

ECONOMIC INTEGRATION VERSUS SOCIAL AVOIDANCE: ASSESSING NEIGHBORHOOD RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE SHANTY TOWN OF CALABAR AND ITS SURROUNDING UPPER-CLASS GATED COMMUNITIES¹

INTEGRAÇÃO ECONÔMICA VS EVITAMENTO SOCIAL: ANALISANDO RELAÇÕES DE BAIRRO ENTRE A FAVELA DE CALABAR E OS CONDOMÍNIOS DE ELITE CIRCUNDANTES

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ABSTRACT: This research assesses the impact of neighborhood effects on the well-being of thirty inhabitants in Calabar, a shanty-town set within an upper-class area of Salvador (Brazil). We adopted a threefold methodological framework in order to explore the material, social and symbolic dimensions of the neighborhood effects based on a set of interviews. With regard to the material dimension, cross-class interactions via the employment nexus are fostered through geographic proximity; however social segmentation regarding access to schools, hospitals and leisure activities have reinforced the social hierarchies. In the social dimension, a high degree of cohesion and solidarity has entailed positive implications for the job search processes, access to resources and a strengthening of territorial identity. With the symbolic dimension, statistical discrimination has entailed deleterious effects on economic integration. In conclusion, the hypothesis of an opportunity-enriching environment should be subjected to careful scrutiny since the economic integration of the inhabitants neither bridges the social distances nor impedes place-based discrimination.

KEYWORDS: Neighborhood Effects; Urban Poverty; Shanty Town; Social Segmentation; Opportunity Structures; Territorial Stigmatization

RESUMO: Esta pesquisa analisa o impacto do bairro circundante no bem estar de trinta habitantes de Calabar, uma favela localizada dentro de uma área de classe alta em Salvador. Adotamos um arcabouço metodológico tripartite para explorar as dimensões materiais, sociais e simbólicas dos efeitos causados pelo bairro com base em um conjunto de entrevistas. Com relação à dimensão material, as interações entre classes via relações empregatícias são fomentadas pela proximidade geográfica; no entanto, a segmentação em relação ao acesso a escolas, hospitais e lazer reforçaram as hierarquias sociais. Na dimensão social, um alto grau de coesão e solidariedade resultou em implicações positivas nos processos de busca de emprego, acesso a recursos e fortalecimento da identidade territorial. Com relação à dimensão simbólica, a discriminação estatística resultou em efeitos deletérios na integração econômica. Em conclusão, a hipótese de um ambiente de oportunidades enriquecedoras deve passar por um escrutínio cuidadoso, já que a integração econômica dos habitantes não cria pontes entre abismos sociais e nem impede a discriminação por localização.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Impacto territorial; Pobreza urbana; Favela; Segmentação social; Estruturas de oportunidade; Estigma territorial.

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INTRODUCTION

Contemporary urban research seeking to explore the mechanisms involved in the reproduction of urban poverty has increasingly focused on the clusterization of structural disadvantages in spaces, and has subscribed to the argument that the concentration of poverty in severely distressed neighborhoods involves adverse effects both on individual outcomes and neighborhood-level social, economic, and political resources (GRAIF; GLADFELTER; MATTHEWS, 2014; RIBEIRO; KOSLINSKI, 2009; SAMPSON, 2012). This micro-social dimension of urban poverty has been addressed by the concept of neighborhood effects, defined as the socio-economic disadvantages that affect individuals, due to being embedded in a specific socio-spatial context (SMALL; NEWMAN, 2001).

Kaztman (1999) proposed a more macro-social approach to urban poverty for the Latin American context, introducing the concept of *Activos, Vulnerabilidade y Estructuras de Oportunidades* (Assets, Vulnerability and Opportunity Structures). He asserted that families embedded in economically deprived and highly segregated neighborhoods have at their disposal a certain amount of tangible and intangible assets, the mobilization of which is critically conditioned by the prevailing structures of opportunity provided by the state, the market and society.

The approach adopted by Häußermann (2003) for neighborhood effects, developed within the German socio-spatial context, assumed that explanatory models should be able to attend to both the reproducing and mitigating mechanisms and processes operating at neighborhood level. The threefold methodological proposal sheds light onto the mechanisms of neighborhood effects affecting the material, social and symbolic dimensions and seeks to identify their underlying causalities.

In the present qualitative research, grounded on the Häußermann (2003) methodological concept, we have attempted to verify whether enhanced structures of opportunities, particularly in the realm of employment relationships, may be explained within the constellations of geographical contiguity by a certain functional interdependence between the centrally located shanty-town, called Calabar, and the surrounding upper-class gated communities of Barra, Ondina and Graça. The main objective of the research is to investigate the potential interference of structural disadvantages – comprising high rates of poverty, unemployment and crime – in the living conditions of an individual and the chances of socio-economic integration.

Through semi-structural interviews, undertaken with 30 inhabitants, the study addresses the following two questions: assuming that context is of importance, which operative mechanisms and analytic pathways help to explain the impact of neighborhood effects on the well-being of the inhabitants? Are we able to uncover empirical evidence for cross-class interactions that extend beyond employment relationships and which might bridge the social distances between those living in the shanty-town and their nearby affluent neighbors?

This empirical study was conducted in Salvador da Bahia, located in Brazil's poor Northeastern region. The city epitomizes both the central-peripheral segregation patterns, on a macroscale level and patterns of spatial contiguities encountered on a micro level, where socially distant classes live in geographical proximity, although separated by security and protection devices. The shanty town

Calabar is embedded within the city's most prosperous region and stands in sharp contrast to its surrounding affluent neighborhoods, with regards to its physical housing conditions, the quality of infrastructure, access to urban equipment and the socioeconomic status of the population.

This paper is structured into five sections, apart from this introduction and the final considerations. The aim of the first section is to outline the main developments that have taken place in research into neighborhood effects within the US, Western-European and Brazilian context. The second section introduces the methodological framework employed in the qualitative research. The third section briefly characterizes the socio-demographic profile of the population of Calabar and the fourth section presents the main results of the research, which are then discussed in the fifth section.

