

The renewal of historic city centers: a study of discourses in the organization of space

Requalificação de centros históricos: estudo sobre os discursos no organizar do espaço

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Abstract

This work aims to understand discourses on the management of public space regarding projects that deal with the renewal of the historic city center of Porto Alegre. We have researched a critical approach to the post-structuralist current of thought and the post-Marxist matrix from a qualitative perspective. Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) discourse theory guides this entire work and the logic of critical explanation has been used as a methodology to portray the problems related to these discourses, as well as an analysis of the interviews, documents, and participant observations. The results point to various conflicts in the attempt to reintegrate the city using modern planning through efficient management. This reintegration contradicts the identity of the place and reinforces market logic. We conclude that urban entrepreneurship has been the central feature of this urban management within the context of market deregulation in which the city has played a major role, and these renewal projects have been justified by the affirmation of the city as merchandise.

Keywords: Urban Renewal. Discourses. Organization of Space.

Resumo

Esse trabalho teve como objetivo compreender os discursos sobre a gestão do espaço público no que diz respeito a projetos de requalificação de centros históricos na cidade de Porto Alegre. Foi realizada uma pesquisa de abordagem crítica de corrente pós-estruturalista e matriz pós-marxista sob uma perspectiva qualitativa. A teoria do discurso de Laclau e Mouffe (1985) norteou todo o trabalho e foi utilizada a lógica da explanação crítica como metodologia para problematizar os discursos, além de análise de entrevistas, documentos e observação participante. Os resultados apontam diferentes conflitos que visam reintegrar à cidade ao planejamento moderno através de uma gestão eficiente, entretanto, essa reintegração contradiz a identidade do lugar e reforça uma lógica de mercado. Conclui-se que o empreendedorismo urbano tem sido a característica central da gestão urbana na conjuntura de desregulamentação dos mercados em que a cidade tem alçado grande protagonismo e os projetos de requalificação têm justificado a afirmação da cidade como mercadoria.

Palavras-chave: Requalificação. Discursos. Organização do Espaço.

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INTRODUCTION

The focus of this work is the conception of urban space as a living organism whose issues need to be examined from the perspective of various actors involved in city management. To Faria (2009), contemporary cities are examined from the perspective of networks, in which levels of interdependence become even more complex when various actors are competing for the same space. According to Corrêa (2000) this city is full of signs, symbols, and battlegrounds, which are the social products that permeate various power relationships. In this manner, managing these spaces is a challenge for public management because it emphasizes that production within an urban space is related to various interests which are the result of contradictory relationships of the reigning system, and therefore the city is a product of these contradictions (CARLOS, 2004).

To Vasconcellos (2012), a city is the result of the interaction between individuals, the government and companies, whose interests influence organization. This signifies that the relationships within this city “network” are dynamic and change constantly due to the discourses of those involved. Fischer (1997) extends this thinking in discussing a more subjective and abstract city in terms of its hierarchies, power relationships and the ways it organizes collective space. This involves thinking of it in terms of the plurality of its relationships and manifestations, thus thinking of the city as an organization can be considered a flow system which produces itself and at the same time reflects an immense gamut of symbols, signs, and meanings (REED, 1992).

In the conceptions of Rolnik (1988) inhabiting these city spaces means appropriating public life in a collective manner, and thus this form of organization needs a certain order. Gonçalves (1996) demonstrates that etymologically *pólis* assumes a political community and politics means coexisting with differences, in which

participative democracy challenges individual interests (KONDER, 1994). Therefore, this city space is the product of relationships established by work, between society and the surrounding environment. It is produced simultaneously in the process of producing human existence (CARLOS, 2016).

A focus on urban renewal has become frequent in new configurations of contemporary cities. In recent years, cities have been scenarios of conflict where new ways to renew urban centers have been discussed as well as which interests are involved in the process. Even though economic issues arise as a primordial factor, another issue also steps to the fore: discursive points of view. Conflicts inherent in public spaces offer a privileged perspective for the study of field discourses in the construction of a city as well as the symbolic space of the construction of identities where social actors find themselves. Discussing the organization of space with this bias implies thinking of its meanings, the feelings it produces, and the discourses that interpret it (LEFEBVRE, 2008).

Over the years, various urban spaces have gone through urban renewal interventions in Brazil and the rest of the world, including the Mauá Docks. The Mauá port, located in Porto Alegre, RS, the central object of this study, is a space with particular features and is an established tourist attraction in Brazil. The architectural heritage of Porto Alegre as well as its tourism activities portray vivid phases of the city’s past. The central region of Porto Alegre in which the Mauá Docks is located, is currently the object of an urban renewal project sponsored by private and public entities designed to preserve the historic areas and stimulate tourism in the area.

The Docks are a part of the city’s history whose special characteristics have led it to be protected as a National and Municipal Heritage site. The historic importance of the Mauá Docks resides in the fact that its construction resulted from a

large joint effort made by the government and local society at the beginning of the 20th century which sought to modernize the capital and expand its economy. The Mauá Docks is part of the historic city center, and the location of the port is the reason for the interest from private initiative because this is a strategic location to attract tourists (VIEIRA, 2012). Over time, the Docks have lost their importance as a port which has led to their decadence.

In 2010, Competitive Bid no. 001/2010 was launched to approve proposals to renew the Mauá Docks. The winning proposal of the competition needed to observe and prioritize accessibility, the restoration of the city's historic heritage and the reallocation of current public buildings. At the end of that year (2010) a contract was signed between Cais Mauá do Brasil S.A. (Mauá Docks of Brazil Inc.) and the state government to renew the docks emphasizing that the new Mauá Docks will be an icon of modernity within the city of Porto Alegre.

Thus, the space began to become the subject of controversy because of the grandiose renewal proposal. In 2015, the Mauá Docks was the object of discussion of groups opposing the project, demonstrating that this renewal was not unanimously supported by the population, and faced great conflicts in its progress. To many militants in organized civil society, this project ignores the area's Gaucho heritage.

