Public policies and the city: producing inclusive urban spaces

Sonia Maria Fleury Teixeira[1]
Joan Subirats[2]
Daniel S. Lacerda[3]
Ismael Blanco[2]

[1] Fundação Oswaldo Cruz / Centro de Estudos Estratégicos, Rio de Janeiro / RJ — Brazil
[2] Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona / Igob — Instituto de Gobierno y Políticas Públicas, Barcelona — Spain
[3] Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul / Escola de Administração, Porto Alegre / RS — Brazil

Research on cities have received increased attention over the years. Urban spaces are, on the one hand, a significant target of speculative financial investments and commodification of life, generating dynamics that are very difficult to contain within the competencies of local governments. At the same time, cities are the central space of everyday life, where there is resistance at many levels seeking to defend the conditions of living and subsistence of the majority of citizens. This special issue presents exciting contributions to the debate on public policies and the city. The articles published approach cities as urban spaces of diversity and encounters; the arena of discursive and material struggles; contradictory embeddedness of commodification and resistance; the focus of institutional disputes between exclusion and participation; and finally, changing spaces that respond to the need for new management technologies at a local level. Drawing on various theoretical frameworks and rich empirical discussions, this special issue reclaims cities as central spaces of everyday life, which are particularly important for protection and emancipation in a global scenario of uncertainty.
Keywords: cities; public policies; urban space; right to the city; democracy.

Políticas públicas e a cidade: produzindo espaços urbanos inclusivos

Pesquisas sobre cidades têm recebido maior atenção ao longo dos anos. Os espaços urbanos são, por um lado, um grande alvo de investimentos financeiros especulativos e mercantilização da vida, gerando dinâmicas que são muito difíceis de conter dentro das competências dos governos locais. Mas, ao mesmo tempo, as cidades também são o espaço central da vida cotidiana, onde a resistência é travada em muitos níveis para defender as condições de vida e subsistência da maioria dos cidadãos. Esse número especial reúne importantes contribuições para o debate sobre políticas públicas e a cidade que trabalham cidades como espaços urbanos de diferença e encontro; arena das lutas discursivas e materiais; imersão contraditória de mercantilização e resistência; foco das disputas institucionais entre exclusão e participação; e espaço em constante transformação que responde à necessidade de novas tecnologias de gestão em nível local. Com base em arcabouços teóricos variados e discussões empíricas ricas, este número resgata então a noção de cidades como espaços centrais da vida cotidiana, que são particularmente importantes para proteção e emancipação em um cenário global de incerteza.
Palavras-chave: cidades; políticas públicas; espaço urbano; direito à cidade; democracia.

Las políticas públicas y la ciudad: produciendo espacios urbanos inclusivos

La investigación sobre las ciudades ha recibido una mayor atención a lo largo de los años. Los espacios urbanos son, por un lado, un objetivo principal de las inversiones financieras especulativas y de la mercantilización de la vida, generando dinámicas que son muy difíciles de contener dentro de las competencias de los gobiernos locales. Pero, al mismo tiempo, las ciudades son también el espacio central de la vida cotidiana, donde la resistencia se desarrolla en muchos niveles para defender las condiciones de vida y subsistencia de la mayoría de los ciudadanos. Este número especial reúne importantes contribuciones al debate sobre las políticas públicas y la ciudad que hacen avanzar a las ciudades como espacios urbanos de diferencias y encuentros, como el campo de las luchas discursivas y materiales, una inserción contradictoria de la mercantilización y la resistencia, el foco de disputas institucionales entre exclusión y participación, y finalmente un espacio cambiante que responde a la necesidad de nuevas tecnologías de gestión a nivel local. Basándose en diversos marcos teóricos y abundantes discusiones empíricas, reivindica las ciudades como espacios centrales de la vida cotidiana, que son particularmente importantes para la protección y la emancipación en un escenario global de incertidumbre.
Palabras clave: ciudades; políticas públicas; espacio urbano; derecho a la ciudad; democracia.

Cities are the arena of encounter and realization of the economic (production), political (redistributive) and communitarian (relational) spheres of social integration (Polanyi, 1944), and the debate on public policies and the city is thus a key topic in public administration. The intellectual attention to the condition of cities has followed a steady increase in their number and size. In that regard, debates on urbanization were widely reverberated in 2008, when according to the United Nations the population in towns and cities surpassed for the first time that in rural areas, and was projected to reach 70 per cent of the world population by 2050.

