

“FORGOTTEN” OPEN SPACES AND “OMITTED” SOCIAL GROUPS

HARDT, Letícia Peret Antunes; ^{a*} HARDT, Carlos; ^b HARDT, Marlos; ^c

(a) PhD in Forest Engineering. Professor Pontifical Catholic University of Paraná (PUCPR), Curitiba (PR), Brazil. ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6661-0050>. CURRICULUM LATTES: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/0732134873966902>

(b) PhD in Environment and Development. Professor Pontifical Catholic University of Paraná (PUCPR), Curitiba (PR), Brazil. ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2240-3436>. CURRICULUM LATTES: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/5024605265137208>

(c) Master in Urban Management. Professor Pontifical Catholic University of Paraná (PUCPR), Curitiba (PR), Brazil. ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4374-0653>. CURRICULUM LATTES: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/3478534420625652>

(*) CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

Address: PUC/PR - Rua Imaculada Conceição, 1155, CEP: 80215901, Curitiba (PR), Brasil. Tel (+ 55 41) 32712623

E-mail: l.hardt@pucpr.br

ABSTRACT

For many reasons, open spaces remain “forgotten” in the functional dynamics of cities. In this scenario, the main objective of this study is to analyze experiences of the use and appropriation of these places, considering the theoretical references pertinent to facing the problem of their gradual “forgetfulness”. In order to do so, the work starts with the interpretation of empirical examples: five Brazilian state capitals in different geographic regions, urban insertions, economic conditions and non-original local functions. The results obtained lead to an understanding of the problems posed in differentiated positions in the urbanized network and to the perception of alternatives to mitigate the social vulnerability of at-risk groups, especially children and adolescents exposed to psychoactive substances. Shared spatial appropriation, with spatialities, temporalities and functionalities related to the sense of collectivity and the discernment of citizenship, offers possibilities so that these individuals do not also remain “left out” and “omitted” in that debate.

Keywords: Urban spaces; Social risks; Empirical experiences; Brazilian metropolis.

RESUMO / RESUMEN

ESPAÇOS LIVRES “ESQUECIDOS” E GRUPOS SOCIAIS “OMITIDOS”

Espaços livres restam, por inúmeras razões, “esquecidos” das dinâmicas funcionais das cidades. Nesse cenário, o objetivo central deste estudo consiste em analisar experiências de uso e apropriação desses locais, consideradas as referências teóricas pertinentes ao enfrentamento da problemática do seu paulatino “esquecimento”. Para tanto, partiu-se da interpretação de exemplos empíricos – cinco capitais de estados brasileiros em diferentes regiões geográficas, inserções urbanísticas, condições econômicas e funções locais não originais. Os resultados alcançados conduzem à compreensão dos problemas preconizados em diferenciados posicionamentos na malha urbanizada e à percepção de alternativas de mitigação da vulnerabilidade social de grupos de risco, especialmente crianças e adolescentes expostos a substâncias psicoativas. A apropriação espacial compartilhada, com espacialidades, temporalidades e funcionalidades relacionadas ao senso de coletividade e ao discernimento da cidadania, oferece possibilidades para esses indivíduos não permanecerem “omitidos” e “omissos” naquele debate.

Palavras chaves: Espaços urbanos; Riscos sociais; Experiências empíricas; Metrôpoles brasileiras.

ESPACIOS LIBRES “OLVIDADOS” Y GRUPOS SOCIALES “OMITIDOS”

Espacios libres quedan, por innumerables razones, “olvidados” de las dinámicas funcionales de las ciudades. En este escenario, el objetivo central de este estudio consiste en analizar las experiencias de uso y apropiación de esos lugares, consideradas las referencias teóricas pertinentes al enfrentamiento de la problemática de su “olvido” gradual. Para tanto, se partió de la interpretación de ejemplos empíricos - cinco capitales de estados brasileños en diferentes regiones geográficas, inserciones urbanísticas, condiciones económicas y funciones locales no originales. Los resultados alcanzados conducen a la comprensión de la distribución de los problemas preconizados en diferenciados posicionamientos en la malha urbanizada y a la percepción de alternativas de mitigación de la vulnerabilidad social de grupos de riesgo, especialmente niños y adolescentes expuestos a sustancias psicoactivas. La apropiación espacial compartida, con espacialidades, temporalidades y funcionalidades relacionadas al sentido de colectividad y al discernimiento de la ciudadanía, ofrece posibilidades para que esos individuos tampoco permanezcan “omitidos” y “omisos” en aquel debate.

Palabras-clave: Espacios urbanos; Riesgos sociales; Experiencias empíricas; Metrôpoles brasileñas.

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INTRODUCTION

Despite the difficulties inherent in the debates on planning and urbanism (ULTRAMARI, 2009), to which could also be associated discussions about urban design and urban management, it is noteworthy that, regardless of the epistemological option, their “objects” comprise constructed environments that harbor social, economic and institutional “relationships” invariably not restricted to their own limits. With the accentuation of the phenomenon of urbanization, these “fixed points” and “flows” have been progressively altered (SANTOS, 2008).

While planning can be considered as an integrated and permanent process of city organization, urbanism comprises a set of continuous practices for its modification (SECCHI, 2017); both generally take on a more strategic character. Otherwise, with a predominantly tactical feature, urban design is more given to the physical-spatial composition (CUTHBERT, 2010), while management is primarily concerned with managerial and administrative aspects of the urbanized environment. In short, however, all the terms have strong multidisciplinary interactions.

Lefebvre (2006 [19740]) interprets the city as a real territorial conformation of the built environment, coupled to the abstract social, economic and institutional phenomenon of the urbanization process, which invariably surpasses the borders of that environment. Santos (2008) conceptualizes the urban space as a hybrid result of materiality and society. Its visual expression is understood as landscape, formed by the interaction of natural and cultural elements over time (MAZZONI, 2014, MUÑOZ-PEDREROS, 2017).

Corrêa (2002) emphasizes the importance of the formation of territories, that is, areas delimited by the appropriation of a particular group or individual, generating collective and personal sensations of socio-spatial belonging. However, Raffestin (1993 [1980]) warns that space predates territory, because it is formed from it by the phenomenon of its territorialization by the actors involved. In the scope of this study, the adjective “socialized” reinforces social interrelationships, including that of citizens with places.