The Docks in the future will be divided into 3 areas: the Gasometer Sector, the Warehouse Sector and the Docks Sector: 1) the Gasometer Sector – will encompass commercial activities such as the construction of a shopping center to connect the Guaíba River with Brigadeiro Sampaio Square; 2) the Warehouse Sector – which will feature historic goods, will be used for cultural, gastronomic, leisure and educational activities; 3) and the Docks Sector – which will focus on the implementation of entrepreneurial activities, such as the construction of towers

which will house a hotel, a business center and garages.

Given this, various questions have arisen in terms of the discourses related to the concept of the city. Positive and negative points have been intertwined as a way to present a relevant city to all of those involved. Questions have arisen around the discussion of what would constitute a “good project”; how would the space be integrated? How would it be organized given the various political groups involved? And what about the social-spatial fragmentation? How could these Gauchos be represented in this context in terms of their traditions? Would the project exclude rather than include them?

In this sense, this article seeks to understand the discourses dealing with this public space in terms of urban renewal projects in the historic center of Porto Alegre. We use the Discourse Theory of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, a post-structuralist theory of the post-Marxist matrix which examines problems with discourses considered as a social practice. In parallel, this discussion is also supported by the Right to the City theory of Henri Lefebvre and the studies about the Capitalist Production of Space by David Harvey who discusses cities as living organisms.

THEORETICAL FUNDAMENTALS

The Renewal of Historic Centers and Public Policies

A topic which deserves attention in this discussion concerns historic centers due to their relevance to the context of urban renewal and the understanding of the origins of the city. These areas possess particular and individual characteristics which make them different from the rest of the city, as pointed out by Silva (2002): a) the location of the central region; b) its great collective attraction; c) the preservation of the urban network; and d) the existence of

architectural elements of recognized value. To Del Rio (2000), the center has a representative symbolic value for all of urban society and a way of production which is the result of the specific social and cultural practices of this city. The question of the emptying of historic centers is already perceptible today due to the migration of central activities to tangential centers. According to the author:

The deterioration of these central areas – the economic, physical, social, and environmental deterioration – corresponds to decadence due to the fact that the local structure no longer satisfies the local role required of it by the city, and as a result the expectations of the property market (SIMÕES JÚNIOR, 1994, p. 12).

In this manner, the renewal of historic centers emerges as an alternative which renovates equipment and infrastructure without losing the value of public space that has a mobilizing, accelerating and strategic nature, and which is designed to provide new uses for spaces that have lost their functionality. It is within this context that local traditions, heritage, and culture have been discussed as merely merchandise in the renewal process (BOTELHO, 2005).

The historic center is important because it permitted the rise of the city and its surrounding areas based on a sum of its identities. With the passing of the years, the spaces within it have been left aside, forgotten and subject to vulnerability at the hands of urban violence, but the cultural dimension derived from social practices, continues to be part of the meaning associated with the origin of the city.

The discussion regarding the renewal of historic environments has to do with problems related to innovation and the cultural preservation of the space. This obstacle has generated much discussion of this renewal which is based solely on entrepreneurship and urban marketing, or in other words, models in which the city is sold like merchandise (DUARTE;

CZAJKOWSKI JÚNIOR, 2007; HARVEY, 2005).

In this sense, renewal includes the restoration or conservation of buildings, called physical rehabilitation, and making the economic and social thread of the area more dynamic, which is called functional revitalization (CUNHA, 1999). This signifies that the physical and functional aspects (the conservation of its functional characteristics and the increasing of its power of attraction, drawing in people to live there to perform economic and social activities compatible with the area) complement each other. According to Vaz and Silveira (1999), the interventions should include: I) Humanization of the produced collective spaces; II) Valorization of the existing symbolic and historic brands; III) An increase in leisure; IV) Preoccupation with ecological aspects; and the V) Participation of the community in its conception and implementation.

The field of Law appropriates this debate through the importance of ensuring minimal conditions for the low-income population that lives in this historic center, as well as the impact of these modifications on society's everyday life. In addition, it is discussed with a focus under the aegis of a judicial-institutional perspective which is based on the Statute of the City and aspects of participative citizenship in articulating issues of public order and social interest which regulate the use of urban property by individuals, which is necessary to guarantee collective well-being in cities (TRINDADE, 2012) and permits the right to the production and appreciation of urban space, as stated by Duarte (2015) in reflecting about the construction of just, egalitarian and sustainable cities.

Within this context, there is a discussion of gentrification which is one of the great problems in this debate and profoundly alters everyday life through the occupation of the city center by the middle class, displacing the lower class (BATALLER; BOTELHO, 2012). This is a problem which calls into question public

assistance policies, issues inherent in the use of urban space and according to Furtado (2014) this constitutes one of the fixed elements of urban renewal based on “the organization of urban space based on the needs of the dominant economic mode of production” (p. 342).

Corroborating this perspective, the field of Architecture deals with the discussion of the preservation of the city’s historic and cultural heritage of works and their importance to the local context in terms of the memory of “a common past and a social identity which makes the population feel part of this place and a space which illuminates the history of all” (TOMAZ, 2010, p. 2). Supporting this, Arantes, Maricato and Vainer (2000) emphasize that the use of images has been a central component to urban renewal projects which use architectural aspects to recreate the scenes of this reality, or in other words, this field of knowledge which involves the creation of plans and projects to recreate the area, resuscitating the memory of the urban landscape. In this manner, it has produced interventions with the objective of generating a certain degree of competitiveness and the valorization of cities through urban renewal projects which preserve spaces which have deteriorated and now have gained life and valorization in real estate, cultural and social terms (GASPAR, *et al.*, 2017). This has been accomplished through strategic urban planning which promotes an inclusive and integrating process (MOURA; GUERRA; SEIXAS, 2006), or in other words, which is based on a reordering of the territory through the preservation of the city’s historic heritage which seeks to place cities within a global context (ORREGO, 2012).

