

ASPECTS OF THE EMERGENCE OF THE URBAN CONTEXT IN ADJUNTAS, A HIGHLAND TOWN IN NINETEENTH CENTURY PUERTO RICO (1814-1877)*

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In this paper I want to trace some selected aspects of the emergence of the urban context in Adjuntas, a Puerto Rican town "established" in 1815. I will rely on some key documents, as I am developing the theme as part of a larger work that I expect to publish in near future¹. The theoretical background comes from marxism, social history, critical ethnography deconstruction and others.

What I want to do is to trace the process of the gradual concretization of Adjuntas as an urban context, which was really a very slow process. Its chronological antecedents, as we shall see, originated around 1814, as the few documents available show. Following Spanish patterns that are reflected in the format, content and style of the archival documents, we get in 1814 some hints that indicate aspects of activities that reflect some initial steps. For instance, an individual interested in getting a land concession was willing to donate money for the construction of the church that was rising in a "place" called "Las Adjuntas"². Mention is also made of *residents* and *taxpayers* of the place, although the settlement was subordinated to the town and municipality of Utuado.

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² Roughly translated as "adjacent places".

THE PERIOD IMMEDIATE AFTER THE FOUNDATION (1820-22)

We will jump some six years and locate ourselves in the year 1820, when a very contradictory situation had developed. After being established, Adjuntas had been demoted as a town and subordinated to Utuado, being categorized as an "attached" town. Its mayor had been formally dismissed and Adjuntas was apparently being administered as a "barrio". The criteria for the demotion had been basically and formally demographic, having less than one thousand inhabitants. But when data is offered, there is evidence of development: some 730 inhabitants, a population in process of socio-economic differentiation. A micropolis was emerging.

This process also involved population movements, including movements of foreigners into the town. These were gradually integrated into the local system; but a whole system of policing them until they were assimilated was in operation. Some of them eventually came to constitute themselves as officers in the local "militias" and, in the long run, in members of the local dominant sectors.

Part of the process of the emergence of local dominant sectors, that came into conflict in the local urban context and that tried to dominate city-hall and other key sectors, can be studied through the local quasi-military organization known as the "Urban Militias" that had also police powers, and the kinship and marriage system of relations. Examination of paternal and maternal surnames demonstrate the preponderance of a few key-surnames in the whole of Adjuntas. The surnames serve also as indicators of processes of socio-economic differentiation. Some surnames predominated in the officers corps of the "Urban Militias", some predominating at the higher levels, others at the middle ones. The incipient local power structure reveals also that the political-administrative posts were enmeshed in the same trends and framework. To round up the picture, it appears that a whole system of alliances, prestations and counterprestations (probably much like a system of restricted exchange, with prescribed? marriage) was in operation, within and between the most powerful kinship groups. It must be pointed out that all this was happening only six years after the town had been established, in 1820.

A comment about the "Urban Militias". They were part of the quasi-military and quasi-police organization, and as such involved in the production and reproduction of a certain type of social order. Their links with these dominant sectors implied the convergence of local dominant groups, the convergence of ideological and superstructural elements and the production and reproduction of the "Urban Militias" as an organization promoting and enforcing those elements. This explains the importance of the yearly "inspections". to keep them in a state of readiness.

THE PRODUCTION AND REPRODUCTION OF THE MICROPOLIS; THE MONTHLY REPORTS AND PERIODICITY (1821-22)

The monthly Reports required by the central government and regularly delivered by the town's local administrators (classifying the local parish priest as one) and with quite a rigid format and content demonstrate the micropolis superstructural persistence, stability (not immobility) and uniformity in space and through time. By political-administrative fiat, "administrative time and procedure" was established and implemented as a practice (in Pierre Bordieu's sense). The micropolis existence can be verified constantly through these reports. These constitute a kind of "manufactured" synthesis of the local context. The micropolis is reported periodically; state and local levels link themselves (but power flowing down) in the production and reproduction of social totalities (micro and macro).

