

“IN SEACH OF A FORGOTTEN OBJECT: POLITICS AND URBAN POLICIES IN BRAZIL¹”

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Abstract:

This article deals with a topic of great importance, but which oddly enough has not been directly studied in Brazil – the politics of cities, especially of large cities. It is to some extent surprising that Brazil has 84% of its population officially living in urban areas (in 2010), but has not developed a substantive debate dedicated to the politics of cities. This subject has been analyzed only indirectly by urban studies as a dimension deriving from societal processes, as well as by political science as a lesser subject, as a dimension deriving from political dynamics of other scales. This article aims to bring this topic to the center of the analysis, reflecting on the particularities of urban politics, critically discussing the various traditions present within national and international debates on urban policies and politics and urban policies, and suggesting ways to establish an approach for Brazilian cities.

It is quite surprising that we have not developed a Brazilian discussion on urban politics, even though the majority of our population lives in cities – 84% of the population lived in urban areas in 2010 according to the IBGE and 66% lived in municipalities with more than 50,000 inhabitants. In concrete terms, this is a significant shortcoming if we consider the importance of municipalities for Brazilian federalism and the amount of services and policies provided by local government levels. This silence is even more surprising when we consider that classic texts of the Brazilian literature on politics such as “*Instituições Políticas Brasileiras*”, by Oliveira Vianna, 1949, and “*Coronelismo, Enxada e Voto*”, by Victor Nunes Leal, 1948, tackled the relationship between the political system and local powers². At that time, the local referred to the small municipality with rural predominance, but was considered an important scale within the Brazilian political system and essential for understanding its underpinnings. The silence of recent decades seems to consider that the gradual reduction of the importance of *coronelismo* and patronage from those classic works, with the nationalization of the parties starting from the populist democratic period and the political centralization during the military regime removed all political dynamism from the scale of cities. Indeed, a general observation of the Brazilian literature dealing with politics in the past decades suggests that, except for sparse studies of electoral geography and a passing interest in the mid-1980s (when direct elections returned for governors and city capital mayors), cities were only an object when the focus of the analysis was on social participation. Even in such cases, the analysis barely incorporated local institutions and the functioning of the political system. Even with the recent development of a strong and dynamic debate on federalism, the workings of local politics has remained undervalued, perhaps for believing that regulatory instruments and federal policies would take local governments to be mere ‘technical’ implementers with no room for discretion. Although this varies between policies, it is certainly not true for strictly urban policies, specifically associated with the construction of an established framework and management of services and facilities that characterize the cities. This article intends to initiate the task of specifically analyzing urban politics, reflecting on its specificities, critically discussing how the various traditions in national and international debates may inform us about the main

² It is interesting to note the parallel with the importance of the debates on community power in the United States, as shall be discussed later. The differences in attention shifts towards the national level, however, are remarkable.

dimensions that mark urban politics and policies, and suggesting ways for understanding the specificity of our urban politics.

Although this silence in national debates is not justified, it is to some extent understandable considering the assumptions embraced by the two major professional and academic communities that could address the issue. On the one hand, we have political scientists, which address the study of institutions and political power. On the other hand, we have the interdisciplinary field of urban studies, where we find geographers, planners, sociologists, and other urban scholars. In neither case, the political processes and institutions of the cities are considered objects with their own dynamics.

Most political scientists stem from the assumption that there are no particularities in local politics and policies, merely considering them regional versions of supra-local processes. According to this viewpoint, a study of local politics (and local policies) would be a lesser activity according to two (misguided) premises. According to the first, "really" relevant processes would be happening elsewhere. Therefore, there would be no such thing as urban politics, but only the unfolding of politics within the urban. As for the second viewpoint, space would only be a sphere where processes take place, much like a blank sheet to be filled. This viewpoint is present even in most electoral geography studies (where political science, including the national political science, more clearly incorporated space), since space is commonly understood as a passive dimension on which voting patterns unfold. Both premises are wrong. It is true that the recent expansion of the literature, with good studies on electoral geography, local implementation of policies, and partisan voter mobilization have brought the local scale to the study of politics in Brazil. However, a better understanding of urban politics depends more fundamentally on the incorporation of space for the study of politics, and not only on a local scale. This is more an ontology than an analytical scale.

It is true that the understanding of urban politics must always consider several scales simultaneously, often defined by the encounters between them – local, regional, national, international (Sellers, 2005). However, beyond a mere analytical scale, the urban represents the main locus of spatial processes, organizations, and actors (John, 2009), which confers an important particularity to urban politics. In this sense, space, understood as locations, contiguities, distances, and flows (created and constantly recreated by urban actors), and as a set of meanings that provide meaning to these actors, can decisively influence political disputes, institutions, the formation and

operation of governments and their organizations, electoral politics, and power processes in a most general sense.

On the other hand, since the 1970s, the premise that the State and politics would be the epiphenomena of processes produced by actors and processes located in society has spread among city analysts, partially under the influence of several theoretical trends within critical literature (Castells 1980; Harvey, 1982). According to this argument, it would not be necessary to study this dimension, and the focus should therefore be solely on societal processes by observing their effects over political institutions. As it has already been shown by the extensive and varied literature, this assumption is also wrong since processes in (and of) the State and its institutions, as well as the concrete power struggles for them (and within them), follow their own dynamics, even though processes occurring in society or in the economy may influence them,.

Thus, the premise of the two main study fields potentially involved with the study of urban politics led to a complete lack of dialogue as well as a great mutual ignorance as to their respective production.

It is worth adding that despite this extreme fissure in the Brazilian case, urban and national politics analysts are not alone in adopting such positions. As we shall see, a similar situation happens internationally. The lack of dialogue in the international debate, however, has already been diagnosed and criticized, with important bridges further explored in this article. The objective of this work is to contribute to the reduction of the mutual isolation in the Brazilian debate and to assist in building a theoretical framework for the study of urban politics and policies.

We shall see throughout the article that urban politics presents particularities due to its association with the urban space, defined by me as spatialities, perceptions and propinquity, besides the existence of several specific city actors with peculiar behaviors. An understanding of these dimensions of politics means considering a specific set of historically constituted actors – political elites and local bureaucracies, urban capital, and civil society actors within relationship networks built throughout the trajectories of individuals (and public policy sectors) and surrounded by the institutions from this sector, which I call the State's relational fabric. Recent concepts such as governance may help us to understand this politics, but only if we address the various relationship patterns concurrently present at a local level, and if we comprehend them simultaneously as spaces of action and social dynamics and as historical products of the formation of the Brazilian State at the local level. A broad research agenda on

urban politics stands ahead, but the development of knowledge depends on studying dense cases, simultaneously comparable and informed by debates on urban studies and political science.

The article develops over four sections, besides this introduction and a conclusion. In the following section, I analyze the particularities of urban politics and policies, the ultimate foundation of interest in this article. In the second section, I recover research traditions on urban politics, from the inaugural debates between pluralists and elite theorists, through Marxists, urban political economy, and coalitions and urban regimes. The third section presents the contemporary discussions on governance and new institutional frameworks for political articulation and the delivering of public policies. The fourth and final section investigates the key elements of politics and policies within Brazilian cities. Given the initial degree of maturity of the debate, the article's conclusion merely suggests some elements for a research agenda on the subject.

1. The specific nature of urban politics

First of all, it is essential to define what I mean by urban politics and policies, since there are different scholarly views on these definitions (Davies and Imbroscio, 2009; Judge, *Stoker* and Wolman, 1995).

Urban politics is understood here as the actions, negotiations, alliances, and conflicts in urban public policies and the power of (and within) the city's political institutions as well as those institutions themselves, their organizations, and actors. According to Jobert and Muller (1987), public policies are understood as the State in action, but urban public policies include only the actions of the State at its local level repercussions. In the Brazilian case, this primarily involves policies developed by the municipality, and the State to a lesser extent. The question is not, however, the government scale, but that the city becomes the object of policies, such as, for example, urban services, the construction of the established environment, planning and local regulation of activities, usages, and constructions. Evidently, many policies influence other processes in the cities (for example, employment and income policies, economic policies, migration policies, etc.). However, I am interested here in understanding the processes surrounding politics and policies of the city rather than including all policies that occur in the city.

This paper stems from the premise that there exists a particularity within urban politics and policies when compared with national politics and policies. A dimension that specifies this object is its relationship with the urban space, which is understood here as related set of (and socially constructed) neighborhoods, contiguities, distances, and flows on a given urban territory.

The starting point for understanding the associations between politics and space is outgrowing a vision of space as a Cartesian plane or as blank page, and incorporating space as a dimension of the social (Lefebvre, 1976), produced by social interactions, always multiple and in continuous construction and change (Massey, 2005). Space then becomes a constitutive dimension of politics, given that, like any other dimension of the social, the political is located in time and space. In fact, these two constitutive dimensions simultaneously shape every social situation, jointly specifying it (Massey, 1992). In this sense, just as there is no politics outside of time, we cannot consider politics outside of space³. If we therefore think ontologically, politics always involves spatial dimensions – spatialities – and temporal dimensions – temporalities. More concretely, this means politics stems from spatialities and inherited spaces, while simultaneously rebuilding them.

We may establish an initial analogy of interaction between space and politics with the effects of institutions, already largely discussed by neo-institutionalism (Hall and Taylor, 2003 and Immergut, 1998). Similar to them, space constitutes itself as a medium-range structure constantly built and altered by actors, but that presents itself to them at any given moment as a set of constraints and opportunities. Political processes are framed by these structures, which influence the formation of the actors' preferences and worldviews as well as their strategies. Moreover, just like the institutions, space interferes in the results of political processes, in view of the inherited spaces and the spatialities of other actors.

However, there are also substantive differences regarding the effect of institutions. As already widely discussed by neo-institutionalism, the influence of institutions occurs for two reasons associated with each other: state organizations are configured as potentially important political actors, and institutions frame and shape politics, which Skocpol (1986) called "the Tocquevillian nature" of institutions.

³ The importance of time, however, has a much more established and intuitive meaning. It is also worth noting in how we commonly use the word 'dynamic' in a metaphorical sense of transformation or change. Sometimes it would be more correct to use 'movement' or 'displacement' when dealing with changes that also happen in space and not only in time..

The effects of space on politics are distinct and may be divided into three interpenetrating dimensions. Firstly, space is the constitutive dimension of institutions and political practices (usually implicitly), as they always present a spatial dimension in what geography calls the **spatiality** of processes. This involves the spatial aspects of institutions, such as, for example, electoral districts in political representation or scales of federalism in public policies and within the government in general, in addition to, obviously, the territorial boundaries of Nation States. Spatialities are also present in political practices, such as in the locations and paths of election campaigns or in the position of space for mobilizing strategies and repertoires for social movements (Agnew, 1987).

Secondly, space plays an important role in the formation of political perceptions, since “the way we imagine space has consequences” (Massey, 2005, p. 4). Space is one of the dimensions responsible for shaping political perceptions and preferences, in addition to strategies and possible actions, generating spatial **perceptions** (Di Méo, 1991). To exemplify this dimension, we may consider the position that the idea of periphery occupies in the political actions of artistic expressions of protest (such as Rap), the formation of regional identities (and their separatisms), or even the effects of residential segregation patterns on perceptions of social justice and redistribution in several cities.

