

# Insurgent uses in transit architectures: actions as plan, trick, and feint

Usos insurgentes nas arquiteturas do trânsito:  
atuações como plano, truque e finta

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## Abstract

The traffic condition is a common phenomenon for peripheral populations of the Metropolitan Region of Rio de Janeiro. By forming a 'compulsory collective space', mobility infrastructures have enormous political and social potential. Certain 'insurgent' practices of groups that use the 'architectural loopholes' of these infrastructures stimulate this potential. This article analyzes some cultural, political, and economic uses connected to transit infrastructures according to three ways of designing (plan, trick, and feint) to discuss how architecture and urban planning can combine to build less unequal realities. Commercial uses around the Pavuna subway station, and political and cultural uses of Cine Taquara (BRT), Viaduto de Realengo, and Viaduto Negrão de Lima (Madureira) are analyzed.

**Keywords:** center-periphery relation; transit spaces; metropolitan mobility; insurgent uses; urban design.

## Resumo

*A condição de trânsito é um fenômeno comum para as populações periféricas da Região Metropolitana do Rio de Janeiro. Ao conformarem um 'espaço coletivo compulsório', as infraestruturas de mobilidade têm um enorme potencial político-social. Certas práticas 'insurgentes' de grupos que se utilizam de 'brechas arquitetônicas' dessas infraestruturas estimulam esse potencial. Este artigo observa usos culturais, políticos e econômicos acoplados às infraestruturas de trânsito à luz de três formas de projetar – plano, truque e finta –, com o objetivo de discutir como a arquitetura e o planejamento urbano podem se aliar à construção de realidades menos desiguais. São analisados usos comerciais no entorno da estação de metrô Pavuna, usos político-culturais do Cine Taquara (BRT), Viaduto de Realengo e Viaduto Negrão de Lima (Madureira).*

**Palavras-chave:** relação centro-periferia; espaços de trânsito; mobilidade metropolitana; usos insurgentes; projeto urbano.



## Introduction

Historically, urban mobility in the Metropolitan Region of Rio de Janeiro reflects the processes of spatial segregation and urban inequalities. The structure of contemporary economic dependence between center and periphery synthesizes profound socio-spatial problems experienced daily by a large part of the population. Commuting is a common practice in the daily lives of peripheral populations who spend, on average, 2 hours and 21 minutes per day<sup>1</sup> inhabiting transport infrastructures (highways, railway lines, buses, train carriages, etc.). However, although the State and some economic agents seek to address inequalities, their practices and policies often reinforce situations of dependence (Capillé, Gonçalves and Soveral, 2021). In particular, the usual State policy response is the creation of more metropolitan mobility axes in projects that are only concerned with technical and functional aspects, which have little or no concern with the relationship between architecture and the local dimension – and much less with new programmatic possibilities that could partially dilute the dependence of some regions on the center.

In the daily life of this peripheral population, transit spaces are the public atmosphere in which millions of people live on a daily basis, forming what Capillé, Gonçalves and Soveral (2021, p.2) describe as a “compulsory collective space”, that is, “the 'space of appearance' [...] where contemporary society manifests its everyday

politics”. By organizing the daily flow of thousands of people, the infrastructure space presents itself as a latent power (Easterling, 2014) for transformation. Some types of use of these spaces demonstrate the recognition of the power of this compulsory collective. Formal and informal businesses, for example, often take advantage of this condition. Insurgent cultural organizations that use the architectural gaps in these stations also present us with an alternative way to occupy these spaces.

The question that arises, therefore, is: how can architecture contribute to the formation of a collective metropolitan culture? Capillé and Cruz (2022) suggest that an architectural production can act in three ways: the “plan”, the “trick” and the “feint”. In a few words, the plan would be the project that openly explains how architecture will solve the problems of this reality. Considering the great complexity of the political and economic challenges of contemporary urbanities in our reality, the authors consider the extremely high cost of “confrontation” within utopian planning practice and suggest other forms of action. The trick would derive from Easterling’s (2014) “spatial hacking” proposal, which would consist of a covert action, which dissociates the declaration from the operation; while the feint openly declares its opposition, but “marginally swings as a way of diverting and defeating it” (this is derived from an interpretation of the work *Inserções em circuitos ideológicos*, by Cildo Meireles).