A COMPARATIVE VIEW OF NEIGHBORHOOD EFFECT RESEARCH

The debate surrounding the effect of concentrated poverty in socio-economically deprived and racially segregated inner-city neighborhoods originated in the United States during the late 1980s. During the 1970s and 1980s the discussion on new urban poverty in US metropolises polarized into three diverging argumentative streams centered around the controversial concept of urban underclass, which largely influenced the ensuing debates on neighborhood effects:

(1) a conservative cultural approach, which correlated the poverty of the Afro-American urban underclass concentrated in inner-city ghettos with its incapacity to adapt to the social ascension model of white US mainstream society and with a welfare program considered as too generous; (LEWIS, 1968; MURRAY, 2015).

(2) a rather more liberal approach, endorsing that the underclass mostly subscribes to the mainstream cultural system and social aspirations, though asserting that structural constraints and limited opportunities of social ascension foster the emergence of an alternative value and behavioral system capable of rationalizing and supporting these structural deficiencies (GANS, 1969; HANNERZ, 1969);

(3) a structuralist approach that embedded the socioeconomic deterioration of the urban underclass within a broader context of, on the one hand, a restructured labor market, socio-demographic transformations and alterations produced within the class composition of inner-city neighborhoods, and on the other, with the secular mechanisms of racial residential segregation reproduced within the private real estate market and public housing policies (MASSEY; DENTON, 1993; WILSON, 1987).

Early neighborhood effect research centered on the concept of social isolation, mostly instigated by the seminal work of William J. Wilson in 1987, *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner-City, the Underclass and Public Policy* (SMALL; NEWMAN, 2001). Wilson defined the concept of social isolation as the absence of sustained interaction between impoverished Afro-American inner-city ghetto dwellers and mainstream society, drawing particular attention to the deleterious influence of local peer groups and role models in upward social mobility (WILSON, 1987).

Neighborhood effect research has proliferated since then, mostly seeking to

validate Wilson's hypothesis of concentrated disadvantages and social isolation (GRAIF; GLADFELTER; MATTHEWS, 2014). Nevertheless, more recent research has refrained from drawing quick conclusions on the impact of the socio-residential context on the well-being of segregated neighborhood dwellers. Small (2004) advocated a conditional approach to neighborhood effects in qualitative research, positing that the socio-residential context interferes heterogeneously in the well-being of an individual.

Recently, multi-level approaches have emerged from within US academia, aiming at eliminating the hiatus between Wilson's top-down structural approach and bottom-up methodological individualism. Focusing on the motivations and actions of individual agents, this latter approach has mostly adopted experimental frameworks in order to obtain statistical control for intervening variables on individual or household levels.

Following Sampson's (2012) rationale, operational neighborhood-level socio-interactional, socio-psychological, organizational and cultural mechanisms mediate between agency and structure, thus providing crucial insights into the processes of the reproduction of poverty in urban spaces. Accordingly, neighborhood effects are neither merely the reflection of individual-level disaggregated attributes nor the sum of macro-structural constraints; but are rather related to social-interactional and institutional processes that involve collective aspects of community.

In Western Europe, the approach to new urban poverty has been theoretically framed by the broadly defined concept of social exclusion, following a more structuralist perspective that contrasts with the behaviorist explanations of social deviance and social disorganization permeating the US research tradition (NIESZERY, 2013). Instead, social exclusion departs from the multidimensional concept of relative deprivation, thus referring to an individual's process of marginalization from mainstream society in terms of economic, political-institutional, social and cultural participation (PAUGAM, 2008).

Although it has been acknowledged that social exclusion relates to broader societal changes, to alterations in the global economic system and to a restructuring of the welfare state, the analysis of its repercussion on the socio-spatial organization of cities has been largely influenced by the US concept of opportunity structures (ATKINSON; KINTREA, 2002). Research that adopts either qualitative, quantitative or combined methodologies has received mixed support for the concentration effect hypothesis (NIESZERY, 2013). Overall, the impact of spatially concentrated disadvantages operating on a neighborhood scale is regarded as hierarchically inferior at explanatory level to the individual- and household-level-nested social mobility parameters, namely income, education and occupational status (MUSTERD et al., 2015).

As in Western Europe, research on neighborhood effects in the Brazilian context constitutes a relatively recent phenomenon. However, urban poverty and the causes of segregation have been broadly discussed since the post war years. On the spatial level, patterns of residential segregation emerging during the accelerated process of urbanization since the 1940s have fueled the geographical separation between, on the one side, the middle- and upper classes in the central areas or cones of expansion with broad access to the employment sector, good quality housing and urban equipment services, and, on the other, the informal settlements

of the lower echelons in socially more homogeneous peripheral areas lacking in urban infrastructure (ROBERTS, 2005).

The synergetic but yet profoundly asymmetric functional relations between the formal and informal labor market in the paradigm of the import substitution model (roughly between 1930 and 1980) consolidated a certain mutual interdependence between the socio-economically distant groups. Furthermore, cross-class interactions were maintained in terms of employment relations in the low-skilled domestic service sector, a phenomenon which is still tangible today.

Urban research since the 1990s has analyzed the impact caused by the restructuring of the labor market, deindustrialization and the state retrenchment of social policies on patterns of residential segregation (TORRES et al., 2003). Attention has been attached to either the structural causes and consequences of segregation and poverty or to individual-based survival strategies for coping with social vulnerability and grass-roots projects of community development.

The fact that the neighborhood itself and the spatial concentration of disadvantages may exert an influence over labor market integration (RIBEIRO; LAGO, 2001), educational attainment (RIBEIRO; KOSLINSKI, 2009) and patterns of sociability (MARQUES, 2010) have only been recently acknowledged, since the approach to urban poverty and social inequities based on income thresholds has by and large remained unchallenged.

