From Urban Space to Everyday Place: Appropriation of Public Leisure Areas *in Belo Horizonte, Brazil*

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Abstract

The dramatic changes occurred in the organization of cities reverberate in the very individual and interpersonal levels of spatial relationships. This essay approaches the public space by transposing fundamental concepts identified among the urban cultural system to the everyday experience of particular places. This transposition gives an insight into the comprehension of the built environment by exploring links between scales. The referential frame adopted is the set of discourses by Soja (2000) on the post-metropolis. The study cases, two contrasted leisure areas situated in the Brazilian city of Belo Horizonte, are potential spots for the cultural and spatial appropriation of people. They are examined within the city context by means of a more specific literature as well as an empirical research based on ethnographic observational methods. The experiment provides the application of global concepts in very concrete places, where a sharply connection with the processes of urban restructuring is evidenced.

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Introduction

Dramatic changes in the spatial organization of cities, that occurred in the last decades, have significantly changed the "urban condition." A restructuring process has caused a direct impact in the way of life and in the appropriation of public spaces (Soja, 2000: 234). Indeed, it is noticeable how the subject calls attention in the area of the urban research in general and particularly in the study of open leisure areas (e.g. Bonastra and Casals, 2014; Ostermann and Timpf, 2009; Franck and Stevens, 2007).

The appropriation of space is here defined within the transformation and adaptation forces between the built environment and the human behavior. As it deals directly with the concrete dimension of places, the appropriation has served as a parameter for evaluating situations and informing intervention programs. Despite its planning potential, the scholarly approach that deals with a broader urban context hardly feed the discussion in a closer, interpersonal level. This sort of methodological disconnection reflects a disciplinary problem: regardless of the collaboration between the field of urban studies – which include areas such as geography and urban planning – and those dealing with smaller scales – like landscape design or architecture –, the transit between scales becomes impaired or fragmented. There are noticeable gaps that need to be bonded.

The purpose of this essay is to explore the relationship between the environment and the public space from the standpoint of the appropriation. Therefore, fundamental concepts identified at the level of the urban milieu are transposed to the everyday experience of particular places. This artifice gives an insight into the comprehension of the built environment by exploring the links between spatial scales.

The transposition of urban scales is a topic that has been not regularly explored in the academic context. Nevertheless, some approaches made in modern times are very suggestive in this sense. Alexander, Ishikawa, and Silverstein (1977) weave an interdependent network of archetypal patterns organized into three levels: cities, buildings and details. The relationships among the patterns are, however, limited to a schematic system that blurs cultural particularities. Hillier (1996) also tries to establish connections between the scale of the city and places through a tool – space syntax – that evaluates the built environment by using parameters such as movement, segregation, interaction and security. Even so, there is still a lack of semantic studies that best assess the socio-spatial quality of the urban milieu. More recently, authors such as Brenner (2019, 2000) are addressing the contemporary urban restructuring scales by revising relevant conceptual as well as methodological approaches. Although some insights are done into the analysis of specific places, investigations based on the microlevel of individuals are yet to be carried out.

This essay deals precisely with concepts identified in the urban context and its transpositions to the experience of common, daily use places. In order to promote a link between these scalar dimensions, an appropriate frame of approach is chosen. The main reference adopted is the set of discourses by Soja (2000) on the postmetropolis, especially those dedicated to the consequences (exopolis and fractal city) and adaptations (carceral archipelago and simcities) of the new restructuring processes of the modern metropolis. These discourses touch, from different starting points, urban socio-spatial relations, giving regular

insights into the respective everyday phenomena. The "general particularities" observed in the city of Los Angeles are taken as parameters for the analysis of different places in other contexts.

