Between decoloniality and borders, positionalities and scales in urban space: geographical considerations from the murder of a homeless person in a brazilian city

Entre decolonialidade e fronteiras, posicionamentos e escalas no espaço urbano: considerações geográficas a partir do assassinato de uma pessoa em situação de rua em uma cidade brasileira

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ABSTRACT
The murder of a homeless person triggered this geographic consideration. What could be understood as a recurrent scene of urban violence in Brazil conveys a series of spatiotemporal meanings, practices, behaviors and gestures around socio-spatial relations. When thinking about Latin America it is known that, even with the processes of independence and the formal end of colonialism, coloniality and everything associated with it did not disappear. Urban space is a privileged site for thinking about power relations and a varied sort of devices that take shape in public, private and institutional spaces are reproduced in it. In this sense, issues of ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality, territorial origin, cultural background and immigration-related stigmas, need to be understood within a geopolitical, positional and relational framework in a non-hierarchical way, from local to global scale. Given the complexity that comprises the emergence of homeless people, this paper aims to understand their daily life confrontations and the risks of its exclusion or violent eradication. In doing this we ponder about the problem of the positionality of the roles of geographer, researcher, citizen and activist in the search for socio-spatial justice. Such questions are involved in a set of trajectories and positionalities, which appear in the form of annunciations, denunciations and tensions that we hope to present and discuss with the aim of offering alternatives for the geographic practice itself.

Keywords: homelessness, positionalities, urban geography and borders.
RESUMO
O assassinato de uma pessoa sem-teto desencadeou essa consideração geográfica. O que poderia ser entendido como uma cena recorrente de violência urbana no Brasil transmite uma série de significados espaciotemporais, práticas, comportamentos e gestos em torno das relações sócio-espaciais. Ao pensar na América Latina, sabe-se que, mesmo com os processos de independência e o fim formal do colonialismo, a colonialidade e tudo o que está associado a ela não desapareceram. O espaço urbano é um local privilegiado para refletir sobre as relações de poder, e uma variedade de dispositivos que se configuram nos espaços públicos, privados e institucionais são reproduzidos nele. Nesse sentido, questões de etnia, raça, gênero, sexualidade, origem territorial, background cultural e estigmas relacionados à imigração precisam ser compreendidos em um quadro geopolítico, posicional e relacional de forma não hierárquica, da escala local à global. Diante da complexidade que envolve a emergência de pessoas sem-teto, este trabalho visa compreender seus confrontos diários e os riscos de sua exclusão ou erradicação violenta. Ao fazê-lo, ponderamos sobre o problema da posicionidade dos papéis do geógrafo, pesquisador, cidadão e ativista na busca por justiça sócio-espacial. Tais questões estão envolvidas em um conjunto de trajetórias e posicionamentos, que se manifestam na forma de anúncios, denúncias e tensões que esperamos apresentar e discutir com o objetivo de oferecer alternativas para a própria prática geográfica.

Palavras-chave: população em situação de rua, posicionalidades, geografia urbana e fronteiras.

1 INTRODUCTION

In the late afternoon, we are at a barbecue stand on the corner of the neighborhood. While we are waiting for the skewers to be ready, we see two employees mocking a homeless person. It is a blind man, black, wearing extremely dirty clothes, a sports google on his face, and carrying a broomstick in his hands. He is not someone unknown in the neighborhood. Amidst the taunts, the man responded by cursing and blowing in the wind. While some passers-by stopped to watch the unusual scene, others dodged or passed by on the street corner. In the midst of all this, the owner of the stall handed us the kebab as if nothing was happening, and faced with our perplexity, even though we were extremely sensitive to the subject and saw the injustice in question, we did nothing about it. We got up from the bench, paid the bill and left. (Field Notebook. Jardim da Penha, Vitória, Brazil. August 7, 2018).

This scene affected us deeply and constituted a trigger for the reflections that will be made in this short text. In fact, this event is not characterized only as an isolated scene in the urban space or a movement of imagination about the possible outcomes if we remained observing or intervening in the conflict in question. When it comes to the social world there is no end and nothing ends in the unfolding of a scene.