This article observes some cases in the North and West Zones of Rio de Janeiro of cultural, political, and economic uses,

associated to transit infrastructures in the light of these three ways of designing – plan, trick and feint –, with the aim of discussing in what ways architecture and urban planning can contribute to changing the precarious and unequal conditions of our urban realities. To this end, commercial uses around the Pavuna train and subway stations, political-cultural uses of Cine Taquara (Taquara Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) station), Realengo Viaduct and Negrão de Lima Viaduct (Madureira) are analyzed.

## Metropolitan mobility: structure and inequality

The issue of mobility is central to discussions involving urban planning in large contemporary metropolises. In Brazil, the patterns of urban mobility outline an extremely unequal social situation, particularly due to the fact that mobility is often directly related to land use and value. In other words, distribution of land is responsible for inducing movement of bodies in the city and the capacity they will have to travel from one point to another (Pero and Mihessen, 2013). The formation of the metropolitan space in Rio de Janeiro is strongly based in unequal distribution of land, hence the intense dependence of peripheral regions in relation to regions with a greater concentration of urban infrastructure, circulation of capital and services: the centers (Santos, 1993).

When following the development of the city of Rio de Janeiro, it is possible to identify a clear differentiation between urban mobility policies that serve the wealthier classes, heirs of colonial privileges, and a poor class that suffers the consequences of this same system (Torres, 2018). In short, the creation of an urban mobility system did nothing more than materialize a pre-existing urban structure and was designed in different ways for different regions. The train, for example, responded to a need to locate low-income people and less noble activities (Abreu, 1997, p. 44). Thus, a city is designed to offer more or less efficient services according to the population class to which they are being targeted.

This inequality, reflected in the supply and quality of services and equipment, is present in the configuration of the Metropolitan Region of Rio de Janeiro, where the central and southern zones are clear as centers and the rest of the region as peripheries. The commuting movement becomes a consequence and marks the daily life of a population that leaves their cities every day towards the capital and returns, remaining for long periods in a condition of transit between home and work. It is important to understand the dimension of long hours in transit on the body that is exposed to such a daily experience and to analyze the reverberations of this urban condition on the population's quality of life.

In the daily lives of residents of peripheral areas, transit spaces (stations and vehicles) are the main public spaces frequented. Thus, paradoxically, we can say that the infrastructural spaces related to mobility in the Metropolitan

Figure 1 – Work by the artist Lucas Ururah entitled “I came to live in the South Zone and earned 8 hours a day” exhibited at MostraNoix: 1st Peripheral Art Exhibition in Honório Gurgel – Rio de Janeiro



Source: photo by Daiane Dias, in 2022.

Region of Rio de Janeiro are equipped with a “disposition” – to use Easterling’s (2014) term – for daily and ordinary collective exchanges and movements that can be used to support the construction of a more equitable urban space. All time consumed by commuting has impacts on mental and physical health, as it directly interferes with the body, relationships with family, intellectual development and access to culture and leisure time. The poor travel conditions to which peripheral populations are subjected represent an important pillar for the maintenance of social inequalities. At the same time, this same space allows the collectivization of millions of people, on a daily basis, even if in a compulsory and often precarious way.

## Transit space as a political potencial

Contrary to the creation of actions that seek to balance this dynamic, what we see, even today on the part of the State, is the reproduction of the system through the creation of more grandiloquent road infrastructures, as we can observe in recent years from the system Bus of Rapid Transit (BRT), in the city of Rio de Janeiro. Currently, three of the four initially proposed corridors are in operation: Transoeste, Transcarioca and Transolímpica, with the fourth, Transbrasil, still in the process of construction.

Regarding railway infrastructure, the Metropolitan Region of Rio de Janeiro (RMRJ) has 270 million kilometers of tracks that take trains from Central do Brasil towards the North and West zones of the city and Baixada Fluminense. Every day, more than 350 thousand passengers travel on trains, currently managed by the Supervia operation. According to data from the Data Rio Institute (2023), until 2019, more than 1 million passengers used the bus system in the city of Rio de Janeiro every day.

One of the main strengths of the metropolitan mobility system, without a doubt, is its ability to reach thousands of people daily, a part of the population that not only passes through these spaces, but stays in them for long periods. Routine is another factor that contributes to the daily vitality of the mobility system, the “compulsory collective” ends up enabling the formation of groups and the transformation of transit spaces into social spaces.

