

Resistance and alternative against the new dominant discourse of the right to the city: the case of the *Movimento Sem Teto da Bahia* (Salvador da Bahia, Brazil)

Belda¹, S., Peris¹, J., Frediani², A., Boni¹, A.

serbelmi@upvnet.upv.es, jperisb@dpi.upv.es, a.frediani@ucl.ac.uk, aboni@dpi.upv.es

¹ Group of Studies on Development, Cooperation and Ethics. Universidad Politécnica de Valencia.

² Development Planning Unit. University College London.

1. Introduction

In recent years we have witnessed how the “right to the city” has turned into a more and more fascinating slogan. As an alternative to liberalism in the task of building more equitable and just cities, it has become a banner for social movements, academic circles, NGOs, as well as for certain governments and “development” agencies.

The right to the city originates in Henri Lefebvre’s work (1969, 1979, 1991a, 1991b) and it puts forward a “radical restructuring of social, political and economic relations” in the city (Purcell, 2002). Since the 60s, it has inspired the discourse and actions of protest of urban social movements.

Nevertheless, a new discourse on the right to the city has recently emerged within the core of organizations and institutions which differ from the ones that used to proudly represent the issue in the past. This new discourse has brought more and more actors together, it has become dominant and has slowly institutionalized on a global, national and local spheres. During the process, its radical original content has changed significantly.

An example of the process is the appearance on a worldwide scale, since the mid 90’s, of the “world charters” for the right to the city. Amongst the national spaces, the Brazilian process arises with the discussion and endorsement of the *Estatuto da Cidade (City Statute, 2001)*, which opens a way to institutionalisation in the local sphere by means of the *Planos Diretores de Desenvolvimento Urbano (Master Plans)*.

Nevertheless, certain social movements have not participated nor their demands have been included in these processes of production and institutionalisation of the new discourse; namely, the movements which have maintained a “lefebvrian conception” of the right to the city (Mayer, 2009).

The present paper aims to understand the contents as well as the origins and institutionalization of the new dominant discourse of the right to the city. This starting point allows us to deepen into the everyday struggle for the right to the city led by a social

movement which stands close to the lefebvrian conception. We intend to explain the way in which the dominant discourse and the new institutionalisation pose significant constraints and, at the same time, a new potential for resistance and for the production of an alternative and more transformative discourse.

Hence, we will study the processes of production and dissemination of essential texts on the right to the city on a global, national (focusing on Brazil) and local basis (focusing on Salvador da Bahia) before deepening into the social struggle of the *Movimento Sem Teto da Bahia* (MSTB, Bahia Roof-Less Movement) in the city of Salvador.

We will then argue to which extent is the new discourse and its institutionalization able to trigger substantial changes in the way we understand and produce the city, as well as in the power relations and in the hegemony of the dominant groups. And whether the new discourse narrows or preserves the possibility of a more radical and transformative alternative inspired by the utopia.

2. Theoretical framework and methodology

For the aims of our work, we rely on Fairclough's "textually oriented discourse analysis" (1992). According to the author, "'social practice' is an articulation of diverse social elements dialectically related," in which discourse is also contained (Fairclough, 1992). "Any instance of discourse is simultaneously a piece of *text* (written or spoken language), an instance of *discursive practice* (producing texts) and an instance of *social practice* (power and structural tensions)" (Fairclough, 1992 in Marston, 2004).

For our analysis we must take into account discourse practices at macro and micro levels (aspects of the production, distribution and consumption of texts and the conditions under which these occur), texts themselves and the social practice of which the discourse is part (its social and discursive context and impact) (Fairclough, 1992 in Darcy, 1999). We must also refer to the shifting relations and changes produced in the social practices in the different scales of social organisation (global, regional, local), establishing the ways in which the discourse is received, appropriated and recontextualised in the different locales (Fairclough, 2001).

According to Manston (2004), "the model illuminates social change from multiple levels of analysis, highlighting tensions between dominant and alternative discourses and highlighting power relations through an analysis of hegemony and resistance.

In order to get a more systematic insight into the social practices of a collective actor (the MSTB), in our study of hegemony and resistance we will stick to Safier's (2002) multidimensional approach for the analysis of collective action. According to the author, actors perform within an "space of action" where they carry out initiatives oriented towards its exploration and consolidation.

This space of action can be understood as the degree of freedom or "room for manoeuvre" of a particular actor to encourage certain changes. It encompasses four dimensions: the

“technical/behavioural dimension”, related to the technical abilities and behaviour of both the individual and the group; “institutional/interorganisational dimension”, related to internal organisational methods and to the relationships with other actors; the “social mobilisation dimension”, related to mobilisation forms of individuals and groups; and the “strategic response dimension”, related to targets and strategic decision-making.

We will first discuss the big trends and processes of change which describe the broad discursive context where the new dominant discourse on the right to the city emerges. Secondly, we will deal with the processes and conditions of production, dissemination and use of key texts within the global (*World Charter for the Right to the City*, 2005), national (Brazil’s *City Statute*, 2001) and local spaces (*Salvador da Bahia Master Plan*, 2008). Subsequently, we will provide an analysis of the texts, its themes, approaches and relations.

Finally we study MSTB’s social struggle for the right to the city in Salvador da Bahia by providing an analysis of MSTB’s actions and their different representations within the four dimensions of its “room for manoeuvre”. We are dealing with a form of resistance against the dominant discourse where tensions and power relations become fundamental, as well as the possibilities and limitations for transformation.

