

The street as a place of appropriation and experience: the case of Vila Belga in Santa Maria, RS

A rua como lugar de apropriação e experiência: o caso da Vila Belga em Santa Maria, RS

La calle como lugar de apropiación y experiencia: el caso de Vila Belga en Santa María, RS

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to present the methodological procedure used to observe and analyse the use and appropriation of a street in Vila Belga, located in Santa Maria, RS. The methodology mainly involves two methods: the first, called “Constellations of Instants”, proposes a look at the particularities and subjectivities that directly influence the use of public space. The second, cartography, is the production of graphic pieces that represent the analysis of the space under study. The methodological approach has allowed the identification of patterns of occupation and appropriation of the street, as well as a new way of approaching and reading the peculiarities of the place. The concluding reflections point to the relevance of the methodology for approaching public space from site specificities.

Keywords: Instant Constellation; Appropriation; Street; Vila Belga; Public space.

Resumo

O presente artigo tem como objetivo apresentar o procedimento metodológico utilizado para observar e analisar o uso e apropriação da rua na Vila Belga, localizada em Santa Maria, RS. A metodologia envolve principalmente dois métodos: o primeiro, denominado de “Constelações de Instantes”, propõe um olhar sobre as particularidades e subjetividades que influenciam diretamente o uso do espaço público. O segundo, a cartografia, gera peças gráficas que representam a análise do espaço estudado. O procedimento metodológico permitiu uma nova forma de contato e leitura das peculiaridades do lugar, bem como a identificação de padrões de ocupação e apropriação da rua. As considerações finais apontam para a relevância da metodologia para o olhar sobre o espaço público a partir das singularidades do lugar.

Palavras-chave: Constelações de Instantes; Apropriação; Rua; Vila Belga; Espaço público.

Resumen

El objetivo de este artículo es presentar el procedimiento metodológico utilizado para observar y analizar el uso y apropiación de una calle en Vila Belga, ubicada en Santa María, RS. La metodología involucra principalmente dos métodos: el primero, denominado “Constelaciones de Instantes”, propone una mirada a las particularidades y subjetividades que influyen directamente en el uso del espacio público. La segunda, la cartografía, es la producción de piezas gráficas que representan el análisis del espacio en estudio. El abordaje metodológico ha permitido identificar patrones de ocupación y apropiación de la calle, así como una nueva forma de abordar y leer las peculiaridades del lugar. Las reflexiones finales apuntan a la relevancia de la metodología para abordar el espacio público desde las especificidades del sitio.

Palabras clave: Constelaciones de Instantes; Apropiación; Calle; Vila Belga; Espacio público.



INTRODUCTION

Streets play a central role in the structure and dynamics of cities, functioning as vital elements of urban life. When occupied, they become places of diversity, offering experiences that go beyond their physical boundaries. However, the streets of today's cities are not always inviting and welcoming places for leisure and permanence. On the other hand, there are spaces where the street can be seen as an extension of the home, appropriated and actively used by residents (Vogel; Mello, 1981; Jacobs, 2007; Gonçalves, 2020).

This article represents a chapter of the first author's doctoral dissertation, entitled "Between Streets and Singularities: Use and Appropriation of Public Space in Vila Belga in Santa Maria - RS." The dissertation aims to examine the dynamics of use and appropriation of public space on streets in Vila Belga, Santa Maria, RS. During the research process, field observations based on the cartographic method, inspired by authors such as Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari and Suely Rolnik, constituted an invaluable source of information and knowledge about appropriation in the case study.

The architectural complex of Vila Belga, constructed at the beginning of the 20th century, exhibits a distinctive urban character, with streets that assume different roles and display particular attributes. These unique features offer alternative avenues for engagement and understanding, diverging from the typical public spaces observed in the surrounding cityscape. An attentive observation of the architectural elements, components of the landscape, appropriations and details of a given place can reveal the manner in which these elements coalesce to create a stimulating scenario. Consequently, due to the unique characteristics observed, it is imperative to consider a method attentive to the particularities of the location, which is capable of embracing such aspects in the research process.

This article presents the methodological procedure entitled "Constellations of Instants" and to demonstrate how it was used in conjunction with cartography to observe the utilisation of public space on the street in the proposed case study. In this way, the street is observed in its complexity, including its functional characteristics, as well as its role as a setting for experiences, encounters, and diverse experiences.

