CHAPTER 12

The Southern Urban Political in Transcalar Perspective: A View from the Squatter Movements of Belo Horizonte

Felipe N.C. Magalhães

Introduction

Brazilian right to the city movements have gone through an important renewal in the last decade, bringing about a new cycle of struggles around access to housing and land and involving new political dynamics in cities that are directly interwoven with processes in larger scales. This chapter approaches these new movements in the city of Belo Horizonte (BH) as a point of departure for a broader consideration of the southern urban question. From the perspective of these right to the movements, the chapter focuses on scalar relations between social movements, the hegemonic production of space in the metropolis, and the domain of the macroeconomic. The first section presents the empirical details of these recent developments. The second adds a trans-scalar perspective to the events, emphasizing connections between the metropolis and the macroeconomic. A final section explores current discussions in urban studies concerning southern cities from a postcolonial perspective, proposing a point of view informed by contemporary Latin American urbanization. This involves a pluralist

F.N.C. Magalhães (✉)
Instituto de Geociências, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, Brazil

T. Enright, U. Rossi (eds.), *The Urban Political*,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-64534-6_12

approach that recognizes the force of neoliberalism in shaping contemporary urban policy and transformations, while also understanding contingent right to the city movements and struggles in terms of their bottom-up potentialities in the production of other southern urban spaces and trajectories.

Struggles for the City in 2010s Belo Horizonte: New Urban Social Movements and *ocupações*

In the last decade, Brazilian cities have witnessed the emergence of a new wave of social movements acting on the struggles around the *right to the city*.[1] The 1970s witnessed the beginning of a long cycle of urban movements, which culminated in the so-called urban reform agenda and the struggles for redemocratization in the 1980s. This agenda involved guaranteeing progressive elements in the basic legal framework defined in the re-democratization process, such as the *social function of property*, a constitutional principle defining that private property must fulfill its "social function" (i.e., not remain empty and without any direct usage). The urban reform culminated in the federal city statute of 2001, which provides a basic charter for urban policy in the whole country (Fernandes, 2005, 2007a, 2007b) and the creation of the Ministry of Cities in 2003, which conservative forces in the federal government's coalition of parties led by the PT would later capture. After this long cycle of urban movements (that involved a blending of social movements with political parties), newer organizations began arising outside the influence of such groups. The first one of these new movements to gain political grounds and visibility was the *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Teto* (Homeless Workers' Movement—MTST), which started in São Paulo as an urban branch of the Landless Peasants' Movement (MST) in 1997. Other emerging organizations include the *Brigadas Populares* (People's Brigades—active mostly in Belo Horizonte), and *Movimento de Luta nos Bairros, Vilas e Favelas* (MLB: Movement of Struggle in Neighborhoods, Communities and Favelas, active in several cities). The common trait among these groups is their use of direct action in occupying either plots of land held empty by real estate speculators, as is more common in Belo Horizonte, or large unused (mostly public) buildings in the city centers, more frequent in the São Paulo context. Although it is not involved in housing, the *Movimento Passe Livre* (MPL—Free Pass Movement), an activist organization focused on public transit with sections across the country, is also part of this new wave of urban social movements.

The city of Belo Horizonte (BH) has been an active laboratory for several of these new movements and their *ocupações*.[2] Starting in the mid-2000s, several new squats claim a strategy against neoliberal urbanism combining the direct production of the *common* (Dardot & Laval, 2014; Hardt & Negri, 2009; Tonucci, 2015) with access to housing as a social right guaranteed by the federal constitution but not adequately delivered by the government. Dandara, the first in a new series of organized squats in BH (after a few were evicted shortly after their beginning), was started by *Brigadas Populares* in 2009. The owners of the land had been speculating with empty tracts since the 1970s, while zoning laws for the region prevented them from pursuing a more profitable form of building. Meanwhile, the property valorized strongly, but its owners still hoped for a favorable change in land use laws, therefore letting the land remain vacant. Located north of Pampulha, the upper class neighborhood where the BH World Cup venue is situated, and whose planning in the 1940s was a prototype for the modernist design of Brasília, Dandara began with around 150 families, and in 2016 it is home for more than a thousand, according to community leaders.

