

## THE PEOPLE'S BOROUGHS PLAN OF ACTION: A COUNTER-PROJECT OF INSURGENT CITIZENSHIP<sup>1</sup>

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/1413-2311.274.97304>

### ABSTRACT

Porto Alegre is divided in eight Boroughs of Planning. Each Borough has a representative in the Urban Planning City Council (UPCC). In 2018 social movements organized to conquer this. From this, some of the Boroughs' councilors felt the need to better inform themselves on the terms and subjects discussed in the UPCC, and to ensure that their local issues would be discussed. For that manner, the People's Borough Plan of Action (PBPA) project was created by a coalition of social movements, the architect's association (IAB-RS) and the university to perform counter-hegemonic actions. The project is based on the insurgent planning theory, which understands urban development from the standpoint of the global south as being essentially performed by communities, activists and grassroots strategies. Thus, the project moves across both invited and invented spaces of action in a non-binary relationship, with the aim of providing the grassroots movements of insurgent citizenship with technical assistance

<sup>1</sup> Recebido em 22/8/2019, aceito em 10/10/2019.

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to support their claims and desires over the city they live. Regarding the City's Master Plan revision, the PBAP represents a counter-plan related to the creation of differential spaces. Therefore, they create a moment of realization of the right to the city.

**Keywords:** The right to the city. Insurgent citizenship. Insurgent planning. People's plan, counter-projects.

## EL PLAN PUPULAR DE ACCIÓN REGIONAL: UN CONTRAPROYECTO DE CIUDADANÍA INSURGENTE

### RESUMEN

Porto Alegre se divide en ocho distritos de planificación. Cada distrito tiene un representante en el Ayuntamiento de Planificación Urbana (APU). En 2018, los movimientos sociales se organizaron para conquistar esto. A partir de esto, algunos de los concejales de los distritos sintieron la necesidad de informarse mejor sobre los términos y temas discutidos en la APU, y asegurarse de que se debatieran sus problemas locales. De esa manera, el proyecto del Plan Popular de Acción Regional (PPAR) fue creado por una coalición de movimientos sociales, la Asociación de Arquitectos (IAB-RS) y la universidad para realizar acciones contra hegemónicas. El proyecto se basa en la teoría de la planificación insurgente, que entiende el desarrollo urbano desde el punto de vista del sur global. Por lo tanto, el proyecto se mueve a través de espacios de acción tanto invitados como inventados en una relación no binaria, con el objetivo de proporcionar a los movimientos de base de la ciudadanía insurgente asistencia técnica para apoyar sus reclamos y deseos sobre la ciudad en la que viven. Con respecto a la revisión del Plan Maestro de la Ciudad, el PPAR representa un contra-plan relacionado con la creación de espacios diferenciales.

**Palabras Clave:** Lo derecho a la ciudad. Ciudadanía insurgente. Planificación insurgente. Plan popular. Contraproyectos.

## PLANO POPULAR DE AÇÃO REGIONAL: UM CONTRAPROJETO DE CIDADANIA INSURGENTE



## RESUMO

Porto Alegre é dividida em oito Regiões de Planejamento (RPs). Cada RP é representada por um conselheiro no Conselho Municipal de Desenvolvimento Urbano Ambiental (CMDUA). Em 2018, movimentos sociais e entidades se organizaram para conquistar este espaço. Alguns dos novos conselheiros sentiram a necessidade de se informar melhor sobre os termos e assuntos discutidos no CMDUA com a finalidade de garantir que seus problemas locais fossem discutidos. Dessa maneira, o projeto Planos Populares de Ação Regional (PPAR) foi criado por uma coalizão de movimentos sociais, o Instituto de Arquitetos do Brasil (IAB-RS) e a universidade para realizar ações contra- hegemônicas. O projeto é baseado na teoria do planejamento insurgente, que entende o desenvolvimento urbano do ponto de vista do sul global como sendo essencialmente realizado por comunidades, ativistas e estratégias de base. Assim, o projeto percorre os espaços de ação convidados e inventados em um relacionamento não-binário, com o objetivo de fornecer aos movimentos populares da cidadania insurgente assistência técnica para apoiar suas reivindicações e desejos sobre a cidade em que vivem. Em relação à revisão do plano diretor da cidade, o PBAP representa um contra-plano relacionado à criação de espaços diferenciais. Cria, portanto, um momento de realização do direito à cidade.

**Palavras-Chave:** Direito à cidade. Cidadania insurgente. Planejamento insurgente. Planos populares. Contraprojetos.

## INTRODUCTION

The city of Porto Alegre, capital of the southernmost state of Brazil, became an international symbol of democracy and popular organization over new policies of Participatory Budgeting (PB). Launched in 1989 by the Workers Party (PT), the PB gave the opportunity to the citizens to decide directly where the resources of the municipal administration should be invested. The citizens' decision regards mainly over urban infrastructure works and services. In addition, during the 2000's, Porto Alegre hosted a few editions of the World Social Forum (WSF). The city was the main stage of the counter-hegemonic alternatives event. According to David Harvey (2012, p. 111)



The marks of distinction being accumulated in Porto Alegre derive from its struggle to fashion an alternative globalization that does not trade on monopoly rents in particular or cave in to multinational capitalism in general. In focusing on popular mobilization, it is actively constructing new cultural forms and new definitions of authenticity, originality, and tradition.

However, Harvey's passage above is part of history now. Over the past decade, Porto Alegre has been transformed by managerial policies and urban entrepreneurial (HARVEY, 1989) practices boosted by the FIFA's World Cup (2014) mega event. Recently, the production of space is being taken under innovative practices such as creative cities, smart cities and financialization. Therefore, people's voice, their local needs and desires related to everyday life are not being taken in consideration.

The year of 2020 is the Municipality due to deliver the revision of the city Master Plan. According to the federal act (The City Statute) the revision of such plan should have been taken under people's participation. So far, the citizens of Porto Alegre have no idea on what is being thought for the city's Plan.

