
Ways of life: the search for an understanding in the transformation of rurality

Modos de vida: la búsqueda de un entendimiento en la transformación de la ruralidad

Modos de vida: a busca por um entendimento na transformação da ruralidade

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Abstract

This article aimed, through the memories of flour mill workers, to point out the transformations that occurred in the way of living a decade ago in the rural neighborhood of Campinhos in Vitória da Conquista (BA). Based on historical materialism, the categories way of life, memory and work were articulated and theoretically with Marx and Engels (2007); Agamben (2007); Thompson (1981), Harvey (2016) reviewed changes in the dynamics of rurality. After the discussion was over, the approximation of the “city” with the rural way of life, through the interpenetration of capital, brought new contours to the population's way of life, as the workforce was being co-opted and workers were separated from their means of production, making them strangers in their place of life and work.

Keywords: way of life, memories, flour houses

Resumen

Este artículo tuvo como objetivo, a través de la memoria de los trabajadores de los molinos harineros, señalar las transformaciones ocurridas en la forma de vivir hace una década en el barrio rural de Campinhos en Vitória da Conquista (BA). A partir del materialismo histórico, las categorías modo de vida, memoria y trabajo se articularon y teóricamente con Marx y Engels (2007); Agamben (2007); Thompson (1981), Harvey (2016) revisaron los cambios en la dinámica de la ruralidad. Terminada la discusión, la aproximación de la “ciudad” con el modo de vida rural, a través de la interpenetración del capital, trajo nuevos contornos al modo de vida de la población,

ya que la fuerza de trabajo fue cooptada y los trabajadores fueron separados de sus medios de producción, haciéndolos extraños en su lugar de vida y trabajo.

Palabras clave: forma de vida, recuerdos, casas de harina.

Resumo

O presente artigo objetivou, por meio das memórias de trabalhadores de casas de farinha apontar as transformações ocorridas no modo de viver há uma década no bairro rural de Campinhos em Vitória da Conquista (BA). Embasados no materialismo histórico, as categorias modo de vida, memória e trabalho foram articuladas e teoricamente com Marx e Engels (2007); Agamben (2007); Thompson (1981), Harvey (2016) revistou algumas transformações na dinâmica da ruralidade. Findada a discussão, concluiu-se que a aproximação da “cidade” com o modo de vida rural, pela interpenetração do capital, trouxe novos contornos ao modo de viver da população, pois a força de trabalho foi sendo cooptada e os trabalhadores apartados dos seus meios de produção, tornando-os estranhos no seu lugar de vida e trabalho.

Palavras-chave: modo de vida, memórias, casas de farinha

Introduction

Só canto o buliço da vida apertada
Da lida pesada, das roças e dos eito
E às vez, recordando a feliz mocidade
Canto uma sodade que mora em meu peito
(Patativa do Assaré, in O poeta da roça)

The present article is part of the research³ that revolves around the study of ways of life in rural communities, via workers in flour houses of the Campinhos community, in the municipality of Vitória da Conquista (BA), a city located 510km from the capital of Bahia and that has the third biggest economy in the state.

The Campinhos community still holds a timid rurality, meaning, the rural way of life (WANDERLEY, 2009, p.204). It has an esteemed population of 4889 people, being 2484 men and 2405 women (IBGE, 2010). From this populational universe, are removed the approximately 1805 young habitants included in the 0-17 age group,

³ The present article is an integral part of the expanded discussion limited in the thesis 07.04.2021defended entitled “Memories of the family labor in Flour Houses: transforming the ways of life of men and women in the field” (Free translation: *Memórias do trabalho familiar em Casas de Farinha: transformação dos modos de vida de homens e mulheres do campo*), of respective authorship and orientation from the authors of this work by PPGMLS-UESB.

alongside the still declining percentage of elderly, that today represents only 7.6% of the population (65 years of more, according to the classification on IBGE, 2010).

Campinhos represents a neighborhood in Vitória da Conquista, recognized as such by the Laws 850/96 and 952/98, and inserted in the Plano Diretor Urbano (a plan for the management of urban development), Law 1385 from 12/26/2006, in which is established the public recognition of the patio as a member of said territory, ceasing to be from that date a district in the municipality. On a daily basis, it's called by its residents as a community. According to Queiroz (1973. p. 163), rural neighborhoods are the reflection on the relationship between its origin and the socioeconomical traditional structure in Brazil, meaning the inevitable and interdependent encounter between the rural and urban, without them dissociating.