In terms of the discourse of Public Administration, renewal deals with the management of public policies through the evaluation of urban renewal policies, seeking to behave in a new manner with new efficiency, in addition to improving urban spaces through appropriate strategic

planning. According to Pereira and Sancho-Pivoto (2020), public administration assumes a strategic function in guiding the methodology of urban management and planning in an integrated and participative manner for social well-being or through the development of participative public policies with city councils and public conferences and audiences for local development (SZWAKO; LAVALLE, 2019). In terms of this subject, it is important to mention that there are cities which develop but are not concerned about planning and this causes problems in the utilization of certain areas as well as the abandonment of others. With the abandonment of these central areas, new policies arise which seek to reverse this situation, valuing everyday aspects of this reality. This process has been observed in Europe, the United States and Brazil. Vargas and Castilho (2009), for example, have developed a series of studies and experiences which contextualize various urban renewal projects in historic centers, and Alves (2017) discusses the processes of transformation and gentrification in historic centers through changes in social, demographic, economic and habitational structure.

The management of policies for historic centers is a challenge to integrated conservation (IC) which conceives of the conservation of a city’s heritage as integrated with urban conservation, but not as something developed through interventions which radically alter rehabilitated areas, proposing a participative approach (ZANCHETI; LAPA, 2012), or in other words, this type of conservation unites actions which seek the conservation of the city’s heritage and prioritize the social and cultural functions of the intervention area, so that they do not alter in an emphatic way the daily lives of those in the surrounding area. However, this type of policy is viewed as a provocation in the face of the articulation of various political actors involved in projects which integrate collective interests without giving

priority to individual interests.

By public policy we mean a group of ideas about a given problem (in this case, the renewal of historic centers) linked to a legal determination, but which do not guarantee their execution, and in addition their evaluation frequently ignores relevant aspects relating to the continuity of the policy. In this manner, public policy consists of a governmental response to social demands through benefits and implications (SOUZA, 2006). In this case, it would be interesting to observe democratic aspects and citizen participation in the elaboration of these public policies in order to integrate society's interests with those of others.

The Discourse Theory of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe: Concepts and Categories

Discourse Theory is a political theory which examines problems through voices (discourse). We understand here that voices are not just phrases. Rather they involve the broad gamut of language and reveal meanings through events, or in other words, the discourse from this perspective needs to be understood as a system of meanings which are inherently contingent on social structures (CORDEIRO; MELLO, 2010; FOUCAULT, 1996).

The discourse analysts Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe from the Essex School (United Kingdom) developed a theory based on their classic work *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy – Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* published in 1985. This is a post-structuralist approach, because it included thinkers such as Lacan and Derrida through a reinterpretation of Gramsci's concept of hegemony. To Barcelos and Dellagnelo (2012) DT studies the way in which social practices are articulated in discourses which are part of social reality, because these practices are acceptable to the extent that their meanings are contingent. To understand Discourse Theory, it is

necessary to discuss several concepts and analytical categories which are inherent in the theory.

Laclau and Mouffe's Discourse Theory is based on various philosophical approaches and seeks to discuss consistent and complex central concepts which support all of the analytical categories that they present. To do this, the authors establish three key concepts: discourse, the notion of hegemony and social antagonism. **Discourse** is a group of elements that are based on a series of relationships, which are understood through the possibilities of the polysemy of their meanings (LACLAU, 2011). **Hegemony** means domination in which a certain group is subjugated by another and becomes controlled by the other's ideologies. Thus, it is understood that the search for hegemony does not exist without a battle (MENDONÇA, 2007). **Social antagonism** means that the presence of the "other" prevents me from being totally myself (LACLAU; MOUFFE, 2015).

In addition to these three central concepts, DT deals with several analytical categories which are necessary to understand the structure within the discourses: articulation, moments, elements, nodes, empty meanings, floating meanings, chains of equivalence and chains of difference. **Articulation** can be defined as "any practice which establishes a relationship between elements in which their identity is modified as a result of the articulating practice" (LACLAU; MOUFFE, 2015, p. 178).

Moments have to do with differentiated positions which are articulated within a discourse while **elements** are the differences which are not presented discursively in an articulated form, due to their floating nature (SILVA; BATISTA; MELLO, 2014). Finally, **nodes**, to DT, represent a junction of moments, the fruit of articulations between elements which once inserted in the discourse generate assimilations to new identities which are capable of generating changes in

articulating practices (MENDONÇA, 2010; LACLAU; MOUFFE, 2015).

These nodes are discussed within the vision of Laclau and Mouffe (2015) with another concept: **empty meanings**. “An empty meaning, in the strict sense of the term, is a meaning without significance” (LACLAU, 2011, p. 67). Or in other words, it does not have a stable meaning and is capable of adjusting to the demands of various political subjects. **Floating meanings**, on the other hand, are emergent in nature, or in other words, they are unarticulated meanings and for this reason, they are objects of political disputes (SILVA; BATISTA; MELLO, 2014).

Two other analytical categories addressed by Discourse Theory are **chains of equivalence and difference**. In the vision of Laclau and Mouffe (2015), equivalence is understood through the logic of simplifying the political space which expands the pragmatic pole, thus reducing, the subject’s number of possible positions. The difference is represented by logic which expands the syntactical pole, leading to an increase in the variety of the subject’s positions.

The Right to the City and the Capitalist Production of Space

Lefebvre (2008) observes the city as a human laboratory. To the author, land was the centrality of this laboratory before the city took its place. In this manner, urban problems arise as an ideology and practice based on a serious discussion of industrialization and urbanization. Based on this context, a parallel is made between the dominant and working classes, through which disorder arises in the urban fabric, with the understanding that the working class will be expelled from the center, diminishing the concept of “inhabiting”.

In this case, the city is discussed from the point of view of large technical, social and political network through which capital and the state establish their relations.

The urban nucleus is treated as a product of consumption, assuming a “double role: a place of consumption and the consumption of a place” (LEFEBVRE, 2008, p. 20). It is in this sense that Harvey (2005) presents the contradictions of the capitalist mode of production in terms of class relations as compared to socialism. The space’s mode of production begins to be understood through various demands which are inherent in it, which are characterized by its transformation (GOMES, 1990).

This philosophy arises through the understanding of studies of cities in Ancient Greece and Rome, discussing the opposition between the value of use (the city and urban life; urban time) and the value of exchange (spaces that are bought and sold; the consumption of products, goods, places and signs) – the value of use *versus* the value of exchange. Thus, to Lefebvre (2008) philosophy is born in the city, with the division of labor which permits the construction of the Right to the City as a guiding project for an urban society (FIORAVANTI, 2013).