These urban spaces play a key function of concentrating labor for the production process and aggregating infrastructure to lessen the cost of circulation of capital. Therefore, as vast urban spaces concentrate a large share of the world population, cities are the locomotives of national and global economies. Moreover, cities have concentrated most power resources, becoming a central apparatus in the decision making process and in the organization of the class system (Leeds and Leeds, 2015:57). Hence, in places where the intervention of state has not protected citizenship and inclusion, the costs paid by the working class has been considerable higher, and include overcrowding, squalid housing, or high commuting costs (Harvey, 2001). In Brazil, for example, a notable expression of the unbalanced distribution of social costs is the severe issue of housing, which strikes also most metropolis in the world. In 2010, the Brazilian national housing deficit in cities reached 5.8 million houses, whereas the number of private unoccupied houses was over 6 million (Fundação João Pinheiro, 2013), and thus should be enough to cover the deficit were these properties not seen solely as assets for investments.

This unrealized solution is largely reflected on the spatial organization of the city, and the territorial dimension reproduces sociospatial urban inequalities. Slums occupy a vast extent of many big cities in countries that underwent later processes of economic development (Davis, 2007), composing discriminated and more or less autonomous cultural microsystems. Likewise, the truly disadvantaged in USA and Europe occupy ghettos where urban segregation merge social and ethnical aspects (Wilson, 2012). Such spatial contradictions sparkle a dispute for the organization of the city when neoliberal models are challenged by social struggles that demand the right to the city of every citizen (Lefebvre, 1968), and marginalized territories become also the locus of power contestation and emergence of insurgent citizenship (Hoston, 2008). Thus, the accumulation of capital and the urban speculation are confronted by attempts of restoring the local power and claiming the equality of the public sphere.

The disputes and changes being crafted in cities goes beyond the political struggle of resistance to the logic of economic production, and can be engendered from within. Thanks to its function of social reproduction, cities provide the apparatus of maintenance to the labor force that favors everyday encounters and also the space for the reproduction of the consumption structure that localize the provision of services. This makes of cities the quintessential site for changes and social innovation that emerge in urban spaces. Projects of solidary economy that acquire multiple forms across territories, startups engaged with the exercise of citizenship, and struggles of the extractive collaborative economy such as AirBnB and Uber are examples of the potentialities enabled by the city in changing the landscape in the productive arrangements. In such complex and dynamic social reality, marginal and liminal organized forms (Meira, 2014) coexist with new technologies that craft institutional spaces for democratic participation (Subirats, 2015b).

In the struggle for social inclusion and representation, progressive and transformative social movements continue to play a cosmopolitan role, trying to articulate the local and the global.

Globalization brings risks generative of social insecurities in the cities but also opportunities for social action against established issues. On the one hand, social insecurity is engendered from processes of inter alia selective processes of territorial development, the naturalized neoliberal discourse, and transnational organized crime. On the other hand, global insecurity prompts responses mainly on the local level. The territorialisation of social struggles and the emergence of social innovations are local responses to the global changes that affect cities around the world (Fleury, Subirats and Blanco, 2009). Thus, the dialectics between the local and global pervade the debates on cities, and the effects of globalization will be different according to socio-institutional processes of construction of cities and citizenship.

CITIES AS CENTRAL SPACES OF EVERYDAY LIFE

"If you believe you are a citizen of the world […], you are not a citizen of anywhere" British Prime Minister Theresa May said in October 2016. In the same month, the Habitat III congress, organized by the United Nations, was held in Quito. A global congress on the local. In recent years there has been much discussion about the global, the national-state, and also the local. National identity is opposed to the global dimension of many problems, and at the same time a new municipalism is emerging that demands its own autonomous position in the structure of multi-level governments. The social movements and new parties that consolidate themselves here and there are struggling to represent these different approaches and the different emotional impulses that come into play when the need for protection of some is at stake against the global demands for justice or environmental sustainability of others.

The fact is that in Quito it was found what some scholars (Barber, 2013) had already highlighted: the local has a great global dimension. Indeed, unlike national political institutions, traditions and cultures, which are still very diversified, the local agenda (mobility, pollution, housing, energy, water, public space, etc.) shows great similarities in every corner of the world. The presence of social movements in Quito was, in this sense, very significant, articulating the different proposals relating to these key aspects of life in cities (in which more than 50% of the world's population lives) in the concept of the "right to the city" (a long tradition since the seminal work of Lefebvre, 1968). The "Final Declaration" of Habitat III took up this demand in its formulation, thus overcoming the resistance of different countries in this regard.

