

## Practical urban: the urbanity and its relationship with the contemporary city

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### Abstract

*This article explains the concepts of city and urban practices - phenomena of human activity into the urbanity - that directly influence the life of the people, your own inhabits and customs, becoming the city the image from your own habitants. It is vitally important for the study understand the urbanity relation to the design of cities, as a complement of the public space, one of the ways that interferes at the urban landscape. We can understand how society is shown in front of herself and the world itself that surrounds it, and what are the devices that make city living when are connected - through uses and customs - vital forces of individuals and their communities at the space with some practices created by the tactics of the inhabitants to allow its ambiance, wellness, safety and comfort, sensations often perceived by the set of elements that constitute the cities. The city spaces are perceived through symbols and signs that are manifested through equipment, furniture, buildings, streets, squares, signage and parking lots that make up the identity of the place. Usually this identity is described by the image that people have of the place, of the resident population habits, social resenatações and produced interventions. The city is more than a jumble of individual men and social conveniences, it is something more than a mere constellation of institutions and administrative provisions. The city is a state of mind, a body of customs, traditions, feelings and attitudes inherent organized the vital processes of the people who compose it. The city is a product of nature, especially of human nature. Urban space is a form of unconscious rationalization (individual and collective), disguised in the visibility of their urban layouts, buildings and monuments, which can be mistaken, suppressing critical reflection and self-criticism of inhabitants or social groups. Cities must offer good living spaces, leisure, integration and culture so that everyone can exercise the right to collective use, living on the street or in the park with the family, revaluing the humanase relations improving the quality of life of its residents. We identify with the places as we recognize its importance and representing a local or global identity.*

**Keywords:** *urban practices, urban landscape, social representations.*

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## **1. Introduction**

The city as a backdrop of urban practices. Key issue in many disciplines, the city is always a recurring theme for scholars seeking to understand this phenomenon of human activity. The history of the city in a little account of the creation of urban space and its manifestations, its functions, transformations and complexity with which we are currently faced with various city typologies around the planet. There is no definition that applies itself to all its manifestations nor isolated description that covers all its transformations, from the embryonic social nucleus to the complex shapes of their maturity and bodily disintegration of his age. The city's origins are obscure, buried or irretrievably erased a large part of his past, and are difficult to weigh its future prospects. If we want to launch new foundations for urban life, we must understand the historical nature of the city and distinguish between their original functions, those which it emerged and those that can still be invoked. In our attempt to get a better view of its current state, we should peek over the line of the historical horizon in order to glimpse the dark traces of more ancient structures and even more primitive functions. However, not abandon this path as not to have followed in all its intricacies and setbacks, through the five thousand years of recorded history, until the emerging future. The author continues to write the city's origins to explain the transformations that the man experienced throughout history and that determined, so to speak, its model of social behavior in the cities: before the city, there was a small village, the sanctuary and the village; before the village, the camp, the hiding, the cave, the stone heap; and above all this, there was a certain predisposition to social life that man shares, of course, with several other animal species. At all levels of life, return to mobility for security or, conversely, immobility for adventure (Mumford,1998).

In the Park of words: “The city is more than a jumble of individual men and social conveniences, streets, buildings, electricity, tramways, telephones; It is something more than a mere constellation of institutions and administrative arrangements - courts, hospitals, schools, police and civil servants of various kinds. The city is a state of mind, a body of customs and traditions and feelings and organized attitudes inherent to these customs and transmitted by this tradition. The city is not merely a physical mechanism and an artificial construction. It is involved in vital processes of the people who compose it; It is a product of nature, and especially of human nature” (Park, 1973).

### **1.1 The city as a backdrop of urban practices**

With the industrial revolution and the emergence of the steam engine in the mid-eighteenth century, we began the industrial age and the cities became industrial centers with a large population growth, mainly due to rural exodus caused by the onset of automation hand labor in agriculture, and improving the quality of life in cities with the arrival of light and lamp filaments surveyed by Sir Joseph Swan and Thomas Edison. The city, therefore, can be seen from different perspectives: the urban space that is composed of the material elements, and the social, the experiences and urban practices. In the words of sociologist Inaê (Brancaglione, 2006), the city can be defined as follows: “more than an architectural or geographical fact [the] city is a social phenomenon, a production - and also a producer - of human collective activities. More than all the buildings and roads, the city is home to each of its residents, is that one social space in the world because it houses the individual routes and the smaller centers of social life, those most economically significant: family, close friends, loves”.