As a part of the southwest region of Bahia (SEI, 2017), the Campinhos Community stood out for many years for its geographic identity in the production of the cassava byproducts and the numerous presences of flour houses, marking the presence of family labor as a central point in the determinations of the material production of life, marking the ways of life and the everyday of its people.

Expressions such as “flour houses of Campinhos” or “flour from Campinhos” were reproduced naturally in the local speeches, giving it some sort of **geographic identity**: “expression used to assign a quality attributed to an originating product from a territory whose characteristics are inherent to its geographic origin”. (MAIORKI E DALLABRIDA; 2015, p. 14). The expression today is not commonly associated to the community in the same eloquence it used to, it's noted a minimal recalling to the lively productive activity⁴ that distinguished the way of life of the respective rural community.

⁴ According to REZENDE, 2009, the variable weekly production in Simão and Campinhos flour houses in 2009 reached 200 bags of flour a week in each house. There were produced quantities as of 420 tons of cassava roots, 976 bags of four of prime quality monthly, 600kg of cassava gum, 920kg of fresh cassava gum and 741 bags of flour of second quality. Such data depart from the recent production: producing a maximum of 150 to 200 bags of flour a month.

Initially pointed by empiricism, the alterations on this identity and way of life in this population made understandable, through the memories of workers of the remainder flour mills⁵, the transformations that occurred in the way of life a little over a decade ago. The memories were co-opted from interviews held in 2019, before the prediction of the pandemic, which could compromise the record of the interviews with the research's subject, with both men and women, workers in the flour mills still operating in the community, as a way to revisit the past in the present. With this angle, the memories contribute to what was collectively lived by the social groups, gathering much more strength when frequently evoked (HALBWACHS, 2003, p. 30).

For such, it has become crucial to own the understanding of the lifestyle and coordinate it with the categories of work and memory. What enabled the understanding of the visible transformations that currently affect this population's way of life by revisiting a past in which the family labor used to rule the daily life in the community, with the flour houses fully operational and mobilizing the local economy (SANTOS 2007, p. 63). During the course of the research, in revisiting the speech of some workers on the past the community witnessed, it was brought up the materiality of the transformations through the memories of a research subject.

My God! Everything here changed a lot. All of this was only Flour House. I was a driver here for a long time, somewhere in the 80s, and we used to comment, the abundance. Now, you see, it's not the same as what we used to see. (VERBAL INFORMATION)⁶

⁵ In 2006 and 2007, according to the presented data in the research developed by Santos (2007), there were 25 flour houses in full operation in the community. Currently, there are only three, with spaced out operations, being unable to affirm how many days a week it's operational, or even if they will operate.

⁶ Recorded interview with Joélio dos Santos, 42 years old, meeting the TCLE terms that composed the research in Memory Doctorate: Language and Society (Free translation: Doutorado em Memória: Linguagem e Sociedade). The interview with a semi-structured script was held in October 2019, in the Campinhos community, by researcher Marisa Oliveira Santos, that monitored a group of national researchers visiting the XIII National Colloquium and the VI International Colloquium of the Pedagogic Museum. Free translation of the transcript: "Meu Deus! Como tudo aqui anda mudado. Tudo isso aqui era só Casa Farinha. Fui motorista aqui por muito tempo, era prá lá de oitenta, a gente comentava, uma fartura só. Agora, veja, num tem mais aquilo que a gente via antes."

So, the memory assumes a central point in this study and peers, somehow, the transformations in this community's lifestyle. The memory, therefore, is a strategic resource as pointed out by Paolo Montesperelli (2004, p. 8), since through the relations that the individuals maintain with the experienced and with the other members of the same social environment are intertwined when revisited. In other words, the memory is a conductive mechanism to remember events by men and women in the fields, in the community life, and as a common thread tries to understand the transformations in this lifestyle, in the moving life, and therefore in the production of the visible life.

