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participação ou autonomia?  
produção do espaço  
para emancipação política  
participation or autonomy?  
production of space for  
political emancipation

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### Abstract:

This article contributes to the discussion proposed by V!RUS on the theme "to participate and to collaborate", in the context of the reflection on the theoretical-critical foundations of the concept of participation in the production of space, and proposes the term "autonomy", instead of participation. The text seeks to identify the conceptual bases of the production of space that can enhance the political emancipation of social groups excluded from the right to the city. The processes of this production of the space, so called participatory, are reformists, as they employ the same capitalist apparatus under the politically correct discourse of citizen participation. In order to overcome the conservatism of participation, the traces of autonomy in the daily production of space must be recognized and valued. Finally, restoring control over the processes of production of space to society presupposes a transformation in the structure of knowledge production itself, that is, in the conventional way that architects and urbanists work.

**Keywords:** Production of space, Autonomy, Participation

## 1 Introduction

The purpose of this article<sup>1</sup> is to guide the discussion about the idea of participation - its meaning, scope and limits - within the process of production of space, the latter understood under the "political theory of space" by the French philosopher Henri Lefebvre. The author assumes that the phenomenon of the production of space presents opposing and inseparable qualities: dissolution of social relations of production and the birth of new relations (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]). Such dialectic outlines a horizon of effective participation of the inhabitants in the production of the cities' space. We will see the reasons why it is preferred to qualify this process as autonomous, to the detriment of participatory.

Lefebvre foresaw the homogeneous and at the same time fragmented space of contemporary cities, stating that capitalism and neo-capitalism produced abstract space in reference to their property of absorbing use-

value as a medium of exchange. Abstract space, that is, the space of power manipulated by all kinds of authority, reduces differences and, at the same time, fragments the space to control and negotiate it. "For paradoxically (yet) this homogeneous space is fragmented: lots, parcels. In pieces!" (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974], p.7). However, by tending toward homogeneity, reducing differences, abstract space accentuates them dialectically, producing new social relations, engendering a new space, one that Lefebvre (1991 [1974]) calls differential space. "It will bring together what abstract space separates: the functions, elements, and moments of social practice" (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974], p.50).

In the second case, Lefebvre asserts that only class struggle can produce differences, preventing abstract space from spreading across the entire planet (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]). The differential space contains "potential for social change, the struggle that seeks to maintain or recover the use-value of the space from the tendency in transforming this space solely into exchange value" (Costa, 2003, p.6, our translation). In other words, new social relations demand a new space.

That said, it is necessary to overcome "the misery of the *habitat*, the misery of the inhabitant subjected to an organized daily life (in and by the bureaucratic society of directed consumption)" (Lefebvre, 2001 [1968], p.138, our translation). As a good Marxist, the author believes in the possibility of the working class in profoundly modifying social life. It is up to the workers' class to combine, in their daily lives, what capitalist society has divided:

[...] the working class presents the totality, the fullness of human dimensions. They become the bearer of a total claim, which encompasses and even brings forward labor related issues : wages and retribution, organization and work protection. However, it goes beyond the economic realm itself; it covers the organization of all daily life, family life, housing, habitat, city life and society, education, culture and moral life, leisure, etc. [...] (Lefebvre, 1963 cited in Ajzenberg, 2005, p.12, our translation).

Although Lefebvre refers to the working class in the European sociopolitical context of the 1960s, his discussion is still relevant nowadays. In the 1980s, the reorganization of the Fordist production model to the Toyota Production System implied in the development of the post-Fordist city. Such restructuring re-qualified urban struggles so that in a fragile city under the aegis of globalization, they became eclectic, not specific to the wage labor movement. In particular, in Brazil and in Latin America, new forms of struggle resurface, such as ethnic or indigenous movements, feminist and racial movements, struggles for housing and others.

