

Participation between consensus and contestation governmentalized practices of planning in Global South and Global North

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This paper argues that planning is a technology of power aimed at 'governing' urban populations. To discuss this statement the study takes as a reference point the post-structuralist discussion on power, the state and government in contemporary societies. According to Post-structuralists, power is not something concrete or objectified from which one can take possession or keep ownership. Instead, it is a social relation between individuals that spreads over the social environment in the form of webs or networks (Foucault, 2008, Laclau and Mouffe 1985, Lemke 2007, Veiga-Neto 2005, Rose 1992).

These networks of relationships involve multiple connections between the agents targeting the governance of people's consciousness and conduct. Within the network, the individual is both the target and the source of power relations. In democratic settings, individual autonomy is not opposed to political power, but rather, the foundation for its exercise, to the extent that individuals are not only objects of power, but they also constitute themselves as subjects of power relations.

This paper directs attention to political power, that kind of power that Foucault defines as a system of forces which is concentrated and monopolized by the state and whose function is to exercise power and influence on other spheres of society. The paper explores the concept of power by focusing on both, the micro and macro relations of power in society, and seeks to explain how they are condensed on the State in the form of government. This is undertaken by evaluating those tactics and strategies of government designed to regulate social conduct that are carried out

through the various institutions that make up the sphere of governance (public and private).

This investigation focuses on those strategies of government that are carried out through the practices of planning and urban management. Attention is given to how planning work to control and regulate human actions within cities. It discusses the mechanisms that make urban planning a technology of power, while examining how planning could become a strategy of resistance and social emancipation.

The discussion on the various forms of power attached to government is developed through the concept of *governmentality*. Governmentality expresses the government ways of thinking and acting in order to know and control individual's everyday life. The concept of governmentality intends to capture a form of power that becomes predominant in the modern world – called political power – that emerges from the historical process of institutionalization of power and its concentration in the state. Power in this formulation is first, the proliferation of government devices, and second, the consolidation of a system of *knowledge* about who, when and how to govern. This knowledge provides, on the one hand, the expertise for defining the means for the exercise of *the art of governing* and, on the other, the appropriate techniques for revealing the nature and habits of those upon whom government will be exercised.

The study covers the strategies of urban government by building on the concept of governmentality, and investigates the power relations that are established between the agents within the microcosm of urban planning policies. The concept of governmentality draws attention to the kind of rationality embedded in the actions aimed at understanding and controlling the various aspects of people's lives. This rationality involves manipulating critical aspects of people's existence and they include issues such as health, housing, work, leisure, happiness and wealth.

The above background underpins the inquiry of this paper. It assumes that planning is a strategy of government and a constitutive element of power relations in society. The study *pays* special attention to how tactics, strategies and maneuvers of governance are articulated within government in order to manipulate the beliefs and behaviors of people and drive them to certain directions. These maneuvers seek to intercept the interests and understandings that people develop regarding the world

they live in and that affect their behavior and their ways of organizing the physical space. The empirical research focuses on several experiences with participatory planning in Global South and Global North and shows how planning as a practice of urban regulation has become a legitimation strategy of government.

This text is organized into two sections. The first discusses the concepts of power, government and state, and assesses the changes in the logic of government that led to the governmentalization of the modern state. In the second section, planning is considered as an instrument of the process of governmentalization. It discusses three cases of planning as a practice of government by focusing on experiences with participatory in planning in USA, Brazil and Poland. It intends to explore the *governmentalization* of participatory practices and how they become technologies directed to manipulate the views and conduct of people and legitimate government policies.