7 Conclusions

"… Understanding, interpreting and addressing the needs of every inhabitant of the city is a duty of the architect that requires a change in education…"
Cavalcanti, 2019

This research endeavoured to answer a set of questions related to how space in informal settlements is shaped by the everyday activities of its inhabitants, and how this understanding can help planners and designers provide better solutions for redevelopment or resettlement of citizens, by providing designs and strategies that are culturally sensitive and place-bound. It did so by conducting an ethnographic investigation that included years of participatory observation in two Brazilian favelas located in the Northeast of Brazil, since 2008, followed by a post-occupation analysis after the residents of one of the favelas studied were resettled into formal housing units in 2010, through a time-series analysis.

The main methodology used to analyse the data of the research, the extended case study method, has allowed me to connect the data collected in the field to broader questions of human habitat, unveiling the spatial needs of the most deprived groups of society. Thus, the finding of the importance of labour to housing the poor brought by this thesis to the study of informal settlements and housing is not only valid to Brazilian Favelas and its inhabitants but may be generalised to informal settlements and its residents all over the world, as both the findings and challenges of this research were contextualized with the challenges and deficiencies of housing and informal settlements of other countries in the Global South and were connected to fundamental and universal needs of the poor (Chapter 2-3-5-6).

The main question of this research was to understand if and how labor, together with other social practices, influence the design of spaces in informal settlements. I have concluded that labor is a fundamental category to understand how spaces in informal settlements are shaped, planned and governed. Labor, among other basic social practices, shapes spaces and ultimately dictates how informal settlements emerge, consolidate and interact with the rest of the city. I hoped to understand these aspects into both their theoretical, intellectual and practical dimensions, which I believe should be the aim of any research, particularly that performed by planners and architects because of the nature of their profession, which is meant to both

observe and analyse how society and space interact in practice but also to frame and conceptualize ideas that will allow them to act in service of society by means of design and planning.

Hence, another issue tackled by this research refers to how architects must interact with those for whom they design for, in order to conjure spatial designs that dignify their ways of producing and using urban space. In other words, architects must understand how people make cities if they wish to help them make better cities. This has led to the following sub-research questions. Two questions that address the theoretical aspects of housing from a methodological perspective. The first refers on how the connections between social practices and space can be investigated in informal settlements. Thus it was seeked to interpret the spontaneous ordinary language of design of the spaces in favelas in a tool and an asset for architects and planners, unveiling new flexible spatial standards in informal settlements. Finally, the practice and responsibility of architects and planners facing such challenges were questioned with respect on how to address self-construction processes that emerge from the needs of residents.

Several conclusions were drawn by this research. First of all, the attributes that are currently used to define informal settlements do not address their entire complexity (Chapter 2). In fact, the lack of adequate construction and sanitation standards that are generally used to define slums are not sufficient to explain the spatial processes that were observed in the informal settlements studied in their complexity (Chapter 2).

Instead, this research has found that the everyday social practices of human beings producing, and populating space are of paramount importance (Chapter 1). These are practices related to residents' self-esteem, intimacy, inhabitation of the dwelling, communal practices of solidarity, to self-reliance, to community ties in the sphere between private, public and shared spaces, to labor (Chapter 4). And from those everyday practices, labor practices are the most crucial.

According to the findings of my research, I conclude above all that slums are primarily shaped planned and governed by the labor practices of their residents (Chapter 2, 3,4,5). First, in both settlements studied, houses, alleys and overall neighbourhoods are primarily defined by the citizens' working practices (Chapter 2). The façades, interiors, and backyards of the houses in these slums adapt to allow domestic life and work (Chapter 2).

Incremental spaces are constantly being added to include part time or fulltime work; they accommodate both domestic and working activities simultaneously (Chapter 3). Alleys are planned to follow the rationale of labor activities (Chapter 3).

In the *Favela Sururu de Capote*, alleys are straight to facilitate the process of fishing, manufacturing and commercialization of *sururu*, the small mollusc typical to the area; and in The Favela do Telégrafo, alleys are built to facilitate commercial and service activities (Chapter 2,3).

Work governs the logic of informal settlements. Residents usually prefer to set their business activities in the margins of the favela, next to the formal city, or in the main alleys of favelas (Chapter 2). Work prevails again and again (Chapter 2). Both settlements under scrutiny have emerged from the need of the first settlers (usually migrants from the countryside) to access work opportunities (Chapter 2). Those residents have considered the features of the terrain and nearby infrastructures, such as buildings, transportation nodes and other facilities, and natural resources available in the new settlements, following the rationale that they could offer them a source of income and survival (Chapter5). In the case of the *Sururu de Capote*, the lagoon was (and is) the most important source of income to a population composed by fisherman (men) and shell cleaners (women), and in the case of the Favela do Telégrafo, it was the proximity to a street market that allows the possibility of income generation to informal residents, and proximity to the city centre that offered formal work to a population greatly composed by masons (men) and domestic servants (women) (Chapter 3).

