

Imbricações entre tradição e modernidade: as inscrições coloniais no discurso imobiliário de um Recife urbano

Imbrications between tradition and modernity: colonial inscriptions in the real estate discourse of an urban Recife

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Resumo: *Este artigo analisa anúncios imobiliários da década de 1970, ao percebê-los como sintoma da manutenção de traços coloniais na constituição da paisagem metropolitana. Para isso, evocamos Gilberto Freyre e sua discussão sobre os traços patriarcais transplantados à lógica urbana do século XIX, em articulação com Lúcia Leitão, em sua atualização do pensamento freyreano. Em um primeiro momento, descrevemos as condições históricas de possibilidade das produções simbólicas aqui discutidas: a metropolização do Recife e seu processo de adensamento concomitante à profusão dos anúncios. Em um segundo momento, apresentamos a atualização da ordem patriarcal que se inscreve nos centros urbanos associada aos ímpetus modernizantes vigentes à época. Por fim, analisamos algumas peças publicitárias que evocam as imbricações entre tradição e modernidade, reiterando a tese freyreana de que há uma transplantação da ordem colonial patriarcal à vida moderna.*

Palavras-Chave: *Publicidade imobiliária. Cidade. Discurso. Gilberto Freyre.*

Abstract: *This article analyzes real estate advertisements from the 1970s, by perceiving them as a symptom of the maintenance of colonial traits in the*

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constitution of the metropolitan landscape. For this, we evoke Gilberto Freyre and his discussion about the patriarchal traits transplanted to the urban logic of the 19th century, in articulation with Lúcia Leitão, in her update of Freyrean thought. In a first moment, we describe the historical conditions of possibility of the symbolic productions discussed here: the metropolization of Recife and its densification process concomitant to the profusion of advertisements. In a second moment, we present the actualization of the patriarchal order that is inscribed in urban centers associated with the modernizing impulses. Finally, we analyze some advertisements that evoke the imbrications between tradition and modernity, reiterating Freyre's thesis that there is a transplantation of the colonial patriarchal order to modern life.

Keywords: *Real estate advertising. City. Discourse. Gilberto Freyre.*

Introduction

“The Brazilian house expresses our originality, that is, our identity, our existence, [and allows] an analysis of who we are and have been and also a reflection of what we have become and are being. (GILBERTO FREYRE, *Sobrados e Mucambos*, 1933, p. 19).

What would be the social media reaction to an ad announcing the sale of a property featuring a couple resting in their bedroom on a Sunday morning while “Zefa,” the maid, takes care of the family’s children? We bet a part of internet users would denounce the ad as classist, pointing out in it the permanence of traces of a slave society in which social inequality and the exploitation of domestic work prevail.

The abovementioned ad is not mere speculation: it circulated back in 1975 in Recife newspapers. The advertisement (which we will explore in detail below) describes the property in the Madalena neighborhood: “Apartment with three bedrooms. One with a private bathroom. Large living/dining room. Social bathroom. Kitchen/pantry. Service terrace. Maid’s room. Beautiful balcony.” In this passage, we want to highlight the reference to the convenient ‘maid’s room’.

Like the character Zefa, countless Brazilian maids lived part of their lives in the tiny “maid’s room.” In Brazil, this space is usually next to the kitchen and service area of the dwelling. Overall, the room is poorly lit and has little or no ventilation.

Viana and Trevisan (2016) point out the argument of the domestic worker’s origins justified the existence of this room. With no family or fixed residence in the city, maids would need to have a place to stay overnight in their employers’ homes. However, until recently, it was common for maids to sleep at their employers’ homes during the week, even if they lived in the city where they worked. Once sleeping in their

employers' house, maids would perform their duties morning, noon, night, and, if necessary, at dawn.

This reality has changed, especially after the approval of a Proposed Constitutional Amendment, PEC das Domésticas³, in 2013, which instituted the payment of overtime and the obligation to formally contract employees who work for three or more days in the same residence. The law that regulated the constitutional amendment was sanctioned in 2015, adding the right to extra pay for night shifts. Instead of the steady maid, a more frequent figure in Brazilian homes became the freelance worker who, in general: a) works in several households, b) earns per hour or per day to perform domestic services, and c) returns to her own home at the end of each workday.