Based on these powers, stations are capable of creating centralities and diverse possibilities that intertwine the urban fabric (Izaga, 2009). In Brazil, some passengers can spend up to 32 days in traffic per year (Cruz, 2019), this leads us to think about how this system should be designed and detailed as a fundamental support in improving the quality of life in cities. Easterling (2014) points out that some of the most important political outcomes of infrastructure spaces remain unstated in the dominant stories that present them. For example, the author argues that the organizing character of urban and social dynamics of infrastructure provides an agency/capacity or ‘disposition’ for significant urban transformations. Easterling, then, proposes that, just like the current hegemonic system,

the space activist can operate in a covert way, in the “folds of infrastructure” in order to produce effects different from the original ones.

Despite being one of the most important public spaces in the metropolis, the spaces that shape mobility systems are commonly the mere consequence of a design that prioritizes flows. Often, the design of these transit spaces is exclusively based on technical issues to organize moving bodies to increase speed and shorten time.

By observing some transit spaces, we were able to identify some spatial transformations, some transformative agents that use this potential and contribute to the development of new urban dynamics based on actions in transit infrastructures (Galarce and Pettená, 2020). In other words, there is a spatial and programmatic gap in the architecture of these infrastructures, which allows for different appropriations. Galarce and Pettená (2020), when analyzing informal commerce in BRT stations on the Transoeste line (Rio de Janeiro), state that these spaces appear as an opportunity to subvert functional dogmas. Generating permanence among the chaotic flow of a terminal or station, where the common objective is to move around, reveals the power of these spaces. Between gaps and hidden uses, then, transit spaces configure great political potential as they are appropriated by peripheral bodies that find their collective there.

The precarious conditions generated by social inequality, discrimination and stigmatization processes can be seen as the basis for the peripheries of different parts of the world to be spaces for the invention of new democratic practices (Caldeira, 2015). They would, therefore, be what (Holsten and Claudio,

2013) call “spaces of insurgent citizenship”, that is, a social movement that is characterized by the “construction of citizenship on the margins of legal citizenship” and the “reinvention of forms of urbanity”.

Insurgent planning is conceptualized by Miraftab (2016), pointing out that insurgent activists shift the debate on inclusion (in the understanding of social justice) from the field of representation to that of self-determination, that is, citizens take part directly and formulate decisions that affect their lives seeking self-determined inclusion, in which people's rights are real and practiced.

In short, we will name 'insurgent' the practices such as artistic, cultural and political actions, which “stand against the established order” (Lefebvre, 1992; Seldin et al., 2020a) and directly interfere in space, becoming events capable of generating tensions and resistances in the face of a control structure. These are practices that come from groups that are often left out of formal spaces and that seek, in these insurgent actions, ways to claim neglected spaces and rights.

## Operation as plan, trick, and feint

Capillé and Cruz (2022) discuss ways of designing based on the definition of three acting concepts for architecture: the “plan”, the “trick” and the “feint”. In short, the plan would be the project that, openly, explains how architecture will solve the

problems of this reality. Considering the great complexity of the political, economic challenges, etc., of contemporary urbanities in our reality, the authors consider the extremely high cost of “confrontation” within utopian planning practice and suggest the other two forms of action.

The hacking trick derives from the proposal of “spatial hacking” (Easterling, 2014) which would consist of a covert action, which dissociates the declaration from the operation. Easterling proposes operating covertly and argues that “the spatial activist does not need to tackle every weed in the field nor wait for favorable political configuration, but, without announcing himself, alter the chemistry of the soil” (2014, p. 214; 2021, p. 81). Easterling calls this practice spatial hacking: a strategy that involves knowing the system and hacking it so that it produces different effects from its original ones. She argues that opposing and hacking are complementary practices (2019, p. 243), but that the latter implies “unorthodox techniques that are less heroic, less automatically oppositional, more effective and trickster” (2014, p. 213). To oppose proposes that the political project should focus on the counterpoint that separates itself from reality as it is given. Hacking proposes that the political project should focus on transforming the same elements of the given reality, covertly mixing revolution and maintenance (Capillé and Cruz, 2022, p. 4).

The feint openly declares its opposition, but “marginally swings as a way of diverting and defeating it (this is derived from an interpretation of the work of Cildo Meireles).

