

The production of Amazonian urban resistance territories: an analysis of Belém, State of Pará

Produção de territórios de resistência urbana amazônica: análise de Belém, Pará

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Abstract

This paper discusses urban activism, that is, actions of resistance engendered by social movements against socio-spatial inequalities and for the right to the city in Belém, State of Pará, based on the socio-spatial interpretation of their narratives, tactics, and strategies in recent years. We seek to strengthen a geographic theory of urban social movements viewed as a fundamental analytical category for the scalar understanding of the urban crisis that affects several metropolises in the current capitalist context. In addition, we aim to reinforce the importance of dialogue between academia (from a geographic perspective) and social movements (and their struggles for the right to the city), so that they can cooperate in the construction of alternatives increasingly accompanied by greater socio-spatial justice in the production of the urban space.

Keywords: social movements; space production; right to the city; struggle for housing; Belém.

Resumo

Este artigo analisa os ativismos urbanos, isto é, as ações de resistência engendradas por movimentos sociais contra as desigualdades socioespaciais e pelo direito à cidade em Belém, Pará, com base na interpretação socioespacial de suas narrativas, táticas e estratégias nos anos recentes. Objetiva-se fortalecer uma teoria geográfica dos movimentos sociais urbanos encarados enquanto categoria analítica fundamental para entendimento escalar da crise urbana que assola diversas metrópoles no atual contexto capitalista, bem como reforçar a importância do diálogo entre a academia (partindo de um prisma geográfico) e os movimentos sociais (e suas lutas pelo direito à cidade) no sentido de cooperarem na construção de alternativas que estejam cada vez mais acompanhadas de maior justiça socioespacial na produção do espaço urbano.

Palavras-chave: movimentos sociais; produção do espaço; direito à cidade; luta por moradia; Belém.



Introduction

Social movements, their labor demands and their actions against the oppressions established by capitalism had one of their first records in literature when Engels (1988) analyzed the situation of the working class in England, exposing the hardships and resistance in the European context of the class struggle.

After a historical leap, it was in the second half of the 20th century that European and North American urban sociology presented significant scientific production on the forms of organization of urban social movements by authors such as Touraine and Castells, as pointed out by Souza (1988), as well as Tilly and Tarrow, as cited by Souza (2017); in the Brazilian sociological context, there are Gohn (1982), Kowarick (1979) and Valladares (1978); and in Brazilian Geography, most recently, there are Souza (1988) and Fernandes (1999), to name a few names.

As Fernandes (2000) pointed out, many sociological studies, due to their focus, do not deal in depth with the spatiality and territoriality of social movements, whether in the rural space or in the city. In this sense, this text is part of an attempt to contribute to the analysis and understanding of social movements as an object of study, based on a reading that considers their spatialities/spatializations and territorialities/territorializations, seeing them as an analytical geographical category (Fernandes, 2000; Souza, 2017).

Therefore, this text represents part of a research (bibliographical, as well as fieldworks to collect informations) that took place between 2017 and 2019, when there were dialogues

with members of urban social movements in Belém, Pará. There was also consultation of various collections and data sources in public libraries and historical documents that make up the trajectory and memory of the struggle of the sectors mentioned here.

There is the idea that, despite the challenges, "[...] today, more than ever, it is from the social movements, not from the state or the parties, that should be expected to find solutions to the main social problems" (Souza, 2017, p. 347). Great examples have already been (and are being) signaled in this direction, such as the Jornadas de Junho of 2013, the public high schools and universities occupies in 2016 and the actions and gains from *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra* – MST (Stédile and Fernandes, 2012) and *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Teto* – MTST (Souza, 2017), in Brazil.

We are therefore trying to understand the ways (expressed into spatial practices and/or territorializations) in which popular social movements, especially those on the outskirts of the city of Belém, against the socio-spatial precariousness of their lives, attracting society's attention by occupying spaces, by producing (in and through the struggle to gain access to the city) their territories of resistance(s).

So, this text understands the urban occupations in the context of struggle for housing and access to the city as a territory of resistance, in other words, as a confrontation aimed at the exclusionary urban logic. Urban social movements – in their demand for citizenship, access to the city and the struggle for housing – were defined as the object of study, in the spatial context of the city of Belém, based on the metropolization process.

We agree with Pedon (2013) when he sees resistance as a process of opposition and contestation of the predatory capitalist forms imposed on the most marginalized sectors of society and we also agree with the idea that territory can be understood as one of the spatial expressions of class struggles in urban space. Therefore, the focus of analysis will be the struggles waged by urban social movements in Belém in the broader demand for the right to the city.

In the first part, the paper presents its analytical framework, showing the importance of Geography as a fundamental science to understanding the processes (spatial practices and territorialization) that involve social movements. In the second part, a brief history is given of the formation and spatial production of the city of Belém and the relationship between metropolitan dispersion and its new rearrangement of settlements towards the periphery, made possible by social movements seeking access to the city. The third part looks at how current social movements in the metropolis have been developing and building their demands, territorializing and spatializing them through dissident and insurgent practices. The Conclusion examines the situation of social and spatial inequalities in Belem today and the challenges ahead.