As a result of this change in the domestic work sector, the “maid’s room” lost its original function and began to have other uses. Many began to serve as junk storage (the so-called “little mess room”). In pandemic times, with the various family members needing to share the space of the house, the room naturally acquired other purposes: many became an office or even a new room for a family member (VIANA; TREVISAN, 2016).

The maid’s room is a legacy of our colonial, slave, and patriarchal past. In this article, we seek to identify continuities and discontinuities between that historical past and the urban growth of the capital of Pernambuco in real estate ads that circulated in Recife newspapers in the 1970s. We presume we can more strongly notice the ambivalences of a discourse aiming at the “new” but not disassociated from the “old” in the advertisements of that time.

To make this argument more evident, in topic 2, we briefly discuss the process of constitution and modernization of the city of Recife. In topic 3, we discuss the permanence of colonial values in the practices and discourses of modern Recife. It is important to clarify that the ads we analyze here are part of a corpus of 4,000 ads that appear in a previous

3 Available at: http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/leis/lcp/lcp150.htm. Accessed on 11 May 2022.

work⁴. The immensity and richness of these advertisements allowed us a segmented approach to this material. In this article, we work exclusively with ads that refer to the country's aristocratic, slave, and patriarchal past. We reiterate Freyre's thesis of a transplantation of the colonial order to modern life through an imbrication between tradition and modernity.

The modernization process of Recife

Despite its urban features designed since the 17th century, the modernization process in Recife began in the 19th century, consolidating in the 20th century, when the city's avenues became broader, and its initial linear character was lost, giving way to a continuous mass. It was the moment when Recife experienced a relevant demographic growth process, accentuated in the 1950s, with inland migration flows (BARRETO, 1994). In 1970, Recife surpassed the mark of one million inhabitants and ranked third among the most populated metropolises in the country, behind Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. The city thus conquered metropolitan features with a dense urban center and a vertical horizon⁵.

Some elements overdetermine the appearance of verticality in Recife. According to Mário Melo (1978), with the expansion of built space, the lengthening of distances, and the increase in expenses and time with transport, the search for land in the city center grew considerably. The consequent increase in the prices of these spaces made their use outside the configuration of multi-story buildings uneconomical. Concomitantly, the technical progress of civil construction also boosted the landscape transformation process.

Besides the argument of territory use based on land value, we must mention a series of legal measures and reforms implemented since

4 The corpus derives from research for Marcela Lins' master's dissertation titled *Formas de ser e habitar na publicidade imobiliária do Recife*.

5 However, the verticality of buildings in Recife is before the 20th century urban growth process. In the 19th century, there was a profusion of two-story *sobrados* (townhouses). It is believed the scarcity of dry lands in the region near the port, where Recife emerged, justifies the feature (CASTRO, 2013).

the beginning of the century that culminated in the densification and verticalization of Recife. City managers pursued values in vogue in large European urban centers in an imaginary associated with progress and modernization. In 1909, the principles of Baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann's plan in Paris⁶ also circumscribed the planning of the capital of Pernambuco. Thus, a series of reforms began to be outlined with the purpose of beautifying, sanitizing, and "putting Recife on the path of modernity." (NASLAVSKY, 2013, p. 251). This process was legitimized by the new urban elites, predominantly linked to commercial activities and liberal professions.

Despite the consolidated verticality, it was only in the 1950s that the first strictly residential apartment building emerged: the Capibaribe building, located on Rua da Aurora in the Santo Amaro neighborhood. In subsequent years, this kind of real estate began to attract some middle and upper-class sectors, occupying the city center primarily. In 1970, the first real estate boom took place with the creation of the National Housing Bank (BNH), a public bank specializing in housing loans, and the Housing Financial System (SFH), a set of financial instruments, such as real estate credit societies and bills⁷ (ROLNIK, 2015).

The imbrication between tradition and modernity

The emergence of liberal professions, anonymity as the code of living in the metropolis, and the incorporation of values and symbols into the urban layout did not fully supplant the sociabilities associated with the agrarian, patriarchal, slave, and aristocratic regime. For Gilberto Freyre (1933), since constituting a centuries-old social landscape, many characteristics of Brazilian agrarian societies remained inscribed in urban social practices.

