

# BOOK REVIEW

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## RETHINKING CITIES IN ORGANIZATIONAL STUDIES: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

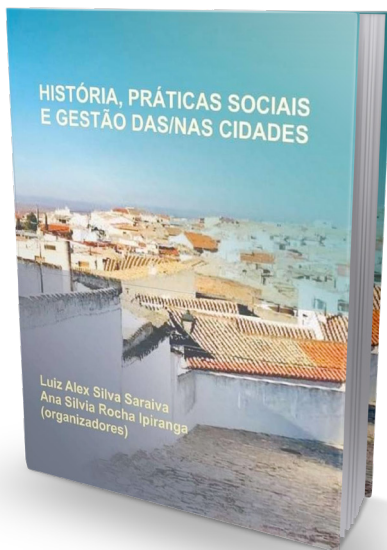
### HISTÓRIA, PRÁTICAS SOCIAIS E GESTÃO DAS/NAS CIDADES

Luiz Alex Silva Saraiva & Ana Sílvia Rocha Ipiranga (Eds.). Ituiubata, MG: Barlavento, 2020. 379 p.

Cities are a rich field for Organizational Studies (OS). We can analyze them both as a site as well as an object of research. According to Knox (2010), cities had received little attention in organizational terms in Administration, but were widely analyzed in geographic, sociological, anthropological, urban, and economic studies. This scenario has been changing, however, especially in Brazilian OS, as cities are being understood from multidisciplinary perspectives such as: complex organizations formed by different webs that connect us in a pluralistic and multidimensional way (Fischer, 1997); individual, cultural and identity processes inserted in space-time (Mac-Allister, 2004); territoriality (Bretas & Saraiva, 2013); organized social life (Saraiva & Carrieri, 2012); aesthetic cultural practices of the urban space (Ipiranga, 2016); and even organizational processes arising from different social and organizing practices (Franco & Oliveira, 2017). The city is no longer just a place for existing and coexisting, but is also a complex contemporary organization made up of diverse agents and practices that produce signs, symbols, meanings and stories, as Ipiranga (2010) points out.

This book by Saraiva and Ipiranga expands on this emerging range of studies, and acts as a guide to the possibilities that exist for carrying out scientific research of/in cities, especially qualitative research. This book, which is multidisciplinary like the cities it deals with, is organized in three parts, in addition to its preface and introduction. The first part focuses on the historicity of cities and the stories that are lived in them, and draws on Walter Benjamin's concepts of history in OS (Chapter 1); the multidisciplinary nature of cities and literature (Chapter 2); and how urbanization has changed the living and subsistence practices of a *quilombola* [former slave] community (Chapter 3).

The second part of the book draws attention to the social practices we employ in our everyday lives, such as how the concept of the global city changes organizations, like fancy restaurants (Chapter 4); how the Brazilian Football Museum represents the city of Belo Horizonte (Chapter 5); how utilitarian cycling happens in Fortaleza (Chapter 6); and the appropriation of public space by a private company in Maringá (Chapter 7). The third part of the book examines city management. It points out that cities are not only organized by human beings and artifacts, but also by non-human animals (Chapter 8); and it looks at how insurgent movements dialogue with public management (Chapter 9).



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The compilation of articles in this book highlights a point already debated by [Figueiredo and Cavedon \(2012\)](#): cities are subject to physical, material, and symbolic appropriations, and so create their own organizational space. That space, as the authors remind us, is the result of several political, social, and economic dynamics, which we find in [Maricato's \(2017\)](#) complex analysis of city development and urban policies in Brazil in recent years. These understandings of the city permeate the work of Saraiva and Ipiranga, although perhaps not so explicitly, but just as we do in cities, we need – and it is recommended to ‘amble’ through these texts and create our own ‘paths’.

The articles in this book expand the way we look at the inhabitants and practitioners of urban spaces. In this sense, then, progress has been made in terms of Brazilian urban-themed OS that encompass practices and citizens that are rarely studied in Administration, such as: homeless people ([Costa & Oliveira, 2019](#); [Honorato & Saraiva, 2016](#)); spatial disruption in an art exhibition ([Bezerra, Lopes, Silva, & Ipiranga, 2019](#)); the graffiti found in cities ([Viegas & Saraiva, 2015](#)); waste pickers ([Rodrigues & Ichikawa, 2015](#)); and others. It is important to carry out studies relating to urban spaces, studying who lives in them, what the everyday lives of people in these spaces are like, how the city constitutes the lives of these subjects, and so many other social dynamics.

Cities are not just places of residence, but also a space that is lived and practiced by human and non-human subjects in a flow of constant transformation ([De Certeau, 2008](#); [Coimbra & Saraiva, 2013](#)). Readers will perceive how different social, organizational, and management practices constitute the city, both historically and every day. The urban space is constructed not only from our experiences, but also from our memories and feelings. As the book warns us, however, we must bear in mind the political forces in this organizational space that end up constituting, shaping, reinforcing, or even preventing our ways of practicing the city, as reminded by De Certeau's (2008) warnings about the Concept-city and its architectural function and functionalistic aspects.

Although not the focus of this particular book, future studies could work on those aspects of the Concept-city that focus on city management, such as urban marketing, which is an urban management tool that helps reinforce the Concept-city and transform cities into goods ([Duarte & Czajkowski, 2007](#); [Sánchez, 2001](#)), making room for urban entrepreneurship, as [Terci \(2018\)](#) points out. Although political forces permeate the works presented in this book, they are not necessarily closely observed, being intrinsic to the social practices that constitute

cities. It would also be interesting to bring the other side of cities into the discussion of Organization Studies; those that are managed and controlled by public and private agents, and to examine how these powers deal with the different historical, cultural, and social practices of their inhabitants.

While this book does not exhaust the theme or discussion about cities within Organizational Studies, it is a well-articulated compilation of different themed texts that remind us that the city is a “mega-organization” ([Fischer, 1996](#)); within it we find several forms, ways and organizational processes that make other organizations happen. Cities are an example of everyday organizational coexistence, which enables us to (re)consider our views about them, their subjects, and the ways of doing research in this organizational space.

The book is available for downloading free at: <https://asebabaoloriginbin.files.wordpress.com/2020/09/historias-praticas-sociais-e-gestao.pdf>.

Enjoy your read; we hope it gives you cause for reflection!

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## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Valdir Costa Junior worked on the conceptualization and theoretical-methodological approach. The theoretical review was conducted by Valdir Costa Junior. Data collection was coordinated by Valdir Costa Junior. Data analysis included Valdir Costa Junior. All authors worked together in the writing and final revision of the manuscript.