Social movements: interpretations from Geography

Fernandes (1999) makes important analyses of social movements and, in order to designate them from a geographical perspective,

he highlights socio-territorial typologies. According to the author, these movements can have a broader character, such as the territorialization of the MST, but they can also be isolated, in other words, they may or may not continue, for example, after the spatial practice of land occupation, being quite unstable and ephemeral.

The territorialized movement or *socioterritorial* movement is organized and acts in different places at the same time, an action made possible by its form of organization, which allows it to spatialize the struggle to conquer new fractions of the territory, multiplying itself in the process of territorialization. A good example of a socio-territorial movement is the MST.

Isolated social movements are those that organize themselves in a municipality or a small group of municipalities to carry out an occupation. These movements receive support from one or more parishes - through pastoral work or not - trade unions, parties, etc. However, their territorial base is limited by the action of the movement. (Ibid., p. 276; our emphasis)

Thus, we can see the importance of the policy of scales of action of these movements, either by spreading their territorialization or by demarcating local actions in quite delimited spaces of the territory.

Souza (2017), highlighting that human practices are not without spatiality, points out that this interdependent relationship with the politics of scales can often, as observed in the Fernandes' (1999) exemple, be very weak/indirect or very strong/complex, depending on aspects ranging from "socio-spatial identity to territorial organization" (ibid., pp. 351-352). Examples of spatially dense social practices

include the territorializations of the Zapatistas in the autonomous territory of Chiapas (Mexico), the *Piqueteros* (Argentina) and the occupations moved by the MTST in Brazil (Souza, 2013).

A distinction needs to be made: the term "social movements" identifies a more ambitious collective action for social transformation; while the term (social) activism is a broader terminology, being the social movement a subset of it. Social activism, in general, is all kinds of lasting collective action (contentious politics) of a strongly public nature, and social movements, strictly speaking, are an ambitious form of social activism (Souza, 2017). According to Pedon (2013, p. 11), based on the perspectives of socioterritorial movements, a social movement is seen as:

[a] type of collective mobilization that is perennial, organized and which, through its actions, criticizes the foundations of current society, based on the processes of accumulation of wealth and concentration of power manifested in the form of territory.

According to Pedon's (2013) theorization, socioterritorial movements express in their practices experiences of resistance to exclusion processes and subordination. Exclusion is a multidimensional socio-historical process in which social inequality nourishes capitalism, but at the same time, exclusion becomes a feeling – shared by disenfranchised groups or social classes – that generates revolt, mobilization and confrontation. Subordination has to do with decisions being made without consulting those who really care. Examples of these practices of resistance can be seen in socioterritorial movements struggling for urban and agrarian reform in Brazil (ibid.).

In the rural space, socioterritorial movements are predominantly made up of peasant movements struggling for land; in the city, they are represented by movements struggling for housing. In the rural spaces and in the city, these movements define their agendas based on a single objective: the construction of their spaces and the conquest of territory, thus promoting the territorialization of the struggle for the territory of life. For these movements, territory is their trump and therefore the reason for their existence, the founding element of their identity – a characteristic that distinguishes them from other forms of mobilization. (Ibid., p. 239)

According to Fernandes (2005), based on Lefebvre (1991) in the sense that space is the condition, means and product of conflictive relations in capitalism, territory is constituted as a totality, it is multidimensional, a space of conflicts, which also includes "multi-territorialities" (Haesbaert, 2004), in other words, it expresses the various struggles and social relations that are inseparable from them. These conflicts, these struggles for territories and spaces are intrinsic to socioterritorial movements that:

[have] territory not only as an asset, but as essential to their existence. Peasant movements, indigenous movements, companies, trade unions and states can become socioterritorial and socio-spatial movements. Because they create social relations to directly address their interests and thus produce their own spaces and territories. (Fernandes, 2005, p. 31)

In cities, according to Souza (2017), the struggles become largely expressive and materialize due to the actions and spatial

practices of the so-called emancipatory social movements. In the case of emancipatory movements, "[...] there is the embodiment of a true praxis [...] horizon of thought and action [...] characterized by the *profound questioning of the current* [heteronomous] *socio-spatial order* and by the mobilization and struggle to overcome it" (Souza, 2017, p. 364; emphasis added). This emancipatory praxis translates into the struggle for the right to the city, in the terms addressed by Lefebvre (1991) and recontextualized by Harvey (2014) when he says:

The right to the city is therefore much more than an individual or group right to access the resources that the city incorporates: *it is a right to change and reinvent the city more in line with our deepest desires*. Moreover, it is more of a collective right than an individual one, since *reinventing the city inevitably depends on exercising collective power over the urbanization process*. (Ibid., p. 28; our emphasis)

It is also in cities that the predatory contemporary processes of capitalist accumulation mentioned by Harvey (2005) give shape to the new imperialism of/in the globalized world, thus expanding what the author calls *accumulation by dispossession* or, in other words, through "urban spoliation" (Kowarick, 1979). These processes of dispossession are often general processes of privatization of life in cities, such as: the commodification/financialization of housing; the privatization of land (assets for real estate speculation); the systematic expropriation of welfare and social assistance rights (to the point of almost or total privatization) from the poorest. Therefore, anti-imperialist social movements, whose right to the city is their

flag struggle, are translated in their practices as possibilities for anti-capitalist transition (Harvey, 2011).

