

The Politics of the 'Urban' in São Paulo*

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(MARQUES, Eduardo (ed). *As Políticas do Urbano em São Paulo*. São Paulo: Editora Unesp; Centro de Estudos da Metrópole, 2018)

Discussions in the field of urban policy in São Paulo hearken back to Brazil's first attempts to build its own school of public policy, especially at the local level. The necessity of organizing space, and the community relations that existed there, with a focus on municipalities, from the 1950s on, were the impetus behind the creation of such institutions as the Instituto Brasileiro de Administração Pública (the Brazilian Institute of Public Administration, or IBAP) in Rio de Janeiro and the Centro de Estudos e Pesquisas de Administração Municipal (the Center of Municipal Administration Studies and Research, or CEPAM) in São Paulo. The 1988 Constitution of Brazil established the municipality as a federal entity and shed light on cities' territories and conflicts, as well as their diverse forms of organization. Despite this effort, there were few academic reflections on urban policy within the field of political science at this time.

Starting with this milestone, there has been a confluence of municipal policy and urban policy. This edited volume, organized by Eduardo Marques, builds a new understanding of the topic by looking at the politics of 'the urban'. These politics are characterized by political arrangements, decision-making processes, and dynamics of implementation specifically related to urban spaces. The originality of the term resides precisely in its focus on designs of governance that create public policies in urban

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environments beyond the classic vision of policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation. Less attention is paid to the content of the policies, and more is paid to the construction and negotiation processes with which these policies are created. Urban policy reflects and alters the spatial relationships of cities because it has to do with their dynamics and locations. The actions of certain actors also embody this spatial question, just as decisions about public policy take pre-existing territorial configurations (as well as those that actors want to create) into account. Given characteristics such as dimensions of big cities existing in reduced spaces, it is also necessary to create an analytical framework for these spaces and what happens within them.

Consolidating this analytical framework is the main contribution of Marques' edited volume, which is a series of studies that try to show urban policy's impact on the construction of the biggest city in Latin America. This book has 12 thematic chapters written by specialists in urban governance and public policy, as well as an introduction and a conclusion written by Marques himself.

The book is a collection of reflections that was produced in the Center of Metropolitan Studies (CEM), a social science research institute that researches topics related to policy formation in urban centers, particularly through the 'Public Policy, Governance, and Politics of the 'Urban'' project. CEM has recently produced a series of academic articles and discussions about the topic of this edited volume.

The specific focus of this edited volume is São Paulo. The scale of the data on population, public transport, budgets, housing, and urban cleanliness transform it into an emblematic case study that is examined in later chapters. More than studies about cities, the authors in this volume propose, and successfully realize, a debate about mega-cities and the complex challenges that come with them.

This volume, organized with interdisciplinary contributions to urban policy from a variety of authors, shows an evolution in areas that are tied to the organization of actors and political coalitions by conducting critical analyses of operational aspects of public policy, starting with public budgeting. Next, it looks at housing policy, urban cleanliness, mobility, and renewal. These would be the 'visible' interpretations of the decisions and disputes between urban social actors, as well as an analysis of big urban projects, such as Porto Maravilha. The volume ends with Marques' analysis of recent comparative methodologies in urban policy in São Paulo.

Marques (2018) starts off the volume by introducing the concept of politics of the 'urban' and by justifying the choice of São Paulo as the topic of the book. In addition to the size of São Paulo, which makes it the biggest city on the continent, the lack of studies focused on it that are capable of bringing together theoretical, analytical, and methodological biases has made the study of São Paulo a good opportunity for understanding how its policies are concentrated. As advocated by Marques, the challenge is to incorporate pre-existing analyses with the constitutive gaze of the state and that of the actors who inhabit and influence the politics of the 'urban', along with the challenges of a federal state and the movements of state and federal governments. The decision-making process and the contingencies imposed by both internal and external actors are fundamental for understanding the design and implementation of politics of the 'urban' in São Paulo. Both the first and second sections of the book, which are focused on specific public policies, rely on this background. It is because of this that Marques invests so much in the very beginning in explanations about the concepts of institutions, agencies, and governance patterns, among other considerations that will form the backbone of the analysis that runs through the rest of the book.

The next three chapters go deeper into some of the concepts introduced by Marques (2018) in the introduction, focusing on the context of the city of São Paulo. An overview of the partisan disputes and government coalitions in the city reveals the power that local actors obtain through negotiations about decisions on the production of municipal public policy. The 'Politics and Government Coalitions' chapter analyzes executive and legislative relations as a fundamental part of the process of building policies, thereby taking focus away from the traditional focus of the executive bureaucracy. The authors understand that this is a fundamental step in this process and invest in detailing the results of the elections and the composition of coalitions in the municipal house since the beginning of the 1980s. They also analyze the relationship of mayors with state houses, starting with Jânio Quadros, through a historical-fundamental approach, in order to understand the most current arrangements in this relationship. In this sense, describing how fundamental legislation for urban policy is put together is important, as are laws about zoning and land use.

In addition to coalitions between the executive and legislative powers, Marques (2018) assigns a chapter to networks of local managers. Here, the roles of interactions and pacts of interest between these actors takes center stage once again.