6 Baron Haussmann became known for a series of urban reforms during his mandate. Haussmann took the position in 1853 at the command of Louis Bonaparte. His mission was to help solve problems of capital surpluses and post-1848 unemployment through urban development.

7 Originally, the BNH and SFH planned to support the construction and financing of houses for low-income families. However, they have become the principal source of finance for the middle class to purchase their own homes.

According to the author, patriarchal heritage figures not only in symbolic inscriptions – like the names of villages, cities, and neighborhoods – but also in how we socially experience urban life. In this context, the “*casa grande*” (“big house”) plays a central role, not only because most cities emerged around farms (and, in this sense, Recife is an exception), but because it originated the patriarchal structure responsible for disseminating fundamental values and customs in Brazilian society.

The big house, in this sense, is the protagonist of the shaping of a colonized social space – when transposed to Brazil, the Portuguese logic became something else (FREYRE, 1936); that is, the big house is not a precise translation of the Portuguese manor. As established, the big house evoked architectural symbols capable of defining a style of culture and civilization (LEITÃO, 2014). A blocked space with the ambition of self-sufficiency and with an evident character of withdrawal, hostile to what is outside and maintaining its order through what Freyre calls a balanced antagonism (BENZAQUEN, 1994).

In the 19th century, through changes in the country’s social structure, determined, to a certain extent, by the arrival of the Portuguese Crown and the first signs of modernization, an urban culture began to superimpose itself on rural values. However, as Freyre points out, there were no disruptions or eliminations but a mixture of combinations that “integrated and disintegrated” (1936). A transition that transforms and preserves symbols, values, institutions, and social distances, culminating in “Brazilian modernity” (DA MATTA, 2013), created from the translation of the modern project, based on local historical values and experiences. In the mansions and shanties, forms and styles of a society with profoundly patriarchal and slave roots unveiled themselves, despite the insertion of a political agenda based on European modernity.

Freyre uses the expression “*brasileirinhas da silva*” (“Da Silva Brazilian”) to refer to the architecture rising in Brazilian cities in the 19th century. About this architecture, he states: “Honest and authentic, sincere expression of the needs of interests, of the broad pace of

patriarchal life.” (FREYRE, 1933, p. 28). The existence of the “servants’ room” in *sobrados* (townhouses) is clear evidence of the transposition of the colonial logic of the old slave quarters to the city. The old ads reproduced below attest to that:

Two-story townhouse for sale [...]. Elegant architecture and some rooms with stucco ceilings, all rooms, cabinets, and bedrooms lined with wallpapers of the latest taste [...] good carriage house, stable for seven animals, servants’ room, two kitchens, tanks for the animals to drink and the laundry, garden, vegetable garden, and country house. (Gazeta do Rio de Janeiro, October 2, 1821 *apud* FREYRE, p. 443, 1936)

[...] townhouses that may accommodate one family, that is, that have at least one living room, a dining room, two bedrooms, two or three rooms for the servants or slaves, an attic, and a yard. (Diario do Rio de Janeiro, February 9, 1822 *apud* FREYRE, p. 443, 1936)

Thus, settled in the 19th century, urban townhouses - a type of housing aimed at the elites and liberal professionals in the new social environment - updated many of the logic dear to the big house, such as the prevalence of domesticity and private values. By succeeding the master’s residence as a noble living space, the townhouse expressed hostility towards those excluded from these environments; and they maintained functions that were very dear to the big house: guarding women – whose access to the street was prohibited – and valuables.

By way of illustration, townhouses often had broken bottle pieces skewered on the walls to ward off thieves and don Juans (FREYRE, 1936). There is another series of architectural indications that point to the maintenance of patriarchal values, such as the false windows facing the streets, which suggest a negation relative to the surroundings, and the *urupemas*, screens endorsing the logic of “seeing without being seen” (FREYRE, 1936), reproducing the perception that what is not domestic is residual. The contempt for the urban space is also perceptible in the habits of townhouse residents who, “almost with the same arrogance as in the mill house or farmhouse”, committed abuses, “chopping firewood on the sidewalk, throwing dead animals, leftover food, the

served water, and, sometimes, even the potty dirt in the middle of the street” (FREYRE, p. 31, 1936).

