

Symbolic disputes related to Mauá Harbor regeneration project in Porto Alegre - Brazil

Clarice Misoczky de Oliveira¹, Debora Gregoletto²

¹⁻²PROPUR-UFRGS

¹arq.clarice@gmail.com

²deboragreg@gmail.com

Porto Alegre, the southern capital of Brazil, in the recent decades has staged considerable changes in terms of its agenda in urban planning. The city worldwide known as the pioneer experience of the Participatory Budget and host of many editions of the World Social Forum can recently be identified as one of the host cities of the FIFA World Cup 2014. Being a host of a sport mega event, in terms of urban planning policies, represented an opportunity to deepen managerialism, and mainly, to introduce “urban entrepreneurialism” (HARVEY, 1989) and city marketing strategies (KOTLER;HAIDER; REIN, 1994) to transform the city to compete in the Brazilian and Mercosul scenarios. Thereat, eighteen Large Urban Projects (LUPs) were conceived. From those, fourteen were related to urban mobility, two to stadia and two to waterfront regeneration. However, it is important to signalize that from those eighteen LUPs, only twelve were related to the Responsibility Matrix. The other six, including one stadium and the waterfront regenerations projects have arisen with the opportunity of investments that being a world cup host city represents (OLIVEIRA, 2013).

During the process, different kinds of resistances have emerged, and not all LUPs have been implemented or completed so far. At this paper, we are especially interested in bringing to the light the symbolic disputes related to one LUP, the Mauá Harbor regeneration project. The harbor is located at the city center, and used to be host important ephemeral cultural events. The regeneration project is to transform the historical harbor pavilions and its open spaces in a shopping mall and business center. This particular project haven't been implemented so far, and, at the present moment, is an object of disputes between different strata of the society. On one hand is what Logan and Molotch (1993) call the “growth coalition”, composed by the international

capital, local elite and entrepreneurs, local, regional and national politicians, and local media; on the other hand is Porto Alegre population represented by different social movements that addresses against the process as the project has been conceived and the project itself. At this dispute, local media, the Mauá Harbor entrepreneurs and municipality are struggling in order to create a consensus within Porto Alegre's society.

Therefore, based on Lefebvre (1991) formulation on the triad of space: the lived space (spaces of representation), the conceived space (the representation of space), and the perceived space (the spatial practice), we aim to understand how and whether the growth coalition is being able to tackle the resistances of this particular project within society.

This research is by one hand based on analysis of the most important local newspaper (Zero Hora) discourse, and on the other hand, in an internet survey realized with Porto Alegre's citizens. The idea is to confront people's thinking of the project with the kind of information they have had contact with. Internet survey with questionnaire is a frequently-used tool due to its speed and low cost (SOMMER; SOMMER, 2002). Thereof, the questionnaire is based on two blocks of the questions as follow. The first block concerns the project itself: 1) Do you know the project proposed by the Viva Cais Mauá entrepreneur? 2) If affirmative, how did you know the project? Was it by Zero Hora, Correio do Povo, Sul21, Entrepreneur Fan page, municipality official website, independent blogs, social movements Facebook or visiting the site during the FIFA World Cup 2014? 3) About each section (Docks, Pavilions and Shopping Center), after informing its characteristics (land uses and occupancy, area, dimension images) the questions are: 3.1) For the Docks section do you prefer with or without the towers? 3.2) Do you agree with the uses chosen for the area? 3.3) If negative, what kind of uses and occupancy do you believe would be appropriated for this area in particular? 3.4) For the Pavilions section, do you agree with the uses chosen for the area? 3.5) If negative, what kind of uses and occupancy do you believe would be appropriated for this area in particular? 3.6) For the Shopping Center section do you prefer with or without the building? 3.7) If negative, what kind of uses and occupancy do you believe would be appropriated for this area in particular? 4) About the planning process, if possible, would you like to be a part of it? 4.1) If affirmative, which kind of participation

do you believe would be more suitable? The second block refers to the social characteristics of the applicants as age, level of education, living neighborhood, whether live, work or visit the city center and if is part of any social movement that contest the Mauá Harbor regeneration project.

This is an ongoing research; therefore the results are still to be analyzed. Nevertheless, there are at least two hypotheses to be explored. The first hypothesis is that Zero Hora plays an important role in the consensus building, that Porto Alegre citizens aim to have a city image aligned with the expected image of a “global city” (SASSEN, 2010) and LUP strategies can break the understand of the Lefebvre’s triad of the space. This hypothesis represents a relevance loss in terms of urban planning. The second hypothesis regards to the difficult of the media to turn the LUP hegemonic, that the local supersede the global, and new forms in urban planning can emerge.

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