What are the cornerstones of this urban revolution? Economic, political and cultural revolution: "It demands, alongside the economic revolution (socially oriented planning) and the political revolution (democratic control of the state apparatus, decentralized self-management), a permanent cultural revolution" (Lefebvre 2001 [1968], p.140, our translation). In Lefebvre's view, the political strategy of urban self-management promotes the right to the city: "The right to the city is manifested as a superior form of rights: the right to freedom, to individualization in socialization, *habitat* and dwelling. The right to the work (to the participant activity) and the right to the appropriation (quite distinct from the right to property) are implied in the right to the city" (Lefebvre 2001 [1968], p.135, our translation). That is, the right to the work requires the autonomy of workers in the production of the space of the cities and the right to the appropriation requires the ownership of the space by the users to the detriment of the notion of ownership of the space, in legal terms: "This right [is] different in its content from the property right which is valid in its logical and juridical form, the principle of the code of normal relations in the capitalist mode of production" (Lefebvre, 2001 [1968], p.28, our translation).

As a result of experiences of social mobilization organized by the Brazilian population, in face of the Neoliberal State, in its daily life for the production of space, and also from the simple observation of the intensification of social inequalities, a theme of studies and actions is the search for other conceptual bases for the development of new practices of production of space, not committed to the increased accumulation of capital.

The formulations of alternatives to the urban issue by the theoreticians and practitioners are articulated in two strands, discordant between themselves in the foundation of the organized social groups' proposals of political emancipation. The controversy set forth concerns the conceptual limits of the so-called participatory processes, typical of the first strand, in which the heteronomous production of space prevails, despite the democratic discourse. The second strand is based on the concept of autonomy and, of course, commits itself to elaborate processes of production of space that promote human emancipation.

The debate that arises in the field of architecture and urban planning is: what is the essential category behind the alternatives of space production that can promote social and political emancipation: participation or autonomy? How to identify the thin line that divides processes equally based on the subject as producer of

the space, but that in the first case maintains and justifies the relegation of the cost of reproduction of the work force and, in the second case, emancipates the subject of its oppressive social relations? The fundamental debate between the two paradigms concerns the overcoming of alienation within the scope of processes of production of space. The following text analyzes the conceptual proposals around the theme, based on the paradigms of participation and autonomy, respectively.

## 2 Proposals based on participation

The strand of participation began in the 60's, in a context of strong questioning of the Modern Movement and the *International Style's* rationalist and universalizing ideals. The critique of this strand of thought lay in urban issues stemming from the principles of the modernist project: "The embryo of this idea is already in the critiques of mass production (which challenges huge housing complexes), traditional design process (which reproduces the separation between project, construction and use) and constructive procedures (which reinforce social and hierarchical division of labor) at least from the 1960s onwards" (Lopes, Kapp, Baltazar, 2010, n.p., our translation). The central perspective is based on the approximation between the architect and the user of the built space. Many architects developed different approaches to user involvement in the process of production of space, which included workshops, counselling, neighborhood offices, self-construction, flexible layouts to adapt the space to the needs of users, and so on. The pioneers of participation<sup>2</sup> were architects Lucien Kroll, Ralph Erskine, Christopher Alexander, Walter Segal, Nicolas John Habraken, Yona Friedman, Eilfried Huth, Archigram, Cedric Price, Rodolfo Livingston, and others.

Participation experiences included openings both in the design process and in other stages of the process of production of space. Six groups of architects were identified, acting independently of each other and whose work is grouped according to the concepts underlying the idea of participation. The first group of architects conceives the user's participation in production of space through combinatorial possibility of different constructive elements (Alexander, 1969, 1977; Habracken, 1979; Kroll, 1987). The second group explores user participation as they use space (Friedman, 1987; Peer Cook, David Greene and Webb: Archigram magazine 1 cited in Sadler, 2005). The third group considers participation through self-construction (Segal cited in Spatial Agency, 2012). The fourth group is dedicated to developing project methodologies for community participation (Erskine cited in Spatial Agency, 2012; Davidoff, 1965; Livingston, 1990, 2006). The fifth group proposes community participation in situations of scarcity and as a form of space management (Hambi, 1991; Till and Schneider, 2007, 2009; Frediani, French and Ferrara, 2011; Till, Awan and Schneider, 2011). The sixth group of architects work on the issue of participation in the production of workspaces (Sanoff, 2006).

