Space and society in the 21st century. The case of São Paulo[1]

Espacio y sociedad en el siglo 21. El caso de San Pablo

Espaço e sociedade no século 21. O caso de São Paulo.

Leandro Medrano
Ph.D. in Architecture and Urban Design
University of São Paulo,
medrano@usp.br

Luiz Recaman
PHD in Aesthetics
University of São Paulo
recaman@usp.br

Abstract

The 21st century set new urban standards in relation to the demands of the population of the city of São Paulo. Economic growth, an increase in the population's income and low unemployment have altered the political agenda of the city, which now has to address socio-spatial structures consolidated throughout history. From the urban and spatial point of view, there is still room for new critical assessments of the recent situation in which the largest metropolis in South America finds itself. In particular with regard to the new urban practices which came to light during the 2013 protests. Recent economic and demographic indicators point toward a shift in the social geography of the city, which may result in significant impacts on its urban shape. The aim of this research is to investigate in detail the potential urban transformations emerging out of this new political and economic configuration. In order to do so, we highlight a number of urban and social phenomena which could lead to alternatives to the traditional administrative pacts (or those currently in force). This new condition points to specific spatial difficulties for urban planning and architecture, which go beyond the historical impediments already analyzed by the Brazilian critical tradition.

Keywords: São Paulo, megacities, urban centers, urban culture, urban space.

Resumen

El siglo XXI establece nuevas normas urbanas con relación a las demandas de la población de la ciudad de San Pablo. El crecimiento económico, el aumento de los ingresos y las tasas bajas de desempleo han alterado la agenda política de la ciudad, que ahora tiene que ocuparse de las estructuras socioespaciales consolidadas a lo largo de la historia. Desde el punto de vista urbano y espacial, todavía hay cabida para nuevos enfoques críticos sobre la situación en la que se encuentra la metrópoli más grande de América del Sur, en especial, con respecto a las nuevas prácticas urbanas que surgieron durante las protestas de 2013. Los últimos indicadores económicos y demográficos muestran un cambio en la geografía social de la ciudad, los cuales pueden tener un impacto significativo en su forma urbana y, por ende, en su planificación. Este artículo da cuenta de las transformaciones urbanas que emergen de la nueva configuración política y económica. Para ello, destacamos fenómenos urbanos y sociales que podrían convertirse en alternativas a los pactos administrativos tradicionales (o los que están actualmente en vigor).

Palabras clave: San Pablo, megaciudades, centros urbanos, cultura urbana, espacio urbano.

Resumo

O século XXI apresenta um novo patamar urbano nas reivindicações populares na cidade de São Paulo. O crescimento econômico, o aumento da renda e o baixo desemprego modificaram a agenda política da cidade, que confronta de forma abrangente as estruturas socioespaciais historicamente consolidadas. Do ponto de vista urbano e espacial, a avaliação crítica dessa condição recente da maior metrópole da América do Sul não se esgotou, principalmente em relação às novas práticas urbanas que se explicitaram nas manifestações de 2013. Indicadores econômicos e demográficos recentes apontam para uma guinada na geografia social da cidade, com incisivas implicações na sua forma urbana. O objetivo desta pesquisa é perscrutar as possibilidades de transformação urbana emergentes dessa configuração política e econômica verificada. Para tanto destacamos alguns fenômenos urbanos e sociais que possam indicar alternativas aos pactos tradicionais (ou vigentes). Essa nova condição aponta para dificuldades espaciais específicas do urbanismo e da disciplina arquitetônica, que vão além impedimentos históricos já analisados pela tradição crítica local.

Palavras-chave: São Paulo, megacidades, centros urbanos, cultura urbana, espaço urbano.

Introduction

The city of São Paulo has always presented a problem, or has been an enigma, for those who have attempted to understand or plan it. Different analytical perspectives to date have proved to be partial, and integrating them in search of a synthesis has led to unsatisfactory results when faced with the city's reality. Existing theories have so far been unable to explain São Paulo. This could be said of all large global cities. Nevertheless, in São Paulo, this truism is even more incisive: the city has resisted classifications, just as it has not responded to land use and urban planning attempts to control parts of its territory, even after advances in urban policies made possible by the Brazilian Constitution of 1988 (Maricato, 2011b).

Leandro Medrano

Associate professor of the School of Architecture and Urbanism, University of São Paulo (FAUUSP). His research focuses in the fields of architecture theory, urban sociology, urban design and housing. Medrano has a B.A. in Architecture and Urbanism (FAUUSP), a M.S. in Architecture Theory (Universitat Politecnica de Catalunya) and a Ph.D. in Architecture and Urban Design (FAUUSP). He is the author of *Habitação e cidade contemporânea: São Paulo e Madri*, *Vilanova Artigas: habitação e cidade na modernização brasileira* and *As virtualidades do morar: artigas e a metrópole*.

Luiz Recaman

Obtained his Master and PHD degrees in Aesthetics at the School of Philosophy and Human Sciences of USP. He is currently a PhD professor at FAUUSP. His main research deals with architecture aesthetics, critical architecture, Brazilian Modern Architecture and the relationship between social housing and urban development. He has published several articles in national and international professional journals, and is the author of *Brazil's modern architecture*, *Vilanova Artigas: habitação e cidade na modernização brasileira* and *As virtualidades do morar: artigas e a metrópole*.

To say that São Paulo does not exist as a socio-urban unit but only as an indistinct agglomeration, does not resolve the issue. Its infrastructure, the complexity of activities that take place in the city, the functional connection between its parts and the shared experiences of its inhabitants indicate, amongst other existing social factors, that it can be considered a unit, even if often only defined by its precariousness.

The difficulties in understanding this city suggest that this anomalous unit requires interpretation models which are more dynamic and new designations to enable different investigation and intervention strategies. It is precisely because partial strategies have resulted in urbanization collapse that, in the 21st century, São Paulo has become a topic of urban priority for academics, managers and its citizens. It seems clear that the city's serious problems, such as social segregation, violence, congestion, flooding, pollution and property speculation, essentially constitute an urban crisis (Harvey, 2012; Harvey, et al., 2013). Today it seems that it is Lefebvrian virtuality (Lefebvre, 2001) –rather than a common imaginary– that points to a possible city. This Lefebvrian virtuality encompasses more than its parts, be it in terms of our understanding of the city, the separation of classes or its productive geography. Regarding the demands in the city, both specialists and citizens can observe the emergence of a type of unity in the negative sense, which can be summarized as the missing "urban". A desire for urbanity which manifests itself in a separate and sectorial manner, but which points toward a new form of conception or a new horizon of rights amalgamating objectivities and subjectivities, infrastructure and representation, space and production, and freedom and work. This urban virtuality presents a possibility within the current conjuncture that has not been captured by the critical or practical tools available within the local architectural and urban planning tradition, despite the considerable progress which has gathered pace during the last decades. It is this reconstruction in the negative of a necessary urbanity that is capable of defining the city of São Paulo and its present conflicts.

