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SOBRE O ARQUITETO-PESQUISADOR-MILITANTE E LIÇÕES DA GEOGRAFIA ABOUT THE ARCHITECT-RESEARCHER-MILITANT AND LESSONS FROM GEOGRAPHY

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Abstract

This article seeks to debate, in an essayistic way, the possibilities and challenges of militant research within the field of Architecture and Urbanism, bringing lessons from the field of Geography. The intention here is to discuss the academic and scientific practices, not through pragmatic proposals about the method, but through an initial reflection regarding the methodological positioning of the architect-researcher-militant – a professional whose presence is getting common nowadays. I argue that it is necessary to shift the focus from the construction of a new role for the architect, a current discussion in the field of Architecture, to the collective construction of architecture as a verb, practiced together with other actors, such as urban social movements. Based on lessons from Geography, I seek to outline possibilities to overcome challenges of the research and the struggle for social transformation, also trying to delimit the issues that specifically permeate Architecture as a field in this task.

Keyword: Social movements, Architecture, Geography, Militant research

1 Introduction

Since I have joined the Architecture and Urbanism undergraduate course at the Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil, in the late 2000s, I witnessed an important transformation in the academic perspective related to the architect's role in society¹. The debates on housing policies and urban planning were quite lively. It is worth remembering that, in 2009, the Minha Casa, Minha Vida Program was created and soon became one of the most researched and criticized subjects (Morado Nascimento et al, 2015). In the same year, its emblematic opposition arose in Belo Horizonte: the Dandara occupation, organized with the support of new-

born local social movements, such as the Brigadas Populares (Popular Brigades), and which had the enthusiastic support of technicians and academics within the field of Architecture and Urbanism (Lourenço, 2014). In the following years, experiences such as the Macro zoning and the Master Plan for Integrated Development of the Belo Horizonte Metropolitan Region (PDDI-RMBH) also inspired several discussions within the university about the construction of another institutionality, outside the urban planning formal institutional sphere (Velloso, 2015). Not to mention the effervescent debates experienced in the city before, during, and after the June 2013 protests and the 2014 World Cup. The criticism to the State and participation in institutional spheres on the one hand, and the discussions about the city built along with popular movements, on the other, appeared very latently.

Thus, I had the privileged to start my academic studies at a quite favorable time. Many teachers – in a certain way, militants of an academy more attentive to popular daily life and the contradictions of socio-spatial dynamics in the capitalist city – had already cleared the way. Architecture and Urbanism as a representation of power, a concept, an authorial work, in a certain way, had already fallen apart. At least during my initial experience in the academic space, the criticism of these models was already so explicit that struggling against them no longer seemed to be the central issue.

Today, after more than a decade, the questions seem different: it is no longer necessary to affirm the need for architects to look at the excluded territories of the city² and claim space in the academy for this. We have seen the emergence and growth of the number of papers, dissertations, thesis, and research projects on slums, *favelas*, building and land occupations, and rural settlements – spaces relegated by the dynamics of capitalist production of space where various forms of power, resistance, and contradictions materialize. If producing knowledge about the real city and its actors (economically disadvantaged, organized in social movements or self-organized) in the field of Architecture and Urbanism is no longer a taboo as it once was, the question that relies on our academic practice is another: how to do this?

In this way, the question of method seems to become central to the debates, highlighting many challenges present in our academic and scientific practice. The discussion about the relationship between researchers architects – and here I intend to focus on those who also act, in some way, as militants – and social movements is not new. However, it is possible to notice that many dilemmas still prevail in the field of Architecture and Urbanism. I do not intend to make pragmatic propositions about the method here. In an essayistic way, I just try to encourage a discussion about our methodological positioning in this dialogue with social movements, based on reflections raised by some geographers. Professionals who can be considered exceptions in their field for demonstrating a great openness to other kinds of knowledge, such as popular knowledge.

2 For a new definition of the architect's role?

On October 29, 2019, the geographer Timo Bartholl was at the School of Architecture of the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG) in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, to debate "How to research with social movements?". During his lecture, Bartholl shared his experience working with collectives and social movements in Morro do Timbau (Maré's Favela, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) and spoke about his militant research method. Rita Velloso, architect and professor at the institution, and the geographer Thiago Canetti were the hosts. The expectation was to debate the current challenges that emerge in the relationship between academia and social movements and encourage the exchange of ideas between the fields of Geography and Architecture and Urbanism³.