About this, Harvey (2014) points out that the cities of the 21st century are becoming real rebel cities (like the Jornadas de Junho in Brazil), in which the process of accumulation by dispossession has been increasingly debated and fought against by anti-imperialist movements. The author recontextualizes the Lefebvre's idea of heterotopia and highlights the importance of the so-called irruptions of everyday life, of the street, originating in the demands of the most varied struggles against dispossession in cities (anti-racist struggles, feminism, gender, LGBTQIA+ agendas, etc.).

Harvey (2005) therefore proposes some exercises to help anti-capitalist political movements act more incisively in the face of the advance of accumulation by dispossession in cities:

- a) political movements, in order to have any macro and long-term impact, have to move away from nostalgia for what has been lost and, at the same time, be prepared to recognize the positive gains to be made from the transfer of assets that can be achieved through limited forms of expropriation (such as land reform or the implementation of new decision-making structures such as joint forest management);
- b) the seek to discriminate between the progressive and regressive aspects of accumulation by dispossession, striving to direct the former towards a more generalized political goal, with greater universal value than the many local movements which, more often than not, refuse to abandon their own particularity. To do this, however, we have to find ways of recognizing the relevance of the multiple identifications

(based on class, gender, place, culture, etc.) that exist within populations, the traces of history and tradition that come from the ways in which these identifications have been constituted, in response to capitalist incursions to the extent that people see themselves as social beings endowed with distinctive and often contradictory qualities and aspirations. (Ibid., p. 146)

For this reason, thinking about a global scales of action politic, the author proposes that anti-capitalist social movements need to learn lessons from their previous struggles, think about new decision-making and organizational strategies, whether through gains from dialogue with state structures or the institutionalization of struggles, and also give greater weight to the different forms of struggles that constitute the real right to the city for the various oppressed segments of society in their daily lives, overcoming localisms and internationalizing struggles. "Above all, we must assiduously cultivate the connectivity between struggles within expanded reproduction and against accumulation by spoliation" (ibid.).

On the issue of organizing the struggles of emancipatory social movements, Souza (2017) points out that, through tactical means, they can combine direct action and non-partisan institutional struggle for possible immediate and long-term gains. For the author, these struggles can take place together with the state, despite the state, and against the state: the gains that can arise from more institutionalized struggles together with the state (for example, the enactment of laws and decrees that can benefit the implementation of more immediate infrastructures) should not be the point of arrival, since the state is a heteronomous structure (it is risking "playing on the opponent's field", where there can be structural

co-optations of movements), therefore, the author indicates, that struggles despite/against the state should be the focus of emancipatory movements from

[...] a point of view that takes seriously the risk of co-optation and degeneration of the movements and that assumes the need for *profound socio-spatial change* [authentic socio-spatial development] as a prerequisite for being able to speak rigorously and consistently of greater social justice and substantial improvements in the quality of life of the majority of the population. (Souza, 2012, p. 6; emphasis added)

Thinking about the city (and space) from the perspective of social movements full of spatialities and territorialities is a challenge. On the one hand, according to Rolnik (2015), we have a large-scale global advance in real estate speculation and the financialization of housing. On the other hand, we have a growth in the contexts of Brazil, Latin America and the world of urban resistance related to struggles to guarantee and maintain fundamental rights such as housing, forming dissident territories, full of insurgent spatialities, such as the homeless in Brazil (Souza, 2017).

These are stories that are reproduced on a global scale, but, as Harvey (2011) says, "what is to be done?" in the face of the advance of the new imperialism and also, "who is going to do it?" What means will the anti-imperialist movements use? So, according to Harvey (2014), we have two clashing spaces of strategies for action and survival: one of capital and market systems (speculative, real estate, financial, etc.) and the other of anti-capitalist movements. The emancipatory praxis of the seek for greater justice in cities, as noted, is already being built in the daily struggles, and the right to the city must be its horizon

(ibid.). How can geography help to broaden the understanding and implementation of this praxis in the metropolis?

Fernandes (2015) points out that, when approaching social movements as a category of geographical analysis, it is important to understand their forms of organization, but to go further, in the sense of understanding which processes of spatialization they develop, which spaces they build and which territories they dominate (their territorialization). According to the author, these are the starting points for building a *geographical reference theory of social movements*.