The architect Lúcia Leitão (2014), when interpreting Freyre’s thought in the light of *Sobrados and Mucambos* (*The Mansions and the Shanties*), argues that the Brazilian built environment, the visible face of cities, has as a backdrop the patriarchy that characterized the country’s social organization. Therefore, the big house expresses and ratifies a series of values that remain inscribed in our social landscape. In line with what Freyre proposes, Lúcia Leitão states that “the big house and the primacy of the private space that it symbolized were not just a way of living, but rather, a way of living marked by segregation, exclusion, the search for distinction and nobility” (LEITÃO, p. 35, 2014). For the author, the urban environment, though marked by modern ideals, maintained characteristics of rural Brazil, such as confinement and hostility towards the surroundings.

Contemporary *condomínios* (housing complexes) update the preeminence of private space over public space. It is not by chance that advertising materials for this type of property emphasize that complexes are closed, indicating an intention to separate the living space from the urban public space. Psychoanalyst Christian Dunker (2015), aware of the atomized sociability of Brazilian housing complexes, emphasizes that their model is more like an occupation fort where military grammar prevails than to a model of community life. It is a collective dwelling that, hegemonically, manages individual values. The wide range of services provided within the complexes – transformed into space-blocks, just as the patriarchal big houses were – also combine a logic of interdiction with the lack of definitions of the public space, a strategy transplanted to real estate marketing.

Colonial inscriptions in real estate ads

After this social-historical contextualization, we will continue analyzing real estate ads published in the 1970s to show imbrications between tradition and modernity.

As already explained, until 1950 in Recife, strictly residential buildings were unusual. As already explained, until 1950 in Recife, strictly residential buildings were unusual. The real estate market had to resort to specific communication strategies to sell them as qualified and suitable housing for the middle and upper classes.

According to Caldeira (2011), during the 1920s, vertical residential buildings were associated with low social status and overcrowded tenements, the single-family housing being the great holder of prestige. Loureiro and Amorim (2005) also point out that, at that time, collective life was associated with decadence, lack of hygiene, discomfort, and lack of privacy. The consolidation of the building as a space not only for work but also for living in Recife was due to the desire of the public administration to modernize and make the city adopt the values of progress found in the large Western metropolises. This modernizing impetus was aimed mainly at the middle classes, relying heavily on defending private property. On the foundation of the abovementioned BNH in 1964, Sandra Cavalcanti, its first president, stated that: "Owning a home makes a worker a conservative who defends the right to property." (ROLNIK, 2015).

Economic and cultural changes of the period culminated with the need of the real estate market to "create" in the consumer a new living habit and a new expectation of the ideal housing standard. In this sense, the notion of land use governed the expanding market and materialized itself in the considerable quantitative increase of robust ads for buildings, which started to compete with graphics referring to houses and lots in the 1970s (LOUREIRO; AMORIM, 2011). A dominant discursive recurrence in the ads published at the time was the characterization of the building as the locus of distinction. To this end, it was common for ads to evoke references to the colonial past. That past was strongly present in the names of buildings and at the base of an entire semantic network used in the ads.

For example, the ad mentioned at the beginning of this paper does not show the building's facade or the apartment interiors. The only

illustration referring to the property is a small floor plan on the lower right side, next to the corporate brand of the real estate company. If, on the one hand, we may not see the building itself, on the other hand, the verbal narrative, quite extensive even by the standards of the time, depicts a way of life that is assumed to be desired by potential buyers of the apartments.

Figure 1 – Ad for the Edifício Pasárgada

Uma ótima maneira de sentir como seria morar
de novo... não há a primeira vez de uma vida ao
além do tempo. Então, quando você está pensando
de uma nova vida.

É tão poético morar num apartamento do Edifício Pasárgada que todos os dias se parecem com os domingos.

O Edifício Pasárgada, 7 apartamentos por andar
são instalados no excelente bairro em expansão de
São Paulo, no bairro de Jabaquara. São apartamentos modernos de
para 2, 3 e 4 dormitórios, com banheiros, churrasqueira,
cozinha e terraço.