As in the US and Western Europe, the neighborhood effects hypothesis has received stronger support by large-scale longitudinal studies based on statistical household surveys, whereas qualitative research has refrained from quick conclusions on the impact of poverty and segregation on the well-being of an individual (MARQUES, 2010; RIBEIRO; KOSLINSKI, 2009). In overall terms, while these studies have attempted to test the heuristic validity of this hypothesis, the underlying mechanisms and processes of neighborhood effects have not been fully examined.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

In our qualitative research we have adopted the methodological framework proposed by Häußermann (2003), which takes into consideration both the potentially positive and negative neighborhood effects operating at the material, social and symbolic levels. In contrast to the German research context, where this concept has been developed and applied, our study places strong emphasis onto the relevance of patterns of sociability, given their capacity to foster or thwart socioeconomic integration in Brazilian metropolises. According to Häußermann, in the first instance, the material dimension of neighborhood effects relates to the geographical localization of the neighborhood in relation to the city and explores the subjective perception of the inhabitants with regard to accessing the labor market and public transport system. In the second instance, it examines the distribution and quality of the urban equipment and infra-structure of the neighborhood. In the third instance, it accounts for the distribution and quality of the commercial, social and cultural infrastructure in the neighborhood as well as the physical conditions of housing. In the fourth instance, it takes into consideration the different urban interventions and public policies, such as slum upgrading programs, the implementation of community police stations, etc.

The social dimension comprises three interrelated issues: the social network composition of the inhabitants, the collective efficacy of the community and the influence of peer groups and role models in the processes of socialization. Collective efficacy is defined as the combination of, on the one side, working trust and social cohesion and, on the other, shared expectations for informal social control (SAMPSON, 2012).

Grounded in the analysis of social networks by Marques (2010) in São Paulo, we examine the affiliation of inhabitants to different spheres of sociability in order to determine whether in their daily interactions, the interviewees rely mostly on more homophilous and local ties or on heterophilous ties connecting to non-resident individuals and groups. The spheres of sociability are represented by permanent social structures generated by processes of social specialization which include circles of interest and institutional spheres.

In our case, we are able to distinguish between, on the one side, the primary spheres of sociability, e.g. family, friends and neighborhood, based on social networks, showing a high degree of homophily and localism and, on the other, the secondary spheres of sociability, e.g. work, studies, non-religious and religious associations. The latter are based on social networks demonstrating a higher degree of heterophily and territorial dispersion, thus widening considerably the spectrum and range of the social ties of the interviewees.

Moreover, we have sought to explore whether and how the interviewees encountered employment opportunities arising both in the neighborhood and in the nearby affluent gated communities, attaching particular attention to the importance of key-persons capable of mediating these jobs. Finally, we examine whether the inhabitants resort to bonding ties or bridging ties in order to obtain social, emotional and material support for their daily needs or in situations of emergency. In this context, Briggs (1998) distinguished between two non-exclusive dimensions of social capital which organize the individual's patterns of sociability.

On the one hand, a densely tied network organized within group ties promote social cohesion, the strengthening of collective identity, intra-group solidarity and the short-term stabilization of daily situations, and operate across highly redundant bonding ties. On the other hand, a sparsely knit network of bridging ties link otherwise disconnected individuals and social groups, which thereby fosters their economic integration. These ties reveal a higher degree of heterophily and operate an inclusion into more diversified and territorially dispersed social networks. With regards to the processes of socialization, we examine the influence of role models and peer groups within the neighborhood and schools.

Integrating the concept of collective efficacy into this framework is of crucial importance, due to the fact that we expect a considerable impact from crime and violence, linked mainly to the local drug trafficking within the social organization of the community. Therefore, as the last aspect of the social dimension, we use Sampson's (2012) measurement index of collective efficacy in order to assess the community's capacity of informal social control and crime prevention.

Following Sampson's methodological approach, "shared expectation of informal social control" was measured, using a five-point scale: very likely, likely, neither likely nor unlikely, unlikely or very unlikely, by asking the interviewees whether they agreed, that their neighbors could be counted on to intervene in various ways if (i)

children were skipping school and hanging out on a street corner (ii) children were spray-painting graffiti on a local building (iii) children were showing disrespect to an adult (iv) a fight broke out in front of their house and (v) the police station closest to their homes was threatened with budget cuts.

The degree of “social cohesion and trust” is represented by five conceptually related items. Using the aforementioned five-point scale (very likely, likely, neither likely nor unlikely, unlikely or very unlikely), interviewees were asked to respond on the degree to which they thought that “people around here are willing to help their neighbors”, “this is a close-knit neighborhood”, “people in this neighborhood can be trusted”, “people in this neighborhood generally don’t get along with each other” and “people in this neighborhood do not share the same values.

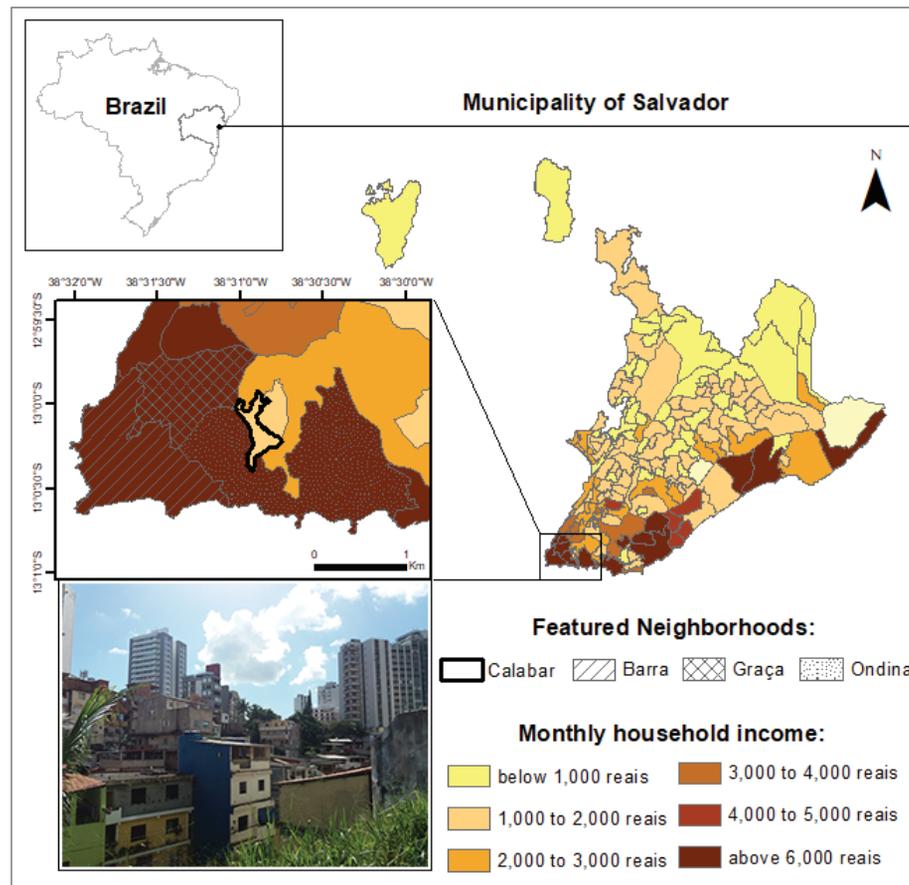
The scale construction for “perceived neighborhood violence” was guided by the question of how often each of the following criminal occurrences had been reported in the last six months according to the perception of the interviewees: “(i) a fight in which a weapon was used, (ii) a violent argument between neighbors, (iii) a gang fight, (iv) a sexual assault or rape, (v) a robbery or mugging”. “Personal victimization” was measured by addressing the following question: “While you have lived in this neighborhood, has anyone ever used violence, such as in a mugging, fight, or sexual assault, against you or any member of your household anywhere in your neighborhood?” (SAMPSON, 2012).