The complexity concerning this task requires an expanding of the theoretical and methodological bases, here assessed by authors such as Castells (1983 [1972]), Lefebvre (1991 [1974]), Harvey (1993) and Santos (1994). An important reference of disciplinary synergy is found in the environment-behavior studies, particularly the spatial analysis dealing with ethnographic and anthropological techniques (e.g. Rapoport, 1990). More recent researches show an attempt to highlight some conceptual and empirical matters concerning the public space, with a particular consideration of sites like squares and parks (Mehta, 2014; Amin, 2008; L'Aoustet and Griffet, 2004). Other works have demonstrated the methodological potential that socio-spatial analysis offers when based on the discourse of renowned authors in the field of urban sociology (Vaide, 2023). In this context, criteria such as inclusiveness, publicness and pleasurability are used to access the everyday activities involved in the human dynamics of places. The approaches include topics that range from the observation of the interactions among people, to the study of movement among bodies and matter, being the quality of urban life an important parameter.

The selected case studies for closer examination are public leisure areas, due to the potential they offer for the appropriation of people. The two contrasted places are situated in the city of Belo Horizonte, a Brazilian state capital that was planned and built in the end of the 19th century with a geometrized urban area surrounded by a more informal suburb (Comissão Construtora da Nova Capital, 1997; Guimarães, 2012). The estimated rate of 200 thousand inhabitants was reached at the 1940s and increased exponentially in the next decades (Gomes and Lima, 2005). The original planned grid has been engulfed by the city itself, whose metropolitan area hosts around 6 million people nowadays.

The two leisure areas are very different in their urban context, so the contrast can offer a platform for comparison. At one extreme stands the Liberty Square, the core of the governmental power surrounded by a high standard neighborhood (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Overview of the Liberty Square in Belo Horizonte, 2007. (Source: The author).

At the other extreme is the Santa Lucia Dam, situated between a slum (favela) and the "formal city" (Figures 2 and 3).
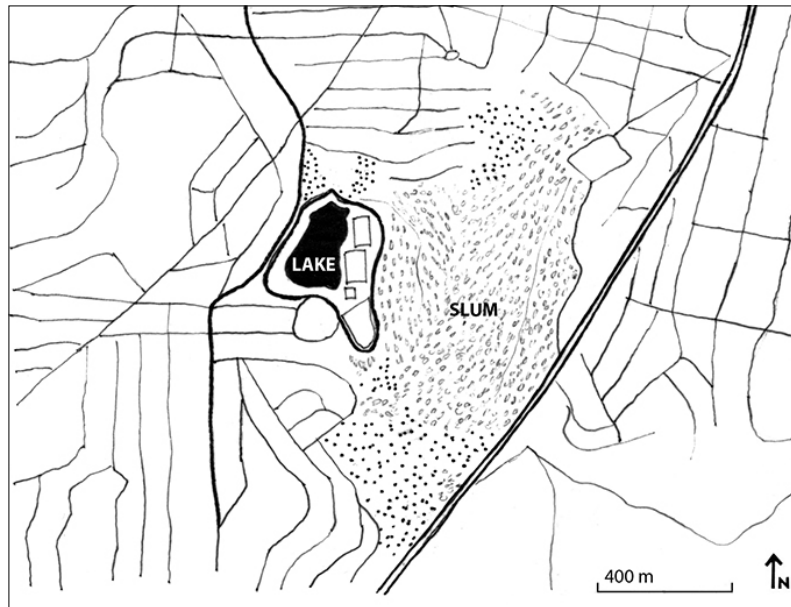

Figure 2. Sketch-plan showing the urban situation of the Santa Lucia Dam in Belo Horizonte with emphasis on the lake and the slum, 2015. (Source: The author).

Figure 3. Overview of the Santa Lucia Dam in Belo Horizonte, 2006. (Source: The author).

The discrepancy is clearly shown in the "social vulnerability index" launched by the municipal government, with the two respective neighborhoods placed with extreme opposed rates (Belo Horizonte, 2000). But are the Dam and the Square really disparate, or is the distinction only an appearance? Are the conceptual and spatial variables similar in both

cases? The contrasting cases raise the question of how the transposition of a general urban dimension to concrete places is manifested in the two socio-spatial situations, being appropriation the main parameter for comparison.