Today, the right to the city takes place beyond the rationed access to the benefits it provides, in particular as demands for changes to the forms of social life. If the city has irreversibly reinvented man, the urban-man sees that he can reinvent his life by transforming the city (Harvey, 2012). "It is not only for twenty cents!", the main slogan of the protests that took the population to the streets of Brazil in

Image 1. São Paulo city center

Source: Prefeitura do Municipio de São Paulo.

June 2013, implies the need to demand minimum urban services (something the city of São Paulo has yet to achieve) whilst at the same time demanding the possibility for transforming the entire city based on a still unstructured general desire for change. Thus, a collective idea of a city to which we are not accustomed emerges (Singer, 2013). The incomplete nature of Brazilian cities is being swamped by a new wave which seeks to transform the concept of urbanity itself and is foreign to the Brazilian social formation. This is a task made doubly difficult since these cities need to be both completed and gain new meaning. The time has come to confront the model of urbanization associated to peripheral countries, in all its aspects: economic, political and cultural.

The critical reflections on Brazilian cities which have mobilized a large number of intellectuals in the last decades of the 20th century did not produce either critical or alternative urban forms. This seems to be a major shortcoming in the current state of affairs. More specifically, despite the existence of important social movements since the process of re-democratization at the end of the 1970s which resulted in the emergence of urban policies, the city has not managed to translate these actions into the development of urban spaces which could reflect the advancements in the critical understanding of social processes.

At present, it seems essential to undertake two tasks: understand the changes related to the social and spatial issues in the city of São Paulo today, at the beginning of the 21st century, in light of the facts which have emerged during the recent popular manifestations; and secondly, analyze the dilemmas of Brazilian architectural thinking which were brought to the fore by this complex scenario of transformations.

The aim of this article is to bring to light a new phase in the urban debate about the city of São Paulo which requires new tools for critical analysis and intervention. Will be analyzed phenomena referring to the national and municipal context between 2001 and 2016 –both qualitatively and quantitatively– so as to identify the movement toward an urban society within the context of a society which has not managed to complete its city cycle as a place for the breakdown of property relations, beliefs and the traditional order (Weber, 1966). This is where Weberian thinking seems to converge with the important reflections of the Brazilian sociologist Florestan Fernandes (1975) on the obstacles to the bourgeois revolution in Brazil. Our intention is that the facts presented can lead to a reflection on a possible object based on a socio-spatial condition that is historically contextualized.

Implosion and affluence

The rapid industrialization of the city of São Paulo in the 20th century was not based, in terms of its territory, on the consolidated urban structure of a large or a capital city. Even if we consider that in European urbanization there was a rupture between the capital city and the industrial city (large city) which did not allow for structural analytical continuity, in the case of São Paulo the abrupt process of urbanization mitigated the symbolic conditioning factors of the traditional city. This process of rapid growth took place in a colonial city which did not have the time or desire to become a 21st century metropolis, and which always had sufficient land that could be incorporated during each new occupation stage. Therefore, for many decades, expansion and obsolescence were both features of the city's growth pattern, especially after the 1930s, when uncontrolled horizontal expansion was intensified (Rolnik, 1997. More recently, at least after the 1990s, the city reaches is territorial and administrative limits, at a time when population growth stabilizes (IBGE, 2010).

This fundamental change in the growth dynamics of São Paulo has not been fully assimilated by planners and citizens –as well as the merciless property market– in terms of the stabilization of the meanings of places and buildings. Vast consolidated areas in need of recovery are transformed into empty plots awaiting business investment, as if they were at the outer limits of the city, instead of being valued for their pre-existing urban characteristics (Fortunato, 2012). The social and urban context has changed, but the city's space-producing machine has kept to its pre-established schemes. That is, starting from zero instead of updating its ownership models. Considering that expansion has ceased, this phenomena could be characterized as a process of implosion.

During the last century, the growth of the São Paulo metropolitan region could be described as an explosion. The population of the city increased from 239,620 inhabitants in 1900 to 10,434,252 inhabitants in the year 2000. The exponential curves relating to Greater São Paulo, which had over 16,000,000 inhabitants in 2000, were even sharper. The total official area of the municipality is entirely urbanized and has incorporated a large part of neighboring cities which form vast peripheral areas or dormitory towns. The movement of poverty toward the peripheries –comprising the absolute majority of inhabitants– and the movement of wealth to the outskirts have known no physical, political-administrative or legal boundaries (Bógus and Taschner, 1999; Caldeira, 2000; Villaça, 1998; 2011).

At that time, the São Paulo urban phenomenon, that is, its urbanized continuum, reached a radius of 100 km from its geographic center, crossing into a number of municipalities. The São Paulo metropolitan region consists of 39 municipalities directly interconnected to neighboring metropolitan regions, which may potentially form a megalopolis linking São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, 425 km apart. This area is under the direct influence of the metropolis, that is, it has essentially urban functions such as sleep and work and sees the movement of both the poor and the wealthy. Bucolic luxury condominiums, dormitory towns, and industrial and commercial centers are connected via saturated roads and avenues. This terri-

torial configuration has not changed. However, the dynamics of uncontrolled expansion has reversed due to phenomena such as a more balanced regional development and technological changes in the industrialization model.

From 2000, with the publication of the 2010 census, it was possible to see that the growth pattern had changed (IBGE, 2010). The city saw an annual population growth during the last decade of 0.76%, reaching a total of 11,253,503 inhabitants, considerably lower than the average 5% between 1950 and 1980. Having reached its territorial limits, an intensive level of economic activity and population stability, the policy agenda started to include new ways of understanding and transforming the occupation dynamics of the city.