The production and reproduction, both at the infrastructural and superstructural level of the micropolis can be examined through the complex of church, parish priest, urban context and ideological reproduction. The organic relation between "religion" and "state" involved the parish priest in the process of ideological reproduction, which he delivered to his parishioners in the strategically situated temple (in the center of the urban context) following a regularized time-table (every Sunday). Municipality and town, as "totalities", were reproduced in space and time. The performance has overtones of what we call the "ethnographic present"; what we get from the monthly reports is the constant repetition (or attempts at) of the process of superstructural production and reproduction of the micropolis (Adjuntas), it tried to have its own "rhythm".

THE CREATION AND INCORPORATION OF ADJUNTAS AS A TOTALITY FROM "ABOVE": THE STATE: THE TOPOGRAPHICAL SURVEY OF 1848, THE INVENTORY OF 1853 AND THE "DISCOVERY" OF THE PRE-URBAN CONTEXT.

We have spoken about the foundation of Adjuntas, and then there has followed an attempt of presenting some key aspects of a process of "formation", which implies some kind of totality (town, municipality, or both). At the same time, at higher levels, there was another process taking place: the creation, production of the state. This must be problematized, not taken for granted. As part of these two processes, which constitute different levels, and in relation to Adjuntas, the survey of 1848 and the inventory of 1853 constituted means of gathering information, of taking stock of the resources and other aspects of the habitat. This was done from the perspective of humans, operating in a very specific situation, with certain productive orientation and practices that constitute a process and not a state. The survey was nearer to nature, the information more general, the taking of stock less specific than the inventory of 1853. But the orientation is the same: humans engaged in relations with nature and among themselves (social relations), gradually utilizing the "resources" and being affected by them. The inventory quantifies, mentions the "main" agricultural products; commercial crops and subsistence ones are implied, reflecting what I have characterized as the 19th. Century fomentarian mentality,

which was closely related as the process of "internal colonization", of which the foundation of Adjuntas was an integral part.

The inventory discovered the existence of a pre-urban context named "Adjuntas", and takes a look at its specificity as a settlement. Its pre-urban traits already contained the potential for an urban "developmental process". Mention is made of a small *series* of houses; there were no streets; but a lot of one and half acre had been separated for the town's square. A small *public* school (for boys only) was operating. There was also a building being used as a city-hall. This verifies the existence of political-administrative entity, operating from and located physically, and related with other public spaces, indicating "contexts" and interrelationships of a pre-urban nature, but with urban projections.

THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND CITY-HALL: LOCAL FACTIONS AND STRUGGLES: ALLIANCES, RUPTURES- THE BURNING OF THE CITY-HALL AS A MICRO-CASE (1844-47).

A fire destroyed the building being used as a city-hall in Adjuntas the 9th. day of May, 1844. The local archives, housed in this same building, were also totally destroyed. This manifest act set in motion a whole "social drama" that permits the characterization of Adjuntas as a more urbanized place, than for example in the just examined inventory of 1853. The type and nature of the data, and the emergence of conflicts within local factions produces a more illustrative and meaningful context.

It shows a local scenery broken up in different factions, and with different types of relations with the central government. There was a local power struggle, with special interest in the control of city-hall. The members of the "Urban Militias", specially its officers, were charged with neglect of duties, along with the local council members (of city-hall) in relation to the "handling" of the fire. A fine was imposed on them. They asked for reconsideration, and in the same document accused the mayor and a syndic of being directly responsible for the fire, and being the ones that were negligent.

The process of the imposition of the fines reveals aspects of the process of commoditization, this last one constituting an element that is intimately connected to our main interest in this paper, the emergence of the urban context, this explaining our interest in varied aspects of the fines. The *mode* of imposition and the *form* of payment betray the precapitalist traits of the Puerto Rican social formation, at the time. The fines were expressed in monetarized form, but in the form of payment it is specified that partial payments could be made in *kind*. Along with this it was also specified that these last payments had to be of items related to constituting construction materials, to be used in the construction of a new city-hall. So we find a contradiction as payments are made in kind but by means of commodities. I would characterize this situation as pre-capitalist, where the situation was one of pre-commoditization; commodities accepted *as* money. From the viewpoint of money, it had not liberated altogether from *other* commodities. The process of full commoditization had not been achieved; it implied further developments towards the capitalist mode of production and the "expected" emergence of a urban context also operating within the parameters of full commoditization.

