

# EDITORIAL

With this current issue of RBEUR, produced with the same care and dedication as always, we take this opportunity to inform our readers that our term in office as head of the Journal's editorial board has been completed. During our three years of management, we have sought to secure RBEUR as one of the foremost scientific journals in Brazil within its field, and to broaden its recognition amongst Ibero-American academics, which may be substantiated both by the institutional diversity of authors from neighboring countries who have published articles and through the bibliographic indicators achieved.

Stirred by its commitment to editorial excellence, the RBEUR Editorial Board has also intensified efforts to bring the journal in line with current standards of contemporary scientific publishing, thus enabling it to enter databases and periodical collections, thereby encouraging the dissemination and advancement of the scientific debate it expresses. Such efforts may be demonstrated through data contained in the journal's annual reports for the three-year period from 2014 to 2016, available on its website, including a number of steps in various dimensions, which range from adjustments to formal aspects and major changes in terms of publication periods (from semi-annual to quarterly), to the introduction of more agile assessment and publishing processes, through modifications to its regulations and the creation of guidelines for an editorial policy, the commitment to its internationalization, and to a balanced regional distribution of Editorial Board members and reviewers, always adhering to the indispensable policy of blind peer review, which underlies consistent standards of scientific publication. We have thus worked to extend the dissemination of world-class academic debate through published articles, both on a national and international level.

Much to our satisfaction, this joint effort has been recognized by our readers, the academic community in the field, and by the directorship of ANPUR, to whom we are extremely grateful. RBEUR has continued to enjoy considerable prestige from amongst researchers within the field, even though it has not yet been indexed to the SciELO or Scopus collections. However, all the necessary requirements for submitting its application to these collections have been concluded, and we have therefore been able to complete the submission process for the SciELO collection, and have recently received approval from the REDALYC collection, amongst other indexes obtained over the last 12 months, as readers may verify on the journal's webpage. Thus, together we share an evolution, which is preparing RBEUR to face the new challenges that lie ahead while constantly seeking to raise its high editorial standards, as expressed in this current issue, which we are hereby pleased to present below.

The first three articles offer analyzes, from different perspectives, regarding the issue of public space. Taking the squares and streets of three Brazilian cities – Serra, João Pessoa and Belo Horizonte, as their empirical objects of investigation, the authors reveal the different meanings of each, all of which may be respectively synthesized into a space of fear, a space of communication and a space of contestation.

In the first, "In search of new methodological paths: perception and experience in contemporary urban public spaces by elderly people in the city of João Pessoa", **Marcela Dimenstein** and **Jovanka Baracuhy Cavalcanti Scocuglia** contest the pessimism surrounding the contemporary condition of losing corporeality in public spaces. The central lines of the authors, presented throughout the article, consider the possibility of stimulating and strengthening the communicative scale of these spaces. The arguments used to substantiate a similar refutation emerge from their reflections linked to the methodological construction of research involving a group of older people using public spaces in the city center of João Pessoa. The objective was to investigate the manner in which they experience and represent this center. The reflections impelled them to recreate ways of approaching, i.e., accessing this group, which gave rise to the conclusion that – although this urban territorial portion of João Pessoa has undergone transformations, having been converted into a key commercial and service area –, the older

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population uses it as a place for leisure, housing and work. Thus, this segment of the population is configured as an actor, capable of legitimizing the area as a place of culture, memory and affections.

The article by **Cláudia Emperatriz Díaz García and Milton Esteves Junior**, “Urban violence and insecurity in places of collective life”, introduces a contrasting standpoint to the previous article, with an invitation to reflect on the urban violence and insecurity in co-living spaces that profoundly affect human existence in contemporary Brazilian cities. These are inseparable problems that, through generating fear amongst citizens, limit the coexistence of different groups in public spaces and, at the same time, segregate collective spatiality. In order to demonstrate the behavior of individuals in a specific urban space, the authors have chosen the public square known as *Praça dos Ipês*, located in the municipality of Serra (in the Metropolitan Region of Greater Vitória), considered to be the most violent in the state of Espírito Santo and among the most violent in Brazil. After using several investigative procedures, such as flow analysis, questionnaires and free interviews with members of different social segments who frequent the square, the authors concluded that coexistence between the different segments is limited by the misgivings felt by individuals in having contact with other social groups. Moreover, Díaz García and Esteves Junior conclude by stating that, since the city is a public space that reflects the city – as most of its conflicts are expressed and are developed within it – it is in this space where fears, anxieties and nonconformities are created.

