

# EDITORIAL

Once again, our readers will note that articles included in the current issue of *Revista Brasileira de Estudos Urbanos e Regionais (Brazilian Journal of Urban and Regional Studies)* have been selected from the continuous flow of articles received by the journal. It is greatly satisfying to observe that this reflects the degree with which RBEUR has become established as a medium acknowledged for its high quality among researchers within the scientific community in the area of Urban and Regional Planning and its related fields, across Brazil and more recently, in Latin American and European countries as well. This quality, also currently expressed through our search for non-Brazilian authors, has begun to manifest itself in terms of growing internationalization followed by the Editorial Board. Broadening the diffusion of the Brazilian scientific production within international debate, and disseminating contemporary contributions from non-Brazilian authors to the Brazilian academy, have motivated initiatives implemented over the last few years, which have now begun to demonstrate results. Hence, two of the nine articles that make up Issue 19/2 of RBEUR have been written by non-Brazilian authors, also submitted by continuous flow and assessed by ad hoc reviewers, to whom we would like once more to extend our thanks.

Since the selected articles have been submitted spontaneously, evidently the current issue has not been dedicated to one specific theme. Nonetheless, it has been possible to link the articles entrusted to the RBEUR by their authors, which reflect the prevalence of certain themes, such as on the one hand, conceptual contributions on the nature of urban space, reflections on urban social movements and social participation in planning, and on the other, the emergence of new themes such as the links between urban space and technological innovation, through to analyses on specific empirical questions such as the LGBT night-life economy and *Amazônia Azul* (Blue Amazon). The combination of articles that follows echoes the perception that in our view expresses the concept that both Brazilian and non-Brazilian researchers have put forward regarding RBEUR as a contemporary channel for divulging qualified scientific pieces of work on themes that are both classical and emergent, traditional and innovative.

The sequence of articles begins with three differing approaches surrounding the conceptual debate on urban space, a central theme for RBEUR. The first is presented in the article “How is the participation going? The conditions for elaborating participative master plans” by **Elson Manoel Pereira**, which is dedicated to the efforts of learning from a critical review of participative urban planning since its very earliest experiences, based on the geographical category of territory. In order to reveal the necessary conditions for quality participative processes – in addition to those referred to in the bibliography (political will, participative tradition, institutional conditions, technician adherence to the processes), the author examines the elaboration of municipal master plans that guide the use and occupation of land. This analysis leads him to emphasize that it is indispensable to understand the territory for which it has been planned. With the support of a survey on the procedures adopted to prepare the Master Plan of the southern city of Florianópolis, initiated in 2006 and instituted in 2014, Pereira acknowledges the existence of territorial conflicts that would not have been revealed in technocratic processes. Furthermore, he stresses that participation, by strengthening historically constructed territorialities, brings with it the potential to prevent the territoriality of capital from being established, particularly real estate capital.

The theme surrounding urban issues follows on with the occupation of urban areas in Belo Horizonte, Brazil’s third largest metropolis located in the southeast region, focused upon in an analysis conducted by **Camila Diniz Bastos, Felipe Nunes Coelho Magalhães, Guilherme Marinho Miranda, Harley Silva, João Bosco Moura Tonucci Filho, Mariana de Moura Cruz** and **Rita de Cássia Lucena Velloso**

in the article “Between abstract space and differential space: urban occupations in Belo Horizonte”. The authors raise the question whether these practices, more specifically the struggles (actions of resistance) and the daily life lived by its inhabitants (collective construction of the occupations), have caused spatial differentiations. Investigating the case of occupations in Belo Horizonte – in the light of Henri Lefebvre’s teachings on *differential space* amidst the contradictions of the current *abstract space* –, the authors conclude that, although occupations are political-community experiments, *abstract space* emerges within them through various devices (the informal real estate market, public safety and coexistence with illicit activities). Thus, if, on the one hand, occupations act in opposition to the production of hegemonic space in a metropolis, then on the other, they reproduce practices consistent with hegemonic social space. Hence the contribution of the authors: to recognize the obstacles in spatial appropriation that effectively produce differences, and, as a result, the need to “think of ways to update the tangible meanings of counter-hegemonic actions in other spaces” (p. 265, editors’ translation).