In general, these strands rely on the concepts of 'flexibility' and 'empowerment' as strong ideas to fuel arguments for participation. These terms are closely related to the assumptions of flexible labor management, in which users share decisions about the production of space, just as workers are responsible for production in the workplace. Generally, "flexibility" is conceived in these proposals as a simple choice of the user between the options developed by technicians, which prevents the production of new space or even a new process of space production. In turn, the term 'empowerment' in participatory processes reduces user control over the management of scarce resources. In both situations, the architect continues to play the role of mediator between the user and the built space.

American professor and scholar Henry Sanoff is engaged in researching participatory methods in architecture and planning, whose emphasis is on community participation in city planning and worker participation in the corporate space. Their ideas are based on the principles of deliberative democracy, strategic planning and local governance (Sanoff, 2006). Sanoff (2006) recognizes that such concepts are borrowed from the private sector and its flexible management techniques, which, like the worker, give the citizen the role of manager of the built space. Nonetheless, participation is subject to the principles of neoliberal ideology of meritocracy and productive efficiency. Thus, participatory democracy is conceived as a highly decentralized collective decision-making process across all sectors of society. Participation theorists suggest that **deliberative democracy** must replace representative democracy and its shortcomings, so as to enable "citizens to collaborate creatively, whereby voting is replaced by consensus decision-making" (Sanoff, 2006, n.p.).

To do this, citizens must organize themselves into groups of selected people reflecting the diversity of the rest of the population and have face to face relationships; the group must express a strong sense of community in order to protect and improve their neighborhoods in places that are significant to them; each member of the group must have social capital, that is, a network of relationships in the community that can effect community organization, social relations and mutual trust; the group must mobilize its 'collective intelligence' in order to respond appropriately to community problems, through reflection and evaluation based on "a willingness to understand values and interests of others in the pursuit for solutions acceptable to all" (Sanoff, 2006, p.134). This 'consensus' is obtained through the joint definition of objectives (Sanoff, 2006).

The whole process of participation is seen as problem solving. First, the group must define an issue, a problem to be solved. Then, the group must define objectives for the process. Keeping in mind these objectives, the group, in consensus, elaborates the solution to the problem. In other words, from the moment everyone thinks and acts to reach a goal, conflicts are placed in the background, they lose the ability to reflect the reasons that generate conflicts. The agreement undertaken by workers is nothing different from the Toyotist management within factories, which demands from workers greater participation in production processes from the development of multiple skills, polyvalence, and creative ability to solve problems. Sanoff (2006), faced with the 'dark side' of consensus or process oriented and manipulated to obtain agreement, uses the term 'real consensus' to explain that it can be achieved through 'real dialogue'. It is assumed that it is possible to obtain a consensus of ends and means by argument. In this case, the role of technicians is to break down customary dissent and create conditions for communication (Kapp and Baltazar, 2012).

The concept of **strategic planning** stems from the need to maintain dialogue between citizens and public authorities, and such dialogue should take the form of a strategic community plan, which will promote the mobilization of resources towards the objectives (Sanoff, 2006). The elaboration of a strategic plan derives from fundamental assumptions such as the accountability of part of citizens organized in groups, who must define objectives and priorities, identify issues and constituent groups, build up organization, act and evaluate results (Checkoway cited in Sanoff, 2006); making the decision-making process more flexible so as to keep the expected results intact; the administration by the group of the gap between the needs of the population and the scarce resources of the public power; wide dissemination of proposals through public meetings, in order to ensure the highest possible number of votes for approval; and participation at the local level, such as the workplace and the community, since it is at this level that people learn about **self-governance** (Sanoff, 2006). The strategy is revealed in participatory processes as a way for the state to share its responsibilities, inaugurating a new form of administration, called "deliberative governance" (Carson cited in Sanoff, 2006). It is argued that, through governance, there is an increase in the frequency of political action (Sanoff, 2006).