However, this spatial and population deceleration must be understood within a framework of economic growth. This factor proved to be fundamental for a potential new way of understanding spatial relations in the city. Particularly with regard to what characterized this period nationwide: a reduction in unemployment and an improvement in the income of a large part of the city's poor population (Garcia and Gonzaga, 2014). This phenomenon underpins the qualitative changes in the debates and demands of recent years (Graphic 1). Changes occurred mainly due to the new demands of this population which vehemently conflict with the model of social and spatial segregation to which both the economic and the political elite (and indeed, why not include architectural and urban planning elites) had been accustomed. The 2012 elections were marked by urban themes which, until that time, had been traditionally left in the background during political disputes. The São Paulo electorate showed a will to engage with the most direct issues (such as mobility, pollution and housing) which were decisive in the outcome of the elections (Haddad, 2012). These issues resurfaced during the protests which took place in June 2013 (Harvey, et al., 2013; Singer, 2013).

Graphic 1: Distribution of classes A, B, C, D and E in 2002, 2008 and 2014
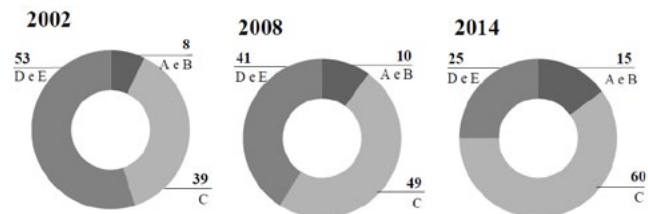
Source: Rappl (2015).

This is good news that must be understood and promoted. However, what are the characteristics of this city which continues to transform itself whilst facing greater stability and permanence regarding its spatial configuration?

Land occupation patterns

The last decade saw a significant change in the traditional pattern of population distribution in São Paulo. More precisely, the tendency of movement toward the periphery and dispersion which has

been the norm since the 1930s was reverted. Data recently published by the 2010 census (IBGE, 2010), numerically confirms the perception that in recent years central areas were re-appropriated in detriment to more distant places.

By dividing the city into five regions, according to the average distance from the center, as proposed by Taschner (1990), and taking into account information provided by the census between 1950 and 2010 (IBGE, 2010), we highlight the following results:

- A fall in the rate of growth in the municipality's population, from 70.5% in the 1950s to 7.85% in the last decade.

- Regions 1 and 2 (central areas) have seen an average population increase of 11.74% between 2000 and 2010, after two decades of average decreases of 15%.

- The growth rates of the furthest regions, which house the population with the lowest income (region 5), drastically decreased: from 160% in the 1950s to 8.83% in the last decade.

- Region 4, less homogeneous in terms of its population profile than region 5 (wealthy and middle-class neighborhoods), saw a reduction in its population of 3.32% in the last decade.

- Region 3, also heterogeneous, grew by 6.36% in the last decade after two decades of population decrease. A similar movement to that observed in more central areas.

The impact of this movement on the social space of the city can be evidenced in the increase in the value of residential properties in central neighborhoods. Even when considering that in recent years properties have substantially increased in value across the country, central neighborhoods such as Belenzinho (220%), Barra Funda (251%), República (290%), Sé (342%) and Luz (362%) in regions 1 and 2 have seen significantly higher increases in relation to periphery neighborhoods such as Grajaú (18%), Cidade Dutra (24%), Vila Brasilândia (37%) and Guaianases (10%), in region 5 (Graphic 2).

Graphic 2: Average valuation of residential properties (%)
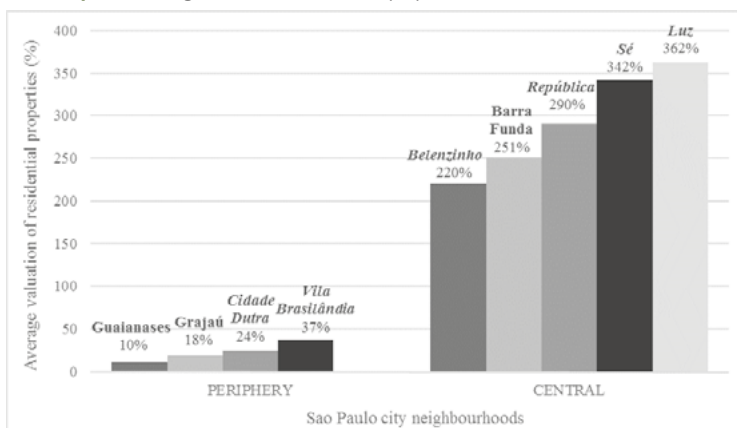
Source: Medrano and Recaman (2013) and Rappl (2015).

The conditions summed up above leads us to a policy issue which is at the heart of the social struggles in the city today: the gentrification of the city's center. From the 1980s onward, the tripod irregular plot –own house– self-build stopped representing the situation in the peripheries of the city, given they had reached their territorial and legal limits (Taschner, 1990). At the same time, the elite abandons the city center toward the south-western districts, increasing the value of property in these areas (Villaça, 2011). Within this scenario, the city center starts to see an influx of poorer people to live in rented accommodation or tenement housing, who also start to occupy empty and degraded properties (Taschner, 1990). In view of this, the movement of gentrification indicates a reconfiguration of the population in general and an increase in property prices in the central region, generating direct conflict with the occupation which had become consolidated in the center in recent decades (Alves, 2011; Medrano and Spinelli, 2014).

The current scenario in the central areas of São Paulo sees the substitution of the lower-income population by that of higher income. It is a significant reversal in the recent trends of outward movement and impoverishment of the city's center. The middle-class's urban young are the latest target of new ventures, whereas the more distant suburbs are becoming older and poorer. After decades of symbolic devaluation of the city (violence, traffic, pollution, etc.), new publicity capturing the new demands emerges, such as cultural heritage, access to information, sociability, diversity and security(!) Above all, market studies suggest that the lack of mobility in the city –a topic which gained political prominence during the June 2013 protests– is a determining factor in the new march toward areas with consolidated infrastructure. This is an enormous discursive shift, if we consider the historical development of the local anti-urbanity movement based on the precariousness of São Paulo's urban structure.

This new state of affairs leads to growing tension between the social movements who defend social housing in the city center and the property market. The government has increasingly become more active within this scenario through initiatives to invert the type of urban planning which has traditionally predominated in the city. In addition to the expansion of programs for rehabilitating buildings for social housing, the new Master Plan proposed a solidarity quota which allocates 20% of all new ventures for social housing. This quota has been reduced during the debating stages for approving the project. In conjunction with the aforementioned housing strategies, the Master Plan inverts the situation regarding the city's road planning by targeting investment toward public transport and cycle paths (PMSP, 2014).