The urban landscape results from the accumulation of various lived times. Its component spaces - constructed or free of buildings - form an indivisible set, with the latter being, to a large extent, places of socialization. Lamas (2014) considers this construction of humanized scenarios as collective patrimony; therefore, citizens - and society itself - have the right to live in aesthetically qualified environments, with territorial planning for the defense and preservation of the environment.

Queiroga (2011, p.27) explains that urban open spaces are those that are discovered, “vegetated or paved, public or private, [...] regardless of their size, aesthetic, functional and land-use qualification”. Examples include: streets, squares, parks, gardens, backyards and patios, among many others (MENDONÇA, 2007). When de-functionalized, they can be characterized as “voids”, commons in accelerated processes of urbanization, in which “cities are made and remade” (HARVEY, 2014, p.30).

In this context, the problematic of the present study lies in the conjuncture that, in Brazil, some urban open spaces traditionally characterized as places of sociality are, for innumerable reasons, “forgotten” in the functional dynamics. Others, however, are replaced by new socio-spatial conformations. Thus, their landscapes are the consequence of society’s momentary experiences (LOBODA; ANGELIS, 2005).

In general, Brazilian cities are planned without the effective participation of certain actors, reinforcing their spatial marginalization and their social segregation (DIAS, FERREIRA, 2015), with increased levels of socio-environmental vulnerability. In these circumstances, Sierra and Mesquita (2006) cite that children and adolescents’ personalities and behaviors are more vulnerable to involvement with drugs, as well as other risk factors. So, it is worth emphasizing the possibilities of reinforcing functions for public urban spaces, such as physical activities and socio-cultural practices that promote new interests for drug users, to compete in some way with psychoactive substances.

In light of the above, the main objective of this article is to analyze the experiences of the use and appropriation of certain urban spaces, considered as theoretical references pertinent to the problem of their gradual “forgetting”. In order to complement the broader-scoped research, alternatives are sought to mitigate the increasing vulnerability of some at-risk groups, with an emphasis on children and adolescents subject to the use of psychoactive substances. These central aims are investigated from the processes detailed below.

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

The research structure was based on exploratory, descriptive and analytical methods, starting with the interpretation of empirical experiments, with a selection of five examples in capitals of Brazilian states, chosen for their representativeness in the national urban network, in different geographic regions, and for their varied socioenvironmental standards and historical-cultural aspects. Three typologies of urbanized areas - central, intermediate and peripheral - were also considered, associated with different economic conditions and with distinct non-original functions in the spaces in question (Figure 1 and Table 1).



Figure 1 - Aerial image of the location of the urban areas of the empirical experiments studied according to Brazilian geographic regions

Source: Elaborated based on Google Earth (2018) and IBGE (2015).

Table 1 - General characteristics of the empirical experiments studied

| City / State | Geographic region | National urban category | Area (km ²) * | Urban population [total] (inhab.) * | Spatial typology | Urban insertion | Non-original function |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Teresina / Piauí | Northeast | 4 | 6.502 | 799.186 [850.198] | Urban empty | Peripheral / intermediate | Primary production |
| Macapá / Amapá | North | 5 | 1.392 | 450.971 [474.706] | Square | Peripheral | Socio-cultural integration |
| São Paulo / São Paulo | Southeast | 1 | 1.521 | 11.985.851 [12.106.920] | Square | Intermediate | Environmental education |
| Brasília / Distrito Federal | Central-West | 2 | 5.780 | 2.917.866 [3.039.444] | Plaza | Central | Permanent commercialization |
| Curitiba / Paraná | South | 3 | 435 | 1.908.359 [1.908.359] | Plaza / street | Central | Temporary commercialization |

Source: Elaborated based on regional, intra-urban and functional diversity selection criteria.
Scores:* = based on IBGE (2017)

1 = metropolis with an urban population of more than 5,000,000 inhabitants.; 2 = metropolis with an urban population between 2,500 and 5,000,000 inhabitants.; 3 = metropolis with an urban population between 1.000.000 and 2.500.00 hab.; 4 = metropolis with an urban population between 500,000 and 1,000,000 inhabitants.; 5 = metropolis with an urban population of less than 500,000 inhabitants.

This stage was linked to scheduled technical visits to the aforementioned capitals, from 2014 to 2017. Occasionally, free consultations were also carried out with personnel related to the administration of the locations visited and to individuals involved with non-original forms of appropriation of certain open spaces in these metropolises.

At the same time, the discussion of previous experiences was based on the analysis of the content of theoretical references from the results of prior bibliometric analysis (OLIVEIRA; PELLIZZARO, 2014), carried out in international and national contexts. Aiming at a quantitative survey of studies developed by the scientific community on themes of interest, published in periodicals and annals of events, among other sources, this technique allows the identification of behaviors by mapping authors and institutions working in the areas of knowledge involved (FERREIRA, 2010).

On a global scale, the SCImago Journal Ranking (SJR, 2013) and the documents published between 2000 and 2013 (OLIVEIRA; PELLIZZARO, 2014) were adopted. This temporal cut enabled the research to carry out technical visits to the empirical experiments precisely in the subsequent years. Among the ten best placed journals in this ranking, specifically in the field of urban and regional planning, the study highlighted the Urban Studies journal (SAGE, 2013)). Despite occupying the sixth position at the time, it was the one that had the highest number of articles (192 - 28.7% of the total) related to the search terms (public spaces; social and environmental vulnerability; urban open spaces; and drugs, besides their derivatives and correlates) (OLIVEIRA; PELLIZZARO, 2014).

In the Brazilian scenario, the same terms were searched for in the Portal of Periodicals of the Coordination of Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES, 2013), which since 2000 has made a relevant part of the country's scientific production available, thus the same time cut was adopted. Only 63 articles were found for this period, a significantly lower proportion (32.8%) than the foreign situation (Oliveira and Pellizzari, 2014). The synopsis of the main bibliometric results is shown in Figure 2, where it is possible to note the significant concern with social and environmental vulnerability (39.3% and 46.0% of international and national texts, respectively) and the expressive relationship between urban public spaces and drugs (48.9% and 50.8% of foreign and Brazilian articles, in that order).

