

A heuristic model to scrutinize urban public spaces in the contemporary city: between conceived and lived spaces

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Abstract

Questo saggio mira a presentare un modello in divenire volto ad analizzare gli spazi pubblici urbani (UPS), fondato su quattro dimensioni localmente situate – socioeconomica, socioculturale, socio-ambientale e politico-amministrativa – e una dimensione esterna, strutturale. In quanto modello relazionale, si concentra sul modo in cui le istituzioni capitaliste/statali e le loro rappresentazioni dello spazio plasmano luoghi e possibilità disuguali e sul modo in cui i cittadini percepiscono, vivono e si appropriano di questi luoghi, conformandosi in misura maggiore o minore allo spazio sociale della città. Un caso studio incentrato sulle persone di Rio de Janeiro che hanno fatto della strada un mezzo di produzione/riproduzione esaminerà il valore euristico del modello, rivelando come gli utenti si sentono nello spazio pubblico urbano, lo pensano e come reagiscono allo spazio “astratto”.

This essay aims at presenting a model with four non-exhaustive local content dimensions – socioeconomic, sociocultural, socio-environmental, and political-administrative – with an external dimension as a base to analyze urban public spaces (UPS). As a relational model it focus on how capitalist/state institutions and their representations of space conform unequal places and possibilities and how citizens perceive, live and appropriate these places, conforming to greater or lesser degree the city social space. A case study focusing on those who depend on the streets as means of production/reproduction in Rio de Janeiro examines the heuristic value of the model, revealing how users feel and think about UPS and how they react to the abstract space.

Parole chiave: spazi pubblici urbani; città contemporanea; rappresentazioni di spazi; spazi vissuti; modello euristico.

Keywords: urban public spaces; contemporary city; representations of spaces; lived spaces; heuristic model.

Introduction

In our last book (Capanema-Alvares and Barbosa, 2018), we sought to understand how institutional policies shape everyday politics of difference and how the latter shapes urban public spaces with the use of a five-dimension analytical model. There, and here, we depart from Santos' proposition (1996) to consider space as a whole, as a social instance, at the same level of economic, cultural, ideological and political instances;

as such, social dialectic is not only established in space, but is undertaken with space and permeates all analytical dimensions of local phenomena. Also, this social dialectic that individuals and collectivities establish with space is relational in nature (Knierbein, 2014), exposing spatial geographies of perceptions that permeate the individuals' and the collectivities' cultural universes, their psychological and historical conditions, and the image constructions of place imposed on them.

These two propositions seem to call for Lefebvre's semiotic-bound space triad and his phenomenological spaces, as both a complement and a step forward in the pursuit of understanding the relations between urban public spaces, planned policies and users. In Brighenti (2010), the publicness of UPS lies in the space between a mostly invisible resistance (coming out of the lived city) and the hegemonic ruling (of the conceived city). Still in agreement with Lefebvre (1968), we argue that these dialectical and relational processes open the possibility of change towards a radically different urban environment through the collective participation in and appropriation of the social production of space.

A brief case study will test the proposed model, picturing how public and 'semi-public'/market designed policies relate to urban public spaces in the contemporary city, conforming representations of space and how those who depend on the streets as a means of production/reproduction react to such policies, navigating, in Lefebvre's terms, from the spaces of representation to popular representations of space, and from conceived spaces to lived spaces, thus proposing a more equitable way of planning the city.

The case study focuses on downtown Rio de Janeiro and dwells on data sets from the Observatorio de Conflitos Urbanos do Rio de Janeiro¹, and the Quality of Place and Landscape Lab of the Graduate Program in Architecture (PROARQ), both based at the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ). Further research in order to bridge the social and the environmental data sets included: a) archival research; b) a systematic non-participant observation (comprised of field notes and photographs) in conflict foci points and four unstructured interviews on symbolic power aspects (Bourdieu, 1991); c) one hundred structured interviews

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with local users in the conflict sites to get a general sense of their profiles and perceptions; and d) territory perception and environmental behavior studies².

The findings point to rather clear relations among the model dimensions, showing how UPS based workers and inhabitants, coming from their own perspectives and perceived possibilities, construct their lived spaces and propose spaces of representation.

Urban public spaces

In landscape studies, urban free spaces are defined as spaces free of buildings; all of them: backyards, gardens, streets, parks, forests and urban beaches or empty spaces (Magnoli, 1982).