1 Supported by the ideas of Paulo Cesar da Costa Gomes (2007) and Doreen Massey (2008) we understand, in general terms, the scene as an event constituted from the meeting of multiple trajectories that involve subjects, their stories, and their meanings that converge in a certain place.
Although it might seem unusual, it may be that scenes like these occur more frequently than we imagine in cities and that they are linked to a varied set of aspects and dimensions that are reproduced on a daily basis in the urban space. Maybe it was not the first time that this man or other people living on the streets went through something similar in their trajectories, as well as other people like us did nothing about it and, still others, felt satisfied with what happened.

It is interesting to think about the possibility that certain practices, behaviors, attitudes and gestures can be legacies of previous periods and structures that remain crystallized in the social-spatial relations of the city. In the Latin American case, including Brazil, it is known that even with the independence processes and the formal end of colonialism, coloniality and everything associated with it has not been extinguished (Cruz, 2017; Mignolo, 2015; Quijano, 2005). The fact is that geographically, the urban space is constituted as a privileged place to think about power relations in the social world, because it historically reproduces a set of devices that unfold in public, private and institutional spaces. In this way, although it may seem contradictory, there is a search for a certain urban rationality that orders the reproduction of a set of images - including the landscape - that may never effectively come true, due to the very mode of formation, organization, and historical and socio-spatial reproduction that exists, the result of a dark side of modernity. Thus, it is difficult to contest the separation between coloniality, urbanization processes, and daily life in Brazilian cities.

In this sense, ethno-racial, gender and sexuality, origin and geographical location issues, involving from migratory movements to the issue of housing in the intra-urban space need to be analyzed and understood geographically within a geopolitical, positional and relational framework, extending inextricably and not necessarily in a hierarchical way from the local to the transnational scales.

Given these propositions, defining exactly what a "decolonial geography" would be is a risk, due to the wide range of origins, perspectives and trajectories in question. In fact, as Manuela Leda (2015) elucidates in a panoramic way, over the last decades theoretical reflections coming from different "peripheral zones" started to question the hegemonic narratives of modernity coming from Europe as the only possible center of culture and knowledge in the world; Valter Cruz (2017) states that this perspective and positionality would be an epistemic, ethical and political way of thinking the colonial past itself and the unfoldings in our society. However, even in the face of the potentialities surrounding the postcolonial option, Walter Mignolo (2015) points out that despite some...
common pillars of contestation around modernity, decolonial thinkers have followed quite different paths in their reflections.

In view of the complexity that involves power relations, knowledge and the spatial dimension and assuming the challenge of thinking other possibilities of doing geography, emerges as a central element of this reflection the recognition of the homeless person as a subject in the city to think the world. In general, as Valter Cruz (2017) points out, most of the intellectuals who proposed decolonial theories and concepts opted for a macro-social analysis, in historical perspective of long duration, thus hindering the understanding of different scales and making certain areas of problematization of the subject - notably, of special interest to our reflection, those referred to the geographical dimension were marginalized from the possibilities of enunciation.

In this way, we recognize that inserting homeless people and their daily confrontations, but also other groups and population segments constitutes an alternative for the understanding of a whole tendency of historical and structural reproduction of society and its intelligibility, despite the position being, as a rule, contrary and relatively minor to the understanding by significant part of Latin American colleagues. However, we believe that in the complex relationship that is established between agency and structure; borders and scales, these subjects, even in the face of adversities, including the risks of being eliminated, can reveal through their positionalities a set of aspects that more structural and global analyses are not able to reveal.

Thus, we believe that not only people living on the streets, but also other frames that involve subjects, groups and population segments in the urban space - especially the marginalized and stigmatized ones - have from their daily lives, a series of explanatory elements about structural forces that remain socially crystallized in the city. These experiences in the form of announcements and denunciations can contribute as an alternative and as a possibility to deepen issues that are little problematized in Urban Geography.