At the same time, we have known for years that the nation-state is no longer the only space in which social movements act and make their demands or express their disagreements (Della Porta and Tarrow, 2005). This is due to many factors, either external to the countries themselves (transnational issues such as environmental challenges, global terrorism, large population movements due to armed, economic or humanitarian conflicts, etc.) or arising from within them, as it is difficult to propose strictly national solutions to the impacts of mercantile globalisation. It is therefore not surprising that, as economic globalisation has progressed and the so-called "multilevel government" has become denser, so has the articulation of social movements on a global scale. While some rights, such as environmental issues, are claimed at global level, social rights are more and more related to the local government because of decentralization. In Latin America this growing claim is observed not only for including new groups of population but also for incorporating new citizenship rights concerning the participation of users in decision making processes and policies implementation (Fleury, 2003).

What we see at the beginning of the 21st century is a growing capacity to establish contacts, to facilitate the dissemination of ideas, to combine local or national demands and issues with those of a global nature, with a special emphasis on environmental issues and the defense of basic civil and political rights. The appearance of the Zapatistas in Mexico in 1994 was a great blow as it exemplified how a movement of resistance and alternative in a corner of the world had the capacity to present a story that had global dimensions. The 1999 Seattle WTO protests, the great global mobilization against the war in Iraq, the World Social Forum, among others, demonstrated the emergence of a time when this civil and social presence in global politics was clearly evident.

The literature of social movements has been constructing the theory of cycles of mobilizations, alluding to periods in which certain changes in the meaning of their demands, in their formats of action, and even in how they define themselves are manifested (Castells, 2004). However, this description might not resonate as much today, in a period when the so-called 'new social movements' or 'new global movements' (Calle, 2005) show more stable ways of relating and articulating in local settings or conflicts in a constant way. Unquestionably, technological change has helped enormously in this regard, facilitating more informal but at the same time reliable channels of contact, more horizontal relationship logics, multi-person dynamics and periods of latency. These innovations, however, have not diminished the presence and influence of social movements (Subirats, 2015b), confirming that many of the problems referred above cannot be solved effectively in a national-state framework alone.

As the American political scientist Benjamin Barber recalls in his posthumous reflections, if we imagine a meeting of five mayors of cities very distant from each other, for example, Nairobi, Seoul, Paris, Boston and Melbourne, it is very likely that in a very short time, the topics of conversation will coincide quickly, revolving around environmental and mobility problems, issues of regulation and management of utilities, urban security and cleanliness and how to deal with housing issues in times of global financializing or tourism platforms on a global scale. It is not easy to imagine that a space of communication and quick tuning like the one described here could occur between the heads of government of these five big cities. Cultural, political, historical and institutional distances would make this approach much more complicated. That is why Barber stressed that, although it may seem contradictory, the most local ends up being the most global today. And this gives special strength and significance to the connection between cities.

We do not underestimate, however, the constraint to local power imposed by global and national policies, as well as the poor capacity of cities to disseminate local innovation and make them sustainable without national incentives. The experience of Participatory Budget in Porto Alegre is a showcase for these issues (Fedozzi, 2000). However, the issues imposed by the global context can assume such a level of structuring that it has been referred to as "transnational governance", representing the interplay between neoliberalism and managerial ideas (Srinivas, 2016). These are also sources of shared experiences in contemporary cities, which also inspire similar responses by the civil society worldwide. In his major work, *The great transformation*, Karl Polanyi warned in 1944 that the profound movement of commodification of life that had been taking place throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries had generated a "counter-movement", which would represent a response to the demand for protection against the loss of social references, and compensation for the impoverishing and competitive dynamics generated by capitalism.

The renewed diffusion of Polanyi's ideas has to do with the continuity of these two movements today, and with the difficulty of the states to respond to the demands for protection against the uncertainties, fears and situations of impoverishment and exclusion that neoliberalism generates. The experience of Welfare States although having created powerful mechanisms of redistribution, built a hierarchical system with strong homogenizing content. Systems that today do not match the demand for emancipation and autonomy on the one hand, and for recognition of diversity on the other (Fraser, 2013). And it is precisely in this scenario that cities appear as spaces in which it is most possible to institutionally strengthen the capacity to defend the living conditions of the majority of citizens, and, at the same time, to set up reciprocal and communitarian dynamics of protection and care from below.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DEBATE