Seu novo lar será instalado em um edifício
com o melhor acabamento. Com toda a infraestrutura
necessária para a sua família. Lazer, segurança,
conforto e elegância. Tudo isso em um único
local. Não deixe escapar a chance de morar
num lugar tão bom. O contato é com o arquiteto
responsável pelo projeto. Saiba mais e peça o projeto
do Edifício Pasárgada. Não deixe escapar a oportunidade de morar no
melhor lugar de São Paulo.

INABI
Imobiliária Nacional - São Paulo

Av. ... 1234567890

Telefone: ...

Source: Diário de Pernambuco, April 6, 1975.

By using you as the pronoun, the ad invites the reader to take on the position of head of the family or housewife (“In the suite, with air-conditioning, *you* wake up”). The image shows two children: one plays

on her little wooden horse, and the other reads on the sofa. The text informs that, before, the two had been in the playground of the building. Zefa, the maid, takes care of the children, waters the plants, and prepares the food while the parents sleep in the air-conditioned room. The couple only gets out of bed when the “sun is already up high” (after all, let us not forget, it is Sunday, a rest day). The ad states, “Everything is a poetic vision of the happy family.” And continues:

All days are simple and beautiful for someone happy. The well-known “material things” do not bring happiness to anyone: but it is not easy to be happy in our society without possessing them at the minimum. The most you have of love, dedication, and affection are the least we can offer you with the comfort, beauty, convenience, and elegance of living in the Edifício Pasárgada in Madalena. [...] It is so poetic to live in an apartment at Edifício Pasárgada that every day feels like Sunday. (DIÁRIO DE PERNAMBUCO, 04/06/1975)

From the passage above, the desired ideal of happiness emerges. This ad from the 1970s already expressed the imperative of happiness we see on social media today. Not surprisingly, since we are talking about advertising rhetoric, which always emphasizes/invents the qualities of the product or service it sells as something that will benefit the consumer. Although the ad says that “‘material things’ do not bring happiness to anyone,” it emphasizes that, in our society, it is not easy to be happy without having them. And it ends by assuring that the Pasárgada apartment building can offer its residents comfort, beauty, convenience, and elegance so they can achieve a happy life.

In fact, except for Zefa, for whom the text shows no signs of happiness, everyone else seems happy. For instance: the child playing on the little horse has a smile stamped on her face, and the other is calm in her reading. The couple, in turn, is graced with the opportunity to remain asleep in the air-conditioned room on a Sunday while the children play and eat under Zefa’s supervision. They also enjoy the beautiful landscape of Recife framed by the large window in front of the room. And as soon as they decide to enter the living room, where the scene in

the ad takes place, they will be able to enjoy “the beauty of the flowers in the crystal vase” and sit at the table with breakfast ready.

The happiness of the ad refers to the idyll of the domestic life of a traditional heteronormative family: father, mother, and children. In this context, the maid is a “strangely familiar” element. Although invisible in the image, Zefa’s existence in the verbal narrative is the element that makes the family’s Sunday happiness possible. Without her, parents would not be able to sleep until late, children would not have anyone to go down to the playground, and meals would not be ready for consumption. Zefa ensures the obligation of domestic chores – cleaning the house, cooking, and taking care of the offspring – does not threaten Sunday rest.

Besides being focused on the family nucleus, the happiness of the ad limits itself to the private space – the apartment or the building. It is not necessary to go to the street, to the public space, to be happy. Happiness is within walls. The children play safely in the living room or the building’s playground, just as it happened with the “boy raised in a wealthy father’s house, away from the dangers of the street, ‘from the vulgarities of the street’.” (LEITÃO, 2014, p. 118). The city of Recife itself, as it transforms into a landscape framed by the bedroom window, is summoned into private life. Something that takes us back to the familism hostile to the surroundings referred to by Freyre. It is essential to reiterate that contempt for public life is nothing new or limited to recent decades. Instead, such contempt has shaped Recife’s urban sociability, given that there is a transplantation of the traditional order to modern cities, especially in Recife.

