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Abstract:

Abstract

From the study of 39 urban activism groups in Belo Horizonte-MG, thepresent article seeks to understand the action of civil society asone of the many actors that produce the cities. As this V!RUS issue'seditorial heralds, "the contemporary city is produced bymultiple actors, from public managers, planners and scholars toprivate business groups, third sector organizations and, inparticular, by its inhabitants." (2017, s.p). However, theimbalances of power between these actors are evident, which Souza andRodrigues (2004) emphasize in the existing consonance between theState and the already privileged groups of society.

The articulations between urban activism are the most dramaticmoments of rupture - even if temporary - of this scenario ofimbalance, making it possible to catalyze the construction of commonprojects among groups of organized civil society. Informationtechnologies are a valuable tool in networking among urban activism, which is increasingly using WhatsApp, Facebook, and other digitalsocial networks. It is precisely in the analysis of these means, especially Facebook, that this article is built. To do so, urbanactivism fan pages were monitored as well as their interactions, occurring through Facebook likes and content sharing.

Obviously, the relationships between urban activism go beyondFacebook. However, the connections occurring in this social networkreproduce several characteristics of the other articulations, insideand outside the digital environment, such as its ephemerality, its connection to emergency moments or the recurrence of some commonguidelines.

Keywords: Urban activism; Belo Horizonte; social networks.

Introduction

The city supports the reproduction of some society's social andeconomic relations, being both product and producer of its dynamics(Lefebvre, 2006). In a society marked by profound power asymmetries, the city thus becomes the stage for the performance of relations of domination such as those between classes - as observed by Lefebvreand Harvey -, of race - as Eugene McCann (1999) -, or of gender -which is argued by the geographer Doreen Massey (1994). The dominanticity is the result of those relations, synthesized by Lefebvre as aspace in which "homogeneity-fragmentation-hierarchy" prevails (2013, p.58, our translation).

If this dominant city is, in general, a consonance between private initiative and the State, civil society emerges as a possibility of counterpoint. Civil society then becomes a collective actor who acts the production of the city together or - more commonly - against the State and private initiative. Its actions and impacts, therefore, should not be analyzed individually, but cumulatively. As announced by the editorial of this edition of V!RUS, the city is, therefore, the product of the action of several actors, or: "Locus where the great flows of the planet reverberate, the contemporary city is produced by multiple actors, from public managers, planners and scholars to private business groups, third sector organizations and, in particular, by its inhabitants." (2017, s.p.).

To measure this cumulative impact, it is necessary to understand howis this collective actor configured and the articulations between the groups which constitute it.

From Belo Horizonte's context, this study sought to investigatemovements, activism, associations, committees, forums, and collectives for which space is a catalyzing element of action, of identity reference or conditioning of their tactics and strategies. Ultimately, groups that have the objective of transforming the dynamics of urban space. It is central to them the struggle foraccess to the city and its equipment and services, but, even more so, the question of the Right to the City as defended by Lefebvre (2008): the right to transform the city, to participate in decision-making about its directions and to appropriate it.

To denominate such groups, we will adopt Marcelo Lopes de Souza'sterm: urban activism in the strong sense (2006) - or only urbanactivism when the context is clear. The category embeds civil societygroups that oppose dominant urban spatial dynamics with organized andrelatively long-lasting public actions (more than a march, forexample) (Souza, 2006, p.278).

A total of 39 urban activism groups were selected in Belo Horizonte, constituting a universe with a wide diversity of approaches, tactics, political and thematic positions of struggle such asenvironmentalists, anarchists and urban occupations for housing purposes, which is summarized in Figure 1.

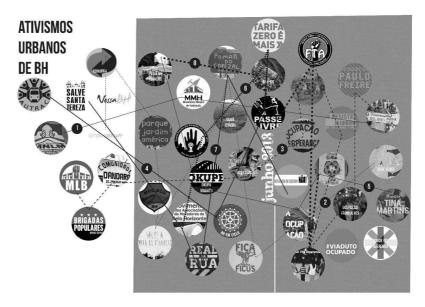


Fig. 1: Urbanactivism addressed in research. Source: the author.