This is the case of the transformations undertaken by neoliberalism, which replaced government with governance (Harvey, 2013 [2008]), or in the words of professor and geographer Erik Swyngedouw, neoliberalism implanted a new "post-political urban police order" (Swyngedouw, 2012 [2007]). The expression refers to the new model of urban governance inaugurated by productive and spatial restructuring in post-Fordist cities, where debate, disagreement and dissent are dissipated by the introduction of a series of 'citizenship technologies' (Cruikshank cited in Swyngedouw, 2012 [2007]) that seek "consensus, agreement and technocratic management" (Swyngedouw, 2012 [2007], p.52). Although Erik Swyngedouw's analysis applies to the context of major spatial restructurings suffered by European metropolises in the 1980s under the excuse of making them more competitive and attractive to global capital investors, new technologies for citizen participation in urban policies are present in all cities subject to neoliberal socioeconomic policy. The term 'post-political' derives from the withdrawal of the political dimension of government, whose new role is reduced to that of policing. This task is based on new technologies of power and a different structure of government, apparently horizontal, between state agents, civil society, NGOs and the private market. By pulverizing power under the aegis of consensus, the network of institutions of governance, including civil society organizations, ironically cannot perceive that the socially excluded, in principle represented by these institutions, are not covered by the advantages of competitive urbanity, creative, innovative and global of the post-Fordist city (Swyngedouw, 2012 [2007]).

It is worth pointing out the congruence of this approach with the new model of work organization within the factories, the Toyota management. In fact, what is perceived in participatory programs is that the arguments of flexibility and empowerment legitimize the processes of perpetuating poverty.

Users are often just informants or guessworkers in a participatory process, whose degree of participation depends on the goodwill of the mediator. Even so, participatory planning experiences have been envisaged as a solution, as opposed to the rapid deterioration of planned communities without participation (Lopes, Kapp and Baltazar, 2010, p.15, our translation).

While participatory processes developed by architects are conceived as 'partial participation' because users act in a piecemeal way in decision-making processes, public policy proposals are considered 'pseudo-participation', considering that the role of users is simple validation of decisions already defined in advance (Pateman cited in Lopes, Kapp and Baltazar, 2010). Contrary to a first representation, proposals centered on the paradigm of participation are not revolutionary, since the mode of production of space remains heteronomous. Despite the openings provided by users' participation in the production process, the standards are defined in advance by technical experts, who at first continue to design solutions for the architectural practices of these users. The question lies in the nature of the concept of participation, as already mentioned: "participation, regardless of the adjective that qualifies it (full, true, genuine, etc.) always suggests another

instance, not composed by the participants themselves, and coordinates the process" (Kapp, 2011, n.p., our translation).

In Brazil, the participation paradigm is present in initiatives developed since the 1980s, notably in the context of public policies, which discourse refers to the implementation of a new pattern of popular participation, replacing the clientelistic and exclusionary pattern of social policies until then in force (Rolnik, 2013). The progressive urban reform proposal aims to overcome urban policy instruments aimed at "the formation of a narrow and speculative estate market" (Rolnik, 2013, n.p., our translation). However, spaces created with popular participation such as council, conference and participatory budgeting were not enough to break with traditional urban policy decision-making processes, which maintain political relations based on clientelism and neo-corporatism at the local level; and in the political-electoral game, at the national level (Rolnik, 2013). And most importantly, in the 1990s, when the neoliberal reform agenda was consolidated with the new governance of the Brazilian municipalities, the instruments of citizen participation were arranged side by side with the idea of a minimal state, emptying any proposal for a broader citizenship (Rolnik, 2013). Popular participation in public policies "is mostly summed up to consult and inform the community, becoming merely a bureaucratic mechanism imposed by law, fulfilling the role of breaking down possible resistances of the community" (Lopes, Kapp and Baltazar, 2010, p.15, our translation). That is, in the terms elaborated by Swyngedouw (2012 [2007]), 'citizen participation' obscures the "post-political urban police order". Despite the democratic discourse, the participation paradigm does not promote the self-determination of the production of space by the population, since public policies are elaborated by exponents external to popular organizations.