Since Dandara, new occupations have sprung up across greater BH. As of 2016 there are twenty-four new occupations in the Metropolitan Region of BH, housing around fourteen thousand families, or fifty-five thousand people (Bittencourt et al., 2016). While there is no precise information available on the evolution of this trend since 2009, it is safe to assume that the June 2013 series of protests that hit Brazilian streets represent an important upward inflexion in its growth curve. That wave of protests, ignited by MPL street demonstrations against the bus fare hike in São Paulo (whose brutal police repression resulted in protests spreading quickly across the country), voiced a loud, clear and renewed cry coming from right to the city struggles in the major metropolitan centers of Brazil. Even though they were extremely heterogeneous, also comprising parts of the conservative opposition to the federal government of the Workers' Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores—PT), their progressive and radical wings were made up largely of these newer, urban-focused social movements. June 2013 did not inaugurate the new wave of urban social movements, but represented a political eruption of their underlying political meanings, projects, and anxieties. Similarly, while the 2014 World Cup played an important role in gathering forces against the evictions and dispossessions it created in its preparations, it was just another source of fuel for political vectors that had been brewing since the mid-2000s.[3]

A place where the 2013 protests did fuel the new squats is the Izidora region, in the northern border of BH, the same area where a new Oscar Niemeyer designed state government center was inaugurated in 2010. Izidora is the last non-developed region within the BH municipality. The city's current plans for the area comprise a set of *operações urbanas* (urban operations) –planning instruments used for the (re)development of large areas usually aimed at higher income markets– whose implementation have been delayed partly due to current unfavorable market conditions, but also because of a strengthening of these new urban social movements in the city.

Those who began the squats in Izidora already lived in the neighboring areas as renters. Suffering eviction pressures from a booming real estate market and without many reasonable locational alternatives, they started building wooden and plastic shacks in the area in the middle of the events of June 2013. Although in the beginning, they occupied Izidora without any support from activist organizations, as their numbers grew movements began offering support for the three main occupations: Rosa Leão, Vitória and Esperança. According to activists, eight thousand families live in the area, as of 2016. Since its first few days, the occupations have been dealing with constant pressures for their evictions, from daily police harassment to formal eviction notices and judicial struggles in courts. They have also received active support from important political actors in the city, from collectives of 'popular lawyers', to research groups in universities and progressive judges in the state's judicial branches.

An important recent development in this context has been the emergence of organized groups of activist lawyers who act in defense of the vulnerable groups in cases of squat evictions and other human rights issues. The active engagement with the judicial apparatus of the state has been an essential aspect of right to the city politics in Brazil since the 1970s. More recently, new urban movements have been working upon the basic set of legislation conquered through the older urban reform movements within courts, bringing up the constitutional right to housing along with the social function of property as an important weapon in specific cases of conflict, mainly against landowners in eviction cases. However, it is also important to note that the new movements organizing occupations also face opposition from older organized movements for social housing in the city, who were actively involved in the local version of the urban reform turn of the early 1990s in policy with the election of progressive mayors in

several cities, including BH. These older movements claim that the new squats disobey an order of priorities in social housing delivery established by the city's policies—while activists in the emerging organizations respond that this queue is simply an instrument for silencing and coopting bottom-up political forces.

These conflicts are indications of deeper differences related to the trajectories and political stance of each group of movements and activists. One side speaks from a longer experience of direct involvement with the state, political parties and lawmaking—which starts in a context of struggles for democracy, against the military regime, and manages to conquer important terrain in the (public/state) domain of rights and institutional structuring. The other departs from a diagnosis of the failure, insufficiency or cooptation of those older struggles, defending a more radical conception of direct action and struggle—beginning to involve in political parties and electoral disputes in the municipal elections of 2016, but not without continuing organized action outside the domains of the state and public policy. Nonetheless, it is visible that this newer strategy is reliant upon the conquests of the older movements, *the social function of property* and the *City Statute* being fundamental instruments for their struggles against evictions in courts and their questioning of the legal status of the properties they occupy—which are carefully and previously selected, aiming those that can be subsequently disputed in courts.[4]