Data related to the council members reveal crucial aspects of the economic system and property relations, and the structure that regulated the relations between town and countryside. The council members emerge as an economic sector with an economic base in the countryside, who somewhat reluctantly are forced to perform urban functions at city-hall and hold predominant political-administrative functions in the barrios where they reside.

Here and there we find trends and bits of information that pertain to a pre-capitalist process of commoditization. All the dealings related to the construction or buying of a new structure to house the city-hall and other facilities were permeated by relations and transactions (proposed or realized) monetarized and partially commoditized. It must be remembered that the city-hall was one of the key centers in the urban context, and that all the problematic I am examining briefly here revolves around the political and administrative aspects but is also subsumed by the polemics of the physical aspects with quite an emphasis on the economic transactions and the possibility of certain beneficiaries, as shall be seen soon.

This process must be connected with the attitude of the central government, mostly the Governor, who appears as having a highly negative attitude towards the local government (including the "Urban Militias") but specially towards the mayor and possibly the council members and the syndic. But this last aspects are not well documented as in the case of the mayor. The fact is that all were dismissed by the governor and a new mayor was appointed. The dismissal of certain people and the incorporation of others into the local power structure points towards the existence of competing sectors or factions, their struggle revolving around city-hall, as I pointed earlier.

The new mayor seems to have had the upper hand in his relations with the central government, but specially with the Governor. In what seems to be a clear case of patron-client relations, and that also insinuates that the relation had antecedents and was not just a recent event, that newly appointed mayor started a chain of events that connected the political administrative aspects, his economic (class?) position (as hose owner) and his relations with his patron, the Governor.

The new mayor, in what seems to be a highly coordinated action and operating in conjunction with the central government, emerged as the owner of a new house that was highly qualified to serve as city-hall and even for a primary school. Revealing his role as a client of the central government he declared in a very explicit and servile style (addressing the Governor in a very direct manner) that it was the best house in the whole town and that it could serve as the Governor's residence if he decided to visit Adjuntas again³. His offer for the purchase of his own house was accepted by the central government, although the house, if it was going to be used as city-hall, needed some improvements. The roof, of "palm leaves"⁴ had to be replaced with wooden tiles⁵. Incidentally, this type of data offers a glimpse of the state of "development" of structures and dwellings in Ad-

3 This was a required role of all the Governors.

4 "Yaguas"

5 "Tejamani"

juntas at this time, as this was considered the "best house" in town.

Arrangements started to be made to proceed with the purchase of the house. Payments were going to originate from the money provided by the fines, and any additional funds would have to come from the municipal funds through tax collections in installments in the years 1848 and 1849. The last data available does not specify further details. But one faction had been overthrown and another (although not described in full) had risen to power, in close coordination with the central government. A micro-drama, centered around the local governmental structure, had served to highlight significant features of the urban and not so urban context in Adjuntas.

THE CEMETERY AS URBAN CONTEXT AND THE URBAN CONTEXT: THE PRODUCTION OF BOTH AND THE SOCIALIZATION OF SPACE: COMMODITIZATION AND DE-COMMODITIZATION AS PROCESS AND RITUAL (1865-1868).

The study of the process of constructing a new cemetery in Adjuntas, or better, the proposal for its construction is a highly productive enterprise in terms of our interest in the urban context of Adjuntas. The demands in itself implied processes of urban evolution. The town had grown, and this was reflected in the cemetery, "the city of the dead". This last must be observed and studied as an urban structure and constituting an integral and organic component of the urban context. Different sectors were involved in the enterprise: the local government and the church. It must be remembered that the church had an ideological investment in the cemetery; the organic relation between state and church (as shown in the study of the ritual of ideological reproduction previously) involved the church in all aspects of the life cycle of the members of the micropolis, and death was a crucial stage in that cycle.

Urban space (both town and cemetery) must be seen as something that is produced, as a socio-historical product. In this same line of theoretical thinking, that part of the life cycle described as "death" must be seen as a product, as a result of a complex of practices. The combination of urban space through the cemetery and "death" should be seen in their specificity. In the case of Adjuntas (at the micro level) the result is the emergence of the following additional components: the notion of an individual grave, the required individualized burying of the body, the notion of bodily decomposition with negative odors and smells, potential pollution associated with epidemics and death.