According to Souza (2012), the urban social movements that emerged in Brazil and Latin America from the 1960s onwards, and which have undergone transformations and new meanings up to the present day, can largely be seen as:

[Agents] strategically proactive, capable of planning interventions and actions in space and managing territories (although obviously without the economic, political and legal privileges and prerogatives of the state), through the planning and management of 'dissident territories' and *through insurgent spatial practices* – among which the formation of networks on various scales stands out (sometimes on the basis of *self-management* and "*self-planning*").

[...] concrete men and women who, in their resistance and insurgency, in their protests and aspirations, and in their struggle to become protagonists, develop and experiment with spatial practices about which we must reflect, take stock and build scenarios. These practices - and the "*dissident territories*" where they are often observed – represent expressions of attempts to institute the new, politically, materially and symbolically. (Ibid., p. 33; emphasis added)

The notion of spatial practices, according to Souza (2013), derives to a large extent from the propositions contained in Lefebvre (1981) and his theorizations on the production of space. Souza (2013) starts from Lefebvre's idea of spatial practice and proposes, from another theoretical-epistemological perspective (from the libertarian field and Castoriadis' perspective of autonomy), the notion of insurgent spatial practices, as opposed to capitalist spatial practices. Insurgent spatial practices, in this sense, aim "to transform reality, politically speaking" and are imbued with "emancipatory praxis, a sense that is inherently critical of the heteronomous status quo, in varying degrees and ways" (ibid., p. 250).

These insurgent spatial practices in the midst of dissension (inequalities and injustices) faced by social movements make up the so-called territories of resistance of popular struggles in cities or, in other words, dissident territories:

[Spaces] by definition of resistance and insurgency [...] of (re)organization of the strugglers and of "self-viability" (struggling to become and make one's own demands visible), spaces of affirmation of counter-powers, spaces of challenge (ephemeral or lasting, joyful or violent), spaces of (re)construction (and sometimes also of destruction). (Souza, 2017, p. 379)

It is in this sense, briefly speaking, that the proposal of socio-spatial development is presented, aiming to contemplate the spatial and social dimensions in order to point out the possibility of building alternatives for "positive social change". This requires an approach that includes much more social justice and quality of life in Brazilian cities for an increasing number of people as fundamental elements in bringing

about authentic change demanded by the oppressed (social movements, those "from below") who make up the heteronomous Brazilian and planetary urban framework (Souza, 2013). This means thinking of alternatives for mutual support between spheres, whether social movements, academics or geographers, with the aim of achieving the full right to the city through possible dialogues.

In the next part, there is a presentation of the urban context of Belém showing how the actions and practices of the social movements in question help to understand the construction of territories of resistance in the city.

The production of space in Belém: a historical context

According to studies by Moreira (1989), there are three phases to the growth of the city of Belém: the riverside phase, which began with its foundation in 1616 and lasted until approximately the 18th century; the penetration phase, which lasted from the second half of the 18th century until approximately the 19th century; and the continentalization phase, from the middle of the 19th century.

At the time of its formation, the spatial organization of Belém was related to a dendritic urban network, facing the river (Tavares, 2011). Its location (a peninsula bordered by the Guamá River to the south, the Guajará Bay to the west and the Maguari River to the north) was defensive when it was founded (Cardoso, 2007). This configuration dates back to the initial organization of the Amazonian urban network, which, until the 1960s, had simple spatial patterns and few links between urban centers (Corrêa, 1987).

Regional dynamics, starting in the 1950s and 1960s, changed this pattern (river-flooded forest-forest), engendering the supremacy of highways (road-solid ground-subsoil) (Gonçalves, 2005), thus redefining the conjuncture of the Amazonian urban-regional network – now more complex due to the actions of the state (Corrêa, 1987) and decisively influencing the metropolization and restructuring of Belém (Trindade Jr., 2016). In this sense, major resource exploitation projects were directed towards the Amazon, attracting a large population of migrants to the region and to the urban centers, in this case the city of Belém (Rodrigues, 1996; Cardoso, 2007).

The inadequacy of public policies of social interest to meet housing demands and the predominance of a typically modern paradigm in existing official policies (since only the demands of the middle-income urban population were taken as a reference for housing policies) led newcomers to create informal settlements (Cardoso, 2007, p. 14).

In view of the historical data pointed out, Trindade Jr. (2016) proposes adding the recent phase of Belém's metropolization – from which we will work – which began in 1960 with the implementation of the economic integration of the Amazon with other regions of Brazil (Northeast, Southeast and South), especially with the construction of highways that cross the Amazon region. This phase has been consolidated in recent years with the dispersion of the city to Augusto Montenegro and BR-316 highways.

The metropolization phase was marked by ambiguities: on the one hand, we have, more than ever, the consolidation of an extremely modern, sophisticated and artificialized way of life; on the other side, we have the growth of

the lower tertiary sector, the housing deficit, the accentuated favelization, the insufficiency of urban services and equipment, etc. (Ibid., p. 23)

With this restructuring of Belém's urban space, a portion of the population was directed, either by public policies or compulsorily, to areas further away from the center (deconcentration), advancing to the current Marambaia neighborhood and beyond, in Icoaraci/Outeiro; and, at another point, to the BR-316 axis (Ananindeua and other nearby municipalities). This was the peripheralization of the dispersed metropolis (ibid.).