According to that new direction over the cities policies and practices, Porto Alegre social movements, professional associations and citizens are struggling to find alternatives of action. One of these experiences is the creation of The People's Borough Plans of Action (PBPA), as presented here in this paper. The city of Porto Alegre is divided in eight Boroughs of Planning (Figure 1), based on the PB structure. Each Borough has a representative in the Urban Planning City Council (UPCC), which is also composed of representatives of nongovernmental and professional associations regarding urban planning and environmentalists and the Municipality architects. In 2018 social movements organized to conquer this space and new counsellors were elected. From this, some of the Boroughs councilors felt the need to better inform themselves on the terms and subjects discussed in the UPCC, as well as to ensure that their local issues would be discussed in their own forums and in the city council.

For that manner, the PBPA project was created by a coalition of social movements, the architect's association (IAB-RS) and the university to perform counter-hegemonic actions, exploring the creation of invented spaces to struggle for the possibilities of the right to the city. This paper explores the limits and possibilities of this practice based on the participatory action research method. According to Kemmis and McTaggart (2005, p. 567), participatory action research is a social process: it is participatory as it engages people in examining their knowledge, it is emancipatory and desalinating, critical and reflexive, and above all, it aims to transform both theory and practice, since it involves people on acknowledging their own

reality in order to change it. The article is divided in two parts. The first will present the literature that was elected among other different theories regarding participatory planning. Miraftab's (2009) Insurgent Planning theory is presented along its main reference, James Hoslton's Insurgent Citizenship, which is related with Henri Lefebvre's theory on the right to the city and the creation of counter/alternative/different spaces as the creation of the possibilities in everyday urban life. The second part present the PBPA counter-project addressing the following issues: (a) the previous context regarding the culture of urban planning in Porto Alegre; (b) the political and social context of the UPCC new formation; (c) the Borough Forum of Planning scenario; (d) the PBPA project methodology and development. At the end, concluding remarks.



**Figure 1: Map of the boroughs of planning (Bp) and macrozones with prevailing neighborhoods of Porto Alegre.**



Source: Municipal Secretariat of Urban Planning (2018).

## **1 ALTERNATIVE URBAN PLANNING, SPACES OF INSURGENT CITIZENSHIP AND THE RIGTH TO THE CITY**

Since the 1960's different theories regarding the participation on planning have been elaborated to open alternatives to the stablished technocratic culture of modernist urban planning. Modernist planning encourages a totalitarian view of the city and the way people should relate to the urban spaces in everyday life. Modernists believed that architecture and the built environment could shape society, nonetheless, society was not able to participate or propose how that built environment should be. Therefore, modernist urban planning refuses

the idea of conflict and contradiction. According to Holston (1999, p. 166), “it assumes a rational domination of the future in which its total and totalizing plan dissolves any conflict between the imagined and the existing society in the imposed coherence of its order”.

After the end of the hegemonic modernist view of planning, different types of alternative planning have emerged. In the United States of America, Davidoff elaborated the theory of *advocacy planning*, based on the idea of giving voice to that unheard. In order to achieve that, he proposed that the planners should represent organized groups’ vision of the city on decision making process. That vision should be proposed by the planner within people’s participation. For Davidoff (2016[1965], p. 431), the advocate planner should be more than “a provider of information, but an analyst of current trends, simulator of future conditions, a detailer of the means”.

Based on England reality, Brindley, Rydin and Stoker (2004) highlight the idea of *popular planning* that emerged in the 1960’s by local communities’ organizations in opposition to large developments, urban motorways and slum clearance that would impact local everyday life. In 1968 by the Town and Planning Act, public participation in planning was institutionalized. Although, according to Brindley, Rydin and Stoker (2004, p. 18) “popular planning seeks to go beyond the defensive antidevelopment campaign, and even beyond the enhanced consultation and participation procedures of the Skeffington report. Rather, it seeks the formal recognition and eventually the implementation of plans prepared by the local community”.

Based on a different perspective, but still as a reaction to the modernist planning, Henri Lefebvre theorizes the right to the city, written in response to the urban crisis of the 1960’s, in France. According to Lefebvre, the city is an *oeuvre* (in the same sense of an *oeuvre* of art); the space is “not only organized and instituted, it is modelled, appropriated by this or that group according to its demands, its ethics and aesthetics, its ideology” (LEFEBVRE, 2008, p. 82). The eminent use of the city, that is, “of its streets and squares, buildings and monuments, is *la fête* (which consumes unproductively, without any other advantage than pleasure and prestige). [...] *oeuvre* is use value and the product is exchange value”; however, the *oeuvre* has been suppressed by the “irreversible orientation towards money, towards commerce, towards exchange, towards the products” (LEFEBVRE, 2001b, p. 12).

For Lefebvre (2001[1968], p. 134) the *right to the city* is a right that “emerges as the highest form of rights: liberty, individualization in socialization, environs (*habitat*) and ways



of living (*habiter*)”. His concern is with specific urban needs: “those of qualified places, places of simultaneity and encounters, places where exchange would not go through exchange value, commerce and profit” (LEFEBVRE, 2001, p. 106).

Marcuse (2012, p. 30) explains that Lefebvre’s (2001b) right is both a cry out of necessity and a demand for something more. Those two different things express “an exigent demand by those deprived of basic material and legal rights, and an aspiration for the future by those discontent with life as they see it around them and perceived as limiting their potential for growth and creativity”. In other words, “the demand is of those who are excluded, the aspiration is for those who are alienated; the city is for the material necessities of life, the aspiration is for a broader right to what is necessary beyond the material to lead a satisfying life” (MARCUSE, 2012, p. 31).

The right to the city “is inscribed within the perspectives of the revolution under the hegemony of the working class” (LEFEBVRE, 2001b, pp. 138-139), it is the right to centrality in decision making and exploring the possibilities of urban life, it is an orientation towards the future, of how the city can be transformed by the people. Therefore, it includes the right to produce the city as well as to enjoy it, the right to determine what is produced and how it is produced (MARCUSE, 2012).

Therefore, the right to the city demands the economic and political (generalized *autogestion*) revolution, but also a permanent cultural revolution, the urban revolution (LEFEBVRE, 2003[1970]), where the city is, actually, *oeuvre* of an urban society. And the agent of this revolutionary process can only be the proletariat, because only it “has the capacity to produce a new humanism”, the humanism of the urban man “from whom and by whom the city and his own daily life in it become *oeuvre*, appropriation, use value (and not exchange value)” (LEFEBVRE, 2001b, p. 140).