Having the considerations described above, the referred article has the memory as a method and approaches the historical materialism as a determinant axis for the transformations seen in the production of the visible life in Campinhos. Without undervaluing the interconnection between memory and lifestyle, the triad junction happens through the human labor, that not decoupled, limits itself in a continuous exchange between the experienced and the way of life of this population, based on the ineliminable human condition, being as a founding element of the material life (MARX and ENGELS, 2007), that sometimes qualifies the way of life and sometimes alters it. And the memories take care of establishing new readings in which are inserted men, labor and life by revisiting the past in the present.

Lifestyle: searching for an understanding

If it's possible approaching the daily life as a concept, the human labor of the ineliminable condition of life and to sustain the memory as a resource, the same job is not so feasible, when the subject is "life", such was recognized by the Greeks the absence of an unambiguous term that defined it. In Greek, there are two words that can be used to describe life: *zoé* and *bios*. Both have different semantics and morphology, but are reportable to a single root "life". *Zoé* expresses the simple fact of

existing, while *bios* indicates the way or the manner in which is lived by an individual or group, meaning the construction of the subject in its social life and political acting (AGAMBEN, 2007).

In this dual substantiation, that isn't random, urges the inevitable hiatus between the terms *zoé* and *bios*. *Zoé* expresses the life granted to all living beings. The term doesn't have a plural, which evidences that, semantically, in the Greek's understanding, natural life is considered unique, there's no plurality or diversity of natural lives. However, *Zoé* is the unqualified life (AGAMBEN, 2007).

Working with the Greek philosophers' line of thinking, Klein (1969), a Czech sociologist, points out that in exceptional conditions, indeed the life of the human groups could be limited only to biological necessities, therefore it's understood that its thinking is in the face of the *zoé* conception of life. The *zoé* that's reproduced in the singular structured existence and it's beyond liberty and culture, it's a starting point and a rupture from subjectivity and society's contradictions. It's understood, thus, that if in *zoé*, humans don't have the liberty or autonomy to change the way of life, it's through *bios*, the human labor, that the way of life starts to be built, getting shape and nurturing memories.

This way, the lifestyle gets a shape of its own sense, rupturing the opportunity of men just existing, but it's molded in the adjectivations given through human labor, thus, *zoé* would be too simple to finish the settings that the humans are willing to establish in producing a visible life (KLEIN, 1969; AGAMBEN, 2007).

If for the Greeks, the creation and development of the *bios* allows for the constitution of subjectivity and society, it's understood that, through *bios*, the human activities give meaning to the life constructed by the experiences, the lived, making memories and confronting contradictions. Afterall, it's in the meeting between different lifestyles and different concepts of societal models, that the dialectical is established, and the original lifestyle is modified.

In these conditions, human labor is the center of convergence of life and the everyday, of the memories and lifestyle of men and women of the field, sewed in the plot of life through beliefs and values, of the cultural aspects and in the confrontation of this whole with totality, meaning the capitalist production way, that allows to make this interweaving from outside in, and the inevitable encounter with the contradictions that constitute its surrounding by observable determinations.

Following on the same line of thought and taking as a truth that the world is a product of human labor (MARX and ENGELS, 2007, p.12), life gets a way to get qualified through the production of means of life, and by producing them, men produce the sense of their own material life:

The way in which men produce their means of life depends, first of all, of the constitution of the means of life already found that they should reproduce. This production manner shouldn't be considered only under the aspect of being a reproduction of the individuals' physical existence. It's, much more, a determined form of activity, a determined form of externalizing its life, a determined *way of life* of these individuals. Such as the individuals externalize their life's, such are them. What they are coincide, thus, with their production, not only with *what* they produce but also with *how* they produce. What the individuals are, however, depends on the material conditions of their production. (MARX and ENGELS, 2007, p. 87). Free translation; author's emphasis.

In this analysis note, Marx and Engels not only direct, but clarify that the way of life is a reflection on the struggle for the reproduction of means of life, that aren't restricted only by physical existence, namely, isn't limited by the biological conditions as also raised by Klein (1969) or by the Greek philosophers. In other words, life is amplified in its exteriorization, qualified by the means of the human activity by defining it. Afterall, men are what they produce and how they produce it, thus the labor, the way of life and memories articulate themselves in a continuous process of constitution and (re) elaboration.