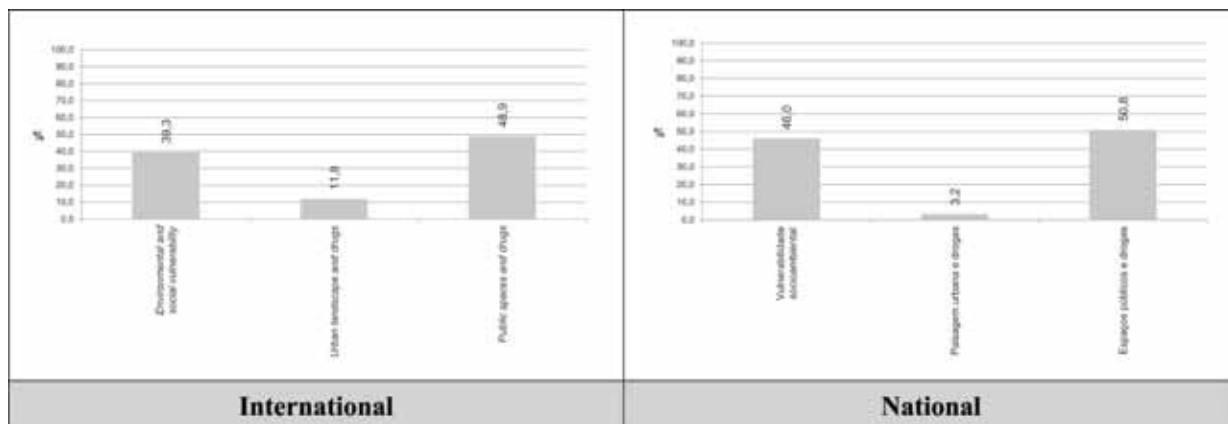


Figure 2 - Graphs of proportionality of articles surveyed in the international journal (left) and in the national journals portal (right) - 2000 to 2013

Source: Elaborated based on Oliveira and Pellizzaro (2014).

The final selection of the main theoretical references for the discussion of the empirical experiments studied herein occurred according to their greater degree of adherence to the theme of the present investigation, with an emphasis on the approach of children and adolescents for linkage with wider-scale research. According to Brazilian legislation (BRAZIL, 1990), childhood includes people from zero to eight years of age, while adolescence comprises individuals from twelve to eighteen.

It is worth mentioning that in the following sections of this research only the selected sources in the literature most opportune to the debate are cited: international (ANDRES, 2013; BEAZLEY, 2002; BLERK, 2013; BROWN, 2013; CRAWFORD; BELL, 2012; PICKERING; KINTREA; BANNISTER, 2012; ROSADO, 2008), and national (ALVES et al., 2010; COTRIM; BICHARA, 2013; CRUZ, 2011; GONZALES; GUARESCHI, 2008; MELO; BARROS; ALMEIDA, 2011). However, others have also been added with a view to deepen the discussion, especially in the item related to relational analysis, which confronts the theoretical and practical aspects most relevant to the critique of the subjects addressed. The results of the application of this set of procedures are presented below, in accordance with the new functionalities of each empirical experiment.

PRIMARY PRODUCTION

This example involves the long experience of the Community Vegetable Garden Program, begun in Teresina, Piauí (Northeast Region), in the mid-1980s. At the time, the City Hall, seeking to improve the conditions of needy children on the periphery of the city, provided the possibilities for the development of activities aimed at their professionalization, implementing the first four experiments (PMT, 2000).

According to information from the Municipal Department of Rural Development (SMDR, 2017), the program was reformatted to a model that was still the basis of the remaining vegetable gardens in the late 1990s (MONTEIRO; MONTEIRO, 2006). One of its main goals is the use of unoccupied areas, that is, “forgotten” by the urban dynamics and that negatively impact the surrounding community. With the development of horticulture by family groups from the region itself, it is possible, on the one hand, to generate employment opportunities with income aggregation for these citizens and, on the other, to prevent the continuation of marginal actions that generate insecurity and troublesomeness (PMT, 2000), some of which co-opt children and adolescents into contact with psychoactive substances.

With the development of the project, the families became involved, mainly due to the high unemployment rate identified in the municipality at that time. Thus, the focus of the program preferentially involved poor settlements on the periphery. Community vegetable gardens then began

to influence the quality of the population's food and to generate work and income. In addition, they contributed effectively to the increase in the supply of vegetables, which was reflected in the reduction of the consumption of products imported from other states (SMDR, 2017).

In the mid-2000s, Teresina had 50 community vegetable gardens in the urban area, corresponding to just over 175 hectares, with 86% being the "conventional" type, that is, with tubular wells, manual irrigation and reduced dimensions, growing herbs and vegetables. The remaining 14% were of the "agricultural field" type, using surface water courses and water bodies in more developed irrigation systems, including the use of sprinklers, resulting in slightly more diverse crops. The municipality also had 10 vegetable gardens in the rural area, comprising almost 40 hectares, 30% of the first category and the remainder of the second category (MONTEIRO; MONTEIRO, 2006).

The largest housing estate in the capital of Piauí - Dirceu Arcoverde - was chosen to start the project, with its first resources originating from the National Foundation for the Well-Being of Minors (FUNABEM). The areas of implantation also contributed to the safety of the neighborhood, since several gardens were installed under the high voltage networks of the Hydroelectric Company of São Francisco (CHESF), locations with a high risk for the construction of houses. Also located in permanent conservation areas along rivers, they prevent the irregular occupation of these spaces. After the experimental period, the vegetable gardens showed positive results, satisfactorily fulfilling their initial objectives. With the increase in their number, the activity became predominantly family-based, with about 68% of horticulturists' work shared with children and spouses, with little more than 31% without the participation of family members and less than 1% with the sporadic employment of third parties (MONTEIRO; MONTEIRO, 2006).

The technical visit programmed by the present research was carried out in three of the most important and successful experiments of this type of primary production in Teresina (Figure 3), each one taking advantage of spaces available for a variety of reasons. The community vegetable garden of Vila São Francisco Norte, located in the northern portion of the city, is an urban block, surrounded by residences (Figure 3 - left view), bordered by a Reference Center for Social Assistance (CRAS). The original characteristics of the area correspond to a remnant of the urbanization process inserted in the urbanized fabric, reserved, at first, for a future square.

In the same region, there are other examples of community vegetable gardens, among which the Moçambinho also received a technical visit (Figure 3 - central view). One of its essential features is that it is composed of land on the banks of the Poti River, located in the great floodplain (close to the areas of permanent conservation), whose soil, due to the fluvial influence, is naturally fertile (SMDR, 2017); these plots are spatial remains wedged between the access road and the waterway.