2 ON POSITIONALITIES, KNOWLEDGE AND POWER IN THE CITY

The conflicts and struggles for the conquest of rights and the possibilities of being and thinking outside the determinations constructed, especially from an idea of absolute truth of science, of its objectivity, neutrality and universality from and about the self, the others and the world constitute the basic elements in dispute. Donna Haraway (1995, p10) states that "all knowledge is a condensed node in an agonistic field of power".
In fact, this position points out that scientific knowledge is not constituted as a truth and an absolute end in itself, but rather, as a social construction made by and from choices, possibilities, and contexts in front of itself and the world itself. Thus, knowledge has a geographical dimension, as it is marked by the origin, situation and location of the subjects, the spatial clippings and scales involved. Therefore, it assumes a partial and incomplete character, calling into question the whole idea of omniscience that orbits around the imaginaries and powers of those who call themselves the guardians of modern science, positioning it as a hermetic truth, hovering over our heads and without any management or control over its possible paths and developments other than scientific progress itself.

Contestations of this kind have proven to be very fruitful for us to think critically about the complexity and possibilities that involve Geography as a field of knowledge, even beyond academic thought. In the case of Human Geography, more specifically, the issue around the conception that establishes a subdivision between the cognizing subject and its object of analysis as a result of a modern thinking model has gained a prominent place in decolonial criticism and reflections.

This form of conception in the construction of knowledge and of the relationships involved with the physical dimension of the world and with other beings on the planet has proven to be extremely violent, antidualogical, and lacking in understanding. These conceptions and practices have led different researchers, from their respective positions and philosophical matrices, to carry out epistemological and existential upheavals in Brazil and abroad, seeking to broaden the debates within the disciplinary field itself2.

Given this framework and also the need to affirm a set of positions and positionalities on geographies, to which we also link ourselves, we resume the discussions on subjects, groups and social segments in space and, logically, the centrality and complexity around the homeless people. Indeed, this phenomenon3 in urban space is marked by a number of factors and dimensions, such as work, housing, education, health,

Certainly, each subject in his or her respective socio-spatial context⁴ faces one or more dimensions in different ways that can lead him or her to such a situation. Thus, each of these trajectories seems to be marked by a strong dissymmetry between these factors and dimensions, and for some, a single incisive variable may be enough to break a set of existing ties and affiliations - sometimes not all - while for others it takes a larger set of disruptive events to reach such a situation. Regardless of the certainties and seeking to escape from determinations, the issue involving the trajectories that led these subjects to certain socio-spatial situations has gained some of the attention of researchers in relation to social phenomena in general and not only in relation to homeless people⁵.

However, a second profile of interest on people living on the streets is strongly linked to the very configuration that involves the daily lives of these subjects, i.e., their practices, behaviors and meanings in the city. We are particularly interested in this problematic and in how people living on the streets think and act through daily spatial strategies, either in relation to the conditions of their own permanence or exit from this situation in the city.

In this sense, based on these primary notes, we propose three exploratory movements of possibilities involving positionalities and scales, decolonialities and borders for the maturation of our own decolonial thinking in Urban Geography. Thus, faced with the inseparability that involves science and politics, theory and practice, knowledge and life, the first movement is constituted through a questioning that can be formulated in the following terms: what are the different relationships that involve the researcher and the research subjects in the city? This movement decisively involves questions of positionality and, therefore, we observe that in different researches, especially with certain marginalized and stigmatized groups and segments in the urban space, it is the very watertight process of objectification of modern science that is constituted as the structuring pillar of thought.

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⁴ It is worth mentioning that the space referred to in question should not be thought of as a single place in a watertight and isolated sense in the world, but as a set of spatialities that involve networks of places, territories, scales, regions, and landscapes, which are always supported by economic, political, social, and cultural relations.

⁵ Other examples that follow the same orientation are: sex workers, members of organizations, and users of psychoactive substances.
Thus, despite a whole discourse and references committed to social issues, many researchers go to the field, apply questionnaires and interviews with totally closed questions, variables and categories and do not carry out any previous approximations with the subjects themselves. Like a kind of alien abduction in a science fiction movie, they arrive in their spaceships, carry out their experiments, and then disappear.

Moreover, many of these works end up claiming a place of prominence through an ultimate determination for such a phenomenon at a specific territorial scale, such as that of a municipality, region, country, and the world itself. This kind of attitude can generate a series of harmful consequences, such as, for example, in public policies. Finally, it is not uncommon that many academic reflections, whether in the form of articles, monographs, or academic theses, seem to have an end in themselves and in the frameworks that involve the university and other institutions of power.