In this process of metropolitan dispersion in Belém, a correlation of unequal forces imprints vectors of occupation, use, appropriation, consumption, production and reproduction of space that spread throughout the urban tissue and are engendered/protagonized by different agents of the production of space, in this case, those represented by agents of high socioeconomic *status* and, at the other end, those of low *status* (ibid.).

This is how socio-spatial segregation is reproduced, according to which the poor occupy the periphery devoid of spatial amenities and the rich, or better paid fragments of the working class, occupy more central neighborhoods. (Ferreira, 2012, p. 130)

According to Ventura Neto (2012), it was at the turn of the 1990s to the 2000s that the real estate groups' efforts to incorporate spaces intensified, such as the axis of the Augusto Montenegro highway, now known as the New Belém. At this time, once again, the lower socio-economic strata were displaced to areas further

away from the city center, largely contributing to the formation of new clandestine settlements in the outlying districts.

The analysis of the configuration of these spatialities presupposes an unveiling of the correlations of these real estate market forces in the production of space which, in the transition from the 1980s to the 1990s, expresses a synthesis of multiple determinations (from the confined to the dispersed form) that still redefine the conformation of the Belém metropolitan space in this second decade of the 21st century, considering the relations of the periphery with metropolization (Trindade Jr., 2016) and the agents of urban production (Corrêa, R., 1989).

The struggle for housing in Belém: conflicts between 1980s and 1990s

Belém is a city with profound social contrasts, expressed in its urban space. The urban occupations carried out by excluded social agents are an expression of the housing deficit that plagues this metropolis as part of a process of "metropolization of poverty" (Trindade Jr., 2016).

The situation of urban poverty and inaccessibility to the formal city is expressed in a housing deficit which, based on 2015 data from the João Pinheiro Foundation (FJP, 2018), is in the order of 6,355,743 in Brazil; 314,643 in the state of Pará; and 101,835 in the Belém Metropolitan Region. It can be seen that these socio-spatial inequalities in the metropolis,

from the 1980s to the 1990s, became the driving force behind struggles for access to the city.

[After] a long process of growing urban problems and disorganized socio-territorial growth in the city, as well as a period of repression caused by the dictatorship, the Urban Social Movements [MSU] in Belém became articulated, following the national process of the 1970s and 1980s of struggle for re-democratization, in which they emerged in the city's peripheral neighborhoods. In the 1990s, a new form of organization emerged for these political subjects, acting in councils and forums; this took place in a gradual process of occupying these spaces, which intensified in the 2000s. (Costa, 2016, p. 56)

The production of urban occupations and/or informal settlements in the city of Belém thus forms part of the practical and alternative, creative and inventive solutions – stemming from direct socio-spatial action (Souza, 2017) – found by low-income populations in order to gain access to the city that is denied to them. Souza (2017) points out that these types of practices oppose the heteronomies (prison spaces) reproduced in cities in the sense that they "try to oppose 'new agoras', more or less consistent and authentic – dissident territories, sometimes animated by genuine self-management and genuine self-planning – through insurgent spatial practices" (ibid., p. 454).

During the early 1980s, following the intellectual trend of Marxist approaches, many sectors of society gave political support to the struggles for access to housing by the low-income population; this consisted of endorsing the demand for ownership of the land they occupied (Cardoso, 2007, p. 14).

In this way, the process of producing Belém's urban space was largely due to this context of resistance and popular struggles for housing. Under the thought of spatial organization and the production of urban occupation territories, Belém's social movements contributed greatly to the construction of authentic socio-spatial development, from dissident territories, in the terms of Souza (2013 and 2017), to the constitution of an urban rebellion (Harvey, 2014) that culminated in the expansion of urban settlements, as attested to by Trindade Jr.'s (1998) dispersed city thesis. These socioterritorial movements were very dynamic and multidimensional in their political action and imbued with the contradictions present in the unequal class society, as can be seen below.

One of these important social movements in the context of Belém's urban growth was the Comissão de Bairros de Belém (CBB), which emerged at the end of the 1970s to articulate and organize struggles, especially for housing (Cruz, 2011).

The main thrust of this process came from the struggle for housing, as it was a need capable of bringing together a large part of the population. Thus, the struggle for the right to housing provoked a process of organization and mobilization of the neighborhoods in the Campaign for the Right to Live, organized by the Comissão de Bairros de Belém (CBB) [...]. (Moura, 2004, pp. 91-92)

One of the CBB's agendas was to hold governments accountable for urban infrastructure works, as well as to press for the titling and expropriation of urban land for low-income housing (Rodrigues and Ribeiro, 2017). Today, the CBB is no longer active.