The work “Inserções em circuitos ideológicos”, by Cildo Meireles, was created for the collective exhibition “Information” at MoMA (New York), in 1970. [...] In short, “Insertions” provokes us to accept the *modus operandi* of this 'found collective', intervening parasitically from within its rules, like a 'hacker' *avant la lettre*. For this practice of insertion, three steps are therefore fundamental: first, a pragmatic acceptance of the collective system found; second, a mere description capable of revealing the rules found in the system; and third, intervene with actions that simultaneously maintain the rules and transform the collective system. (Capillé and Cruz, 2022, p. 5)

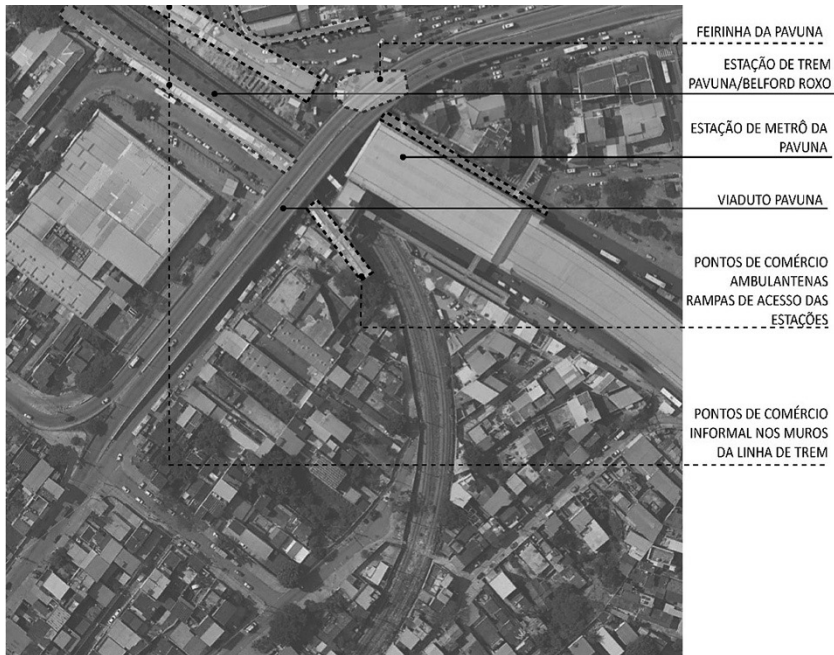
In this work, we use these concepts as instruments to interpret the actions of social groups in urban space in specific cases in Rio de Janeiro, and relate them to the possibility of architects and planners working in these transit spaces and their dynamics. In short, we argue that informal commerce can be understood as a “trick” action in that it uses this found collective (population in transit) and gaps in infrastructure to guarantee sustenance outside the formal market (which is generally denied to them). Insurgent cultural uses are understood as a “feint” because they also act in these gaps in the system, but they explicitly declared their political position of building a more egalitarian city.

## “Trick”: commerce and appropriation

Pavuna is a densely occupied neighborhood in the North Zone of Rio de Janeiro that borders the city of São João de Meriti (Figure 2). This region forms a large road junction through the junction of the final station of Metro Line 2 (Pavuna Station), the Pavuna/São João de Meriti train station on Ramal Belford-Roxo and the Rio-Pavuna bus terminal. However, the most emblematic of this centrality is the large commercial center made up of official street market, street stores and informal street commerce that occupies everything from the walkways of the subway and train stations to the areas below the viaducts, sidewalks, and railway boundary walls.

The commercial centrality of this region is not recent: Feirinha da Pavuna, considered Intangible Cultural Heritage of the City of Rio de Janeiro by law n. 524/2014, has existed for over 50 years. This region underwent major restructuring during the 1990s by interventions following the Rio-Cidade project (from 1995) and the installation of the Pavuna metro station (1998). Silva (2012, p. 14), states that street market, which he describes as: “a labyrinth of stalls scattered everywhere, without any type of control or organization, occupying all the spaces intended for pedestrian circulation” would not have been changed in no way as a result of these renovation projects. For

Figure 2 – Map of the surroundings of the Pavuna/São João de Meriti train and subway stations, showing areas of appropriation by street market



Source: made by the authors based on Google Earth map.

Oliveira (2008), the Rio-Cidade project could be identified both by the spatial distinction of the elements that make up the urban furniture and the landscape in general, and by the social control exercised by the police force (Municipal Guard and others) over street commerce and the homeless population. These two views above highlight public space as an environment of dispute, a game of forces.