The debate that followed was quite lively, and the discussions ended up shifting from "how to do?" to "what is the architect's role?", placing our performance as researchers at the center of the discussion. Debates about the architect's role in society are quite frequent at the UFMG School of Architecture, such as those presented in Baltazar and Kapp (2006)⁴ and Linhares and Morado (2018)⁵. They motivate important methodological reflections within our field.

To put into check the role conventionally attributed to the architect in the production of the city and to make a criticism capable of delineating another one, more coherent, it is recurrently mentioned, from a historical perspective, how the field of Architecture was consolidated. Stevens (1998) and Ferro (2006) are great references in this sense (Linhares and Morado, 2018). Stevens (1998) highlights how the architect's education favors, since the origin of the profession, the interests of capital, and the provision of services for the dominant classes. In Bourdieu's terms⁶, the field of architecture was consecrated as a legitimizer of the dominant culture and the symbolic power. Ferro (2006) shows how the architect's role as a producer of drawings was consolidated during the historical process of this profession, guaranteeing the exploration of work on the construction site and the reproduction of hegemonic architectural patterns.

However, as much as this understanding of the field's origins and the consolidation of the architect's role throughout history are fundamental to help to know the place where we came from, I am not sure whether we should focus on an affirmative elaboration on what it should be the new ideal architect's role. In other words, I do not intend to present the architect-researcher-militant as this new architect's role. This approach can end up becoming a trap, limiting the elaborations that are being shaped in the constant and dialectical relationship between theory and everyday practice. We are discovering by doing. I am not saying that this process should be exempt from theoretical reflection. I am only saying that it may be more fruitful to reflect on what we should not be doing (that is, the logics that we no longer want to reproduce) than on what kind of architect exactly we should become.

I say this because it is impossible to defend, *a priori*, the architect as a professional. As the philosopher André Gorz warned in the 1970s, it is necessary to criticize and deconstruct the division of labour. According to Gorz (1976, p. 162, emphasis in original), "[...] scientific and technical workers, in performing their technical functions, are also performing the function of reproducing *the conditions and forms of the domination of labour by capital*". In other words, the problem is not only what we do and how we do it, but at the first level: who we are. According to the author, qualifications and competencies are, above all, ideological and social. They are designed to prolong and consolidate the social division of labour, to make production more effective and to guarantee the power of capital, and the hierarchical division of collective labour². Thus,

[...] the content and orientation of scientific research could be other than it is, but that this would be possible only with a different technology and in a different society. As a result, they know that scientific work is not a force for revolution, but that it could be. And, finally, as a result, it is neither voluntarist nor Utopian to challenge them to struggle, to criticize and to repudiate the orientation and content of their skills and knowledge, and the illusory neutrality and unassailability of their scientific work (Gorz, 1976, p. 166).

It would be better, then, to shift the question of formulating a new role for the architect. In order not to reinforce the division of labour, not to fall into the illusion of believing that we are indispensable, and also not to remain defending, even if indirectly, some role (even a newer and transformed one, such as mediator of collaborative projects, producer of interfaces, an inducer of an insurgent planning, etc.), perhaps it is better to make another question. How – here and now – can we, researchers architects, social movements, and self-organized groups with whom we have interacted, discuss and elaborate formulations about the world we live in and the world we would like to build?

3 Lessons from Geography: becoming a *verb*

The problems of division of labour, pointed out by André Gorz (1976), constitute and are constitutive of scientific knowledge production. As stated by geographer Marcelo Lopes de Souza (2017), all the sciences of society are affected by the division of academic work. "Each of them was 'split' like a piece of a mutilated, dismembered 'body' (*concrete society*), divided into parts" (SOUZA, 2017, p. 461, emphasis in original, our translation). According to another geographer, Carlos Walter Porto-Gonçalves (2004, pp. 261-262, our translation):

Social sciences are instituted by and instituting of contemporary society and, thus, overcoming the division of scientific work, as it appears, is part of the struggle to overcome the contradictions of that same society. [...] It should be noted that major theoretical contributions to the comprehension of social processes were given by intellectuals who, strictly speaking, do not fit into this division of scientific work, such as Marx and Engels, Antonio Gramsci, Paulo Freire, Mariátegui, among so many others. This is because, to paraphrase Marx himself, these intellectuals were not merely interpreting the world but also trying to transform it.