One of these “other spaces” is analytically contemplated by **Gustavo Resgala** in the article “The social currency and the strengthening of the differential space in the peripheries”. Coincidentally, in this same issue, a second author also discusses *differential* and *abstract spaces*, both based on Henri Lefebvre’s theoretical framework. What distinguishes this article from the previous one is its starting interrogation: is social currency capable of demarcating a territory where difference and creativity gain strength? By analyzing the experience of the Banco Comunitário de Palmas – in which there are 35,000 partners, all residents in the Palmeiras Complex (Fortaleza-CE), and whose currency (Palmas) has circulated since 2000 –, Resgala concludes that a collective/community experience (which questions the autonomy of the monetary system to the point of introducing a local currency), certainly constructs a difference. Nevertheless, according to the author, its mere introduction is insufficient to demonstrate local development, or to declare, in Lefebvrian terms, the emergence of the urban from the periphery. The important feature is that this adoption signals aspects for the production of a differentiated space, in the face of an abstract space the production of which is meant as hegemonic in the production of cities. It should be noted that the reflections presented have initiated further research, which should include two community banks – Esmeradas and Igarapé – both active in Belo Horizonte. It is probable that through these, Resgala will introduce new ideas on this theme.

The next article leads the reader onto an emergent theme. With the intriguing title, “Just for the boy with the golden body tanned by the Ipanema sun: the spatial distribution of LGBT night economy in the city of Rio de Janeiro”, the work of **Diego Santos Vieira de Jesus**, based on bibliographical and qualitative research (interviews), proposes a discussion on a topic that has not yet been approached in urban and regional studies: the spatial distribution of the LGBT night-life economy in the city of Rio de Janeiro and the relationship established with the creative industries (performing arts and gastronomy). Based on the exclusionary parameters of “pink capitalism” – understood as the incorporation of the LGBT community’s aesthetic and cultural needs into the market economy, especially those stemming from gay, cisgender, Western, white, upper-middle class men –, the author argues that the development of this market niche in the aforementioned city results from actions by the City Hall, the business community and users of the services within this economy. At their core, these agents redefine their role in demarcating the night-life economy for this community. Besides illustrating how services are concentrated in the City Center and Southern Region of Rio de Janeiro, the author makes it evident that the aforementioned incorporation was due to the increase in clientele and not necessarily to the recognition of sexual diversity within the capitalist system, which clearly reproduces the exclusionary character of that market.

The following articles focus on spaces of different scales with approaches encompassing an economic dimension. The first, “The economic and spatial restructuring and development process in the North Sector of the Metropolitan Region of Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais”, authored by **Luciano dos Santos**

**Diniz** and **Maura Pardini Bicudo Vêras**, challenges the problematics of the acknowledged association between the strategic planning of cities, public investments and the private appropriation of real estate valorization, now under the supremacy of financial capital instead of industrial capital. Taking the so-called Northern Sector of the city of Belo Horizonte as their empirical object, the authors argue that such supremacy is redefining the sense of space itself. Also based on Lefebvre, on the one hand, and on Molotch and Logan's argument regarding the "urban growth machine", the article seeks to demonstrate that expansion towards the north of the Metropolitan Region of Belo Horizonte, during a period that marked a growth in family income, employment and public investment, vigorously reiterates the coalition of interests that has been redesigning space structures to benefit the valorization of private capital in Brazil, in the example of similar phenomena observed in many urban centers across the globe.