It is important to highlight that Lefebvre’s idea on the right to the city is not related to the culture of urban planning, on the contrary, the author is a severe critique of this culture. Lefebvre (2003[1970]) understands it as an illusion of architects, who believe that the built environment can build society, and, an illusion of the state, that aims to control society. In another words, Lefebvre understand that urban planning has the intention to substitute urban practice, since it would replace praxis by representation of spaces and social urban life.

The latter idea relates to the theory of the production of space in Henri Lefebvre’s (1991) work, as the trialetic movement between the lived space (spaces of representation, between the spaces of transformation and domination), the perceived space (the spatial

practice, between the everyday life and the urban reality), and the conceived space (the space between the technicians - architects, engineers and planners - and the state). Therefore, Lefebvre (1991) conceptualises the possibility of creating *counter-spaces* based on the dialectical movement of induced-produced-reduced differences, in such a way that they can be conceived from *counter-projects* that simulate real space pointing to their limitations. However, *counter-projects* are conceived not from the state, but from the urban struggles, and why not, against the state. A *counter-project* or a *counter-plan* does not mean to apply the rationality of urban planning from another perspective, but to deny some of its pitfalls, such as the prediction of the consolidation of scenarios always in an optimistic way.

The right to the city and the creation of counter-spaces can be related to what Holston (1999, p. 167) identifies as insurgent citizenship. For the author, there is the necessity of action by a counter-agent, in opposition to the state as, insofar, the agent that promotes urban transformation. Holston (1999) stresses the notion that urban planning relies on and builds up the state, and provokes the idea of planners working along grassroots movements to promote the formation of counter-agent by the insurgent citizenship.

Planning theory needs to be grounded in these antagonistic complements, both based on ethnographic and not utopian possibility: on one side, the project of state-directed futures, which can be transformative but which is always a product of specific politics; and, on the other, the project of engaging planners with the insurgent forms of the social that often derive from and transform the first project but are in important ways heterogeneous and outside state. These insurgent forms are found both in organized grassroots mobilizations and in everyday practices that, in different ways, empower, parody, derail, or subvert states agendas. They are found, in other words, in struggles over what it means to be a member of the modern state – which is why I refer to them with the term *citizenship*. Membership in the state has never been a static identity, given the dynamics of global migrations and national ambitions. Citizenship changes as new members emerge to advance their claims, expanding its realm, and as new forms of segregation and violence counter these advances, eroding it. The sites of insurgent citizenship are found at the intersection of these processes of expansion and erosion (HOLSTON, 1999, p. 167).

Based on Holston's theory presented above, Miraftab (2016 [2009], p. 480) develops the *insurgent planning* theory which encompasses the “radical planning practices that respond to neoliberal specifics of dominance through inclusion”, from a historicized standpoint of the global south contextualized in neoliberal capitalism. Miraftab addresses the matter of people's participation and inclusion related to the production of the space concerned with

managerialism<sup>6</sup>, that emerged within the shift to the neoliberal state in the late 1970's.

According to Osborne and Gaebler (1993)<sup>7</sup>, the bureaucratic model changed and the public institutions needed flexible and adaptable practices, no longer responsible for serving citizens but for building environments in which they could create conditions for themselves. In this sense, it is created the idea of the *community owned government*, empowering the citizens rather than serving – training and encouraging communities to take control of services, providing resources and technical assistance. Thus, *governance* emerges as a practice to avoid conflict and compress time of decision making even though embracing citizen participation. *Collaborative planning* (Haeyle, 1997) theory relates to that idea, based on Habermas (1981) theory of communicative action to avoid conflict.

Miraftab (2016[2009], p. 482) recognizes this phenomenon by incorporating Cox (2001) acknowledgment on the action of international development agencies such as the World Bank that employs “a hegemonic move from above that adopted development of local states, community participation and participatory developments as their institutional mandate” and recognizes this institutional move as an evidence of “the increasing number of state partnership with CBOs and NGOs over the last two decades”, and, concludes that,

[...] this global trend embodies the state's hegemonic strategy to contain grassroots struggles through local formal channels for citizen participation and claims. Such a hegemonic move, however, creates contradictions that can stimulate grassroots movements building deep democracies from below. Through persistent counter-hegemonic practices, these movements expose and upset the normalized relations of dominance.

Therefore, Miraftab (2016 [2009], p. 480) proposes to rethink participation under neoliberal governance that relies essentially on "legitimation and citizens' perception of inclusion to achieve hegemonic power". According to the author, the insurgent/radical planning goes beyond the boundaries set by professionally trained planners to be intrinsically incorporated into everyday citizenship practices of contestation of neoliberal domination.

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6 To Murphy (2008, p. 154), managerialism deconstructs “issues of social life and organisations into a series of discreet problems that can be resolved through the application of technical expertise”. To Parker (2002), managerialism is the generalised ideology of management that, in turn, has multiple meanings. This concept could be related to a group of executives; a process or a management act, or an academic subject related to management and administration.

7 The dissemination and specific differences with the post-bureaucratic movement, with the New Public Management in Anglo-Saxon countries, and with the Managerial Public Administration in Brazil cannot be ignored. However, the Reinventing Government movement is the most relevant approach for the purposes of this study.

Insurgent planning practices are characterized as counter-hegemonic, transgressive and imaginative. They are counter-hegemonic in that they destabilize the normalized order of things; they transgress time and place by locating historical memory and transnational consciousness at the heart of their practices. They are imaginative in promoting the concept of a different world as being, Walter Rodney says, both possible and necessary (MIRAFTAB, 2016 [2009], p. 481).

Miraftab (2016[2009], p. 489) also stresses that insurgent planning might be a contradiction in terms. The author explains that it might be if it is “framed in terms of relevance for planning, not for the planner. It refers to a set of practices, not to a specific type of actor (insurgent planner)”. Miraftab (2016[2009]) refers to Davidoff’s *advocacy planning* and Haeye’s *collaborative planning*, mentioned above, to emphasize that these theory remains bounded with the traditional perspective of planning, where the planners are occupying a place outside the society. Therefore, the author includes the practice of planners within communities and grassroots movements that are willing to distress the hegemonic power on production of the urban space.