In the social sciences, public spaces take the character of meeting places, sites of individual and collective manifestations, struggle, conflict, and symbolic appropriations, which intrinsically bring the public sphere dimension – the very *vita activa*'s sphere that can only happen in public spaces. For Knierbein (2014), UPS present a social quality (in everyday lived public spaces) and a political quality (in revolutionary sites of emerging counter publics), but “the public in the city is never merely political, never just social, and never only physical. [It is] relational, both a sphere of action and carrier of meaning” (p.44). In Brighenti (2010), UPS (the “public domain” in his conceptualization) are also relational, since they are mostly about “intervisibility” as «a regime of categorical recognition and a dynamic of subsequent acts of appropriation and resistance against appropriation» (Ivi: 38).

This study understands public spaces as commonly used places like streets, squares, parks, public buildings and all collectively appropriated spaces where public sphere actions are carried out, whether publicly or privately owned. They may even exist without a physical and tangible support, considering that public institutions and cyber spaces are now important, collectively appropriated, spaces for citizen manifestation. Physical and

² Territory perception (Del Rio, 1999) is a sum of methodologies used for territory character apprehension from the user's perspective in order to gather: 1) the territory morphology; 2) a visual analysis; 3) environmental perception, which adopts classic concepts such as imageability of spaces by Lynch (1999), and Norberg-Schulz' Existence Space (1979); and 4) environmental behavior. Twelve forms containing a survey of local resources and the four aspects of territory perception were filled at four conflict foci points in the downtown area at three different times of the day.

environmental practices, on the other hand, point out that urban free spaces systems are fairly complex, given their interrelation with other juxtaposed systems (circulation, urban drainage, environmental comfort, leisure, imaginaries and memories, conservation and environmental improvement, to cite a few).

It is in the meeting point of such studies and practices that the concept – open and under construction – emerges in this study: Urban public spaces (UPS) will mean those spaces of free access to the people, falling mostly in spaces free of buildings, but not limited to them. Spaces where one can observe the relationships between built and free elements, between people and goods flows, and the social interactions. UPS will be more economically relevant when they overlap infrastructure lines or can be considered of market interest, socially when they conform the public sphere, culturally when conforming and being conformed by citizens identities, environmentally when they are vegetated or represent residual spaces, and administratively when they become the subject of plans and projects. This multidisciplinary line of thinking calls, therefore, for a multi-dimensional frame of analysis.

The recent international debate on UPS is not so much on the private-public dichotomy raised by privatization of public spaces which began in the 1980s and was primarily based on restricting access to the undesirables (Madanipour, 2010). That dichotomy, as discussed by Lehtovuori (2010), proved problematic in addressing urban public spaces outside European white-male cultures and unable to take into account constitutive systems and processes. Nevertheless, it was the very access issue that brought us to the more recent debate, over power and control (Cancellieri, 2014) to design, plan and appropriate public spaces, rendering them more or less inclusive/exclusive, in combinations not so easy to demarcate (Silver, 2014). For Brighenti (2010: 10), power is a way of «associating and dividing, distributing and partitioning, visibilising and invisibilising, affecting and anaesthetising, synchronising and desynchronizing – in sum, of territorialising and deterritorialising». In Hou (2010), UPS have always been both an expression of power and a subject of political control. Across the different cultural traditions, the functions and meanings of public space have varied significantly, illustrating the varying means and degrees of social and political control: «The control of public space is now a worldwide phenomenon

that shows how form follows capital» (Ivi: 6).

Focusing on the issues at stake in this paper, Mitchell (2003) has stated that the publicness of UPS has never been guaranteed; on the contrary, it has always been won «through concerted struggles» (Ivi: 5) that challenge power structures through different space appropriations; as Miraftab (2009: 33) has also noted, «in Gramscian terms, [these struggles] launch a war of positions». The possibilities of transgressing hegemonic apparently consolidated UPS are exposed in daily life through small and spotted expressions that reveal individualities and/or recover traditional practices common to different social groups in the production of what Lefebvre called counter spaces in the city.

Communitarian, subcultural or oppositional minorities [...] importantly intervene in the mainstream, fostering change within, and sometimes even dissolving into it. In fact, the 'counter-' or 'subaltern-' prefixes refer to a specific relationship these minoritarian arenas of communication entertain with the mainstream (Brighenti, 2010: 19).

In Fraser (1990: 60), the «subaltern counterpublics [...] are formed as social inequality responses to the exclusions undertaken by the dominant forms of deliberation; they are the background for formation and enactment of social identities». Hou (2010) categorized insurgencies into appropriating, reclaiming, pluralizing, transgressing, uncovering or contesting, reflecting a collection of sociocultural movements and a few socioeconomic struggles.