In this sense, the field of Geography presents interesting possibilities. As Souza (2017) points out, despite being a "dual personality" scientific field (Souza, 2017, p. 461, our translation) (Science of Nature and Science of Society), Geography has not been treated as a "bridge science" (Souza, 2017, p. 462, our translation), but as a polarized scientific field between both epistemological domains and, therefore, it has been condemned to a gradual demise. However,

Ironically, by its "omnivorous" character, its vocation for ambitious syntheses, and by its ease of working with various scales of analysis in an integrated manner, the knowledge known as Geography, within the framework of the positivist division of academic work, is potentially one of the most adverse to "disciplinarianism". Consequently, it is better able to embrace non-limiting, non-mutilating

contributions. For this, however, geographers need a metatheoretical (philosophical) basis that will provide them with a reading of the world, of the praxis, and of the research itself appropriate to the task of valuing the different dimensions of reality (Souza, 2017, p. 462, our translation).

Just like Architecture, the past of Geography is also entwined with the conservation of hegemonic power. In some of his works, Porto-Gonçalves refers to the origins of the latter and shows how it was born already committed to the structures of power, emerging as practical knowledge in the constitution of the modern-colonial world, even before it became a science in the 19th century. According to the author, the geographer was, at first, the specialist in representing space, the King's official who made maps and delimited the Territorial States borders. In other words, he was more a professional who worked in territorial control procedures than theoretical interest, even if, since Renaissance, he acquired a presumably mathematical and objective perspective (Porto-Gonçalves, 2002).

Porto-Gonçalves (2019) reveals that, when he realized this, he wanted to "commit suicide as a geographer". In his militancy along with Latin American social movements, however, he learned to re-signify his place. According to him, in the 1980s, rubber tappers from the Amazon rainforest "resurrected" him as a geographer: while they had never seen themselves "from above", and this represented another dimension in their struggle for their territory, he had never seen them "from below" in the sphere of everyday space (Porto-Gonçalves, 2019). This encounter mobilized a powerful academic-militant partnership, capable of rethinking space and of building power from below through exchanges of knowledge and the design of strategies to resist against those who wanted to exterminate them. Porto-Gonçalves believes that social movements bring to light, because of their existence, not only the contradictions of space and society but also what society we can be and what it is unable to be. The author adds that "Therefore, every social movement carries, to some degree, a new order that, as such, presupposes new positions, new relationships, always socially instituted, between places" (Porto-Gonçalves, 2004, p. 269-270, our translation).

Based on this idea, the geographer invites us to think of Geography as a verb – the act of marking the land – and no longer as a noun. According to him, "[...] the different social movements re-signify space and, thus, with new signs they graph the earth, geographize, reinventing society" (Porto-Gonçalves, 2004, p. 269-270, our translation). In this perspective, which also brings up the conflicts of the territory(s), other ways of interpreting the world emerge, confronting the prevailing social order. As stated by the author:

In 1993, when I was working in northern Bolivia, in the Department of Pando, I heard from a peasant the following statement: "we do not want land, we want territory". For the first time, I had heard the expression territory spoken outside the academic or legal field. I began to understand that the territory can be reinvented, when I saw that peasant reject the debate on agrarian reform in the theoretical-political framework of the West, where the land is perceived only as a means of production (Porto-Gonçalves, 2012, p. 54, our translation).

According to Uruguayan journalist Raul Zibechi (2015), Latin American urban social movements⁸ are directly bound to peasant and indigenous movements, sharing theoretical and political concepts such as *territory*, *autonomy*, and *self-government*. For the author, the rural poor people are making an agrarian reform from below, and "[...] the urban poor are following similar paths, certainly with much more difficulty" (p. 28). The author states:

The way they produced the transition from land to territory, from the struggle for rights to the struggle for autonomy and self-government; that is, how the transition went from domination to resistance and the affirmation of difference, have particular importance for urban communities that, in the passage between the two centuries, began to root in self-constructed urban spaces (Zibechi, 2015, p. 40, our translation).

However, it is possible to see that not all social movements and groups that rise in self-constructed urban spaces have a territory notion as clear as have historically presented the other groups mentioned. In the urban space, the capitalist logic of labour and property integrates with popular modes of living. It becomes difficult to determine where *abstract space* and *differential space* are constituted⁹, in Henri Lefebvre's (1991) terms, outlining clear challenges to autonomy. It is precisely in this space that the performance of the architect-researcher-militant has appeared with great prominence.