Urbanism through the sale of merchandise is a common theme in the studies of Lefebvre (2008) and Harvey (2005). To the former, urbanism in this case conceives of the city from the point of view of the market, envisioning just its exchange value, or profit. In this way, one does not sell homes but rather a new style of residence through a happy city, which is secure and removed from disorder. According to Lefebvre (2008), contemporary cities are conditioned by formal architects and strategic administrators, which is problematic because they bring with them exclusionary urban typologies.

And when the author discusses the sciences (history, economics, demographics, architecture, and sociology) which arise when we wish to analyze cities, which to him are fragmented, with the exception of the philosophy which makes his contribution more complete, this is also

corroborated by the studies of Carlos (2016) regarding the production of urban space which consider this philosophy to be a condition for comprehending the world. Nonetheless, he still asks: “Is it possible to take from these compartmentalized sciences a science of the city?” (LEFEBVRE, 2008, p. 40). To the author, this can only be done through *práxis*.

In this understanding, the city sends and receives messages. In a semiology analysis, we discuss the city’s speech, language, and its urban and written language. These are elements through which signs are generated and shared, bringing the production and consumption of these signs to the city. It is within this context that Gehl (2013) presents a discussion of living cities which are those in which people manage to interact with each other in a system of sociability with a large number of experiences.

In this way, the Right to the City presents itself as the right to live. Integral, complete citizenship for all inhabitants is repeated all the time as a way to express a right of all citizens, making humanization emerge as a necessity for the right to freedom. These rights are configured as the right to use, or in other words, the right to the city takes precedence over the right of exchange and merchandise. In other words, urban space is produced by humans based on the way they perceive (experience), conceive of (think about) and live (act) (LEFEBVRE, 2008; HARVEY, 2005).

In this analysis, the Mauá Docks will only work if these three dimensions can be met in an overall manner: to perceive in the sensorial meaning, to know in the sense of participating, planning, having a voice, and living in the sense of being part of/having experience. Thus, to the author, the revolution and the battle need to be urban through historic, cultural, and political resurrection. In this case, the city is a discourse, and the discourse is a language, or in other words, communication which the city performs through social practices (HARVEY, 2013).

Harvey (2005) also analyzes this space in the relationship between the state and capitalism itself, providing contributions for a spatial analysis. In the case of the phenomenon studied in the case of the port of the Mauá Docks, he discusses the role of the government in relation to the entrepreneurial profile, or in other words, the position of an entrepreneurial state through urban entrepreneurship, which seeks to transform income and any form of service or merchandise into financial capital. To Harvey (2005) it is in this urban space that the state interferes in the form of relationships in which most of the classes are oppressed by hegemony.

“Modernization” conceived of in this project as a “happy port” can be seen in the contributions of these authors. Harvey (2005) calls attention to this type of modernization, because he underlines that the process of making the city in this belated capitalism is as much a product as a condition of the transformation processes of urban governance, or in other words, according to the author, activity is shown as a spectacle to those who are excluded from it and is legitimized by configuring itself as a new type of imagination of integration and memory.

METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

This study assumes a position that is critical of the post-structuralist current of thought and the post-Marxist matrix from the point of view of a qualitative approach. Qualitative methodology employs various philosophical and strategic conceptions of the investigation, methods, and analysis of data. Based on data from texts, interviews, and images, it is fundamentally interpretive, and also provides the researcher with a vision of the phenomenon (CRESWELL, 2010). Given this, this work assumes a non-positivist vision, and understands discourse as a social practice based on an articulation process.

Discourse Theory covers a group of phases that guide the analyses. Glynos and

Howarth (2007), who are also discourse theorists, have developed some methodological orientations based on the explanatory logic of their work *Logics of Critical Explanation in Social and Political Theory* (2007). In this manner, this study uses this method because it is aligned with Discourse Theory.

Howarth *et al.* (2016) state that the logic of critical explanation can be divided into five relevant phases: determining the problem, retroduction, logic, articulation, and criticism. However, we can consider them in three main moments, in which determining the problem is the first moment, while retroduction, logic, and articulation are responsible for the second moment, forming the retroductive cycles and finally, the moment of criticism, which is formed by justification and persuasion.

Moment 1 – Determining the problem permits various questions regarding the construction and interpretation of the studied phenomenon to expand the discursive field, involving the entire empirical phenomenon. Moment 2 – Retroduction, Logic, and Articulation, meanwhile, involves the retroductive explanation which is the understanding of the phenomenon through retroductive cycles, which reinterpret observations examined in the determination of the problem.

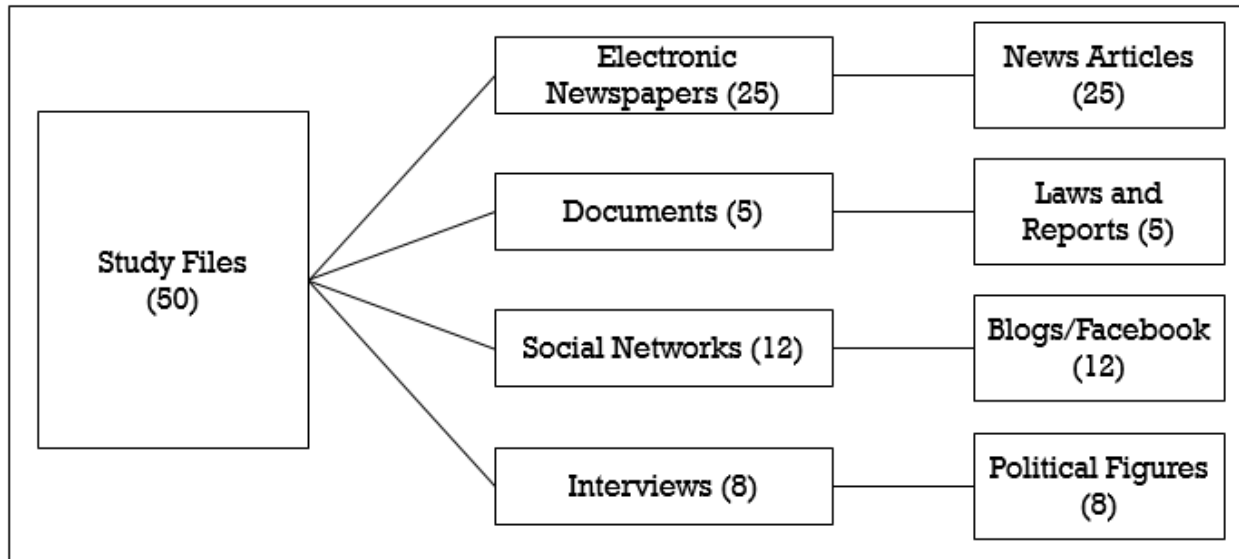
Glynos and Howarth (2007) discuss social practices based on three types of logic: social, political, and phantasmagorical. **Social logic** answers the question “what?” and is based on