This article sets out to address the following question: *how can a more nuanced understanding of street appropriation be achieved by examining the specificities of a given location?* To this end, we initially examine the themes surrounding the street, its appropriation and constitution as a place of experience. Subsequently, we present and contextualise Vila Belga, a case study for this research, before finally clarifying the methodological procedure and presenting the results obtained.



STREET: APPROPRIATION AND EXPERIENCE

Streets can be considered the primary structures that shape the layout and form of cities, in addition to functioning as vital elements in urban space, providing a variety of functions that extend beyond formal and rigorously planned uses (Jacobs, 2007, p. 29). It can be argued that the open spaces of the streets can serve as a setting for a variety of activities, ranging from minor everyday occurrences to significant spontaneous events. Consequently, it can be proposed that it is within the public domain that space enables the existence of an autonomous essence, which transcends the limitations of imposed order and rationality (Vogel; Mello, 1981; Queiroga, 2012).

The appropriation of public spaces is shaped by a multitude of subjective, cultural and social factors, which collectively influence the city in accordance with the needs and desires of its inhabitants. Such spontaneous activities serve to promote dynamism and adaptability, frequently reflecting the demands of the local community (Mendonça, 2007; Queiroga, 2012). In this sense, when occupied, the street becomes a place of intense multiplicity, offering experiences in a multitude of ways.

When individuals interact with the urban environment, they gain an understanding of the world around them. Larrosa posits that experience is the sum of everything that happens and touches the individual, and that this requires pause, reflection and attention to detail. However, in contemporary society, there is a relentless pursuit of renewal, productivity and accelerated time. The stimuli are restricted to brief, transient and repetitive moments experienced rapidly. Despite the multitude of occurrences, only a select few have a direct and significant impact on individuals (Larrosa, 2015).

In this scenario, the individual who is exposed to the experience also becomes receptive to the possibility of transformation. The knowledge gained from experience is personal and distinctive, as each individual processes it in a unique manner (Larrosa, 2015). Consequently, urban living offers a rich tapestry of individual experiences, while also fostering collective experiences.

The human experience of the built environment is inherently multisensory. Given that the human body is in constant interaction with its surroundings, it is logical that spatial characteristics, materials, textures and scales are equally perceived. In the modern environment, there is a considerable amount of information to be processed, including a variety of sensory inputs such as smells, sounds, textures and colours, some of which may be familiar to the people inhabiting a particular space. Individuals gain a comprehensive understanding of their environment through a continuous exchange of sensory and bodily experiences (Pallasmaa, 2011).

Gonçalves (2020) emphasises the importance of considering the experiences of daily life and collective action in urban environments. The author asserts that a



comprehensive understanding of the complexities and potential of each urban space can only be achieved through a multifaceted approach that encompasses physical, sensory, open-minded and non-confrontational exploration (Gonçalves, 2020).

In light of the numerous functional and formal aspects involved in the analysis of public space, there is a growing need for alternative approaches to urban perception. This necessitates a focus on the interaction between the physical body and the body of the city, as well as their respective materialities. In this context, gaining an understanding of the city through experience is an essential aspect of the desire for openness.

The concept of cartography has its roots in the complexity of mapping and delineating urban subjectivities and experiences. This is a theme that has been explored by authors such as Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari and Suely Rolnik. While there are differences in approach between the cartographies of Deleuze and Guattari and those of Suely Rolnik, both sets of ideas support the reflections set out in this work. These two approaches, although distinct, are mutually reinforcing, providing tools to understand urban flows and to capture the subjective experiences that emerge in everyday life in the city.

The term “cartography” was first used in the Portuguese language in 1839, initially in correspondence, to refer to the creation of maps and charts. While cartography is traditionally associated with the field of geosciences, which deals with the representations of the Earth’s surface, other authors propose different approaches. In addition to its conventional definition, cartography can be reinterpreted as a method of mapping subjective and emotional territories, taking into account the ever-changing nature of these spaces.

To ascertain and, concurrently, dismantle the concept of cartography, it is essential to reference the inaugural volume of *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1995). In this text, Deleuze and Guattari do not portray cartography as a research methodology, but rather as a mode of thought and a process of understanding. The authors view it as an experience oriented towards reality, a dynamic map imbued with meanings. Consequently, when following processes and their movements, the cartographer utilises various sources and references, which may not necessarily be written or theoretical in nature. Any material can serve as an object of expression and constitute integral elements of the cartographer’s activity (Deleuze; Guattari, 1995).