The third effect of space is more concrete and concerns locations patterns, contiguities, distances, and flows, in what John (2005) defines as **propinquity**. In a sense, propinquity (concrete spatial dimension) represents the crystallization of certain spatialities (the dimension of practices), constituting what geography refers to as forms (Santos, 1988). This includes both the effects of inherited space over which policies act as well as the concrete effects of political actions on space. The existence of previous spatial legacies establishes a set of constraints and opportunities, generating incentives and disincentives for certain actions and strongly influencing processes in the city. Usually, this effect is linked to specific locations, such as, for example, the locations of the best quality schools and their districts, with consequences for the distribution of educational skills and the locational strategies and family choices. However, the flows of existing politics and policies also have a similar effect, such as, for example, in the layout of existing bus and subway lines, with similar effects on locational strategies and on everyday decisions. Political actions, in turn, rebuild this space on a daily basis, reconstituting such locations, flows, contiguities, and distances.

Therefore, to disregard space is to leave out one of the dimensions of political phenomena. Additionally, space also provides methodological potential, since spatial association allows us to infer associations between elements, processes, and actors, making it easy to specify "who gets what, when, and how", as Harold Lasswell classically described. It is clear however, that these dimensions are present in different ways when considering the analyzed political phenomenon as well as the spatial scale at stake. In the case of the city, it is necessary to incorporate space at the local level and in a disaggregated manner, considering practices, perceptions, locations, and intra-urban flows. The incorporation of these dimensions does not mean that the study of politics within the local may disregard processes located in lesser-detailed scales, not only national, but also international. In the case of urban politics, the point is to focus on the local, but also to consider how the city is crisscrossed by processes of different scales (Sellers, 2005).

Furthermore, within a larger-detailed dimension, the very structure of the cities is the product of several processes and actors. In market societies, access to locations is mediated by the distribution of land prices, which constitutes spaces segregated by their uses and social groups, according to their different capacities to pay. The state intervenes in varying degrees on such distribution, reinforcing or tackling segregation (Marques, 2005). This happens primarily through numerous regulatory instruments such as city master plans, laws for the use and subdivision of land, housing and environmental laws to define and prohibit uses and which, by establishing parameters, "create" the urban soil and affect several locations and prices in varied ways. Moreover, actions and direct investments from the State directly influence the prices and locations for activities and social groups, as well as indirectly influencing the production of mobility structures, infrastructure works, housing projects, among many other facilities and policies.

The combination of these elements forms the urban setting of a certain city at a given time, structuring the relationship between politics and space with considerable inertia and stability. The actions of political actors (including the State) spatialize themselves over these inherited spatial structures. By knowing this, political actors strategically anticipate the effects of space over their actions and adapt accordingly. Moreover, the locations listed above leads to overlays in space, since within space citizens encounter policies (and vice versa), politicians find voters, and representation structures find the represented. Since urban segregation separates social groups and different activities, generating inequalities, the aforementioned encounters involve

circularities and contribute to the crystallization of inequalities (Vetter and Massena, 1981).

Additionally, but no less important, one last dimension of the particularity of urban politics stems from the existence of procedures and the very actors of the cities, even if they hold intense connections with actors and processes of other scales (and may also act upon them, albeit under a different logic than in the urban environment). A part of them is directly associated with the production of space and includes what I call urban capitals – developers, infrastructure builders, urban service providers. These private actors have their valuation processes directly associated with construction, maintenance, and the operation of the city itself, and are therefore potentially very important for its conflicts and political processes. The fourth section will take up this topic again, considering the significant importance of these capitals in Brazil.

Apart from them, it is important to mention the members of the political class, which have in the urban their range of action and their forms of political reproduction – local politicians, local political party operators, mayors and city councilors, including those from the constituency, but also others linked with voters and economic interests operating in the city scale. Another typically urban set of actors – whose importance in the production of policies has already been sufficiently analyzed and we may dismiss major elaborations – are the street level bureaucracies (Lipsky, 1980). Although what characterizes this type of bureaucracy is the direct delivery of policies and not any kind of territorial dimension (as the name aptly suggests), most of the policies are delivered in and within the city, making space an important dimension of action for these bureaucrats. Finally but no less important, we should mention the various types of civil society organizations that specifically thematize or act in cities, being peculiar for responding to very specific conditions of mobilization due to their direct contact with their base (Gurza Lavalle, Castello and Bichir, 2008).

However, this all may seem very abstract, especially for political science readers. In what way then do these dimensions concretely affect classic political science issues? Some dimensions are more obvious than others.

In electoral politics, voters (and votes) are located in the territory as well as the design of institutions regulating the elections (the districts), and may even produce deviations in electoral results, sometimes strategically planned. The famous phrase by Byron Price in 1932 “all politics is local politics” captures the position of local constituencies in the construction of ties that lead to electoral success. Nevertheless, even in high magnitude proportional electoral systems (such as Brazil), which should

reduce this spatial association, informal districting process may occur (Kinzo, Borin e Martins Jr, 2003). In such cases, voters and representatives present specific political perceptions and behaviors, directly influenced by the spaces in which they find themselves (Kuschnir, 2000). On the other hand, most of the actions from governments, positive and negative, also display spatialities and creates propinquities, thus spatializing themselves. All of this leads politicians and parties to build spatial strategies to mobilize their electorate and for political disputes by considering the stable distributions of voters and their preferences (Limongi and Mesquita, 2011), the institutional designs, and the spatial distribution of State actions. National party systems actually consist of local structure compositions, although no scale merely represents a repercussion of the other, generating composition effects with significant political consequences (Lima Jr, 1997).

In public policies, bureaucracies and organizations spatialize themselves. The first most obvious dimension of this relates to the spatial design of state organizations, delimitating specific constituencies. In Brazil, the major effect of federalism has already been the subject of extensive analysis (Arretche, 2012) and the development of detailed studies on implementation (Faria, 2012) will certainly increase our knowledge of politics at the local level. On the other hand, policies themselves as well as the demands they intend to meet are spatially located. There are policies with direct spatial influence, such as the construction of infrastructures, the provision of urban services or urban planning. However, spatial influence also exists for many policies acting upon other social dimensions, but which are localized and construct flows, such as educational facilities, health care, and assistance. The location of such facilities must take into account the distribution of specific social groups, considering the demands they must meet. Others lack the construction of localized facilities, but the strategies for the delivery of policies centrally involve space, such as the family health program in the Brazilian case. Lastly, there are policies that could abstract from space in their implementation, but which have their efficiency increased if they do incorporate the dimension of space, such as anti-poverty policies (Torres, 2002). The theme also has obvious associations with the instruments and tools of public policy, which often incorporate space with consequences for the results of State actions, especially during implementation (Lascoumes and Le Galés, 2007). The incorporation of space may conceal or make visible themes or populations in diagnostics or plans of actions, including in very instrumental dimensions such as information systems (Torres, 2002). Similarly, spatial designs in policy implementation may lead them to succeed or fail in

meeting the policy's demands and objectives, as extensively documented in the literature as targeting errors.

In civil society, organizations and social movements are also located, and spatialize their demands and strategies. This takes into account the inherited spaces and State actions, but it may also consider the spatial designs of political institutions acting in scales and specific points in order for its political action to be more effective. There is a spatial dimension in the fit between social organizations and the State in the construction of their demands, already thematized by neo-institutionalism to show both the success of collective mobilization (Skocpol, 1992) and to explain conformation of party systems (Katznelson 1981). On the other hand, much has been written on the association between local decision-making processes and political participation under a Tocquevillian perspective, regarding the functioning of institutions close to citizens or the normative defense of bottom-up type policies (Barrett, 2004).

Lastly, political culture is specified in space, considering that social groups are located and present different behaviors, and are also molded by political processes taking place in the very space in which they inhabit. This has effects on the previous dimensions to the extent that the behavior of the inhabitants within each city region overlap electoral politics, with public policies and with social organizations and mobilizations of various orders influencing the political processes.

2. The traditions of the study of urban politics

The international debate on urban politics germinated in the US in the 1950s and 1960s. Although the city is a much older study object, previous analytical perspectives rarely dealt with political institutions, government, or policies, focusing on macro-sociological aspects of the city as did Karl Mark and Max Weber, or by focusing their attention on sociability within increasingly important urban centers, such as Georg Simmel and the Chicago School. Thus, while cities have been the subject of systematic and massive attention for the first time in the studies of the so-called first Chicago School between 1910 and 1930, their attention was devoted to the sociability of ethnic groups, their identities and power relations. Within this tradition, the workings of local politics received better attention in the classic (and heterodox) of urban anthropology Whyte (1943), in which the main attention was also turned towards individuals and local organizations, but without neglecting their connections with politicians, elections, and the local government.

Just a few years later, however, the discussion of what came to known as *community power debate* began with the systematic discussion of political power in the city. This debate is too well known to be detailed here (Marques, 2003), but a quick summary helps to place the later steps of the literature. This debate informed both the traditions of urban studies and political science, being in fact the last moment of intense dialogue between these two fields (Sapotichne, Jones e Wolfe, 2007).

In 1953, Floyd Hunter published his study on power in Atlanta, arguing that a limited group of political actors dominated power in the city, continuously in time and broadly on several policies. This argument suggested that the American representative democracy represented a scene game, arriving to the same conclusions as Mills (1956) and originating the second generation of elite theory. The elite's power was considered to originate from their members' social position within a society with major social inequalities. The origin of the elite's power was therefore considered sociological and potential, in the sense that it does not need not be analyzed in use (through concrete political disputes or government operations), and its reproduction would occur through the reproduction of society as a whole by the heritage of assets and property, but also through socialization in schools and elite universities, marriages and friendships, and sociability locales such as clubs and associations. These processes of reproduction would ensure the reproduction mechanisms for positions, and consequently, of the power associated with them, establishing stable power structures in the city.

Against this interpretation, authors from what would later be called pluralism, developed studies on other cities, advocating the vitality of American democracy from the local. The most important of them was the classic study by Dahl (1961), which analyzed politics in the city of New Haven from a historical perspective. In this case, political power was not thought of as potential and positional, but as the capacity of a certain group to act over others to enforce their interests in the formation of governments and the attainment of policies. Political dynamics would originate from interest groups present within parties and other organizations representing the true units of political action. Dahl argued that despite the presence of severe inequalities in American society, these would not be cumulative by the presence of a market society with a democratic representative government (unlike in a stratified society). Throughout American history, it would be possible to observe the passage from an oligarchic representative regime (at the time of independence) towards an increasingly competitive and inclusive political system throughout the XIX century, which would

culminate in mass democracy in the mid-twentieth century. Such a transformation would have occurred in the XIX century through industrialization and rural-urban migration, the gradual increase in universal suffrage for social groups increasingly different from elites originally endowed with political rights, the emergence of a new professional political class, and the massification of politics in the XX century. This historical trend would have contributed to the pluralization of society and politics, where no single group would be able to control politics thoroughly and thematically and over time, even if in certain periods the presence of relatively stable coalitions do exist, these would later dissolve. The pluralistic perspective continued to have strong influence on urban debates.