It's important to understand that the way of life, as emphasized by Klein (1969), may seem to initially approach some sort of perfection, this being put in a

structural logic of the lived system, without excluding the inherent contradictions to the constructing process of a way of life, that needs to be seen and inserted in a bigger system, in the perspective of totality clashing with the other lifestyles. In short, the apparent perfection does not exist, given that every lifestyle is interconnected with variables external to the constitution and to other ways of life.

Way or ways of life?

To take on the challenge of saying “way of life” or “ways of life”, initially, requires an effort to understanding life in multiple aspects, that transpose the simple appearance, looking to understand it beyond the countless conceptions that cover the daily life, sometimes disguised as a common sense. This way, life itself is limited to the daily practices that encompass the life of men, women, children and the other living, and as such, build a historical and social dynamic in Campinhos, giving this trajectory a shape, a way of perceiving it in the agglutination of personal and collective experiences, in the work accomplished, in the costumes and values, checking the dual coexistence between memories and contexts sometimes similar or perhaps opposites.

This way, amidst the daily life in which is replicated, the way of life is molded, gets its shape, not as something systematic and thought of, but as a natural phenomenon built with the gird of days, forming a bond with life, with the experiences provoked and the material relations. It’s observed that the way of life gets an outline through the norms, the rules, the necessary and the learned expectations, mainly in the family, then at work and in the community, according to Thompson (1981) but also in the field of dispute and the different conceptions of society, that automatically and inevitably insert new conceptions of life through the course of time. Like such:

The values are not “thought of” or “called”; they are lived, and arise within the same bond with material life and material relations in which our ideas emerge. It’s the norms, rules, expectations, etc.,

needed and learned in the “*habitus*” of living; and learned, in the first place with the family, work, and the immediate community. Without this learning, social life couldn’t be held and all production would cease. (THOMPSON, 1981, p. 194).

José de Souza Martins (1998) adds to the context of the rural villages the characteristic of a traditional sociability between people, that’s limited in domestic scenarios, in the provisional, insecure and the unstable, and slowly imprints peculiar characteristics to the collective life. Such remark approaches – a lot – to the annotations by Antônio Cândido (2017), in which refers to the sociability as a manifestation of the rural life amidst a balanced rusticity, called by the author as a neighboring sociability⁷.

Hence, a way of life is understood here as an ensemble of practices related to the world of work, of family life, that are connected to the social reality. The rural way of life is associated with “peasants ways of existing in the daily struggle trying to survive, in the routine practices maintaining and reproducing life constructed around the land, the family and work, mediated by relations of solidarity with relatives and neighbors” (MARQUES, 2004) and that before the amplified reproduction of life, also constantly confronts with an expanded reproduction of contradictions, through an insertion of new models or territory conceptions, with the broadened reproduction of capital. (FERNANDES, 2009; TIRIBA, 2018).

Social life can be understood in Campinhos by the remainder operation of three little flour houses, of the commerce that continually expands; by the available services (water, energy, sewage, internet, bank correspondents, gas stations, supermarkets, health centers); by the presence of a school; by the constant car traffic and flow of people; by the availability of public transportation; by the comings and goings of field workers to the city; by the contrast between the rural and urban life, legislated and established by the local routine.

⁷ Free translation: “sociabilidade vicinal”.

The everydayness, present in life in Campinhos, should be understood as a phenomenon that encompass people's lives, as a sort of day-to-day arrangement of the individual life of men with vital repetitions, fixated in the time distribution, in which is echoed the particularized life and that adds to so many other activities done concomitantly by other men (KOSIK, 1976) amidst the contradictions of a wider society, assisting in the constitution of memories and granting space to the voracious need to insert the contradictory, or the inevitable encounter between different lifestyles.

Each day life has its own experience, its own knowledge, its own horizon, its own predictions, the repetitions, but also the holiday days. [...] for this reason, it's a world of intimacy, familiarity and trivial actions. In this, the individual creates for itself relationships based on the experience itself, in the possibilities themselves, the activity itself and then consider this possibility as its own world. (KOSIK, 1976, p.80).