The activities carried on in the attempts to construct the new cemetery or operate the old one more efficiently reveal a series of items and aspects closely related to the main theme of this paper. Trends toward commoditization of the land are again verified, as the construction of a new cemetery, or the limited expansion of the old one requiring that land be bought. The relations between the central government and the local once again become relevant. The dealing had to be authorized by the central government municipality apparently lacked financial and technical resources, and the central government was obliged to provide assistance of all types.

Following this orientation, plans were started. What we contemplate in the first instance is a rational, quantified and empirical task. The local registers of the dead were examined, and mathematical models drawn up, reflecting for example, the relation between the mortality rate that resulted in the inhumation (burial) of the body and the exhumation rate. This was to be combined with the size of the grave and with total amount of land needed per year. This gave an annual rate that was projected, for example for some ten years. The result of all these calculations produced a model, from the viewpoint of the people who apparently favored the construction of the new cemetery. Combined with the value of the land a feasibility model was presented.

Other elements had to be incorporated into the model: an access dirt road to be built and water control measures had to be implemented.

When drawing up the calculations a very revealing comment is made by the experts, the reveal amply the urban character of the cemetery in a micropolis of this type. Implying a rapid rate of death in Adjuntas and making projections in a somber tone, the expert mentioned the possibility that a critical situation could develop and the cemetery would not be able to absorb the dead, and stated: "... the people of Adjuntas would be forced to bury their own dead in the countryside." Dispersed? Burials in the countryside, outside of the urban context would separate, segregate and negate the urban context, with its collective orientation and among others, kinship links. This constituted a menace to the continuity of the process of production and reproduction in the urban context. The cemetery had an urban character, in spite of being perceived as something that could have a negative impact. It was always located near the town, in a kind of arrangement that allowed for the coexistence of the community of the live and the "community" of the dead, both being integrated or fused in the micropolis. When examined from this angle, death reveals its urban connections and framework.

Another aspect of the planning and conceptualization of the cemetery combined quantitative and qualitative elements; its location, especially in relation to the prevailing winds. It appears to be related to sensations of an olfactory nature, this being associated with smells, bodily decomposition pollution and disease. Thus, bodies are buried, walls are constructed around the cemetery, to prevent their exhumation by stray animals. The conception of the cemetery as communal and urban and the other conception as a potential pathological milieu are mediated by state regulations; the state emerges as "mediation".

Additional topographical, urban and demographic factors influenced the plans. The high and rugged topography in some sections did not allow for expansion in that direction, while the urban and demographic growth had the same impact. The population was increasing the town gradually expanding. What had been considered relatively distant from the town's center was *in* the center. The urban habitat was undergoing a process of transformations, with the whole of the municipality (town and its countryside) having an extraordinary population increase.⁶

6. 6.010 inhabitants in 1860 and 14,172 in 1877. Ref Jimeno Agius, D. J. "Memoria de 1885" in: Coll y Toste, BHPR, Tomo 5, page 291.

Plans were drawn in 1865 for a new cemetery, which in general terms followed the conceptions we have outlined previously, but in which some significant items were eliminated and provided for in another manner, with the intention of lowering the construction costs. This can be seen very clear in the elimination of plans for constructing a wall made of masonry. Instead, ditches were to be constructed around the cemetery, and plants with spines, planted alongside, would provide for a protective divide.

There is another very relevant element, of superstructural character, and intimately related to the production of the cemetery ("socialization of space"), to processes of commoditization and deonomodization these last examined as rituals (processes). Mention is made of the process of "benediction" of the cemetery *after* it is physically concluded. "Benediction" appears as a requirement *before* burials can take place. The total⁷ social construction of the cemetery was expected and required to end with this ritual act. This last ideological items bear some similarities with the process of commoditization; if the "thing" does not enter into the circulation process it will not become a commodity. The new cemetery would not become one until the incorporation ritual was fully completed. On the other side, the old cemetery: "... a set of regulations forbidding the practice of burying the dead in the old cemetery must be instituted, until it is sold as a lot when a number of years deemed as relevant have passed. The new cemetery would be incorporated, while the old one would be de-incorporated (as such) and gradually converted into a commodity. The new cemetery would be de-commoditized and sacralized, while the old one would be desacralized and commoditized.