In her book, *Sentimental Cartography: Contemporary Transformations of Desire*, the author Suely Rolnik outlines a path for cartography that is not defined by a beginning, middle, or end. Conversely, it acknowledges the less discernible and foreseeable shifts occurring within urban environments, which can be regarded as a subject for investigation through experimentation. In this context, cartography is revealed to be a practice of micropolitics. It does not act as a map that interprets



only the visible plane, but also recognises subjectivities and intensities. Accordingly, the plan is regarded as “a piece of imminence” (Rolnik, 2016, p. 62). Cartographic practice records not only the location in question, but also the elements that constitute it, without any judgment of value.

The discoveries of space occur concurrently with the processes of transformation of psychosocial landscapes, with cartography serving as a representation of these changes, which are often imperceptible. The formation of emotional responses and sensitivities is not constrained by fixed standards. Any external factor that affects the researcher’s emotional state is considered valid (Rolnik, 2016).

In a process of expansion and opening, the cartographic journey employs different methodologies utilising the body as the principal instrument. Consequently, the researcher undergoes a period of intensive spatial and temporal experimentation within the study space. By focusing on details, the aim is to gain a deeper understanding of each unique moment (Rocha *et al.*, 2017). This approach views the body, the city and time as interlinked, and attributes the full urban experience to cartographic practice. The experiences gained from daily life on the streets leave a lasting impression on individuals, influencing their identity and their engagement with urban spaces.

The Vila Belga

The methodological procedure was tested in Vila Belga, a historic residential complex in Santa Maria, a medium-sized city in the interior of Rio Grande do Sul, south of Brazil (Figure 01), which faces challenges such as crime and disorderly growth. Vila Belga is distinguished from the rest of the city by its spontaneous social dynamics and preserved environment, which provide a distinctive setting for observing public space.

The Vila, which comprises the streets Manoel Ribas, Ernesto Beck, Doutor Wauthier and André Marques, was constructed at the beginning of the 20th century. It features an eclectic style of architecture, incorporating elements inspired by Art Nouveau. It comprises 84 single-storey residences, semi-detached two-by-two, without frontal setback, aligned directly with the pavement. The residences were constructed by the Belgian company “*Compagnie Auxiliaire des Chemins de Fer au Brésil*” to provide accommodation for its employees, who were based at the now-deactivated railway station (Mello, 2010).





Figure 1: Location of the Vila Belga. Source: Google Maps, adapted, 2023.

The past of Vila Belga is marked by significant moments: firstly, the arrival of the railway in the city, which influenced the construction of the town. For many years, the railway's presence encouraged the appropriation and use of the city's streets. At the end of the 20th century, however, the dynamics of the space were greatly affected by the end of passenger train activity. Nevertheless, the Vila was declared a National Monument in 1997 for its architectural, cultural and heritage importance. Furthermore, the creation of some events, such as Vila Belga Flea Market, has contributed to the preservation and promotion of the appropriation of the streets of this historic place (Mello, 2010).

The Vila Belga Flea Market was established in 2015 in response to a perceived need and desire among residents to transform the local streets into a meeting space and creative economy. This initiative emerged at a time when the Vila was facing a number of challenges, including the neglect of public authorities with regard to infrastructure maintenance, a decline in tourism, an increase in insecurity, and the marginalisation of a significant aspect of the community's heritage. Over time, the event has grown in popularity, gaining recognition and attracting a large audience from across the city. This has contributed to the region's historical and heritage value being more widely acknowledged, strengthening its cultural identity. Such visibility provides an environment conducive to creativity and culture, offering opportunities for artists, entrepreneurs and small producers in the city (Viana, 2019).

The characteristics that distinguish Vila Belga as a singular and distinctive location within Santa Maria extend beyond its historical and cultural significance. The landscape, with its distinctive hues, textures, and proportions, also contributes to its singularity. These elements contribute to the creation of a unified image of the location (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Streets of Vila Belga. Source: Authors' personal collection, 2023.