Culture and public spaces

This change in the geography of the city reveals two main factors noticeable in recent years: the emergence of new urban experiences and the identification, at various levels, of problems that are specifically urban-spatial. These factors are associated both with an increase in demands, the strengthening of "urbanity" and the aggravation of problems, in particular those relating to symbolic barriers, precarious infrastructure and the unequal urban space. A

feature of this "urbanity" is a number of wide-reaching perceptions, to which the polity is not accustomed. It is largely associated with the recent increase in the income of the poorer population which is now able to access urban goods, previously inaccessible. This puts pressure on the existing infrastructure, whilst reinventing new urban meanings, redrawing and provoking tension in the geography of the city's symbolic capital.

Since the 1970s, the poor peripheral districts of the city of São Paulo have been consolidated into a single social and political unit. This peripherization is part of a segregating project of urban planning which saw large housing complexes and extensive numbers of land plots for the low-income population, many of which had an irregular legal status. This type of urbanization, horizontal, dispersed and without infrastructure, was the backdrop which triggered intense social associations resulting in more general political strategies. Survival, resistance and political conflicts during the military regime turned the periphery of the city of São Paulo into a space for social struggle (Caldeira, 2000; Kowarick, 2013).

Political strategies have been combined with cultural activities and, more recently, have become increasingly autonomous, creating a diverse and influential scenario of alternative and popular cultural production. Hip-Hop groups, and graffiti and theatre artists frequently refer to politics, protest and opposition, differentiating this type of popular and independent production in the city from other national and international cultural manifestations (Scandiucci, 2006; Weller, 2004). In addition, the city has recently seen literary and fringe literature meetings which have become part of the city's official agenda.

It is important to reflect on the expansion of the city's cultural activities during the last decades and to conceive these with reference to the aforementioned changes in the income of this population. In the first decade of the 21st century, cultural production in the city's periphery –whose political tradition evolved during the military dictatorship– was promoted by the cultural policies of government at different levels. Progressive governments both at municipal and federal levels fostered cultural activities providing resources and infrastructure for their development (Turino, 2010). Although policies were limited in scope, they provided support for the continuation of cultural movements and, in some cases such as theatre, they fostered new productions, now part of the city's official agenda. In addition to governmental incentives, the city's cultural movements were influenced by an increase in the income of the population living in the periphery. This enabled the production and circulation of goods and people within a wider urban environment, now mediated by social media and the internet. This influx altered the original content of cultural groups who moved toward a different political agenda and new forms of activism (Barcellos, Dellagno and Salles, 2014).

The novel set up which had brought together original critical content and public incentive, characteristic of the first decade of this century, has recently evolved into multiple cultural and behavioral expressions of the people of the peripheries of São Paulo. The initial confrontation between the "periphery" and the "center", very explicit in the 1990s Hip-Hop manifestations, gave way to a movement for occupying the "city" as a space for public and poli-

tical representation (Caldeira, 2012). The idea of "invading" the city and its symbolic capital is thus able to overcome the geographical chasm and move toward a more democratic and unitary vision of the urban space. It is important to highlight that this movement for unification and "invasion" is part of a context of political struggle which encounters real resistance, preventing the resolution of fundamental issues related to this dual space. It is even possible to conceive this "invasion" as exacerbating and bringing to the fore the problems relating to the spatial configuration of São Paulo and its segregating urbanization - a model which worked well for the conservative modernization of the city during its industrial epicenter phase.

What characterizes this new moment is the amalgamation of urban pulses - in their wider social sense - and repressed consumption, whose content is neither immediately political, nor insignificant. It seems that a new city may be on the horizon, beyond this multiplicity of actions which conflict with the existing city, in as much as it can neither sustain the old social forms nor the new re-appropriation of the city by the population.

The symbolic occupation of the "city", where full employment and a higher income have fostered the consumption of goods and services, has resulted in the collapse of urban mobility, one of the main problems identified by the population (Rolnik and Klintowitz, 2011). Public spaces have also been affected by the new level of usage, both in terms of areas available and their quality and structure. The occupation of the streets in short-lived events has been a problem for the city which does not possess appropriate open spaces for this type of dynamics. Gastronomic fairs, "Virada Cultural" (24-hour cultural event) (Image 2), parades, the celebration of the World Cup in Vila Madalena, the "Baixo Augusta" phenomenon, street carnivals and "buraco da minhoca" parties,[2] sports events and specialized commercial streets which should have been a normal part of city life, but in recent years have resulted in the degradation of spaces. These events occur frequently, facilitated by extra-urban and logistic mechanisms (Vargas and Lisboa, 2011). From the urban planning point of view, it is interesting that this new mass cultural dynamics has increased the pressure on the city's public spaces. Recently, this has become so obvious that it is possible to ascribe them a place outside more general public demands. This is the novelty: the city's space is a site for conflicts beyond issues of property speculation and ownership - its emblems and symbols are also at stake.

The recent phenomenon of "rolezinho" is an extreme example of this fusion of social energies in a new format. These are meetings of young people from the periphery, particularly in shopping malls, organized via social media. The use of shopping malls as leisure spaces is not new. What is new is the number of low-income young people who have access to social media and who have transformed the "group" phenomena into something involving thousands. This has caused large disturbances and scared the middle classes who were used to having their own exclusive spaces. The entire imaginary of this event is associated to consuming, be it in terms of clothes, musical tastes or meeting places. It has expanded the

---

[2] Spontaneous cultural events in which urban tribes take over alternative/underground spaces such as streets and spaces underneath viaducts.

Image 2. "Virada Cultural" (24-hour cultural event) in the São Paulo central area

Source: Prefeitura do Município de São Paulo.

consumerist universe both in terms of new economic possibilities and access to the codes of the universe of iconic brands. It is worth remembering that Shopping Malls, as a specific local phenomenon, have become a place for entertainment and a meeting point, over and above a place for shopping; they are a pragmatic solution in cities without a tradition of public spaces, besieged by urban violence.

"Rolezinho", in its original format, highlights two objective situations in the city: 1) the fact that a desire for conspicuous consumption is set against a background of segregation which had initially ignored this mass of low-income young people; 2) the shopping mall –a flawed and anti-urban spatial structure and a feature of the city of São Paulo which suppressed open spaces as a rudimentary means of social control– is now dismantled by the "rolezinho" phenomenon. It is worth pointing out that this attack on the existing urban consensus of the city was not a conscious political act on the part of any particular group. It was carried out by subjects who had been excluded from the social advantages associated to the consumer society, the current basis of the country's economic growth. Its impact on the city relates to the physical presence of these new actors –an emerging mass– whose actions, as far as we can see, do not involve conscious critical content.