This statement shows how the inhabitants of a city are faced with an urban landscape designed to offer the population greater identification and sense of belonging with their space, pride and memories, positive feelings of homeland only transpires when we are proud of environment to which we belong. Lynch (Brancaglione, 2006) explains: “To understand a city, we must consider not only the city itself, but the way its inhabitants to realize”. Thus, the deployment of street furniture equipment can contribute to qualify the image of cities, seen through its own inhabitants. In contemporary times, urban centers are specific

scenarios of diversity and inequality. For this fact, it is necessary to think relational aesthetics (Brancaglion, 2006) as an alternative to sociability, and perceive it as stimulating experiences as well as a device to solve the lack of social ties that a capitalist society and global causes. Confirming such statements, is quoted also Norberg-Schulz, which says: "There must be "identification" a "friendly" relationship with the environment. And both the guidance and the identification are aspects of an overall relationship. Thus, the environment is experienced as meaning bearer, "character is a correspondence between the external world and the internal world, body and soul" (Norbert-Schulz, 2006).

## **1.2. Social representations to the organization of the city**

According Jodelet, there is always the need to be informed about the world around us. In addition to adjusting to it, we need to know how to behave, physics master it and intellectually, identify and resolve problems that arise: is why we created representations. Faced with this world of objects, people, events and ideas are not (only) automatic, nor are isolated in a social vacuum: we share this world with others who serve in support, at times in a convergent way, others by conflict, to understand it, manage it or face it. That is why the representations are social and so important in everyday life. They guide us in the way of naming and jointly define the different aspects of everyday reality in the way of interpreting these aspects, makes decisions and eventually position yourself in front of them defensively (Jodelet, 2001). For the author, the social representations are complex phenomena always enabled and action in social life. As a phenomenon full of riches, we found many elements (some, studied in isolation): informational, cognitive, ideological, normative, beliefs, values, attitudes, opinions, images, etc.). However, these elements are always organized under the guise of a knowledge that says something about the state of reality (Jodelet, 2001). It is recognized that the social representations - as interpretation systems that govern our relationship with the world and with others - guide and organize behavior and social communications. Similarly, they are involved in various processes such as diffusion and assimilation of knowledge, individual and collective development, the definition of personal and partner's identities, expression of groups and social transformation. As cognitive phenomena, involves social belonging of individuals with affective and normative implications, from the experiences of interiorizações, practices, role models and thinking, socially inculcated or transmitted by the media, that it is connected. From this point of view, the social representations are addressed concurrently as product and process an appropriation of activity of external reality to thought and psychological and social development of this reality (Jodelet, 2001).

To Mumford, it is possible to understand the space of a city only when you know the culture that developed it (social representations). The author states that the more you know the culture of a city, the more will be able to understand the development of this city. In the words of historicist and archaeologist Ulpiano Meneses: "The culturally qualified city is good to be known (at local, the tourist, so there is business to attend to, the technical etc.), good to contemplate aesthetically fruída analyzed, suitable for memory, consumed affective and their identities, but it is also good to be practiced in the fullness of their potential. It must be good as a city, need conditions of economic viability, infrastructure, adequate housing policies, transport, health, education etc." [5. Meneses]. Therefore, the city is more than an urban and architectural space is the place where they develop social representations, is the "home". In the words of Lynch, the city is: "Characteristic and legible environment that offers not only security but also enhances the depth and potential intensity of human experience. Although life is far from impossible in the visual chaos of the modern city, the same daily action could take on a new meaning if it were practiced in a clearer scenario. Potentially the city itself is a powerful symbol of a complex society. If well organized visually, it can also have a strong expressive meaning" (Brancaglion, 2006).

For some scholars, such as Durkheim and Minayo (Brancaglioni, 2006), social representations are categories of thinking that express reality. These concepts are closely linked to understanding the identity of meaning of space, ie, what is concerned this study, which aims to explain the reasons why the environments and public spaces in cities suffer interference from street furniture and how esa relationship can be raw state in a positive and harmonious experience. For Durkheim (Brancaglioni, 2006), "collective representations reflect the way the group is thought in its relations with the objects that affect it. To understand how society represents itself and the world that surrounds it, we must consider the nature of society and not of individuals".

The customs and habits practiced by these individuals manifest also the cul ture of a group that is defined by Taylor (Brancaglioni, 2006) as "the whole complex which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, customs or any other capacity and habits acquired by man as a member of a socie-ness "that is, all behavior learned and transmitted from generation to generation in a cumulative process through communication (language) and which is independent of genetic transmission. To Laraia (Brancaglioni, 2006), "communication is a cultural process and human language is a product of culture, but culture would not exist if man did not have the possibility of developing a coordinated system of oral communication." Here follows the same understanding of the subject in the words of Michel de Certeau in "The invention of daily": "Many works are dedicated to studying whether the representations is the behavior of a society. Thanks to the knowledge of these social objects, seems to be possible and necessary to guide the use of them do groups or individuals. The analysis of the images broadcast by television (representations) and of ancient times before the device (behavior) should be completed by the study of what the cultural consumer "manufactures" during these hours and these images. The same is true with regard to the use of urban space, of products bought in the supermarket or the stories and legends that the newspaper distributes (Certeau, 1994).