Finally, within the symbolic dimension, we inquired as to whether and how processes of territorial stigmatization had affected the well-being of the interviewee. Such stigmas may entail negative effects on the economic integration of the inhabitants. Furthermore, we questioned the interviewees on their subjective perception regarding their embeddedness in a predominantly affluent region and whether this situation could be considered advantageous to their socioeconomic integration or a constraint to their living conditions – given the greater visibility of economic cleavages between the socially distant groups.

The qualitative research was conducted in the shanty-town of Calabar. As may be observed in Figure 1, which presents the spatial distribution of social groups in terms of income in the municipality of Salvador adapted to the census tract, Calabar is located in the southwestern part of Salvador and surrounded by the affluent neighborhoods of Barra, Ondina and Graça. The neighborhood is embedded in the early expansion processes of the middle and upper class region occupied in the late 1940s, which shows a mixed land use comprising residential, commercial and public recreational functions. The map was generated with ArcMap (version 10) and the typology for the average household income is based on data published by the decennial census.

For the purpose of this study, a total of 30 semi-structured interviews were conducted in Calabar. The interviewees were randomly selected from different geographical points of the neighborhood or targeted with the assistance of previously known community leaders and key-persons living in the neighborhood. In order to avoid any selection bias within the analyzed sample, the sociodemographic profile of the interviewees comprised an age range of between 16 and 65, thus corresponding to different life cycles.

Figure 1. Spatial Distribution of Social Groups in Terms of Income in Salvador



Source: Produced by the author. Photograph taken by the author.

We intentionally avoided focusing on the most vulnerable target group – normally children and adolescents. This selection reductionism would have conveyed a biased image of the socio-economic composition of the neighborhood and would therefore have failed to correspond to the heterogeneity and conditionality of the impact of neighborhood effects on the well-being of the inhabitants. Overall, the sample demonstrated a low variability in terms of the average household income, ranging in this case between one and two minimum salaries (roughly between 270 and 540 US Dollars per month), educational level (ranging between secondary school level - complete and incomplete) and occupational status (roughly one third of the interviewees said they were unemployed).

First, the interviewees were asked to provide some basic information on their age, income, occupational status, educational level, years of residence in Calabar and family composition. Second, we addressed the abovementioned issues related to the impact of neighborhood effects with the aid of a questionnaire, which may be found annexed in Portuguese. The average length of all the interviews was approximately half an hour and were mostly conducted at home and during the week and at weekends.

For our purposes, our fieldwork observations were added to the interview transcripts, and included the records of a number of meetings held by the neighborhood council, which provided important insights into the socio-residential context and the

socio-institutional organization of the neighborhood. It should be noted that the scope of the present research, taking into account its reduced sample size, is clearly limited and therefore does not enable any valid generalizations to be made for other socio-spatial settings either in Salvador itself or elsewhere, since we chose not to rely on procedures of inferential statistics, thereby permitting a quantitative assessment of neighborhood effects.

SETTING THE SCENE: CALABAR²

The origins of informal settlements that make up Calabar may be traced back to the 1950s, when successive waves of migrants arriving from Bahia's impoverished hinterland settled in the empty valleys of the neighborhood and the hillsides belonging to the Catholic Church. Given its strategic location amidst Salvador's middle and upper-class neighborhoods, the Calabar population were forced to fight against attempts by large real estate companies to take over the land. The grassroots struggle of the community during the 1970s and 1980 succeeded in claiming public investments for basic infrastructure and urban equipment while resisting the plans of the city hall to convert the area into an avenue connecting the nearby neighborhoods of Federação and Ondina.

In political-administrative terms, the neighborhood belongs to the census district (*Área de Ponderação*) AP-28, composed of Calabar, Altos das Pombas, Federação and Campo Santo, the population of which has gradually increased from 15,888 in 1991 to approximately 20,000 in 2010, 6,484 of whom live in Calabar. Roughly 1,700 permanent housing units, of which 89.37% are currently classified as substandard, are distributed along an extension of 5.4 kilometers. The location ranks amongst the city's highest population density rates; taking an upward trend from 35,612 inhabitants/km² in 2000 to 38,726 inhabitants/km² in 2010.

A considerable portion of the privately-owned housing stock, mostly composed of two or three-story autoconstructed dwellings, is located in areas of high environmental risk of flooding and landslides, which occur periodically during the rainy seasons. The average monthly income of the head of household living in permanent private-owned dwellings reached R\$³ 1029.3 in 2010 (roughly US\$ 280 per month), in stark contrast to the surrounding neighborhoods of Barra (R\$6585, or roughly US\$ 1780 per month), Ondina (R\$7614, or roughly US\$ 2058 per month) and Graça (R\$7772, or roughly US\$ 2100 per month).

The proportion of heads of household living in permanent privately-owned dwellings, with no income was 17.9% in 2010 (PNUD 2010). Added to the low economic status, the unemployment rate for young adults aged 18 to 24 peaked at 39.10% in 2010, whereas the average unemployment rate for male adults rose to 14.76% (PNUD, 2010). According to the decennial census, 88.89% of the Calabar population described themselves as being either brown (*pardo*) or black race, whereas this proportion amounts only to 37.82% in Graça, 44.28% in Barra, and 50.80% in Ondina (SIM, 2010).