Our aim here is to directly focus on space and urbanity within the current dynamics in the city, the same city which evolved outside civilized spatial formations and in which space now becomes the main locus for political struggle. From a structurally urban point of view, new spatial conceptions have led to accentuated social tensions which had, up to that time, encompassed mainly issues of ownership and their spatial outcomes. For example, land regularization, a fundamental part of the social struggles for the right to housing, but nonetheless limited, given the greater complexity of the population's demands. In the city of São Paulo, macroeconomic transformations –growth based on the increase of consumption by the lower-income classes– considered in broader terms have led to major conflicts of an explicitly spatial nature.

Economic activity and territory

Financial globalization and new forms of employment regulation brought new functions and characteristics to the precarious and fragmented structures of the city of São Paulo. In recent years, changes in a number of aspects associated to the relationship between employment and territory were observed. However, changes have not meant a reconfiguration of the city's spaces, but an adaptation of its fragmentary structures to new ways of production and employment.

The São Paulo metropolis was mainly formed during the process of industrial acceleration started in the 1940s (Grostein, 2001; Rolnik, 1997). However, its urban space cannot be appropriately described as a classic industrial metropolis, consisting of industrial, wealthy and low-income areas. Income from land, hand-in-hand with mechanisms for increasing land value, prevailed over and above the rationale of factory spatial organization. This phenomenon was recently identified as a characteristic of capitalism itself and partly explains the recent urban and property crisis in many parts of the industrialized world (Harvey, 2012). Nevertheless, in Brazil, land issues have shaped the country's economic and social life since colonization (Faoro, 2001). This primary mechanism for adding value to land has lasted - or continued to prevail - into industrial times. However, it was not met with the same amount of social and cultural resistance as in other more classic cases. The imbalance between archaic economic forces and modernizing forces, together with a fragile urban culture, have shaped the seemingly unplanned space of the city of São Paulo (Oliveira, 2003).

It is worth reaffirming that an understanding of this duality existed even at the moment of the productive and urban impact of Brazilian modernization, that is, the 1930s Revolution.[3] It is present in the classic theories of the "Brazilian Formation" (Cândido, 1993). The rural characteristics of the society as a major impediment to a bourgeois revolution in Brazil is described in all the classic works on the country's "Formation", that is, the diagnosis of rural

---

3   The so-called 1930s Revolution overthrew the República Velha (Old Republic) and the oligarchic power which ruled Brazil. The new government had the effect of modernizing and industrializing the country. In 1937, President Getúlio Vargas instituted what became known as the Estado Novo (New State), repealing the 1934 Constitution and installing a dictatorship which lasted until 1945.

determination as a fundamental obstacle to a Bourgeois Revolution in the country (Cândido, 2000; Fernandes, 1975; Holanda, 1995; Prado Jr., 2012) or as the positive foundation for an original tropical modernization (Freyre, 2013).

The "lack of territorial planning" seen in the light of both the European urban traditions and American suburbanization is, in the Brazilian case, and most specifically in the case of the São Paulo metropolis, a direct and unrestrained translation of pure economic relations. Consolidated political and social processes and urban –or public– culture are not present in Brazil to the same degree and intensity as they were in the industrial cities which evolved in the 19th century, where precariousness of land in the liberal city of the first half of this century was an obstacle for the second industrial revolution, both in terms of functional issues and in terms of social control. The victorious bourgeoisie implemented large reforms –by means of legislation and urban planning processes– which marked the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the industrial era in the large metropolises. In the case of Brazil, hyper-late industrialization and the malleability and functionality of precariousness were not an obstacle. Indeed, they optimized industrial accumulation against a backdrop of the international division of labor (Oliveira, 1988).

This framework is still in place: territorial precariousness underpins productive strategies. However, it has drastically changed during recent decades. Subsequent to the 1970s oil crisis which interrupted the great growth cycle of the Brazilian "economic miracle", the 1980s financial crisis affected the whole country and reduced growth. This scenario of difficulties gave rise to a process which decreased the share of industry in the GDP, substituted by commodities, agriculture, services and in particular, financial capital. It is against this backdrop, which reveals a change in the peripheral participation of Brazil within transnational capitalism, that the country gained fragile access to globalization (Furtado, 1978).

The city of São Paulo, the industrial capital of the country, was particularly affected by this new economic configuration. It was responsible for 15.8% of the GDP in 1980 and for 11.5% in 2010 (IBGE, 2010). The city remains the country's main production center: industries, financial markets, services, technology and culture. São Paulo has been socially and territorially transformed so as to become an advanced services hub. In addition to the de-industrialization which affected the entire country (Cano, 2012), São Paulo saw in recent years the transfer of its industries to other municipalities. Thus, the general process of de-industrialization was significant and visible, affecting the city's urban structure, for example, leaving behind large empty spaces in the central areas, previously occupied by textile industries.

However, since the 1970s the re-organization of production has been founded upon São Paulo's precarious urban structure. Adaptation to a new "post-industrial" reality also made use of archaic territorial structures, re-organized so as to meet new demands, for example, in housing. This corresponds to a period which saw the growth in favelas and the construction of the large BHN (National Housing Bank) housing complexes in the most remote peripheries. The following years of re-democratization and the creation of progressive urban policies did not succeed in changing the

urban scenario, either because of the economic crisis or because discussions were still incipient. Urban planning instruments were drafted in public institutions and universities and resulted in the legislation regulating municipalities –the "Cities' Statute" (2001)– and the creation of a Ministry for Cities (2003). However, from the point of view of urban form and structure, results have so far proved to be modest and inefficient in face of the consolidated processes of production of the city's space (Maricato, 2011a).

The results of this situation are threefold. The first, already referred to, is the consolidation of the south-western axis of the city as its new financial and commercial hub, which has been progressively moving away from the city's urban center. The second –an essential element to the proposals of a return to and an increase in the value of property in central districts– is the existence of large empty spaces, the result of the move out of the city's industrial complex. The property market has been increasingly interested in these plots, due to their growing value, for building large vertical condominiums. Their aggressive isolation is a new and difficult urban problem. The third factor relates to flexible forms of precarious labor which have adapted to the unplanned city. An example would be the mobility problems affecting the informal clothes production centers in the periphery and distribution, also informal, to the center of the city. This was resolved with the creation of a public market open between 3 am and 10 am in the Brás neighborhood, an important commercial zone in the city (Wu, 2010; Wu and Medrano, 2009). This "early morning market" started illegally and was recognized by the municipal authorities in 2005. It is currently being refurbished and includes a project for a new shopping center, a bus station, a hotel and commercial high-rise buildings.