In this context, it was necessary to identify methodological procedures that were not limited to technical matters such as data and numbers, and which did not rely on the rationality that is imposed in the survey of a purely formal and material urban layout. This study proposes an alternative method of representing the multifaceted aspects of urban street life, including street space, subjectivities, relationships and activities.

Method

In the open process of analysis and observation of public space, an alternative approach to urban understanding emerges, which is based on physical, sensorial and bodily experience. In this approach, the human body is regarded as an active element that exerts influence and is itself influenced throughout the experience, thereby experiencing and feeling the city in ways that are distinctive and individual. Each of these experiences reveals different possibilities of interaction with space, thereby rendering urban perception plural and subjective. In her discussion of the corporeal experience in the city, Paola Jacques (2005) posits that the physical body and the city's body interact and converge in urban public spaces.

Consequently, cartography emerges during the research as a fundamental element that facilitates the development of a route, not merely as a methodology, but as a comprehensive approach that prioritises the experience of the process. In the analysis of the case study proposed in this work, maps are shown to present not only the visible aspect of physical space, but also the variable dimensions of time. The challenge is to adopt a qualitative methodology for the study of public space that is capable of encompassing and understanding the unique characteristics of the place in question.

The flexibility inherent to the cartographic procedure enables the method to be developed throughout the investigative process. It is notable that the cartographic method phase is not confined to the collection of definitive and

straightforward data, but rather encompasses the entirety of the research investigation process. Consequently, the surveys commence with cartography and subsequently encompass metaphors of moments and constellations.

The mapped moments thus represent unique and intense moments of experience, challenging the hegemonic notion of linear time and providing a deeper understanding of the place. In his work, Gaston Bachelard builds upon Rounpel's ideas about the theme of time and instants, proposing that time is discontinuous, with the temporal reality being that of the instant. The focus of consciousness is on experiencing the present, whereas the past and future are perceived as vast emptiness. Consequently, each constellation depicts a singular instant (or series of instants) experienced individually. This moment cannot be preserved; it is ephemeral, it is not repeated, and in isolation it does not constitute a complete memory. Bachelard posits that "the memory of many moments is necessary to make a complete memory" (Bachelard, 2010, p. 17). In this context, moments are intertwined and extend one another, forming an inseparable continuum of experience.

The moments experienced are typified by the concentration of significant experiences, which disrupt the linearity of time, providing a profound sensation of presence and awareness of the current moment. In this context, the metaphor of constellations provides a conceptual framework for understanding the interrelationships between images, temporalities, moments, experiences, sensations, and instants.

Constellations represent visible groupings of stars, which have been identified and named throughout history by humanity. They are cultural constructs that exhibit variability between civilisations and historical periods. However, they are not, in fact, physical structures in space; rather, they are projections resulting from Earth's perspective in relation to the stars. These groupings facilitate the division of the celestial sphere into smaller portions, thereby imparting order to the apparently infinite universe and enabling humanity to situate itself in space, navigating the unknown (Redin, 2013). The constellations of instants, proposed in this research, aim to establish a connection between images and concepts, in a manner analogous to the shapes that are imagined in the starry sky.

Accordingly, field observations were conducted on various dates and at different times, thereby enabling the identification of distinctive characteristics and patterns of utilization of the locale, both during events and in everyday life. The data collected at each instant was processed to generate a text narrative and an additional image, guided by a series of steps that can be seen in Figure 3.



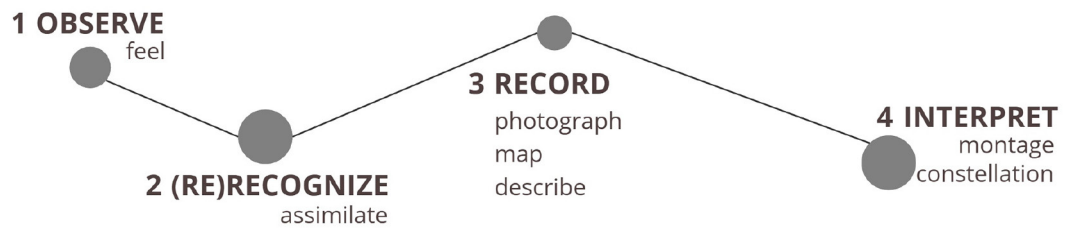


Figure 3: Moments of the Constellation of instants. Source: Authors, 2023.