As mentioned above, another class of underused land optimized by the Teresina project originates from the strips of land used by the high voltage power grid that cut through the urbanized grid. In the case of the Community Garden of Grande Dirceu (Figure 3 - right view), they are extensions of land less than 100 meters wide, located in the southeast portion of the city, surrounded by dwellings slightly less densely than in the previous cases. In the specific testimony of one of the beneficiaries, a horticulturalist for more than 25 years in the program, who, in addition to growing, sells part of her production on the spot, there is mention, as great advantages of the project, its geographical location - with potential buyers - and the opportunity to keep her children occupied, preventing them from being idle and exposed to traffickers and drug users. It should be noted these offspring spent all their early lives developing these agricultural practices. Although this positioning demonstrates the degree of these parents' concern, as residents in environments of high social vulnerability, regarding the time their children and young people are exposed to undesirable activities, it may also incorporate eventual substitutions of time for leisure, sport and culture, or even of inactivity, by child labor. However, Brazil's recent efforts towards significant advances in eliminating the economic exploitation of children (DOL-US, 2018) should be highlighted.



Figure 3 - Aerial image and views of empirical experiments of primary production - community vegetable gardens in Teresina, Piauí (Northeast Region)

Sources:¹ = based on Google Earth (2018);^{2,3,4} = collection of research (2015)

This experience of community vegetable gardens proves the possibility of incorporating socio-economic functions in urban spatial remnants, together with the control of at-risk social groups. Starting from the assumption of the importance of the location in the creation of the social identity

of the subject and addressing theoretical references regarding the relationships between adolescence and the living place, it is verified that the interests of young people in public spaces come second due to their inexpressive relevance in the structure of the formal economy (PICKERING; KINTREA; BANNISTER, 2012).

However, the low interaction of these people with their areas of daily experiences and their dissociation from security policies contribute to the development of antisocial behaviors and alternative forms of territoriality in their collectivities (BROWN, 2013). In many cases, this latter fact culminates in violent situations in peripheral regions, commonly observed in Brazilian neighborhoods, where these individuals have few options for their own development, being subject to high levels of social vulnerability and low levels of community life (ALVES et al., 2010).

SOCIOCULTURAL INTEGRATION

The Dance Project in Macapá Square integrates an extensive group of cultural projects implemented in the capital of Amapá (North Region) (Figure 4). In partnership with non-governmental organizations, cultural activities are developed in open spaces, mainly squares, with community involvement, mainly emphasizing aspects originating from local peoples, such as the marabaixo. Related to events of devotion to Catholic saints, this manifestation congregates dance, music and song, and is linked to a strong social identity. With a marked occurrence in settlements of black populations, their verses - called “ladrões” (thieves) - refer to the process of territorial occupation of the region, reporting the history of the ethnic group, which enables the continuous transmission of memory between generations (MORIM, 2018).

According to information from the State Secretariat for Tourism of Amapá, capoeira, banzeiro, hip hop and batuque, as well as other artistic expressions, with various musical styles (SETUR-AP, 2017) are also valued. After prior reconnaissance of the venues where the public shows are held, the scheduled technical visit for the present research coincided with one of the presentations, held at the Plaza Zero Square on the occasion of the event called “Equinox of Waters”, coordinated by the Secretariat in this peripheral region of the capital of Amapá. In a building there was an exhibition organized by academics with displays demystifying the astronomical phenomenon and the clockwise or counterclockwise direction of water flow in the terrestrial hemispheres (Figure 4 - left view).

To celebrate the exact moment of the equinox, musical performances of various styles were held in the open area of the square. These events were organized by several grassroots groups, with manifestations strongly linked to local communities, such as capoeira and the marabaixo dance (Figure 4 - central and right views, respectively). It is worth emphasizing the remarkable presence of children and adolescents, as well as the interaction of other citizens with these events. Even though there were no other exhibitions scheduled at that time, the cultural activities developed in squares have been strongly supported as an important means of minimizing the risks of underutilization of open spaces (SETUR-AP, 2017).

This experience underscores the need for lively cultural structures in urban public areas, both to prevent the “disremembering” of open spaces and for the direct involvement of different age groups from local communities. In this example, it is possible to perceive the engagement of childhood and adolescence to reinforce their feelings of belonging to the city. Children and young people need their own places for development (CRUZ, 2011), but these are practically non-existent in a large part of the irregular occupations in Brazilian metropolises, for example, where the experience of spatial restriction is concrete, which contributes to the sense of social exclusion of children and young people in relation to their own city.



Figure 4 - Aerial image and views of empirical experience of cultural integration - academic shows and musical presentations at the Plaza Zero Marco in Macapá, Amapá (North Region)

Sources: ¹ = based on Google Earth (2018); ^{2,3,4} = collection of research (2015)

Several studies developed by national institutions and international organizations, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), focus on the susceptibility of children and young people associated with poverty, violence, sexuality and drugs (GONZALES; GUARESCHI, 2008). At the same time, they provide subsidies for the development of public policies to control the threats induced by these less-favored strata in the direction of their peripheralization (BLERK, 2013), which are also compatible with educational actions.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

The experience of Victor Civita Square, in the state capital of São Paulo (Southeastern Region) (Figure 5), became emblematic as an example of the recovery of a “forgotten” space in the city, which, before this intervention took place, was subordinated to degrading activities that caused discomfort and concerns for the neighborhood community, consisting of commercial, service and residential buildings. After its recovery, the location began to offer a wide cultural, sports, leisure and environmental education program to the general public (HELM, 2011).

With an innovative character, the square has a stage and bleachers for 290 people, as well as the building of the old Pinheiros incinerator, recovered to host exhibitions and events. Interpretative panels (Figure 5 - left view) allow different locations and equipment to be identified, with an emphasis on those aimed at the dissemination of water conservation processes and the development of organic farming practices (Figure 5 - central and right views, respectively), among others.

The site is managed by the Friends of the Victor Civita Square Association, based on a structure that provides for the involvement of companies, public institutions, third sector organizations and the community of São Paulo to maintain and carry out the planned activities. Also called the “Open Space of Sustainability”, this archetypal public-private partnership, especially fostered by the Instituto Abril and the Municipality of São Paulo, has led to the development of multidisciplinary actions to convert a degraded area into an example of the rehabilitation of spaces and recycling of uses (HELM, 2011).

The process of upgrading the square is noteworthy for the works being carried out with resources from a traditional business group and is named after its leader. Other characteristics have also promoted its selection as an empirical example for this research, in particular its educational character - formal and informal - that permeates the actions organized in its interior, whether by private initiative or public responsibility. It is also worth mentioning the responsibility of a non-governmental organization for the promotion of integration between the interests of the community and the municipal government, helping in the promotion of events.