With regard to educational levels, the population of Calabar lags far behind its surrounding upper-class neighbors: according to the 2010 census data, 5.80% of the heads of household of privately-owned permanent dwellings had not completed

² Unless otherwise stated, the socio-demographic data were provided by the *Companhia de Desenvolvimento Urbano do Estado da Bahia* (CONDER/INFORMS) and refer exclusively to the neighborhood of Calabar.

³ Values in Real (BRL) – the Brazilian currency

their schooling or had attended school for just one year, 8.07% attended school for 1-3 years, 12.63% for 4-7 years, 7.25% for 8-10 years and only 6.08% for 11-14 years (SIM, 2010).

A cross-sectional comparison focusing on educational levels is particularly revealing in terms of the low percentage of heads of households in Calabar enrolled in higher education (1.52%), which sharply contrasts with the average in Barra (46.02%), Ondina (37.88%) and Graça (42.86%). The rate of illiteracy amongst the population aged 15 amounted to 7.45% in 2010, and around 35% of the female heads of households with underage children had not completed primary school.

MAIN RESULTS

MATERIAL DIMENSION

In terms of the material dimension of neighborhood effects, locational advantages mostly stem from the proximity of inhabitants to employment opportunities that arise from the local demand of those living in the gated communities of Barra, Graça, and Ondina for personal services, e.g. watchmen, janitors, maids, gardeners, electricians, amongst many others. These opportunities are all located within walking distance, thus benefitting both the employers and the employees, since the former do not need to reimburse the latter for traveling expenses. It should be mentioned that with regard to jobs in the aforementioned gated community, in Brazil, employers are required by law to pay for the employee's traveling expenses.

Moreover, the interviewees indicated that the Shopping Barra (Shopping Mall) and the Hospital Fundação José Silveira are the main local employers and listed the vast number of opportunities emerging from the informal labor market. These opportunities mostly consist of selling informal street merchandise, such as fast food, beverages, fruit and vegetables along strategic points of the nearby beaches of Porto da Barra, Morro do Cristo and Farol da Barra, as well as at the entrances to the gated communities, as the following quote demonstrates:

You see, Calabar is really a perfect place for selling things. Wherever you go, there are opportunities to sell your goods. Sure, it's mostly fruit, vegetables and snacks that we're selling, but it's what those living in the gated communities like! It's all fresh and cheap, so we have a very stable demand. Especially in the summer time, when Porto da Barra becomes so crowded that everyone in the family has to work for the tourists! (João, a 54 year-old street vendor).

The extra, high local demand in terms of personal services and commercialized products sharply contrasts with the scarcity of employment opportunities encountered within the boundaries of Calabar. These are mainly restricted to local family-run businesses and, as in the case of the street vendors, do not provide stable jobs with social security coverage. The locational advantages regarding the labor market and public transport can also be confirmed in terms of accessing infrastructure and urban equipment surrounding Calabar, partially compensating the prevailing deficiencies

within the neighborhood, such as the absence of high schools, specialized hospitals and leisure activities.

However, proximity to the privately-run hospitals does not automatically translate into benefits for the majority of the interviewees, due to the high costs involved in medical treatment. According to the interviews, many improvements have been made in the realm of basic infrastructure, contrasting with former periods when Calabar had no electricity, running water, sewage system or garbage collection. Overall, the neighborhood commercial, social and cultural infrastructure was positively perceived as positive, even though some interviewees expressed their worries concerning the decline in cultural activities within the neighborhood.

Outside the employment relationships, the majority of interviewees stated that they seldom interacted with the middle and upper class gated community residents. By the same token, they did not consider the public spaces along Avenida Centenária and the nearby beaches of Barra and Ondina as locations of egalitarian access where cross-class interactions are encouraged through the mere physical presence of both social groups. Strong segmentation tendencies could also be observed in the shared use of the playground facilities located on Avenida Centenária. Although they are accessible to both social groups, the interviewees felt that those living in the gated communities did not wish their children to play with the children from Calabar

SOCIAL DIMENSION

Shifting the focus to the social dimension, we encountered no major evidences for a generalized confinement of the social ties of the interviewees to the local context which, giving credit to Wilson's hypothesis of social isolation, would have conferred a higher degree of homophily and localism to their patterns of sociability. Counterintuitively, we observed a strong orientation of the social networks towards the surrounding neighborhoods. This dynamic concedes a higher degree of heterophily and territorial dispersion to the social ties of the interviewees, thereby increasing the likelihood of obtaining vital information regarding job openings and gaining access to (non)material resources in the surroundings of Calabar.

This higher degree of connectivity was confirmed predominantly amongst the sample of interviewees whose daily commutes between home and workplace, and/or home and school, widen their interaction radius. Encapsulating network structures demonstrating a higher degree of homophily and localism was identified within the group of interviewees who were currently unemployed, particularly those involved in the local informal labor market or amongst the elderly. Access to crucial information regarding job openings is strongly conditioned by contact with local key-persons already employed in the gated communities, especially janitors and watchmen, who take on a pivotal role for job referrals in Calabar, since they are frequently informed by their employers of short-term openings for housekeepers, electricians, gardeners, etc., as the following quote demonstrates:

My brother works in this nearby gated community, just across the street. He's a watchman, and receives good money for doing almost nothing. But what really matters: he got me a job as a gardener and recommended my son to fix the electricity. It's all about

contacts, and nearly everyone who lives in the gated community wants cheap, quick service, and someone they can trust (Alberto, a 43-year-old gardener).

Consequently, these bonding ties become relevant in negotiating the informal jobs offered in the neighborhood. We are able to infer from these observations that it is exactly this group of interviewees, often through this tight network tied within the primary spheres of sociability, e.g. family, friends and neighbors, who benefit most, either from the proximity of Calabar to the gated communities or the jobs offered within the local informal labor market. It also becomes clear that when seeking jobs, access to both bridging and bonding ties only entails advantages for the relatively unskilled and those with low educational levels, and generally applies to the vast majority of those living in Calabar.