3. The broad discursive context. Strategic shift of the social movements, urban crisis and new paradigms.

The right to the city emerged during the 60s within the heart of the social movements as a discourse with a highly politicised background and popularized in a situation of revolutionary nature, as May 1968 (Marcuse, 2009). It appears as a reaction to fordism and as part of mobilizations connected to the basic need of housing and the increasing feeling of inhospitality in the cities (Mayer, 2009).

Based in Lefebvre’s original conception, the right to the city “is an argument for profoundly reworking both the social relations of capitalism and the current structure of liberal-democratic citizenship” (Purcell, 2002). This formulation includes two main issues, namely, the right to appropriate the urban space (by emphasizing its “use-value” as opposed to its “exchange-value”) and the right to participate in the production of public space in a broad sense. It poses a challenge to capitalist order, “a call for a radical restructuring of social, political, and economic relations, both in the city and beyond” (Purcell, 2002). It emphasizes transformation processes of the city and of the citizens which appropriate it.

Since the 80s, the global change towards the neoliberal paradigm and its implied consequences have focused attention on “old” urban issues: unemployment, poverty, housing deficit, etc... Governments have discovered the enormous potential of social movements and community organizations to develop and legitimate their social agendas, especially within a context of significant tax restrictions. Within this framework, the relations between social movements and grass-roots organizations and the State acquire a new shape by shifting their strategies from protest to cooperation, especially by participating in social programmes as service suppliers. While these new relations institutionalize, most movements and organizations enter a professionalization and bureaucratizing process,

although some minority groups dissociate from these forms of cooperation and institutionalization (Mayer, 2009).

During the 90s, neoliberal hegemony continued, as well as the prioritization of the market mechanism in urban development. However, social, political and environmental criteria joined the efforts to promote development from the point of view of management, utilitarianism and economic rationality. New discourses emerged (Stevenson and Watt, 1999): “holistic” or “integral”, as well as “democratization”, “governance”, “decentralization”, or “community management”. These included some of the old demands of social movements and grass-roots organizations, which took part in the elaboration of policies. This dynamic implied abandoning protests and front opposition against policies. The strategy consists on institutionalizing demands and working together with the State as well as with actors of any other profile which share similar demands and proposals.

This trend continues during the beginning of the new century, when urbanization processes become more global than ever due to integrating financial markets (Harvey, 2008). This fact sharpens social divisions and triggers new protests against the shape, objectives and effects of development. However, protest are not led anymore by social movements, but mostly by big NGOs and international organizations, which also participate in development policies, programmes, projects and often collaborate with those institutions they criticise (such as the World Bank itself) (Mayer 2009).

The dominant discourse on the right to the city has emerged within this process, it has gained strength and presence but, at the same time, it has substantially changed its original contents, as we will discuss further on. According to Lopes de Souza (2010), “it does not seem that Lefebvre’s approach and radicality are always seriously taken into consideration and preserved”.

4. Process of production and dissemination of key texts.

We will now get an insight into the processes of production and dissemination of those key texts, which have been decisive in the production of discourses and the institutionalization of the dominant discourse of the right to the city in different spheres.

4.1 The “world charters” for the Right to the City

In 1995, the Brazilian *Fórum Nacional de Reforma Urbana* (FNRU, National Forum of Urban Reform) presents the “Charter of Human Rights in the City”, which became a major precursor of the City Statute and of the world charters. In 2001, within the framework of the first World Social Forum (WSF) and with the support of Habitat International Coalition (HIC), the process of elaboration of the *World Charter for the Right to the City* begins. The discussion of proposals is still an unfinished process and it takes place mainly within the frameworks of the WSF, different regional social forums and the World Urban Forum (HIC, 2010a).

Since the beginning, the process has been led by big international networks, especially HIC, whose members are community-based organizations, but mainly NGOs and academic or professional institutions. The debate is essentially guided by groups of technical experts, whereas the proposals “come from some NGO experts in a top-down manner” (Unger, 2009). NGOs, local authorities, international institutions and other public and private actors integrate progressively in an agglutinating process which reduces the influence of community-based organizations in the discussion.

The results of the debates on the elaboration of charters show “the institutionalized version of a top down agenda agreed on by some NGO networks” (Mayer, 2009). However, according to Unger (2009), within the debates of the WSF 2009, more radical discourses on the right to the city are still present in the discussion, even if they have become invisible due to the process of convergence towards a unique discourse.

The initiative slowly shifted its aim of creating a “political document” to intending “to build an instrument both universal and compact which may be adopted by the United Nations System, the regional human rights systems, and governments, as a legal instrument or at least basic reference” (Ortiz, 2006). A human rights instrument as understood within the United Nations system (Mayer, 2009).

4.2 Brazil City Statute

Before the transition to democracy in the 80s, “new community-based movements” appeared in Brazil. They were new self-organized social movements which proposed a “new sociability” and intended to “politicize spaces of the private sphere which used to be silenced” (Sader, 1998). They fought for their own interests but also for social and political issues that concerned society as a whole (Fernandes et al., 2002). They undertook actions of pressure, criticism and front opposition against the military regime and were devoted to maintaining their autonomy by remaining away from state institutions. Their internal organization was based on militant associationism and had a strong political-ideological character (Gohn, 2004).