For more developed than are the communication systems, the participation of individuals in all the elements that make up their culture is limited, often by differences in profession, religion, sex, age etc. Individuals, because of the groups attending (collective representations) interpret differently received in-training. Lynch (Jodelet, 2001), in his study of the formation of the environmental image, states that "the creation of the environmental image is a bilateral process between observer and object. What he sees is based on the exterior, but the way he interprets and organizes it, and how to direct your attention, turn affects what he sees" (Brancaglioni, 2006). "See the city, observe it, interpret your senses are the three stages of reading. Reading has the category everyday seized by its representations that are parameters for the manifestation of other paradigm but the perception as a way to produce behavior information. It is far empirical activity of any legislative terms, reading feeds on imagens / signs as a way to understand and interact with the city, appropriating it. Relate traces almost seen, is the assembly relacio-nated fragments remembered. The evocative image is representation, sign of existen cial ownership requires intelligibility and, therefore, it is necessary to see cross-dressing to observe. Reading is assembling fragments of images, completed imaginary senses that aim and reveal particular for mounting the reading" (Jodelet, 2001).

For Certeau, "the act of walking is to the urban system as the enunciation is to the language or to the statements uttered. It is a process of appropriation of the topographical system for pedestrians (as well as the speaker appropriates and assumes the language). For the author, the seats are fragmentary and isolated stories themselves, the past stolen legibility on the other, stacked times that can unfold but are there before and stories waiting and remain in the state of puzzles, riddles, symbolizations encysted and pain and body pleasure (Certeau, 1994). Jodelet states that ownership is the space of qualified city, informed by the use (city as living space, experienced, qualified, modified: socialized space, social). Such appropriation of images are until certain irrational point, triggered by emotional stimuli and can not be

explained by institutional appeals. This subject of social action produces the city and builds an imaginary (Jodelet, 2001). However, this quality is not homogeneous, corresponds to rhythms and forms as diverse as the everyday experiences of city users. This heterogeneity is responsible for the fragmentation of the city into its pieces, their places of slow appropriation, but inexorable and without similar. The appropriate space qualified, socialized gives rise to the places in town. Without being self-employed or given, the place is constructed from socially produced relations and experiences. "Is an informational activity triggered by the imagery contained in the cultural repertoire of the inhabitants of a place; Corresponds to a relationship between the experiences of the present and comparatively driven past, to enable the production of information and learning responsible behavior and changes. Identify the places in the city assumes realize the process of present and past images that qualify and attests to ownership mode" (Jodelet, 2001).

As a metaphor of everyday practices regarding urban place, Certeau also clarifies that "talk is a provisional and collective effect of competence in the art of manipulating" commonplaces "and play the inevitable of events to make them "livable". He says that "every story is a travel story - a practice space. It has to do with the everyday tactics, part of them, from the alphabet of space indication ("turn right"), draft a report whose sequence is written by the steps to the "news" every day ("guess who I found in the bakery?). These narrated adventures, at the same time produce actions and geographies derive for the common places an order, not only constitute a "supplement" to set out pedestrians and rhetorical *caminhatórias* [6. Certeau]. To Nojima, "the orientation in space is critical and depends, among other factors, the permanence of certain environmental features, which means preserving the identity of the places" (Brancaglione, 2006). The city is therefore a scenario full of overlapping messages that characterize the urban communication. This is defined by Nojima as the result of the interaction between social representations and the scenario where they occur. And it is through the interpretation of these messages that appear in the urban design of the city (streets, buildings, gardens, squares, furniture), the individual defines the elements that identify the city. According to the author, "the interventions aim to characterize the environment and this representation is a necessity that has the man to establish vital relationships in your environment to make sense of their actions" (Brancaglione, 2006).