A range of actors may participate in insurgent planning practices: community activists, mothers, professional planners, school teachers, city councilors, the unemployed, retired residents, etc. Whoever the actors, what they do is identifiable as insurgent planning if it is purposeful actions that aim to disrupt domineering relationships of oppressors to the oppressed, and to destabilize such a status quo through consciousness of the past and imagination of an alternative future (MIRAFTAB, 2016 [2009], p. 492).

Hence, insurgent planning involves the practice on *invited-invented spaces*. According to Miraftab (2016[2009], p. 486), “invited spaces are defined as those grassroots actions and their allied nongovernmental organizations that are legitimized by donors and government interventions and aim to cope with systems of hardship” and “invented spaces are defined as those collective actions by the poor that directly confront the authorities and challenge the status quo”. Miraftab (2016[2009], p. 487) argues that “the two sorts of spaces stand in a mutually constituted, interacting relationship, not a binary one. They are not mutually exclusive, nor is either necessarily affiliated with a fixed set of individuals or groups or with a particular kind of civil society”.

This is the main difference between *insurgent citizenship* (HOLSTON, 1999) and the *right to the city* (LEFEBVRE, 2001[1968]). The first stresses the occupation of the institutionalized spaces of participation as a way of struggle, but not only, as the latter negates that as a possibility to the urban revolution. It is important to acknowledge that Lefebvre was

a severe critique of the French state, which by that time was extremely controlling and oppressive. It is impossible to argue whatever would Lefebvre agree or not with the possibility of occupying *invited spaces* as a way of struggling to the right of the city, but it is possible to relate that *invented spaces* are *differential*, *alternative* and a *counter-action*, in Lefebvre's terms. Nowadays, Lefebvre's notion on the *right to the city* couldn't be more relevant, as the hipermercantilization of urban life and the state's neoliberal hegemonic strategy of governance to contain grassroots struggles are in vogue. Therefore, insurgent planning transgresses the spaces of participation created in 1980's and the modes of citizenship under neoliberal state: it mobilizes within but beyond the state's control and claims the right to the city.

At the next part it will be presented the case of the PBPA, but in order to understand the scenario where it has been developed, it will be introduced the previous context regarding the culture of urban planning in Porto Alegre, including the transformation of a participatory planning into a market-led planning and urban entrepreneurialism, and, Participatory Budgeting (PB) into Local Governance (LG).

## 2 THE CASE OF PORTO ALEGRE

With the end of the Military Dictatorship, the years between 1985 and 1988 were extremely important to build and discuss the terms of Brazilian democracy. A Constitution Assembly was called. In those years, not only patrimonialism power was on board, but people's power and organization, through the possibility of engaging People's Amendments to be voted in the Constitution. In this scenario, the National Movement for Urban Reform (NMUR) emerged to struggle for the right to the city to be regulated for every citizen in Brazil.

It is important to enlighten that the right to the city on Brazilian Constitution, although inspired by Lefebvre's idea, was not applied as the authors original conceptualization. In Brazilian terms, it was the duty of the state to provide the right to the city, for that manner, the right to urban mobility, the right to housing, the right to education, and so on. The NMUR believed that it was only possible to achieve citizenship if there was accessibility to all of those rights. This is the contrary of Lefebvre's notion on the right to the city, in which citizenship is conquered by struggling for those rights, not waiting for their provision by the state.

Nonetheless, *The 1988 Federal Constitution* was the regulatory framework that promoted a series of events that were about to change people's participation on urban matters. After its proclamation - and the birth of a new democratic government - a vast amount of institutionalized participatory spaces was formed, such as participatory councils and master plans, and the PB. This is the specific case of Porto Alegre. The city administration was held by the Worker's Party (PT) from 1989 to 2004, in a total of 16 years, and was the pioneer on many of these actions to produce a city for people within their participation. Porto Alegre's experience along a few other cities administration that incorporated the NMRU agenda promoted the political context for the *The 2001 Statute of the City* approval, in the national sphere.

In the case of Porto Alegre, at the beginning of PT's administration, there was the intent to develop a form of organization that included the marginalized population onto the decision making processes of municipal matters. In other words, to promote the feeling of belonging to the city by those who had been left out historically. It was sought, through public participation, solving inherent difficulties of communication and the manifestation of people's will, with the intention of rupture towards the ongoing exclusionary logic. Therefore, it was thought that the newly created strings of urbanity and citizenship would establish a culture of participation with roots sufficiently deep to maintain its continuity throughout the future, including adverse scenarios (COSTA, 2007).

In spite of all the efforts, somewhere in between those 16 years of municipal administration a process of reorganization started to take place. In a practice defined by Ferreira (2010) as *urbanism in reverse*, a new phenomenon began, in which a party initially defined as leftwing transformed the city into a speculative basis for increased accumulation purposes. As a matter of fact, it was under PT's leadership that managerialism was introduced and urban planning started its reconfiguration to become a tool for the protection of private elitist interests, despite the previous rhetoric of improvement of people's participation.

In December of 1993, during the First City Conference, held as a part of the *Porto Alegre Project - Constituent City*, that aimed to promote a discussion about the City Master Plan revision (scheduled to be voted by the local Council in 1997), the city's normative Urban Plan was greatly criticized. As a result, a publication containing ideas and guidelines for the city's next years was created, in which "The normative Master Plan was criticized as a limitation to creativity, as authoritarian, as inflexible and an obstacle to innovation, as an expression of the limited technical competence of the public sector" (ALBANO, 1999). In



face of the emerging neoliberal context, it is no coincidence that the new Master Plan not only followed these guidelines, but also included strategies concerning the city's production, emphasizing the promotion of entrepreneurial opportunities for urban development.