Time marking is important information, since different forms ofaction and articulation are observed between old and new groups. Urban activism groups inside the gray rectangle are those calledthroughout the text as new urban activisms, as opposed to traditionalones. While the former have their origin from 2009, the so-calledtraditional ones are those that arose between the late 1980s andearly 1990s. The main difference between such groups concerns theresumption of direct action by the new urban activisms, while thetraditional ones undertake an institutional struggle. Although theyhave conducted some direct actions in their origins, they havegradually been incorporated into the state apparatus andinstitutionalized channels of participation because of their closerelationship with political parties and governments.

June 2013 is also a significant time marking to the investigatedgroups dynamics, because of the protests that broke out across thecountry. Much urban activism arose after this period, as can be seenin the figure. Some, such as Assembleia Popular Horizontal (APH-BH), Tarifa Zero - BH and Movimento Passe Livre - BH (MPL-BH) are directreverberations of the protests. Although it is not possible toestablish this same relationship with other post-June activism, theywere evidently influenced by the imagery that emerged after theperiod, fuelled by the impact of the protests' scale and thesignaling of gains and transformations that seemed to materializefinally.

The lines that connect urban activism groups in the figuredemonstrate the different categories to which they belong based onaspects such as organization, guidelines, political position, theconjuncture of creation, etc.. These categories were not exhausted, being limited to those critical to this work's context:

- 1. Traditional urban activisms with housing agenda
- 2. Urban activisms with environmental protection agenda

- 3. Urban occupations for housing purposes
- 4. Activisms linked to the mobility agenda
- 5. Occupations of public spaces and empty spaces for other purposes
- 6. Activisms in direct relation to the protests of 2013 and 2014World Cup
- 7. Neighborhood and local defense associations
- 8. Libertarian field

Urban articulations and activisms

Once urban activisms were delimited, an attempt was made to apprehendits form and articulations. These perform in both physical anddigital spaces are in a strong complementary relationship.

In addition to the local context and occasional events, the recentactions of organized civil society groups are also related to a macrocontext of the rise of neoliberalism, changes in the organization ofwork, the emergence of leftist governments since the 1990s and theparticipatory wave. The sociologist Ana Clara Torres Ribeiro (2014)considers that a culturalist emphasis of the contemporary socialmovements, the abandonment of the notion of class and the consequentfragmentation of a supposed collective subject would be directreflexes of these broader social, economic and politicaltransformations.

Despite the fragmentation, the articulation of networks is one of thefundamental characteristics of activisms. An adoption of such anorganization is not restricted only to activisms, the whole societyorganizes itself this way, being a striking feature of powerrelations. Dominant groups are arranged through articulating projectsthat mobilize different networks - political, military, cultural, etc. The opposition to power relations must, therefore, as Castells(2005) affirms, operate in the same logic of its organization: Activist networks around common alternative projects.

The identification of these networks and the themes and eventscapable of mobilizing and articulating urban activisms in the presentresearch were made through consultation in the academic literature produced on the activisms studied, monitoring their fan pages on Facebook and interviewing some of the referred groups' activists.

It is important to emphasize that, despite the new possibilitiesbrought by current articulations for the expansion of scope anddynamicity in the groups, both driven by information technologies, the imaginary around the uniting force between urban activisms is thefruit of a long historical process. Together with the empirical results of articulation experiences, contribute to this work several intellectual assets that systematically recover throughout the history of critical thinking the commitment with the articulation between the subjugated groups of the society.

When Marx and Engels wrote the Communist Manifesto in 1848, it is evidenced this commitment on an alliance for revolution by appealing to the constitution of a class identity among the workers' groupsengaged in local struggles and, in some cases, in conflicts between them. This spirit is summed up by the famous phrase: "Workers of the world unite!" (Marx and Engels, 2003).

Later on, Gramsci (1999), from a failed context of the expectedrevolution in Western Europe, reaffirms the importance of analliance, extended, however, beyond the urban proletarians. For the Italian Marxist, the construction of a class identity is restrictive, since, in addition to the urban proletarians, other groups are dominated in the capitalist system. The strategy of revolution must, therefore, be based on an alliance between the subordinated groups, articulated and directed by the working class (Gramsci, 1999).