### 1.3. Memories of things and Urban Space

While collective memory, social representations establish how we see our city, we relate to others, we appropriate the urban space, we identify our "place". For Maurice Halbwachs, "we are not accustomed to talking about the memory of a group, even a metaphor. It seems that this faculty can not exist and last but to the extent that is connected to a body or an individual brain". According to the author, "the individual would participate in two species of memories, but as participate in one or the other, adopt two very different attitudes and even contrary. If the individual memory can, to confirm some of their memories, or even to cover some gaps, to rely on collective memory, move it, be confused momentarily with her; Therefore not to follow your own path. However, collective memory involves individual memories, but not to be confused with them. It evolves according to its laws, and some individual memories sometimes penetrate it, change figure so are replaced in a set that is not a personal conscience: [individual memory] is not entirely isolated and closed. A man, evoke its own past, often needs to appeal to the memories of others. They reports landmarks that exist outside of it, which are set by society. The operation of the individual memory is not possible without these instruments are the words and ideas that the individual did not invent and borrowed from their midst. It is very closely limited in space and time. The collective memory is the well: but these limits are not the same. I carry a luggage of historical memories, which can extend the conversation or for reading. But it is a borrowed memory and it is not mine" (Halbwachs, 2003).

According to Halbwachs, the collective memory had no other materials. It is no series of dates or lists of historical facts, it does not play a very minor role in setting our memories as often we reinstated our memories in a space and time, we also situate between the dates that only have meaning only in relation to which groups we belong [8. Halbwachs]. So there is also a mental balance to the world, to things and places, Halbwachs adds that much of the balance is given by the fact that the material objects with which we are in daily contact mu-dam little and therefore offer us an image of permanence and stability "when some event also requires us to transport ourselves to a new surrounding material before him to adapt, we crossed a period of incerte-za, as if we had left behind all our personality, so much verda-that the usual images of the outside world are inseparable from our self. Our surroundings stuff takes both our brand and that of others. Our house, millstone-ble and the manner in which they are arranged, remind us our family and friends who often saw this picture. When a group is inserted into a portion of the space, he turns to his image, while that subject and adapts the material things that he resist. It is not the isolated individual is the individual as a member of the group, is the group itself remains under the influence of material nature and participates in its balance. This explains how spatial images play a role in the collective memory" (Halbwachs, 2003).

For the author, the urban group does not "feel" the impression of change while the aspect of the streets and buildings remains identical. Differentiation of a re-consultation city led to a diversity of functions and social customs; as the group evolves, the city in your outdoor space, changes more slowly. Local habits resist the forces that tend to make them, and this strength allows us to understand better the extent to which the collective memory has its foothold on the spatial images (Halbwachs, 2003).

## **2. The urban space**

A Levi-Strauss defended the thesis that the urban space reveals the logic and underlying structures of a people. There would be inscribed right in order to have the houses of a village or a city. This ratio is not made aware by the villagers, but it can be discovered by the social scientist who is concerned with the study of specific culture and its forms of social and spatial organization. For the French anthropologist, the story itself is neither rational nor irrational value. There would be no logic inscribed in the cumulative time of a culture (Freitag, 2002). Ferrara (Barbosa et al., 2010), the most concrete manifestation of urban place consists of uses and habits, to the same extent that place is the concrete manifestation of space. Thus, in general, the urban space is seen as an environment in which the human being, as a citizen or host, has a total freedom of movement where you can free interaction and uncontrolled between supposedly autonomous individuals. According to the author, the public space is understood based meeting in the presence of strangers who share the same environment, a space of collective expression, community, of being with and among others, celebration. It is also a universal space, completely freely accessible at any time and for any person. For Tschumi, the memory evokes feelings from the city's memory: "We have an innate ability to remember and imagine places. Perception, memory and imagination are in constant interaction; the sphere of the present merges with memory and fantasy images. There are cities that remain as mere distant visual images when recalled, and there are cities that are recalled in all its vividness. The memory brings back the pleasant city with all its sounds and smells and light and shade variations" (Tshumi, 1984).

The spaces of a city are perceived through symbols and signs that manifest themselves through objects, furniture, buildings, streets, squares, signs, stairs, parking lots, among others, that make up the identity of the place (Brancaglioni, 2006). "The identity of a place is usually described by the image that people have of this place, of the resident population habits, their social representations and also of the interventions that it produces with the implementation of signaling equipment, furniture and even ornaments such as vases and plants. It is worth mentioning the existence of "private spaces for public uses" that are operated

by private companies and not pre-determine a specific target audience for its use, such as shopping malls and hospitals. There is also the “public spaces for private use” as we find empirically, without organization, created by street workers and merchants, keepers of cars and prostitutes [3. Brancaglioni]”. When you have in mind space “city” can not think of each element that is in a particular way, it should be reflected as a set of parts that complement and pervade a population. Each element has its value and contributes to building an environment in which the community and the city structure work social way [3. Ferreira; Brancaglioni]. Ferrara illustrates some of the major signs that are part of the urban area of a city: “The urban environment is a complex of signs: the formal (the very form of the built object), language (the street name), the advertising (posters), direction indicators, the aesthetic (the materials used, the stylistic features of facades, gardens, lighting etc.), contextual – the urban situation in which it is located (and the user signs) – the specificity of human behavior taken as a sign” (Brancaglioni, 2006).