One of the new strategies created during that period has had a particular impact on the city development. The so called *Special Projects* instrument is ruled by the Master Plan, with the aim to promote urban interventions that would not be allowed according to the current regulation. Because of the multiplicity of actors involved in the process or the specificities of location, the Special Project needs special criteria and includes programmatic arrangements with the public administration (PORTO ALEGRE, 1999). According to the Master Plan, a Special Project must either be approved at the UPCC or in a public hearing - which only occurs if the project's scale and impact demand an environmental analysis study. In other words, only a part of such projects goes through the public hearing process during its approbation phase and a great deal of them are approved without any deliberative action. Public hearings usually happen at the end of the process and the entrepreneurs and politicians involved with the Project do not take the people's concerns into consideration. As for the UPCC, the space created to promote participatory planning at the beginning, nowadays, has been transformed into a decision making sphere of Special Projects.

Since the approval of the 1999 Master Plan, Special Projects instrument has been applied as a rule, not as an exception. Few are the projects that are disapproved by the long analysis process, including the UPCC. Accordingly, the urban space is beginning to be constituted by many exceptions, that are evaluated individually, instead of taking a closer look at the city as a whole. According to Domingues (ESPECIALISTAS..., 2018) Special Projects are "few if taking in count the amount of projects in the city, but are the ones that generate the most impact, due its nature and scale: gated communities, shopping centers, soccer stadiums. It should have a very good reason to approve projects that out pass the norm".

In an effort to demonstrate the current scenario, Domingues and scholarships examined 160 Special Projects that had been approved between 2013 and 2017 in the city of Porto Alegre. As shown in the research, the impact of many Special Projects and their approval on a large scale demonstrate the consolidation of the instrument as a way to surpass the city's normative Master Plan. Therefore, the Urban regime of several areas is being distorted by real estate market forces.

It is important to clarify that a third part of the UPCC is composed by the representatives of Porto Alegre's eight Boroughs and one of the OP. The other two parts are

composed by the Municipality Civil Servants and organizations or associations related to urban planning. Apart from the civil servant's part, the other two should have their Councilors elected by society. Until the year of 2017 most of the association or organization Councilors were related to the real estate market, while the Boroughs Councilors were uniquely assisted by municipality civil servants, which in this processes always have the obligation to vote and promote the development. It is a perfect example of the growth coalition (LONGAN; MOLOTCH, 1993) in practice.

In conclusion, is possible to say that the transformations occurred in 1993 resulted in the reconfiguration of the local government. In fact, the changes were to such an extent that the effective actions of urban planning have nearly disappeared. On the other hand, its practice is being substituted by a process in which the growth coalition has direct access to the decision-makers and to public funds. As a consequence, the right to the city becomes a privilege of elitist arrangements and results in a much divided urban space. Furthermore, the process that has been taking place in Porto Alegre since the 1990s is producing an even more divided and exclusionary city: as the replacement of urban planning practices by individual projects occurs, such as the case of Special Projects, Porto Alegre is transformed into a typical case of market-led planning. This practice also had a recent pinnacle with the realization of the 2014 Fifa World Cup. Many Large Urban Projects (LUPs) were created to transform the city under urban entrepreneurialism strategies (HARVEY, 1989).

In addition to that, and with the posterior withdrawal of PT, in 2004, a different model of management and structure of organization emerged, attending by the name of Local Solidarity Governance (LSG). After the city staged the sport mega event, the Municipality argued that there was no more budget available to put the infrastructure developments approved at the LSG into practice. Apart from that, the LSG was turned into a program of urban resilience, financed by the Rockefeller Foundation.

Through this practice, horizontally articulated programs, such as the PB and the UPCC, have been substituted along the years by top-down initiatives of the private sector and entrepreneurs in partnership with politicians, as well as international agencies. Taking this context into consideration, the next part of the paper will present the new articulation and the ongoing counter-plan, which intends to open invited/invented spaces and to develop alternatives to the hegemonic actions mentioned above.

## 2.1 THE CAMPAING FOR THE 2018-2019 UPCC



The current scenario of Porto Alegre, described in the previous section, and the legal need for a revision of the City Master Plan until the year 2020, encouraged different sectors of society to join a mobilization with the aim to re-conquer the existing spaces of participation and to put forward a discussion about the city. The interest to compose the UPCC new formation began with The City We Want Collective<sup>8</sup> (TCWWC), The Brazilian Architects Association<sup>9</sup> in the State of Rio Grande do Sul (BAA - RS), and other social movements with the prospect of the UPCC elections for period of 2018-2019 (SIQUEIRA, 2018). Therefore, a series of seminars, debates and meetings were organized in order to understand the functioning of the council and its electoral process. The result of this movement was a solid articulation of several citizens and 52 grassroots organizations such as social movements related to the housing, women's rights and empowerment and urban mobility struggles; class associations and unions related to urban planning; and environmentalists, who came together to dispute the composition of the UPCC.

As mentioned before, the UPCC is composed by three different types of representation: (1) eight Councilors as representatives of the eight Boroughs of Planning (BP) as shown in Figure 1 (p. 3) and one representative of the Participatory Budgeting; (2) five Councilors as representatives of class unions and associations related to urban planning, 1 of environmentalists, and 2 of entrepreneurs; and (3) nine Councilors that are civil servants as representatives of the different offices related to urban planning and the municipality administration.

The election process of these three parts happens in different manners. There is no election for the third part, as the civil servants are indicated for the position by the secretary of the Municipality Urban Planning Office. For the second part, the Office opens an application for the unions, associations and entrepreneurs that want to be part of the processes, as voters and as candidates. Seven unions, associations and environmentalists that have participated of the campaign to compose the UPCC, mentioned above, were elected and two others were associations that represent the real estate market interests.

As for the first part polls, the process is a little different. Any person that lives in Porto Alegre can register as a candidate for Councilor or Delegate to compose the Borough Forum

8 In Portuguese: *Coletivo a Cidade Que Queremos*. For more information: <https://coletivocidadequequeremos.wordpress.com/author/coletivocidadequequeremos/>

9 In Portuguese: Instituto de Arquitetos do Brasil – Departamento Rio Grande do Sul (IAB-RS). For more information: <http://www.iab-rs.org.br/>

of Planning (BFP). Therefore, in addition to the articulation made by the grassroots organizations, citizens and grassroots movements also organized themselves to dispute the elections as Counselors and Delegates of the eight BPs. Two of the BPs (A and B) had their composition organized by the grassroots organization campaign; other two BPs (C and D) were supported by the union and association campaigners, as they shared the goal of bringing the debates about the city back to the public sphere and to the people. The other four BPs (E, F, G and H) were composed by real estate market representatives or people who share interests within the Municipality.