A second aspect is characterized from an illusion of horizontality between the relations involving the positions and positionalities of the researchers and the researched. Linda McDowell (1992, p.409) points out that "we must recognize and take account of our own position, as well as that of our research participants, and write this into our research practice rather than continue hanker after some idealized equality between us".

In fact, when we conduct research with people living on the streets, but mainly, we make the decision to go to public spaces or social assistance equipment, the first thing we recognize is that morally we slept in a warm and soft bed, besides that positionally we find ourselves in a more comfortable and privileged socioeconomic situation at that moment. "The research subjects" may have slept absolutely nothing the night before, not had the food and hygiene they would have liked, or may have been violated in some way prior to their dialogues with us.

Thus, despite our stance against racism, machismo, homophobia, aporophobia, and other forms of violence and social-spatial injustice, as well as, seeking to establish a transparent dialogue and to recognize these subjects as endowed with knowledge - not only of their own situations in the city, but of thinking about the world in general - we cannot simply admit it as something totally horizontal when what is at issue are our positions, mainly, in relation to the logic surrounding the construction of scientific knowledge. Regardless of all the dialogical movements that we may share and build together with them, including the thematic axes, the categorical ones, and the concepts themselves under analysis, should we take the decision to write the final material and sign
for it, we renew and reinforce these asymmetries. Gillian Rose (1997, p.312) elucidates this situation as follows:

Reflecting on their respective positions, a researcher situates both herself and her research subjects in the same landscape of power, which is the context of the research project in question. However, the researched must be placed in a different position from the researcher since they are separate and different from her. Differences between researcher and researched are imagined as distances in this landscape of power.

In fact, the question involving a reflexive and positional knowledge within science is a challenge and it seems that we have no control or ability to think and act on all the processes involved, because everything is always changing and most of it will always escape us. Recognizing the initial character of the debates, their limitation and partiality, we move on to a second movement that can also be expressed in the form of a question, which is: how to think about the relationships that involve the research subjects and the researcher in the city? This is also a complex question and one that we are rarely concerned with as it involves research processes, especially in Urban Geography.

One question that might be necessary to trigger some questioning would be: why do certain subjects accept to participate in our research? Although many deny themselves and this is present in different reflective records of scientific analysis in the human and social sciences, dialogues end up happening and that is why there are countless cases analyzed. Thus, a first aspect that we need to emphasize is that the researched subjects, even those who are facing great daily adversities are not innocent, because they are also inserted in the frameworks that involve power relations, including the researcher and the institutions in question.

Thus, we need to recognize their positions, the places and perspectives from which they see and act in the world, as well as, the frames that they present before us. Many times, especially when these meetings are scheduled in institutional spaces, the voluntariness and solidarity of the researched with the researcher may be linked even with a question of embarrassment, violence, or future gains, despite the researchers themselves not knowing or being aware of this. In fact, when it involves homeless people, many

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6 Generic and personal acknowledgements are quite common in academic works, for example, in relation to mediators (informants) with the researched subjects and to the subjects themselves who contributed to and participated in the research, as well as to reviewers and critics of the texts. In addition, there are collective writing movements and signatures around the production of knowledge. However, individual signatures and those of small groups of participants still present themselves in a hegemonic way in the field of scientific knowledge.
services and public care facilities in Brazil have great fear of receiving researchers, due to the possible risks involved, especially because of the dissonance with the current policy (KATZ, 1994; ROBAINA, 2015). Thus, some subjects may refuse, while others wish to participate due to their own histories and expectations in relation to these institutions and the researchers themselves.

As an unfolding of the power configurations themselves, academic research can also be seen by the researched subjects as a kind of channel, a flow, that is, a trans-scalar possibility of visibility of a picture or of a possible resolution of a problem. This vision of omnipotence that science possesses can be a boon for the researcher, because the researched subjects have some hope in it. Nevertheless, we know that many academic productions end up dusty in the world's libraries, as links somewhere unknown to us in the international computer network, or as metrics in the rankings among researchers and graduate programs in the different quantitative scales of scientific knowledge around the globe.

Regardless of the issues involving the fate of the publications and their possible intentions, the fact is that the subjects, through enunciations and denunciations, expose their realities, their sufferings, and their possible tormentors (generic or nominal) throughout their trajectories, explaining logics that affect them in some way in the city.