The new political situation that arose after the transition in the 80s enabled the participation of these movements in the creation of a new institutionality considered capable of integrating their demands (Da Silva, 2003). Hence, the *Movimento Nacional pela Reforma Urbana* (MNRU, National Movement for Urban Reform) emerged as an agglutinating platform in order to influence the constituent process and brought together NGOs, academic and professional institutions, and technical advisors.

Within this process, the MNRU focused progressively its efforts on legal issues (excessively, according to Maricato, 2000). Subsequently, technical sector experts acquired more and more strength whereas the movement lost part of its grass-root and political pressure profile. In any case, the strategy achieved to introduce the 1988 Constitution, the people’s amendment which enabled the elaboration process of the City Statute.

The first bill for the Statute was proposed in 1990 and was well received by the FNRU (new denomination for the MNRU) because it encompassed their main proposals (Bassul, 2010). However, it was strongly rejected by the construction industry, which considered it a “socialist and confiscatory” proposal (TFP, 2004, p. 6) and blocked the process through different means.

The deadlock was only broken after long negotiations in a working group assembling the FRNU and the business sector. They presented in 1997 a new proposal which modified and limited the initial approach and which was accepted by the business sector: “the instruments might be profitable for urban estate activities, since they introduce innovations in the forms of collaboration between public authorities and private companies” (CD, s/d). Despite the rejection of certain bodies within the FRNU, the posture of approval prevailed as the agreement was considered “the best possible” solution (Da Silva, 2003). According to certain authors, the FNRU had to relinquish many of its proposals (Grazia, 2003).

After a small number of modifications, the project was acclaimed and approved unanimously by the Congress on the 20th of February 2001.

What at one point seemed to be regarded as a threat for the business sector, went on to be considered as an opportunity. They were aware of the fact that “the previous model had not succeeded” (Rolnik, 2003) and that the “deterioration of urban living conditions in Brazil posed an increasing risk for the market” (Bassul, 2010). The new model could enable the legitimization, invigoration and expansion of the market without exposing their interests to much risk. They were very aware of this fact, since “most of the instruments the Statute wanted to introduce were already being put into practice in the municipalities and they considered the results as favourable (Bassul, 2010).

4.3 Salvador da Bahia Master Plan

The City statute delegated the specification and realization of its essential issues to the local sphere through the drafting of the Master Plans. The new Plan in Salvador da Bahia was developed from the beginning of 2005 to the beginning of 2008.

The process was mainly directed by technical experts of the prefecture, which prepared the proposals and restricted participation to consultation and discussion in several public hearings. They characterized by the low public involvement (Pereira 2008). The participants were mainly civil servants, councillor advisers, university students, liberal professionals and, to a lower extent, environmental groups and NGOs, as well as the business sector (CMS, 200).

The process was severely criticized by part of the participants and the media because they had not received enough information or training for the participation, because of the technical language used, and because the proposals approved in previous hearings had not been incorporated, whereas the amendments done by the real estate, construction and hotel business sectors were indeed taken into account (Pereira 2008).

The participation of social movements was very low. The main social movements for the right to housing, black and women movements were virtually absent, and so was the MSTB. According to Pereira (2008), the absence of these organizations was “mainly due to the disbelief that Salvador’s public authorities were really interested in encouraging an open and clear debate”.

Despite social opposition and the loss of support of several parties in the local Chamber, the proposal was endorsed in February 2008, in a hall with a majority of members of the civil construction business and politicians (Correio da Bahia; 21/2/08). The construction sector evaluated the project as “a significant advance in relation to the Plan in force” (Pereira, 2008).

The following common features are to find in these related processes of discursive production: the commitment to institutionalization and the loss of radicality; the gradual loss of prominence of community-based movements and organizations; the silencing of proposals coming from more radical movements (due to the impossibility of including their demands or due to the lack of participation); the strong influence and support of historically prominent actors during in the production processes of the city.

5. Contents of discursive production: analysis of themes, approaches and linkages in key texts.

The present section presents the key themes offered by the referred texts, as well as certain cross issues which link them. Regarding the World Charter for the Right to the City, we will analyze the version discussed in the WSF in 2005.

5.1. Themes and linkages

We base our analysis¹ in three different texts which organize the discourse according to certain “directive principles” present throughout the texts but vaguely defined. Besides these principles, the “mechanisms” to put them into practice are explained to a greater or lesser extent. In both the World Charter for the Right to the City and the City Statute these mechanisms are imprecisely described. Although in the Master Plan they are more precisely described, they still remain unclear. The text focuses rather on proposals and wills than on punitive or control mechanisms to avoid the contravention of principles.

We can group these “principles” and “mechanisms” in three common and recurrent themes: the *social function of propriety*, *participation* and *recognition of diversity*

The social function of propriety

¹ In order to analyze the world charters for the Right to the City, we focus on the version presented in the WSF 2005, which is still discussed.

The social function of propriety is a central issue in all three documents. All of them provide explanations of the different situations in which the mentioned function is not being accomplished (“deserted”, “unused”, “underused”, “unoccupied propriety”). Although, propriety is considered as a commodity, an asset that must be redistributed and managed regarding social criteria.

On the other hand, the definition remains imprecise (if compared, for example, to what is said in Brazilian legislation about the social function of rural propriety). Furthermore, specific mechanisms of eviction or any other particular action of the State are not mentioned in case of failure infringement.