On February 8, 1992, the Forum Metropolitano de Reforma Urbana (FMRU) was created in Belém as a result of the debates held at the Forum Nacional de Reforma Urbana (FNRU). Among the FMRU's main demands were the push for greater popular participation in the Urban Master Plan from 1996 onwards, the seek for improvements in public transport in Belém and also greater social control in urban structuring projects such as the macro-drainage of the Una basin (*ibid.*).

Other urban social movements struggling for housing and access to the city were the Federação Metropolitana de Centros Comunitários e a Associação de Moradores (together they form the acronym Femecam), which were made up of the political forces that participated in the CBB (Andrade, 2012).

Both the CBB and Femecam are now disbanded due to internal contradictions: the political disagreements between the members of these movements were stronger than their initial pretensions of social change (Costa, 2016).

With regard to the praxis of the struggles waged by these movements, many authors have debated the issues of the production of urban space, housing, the right to the city and urban social movements. Their considerations will be dealt with briefly below.

Abelém (1988) tackled the issue of the removal of people from the outskirts of Belém's city center in sense to carry out a critical analysis of the role of the state as a planning agent, through its technicians, and urban modeler, as well as recording the affected residents who were resettled to housing in Conjunto Providência. This "removal was for whom?

And for what?", the author asked, revealing that this project did not meet the wishes of the population, which was relocated, disarticulated and did not participate in the process in order to propose alternatives.

As Cardoso (2007) points out, the policy of beautifying and adapting unhealthy areas often distances itself from the causes of poverty and "[...] has an influence on the procedures of [...] official agencies that encourage high-tech engineering works for sites inhabited by people who have no other choice: to slum" (*ibid.*, p. 19).

Rodrigues (1988), when talking about the "banished from the city", revealed that they were united in their condition as social agents excluded from the right to the city, since they were expelled from it and resettled in what was then Cidade Nova, in a government "attempt" to solve the housing issue. The residents then produced their own space, giving a new sense to the "city" to which they had been settled.

Once again, the technical vision of Belém's urban planning prioritized the elites through isolated state actions, further exacerbating urban problems in the metropolis of the Eastern Amazon (Corrêa, A., 1989).

Trindade Jr. (1993), in his approach to the process of reproducing urban space in Belém's sanitized lowlands (*baixadas*), presented his first theories on the confined metropolis, which soon spread to the BR-316 and the Augusto Montenegro highway. This is an interesting piece of work, as it takes a geographical approach to the changing use of urban land in the capital, specifically the lowland areas occupied by people of low socio-economic status, many of whom have been incorporated by real estate capital.

Cruz (1994) analyzed the urban social movements in Belém, precisely the one operating in the Sacramenta district, in order to present their struggle for much more participation in issues involving housing and democratic participation processes, such as the expansion of collective action, with a view to greater political participation and citizenship within the metropolis.

Rodrigues (1996), addressing Belém's "urban adventure", analyzed the built environment of Belém's urban space. As a result of national and regional impositions, which began in the second half of the 20th century, the metropolis reproduced a space as a means of reproducing social inequalities and environmental quality, which was defined by the poverty of segregated spaces. The aforementioned author points out that:

Despite this absolutely exclusionary character that marks the life of the working classes in Belém, their responses in the direction of the necessary structural changes are expressed in very rich examples of organized struggle where today the movement in favour of an urban reform that will signify an important step in the historical process of the humanization of humanity stands out. (Ibid., p. 237)

Silva (1995), when analyzing the production of space on the Caratateua island due to the pursuit for housing by excluded social agents, highlighted the social and spatial contradictions and inequalities inherent to the capitalist mode of production that began to hit the island hard from 1986 onwards, when the state government, under the management of Jader Barbalho, built the Enéas Martins bridge (known as the "Outeiro bridge"), which facilitated access to land and the expansion of precarious settlements on the island.

Alves (1997), in treating Belém as the capital of land invasions, points out, analyzing the case of Paar (in reference to the Pará-Amazonas-Acre-Rondônia housing complex), that the invasions materialize the struggle for urban land as a collective action and political act of confrontation and claiming rights denied by the state, even though there are ambiguities and contradictions that concern the certain co-optation of leaders and movements by political agents.

Trindade Jr. (1998) addressed the metropolitan restructuring of Belém and its new settlement spaces, an analysis in which he emphasizes that the metropolis is now dispersed (previously compact or confined to the first league), in which the production of space by excluded social agents, by the state and by agents of real estate capital spreads the urban space towards the new axes of urban-real estate expansion, in which new content-forms come to make up the socio-spatial morphology of the city.

What can be seen, at least in the city of Belém, is an urban plethora of socio-spatial practices, actions and movements that can be schematized according to Souza's (2017) propositions, when he points out that the autonomy of agents can involve participation in decision-making processes together with the state, despite the state and against the state. An example of collective actions together with the state that generated relative participatory gains in municipal administrations in Belém was worked on by Malato (2006), who looked at democratization in public management in the Amazon based on the participatory budget and the city congress in Belém do Pará from 1997 to 2004, during the then administration of Edmilson Rodrigues, of the Workers' Party.

