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"Powers Movement in the City"

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Intro

The city marks the space of political life and carries with it very deeply the marks of technocracy, showing the impotence of all attempts for animation, a space where "the citizen and resident of the city were dissociated" (Lefebvre, 2010: 22-23). A citizen is defined here by his belonging to a territory, his participation; and a resident is defined as being in constant motion and dissociated from the place where he lives and the collective life that exists around him. In this way, habitat is no longer a privileged place for social relations, and by analogy, collective and political life. Debord enhances our understanding about this dynamic which we can define as the "removal of the street", ie, the loss of substantial political space where man lives his freedom as a collective actor. This determines the weakening of the political community and political practice in everyday life by the loss of the ability for inter-subjective construction of reality and the decline of the bonds of solidarity. Jacobs also attacks this urbanism that simplifies the streets, "transforming on track or tapes without hindrance or life, losing its sense of being" (Jacobs, 2011).

Through analyzing the processes of city construction, we realize that urban planning and spatial organization have enhanced the privatization of life. Urban space works as a symbol of power that is based on a planning process that can be defined as the "intervention of the political (...) in order to ensure the realization of the interests of the ruling class in the set of social formation and reorganization of the urban system" (Castells, 1974). We see the formation of separate quarters linked by major roads that amplify cities' dehumanization (standardization, serialization, monotony, anonymity, lack of aestheticism). Parés demonstrated it in an empirical analysis of urban development in Barcelona, concluding: "that the urban and regional model produced in the last decades is related to dynamics of capital accumulation, responding to the interest of an elite that has gentrified the center of the region and has caused the migration of a part of the population of middle and middle-low income classes to the periphery of the region, where urban sprawl is the predominant urban form." (Pares, 2006: 6)

City as a control factor

Hardt and Negri (1999) put at the center of their thinking the idea of the commonwealth as resistance to capitalism and the foundation of political society. They rely on the idea of a diffuse power, biopolitic, which governs mentalities as Foucault proposes with his notion of *governmentality* (1991). This concept characterizes capitalism as a logic of achievement universal to all domains of life (health, education, architecture, etc.), including the way of organizing cities. Thus, from the first modern hygienists (Haussman in Paris), one of the main objectives of the major reforms was to make an economically pragmatic city facilitating transit, developing areas of consumption, and increasing density. Examples are numerous and the consequences, too, with the rise of individualism in Western cities linked to a process of building that has favored its cellular appearance, dividing bodies and therefore mentalities (to use a Foucauldian term), when planning limits meeting places, multiplies civic ordinances on the use of public space or proposes mega projects that do not respect the pace and scale of community processes. This style of urban planning has as its sole purpose the branding of cities that become a showcase for the world market. In this way urban space is commodified and community

destroyed in its political sense, an effect of a situation in which Western cities give up the management of public space to private companies when granting building permits, or when they set ultra limiting standards of "civility." The city of Barcelona is a good example to illustrate this purpose. Indeed, the "Barcelona model" is recognized worldwide, and even if we are to recognize certain achievements from its early years, from the fact that the model transformed diverse areas to create plazas, pedestrian streets, and shared spaces of leisure, etc.; but the other side of the coin shows the consequences of these macro metropolitan projects, especially in the displacement of populations (such as the neighborhoods of La Mina, Bon Pastor, and Can Tunis) – a heritage of hygienist plans. We also see the establishment of standards when it comes to reducing diversity in public space and therefore the space's ability to generate a commons (for example, municipal ordinances against the use of skateboards, ball games, birthday parties, street art, etc.) We witness an urban space's conversion into a tourist city that neglects its small shops and mainly specializes in managing flows (of people, of merchandise) at the expense of the community life that may develop within it. The newly closed portion of Park Güell is the witness of this new trend that increasingly defines the space available to citizens.

The city thus operates as a cog in the machine of privatization in which the phenomenon of production of the city is directly linked to cognitive capitalism. The city's production is organized by methods of urban planning that function according to a logic of mass consumption (zoning, management of transport flows, town centers such as shopping areas, etc.), an urban planning that is influenced by power relations in which the privatization of relations plays a vital role as a means of controlling bodies and mentalities. It is important to stress here the way in which the city is spreading these discipline strategies involved in the privatization of society; indeed it is the interest of this text to discuss power in terms of actions and practices, emphasizing its relational character and defining it by a relationship of power and discipline, which give a central role to the subject who is marked bodily and mentally (Le Blanc, 2004). The usual model for understanding this process is as follows: power is imposed upon the citizenry and, weakened by the force, the people internalize or accept its conditions. Davis highlights this effect when discussing disciplinary control in Los Angeles: "Disciplinary control is derived from the distribution of bodies within space, placing each individual within a cellular division to create a functional space beyond the bounds of this analytical spatial understanding." (Davis, 2001:16).