When referring to the “functions” of the city, beyond the social function of propriety, the city (or “the city and its surroundings”) is understood as a closed unit of analysis with well-defined characteristics and functions, where the “economic function” is very present, as well as the references to terms such as the necessary “competitiveness” of the city. The city is understood as both producer and provider of goods and services, and at the same time as a product which needs to be “competitive”. Among all these functions, “efficiency” appears as a recurrent idea.

The relation between “social function” and “economic function” is not explicitly outlined, however, it is implied that they are not incompatible but somehow complementary. The “competitiveness” of the cities is linked to the idea of their capacity of inclusion, precisely as a way of making them more attractive and competitive.

In a broader sense, the “social issue” is always considered an element “to be integrated” in “management”, as well as (and being this a confusing relation), an issue which needs to be properly “managed”.

Participation

In the texts, “participation” is linked to themes such as “consultation”, “public debate”, “control” of State’s action and the election of representatives. All these concepts are as well related to terms such as “efficiency”, “good management”, “transparency” or “decentralization”. At some points the texts refer to “political participation”, but the idea is not linked to terms we could connect to stronger conceptions of participation.

The participation of “civil society” is considered relevant, but the idea usually appears together with the assertion that the participation of other public and private actors is important.

The idea that urban developing programmes and projects should be managed by “community-based organizations” is also mentioned. This concept is approached from an instrumental point of view, and it identifies these organizations as potential managers of resources. However, the same is said regarding the State itself or private profit-making companies.

On the other hand, the relation between individual participation and collective participation is not outlined, or what kind of decisions are the responsibility of whom and how they relate among themselves and regarding a particular conception of civil society and its role.

“Participation” seems to be understood as a right (if not a “service”) contained in a series of rights within a defined model. It is seen as an “efficiency” guaranty in management and satisfaction of needs, but not implying a change of paradigm regarding the production of the city and appropriation of territory.

Recognition of diversity

Diversity is a recurrent issue in the works, it is linked to concepts such as “discrimination”, “inequitable distribution” of commodities, or “inequitable” access to city services and resources, in relation to “gender”, “age”, “class”, “disability” or other “vulnerable” social groups. There is a direct relationship between identity and injustice which does not deepen in other kind of ambitions related to the city. Recognizing diversity would consist on “managing” differences in order to avoid the inequity of “rights”.

The discourse on “special protection to the groups” appears in all three texts and it reflects the logics of social policies addressed to defined focus groups. On the other hand, these groups are considered having a fixed, static identity, somehow pre-determined by the institutionality itself. Still, certain groups (as “classes”) are very vaguely defined —or not defined at all— in all three texts (not even in Salvador’s Master Plan). However, to define low income groups (the “poor”) they employ the usual criteria of salary.

5.2. Approaches

Subsequently, we will briefly mention the common approaches shared by the key subjects in all three works:

Inclusion, understood as an approach which does not take into account the creation of alternative models, but of alternatives, “improvements”, “new forms” within an unquestionable model.

Managerialism, considering the problems of the city as technical ones, and understanding “good management” as a guaranty for the right to the city.

Commodification, by which the right to the city is understood as a series of rights which are to be provided in terms of services and goods. Hence, the city is understood as producer and supplier of services and goods, as well as considered a product itself.

Dichotomies as categories for analysis: global/local, public/private, inclusion/exclusion, rural/urban, etc...

The right to the city as an “accumulation of rights”. This combination of rights in a new right that includes them all (the “right to the city”), does not provide them with new meanings or implications.

6. MSTB’s struggle for the right to the city in Salvador da Bahia: action and the production of an alternative discourse.

We will now deal with MSTB’s social struggle for the right to the city in Salvador da Bahia. We will get an insight into the limitations and potentials of MSTB’s activities within the different dimensions of their room for manoeuvre against the dominant discourse and the new institutionality. Simultaneously, a new discourse and a new representation of those dimensions emerge within a context of tension and relations of power.

6.1. Salvador and the MSTB

Historically, occupation has been the only way to have access to housing for the lower classes of Salvador, what has strongly influenced the city’s urban development. Nowadays 2,9 million inhabitants live in its metropolitan area (one of the poorest and most inequitable regions in the country), where the housing deficit is estimated at 105.000 homes (PMHIS, 2008).

The MSTB “is a grass-roots organization that performs in the urban space and mobilizes homeless workers to fight for their right to housing. (...) With this aim, they pressure the government through mobilization and occupation of abandoned properties which have no social function (web MSTB, 2010). Under the motto “Organize, Occupy and Resist”, their principles are “Autonomy, Fighting Spirit, Horizontality and Solidarity”. The movement started in July 2003 and since then it has been growing intensively (Dos Santos, 2008).

MSTB’s spaces are grouped in 6 *núcleos*, (spaces of previous registration and organization of families that want to occupy), where 36.000 families are registered; 24 occupations (in unoccupied or unused properties) where 5.000 families live and communities (occupations where State intervention was achieved for the building of houses) (Zibechi, 2010).

6.2. The strategic response dimension.

In its discourse, MSTB’s strategy is inspired in a broader goal than achieving the end of evictions and guarantying the access to housing and services to all inhabitants in their occupations. Their aim is “creating a new sociability, new forms of relation, a collectivization process (...) which go beyond the market logics of the city in order to substitute them by the logics of people’s needs (...). Therefore, the struggle for the right to the city is above all a strategic project, a political horizon, a particular conception of society” (MSTB, 2008). Ultimately, it goes beyond inclusion to achieve transformation: “we do not want to be included in their city, but to create our own” (interview with MSTB’s coordinator, 2010)².