The call for an encompassing heuristic model is also present in the recent literature. Irazábal (2008), in her *Ordinary Place/ Extraordinary Events*, stated that «no study [had] explicitly scrutinize[d] the development of democracy and citizenship in physical urban space» (Ivi: 2) and sought to «interrogate the fate of the link between public spaces and the construction of citizenship and democracy in this era» (Ivi: 3). Her book does not focus, however, on the everyday uses of UPS; rather, it looks at how regular urban spaces house historical episodes of political activism. The comprehensive model proposed by Carmona et al (2003) focused on Urban Design and had a normative goal, depicting how different aspects of real life influence the design process itself and how this latter can conform quality public spaces. Whereas the authors saw the urban processes as shaped

by local, global, market and regulatory aspects, we, instead, take the local urban context to investigate how the different dimensions of real life can be systematically understood and thought of, aiming at questioning, and hopefully subsidizing efforts towards structural change, the very aspects Carmona at al rightfully «accept[...] as givens» in «individual urban design projects» (Ivi: 36).

Cancellieri (2014) discusses common but deterministic frames or lenses with which the literature has viewed public spaces – a nostalgic and a violent, the first leading nowhere because it is romanticized and the second calling for «architectural, technological and political devices that restrict or discourage certain spatial uses and appropriations» (Ivi:147-148) and for the naturalization of exclusion practices. Knierbein (2014) observes that «few analyses explicitly establish theoretical abstractions – and thus epistemological connections – based on the nature of the subject itself, and hardly any deal with the potentials and limits of public space for gaining knowledge about cities. [Further,] there is a lack of in-depth approaches that go beyond fragmented research design to develop a methodological or analytical basis of the core of the subject itself» (Ivi: 45). [Finally,] «both conceptions – social reality and urban public space – need to be bridged and thought of together as two sides of the same coin, rather than as two distinctive and separated categories in space-related theory and practice» (Ivi: 48).

Holston (1998) and Miraftab (2009) both urge considering Urban Planning vis-à-vis invited and invented spaces of insurgent citizenship, where groups appropriate spaces in their own terms.

Towards a multidisciplinary analytical model

As a first instrument in attempting to understand the social reality in human space, this study proposes the systematization of local relations designed by Tourism scholars (Beni, 2002; Boullon, 2005). According to them, places are necessarily structured by 1) economic, 2) social, 3) cultural, and 4) environmental local relations; these relations are permeable and overlay each other to different extents, forming an inseparable whole. This set of local relations would be in constant exchange with the external environment and under the influence of a superstructure given by the political-administrative dimension.

Our proposal to read the relations manifested in UPS takes the set of four local non-exhaustive dimensions and their relationships to political-administrative and external influences in their current most relevant aspects as a basis. We, however, assume that all local dimensions are social (as does Lehtovuori, 2010) and the initial local dimensions can be merged into the socioeconomic, sociocultural, and socio-environmental dimensions.

Under the socioeconomic dimension are, in the first place, power and control, the main determinants of all other relations, while participation and deliberation are their crucial byproducts (Brighenti, 2010). Access, interest and agency (Benn and Gaus, 1983), where the first regards all resources and activities, would lead to sharing design, planning, development and management of public spaces with a large array of interests and to multi-agency processes and inclusiveness (Madanipour, 2010).

In fact and due to structural changes in the very reproduction of capital, our cities are now managed by hegemonic groups, who invest on technological novelties, land use, and real estate speculation – which are largely structured by transport axes – and structure capital flows and investments in urban areas. The creation of exchange value via speculation and/or major transportation projects is the cause of most violations of human rights intrinsic to the urban environment (housing, freedom of movement, and of information). As Hou (2010) and Silver (2014) point out, these forces are counteracted by those who praise UPS use value.

The sociocultural dimension relates primarily to past and present sociabilities and to the public sphere, given by UPS appropriations and uses. For Brighenti (2010), the publicness of UPS is inseparable from the intervisibility and representation of its users. This dimension, which socially structures the city, can be understood both for its role in industrial capitalism – providing leisure and amenities to workers – as for its symbolic character and identities (present in all open areas that are appropriate for public use). Complementing its practical role, symbolic aspects are the unity that establishes ‘being-in-the-world’ possibilities and collective memories.

Under the socio-environmental dimension, one must consider the green areas, the infrastructure lines that overlay/underlay them endangering or enhancing quality of urban life, and

the residual spaces, vegetated or not, given their potential. Basic actions of preservation, conservation, restoration, and/or intervention, as well as their adequacy to the promotion of social and environmental justice, should be considered in order to reduce social pressure on the natural environment.