The square is home to several events, with environments and equipment that induce both passive and interactive uses, as well as language courses and theatrical and musical performances. In the sectors aimed at demonstrating sustainable practices for the use of natural resources with productive activities, attention is drawn to the direct communication with the user, explaining socio-environmental principles and reinforcing the educational character that has made this experience the object of several technical and scientific investigations, including their sustainable solutions.

Private management has enabled the rehabilitation of the space for public uses, such as concerts, exhibitions and courses, making the enterprise self-sustaining in economic terms. In the cultural context, the aim is to catalyze community and educational development, with broad access to programs linked to the Covered Arena, the Third Age Center, the Environmental Education Workshop, the Rehabilitation and Sustainability museums and the Nucleus of Investigation of Soils and Groundwater, among others. To that end, it counts on the participation of institutions such as the Environmental Sanitation Technology Company (CETESB), the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), the São Paulo Museum of Art (MASP) and the Verdescola Institute. In the ecological sphere, through partnerships with some of these entities, in addition to the Institute of Technological Research (IPT), the square offers investments in sustainability research, focused on, for example, wood certification, a plant laboratory, rationing energy use and the use of organic systems for water recycling, among other topics of interest (LEVISKY; DIETZSCH, 2009).

Even though there are controversies regarding the architectural and landscape solutions adopted in the new project for the space, there are gains in its execution, not only in terms of the environmental restoration of a degraded site, but above all by the increase of educational actions, the result of integration between local community interests, private business organizations and the public

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authorities. The following basic premises were defined in order to shape the square’s programming: the maintenance of its vocation as a model, as focus and forum for debate on sustainability; free and regular offerings of quality cultural programs for different audiences and age groups; the development of environmental education actions, focused primarily on children and adolescents; and the composition of a leisure and meeting space, with a constant planning of activities (HELM, 2011).

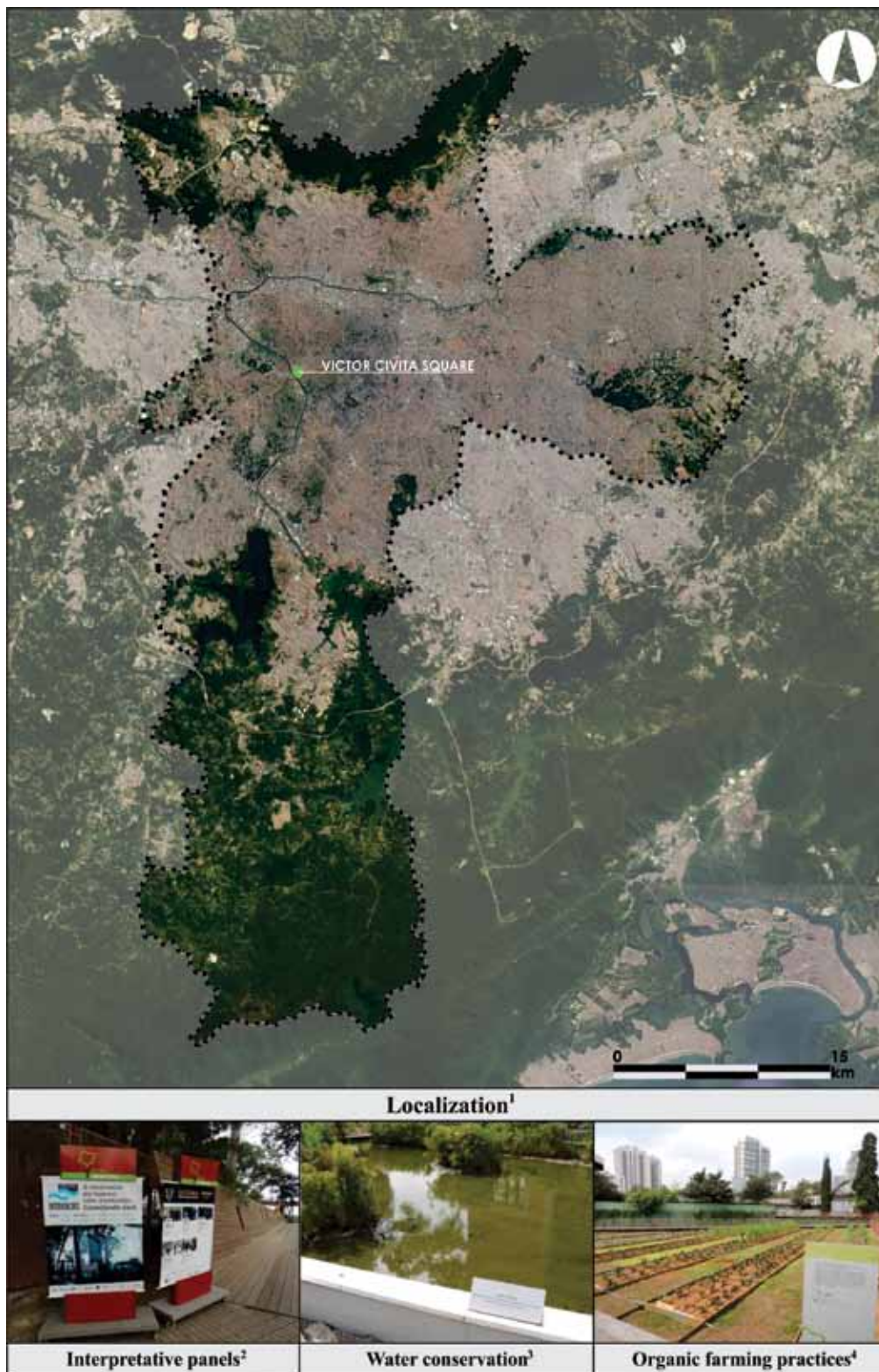


Figure 5 - Aerial image and views of empirical experience of environmental education - sustainable activities at Victor Civita Square in São Paulo, São Paulo (Southeast Region)
Sources: 1 = based on Google Earth (2018); 2, 3, 4 = collection of research (2014)

Therefore, this empirical experience reveals the conditions to deal with issues related to various aspects of sustainability, in an appropriate open space by several social strata, with an emphasis on environmental education for children and adolescents. These aspects gain relevance in the urban expansion processes of the Metropolitan Region of São Paulo, where areas of significant social and environmental vulnerability have high levels of land use irregularities. In this scenario there is a significant presence of precarious settlements, with unfavorable socioeconomic conditions. As a corollary, it is faced with the gradual overlapping of problems and the constant aggravation of risks (ALVES et al., 2010).