The most intense cases of stability were not associated with a capturing by the elites (as elite theory would like), but with the formation of the so-called political machines (Gottfried, 1972), prevalent in several North American cities in the first half of the XX century. Pluralist literature conceptualized them as specific forms of political organization with stability, structure, and hierarchy, although with varying degrees of centralization (the existence of so-called bosses). This organization would gain girth in a political party, articulating their leaderships, activists, local supporters (both corporate as well as voters) through incentive structures, material rewards, and services provided by the machine in exchange for political and electoral support. The style of the resulting political mobilization was clientelism and patronage, and the form of articulation of interests was pragmatic and geared towards concrete gains for those involved (Wolfinger, 1972).

In the 1960s and 1970s, a third theoretical corpus came into play and the field of urban studies was strongly affected by Marxist interpretations on the city. This debate is also too well known for us to analyze in detail here. It is nevertheless important to rapidly recover its contributions to help us understand how the Marxist perspective outlined politics and institutions in the city. There are several analytical lines, but for the purposes of this article at least three perspectives should be differentiated, associated respectively to Henri Lefebvre, to structuralist sociology (Manuel Castells and Jean Lojkine), and to critical geography, especially David Harvey. Political institutions or politics were not given special attention by any of these authors, and there was no room for the contingency that characterizes the field of politics in most of these perspectives.

The first Marxist author to focus on the city was Lefebvre (1969). Lefebvre studied the city in its maturity, interested in understanding the place of the city within

contemporary capitalist society. He analyzed the city and its characteristics in different historical moments and its relationships with the rural. The city would represent the central dimension of capitalist society, as it would be the locus of reproduction for the whole of society in its economic, social, and political aspects, establishing an urban society. Politics would relate to power struggles associated with this reproduction. If power is central for Lefebvre, political institutions remain absent from his work. A possible exception to this is the indirect reference to the State in his criticism of policies on city planning and construction, particularly influenced by modernism, which was then hegemonic in urbanism. The State would be building places without urbanity and marked by an impoverished sociability. An important part of his studies was guided towards analyzing elements associated with everyday sociability, where power dimensions were present, but not very connected with political institutions

As for the State, the most influential works in Marxist sociology were certainly those by Castells (1983) and Lojkine (1977), discernable by their strong structuralism. Perhaps the most lasting legacy of Castells' work was the emphatic statement of the contemporary city as a specific social product of capitalist society, thus refusing the epistemological starting points of the Chicago School and of urban economy. Based on a conceptual framework derived from Nicos Poulantzas' work on the State (and therefore within Althusserian structuralism), Castells (1983 [1972])⁴ considered public policies, institutions, and representative politics as reverberations on the legal-political sphere from class struggle accumulation processes. The city was understood as a space of consumption within capitalist society, and providing extended conditions of reproduction of the workforce. This would happen not only through providing personal consumption to workers (in the city), but more importantly by providing collective consumption goods needed for the social reproduction of the working class. Social movements would be simple answers to very low levels of such reproduction. The State, therefore, was perceived as a set of institutions responsible for providing such conditions as well as the legitimation of domination or repression when such legitimacy failed. Its structural nature would explain its actions, ultimately leaving little room to comprehend politics in a broader sense.

A few years later, Lojkine (1977), arguing against Castells, defined the city as a locus of production and circulation that would allow for the establishment of social relations of production, based on collective consumption and facilities associated with it

⁴ It is important to note that "The urban question" is based on the first Poulantzas, represented by the book "Political Power and Social Classes", from 1968, but published in Brazil in 1977.

for the reproduction of production process. In this case, there was an emphasis on the dimension of enlarged cooperation provided by the city, analogous to the cooperation between workers inside a factory, potentiating accumulation processes. The State would therefore remain a distant and homogeneous set of organizations, defined by its functions in helping accumulation – generating the general conditions of production – and legitimacy – providing goods and services that, by their nature and volume, would not place the mode of production into question. As with Castells, urban social movements are seen as responses to low levels of worker reproduction, given the (systemic) needs for the support of accumulation. However, since in this case the city would occupy a central place in the reproduction of the capitalist system, social movements would have potentially revolutionary characteristics. Thus, in this case political dynamics (including those originating from below) derives from economic processes and/or other processes within society. While the State was at the center of analysis, the functioning of political organizations and institutions of the city remained underexplored.

Later, in a work that distances itself from the structuralist influence – *City, democracy and socialism* (1980 [1975]), Castells includes the issue of political regimes in his analysis, since the book largely deals with the role of urban social movements in the Spanish transition. However, regimes remain a background dimension, influenced by processes and societal actors. The internal dynamics within the States and institutions are completely left out of the analysis, which focuses on the political processes within society.

Another author who devoted himself to rebuild the Marxist theoretical field by including space and cities was David Harvey. As a geographer, a share of his concerns are on urbanization processes and the establishment of space to the likeness of capital within capitalist society, comprised of fixed and flows that have historically and gradually enhanced accumulation, both regarding capital and work. By analyzing residential segregation processes and the production of urban space, Harvey reflected on the conflicts among social actors. The author delimited the presence of four groups "interested" in urban policies and in constant conflict for the appropriation of the benefits of production and the use of the environment, which would allow for a more shrewd analysis of politics than in previous authors (Harvey, 1980 and 1982). These actors are: capital in general, landowners, the capital for the production of built environments, and the working class. However, in spite of discussing conflicts and strategies therein present, Harvey stated that since capital in general needs the built

environment, the State does not allow this to be decided by the power game between actors, thus throwing its weight in favor of capitalist social reproduction (Harvey, 1982, p. 12). Hence, here likewise we find the captured character of the State making it act in the interests of capitalists, silencing the mechanisms by which this would happen and leaving very little room to analyze the contingency that characterizes the political game⁵. Interestingly, a significant portion of the analyses based on this tradition focuses on urban struggles⁶, although, paradoxically, chances of an actual political victory of such struggles are restricted if the theoretical model is applied exactly as prescribed.

According to this literature, therefore, power stems from social structures, understood as class structures in conjunction with accumulation processes. This viewpoint, therefore, led to a stricter (and economic) reading of the structural constraints than in the case of elite theory, which was also interested in power structures but considered them more multilayered and mutable. Political power "in action" in the functioning of political institutions, in the formation of government, and in the production of policies was seen as a repercussions of processes taking place in society, being less relevant as an object of study than the actual societal dynamics allegedly driving them.

It is also important to highlight some of the contributions from the Marxist literature of the 1970s that focused on more localized elements of urban studies, which will become relevant later in this article. At least two deserve to be mentioned here. Firstly, it is necessary to underline the contributions regarding urban capital, especially real estate capital. At no other moment has there been such theoretical knowledge accumulated on the political economy of incorporation than with the work of Topalov (1973). On the other hand, segregation patterns in the city, defined as the distribution of social structure in space and its association with distribution of urban facilities had its peak in the precise works of Preteceille, especially Pinçon-Charlot, Preteceille and Rendu (1979). Although they did not deal with the State and the city's political institutions, advances in these two lines of analysis presented important learnings from which we shall further discuss politics in Brazilian cities.

⁵ On the subject of explanations or capture mechanisms in Marxism in comparison with other works on the State, see Marques (1997).

⁶ This seems to be critical geography's viewpoint, to which urban policy are mainly socio-spatial struggles, especially on inequalities, and space is understood as a set of processes and not as a thing (Martin, 2011).

It is worth mentioning that Brazilian urban sociology begins at this moment, in parallel to this literature, but mostly without any direct dialogue. Dialogues would only occur some years later, in the 1980s. The works that mark the beginning of systematic concerns from the Brazilian social sciences with the city were Brandt (1976) and Kowarick (1979). In both cases, the analytical interest was to show how the Brazilian economic model implemented by the military dictatorship had produced large-scale economic growth, albeit also poverty, inequality, and social deprivation. Previous writings in the national debate had already established the characteristics of the national capitalism, identifying the centrality of low wages and informal work in our large cities on the dependent and peripheral position of the country in the international division of labor. The works cited above brought innovations, especially Kowarick, since they connected more broad-spectrum dimensions with specific urban conditions. The existent exploration patterns would find in the metropolises other forms of dispossession, directly associated with the daily life of the working class. Kowarick (1979) went even further by connecting these economic dimensions with the political, introducing political regimes in the theoretical model and stating that only under authoritarian regimes – then in force in Latin America – similar patterns of exploitation could be tolerated. The production of peripheries based on self-construction in irregular settlements or slums, with scarce State presence, has become a key concern in the literature since then, leading to the rich tradition of urban studies that produced numerous analytical ramifications over the following decade (Maricato, 1982; Chinelli, 1980; Santos, 1980; Bonduki and Rolnik, 1982; Machado da Silva, 1985). Despite the enormous importance of this tradition and its substantial contribution to the understanding of our cities, few were the clues left by it to comprehend urban politics, given its focus on the production of space and economic dimensions, justified by the relative minor importance of local politics at the time.

In this same period, however, there was a brief moment of interest within Brazilian literature on local level politics, though not necessarily focused on cities. This interest may be partially explained by the return, in the final years of the military regime, of elections for state governors and state capital mayors, generating academic (and political) interest on the dynamics of the elections, the formation of government, and the workings of local parties. Among them, we should underline the work of Diniz (1979) on *Chaguismo* in the state of Rio de Janeiro during the years 1970/1980, considered a political machine in the sense given by Wolfinger (1972) and Gottfried (1972). Another work that marks this short interest from Brazilian political science on

local levels was the collection edited by Lamournier (1985), containing several analyses of the 1985 elections in São Paulo. In this case, contrary to the predictions (and desires) of analysts, Janio Quadros was once again elected mayor of São Paulo, defeating the PMDB candidate Fernando Henrique Cardoso. In this case, however, the focus was on the elections (Lamournier, 1985) and candidate profile (Sadek, 1985 and 1986), unlike the first title, which focused on establishing a broader explanation of the power of *chaguismo* in Rio de Janeiro.

Internationally speaking, the 1970s were also witness to the emergence of a new line of research on city politics. This new lineage suffered some influence from Marxism, but in reality it represented a new reading of the urban political economy, with important nuances, among them the recovery of important elements from pluralism. There are two main contributions – the growth machines and urban regimes, although a third perspective based on power coalitions has also been important.

The idea of growth machines has its origins in the works by Moloch (1976). Based on an analysis of politics in North American cities, the author argued that the characteristics of U.S. fiscal federalism would create an almost inexorable situation for the cities. The financing of local governments in the U.S would leave localities without their own funding sources, while at the same time not providing systematic transfers from other levels of government (state and federal). This would lead to cities fundamentally depending on private investors to develop policies. Urban coalitions therefore seek to build growth cycles (primarily based on urban improvement and real estate development), always associating local political elites with land interests, particularly those promoting incorporation. These would be the background roots to explain such a widespread existence of what the author named growth machines in the building of coalitions.