With regard to interviewees resorting to both leverage and survival networks in order to obtain (non-) material resources, a certain shift was observed within the primary structures of reciprocity and support. Accordingly, this fact stems from a lack of confidence in their neighbors, the all-encompassing impact of the local drug traffic on former relationships between neighbors, and the diffusion of a more individualist life concept that undermines the altruistic behavior of the inhabitants. This decline of reliability between neighbors has been partially compensated by the affiliation and active participation in dense associative networks tied to the secondary spheres of sociability, such as the protestant churches and neighborhood councils, which promote a wide array of (non-)material resources, such as micro-credit, food supply and emotional support.

When assessing the capacity of the primary structures of reciprocity, e.g. family, friends and neighbors, to promote support in daily needs, such as childcare, and the provision of food, surveillance and emotional support, we may observe the same weakening of solidarity between neighbors, counter-balanced by the strengthening of family and friendship ties. Similar tendencies corroborating the interviewees' withdrawal from less confident ties between neighbors surfaced when they were asked with whom they usually spent most of their free time, namely: relatives and friends.

We then analyzed the individual capacity for informal social control within the neighborhood, adopting the synthetic measurement index of collective efficacy proposed by Sampson's (2012). By inferring from the reports by interviewees, with regards to "shared expectation of informal social control", we were led to believe that awareness of the potentially deleterious influence of local peer groups and role models linked to the local drug trafficking remains unaltered, and is very high within the community.

Informal mechanisms to achieve public order comprise different strategies for monitoring children and adolescents and, when there is a higher degree of intimacy, for punishing truancy. In this respect, in most cases, it is possible to verify the willingness to intervene in situations where children hang around on the streets instead of being at school, or when disrespect is shown towards adults and older people.

Nevertheless, it becomes clear that the voluntary disposition to intervene on the behalf of the community's social organization in this context depends largely on the attitude and behavior of the children, and/or of their parents: Most of the respondents agreed that if parents are known to disapprove of third parties intruding into their children's education, they feel less inclined to correct their behavior. The

same observation applies to situations when children or adolescents show disrespect towards adult or older people in public.

Most interviewees agreed that they would not interfere in private issues, due to fear of retaliation or deterioration of relationships between neighbors. However, interviewees unanimously asserted that they would not hesitate to mobilize on the behalf of the institutions' maintenance, even if they controlled the degree of participation in associative networks. Assessing the degree of "social cohesion and trust" within the neighborhood, the respondents mostly agreed with the first item, that: "People around here are willing to help their neighbors".

However, a few dissenting voices argued that in former times social cohesion was stronger, because the struggle to access basic urban services and public safety required the inhabitants to demonstrate more civic responsibility towards collective wellbeing. None of the respondents were able to report any major criminal occurrences during the previous six months, which sharply contrasts with past experiences, when their daily routines were seriously disrupted by violent disputes regarding the territorial control of the local drug market.

In this sense, the respondents emphasized that considerable progress had been achieved by the *Base Comunitária de Segurança* (Community Police Station, henceforward BCS) with regards to the overall reduction of crime, a return of public safety onto the streets and a revalorization of the neighborhood's image, both in the local media and in the subjective perception of the interviewees. With the reduction in crime, none of the respondents reported having suffered any type of "personal victimization" during the previous six months.

Thirdly, we investigated the influence of the potentially deleterious effects of peer groups and role models both in the spheres of the local primary school and in the neighborhood itself. While it was felt that local peer groups had significant lost their influence over changing the behavior of children and adolescents, the respondents stressed the importance of the crime-preventing interventions realized by, on the one side, the BCS, the protestant churches and the local library, and, on the other, key-persons and community leaders.

According to the interviewees, the current situation of neighborhood safety sharply contrasts with former times, when the local drug trafficking gangs endorsed an all-encompassing function in the neighborhood's social organization by influencing behavior and attitudes, particularly of older children and adolescents. Beyond local influences, it was often positively acknowledged that being exposed to non-local persons and institutions, in the spheres of school and employment relationships, increases the probability of contact with non-local peer groups, which valorize education as a successful path towards upward social mobility.

SYMBOLIC DIMENSION

When assessing the symbolic dimension of neighborhood effects, strong evidence could be found for enduring processes of the population's territorial stigmatization despite the substantial improvements made in terms of public safety and the population's efforts to demonstrate that the community has successfully resisted the influence of the past drug trafficking activities. Due to the perpetuation of territorial stigmas, ingrained in the collective memory of the inhabitants of Calabar,

the interviewees turned to different counter-strategies to disassociate themselves from the negative image of a crime-ridden shanty-town hosting a potentially dangerous population. These strategies mainly consisted of distinguishing between, on the one side, the group of hard-working and ambitious inhabitants and, on the other side, the group of inhabitants pursuing illegal activities or relying on cash-transfer programs for their daily living.

It should be mentioned that this negative image, primarily replicated within the mass media, sharply contrasts with the interviewee self-perceptions regarding their daily living situation. Accordingly, Calabar's strategic embeddedness in the more central regions of Salvador, in conjunction with a strong vitality within the relationships between neighbors and a long-standing history of associative life, may explain the predominantly positive evaluation of their living conditions. In many cases, the interviewees contrasted their "privileged" location with the more peripheral neighborhoods of Salvador, where access to the labor market, public transport and urban services is disadvantaged, due to the spatial distance to the central regions where most employment opportunities and good quality public services are concentrated.

With regard to the impact of territorial discrimination on job seeking, we discerned a strong heterogeneity within the analyzed sample. On the one hand, respondents referred to the persistence of prejudices, perceived as impediments to their labor market integration. On the other hand, the interviewees claimed that the very proximity to the gated communities of Barra, Ondina and Graça enhances the probabilities of being hired for work. A third group further affirmed that those living in the gated communities prefer to employ non-Calabar residents, due to a lack of trust and the high number of applicants, which by and large exceeds the number of available jobs in personal services, thus permitting the middle and upper classes to recruit employees from amongst what they consider to be safer neighborhoods.

When it comes to institutional discrimination, most of the interviewees agreed that the biased, strict police controls have now ceased, thus favoring a more comprehensive and holistic approach to reducing crime, which does not take for granted a general stigmatized image of the whole population but rather evaluates the behavior of each individual inhabitant.