The city did not consolidate its Fordist form which more clearly separates capital from work spaces (factory and home). Recently, both the global São Paulo, encompassing high-end goods and services and the São Paulo of "globalization from below" (Tarrius, 2002) have adapted to structures which, from the point of view of a planned city, are dysfunctional.

Housing and space

An important reflection on urban possibilities, which is revealed by this socio-spatial movement relates to architecture, in particular, collective housing. From the point of view of the social urgency of housing issues, the numbers show a recent improvement. Nonetheless, in terms of urban issues –where types of housing make up one of the main strategies for the construction of public spaces– the aforementioned historical difficulties still persist.

If the development of Brazilian cities is still influenced by inherited, archaic and structuring colonial social relations, this is also the case with the ideologies which informed Brazilian modern architecture (Medrano and Recaman, 2013). Once again, collective housing is key to understanding this paradox.

Government initiatives adopted to address the issue of low-income housing in the city –and in Brazil– have reproduced the links established by the 1930s revolution between the authoritarian state

and modern architecture, which in general terms have driven industrial modernization (Recaman, 2007). The strategies of the Estado-Novo for modernizing working-class housing in the country, previously in the hands of the private sector, provided an opportunity for the new architectural culture to practice theories of modern urban spaces. Proposals funded by the Institutes of Retirement and Pensions (IAPI) are emblematic of this period, in particular of the difficulties relating to the academic field of architecture this article seeks to highlight.

An important difference helps us to understand the limitations of the IAPI experiments as wide-ranging projects in terms of working-class housing in the country. If social housing was the ideological and aesthetic basis of the modern movement in architecture, this is not how Le Corbusier's work was appropriated in Brazil. Palaces (MESP), bourgeois leisure facilities (Pampulha) and luxury residences (Parque Guinle) were the hallmarks of the formation of the Brazilian architectural "system". This means that the adoption of the modern vocabulary was defined by formal issues and not by those resulting from the social and constructive rationale of the architectural modernity of the 1920s. It is clear that formalism is a determining factor which emerged from "architectural rationality" dialectics (Tafuri, 1979), but when it migrated to the Brazilian context, it did so at the expense of its social emancipatory values, equally as fundamental within these dialectics.

The state experience between 1940 and 1964, prior to the creation of BNH, was an attempt to associate the results of Brazilian architecture to social housing. However, it had a number of flaws which went beyond the lack of public interest in social issues, as pointed out by some critics. Professional limitations, or at least those relating to how modern architecture was adopted in the country, were equally responsible for the lack of success of the feeble solutions provided by the IAPIs.

First, despite the success of Brazilian modern architecture, this field of knowledge neglected research on social housing. It could not, therefore, provide useful housing solutions, particularly in relation to urban morphology and urban planning, given that all strategies were geared toward the virtuosity of the object-building, devoid of any utopian energy. It is possible to state that in terms of the discipline of architecture, there is no direct relationship between these housing experiences and the beginnings of Brazilian modern architecture, not even in its renewed form, practiced in São Paulo after the 1950s. The IAPIs were isolated and asystematic projects, incapable of constituting a progressive alternative to the hegemonic model. In contrast to the modern housing experience in Germany, these projects were not based on previous systematic knowledge which enabled them to develop alternatives, neither was their arrival held hostage to architectural failings.

Secondly, these housing complexes were not a widespread solution in terms of constructive techniques. The absence of constructive rationalization prevented their use in mass solutions which, despite being precarious from the point of view of urban planning, could have resolved, in numerical terms, the housing deficit as it did in the post-WWII period in France. In that country, wide-ranging programs associated to systems for mass-produced construction were able to balance the demand for housing in numerical terms, though this solution has been criticized since the 1970s because of the social problems associated to it.

Examples of this housing policy are associated to the conceptions and ideologies related to the cycle of industrial modernization (national developmentism). They consisted of *ad hoc* fragments in the middle of a city which were developed regardless of any spatial planning. The molecule which tenuously brought together modern architecture, social housing and the State did not resist the ideological crisis at the end of national developmentism's progressive cycle at the beginning of the 1960s. From that moment onward, technocratic policies considerably expanded the building of social housing by using modern Fordist schemes, developing large complexes in the remotest outskirts of the city (Image 3. At the end of this radical experiment, no illusions remained regarding the social and urban potential of Brazilian modern architecture. It disregarded social inclusion –represented by housing programs– competing instead for the military government's large ventures.

This is the fragile context of ideological crisis in which Brazilian modern architecture had to face São Paulo's de-industrialization, the country's introduction to neoliberalism and globalization, as well as the re-democratization of the 1980s. During this period, whilst the centralizing State was in crisis, unified housing policies ceased and the process of *favela* creation, particularly in the city of São Paulo, accelerated.

The reaction to the dismantling of social policies in the 1990s drove ad hoc experiments by local governments. One of the most significant took place during the administration of the Worker's Party in the city of São Paulo, their first experience of administrating large cities. Between 1989 and 1992 the city attempted to "revert priorities" (Kowarick and Singer, 1993), by strengthening the role of the municipal government as mediator and negotiator of the different interests at stake in the city, prioritizing the demands of popular movements. One of its most important outcomes was precisely in the housing sector. It was the first big attempt to draw up a wide-ranging social housing program in line with the new urban and architectural strategies.

A number of programs were conceived and developed whose features contrasted with the large complexes planned during the military regime. Integrated within the urban framework and the existing infrastructure, new housing complexes sought proximity to central areas. They had a smaller number of units and prioritized public spaces and their integration within each neighborhood. Proposals were in line with international debates on urban design and moved away from the local tradition both in terms of urban planning processes and Brazilian architecture. In contrast to the BHN's technocratic machine which built standardized and massive complexes in the 1970s, the complexes built in São Paulo at the beginning of the 1990s were planned by architects open to discussions on culture, urban planning and popular participation which guided the local administration's policies.

However, these experiences were not the norm, both from the point of view of urban-architectural experiments and from the

Image 3. Cidade Tiradentes housing complex, built in the periphery of the city of São Paulo in the 1970s

Source: Laboratory QUAPA, FAUUSP.

political point of view. In São Paulo and in Brazil de-centralizing policies geared toward privatization predominated, in line with the neoliberal consensus (Arretche, 2002; Valença and Bonates, 2010). The State gave priority to financing the end consumer who would purchase their houses on the market, resulting in increasing difficulties both for the low-income population and the structure of cities.