Most of the post-Dandara occupations have a fundamental difference from areas that have witnessed similar processes of irregular urbanization and favela formation in the past: purposeful planning and design, in most experiences with the active support from organized groups of professional and academic urbanists, architects, planners and geographers. This design thinking is a constantly evolving learning-by-doing process directed to preserving environmentally sensitive areas, defining building standards, street widths and an urbanization pattern (in an informal context) aiming at making usual favela urbanization (i.e. land tenure regularization with infrastructure provision) easier and cheaper for public funds. As shown by Amin (2014), they also involve thinking and developing infrastructural solutions with the active participation of dwellers, combining the technical knowledge of formally trained university architects with the popular knowledge acquired through direct practice by settlers. The new *ocupações* in BH constitute a form of housing policy organized through direct action from groups acting outside the state, and, considering the ever-present threat of evictions, many times acting against it.

While these occupations are rich examples of the open, undefined, and multifaceted character of such bottom-up socio-spatial processes, they can also end up hosting violent and authoritarian non-progressive forces, such as the drug trafficking business. The latter take advantage of an urban fabric that promotes isolation from the city and the absence of state control in order to dominate them for their own anti-democratic purposes—establishing their own territorial command and repressing any attempt at community organizing. In 2015, two activists—one of them also a resident of the occupations—were killed in Izidora in a dispute around the selling of plots by dwellers in one case, and in a conflict with drug traffickers in the other. Some activists report a deliberate absence of the police as a state tactic to weaken the legitimacy of the occupations in the city, with a concomitant strengthening of the drug trade in the communities as a result.

Tracing Scalar Connectors

The Lefebvrean notion of the urban as an intermediation between near and distant orders (Lefebvre, 1968, 2003) is useful as a conceptual point of departure for the focus on scalar connections needed to approach the events above in richer textural manners. Focusing on such linkages, the socio-spatial dynamics that result from struggles around the production of space in the city insert themselves in dense interactive webs of relations between agents, institutions, organizations and their respective actions. The reasons behind the return to direct action in the urban social movements in BH and other Brazilian cities relate to a complex and multifaceted assemblage composed of different interconnected genealogies and associations that operate in different scales. I propose to examine a select few of them, handpicking those that best reveal the trans-scalar character of the relations between social movements, urban change and spatial politics in BH. A focus on these relations also illustrates how it can be more helpful to approach these assemblages of interrelated lineages through the "both/and" lens of engaged methodological pluralism (Barnes & Sheppard, 2010) instead of monochromatic perspectives.

- The first and most evident connection lies in the rupture between the new social movements and the groups of urban reform organizations that have been active since the 1970s and 1980s. In the former's point of view, considering this specific recent experience in

BH, the latter have been coopted and instrumentalized through their direct insertion in policy making in different spheres of government and planning.

- A second connection is a clear neoliberal turn in urban policy conducted by the city in the late 2000s after a long experience of progressive planning associated with the urban reform agenda. This was one of many policy changes geared at promoting general land rent gains, and that were in line with a city marketing/strategic planning model for urban growth and development. When the city shuts down the municipal secretary for social housing in 2009, it sends a clear turning signal to movements acting around the issue in the region. The new social movements' return to the old tactic of direct action in squatting empty plots of land and buildings is therefore related to the rupture with the older movements discussed above. In this process, the new movements start their militant actions already in direct conflict with the city's new administration, while many of the older organizations stay within the fringes of negotiation and cooperation with the state (sometimes with members working directly as city hall staff).
- A third connection was the strong surge in real estate prices that took place in the whole country along with the 2004–2010 economic boom, fueled by growth in both income and credit availability for the majority of the population. This valorization was intensified by urban policy geared towards growth in many cities, including BH, after 2009.
- A fourth connection is the program *Minha Casa Minha Vida* (MCMV—"My House My Life"), a large social housing package that also works as a form of anti-crisis stimulus through the delivery of long-term credit subsidies to lower income groups traditionally excluded from formal housing markets. Announced by the federal government in the aftermath of the international financial crisis of 2008, the program aims to provide access to housing for the poor while at the same time creating an incentive for investment and economic growth. However, the implementation of the program came with little usage of public land or any regulations on land price variations in the areas receiving new housing units. This created an additional stimulus to the—already heated—real estate market in metropolitan peripheries that pushed poor populations that could