Although this model of interpretation has been tremendously influential, authors such as Harding (1997) showed how it presents difficulties when 'traveling' to other contexts besides the U.S. By analyzing European cities, Harding suggests that local political elites are much less dependent on urban capitals for their initiatives, due to the presence of at least two fundamental differences in political institutions. Firstly, European local governments have their own sources of funding as well as transfers from the central governments. On the other hand, the distribution of land ownership is fundamentally different from the U.S., with the State also being a major landowner in Europe, both due to long term historical dimensions (as in the French case) as well as for housing policies based on rent assistance implemented in the second postwar (as

in France, England, Holland, Germany, among others). Additionally, studies such as Schneider and Teske (1993) showed that even by having a broad generation of growth coalitions, U.S. politics in cities also includes other types of coalition, including anti-growth, given the consequences of at least a portion of growth-promoting experiences, leading to a loss of electoral support for this type of articulation. I will return to these points when discussing the Brazilian case, but similar observations accompanying specific features should be made for the Brazilian case.

Another explanatory model was also established in the U.S. in the early 1980s, but with a clearer (and more critical) dialogue with the pluralist tradition. Firstly, it is important to highlight the work of Elkin (1985), who coined the idea of urban regimes. For him, the growth machine idea simplifies a historical situation that had important nuances in the division of labor between the State and the market in U.S. cities throughout history. He builds the argument in three stages. Firstly, Elkin agrees that most decisions are in the hands of private owners, and therefore the production of well-being depends on the construction of relatively stable alliances with the private sector, especially with what he calls the "land interests". However, politicians also need to create stable electoral victories, which does not always simply align with growth interests. In addition, these two dimensions depend on the presence of functional bureaucracies capable of delivering the necessary services for economic development and reelections. If this, on the one hand, leads to a scattering of efforts that could be used for growth, on the other hand it builds a set of potentially autonomous bureaucratic actors.

In the XX century there have three urban regimes in the U.S. Until the 1930s, privatist regimes were in operation, directed towards business growth with minimal government interference, except for the hiring of companies to maximize business expansion. Politicians, besides from not hindering private decisions (which financed their party machines), were part of the expanding working classes. In this regime, construction companies and service providers were central, as well as commerce in urban centers. Party members occupied the bureaucracy and politics involved many different practices, including fraud, where immigrants and blacks were excluded, similar to the description of political machines in the pluralist tradition (Gottfried, 1972). The following decades witnessed the disarticulation of these regimes between the Great Depression and the Second World War, creating a period named by the author as interregnum. Land interests strongly declined, but this time with federal resources for poverty alleviation, although mostly used to revitalize the political machines. Local

unions became important actors. It was during this period that attempts to generate local economic growth culminated in pluralist regimes.

Between 1950 and 1960, pluralist regimes existed, analyzed by the literature with the same name. They were comprised of dominant land interests, but with more autonomous functional bureaucracies and less visible and permeable to decision-making processes than suggested by the pluralists. The most important actors were elected politicians, property developers, and city center investors. Party leaders participated in the coalition and were responsible for the distribution of patronage, made possible by the bureaucracy. The regime had the support of the middle classes and rich homeowners, with the highest price paid by the poor and the minorities, who nonetheless harbored support by voting on parties associated with urban improvement.

Elkin also suggests the construction of a fourth regime in the 1970s – the federalist regimes, with a greater federal presence after the political conflicts of the 1960s, greater importance to street level bureaucracies, and municipal workers unions. The continuity of this regime, however, would depend on federal funds (which effectively did not happen with the Reagan government cuts).

The construction of an analytical model of urban regimes was continued by Stone (1993), returning to the study of politics in Atlanta between 1946 and 1988 (the city analyzed by Floyd Hunter). The result is perhaps the most influential recent model on urban politics. Stone stemmed from a critical absorption of elements of pluralism, rejecting the assumption that groups would have equal power and stressing the power of economic actors. This highlight finds parallel with the Marxist literature and elite theory, although in those cases power is considered to be structural (from capitalism in the first tradition and from the social structure in the second). Stone disagreed with such a view on power, advocating the existence of four types of power, specified by two binary classifications - situational X intentional and direct X indirect. Intentional and direct power was theorized by pluralism, while situational and direct power were backed by Marxism, and intentional and indirect power refers to the non-decisions of Barach and Baratz (1962). Situational and indirect power would correspond to what he calls systemic power, characterized as the capacity to do, recognizable by other actors (Davies, 2001). Therefore, for Hunter, business interests often prevail (as noted by the growth machines), as this would be in the interest of the state agents, considering their capacity to conduct actions and policies. The State at a local level could sometimes enforce its will, but as the capabilities are in the hands of the private sector, it would most commonly be limited to coordinate. Governments would thus cooperate since

they would need private actors to create and implement policies. For Stone, therefore, power does not represent something over other agents, but the capacity to conduct, shifting the idea of power from control towards production (Davies, 2001).

In other words, state actors would be autonomous (as in pluralism), but businesspersons have a privileged position (as in Marxism, elite theory and growth machines). As in the earlier example from Elkin (1985), electoral dynamics and the electorate's composition would be central as well as the processes associated with bureaucracies and state actors, which could lead to several different outcomes in terms of composition of coalitions. Consequently, urban regimes would be informal arrangements between public and private agents (elected politicians, private companies, professional communities, and State officials) that operate together to carry out public decisions and take actions. The central element would be the internal politics of coalition building. Stone therefore paves the way for the explanation of empirical variability and the differences between the types of regimes, although he presumes the existence of a single regime for a given location during a certain period.

A third explanation model of local politics also originated from a critical debate with Marxism and especially pluralism. It is a study by Mollenkopf (1992) on politics in New York during the successive terms of Ed Koch (1978-89). The author built an analytical model attempting to recover elements from both pluralism and Marxism to analyze power in the city. Firstly, he underlined an element from pluralism: professional politicians who interact with voters as well as with the economic interests and the market. On the other hand, the author states that political leaders who intend to control the city's politics should also deal with interests produced within the public sector itself. For him the complexity of politics comes precisely from the fact that both the interests of the voters and the private sector are fragmented and contradictory. An understanding of politics should then come from analyzing the ruling political coalition – a tactic alliance among different interests able to win the elections for the Executive branch and to establish and maintain cooperation with other private and public power centers needed to govern. These coalitions may be long lasting and comprehensive, maintaining power over a wide range of political sectors/issues for relatively long periods. For Mollenkopf, the collapse of a coalition usually occurs by crisis or intense social and economic changes (external shocks).

3. The contemporary debate

In the early 1990s, the study of power in the city mainly counted with the pluralist, elitist and Marxist traditions, as well as the models of growth machines, regimes, and urban coalitions. A significant portion of the subsequent shifts in the literature deal with movements within the debates themselves and the stronger concrete changes experienced in several of the policies within the countries in the period. Given the concentration of the research in the English language, as well as the ability to influence policies in the US and Britain, the changes observed in these countries are of particular interest, even if we may also find them in countries such as France and in several policies established with the support from the European Union (Le Galés, 1995; 2001a and 2001b). To observe such changes helps to understand these shifts within the literature.

We have already seen that U.S. cities have always been marked by minor federal presence, both in regulation and in the financing of local policies/politics (source of the growth machines). The economic decline of the central areas and the escape of wealthiest social groups towards the suburbs, partially the product of federal policies such as the "Housing Act" of 1949 and the "Federal Highway Act" of 1956, intensified problems. Consequently, large cities mostly concentrated social problems, declining economic activity, and weak tax base. This situation began to change from anti-poverty policies pushed by 1960s civil rights movement within the broader effort of the "Great Society and War on Poverty", marking the period known as Progressive Era – the creation of the "Office of Economic Opportunity" (OEO), the "Economic Development Agency" (EDA) and the "Department of Housing and Urban Development" (HUD), all in 1965. There was also the "Community Development Block Grants" (CDBG) in 1974 and the "American Urban Development Action Grants" (UDAG) in 1977, all formulated and implemented under Democrat administrations (IEDC, 2008)

The Republican conservative turn at the federal level with Reagan's election in 1980 reversed this trend. Not only were fund transfers significantly reduced, but the provision of services also changed, increasing the private presence in public-private partnerships, special purpose organizations, business improvement districts and other formats, encouraged by a tightening of funding for urban improvement in the 1980s and 1990s. The return of the Democratic Party to federal power in 1992 did not substantially change this situation, with the permanence of institutional formats with a high presence of the private sector in policy implementation, when not also in decision-making, as well as a high dependence on private funding.

The comparison with the British case is interesting for its differences and similarities. The British tradition was in fact opposite to the US, with low private presence, significant state planning, and a strong national presence, both in funding and in promoting policies and regulating initiatives. In spite of the minor decision-making autonomy of local governments on policies, these were historically constructed as a scale endowed with substantial administrative and planning capacity (John, 2014).

While planning has been central in England since before the XX century, after the end of World War II urban policies followed two paths – tackling the decline of declining industrial areas and dispersing the population in England (Hill, 2000). This was done by a planning system established in 1947 by the "Town and Country Planning Act" in parallel with the creation of the Welfare State, with local governments being responsible for the delivery of services (Hill, 2000). Massive housing construction at a local level became a priority, given the deficit caused by war and the intense migration produced by decolonization. In the 1960s and 1970s, these trends were reinforced after riots in several large cities, with redistributive (and housing) policies, locally named as "municipal socialism" (Davies, 2001).

After 1979, Thatcher's conservative government questioned both the traditional planning model as well as the redistributive premises of postwar governments. In addition to the tightening of funding, there were also intense changes in the delivery of deregulation policies, private solutions and new agencies with different designs, especially the so-called Quangos (quasi-autonomous non-governmental organizations), as well as privatization and public-private partnerships for the delivery of services (Hill, 2000). As in the US case, the premise was that the private provision of public services would work better as they would not influence politics⁷. In this context, the Quango London Docklands Development Corporation, created with private control for the renovation of the former London port area, has become an icon (Fainstein, 1994). The role of local governments decreased in planning systems as an attempt to empower local private actors. In addition, large-scale institutional changes were introduced to reduce the local political opposition (in which the Labour Party was stronger), with the most emblematic being the abolition of all metropolitan Councils, including the Greater London Council in 1986. Common interest services became managed by special purpose companies and policies of a more local nature were redistributed to the lower levels (the London boroughs), leaving the metropolises

⁷ It is worth mentioning here the Heninget study results (2003) on the American charter schools. The authors showed that private agents also resort to politics when conditions and interests allow, suggesting that the normative premise of New Managerialism is simply wrong.

without territorial coordination tools. It is worth noting that this institutional arrangement is very similar to the current one in Brazilian metropolises, minus the differences in fiscal federalism, as I shall discuss later.

There was resistance at first from the Labour Party in local governments, but they gradually displaced or surrendered to the conservative policies. Thus, with the return of the Labour Party to national power in 1997, very little changed. The so-called Third Way governments implemented policies maintaining the previous privatization solutions geared towards demand, but with the reintroduction of a planning system. The creation of the "Great London Authority" in 2000, with an elected mayor and assembly positioned above the governments of the 32 London boroughs (plus the City Corporation, responsible for the heart of the historic center) was perhaps the most emblematic initiative in this direction. On the other hand, authors such as Davies (2001) argue that most initiatives merely represented the continuity of previous policies, albeit formulated as promoting local participation. After 2009, with the return of the Conservatives to the central government, a strong fiscal austerity policy has strangled the local governments, which have resisted and adapted to new conditions (John, 2014 and Gardner, 2014), although it is still early to determine the resulting pattern.