Housing solutions based on the financial system, the market and veto players, added to the cost of the few plots available and the agenda of social movements made housing issues in São Paulo all the more complex. The local administration was essentially responsible for the most critical situations, usually involving the lowest-income sector of the population. In view of the above, the experience of the last decades showed that there has been a consensus around case-by-case solutions, avoiding large housing

complexes. Recent strategies have improved the quality of housing policies, via the re-urbanization of favelas, the building of small complexes in occupied areas (Image 4) and ear-marking abandoned buildings in central areas for public housing.

These specific solutions not only reveal an awareness of the current urban complexity, but also the absence of far-reaching housing and urban planning policies. Leaving aside their potential architectural quality, current interventions do not constitute a mechanism for comprehensive land occupation regulated by the public sector. Furthermore, they do not respond to the pressures in terms of the housing deficit. Generally speaking, the major emerging urban issue is that housing –not only so-called social housing– is not considered in primarily urban terms, neither in relation to its form nor in terms of developing a new more diverse and democratic social geography.

Image 4. Housing complex in Heliopolis slum. Architect: Hector Vigliecca

Source: Laboratory QUAPA, FAUUSP.

Urban policies

In the present scenario, in terms of territorial urban planning control, we have seen the beginning of a new phase in the city, seeking to roll back or attenuate privatization and road-priority principles which have dictated spatial dynamics in the 20th century. The new Master Plan drafted in 2014 reflects the recent socio-cultural transformations in the city. One hundred and fourteen public hearings were conducted with the total participation of 25,692 people who contributed with 10,147 proposals for improving the plan. Face-to-face meetings resulted in 5,684 proposals and a further 4,463 proposals were made via internet using tools such as the "Gestão Urbana" website, where 1,826 online forms were completed, 902 were collected via a collaborative map, 1,204 through the participatory minutes available online and 531 on the Municipality's website (PMSP, 2014).

It is participative in terms of its formulation, discussions and dissemination. Furthermore, and unusually for the local urban culture, it adopts urban planning tools, translatable into spatial strategies which reach beyond purely functional aspects. As described in its objectives:

> The main purpose of the new Master Plan is to humanize and re-balance São Paulo, bringing housing and jobs closer together and addressing socio-territorial inequalities. In order to reach these objectives, it is important to deal with idle land that does not fulfil a social function; implement a housing policy for those in need; value the environment; steer the city's growth toward where there is public transport; improve urban life at neighborhood level; promote the economic development of the city; preserve the city's heritage and value cultural initiatives; and strengthen popular participation in decision-making about the future of the city (PMSP, No date).

In order to do so, the 2014 Master Plan contains 10 priority strategies:

- A plan to socialize production gains in the city
- A plan to improve urban mobility
- A plan to re-organize the metropolitan dynamics
- A plan to promote the city's economic development
- A plan to preserve heritage and value cultural initiatives
- A plan to guarantee the right to decent housing for those in need
- A plan to improve urban life at neighborhood level
- A plan to steer the city's growth toward areas close to public transport
- A plan to incorporate the environmental agenda into the city's development
- A plan to strengthen popular participation in decision-making about the city's future.

Although these mechanisms are not innovative in any way –having been long established across other cities in the world– the new Master Plan is doubtless a change in the position of authorities with regard to urban planning processes. The serious problems of Brazilian cities, in particular São Paulo, were caused by the economic impetus for optimizing wealth, based on income from land, but also on the modernist conceptions of Brazilian urban thinking. Planning and the property market may oppose each other, but they also share the same rationale, based on the economic and spatial principle of the indivisibility of property.

A change in the traditional mechanisms –zoning, land division via allotments and individual transport in the form of cars– and new priorities –public transport, mixed use, social mixing and valuing the public aspects of urban spaces– have become possible after extensive debates around the Cities' Statute. Many changes would have been possible even without regulation by the Master Plan. However, the difficulties in implementing urban planning strategies are rooted in the resistance of the economic agents who have been key players in the spatial regulation of the city. In view of the above, the current capacity of the city's social forces is being tested in their ability to define spatial directions, ensuring their potential for social modernization.

Conclusion

Dynamic factors driving the city of São Paulo's growth in the last century have undergone drastic changes in recent years. Structural differences related to land and property ownership continue to affect the configuration of the city. However, they now clash with a new understanding of urban space. Topics which were previously disregarded by social actors seem to have gained definitive relevance, such as spatial non-segregation, innovative mobility, public spaces and cultural get-togethers. In addition to the traditional issues of urban land rights, current demands associated to the new socio-economic and cultural context are in direct conflict with both the city and the country's archaic structures. Thus, it is not a question of overcoming historical conflicts, but that new conflicts bring to the fore spatial arrangements which did not previously exist. The struggle moves in the direction of a broader urban and cultural field where spatial disputes supersede more immediate housing issues and draw attention to questions of the right to the city, until recently left outside the realm of national political struggles. The current state of affairs identified here requires that institutional agents and critical architecture adopt new instruments for analysis and strategies for action. The urban space, as an arena for action and social dynamics, has to prevail over sectorial and case-by-case solutions which characterize Brazilian architecture. In addition, it should also prevail over other urban agents involved in the transformation of the city of São Paulo.

Acknowledgements

Bibliography

ALVES, G. da A. (2011). "Reclassification of the downtown area of São Paulo". *Estudos Avançados*, 25 (71): 109-118.

ARRETCHE, M. (2002). "Federalismo e relações intergovernamentais no Brasil: a reforma de programas sociais". *Revista de Ciências Sociais*, 45 (3): 431-458.

BARCELLOS, R., DELLAGNO, E. and SALLES, H. (2014). "Práticas organizacionais e o estabelecimento de lógicas de equivalência: o Circuito Fora do Eixo à luz da Teoria Política do Discurso". *Revista de Administração*, 49 (4): 684-697. Retrieved from:

BÓGUS, L. M. M. and TASCHNER, S. P. (1999). "São Paulo, velhas desigualdades, novas configurações espaciais". *Revista Brasileira de Estudos Urbanos e Regionais*, 0 (1): 153-174.

CALDEIRA, T. P. do R. (2012). "Inscrição e circulação: novas visibilidades e configurações do espaço público em São Paulo". *Novos Estudos - CEBRAP*, 94: 31-67.

CALDEIRA, T. P. do R. (2000). *Cidade de muros: crime, segregação e cidadania em São Paulo*. São Paulo: Editora 34.