not afford the long-term mortgages that the program offered to areas even farther from the core and with less urban infrastructure, creating an eviction dynamic that corresponds to the third factor fueling the post-2009 occupations. MCMV takes inspiration from the Chilean experiences of favela clearance and social housing provision in the 1970s under the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet. It works as a market-failure correction program, with government subsidies and guarantees provided for the long-term mortgages of lower income groups considered as too risky by the financiers. Hence, it is a government-led process of direct financialization of the urban poor, which feeds into the cycle of raising land rent, affecting the peripheral populations who were not included in the program (some of which would also look for the new *ocupações* as an alternative form of access to housing).

The third item above relates to Brazil's direct connection to the Chinese boom. This was also a result of a neoliberal free trade shift in the 1990s that promoted a dialectical return to the country's pre-1930 economic structure, which was driven by an export base of commodities, raw materials and agricultural products. This took place through an economic restructuring tuned to the authoritarian imperative of the competitiveness-seeking focus on comparative advantage sectors, as the supposedly exclusive path to surviving in a free trade environment. The other three dynamics connect to some political events that took place at the federal government after the election of the PT for the presidency in 2002. They include the political alliances with centrist parties for the formation of a majority government, and the PT's earlier shift to accepting campaign donations from big corporations (many of which would be construction and real estate oligopolies, as well as important players in finance). These have been decisive actors in the pro-growth political pact between the PT, labor unions, an important fraction of the social movements and large business conglomerates, which characterized the cycle of distributive growth. It is now clear that the latter hinged on the commodity boom of the 2000s, which allowed for the experience of combining economic growth with a decline in inequality—exceptional both in Brazil's history of economic expansion based upon exclusion and concentration and in the history of neoliberalism in general.

The Southern Urban and Theoretical-Political Ambivalences

Peck (2015) analyzes a series of influential theoretical and methodological interventions concerning global south urbanization in northern academic dialogues.[5] This is a move that opens up myriad opportunities for research and renewed understandings of the urban, and through the *ontological turn*[6] it proposes, these are not exclusively *in*, or *for* the south itself.

As in Roy's (2011) nuanced epistemes of subaltern urbanism, the stance taken in this group of theoretical interventions in favor of southern singularities also provides important material for responding to the very partial understandings of informal urbanization by influential critics (see, for example, Mike Davis, 2006). Informality and favelas constitute rich empirical material for such discussions, but one can easily miss their ambivalent character. In many such sites, negative factors ranging from material precariousness, to everyday police abuse, to harsh living conditions act in conjunction with a wide set of bottom-up potentialities (often diminished and repressed through their heteronomic relations) that hold not only emancipatory political potentials but much explaining capacity, if examined closely and in their own terms. Such perspectives could depart from questioning (and looking for the diverse associations that connect to) the simple fact that most favela inhabitants, in most places, would change very little in their own communities. The ambivalence of the urban political in these contexts pertains to a number of key features. On the one hand, these include the accumulated democratic deficit crystallized in cityscapes, the militarized recuperation of territory, the cinematized/televised spectacle of gentrification, and the pervasive exclusions-as-otherings. On the other hand, there are the political possibilities situated in both/and terrains of radical democratic inclusion in the public sphere, which will tend to significantly alter its conditions, and in constructions of urban political alterity-(as-)autonomy.