The political-administrative dimension regards government structures and public policies; in relation to UPS, important and current courses of action seem to be city entrepreneuring – widely adopted model which focuses on neoliberal management of the city as if it were a private enterprise –, resorting to hygienists policies to “clean” the most visible and marketable spaces, and city marketing, which uses UPS to promote exclusionary policies and the administrators’ images. As Brighenti (2010: 34) points out, «since the late 1980s, the spread of neoliberal ‘law and order’ policies has been dominated by a concern for unacceptable disorder, which turned into an obsession for safety [and surveillance] (mainly, personal physical safety and safety of property)».

The administrative issue has changed from the «relationship between the public and private institutions to a metamorphosis of the public institutions» (Madanipour, 2019, w/p). Indeed, as Carmona (2015) summarized recent criticisms on the development and management of urban public spaces, he listed a number of public actions that take a rather private character, like exclusion, privatization, segregation, and the like.

Among the most relevant aspects of the current city is the interscale or interdependency (Madanipour, 2010) character of phenomena such as capital flows, public policies and sociocultural influences, all largely submitted to global capital and world corporations; events, tourism and other types of business attraction, understood as the material side of volatile monetary flows, become a primary mean for rotating resources and investments in the global game. Butler (2012: 10) draws on Neil Brenner to state that «although originally formulated as a means of critiquing the productivist and commodifying tendencies of the social democratic state, the ‘state mode of production’ [has also encompassed] the global rise of neoliberalism within the architecture of the state over the past four decades».

In short, this study seeks to understand UPS aspects, politics and conflicts considering the dimensions summarized in Table 1.

Table 1- Set of local and external relations

Socioeconomic dimension
Power and control – access, interest and agency
Technology and real estate speculation
Transport axes, expansion axes
Human rights (housing, freedom of movement, and information)
Sociocultural dimension
Sociability and public sphere - Appropriations and uses
Leisure and amenities
Visibility: Symbolic and identity aspects
Social-environmental dimension
Green areas, infrastructural lines and residual spaces (fringe belts included)
Preservation, conservation, restoration and intervention
Environmental social justice
Pressures on the natural environment
Political-administrative dimension
Entrepreneur City
Hygienist Policies
Safety and surveillance
External dimension
Interscalarities
Global capital and large corporations
Tourism and investment attraction

Source: the author's.

We next turn to the consideration of Lefebvre's concepts pertinent to our argument, and then to develop some specificities of our proposed model dimensions as they concern the focus of this study.

The appropriation of UPS in Lefebvre's theory

Lefebvre's idea of space is based, to a good extent, in what he calls a triad of perceived space, conceived space, and lived space (Lefebvre, 1991). Perceived space refers to the relatively objective, concrete space people encounter in their daily environment.

Conceived space refers to mental constructions of space, creative ideas about and representations of space. Lived space is the complex combination of perceived and conceived space. It represents a person's actual experience and understanding of space in everyday life. Between the perceived space, of the daily spatial practices, and the spaces of representation, of the complex cognitive structures, Lefebvre introduces the spaces conceived by the structures of planning and of 'power', constituting, therefore, a conceptual triad that dialectically deepens the analysis of space and of the perception of space.

The Lefebvrian triad also becomes subjacent to the urban public sphere and to any sociospatial structure through: a) the social practices, comprehending production and reproduction, that shape specific places and particular spatial sets for every social formation; b) the representations of space, the imposed order connected to the relations of production, of knowledge, of signs and codes; c) the spaces of representation, presenting complex symbolisms, as they express both the subterranean side of social life and art.

The abstract space (as opposed to the absolute space), constituted by the State, serves as an instrument for the power holders – politically and economically – to downplay everything that represents conflict and resistance and open the way to homogenize differences (Serpa, 2013).

The conceived space is the space of mediation and interchange between the perceived and the representations; it also is a symbol that needs perception content and that seeks to incorporate itself to the cognitive structures, directly influencing the spaces of representation. (Serpa, 2013: 174). If the spaces of representation contain the spaces perceived and lived by different groups and social classes, they certainly contain and express the struggles and conflicts of the different groups and classes over the control of the spaces conception strategies (Serpa, 2013: 176). Knierbein (2014) sees that public space is framed as lived space embodying social imaginaries and striving for a radical societal transformation, and initiated by a spatial praxis already settled in everyday life.

The socioeconomic dimension and the right to the city – The right to the city concerns, most of all, participation of all inhabitants of the city regardless of their citizenship status in all decision making processes about the territory; and appropriation – as a struggle for spatial justice –, so that collective and public policies consider the inequality of risks and opportunities historically,

institutionally, and continually established in the urban landscape (Cresswell, 2006) and are positively engaged in a radical change that empowers the disenfranchised. Through their social practices – momentary or lasting appropriations of public spaces – citizens imprint their marks on the perceived space, or the concrete city, rendering them their spaces of representation. To uncover these influences in public spaces is the first step towards recognition and valorization of their experiences and their demands for a city of rights and of «the right to produce urban space that meets the needs of inhabitants» (Purcell, 2002, p.103). Agreeing with Holston (1998) and Mirafteb (2009), Purcell (2013) reminds us that as important as (and complementary to) the right to the city, is the right to difference: the right of inhabitants to encounter each other on their own terms and engage together in the project of managing urban space for themselves.