² Future references to interviews with MSTB coordinators will be quoted as follows: (MSTB, year)

This conception of the city contained in MSTB's discourse is not shared by the State, which "proposes reforms and a model of city tied to speculation and to the logic of the city as a good (...) State intervention is carried out according to financial needs and without real participation; needs, demands and rights are only understood in terms of individuality" (MSTB, 2010).

Social movements must preserve their autonomy, which is understood as the need to have a strategy of their own —regardless the State, or against the State— establishing tactical alliances with the State only when necessary. In order to build these strategies and transparent political-ideological alignments, besides permanent discussion and situational analysis, the MSTB celebrates its Congress every three years.

This strategy, together with their disbelief regarding State activities, have prevented the movement from participating in policy making processes (such as the Master Plan) or in other kind of forums (national or global). However, as a tactic, it does participate occasionally in certain spaces which appeared as a result of the Statute, such as the *Conselho das Cidades* (Council of the Cities) in Bahia, or the Negotiating Commission formed by the *Secretaria de Desenvolvimento Urbano da Bahia* (SEDUR, Urban Development Department of Bahia) and the MSTB.

Given all this, the influence scope of the MSTB in all these spaces has been very reduced, but the movement understands this as necessary to avoid co-option and the legitimization of processes they do not support or believe in.

This strategy places the MSTB at disadvantage against other community-based movements and organizations that support collaborative strategies with the State, both in terms of scope of influence and regarding the access to resources by means of projects and subsidies. Nevertheless, this posture brings the MSTB closer to other movements with similar political and ideological conceptions.

6.3. The social mobilization dimension.

Mobilization and social organization are at the core of MSTB's actions. The movement has gone through a process of expansion which is understood as a political fact, a continuous process of appropriation, control and re-creation of the territory. That territory is "a political space of dispute, in which market logics are gradually being substituted by the logics of people's needs" (MSTB, 2010).

The goal of the organization (by means of the work done in assemblies, meetings, daily struggle, popular education processes...) is to raise awareness in a broad sense, beyond satisfying immediate needs: "considering housing as something more than a shelter (...) People must rise awareness, become active individuals" (MSTB, 2010).

Self-managed initiatives (community centres, schools, kitchens, nurseries, school-support centres, productive undertakings, etc...) are not considered as alternative forms of service

supplies or income production but as “spaces for the arising of a new sociability and also as part of the collectivization process” (MSTB, 2010).

Within the discourse, identity plays a central role in this process, not only as “recognition” and “attention” to diversity but as a transformative process: “the processes of participation aim to generate and transform group identities (blacks, women, young, workers, hip hoppers) while building at the same time common identities” (MSTB, 2010).

The transformation of the city is carried out by starting from the identity itself: “we must assure public health, security, education, real autonomy, employment... But what kind of employment? What kind of public health? What kind of security? All these issues must be approached from the identity: another kind of public health, of employment... they must be considered in relation to gender, class...” (MSTB, 2010).

The institutionalization of the right to the city in Salvador has created new opportunities for mobilization, as well as risks. It has helped to stop several evictions and -in a lesser extent- has provided more funds for housing projects in MSTB occupations. The situation has generated expectations that have enabled mobilizations, but at the same time it has increased the risk of self-interested participation and quick demobilization.

In order to avoid evictions, the State has demanded the MSTB not to start any building processes with durable materials within the occupied areas, and to wait for public intervention. Nevertheless, the number of housing projects has not increased significantly and bureaucracy has not been reduced. This has generated long waits, frustrations and a negative effect on the processes of mobilization.

Housing projects have included public spaces and equipments, what has created access to further services beyond housing. However, in certain cases they have weakened already existing self-managed occupation initiatives. On the other hand, the projects are conceived according to the “ideology of the own house” (Fiori y Fix, 2008), as is to see in the spatial configuration of public and private spaces and in the individual house securitization. Again, it leads to individual and self-interested attitudes, as well as to speculative processes of informal buying and selling.

For the planning and management of these housing projects, carried out by private companies, very few spaces of participation have been offered. They might have triggered interesting discussions, but they have also created expectations which have not been fulfilled due to the infringement of agreements. In the end, building companies end up making the proposal for the final design, which is usually bound to criteria of minimization of costs. On the other hand, building companies have been often accused of obtaining enormous benefits (further beyond the limits established in the programmes) and of not satisfying building quality criteria, as established in regulations and contracts —which in itself are already of a

minimum profile³. In addition, it seems that the legal owners of the occupied land (individuals or enterprises) could be speculating and pressing the State in order to obtain higher prizes, knowing that the State wants the land to build housing projects for the people settled in it (Karruna, 2009).

In any case, the State tempo, subject to different pressures, bureaucracy and to the availability of resources, is very different to the one of social mobilization, what creates distortion. The long waits have been followed by short design and building tempos, where there was no time for the generation of spaces for debate or for pressure to include community demands.

6.4 The technical/behavioural dimension.

In MSTB's discourse, the "qualification" of its militants does not have to do with technical training but with political training and education. It is considered as a long and spontaneous process arising through participation and commitment with the daily struggles of the occupations: "Vocal leaders emerge spontaneously and gradually learn and qualify for different forms of community based organization" (MSTB, 2010). It is a process by means of which "individuals also obtain legitimacy in the community" (MSTB, 2010). In addition, leaders receive methodological and political-ideological instruction of a more theoretical nature in the "political training courses", supported by advisory organizations.