Although they portray themselves as planned spaces and attempt to keep a certain distance from the image of the traditional favela, the *ocupações* above have many similarities to historical constitutions of such areas—representing not only a kind of DIY housing policy, but also self-constructed outsider spaces constantly seeking forms of autonomy and lines of flight (therefore in constant repression[7]). Thus, because of a historical ethnographic deficit in urban studies well captured and criticized by several recent postcolonial interventions, a great deal of southern

urban epistemologies remain in the unknowns of urban theory, and they constitute not simply different experiences, but also other urban imaginaries. The trajectory of the favela in the making of urban normativities and the ways they appear not only in policy but also in the practices of social movements in Brazil since the 1960s is an important factor in the new round of occupations. The acceptance of the favela in the 1960s and 1970s, as territories and forms of city building that progressive urbanists should defend and not decry, mutates in a first moment into an international policy standard (promoted by the World Bank) (Davis, 2006, pp. 70–94), resulting in several experiences of 'upgrading' and basic infrastructure provision. The current process with the occupations is a new round in this lineage, in which organized movements build planned irregular areas from scratch, aiming at their future integration into the 'formal city' with zero impact in terms of evicted families.

Concerning the recent discussions in postcolonial urbanisms, a first critical remark from a Brazilian and Latin American standpoint is that sometimes, while privileging the Asian and African contexts, they tend to obfuscate our own experiences of urbanization, whose histories show some interesting, underrated and maybe revealing parallels to the ultra-accelerated contemporary dynamics in Asia and Africa. Of course, this does not invalidate the relevance of the bulk of the theoretical developments brought forward by the current trends in postcolonial urbanism for understanding Latin American urbanization—but the empirical inputs could give further space to the region, something that would involve important consequences, mainly in the theoretical approach to neoliberalism. If historical trajectories continue the current trend of inserting parts of Southeast Asia into the main stages of global wealth production and management,[8] cementing the idea of the twenty-first century as the Asian Century (both economically and theoretically), Latin America and Africa will be restructured along this process as peripheries no longer exclusively for Euro North American centers, but increasingly for Asian centralities of power, knowledge and wealth as well. And if recent trends of postcolonial urbanism are largely connected to Asian and African perspectives of postcolonial theory, its Latin American versions– comprising mainly the Modernity-Coloniality group (e.g. Mignolo, 2007a, 2007b)—have only begun to overflow into the terrain of urban studies (Vainer, 2014).[9]

The dialogue between these two trends of postcolonialism in their intersection with urban studies is still a blank page that could eventually provide rich material for both. A Brazilian version would certainly involve

the critique of the twentieth century cultural cauldron as a form of nation building through the erasing of differences and the silencing of the subaltern, but at the same time the idea of anthropophagy, as in Oswald de Andrade's manifesto, in which the European is not "delinked" (as in Mignolo) but cannibalized. Meanwhile, some Latin American perspectives would also tend to bring along parts of the continent's social sciences tradition in understanding the specificities of the region's several different social, economic, spatial and historical formations, a history of ideas that has important inputs from sociologists and political economists. The latter's interpretation of a persistent colonial condition in the peripheral character of the region's economies departs from André Gunder Frank, Raúl Prebisch and Celso Furtado's analysis of the consequences of extractivism as the economic inheritance of colonialism. This is a reading that regains pertinence with the post-1990 neoliberal drive towards comparative advantages, whose effects for the (manufacturing) metropolitan areas should not be underestimated. It is important to note that in the Brazilian experience of a progressive center-left national government from 2003 to the 2016 coup, this structural economic shift back to the pre-1930 period of predominance of commodity exports has not only continued, but gained strength. This happened as the Chinese demand for such sectors grew exponentially and provided the growth dynamic (regardless of local labor costs) that the distributive model of policy needed to work. The current moment's political vulnerability of these governments in South America are not only related to a conservative recrudescence and organized reaction (also clearly inserted in international chains), but also to the commodity market bust of the last few years that brought the cycle of inclusive growth to a halt.