CÂNDIDO, A. (2000). *Formação da literatura brasileira: momentos decisivos 1750-1836*. São Paulo: Itatiaia.

CÂNDIDO, A. (1993). *Formação da literatura brasileira: 1836-1880*. São Paulo: Itatiaia.

CANO, W. (2012). "Deindustralization in Brazil". *Economia e Sociedade*, 21: 831-851. Retrieved from:

FAORO, R. (2001). *Os donos do poder*. Rio de Janeiro: Globo.

FERNANDES, F. (1975). *A revolução burguesa no Brasil ; ensaio de interpretação sociológica*. São Paulo: Zahar.

FORTUNATO, I. (2012). "Mooca, ou como a verticalização devora a paisagem e a memória de um bairro". *Arquitextos*, 12 (140.05). Retrieved from:

FREYRE, G. (2013). *Sobrados e mucambos*. São Paulo: Global.

FURTADO, C. (1978). *Criatividade e dependência na civilização industrial*. São Paulo: Paz e Terra.

GARCIA, L. and GONZAGA, L. L. (2014). "Pesquisa de Emprego e Desemprego: trinta anos de acompanhamento do mercado de trabalho na Região Metropolitana de São Paulo". *Estudos Avançados*, 28 (81): 127-140.

GROSTEIN, M. D. (2001). "Metrópole e expansão urbana: a persistência de processos "insustentáveis"". *São Paulo Em Perspectiva*, 15 (1): 13-19. Retrieved from:

HADDAD, F. (2012). *Programa de governo: coligação para mudar e renovar São Paulo*. Retrieved from:

HARVEY, D. (2012). *Rebel cities: from the right to the city to the urban revolution*. Brooklyn: Verso.

HARVEY, D., et al. (2013). *Cidades rebeldes: passe livre e as manifestações que tomaram as ruas do Brasil*. São Paulo: Boitempo.

HOLANDA, S. B. de. (1995). *Raízes do Brasil*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras.

IBGE. (2010). *Censo demográfico da cidade de São Paulo*. Retrieved from: KOWARICK, L. (2013). "Cortiços: a humilhação e a subalternidade". *Tempo Social*, 25 (2): 49-77.

KOWARICK, L. and SINGER, A. (1993). "A experiência do Partido dos Trabalhadores na prefeitura de São Paulo". *Novos Estudos Cebrap*, 35: 195-216.

LEFEBVRE, H. (2001). *O Direito à Cidade*. São Paulo: Centauro.

MARICATO, E. (2011a). *O impasse da política urbana no Brasil*. Petrópolis: Vozes.

MARICATO, E. (2011b). "Uncontrolled metropolises". *Estudos Avançados*, 25 (71): 7-22.

MEDRANO, L. and RECAMAN, L. (2013). *Vilanova Artigas. Habitação e cidade na modernização brasileira*. Campinas: Unicamp.

MEDRANO, L. and SPINELLI, J. (2014). "Urban policies and projects for social housing in central areas. The case of the Habitasampa competition (São Paulo, Brazil)". *Habitat International*, 42: 39-47.

OLIVEIRA, F. de. (2003). "The Duckbilled Platypus". *New Left Review*, 24: 40-57.

OLIVEIRA, F. de. (1988). *A economia brasileira: crítica à razão dualista*. São Paulo: Vozes.

PMSP. (2014). *Plano Diretor Estratégico do Município de São Paulo*. Retrieved from:

PMSP. (No date). *Plano Diretor Estratégico*. Retrieved from:

PRADO Jr., C. P. (2012). *Formação do Brasil contemporâneo*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras.

RAPPL, K. (2015). *Políticas públicas e habitação de interesse social : similaridades e diferenças entre o caso Brasileiro e o Espanhol*. Campinas: Unicamp, MA disertation. Retrieved from:

RECAMAN, L. (2007). "Forma sem utopia". In: E. Andreoli and A. Forty (eds.), *Brazil's Modern architecture*. London: Phaidon Press, pp 40-59.

ROLNIK, R. (1997). *A cidade e a lei: legislação, política urbana e territórios na cidade de São Paulo*. São Paulo: Studio Nobel.

ROLNIK, R. and KLINTOWITZ, D. (2011). "Mobilidade na cidade de São Paulo". *Estudos Avançados*, 25 (71): 89-108.

SCANDIUCCI, G. (2006). "Cultura hip hop: um lugar psíquico para a juventude negro-descendente das periferias de São Paulo". *Imaginário*, 12 (12): 225-249.

SINGER, A. (2013). "Brasil, junho de 2013, classes e ideologias cruzadas". *Novos Estudos - CEBRAP*, 97: 23-40.

TAFURI, M. (1979). *Architecture and utopia: design and capitalist development*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

TARRIUS, A. (2002). *La mondialisation par le bas. Les nouveaux nomades des économies souterraines.* Paris: Balland.

TASCHNER, S. P. (1990). "Habitação e demografia intra-urbana em São Paulo". *Revista Brasileira de Estudos de População*, 7 (1): 3-34.

TURINO, C. (2010). "Ponto de cultura: a construção de uma política pública". *Cadernos Cenpec*, 5 (7): 23-31. Retrieved from: VALENÇA, M. M. and BONATES, M. F. (2010). "The trajectory of social housing policy in Brazil: from the National Housing Bank to the Ministry of the Cities". *Habitat International*, 34 (2): 165-173.

VARGAS, H. C. and LISBOA, V. S. (2011). "Dinâmicas espaciais dos grandes eventos no cotidiano da cidade: significados e impactos urbanos". *Cadernos Metrópole*, 13 (25): 145-161. Retrieved from:

VILLAÇA, F. (2011). "São Paulo: urban segregation and inequality". *Estudos Avançados*, 25 (71): 37-58.

VILLAÇA, F. (1998). *Espaço intra-urbano no Brasil*. São Paulo: Studio Nobel.

WEBER, M. (1966). *The city*. Chicago: Free Press.

WELLER, W. (2004). "O hip hop como possibilidade de inclusão e de enfrentamento da discriminação e da segregação na periferia de São Paulo". *Caderno CRH*, 17 (40): 103-116. Retrieved from: WU, C. K. (2010). *Habitação e trabalho em domicílio para a indústria do vestuário na cidade de São Paulo*. Campinas: Unicamp, MA disertation. Retrieved from:

WU, C. K. and MEDRANO, L. S. (2009). "Social housing and the garment industry in Sao Paulo's downtown". Paper presented at the ISA-RC21 Sao Paulo Conference.