### **3 Proposals based on autonomy**

Radically different from the previous view, there are authors who rely on the concept of autonomy as a means of social emancipation. While the proposals centered on the participation paradigm criticize the distance between the architect and the user of space, the autonomy initiatives criticize any form of omission and justification of the perpetuation of oppressive relations in the production of space, among them the relations between capital and labor, gender, ethnicity, etc.

The paradigm of autonomy arises mainly from the works developed in the field of Critical Theory, inaugurated in the 1930s, from the disillusionment with the idea that the development of the productive forces would modify the relations of production. In a historical context of the emergence of fascism and Nazism, of the dictatorial regime in the Communist Soviet Union, i.e., in the face of barbarism, thinkers of the Frankfurt School were the first to point out the limits of orthodox Marxism or the impossibility of society in the context of the industrial capitalism of the twentieth century (Adorno, Horkheimer, 1985 [1947]). Marx's theory predicted that at a certain point of development, productive forces and relations of production would contradict each other, leading to a social revolution. Just as scientific development did not lead to the emancipation of man, because he was bound to social control and social cohesion, labor also did not lead to the autonomous and emancipated formation of man. On the contrary, although the work was formative, the "universalization of the social form of alienated labor" prevailed in society (MAAR cited in Adorno, 2010 [1971], p.17, our translation).

From the point of view of Critical Theory, it is the social relations that determine productive forces, not the opposite. Marcuse (1973 [1964]) elucidated why scientific development did not lead to emancipation: "technology serves to institute new, more effective, and more pleasing forms of social control and social cohesion" (Marcuse, 1973 [1964], p.18, our translation) instead of fulfilling his promise to free men from work, or at least to free them from heavy labor, boring, not free. The loss of the historical transformation role of the working class is due to its 'gentrification' by the ideology of the Cultural Industry (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1985 [1947]). This regression is attributed to the destructive element of progress, which is that the standardization of the administered society has led to the self-destruction of enlightenment. For Adorno and Horkheimer (1985 [1947]), the cultural industry reduces the clarification to ideology, in the sense of manipulating the masses, of transforming the home into a simple consumer, because what one wants is prestige and not knowledge. The guiding principle lies in the premise that freedom in society is only possible from enlightening thinking. Adorno (1995 [1959-69]) points out that the survival of humanity depends on attempts to overcome barbarism, through the production of a true, autonomous and emancipated consciousness.

The contribution of the Frankfurt School in relation to Marxism is to point out that the conquest of another pattern of sociability goes beyond the simple ownership of the means of production by the workers. Tragtenberg (1987), a Brazilian sociologist and professor, from his studies on the Spanish collectivities, product of a working-class movement in the period 1936/1939 during the Civil War, shares the same assertion of the Frankfurt School, that the debate on autonomy is part of the social relations of production:

Socialism does not mean only common property and control of the means of production and distribution, it also means equality, affective freedom, reciprocal

recognition and a radical transformation of the relations between men. It is man's authentic "self-awareness" (Tragerberg, 1987, p.22, our translation).