One of the topics illuminated by the papers in this special issue is the cooptation of the city as commodity, and the counter movement that generates processes of resistance. From a theoretical standpoint, Maria Ceci Misoczky and Clarice Misoczky de Oliveira revisit Henry Lefebvre's writings to explore the contributions of the author to illuminate restless urban struggles and spatial practices of social movements. Lefebvre has been very influential in many fields of social science, ranging from the Organization to Urban Studies (Dale, Kingma and Wasserman, 2018; Lacerda, 2016; Elden, 2004), but his ideas would be often underexplored in terms of the resistance to the abstraction of space and the alternative spaces of possibility. Scrutinizing the practice of designing and implementing urban projects worldwide, Misoczky and Oliveira propose that the political project present in such urban development enterprises should also be disclosed, in light of the possibilities of the urban as a space of differences and encounter promoted by the social struggles that resist them.

Drawing on the same longstanding debate initiated by Lefebvre (2008), but choosing a different approach, Morgana Krieger and Esther Madelein Leblanc use the Political Theory of Discourse (PTD) to examine the dispute regarding the right to the city. The authors analyze, in the debates triggered by the national demonstrations of 2013, the different meanings conveyed with the discourses reproduced by different groups that dispute the public arena, They argue that the idea of right to the city advanced by social movements remains counter-hegemonic and largely cornered in an antagonistic relation with the current hegemony produced in the city, which nevertheless does not prevent the assessed actors to discursively interact and propose new practices for the production of urban space.

However, setting urban disputes either with change or reinforcement of hegemony in the city would not represent the resolution of its contradictions. Nayara Silva de Noronha demonstrate empirically that the social struggle for housing in the favela of Heliopolis, Brazil coexist with practices of reproduction of real estate market. It reveals that the apparently dichotomist relation between commodification and resistance exist rather in mutual affirmation, and the complex concreteness of the right to housing in favelas encompasses concurrent relations between social struggle and market practices, which oppose and foster each other.

Urban struggles discussed in debates on the city as commodity regard also the democratization of the local power revamping the city of citizens in the exercise of active democracy through participation and inclusion. In another work that investigated favela Heliopolis, Hugo Fanton Ribeiro da Silva

discusses how the historical conformation of the territory is produced by the interests of the hegemonic bloc, and even when favorable conditions of representation emerge, alliance with sectors of the ruling classes can lead to the cooptation of subaltern movements, consolidating previous hegemony and favoring real estate speculation.

In another case of the embeddedness between the right to the city and participatory democracy, Eduardo Torre and Paulo Amarante discuss the issue of the exclusion of madness from social life. The institutionalization of the insane led to construction of madness as error, incapacity, inferiority and hazard, which removed people in mental suffering from the horizon of social life, excluding them from the right to work, leisure, culture, and spaces of social and political representation, therefore, of participation in the social pact. They offer a new conception of madness and difference, in which diverse subjects have the right to the city and to social participation.

However, Latin America does not lack examples of participatory democracy, and Felipe Addor examines two symbolic and largely studied cases, the experiences of Cotacachi in Ecuador and Torres in Venezuela, to propose five factors that should be regarded as fundamental for the advancement and diffusion of democratic experiences: resuming the discussion on democracy, territorialization of democracy, the need to transform the State, the interaction between democracy and capitalism, and a regional democratic political project. Such factors are derived from the analysis of agency and public space, and could serve as guidelines to challenge the widespread neoliberal model of governance in Latin America.

Finally, the work of Mariana Brandão and Luiz Antonio Joia explore urban social innovation that responds to the need of new management technologies at a local level for dealing with the challenges of contemporary urban spaces. They offer a rich empirical analysis of the implementation of a smart city project, and from the lens of Actor Network Theory criticize the "technocentricity" of smart city enterprises. The authors set out the influence of the context as crucial for the analysis.

In the recent years of unbridled growth in the financial and real estate economy, cities had simply been seen as privileged spaces for capital accumulation and financial speculation. The papers in this Special Issue, drawing on theoretical and empirical discussions, reclaim the city as central spaces of everyday life and in the making spaces of dispute.

REFERENCES

BARBER, Benjamin. *If mayors ruled the world*: dysfunctional nations, rising cities. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013.

Calle, Angel. *Nuevos movimientos globales*. Madrid: Popular, 2005.

CASTELLS, Manuel. *The power of identity*. 2. ed. London: Blackwell, 2004.