It is not necessary to agree with the developmentalist modernizing drive that traditionally derives as a set of policy prognosis from those historical analyses to recognize their validity in explaining the persistence of our peripheral economic condition, whose genealogies connect to colonialism in its ever-evolving formats. Today, they can blend with more politicized proposals of the idea of development that attempt to open its meanings towards many possible democratic constructions—in terms that replace the twentieth century's projects of promoting modernization with attempts to open up radically democratic trajectories for social spaces of difference. The new urban social movements' demands for deeper democratization, which tackle the recent entrepreneurialist urban policy-making environment of the neoliberal turn in BH, are in tune with an interpretation

of neoliberalism as departing from the (police) state. Many of the struggles that they engage in—against social housing as a form of financialization of the poor, or public transit as a concession of guaranteed profits to private capital operating the systems (as in the initial sparks of the June 2013 events)—also implicate the neoliberal city as a state phenomenon. On another level, the coup against President Dilma Rousseff in 2016 opens doors to a radical austerity fix in the regulatory apparatus at the national scale that undermine major democratic achievements from the re-democratization period of the 1980s, freezing budgets for public services for twenty years, proposing drastic changes in the public pension system and in labor legislations and rights. In this new authoritarian wave, *democracy against the state* (Abensour, 2010) involves struggles from the former against the clearly neoliberal constitution of the latter.[10]

In terms of the movements behind the occupations, their struggles are tuned to *the city against the state* (Velloso, 2015), and operate in concrete grounds that involve courts, negotiations with landowners and construction companies mediated by the state, street protests with a large deal of police violence, frequently mobilized resistance to eviction threats, violence perpetrated by drug traffickers attempting to take over the occupations and/or occupiers that engage in selling land and houses in the squats etc. These conflicts crosscut assemblages of agents and institutions operating in domains that connect near and distant orders, cross-scalar processes related to local histories of land tenure concentration through corruption and, simultaneously, to housing policies designed by macroeconomists at the federal government as a pseudo-Keynesian policy package to counter the effects of the 2008 financial crisis. Hence, political responses also need to operate on these multiscalar terms, as the urban movements addressed here know well.

Robinson and Parnell (2011) emphasize the political possibilities one can find in southern cities—of overcoming, escaping or leaving behind the close encounters between neoliberalism and planning. They propose an open regard to new and diverse directions that new trajectories could point to and thereby highlight important openings in the southern contingencies of different pathways of counter-hegemony and bottom-up attempts at social change. Obviously, this does not exclude current hegemonies from their everyday production of space, whose consequences feed the continued struggles in which these politicized agents engage. In this sense, the squats and the new urban social movements represent, *at the same time*, both a *puissance* of the southern city in its creative potential

that emanates from an everyday life of struggle and resistance, and a result of larger economic-political forces that are able to operate in the (re)production of new forms of rent and value extraction. The occupations constitute a very small but frontal attack to a key historical pillar in the constitutions of power and hegemony in Brazil, i.e. access to land, revealing the insufficiency of the post-dictatorship experience of democratization in addressing the extreme and persistent inequality in (both urban and rural) land tenure, even amidst active urban social movements and their direct insertion in the state in many spheres and cities.

Conclusion

The struggles examined in this chapter are unfolding processes that I have only started to portray in the inherent partiality of unfinished socio-spatial dynamics. The struggles of occupiers continue, facing eviction threats, the entrance of the drug business and the pressure coming from a beginning informal real estate market in the occupations etc. These stories are part of a historical lineage, which, in a certain postcolonial perspective, go back to the struggles of runaway slaves in attempting to build and organize their own communities (still ongoing in the *quilombola* communities that managed to survive)[11]. In the domain of contemporary urban policy, politics and the political, they represent a new round of movements emerged after the exhaustion of the cycle that started in early 1960s in the roots of the urban reform movements and melded into the progressive mayors of the PT in the 1990s and the federal government in the early Lula period (Holston, 2008). The chapter has attempted to tell a story of an experience that are simultaneously inserted both in a web of urban neoliberalism operating in transscalar fashions, and in an assemblage of localized/contingent political singularities that attempt to produce space differentially in their own emancipatory terms. As such, and in ways that I could only point towards in this chapter, a plural theoretical and methodological stance, inserted in both a critical strand of urban studies informed by political economy and thicker empirical mappings of webs of agents, events and relations informed by postcolonialism and/or poststructuralism, can be a potent form of approaching the urban political today, and not only in southern contexts.