However, the State expects specific qualification, technical knowledge and project management capacity from the social movements. The spaces for discussion and consultation we mentioned before are represented as spaces of technical discussion and consultation to satisfy and sort our demands. On the contrary, the MSTB considers them as negotiating spaces of strictly political nature. It participates just in order to maintain legitimacy, to obtain information and, eventually, "as a way to achieve specific commitments and denouncing abuses in case they are perpetrated... what certainly is to occur" (MSTB, 2010).

This situation poses significant restrictions for MSTB's actions. They do not give priority to technical matters, and they politicize debates which are considered technical by civil servants. Hence, the State takes this fact as an argument to justify their disregard to MSTB's demands and to give priority to the demands of other social movements and NGOs, which have "a broader technical capacity" and a less belligerent attitude:

"MSTB is not concerned with technical matters. They should put forward things like that [talking about a housing project of 54 "sustainable houses" for small farmers in a rural area, managed by a NGO]. Costs are very low and quality is optimal!. But MSTB is not interested in things like this. We support them, but they continue with confrontation... They must

³ Among the people interviewed for this work, several civil servants and professionals which had worked together with private companies, as well as the members of the MSTB, expressed such accusations in very similar terms.

understand that we are on their side, but they need to do proposals” (interview with a civil servant of SEDUR, 2010).

6.4 The institutional/interorganisational dimension

MSTB’s internal structure is not oriented towards efficiency in terms of management capacity, but towards the pledge to organization and consensus. It is divided in several coordination spaces (which members are elected by consensus), assemblies and working groups at different scales (state, city, settlement, group of families). These spaces are autonomous in decision-making, however they follow basic strategic guidelines and specific political-ideological approaches which are defined in the Congress.

All this seems to affect positively on the movement’s representativeness, democracy and horizontality. However, the slow tempo of the processes to create leaders, together with the rapid expansion of the movement, has aroused the problem of not having enough leaders, who are obliged to hold that position repeatedly. On the other hand, this assembly structure, at times extends decision-making processes. This fact can arise problems regarding State and private companies tempos, as well as a “disadvantage” in relation to other social organizations which have more hierarchical and agile decision-making structures.

The movement’s relationships with other social movements rely on common political-ideological positions, especially regards their conception of autonomy and horizontality. The *Frente Nacional de Movimientos de Resistencia Urbana* (National Front of Urban Resistance Movements), created in 2006, embodies the main space for collaboration with other social movements: “the movements working together in the Front share a long tradition of autonomy and horizontality” (MSTB, 2010). Within these space and according to the broad conception of struggling for the right to the city and with the central aim of creating common identities, urban roofless movements work together with black or hip-hop movements: “it is a natural alliance, since all of them live in favelas, suffer police abuse and share rebellion against poverty and the system that marginalizes them” (MSTB, 2010).

NGOs or any other kind of non community-based organizations, do not participate in the Front, neither other big urban Brazilian movements that maintain a more collaborative attitude towards the State.

The MSTB collaborates also with other entities with common political-ideological convictions, such as NGOs with a militant profile (namely, CJP and CEAS), particular university collectives (such as CAJUP and SAJU) and also individuals, usually experts that individually support the movement.

These positions have strictly limited the number of allies, and have at times brought the MSTB to a situation of isolation, especially after directly confronting the State. Nevertheless, these are not instrumental alliances, but strategic, and they have been tight and unproblematic due to the fact that they share a common ideological-political base. Not only eventual support to actions, but also political support and common discourses and strategies have emerged, particularly within the core of the Front.

7. Conclusions

Relying on Fairclough's textually oriented discourse analysis (1992), we have intended to explain the broad dissemination and institutionalization of the currently dominant discourse on the right to the city, with regard to the related process of progressive loss of radicality.

We showed how new actors acquired more relevance within an "agglutinating" progression that creates a broad "consensus" around the emerging dominant discourse. At the same time, community-based organizations and movements—which have become more and more bureaucratized and have moved away from radical demands—have lost influence.

Throughout the process, the conflicts among different conceptions have been present anyway. The demands of particular social movements whose conceptions were close to the lefebvrian ones were silenced in favour of those actors with less radical perspectives. On the other hand, the institutionalization started to be accepted by historically dominant actors, especially the real estate and construction sectors. In the end, a reformist, managerial, and commoditized perspective of the right to the city prevailed.

The present analysis allows us to bring into question the capacity of the new institutionalized discourse to encourage substantial changes within power relations, as well as to refute the hegemony of particular actors in the processes of production of the city. In addition, it is worth reflecting on the possibilities to continue creating an alternative and more transformative discourse. We have intended to approach these issues by studying—from Safier's framework—the case of the MSTB's social struggle in Salvador da Bahia.

The MSTB, through practices of resistance, represented an alternative discourse: on the first place, the organic performance of the movement and political training of its members were central issues, and not technical knowledge or efficiency in management. The mobilization of the social basis was represented as a process of transforming individual and collective identities, of generating political awareness and as a way of producing a new sociability in a new city. The creation of wide networks in collaboration with other movements had also a political meaning, as well as confrontation with the State. MSTB's discourse of the right to the city was a politicized and a transformative one which aimed at substantial changes in social, cultural and economic relations in the city and beyond.