More recently, Laclau and Mouffe (1987) take up and update Gramsci'sthinking, reinforcing his idea of expanding the articulationsfor the oppressed beyond the working class. They, however, challengeGramsci's leading role in the working class in the construction of this alliance and also suggest the transposition of class boundaries and the "construction of partially unified subjects whosefundamental determination is popular determination" (Laclau andMouffe, 1987, p. 23, our translation).

More than seeking evidence of systematic adherence to the thought ofthis or that author, on what concerns activisms, it is interesting toobserve to what extent these theoretical constructions are able toapprehend the reality of the articulations that are established between them. For this overlap, it was necessary to seize thenetworks created between urban activisms in Belo Horizonte and the joint projects that articulate them. Theses analyses were based oninterviews with groups' participants and public interactions amongtheir Facebook fan pages. Numerous other connections are established in the digital environment via email groups, WhatsApp, and other instant messaging applications, of course. However, although reported by the interviewees, these spaces are restricted to the activists. Therefore, in addition to the lack of access to them, the ethicalissues in publicizing interactions established in private media mustalso be considered.

In Belo Horizonte, the interviewees reported a dynamic relationshipbetween the groups. These articulations are considered fundamental tothe resistance of activisms due to the fragmentation of these collective actors and their concentration on isolated themes and local approaches. They serve both to broaden the groups' agendas -in addition to local demands and actions - and to increase their political pressure, especially in relation to other actors in the production of urban space - such as the State and the private sector.

The mobilizations that stand out in the recent history of activismsshow, however, that, in general, the most expressive networks occurror short periods and as resistance to the possibilities of losses. They are catalyzed by the constitution, albeit temporary, of a "common enemy", such as the case against the impeachment -coup - of President Dilma, who has been able to mobilize eventraditional activisms long concentrated in peaceful action within the governmental spaces.

With the placing of antagonism in particular people or events - in the mayor Márcio Lacerda in Belo Horizonte, in the President Michel Temer, in the 2014 FIFA World Cup, in the increase of bus fares, etc.- articulations happen in emergent and punctual situations. After theend of the fact that unified activisms, due to victories, even if momentary, or the exhaustion of the possibilities of action, thenetworks demobilize. As Castells (2013) observes, its unification is the common indignation towards a given situation.

The perception of the need for more durable articulations betweenactivisms, constituting permanent spaces for dialogue, exchange of experience and the constitution of an articulating struggle iswidespread among the interviewees. However, these attempts are usually subsumed by daily threats and individual group struggles. When they are longer lasting, they are confined to same or nearagendas' activisms, such as mobility, empty land occupation movements, or cultural movements.

The perception that the city's segregation is also reproduced inthe articulation between activisms is widespread: there is adiscontinuity between the centre and periphery activisms and betweenboth and society in general. This discontinuity is evident in thespeech of one of the activists: "[the articulation] iscentrecentric because we think that Belo Horizonte is its centralarea! We forget that the city is much bigger than that. The centralarea is very well put together, while all hell is breaking loose onthe periphery." (P.K., 2015). Obviously, there are exceptionsand some attempts to overcome this lack of dialogue, but in an evenless expressive way. The few peripheral activisms that can articulate with the central groups do so, in general, moving from the peripheryto the central area.

The lack of dialogue is related, in part, to the difference ofagendas. While in peripheral activisms the tendency is for strugglesfor access to rights that are already established but notuniversalized, central area activism is fighting for the recognition of new rights. The distance between central areas and peripherygroups is further reinforced by the critical positioning of newactivisms concerning previous attempts at approximations by theso-called base work. In fact, this practice often resulted independency relations and paternalistic, colonizing, and evenutilitarian ties.

If the dialogue between central areas and periphery activisms is notvery productive, echoing beyond this universe in society as a wholeis even less. Even in matters that concern most people, such as acall to protest against the increase in bus fares, hardly a groupbeyond the usual will be mobilized. This situation does notnecessarily mean that the agenda is considered illegitimate by thoseoutside the activist universe, but that, between identifying andassembling, there is a distance that the groups have not been able tooverpass. This is precisely one of their great questions: How toreach and mobilize society in an expanded way since it is also subjugated by the same domination patterns fought by the activistgroups?