characterizing practices in defining rules and norms through normalization strategies. **Political logic** answers the question “how?” which feature the historic emergence through the formation of practices which deal with conflicts which provided the background of its constitution and **Phantasmagorical logic** answers the question “why?” and deals with understanding the way in which the subjects are united in practice. In terms of the articulation, it is relevant to articulate various types of logic, connecting plurality to consider the problems of the phenomenon (GLYNOS *et al.*, 2015).

Moment 3 – Criticism: Persuasion and intervention (explanation) is the conclusive moment of the work, through which theory is mentioned and offers arguments based on findings to convince and propose interventions in an engaged literature (OLIVEIRA *et al.*, 2013). The method uses an anti-positivist approach because discourses are not fixed and deal with research problems of a political and social nature (GLYNOS; HOWARTH, 2007).

In terms of the corpus of this study, it was constructed based on the positions of the political subjects. After careful research, we assembled the corpus which contains 50 files, including: interviews, reports, documents, and social networks (Figure 1). In addition, it rests on three main techniques during the research phase: participative observation, interviews, and document data (Table 1).

Figure 1 - Composition of the Study's Corpus



Source: Prepared by the Authors (2018).

Table 1 - Techniques Used in the Study

TECHNIQUE	DESCRIPTION
Participatory Observation	The observations were realized through local visits to the Mauá Docks. The researcher made field notes, took photographs, and took walks to determine if this location is lacking in historic value and the perceptions of people who frequent this area as a result of practices related to civil society. Thus, a boat trip was taken along the Docks, which is still the only mode of access, given that it is closed to the public.
Interviews	Interviews were conducted with members of organized civil society: resistance movements such as Mauá Docks for Everyone and My Porto Alegre; representatives of the Historic Center Residents Association; The Gaucho Environmental Protection Association; the Brazilian Geographer's Association and several representatives of the government.
Documents	We researched laws, lawsuits, news articles and reports about the Mauá Docks controversy.

Source: Prepared by the Authors (2018).

To support the analyses, we used the NVivo software to codify our information and organize the file data. After the codification, we created nodes and sub-nodes to facilitate the presentation of our results. The analysis began soon after the

organization of the study's *corpus*, whose items were carefully read and analyzed. In terms of the interviews, the interviewees were important figures in resistance movements as displayed in Table 2 below.

Table 2 - List of the Interviewees

CODE	DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVIEWEES
Interviewee 1	Co-founder of the movement My Porto Alegre and member of the Mauá Docks for Everyone movement.
Interviewee 2	Legal advisor to the Mauá Docks for Everyone movement.
Interviewee 3	Member of the Gaucho Environmental Protection Association – AGAPAN
Interviewee 4	Member of the Brazilian Geographer's Association – AGB and member of the Mauá Docks for Everyone movement.
Interviewee 5	Member of the Mauá Docks for Everyone movement and Councilman.

Interviewee 6	President of the Historic Center Residents Association.
Interviewee 7	Member of the Mauá Docks for Everyone and State Representative.
Interviewee 8	Resident of the Historic Center neighborhood.

Source: Prepared by the Authors (2018).

The selection process was determined by accessibility and the researcher scheduled the interviews and conducted them in the city of Porto Alegre. The interviews lasted an average of 40 minutes, were transcribed in their entirety by the researcher, and were soon afterward imported using the NVivo software to be decodified and analyzed.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The results are based on a discussion about the use of space that favors capital, or

in other words, the resistance movements use the discourse that the current project to renew the Mauá Docks is an elitist project, which benefits a specific group. To illustrate this issue, it is of interest to construct the arguments based on a dichotomy of popular versus elite or rich versus poor. In the analyses we identified three nodes in the discourses in relation to the elitism and gentrification of the project, considering the logic of retrodution (Table 3).

Table 3 - Identification of the Nodes

Node	Description
1	Emphasizes that the renewal of the Mauá Docks is an elitist project which will cause gentrification.
2	Questions why Gaucho habits and history have not been taken into consideration in the renewal.
3	Denounces the imprudence of the government and private initiative in the renewal of the Mauá Docks.

Source: Extracted from NVivo (2018).

In relation to the node *Emphasizes that the renewal of the Mauá Docks is an elitist project which will cause gentrification*, it may be observed that this discourse has a very strong meaning which has frequently been justified and debated by the resistance. The social media have been an important channel to propagate this micro-discourse, and the interviews also began with movement members demonstrating their dissatisfaction with renewing the area and making it exclusive through elitism. Some excerpts of the interviewees presented below, indicate this discourse:

[...] The government gives privileges to a certain group, understand? When people see a project of this size and with so much dedication from the government for this specific project,

we question is this really what the city needs? It's placing the city on a mere plane of business; there's a demand for mega-investments in the city within the world circuit (Interviewee 4).

[...] even though there isn't a turnstile to enter, the way in which it is structured ends up restricting the type of people who will share this space which belongs to the people (Interviewee 5).

This is accepted as a "Renewal of the Docks"? Or does renewal just foresee an elitist public which will have access to this environment, requiring the private appropriation of this space? (Interviewee 3).