The conquests of man's self-awareness do not stem from formal logical thinking, but from the ability to think about reality (Adorno, 1995 [1959-69]). Authors who intend to understand the reality of architectural production identify the close relationship between architectural practice and processes of capitalist production. English architect and professor Jonathan Charley (cited in *Telling It Like It Is*, 2009) points out that the claim to emancipation from the field of architecture in relation to politics and economics is an ideological mechanism to cover up the commitment of architectural practice to the social practices that generate more value. Such practices are, for example, the privatization of public space, the record of financing for the construction industry, the 'author' buildings ordered by dictators or oligarchs, the dismissal of construction workers, among others: "[...], contemporary architectural practice is not a charming exercise in the exploration of the space imagination. [...] It is the capitalist labor process driven by ideology and the imperatives placed upon it by the process of capital accumulation" (Charley cited in *Telling It Like It Is*, 2009, n.p.).

Faced with the realization that architecture is a branch of operation of the capitalist production process, the question of ethics in architectural practice gains visibility, leading to the proposal of defining fundamental principles of an insurgent architecture. Jonathan Charley proposes an alternative architectural practice, which he understands as an anti-capitalist resistance practice. In the author's view, the alternative term refers to a way of producing things, including the production of buildings, which is not determined by capitalist imperatives and by bourgeois morality. The politically engaged meaning includes the practice of resistance in the ecological and social spheres, in the sense of resisting the destructive aspects of capitalist urban development, and in the professional sphere, in the sense that the technician engages in post-capitalist modes of architectural production. Charley (2008) argues that most architects work to reinforce the image of power and wealth of their clients but does not reflect on oppressive relationships in society as well as on the construction site, elements generated by the process of capital accumulation. Technicians, like all common sense, think and act according to the naturalized ideology that the ills of the world will be remedied by neoliberal economic theory. Thus, the free market myth promotes the commodification of all aspects of the built environment.

On the other hand, the failure of real socialism in the former Soviet bloc has condemned the historical attempts to forge an alternative to capitalism to oblivion. One of these attempts occurred during the early years of the October Revolution in the Soviet Union, when members of the Russian artistic avant-garde developed in the 1920s a policy practice engaged in the revolutionary needs of building a new socialist state (Cook, 2004 [1999]). The designer and theoretical artist Alexei Gan, along with Lyubov Popova (1889-1924), Aleksandr Rodchenko (1891-1956), Várvara Stepanova (1894-1958), Vladimir Tatlin (1885-1953), Karl Ioganson, the Sternberg brothers, 1900-1933, and Vladimir, 1899-1982), Konstantin Medunetzki, among others, inaugurated the first group of the aesthetic movement called 'Constructivist'. The cultural design of the avant-garde had as its principle the engagement of the various arts, such as painting, sculpture, architecture, theater, industrial design and cinema in the reconstruction of the whole social organism (Gancited in Bann, 1974).

Besides the group proposing the adoption of a common language among the different arts, it rejected the notion of art as a mere isolated, individual and romantic expression. Alexei Gan, Alexander Rodchenko and his wife, the painter and graphic artist Varvara Stepanova, wrote the program of the Productivist group and, two years later, the Productivist manifesto, in which they pointed to speculative art and religion itself as escapist and dangerous activities (Gan ; Rodchenko; Stepanova, 2009 [1922]). Inspired by Marx's ideas, especially in the first part of *The German Ideology* (1845), the productivists formulate a new postulate for the work of artists from the communist expression "material constructions" (Cook, 2004 [1999]).

The task required by this new position implied, among other things, the real participation of intellectual production as an important element in the construction of the new communist culture. This mainly meant a direct contact with all the productive centers and principal organs of the unified Soviet mechanism, which in practice made possible new forms of livingness and experience. The order, then, was to go out onto the streets, to the factories, the only places where artists could reshape materialistic concepts and realize them in practical life, synthesizing Marx's ideas concerning scientists, i.e. artists, in more varied forms, have interpreted the world, but its task is to transform it (Vieira, 2004, p.19, our translation).

For the productivists, the replacement of the capitalist city by a communist city would require the adoption of new principles by the architects, who must plan the city outside their offices, in the streets, in order to attract all the citizens of the proletarian republic into a large collective work (Gancited in Cook, 2004 [1999]).