To put these recreational areas into the city context, a more specific literature is accessed. The methodology of research also involves empirical methods. Although no formal surveys were launched, nor a quantitative handling of the material systematically accomplished, a scrupulous ethnography-based, non-participatory observation was endeavored (see Jones, 2020; Alwi, 2016; Cobb and Hoang, 2015; Clark, Holland, Katz and Peace, 2009; White, 1980). The behavior of people, the fluxes of activities, as well as the spatial quality of the environment were some of the categories taken into account when approaching the circumstances of analysis. Frequent visits on the sites in different days of the week and moments of daytime, with an acute examination of the activities – common as well as unusual ones – followed by descriptive and critical notes, were the main resources for data surveying. A great effort was also made in the registration of photographic images, so the scenes could be further and closer reviewed afterwards.

The main set of data was collected on site along the years 2008 and 2009. Some considerable changes have been thenceforth occurred in the leisure areas, since they are situated in sectors of the city that suffer from housing as well as commercial and cultural pressures. The square has especially been undergoing a major transformation, with the increase of cultural and touristic activities and the secretariat buildings becoming museums (Lemos and Bortolozzi, 2014; Faria, Penido and Gonçalves, 2025). In order to monitor the more recent changes in the Square as well as in the Dam, frequent visits for observation and comparison were made along the past years. Although some information was updated, it has been noticed that the situations were largely maintained in its substantial essence.

The following approach to the selected phenomena is preceded by a brief description of the places of study, so basic characteristics are pointed out and the contrast between them is more evidenced. The processes of transposition of scale and appropriation of space are than explored by taking the set of Soja's discourse as a base. The topics are: new centralities; implosion-explosion; inequality-segregation; control and surveillance; and simulations and hyperreality. Finally, the proposed approach to the appropriation of space by transposing the urban and interpersonal scales is assessed. In the meantime, the possibilities as well as the limitations of development and application of the achieved results are discussed.

The Square and the Dam
The original planned area of Belo Horizonte was built in the late 19th century to house the new capital of the State of Minas Gerais. The Liberty Square, designed as a government core in the geometric urban grid, was located in the encounter of great avenues. It was organized by a green rectangle headed by the presidential palace and flanked by office secretarial buildings. In the surrounding neighborhood were installed the elites of government leaders and public servants (Lana, 1990). The area is nowadays occupied by residential and commercial, well-built tall buildings. The Square represents an important landmark in the urban imaginary, besides being intensively used as a leisure public space. It has been regarded as a spot where different kinds of appropriation can occur (Fernandes and Medeiros, 2012; Caldeira, 1998; Albano, Lemos and Werneck, 1985).

The Santa Lucia Dam, otherwise, was located in the former suburban sector of the original city plan. The area, to be occupied by productive rural units, was subsequently settled by the working class (Guimarães, 2012). Within this context, the Dam was created in the 1950s as a result of the hydrological management of the Leitão Stream (Soares, 2001). Once entangled by the city, it currently shows a typical contrast caused by urban slum communities: an informal self-built, low-class cluster, entangled by middle and upper classes neighborhoods (Lima, 2011). There is a park with green areas and communal services along the border of the Dam. Its appropriation by local people shows, at first sight, a dual process of both interaction and segregation.

These two places have also a curious formal counterpoint. The Square, with its institutional buildings arranged around the public gardens, is situated at the highest point of the planned grid like an acropolis (Guimarães, 2013). The Dam, by contrast, expresses an aquatic void with the slopes falling toward the lake.

New Centralities
Among the concepts discussed by Soja (2000) when addressing the transformation of the urban milieu, stands the emergence of new centralities. In the foundation of Belo Horizonte, a strong centrality was determined by a strict geometric grid of streets and avenues inspired by cities such as Washington (USA) and La Plata (Argentina). However, the surrounding informal area, planned for future expansion, was promptly settled by workers and immigrants, who attended the construction of the city. In the next decades, in the beginning of the 20th century, this encompassing zone had a significant increase in its density and extension (Fundação João Pinheiro, 1997: 48; Estado de Minas, 1996). During this process, a new centrality sense, based on a peripheral-centrifugal force, was undoubtedly created.