As may be observed, their statements indicate the meaning associated with the revolt against this renewal project.

The arguments are the same: elitism, segregation and gentrification, each with its respective point of view. It is possible to note a discourse that resists the government's actions, questioning public policies of social participation and participatory democracy, and presenting the problems related to the real needs of the population of Porto Alegre. The groups show that they are in favor of a renewal, but not in the way it is being proposed and managed. They are aware that the Docks need to be reactivated, but they want this to occur through cultural and playful activities which will include rather than exclude the population at large. Another issue frequently observed in the discourses has been the survival of commerce near the Docks, in the historic center.

[...] our hotels in the historic center manage 50% occupancy at best during big events, and then you place a hotel 260 feet high in front of the setting sun and that's something they just can't compete with, which is very unfair and what's worse, this is in a public area. You take a public area and deliver it on a platter, giving them an unfair advantage (Interviewee 6).

[...] what's left over for us in the heart of the city center? Reduced commerce, pastel shops and pharmacies is what's left over. So, the center becomes scrap with even poorer prospects from the point of view of those who cannot migrate to another place (Interviewee 1).

It seems that there are various demands in search of the meaning of this renewal of the Mauá Docks, but the question is how to combine these demands to benefit society as well? Most of the time, these discourses are polarizing in the antagonistic logic of one versus the other or good versus the evil, which leaves society locked out without being heard, which is contrary to social well-being and challenges the effectiveness of public order. When questioned about the possible benefits of this project for the population, the responses were as follows:

Will there be benefits? Yes, a small benefit and extreme exclusion, so I ask is it really a benefit? If this were the only alternative then it would be better than doing nothing, but that's not the case (Interviewee 5).

The only benefit will be that the people will find their river again and the beauty of the place, but even this may be questionable, given that there are doubts about free access to the Mauá Docks (Interviewee 2).

The interviewees expressed their arguments in an emphatic and personal manner, as if they were fighting for themselves. Their facial expressions denoted an enormous dissatisfaction and indignation when they asked about the possibility of other renewal projects which would not cause exclusion. In addition, various complaints reinforce the problematic nature of free access to the Mauá Docks.

In relation to the discourse *Questions why Gaucho habits and history have not been taken into consideration in the renewal*, we can perceive that this argument is present in most of the interviewee statements, demonstrating discontent with the project which promises to bring life to the historic center, but does not contemplate playful activities and even excludes the Gaucho identity. Excerpts from the interviews demonstrate this discourse:

[...] it's a project that doesn't represent the city, Porto Alegre has this name due to the Mauá Docks port, it's the city's postcard, in which the Docks and the entire port appear, along with part of the center, the cathedral tower, with a factory chimney in the corner, so it's a landscape that in fact portrays the city. Imagine what this image will look like after the renewal project? This won't be the image that reflects our daily lives and the Gaucho style. The city will never be the same and this photograph won't exist anymore. You can tear it up! (Interviewee 6).

[...] the way it's structured, the warehouses have a symbology that's part of the Gaucho's everyday way of

life. There are countless postcards of the city, and they even have a simulation of how horrible a shopping center would appear there, without the least protection against flooding, for example, and you'll have countless problems along with the towers and garage, doing away with the history of Porto Alegre which was born there (Interviewee 5).

It may be perceived that the interviewee statements orbit the discursive field in an attempt to generate significance to the population of Porto Alegre. Gauchos seem quite concerned with their identity, and this is why they are resisting in this way. However, if the renewal project for the port is contrary to Gaucho identity, what would be an alternative project that would address this type of demand? How should the Gaucho be portrayed in this public space? What Gaucho habits are not supported by the current project? And how does the old port represent the Gaucho, and why does this not appear in the proposed new port? In this case, the identity is the place, which is a fact that should be reflected on.

In this case, it resurrects the importance of culture in the formation of the concept itself and of the identified group, focusing on the role of collective identity politics. These identities are constructed based on functions and the positions of figures who have produced discourses historically (HOWARTH, 2013). This lets us infer that the formation of collective identities takes place through a hegemonic project and the social articulations and antagonisms inherent in it.

It may be inferred that cultural identity is associated with "being a Gaucho", however, the political identity discussed by the authors transcends this "being a Gaucho", or in other words, it is not because this place is Gaucho that others cannot appropriate it, precisely because of the contingent nature of its identity. In truth, what exists is a discourse about this inappropriateness, which becomes an

irrational condition. In this manner, it may be perceived that the Gaucho way of resisting presents itself as something that makes this discussion unique. If cultural identity is used as a way to justify resistance to urban interventions in various cities, then its supporters have some support for this justification.

The last node which sustains this discourse is arbitrary management, in which the discourse of the resistance movements emphasizes how the management of the renewal is being remiss in various aspects. The node identified is: *Denounces the imprudence of the government and private initiative in the renewal of the Mauá Docks* and in relation to this we have made the following inferences.

A political logic based on this relationship of contestation and the market's interference in the government, indicate problems in the functions of the project's executor (private initiative) and supervisor (government). In this case, it would be interesting, and at the same time challenging, to think of efficient management through a private-public partnership, between the social and the collective.

The **moments** and **articulations** in the contra-hegemony have sought to create **nodal points** with meanings of resistance and a fight for hegemony with the intent of demonstrating actions which disarticulate the hegemonic discourse, based on two main points: I) Attempts at disarticulation in the pointing out of irregularities in the consortium; and II) Indications of alternative proposals for a different renewal project.

I) Attempts at disarticulation and the pointing out of irregularities in the consortium

Roughly 50 activists participated late Saturday afternoon in a symbolic hug of the Mauá Docks to reinforce the criticism that has been

directed at the area's renewal project, which foresees the construction of commercial buildings, a shopping center, and a hotel on the banks of the Guaíba River. (News Article: A Hug for the Mauá Docks Brings Together 50 People in the Center of Porto Alegre. Source: The JÁ newspaper, published on 5/7/2016).