The sociocultural dimension: appropriation and representation – Identification with UPS seems to be influenced by membership to social class fractions, when subjects share social behaviors, habits, values and social position, or to a “system of the social order constitutive differences” – Bourdieu’s (1987) habitus. In Bourdieu (2010), personal identity would come from each individual’s complex and multiple representations/imaginaries of reality, given his/her position in the urban habitus. Bourdieu also seems to understand habitus as a result of class trajectories, as he makes a clear distinction between middle classes’ habitus – based on freedom of consumption – and working classes’ habitus – based on consumption needs –. This line of reasoning brings Bourdieu’s reasoning closer to Harvey’s (and the right to the city), as it concerns the differentiation between the working class needs (dependent on public spaces for production and reproduction) versus the middle class possibilities. From a Gramscian perspective, a subordinated classes’ fractions counter-action is to «produce subdominant or alternative cultures when facing ruling classes hegemonic strategies of cultural production» (Serpa, 2013: 148). Finally, different class fractions spaces of representation «contain and also express the struggles and conflicts for the domination of these places conception’s strategies» (Serpa, 2013:176).

The Political-administrative dimension: the contemporary city and its public spaces - Under strategic/neoliberal planning, as the state and its partners recreate structure and urban image in order to sell cities, they further inequalities by concentrating quality UPS

in upscale neighborhoods and abandoning other areas (Tângari, 2018), creating true ghettos; in central areas, market-guided policies 'clean' UPS from their social ills and hides what investors do not want to see (Camara, 2006). Moreira (2004) also sees a *tabula rasa* ('destroyed land') policy, diagnosed by the neglect of services and equipment to cause degradation and feelings of uneasiness and insecurity. The next step is to offer privatization as a solution, outsourcing services and gentrifying the areas. Counter-acts that forge spaces of representation include 'residential/private' use of public spaces, graffiti and prostitution.

Purcell (2002), Madanipour (2010), Swyngedouw (2010), and Butler (2012), to cite a few, have pointed out that global influences in local governments have rescaled, re-oriented (towards the market), and transferred (to private hands or control) government functions and policies. As a result, urban inhabitants are becoming increasingly disenfranchised, specifically with respect to the control they exert over the decisions that shape the geography of the city. (Purcell, 2002: 100). Furthermore, global "accumulation by dispossession" (Harvey, 2003; Roy, 2006), use uneven power geometries to impose privatization of public systems and places and to evict and/or displace entire communities from their land and take ownership of their resources.

We now take a case in which the much discussed differentiation of public spaces are both present, i.e., where hegemonic planning creates exchanging value and appropriation by the undesirables creates use value, in order to test our proposed model of analysis.

Downtown Rio de Janeiro and the street-dependent populations

The Brazilian Federal Constitution of 1988 decentralized planning competences, setting the legal grounds for the adoption of entrepreneurial governance models at the local scale.

Since 1993, with the adoption of the neoliberal official discourse in Rio de Janeiro, its administrations emphasize an urban 'crisis', which continuously has to be addressed through efficient management, order enforcement and the attraction of economic activities and investments. A couple of master plans have since been designed aiming at rescuing the city from the 'crisis' scenario through its marketing as an international destination for tourists and global capital: the main strategies included changing the image of the city by preparing new developments in the environmentally

protected fringes or in downtown abandoned areas, and attracting mega-events as excuses for major public works.

Together with the restructuring and the use restrictions on contemplative UPS in central areas, security policies insured the low visibility of street-dependent population, the relocation of innumerable poor residents, and the capturing of homeless to have them 'delivered' 30 km away from the central areas and thus render their return harder (ANCOP, 2012).

The Rio de Janeiro's Urban Conflicts Permanent Observatory points out that since 1993 the most contentious issues in the downtown area relate to access to and use of public spaces, with 40% of the total registered conflicting manifestations. Street vendors, merchants and artisans are the main organizers of these conflicts, adding 39% of the total. Of the 64 conflicts organized by them, 60 involved access to and use of public space and the right to work and were violently repressed by Military Police forces. They protested against City Hall removal of vendors from their locations; police surveillance; the sale of plots where they usually work; and the destruction of barns and markets which housed them. Among conflicts originated and manifested in the downtown area, there was a greater concentration on its main avenue, Presidente Vargas, from the *Brasil* Central Station area all the way up to Uruguaiana Street, where the street vendors have their own market.