As a result of these displacements, debates on power and urban policies strongly shifted from political compositions in the city itself to the discussion of governance forms as well as analyzing partnerships, special purpose companies, and other recent formats for the development of urban policies. This rich literature advances the understanding of the various configurations in the current policy-making patterns as well as its consequences.

The general concept encompassing such shifts is governance. It would go beyond the scope of this article to discuss it in detail⁸. While the concept is polysemic (excessively, for some⁹), the most common and accepted definitions of the word designate complex sets of state and non-state organizations, connected by self-governing networks (Stoker, 1998a and Rhodes, 2006), leading to a government form in which the boundaries among organizations and between the public and private sectors have become permeable, involving interdependence of organizations. For defenders of the model, such as Pierre (1998), Peters (2000) e Stoker (1998a),

⁸ In Marques (2013), I discuss the issue in detail, both critically reviewing the uses of the concept in Brazil and proposing an alternative concept, and in a preliminary mapping of the governance standards present in the Sao Paulo metropolis.

⁹ Rhodes (1997) states that governance is used with six meanings internationally: minimal State, corporate governance, new public management, good governance, socio-cybernetic systems and self-organized networks. For a typology, also see Stoker (1998b).

governance represented a response to the increasing historical complexity of societies, given the impossibility of state organizations to face the challenges of delivering policies in increasingly complex societies. On the other hand, to critics such as Davies (2001) and Imbroscio (2000), governance was the combined results of the crisis of Fordism, the rise of the New Right, and neo-liberalism. According to this viewpoint, the premises of the New Public Management are wrong, both for considering that the private provision of services is superior to the public provision, and for seeing the field of politics under a negative light, allegedly only mobilized by public actors¹⁰.

In a more nuanced manner, Stoker (2000) argued that studies on urban politics have always left out the details of the workings of politics and policies, engulfed by complexity, institutional fragmentation, and power dependence amongst the players. For the author, the initial focus on coalition building as a mechanism for producing coordination succeeded due to the analysis of others, since the formation of pro-growth coalitions were too centered in the U.S. Elsewhere in the world, coalitions were very weak or nonexistent, with the State often being decisive for initiatives. In Europe, including in the UK, local political coordination to promote urban projects was the product of a deliberate (central) government action, leading to the coordination and collective action of private actors. Thus, the analytical shift towards governance resulted from the conclusion that the production of collective action in public affairs under certain conditions may not resort to the singular authority of the State, but neither may it do without it, as shown by studies on coalitions. Different governance formats would result from this, depending on local conditions and decisions (Pierre, 2011).

The most important thing to remember from this debate seems to be a shift in how to frame policymaking, increasingly focused on the relevant actors and arenas (Marques, 1998), regardless of their location in the State or elsewhere (Marques, 2000 and 2003). The most appropriate starting point seems to be to focus on who governs what (and how), and who governs what the State does not govern (Le Galés, 2011). Studies thus unfold in non-normative analyses of the different sets of actors involved, their connections, and the institutions around them (Marques, 2013).

While it is necessary to bear in mind that a substantial part of the State in all countries continue to operate under the previous regime (Levi-Faur, 2005) with several services provided directly by various state agencies, it seems undeniable that there have been substantial changes in the division of tasks between State and market in certain important policies, regardless of our position on such changes. The most prolific

¹⁰ Unlike what was found by Heniget (2003).

contribution for an understanding of the broader consequences in these shifts names the contemporary period as regulatory capitalism (Levi-Faur, 2005). According to this viewpoint, after a short period of hegemony of neoliberal ideas based on the reduction of the State and privatization, a rebuilding of State responsibilities and the market established and stabilized itself in the production and regulation of the economy and services. The result would not be less State (as a neoliberal perspective would argue), given that sometimes the devices built for regulation could be of a significant size (or even with higher expenses), but a different State.

Within XIX century competitive capitalism, the private sector was responsible for producing – captured by the metaphor *to row* –, as well as conducting or guiding – *steer* (Stoker, 1998b). However, changes in Fordism-Keynesianism would have given the State a substantial capacity both for producing as well as for guiding within the period called the Levi-Faur Welfare capitalism. Transformations since the 1970s have changed the situation, with the State currently focusing on regulating (*steer*) the concrete production (*row*) carried out by the private sector. The author makes it clear, however, that this change is not a complete replacement of the previous standards and shows great variation between countries. As always with historical processes, regulatory capitalism did not completely replace previous national-State structures, but became inextricably entwined with them, changing the operating logic of economies and political systems (given they changed the relationships between politics and economics). The expansion of regulation also introduced a new and diverse set of increasingly sophisticated tools, which influence policies themselves and came to be a privileged research subject, expanding worldwide¹¹ (Lascoumes and Le Galés, 2008)¹².

Precisely because of the importance of all these dimensions in the workings of policies, Lowndes (2001) argues that the incorporation of neo-institutionalism is more than central in the study of urban politics. It is noteworthy that, despite currently being almost an orthodoxy in political science, the presence of neo-institutionalism in urban studies is practically nonexistent. For Lowndes, the reasons for this are historical – pluralists and elitists established the literature on urban politics as a counterpoint to traditional institutional analyses, focused on static comparisons of the city's institutional structures and frameworks. The scholarly field then went through Marxism and then the

¹¹ The interesting work by Jordana and Levi-Faur (2005) is worthy of mention, on the dissemination of regulatory structures in Latin America after 1979.

¹² There is a possible dialogue here with direct planning, for whom urban politics is a set of practices associated politically to a set of non-neutral techniques (Miraftab, 2011).

political economy of growth machines and regimes, but always distant from institutions. For the author, the pluralistic perspective that grounds much of the international debate on urban politics cannot be applied to most situations in other countries outside the U.S., including Britain. For this reason, it is urgent to incorporate the more flexible perspective of neo-institutionalism, which leaves room for institutions and for different processes and informal actors. In this sense, institutions include the rules of the game as well as organizations and other actors and processes that are continuously built and rebuilt. They incorporate values, but values that are not submerged and hypostasized as in behaviorism. The choice of tools and construction of policies, on the other hand, is not neutral but immersed in politics, incorporating power relationships inserted within the social in different ways.

For the author, recent changes in policymaking framed by the concept of governance may have changed institutions and bureaucracies, but with a selective and non-linear maintenance of previous patterns. From this point of view, urban regimes are also made up of institutions and organizations, traversed by formal and informal associations in constant reconstruction by several actors. Therefore, the incorporation of contributions from neo-institutionalism may be of great assistance in the investigation of urban politics.

Although Lowndes suggestions are yet to be fully incorporated in the urban debates, the international literature on urban politics has effectively analyzed several institutional formats introduced since the 1990s, their relations with urban actors and their power dynamics. These vary greatly in time and even between different countries for a same instrument. It is illustrative to accompany this literature as many of these formats are currently reaching Brazil's local administrations, although they are still scarcely analyzed among us.

Unlike the regimes, prevalent in the U.S. and characterized by much more informal contact networks between organizations, most recent formats in other countries occurred through partnerships, with the creation of special purpose companies or the establishment of territorial jurisdictions regulated by their own legislation, beyond the mere privatization of services. In these arrangements we may find private companies as well as non-governmental non-profit organizations or even community associations, which depending on the case may include residents or especially local merchants (typically in central areas). It is important to understand not only which actors are involved in each case, but also what type of influence each type of actor has on policymaking.

Partnerships have spread from the British experience, although it is still the subject of controversy whether by policy mobility processes (Ward, 2006) or exportation conducted by specific actors (Davies, 2007). Davies (2001) suggests the existence of three types of partnerships: public-public, buyer-supplier contracts (of delivery, which may simply involve the contraction of private services), and strategic partnerships with private agents, which then come to possess decision-making delegation power on at least part of the policies. Of course, the latter type raises larger problems regarding public control over initiatives.

In the late 1970s partnerships only involved public officials among government levels as a means of an integrated response to the urban crisis of the 1960s ("Inner City Partnerships" - ICP), expressing the view of Labour governments. In the 1980s and 1990s, there was a shift towards partnerships with the private sector, even in degraded areas with the "Urban Development Grants" (UDG), but also in rich areas with the "Urban Development Corporation" (UDC), dominated by private interests and marginalizing local governments. Not much change was seen with the return of the Labour Party in 1997, even though local participation has become a recurring discourse in the past decade. For Davies (2007), however, the way in which community participation happens in the "Community Planning Partnerships" (PSCs) or in the "Local Strategic Partnerships" (LSP) only covers up managerialism. In cases where participation exists, conflicts eventually happen and communities are ultimately shut out of the process since the interests of the central government, ultimate promoters for initiatives, pertain to economic encouragement, with results that resemble the old description of the capture of the State

Partnerships are different from urban regimes since private companies have a minor role in the formulation of policies as well as bureaucratic structures promoted through initiative and with central government control. Although they were established by copying U.S. initiatives, the centralized UK government took a completely different pace, in which the private sector had little interest in participating as it realized it would have little decision-making power (Davies, 2003).

Several proposals for institutional reform advocate partnerships as coordination models, suggesting that they work in horizontal networks, given that networks represent cooperation as opposed to competition (markets) and hierarchies (bureaucracies). Existing studies indicate differently, that partnerships should not be confused with partnership policy designs as a form of coordination. Lowndes and Skelcher (1998) have shown that within urban partnerships several forms of

coordination may be present, depending on the stage of the partnership building. Typically, the construction of partnerships operates in very informal collaboration networks, while the creation and consolidation of the partnership is based on hierarchies with the formalization of previous networks, project formatting, the request of resources, and the jettison of the community from the process. The delivery or implementation of the partnership, lastly, involves market mechanisms or quasi-market competition for resources, putting at risk the trust built in the first phase.

Although widespread, partnerships were just as important as special purpose companies. According to Judd and Smith (2007), these deserve more analytical attention, considering they have often replaced or subjugated local elected institutions. In many places, such authorities assumed responsibility for transport infrastructure (roads, bridges, tunnels, airports, ports, and mass transit), water and sewage (waste collection and disposal), as well as tourism and leisure facilities. In many cases, new agencies receive mandatory government subsidies and transfers, but are not required to conduct public hearings or other forms of public disclosure of information, nor do they need to bother with voters.

In fact, the local opposition to urban projects became a major topic since the 1980s (Dewey and Davis, 2013). There are reasons to conclude that, in many cases, the establishment of special purpose agencies has precisely the objective of reducing accountability and to obtain revenue without raising taxes, although financing almost always comes from public funds (Judd and Smith, 2007; Smith, 2010; Raco, 2014). One other strategy to reduce resistances to improvement projects and major urban projects has been to previously format projects in order to escape predictable resistances (Smith, 2010; Dewey and Davis, 2013), although the transference of initiatives to be controlled by higher government levels has also been mobilized (Smith, 2010).