Networks in the network: digital social media and activisms

The subjects listed in the previous section are also observed when analyzing the public interactions among Facebook fan pages. In the context of this research, two types of relationship mediated by activisms fan pages were considered: Facebook likes between activism pages and the sharing of information between them. To the information extracted were applied methods of Social Network Analysis (ARS), which are based on the interactions between actors and on the roles they play in their contexts (Recuerdo et al., 2015). For this, mathematical and computational models that generate graphical representations are used, the so-called graphs, that relate elements a given moment. In graphs, relationships are represented by edgesthat join the actors, represented by circles.

The nodes of the generated graphs are, therefore, urban activisms fanpages, united by two categories of relationships: Facebook likes andinformation sharing. In the latter case, shared content is also represented by circles, since they are articulators of the variousagents that compose the network.

Facebook likes among activisms fan pages bring relevant information, because they mean publicly assuming a connection, the recognition of struggle, or even the interest in following their publications. Using Netvizz to extract Facebook likes data, two networks were generated. The first one, called grade 1 network (Figure 2), is restricted to articulations made by Facebook likes among urban activism fan pages in Belo Horizonte, forming a universe composed of 39 of them. Thesecond, called grade 2 network (figure 3), broadens the universe of actors for activism linked to other themes, such as media channels, academy groups, public institutions, political parties and political figures.



Fig. 2: Grade 1 network. Source: the author.

The circles and font sizes correspond to the number of Facebook likesof each fan page by the other actors of the network. As a result, wehave, as shown in figure 2, a network with a high degree of activitian between fan pages, although some remain marginal. Thewell-defined division between some categories of activisms isremarkable. Those with a predominantly environmental agenda, forexample – Parque Jardim América, Fica Fícus, Rede Verde, Salve aMata do Planalto, Comupra (Conselho Comunitário Unidos pelo Ribeirode Abreu) and AMAU (Articulação Metropolitana de AgriculturaUrbana) – find themselves in the upper limit of the graph; Whereas,the anarchist and autonomist groups - Bloco de Lutas pelo Transporte,MPL-BH (Movimento Passe Livre – BH) and, in part, APH-BH(Assembleia Popular Horizontal) – are located to the left of thegraph and the urban occupations for housing purposes, although wellinserted in the network, are strongly connected to each other and tothe groups that support them.

It is also noticeable the proximity between activism groups that hasthe same space - Santa Tereza Viaduct - as a place of encounter andthat with it developed a sense of belonging. A Real da Rua was bornfrom the need for a discussion forum on the space of the viaduct, while A Ocupação, a cultural event that has as its premise theappropriation of public spaces and that has had three of its editionsthere. The Viaduto Ocupado, an articulation in opposition to theinfrastructure works of the viaduct in 2014 and the Okupa ViadutoSanta Tereza, a group against municipal government's urbancleansing policies in the central region, characterized by a greatfrequency of marginal groups (street dwellers, prostitutes, andtransvestites, etc.). The proximity between these groups evidencethat some locations can become catalysts for articulations, unifyinggroups for which they are references to identity and belonging.

In the following step, Netvizz also collected information aboutFacebook likes in an expanded universe of fan pages. Called the grade2 network, it considers, besides the Facebook likes among urbanactivism delimited groups for the research, all the fan pages theyhave liked and the interactions of these with the other urbanactivisms fan pages. The following colours were used in the differentiation between the agents that make up the graph: urbanactivism in the strong sense in pink, movements linked to art and culture in purple, traditional and alternative media channels ingray, activism of other places or broader ranges in yellow, studentmovements in light blue, religious groups in brown, institutions and public bodies in orange, activism in Belo Horizonte with a distinct focus than urban space in green, research and outreach university groups and university organizations or groups of technical assistance in dark blue, political parties and political figures in red and trade unions and professional associations in light brown.

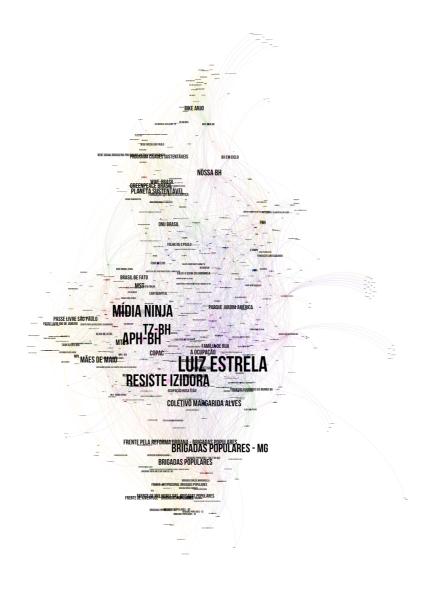


Fig. 3: Grade2 network. Source: the author.