With the urban sprawl, occurred from the middle of the 20th century on, the commercial and institutional power of the downtown was maintained. While the old centralities were transformed among time and social change, new concentrations of people and life appeared inside as well as outside the original grid. In this process, new centralities appear by the blurring of urban-suburban boundaries and the hybridization of cultural influences (Soja, 2000). These phenomena are understood and identified more clearly when we observe the daily activities carried out in urban spaces, which represent legitimate, although fragmented, centralities.

Nowadays, an extensive program of requalification is still under course at the Liberty Square (Prodemge, 2017; Lemos and Bortolozzi, 2014). The activities usually taken in the secretariat buildings have been transferred to a governmental center to the north of the city, in the way to the international airport. The so-called "Administrative City" is defining a new urban centrality by causing important developments in dwelling and commercial areas, as well as in transportation connections. The Square and its surroundings, by their side, are being rehabilitated into a cultural complex, in which buildings are housing functions such as museums and educational facilities (Faria, Penido and Gonçalves, 2025). This is undoubtedly redefining the reference and meaning of the place – a new centrality – for the collective imaginary of the city.

The Dam has also determined a new convergence within the surrounding neighborhoods. The water and the vegetation enhance the environmental quality of the place. The open,

free of construction space represents a void in the urban fabric and provides panoramic views around the lake. Moreover, the attraction is given by the potential public use and the recreational and social activities it gathers (Jácome, Nogueira and Silva, 2024).

By means of similar and diverse centripetal forces, both the Square and the Dam show that new centralities are emerging, although the old ones still maintain its strong presence in the city.

Implosion-Explosion; Borders Diluted?

The constructive implosion-explosion, combined with the blurring of boundaries, is another phenomenon pointed out by Soja (2000) in the transformation of the urban milieu. In both the Square and the Dam, there undergoes an intense constructive densification followed by obstructionist processes.

The built environment among the Square is becoming increasingly more homogeneous, despite the mixture of old and modern buildings. The "frontiers" of heritage preservation have been systematically violated by the demolition of old houses and the proliferation of sky-scrapers (Lopes, 2006). The accelerated process of vertical growing represents an explosion toward the sky. A new frontier is created, but another one is attenuated: the view to the mountain range called Serra do Curral, a natural and germinal element that once situated the city and guided people within the territory, is being gradually obstructed by the constructive mass. If until the 1950s the mountains could still be seen from the acropolis-like Square, some decades later this relationship became barely perceptible (Guimarães, 2013).

The use of the public space of the Square also defines borders. The population density and the shortage of recreational areas in the city attract residents who seek for leisure. The belt of joggers around the Square forms a fluid barrier that is difficult to transpose by passers-by during the rush hours. Once inside, among the gardens, this kind of boundary dilutes in appropriation cells, which set up a constellation of more contemplative as well as congregative activities.

The Dam, by its side, had a significant intervention when the park was installed in the early 1990s (Soares, 2001). In that occasion, a range of facilities, including a sport complex, a healthcare center and a police station, were located to the east of the lake. The situation has not changed a lot until the present time. The infrastructure, attended mostly by poor people, forms, together with the lake, a protection barrier from the richer, middle-class neighborhoods (Lansky, 2012: 55-56). At the opposite side of the slum, a highway constitutes another boundary that confines and prevents the access to the area. This bordering phenomenon does not happen to the north and south edges, where remaining green areas function as buffer stocks in the dilution of the slum. This interlude can be understood as a fragile locus for a surviving nature, as well as a potential space for real encounter – or clash – with the surroundings.

Meanwhile, the slum itself becomes more and more dense with the disappearance of open spaces and the increment of floors on the houses. Is such a growth going to result in a constructive implosion? Until when will the slopes endure such a pressure?

In both the Square and the Dam, it can be stated that the borders are not being blurred in all situations or aspects. Some physical, as well as spatial and psychological barriers, are still constraining the urban fabric. It is also true that there is a very dynamic constructive movement under development.