The majority of the city population is unaware of the existence of the UPCC and its role. The election process was not widely publicized by Municipality administration, who is in charge of the polls. The amount of people who joined the election expresses that. However, some BPs where grassroots movements are more relevant, or, have a more organized background of participation at the PB, for example, had gathered several hundreds of electors. The results of the elections were officially publicized 22 days after the end of the electoral process. The tenure ceremony of the new council board was canceled (NOTA de repúdio..., 2018). The previous composition of the UPCC, which should had been finished at the beginning of the year, was extended until May (SIQUEIRA, 2018). It only came to an end after the new counselors required their rights, since the UPCC's meeting were still ongoing with the older composition, even though the councilors no longer had the right to make decisions (CANOFRE, 2018). In the meantime, the Municipality issued a decree changing the council's working hours, from every Tuesday evening to every Tuesday afternoon, as well as, reducing its autonomy and responsibility (PMPA, 2018). Finally, in the last week of June, the tenure of the new composition occurred during an ordinary UPCC meeting.

Once the UPCC new composition was established, another chapter on the participatory process was about to begin, since the BP's Councilors have to call all the elected Delegates to compose de BFP. Although, the previous events described above shows the lack of commitment with people's participation on urban planning matters. Therefore, they do not stimulate, neither, regulates the obligation of the BFP formation. It is important to clarify, that the BFP follows the same system as the PB, but in this case it is a space for people's participation on urban planning decisions, not on budgeting. On the next part will be described the coalitions and the difficulties related to the BFP formation on the eight BPs.

## 2.2 THE BOROUGH FORUM OF PLANNING



The eight Boroughs of Planning of Porto Alegre have very distinct physical and social characteristics. Their boundaries were based on the PB structure. Every two or three Participatory Budgeting wards were joint to form a BP. Each one of them includes many neighborhoods. However, the limits of the BPs do not necessarily match neither with the PB structure nor the neighborhoods' boundaries. Beyond the physical and territorial characteristics that distinguish the BPs, there are also intrinsic social differences that are crucial to understand the diversity that exists inside the UPCC.

The BP A is composed by the territory with the city historical site, the most developed urban infrastructure (sewage, water provision, transportation, so on) and the wealthiest population. In this Borough, the 36 Delegates elected with the new Counselors formed a BFP with many representatives from the associations that were mobilized to conquer the elections, as described previously. Also, most of them are graduated, many have formal jobs, and are involved with the grassroots movements, associations or political parties. The BFP A has recently organized two important events to discuss urban planning, gathering the University, grassroots movements, citizens from the BPA and others BPs to collaborate with them. One of the main characteristic of this BP is that they are at the center of Porto Alegre urban life, so at this BFP they discuss the matter of the city as a whole, and matters that affects other BPs, as well. As the BFP A delegates expand their territory of intervention, they show a difficulty to manage the matters of their own.

The BP B has been an area of important great real estate market expansion. On the past ten years, many middle and upper class gated communities have been developed. Encompassed with this expansion to one side of the city, shopping centers developments and several urban infrastructure investments, such as high roads extensions, occurred. The real estate expectations to the area regards the provision of deurbanized land, as well as, many natural untouched environments. For UPCC polls a great grassroots campaign happened, involving neighbors, environmentalists, and others. Although the Councilor re-elected belonged to the real estate market. At the election day many workers were taken by bus and cars, organized by politicians and entrepreneurs, to vote. As a result, the BP B Councilor never organized the BFP B meetings, which is composed by 30 Delegates. The decisions on the UPCC are taken exclusively by him and his campaigners.

The BP C has an organized Forum of 22 Delegates, composed by political actors, participants of the PB and representatives of social movements. The Counselors elected are

related to the Worker's Party (PT) and to a grassroots garbage recycling unit. It is another area of gated communities' developments. Most of them approved at the UPCC for the past ten years, as Special Projects. The difference from BP C and BP B, is that it is a more urbanized and developed area. Although the community is very involved on the PB and other communities' development, it is very difficult for them to articulate the BFP.

The BP D is located on the periphery of the city and has several urban typologies within its territory, such as areas of intense urbanization, informal settlements, environmental preservation areas, gated communities and so on. In a context of historical engagement and active grassroots movements, three women from different parts of the territory were elected as councilors with the aim of uniting their communities to perform a stronger mobilization. The UPCC has an important influence in the region, and the elections mobilized more than 700 electors (SAMPAIO, 2018). The BFP D, composed by 105 Delegates, organized seminars on the city's master plan and projects developed within the region in order to empower the councilors and delegates on the urban planning sphere.

The BFP E is the largest borough but it doesn't have many Delegates, 21 in total. Even so, the forum assembles its members regularly. There are many urban conflicts in the area, such as irregular settlements and occupations, cases of removals, floods, real estate speculation and gentrification. The social movements that struggle for the right to adequate housing are continuously working in this territory in defense of the population that lives in occupations, yet, they are not articulated with the BFP E. Furthermore, the city hall has a project to promote massive transformations in an area related to the smart cities model for the industrial site that has been abandoned over the last decades. During the process of this Urban Project, the local population was not effectively included and is not aware of the future of their own neighborhood.

The counselor of the BP F was re-elected in the last poll. In the past, he conquered important services for his own community through the PB and through agreements with the municipality, for which he is often criticized. Even though there are many organized communities in the region, they tend to act independently. Special projects of high impact have already been approved by the UPCC to be implemented in the region, which is a matter of discussion for councilors and delegates. The area has been massive transformed by the projects related to the FIFA World Cup. By a high road extension many families were evicted from their houses. It is an area where many favelas and drug dealing conflicts exists. During the communities' resistance processes to remain at the area, several ruptures within



communities' leaders trusting issues occurred. Breaking the people's organization as a whole community. The eviction and the under construction site until these days transformed the area into a more vulnerable one. The BFP is formed by only seven people.