In the United States, this format also gave origin to special districts, which may even collect taxes and carry out services. Ward (2006) analyzed the migration of this model to the UK in the so-called business improvement districts (BID). The idea arose in Toronto, Canada (Business improvement areas - BIAs), but spread through the U.S. in the following decades. The initiatives do not involve major improvement projects, but the provision of some kind of urban service and security – such as garbage collection, repairs in common grounds, police – , carried out by specific institutions with community participation, but which mainly involve retailers and local businesspersons. Initiatives are privately funded, although resources are collected by the local

government and transferred to private control. The migration of this initiative to the UK led to something substantially different by differences in welfare regimes, power divisions between government scales, and the political and economic trajectories in cities in both countries. As already stated by Davies (2003) regarding partnerships, local businesses and property owners and developers did not adhere to initiatives as it happened in the U.S., resulting in experiences with a much stronger (central) government presence.

The policymaking model with intense private participation was particularly developed, lastly, in the production of renewal initiatives and major urban projects. In the British experience, it reached its peak with the preparation of the London 2012 Olympic Games. These involved the renovation of a vast region east of the English capital, the last region with still relatively low land values. Raco (2014) researched the subject by investigating the institutional arrangements responsible for the preparation of the Olympic Games, an extreme example of policymaking in the recent milestone of regulatory capitalism. The State (at its different levels) withdrew itself from the actual production of the various components associated with the event, hiring the private initiative for everything, but building a comprehensive system to regulate the contracted private activities with overall costs certainly higher. The example shows how a policy geared towards the 'delivery' of policies turned into a series of regulatory structures, controlled by contracts and allowing for a State conducted privatization where public funds and goals were converted into private management and delivery programs. One dimension of this process is the insulation of structures for implementing democratic demands, seen as a risk to the future of initiatives. The scale of contracts and subcontracts for several services was effectively enormous (43,000 contracts in total) to the total cost of 10 billion GBP. In 2006, an authority was established to manage all this – the "Olympic Delivery Authority" (ODA), a quango with specific powers. This agency in turn hired innumerable companies for many different activities, especially the CLM (multinational consortium for project management) to whom the management of the entire process was delegated.

There are strong similarities between this case and the implementation of *Porto Maravilha* in Rio de Janeiro, explained by the mobility of these policy instruments (Silvestre, 2013), but also by the local processes and choices (Saruê, 2014). Most of the Brazilian literature on major projects such as Vainer (2012), however, have focused their attention on the integration of ventures in city planning – the urban strategic planning or the assumptions guiding such planning, with the implementation of

business logic (Vainer, 2002). Institutional dimensions surrounding the initiatives remain largely unexplored as well as the political dynamics associated with the approval or implementation of projects.

This theoretical recovery demonstrated that the aforementioned distance between urban studies and political science is not exclusive to the Brazilian debate. If in the 1950s and 1960s we find an intense international dialogue between the two fields, from the 1970s, studies on politics and the urban have developed in two completely different lines. In the international debate, however, we find a discussion as to the reasons for this separation. These may be read as mutual accusations, motivated by the dispute for the domain of the field between political scientists who study urban politics (and the State) and urban scholars who discuss politics and city politics. However, we may also consider that the debate poses some interesting arguments to reflect on what it would take to develop and to build bridges between these fields and what we lose by not having such bridges.

Internationally speaking, according to Wolman and Goldsmith (1992) the study of urban politics study is also considered a minor topic in political science when compared to national politics. The authors use the metaphor of a second division sports match, where the game that really matters is being played elsewhere. Similarly, Stone (2010) states that for the political science mainstream, urban politics is about "education and garbage collection." With that, political science loses some theoretical tools and methods for understanding the distributive logic behind politics, considering that the space, when allocating processes and actors, strongly influences "who wins what."

The possible dimensions of the low connection between areas are analyzed more systematically by Sapotichne, Jones and Wolfe (2007) by using cross-citations of classic texts within the several areas of political science – pluralism, public choice and collective action, public policy, Marxism and political economy, as well as urban studies. The results indicate that each sub-area tends to quote their own classics more often, although some titles managed to overcome borders, such as Dahl. However, most significant is the great isolation of urban studies, which absorbs other sub-areas

but is cited or read outside its own borders. The presence of neo-Marxism is also much more expressive in urban studies.

Judd (2005) established a keen (albeit acid) critique of the emphasis given by urban studies on politics and policies. The author argues that mainstream political science disregards the field of urban studies due to three postures from urban scholars. Firstly, since the 1960s, they were dedicated to saving the cities (a normative starting point that hinders research). Secondly, they continue to express the aforementioned reformist traditions of the Progressive Era from the 1960s. Lastly, they adopted an excessive rhetoric for describing the urban issue. In the origins of community studies and the debates between pluralism and elite theory, there were strong connections between the fields, but these were lost between 1960 and 1970. Not even with the emergence of the growth machine and urban regimes models, both very useful for studying national politics, did convergence occur. For Judd, the reasons for this separation are both in the capture of urban studies by politics of the 1960s and 1970s, and of political science by the behaviorist revolution. These divergent paths gradually hindered communication, accentuated by intellectual hype¹³ and certain ideological and rhetorical consensus.

The urban field would also be marked by a pessimism regarding the city itself, which according to Judd culminated in what he calls the triptych noir: tragedy, great drama, and disastrous future. The author heads-on disagrees with this diagnosis, which does not mean that major globalized cities do not contain very bad spaces in many different ways – poverty, surveillance, tourist bubbles, fortified enclaves, or even that inequality has not grown in past decades. What the author argues is that while cities may have such places, they are not their entirety, being also characterized by complex and varied fabrics with multiple and contradictory meanings. The mistake of a significant portion of urban studies, therefore, would be in taking the description of the parts as the whole. For the author, this dystopia is a nostalgia for something that never

¹³ This may be understood as a consequence of the interdisciplinary nature of the area, which is continuously influenced by various research fields and paradigms. However, the capacity of urban studies to generate new key concepts is rather impressive, explanatory totalities that eventually decline after a few years. Some deal with actual new phenomena and resist longer the effects, although in a nuanced manner, such as gentrification and global cities, but others disappear such as megacities. The most recent examples include policy mobility (Peck and Theodore, 2010) and urban assemblages (McFarlane, 2011), both focusing on processes already discussed by other fields in detail by different categories, but recently resignified. For excellent reviews suggesting the need to anchor the new concepts within already established traditions and debates in order to escape naive objectivism see Brenner, Madden and Wachsmuth (2011) and Storper and Scott (2014).

existed: a working-class neighborhood solidarity or the small community with horizontal power relations.

The collective consequence of this attitude is a stronger invitation to preach to the choir than to discuss arguments arising from research with the unconverted in order to accumulate knowledge collectively.

Stone (2010), in contrast, argues that urban studies developed themselves in relative isolation, since the mainstream political science, stemming from pluralist assumptions, advocates three very complicated viewpoints for studying power in the city: the separation of politics and economy, silence on the issue of inequality, and believing that mandate and legislative authorization are equivalent to politics, thus disregarding their implementation. Lastly, they usually disregards that policies are a result of government actions alongside citizens' reaction.

Responding to Judd's critique (2005), Imbroscio (2010) follows the same line as Stone, arguing that the existing distance between fields is healthy since political science generally presents a very impoverished view of power, grounded on pluralism, in addition to advocating a separation between State and market and refusing to be impacted by the critical literature. Moreover, the author argues that the political science mainstream continues to be dominated by behaviorism and, more recently, by rational choice theory, rejecting the necessary interdisciplinary methodological pluralism for studying the city. Finally, the author states that the mainstream lacks scientific neutrality, celebrating the established order, contrary to his own discourse. It would be interesting to wonder if Imbroscio (2010) considers his own analysis to be scientifically neutral.

I must say, I partially agree with arguments from both sides of this debate. On the one hand, traditional political science has undervalued urban debates for some decades, including those that could bring a better theoretical understanding of political or empirical processes in non-urban scales. On the other hand, the field of urban studies has read very little of what is produced on politics and policies, disregarding contributions due to ideological prejudice or treading from scratch in already established paths, as is the case of political mobility discussions (Peck and Theodore, 2010), which disregard the vast literature on the importance of ideas in public policies. We should add another element regarding the Brazilian production. A national trend seems to be prevalent in various research fields to embrace theories, methods, or authors in a unique and pure manner, taking things to an almost identitarian dimension. This has two consequences, both of them negative, for the production of knowledge.

On the one hand, it leads to an effort to apply the author, method or theory of preference to any object, or to choose objects in order to apply the theory and not the other way around. On the other hand, it leads to a refusal to dialogue with any other analytic tradition, even if it is more appropriate for the issues in question. It may seem obvious, but it is necessary for our debates to reaffirm that we should know as much as possible of the different debates (and methods) and dialogue with different traditions and make use of methods and authors whenever advantageous (Marques and Faria, 2012).

4. Brazilian cities, urban politics, and policies

Although the dimensions discussed in the previous sections also characterize urban politics in Brazilian cities, some important local dimensions are specific to the Brazilian case. These particularities relate to the actors present within the urban scenario and their relative importance, the institutions of the political world and the city, as well as the legacy of previous policies. On the one hand, state institutions have always been present, although with serious fragilities in insulation and capacity. Additionally, the presence of state actors early on included agencies and institutions of different government levels simultaneously, given the importance of federalism, especially in recent times. On the other hand, the private sector associated with urban production has always been of major importance, albeit with particularities regarding the types of activities in has been involved in, as well as the interpenetration patterns with institutions responsible for policies.

Thus, this section begins by retrieving the historical production course for urban policies in Brazil, helping us understand legacies and the configurations of the existing actors. The trajectory of urban services and urban policies in the country shows a relatively clear general pattern, associated with the development of the State and the economy in Brazil (Rangel, 1987), resulting in four periods with clear and distinct characteristics with regards to the form of organization of policies and services and the existing type of provision.

State action began still under the influence of the miasmatic paradigm in the second half of the XIX century, although the dissemination of hygienism had since further enhanced its presence (Marques, 1995). Although this expansion did not occur in a substantially different manner as to what took place in central countries, it was marred by operational fragilities in public institutions and within the national private sector. In several cities, the situation repeated itself with the initial hiring of domestic

private companies, which after a short period of operation eventually passed their services on to foreign companies. Rangel (1987) suggested that this happened because of the lack of techniques, raw materials, and domestic materials, as well as the low capitalization of domestic companies, all of which are associated with the stage of the national economy.

The first initiatives in the second half of the XIX century were aimed at water supply and production, drainage, and desiccation of wetlands, all contracted with the private sector. In almost all cases, expert committees decided for certain construction works, for which projects and constructions were directly contracted with engineers, domestic or foreign. Some decades later, the contracting of services with national private companies became disseminated with concessions for water supply, sewage, animal traction trams, and street lighting by gas (Marques, 1995 and Telles, 1994). In almost all cases, services were transferred to foreign private companies after only a few years in operation. The arrival of the new century added public lighting by electricity and electric traction trams to the list, many of them already born from concessions to foreign companies. During this period, housing policies for low-income population were completely absent, marked especially by precarious housing in slums. Similarly, coverage rates were very low and planning initiatives or control policies were non-existent for land use and occupation. The exception being embellishment projects for central areas, usually implemented with the participation of foreign architects and geared towards purging the colonial character of our cities, gentrifying them such as in the Passos Reform in Rio de Janeiro and interventions by Antonio Prado in Sao Paulo.