Step 1: careful observation; Step 2: recognition of the place and assimilation of sensations and events; Step 3: record with photographs, notes, describing experiences; Step 4: interpretation of the images in a Constellation, positioning the photographs side by side, gathered and selected in a montage, with the aim of illustrating subjectivities, materialities, events and unexpected moments.

The Constellations of Instants

Vila Belga was visited on four separate occasions: the first occurred on a Saturday morning during the summer, the second on a Sunday during the Flea Market in the autumn, the third on a Saturday afternoon in the autumn, and the fourth on a Wednesday afternoon during the winter.

The four moment paths were illustrated and demonstrated in Figure 4.



Figure 4: Routes taken during field surveys. Source: Authors, 2023.

Initially, the streets of Vila Belga appeared to be sparsely populated, with a limited number of street-level activities. Despite the agreeable visual configuration, the thermal discomfort of a very hot summer day, combined with the lack of trees or seating to rest on the pavements, made it inadvisable to remain in the public space for extended periods. Furthermore, the presence of closed windows contributed to a sense of isolation and insecurity on the street.

The second moment occurred during the flea market. During the course of the event, the streets were made available for the purpose of conducting permanent activities. Moreover, the absence of fixed furnishings did not appear to present a challenge for residents or visitors, who brought their own seating to the pavement. The distinction between public and private realms appeared to become less pronounced. Windows and doors of residential properties were opened, and the event extended its reach to encompass the immediate vicinity of the streets. In one of the Vila's streets, where the event was not taking place, a couple of girls were selling beaded jewellery, with the table positioned on the pavement in front of their house. This exemplified the significance of flea markets in the region,

particularly in terms of their capacity to stimulate the creative economy, including through processes of appropriation and socialisation.

In the third moment, the Vila was experienced as a lived-in place and the street as an extension of the house, this time in everyday life. In an atmosphere of warmth and acceptance, children were able to expand their imaginative horizons, transforming the street into an informal playground. Moreover, residents and visitors utilised the pavements by occupying them with folding chairs, thereby creating a large space for social interaction and spontaneous socialisation.

Finally, the fourth moment represents a typical aspect of the local daily life, whereby residents congregate outside their residences at dusk, partaking in the traditional beverage mate tea and engaging in conversation. Of note is the observation of the railway station, Gare da Estação, visible in the distance through the garden at the rear of a property in Vila; this offers an alternative perspective on the surrounding landscape.

The highlights identified are illustrated in figure 5.



Figure 5: Highlights of the Instant Constellations. Source: Authors, 2023.



Each moment was examined through the lens of the interaction between the “city body” and the human body, employing a cartographic methodology. This approach enabled a more profound and intimate comprehension of the case study, concentrating on the specifics and sensations of the location. A number of moments and details were identified as being particularly noteworthy. These included children playing on the pavement and a basketball hoop attached to a window grille, which could be seen to symbolise the conflict between the protection of private space and the public use of the street. The four moments revealed different atmospheres, experienced in a gradual and distinctive manner, thereby providing distinctive sensations and insights. The objective of these observations is to expand the understanding of the place, taking into account elements such as time and temperature, which directly influence the dynamics of the street and the way people use it. The images captured reflect the distinctive characteristics and atmosphere of each moment experienced on the streets of Vila Belga.

The results of the surveys and observations conducted in the field indicate that the appropriation (or non-appropriation) of public space in Vila Belga is influenced by a number of different factors. The aforementioned moments elucidate pivotal elements that facilitate comprehension of the utilisation of space, in addition to the challenges encountered throughout this process. Accordingly, the utilisation of public space in the case study can be categorised into two principal phases: the event and everyday life.

The events attract individuals who normally do not frequent the region, thereby becoming the primary drivers of visitation. During the festivities that take place on the street, it is evident that the conventional boundaries between public and private domains are becoming increasingly permeable. In this context, commercial establishments play a fundamental role, providing spaces for people to linger longer and interact with the local architectural heritage. Moreover, the significance of the flea market is evident in the field experiences. The interaction between residents and visitors is not limited to the streets where the event is taking place; it also extends to other streets in the area, thereby promoting social interaction. Local residents participate in the festivities by opening their doors to visitors, sitting in front of their houses, watching from windows, or selling their own products.