The economic dimension of space production also extends into the next article, "Spatial distribution of mammography equipment in Brazil", referring the reader towards the classic question of regional imbalance, from the perspective of the provision of healthcare services. Based on the assumption that in Brazil there are sufficient mammography machines to meet the national estimated demands, **Pedro Amaral**, **Luciana Luz**, **Francisco Cardoso** and **Rosiene Freire** question whether there are regions that remain unserved due to an unnecessarily high concentration of equipment in certain other spaces. The investigation is based on technical information from the National Cancer Institute (INCA) in which the adequate scope of mammography services is limited to a distance of 60 kilometers. To answer this question, the authors first indicate that spatial analysis has been widely used in several studies to explore the relationship between accessibility and location of health equipment. However, they have not considered the supply network of equipment taking into account the distance between the potential demand and the supply of equipment at a municipal level. Faced with this situation, their proposal was to investigate this relationship. The analysis has enabled the authors to conclude that there is an imbalance in the spatial distribution of this equipment across the country, and that when considering the National Health System (known as SUS, which stands for Sistema Único de Saúde), this imbalance between supply and demand intensifies, when compared to the private network. This means that part of the population remains without access to this type of equipment, thus urging for the improvement of mammography availability in order to meet locational demands.

The debate regarding regional inequalities also crosses over into the article by **Fernando Campos Mesquita** and **Daniel Pereira Sampaio**, "Geographical proximity and technological intensity in manufacturing: evidence from the periphery of the São Paulo-Brasília axis at the beginning of the 21st century". By adopting geographical proximity as their reference point (herein understood as Euclidean distance), the authors have updated the discussion on manufacturing deconcentration, which mobilized academics during the 1980s and 1990s, seeking to verify whether the prevailing trend continues towards concentration in the light of technical progress in both transport and communications infrastructures, which have facilitated transactions over distance. With its focus on a regional scale (rather than the country as a whole), the study has concentrated on the region that encompasses the "São Paulo-Brasília" axis, observed from within three subdivisions (or three peripheries, as the authors prefer). By mapping the manufacturing industry located along the abovementioned axis through technological intensity, the authors argue that, instead of being the provision of cutting-edge communications and transportation systems that intensifies an advantageous position in the context of the so-called knowledge economy, it is in fact the municipalities where the qualified workforce and scientific and technological infrastructures are concentrated. As these are located closer to the nation's economic center of gravity – the city of São Paulo –, the predominant tendency of concentrating higher rates of investment in dynamic centers is therefore continuously repeated, as observed in the literature on capitalist production of space since the 1980s.

The issue of technological innovation is also addressed in the next article, which is much more conceptual in nature, and aims to reflect on the connections between innovation, development and

urban space, and is entitled “Innovation, development and urban space: a necessary but not enough relationship”, by **Valdir Roque Dallabrida**, **Maria das Mercês Cabrita Mendonça Covas** and **Antônio Manuel Alinho Covas**. Encouraged by the current widely held consideration that innovation competencies are an essential factor for regional development – an argument shared in the previous article –, the authors propose that the debate requires problematization. Based on a broad review of the literature regarding the “triangular relationship”, and constructed according to the different thematic perspectives that make up the subsections of the article, the authors agree with the prevailing view in the literature that urban space offers conditions that are conducive to the innovation process. However, they also warn that urban development refers to the idea of a process that is “more integrative, more intelligent, more inclusive, more eclectic, i.e., ethically more accountable to its citizens” (p. 360, editors’ translation), thus rejecting the notion that it is sufficient for a given urban center to house such innovation competencies to automatically achieve the desired development. On the contrary, as the authors argue, the urban development process, on the one hand, and the innovation process, on the other, constitute a much more complex matter.