Inequality and Segregation

Soja (2000: 265) also argues that the new urbanization processes enhance the socio-economic inequalities. The axes around class, race and gender have been transformed and are becoming increasingly complex and interrelated, while the urban environment tends to be more fragmented. It is also noted that the old polarities – bourgeoisie-proletariat, black-white, men-women – are still very active.

Belo Horizonte is still constrained by a strong centrality. The wealth, measured by rates concerning infrastructure, services, housing, education and skin color, among other criteria, is concentrated primarily in two areas, the designed city and the region of Pampulha to the north (Belo Horizonte, 2003). If the Square is a focus of well-being, the Dam's slum can be regarded, on the contrary, as a fragment of poverty within the city. Two opposed poles of inequality are clearly expressed.

In the original plan of Belo Horizonte, there was a noticeable distinction between the central regular city and the surrounding suburban area. An equivalent phenomenon took place in the use of the Liberty Square during the early decades of the 20th century. The two rows of palm trees, divided by a central pathway, served as a support for social segregation, with the elite at one side and the populace at the other (Caldeira, 1998: 91-92).

This separation is not so clear today. The peripheral flow of the jogging elite is there, but it coexists with diverse groups using seats and pathway corners among the gardens. Despite the predominance of housing and office buildings, as well as the lack of commerce around the Square, the educational and cultural institutions bring to the scene people from different backgrounds. This does not necessarily mean a mixed social interaction, since some pockets are being set: neighbors, students and young workers, for example. Anyway, the Square provides an accessible public space with a range of options for appropriation.

It has also been argued that the Liberty Square enhances a well-integrated area concerning the urban fabric and the sense of urbanity (Fernandes and Medeiros, 2012). It seems, however, that the "real spaces of interaction between people" and the "intense use of public space" should be analyzed in a more ethnographic closeness. Then the synthetic activities identified in the Square could be considered not only in an everyday basis, but also in its meaningful implication within societal matters.

It has also been demonstrated in a research work carried out in Belo Horizonte that the proliferation of suburban upper-class neighborhoods is followed by nearby settlements of low-income social groups (Mendonça and Perpétuo, 2006). The polarized social structure, with its usual system of labor relations, is then reproduced. In the case of the orthogonal planned city, there is no housing place for the workers, due to the dynamics dictated by the elites and the real estate market. A transportation system, nevertheless, guarantee the flux from and to the peripheries, so the services and apartments can be attended by the working, poorer classes.

Meanwhile, along the 20th century, the yet unoccupied slopes of the Leitão Stream offered to impoverished people an opportunity of living in a relative closeness to the city. After the entangling of the slum by the urban fabric, there was an inverse occurrence: people of middle and upper-classes settled in the new urbanized neighborhoods of Santa Lucia and Sao Bento to the south side of the Dam.

With the remodeling of the Dam and the leisure facilities around the lake, the contact between different populations is supposedly encouraged. However, there is a phenomenon similar to the Square, with groups of users sharing a common place but hardly communicating to each other. In spite of the high attendance, the social classes do not mix much (Lansky, 2012; Baptista, 2003) and have different comprehensions of the public space in terms of sociability and sense of belonging (Xavier, Lustoza and Batella, 2019; Jácome, Nogueira and Silva, 2024). This dual situation of possible interaction and segregation can be observed in the everyday activities. Both the sinuous benches and some services located to the side of the slum – such as the capoeira's (Brazilian dance) school and the horticultural popular store – bring people together (Baptista, 2003: 103-104). Also sports and commerce (open-air market and refreshment kiosks) activities are important social loci for the sector of higher income as well as for the people from the poorer community, who also come to the lake for more informal practices such as fishing and wandering. The free exploration of the shore is a highly educational and socializing activity restricted to the dark skin children. Richer, white kids, however, have not this opportunity, since they and their parents are too worried about safety matters.