In fact, this knowledge, on the one hand, constitutes a risk for the subjects that reveal these geographies, for when they become public, it could fall like a "bomb" on them. On the other hand, this attitude of trust gives rise to some hope of transformation or punishment for those who have affected them in some way along their trajectories. Of course, we should not again fall into the innocence that the researched subjects will reveal everything we expect and without any kind of filter. However, should they do so at some point - regardless of whether we have any certainty - we have a responsibility on how we should behave and deal with the dialogues themselves and the possible outcomes of the research.

The third and last movement of reflection in this second part of the text and which involves the researcher in a less direct, but no less important way, could be formulated through the following question: how is the nexus between the research subjects and their relations with the city verified. A first aspect to be problematized is anchored in the critique of the notion of exclusion itself. Without wanting to get into the controversy surrounding the theme, even because of the vast literature, we believe that the use of this notion in a radical and absolute perspective can simplify in a reductionist way the debate
and produce some determinations that make even more difficult the analyses about the socio-spatial phenomena, processes, and dynamics.

Despite the criticism, we recognize the intentions of those who have used and still use this notion in their research, as well as some transformative developments resulting from its use in public policies\(^7\). Moreover, we do not deny the existence of a set of adversities and perverse logics that involve this notion, highlighting even the existence of necropolitics\(^8\) on homeless people, other groups and social segments in urban space as part of this process.

However, from the positionality as city subjects and researchers with some experience with homeless people, we understand that the subjects in question even having a series of adversities that generate deep adversities that impact their own existence, also have a series of links and relationships with the city, despite all the stereotypes, stigmas and violence suffered.

The existing connections are greater than we imagine, even if they are anchored in their own situations in the absolute, relative, and relational framework of the city\(^9\). In this way, the subjects themselves recognizing all this set that involves situations, positions and arrangements existing in the city end up trying to build a series of spatial logics that involve practices of permanence, mobility and socio-spatial rhythms that are more advantageous or less harmful for themselves daily in the city (SCHMIDT; ROBAINA, 2017).

In this sense, from occasional visits to the homes of friends and family, through different ways to obtain resources, to hygiene, food and leisure practices, these people build a series of knowledge and possibilities in the face of the adverse context in which they find themselves. It is also necessary to emphasize the clarity that these subjects have about the impediments and interdictions and how this participates directly in the daily lives of these groups and population segments (SILVA, 2013).

In this sense, the socio-spatial negotiation is a fundamental framework for geographical reflection, particularly noteworthy with regard to this theme, because it establishes both internal relationships with subjects who coexist in the same situation, as

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\(^7\) The Fome Zero and Bolsa Família programs in Brazil are clear examples of this process.

\(^8\) We make direct reference to the Cameroonian thinker Achille Mbembe and his post-colonial reflections about biopower.

\(^9\) The mention of the categories of Absolute, Relative and Relational is referenced from the reflections of HARVEY (2012), even recognizing their strength and importance in different authors throughout the history of geographical thought.
well as with other subjects and spaces in the city. In this sense, a series of geographies that demarcate zonal territorial processes, reticular logics, places, scales, and socio-spatial borders unfold. However, this whole complex set of relations involving rules of social interaction, establishing proximities and distances end up ordering different geopolitical frames in the city, which are extremely sensitive to change, where openings, elasticities, rigidities, and ruptures that can be quickly imposed on the relations and spaces themselves.

Due to different moral - and often illegal - issues, most of the negotiations involving homeless people can gain underground contours that only the subjects themselves can or wish to reveal. Thus, silence and invisibility is part of the process that establishes some of these geographies, including the very institutions that deal directly with these subjects, such as social assistance, municipal guards and police forces (ROBAINA, 2015).

Regardless of the context of relations - most often adverse and unfavorable - and the need for great effort on the part of this construction, "what is at the heart of these negotiations for the homeless population is the possibility of accessing, staying, circulating and controlling certain places and their respective advantages for everyday life" (ROBAINA, 2015, p.344).

Certainly, most of these geographies are marked by ephemerality and social-spatial instability, either in relation to the logic of permanence, or in relation to the rhythms and mobilities. Thus, from personal conflicts, through the opening or closing of a commercial establishment to urban interventions in the city's morphology can produce new impediments and reorientations that produce logics correlated to what Rogério Haesbaert (2004) calls (de)reterritorialization. In this sense, homeless people, but this is also true for other population groups and segments in the city, recognize the fragilities and instabilities in their daily geographies and, therefore, operate within their own spatial logics alternative possibilities so that it is possible to continue their own lives, because space is vital!