Local managers occupy the highest political appointments in municipal secretariats, even when these positions are occupied by career public servants. The goal is to understand the migration of managers between positions and portfolios so as to make it possible to remake a 'map' of interactions behind these movements. The methodology used to put this chapter together demonstrates the challenges of dealing with a metropolis the size of São Paulo as well as those of studying it systematically. As the chapter attempts to reconstitute this map since the 1980s, information sources become scarcer the farther one goes back in time. This information is presented in sociograms that demonstrate the relationships between managers of important areas, such as social policy in urban areas, management, and government. Marques concludes that, beyond the thematic dimension, there are partisan political aspects that get mixed into the networks of positions being filled.

An analysis of the governance of public budgeting concludes the first section of the book. Just like the chapter about government coalitions, Peres (2018) writes about the relevance of disputes about budgetary implementation for policy design. She then develops the concept of budgetary governance, on both the macro- and micro-institutional levels, as a basis for looking at the case of the city of São Paulo. For municipal arrangements, there is a confluence of elements that sometimes concentrates and sometimes disperses decision-making power through a mix of top-down and bottom-up processes. Despite having to be negotiated in many cases, the final decision on the mediation of conflicts ends up being concentrated in the head of the executive branch.

Choosing from a restricted range of public policies can work because it allows for a variety of approaches for urban matters, maintaining a common thread of analysis through interactions on territory. Chapter 05 and 06 examine public housing policies. Chapter 05 looks back at housing policy in São Paulo between 1989 and 2016. In this field, Marques, Pulhez, and Págin (2018) emphasize the role of the federal government in expanding and financing housing, especially after the creation of the Ministry of Cities in 2003. A setup of partisan dialogue (or rather, the alignment between federal and municipal governments) is essential for strengthening these types of policies. Solutions that are linked to specific ideological matrices, such as those on cooperative labor and affordable housing initiatives, tend to be discontinued when management teams are changed. Moreover, despite advances in the area, most policy execution still centers on the municipality, and so inequalities in housing access persist in São Paulo.

Chapter 06 is about private housing policy, and it traces an intricate pattern of relationships between public agencies and developers. The most recent advances, linked to the systematization of the control of contracts and the fight against corruption, as well as the implementation of computerized systems, have reduced the information asymmetries between the public and private sectors. However, they still show how multifaceted and complex housing regulation can be.

Urban cleanliness policy is also introduced through a retrospective, starting with the role of the executive branch in this task. The disputes between service provision through public and private means harkens back once again to the difficulties of, on the one hand, implementing policies grounded in territory in its most basic form, and on the other hand, the difficulty of regulating services of metropolitan proportions.

The discussion and design of urban mobility policy in São Paulo is perhaps what has most been in evidence since the 2013 protests, which started with an increase in the price of bus and metropolitan transportation tickets. This edited volume dedicates three chapters to the topic. The first discusses the trajectory of the institutional control organs for traffic: the Traffic Engineering Company (CET) and São Paulo Transport (SPTrans), both under the authority of the municipal government. Requena (2018) attributes the consolidation of this paradigm to the fluidity of automobiles, which were supported by municipal bureaucrats during the military dictatorship. She then writes about the disputes of meaning about the mobility policy of São Paulo, with consequences for its implementation. Next, she writes about how the transition from an analog ticketing system to an electronic one that automatically charges passengers can help us understand the governance aspects of public policy. The author supports her arguments with practical and everyday elements from the lives of the majority of São Paulo residents to analyze technology's impact on the interaction between the actors present in public policy.

Finally, she debates the role of the São Paulo Metro in the organization of urban mobility policies. While under the responsibility of the state, the railway transportation system affects municipal policy by being within the territory of the municipality. The author gives an overview by explaining the construction of the metro lines and the decisions behind each of them in order to show, once again, the confrontational relationships between public and private organizations in the definition of public policies.

Within the book, the territorial aspect of the city is possibly most present in Chapter 11, which focuses on urban renewal policies, particularly in the case of São Paulo. This is because Sarue and Pagin (2018) write about the use of the Urban Operation Consortium (OUC) as the main instrument for negotiations about surplus landholdings. Sarue and Pagin (2018) make an important contribution by clarifying how the OUC works, as well as the disputes around when it was created. This is all substantiated in the patterns of governance between the municipal government and private agents, particularly in the field of real estate. Even though they can be innovative regulatory instruments for occupying urban space, they can also highlight market-oriented elements behind decisions in the public interest.

The case of the first big Brazilian urban project, Porto Maravilha, which was designed in the city of Rio de Janeiro (RJ), is introduced to support decisive analyses of the patterns of interaction that exist in big cities. In this case, there is the conjunction of the use of the OUC, the financing and the cession of public land via the federal government, and the use of Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) to provide public services. This all has to do with a case that can help us learn about the formulation of urban policies when there are intense interactions between municipal, federal, public, and private actors—which is in accordance with the spirit of this edited volume.

In the conclusion, Marques (2018) points to elements of comparison in the politics of the 'urban' in São Paulo in recent years. In particular, the policies are related to the territories in which they are implemented, as well as the contexts of decision-making processes, coalition formation, and the patterns of interaction between the public and private spheres. The effects of the federative design are different from those in most Brazilian cities, considering the weight of implementing public policy in São Paulo. Marques (2018) also pays attention to the bureaucratic capacity and the regulation practices of urban production in São Paulo, seeing them as fundamental elements of this analysis.

This edited volume, organized by Eduardo Marques, helps us understand the construction and implementation of the politics of the 'urban' through the lens of political, social, and economic interactions. This is the alignment present through the entire book, which results in a refined methodological contribution for the study of politics in big urban centers. It will be an essential part of the literature for all those who are interested in understanding the dynamics behind the construction of public policies in big cities.

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