Control and Surveillance

The discourses of Soja dealing with the intensification of social and spatial control are clearly applicable to the leisure areas here in examination. New modes of regulation are created through the privatization, management, surveillance and design of the built environment. Soja (2000: 300) could be describing the Liberty Square when mentioning the emergence of new cultural acropolises, which are defined as pseudo-public spaces with invisible signs that drive the slag away. In fact, the transformation of the Square into a cultural complex has been followed by a sophisticated surveillance machinery.

At the Dam, as well as at the Square, there is a peripheral flow of jogging athletes. It constitutes, notably in the case of the Dam, a strategy for space surveillance. The dynamic, and at the same time fixed circuit, form an authentic patrolling mechanism. Tall light poles ensure the visualization and presence of the round along the night.

There are also formal human patrols in both leisure areas, but some differences exist. The Square is overseen by unarmed, radio equipped watchmen, whose jackets show the word "surveillance." Although they serve the general public by providing tourist information, their presence is closely related to the disappearance of dark skin children who used to swim in the ponds and fountains.

A similar means of spatial control is imposed in the case of the Dam, where municipal guards now patrol the shores of the lake. They are complementary to the regular Military Police, whose barracks are strategically located at the southern end of the complex, in an area of possible contact between the slum and the middle-class district of Santa Lucia.

Another mode of surveillance is found to the north side of the Dam's slum, in the interface with the richer neighborhood of Santo Antonio. Besides the physical barrier stressed by a sharp slope, a skyscraper stands out like an observatory or panopticon (Foucault, 1977; Manokha, 2018) (see Figure 3). Although residential, this tower symbolizes the presence of some authority's watching eyes, besides providing a privileged position for the vigilance of the Dam and its surroundings.

The corresponding element at the Square is the video-monitoring system. In this case, the symbolic meaning is concretized by a very explicit and functional device, which is connected to the telecommunication antennas on the top of the police building located next to the government palace. It is difficult to understand the real need for such an apparatus in a place already so controlled. A camera installed in the bandstand takes advantage of the circular configuration and the elevated situation of this structure – again, the panopticon-like position (Foucault, 1977; Koskela, 2003). The lovers and groups of teenagers that used to be there have no more privacy. Basic functions of this charming building, such as shelter and site seeing, are being trespassed by a remote alien observation.

Simulations and Hyperreality

The last discourse of Soja (2000) here taken into account refers to the restructuring of the collective imaginary and its effects on everyday activity. Ideological and political strategies are seen as subtle forms of social and spatial regulation that manipulate conscience and urban life. Some phenomena assessed are the simulacrum (understood as the perversion of reality by image), the psychasthenia (or mental disorder in the relationship between the human being and the environment) and the hyperreality of virtual culture.

The aforementioned process of "enculturation" of the Liberty Square shows a distortion of reality. The removal of bureaucratic functions implicates the withdrawing of important political meanings of the place that used to be the governmental core of the city. With the new administrative center being now placed at the edge of the city, the square tends to become a virtual hyperreality or, at best, a distant reality. Once again, privilege is given to the elites, since low levels of education among the general population restrict the efficacy of formal modes of culture cultivation such as that provided by traditional, formal museums. The program of rehabilitation has been criticized by the one-dimensional land use and the lack of popular facilities (Ferolla, 2004). The Square is surrendering itself to tourism, which calls much more attention and improves business. Culture could also be seen as a means for the democratization of knowledge, but this seems not to be the main premise at the Square.

The Christmas decoration usually placed on the grass is an exemplar source of hyperreal simulations. The giant plastic-made objects are the extreme of an a-topia on the one hand, and a marketing influence on the other. What do they advertise, the arrival of Santa Claus from the North Pole or the transposition of economical values from an ancient religious celebration? Imitations of enormous gift boxes, along with snowmen, stress the propaganda for consumption (Rabiei, Golrokh and Bahrami, 2021: 15-16). This is the time when the decorative lights are lit and purchases, sales and loans are increased. The main square, that engenders an important public place of the city, becomes an arena for business manipulation of people.