Considering these challenges intrinsic to the urban space and faced within the field of Architecture, and taking the exercise of Porto-Gonçalves as an example, would it be possible to think of Architecture as a verb rather than a noun? Bringing academic and non-academic knowledge (or academic knowledge outside the academy) together in a task similar to that presented by Geography?

Architecture as a verb, following this proposition, determines a social practice, not limited to a professional field¹⁰. Perhaps, for this, it presupposes, before the essential transformation of the architect's role, his "suicide", the abandonment of the knowledge monopoly. Architecture as a noun and the architect as a subject would no longer be at the centre of the debate, but practice, as collective know-how [*saber-fazer*]. Thus, it opens up for the performances of different actors and, in this sense, for other possibilities of collaboration with social movements. Based on this approach, the contradictions, both in the practices of architects and in the practices of social movements and groups that arise in urban space, could thus be the object of debate, criticism, and collective transformation.

4 Architects and social movements: how to collaborate?

The work of architects-researchers-militants – subjects not only active in their professional and academic practices but also engaged in mobilizations for social transformation alongside social movements and urban insurgent groups – can be identified in Brazil, since the 1960s, within the scope of urbanization processes of towns and *favelas* (Ferreira, 2017). It has also become well known, from the 1980s, with the struggles for Urban Reform, and in the 1990s, with the rise of self-management policies in popular housing projects in municipalities such as São Paulo (State of São Paulo, Brazil), Belo Horizonte and Ipatinga (State of Minas Gerais, Brazil). More recently, militant architects have gradually acquired a considerable role in the occupations of buildings and urban land, organized by housing movements after the 2000s. They are part, along with (and perhaps with more strength than) geographers, of the broad set of "academic supporters" of the homeless (Souza, 2015, p. 30, our translation).

However, after many decades building knowledge and practices along with popular movements, there still is the accumulation of frustrations regarding this partnership in the field of Architecture and Urbanism. João Marcos de Almeida Lopes, an architect with long experience in this area¹¹, summarizes the uneasiness resulting from this journey, which shuffles "technical work and political militancy" (Lopes, 2018, p. 241, our translation):

If we shared, technicians and autonomous constructors, the same assumptions of autonomy and self-determination, why do not we recognize today in the daily practices installed in the housing projects we helped to build, even an outline of affinity with the speeches we sharpened together? (Lopes, 2018, p. 242, our translation).

Lopes elaborates some reasons for this mismatch, pointing out that, on the architects' side, the references to such assumptions "[...] were and are, most of it, Eurocentric, especially if we consider the discursive aspect linked to the libertarian and anarchist tradition" (2018, p. 243, our translation). The meaning of the idea of autonomy and self-determination was not built through popular local references, such as those mentioned by Zibechi (2015). The architects engaged with these groups either did not care or realize the importance of "[...] asking about the genetic identity of such foundations" (Lopes, 2018, p. 243, our translation).

Besides, there is yet another dimension that cannot be forgotten: when working with such groups, we, as architects-researchers-militants, do not clearly position ourselves as agents of social transformation. We do not readily decide whether to put ourselves in such processes as militants or as architects. This gets quite clear in the case narrated by Lopes (2018) about the advisory given by USINA to the Ireno Alves dos Santos settlement, located in the central-west of the state of Paraná (Brazil), that consists on one of the biggest occupations of the Landless Workers Movement [*Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem-Terra - MST*] built between mid-1998 and 2000. This settlement involved a construction site of 1500 families on 27,000 hectares, as well as a semi-urban village in ruins, to be reformed. In one of his visits to the village, the architect came across with a banner which said "OPENING SOON: CHAINSAWS AND MOTORS MECHANIC", in the place where the headquarters of the cooperative he was advising was supposedly going to operate.

I commented and complained to one of the local MST leaders [...], saying that this initiative ran counter to all the discussions we were promoting. I said that I did not know how to act in a situation like that, that the leadership of the movement should take a firm stance to prevent similar initiatives, and that it was not my role as technical advisor to interfere in that context, and so on. His answer was quite synthetic [...]: "This problem of identity, of not knowing whether you are part of the base or the direction, is your problem, from the city...". After that conversation, I went to the place where the banner was, and I pulled it out, letting the staff of the cooperative office know that they could look for me in case someone came to complain about the removal of the banner (Lopes, 2018, p. 247, our translation).