The second period began in the 1910s and 1920s with the creation of state institutions for direct administration, which expropriated private services and held them until the late 1950s. For Rangel (1987) and Marques (1995), the transition towards this period may be explained by the development of national industries of materials and products as well as professional communities pressuring for the expansion of this market for professionals and domestic companies. There was further pressure in the following decades due to the growing difficulties in hiring foreign companies and the import of raw materials, initially in the First World War, and later during the Great Depression. In the case of water and sewage supply, the entrance of the public sector typically occurred between the 1910s and 1930s¹⁴. In this second period, the State

¹⁴ The Water and Sewage Inspectorate (IAE) became the operator for new systems in Rio de Janeiro in 1922 and state governments assumed the services in Recife in 1900 and in Florianópolis in 1910, although the Water and Sewage Bureau of (RAE) was already operating the systems in São Paulo since 1893. In some cases, state institutions coexisted with previous private concessions until the 1940s, such

would directly execute and operate services from direct administration bodies, with no major concerns for tariff recovery. As for planning, the first set of plans were introduced during this period, as proposed by Alfred Agache in Rio de Janeiro in 1930 and the functional zoning of São Paulo in 1934.

Although expansion of services did occur throughout the period, the offer was usually lower than the demand. The same holds true for housing policy. In fact, the period marks the beginning of the public production for low-income population, with the construction of the Retirement and Pensions Institutes – IAPs (Bonduki, 2004). The access to these was subjected to the mechanisms of the Brazilian regulated citizenship (Santos, 1979)¹⁵, and the production ended up with inexpressive dimensions.

The third period began in the late 1950s and early 1960s, with the establishment of corporately organized public companies interested in economic-financial returns. This allowed for more efficient standards and changes in the scale of the systems and services through the obtainment of loans¹⁶, but which in the end limited the expansion of coverage of the population serviced. Institutions and federal policies systems formed after the 1964 military coup¹⁷ consolidated and expanded this pattern. These encouraged the formation of state institutions to implement policies under strong federal standardization and regulation¹⁸. Mass production took place in different areas of public policy, as in the case of housing, electricity and sewage, but with serious quality problems, focus, gigantism, and corruption (Draibe, 1989). In spite of increasing production scales, demand continued to be higher than supply in various services, and housing and urban precariousness continued to grow under the weight of the passage of the Brazilian urban population from 20 million inhabitants in 1950 to 80 million in 1980. Over the course of this third period, the private sector was distant from

as the company City in Rio de Janeiro, which became extinct in 1947, and the Light Company in Sao Paulo, which were only encompassed in 1956, although tram services had already been encompassed in 1941. Urban sanitation also followed a similar path (Ralize, 2015).

¹⁵ In a founding analysis, Santos (1979) suggested that citizenship in Brazil was founded since the late XIX century and more intensely from the 1930s onwards, associated with the world of urban formal employment and certain occupations elected by the State as strategic for its development strategies. This regulatory dimension (by the State, considering the occupational structure) of our citizenship generated particularism, fragmentation, and selectivity.

¹⁶ The pioneering model was perhaps the Sanitation and Urbanization Superintendence (SURSAN) in Guanabara in 1957.

¹⁷ Among Them, the National Housing Bank, the Housing and Sanitation Financial Systems, and Planasa - National Sanitation Plan, Brazilian Company of Urban Transportation etc.

¹⁸ The State Sanitation Companies, state electricity companies, Metropolitan and Housing Companies are good examples.

the provision of services, but operated intensely as a contractor for construction works, services and facilities, providing an important role in policymaking efforts¹⁹.

As for planning, this period represented the pinnacle of integrated and joint planning, although with relatively few practical consequences since it was detached from the construction of state capacities at a local level in order to manage production effectively in the territory in the medium-term. This was partially due to a chronic difficulty in establishing active management policies for our cities' territories, for political reasons, given the redistributive features of this type of initiative, as I shall discuss later.

The return of democracy since the 1980s introduced limited immediate changes in this pattern, but the previous period established a slow transition towards a fourth phase in the provision of urban services and policies in the country. Although migration processes and fertility rates have declined sharply since 1980, the urban population continued to grow strongly, given the scale reached by the cities, jumping from 80 to 161 million inhabitants between 1980 and 2010. Once again, therefore, housing precariousness expanded even more as a combined result of inadequate policies and urban growth.

The accentuated decline of the military regime policies in the late 1970s and early 1980s led to a severe disaggregation in national sector institutions. Local organs created in the previous period, however, continued to exist and sought for ways to operate and produce their policies. Although privatization and concession of services did occur, especially after the 1990s, they only had a lateral impact on urban policies. The 1988 Federal Constitution was a landmark for health, assistance and social security policies, but it provided relatively little change for the urban landscape and consequent policies, despite all the pressure from previous mobilizations such as the urban-reform movements and movements focused on other sectorial reforms. The Constitution included the urban issue in just two articles with instruments for urban land democratization, but these were still in need of regulation. This only came with the so-called Statute of the Cities, which was not signed into law until 2001.

The main changes in Brazilian cities took place, in fact, though the slow displacement of the policy agenda from activism by numerous local governments,

¹⁹ An important exception was the public transportation services on tires, which have always conceded or contracted private bus companies throughout the country, even if accompanied by public provision in varying degrees. In São Paulo, even though a public company devoted to expanding service and removing the private sector existed since 1947, private participation only further increased (Requena, 2014).

which independently developed innovative policies during the 1980s and 1990s, such as slum urbanization, allotment regulation, special zonings, social fees for services, different forms of self-managed community help or active participation of residents, social renting, etc. The slow horizontal dissemination of these policies since the end of the 1980s produced shifts in the urban policy community towards more redistributive and inventive initiatives in terms of design.

This process led to programs during the Fernando Henrique Cardoso administration such as *Habitar Brazil* and *Prosanear*. This same administration began a slow and gradual reform process of the housing sector, with an incremental reform of numerous regulations, including in private production, which produced medium-term impacts on housing supply (Dias, 2012). This process later acquired a different scale with the creation of the Ministry of Cities at the beginning of the Lula administration in 2003, which federalized or established federal incentives for the local development of several local policies established in the previous decade. The following years witnessed the solidification of several urban policy sectors with new federal institutionalities²⁰, though obviously without overcoming the broader deadlocks placed by the Brazilian political system (Rolnik, 2009). There was also the development of greater capacities in local governments, partially due to federal incentives, but also by local learnings, although these are still very low on average.

The majority of services were still provided by public entities, mostly from indirect administration through the hiring of private companies to carry out different tasks. Regulatory bodies were formed in some cases²¹, but only by introducing minor differences in the existing situation. In some few cases, the entirety of service concessions were handed to the private sector. In most policies and cities, however, provision of policies by autarchies or local government public companies continued to occur, with the private sector being hired to perform tasks directly. The concession experiences, however, have increased, thus indicating a tendency of greater private sector participation in the provision of services and in construction²².

²⁰ Among them, we should mention the National System of Social Housing – SNHIS – with its Fund and Council, the National Housing Policies, Sanitation and Solid Waste, the National Traffic Code, the Law on Public consortia, the National City Conferences, and programs to encourage the recovery programs for central areas, the development of local capacities for planning, risk areas, and land regularization.

²¹ Such as, for example, in cases of transformation of the CMTC in SPTrans in bus services in São Paulo (Campos, 2015) and the creation of the Amlurb in urban cleaning, both in São Paulo (Ralize, 2015)).

²² A good example of this trend is the São Paulo subway. In 2010, line 4 (yellow) was inaugurated, the first line built by concession to a private construction and operation consortium. All other lines currently under construction follow the same format, but the three original lines built since the 1970s continue to

Another recent important change in policy development concerns the massive federal housing program *Minha Casa Minha Vida*. After years of an almost complete lack of federal funding in the housing sector, the federal government launched the program in 2009 with the ambitious goal of building one million housing units in four years for three different income levels – less than 3 minimum wages, between 3 and 5, and more than 5 salaries. Two extra million units were added to this goal in the second stage, launched in 2011²³. The most important aspect of the program for this article, however, concerns its implementation arrangement, which increased the private presence in policy implementation. The program is almost completely subsidized for its first range (a range rarely before attended to by previous programs) and partially for the second range. The program's operating agent, much like previous policies, is the bank *Caixa Econômica Federal* (CEF – Federal Savings Bank), but in this case, the construction companies hire directly with the CEF the implementation of units for range 1, displacing local governments. Local governments are responsible for obtaining land and organizing the beneficiaries queue for range 1, while private agents operate directly for ranges 2 and 3 as a developer for the projects. The program regulation, therefore, is federal (CEF and Ministry of Cities), but almost the entire implementation of range 1 is in the hands of private companies, leaving local governments only with the selection of locations and mortgagees (Rodrigues, 2015).

In the field of urban planning there has also been important changes if we consider the main theme of this article. If the fourth period continued to be marked by the continued absence of active management of the cities' territories, even in cases where institutional constructions efforts took place (Hoyler, 2014), it also presented the dissemination of reform initiatives or specific revitalizations, associated with major urban projects. From the point of view of policymaking arrangements, there were new institutional formats introduced with increasing private participation. At least three types of changes should be underlined, associated with specific policy instruments developed in three sets of major urban projects.

Firstly, there were several Interlinked and Urban Operations (*Operações Interligadas e Urbanas*) experiments since the decade of 1980 in São Paulo (especially in *Operação Faria Lima*), and later in several other cities, delimiting city areas where urban legislation could be negotiated and construction potential could be transacted. This experience gave rise to the Additional Construction Potential Certificates

be managed and operated by the public company, although construction has been contracted with private companies.

²³ The third phase was launched in 2014.

(*Certificados de potencial adicional*) – Cepacs –, a financial title traded in the stock exchange and, therefore, highly liquid and subject to speculation regarding its future appreciations. A second institutional innovation also began in Sao Paulo, more specifically in the *Nova Luz* project. After years of failed attempts in initiating this project during the Serra administration and almost the entire Kassab administration, the local government attempted to apply a new device – the so-called urban concession, delegating several government legal prerogatives, including expropriation, to private concessionaire agents responsible for the renewal of a city region (Souza 2011). The project was ultimately barred in court and never came to life, at least in its original formulation. It did however introduce an innovation that remains as an alternative for future initiatives. Lastly, we should mention the establishment of the *Porto Maravilha* project in Rio de Janeiro (the first national project to actually deserve the Major Project adjective). The project inaugurated a new format for the provision of urban services (Saruê, 2015), based on the concessions of all services and policies within a particular city area to a private agent over a long period of time, hired by another mixed agent in a format that holds connections with the one described by Raco (2014) for the London Olympic Games.

