

# EDITORIAL

This current issue of the *Revista Brasileira de Estudos Urbanos e Regionais* (RBEUR) return to the format of a number composed exclusively of papers selected from manuscripts submitted by continuous flow. Given the significant energy applied by our reviewers towards the object of their work, we would like to open this presentation by extending our sincere gratitude to all our collaborators, who have offered their generous contributions in a collective effort to consolidate the ANPUR Journal in a sphere with the high demands that contextualize the activity of contemporary scientific publishing.

Volume 19 | Issue 1 of RBEUR opens with the text “ANPUR: academic articulation in constructing agendas for research, teaching and scientific, urban and regional policies, 2009-2011” by **Leila Christina Dias**, which constitutes part of the special section *Memories from the Presidency*. The article not only refers back to the main activities of the ANPUR board between 2009 and 2011, but also emphasizes the role of the institution in the academic articulation for constructing and disseminating agendas for research, teaching and public policies. For this, a further, but no less important, role should also be added in which ANPUR has propagated the scientific knowledge produced in the field of urban and regional studies, especially since the creation of RBEUR, which has resulted from the efforts of successive boards of directors, similar to that during the period 2009-2011.

Beginning the *Articles* section, we have been able to select nine papers that, despite covering a variety of themes, have enabled us to identify the recurrence of certain topics onto which the attention of researchers continues to focus, albeit from different perspectives, such as the urban question, even three decades after the promulgation of the so-called Citizen’s Constitution. Being aware that for the very first time this Constitution introduced specific chapters that attempted to equate the above issue, the articles herein demonstrate its persistent resistance to change and its ability to evade a diversity of controls. Similarly, articles published herein that reflect on land issues in rural areas and along economic frontiers, while considering phenomena that have occurred over recent years, they reiterate this adverse resilience characteristic of Brazilian economic and territorial formation.

The text “Institutional legitimacy and (de)regulation of urban land”, by **Eliane Alves da Silva** and **Herbert Rodrigues**, prompts readers to reflect on the urban conflicts arising from the processes of land repossession, forced removals and evictions of poorly-served populations. A further perspective regarding the role of the state in these disputes is revealed by the authors through the concepts of legitimacy, procedural justice and compliance (compliance with rules and norms, or simply obedience to laws). These conceptual choices have permitted the authors to discover, through the analysis of three scenes that occurred in the city of São Paulo – understood as episodes from the same script –, the arbitrary nature of the resettlement process. Moreover, they have made it possible to conclude that the only manner for the state to build legitimacy into these processes is through procedural justice (active listening and the fair, equitable and respectful treatment of the occupants). This type of justice was not present in the cases they have brought to discussion and thus, has weakened the belief that institutions have legal authority. In other words, their absence has contributed to cushion the social ties between individuals and authorities.

The debate on urban policy is then approached by **Angela Moulin S. Penalva Santos**, as a dimension that dialogues within the sphere of social rights enshrined in the 1988 Constitution. In her article entitled “Post-Constitutional Urban Policy: the experience of the Municipality of Rio de Janeiro”, the author reflects on the mismatch between the high expectations of organized civil society reflected in the constitutional text and the inability of urban policy, after three decades, to carry out the projected transformations. The issue is dealt with from the perspective of experience in the city of Rio de Janeiro, based

on a thought-provoking reflection that positions urban policy as a part of social policies, for which the main material was a series of statements collected in interviews with various urban planners engaged in this debate over the last 30 years. By arguing that over time urban management has distanced itself from the vision of macroplanning and of the right to the city as set out in the post-constitutional agenda, in favor of what it terms “urban acupuncture”, exacerbated by the municipality’s choice to host the 2016 Olympic Games, the article suggests that urban policy should be recognized as a dimension of social policies, and at the same time offers a historical record of relevant memories and reflections, especially for new generations of researchers and planners.