We cannot ignore the name of the building. “Pasárgada” is also the title of a poem by Manuel Bandeira from Pernambuco. In the poem, the lyrical subject says that he is leaving for Parsárgada, where he is “friends with the king” and can “have the woman he wants, in the bed he chooses.” The Parsárgada in the poem is a place that “has everything,” “another civilization.” In Parsárgada, the poet can do gymnastics, ride a bicycle, ride a wild donkey, climb a greasy pole, and bathe in the sea.”

And if he gets tired, he can “call the mother of water to tell him stories like Rosa used to do to him when he was a boy.”

Poem and ad claim Pasárgada as a place of endless happiness, a kind of utopia. Often, a utopia hides a dystopia because the joy of some is the sacrifice of others. The poem and the ad reduce the Other to the place of the one who serves. In both, this servant figure is predominantly female. In the ad, Zefa works on Sundays for her bosses. In the poem, not only are prostitutes available to the poet, but he can go to bed with any woman he wants, and Rosa is always ready to tell him stories.

Finally, we can infer that both possible residents of the Pasárgada apartment building and the enunciator of the poem “Pasárgada” aspire to receive the treatment of kings, given that only royalty can live as if every day was Sunday, that is, days of leisure with no obligations or commitments.

The names of other buildings also express this desire to live like kings. Several of them include the word “solar” (“manor”), whose meaning is: 1) the land or castle where the nobility lived and which gave the title to the families, 2) palace, estate, or land belonging to nobles, which served as their home and passed on to their descendants by inheritance.

The “Solar do Giqui” in the ad published on May 28, 1978, for example, is sold as “the big house of Rosa e Silva.” Far from any criticism of colonial sociability, the ad seeks to construct a positive effect on the reader by transposing a supposed distinction to the building, referring to it as the big house. The text even says that the apartment building is a place of “class, a lot of class.” We notice the distinction in the ad’s emphasis on the location of the property (on the corner of Rosa e Silva and Conselheiro Portela) and description of the various spaces, whether inside the apartment (4 bedrooms, one suite, closet, two large living rooms, balcony) or in the building (playground, game and party rooms, private parking space).

Figure 2 – Ad for Edifício Solar do Giqui



Source: Diário de Pernambuco, 05/28/2022.

The ad for Solar do Gaypió, which ran on January 11, 1976, also sold the apartment building as having been “inspired by the old big houses and famous sugar mills.” Besides the “antiquity,” the ad says “the future and the past meet” in the building, given the property was backed by the Sociedade Technica de Engenharia de Comércio Ltda.

Figure 3 - Ad for Edifício Solar do Gaypió



Futuro e passado encontram-se no Solar do GAYPIÓ

Inspirado nas antigas casas grades e cômodas eprchos de arcaica tem a Sociedade Técnica de Engenharia e Comércio Ltda., incorporado à Sousa Paisagem, os Solares de Soaresna, de Gaypió, do Mattapayre... construído dentro da mais arrojada técnica. Assim sendo, o Solar do Gaypió é um recanto de bom gosto na paisagem sobre do Espinhaço.

Av. Agamenon Magalhães

Canal
Venham conhecer o Solar do Gaypió hoje mesmo, veja os amplos apartamentos serviços por dois elevadores, hall nobre, Salão em largas corridas, 4 quartos sociais, (1 suite com closet), terraço, a cozinha com sanejo decorado e balcão em aço inox, área de serviço com dependência completa para empregada, a garagem privada do sub-solo, tudo isto atrevido do requete do acabamento que só a SOTEC empresta às suas obras.

SINAL - Cr\$ 36.000,00
PRESTAÇÕES MENSAIS DE Cr\$ 6.420,00 OU A COMBINAR

HOJE PLANTÃO NO LOCAL

VENDAS EXCLUSIVAS COM:
Miranda & Lda. Rua...
Local Ltda. Rua...
Rua...
DE MIRANDA GAYPIÓ Propriet. DE SOUSA
Uma Família de Soaresna.

Source: Diário de Pernambuco, 01/11/1976.

Gaypió directly references the Gaipió mill, dating from the 1870s, located in the municipality of Ipojuca, 51 kilometers from the city of Recife. Modernity, in turn, is evoked in the urban life form of the vertical building construction. According to the ad, the apartment building was constructed “within a bolder technique” (Diário de Pernambuco, January 11, 1976), an evident association between technique and future/progress. Below we have an ad for Edifício Solar dos Amarais published in the classifieds of the DP in 1977.