3 COLONIALITY IN THE SCALAR TENSIONS OF EVERYDAY LIFE: SOME CONSIDERATIONS ON GEOGRAPHIES, EMERGENCES AND CONSTRAINTS

Finalizing this text becomes an anguishing task, due to the fear of what was not contemplated and the risks of crystallization of the ideas that were briefly presented here.
Certainly, the main intention is to enable some openness around geographical thought and research, especially from the reflections that involve our actions and positionalities with the subjects, groups and social-spatial segments in situations of daily adversity in the city.

Thus, despite our background in Geography and all the recognition of the importance of representations, including cartographic ones, we also carry a second fear that is related to the risks of analyses that seek rigid geometrical determinations of the configurations present in everyday relations, power, and the spatial dimension. This fear is somehow associated with the traps warned by Donna Haraway (1995), mainly of what she calls god-trick. This moral attitude of hierarchical superiority about others, the world and knowledge as an absolute truth is often reproduced in Geography through maps, sketches and other forms of social-spatial representations.

Thus, it is common to see in different analyses in the human and social sciences - not only in Geography - representations that rigidly establish the locations and extents of certain phenomena without further political, social, cultural and, above all, theoretical and methodological problematizations. In this sense, this kind of moral position "allows" a researcher, even without conducting any kind of visit, approach, and dialogue, to allegedly determine a whole set of representations about a group or social segment, and similarly, about the logics that involve practices, behaviors, and social-spatial meanings.

Thus, even in the face of the complexity involved and the recognition of our lack of control over the general framework that organizes society, we need to reflect about all the intellectual egocentrism that is present in the university; about our privileged position of speech and our place in the decisions that mark the construction of knowledge.

Certainly, we cannot go along with the idea that these representations appear as a "magic trick" made possible by image processing technologies and seeking to justify and legitimize themselves only by the power that science has in society. These constructions always involve a series of risks and responsibilities. However, we do not position ourselves as iconoclasts, quite the contrary, because we recognize that representations, images, and imaginaries constitute an important pillar for geographical thought (BAILLY, 1998; COSGROVE, 2008; DRIVE, 2003; GOMES, 2013, 2017; SAID, 2001). However, these representations need to be understood as results of historical, social, and geographical constructions, and not as an absolute, ultimate, and crystallized truth about others, through which, many times, the subjects themselves do not even know or participate in these processes, even though they may cause significant impacts in their lives.
A second point is presented less as a warning, but as a kind of proposition to think about the way in which some issues related to coloniality may be present in the daily lives of subjects, groups, and social segments in urban space. In this way, the challenge is directly associated with the possible ways of participation of the very subjects involved in this process.

In the case of the reflections about the homeless people as the core of our reflections, but positioning the text beyond this phenomenon and socio-spatial configuration, we understand the need to analyze and reflect on the way in which coloniality can be present and participate in the construction of geographies, especially from different scales and inseparable logics that involve positionalities, territories and borders. The first approach is justified by a movement of violent determination that produces an entire classification and conversion of these subjects into an object, as a rule a "Population", despite all the existing heterogeneity. In a way, we naturalize the idea of population and forget that it is an artificial resource, linked to the postulates of governmentality and understood as a resource (FOUCAULT, 2008; RAFFESTIN, 1993).

Thus, for the specific case of this phenomenon, we should point out that the fact of being adults and a whole series of issues that somehow impact the patterns of everyday life through the housing dimension constitute the pillars of this classification. However, when we get closer to the different trajectories of the subjects themselves, we see the confrontations associated not only with these and other definitions that are correlated to them, because there are many other questions and conflicts, some of them contradictory, that go far beyond the relative consensus that people "don't have a house to live in!" Regardless of these developments that deserve extreme attention and research, the fact is that once on the streets, these subjects, also stigmatized by this classification, access or are approached by social assistance equipment, other social services and public institutions.