The quote above allows for an initial sizing of the human intervention in the production of life and its materiality that slowly starts getting shape and covers the individual in its historic act, as well as assisting in the constitution of its memories. For Medeiros (2015) one cannot conceive memory without labor. It is, as is labor, genesis to human life:

Men had to memorize the best (or the possible) way to hunt, fish, change and conserve food, take shelter, plant, harvest, to know the proper weather for cultivation, choose the proper soil, etc. (MEDEIROS, 2015, p. 62)

This everydayness of repetition of the social practices is the same that resonates the lack of jobs, the lack of opportunities for the young, the disarticulation of family labor, the real estate speculation, the dismissal of the neighboring sociability (CÂNDIDO, 2017), the increase of violence in the community, the partition of lands, the dispossession of production means (HARVEY, 2013) and the disarticulation of the feeling of belonging, making way to the uprooting (MARTINS,1997) from the place lived, and this movement starts to impose new

outlines to the lifestyle built by its population and feeds the desire of capital infiltration in non-capitalist economies (LUXEMBURG, 1985).

For now, it's understood that this apparent initial synchrony between life, daily routine and memories, doesn't offer a concreteness of life in a broader sense, especially in its mode or shape, becoming necessary to expand the discussion range. The word *shape* stands for mold, meaning the physical condition in which some fluid substance is put on and, consequently, has its shape reconfigured as such (HOUAISS, 2004). The reflecting than urges the following question: how to put life and its subjectivity in a mold, or a shape?

When "shape" or "mode" is applied to life it assigns aspects that compose a routine that defines it, so life can have a shape or a mode, concludes professor Daniel Arruda Nascimento (2012). According to this line of interpretation, as stated by Klein (1969), the comprehension on what is a way, or mode, of life pervades through a variety of shapes of human lives found constantly, but not immutably. Points out, still, that a way of life is a part of a totality of ways to live that correlate, directly or indirectly, with other ways of life, inserted within a wider field meeting or cross-checking, reaffirming, this way, the plurality of the term: ways of life amidst the contradictory establishing the clash of plurals.

And as such understood, it's in this field of inevitable encounters between the ways of life in rural communities, that the empiricism slowly grants shapes to the qualified life through human labor, but by verifying changes in the production social relationships and the immediate identification of contradictions gives in through transformations new outlines and imposes new ways to live, that not always sustain the residents of the Campinhos community.

In the symbiosis between life and routine, the ways of life are structured. The way of life built in the social practices is not something immutable, something perfectly detectable, they suffer the influences of the external, so they are not untouched, even if the observation corollary of a specific context, or in the

coexistence that is replicated in daily life, makes it look like something defined in itself. It is not (KLEIN, 1969).

Within the numerous interferences, the prominence of the capitalist production manner is a preponderance factor to modify the ways of life that circumvent rurality, and in this direction the proximity to the city is immediately crystalized, generating physical contrast, but overall granting movement to the inevitable transformations between the conflict of different ways of life, city and field, but never dissociated (WILLIAMS, 1989). For Carlos (2005), the city is more associated to the intense and uninterrupted doing, remembering that the city as a human realization reflects through the movement of life, a way of life, and even if not dissociated from rurality, it imposes its way of seeing and being in the world.

The proportion in which they move and structure themselves, non-capitalist ways of life challenge the sagacious and voracious need to sustain the dominant way of life, meaning the capitalist. Thus, when it infiltrates, the capitalist production subtracts in Campinhos the remains of rurality as a way of life, as advocated by Wanderley (2009). In other words, it subtracts the fundamental autonomy of workers, dispossessing them of the production means, placing them as a reproduction factor for labor force, keeping them from the correlative and direct relation with nature, imposing to them the presence of determinant forces from the social construct process, such as the capital in the antagonistic relationship with labor that helps in the constitution of ways of life and nourishes memories, as pointed out by David Harvey:

The consideration of contradiction between capital and labor certainly point to the political ambition to supplant the capital domination over labor, not only in the job market but also in the work environment, through organization means in which workers collectively associated control their time, their processes and their product. (HARVEY, 2016, p. 70)

Afterall, the capitalist production needs these factors as sources of acquisition for their production means and as a labor force storage for its expansion and domain

system (LUXEMBURG, 1985, p. 253) and, anchored in this logic, the interpenetration of capital in Campinhos has been targeted for the capital's greed, as it also can be said that such movement happens on other basis of a qualified life from human labor.