Our environmental data will focus on the Central Station (Fig. 1), which concentrates most diversity of users and street-vendors, and its neighbor Campo de Santana (Fig. 2), a small park that offers shelter to passersby and to a range of homeless/quasi-homeless during the day (i.e. downtown users who inhabit distant areas and are forced by financial and time constraints to remain in the central areas during the week and to go home only for the weekends). Together, they offer two very different, but complementary, insights.

Brasil Central Station (CS)

As the main rail station in Rio located in one of its main avenues, *Brasil* CS can be characterized as the neural center of the entire region, which underwent a modernist redevelopment in the 1940s. The station's adjacent streets, usually lined with uninterrupted rows of street vendors, also play the role of a bus station, with a number of crowded stops during business hours. The building's side entrance from Bento Ribeiro Street conforms a street workers'

territory: from jacks-of-all-trades who offer their services and small objects, to vendors and prostitutes, they all appropriate the large gated area to rest, sleep and beg the thousands of passersby. The entrance to the Leo XVIII Hotel/School Popular Foundation, serving meals at popular prices, is on the same narrow sidewalk as the Bureau for the Elderly at Senador Pompeu St., which also has a number of bus stops and the more ephemeral street vendors site of the region, known as 'clothesline'; together, they cause rather intense flows, including policemen trying to suppress the ongoing trade. The Bento Ribeiro Street's block neighbor to the station turned out to be an action stage fully occupied by street vendors victimized by the fire on the local street vendors market back in April 2010. Conflicts between street vendors and the Police 'shock of order' policy are constant.

Presidente Vargas Avenue and Procopio Ferreira Square fluxes block the view to Campo de Santana's green area just across the avenue, setting it apart from the square open spaces, more sparsely occupied by finer goods vendors, youngsters with street trajectory, and various bus stops.



Figure 1 – Central Station
Source: the author's.

The buildings and street vendors 'walls' compose the Norberg-Shulz (1979) urban perception level; the emptiness of Presidente Vargas' Ave. composes the landscape perception level (its emptiness seem to stretch itself endlessly westward) and the framing green southwards closes the horizon. The CS and the Campo de Santana have a good imageability, which passersby seem to absorb as they follow consolidated behaviors.

Praça da República (Republic Square)/*Campo de Santana* (Santana Field)

The field has been downsized in many occasions and currently occupies one block of gardens located right across the avenue from CS, amid the downtown frenzy; it has four entrances (Presidente Vargas', one East and two West of the Republic Square) and is maintained by City Hall, with the Military Police and the Municipal Guard's help. Well-positioned benches for contemplation, in harmony with the diverse urban fauna and flora conform a beautiful gated green area. The English style garden, offering a great scenic effect with its exotic species, is in sharp contrast with the surrounding buildings.

Pedestrians in a rush, who enter through the Republic Square east gate and head towards CS – shaping a behavioral sequence –, are the primary users of the Field; the area provides them a more pleasant microclimate than the surroundings. Frequented by older neighborhood residents and students of the public elementary school situated on Republic Square, it presents a territorial appropriation typical of large cities' downtown areas: there is the soft drugs consumers' territory right next to the Presidente Vargas entrance, where they enjoy a beautiful landscape over a little creek and can also sleep under the Municipal Guard's eyes. Over the small lake, the black and poor boys bathe, chat and rest, transforming the area in the home they don't have, producing somehow their appearance (in Arendt terms). The homeless wanderers crisscross all territories and often approach the prostitutes' territory along the most used pedestrian paths; there are women of all ages from all Rio's regions and even from other states. Most of them share rooms in the precarious buildings nearby, while the lower income prostitutes sleep in the streets. Their default behavior entails professionally approaching passersby and many of them also

use the site to get high without being bothered.

Another important territory is the crack users', deeper down on the Field towards Frei Caneca St. (where there are no entrances), mostly frequented by adult men. There is a small visitor population (both tourists and locals) who sits around the lakes, enjoy the landscape, take pictures, and walk around with their families; they are there for leisure and resting purposes. With such diverse users, there are, of course, small robberies and thefts.



Figure 2 – Santana Field

Source: the author's.

The existence space may be understood, at the first instance, by the urban equipment, statues, the creek and vegetation. At a broader level, the green predominates intertwined by paths and nodes. All the Field space is landscaped. Taking the outside areas into consideration, there is a big contrast made even more evident by the different conservation and noise pollution standards. The Presidente Vargas Ave. has a main path role, but it also works as a limit, dividing two realities: one is given by all the action around the CS, the other is given by the encapsulated Field sector.