The institutionalization of the dominant discourse in Salvador seemed to have created some new opportunities for MSTB actions: some spaces for negotiation, more access to information, a decrease in the number of evictions and a slight increase in the access to housing projects. Nevertheless, State's practices were led by technical discussion and by the search for "efficiency", promoting the depolitization and the bureaucratization of movements. All this has caused strong limitations, isolation and a certain "disadvantage" in the struggle of a movement led by strong political-ideological convictions, a solid conception of autonomy and the prioritization of politicized social action.

On the other hand, it seems that the institutionalization of the right to the city discourse is not promoting significant changes in power relations in Salvador: the strict bureaucratic control of

processes continues, but also the strong influence (or even control) of the construction industry. This influence of the private sector might be due to the persuasion of experts and political authorities, or due to the ambiguity and limitations of laws and regulations or because of their infringements remain unpunished.

Much has been said about the question whether the institutionalization of “the right to the city” all round the world has meant an “advance”. Throughout this paper we have also intended to clarify what “advance” may mean for the dominant discourse: we showed that it has little to do with profound transformations. In the particular case of the Brazilian context, where these “advances” have been particularly acclaimed, we have witnessed that they did not seem to have encouraged substantial changes or the subversion of power relations. Furthermore, they might be generating more limitations (though some opportunities as well) to an alternative and more transformative discourse. Nevertheless, there is always an existing space —as MSTB’s action shows us— for the representation and production of a city still inspired in the utopia.

References

Bassul, J.R., (2010) “El Estatuto de la Ciudad: la construcción de una ley” in Santos Carvalho C. y A. Rossbach (org.), *El Estatuto de la Ciudad de Brasil: un comentario*. São Paulo, Cities Alliance y Ministério das Cidades.

Bochicchio, S., (2008) *Movimento dos Sem Teto de Salvador: Estratégias de Apropriação dos Espaços e Territorialização*. Dissertation of Master’s Program in Geography. Universidade Federal da Bahia.

Castells, M., (1983) *The city and the grassroots*. Los Angeles, University of California Press.

CD (Câmara dos Deputados). Projeto de ley n.º 5.788-D, 1990, s/d.

Cloux, R. F., (2008) *Uma história urbana do presente: o Movimento dos Sem Teto de Salvador (2003-2007)*. Dissertation of Master’s Program in Urban and Regional Development. Universidade Salvador – UNIFACS

Da Silva, E. R., (2003) *O Movimento Nacional pela Reforma Urbana e o Processo de Democratização do Planejamento Urbano no Brasil*. Dissertation of Master’s Program in Urban Engineering. Universidade Federal de São Carlos.

Darcy, M., (1999) “The discourse of ‘Community’ and the Reinvention of Social Housing Policy in Australia” in *Urban Studies*. Vol. 36, No. 1, pp. 13-25.

Dos Santos Miranda, L.C., (2008). *Vizinhos do (in)conformismo: O Movimento dos Sem Teto da Bahia entre a hegemonia e a contra-hegemonia*. Dissertation of Master’s Program in Social Sciences. Universidade Federal da Bahia.

Fairclough, N., (1992) *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge, Polity Pres.

Fairclough, N., (2001) "The Dialectics of Discourse" in *Textus*. Vol. 14, No. 2, pp. 3-10.

Fernandes, A.L.; Quintanilla, A; Isasa de Melo, M.G. and R.M. Pozzobon, (2002). "Consideraciones sobre los movimientos sociales y la participación popular en Brasil" in *Nueva Sociedad*. No. 182. November-December 2002, pp. 139-154.

Fernandes, E., (2007) "Constructing the 'Right to the City' in Brazil" in *Social and Legal Studies*. Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 201-219.

Gohn, M.G., (2004) "Sociedade civil no Brasil: movimentos sociais e ONGs" in *Nômadias*. No. 20. April 2004, pp. 140-150.

Grazia, G., (2003) "Reforma urbana e Estatuto da Cidade" in Ribeiro, L.C and A.L. Cardoso (orgs.). *Reforma urbana e gestão democrática: promessas e desafios do Estatuto da Cidade*. Rio de Janeiro, Revan.

Habitat International Coalition (2010a) "El Derecho a la Ciudad y la Carta Global por el Derecho a la Ciudad. ¿Por qué una Carta Mundial por el Derecho a la Ciudad?". <http://www.hic-al.org/derecho.cfm?base=2&pag=derechociudad2> [accessed September 2010].

Habitat International Coalition (2010b) World Charter for the Right to the city (2005).. <http://www.urbanreinventors.net/3/wsf.pdf> [accessed Mai 2010]

Harvey, D., (2003) *Espacios de esperanza*. Barcelona, Akal.

Harvey, D., (2008) "The Right to the City" in *New Left Review*. Vol. 53, No. 23. September-October 2008, pp. 23-40.

Hastings, A., (1999) "Analysing Power Relations in Partnerships: Is There a Role for Discourse Analysis" in *Urban Studies*. Vol. 36, No. 1, pp. 91-106.

Jacobs, K., (2006) Discourse Analysis and its Utility for Urban Policy Research in *Urban Policy and Research*. Vol. 24, No. 1. March 2006, pp. 39-52.

Karruna, R. (2009) *Institutional Ignorance in an Urbanizing World: Can the New Institutional Economics approach to the operation of markets provide a useful tool for analysing the poor's access to land and housing in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil?*. Dissertation of Master's Program in Urban Economic Development. Development Planning Unit, University College London.