Therefore, the genesis of a way of life suffers mutations by interferences from the capitalist society structure. The mediations of the infiltrated capital undervalue the right to live and produce material life in a way different than the capitalist production, therefore it rushes in dissolving the structural elements of rurality, so the ways of life are active targets of this disarticulation.

Following this baseline, one can think that the evolution of the industrial society has imposed a production speed that significantly affected what's produced and how it should be produced and, nevertheless, this movement entails the capture of different ways of life that, once dismantled, entered as labor force and can rarely adapt to the imposed production speed of the capitalist production. The traditional keeps yielding to the new technological configurations and, by doing so, it ruptures with the original metabolism of diverse lifestyles, namely, the imposing force of the new in regards of the weeding of the old, Harvey ratifies.

New technological configurations subsist the old ones. *Ways of life*, ways of being and thinking are drastically modified to embrace the new to the detriment of the old. [...] Technological changes are never free or painless, and the cost and the pain they bring are not uniformly divided. We must always inquire: who gains from the creation and who has to live with the impact of the destruction? (HARVEY, 2016, p. 99) Free translation; author's emphasis.

Ruled by the inevitable force of the capital movement, Istvan Mészáros (2011, p. 946) emphatically affirms that the world lives firmly kept in its grip, by which inevitable changes are built, not only in production relations, but also in social relations and the way of life. The apparent progress entails in the structural rupture that might eventually come to limit the expansion of the capitalist system, inserting the contradiction between the old ways and the new way of seeing and being in the

world. Soon, the presence or absence of science and technology at men's disposal determine different models of reality and living.

The rupture, cession or resistance to a certain way of life is determined according to Klein (1969) by the limits of men as a social, natural being. In this sense, Tiriba and Ficher (2015) affirm that the ways of life cannot circumvent the perverse and excluding logic of the capitalist market, which is the strongest. This way, the way of life for this present study is not a spatial cutout, immutable or descriptive of an empiric reality that shoots itself in observation as an image and is arranged by a social phenomenon.

The dialectics as a "way of thinking" articulates a challenge of finding in the exegesis of changes and transformations observed through human labor, the new meaning obtained by those who come across their concrete reality, merging past and present, the memories acting as a common thread for knowledge and (re) signation of new social relations and their succession over time.

A way of life through changes: Campinhos

The arising of the XX century in the Southwest region of Bahia (SEI, 2017), according to notions by Medeiros (1985) was fundamental to constitutive buildings in the urban mesh of the subject region, mainly in the 1940s in Vitória da Conquista, in the face of the materiality of the capital's presence in a territory (RAFFESTIN, 1993).

The 1940s is a reference point that explains the subsequent urban development. It's in this decade that the proper conditions accumulate for new economic activities and, because of it, for urban expansion. (MEDEIROS, 1977, p. 8-9)

In this sense, the urban evolution of Vitória da Conquista started in the social transformations that still affect today's evolution of the territory and its surroundings and that, in a way, mark the conflicts between those who find themselves in it. For better understanding of the life dynamic in the Campinhos community, it's seen a

major approach by the community onto BA262 and BR-116, a major entrepôt of the conquistense road network that also creates a confluence with several cities and regions, amongst these Brumado, Anagé, Guanambi, Caetité, Itapetinga, Ilhéus, Salvador, Jequié, and others.

If the road network built a new way to approach a different way of life, more urban or urbanite, in a way, the Campinhos community has also been co-opted by the major real estate developments through the public habitation projects, by the expansion of the local logistic park, by popular and residential allotments, dated from 1977 on behalf of the Municipal Law of the Plano Diretor Urbano, and strengthened from 1996 with the opening of private initiative projects. The real estate agents, with different action strategies, infused in the region an urbanization plot, inferring changes in the community's way of life. According to Ferraz (2001), the main responsible agents for the land's allotment, the owner-lottery, the private developers and development companies increasingly expropriated the cornerstone of rural life: the available land in Campinhos, its exchange value and removing it summarily from its use value.

The Campinhos Community in 2009 was input in one of the municipal agenda for civil construction expansion because of its entry in federal government habitational project Minha Casa, Minha Vida⁸ with four housing complexes (Image 1). According to Rocha (2019), Campinhos stood out in the habitational complex policy in Vitória da Conquista, for receiving a good number of residential units from the program, which has altered its socioeconomical structure and dynamic, being covered with four habitational complexes in the edge of the community, transforming into what's currently a sort of neighborhood of workers that migrated for civil construction, commerce, informality or for the large industry.