Acknowledgements I thank the editors for important feedback on drafts, along with Joshua Akers, Dan Cohen, Max Ritts and Trevor Wideman, who have contributed with valuable comments and critiques on previous versions of this piece.

Notes

1. A story yet to be told, which escapes our scope in this intervention, is Henri Lefebvre's direct influence in Brazil's urban social movements in the late 1960s and early 70s. *Le Droit à la Ville*'s 1969 translation (Lefebvre, 1968) published in Portugal circulated quickly within the Brazilian community of activist urbanists (according to some accounts, the military government's censors did not capture Lefebvre's connection to Marxism), and while there is a great amount of debate concerning the subsequent diminishing/distortion of the term (rather ironically) by those involved in organized action to the simple access to "means of collective consumption", Lefebvre's influence is recognized by many.
2. There is a foundational political dispute around the terms *occupation* versus *invasion*, in which the movements use the first, while the media aligned with conservative mayors use the second to condemn their actions. The idea of occupying in this context refers to a sociopolitical attempt to frame the movements' own actions in terms of promoting justice and serving the collective interests of diminishing the stock of empty homes and urbanized plots of land while many people remain without access to homes or land.
3. In Magalhães (2017), I approach the events of 2013 and the subsequent reactions that culminated in the 2016 coup against Dilma Rousseff.
4. e.g., large urbanized plots donated by the state to private investors, conditioned upon industrial investments that end up not taking place; areas owned by corporations that owe large amounts of property tax to the city, and that remain empty in the middle of urbanized neighborhoods, waiting for a favorable change in the city's zoning ordinance for higher density building etc.
5. I do not have the scope in this chapter to present a careful reading, in relation to the context above described and the stories in which they insert, of each of these trends in contemporary southern/postcolonial urbanism—such as Peck (2015), with his own perspective on this literature. For a recent panoramic on important parts of this literature, see Parnell and Oldfield (2014).
6. On a more deeply theoretical note, fertile grounds could hide behind eventual interfaces in urban studies and human geography—and not exclusively within this lineage of southern urbanisms—with the ongoing debates on the ontological turn amongst anthropologists (de Castro, 2014; Graeber, 2015).
7. Not only from abusive police forces but also from the drug trafficking and armed militias that take over these territories. Today, the Rio de Janeiro story of favela militarized police units intensifies conflicts amongst these forces. Their locations, restricted to the strategic parts of the city either inserted in its postcard or World Cup/Olympics circuits, is very telling of their connections to a city marketing/land rent/urban financialization nexus.

8. Alternatively, dislocating centers towards Asia—as in Arrighi's (1994) interpretation of this geo-economic shift as inserted in a centuries old Braudelian genealogy of capitalist centers changing places in each long cycle of accumulation.
9. It is worth noting that the *epistemologies of the south* which Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2014) invokes have been an important and influential theoretical intervention in Brazil and Latin America in the last 20 years. Also through practical engagements with the World Social Forum and its networks of movements, Santos' approach to popular knowledge and political epistemologies of southern *Others* could be an interesting additional point of contact and dialogue for contemporary postcolonial urbanists.
10. On Storper's (2016) critique of the idea and concept of the neoliberal city, it is important to note how it speaks from a technocratic standpoint that is very common amongst neoclassical hegemonic economists that deny the validity of the adjective—in spite of the IMF itself engaging with the term 'neoliberalism' in technical discourse more recently (Ostry, Loungani, & Furceri, 2016). It also does not seem to realize the trans-scalarity of urban neoliberalism (as a concept that refers to a scalar-relational set of processes), or this connection to the state as a major pillar, implying a general democratic deficit that is intensely experienced in the contemporary metropolis.
11. Bringing important implications for the contemporary left, in recognizing that the roots of organized resistance movements in Brazil are far from the immigration of Italian anarchists in the early twentieth century, as the common story tells.

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Felipe N.C. Magalhães Assistant Professor of Economic Geography at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG), in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, currently researching new urban social movements, urban policy and networks of cooperative/solidarity economies in the greater BH.