In this new configuration, displayed in figure 3, a strong insertion of actors linked to art and culture is noticed. Their involvement with Belo Horizonte's urban activisms has been a constant since Praia da Estação movement when an artistic-cultural slope has been incorporated into the forms of action and protest, the 'party-protests' (or carnivalesque protests) observed by IgorOliveira (2012).

Again, it is displayed a proximity between groups of the same subjector political position, explaining the existence of articulationbetween them. Groups linked to the mobility issues, for example, are concentrated on the extreme left of the figure, while those related to cycle activism are in the upper portion of the figure and government agencies and institutions on the extreme left. It is worthnoting the little insertion of parties, unions and religious movements, especially when we remember that at some points in the past these actors were influential articulators of urban activism.

Temporal articulations on Facebook

Still based on Facebook interactions, the analyses of publications and content sharing among urban activisms fan pages reinforces manyof the trends already presented. From the information gathered duringthe research, between September 1st, 2015 and June 3rd, 2016, themescapable of articulating groups during this temporality and itsperiodicity surfaced. 1357 posts published or shared by urbanactivisms were collected. These posts were systematized by date, groups that interacted with them - publishing or sharing - and thetopics covered. With this information, the following graphs weregenerated representing the articulations established on Facebookduring the ten months of data collection. The same previous colorpattern was adopted in the categorization of actor types, with theaddition of dark pink to theme circles and lilac to people who hadtheir posts shared by activisms fan pages. Their names have been posts were shared, thousands of others interacted with the collected publications. Research, however, did not concern individual interactions, but rather those of activisms as collective actors.

In September 2015 the second occupation of the City Council (inPortuguese Segunda Ocupação da Câmara Municipal), promoted byactivisms related to the transportation issue, managed to mobilizegroups linked to the different themes comprised on this research, asshown in figure 4. The action had as its primary agenda the holdingof a public hearing to discuss the increases of the bus fare occurredthat same month. On the other hand, subjects of less expressivenesswere contained in same themes groups, as can be seen in the case ofurban occupations for housing purposes on the left of the graph, mobilized around

themes such as urban evictions in Canaã (inContagem) and Macuco, Recanto Verde and Limoeiro (in Timóteo), urbanoccupations in small towns of the state of Minas Gerais.

The environmental groups are another nucleus on the right of thegraph whose main discussion topic is a meeting of COMAM (ConselhoMunicipal de Meio Ambiente) in which the licensing for theConstrutora Directional's real estate projects in a green area of almost 200 thousand square meters, would be approved.

The disruption of Fundão dam, in Bento Rodrigues (in Mariana, MinasGerais), occurred on November 5th, 2015, was also a theme that wasable to mobilize the various activism groups in the digital space, asshown in figure 6. The commotion around the disaster is explicit in the fan pages activities in November. However, urban activisms promoted or engaged in fewer off-line actions. This demonstrates that, although often the issues brought in the digital environment reflect ongoing actions - either direct or institutional - outsideit, this is not a rule. Engagement will not necessarily reflectactions beyond this medium.

This graph also reveals the lack of relationship between traditional new activisms. In the isolated group on the left are thetraditional housing activisms, founded between the late 1980s andearly 1990s. This disconnection, noticed earlier in the research andin interviews, delimits the scenario in which, on the one hand, traditional activisms with action rooted in institutionalized channels, and mostly against direct action - radically against emptyland occupations, for example - and on the other, the new activism that usually sees the former as part of the status quo.

Figure 8, which represents the dynamics in January 2016, reveals onceagain the increase in bus fares as a mobilizing issue. There werethree consecutive acts against the increase (calls for actions weremade by MPL-BH) and at the same time two lawsuits were filed allegingirregularities in the increase: one by the State Public Defender'sOffice (Defensoria Pública), triggered by Tarifa Zero-BH, and theother by the Public Prosecutors' Office of Minas Gerais (MinistérioPúblico de Minas Gerais). Even with these articulations, theincrease was maintained.