This case is important to illustrate the dilemma of architects when they behave like militants: to do what one believes, in one another's territory, or to wait for the other to do it in their own territory, to guarantee a supposed professional neutrality, what is "the least worst" choice? According to Gabriel Tupinambá, in a reflection based on a critique of the political economy of the militancy, this seems to be, in fact, a general problem of left-wing militancy in the current scenario:

When a militant decides to "go" to society, it implies that he *does not understand himself as part of society* – and renounces something to "join" others. Abandoning this distinctive feature, which carries a certain tragic satisfaction, is one of the most significant organizational challenges of the left (Tupinambá, 2017, emphasis in original, our translation).

When tearing the banner off, João Marcos recognizes his involvement in the construction of that space, stripping himself of his presumed role as an architect (technical advisor) to take responsibility concerning the practices produced collectively. This action, however, does not emerge without a prior conflict between preserving his role as an architect and acting as a militant, which seems to imply a choice between one and another. Regarding this transformation of positioning, the geographer Timo Bartholl proposes important methodological elaborations. In elaborating a theory about militant research as a method, Bartholl states that "The order of importance is decisive: self-interest, composed of personal and political interest [...] is ahead of academic or scientific interests [...]. I do not take part in a process because I want to investigate it, but I investigate it because I am part of it" (Bartholl, 2018, p. 24, our translation). The geographer understands that the pursuit of articulating research and practices of resistance has as its engine the quest for an emancipatory praxis.

To the question: "Geographers and social movements, how to collaborate?" Bartholl (2018, p. 54, our translation) answers with another one: "how [...] to separate Geography, on the one hand, and social movement, on the other?" If we have observed militants from popular movements joining universities as researchers, researchers approaching movements to become militants, and this is a potentiality, not a limitation, "Is there why or how to separate the two fields, the subjects and their efforts (to act, to reflect, to study and to transform)?" (Bartholl, 2018, p. 54, our translation). He advocates:

I understand Geographies made *with, in, and by* movements as a proposal to relate research/theorization and practice/self-reflection (know-with [*saberes-com*] and know-how [*saberes-fazer*]), both in terms of intra and inter-subject relationships, as a collective task (trans-subject). For this, there is no ideal form or standard that everyone must follow. Subjects can open themselves to the challenge of militating-reflecting-researching-theorizing. This does not release us from the need to clearly define at what point/stage/process/place in the cycles of practice-theory we are, but in epistemological terms, the posture can and must go beyond "one or another", "researcher or militant". [...] This process may involve academic structures and more strictly, scientific or not (Bartholl, 2018, pp. 57-58, emphasis added, our translation).

Therefore, I believe that the challenge of militating-reflecting-researching-theorizing, shared among the subjects, as proposed by Bartholl, encounters the idea of architecture as a verb, inspired by Porto-Gonçalves' proposal, mentioned above.

5 Final remarks

As I have tried to demonstrate here, the possibilities of action for the architect-researcher-militant must go beyond the search for an elaboration of a new architect's role. The architect-researcher-militant is a professional who already exists, here and now, and who is in constant transformation. She/he carries a contradiction in herself/himself, born within the division of labour, configuring herself/himself as the holder of a heteronomous power who is gradually discovering herself/himself as part of a social change. What I have tried to show, in this regard, is the need to think about a transformation of methodological positioning.

In this direction, would it be possible to bring lessons from Geography? We saw with Porto-Gonçalves that, more important than defining Geography as a noun, it would be to construct it as a verb with social movements. With Timo Bartholl's militant research, we present the possibility of breaking the distance between militant and academic, as individuals in movement for social transformation.

The challenges that appear in the field of Architecture, however, present some specificities. To transform her/his positioning, the architect-researcher-militant needs to open space for the know-with [*saberes-com*]

and the know-how [*saberes-fazeres*]. However, this does not happen without commitment. As the architect Tiago Castelo Branco Lourenço remembers:

As well as the prestige granted by the professional's position, the admiration for one's instruments makes us proud, without making us realize how the distance and the hierarchy generated contradict our intention to contribute to an emancipatory political action. The capital's material and symbolic production, in which architects participate daily, does not end in occupations for the mere intention of undoing it, because the subjective dispositions that these professionals acquire over time do not come undone there either (Lourenço, 2014, p. 155, our translation).

To commit suicide as an architect is a difficult task when people accept us as an integrated part of the struggle precisely because of the incomes brought by our technical authority. However, it is necessary to reaffirm constantly (for ourselves and the other actors) that:

The knowledge (legal, geographic, architectural, historiographical, about computer science, video making, etc.) brought by the academic supporters (members of the daily support group or the solidarity network) can be very useful and even crucial. However, it is neither infallible (colossal illusion!), nor intrinsically more important than the technical knowledge of a bricklayer, carpenter, or peasant (Souza, 2015, p. 36, our translation).