Lees, L.. (2004) "Urban geography: discourse analysis and urban research" in *Progress in Human Geography*. Vol. 28, No. 1, pp. 101-107.

Lefebvre, H., (1969) *El derecho a la ciudad*. Barcelona, Península.

Lefebvre, H., (1976) *Espacio y política: el derecho a la ciudad II*. Barcelona, Península.

Lefebvre, H., (1991a) *The production of space*. Oxford, Blackwell.

Lefebvre, H., (1991b) *Writings on cities*. Cambridge, Blackwell.

Levy, K., (1996) *The Process of institutionalizing gender in policy and planning: the 'web' of institutionalization*. Working Paper 74, Development Planning Unit, University College London.

Lopes de Souza, M., (2010) "Which right to which city?. In defence of political-strategic clarity" in *Interface*. Vol. 2, No. 1. Mai 2010, pp. 315-333

Marcuse, P., (2009) "From critical urban theory to the right to the city" in *City*. Vol. 13, No. 2-3. June-September 2009, pp. 185-197.

Maricato, E., (2000) "As ideias fora do lugar e o lugar fora das ideias: planejamento urbano no Brasil" in Arantes, O.; Vainer, C. and E. Maricato (eds.). *A cidade do pensamento único: desmanchando consensus*. Petrópolis, Vozes.

Marston, G., (2004) "Managerialism and Public Housing Reform" in *Housing Studies*. Vol. 19, No. 1. January 2004, pp. 5-20.

Mayer, M., (2009) "The 'Right to the City' in the context of shifting mottos of urban social movements" in *City*. Vol. 13, No. 2-3. June-September 2009, pp. 362-374.

McCann, J., (2002) "Space, citizenship and the right to the city: a brief overview" in *GeoJournal*. Vol. 58, No. 2, pp. 77-79.

Ministério das Cidades (2010) Lei n.º 10.257, 10th July 2001 (Estatuto da Cidade). <http://www.cidades.gov.br/secretarias-nacionais/programas-urbanos/legislacao/Lei10.257-01.pdf> [accessed April 2010]

Montoya, J.W., (2006) *Cambio urbano y evolución discursiva en el análisis de la ciudad latinoamericana: de la dependencia a la globalización*. Bogotá, Universidad Nacional de Colombia.

Moysés Rodríguez, A., (2006) "Las luchas por el derecho a la ciudad" in *Scripta Nova* (online journal). Vol. 10, No. 218. August 2006.

Ortiz, E. (2006) "Towards a World Charter for the Right to the City". <http://www.hic-net.org/articles.php?pid=2296> [accessed June 2010]

Pereira do Nascimento, M.F., (2008) *A participação cidadão no Plano Diretor de Desenvolvimento Urbano de Salvador*. Dissertation of Master's Program in Social Politics and Citizenship. Universidade Católica de Salvador.

Purcell, M., (2002) "Excavating Lefebvre: The right to the city and its urban politics of the inhabitant" in *GeoJournal*. Vol. 58, No. 2, pp. 99-108.

Purcell, M. (2003) "Citizenship and the right to the global city: reimagining the capitalist world order" in *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. Vol. 25, No. 3, pp. 564-590.

Prefeitura Municipal de Salvador (2010a). Plano Diretor de Desenvolvimento Urbano de Salvador (2008) http://www.sedham.salvador.ba.gov.br/lei7400_pddu [accessed Mai 2010]

Prefeitura Municipal de Salvador (2010b). Plano Municipal de Habitação de Interesse Social (2008). <http://www.cidades.gov.br/secretarias-nacionais/secretaria-de-habitacao/biblioteca/> [accessed June 2010]

Presidência da República, Casa Civil (2010). Constituição da República Federativa do Brasil (1988). http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/constituicao/ [accessed April 2010]

Rodrigues, E. and B.R. Barbosa, (2010). "Los movimientos populares y el Estatuto de la Ciudad" in Santos Carvalho C. y A. Rossbach (org.), *El Estatuto de la Ciudad de Brasil: un comentario*. São Paulo, Cities Alliance and Ministério das Cidades.

Safier, M., (2002) "On estimating 'room for manoeuver'" in *City*. Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 117-132.

Secretaria Estadual de Desenvolvimento Urbano, Estado da Bahia (2010). Política Estadual de Habitação de Interesse Social (2006). <http://www.sedur.ba.gov.br/pdf/doc.sintese.pehis.02.pdf> [accessed June 2010]

Stenson, K. y P. Watt, (1999) "Governmentality and 'the Death of the Social'? A Discourse Analysis of Local Government Texts in South-east England" in *Urban Studies*. Vol. 36, No. 1, pp. 189-201.

Unger, K., (2009) "'Right to the City' as a response to the crisis: 'convergence' or divergence of urban social movements?". <http://reclaiming-spaces.org/crisis/archives/266> [accessed September 2010]

Velloso Buonfiglio, L., (2007) "O 'direito a à cidade' apropriado: da utopia dos sem teto ao modelo de gestão do Estado", conference *II Seminario Nacional de Movimientos Sociales, Participación y Democracia*, Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Florianópolis, 25th-27th April 2007.

Zibechi, R., (2010) "Los Sin Techo de Bahia: La utopia del Buen Vivir" in *América Latina en Movimiento* [on-line journal]. <http://alainet.org/active/37113&lang=es> [accessed June 2010].