It is also remarkable in this graph that the disruption of BentoRodrigues dam practically disappears between the shared subjects, evidencing the brevity of the mobilizations that are established in this environment. On the one hand, the very dynamics of internetcontribute to this fact by overlapping information by new informationgenerated. To this disinformation produced by information excess is commonly used the term white out (Prudêncio, 2009). On the otherhand, this fact reflects the very nature of urban activisms articulations, very restricted to the emergency moments for, soonafter, dissolve themselves. Daily obligations and struggles of eachgroup, thus, cause the quenching of a common agenda.

In February, it is important to emphasize the emergence of thefeminist agenda among urban activisms, an agenda that became constantfrom then on, which is revealed in figure 9. The emergence of genderdiscussion in different groups reflects the creation of feministfronts that seek to discuss the gender issue both concerning theiractivisms themes and about the reproduction of gender domination elations within their groups. This is a systematic discussion, although it strengthens at critical moments, such as at the time of proposals against women's rights by Eduardo Cunha in the Federal Congress, or in the case of the collective rape of the 16-year-oldgirl in Rio de Janeiro (these moments appear in the graphs of November and May). It is not possible to say that there is an articulation between these groups, which act in a dispersed way in their activism, nor that there is a unit of thought among these feminist activists (it is even probable that there are a series of conflicts between them). However, the repercussion that Tina Martinsoccupation, a self-managed reference house to women victims of violence, had among other urban activisms seems to show the strength of the gender identity among the activists.

On March 13th, 2016, the first of a series of protests against DilmaRousseff's government took place, what would trigger her impeachmentprocess. This issue became a generalized theme among urban activisms, which can be seen in Figure 10. Resistance, however, occurred in afragmented way.

The process of impeachment and the protests against it continued ascentral themes between the groups during April, as manifested infigure 11. Tina Martins occupation's danger of eviction was alsoone of the articulating themes by then. Its great echo suggests thestrengthening of feminist agenda among urban activisms. Surprisingly, the eviction was suspended by the establishment of a negotiatingtable with Minas Gerais State government. A State-owned house wasassigned to the group, still included in a network to combat violenceagainst women. Its current challenge is to resist autonomously fromthe State, especially financially.

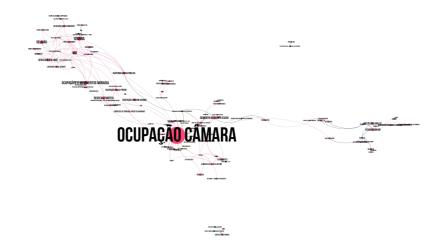


Fig. 4: September2015. Source: The author.



Fig. 5: October2015. Source: The author.



Fig. 6: November2015. Source: The author.



MERCADO SANTA TEREZA

CARNAVAL DE RUA
SALVE SANTA TEREZA

Fig. 7: December 2015. Source: The author.



Fig. 8: January 2016. Source: The author.



Fig. 9: February2016. Source: The author.

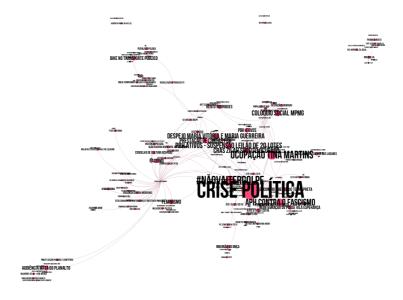


Fig. 10: March2016. Source: The author.

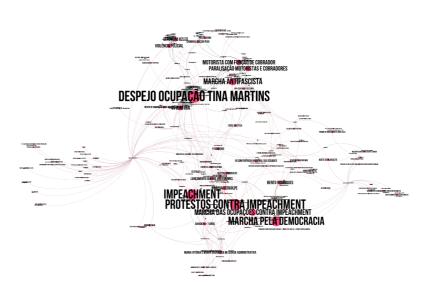


Fig. 11: April2016. Source: The author.