Thus, initiatives such as the conception of Victor Civita Square also meet pressing metropolitan needs, since the Brazilian conjuncture, like other Latin American realities, promotes the development of cities in an unequal and unsustainable way (CRAWFORD, BELL, 2012). Considering the forms of occupation of spaces by children and adolescents in urbanized areas in the country, as well as the physical and social environments experienced in areas of environmental degradation and spatial restrictions, two modes of territorial use can be distinguished by these individuals: planned (playgrounds, for example) and spontaneous (in different places) (COTRIM, BICHARA, 2013, CRUZ, 2011).

The former are usually located in squares and parks, where the lack of conservation and surveillance is commonplace; in the latter, they often occur in alleyways, streets, roundabouts and similar areas where there is exposure to risks such as violent situations, illicit activities, drug use, motor vehicle conflicts and other contemporary threats. Controlled environments such as those in the example in question minimize these problems. In addition, they contribute to the intellectual formation of children and young people, in whom it is fundamental to establish positive patterns of human behavior (ROSADO, 2008), optimizing their future chances of insertion into the labor market.

PERMANENT MARKETING

By the end of the 2000s, the Brasilia TV Tower Handicraft Fair, Federal District (Central-West Region) (Figure 6), was located at the base of that landmark of the national capital, operating at weekends since 1970 (FATV, 2018) and serving as a support for commercial activities linked to handicrafts and gastronomy, as well as housing community leisure options. At the time it was known as the “Hippie Fair”. Today, a specific space (Figure 6 - left view) has been set aside for its products (Figure 6 - central view) and facilities (Figure 6 - right view).

Although managed by the Federal District Government (GDF), it is also administrated by the Association of Exhibitors, Artisans, Artists and Food Handlers, which organizes its activities and associates. Currently, it operates almost uninterruptedly, including holidays, with approximately 600 stalls. It is considered one of the local poles developing the solidarity economy, as it has generated almost 1,400 direct and indirect jobs, making it one of the most visited points in Brasilia in the middle of the current decade, with an average of 60 thousand people per month (SELT -DF, 2017).

The relative precariousness of the facilities at its inception was transformed in 2011 (SELT-DF, 2017), by the Development Agency of the Federal District, resulting in a physical structure offering better conditions to both the artisan and the visitor. There is a large imbalance in the influx of people between weekdays and weekends, and there are many rooms that only operate when there is greater demand. However, the existence of the fair has enabled the generation of work-related activities, including of adolescents, since there is a family involvement in the production and commercialization of the products.

According to testimony of one of the stallholders, it has helped to keep his son away from “bad company”. This fact corroborates the premise of this study that there are alternatives for attracting the interest of children and adolescents in urban spaces, even with a certain level of social control. The young people themselves point out that drug use is one of the principal causes of violence

and consider the greater intensity of policing as an important strategy for coping with the problem (MELO; BARROS; ALMEIDA, 2011).



Figure 6 - Aerial image and empirical experiences of permanent commercialization - Craft Fair of the TV Tower in Brasília, Federal District (Central-West Region)

Sources: ¹ = based on Google Earth (2018); ^{2,3,4} = collection of research (2015)

Based on information from the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF, 2002), the highest consumption of these substances is found in classes A and B, with records of about 22% and 20%, respectively. These figures contradict the common belief that the use of narcotics is mainly linked to the less favored strata of society, especially those living in urban peripheries (MELO; BARROS; ALMEIDA, 2011). Therefore, the involvement of children and young people in profitable family activities - permanent or temporary - in spaces subordinated to a certain degree of social control, bring important repercussions to their community insertion, valuing different paths that can be taken by the collaborative process (ANDRES, 2013).

PERIODIC MARKETING

As part of the open spaces in Curitiba, Paraná (South Region) (Figure 7), the Largo da Ordem Fair is officially named the “Garibaldi Art and Craft Fair” (GALANI, 2017), due to the distinctiveness of the meaning of its main activity, that is, trade in non-industrialized goods, many of them related to the arts. The diversity of artisanal and artistic products is remarkable and is one of its main expressions.