FURTHER TRENDS TOWARDS URBANIZATION AS COMMODITIZATION: FROM EJIDOS TO INDIVIDUAL LOTS (1876)

The trends and the problematic emerged when individuals occupying communal lots from the Ejido requested and initiated attempts to commoditize those lots and insert them in the process of circulation (of commodities). This process negated the original communal conception of the land, as it implied the occupation and segregation of the land into lots, the inclusion of some individuals and the exclusion of others. This evolutionary urban process was illustrated also by a process of settling down and developing roots, where individuals were improving their dwellings by alterations and improvements. From the data, it can be inferred that the practice of commoditization was already in operation; the individuals and the mayor wanted to legitimize it, having made such request to the higher levels of government. It was something that, apparently, had originated at the local level, in the urban context.

There is not much information, but the parameters of the problematic oscillated be-

7. Godelier refers to this "total" aspect, borrowing freely from Marcel Mauss: "... in the sense that they summarize and express - and therefore totalize in an exceptional moment, in a particular configuration of social life - the organizational principles underlying a given way of life. A particular practice is required to stage and live out the exceptional character of these acts, load them with meaning and express the full scope of what is involved. This is "ceremonial" practice. (Godelier, 1986, page 45).

tween implementing a fixed and annual payment for the usufruct of the land and maintaining the logical? fiction of the commons ("Ejido"), implying an utopical and eventual return. The municipality would receive the funds and supposedly, would reproduce the property relations implicit in the conception of Ejido. This proposal, at the formal level, was an "attempt" to stop the commoditization of the Ejido lands. On the other side, the alternate proposal consisted in the absolute negation of the property relations of the Ejido and the absolute negation of the property relations of the Ejido and the full implementation of commoditization, by means of the creation of a land-market. The whole problematic can be contemplated as a pre-capitalist breakthrough, with strong leanings toward capitalism, all within an emerging urban context.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE STREET: URBANIZATION IN A PRE-CAPITALIST MILIEU: COMMODITIZATION VERSUS PERSONAL SERVICE (1877).

This process was intimately bound with the commodization just mentioned. The most prominent residents and taxpayers, plus the people in city-hall, were fully conscious for the need to draw up a street plan for Adjuntas. The concept of the street correlated perfectly with the one of lot in the production of the urban space in Adjuntas.

The embryonic and rudimentary state of the urban context is reflected in the arguments presented by the mayor to the central government: "... we could eliminate, in first place, the negative effects we get on rainy days when the waters do not flow freely and become stagnant, as the streets are not level". Concluding with a note on the personal service required in the cleaning and repairing of those "streets": "... frequently we have problems with and between the residents when there is the need for street repairs ... this could be prevented if we had a street plan."

This general problem is related to the required personal services to be rendered when the need arose of street repairs. There was no system of disposal of waters in relation to the street system (which was non-existent) and the location of the settlement. Reference must also be made to the rugged and uneven topography in many parts of the urban milieu, and of the whole municipality, so that the comments by the mayor be understood. The problem of personal services (prestations) implied a process of discussion and deliberation at city-hall, and the decisions taken there would result in the distribution of the personal services between the residents and taxpayers (personal service as a form of pre-capitalist taxation). These were also the owners of the houses and the occupants of the lots demanding its commoditization. Thus, all the information at our disposal, although quite limited, is quite consonant with the trends toward commoditization and the emergence of the lots as exchange values.

POJAVA URBANIZACIJE U ADJUNTASU (PUERTO RICO) I POTEŠKOĆE PRILAGODBE

Sažetak

U ovom prilogu autor raspravlja o problemima urbanizacije portorikanskog grada Adjuntas. Prateći povijesni razvoj (od 1820) razdoblja urbanizacije (do 1877) ovoga grada na portorikanskoj visoravni, autor istražuje razvoj urbanih odnosa i sudbinu predurbanog sadržaja u urbanoj sredini kao i odnose međusobnog prilagođavanja dvaju sustava. Na temelju socijalno historijske rekonstrukcije autor zaključuje da su odnosi urbanizacije isprepleteni s predkapitalističkim odnosima i da se međusobno nadograđuju.