In the course of everyday activities, as well as during visits and mapping, the primary types of appropriations were discerned, which differed between stay, transit, and leisure activities.

Following an observation period, it was noted that some forms of appropriation had occurred. For instance, residents were seen to sit in front of the house on folding chairs, a practice that has become customary. By moving a chair to the pavement, an individual makes a temporary change, incorporating the object into the public space for a limited period. This is due to a combination of factors, including familiarity and affinity with the place, as well as the desire to enjoy certain spaces.



In Vila, seating on the doorstep is a common practice that does not require the provision of specific infrastructure for the purpose of staying. For Hertzberger, the threshold facilitates a seamless transition, delineating distinct zones with clear territorial limits. One side represents public space, while the other is the private sphere (Hertzberger, 1999). In this context, commercial premises and garages also serve to reduce the boundary between public and private space in Vila Belga.

Additionally, it was noted that some individuals were observed resting and waiting, without a specific purpose. Furthermore, some individuals and tourists appreciated the scenery, capturing images both independently and as part of a group.

In contrast, the passing activities include individuals entering and exiting their residences or businesses, as well as those merely traversing the area. Furthermore, some individuals were observed walking their pets along the pavement.

The observed forms of appropriation are closely linked to the atmosphere and specific characteristics of each street. On roads where vehicle traffic is reduced and pavements are wider, children can play more freely, making use of the available space and demonstrating creativity: for example, two flip-flops can be used as a goalkeeper, and a lamp post can serve as a hiding place.

Table 1 illustrates the primary activities observed in everyday life, along with the streets where they were identified.

TYPE OF EVERYDAY USE	ACTIVITY	LOCATION
PERMANENCE	Sitting on the doorstep	Doutor Wauthier and Manoel Ribas streets
	Sitting on chairs on the sidewalk	All streets
	Resting/waiting	Doutor Wauthier and Manoel Ribas streets
	Photographing	André Marques and Manoel Ribas streets
	People gathered in front of a commercial space or garage	André Marques and Manoel Ribas streets
MOVEMENT	Entering or leaving a commercial establishment or residence	André Marques, Manoel Ribas and Ernesto Beck streets
	Passing	All streets
	Walking a dog	Ernesto Beck and Doutor Wauthier streets
PLAYFUL	Children playing	Manoel Ribas street
	Skateboarding	Manoel Ribas street

Quadro 1: Apropriações identificadas nas ruas da Vila Belga. Fonte: Elaborado pelas autoras.



In addition to the aforementioned activities and appropriations, certain challenges were identified with regard to the utilisation of the street.

One of the aspects observed is the absence of public furniture that could facilitate prolonged stays. The presence of people imbues public spaces with a new dimension, and it is here that urban furniture plays a crucial role, allowing for pauses for contemplation or social interactions. In the absence of these features, visitors may be dissuaded from remaining on the site.

The temperature during the summer months also has a considerable impact on the utilisation of space within the Vila. On days with high temperatures, the number of individuals remaining in public spaces for extended periods of time is notably reduced. On the sole avenue lined with trees, some residents seek out shaded areas in which to repose. Moreover, the flea market area is subject to disruption during the months of January and February, when intense heat is prevalent.

In addition, the absence of adequate infrastructure has an impact on accessibility. The lack of regular pavements and streets, combined with the absence of wheelchair-accessible ramps at key locations, can often restrict or prevent full use of public spaces by specific population groups, including the elderly, people with disabilities, and families with young children.

In addition, feelings of insecurity frequently act as a deterrent for residents from utilising the city's public spaces. The fear of the streets has a considerable influence on the manner in which they are utilised and appropriated, even in areas that are generally regarded as secure, such as Vila Belga. The interior spaces of homes and backyards, which are protected by walls, fences and electric fences, become more attractive options for leisure activities.

In the field of architecture, the presence of bars on windows is indicative of a sense of insecurity. This is particularly evident in the Vila, where the majority of houses have bars installed on their windows, especially on streets where the windows are in closer proximity to the pavement and, therefore, more vulnerable. Furthermore, during field visits, it was observed that the majority of doors and windows remained perpetually closed, which contributed to a pervasive sense of isolation when traversing the sidewalks. Consequently, the "informal surveillance" described by Jacobs is diminished, which occurs when there is an active presence of individuals observing the street (Jacobs, 2007). Presently, this surveillance is conducted remotely, primarily through cameras installed throughout the streets of the Vila.