Figure 4 – Ad for Edifício Solar dos Amarais

**Com tanto colégio por perto;
com as piscinas do Náutico, Português,
São Luís, Country; com salões,
som, quadras, jardins, play-grounds
e supermercados,
você só vai precisar de um bom
apartamento, no Solar dos Amarais,
na Rua do Futuro, 326**



INABI
Linha participativa especializada em
imóveis, com o melhor custo-benefício.
Rua José de Barros, 121 - Torre 2
PARR 21.104 - 21.126

Solar dos Amarais
Rua do Futuro, 326 - Afogados

INABI
Linha participativa especializada em
imóveis, com o melhor custo-benefício.
Rua José de Barros, 121 - Torre 2
PARR 21.104 - 21.126

Solar dos Amarais
Rua do Futuro, 326 - Afogados

Source: Diário de Pernambuco, 09/11/1977.

At the time of the circulation of this ad, clubs mentioned in it, such as Country, Náutico, and O Português, were linked to the prestige of wealthier social classes since only members and their guests could go to them – which indicates the exclusive nature of these places. São Luís, in turn, is a very traditional private school, formerly designed to teach boys only. Therefore, in the symbolic geography of Recife, Solar dos Amarais evokes a privileged way of life marked by sociability in differentiated and exclusive spaces. Furthermore, the advertisement says the apartment building is close to commercial establishments.

The idea of exclusivity and distinction manifests in other elements of the ad. For example, the image accompanying the text shows two white women, one older and another younger. They are sitting side by side on a couch. A side table with a lamp, a picture frame, and a vase are behind the sofa. On the wall, there is a painting. Smiling, the women show off their elegant outfits, jewelry, and hairstyles. Such an image could

easily compose the album of a family heir to the local aristocracy. The very expression “Solar dos Amarais” endorses that image. The statement “The Bairro dos Aflitos is a neighborhood of traditional housing for an aristocratic social class” also confirms that it is an aristocratic dwelling.

The distinctive traits of the property materialize in the mention of its exposed concrete coating, marble, anodized aluminum, separate halls (service and social), and separate elevators – which implies that employees and residents do not need to access the same resources. The ad also associates the apartment with a quiet dwelling, in a peaceful and “typically residential” street, in a “strictly residential” building, to the detriment of mixed-use buildings (commercial and residential), which generate sociabilities and hustle in their surroundings.

The ad is also consistent with a logic that associates domesticity with the feminine since two women appear in the image – something that also takes us back to the colonial patriarchal familism referred to by Freyre in *Casa Grande e Senzala* (*The Masters and the Slaves*) and *Sobrados e Mucambos* (*The Mansions and the Shanties*). Women are also a prominent element in the ad for the Zumbi apartment building, as the advertiser addresses her saying, “It is freedom for the children and peace of mind for you, mother.”.

Figure 5 – Ad for Edifício Zumbi

Edifício Zumbi, pronto para morar. É liberdade para as crianças e tranquilidade para você, mamãe.

Quando o Guga foi visitar Paulinho no Edifício Zumbi não queria mais voltar para casa.

No Edifício Zumbi é sempre assim, as crianças adoram ficar livres na grande área de lazer (3.082,00m²) com jardins, árvores com passarinhos, quadra de esportes (vôlei, basquete, futebol de salão), playground e muito espaço para a turminha correr, empinar papagaio, andar de bicicleta, patotar à vontade e o que é mais importante: Ser criança.

Os apartamentos do Edifício Zumbi têm 3 quartos com suite, varanda, sala de estar-jantar, despensa, e demais dependências, 2 elevadores e estão prontos para morar. Se você não tem programa para hoje, leve as crianças para brincar na grande área de lazer do Edifício Zumbi, elas vão adorar.

Sinal Cr\$ 82.400,00
Poupança Fixa em 25 meses.
Prestação do Financiamento Cr\$ 11.660,00
Renda Familiar Cr\$ 29.000,00
Financiamento assegurado ao comprador pela Banorte.