Work places the men and women living in the favela in the global economic flows of capital (Chapter 3). Labor practices in favelas influence the rest of the city, and have an impact in the world economy (Chapter 3). The work produced by the residents of the *Favela Sururu de Capote* is exported to other parts of the world, and the products traded and manufactured in the market of Jacintinho travel around Brazil (such as the famous *Feira de Caruaru*, a traditional market-town in the State of Pernambuco). The labor of masons, domestic servants, hairdressers and many more builds the economies of the formal city, and hawkers, peddlers and carters connect both informal and formal realms. (Chapter 3).

The fact that labor should be included in a new conceptualization and definition of slums explains the fact that current housing approaches that aim to resettle inhabitants of informal settlements in traditional housing estates mostly fail (Chapter 5). This was proved by one example of a resettlement of residents from a favela to a social housing designed by local authorities analysed in Chapter 5. Poor residents living in informal settlements and relocated to formal housing characterized by

improvement of the initial sanitary and structural conditions, but without considering the social practices of the prospect users. Users in this case started soon to bring back again the working practices originally performed in the slums (Chapter 5). In fact, these working activities are still the only source of income for the residents, and are used to pay the monthly instalment of the newly received housing unit (Chapter 5).

Thus, work as an analytical category is conceived in this thesis as a housing right (Chapter 5). Labor practices steam from the everyday need of residents to survive, thrive and self-affirm their existence as citizens, as men and women bearers of dignity within society (chapter 5). Therefore, in the thesis, practical solutions and models in which labor may be integrated within the domain of housing are elaborated and frame a new concept of housing for the poor, based on human production and livelihoods (Chapter 6).

I have explained that the favela is an urban ecosystem, and not a residual city, merely created for the purpose of residence of the poor in the city (Chapter 6). It is a 'city' born with the same exigencies of the cities, but it is constrained within the limits of the continence and, it is not actualized with the needs of the 'formal city' (Chapter 6). It is a state of primary order (Chapter 6). Which has been prevented in part from the aim of architects to follow the response (*pars construens*) to the assumption that slums are only spaces of lack of structure and sanitation (*pars desconstruens*) (Chapter 6). Hence, with this new epistemologic paradigm, I hope that architects understand that housing the poor means also restoring the integration between labor and homes, that existed since the beginning of human production, and that has been overlooked by modernism impetus, the determinism of architecture and planning practice, and the industrial modes of production (Chapter 6).

Overall, this doctoral research has gathered empirical and theoretical evidence that allows us to define slums as both an outspring and a nest of work practices, besides their particular sanitary and structural challenges (Chapter 2). Hence, these findings expand and re-conceptualize the theoretical frameworks about slums and raise questions on the scope of knowledge previously produced about this subject (Chapter 2). The aim is not to contest the current ontological definition of "slums" as spaces of poverty and lack of sanitation, because these characteristics are undeniable, but rather to consolidate and sow a new knowledge production and research practice that expands the current definition of slums to one that both shows and explains the complexities of slums, their emergence and expansion as spaces of labor, apart from residence, life and transformation of poor citizens in the city (Chapter 2).

Therefore, new epistemologies and pedagogic tools seemed to be needed to make visible what was invisible in the contexts of informal settlement, namely the social practices, highlighting their crucial influence on space production, so as to understand the real needs of the poor, seeking to reform the hierarchical and parochial, technocratic approach found in the literature of architecture and planning, and taught in schools of architecture. I claim we need to reformulate approaches concerning the study of poverty, and the spaces inhabited by the poor (Chapter 4). This is the favela pattern language I propose in Chapter 4. This is a pedagogic tool for understanding and learning the spaces of informal settlements from an ethnographic perspective, via drawings and descriptions of the everyday life of its residents (Chapter 4). It shows the correlation of social practices of residents with the spaces produced in several categories and contributes to the planning and design literature by unveiling and decodifying the production of space by the poor (Chapter 4).

Finally, this thesis discusses the role of the architect as investigator of spatial realities and as a scholar not only centred in questions of form, creativity, imagination and techniques, but also of humanity, sociology and anthropology (Chapter 1, Chapter 6). I believe the findings of this work call for a change in education in architecture, meaning to unveil the needs of deprived persons living in society (Chapter 6). Understanding, interpreting and addressing the needs of every inhabitant of the city is a duty of the architect that requires a change in education, claiming to recover the role of architect as investigator of spatial realities (Chapter 6). (fig.7.1)

FIG. 7.1 Picture of a workshop of the *School of Favela Architecture* (2009-ongoing) in the Favela do Telégrafo. Source: Ana Rosa Chagas Cavalcanti, 2014.

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