Anarchist ideas and practices of Gan and his companions predicted decentralized production and the complete absence of internal structures of power. The ideas were reported in *Anarkhiia* magazine, whose editor was Gan. Of note in the publication are articles such as Malevich, April 1918, entitled "Architecture as a slap in the face of reinforced concrete," in which he denounced the conventional practices of individualist architects. Their anarchist practices can be exemplified by the expropriation of 25 mansions in Moscow, which became headquarters of the movement, denominated "Houses of Anarchy". Anarchist principles clashed with the bureaucratic and centralizing policies of Lenin's government, which had transferred the administration to the historic center of Moscow in March 1918. In the coming years, Bolshevik cultural policy increasingly threatened and weakened anarchist movements (Cook, 2004 [1999]).

More recently, from a perspective centered on the politics of production of space, Swyngedouw (2012 [2007]) proposes a radical socio political program. The ethics of a "correct political gesture" lies in disagreement, in breaking with the police order (symbolic, social and state), or, in other words, politics disorganize the police order when there is a refusal to observe the "established order of governance with everyone in their 'right' places in the apparent natural order of things" (Dikeçited in Swyngedouw, 2012 [2007], p.57, our translation). It is assumed that the role of the police is to organize the distribution of people in space and to standardize this distribution of places. Politics and police converge on the concepts of spatiality and temporality:

In the end, everything in politics was about the distribution of spaces. What are these places? How do they work? Why are they there? Who can occupy them? For me, political action always acts on the social as the litigious distribution of places and roles. It is always a matter of knowing who is qualified to say what a certain space is and what is done with it (Rancièrecited in Swyngedouw, 2012 [2007], p.58).

Ultimately, the proper policy is to reconfigure the police space, in a dialectical way, giving rise to intermediate spaces. "Appropriate policy acts in the police space, from the police space and through [that] space. Policy, however, does not act within the police space, but *between spaces* that are not determined by the police, which have no place in the police space" (Swyngedouw, 2012 [2007], p.58, author's highlights, our translation). Democracy arises when the pattern of "consensual techno-administrative urbanity" is replaced by the pattern of acceptance of urban conflict in social space, when "intervals of subjectivation" are constructed between identities, between spaces and places (Rancièrecited in Swyngedouw, 2012 [2007]). These free urban spaces are the kinds of spaces in which alternative forms of life, work, and expression are experienced, in which new forms of political and social action are staged, where affective economies are reworked, and creative living is not measured by the rise in stock market indices or pension funds" (Swyngedouw, 2012 [2007], p.60, our translation).

The authentic democratic political practices carried out on the shores of the contemporary city require the recognition and appreciation of these practices, the production of their own space, the mapping and cartography of alternatives, the imagination and the architectural and urban creativity, the citizenship redefinition and the development of visionary urban programs (Swyngedouw, 2012 [2007]). The fundamental question in the approaches that contemplate the concept of autonomy, even implicitly, is that it is not only about openings in the conventional process of production of space, but of formulating another process.

The conventional process of production of space is characterized by the linear sequence of tasks, grounded in the logical and rational reasoning of Cartesian thought. "The usual procedure begins with a kind of customer consultation (not always the user of the space) for the establishment of a program of needs, followed by the plan design, the construction of that plan and, finally, the use" (Baltazar, Kapp, 2006, p.95, our translation). The capitalist practice of architecture is evident through the vertical division of labor (conception, execution and use) and the use of the technical drawing tool. That is, the practice of architecture provides social control by means of managerial and technical apparatus, in accordance with the capitalist mode of production. Unlike the participation paradigm, the autonomy model focuses not only on the distance between conception and use, but also on the separation between conception and execution.