From a historical perspective, **Clovis Ultramari**, **Mario Procopiuck** and **Manoela Mussuchetto Jazar** offer reflections – yielded from within the framework of the research they have conducted – on an inspiring theme related to the transference of ideas regarding cities on different temporal and geographical levels. The text “Brazilian Mayor and writer Graciliano Ramos through the eyes of the contemporary urban management” is based on an analysis of reports (accounting balance sheets) from the administration of Mayor Graciliano Ramos, in Palmeira dos Índios, Alagoas, in the late 1920s. The authors consider such records as being important references – probably accounting for the superficiality, whether intentional or not, of how such reports are made contemporaneously – since they disclose a practice model of management and, therefore, to be adopted by current municipal managers. According to the authors, these reports are far from an accounting-based balance sheet, and reveal the Mayor’s efforts to “ease the burden of the governor – his ally – and the Federation, by endeavoring, unlike other mayors, to carry out works with municipal resources” (p. 82, our translation). Not without reason, the text concludes with the importance of this work, albeit limited to its historical period and, therefore, considered improper so as to constitute an example of municipal management. After all, Graciliano was little interested in political debate and, in the present times, public administration demands strategies that will guarantee the sustainability of government actions. In addition, his mode of administering was marked by informality, inadmissible in the urban management of today.

Another implacable logic of the accumulation of capital – the production of urban space – is explored by **Giovana Gorette Feijó de Almeida** and **Vonia Engel** in “The merchandise city and urban marketing in (re)constructing the image of public spaces: the case of the city of Rio de Janeiro”. This is an analysis of the “city as commodity” and of the indispensable marketing in order to promote it as such. As empirical support, the strategy chosen by researchers was to (re)construct the image of public spaces, promoted by means of the brand created in 2011, for the city of Rio de Janeiro, and published nationally and internationally as a symbol for the venue of the 2016 Rio Olympic Games. The local management strategy with regard to the brand, in addition to contemplating partnerships with globally recognized products (Nestlé, Nikon, etc.), also extended into *Google Maps* so that the term “favela” would be removed from numerous communities in Rio de Janeiro. This was the manner in which this city began to be sold on the global market, resulting in a series of investments, most notably those related to raising the flow of tourists. The authors draw particular attention to the fact that the reality of this city, as revealed through the brand, is significantly different from that actually presented in the city of Rio de Janeiro itself, where daily news reports portray violence and neglect regarding urban infrastructures directed towards its lowest income inhabitants. In addition, they report that the financial crisis, which has hit the municipal administration has damaged the image (urban marketing) of the “wonderful city”, thereby affecting the (re)construction process of its public spaces.

With the article by **Daiane Marani Gotardo** and **Jefferson Andronio Ramundo Staduto**, “Centers and influential areas: a proposal for the economic regionalization in the State of Paraná, Brazil”, the scale of observation is extended from that of intra-urban to the regional. As the first of four articles in the current issue dealing with this scale, the work of Gotardo and Staduto is part of the ongoing debate regarding the relevance of updating the available regionalizations, this time at a state level. After all,

the fast-moving dynamics of the economy, with the revolution in microelectronics and the internet and the ensuing global integration, have driven efforts into this direction. Based on a gravitational model (similarly intensified itself by microelectronics and the internet), the article makes use of the debate on the criteria and objectives of regionalization to advocate “specificities that best represent the economic relations that exist in a given area.” (p. 107, our translation).

The following article, by **André Cutrim Carvalho**, addresses a current, key debate on the significance of the economic frontier from an institutionalist perspective. In the article entitled “Frontiers and Economic Institutions in Brazil: an approach focused on the new institutional economics”, some elements from the analytical framework of the so-called French School of Regulation may be recognized, through associating economic development (translated into a regime of accumulation by regulation theorists) with the existence of an “institutional system” (the mode of regulation for the French school). However, Carvalho moves into another direction and produces a solid critical reflection with a historiographical focus on the significance of the economic frontier, contrasting the institutional bases of the North American and the Latin American experiences in order to understand the specific meanings of frontier in the Brazilian case, noting particularly the expansion of the Amazonian occupation, the main agent of which – motivated by government action during the military regime – was the large capital, national and transnational. Understanding that it is the set of formal and informal institutions that mediate economic relations and that defines the behavior patterns of the members of a society, the author concludes by arguing that the economic frontier is generally a social relation of production. In the Amazon, it has been an institutional product created by the state, as part of the totality of Brazil’s socioeconomy, where the legal apparatus, when it exists, tends to favor large capital. Although the dimension of territorial sovereignty is not made explicit in the article, the argument comes at an opportune moment, and will certainly contribute to the debate surrounding the implications of a bill, currently being prepared by Temer’s government, which will allow the sale of vast tracts of Brazilian land to foreign investors, especially in areas of consolidated economic frontiers or not.