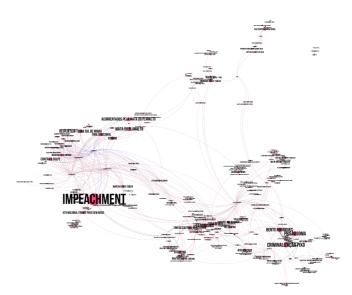


Fig. 12: May 2016. Source: The author.

Final comments

Mobilization moments have the essential role of making civil societygroups more expressive actors and with greater political power,breaking the evident asymmetry of forces with the other actors in theurban space production process. As Marcelo Lopes de Souza and GlaucoRodrigues (2004, 27) argue, there is an evident convergence betweenthe State and dominant groups, in

which the former often intervenesand decides in favor of the latter. That is, these moments have thecapacity to balance, albeit briefly, the power of influence of urbanactivisms in the production of the urban.

However, as we have seen, these moments are, in general, punctualarticulations that emerge as resistances to destitution processes that threaten groups or their agendas. Although they are notcontinuous, gains are glimpsed from these articulations, because in acontext of dispute, their performative character and, therefore, theidea that there is a constant and uninterrupted support networkbetween the activisms, is enough to give them political force. There are significant gains such as the resistance of 9 thousand families in the 16 urban occupations for housing purposes in Belo Horizonte, despite multiple attempts to evict them. The conservation, at leastso far, of two areas of environmental importance threatened by the construction of real estate projects - Mata do Planalto and ParqueJardim América. The promise of shared management between public power and local groups for an old local market located in SantaTereza's district.

As resistances to governmental and private sector processes, thesegains are, for the most part, "non-losses" and, therefore, hardly capable of structural transformations. This is what we canobserve in the speech of one of the activists:

'[...] we are held hostage to the conflict! And being held hostageby the conflict, the other ways of life and other practices dimensions [...] are kept in the background. [...] You overcome the conflict and then you have to build beyond the conflict. How tomobilize, how to ensure people's presence? It is always difficult, and conflict is a great mobilization device' (J.M., 2015).

On the other hand, from these resistance processes can ariseconstructions capable of enlarging the horizon of struggle and also of the activists. The didactic character of the conflict has been reported countless times by the interviewees, whose awareness of their political formations. This is the case of História em Construção group, which was initially set up as a resistance movement to residents' evictions during the real estate works of Vila Viva government program in Viladas Antenas. After the end of the intervention that resulted innumerous evictions, the group continues to act, one of its actions being a community workshop, where the collective management of resources and work objects is discussed, based on sharing knowledge.

Actions, therefore, contribute to the mentality transformation oftheir activists and, in some cases, succeed in expanding into othergroups, resulting in small changes in thinking here and there, albeitin a minoritarian way. In urban occupations for the purpose ofhousing, for example, one perceives a subtle change of thought aboutprivate property. Among its supporters people linked to socialmovements, academia, class entities, etc. - the submission of privateproperty to social and environmental interests has always been aconsensus. Besides, among the residents, especially in the areas of spontaneous formation, it was common to perceive the justifying focusfor their actions in the lack of formal access to housing. Today, although the necessity discourse persists, there is also recognition of the legitimacy of using land that does not fulfill its social function. A beginning, therefore, of questioning the absolutecharacter of private property

Moreover, the limits of these mentality changes can be observed inrecent events as the setbacks related to labor rights, democracy andthe use of police violence against demonstrations during the 2014FIFA World Cup and the Olympic Games, it seems, with a significantpart of society's consent. Contrary to the 99% announced by thefamous slogan of the Occupy Wall Street movement, few people seemwilling to think of other possible horizons or identify themselvesagainst the current reality. With such a limited field of influence,how can urban activism counteract the dominant model of cityproduction?

The small gains that preserve or broaden rights are added to those ofactivist resistance, such as the implementation of Casa de ReferênciaTina Martins, a shelter self-managed by women for women at risk; Thepublic spaces occupied by cultural activities; The taking of the cityby the Festival, though temporary, during Carnival. They are allconstructions that point to another city that overcomes that dominantand essentially capitalist, but still, misogynist, racist andhomophobic one. Although small, incipient and crossed by variouscontradictions, urban activism can bring some freedom, justice, andequality to urban space, working as prototypes of other possiblehorizons, sparks of hope, even more necessary in these dark timesthat await us.

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