In Trindade Jr.'s (1998) analysis of the spontaneous settlements in Belém, the actions together with the state and against the state were very close, as can be seen in the chain of the so-called "invasion industry" between the government (state figure), career politicians, landowners (who benefited from the expropriations granted by the state), professional "invaders" (who managed the occupations), occupants ("invaders"), intermediate occupants ("invaders" opportunists) and the occupation (land). The case of Paar, analyzed by Alves (1997), was very close to this chain of relationships. Housing as a logic of necessity (Abramo, 2007) is also expressed in these networks. We believe that this chain is still very useful for understanding the case analyzed in this article.

Territorialities in Belém: contemporary urban struggles

Fundamental to the new milestones of social movements in the city of Belém in the second decade of the 21st century were the Jornadas de Junho, 2013, as these events have come to be known.

These demonstrations, sometimes seen as "ownerless" or "without hierarchies", sometimes "leaderless" and "popular", were linked to the Movimento Passe Livre (MPL) due to the calls made through networks of struggle and resistance and also social networks. However, they overflowed their bases, bringing together other groups around the agenda of reducing public transport fares and consequently expanding. (Sobreiro Filho, 2016, p. 349)

In 2014, the MPL in Belém organized a number of actions around the city using cyberspace, mobilizing sections of the population, student movements, left-wing political parties and their groups. Among the agendas was that of "zero fares", as well as adequate housing. Its principles are federalism, self-management, popular autonomy and non-partisanship, giving the movement a libertarian bias, with the participation of punks, anarchists, black blocs, etc.). The MPL can be considered a socio-spatial movement "because it does not aim to build a territory in itself, but rather to promote a struggle that contributes significantly to the transformation of the relations that regulate space and contest certain territories" (ibid., p. 119).

Belém also has an anarchist/punk/libertarian movement that is too much rooted in social struggles for the right to a fairer city. Since the early 1990s, it has produced a number of self-managed experiences, such as the first Libertarian Culture Centre, Casa Utopia, which operated in the old "Morada da Arte" space; the Maxwell de Souza Ferreira Libertarian Library; the Cabano Centre; the Grassroots Organization Movement and, more recently, the Amazon Libertarian Culture Centre. These urban social movements aim to transform society in practice, with mutual support, solidarity between social movements in the city and the countryside, social criticism of the capitalist mode of production and its ills, through social grassroots work in communities, as well as leisure, cultural and protest activities.

From 2014 until 2019, other movements were gaining more prominence, such as the Movimento de Organização de Base, Pará

(MOB-PA). This is a social movement that pursues, through the mobilization of organized people, to struggle for the rights and most immediate needs of our people, whether in education, health, culture, work, etc. Collectively and horizontally, it seeks to build tools of struggle that help in the daily journey towards these goals, such as culture centers, libraries, workshops, cultural activities, production work and collective income generation, educational spaces. Community work is advocated as a central element in the movement, because it is in the peripheral neighborhoods and lowlands (baixadas) of Belém where the oppressed people, the target of the actions of this socio-territorial movement, are found, and where there is a need to resume social insertion and long-term grassroots work (MOB, 2018). Other movements in the city are highlighted below.

Currently, on Belém's southern riverfront, the large urban project so called Portal da Amazônia, part of the Macrodrainage Program for the Estrada Nova Basin (Promaben), affects urban populations, segregating them insofar as it spectacularizes this part of the metropolis as a concept of consumption of the global economy aimed at renovating spaces, which transfigures labor and housing relations, in addition to the very relationship of uses of the river (Cruz, Silva and Sá, 2015) and which

Still in relation to the impact on housing, it can be said that the solutions pointed out solve the demand of the program, taking care of the situations of relocation of families, but they do not solve the housing situation, because, according to the demands of the social movement in defense of urban reform, programs like this should provide for the construction of housing units in the intervention areas

themselves, avoiding the relocation or vulnerability of the families affected. (Ibid., pp. 239-240)

With regard to these and other urban conflicts, according to information provided by Rodrigo Peixoto, the coordinating professor of the Observatory of Urban Conflicts in Belém, which is linked to the Federal University of Pará (UFPA), the Observatory aims to establish consultancies and dialogues with popular movements in the city that are struggling for basic sanitation, against hate crimes, against socio-spatial and racial segregation, and that are resisting to the gentrification processes. Then:

Conflict is an essential element of the city's political life, it is a key to interpreting the segregated urban space that reveals its colonialities and resistances against the actions of removal of black and brown populations from their places of life, work, housing and sociability. (Encarte II Seminar of the Observatory of Urban Conflicts, Belém, 2017)

UFPA's Social Service Faculty has the Programa de Apoio à Reforma Urbana (Paru). Created in 1981, it was institutionalized in 1992 and is a group that works in the areas of teaching, research and extension, advising and showing solidarity with the struggles for the right to the city in Belém and its metropolitan region (Paru, 2018).