The BP G is located at the fringe of the city. The real estate market shows very little interest there. In contrast it is a part of the city where the Municipality built most of social housing developments, but with very poor infrastructure provision. Therefore, it is an area with high social vulnerability and drug dealing issues. The Councilors elected hardly assembly their Forum, composed by 6 Delegates. They are usually absent from the UPPC meetings. Although when present, they vote always align with real estate market interests.

Finally, the BP H is located at other fringe of the city. Although there is a very large amount of grassroots movements, specially related to the housing and natural environment, only 4 Delegates got elected. The grassroots campaigners did not manage to apply on time. The ones elected did not attend the UPPC meetings. For that matter, another election process is to be held.

In general, the elected Councilors have the role of representing their BFPs in the UPCC. Therefore, they are responsible for transmitting the issues presented during the meetings to their delegates, so that each BFP may discuss and deliberate its position concerning every matter. As the councilors hold the power to vote in the UPCC, it is expected that they would vote according to their BFP's position. However, the discussions of the UPCC are too technical and inaccessible to the general population, causing many councilors to be unable to fully understand the sessions and pass on the information to their own forums. Thus, there was a demand for technical training of the new BPs councilors and their forums, so that they can broaden their technical repertoire and empower themselves to participate in the council and make their claims.

Many new Councilors elected requested whether the architect's association (IAB-RS), which had a representative position at the UPCC, would accept the demand for a technical training. The People's Borough Plan of Action Project arose from the aim to bring planners as counter agents of insurgent citizenship. The Project provides assistance to the BFPs to create their own Plan of Action, a document that systematizes and records their demands, struggles and intentions for their everyday life in the city. Moreover, the boroughs have the possibility to fundamentally discuss the city's issues and to obtain information about the technical vocabulary and matter involving the city Master Plan and others. Following part will present the grounds of the PBPA.

## 2.3 THE PEOPLE'S BOROUGH PLAN OF ACTION

The PBPA is promoted by IAB-RS with the support of grassroots movements, activists, scholars and class unions, with the fundamental partnership of five out of the eight BPs of Porto Alegre. Its essence is anchored in the provision of technical assistance in urban planning for the five BFPs with the purpose of providing delegates, councilors and residents with a few understanding regarding urban planning tools. The idea of elaborating a People's Plan of Action was born on the grassroots campaign to compose a new formation of the UPPC. The main reason is that a few Councilors brought the possibility of elaborating a Borough Plan of Action, as described on the Master Plan. In other words, the Master Plan proposes the development of this type of Plan, on the BFP, but with state coordination. The idea behind the project is to occupy this empty space, after all, the Borough's Plans of Action were never developed. Thus, taking advantage of an already existing *absent space*, and at the same time *invited space* (people are invited to participate the project develops an *invented space*, transforming what would be a traditional urban planning practice, into a tool of alternative/insurgent planning. Therefore, each region engaged, at the end will have an PBPA of its own.

In view of these goals, a working group composed of people from the areas of architecture, urban planning, social service and graphic design develops a series of internal and external activities, which include professionals from areas such as environmental engineering and social sciences. The internal activities consist basically of organizational meetings, research, seminars, production of material for workshops and advertising, production of graphic material for the physical and digital publication of the Plans and development of methodologies for participatory workshops. Chronologically, the work began with organizational meetings of the working group (which was still under development) along with partner groups, culminating in the Preparatory Workshop.

In the beginning of 2019, it was held a two-day-seminar on theories of alternative urban planning and case studies of People's Plans developed in Brazil and around the world; the ideas discussed during this event helped to consolidate the theoretical and practical repertoire.

The Preparatory Workshop was the first participatory activity developed by the working group with the BPs, on November 26, 2018 (Figure 2). Its purpose was to formally



present the project to the counselors and delegates from the four BPs that were actively holding their forums (A, C, D, and E); all of them were represented in the event. The activity began with the presentation of the project, a seminar regarding the changes over the past decades on participatory issues and the possibilities of people's power in Porto Alegre followed by a debate among all the participants. Next, a mapping activity was developed in which the participants, separated by BP, should choose 5 priority themes in their Borough, describe the main issues involved and locate them on satellite images. The main goal of this first workshop was to debate the limits and possibilities of a PBAP, to deepen the relationship with the Councilors and Delegates and to acknowledge their everyday life urban reality closely. At the end, there was a moment of presentation and discussion about the results. The representatives of all BPs present confirmed their interest in taking part in the project. The fifth BP to join the project was the BP F, which held its first forum since the elections at the event organized in collaboration with the PBPA project.

**Figure 2** - First workshop held with counselors and delegates from BFP A, BFP C, BFP D AND BFP E.



Source: Author (2018).

Participatory workshops are the main interface between the working group and the BPs, because it is when the technical training seminars and the sharing of local popular knowledge meet, in order to generate the accumulation of information that will be systematized in the PBAP. The Plans will consist of five documents of non-normative character that is complementary to the Master Plan; it can be used by the forums as instruments of popular organization. The role of technical assistance in urban planning will therefore be restricted to the organization of activities, to the systematization of the material produced in workshops and to the presentation of technical data on issues such as urban infrastructure and urban planning history in Porto Alegre. The proposals and how they should

be addressed should be elaborated exclusively by the participants, not by the technicians involved on the consultancy. In addition to the participation of delegates and councilors, the forums are autonomous to open the workshops to residents, social movements and other organizations operating within the regions.

The PBAP content includes the aims, demands, difficulties and possible solutions, all of them proposed by the workshop participants at the BFPs, considering the physical limits of each region. The Plans document will be divided into seven chapters:

1. Introduction: project presentation (IAB) and manifest (BFP);
2. Process: actors, workshop methodology, advertising, photographic records;
3. History: urban plans throughout the history of Porto Alegre, photographic records, historical reports, and peoples' analysis;
4. Data: socioeconomic data, urban infrastructure, environment, special projects and peoples' analysis;
5. Summary: positive and negative aspects of the Borough;
6. Proposal: projects, actions and their limitations and possibilities as solutions proposed by the BPF;
7. Appendix / attachments: presentation of extra data.