The articles section of this issue comes to a close with “The new Brazilian Space: Amazônia Azul and its implications”, the theme of which certainly brings an opportune fresh take on the Brazilian urban and regional debate within the current political-institutional context, which ever since the deposition of President Dilma Rousseff, has speedily transformed the legal framework on which the possibilities for the national development are based. Under the authorship of **Marianne L. Wiesebron**, the fact that this is a non-Brazilian viewpoint on a question, which has rarely been reflected upon in the field of urban and regional and related studies in Brazil, we trust that this article may generate some degree of unease among the country’s scientific community within the area, since it provides us with a mirror that reflects how little attention we have afforded to our wealth, in terms of biodiversity, mineral resources and the geopolitics of Brazilian territorial waters that flow into the Atlantic Ocean. The vast stretch of Brazilian coastline has been the object of numerous – and very significant – critical studies regarding the appropriation of coastal areas, including, among others, conflicts between fishing communities and major real estate and tourism projects, some of which have been published in RBEUR. On the other hand, the 4.5 million km<sup>2</sup> of Brazilian jurisdictional waters (equivalent to more than 50% of the entire country) have remained uncharted in the regional and urban scientific research. In times when our natural wealth is being transferred to foreign interests, most notably the Pre-salt oil reserves, which could guarantee perspectives for the development of education and endogenous knowledge creation, through the significant rise in oil royalties – it is important to intensify our analyses on such transferences, including those located in Brazilian jurisdictional waters. With the understanding that we do not defend what we do not know, Brazilian self-determination regarding Amazônia Azul (Blue Amazon – which, as the author explains, was originally named by an admiral from the Brazilian Navy) presupposes, first and foremost, initiatives for its appropriation as a line of investigation by groups of national researchers. Within this perspective, in the current issue, we include (and encourage the reading of) Wiesebron’s article on this yet little known but strategically important national wealth. Throughout the article, readers will follow the historical construction and demarcation of what the author terms a “new Brazilian space”, which, following other interpretations of the concept of space, results from the social construction that has taken place ever since the United Nations convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) was signed in 1982, granting the country exclusive dominion over the 200-nautical-mile oceanic strip of the coast, in which the Pre-salt was discovered, among other natural riches. This new space under construction has received watchful attention over the last decade, when, according to the author, the Lula government began a planning process of sustainable development in the Amazônia Azul, under the leadership of the Brazilian Navy, and which culminated in the formulation of the National Policy for Marine Resources (PNRM). With this initiative, the Brazilian Navy adopted an

innovative role in the world by including issues of sustainable development on its agenda, which has traditionally only been dedicated to the field of defense. At the same time, it has also counted on the collaboration of universities and research institutes, through which, in addition to the PNRM, they have formulated eight Sectorial Plans for Marine Resources until 2016, as well as measures for its protection. All construction for this Brazilian “new space” is currently under threat because of the radical neoliberalism of the Temer government, whose retrograde measures have benefitted from the arrest, through the *Lava Jato* (Car Wash) corruption operation, of Admiral Othon Luiz Pinheiro da Silva, nuclear physicist and head of the Brazilian Nuclear Program, sentenced to 43 years in prison by Judge Sérgio Moro, a decision that has generated outrage among the academic community. Continuing the task for urban and regional studies to comprehend the construction of space, both the new and the old, is, more than ever, fundamental for resisting its exploitation for the benefit of the few.

Following a similar direction, other texts published herein may also be interpreted along these lines in the sections *Memories of the Presidency* and *Reviews* that complete the current issue. On the one hand, a review of the work by Caio Maciel and Emílio Tarlis Pontes – *Seca e convivência com o semiárido: adaptação ao meio e patrimonialização da Caatinga no Nordeste brasileiro (Drought and coexistence in the semi-arid region: adapting to the environment and cultural heritage of the Caatinga in the Brazilian Northeast)* –, written by **Thiago Romeu**, introduces new elements of analysis on one of the oldest spaces in our country, which is nevertheless still poorly understood in its most varied dimensions in connection with concentration of political and economic powers in the hands of hegemonic agents. In Romeu’s opinion, the book is inserted into the current debate on the Political Economy of Globalization (or deglobalisation as we editors see it now) and draws attention to the discursive disputes surrounding the notions of “adaptation” and “coexistence” with the Brazilian Semi-Arid region, taking the hinterland of Pajeú in Pernambuco, as an empirical reference.

And in the other, the testimony of **Ester Limonad**, “Here’s to the thirty years of ANPUR ...”, registers the activities of the directorship of ANPUR during the period 2011-2013, initially presided over by the late professor Ana Clara Torres Ribeiro and then by Professor Ester Limonad as of December 2011. In addition to the achievements of that particular management, organized into three areas – institutional strengthening, institutional relations and academic production –, the text recalls several moments of the Association’s trajectory, which through its political and academic activities completed thirty years of existence in 2013, during the time of Ester Limonad, combining stimuli for the advance of scientific production in the area of urban and regional research with values that defend social justice, the right to the city and the democratization of knowledge creation and diffusion.

Enjoy your reading!

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