In a more general way, Debord defines this sort of urban planning as a means of population control: "the general trend toward isolation, which is the underlying essence of urbanism, must also include a controlled reintegration of the workers based on the planned needs of production and consumption. This reintegration into the system means bringing isolated individuals together as isolated individuals. Factories, cultural centers, tourist resorts and housing developments are specifically designed to foster this type of pseudo-community. The same collective isolation prevails even within the family cell, where the omnipresent receivers of spectacular messages fill the isolation with the ruling images — images that derive their full power precisely from that isolation" (Debord, 1992: 166). Here Debord makes the connection between the urban and Foucault's concept of governmentality. There is no hierarchical power, or power by force, imposed on us to limit community life in our neighborhoods, but there are a number of mechanisms, such as the way our cities are planned, or video surveillance, for example, that will have effects on the social and political activity of society. Thus, urban planning, which participates in this control mechanism, is a factor of privatization and the destruction of communities, even

though the city in its ideal should be able to promote emergence of competent citizens (encourage group activities, educational time and deliberation, etc.)

Bourgeois public space

Public space is the victim and the executioner of this mechanism, through its domination by the bourgeois movement, a factor in the resulting disappearance of the citizen. Public space is dominated by society; the *polis* has disappeared in favor of the state. Arendt saw in this situation the emergence of the individual at the expense of the citizen, causing individual political action to lose its legitimacy in the advent of free agency (Arendt, 1983). A parallel may be drawn here with the work of Habermas, who situates the creation of the bourgeois public space in a genealogy, later to disappear under the influence of the market. Habermas shows that the emergence of the bourgeois public sphere was at "at a time when the feudal model based on divine right tumbled under bourgeois pressure for the establishment of a social contract. Public space became a necessary gap between civil society and the state, which is to say between private interests and the common law. We thus observe an opening of opportunities to discuss the rules, and at the same time the emergence of the city as a center of social activity" (Delavictoire, 2008: 7). But his work also demonstrates the perversion of this public political space for the emergence of a consensus made and worn by privileged interests. He further describes a public space as a "social opportunity which historically is possible only if it is shared by a plurality of individuals" (Delavictoire, 2008: 8). Thus, he describes the passage of public space allowing for criticism of state power to an area controlled by the commercial reality that distorts the way in which the individual interprets the world around him: "because he no longer succeeds in getting an overview of the ever more complicated life of the city as a whole in such a fashion that it is really public for him. The more the city as a whole is transformed into a barely penetrable jungle, the more he withdraws into his sphere of privacy which in turn is extended ever further; but at length he comes to realize nevertheless that not the least reason why the urban public sphere disintegrates is that public space has been turned into an ill-ordered arena for tyrannical vehicle traffic". (Habermas, 1962 :159).

And although Habermas and Senett don't experience public space in the same way, the latter, author of *The Decline of Public Man* (2011), also handles the crisis of the city dweller from the point of view of the existing imbalance between public and private life today. Sennett shows how our lives are deprived of pleasures, how the stranger is perceived as a threatening being, and how silence and observation have become the only ways to experience public life.

Sennett comes to say that the idea of the loss of public life occurred through changes in the urban behavior of economies modified by the processes of industrial capitalism in the nineteenth century. These economic developments have affected citizen behavior, making people react passively and banishing from their minds the idea of community. His view about urbanism is that public spaces are organized independently of each other, with different activities, different classes, different sectors, leading to the disintegration of space and increasingly adding to the deterioration of public culture (Sennett, 2011).

Resistance in the city

The city remains a creative entity through public space where problems and conflicts confront each other. Public space is thus defined as a pluralistic place of relations created by the interaction of individuals. Every day, the city is put through a process of creation of civic engagement and citizenship, a process that is at the same time individual and collective. The citizen is one who has participated in the occupation of the city, a process that works as an initiation ceremony, an ensemble of possibilities offered to residents for participation in collective processes: the construction of a joint quest, and the ongoing fight against tendencies towards divisiveness and identity politics (Borja, 2003). This requires independent citizens, ie, with capacities and tools based on principles of social justice and social responsibility, individuals able to determinate themselves as inhabitants and citizens.

"Where there is power, there is resistance": This adage refers to Foucault's work on policies of resistance, and also to the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari, who help us to understand the city as a place of power, but also of resistance to power through micro-political mechanisms (we find applications of this notion in many fields such as education and feminism). Micropolitics enables individuals to give political meaning to their everyday life actions, allowing for empowerment and community building in the city. Following the definitions of Foucault and Deleuze, micropolitics is politics in the general sense, analyzed here as centralized and hierarchical interventions, leaving aside state institutions. In *Postmodern Theory*, Best and Kellner[1] write that micropolitics focuses "on everyday practices, leading to a revolution in lifestyle, in speech, in the body, sexuality, communication" which underline the importance of practicing politics daily. When De Certeau talks about tactics, strategies, and choices that form our everyday life, he highlights the city as a privileged stage for the individual to form his existence and therefore his resistance of power mechanisms. Indeed, we need resources to stage micropolitics, and the city is the place where we can find ways of resistance and biopolitical expression.