The article by **Carlos Eduardo Frankiw de Andrade**, entitled “Resist, celebrate: Tico Tico Serra Copo, the direct action and appropriation of space in the contemporary carnival of Belo Horizonte”, in turn, centers on restoring the political dimension of public spaces, interpreted through the return of carnival in the city of Belo Horizonte, and more specifically the carnival block known as *Tico Tico Serra Copo*, founded in 2009. By studying the street parades of this block, together with the speeches made by its articulators and followers, Andrade’s intention has been to characterize their manifestations as practices of *appropriating space*, which thereby resemble practices of *direct action*, since they are revealed as an instrument of political action aimed at contesting and, by extension, transforming. This characterization was based on the singularity of this particular block. By being itinerant, its proposal is to penetrate the peripheral areas of the city, interacting with communities in order to expose “the existence of so many other cities within the urban space of the capital of Minas Gerais” (page 471), while at the same time revealing practices of solidarity on the part of those who persist in changing the reality of this state capital.

Identity and place are two concepts explored by **Helenilda Wanderlei de Vasconcelos Cavalcanti and Breno Bittencourt Santos**, through studies regarding the meanings and values involved in the process of constructing a place-based identity. Thus, at first glance, this article, “The processes of constructing a place-based identity: the experience of residents in the municipalities of Cabo de Santo Agostinho and Ipojuca, Pernambuco, Brazil”, would appear to be just one more amongst many others. However, it should be noted that most other studies have adopted a qualitative methodology, inasmuch as, such processes are considered essentially intersubjective in character. Although Cavalcanti and Santos are in agreement with this orientation, they defend and demonstrate – through studying the process of constructing a place-based identity with residents in the municipalities of Cabo de Santo Agostinho and Ipojuca in the state of Pernambuco – that, in the cases investigated, it is possible to base interpretations on the use of quantitative methods. Thus, they have adopted “an anti-hegemonic perspective.” Throughout the work, taking a non-probability sample of 786 residents from a previous study, and with a conceptual framework centered on an understanding of place and belonging, the authors have constructed and adjusted a procedure of statistical analysis constructed with variables related to a place-based identity – *a desire to move away, place where registered to vote and place where the dead are buried*. In addition, they have created *an identity index*, through assigning weights to answers, which demonstrates that residents have a sense of belonging to the place in which they live. It may be said that the methodological strategy adopted by the authors not only assembles a satisfactory amount of data, but also provides inspiration for future studies on this subject in human and social sciences, on the understanding that new analytical tools based on artificial intelligence and neural networks capable of processing large databases will soon expand the frontiers of analysis in these areas of knowledge, and which has consequently led to the

emergence of the so-called “digital humanities”. RBEUR is attentive to this and open to analyses elaborated through these tools.

The following two articles address the enduringly current issue of the conflicts and contradictions inherent to the capitalist production process of value through the appropriation and transformation of urban space. The first, “Reinventing Rio de Janeiro’s old port: territorial stigmatization, symbolic re-signification, and planned repopulation in Porto Maravilha” by **Anne-Marie Broudehoux** and **João Carlos Carvalhaes dos Santos Monteiro**, leads the reader to the ever-present issue of “redeveloping” degraded areas for purposes of real estate valorization, specifically the port area of the city of Rio de Janeiro. Based on long-term research, undertaken between 2009 and 2016, the authors have adopted a multidisciplinary approach, associating elements of ethnography and critical human geography, in order to explore the extensive, wide-ranging material collected from several sources. This effort has allowed them to defend the argument that the successful valorization of real estate in that area of the city, for the benefit of its promoters, depends on “territorial de-stigmatization”, which would lead the old population of residents – historically black and poor, made up of workers and well-known for its cultural wealth and strong activism – to be replaced by another population, white, cosmopolitan and elitist, with an individualistic, consumerist cultural perspective. Contrasting the empirical material with a consistent theoretical context, the authors seek to demonstrate a rarely emphasized aspect in studies on this theme: an understanding that culture is simultaneously converted into an instrument of gentrification by real estate agents and into ammunition for resistance against the invisibilization and symbolic erasure of social groups.