Applying the multidimensional model

Under the socio-economic dimension there is the land use control and related power struggles: exclusionary mechanisms push the underprivileged away from formal spaces; in a country where around 40% of all economic activity is estimated to be in the informal sector (Mangueira, 2013), street vendors lived spaces bear the right to work in UPS and to make UPS their production means. As such they demand the use of such spaces and do not accept to be banned very easily. The vast majority of conflicts registered in and around the CS show there is a need to understand UPS as spaces of production, reproduction and representation. Whereas access to physical public structures is free and equal, decision-making access to the poor is absolutely denied, and the only agency left to them is to conform spaces of representation.

Considering the sociocultural relations, the encounters in the CS areas are mostly among the same class fraction, casted away from the formal markets. The 'other' is represented by low-paid workers who pass by the Santana Field and the Central Station and by the Military Police – law and order represented. The state treats different occupations within the same class fraction in very different ways, deepening social divisions and threatening social ties and future collectivities: pushed out of formality, outcasts can drug themselves in low visibility spaces of the Santana Field, where the conception of places in their own terms results in private/residential use of the premises; if and when they decide to appropriate their lived spaces as spaces of production they are forced to engage in conflict with the system and are chased off the UPS of greater visibility. Whenever their *habitus*' expectations indicate (considering their association and bargaining potential), they protest out in the streets challenging the places conception's strategies. We call attention to the fact that, unlike the majority of social movements in the Global North, they are acting out of necessity, not freedom of choice.

The citadins' social practices interact with the representations of spaces presented to them in order to present (Arendt, 1998) and represent themselves in space, reshaping UPS: The street-vendors social practices entail busy paths and nodes in well delimited sectors of low imageability, where the existence

space becomes that of 'action'; they openly negotiate their right to space and, at times, they confront the power structures presenting/representing themselves through conflict in order to secure their lived spaces. The outcasts whose social practices lead to less visible areas amenable to contemplation, on the contrary, take advantage of a conceived and confined green area and get along with its repressive/tolerance representations in and of space in order to live their spaces of representation, which become existence spaces of 'underground leisure'.

The socioenvironmental dimension depicts two very different settings: gated, almost invisible communities creating their unlawful territories and relationships amid a park, and more or less permanent vendors occupying streets with heavy pedestrian traffic.

Under the political-administrative dimension, public policies for downtown Rio apparently present a paradox: on the one hand, they endanger real estate values of CS nearby plots with a *tabula rasa* policy while using the police apparatus to harshly repress street-vendors around the CS; on the other hand, City Hall takes good care of the Santana Field, where the police stands in peace with unlawful and degrading behaviors. In both cases, it represses users' spatial practices.

Strategic planning, however, sees fit to let the CS area rot in the mid/long run, creating a sense of chaos, while the police does not allow groups' identification with and appropriation of it and furthers the 'crisis' feelings with its violence, so that the cheap land is amenable to refurbishment through megaprojects and can be offered in the market in due time; on the contrary, it finds important to preserve the Campo de Santana as a public and quality equipment to the outsider eye; while it currently 'hides what investors (and tourists) do not want to see' inside its gates – what can be easily reverted at any point in time –, when the CS area renewal process takes place, the Campo will add yet more value to the development.

Considering the external dimension, it is clear that the State role was dictated by a capitalist interest coalition involving tourism, the FIFA World Cup 2014 and the Rio 2016 Summer Olympics, and real estate development (Broudehoux, 2017). Together they impose their representations of space and repress social practices in the CS areas – echoing a law-and-order global frenesi, thus hampering the dialectic process that

leads to popular spaces of representation.

It is necessary to ask then, considering a multidimensional analysis, what kind of public sphere is being forged in UPS when, under the neoliberal shield, public equipment as leisure areas take a new role in addition to the already known and engendered by capital: the hygienist possibility of hiding the outcasts with the placid agreement of the State, while that same State violently represses street-vendors struggles for the right to appropriate UPS as production and reproduction places. Street-vendors social practices bring some tension to the dialectical relation with the capital-state representation of space; their rights to spaces of representation are highly endangered when they are not let to live UPS up to their needs and Lefebvre’s social production of space falls short of completion.

In the guise of a conclusion: evaluating the model

In order to evaluate the model, we start by schematically comparing its analytical potential (regarding the presented case) against questions and issues posed by key sources, and then try to comment on them, hoping to open a debate and have our readers help us further develop and qualify the model.