However, in contrast to the typical urban environment, the residences in Vila Belga are designed not only to protect their residents, but also to integrate them into a cohesive community. From this perspective, the sentiment of "security" is frequently linked to the proximity between neighbours: the sense of community and solidarity, where each individual is invested in the well-being of the other.



Such protection is perceived as a collective endeavour. Moreover, the urban structure of the area facilitates connectivity with the wider city, thereby enabling the integration of additional individuals into the community.

Moreover, initiatives such as the flea market and informal appropriations in public spaces may prove effective in addressing the challenges associated with feelings of insecurity. By fostering coexistence with diversity and celebrating cultural creativity, these practices facilitate meaningful dialogue between disparate groups, thereby enhancing community cohesion. Figure 6 elucidates the primary factors that either facilitate or impede appropriation in the Vila.

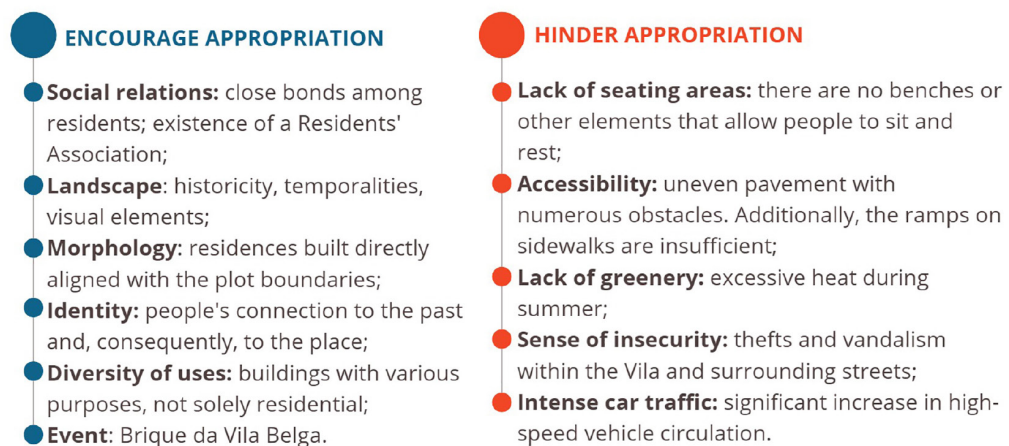


Figure 6: Elements that favor or hinder appropriation in the case study. Source: Authors, 2023.

As a result of the identification of the elements that facilitate or impede the appropriation process, guidelines and strategies have been developed with a view to mitigating the observed problems and highlighting factors conducive to such activities.

FINAL REFLECTIONS

The results of the analysis demonstrate that the appropriation of public space in Vila Belga is shaped by a complex interplay of physical, architectural, social and economic factors. The architectural features of a given space can either encourage or inhibit the duration of human presence, depending on the presence or absence of elements such as seating, shade, or accessibility. Moreover, the dynamics of appropriation are contingent upon the sensorial conditions presented by the environment, including factors such as lighting, temperature, and the perception of security. These elements can either enhance or constrain the everyday experiences of individuals within that environment. Furthermore, an understanding of these aspects enables the appreciation of the influence of spatial and sensory support on experience.

In response to the research question «*How can an understanding of the appropriation of streets be deepened by looking at the particularities of the place?*», it can be seen that an examination of such subjectivities facilitated a deeper and more nuanced understanding of appropriation patterns, as well as the identification of both weaknesses and potential based on experiences lived during the research.

It is crucial that the street space provides the necessary and favourable conditions for people to stay, as Gonçalves (2020) highlights, in order for it to be used and appropriated freely as a place of public life. Moreover, it is essential that they feel safe and welcomed in order to remain in a particular location for an extended period of time (Gonçalves, 2020).

The methodological procedure, based on the methodology of cartography, also prompted discussions and questions regarding the various approaches to sharing the city's experience, creating new narratives and alternative ways of communicating them.

Ultimately, it became evident that the streets of Vila Belga are imbued with significant meaning and diversity. Here, both tangible and intangible elements play a pivotal role in the creation of memorable experiences, which can alter one's perception of space. This process of transformation imbues streets with a heightened sense of meaning and experiences.

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