

BOOK REVIEW

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THE CITY EXISTS AND RESISTS: EXPANDING ORGANIZATIONAL DYNAMICS

CIDADES E ESTUDOS ORGANIZACIONAIS: UM DEBATE NECESSÁRIO

Luiz Alex Silva Saraiva e Alessandro Gomes Enoque (Orgs.). Ituiutaba/MG, Brasil: Barlavento, 2019. 433 p.

The approach to cities in management studies has gone in new directions since the publication of various seminal works in Brazil (Fischer, 1996, 1997; Mac-Allister, 2004) aimed at incorporating social, political, economic, and cultural issues into the realm of management studies that take into account a symbolic, critical and context-sensitive perspective. Bearing in mind the need for more discussions on the interdisciplinarity that can link the topic of cities with perspectives taken from administrative sciences, *Cities and Organizational Studies: a necessary debate* summarizes academic production and looks at the effort to expand this debate in *academia*. In view of the urgent need to understand the urban space and the production of the city through different lenses, including Organizational Studies, this work considers the city as an organization with its different organizational processes that are associated with practical knowledge and a reflective management view.

The book, which is available in an electronic format that can be downloaded for free, comprises nine chapters in article format, and deals with the concerns of different researchers to problematize the city in a way that goes far beyond notions of space and geographical frontiers, thus expanding the concept of organization. The book was compiled by Professors Luiz Alex Silva Saraiva (UFMG) and Alessandro Gomes Enoque (UFU), who highlight the interdisciplinary approaches of Organization Studies in their works, especially in those involving the study of cities. The work unveils the authors' discussions that articulate different approaches, ranging from urban space practices to socio-urban dynamics, power relations, dispute issues, resistance groups, sociability and urban planning.

"Cities in Organizational Studies as resistance and socio-spatial reaction", which is the subheading of the preface, is an invitation by Ana Paula Baltazar, associate professor at UFMG's School of Architecture and Design, to the reader to reflect on the extinction of the Ministry of Cities in 2019, and the consequent dismantling of socio-spatial public policies. This preface is the gateway that introduces the reader to the book's contents and places the subject matter in context. The various texts are a response to the clamor for the necessary debate between cities and Organizational Studies from a viewpoint that involves active subjects, culture, differences, multi-territoriality, popular participation, symbolism, local entrepreneurship and the organization of collective spaces, all of which form a research agenda in different areas of knowledge, among which is Organizational Studies.



Por

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The subject of the proposed “necessary debate” is taken up immediately in the first chapter, in which the author constructs a dialogue that systematizes the literature on city studies that goes beyond its conventional form, such as geography and urbanism, for example. The author approaches interdisciplinary areas of knowledge, including Urban Anthropology, Urban Sociology, the Arts and Social Psychology to build a discussion about the field of Administration, and especially about Organizational Studies. The author demonstrates that this relationship is a “continuous construction”, and explains how each of these areas of knowledge can approach management in cities by understanding the urban dynamics that give cities a specific approach to the intricacies of knowledge, such as: i) disputes over spaces; ii) places for experiences and sociability; and iii) social inequalities and diverse segregations. This chapter, therefore, opens the way for other authors to explore the concerns raised in this work.

The other chapters fulfil what was promised in the introduction to the work. In addition to the chapter that discusses the relationship between organization, city and organicity as a method of urban representation, the work also addresses strained power relations and the concept of *favelas* as an organization/disorganization of the social space, when it deals with: i) the way in which a social group can territorialize the city; ii) the approach to social groups as relevant actors in the construction of urban planning; and iii) reflection on the fact that struggles occur in different ways that go beyond the notion of organization. These different issues support the discussion about the urban dynamics of transformations in cities, which are anchored in concepts of space, place, identity, de-territorialization and re-territorialization. The subsequent chapters set out to highlight the development of a plot based on critical thinking that questions the growth of the city as a way of only serving private economic sectors. It also sheds light on the reorganization and reproduction of the urban space and the interests inherent to it. The work ends with discussions related to the dynamics of reconversion in the economic functions of cities through local entrepreneurship, and with regard to cultural production and consumption and their contradictory relationships that reinforce class domination. At last, the role of urban planning in Organizational Studies is being discussed in the light of the works by Henri Lefebvre, *The Right to the City*, *The Urban Revolution* and *The Production of Space*.

The authors of the work, as the protagonists of the discussions, deal with different Brazilian cities and reflect on their problems. For example, two *favelas* with UPPs (Pacifying Police Units) in Rio

de Janeiro (RJ) are analyzed for discussing fields of power and their organization processes from a Bourdieusian perspective (Czarniawska, 2014). Belo Horizonte (MG) is the stage for reflecting on the transformations that occur in the management of the *Novo Mercado*, and bringing to the fore the construction of identities that are inherent to urban spaces. The Santa Felicidade neighborhood in Maringá (PR) offers material for problematizing the formation of a “city without slums”, which is based on the city’s “Municipal ‘De-favelization’ Program”. This program is aimed at establishing “cleanliness in urban order”, thereby criticizing the neoliberal process of capitalist development. The context of this work makes the reader reflect critically on other Brazilian cities that have emerged under the sign of modernity and desired “progress” in their search for a planned urban aesthetic which, as a consequence, excludes inhabitants who do not fit in this context of “touching up” the city. Tiradentes (MG) and Paraty (RJ) are used as examples for discussing local entrepreneurship and the conversion processes of economic functions in cities that are inspired by Bourdieu’s “Theory of Practical Action”, based on the concepts of *habitus*, capital and countryside. Another interesting study in the work addresses the cultural formation of Cataguases (MG) from a historical perspective, based on a reflection on time and the construction of urban memory spaces for understanding how the production of cultural goods, for example, can widen the cracks in the city, resulting in “privileged circles of culture”.

Because of these relevant issues, and over and above the major protagonist of this work, which is the city and its elements in Organizational Studies, at several moments the text draws our attention to a transversal topic, which aims to understand the city from the perspective of the relationship between the center and its periphery, considering not just a dichotomous and antagonistic view between the parties, but presenting other forms of understanding, in which this opposition does not turn into something that justifies abandonment by the state, and increasingly accentuates the differences that exist. Interestingly, these spaces are not extraneous to the State (Das & Poole, 2004). The work is rich in details regarding the theories and methodology used. It is an effort by the authors to introduce different themes to the Organizational Studies area by way of an interdisciplinary perspective on the urban issues faced by cities and their organization. It demonstrates the concern of the authors, who understand the city to be an object of study that exists and resists and that enables us to understand its social and organizational dynamics, thereby broadening the horizons that make Administration an applied social science.

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AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION

All stages of the work were carried out by the author Carlos César de Oliveira Lacerda.