Sérgio Ferro (1982) highlights the role of design in the process of abolishing corporate bodies. Once separated, the technical drawing mediates between the activities of conceiving and executing and arises as a tool of worker control. Iron (1982) demonstrates how this resource is used for the externalization of practical knowledge and for the monopolization of information:

From the regulation of production to its organization, from external measurement to the systematization of operations - it is in this passage that the drawing is adopted as a capital instrument, at which point it becomes urgent to define the portions of production with greater rigor. An organizational matter, therefore,

generalizes it as a work document. The purpose of its use is neither the quality of the product (the standards of the corporation were much more rigid and detailed), nor its constancy (the absence of drawing makes, if it were the case, direct copy a more faithful method). What embarrasses the history of drawing is the unequal division of labor that is advancing - and its other pole, the agreement to be imposed on the components produced by the divided works (Ferro, 1982, p.63, our translation).

The technical apparatus of drawing, or the architectural or urbanistic project, not only reproduces the social division of labor, but also prevents self-determination of the production of space by users. These relations of domination reveal the character of the restoration of the architectural practice, submitted to capitalist relations of production.

*A plan implies, by its very nature, the restriction of the freedom of decision and action of all the people who suffer its consequences, without having had the right to voice and vote in its elaboration.* In the realm of architectural and urban planning, this means the restriction of freedom, both of those who execute a project materially (the workers involved in construction) and those who will use their results (the inhabitants, in a broad sense of the term). These relations of domination, inherent in the project, are seldom perceived clearly, for it has become a kind of fetish, in the sense in which Karl Marx uses the term: it makes appear as links between things what in fact they are associations between people or social relationships. On the other hand, as a fetish, it means nothing more than something done, that is, human artifice, neither divine nor natural, also this fetish of the plan can be questioned, criticized and undone (Baltazar, 2006, p.94, italics of the authors, our translation).

Having as a horizon the autonomous production of space, the user as producer of the space plays a much more active role than in the popular participation. "While the latter suggests invited residents in a process whose structure was defined by professionals or by the State, autonomy implies processes orchestrated by the residents, in which professionals and the State would be the (eventual) guests (KAPP et al., 2012)." The user, as producer of the space, differs from the proposals which paradigm focuses on participation, since it is not about the user choosing between a range of options previously determined by technicians, but the user determining the production process of the space. Thus, it is necessary to review the product and process of architectural practice, "so that no more ideal procedures or architectures are sought, but rather the possibility of each individual or group deciding on the most appropriate procedure for each situation" (Baltazar and Kapp, 2006, p.101, our translation)).

#### **4 Conclusion**

Technicians engaged in social issues develop two strands, discordant to each other, from the idea of instrumentalization of the user / producer of spaces. The first strand is based on the participation paradigm, which under the umbrella of such flexibility and empowerment legitimizes processes of perpetuating poverty, since users act in a piecemeal way in decision-making processes and simply validate decisions previously defined by specialist technicians. The second strand, whose paradigm is autonomy, is not restricted to providing openings to users in the conventional process of production of space, but to formulate another production process, based on criticism. The exercise of criticism by the architect contemplates the questioning of the real commitment of the architectural practice with the social emancipation of individuals or groups.

The ethics of architectural practice is the idealization of a free society, in which individuals or groups are conceived in their totality, and not from their economic function, sometimes separated as simple consumers of space, sometimes as simple producers of space. Such an ethic allows the production rules of space to be elaborated by users, according to critiques referring to the sphere of the reproduction of life, and not to the accumulation of capital.

Without idealizing values in advance, the architect can avoid idealistic proposals by recognizing the patterns of spatial relationships elaborated in daily life by the producers of space, in order to enhance the active practice of the social individual. Architects must develop a new instrumentality, in addition to the technical project, for such subjects to develop their socio-spatial practices. The relevant question is to know which technical and legal instruments can be developed by architects and employed by producers of space in order to strengthen the autonomy of space production and to promote the political emancipation of these subjects.

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**2** For a detailed survey of architects' proposals on user participation, refer to "Architects and Participation" icon available on the Morar de Outras Maneiras study group's website: <<http://www.mom.arq.ufmg.br/mom/index.html>>.