As we have seen, the theory of regulatory capitalism suggests the existence of a peculiar moment in global capitalism in which the State moves away from direct production (row) of several services (although not all), albeit more strongly occupying regulatory activities (steer) than in the previous period. The previous historical restoration indicates that the Brazilian State had already been directly participating in policies (row) since the transition from the first to the second period of production of urban services in the early XX century. Even if it was unable to completely guide (steer) the processes, it was present since the first regulation period of private contracts. At the same time, participation of the private sector (row) has always been present. It occurred directly during the first period, through the contracting of construction and purchase of services, materials, and equipment in the second and third periods, and again in the direct provision of some services in the fourth period. The entrance of the private sector in the provision of services has recently been accompanied by an attempt to increase the State's regulatory capacities (steer), still with partial success. At

the current moment, therefore, the State is still involved with the larger share of direct provision, albeit always with intense private participation in construction and services. In some specific policies and cities, the private sector appears for the first time in direct provision in nearly 100 years as a concessionaire, although it is necessary to emphasize that these are extreme cases, and that increased private participation increases much more in other recently developed urban policymaking arrangements.

Another central dimension to consider in the Brazilian case concerns the different roles of the various levels of government for the provision of services and policies. This division is specific to each policy and changes over time, but it must be understood in the wake of the recent discussions on federalism in policymaking (Arretche, 2012). Although urban policies are the responsibility of local governments by constitutional principle, the legacy of previous policies (such as the existence of state companies or funds and federal funding systems) as well as higher level government policies (for example, the *Minha Casa Minha Vida* program) had a strong influence on policies developed in cities. In addition to these specific dimensions in policies, however, the general design of Brazilian federalism generally affects urban politics, as it differentiates the environment surrounding urban politics in the country from the situation described by Moloch's growth machines (1976). In Brazil, the local power levels have access to a significant amount of financial resources through automatic transfers (via the Participation Fund of Municipalities) as well as conditional transfers, but specified by policy (such as health, education, public safety, and assistance). Thus, the relationship of local political elites with economic interests is not marked by the same kind of dependence game, at least for the development of local policies. As I shall outline below, the association between these actors seems to be much more of a political nature than associated with the promotion of local public policies.

Another set of issues specifying urban politics in Brazil derives from how the public and private sphere relate and connect with each other in the country, not just in formal arrangements, but also in informal ones and in the operationalization of policies (Marques, 2000 and 2003). Although the state is very present in several social spheres, it often has no conditions for insulation or capacity for policy formulation and implementation. Some authors have mobilized the idea of State privatization to describe the connections between public and private, emphasizing the exploitation of the public by the private in Brazil (Grau and Beluzzo, 1995). Cardoso (1971), on the other hand, developed the idea of bureaucratic power rings in a classic contribution – circles of interest that would connect State sectors with private players interested in

these sectors. This idea was initially developed to describe the populist democratic period, but was later applied to analyze policies during the military regime. The concept helps us to consider the intermediation of interests in the country when compared with the U.S. lobby and European corporatism. However, it does little to contribute in specifying the details of these patterns besides suggesting connection intentionality and low inertia.

To contribute in this direction, I have developed the ideas of the relational fabric of the State and State permeability, in a clearer dialogue with the elitist State and neo-institutionalist theories while making use of network analyses as a method (Marques, 2000 and 2003). The first concept expresses the connection patterns between state and non-state actors within networks based on formal and informal relationships of various types, which internally structure the State and connect it with the broader surrounding political environment. Permeability, in turn, refers specifically to the connections of the private sector with State actors. These ideas attempt to deal with patterns that are more inertial and less associated with intentional ties than the ones described by the bureaucratic rings. The relational fabric of the State was historically built through production processes in several policy sectors. The concept emphasizes the interconnected nature, yet continuous and not entirely intentional, of the relations between State and society, connected by multiple ties with several ties and built in different situations. By considering this dimension, we may better comprehend why the State is very present in the production of policies, but tends to be poorly insulated and interpenetrated with private agents.

The matter is particularly relevant for urban policies, due to the particularities of political and economic actors present in the cities. Lessa and Dain (1982) suggested the existence of a triple alliance in the construction of capitalism in Brazil, with the State being responsible for the production infrastructure and intermediate goods while the foreign private sector focuses on modern transformation industry and the national private sector specializes itself in banking, commercial sectors, and civil construction. The construction sector was partially a product of the Brazilian State as its contracts capitalized and specialized the sector (Camargos, 1993) since the 1950s. The military regime only strengthened this specialization, which remained mostly unchanged in the early years of the recent democratic period.

Transformations in the Brazilian economy in the 1990s introduced changes in ownership structure, but this division only suffered lateral changes. Privatizations reduced State presence in the intermediate goods and infrastructure sector (the latter

through concessions) and a substantial part of the banking and commercial sector opened themselves to international capital. However, the construction industry, including both construction companies for public works and edifications, further strengthened themselves. In fact, they have been largely benefited from the privatization process of assets related to intermediate goods (cement and oil refining), as well as the concession of infrastructure works. In the wake of this process, they diversified their portfolios and went on to become multinational companies, with works in countries all over the world. In addition, they kept their place as contracted companies for constructions, both in infrastructure and buildings. The return of federal investments in infrastructure and major urban development construction projects in the last decade greatly benefited these companies.

As a result, construction companies are now among the leading national capitals alongside financial companies and industry groups for intermediate goods and agribusiness. Hence, the extremely important political relevance of construction companies, which, unlike the other two sectors, mostly survives from contracts with the State at its different levels and different political sectors. For this reason, the construction sector has many interests in establishing and maintaining links with governments and State agencies. For no other reason are they always among the most important donors for election campaigns. Nor for any other reason are they also involved in several recent corruption scandals.

In the case of cities, the importance of these actors is even greater and more diversified as it also involves other types of urban capital, including at least the provision of urban services (bus companies and urban cleaning), the construction of public works, and several real estate developers specialties (Marques, 2013). Although there are no systematic studies on the subject, it is likely that the lack of active policies of land regulation in our cities is associated with the place occupied by urban land in local wealth. This is because, on the one hand, local political and economic elites in Brazil have great interpenetration with the capital involved in promoting and incorporating real estate development companies, which as we have seen distinguish themselves by their economic girth. On the other hand, given the dissemination of property as a means of access to housing (including among the poorest population), land and its valorization remains central for different social groups. As a result, in addition to multiple concrete channels that may influence the private sector on policies (Hoyler, 2014), games of imposed losses associated with land regulation have high political costs to local political leaders, even for those located more to the left.

Lastly, it is worth adding that the recent period also witnessed the consolidation of the importance of other actors, such as the Public Ministry (Public Prosecution Office), which has contributed to the opening of decision-making processes related to urban policies or in increasing their accountability. At the same time, Brazil's recent democracy has witnessed an intense dissemination of new participatory institutional bodies in public policies, many of them mandatory. These currently represent new channels for the presence and action of social movements, which already marked the urban scene since the late 1970s. The presence of these new actors and institutions has produced effects on urban politics and policies, such as the *Nova Luz* project in Sao Paulo. As mentioned above, after years of implementation difficulties, the municipal government decided to develop the project through a concession that granted major prerogatives to a private company. The lack of compliance of mandatory rites regarding public consultation, however, allowed for opponents of this project (basically all local actors, from retailers to the housing movement) to block the project in court.

Rather than concluding, pointing towards an agenda

In this last section, I return to the main elements underlined throughout the article and discuss some points for a research agenda on urban politics in Brazil.

As we have seen, international debates present a solid trajectory, which originated in the so-called community power debate, and was influenced by French Marxist sociology and by the shifts within the literature towards public policy. It later moved on to urban regimes and coalitions, and most recently has focused on the various governance arrangements with public and private participation developed in recent decades as well as the institutional arrangements regulating these new standards. The last decades have consolidated (unfortunately) a division of different fields for an understanding of cities and politics, being this trend even sharper within the national literature. Building bridges between these two rich fields of research will only be possible if we consider space triply: as a constitutive dimension of politics (and State actions), its assumption (through the inherited spatial legacy), and a result of these same political practices. On the other hand (and simultaneously), this exercise presumes considering the State and political institutions as the analytical locus for dynamics and the processes themselves, and not merely an unfolding of processes outside of them. Politics and institutions, as well as space, matter.

We have also seen that we have a peculiar arrangement in providing services and policies in Brazilian cities in which the State has always been present, but with different forms of intense private participation. These arrangements were regulated not only by formal institutions, but also by permeability patterns, where private companies involved in the direct production of the urban framework had (and have) major importance. The influence of different levels of government on local policies must also be considered to be central. However, local governments in Brazil have lower structural constraints for developing policies than in countries such as the United States. Capitals directly involved with the production of cities, on the other hand, have great influence and the production of policies on urban land regulation find greater difficulties than in Europe.

How may we then summarize a necessary research agenda among us to build bridges between studies on politics and studies on cities, thus creating conditions for a better understanding of city politics? I believe that at least three major fields of analysis need to be explored in the coming years so that we may better understand urban politics in Brazil.

First of all, and I dare say the most pressing, is the development of studies on local public policies, local bureaucracies and agencies, and on governance patterns therein present, considering the different possible configurations in actors and institutions. The Brazilian literature has witnessed a healthy expansion of studies on policy implementation, which incorporate the local level (the articles contained in Faria, 2012, for example). However, we find a considerable lack of studies on policies directly influencing the construction of the urban framework. In fact, there are some studies on the subject, but the majority of them almost perfectly reproduce the problems coming from the dissociation between the urban literature and the political science literature, already widely discussed throughout this article. The herein motioned urgency concerns the development of studies informed in both traditions in order to consider space and politics simultaneously as sources of dynamics and locus of processes.

This task is partially associated with yet another one: a detailed and empirically based study on several actors within the private sector present in the cities, especially the so-called several urban capitals, involved in the actual production of the city. Again, there are recent studies that highlight such actors, but they are mostly based on abstract and imprecise conceptual frameworks regarding the characteristics and processes at stake, failing to specify the actual mechanisms involved (Marques, 2007).

Thirdly, it is necessary to solidify our knowledge on the particularities of local electoral dynamics as well as on government formation at a municipal level. Among the three listed themes, this is the only one where the local debate already shows increasing density within Brazilian political science, with electoral geography studies (Pierucci and Lima, 1993, Kinzo et al. 2003 and Limongi and Mesquita, 2011, for example) on the association between political elites and neighborhoods or on voters' partisan mobilization (Kuschnir, 2000). However, this production occurs almost completely disconnected from studies on the cities themselves, generating little collective accumulation on the workings of urban politics.

I conclude this article with a brief note on methodology and research design. Urban politics involves the analysis of different configurations of actors, connected by various relationships patterns, surrounded by institutions and legacies of previous politics as well as spaces. These characteristics suggest that the subject should be analyzed primarily through detailed case studies, but with a comparable theoretical and methodological orientation in order to specify these conditions as well as their order and combination, in what Ragin (1987) called multiple conjectural causation. This methodological strategy does not abstain from generalizations, but points towards a certain logic for the construction of more comprehensive theoretical statements. This entails conducting a series of studies to cover the entire range of the phenomenon (Tilly, 1992), in continuous transit between theory and empirical analysis and constantly informing the first from the second. Thus, the advancement of our understanding of urban politics assumes a comparative gesture (Robinson, 2011), both nationally and internationally, and achievable only from case studies designed in an open dialogue between cities, perspectives, and approaches. Precisely the opposite of what has been done so far in the majority of the national debate.

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