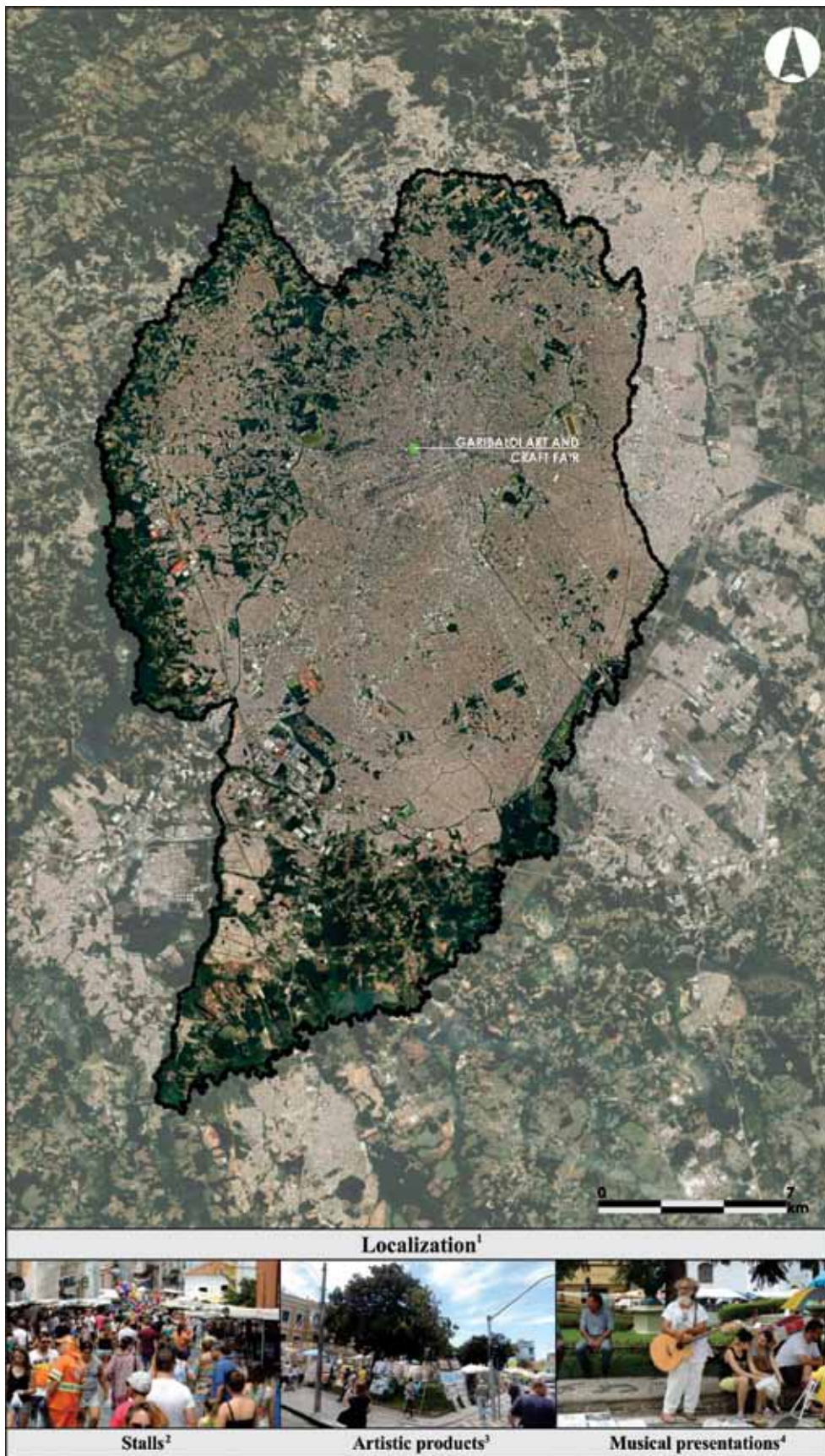


Figure 7 - Aerial image and empirical experience of periodical commercialization - Garibaldi Art and Craft Fair in Largo da Ordem in Curitiba, Paraná (Southern Region)
Sources: 1 = based on Google Earth (2018); 2, 3, 4 = collection of research (2017)

Located in the historical sector of the city, it was opened due to the independent initiative of some craftspeople in the early 1970s, which is why it was called “Feirinha Hippie”. At present it only opens on Sundays (IMT, 2018). According to information from the Municipal Tourism Institute (IMT), one of the co-administrators, due to its success, the Municipality took over its organization, gradually expanding beyond the original patio to the surrounding streets - São Francisco and Kellers streets; currently it is about one kilometer in length (IMT, 2017). It is also worth mentioning that the fair is a point of reference in most of the portals that deal with tourist activities in the capital of Paraná.

In this urban sector, already configured as a traditional tourist attraction containing the historical center of the city, a new tourist product was created, which, due to its scale and different social strata, both of merchants and visitors, strongly values trade (Figure 7 - left view). According to the testimony of one of the stallholders, “what was an ‘extra’, today is my main source of income”, involving the whole family, including the children and adolescents who use part of their free time in lawful occupations.

These conditions generated a differentiated dynamic for the region, which by simple local observation allows an inference regarding the quality and quantity of professionals involved, of different age groups. In addition, related actions are carried out, especially related to the arts, with an emphasis on music (Figure 7 - central and right views, respectively). Thus, several artists present themselves in contiguous open areas, individually or in groups, such as Choro and Seresta, which have been active for more than 40 years (UFPR, 2013). For Santos (2017, p.354), “art is the privileged proof of human immanence”.

Even with the intense circulation of people and with the development of commercial and cultural activities, the presence of street people and small groups of individuals linked to drugs, whether legal or not, can be observed. These, despite their reduced influence, permit the perception of the importance of spatial occupation from the sociocultural and economic points of view (BEAZLEY, 2002). In this perspective, there are concerns about public safety issues, since some adolescents are wrongly treated as risks, especially those from poor communities (BLERK, 2013).

This vision conditions the direction of public policies to the exclusion of these less favored strata from central and nobler areas of the city, moving them to more peripheral regions. This guideline was applied prior to the 2010 Football World Cup, aiming to disguise the presence of these young people, thus contributing to the further marginalization of this population in South Africa (BLERK, 2013). Similar discriminatory acts were also witnessed during the edition of the same event in Brazil in 2014.

RELATIONAL ANALYSIS

With a view to analyzing experiences of use and appropriation of previously “forgotten” urban open spaces, Figure 8 summarizes some of the main convergences and contradictions of the empirical examples studied. As a response to the research of greater scope of which the present work is integral, it is worth remembering that the selection of these locations also sought to interpret the involvement of children and adolescents in the sense of potentially distancing them from psychoactive substances, or by their performance in specific functions in those places. Considering the characteristics described above and weighted for each of the cases addressed, it is difficult to evaluate the exclusively comparative character between these objects; even so, some relational and critical aspects deserve attention.

As a result of the selection criteria adopted, the functional diversity of the analyzed experiences (association of primary production, socio-cultural integration, environmental education, permanent commercialization or temporary commercialization) is verified under different spatial typologies (empty, square, plaza and street) in differentiated positions in the urbanized network (central, inter-

mediate and peripheral). As expected, all the examples have multifunctional characteristics of use, with emphasis on the Victor Civita Square (Open Space of Sustainability, São Paulo, São Paulo, Southeast Region), which is inserted in the largest metropolis (RIBEIRO et al., 2009), including its wide range of urbanistic functions, which leads to the hierarchy of places as stated by Santos (2008). In compensation, Alves et al. (2010) also indicate the increase of situations of vulnerability in their intra-urban scale, with the probable omission of certain groups (CRAWFORD; BELL, 2012).

| City / State / Geographic region / National urban category | Current function | | | | Tipologia espacial | | | Inserção urbana | | Use | Appropriation | Observations | | |
|--|--------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|--------|-----------------|--------|-----|---------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| | Primary production | Socio-cultural integration | Environmental education | Permanent commercialization | Temporary commercialization | Urban empty | Square | Plaza | Street | | | | Central | Intermediate |
| Teresina / Piauí / Northeast / 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | Median functional diversity | Restricted access | Minor purpose of socio-cultural integration |
| Macapá / Amapá / North / 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | Functional “ephemerality” | High sense of belonging | Greater interpersonal relationship |
| São Paulo / São Paulo / Southeast / 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | Wide functional diversity | Controlled access | More significant re-functionalization intervention |
| Brasília / Distrito Federal / Central-West / 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | Median functional diversity | Reduced sense of belonging | Greater homogeneity of treatment |
| Curitiba / Paraná / South / 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | Functional “ephemerality” | Medium sense of belonging | Socio-spatial heterogeneity |

| | | |
|----------|-----------|-------------------------------|
| priority | secondary | complementary or non-existent |
|----------|-----------|-------------------------------|

Figure 8 - Aspects of use and appropriation of spaces in the empirical experiments studied
Source: Prepared based on the results found.