Para mais informações de vendas, inclua: Anúncios e Serviços.

INABI Edifício Zumbi

Rua José de Alencar, 522 - Fone: 331-1432 - 331-1796
Av. Camélieira Aguiar, 2130 - Fone: 338-7622

Empreita inscrita: 1.02045 PE

Source: Diário de Pernambuco, 05/28/1978.

When appearing next to the word “freedom,” the term “Zumbi” reminds us of the figure of Zumbi dos Palmares, leader of Quilombo dos Palmares, the largest community of enslaved Black people who escaped farms, prisons, and slave quarters in the Brazilian colonial period. There, Black people freed themselves from the White Portuguese oppression that enslaved them. Quite possibly because of this, the ad sells the building by associating it with a place conducive to children’s freedom. But it is worth asking what freedom is involved here?

Life in Quilombo dos Palmares revolved around the issue of security since the colonizers represented a significant threat to the lives of those populations. Three large palisades (wooden walls) with watchtowers surrounded the capital of Palmares, Cerca Real do Macaco *mocambo*.⁸ The “peaceful” life of the mothers who live in the Zumbi apartment building can only happen because an intramural leisure structure guarantees their children’s freedom. But the intramural life of the children living in the Zumbi apartment building does not compare with the intramural life of Quilombo dos Palmares, whose residents needed to isolate themselves and remain under constant vigilance to survive.

Final considerations

Throughout the text, we argue how there was a patriarchal logic transplanted to the urban order of Recife, which, in turn, is evident in real estate advertising. In this sense, there is an imbrication between the narratives of tradition and modernity in the forms of narrating the city as it was becoming vertical.

By adhering to the values of modernization, Recife not only maintained traces of the patriarchalism that constitutes it but also translated from its cultural practices a given conception of modernity, something that concerns a transnational notion, a “Brazilian modernity,” as DaMatta (2013) tells us. In other words, by acclimatizing itself, the

8 Palmares was the result of a combination of mocambos that formed a quilombola confederation that extended over a reasonably vast territory on the border of the current states of Alagoas and Pernambuco.

modern paradigm repeatedly produces a space impregnated with the past. Instead of thinking in terms of a global-local opposition, in which the global (the modern) is opposed to an authentic cultural tradition, one can think in terms of *other* modernities, resulting in negotiation processes between the modern and the native.

In this sense, real estate ads served as an interesting interpretive key to a city that, by incorporating Haussmanian ideals, epitomized in the logic of anonymity and universalism, translates and transplants its colonial heritage – related to patriarchy and slavery par excellence. An inheritance that produces cities hostile to the vagueness of the public space and that violently inscribes social differences.

In this sense, real estate ads served as an interesting interpretive key to a city that, by adhering to Haussmanian ideals, the epitome of the logic of anonymity and universalism, translates and transplants its colonial heritage – related to patriarchy and slavery par excellence. An inheritance that produces cities hostile to the vagueness of the public space and that violently inscribe their social differences. Thus, if the big house represented the ultimate demonstration of distinction, with its block shape and ambitions of self-sufficiency relative to its exterior, Recife, since its constitution, very precisely circumscribes the place of the dispossessed and the place of the wealthy classes (whether in territorial or housing terms). And the vertical apartment building – this form of collective housing, though based on individual values – today constitutes a kind of synthesis or symbol of a city that constantly evokes its inequalities.

Finally, returning to the image of the maid's room that opened this text, it is worth mentioning that the Brazilian bourgeois family continues to depend on the manual labor of domestic workers. The lockdown caused by the Covid-19 pandemic illustrates this hypothesis well. At the time, there were many calls for the most intransigent employers to renounce domestic services so that domestic workers could stay in their homes. But calls did not sensitize many of them. It is even quite symptomatic that the first death recorded in Brazil from Covid-19 was

that of a domestic worker infected by her employer.⁹ Also quite symbolic – and cruel – is the case of another maid who left her son in the care of her employer while walking the household’s dogs and, upon returning, had to soothe her dead son’s body, lying on the ground of the building¹⁰. These cases illustrate the permanence of colonialist traces as constitutive of the Brazilian experience.

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