In this sense, returning to the second point, it is fundamental for this type of proposition that seeks to unveil not only the discourses - but mainly the practices, behaviors, and socio-spatial meanings - these subjects need to gain visibility and voice about the dynamics and processes that involve their own lives, because they are the ones.

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10 The Brazilian National Survey on the Homeless Population (2008, p.8-9) defines the phenomenon as follows: "Heterogeneous population group, characterized by extreme poverty, by the interruption or fragility of family ties and the lack of regular conventional housing. They are people compelled to inhabit public places (streets, squares, cemeteries, etc.), degraded areas (sheds and abandoned buildings, ruins, etc.) and, occasionally, use shelters and hostels for the night".
who are directly impacted. It is necessary to let them reveal through the annunciation how they perceive and live daily the possible problems that involve coloniality, such as racism, machismo, religious intolerances, issues involving geographical origins, etc. However, we cannot forget our positions as researchers in addition to all the other aspects and dimensions in this world, as well as the information that is at stake in the field of knowledge in general.

As an example to elucidate these emergencies, according to the Brazilian National Survey on the Homeless Population (2008), of the 31,922 people interviewed, 67% declared themselves black or brown. In the case of the Survey on the Homeless Population in the Metropolitan Region of Grande Vitória (2018) this same profile reached 77.6%, in addition to the presence of the indigenous population, with 1.8% self-declared\textsuperscript{11}. However, despite the emphasis on the two cases presented above, in the few researches conducted by the public authorities about this population, often the ethnic-racial issue is neglected.

Thus, for the case of homeless people in Brazil, the ethnic-racial issue needs to be better understood by Urban Geography and, above all, analyzing how it possibly presents itself and what are the developments in the daily lives of these subjects and in the settings that involve the public policies in the city. Denilson Oliveira (2017) alerts us and points us towards a Brazilian "racist management of urban space" (p.89). In this sense, we wonder how this could also be present in public policies that affect homeless people, but also other groups and social segments in the urban space.

In this sense, two other possible paths open up. The first one is associated with the operations performed by institutions and official bodies that generate immediate effects on the lives of people living on the streets, such as, for instance, the social street approaches, the referrals - not always in a voluntary and peaceful way - to shelters, the actions of collection of personal belongings, the fencing\textsuperscript{12} and the implementation of hostile morphologies (antihomeless architectures). Would these actions be somehow related to racism or other aspects linked to coloniality?

\textsuperscript{11} we participated as academic representatives in the Working Group that involved the Research on the Homeless Population in the Metropolitan Region of Grande Vitória. In fact, this research organized by the Jones dos Santos Neves Institute was an extremely challenging experience, especially because of its interdisciplinary character and the presence of professionals from different departments, representatives of civil society and the social movements of homeless people themselves.

\textsuperscript{12} Fencing is a practice of referring homeless people for background checks or open conflicts with the law, before being referred to the shelter itself or to another social assistance facility.
Our suspicion is yes! However, on the one hand, as geographers we want - besides understanding structural issues - to know how possible sets of strategies and scalar practices operate that can vary between cities or even between neighborhoods of the same city, extending from processes of territorial containment barely visible in the landscape to massacres in urban space. On the other hand, it is important to understand how these subjects deal on a daily basis with these adversities resulting from perverse logics in public and institutional spaces. Thus, we can have a more complex vision and the academic texts themselves can serve as subsidies, denunciations, and interventions on public policies.

The example of racism was used analytically to think about the possible relations with coloniality due to the immense strength and visibility of the statistical data and the historical social injustice that marks the ethno-racial picture in Brazil. However, numerous other issues are just as important and are inextricably linked with coloniality and also deserve our attention. For the case of homeless people, the issues of gender and sexuality are still major gaps in Geography, but they passed without assuming greater relevance in my doctoral thesis. We remember that we had an extremely impactful encounter in the final stretch of the fieldwork in 2013 with a group of five transsexuals who were living on the streets in the central area of the city of Rio de Janeiro.

As a research, and any other scientific movement, cannot contemplate absolutely everything, because we are always facing a partial, positional and localized perspective, but at the same time, having at that moment a concern with the recognition/self-legitimation of the research as scientific, we decided to analytically cut the profile by the established patterns of treatment for the phenomenon from the perspective of official data (adults, male and without psychiatric disorders) and looking for some pillars of modern science (trends and patterns). However, in relation to the meeting we had and the information that emerged from it, we did not know how to deal at that moment, and unfortunately, even the interviews were not part of the final text.