Linked to Paru and UFPA's Urban Conflict Observatory are the Front of the Damaged of the UNA Basin, the Urban Popular Committee, the Centro de Estudos e Defesa do Negro no Pará (Cedenpa), the Quilombola Community of Abacatal, the Our Library Cultural Space,

the Front of the Damaged of Tucunduba river, the Association of Residents of the Portal da Amazônia Project, members of the Terra Prometida Community (which was recently removed) and the Human Rights Commission of the Legislative Assembly of the State of Pará. (Encarte... 2017). This plethora of urban social movements in Belém have a common agenda - Urban Reform. However:

At the current situation, urban social movements face the challenge of organizing the population to demand basic human rights, since individualism and conservative values resulting from the process of intensifying neoliberalism are increasingly becoming part of the population's daily life, thus preventing people from seeing themselves as a collective. (Santos and Dias, 2017, p. 11)

According to Trindade Jr. (2016), the agents involved in the production of space maintain relations, interests and contents that guarantee the continued reproduction of these unequal social relations of use and appropriation of urban land over the space-time course of Belém's urban-metropolitan development. Space is therefore a product, a condition and a means of reproducing these conflicting relations, and is a fundamental element for understanding them.

In the metropolis of Belém, for example, the housing issue is worsening as the high price of urban land and rents, the lack of social housing policies and low salaries force the working classes to occupy idle land on the outskirts under precarious conditions of sanitation and infrastructure, which is at the same time the context of struggle and survival in the city (Pinheiro et al., 2007). For Belém city:

Notably, a modern, capitalist land logic – along Latin American lines – has deepened, in which private ownership of urban land coexists with high rates of precarious housing and public administration is more associated with regional economic elites than with any form of public interest. (Cardoso et al., 2016, p. 13)

The housing deficit is reproduced as a problem of the metropolitanization process in Belem, stimulated by national and regional capitalist dynamics in Brazilian urbanization. This dispersion has configured a socio-spatial rearrangement that has exacerbated the inequalities and fragmentation of the urban space, (re)producing peripheral residential spaces or the Expanded Area of the Metropolis, in which sprawl has redefined its interior, impacting it intensely (Trindade Jr., 2016).

Belém, like so many other urban centers in the Amazon, is an unhealthy city, suffering from precarious sanitation, transport, housing, health, violence and the cost of living. However, as Cardoso (2007, p. 17) points out, in "such a context, it is advisable to learn how to build spaces that do not subject the population to the traps of poverty and, if possible, to learn how to build spaces that can help overcome this situation". Hence the importance of greater participation by grassroots popular organizations to overcome this situation.

Conclusions

By using the geographical tools for reading social movements highlighted in this text, it can be understood that, throughout the recent

metropolitan formation of the city of Belém, excluded social agents have used (and still use) spatial practices, strategies and tactics that shape territorialities and territorialize their struggles for access to the city, such as the production of new settlements in the periphery.

We agree that what happened in the city of Belém from the second half of the 20th century onwards was, on a large scale, the construction of an emancipatory urban socio-spatial practice, in the terms of Souza (2013 and 2017), in the sense of opposing the inequalities produced by capitalism.

On the other hand, there is also a scenario in which housing as a social right, according to the Brazilian Constitution, in its Chapter 2, art. 6, and the competencies of the Union, states and municipalities, established in art. 23, item IX (Brazil, 1988), is still not a reality in large urban centers, as well as in metropolitan regions, as is the case of Belém, Pará. It's no wonder that the conflicts between the agents involved in the production of space in Belém have increased, largely due to the dissatisfaction of the poorest with the inefficiency of the state in providing constitutional social rights.

Linked to the violation of the right to housing, since the state does not adequately address this issue, is the growing Brazilian housing deficit, which reveals the frightening number of missing homes, more than 6 million in 2015 (FJP, 2018).

Faced with this scenario, "what is to be done?", as Harvey (2011) puts it, to have the right to live and to be a subject of rights. In other words, what is the alternative found by excluded social agents to have the right to the city? Perhaps one way out is socio-spatial insurgency, that is, the continuous construction of dissident territories, confronting heteronomies, as pointed out by Souza (2017), such as housing occupations.

In the presence of the current challenges identified in the process of production of the Belém city as a whole, to the extent that the problem of precarious living conditions in the metropolis still reproduces unhealthy housing settlements, there are no ready-made recipes for what to do. But, as mentioned, many movements, such as the housing movement and the MPL, have already announced alternatives, including the use of cyberspace for mobilizations.

In these terms, the construction of a theoretical-methodological geographic tool that supports the understanding of social movements (Fernandes, 2000) for cooperation in the production of "alternative spaces" (Cardoso, 2007) is necessary. Fernandes' (1999, p. 292) calls for action, which expresses what has often been done by popular movements: "occupy, resist, produce [...] the logic of resistance to exclusion, exploitation and expropriation".

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