For the city's inhabitant become an actor, we must link the individual with space. It is from this perspective that an actor must have both recourse to space and the capacities to build and transform it. But that requires mobility, movement, flexibility. We must resist the imposed immobility of space, just as we ask inhabitants to participate rather than stay fixed in place. As explained by the perspective developed by Bourdin about everyday life (2005), it is an encouraging experience to turn "the system of constraints (into) a set of resources with which the individual constructs his existence." This perspective therefore proposes the possibility of a *space-movement*, "linked to the existence of spaces that are in motion and continuous flux, that experience constant displacement (…) and that would no longer be linked to the space itself but rather to movement along a course, to the experience of traveling, to the experience of life; and at the same time to the movement of space in transformation, and to the living." (Berenstein, 2002: 194). It's an idea related to Situationist psychogeography which sees in urban situations a way to "encourage spectators to become engaged by drawing out their own capacities for transforming their lives" (IS, No. 1[2]), and is applied, by Berenstein in Rio's *favela*, space-movement par excellence. The neighborhood's precariousness can be argued to be an advantage for the participation and involvement of the people in their future as actors. Thus, we define a

[1] http://pages.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/pomo/ch1.html
[2] http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/is1.html

framework of experience that causes the capacity of people to change their own lives because they are both walking the space and building it. We define a framework of evolutionary experience, but not a neutral one, in the sense that it is provocative and provoked. It is a notion of urban planning that Berenstein defends with the notion of the urban-architect

> …who interferes in pre-existing, already built urban situations (…) and is the trigger, the translator, the catalyst of the desires of the inhabitants. He begins his work from an organized *laisser-faire* attitude (…) he intervenes discretely, no longer through real construction, nor architectural oeuvre, nor architect's signature – the work being, as it is, from that point on, collective and anonymous. The urban architect is sensitive to the flow of space-movement, to its linking structure, to the most diverse of relationships, to differences in temporality, and, as a result, to alterity in architecture. (Berenstein, 2002: 201).

The image of space-movement brings us to the issue of informality, a form of urbanization against that which is imposed by the existing rules; informality is the "negation of the rules," and thus the establishment of a different order. Informality allows this constant movement and encourages a rhizomatic formation of cities. The rhizome has that ability to play in the interstices of the city, resisting the hierarchical city and the center/periphery dichotomy, allowing for the emergence of a citizenship reinforced by a sense of community that is evident in the vitality of the streets and public rituals of Rio's favelas (Varley, 2010). However, as Varley also notes in his conclusion, we cannot only focus on a philosophical view of the city while denying populations' right to urbanization -- populations that today are defined as "submitted" to informality, rather than true actors of the informal rhizomatic development that they wished. Informality is just "a permanent impermanence," which must adapt to the legitimacy of residents to permanence and stability. This is a paradox in itself, but it can be resolved if we take into account the many forms of informality and temporality added to this phenomenon, defining a framework of evolutionary experience.

Moreover, temporary urbanism is a concrete form of expression of this search for informality, valorizing public space as collective meeting space, and is a political instrument that combines an action on the *urbs* (the built environment) and *civitas* (social reality) in the same building movement of the city (Pradel, 2011). However, this temporary urbanism cannot be seriously considered only in the context of an isolated event if we place it in the context of the debate on space-movement. Temporary urbanism must be biopolitical, integrated into lifestyles, everyday life, bodies. It needs to articulate the unfolding of life, making it political. This is the idea of tactical urbanism. Born from the simple desire of wanting to change the place of life, as described by a *Grib* journalist ("These people aren't just talking about changing the places where they live and work. They are doing it. Smart, fast, cheap, flexible, nimble, open-source – it's the new New Urbanism"), tactical urbanism is first of all an intervention in the public space of one or more individuals, in an organized way or not, meant to amend space in order to improve the quality of its use. It is developed under the names of "Guerilla" or "Pop-ups," and has the characteristic of small-scale acts simultaneously raising wider implications. It is the link between urbanism and the individual in the context of everyday actions and lifestyles, defining urbanism as micro-urbanism, and hence as micropolitical. As well we define a framework of an urban planning that is not "decision maker" but rather facilitator and integrator, in which politics becomes everyday micropolitics because it concerns every actor in their everyday life through small-scale interventions. As evidenced by Petcou and

Petrescu (2007) in their study of the 56 St Blaise project in Paris, a heterotopic space investment by people allows "the formation of a collective and synaptic subjectivity capable of porous territorial appropriation and political transformation starting with daily experience. A constant democratization of the surrounding space through 'landscape design,' acting within microfissures and biopolitics on one's doorstep" (2007: 104). This kind of space formation draws out relationships and creates an inhabitants' commons.

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