Although we talked to some Geography colleagues, including being questioned about gender and sexuality issues, our justification was always marked by the profile cutout, which despite seeming methodologically coherent and legitimate, affects our thoughts to this day and makes us write this paragraph. The fact is that women in street situation and other profiles and outside the heteronormative standards, even if in smaller numbers, are present in the picture that involves the phenomenon of street situation and, therefore, need to be analyzed and understood, as they enable a series of openings on the
disciplinary field of geography and spatial dimensions itself. This is not exclusive to the homeless population and it seems that it also needs to receive greater attention to other phenomena, dynamics and social-spatial processes.

Moreover, this specific issue involving gender and sexuality also constitutes an extremely strong moral element of life on the streets. Thus, we should expressly open a new question beyond official policies. It is important to analyze how the subjects themselves reproduce the logics that involve coloniality in the city. Although it may seem contradictory, the moral dimensions and the whole set of power relations unfold and have extreme strength among the subjects. We register this, because there is a risk of considering the subject that is homeless, (but also other segments or social groups) not as a subject, but reducing him/her as something essentialized or even a thing that is unable to share the values and moralities that are present in society.

About this, as a way of not speaking for the other, of not representing and determining him/her, it would be indispensable a whole set of efforts to make it possible for his/her perceptions, conceptions and emotions to be part of the research process. Somehow, we have seen in different speeches, on one hand, representatives of social welfare secretaries boasting in interviews that "no matter how hard we try, a great part of this population doesn't accept the shelter!"; or, still, certain philanthropic and religious groups stating that "the homeless population needs this or that". The only thing that is not seen are the subjects talking about their own needs and desires.

About the constraints that involve our position and our final reflection, we need to reveal that we became Doctors in Geography, universities professores, and obtained a change in social mobility due to the existence of the homeless phenomenon. In the end, as the geographer Cindy Katz (1994) points out, we were and are the greatest beneficiary of all the encounters we had with these people. Despite the subsidies that the thesis, the articles, and the book chapters can provide for public policies, as well as my critical position in relation to human rights, citizenship, democracy, and in favor of social justice, whether in articles, interviews, and opinions to the media, or public hearings in spaces of political representation; in the organization of scientific events, including with the participation of representatives of the homeless movements themselves as a central place of speech, we were the greatest beneficiaries and will never be able to repay the part we received in each of the meetings we had in public and institutional spaces. We are making

13 In Robaina (2015), more specifically in the second chapter, it is presented how these developments appear for a case in the central area of the city of Rio de Janeiro.
this register although it is reasonable to conjecture that the argument is not restricted to our case and that of the geographer Cindy Katz, but it is extensive, heavily, to researchers who deal with the subject, among which, in a prominent way, it directly involves us, urban researchers in geography who deal with social-spatial injustices.

Finally, going back to the text’s initial epigraph and to that man who served as the trigger of the ideas that brought us here, we confess that despite passing by him almost daily in the last three years, we have never extended a dialogue beyond a formal "good morning" greeting and leaving some coins when he was sitting in front of the bank branch.

Surprised while holding one of the meetings in the post-graduate course Positionalities, Borders and Geographic Knowledge, a female student asked if we knew that the "blind man" had died? The response was “no”. She immediately sent a link. We read the article and realized that we did not even know his name.

Thus, any move we make towards dedicating this text would be mere demagogy, for the ultimate event itself has once again been transformative for one's own thinking. Passing in front of the same bank agency days later, there was already another person sitting there and we did not know her name either, and we do not know if this is already the most important thing, because morally it becomes difficult to take any position. As the ones who signs the text and has not only the privileged place of speech, we point out that the challenges that involve the construction of knowledge, the personal dimensions, the circumstances, the contexts and the complexity that involves life in the city and its geographical dimension, should think about conceptual, methodological and positional openings and transfigurations, not thinking that we could see, speak and write about the city as if we were outside it. Finally, we are affected by the city and everything in it. Finally, despite the set of criticisms that we no longer allow ourselves and everything we have stated and registered so far, it is no longer an easy task exactly to know where to go!
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