The following article, “The capitalist production of space and the entrepreneurial management of urban policy: the case of PBH Ativos S/A”, confronts the issue of the capitalist production of space from a very current perspective, where times are hard for popular forces to resist the heightened appetite for economic power, either with regard to the attack on the rights of citizens or the appropriation of territories both in the city and in the countryside: the institutional “innovations” implemented by the municipal public authority, in order to facilitate the process of real estate valorization, in association with the characteristic pragmatism of contemporary neoliberalism. For **Thiago Canettieri**, author of the article, the mission of PBH Ativos S/A, a company created by the administration of the “socialist” Márcio Lacerda in Belo Horizonte, was not to promote the “articulation and operationalization of public policies focused on the economic and social development of the Municipality” (p. 515), as formally expressed. Instead, the company enabled “concretely, in its operationalization, the transfer of large amounts of public assets from the municipal coffers to PBH Ativos” (p. 515), and used it as a guarantee for the PPPs (Public-Private Partnerships) destined for works on infrastructure and buildings to house public services (schools, hospitals, etc.), all of which PBH Ativos was necessarily involved in. From reading Canettieri’s article, it is possible to suppose that in Belo Horizonte the by now renowned direct interference in urban politics by real estate market forces has reached radical, new levels, in that municipal urban politics are subordinate to the company’s financial profits, thereby subjecting the city to a financialization process, with nontrivial impacts on public budgeting. It is left to the reader to examine and perhaps question the advances of such a model within other Brazilian cities, especially those where “socialist” rulers encounter a fertile rentier state, such as Recife, for example. Actually, there are indications that São Paulo’s government has already embraced it.

The next article scales up the issue on the capitalist production of space by addressing regional disparities, yet another theme that equally lies at the heart of the debate RBEUR, conveys, taking the territory of Paraná as an empirical object. Authored by **Carin Caroline Deda** and **Samira Kauchakje**, the central argument of “Multi-level government structures in Brazil: the relationship between intergovernmental transfers and a reduction in regional inequalities in the state of Paraná” is to defend the “importance of the applying coordination mechanisms to the actions from the various levels of government to effectively enable the process of reducing inter-municipal inequalities” (p. 530). The analysis that led to this argument began by questioning the effects of intergovernmental transfers as a federal fiscal policy to reduce regional disparities, since such a policy, without requiring a counterpart in terms of the efficient use of resources, may not achieve its objectives and may accentuate the degree to which municipalities depend on these transfers. Through careful reflection inspired by political science regarding the

challenges of the federal political system, the analysis examined data from the Municipal Participation Fund (MPF) of 349 municipalities in the state of Paraná, between 2002 and 2013, processed in an econometric regression model. One of the most outstanding aspects highlighted by the authors is the high degree to which municipalities in Paraná depend on government transfers. Thus, without the necessary counterbalance for the suitable multiscale management of fiscal policy, such transfers may be relinquishing municipal managers from the need to expand the local tax base, even in a state nationally recognized for its tradition of regional planning, such as Paraná, which brings added importance to the ever-delayed debate on an effective and progressive tax reform in Brazil.

In conclusion, readers are confronted with **Andreas Novy's** article "Emancipatory economic deglobalization: a Polanyian perspective", the theme of which brings the debate regarding the capitalist production of space onto a global scale, and could therefore not be more current. Faced with the persistent crisis that has plagued the world economy for over a decade now, since the collapse of the Lehman Brothers Bank, followed by countless prominent episodes that have shaken a number of different societies and economies, including the growth of the far right in Europe, Brexit in the UK and the election of Donald Trump as President of the US, together with the deposition of President Dilma Rousseff in Brazil, the attention of academics has been drawn to the formation of a possible process of deglobalization. In this context, Novy offers an uncommon contribution to the debate by proposing to overcome, in his view, a Manichean opposition between cosmopolitan globalists and reactionary nationalists. Based on three distinct, complementary interpretations of the work by the Austro-Hungarian thinker Karl Polanyi, the author adopts the idea of the "good life for all" to formulate a critique of the ongoing neoliberal globalization, understood as an updated version of the "liberal utopia" by Hayek. Recalling that both thinkers are contemporaries of the experience known as Red Vienna, this is taken by Novy as inspiration in order to understand the confrontations, amplified by globalization, currently taking place worldwide, and especially in Brazil, where the reformist attempts to civilize capitalism have been suppressed by a stark coalition of both internal and exogenous forces.

In view of the extent and speed of the retrogression, which the reactionary forces installed in the present-day federal government have imposed on the civilizational process inaugurated in Brazil with the 1988 Constitution, with profound attacks on the rights of workers and minorities and on national sovereignty, it is our belief that this current issue kindles the construction of critical analysis on the relationship between retrogression in Brazil and the deglobalization process indicated by Novy, as well as the ongoing reconfiguration of the capitalist production of space. We trust this will foster scientific debate and provide inspiration for effective resistance movements that favor a more sustainable, less unequal life in the Brazilian countryside and cities. With this purpose in mind, and with a sense of duty fulfilled, we bid farewell as RBEUR's Editor-in-chief, Assistant Editor and Executive Secretary, in the hope that the succeeding editorial board will gain new heights in the process of consolidating RBEUR and bear witness to the return of the country to its destiny as a sovereign, just, sustainable nation.

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