As stated by Souza (2015, p. 36, emphasis in original, our translation), "The knowledge of the oppressed social base [...] must and can be integrated with academic knowledge, *for the benefit of both parties*". Perhaps a possible path for the architect-researcher-militant is to continuously integrate herself/himself with the processes which he contributes, not ending her/his activities after the work (or the research project) ends. Therefore, talking about the contradictions of labour and property in urban spaces would become a problem for everyone, including ourselves, not just those we advise. It is never too late to remember what we often seem to forget: transforming the world where we live in is a continuous process that concerns all of us, those who, as Timo Bartholl (2018) says, "[...] struggle to transform, investigate to understand and reflect to enhance the popular struggle" (Bartholl, 2018, p. 56).

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- ¹ In 2007, the Program to Support the Plans for Restructuring and Expansion of the Federal Universities System in Brazil (REUNI) started. That made it possible to create the Architecture and Urbanism night course at the Federal University of Minas Gerais, in 2009, with an innovative curriculum, attentive to contemporary urban issues.
- ² Even our class council, the Council of Architecture and Urbanism (CAU), has carried out several campaigns to finance and promote technical advisory to economically disadvantaged groups (and unfortunately tried, sometimes opportunistically, to create a niche market from that).
- ³ The event was called "Colloquium to investigate urban emergency" and had a roundtable with Rita Velloso, Thiago Canetti, and Timo Bartholl to debate the subject. The colloquium was part of a series of events promoted within the scope of the cooperation project "Constellations of the urban: right to the city, metropolitan citizenship, urban movements, and conflicts", recently signed between the Institute for Housing and Urban Research (IBF), Uppsala University (Sweden), and the UFMG School of Architecture (Brazil). I am one of the members of this cooperation project (Capes/STINT 28/2018).

4 Baltazar and Kapp (2006) argue that the role of the architect “[...] is no longer to design architectural or urban objects but to produce interfaces. The architect can take a step back and, instead of predetermining spaces, create instruments so that users and builders can determine them, themselves” (p. 100, our translation).

5 Linhares and Morado (2018) propose that the architect acts as “[...] mediator of information between technical knowledge and the knowledge of residents” (p. 151, our translation). She or he must stop being the one who receives demands or solves problems, giving up power over technical design and becoming “[...] a provocateur, a proposer, a technical advisor, capable of providing important data and information for self-construction practice” (p. 151, our translation).

6 According to Bourdieu, “A field is a mutually supporting set of social institutions, individuals and discourses” (Stevens, 1998, p. 74).

7 In *O canteiro e o desenho*, Sérgio Ferro (2006) makes this quite clear when it comes to the relationship between the production of architectural design and the construction of buildings.

8 Zibechi (2015) prefers to refer to them as “societies in movement” or “territories in resistance”, in contrast to the often bureaucratic and, according to him, “colonized” idea of “social movement” (Zibechi, 2015, p. 35, our translation).

9 According to Lefebvre (1991, p. 370), “Abstract space, which is the tool of domination, asphyxiates whatever is conceived within it and then strives to emerge. [...] This space is a lethal one which destroys the historical conditions that gave rise to it, its own (internal) differences, and any such differences that show signs of developing, in order to impose an abstract homogeneity”. The differential space, on the other hand, will “[...] restore unity to what abstract space breaks up – to the functions, elements and moments of social practice” (p. 52). The relationship between abstract space and differential space in urban occupations for housing can be seen in Bastos et al (2017).

10 In this sense, the definition of architecture presented by Kapp, Nogueira and Baltazar (2009, p. 5, our translation) can reveal a similar perspective, despite it does not mention architecture as a verb: “[...] the space transformed by human work, not just that small portion designed by architects and recognized by the academic and professional field of architecture [...]. In other words, the architecture includes the common, everyday, 'ordinary' space”.

11 In addition to being an academic, the architect is an associate at USINA - Center for Work for the Inhabited Environment, of which he was coordinator between 1990 and 2005. In the group, he worked on projects and construction of affordable housing promoted by mutual aid and self-management, projects and construction in precarious settlements, development of housing policies and programs, applied research, and systems development (as informed in his curriculum on the Lattes Platform, available in: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/9454329212153701>. Accessed on: 03/05/2020.