Various meanings can be perceived in the dispute over the Mauá Docks as demonstrated in this newspaper article, which seeks to justify the criticism of the current renewal project. The concepts of elitism and commercialization are always circulating in the discursive structures of the individuals organized against the hegemony. In Laclau's work, subjects resist and interact in processes which constitute social relations, and articulate and transform themselves within this movement, creating new ways of seeing the world (LACLAU; MOUFFE, 2015). Laclau mentions that subjects who resist and articulate themselves in procedures which constitute social relations, articulate and transform themselves within this movement, creating new ways of seeing the world (SANTOS; MELLO, 2014).

An analysis of the discourse in favor of the current renewal project presents an articulation in favor of the sense that this renewal is relevant to the progress of the city. However, various antagonistic positions arise as well-structured elements through articulation in the form of resistance. As we have observed, the hegemonic discourse is disputing space with those who are against the project in terms of the way it is being imposed, without taking into consideration aspects such as culture or regionality, as well as the "feeling" of the city (LEFEBVRE, 2008; HARVEY, 2005). In this sense, this dialogue reinforces articulating practices that seek to establish meanings of identification related to the Mauá Docks. The following interview excerpts present the attempt to disarticulate the hegemonic discourse by pointing out irregularities in

the renewal project's management:

[...] there are various inquiries in the State Prosecutor's Office, a report of irregularities from the State Accounting Court, and even an investigation by the Federal Police of the consortium companies and whether the city's Overall Plan is not being taken into account (Interviewee 2).

So, this project is very mediocre from the inclusive point of view as a venture. It is very poorly conceived, because it doesn't solve a series of necessary variables for any proposed venture, like how are you going to construct towers for commercial use in a place which floods? Are people going to have an office that they will eventually need a boat to reach? How is that going to work? They haven't thought this through (Interviewee 7).

Organized civil society represented by resistance movements articulates itself with the objective of demobilizing the private-public partnership based on the number of irregularities practiced by the companies involved in this concession granted by the government. In addition, it does not take into account the Overall City Plan which envisions the participation of society in urban interventions. As demonstrated by the interview excerpt, the issue of flooding is a recurring problem in the city of Porto Alegre. The Guaíba is one of the most famous rivers in the city due to the volume of water that bathes the current Mauá Docks port, and this is historically and culturally linked from the arrival of the first couples from the Azores until the region's current economic development (MAUCH, 1992).

A series of floods followed by the largest one in 1941 flooded various neighborhoods and this made authorities decide to construct a flood protection system. However, one can still perceive that there are problems with flooding. Various measures have been taken to try to solve this issue, but everything indicates that the great ventures planned in this renewal do

not have the capacity to face this typical problem of the Mauá Docks.

We may observe various arguments that strengthen this discourse about arbitrary management and the issue which denounces the omissions of the government and private initiative. In opposition to this, the government and private initiative respond to these provocations from the resistance movement by demonstrating that the process is occurring in a “clean” manner. One discourse tries to annihilate the other and there is no convergence of ideas, because the existence of the other impedes me from being myself, making this pure antagonism.

The report of the working group coordinated by the State Transportation Secretariat exonerates the Mauá Docks entrepreneur from the irregularities appointed by the State Accounting Court. This occurred one day after opposition movements to the proposed renewal model announced that they would again sue in the courts to try to block its construction. (News article: The State Publishes a Report which Exonerates the Consortium of Irregularities in the Mauá Docks. Source: JÁ Newspaper, published on 3/15/2016).

The articulation process is observed in the presented news articles and identified as **moments** based on Laclau and Mouffe’s Discourse Theory. In this manner, we can infer that there is a high degree of **articulation** within the anti-hegemonic discourse. That being so, this **chain of equivalence** shares many common meanings, which makes it politically strong.

“Progress” and a “City for Everyone” appear in the hegemonic discourse, but this type of progress also brings with it exclusion, a concentration of income, underdevelopment, and the harming and restricting of essential human rights (SANTOS; MELLO, 2014; CORDEIRO; MELLO, 2013), as we can observe in the

statements of the interviewees. In opposition, the social discourse privileges elements with meanings which are linked with the integration of the city with the Guaíba River, subordinating the use of this space to representations of social coexistence and the preservation of local history.

It is possible to observe that this urban renewal project is far from representing a consensus among the population, and instead represents a battleground of individual interests which make the concept of democracy problematic.

II) Indications of alternative proposals for a new renewal

Within this dispute there are also demonstrators who present alternative proposals and/or are pressuring for a new project as a way to generate meaning for a part of the population, which is not contemplated by the hegemonic posture, as can be seen in the following excerpt:

Next Saturday, the Mauá Docks for Everyone Collective of residents who are unhappy with the private initiative concession of the capital’s old port, will present an alternative architectural and urbanistic intervention to the concession’s winning proposal. (News Article: Activists Propose and Alternative Project for the Mauá Docks. Source: Já Newspaper – Porto Alegre. Published on 12/15/2015).

As a way to make its voice active, the hegemonic opposition has created indications of complementary proposals which seek participation and transparency. It is also important to emphasize the contribution of the social networks to this debate which is where emotional discussions take place, and this represents a space of articulation between the political figures, and the creation of strategies to disarticulate the hegemonic discourse.

Movements such as “Mauá Docks

for Everyone”, “#OccupyMauáDocks” and “The City that We Want” act in a feverish manner on the social networks, keeping participants updated about the progress of the protests. These three groups are articulated in such a way that they make up a chain of equivalence, placing their strategies in constant articulation with the common objectives. Here is an excerpt of an interview which demonstrates what a Mauá Docks for Everyone would be:

Something else that should be thought of is that we have a tradition in Porto Alegre of street artists and artisans and these people do not have a place to produce or store their works, living in a humble manner in huts scattered throughout the neighborhoods and outskirts of the metropolitan region, filling their heavy suitcases and coming to the center to commercialize their art, so a space for this creative economy would be fundamental. The issue of free access to information technology [...] there are so many things of social interest that could be used [...] (Interviewee 6).

It is possible to observe the denial of an elitist project that excludes more than it includes. For example, various segments of cultural artists who are involved in the creative economy have not been taken into consideration in any of the project’s steps, and there is no space reserved for appreciating regional culture. On the contrary, the movements articulate themselves emphasizing that street artists do not feel represented and are much less at ease with the “modern” Mauá Docks, or in other words, we can perceive the exclusion of social interests.