Based on this organization, the amount of four workshops were estimated to be organized in each BPs, considering the themes: Present, Past, Future and Return. The methodology was based on Lefebvre's ([1970] 2008) regressive-progressive method, in which from the stand point of the present, facing back to the past is possible to acknowledge the spaces of domination and the possibilities of transformation of the future. The Return workshop is no more than the validation of the PBAP with the BFP. Each workshop adds up to the accumulation of knowledge about the Borough; all the information is identified in a summary map (1m<sup>2</sup>) of collective use, in paper files and in printed maps with reduced size. In general, the workshops follow the sequence of presentation, formation (technical training), individual activity, activity in small groups and collective activity or a debate at the end.

In the workshop of the Present, the participants are encouraged to draw a current diagnosis of the area based on their previous knowledge, socioeconomic data from the Atlas of Human Development (presented on the map of the territory) and cards with urban themes (such as housing, environment, transport, etc.). The activity is divided into five moments: presentation of the participants and the project; training, which may or may not happen because of the schedule of the workshop; identification of landmarks in the region and



conflictive areas (Figure 3); selection of the priority themes of the Borough, with a description of the positive and negative issues and their location on the map; presentation of the previous activity to the large group. Concurrently, the participants urban practice in everyday life is elaborates at the map, in which each participant identifies the main displacements of his or her daily life on the map, with the help of pins to mark places and colorful lines to trace the routes (Figure 4). Adaptations of the model of the workshop are planned considering duration and participants (Figure 5 and 6).

The workshop of the Past seeks to activate the participants' memories by identifying urban transformations and historical demands in the Borough, the spaces of domination and transformation. After the moment of presentation, there is a training activity, in which the chronology of the urban planning of Porto Alegre is presented, giving emphasis to the Master Plan and its implication in the area (Figure 7). Following are headlines and historical photographs portraying important moments of the Borough. These presentations evoke both individual and collective memories in the participants, who are encouraged to share them with the large group. In the third moment, the participants receive little flags in which they are to write the main urban transformations that happened in their surroundings; then they are gathered in small groups, pick some of the plates and describe them in cards.

During presentations to the large group, there is another debate regarding the different actors and matters related to the production of the urban space. It becomes clear through the participant's knowledge that urban planning tools like the Master Plan are no guarantee of an equal city development. It is presented the eight dimensions of urban projects (institutional, political, architectural/urban, economic-financial, real estate, symbolic, socio-environmental, scale) and the participants are invited to tell their acknowledgment exploring these dimensions. This is an important part of the workshops to discuss the limitations of urban planning, and even, the limitations-possibilities of their own counter-project, the PBAP. Even more, to prepare for the Future Workshop, when the proposals should be elaborate, for them to be able to comprehend what could be possible or not, which actors should be involved, and so on.

**Figure 3: Cartography activity of positive and negative points for urban themes during a workshop of the present.**



Source: Author (2019).

**Figure 4: Cartography activity of displacements in the territory (pins and colored lines), landmarks and places of conflict (white flags) during a workshop of the present.**



Source: Author (2019).

**Figure 5 and 6: Cartography and group activity**



Source: Author (2019).

**Figure 7: Training activity on the history of urban planning in porto alegre during a workshop of the past.**



**Source:** Author (2019).

At the present moment, the workshops regarding the Present and the Past have been done completely. So far, the process has been very important to promote the involvement of different groups and residents together to discuss and comprehend as a whole community what are their wishes, desires, expectations and frustrations on how the city is being upgrading or downgrading trough time. In Lefebvre's terms, the project is promoting the formation of spaces of representation, since, by understanding the real space, will be possible to point out the limitations and possibilities to be created.

### **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The process of creating the PBAP is executed through workshops with the communities, with the participation of the Boroughs' counsellors and Delegates, as well as social movements' representatives and people from the community. As only five of the eight Boroughs are performing their BFP, IAB is providing technical assistance to develop the PBPA only in these regions. It is important to say that one of this Borough's only started to get mobilized by the possibility of this assistance, since they were a broken community after the events of the evictions related to the FIFA World Cup. Through time, the Boroughs Councilors started to put a good word on the project to other Boroughs. The usual remark is the manner the planners express themselves regarding technical knowledge, being able to connect with the community.

Regarding the City's Urban Plan revision matter, the PBAP represents a counter-plan (LEFEBVRE, 1991) related to the creation of differential spaces (LEFEBVRE, 1991). Whether the Municipality don't open the process to people's participation, the community

organizes itself to create their own terms. Therefore, they create of a moment of realization to the right to the city (LEFEBVRE, 2014).

At the end, when each BP has their one PBPA, a seminar where each Councilor presents their ideas/desires/struggles for the city, a statement of the ideas for the whole city will be formulated. It will be like a People's Conference. This statement and all the other information gathered on the PBPA are, at some level, a form of a Master Counter-Plan, where the induced-produced-reduced differences will simulate what is desirable on people's perspective, at a local level. Therefore, a counter-action to the global hegemonic perspective, related to immediate profits on what the new Master Plan should be.

The PBAP are counter- hegemonic for other reasons, such as: (1) it is a possibility for people to create their own understanding on the production of the city, and their part on it; (2) it enables each Borough Councilor to propose their vision and their projects to the city, insofar, only the entrepreneurs proposes projects at the UPPC; (3) it is a possibility of a better understand on what is on steak when they approve a real estate special project, therefore, the refusal or change on the terms pre-established by the Municipality and the entrepreneurs, and finally, (4) it is a form of organization to struggle and debate at, somehow, the same level of understanding and empowerment. If the Councilors do not know the terms and the possibilities presented within the institutional space, it is a far more unequal struggle.

Thus, the project moves across both invited - existing institutionalized and sanctioned structures of participatory planning - and invented spaces of action (MIRAFTAB, 2016[2009]) - these in which collective action seeks to confront hegemonic practices - in a non-binary relationship, with the aim of providing the grassroots movements of insurgent citizenship with technical assistance to support their claims and desires over the city they live. At the same time, the project promotes the production of the city in a differential space, since it embraces the lived-perceived-conceived all together, but from a different perspective, where capitalists and entrepreneurs are not in the center, but the people and their right to the city. Nonetheless, it embraces the invited institutionalized spaces, but as a counter-action, not as a hegemonic one.

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