⁸ The Program Minha Casa, Minha Vida (PMCMV) is a public policy launched nationally, proposing to subsidize the ownership of a home, introduced by the Law n. 11977, July 7th 2009. Between 2009 and 2014, Vitória da Conquista was benefited with the construction of 22 habitational complexes, 8298 residential units of the Program, four of them being in the Campinhos community (ALMEIDA, 2017)

Image 1 – Minha casa, minha vida – Campinhos (Vitória da Conquista-BA)



Source: Marisa Oliveira (2021)

Almeida (2017) points out that, unlike developments of great real estate speculation, the PMCMV habitational complexes were built in Vitória da Conquista, from the peripheral regions to beyond the ring road, with questionable quality buildings, in which the majority of lands used didn't even have the bare minimal infrastructure, such as water or sewage for instance, being available at the lowest price to the real estate agents that ended up holding them in the expropriation of the rural men and, because of these conditions of popular housing, it constituted a highly profitable commodity by the capital's logic. This observation is relevant, as the verified in the Campinhos Community, which activated also the access to labor force, turning the community into a labor force haven.

The holders of the urban land and the state power turned the city into a commodity, via urban planning and with the law's apparatus, in a way that the city becomes a product of capitalism, as pointed out by Rocha (2019). It's then understood that the imposition of a type of housing concerted by the capital is also a way to dismantle the rural community's way of life, and the habitational issue orients a interpenetration mechanism, being it incorporating the house in capitalist expansion, establishing an imposition on the house itself as a sort of valuation, or turning it into a commodity itself, conditioned overall to the amplified reproduction of the capital and their dominance interests (SANTOS, 2005; CARLOS, 2005).

The real estate speculation is a crucial aspect to analyze the commercial conception that's granted to the space and that strongly intensifies the struggles

between the classes that keep different interests in the territorial base, eliminating what Luxemburg (1985, p.264) calls a “ethnonym communism”⁹, which in the studied community comes close to a disarticulation of the family life in a same location.

The inevitable encounter between different lifestyles has brought up to beyond the physical transformations the strangeness of the community life. It’s the memories of Dona Zélia Soares (58 years old), worker in a flour house, that ensures that the lifestyle transformations alter the life dynamic of the residents, but also makes them strangers in their own life and work place. So, she said: “It’s because **the city came in our place**, so we’ll live a city life, **before it was a country life, in the rural area**, everyone knew each other, everybody was friends with each other, but not now you’ll see people you don’t know. (Verbal information, author’s emphasis)¹⁰

If life is qualified by labor, it’s the new dimensions and dynamics attributed to this labor that made it noticeable that is no longer the family work, it’s no longer the flour houses that merge or define the community life. At the same time that the rural collapses in confrontation with the city life, this winding movement of men and women of the field are separated from the land, dismissed from the production means, and now depleted are co-opted as labor force. In the city? Not always, afterall there’s no room for everyone. In the industry? Maybe. Informality? Most of the times. Struggling to survive? Almost always, followed by a number of uncertainties delimited by a contradictional society.

Final Considerations

To say or think about ways of life is overall to defend the place to see and be in the world. It’s to understand that life can have different shapes and outlines, and is qualified by them. But it’s also to recognize that is not always a choice or an option to

⁹ Free translation: “comunismo gentilico”

¹⁰ Free translation of verbal information: “É porque a cidade entrou em nosso meio, então a gente vai viver a vida da cidade, antes vivia a vida da roça, da zona rural, todo mundo se conhecia, todo mundo era amigo, e hoje não, hoje você se depara com pessoas estranhas.”

be in the world, because here are different ways to live. Thus, the inevitable encounter between these different ways to live uncovers for now the overlapping of the strongest, in detriment of the dismissal and dispossession of the weakest. In other words, in a Society marked by the social stratification and by the heated and ever so strategic social division of labor, it's inevitable to infer and think that the excluded become more and more excluded, and the dominant becomes more and more dominant. It robs the right to choose the ways to be in the world, the way of life, becoming so a source of memories, but not always of choices.

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