The majority of the interviewees did not perceive their proximity to the gated communities as something hostile; on the contrary, they mostly considered the high living standards of their nearby neighborhoods as a result of hard work, personal ambition and, in particular, investment in education, as the following quote suggests:

Look, they don't live in these fancy apartments by accident. Okay, sure, some might come from rich families. But I think that they're there because they've worked hard, studied a lot and, well, made an effort. Do you understand? (Joana, 21 years old, unemployed).

DISCUSSION

The first research question raised in the introduction of this paper was: which operative mechanisms and analytic pathways help to explain the impact of neighborhood effects on the well-being of residents? We are now able to discuss seven

different causal pathways which promote a better understanding of the neighborhood effects in Calabar.

The first mechanism which helps to explain the strengthening of the neighborhood's social organization and capacity for informal social control is linked with the impact brought by the implementation of the BCS in 2011. A direct result of restoring public safety was that it enabled the local retail market to return and substantially benefitted the associative life, particularly at night time.

It is noteworthy that, according to the interviews, being exposed to role models and peer-groups that are uncondusive to law-abiding behavior both in the primary school and in public space, is no longer registered, owing to BCS operations and, particularly, to the crime prevention interventions by public and private organizations through the Escola Aberta, the Biblioteca Municipal and local community leaders. Moreover, the BCS has helped to revalorize the image of the neighborhood, at least in the subjective perception of the interviewees; this has therefore led to a rise in self-esteem and to a higher degree of satisfaction from living in Calabar.

Respondents reported that in former times better-off inhabitants left the area and moved to less crime-ridden neighborhoods. On returning, they were unable to find vacant apartments or houses to buy or rent, since during their absence the attractiveness of Calabar had increased. Changes in Calabar's image, post-BCS, have also become tangible in terms of higher rents for apartments and houses located immediately adjacent to the neighborhood.

A second mechanism refers to the high degree of collective mobilization and the strong commitment to the community's common goals in the past. The case of Calabar exemplifies how a small number of its residents fought for the right to remain in this highly valorized area and how the grass roots struggle successfully exerted pressure on the local government to provide basic urban infrastructure and equipment during the 1980s and 1990s. These factors substantially benefitted the political and associative life in former times, and went on to strengthen the community's social cohesion and solidarity. However, according to interviewees, this capacity for community engagement has decreased over recent times.

A third mechanism is related to the argument frequently raised by the interviewees that the structural disadvantages, such as high unemployment, poverty and poor schooling, may be found in any other poor shanty-town in Salvador, the difference being that there are many other places that suffer from higher levels of violence and drug trafficking, and are not connected to the city's central labor markets and transport system. This relativization strategy has contributed to the valorization of Calabar vis-a-vis other poor neighborhoods.

The fourth and final mechanism refers to the strong extra-local orientation of the social relationships of the interviewees in relation to their adjacent neighborhoods, especially in the spheres of work and school. Inevitably, this dynamic should be analyzed taking into consideration the reduced population as well as the size of the neighborhood, since it induces a major orientation towards its surroundings, thus increasing the probabilities of interactions with non-residents in the spheres of work, school and leisure activities. It is possible that this extra-local orientation impedes the population from being confined to the local social context, within the realm of its patterns of sociability.

Beneath these “virtuous” neighborhood effects, exerting a positive influence on the well-being of the interviewee, there are three mechanisms which may be held accountable for constituting negative neighborhood effects in Calabar. As the first mechanism, we highlight the enduring process of territorial stigmatization associated with Calabar’s former image, since it was notorious for hosting groups related to drug trafficking and this entailed a set of disadvantages for integration into the labor market and cross-class links.

The second mechanism negatively affecting the well-being of the inhabitants in Calabar refers to the shifts that have occurred in the realm of the primary structures of reciprocity and support, mostly considered as a reaction to the increase in mistrust and conflicts within the relationships between neighbors. By the same token, the interviewees indicated a perceptible apathy that characterizes the participation of adolescents in political and associative networks; this apathy considerably undermines the capacity of the community to solve problems of common interest, as it had done in former times.

The third mechanism is, according to the interviewees, related to the fear of expropriation by public authorities. Rampant tendencies of the population’s non-coercive expulsion have already been observed by the interviewees on some of the boundaries of Calabar, close to Ondina. Accordingly, attempts by real estate companies to acquire more land inside Calabar with the aim of building gated communities amidst the informal dwellings will subsequently lead to their out-migration because of increased living costs and housing taxes, which result from the valorization of the neighborhood.

With regard to the second research question, namely, whether we are able to uncover empirical evidence for cross-class interactions that extend beyond employment relationships, the case study indicates the ambiguity between economic integration and social avoidance.

The complex functional interdependence that exists between the two socially distant groups offers considerable advantages for the economic integration of the interviewees. However this may be weakened by (1) a decrease in the demand for personal services, because of the declining economic power of the middle classes. In the light of Brazil’s most severe recession, this phenomenon was confirmed by some of the interviewees; (2) opting for job recruitment strategies based on the premise of the “neighborhood’s safety and external image first” at the expense of the “geographic proximity” factor. Since confidence, trust and intimacy are paramount in terms of job requirements for the personal service sector, it must be taken into consideration that the former factor might outweigh the economic savings made in the employees’ salaries with regard to expenses for public transport.

Furthermore, it should also be stressed that the probability of superficial contacts between the socially distant groups via the employment nexus varies according to the degree of the predominant functional use of each surrounding neighborhood. Thus, interactions rarely occur in residential-only neighborhoods such as Ondina, whereas in mixed-use areas, such as Barra, and Graça, Calabar inhabitants are able to use the public space for commercial use, particularly selling fruit, vegetables and fast food.

With social avoidance, the persistence of territorial stigma is largely due to the lack of sustained interactions between Calabar inhabitants and those living in the gated community, which makes it exceedingly difficult to invalidate the prejudices

and the preconceived ideas regarding the negative image of the neighborhood. The social avoidance of “the others” is also magnified by the very housing situation of the gated communities, which is characterized by safety and control devices restricting access to residents or employees, i.e., by means of physical boundaries, whereas the entrance to Calabar is characterized by symbolic boundaries.

