Nature in the City: A critical approach to the environmental perspective in the planning of urban green areas system

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The object of the current thesis is the process of implantation of natural elements in the urban public space. It was identified that this process occurred differently in “historic typologies” of public spaces that constitute the Green Areas System of the contemporary city: 1) the squares, which are spaces recognized by the collective appropriation, whose emergence is inherent to the urban place, and which, form the 18th century onwards, have vegetation in their composition. 2) the public parks, which after successive adaptions of rural gardens, enter in urban place and became one of the central issue of urban planning of the modern industrial city. 3) the protected areas, which are large natural masses defended by the conservationism and preservationism movements started in the 19th century and, today, integrate a global agenda to safeguard rural and urban territories. The hypothesis of this research is that, despite the perspectives defended by contemporary environmental movement about the role of nature elements in the urban public space, the criteria that guided de decision to create the “historic typologies” of the Green Areas System are predominantly for its usefulness and financial value. Even with the growth of the concepts of “development” and “sustainability” in the political agreements of western nations since the 1960s, which resulted in the proliferations of terms, such as “urban ecosystem”, “environmental planning”, “green infrastructure” or “sustainable cities” in the discourse of urban planning, we realize the population of Latin-American cities, especially the most vulnerable, continue to suffer from environmental imbalance. This work aims to clarify the discrepancies between the discourse and the practice that steal guide the real creation of the Green Areas System from an economic and anthropocentric perspective. The main objective of the research is to identify and characterize the object of the thesis, debating the adoption of environmental discourse in all stages of planning of the Green Areas System policy in the city of São Paulo, from three mismatches: 1) dissonance between the concept of “system” and its instruments, the typologies; 2) dissonance between the criteria for choosing the sites in the discourse and the land purchase process; 3) dissonance between the adherence to the holist perspective in the theory while remaining with the anthropocentric perspectives in the practice. This investigation considers two historic periods in the city of São Paulo, in which we have, at the same time, a masterplan for the whole city, a specific public policy by the public agency, and a public act of increasing the number of green areas in the city: 1971 to 2001 and 2002 to 2016. This research has, at least, three justifications. First, although it is argued the sustainability policies should be prioritized, especially after COVID-19, we see an increasing disregard for public environmental policies in Brazil. Second, there is rase of creation green areas with the environmental defense arguments, that refer to laws that consider,

mistakenly, that the real preservation occurs with the removal of the human presence from its habitat. Third, even though constantly mentioned in the laws, there is still a diffuse recognition of the environmental value in urban policy, perpetuating the model or urbanization based on degradations and inequality. The methodological procedures are separated into two stages, following the organizational structure of this thesis itself. For the first part, with tree chapters that aim to characterize the object of the research, it is being applied three procedures: restrict de object of the thesis in typologies, following the concepts of Waisman (2013) and Rossi (2201); organize the texts about urban planning in analytical categories, as predicted by Choay (1980) and Villaça (1999); systematize the interpretation of historical texts based on the principles of periodization, continuity/discontinuity and historical durations by Waisman (2013). For the second part, which have other tree chapter for the verifications of the hypothesis, area being used two other procedures: for the analysis of the text, the reference is the four requirements of the discourse analysis method, explained by Foucault (2013); to design analysis, the reference is the four criteria for practice bases research, by Büchler and Biggs (2010).

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