In the same sense, we can mention Kings: “Cities need to provide for its citizens living spaces, leisure, integration and culture, so that men and women can exercise the right to collective use of 'living on the street or in the park with the family, the (re) value of human relationships, finally, the city must have in place spaces that offer quality of life. Citizens identify with places, as they recognize their importance, they assume the condition of collective use spaces and representing the local or global identity” [11. Reis; Beraldo; Jorge; Levitan; Sielski; Silva]. So public space is one where, theoretically, you can find people of all social strata, cultural and economic, where diversity is one of its present characteristics. However, the current reality of the cities in shows another view, according to Ferreira (Reis, 2010 y Beraldo, et al., 2010). The loss and neglect of public spaces degrade the living relationship of individuals within these spaces, and thus there is a greater search for private entities to conduct such meetings. The apparent indifference of the State with the social spaces of the city has intensified since business groups have sought partnerships with the government to “gift” the city with works such as shopping centers, works with predominantly commercial character, which further accentuates uneven urban development. According to Harvey, “the common urban spaces should be designed so even for them to fulfill effectively their social role to the citizens. So there is an urgent need to make the citizens feel the characters themselves that space, capable of interfering in the city through their daily practices, even unconscious, as they have the right to the city” (Beraldo, et al., 2010).

## 2.1 Urban landscape

The “landscape” is a very broad phenomenon. It can be said that some phenomena form an “environment” for others. A concrete term for speaking environment is "place". In common parlance it is said that actions and events have a place. According to Schulz, when we refer to something more than an abstract location, think of a whole composed of concrete things having material substance, shape, texture and color. Together, these things determine an “environmental quality”, which is the essence of the place or the qualitative phenomenon “total”, which can not reduce any of its properties without losing sight of their specific nature, preventing the seats are defined by analytical or scientific concepts. For the author, phenomenology exists to solve this impasse, it is “a return to things” as opposed to abstractions and mental constructions (Norbert-Schulz, 2006).

Rodrigues, it states that the landscape is as a psychological resource and therefore a resource on human health. It is an indirect way, a resource of economic and material nature by the influence it has on certain activities such as tourism, residence and recreational activities. Research carried out over the landscape there is shown that [it] focuses powerfully on psychological functioning, as it can numb the most positive aspects of the subject's performance. The presence of a pleasant landscape for an individual can have a positive impact on their psychological functioning. The presence of a landscape can also generate

reparative effects on the individual who is subjected overstimulation in the urban environment, particularly in large cities (Rodrigues, 1996).

The spaces of a city or a neighborhood are perceived through symbols and signs that manifest themselves through objects, furniture, buildings, streets, squares, signs, stairs, parking lots, among others, that make up the identity of the place (Brancaglioni, 2006). The identity of a place is usually described by the image that people have of this place, of the resident population habits, their social representations and, above all, of the interventions that it produces with the implementation of signaling equipment, furniture and even loud as pots and plants. The importance of identity is reading it conducive to the individual, the possibility of appropriating the impressions that it will build in relation to the collective space, public, among others. Means for readability everything that can be read, deciphered and understood. To be readable, a city requires its spaces are conceived, designed to allow its inhabitants can interpret, recognize, as a whole, their neighborhoods, landmarks, roads (Brancaglioni, 2006).

### 3. Final considerations

Cities are home to endless urban practices that reveal the culture of its people and their preferences, habits and customs. The urban landscape is a very comprehensive phenomenon that forms the environment for the people or in common language, "the place" of the acts and events. This is more than an abstract location, a totality of concrete things having material substance, shape, texture and color. Together determine a particular "environmental quality" essence of the place. Whether in relation to social habits or in relation to the use of practices and ownership of its streets, sidewalks, urban furniture or simply urban space, the city reveals the cultural and identity component from its origin and reflects the setting and the environment created to represent the political and community forces that control it. The city can be seen as the urban space that is composed of the material elements, and the social, the experiences and urban practices. And integrate this spatial and urban planning logic requires a technical and creative effort to qualify properly, public open spaces or closed. The city is more than an urban and architectural space is the place where they develop social representations, is the "home". This demonstrates how the inhabitants of a city are faced with a projected urban landscape that can offer greater identification and sense of belonging with their space, satisfaction and memories, positive feelings that only emerges when we are proud of the environment to which we belong. "To understand a city, we must consider not only the city itself, but the way its inhabitants to realize."

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