Next, the debate on the economic frontier is complemented by a more specific discussion on the conflicts surrounding the production of space in the Amazon. **Juliana Mota de Siqueira, Ana Paula Dal’Asta, Silvana Amaral, Maria Isabel Sobral Escada and Antônio Miguel V. Monteiro** – authors of the article “The Middle and Lower Xingu: the response to the crystallization of different temporalities in the production of regional space” – invite readers to distinguish the different elements responsible for producing this space, also characterized by being the cause of conflicts surrounding land ownership, rural in this case. To convey this argument, they undertake an analysis that articulates part of the knowledge produced on the region with the discourse of some of the agents who have transformed it. For their investigative temporal route, they adopt the colonization (initiated in the 17<sup>th</sup> century), the opening of the Trans-Amazonian road (in the 1960s and 1970s), the intensification of conflicts over land (from the 1960s) and the construction of the Belo Monte Hydroelectric Plant (initiated in the 21<sup>st</sup> century). This trajectory allows the authors to reveal various economic cycles within this region; each with socially perverse consequences for a significant portion of the population (indigenous, riparian and immigrants with no financial resources), despite the action of several institutions to defend these contingent populations against the actions of groups such as big farmers, large companies (private and state-owned) and institutions such as the National Institute for Colonization and Agrarian Reform (INCRA).

The following article maintains the reader’s attention on the regional scale, in the Northern region of the country: “From Legal Southeast Amazon to the Central North: spatial transformation of the economy”. Although the idea is evident in the text that regional development intensifies with the establishment of a market-oriented economic base, the authors **Thiago José Arruda de Oliveira** and **Moacir Piffer** present an interesting set of evidence obtained by calculating the locational quotients based on data from the Annual Report of Social Indicators (RAIS) from the Ministry of Labor and Employment for the peri-

od 2000-2010, regarding the expansion of the primary-exporting activity in the so-called Central North region. Beforehand, however, in order to construct their argument, they emphasize the importance of the historical trajectory that formed this region. The authors also demonstrate, in contrast to the growth of the agribusiness, the reduction of more typically urban activities in the existing cities, reaffirming that the demands for trade in goods and services in this part of the country during the first decade of the 21st century have been increasingly supplied by urban centers located far away, thereby raising concerns about such a “development” model.

This section of this issue closes with a contribution by **Blanca Rebeca Ramírez Velázquez**, who confronts the debate on planning from a multiscale perspective with her article “Scales of planning and territorial vulnerability in Mexico”. The author transports us to the planning experience, which has been taking place since the end of the last century in her country. From her standpoint, the neoliberal character of the policies implemented since this period has dismantled the previously constructed instruments and promoted the formation of what it is called a state of permanent exception. In her line of argument, Ramírez Velázquez identifies a “development model” correlated with the outsourcing of the economy, focused on an over-contribution from the tourism sector to the national product, alongside an acute process of deindustrialization and a rapid reduction of arable land. Such a model would thus promote a combination of environmental deterioration with fragile, dependent “development” – which threatens the very reproduction of the material basis of production in the country, as well as the social reproduction of the less-favored groups – understood in the field of vulnerability, in its social, environmental and territorial dimensions, which has been accentuated in time and space, and which is expressed on different scales. According to the author, there is thus a territorial counter-policy that has converted the development model by replacing imports with another that restricts self-sufficiency and the freedom of action of citizens and that delivers local, regional and national economic planning over to international capital. Ramírez Velázquez concludes the article by claiming that this process affects not only different Mexican territories, but also many others around the world, especially in Latin America, which leads us to encourage scholars and professionals in territorial planning to carefully invest in reading the article.

A striking counterpoint to this problematic Mexican experience is offered to our readers in the form of a review by **Sarah Feldman** on the book by Virgínia Pontual, *Louis-Joseph Lebreton na América Latina: um exitoso laboratório de experiências em planejamento humanista*. Returning to the past, instead of motivating feelings of nostalgia, may be a necessary source of inspiration so as to face the considerable challenges posed by the current process of deconstructing the role of the state as a space-producing agent, the citizen-centered economies and socio-environmental sustainability, which is currently under way both in Brazil and across the world.

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