The situation at Santa Lucia Dam is much rawer and, at the same time, subtle. However, the simulations are nonetheless perceptible. The very design with sinuous paths, shady corners and green meadows around the lake, as well as the illusion of a democratic and convivial place, represent a clear distortion of reality. The public space shows, with a more acute observation, clear signs of deterioration and segregation, being examples the degraded playground and the abundant garbage on the streets of the poorer community. The houses at the lower part of the slum have a better aspect (plaster, paint) than the ones at the upper side. This is due to richer people living in a more convenient location, but can also be regarded to revitalization programs that superficially tinkers slums. An example of this strategy is more clearly found in the very agglomerate of the Dam, on the sector facing the highway to the east, where colorful painted hovels make a supposedly better view for the passers-by. Indeed, the conflicting relationship between dwellers and the municipal government among slum communities in Belo Horizonte and other state capital cities usually calls for actions of social mobilization (Fernandes and Pereira, 2010; Leitão and Delecave, 2013).

Finally, it is noted in both the Square and the Dam, as well as in different leisure areas in the city, the appropriation of virtual culture. The jogging circuits show a peculiar incidence of this phenomenon. Entertained by music, social networks and other means of digital virtuality – that can be noticed mainly via the use of earplugs and mini-microphones –, many of the athletes keep an excessive concentration in their duty. Paradoxically, this behavior can also be interpreted as a result of an alienating process, being the physical exercise the only purpose in matter and the remaining connection with the real world. In the case of the earphone users, the sounds around are blocked, so the urban noise or a friend's calling cannot be clearly heard. It becomes very difficult for passers-by to get closer or even change some face glances. The possibility of communication among people and within the environment is tragically diminished. The capacity of observing things and movements weakens, while the perceptible image is reduced to a background. By getting absorbed by a parallel dimension, people get disconnected from reality.

Conclusion

General implications of the phenomena here approached show that the identification and the characterization of urban factors contribute to a better understanding of concrete places. The appropriation developed to be sharply connected with the processes of urban restructuring. In this relational movement, social and spatial dimensions are shown as essentially inseparable. The set of discourses by Soja (2000), taken here as the main reference, proved to be very adequate. Among the key ideas illustrated are:

- The emerging of new centralities based on everyday use of public spaces.
- The transformation of borders by means of spatial and psychological barriers.
- The enhancement of inequality and socio-spatial segregation processes, despite the persistence of socializing pocket activities.
- The controlling and surveillance of space by people themselves, police agents, as well as technological mechanisms.
- The distortion of reality caused by alienating virtual processes, by the withdrawal of political meanings, and by the appeal to commercial and cultural consumption.

The experiment of transposing a general urban dimension to a more daily spatial scale is efficacious in providing the application of global concepts in empirical places. This transfer process suggests the collaboration among study fields dealing with urban space such as architecture, landscape architecture and urban planning. It comes to be a surprise that the interfaces within those disciplines have not yet been properly explored, in spite of the conceptual and academic closeness.

Many differences between the two leisure areas – the Liberty Square and the Santa Lucia Dam – were both confirmed and declined. On the one hand, the processes of settlement and urban development gather spatial structures, control mechanisms and behaviors clearly distinct in each situation. On the other hand, the coincidence of variables and responses in the appropriation of both places show some super-structural forces acting indiscriminately in the urban milieu. In this sense, the empirical examples should be broadened to other cities in Brazil and abroad, in order to verify the inference in diverse contexts.

If this essay presents basically a conscientious reading on the situations, it is desirable, as a next step, to get into the formulation of propositions. The analysis and criticism are not entirely operative if the problems are only pointed out and explained, although this is a fundamental move for a discussion. An example of enquiring is suggested by Soja (2000: 281-282) himself, who calls the attention for a new cultural policy capable of building intercultural coalitions and providing spaces of resistance for concrete action. This could be a task for further research: to check, in the general context and particularly in the city of Belo Horizonte, if there are representative examples of these movements or spatial politics, and how they give insight into the appropriation of the public space.

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