Despite this articulation in opposition to the hegemony, it is still possible to observe some individual voices, showing the differences present in the movement. Some intellectuals, the architects and a portion of the population are often apathetic when the time comes to present their discourses and are neither in favor nor against the “new” Mauá Docks. In this way, the lack of a **chain of equivalence**

appears instead as a **chain of difference** which often disarticulates the meaning of “cultural, environmental and identity preservation”, abandoning their positions in the generation of significance, leaving an empty significance. However, we can still infer from the analyses that there is a timid portion of articulating significance around the **nodal point**. The following interview excerpt demonstrates a chain of difference, in which resistance movements which seek to “protect” society, often do not practice their own discourses.

[...] I believe that this project will improve many things here in the historic center of the city. The streets are dangerous at night, so revitalizing this area will bring in people from other places to enjoy this space, and if no one is there the space is abandoned. So, it’s better that the people inhabit it, and thus, there will be more options in terms of restaurants and leisure areas. This is sorely lacking in the city and will change the idea of an abandoned and dangerous center. So, we’re going to populate the center, and I’m anxious for this progress that they talk so much about (Interviewee 8).

This statement indicates the various demands for the Mauá Docks with part of the population being in favor of the renewal project as it is being proposed, while others assumes other positions. However, the critiques appear in the arguments of the groups that oppose this project, which favors one layer of society to the detriment of another, and they often use this discourse and the image of the people without even being aware of the people’s opinion. Meanwhile, in the interview with the community leader in the historic center, we can perceive that he assumes a position of emphasizing the demands of the people who live in the area surrounding the Docks, as indicated below:

[...] What would the community like? Trees and birds. Or in other words, I think what the community would like is nature, to be able to appreciate it,

right? Inexpensive leisure, accessible on the weekend, where the community could meet, drink their mate and eat some peanuts while the children play soccer, the adults converse and stroll about, and the elderly would walk around in harmony with their surroundings. This is our existence in the community, the everyday life of people who live in the historic center (Interviewee 6).

We can perceive the discontent of this layer of society and the denouncing of the proposed use of this space in the Mauá Docks. It may be understood that the disputes for meaning which originate in the social field appear as antagonistic discursive arenas in regard to the renewal of the Mauá Docks. This antagonism and resistance are part of the discourse regarding the Docks and they are relevant to Laclau and Mouffe's theory, which considers them to be a field of discourse. The antagonistic relationship is established to the extent that the presence of the 'other' does not allow 'me' to completely be 'me'.

We can also observe a displacement in terms of the meanings linked to Gaucho identity. In this moment, the meaning is displaced by the question of an elitist space,

or in other words, what before was based on propagating a discourse that the renewal of the Mauá Docks is contrary to the Gaucho identity, now seems to emphasize more the dichotomy between the discourse of the population at large and the elite in the use of this space. This question denotes the various demands of civil society in the form of complaints and resistance in articulating different meanings of modernization, progress, and globalization, questioning the meaning of these concepts and the cost of what, for whom, when and why.

Given this, we may consider the following types of discursive logic: the **social logic** based on a shared space, which all of society can appreciate, participating in and producing social relationships. This is one of the main arguments used by the resistance movements. The battles for this shared space and a space for all reflect the **political logic**, through which various political figures try to generate meanings for this space. The **phantasmagorical logic** reflects an ideology through social protagonism, integrating various demands and giving a voice to civil society. Below we present a table with a summary of the types of discursive logic (Table 4).

Table 4 - Types of Discursive Logic

DISCURSIVE LOGIC	MEANINGS
Social	Shared space
Political	The battle for a space for everyone
Phantasmagorical	Social protagonism

Source: Prepared by the Authors (2018).

It may be observed that these types of discursive logic favor a concept of modernity based on large constructions and elitist space, where the Gaucho does not feel represented. The social is a shared space which has been losing its concept to the private space, however through the political logic we can perceive that the battle for a space for everyone is represented by each action against the project which intends to cause social gentrification, where there is a quest for

social protagonism. We can perceive the battle fronts against a project which intends to bring new life to the population of Porto Alegre, but its critiques are based on how this life will be perceived by the population and whether this type of proposed renewal will be possible.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

As we have seen, it may be perceived that various discourses are trying

to articulate a concept of the city which integrates the metropolis with intercity competition. The discourses are based on understanding that the conflicts in terms of public space seek to reintegrate the city with modern planning through efficient management. However, this reintegration contradicts the cultural identity of the place and reinforces more market logic and urban entrepreneurship.

Some critiques have been cited to give context to the results of this study: What led to the questioning of this renewal project because it does not contemplate local identity? Since the city of Porto Alegre has developed based on a modern logic of urban planning, its urban intervention projects have also followed this logic and perpetuate a hegemonic meaning in terms of the use of space. If this renewal is not the consensus of all demands, then the project is inadequate, and it is hoped that society will be a protagonistic voice that will participate in urban planning.

Harvey (2005) weaves his critiques of this development model which mainly benefits financial capital. It is interesting to perceive that the renewal of historic centers as a policy to increase tourism, may principally involve the logic of capital, but we need to examine the instruments of urban policy which can capture part of the valorization of this renewed urban space for the public coffers, such as improvement contribution instruments including the progressive IPTU (Urban Territory Building Tax) tax, the Overall City Plan and its urban policy planning boards.

Therefore, what has been presented and debated in this study highlights a discussion about modern reintegration through the modernity paradigm using market logic, which is justified by discourses of capital, and illustrates the problem with concepts of integration and democracy as empty meanings, or in other words, ones that are under construction. This means that reintegration in the hegemonic discourse is still based on an

urban planning model based on the assumptions of positivism and economists and does not reflect on the social relationships inherent in each reality.

In this manner, we may conclude that urban entrepreneurship has been a central characteristic of urban management together with the deregulation of markets in which cities and locations have taken a prominent role and urban renewal projects have justified treating the city as merchandise, reducing the right to the city of the low-income population.

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