Table 2 – Evaluating the model

Source	Question/issue	Model analysis
Knierbein (2014)	Public life should be analyzed and interpreted according to its local embeddedness in the specific social, political and cultural context.	Good
	Enquiry into spatial complexity needs to emphasize both internal as well as external complexities, and their mutual entanglements.	Very Good
	Researchers should inspect, dismantle and dissect the multi-causal web of relations in contemporary cities between urban professionals’ interventions and civic unrest born out of development projects.	Weak
	What kind of lived space is meaningful and which patterns are interpreted as banal and alienating?	Acceptable

Brighenti (2010)	What counts as public ordered and what counts as disordered in the city?	Very Good
	Who should take care of public order? What are its boundaries? Who threatens it?	Good
	Are there enclosed spaces endowed with affordances that foster a specific grammar and practice of interaction?	Very Good
	Are visibility asymmetries fostered by contemporary surveillance practices?	Very Good
Cancellieri (2014)	Studies should analyze physical and social thresholds, both due to legal regulations and to everyday bottom-up practices.	Weak
	Are there informal/institutional or material/immaterial thresholds for some specific 'publics'?	Acceptable
	Which social actors do we want to favour in terms of accessibility?	Very Good
	Can 'deterministic' frames be found?	Very Good
Silver (2014)	Are ordinary people fighting back, demanding their "right to the city"?	Very Good
Hou (2010)	What do the acts reveal about the limitations and possibilities of public realm in our contemporary city?	Good
	How do instances of insurgency challenge the conventional understanding and making of public space?	Good
	How are these spaces and activities redefining and expanding the roles, functions, and meanings of the public and the production of it?	Good
	What can we learn from these acts of everyday and not-so-everyday resistance?	Weak

The multi-dimensional proposition has at its core the aim of contextualizing the analysis of UPS in the local socioeconomic, sociocultural and socioenvironmental realms, with a strong emphasis in the political and external relations to the case study. Despite the limitations of one paper, the model was able to unveil a number of specificities for that matter. As mentioned above, however, the policies adopted in both Santana Field and

Central Station were a strategic 'development' plan by-product (related to the mega-events to come) and the urban planners' role was not implicated or questioned.

The meaning of the lived spaces and their role in (dis)alienating were not questioned either; the analysis, however, mentions the Central Station vicinities production/reproduction role as fulfilling a bare necessity, and the use of Santana Field as a quasi-home for the homeless permitting a (dis)alienating behavior for the otherwise invisible. In the latter case that would involve some social recognition of the "non-public publics" (Brighenti, 2010).

The law and order state, as well pointed by the analysis, seems to enact a contradiction through a laissez-faire towards the Santana Field and the harsh repression of street vendors, what finds explanation in the low intervisibility of those bounded by gates versus the visibility of those who need to be seen in order to survive. Occupying the streets with informal merchandise and commerce threatens the very capitalism that marginalizes them and the state that wants their taxes but provides very little. On the other hand, the Santana Field gates foster a number of unlawful territories, stages of action and specific interactions, as the socioenvironmental dimension showed.

Our analyses do not uncover or indicate ways out or hopes that their bottom-up practices will change/challenge the status-quo in the face of hygienist policies. The critical character of the model, however, makes it very clear that planners ought to favor the disenfranchised and stand up for their access to a city of rights, regardless of their conscious struggles (street vendors) or absence thereof (Santana Field users).

In Cancellieri's (2014) terms, two 'deterministic' frames were revealed through the model analysis: a top-to-bottom strategic plan that ghettoizes UPS and otherwise 'cleans' the visible spaces, and the other side of the same coin, the creation of 'dangerous' spaces, such as the Santana Field. A third, non-deterministic frame also emerges: users claiming their right to the city where ...public space is the field of action and the stage of many everyday complex and ambivalent social processes and acts of territorialisation/ (Ivi: 148).

Both the street vendors socioeconomic insurgencies (through everyday practices and eventful social movements) and the outcasts sociocultural insurgencies redefine UPS roles and

challenge our understanding of streets as transportation axes/ places of encounter and of parks as leisure spaces; basic necessities, such as making ends meet in a capitalist society or dwelling in central areas, feed the users lived spaces, their conceptions of space, their only real connection to our time-space.

The lessons to be learned out of our analysis seem to be few if any; the big picture of global inequalities, of accumulation by dispossession, of neoliberal planning is not new to planners, who find their hands tied in the local realm. That resistance out of necessity and visibility through prostitution, drug abuse or public bathing should be addressed through structural socioeconomic change is no news either. The model was able to picture once more this reality, through which our contemporary city growingly presents a challenge to public authorities and the limits of the capitalist mode of production.

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