Notes: 1 = metropolis with an urban population over 5,000,000 hab.; 2 = metropolis with an urban population between 2,500 and 5,000,000 inhabitants.; 3 = metropolis with an urban population between 1.000.000 and 2.500.00 hab.; 4 = metropolis with an urban population between 500,000 and 1,000,000 inhabitants.; 5 = metropolis with an urban population of less than 500,000 inhabitants.

Among the examples studied, the experience in São Paulo is the result of the most significant intervention of spatial re-functionalization, based on management by partnership between the governmental administration and the productive sphere. Guillen (2014, p.5) recognizes the “relevance of private sector participation in urban development, because despite the state’s responsibility, due to technical, administrative and financial constraints, the public power has encountered obstacles in the full accomplishment of this purpose”.

Another relevant situation of local use concerns functional “ephemerality”, as in the experiences of the Garibaldi Art and Craft Fair (Curitiba, Paraná, Southern Region), where socio-spatial heterogeneity is perceptible, and of Marco Zero Square (Macapá, Amapá, North region). Geographically distant, both promote the attraction of other attendees for the periodic transformation of their use, similar to the alternative forms of territorialities cited by Brown (2013).

This regular change of functions also widens the appropriation of sites by different social strata. This is one of the preponderant factors to the constitution of citizenship, including children

and young people (GONZALES, GUARESCHI, 2008; MENDONÇA, 2007), given Pickering, Kintrea and Bannister’s (2012) assertion about the very interference of the place in the formation of the social identity of the individual. Andres (2013) points out that the collaborative planning of temporary uses in differential spaces shapes usage values, influences the distribution of power and allows occupants to sustain their positions in these areas, sometimes generating what Beazley (2002) and Blerk (2013)) call “new spatial geographies”.

It is precisely the Macapá square that allows users to feel a clearer sense of belonging, in view of their intense interpersonal relationship, with the valorization of planned and spontaneous territorial uses, as cited by Cotrim and Bichara (2013) and endorsed by Cruz (2011)). On the other hand, this feeling of empowerment by visitors is lower in the Craft Fair of TV Tower (Brasília, Federal District, Central-West Region), presumably due to the homogeneity in the treatment of their spaces, without any greater stimuli to permanence and attractiveness to the interaction of people. In this field, Ferraz (2009) comments that the design options must consider both the logics of human relationships and the culture of the anthropological conditions, taking on new projective conceptions for place. In turn, Rosado (2008) notes that the results of these projects can lead to negative or positive patterns of behavior.

In turn, the restricted access to the areas of the Community Vegetable Garden Program (Teresina, Piauí, Northeast Region) is unique in the selected group as there is no representative focus in the socio-cultural integration and with restricted access, reducing the forms of spatial appropriation in these places. Although less exclusive, a similar situation is found in the Victor Civita Square (Open Space of Sustainability, São Paulo, São Paulo, Southeastern Region) due to the control in its entrance. The limitation of accessibility is not only derived from functional issues, but is also based on manifestations of urban violence, regarding which Melo, Barros and Almeida (2011) alert to the imperative of reflections about prevention based on the visibility of the phenomenon.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In view of the above, it is evident that the functions performed in the empirical experiments studied take place on the margins of the debates about planning and urbanism, or about urban design and city management, since, with the exception almost exclusively of the example of environmental education, these activities do not correspond to the use originally foreseen for these places, including in urban planning guidelines emanating from the public authority, as verified in a more comprehensive context study.

Even so, the problem of “forgotten” spaces and the exposure of at-risk social groups in urbanized areas remains on the academic agenda, despite the significant reduction in the number of studies on the subject in the Brazilian scenario compared to the international context. However, it is worth mentioning that, although they relate realities in different regions of the country, the social and urban problems are partly similar in the forms of spatial use and appropriation diagnosed in the relational analysis of the examples. Given the appropriate proportions, the situations analyzed in other nations also present significant similarities in terms of spatialities, temporalities and functionalities involving children and adolescents subject to threats, including those related to contact with psychoactive substances.

Thus, the methodological procedures adopted to interpret the empirical experiments, as well as for their discussion through the systematization of selected theoretical references, allowed the general objective of the research to be reached, although the sources are metrically restricted. However, the set of articles selected gives a relative view of the world context and its relationship with the examples analyzed.

The five empirical cases in Brazilian capitals located in different geographical situations, associated to different hierarchical positions in the network of cities, varied economic conditions

and different non-original functions of these places give the perception that the focal problems of the research have different positions in the urban fabric as a whole. The possible generalization of the problem studied in both central and intermediate and peripheral regions of Brazilian cities can be inferred.

On the other hand, it is understood that the social vulnerability of children and young people can be minimized by solutions aimed at engaging at-risk social groups in underutilized spaces (example of primary production), the involvement of children and adolescents as reinforcement of a sense of belonging (e.g. socio-cultural integration), the participation of these age groups in the treatment of socio-environmental issues related to sustainability (e.g. environmental education) and the expansion of the future possibilities of future generations (examples of permanent and periodic commercialization), provided it unquestionably does not involve complex ethical issues related to child labor.

Another aspect is pertinent to the effective and controlled uses of urban open spaces, which can be carried out both by the public authority, responsible for the management of these areas, and by social sectors, duly authorized by the former. In any of the cases, the assumption of success in minimizing socio-environmental threats is concentrated, in principle, on the alternative and diversified use of these territories. It should be noted, however, that it is not a question of suppressing leisure options, including children and young people, but, conversely, offering occupational opportunities directly linked to recreational, cultural and sports activities, among others. In these circumstances, the wide use of the territory by society itself becomes essential to reduce the possibilities of spatial underuse and socially inappropriate practices.

Finally, it is important to emphasize the imperative of the appropriation of urban spaces, especially the “forgotten” ones, by children and young people, sharing, with other age groups and the different strata of society, activities related both to the sense of collectivity and functions related to the discernment of citizenship. In this way, it is possible for children and adolescents no longer to be “forgotten” - due to the lack of opportunities for interaction with these places - and “omitted” - especially in planning processes and urban projects, instead being transformed into active agents in the formation of socialized landscapes in cities.

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