DALE, Karen; KINGMA, Sytze; WASSERMAN, Varda (Ed.). *Organisational space and beyond*: the significance of Henri Lefebvre for organisation studies. London: Routledge, 2018.

DAVIS, Mike. *Planet of slums*. London: Verso, 2007.

DELLA PORTA, Donatella; TARROW, Sidney (Ed.). *Transnational protest and global activism*. Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005.

ELDEN, Stuart. *Understanding Henri Lefebvre* — theory and the possible. London; New York: Continuum, 2004.

FEDOZZI, Luciano. *O poder da aldeia gênese e história do Orçamento Participativo de Porto Alegre*. Porto Alegre: Tomo, 2000.

FLEURY, Sonia. La expansion de la ciudadanía. In: UNIVERSIDAD JAVERIANA (Org.). *Inclusión social y nuevas ciudadanías*: condiciones para la convivencia y seguridad democrática. Bogotá: Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2003. p. 167-194.

FLEURY, Sonia; SUBIRATS, Joan; BLANCO, Ismael. *Respuestas locales a inseguridades globales*: innovación y cambios en Brasil y España. Barcelona: Bellaterra, 2009.

FUNDAÇÃO JOÃO PINHEIRO. *Déficit habitacional municipal no Brasil 2010*. Belo Horizonte: Centro de Estatística e Informações, 2013.

FRASER, Nancy. A triple movement? Parsing the politics of crisis after Polanyi. *New Left Review*, v. 81, p. 119-132, May/June 2013. Available at: <https://newleftreview.org/II/81/nancy-fraser-a-triple-movement>. Accessed on: 6 Sept. 2018.

HARVEY, David. *Spaces of capital*: towards a critical geography. New York: Routledge, 2001.

HOSTON, James. *Insurgent citizenship*: disjunctions of democracy and modernity in Brazil. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008.

LACERDA, Daniel S. The production of spatial hegemony as statecraft: an attempted passive revolution in the favelas of Rio. *Third World Quarterly*, v. 37, n. 6, p. 1-19, 2016. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2015.1109437>. Accessed on: 6 Sept. 2018.

LEEDS, Anthony; LEEDS, Elizabeth. *A sociologia do Brasil urbano*. Rio de Janeiro: Fiocruz, 2015.

LEFEBVRE, Henri. The right to the city. In: LEFEBVRE, Henri. *Writing on cities*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2008. p. 147-159.

MEIRA, Fábio B. Liminal organization: organizational emergence within solidary economy in Brazil. *Organization*, v. 21, n. 5, p. 713-729, 2014. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508414537621>. Accessed on: 6 Sept. 2018.

POLANYI, Karl. *The great transformation*. Newa York: Rinehart and Co, 1944.

SRINIVAS, N. Transnational governance and the trilhos urbanos: civil society resistance to the Rio Mega Events. *Revista de Administração de Empresas*, v. 56, n. 4, p. 438-447, 2016. Available at: <http://doi.org/10.1590/S0034-759020160407>. Accessed on: 6 sept. 2018.

SUBIRATS, Joan. ¿Que gestión pública para que sociedad? *Revista Administración Pública Y Sociedad*, v. 16, p. 5-16, 2015a.

SUBIRATS, Joan (Ed.). *Ya nada será lo mismo*: los efectos del cambio tecnológico en la política, los partidos y el activismo juvenil. Madrid: Centro Reina Sofía sobre Adolescencia y Juventud, 2015b. Available at: <http://igop.uab.cat/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/ya-nada-sera-lo-mismo.pdf>. Accessed on: 6 Sept. 2018.

WILSON, William J. *The truly disadvantaged*: the inner city, the underclass, and public policy. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012.

Sonia Maria Fleury Teixeira

Political scientist, senior researcher at the Center for Strategic Studies, Fundação Oswaldo Cruz-Fiocruz (Brazil). E-mail: profsoniafleury@gmail.com.

Joan Subirats

Political scientist, full professor at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, since 2017 he is the Commissioner of Culture of the Barcelona City Council (Spain). E-mail: joan.subirats@uab.es.

Daniel S. Lacerda

PhD in Organization Studies from Lancaster Universisty, UK and professor at Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul — UFRGS (Brazil). E-mail: d.lacerda@ufrgs.br.

Ismael Blanco

PhD in Political Science from the UAB and professor of political science at the Institute of Government and Public Policies (Igop) of the UAB (Spain). E-mail: ismael.blanco@uab.cat