In public spaces frequented by both social groups, avoidance and group differentiation occur in a subtler manner, such as using the open-air gym at different hours, through differences in conduct and clothing, whereas the nearby beaches remain a domain of common recreation, thereby promoting cross-class interactions. Social avoidance becomes particularly evident with regard to the segmented access to hospitals and to the public/private divide inherent to Brazilian’s educational system: public schools are predominantly attended by the lower echelons, whereas the middle and upper classes send their children to expensive private schools.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The main objective of this paper was to assess the impact of the socio-residential context on the well-being of thirty inhabitants of Calabar. Unlike most published quantitative assessments on neighborhood effects relying on data collected by the decennial census, the purpose of this qualitative research was to identify its organizational and socio-interactive processes and mechanisms. Thus, applying the concept of neighborhood effects to the Brazilian research context has yielded significant insights into the processes of reproducing social inequalities at a neighborhood level. Our study has also demonstrated that, as a particular trait of this shanty-town, the stability of social networks in conjunction with a strong associative life mitigate the negative effects of both poverty and crime. In contrast to the US context, primary ties become crucial for becoming integrated into the (informal) labor market, given the demand of the affluent gated community dwellers for personal services and non-durable goods.

The research has provided important insights into the contextual causalities underlying the concept of neighborhood effects, such as the positive impact of the BCS (material dimension) on restoring confidence in relationships between neighbors (social dimension), on the community’s capacity for informal social control (social dimension) and on the subjective perception of the interviewees concerning their neighborhood (symbolic dimension). With regard to the causalities amongst the social and symbolic dimensions, we would emphasize the high degree of social cohesion, solidarity and intimacy characterizing the social relations, which entails a set of positive implications for the job searching processes, access to (non-) material resources and the strengthening of the territorial identity.

When characterizing the importance of the geographical proximity between the two socioeconomically distant groups, five central issues need to be stressed: (1) the cultural devaluation of informal settlements in contrast to Calabar’s affluent surroundings; (2) the qualitative deficiencies prevailing in the housing conditions, the internal transport system and access to high-quality urban infrastructure and equipment; (3) the persistence of an essentially negative image of the neighborhood despite improvements in public safety; (4) the advantageous proximity to employment

opportunities, particularly in the gated communities, which do not require higher professional skills and (5) the social avoidance in non-employment relationships.

Inferred from these observations, the hypothesis of an opportunity-enriching environment must come under careful scrutiny, since the functional economic integration of the inhabitants, almost exclusively occurring in the realm of low-wage personal services, neither bridges the social distances nor impedes more subtle forms of place-based discrimination. The study strongly advocates the integration of a contextual reading on poverty in explanatory models, analyzing the mechanisms of the reproduction of social inequities in Brazilian metropolises at neighborhood level; this approach contrasts with the prevailing belief endorsed by many scholars, who have tended to attribute the reproduction of poverty exclusively to personal failures or shortcomings (MURRAY, 2015).

In this sense, the scarcity of research into Brazilian neighborhood effects may be considered as symptomatic of the waning influence of structural theories, which, in turn, accounts for the rise in the popularity of (political) arguments claiming that individual labor and educational attainment are responsible for deciding upward social mobility. Does the neighborhood socio-residential context therefore become irrelevant for urban studies?

While the *qua* experimental controlling for intervening variables at a household-level tends to reify social realities and quantitative approaches often fail to account for neighborhood effect heterogeneity, contextual thinking may however provide useful insights into the processes and mechanisms operating on a neighborhood scale, since they produce both negative and positive neighborhood effects.

Qualitative research centered on the neighborhood as an analytic dimension – considered as an interface between structure and agency – might become increasingly relevant for place-based urban interventions targeting the whole neighborhood in Brazilian metropolises by uncovering empirically both structural deficiencies and virtues in terms of socio-institutional resources.

For the same reason, the case study corroborates that the causal interactions between structure and agency cannot be neglected in methodological frameworks: on the one hand, the neighborhood's material and socio-institutional resources, the quality of physical boundaries with regard to the nearby affluent neighborhoods and the socioeconomic composition of its population; on the other, individual-nested attributes, e.g. occupational status, family income, educational level and life cycle, but also, patterns of sociability and auto-perception.

Given the strong causalities permeating both analytical dimensions, interpreting the neighborhood effect necessarily has to take into full account the premise of heterogeneity and the non-linearity underlying the causal relationships between the socio-residential context and the well-being of the inhabitants. In his insightful ethnographic description of Villa Victoria, an impoverished neighborhood of Boston - Massachusetts, Small (2004) challenges most of the all-encompassing theories of social disorganization and social isolation. Indeed, the study underlines that assumptions of social isolation caused by concentrated poverty and residential segregation must come under careful scrutiny when applied to our research context: Inferring from our data, we are therefore induced to believe that overarching analytical concepts such as social isolation bear little resemblance to the US case.

We could neither attest the paucity of middle-class references among the

interviewees nor find any evidence for the depletion of socio-institutional resources or social disorganization, but rather a strong, however declining, commitment towards the collective goals of the community. Despite residential segregation, cross-class interactions via the employment nexus are fostered by geographic closeness, following the aforementioned demand-supply logic. However, social segmentation regarding access to schools, hospitals and leisure activities reaffirms the engrained social hierarchies and therefore creates obstacles to bridging social distances and eliminating prejudices.

Finally, the study demonstrates that individual or household-centered strategies to mobilize socio-institutional resources are critically conditioned by larger extra-local opportunity structures, in the sense of Katzman's concept of *Activos, Vulnerabilidade y Estructuras de Oportunidades*. Therefore, the uncovered mechanisms and processes operating at neighborhood scale must be embedded into larger structures, e.g. the labor market system, the welfare-state and broader societal transformations.

The same observation should also apply to the potential contributions of research into neighborhood effect for public policies in the Brazilian context. Despite the importance of place-based policies capable of expanding the structures of opportunities at a household or neighborhood level, confining the social question to the spatial dimension obscures the view of the three causes of the reproduction of social inequities in Brazilian metropolises, i.e., the enduring effect of socioeconomic disparities, often coalescing along racial lines, social segmentation, and the retrenchment of former universally conceived social policies.

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