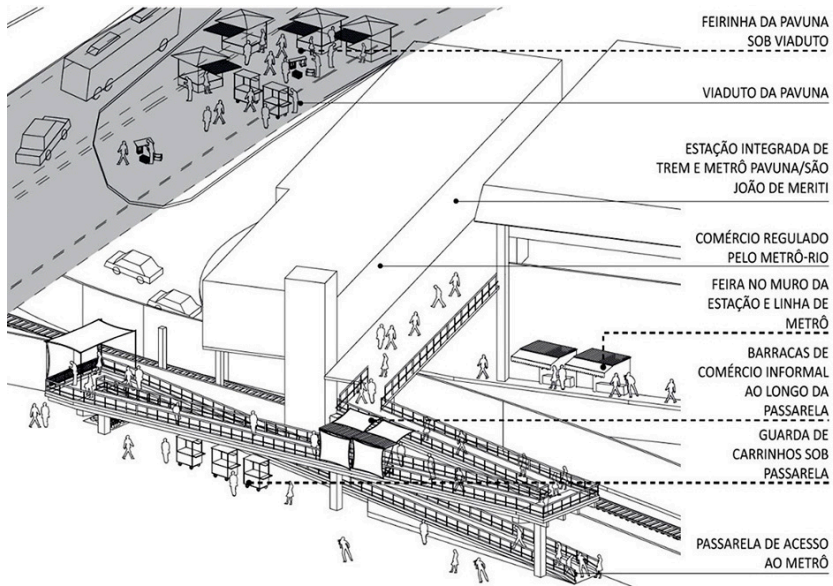
Currently, street market occupies several spaces around these stations, as informal sales stalls/booths/stands mix with the regulated market in a way that cannot be differentiated (Figure 3). The architectural scale of these

road infrastructures is often relegated to the background, creating a multi-scale margin that configures an unprogrammed space with appropriable fragments. In the case of street vendors, their behaviors are capable of reconfiguring places (Galace and Pettená, 2020).

The physical structures of the station and access points (ramps, walls, overpass) become support for this activity, which uses a wide range of ordinary materials (such as metal rods, canvas, railings, PVC pipes, tiles) to take place (Figure 3 and Figure 4). The sellers use the presence of this enormous daily flow of people to guarantee sustenance outside the



Figure 3 – Section of Pavuna intermodal station (subway and train). Its access via ramps and viaduct where some types of appropriation of spaces by informal commerce and open-air markets can be observed



Source: made by the authors.

Figure 4 – Photo of the walkway leading to the Pavuna metro station, showing an informal sales counter using the metal railing of the ramp as support. On the right we see a metal bar pre-fixed to the metal railing of the ramp, ready to serve as a support



Source: photo by Maria Rúbia Pereira, in 2023.

formal market (which is generally denied to them) through the trade of goods, using this collective found (population in transit) and the gaps in the infrastructure. This insurgency also manifests the desire to transform urban space, through the use and occupation of public space, claiming new possibilities for reading spaces and providing a parallel and effective change in the territory (Lima, 2014).

## Cultural appropriations in the gaps of architecture

We will address three cases of urban intermodal nodes where some local agents promoted spatial interventions to carry out cultural and educational activities. The interventions, in a way, reversed and contributed to the transformation of the mobility infrastructure, giving the space a cultural and political meaning for the impacted communities. Both cases occurred from the 1990s onwards, the oldest being the occupation of Viaduto Negrão de Lima (Viaduto de Madureira).

The analyzes show that these actions in space are ways of combating state negligence, highlighting the lack of investment in equipment and cultural policies in these regions. The interventions have, in common, the fact that they are actions carried out in mobility infrastructures and take advantage of the “flaws” in the designs and formal planning. These spaces can be seen as true laboratories for urban experience and social encounters (Seldin et al., 2020), a form of space occupation

capable of meeting the most specific demands and concrete needs of the community, providing multi-scalar impacts.

Seldin et al. (2020) will call spaces like these as “unusual spaces”, disputed territories capable of producing essential symbols and meanings for an intense connection between neighborhoods, their population and public spaces. The right to the city is intimidatingly linked to the right to culture, since the city, in itself, is the result of a cultural intervention in space and the expansion of the citizen's voice comes from the transformative power of everyday life, through access to culture (Lefebvre, 1992). What was designed as a transit space takes on new contours and enables interpersonal exchanges responsible for stimulating political participation. Spaces like these would be like munition against the construction of segregating cities capable of maintaining high levels of inequality.

The initiatives are also characterized by their short temporality, that is, despite permanent modifications in space, they do not permanently modify the function, proposing events that occur at different frequencies, modifying the surroundings. The occupation of walls with graffiti, for example, are permanent marks that contribute to the construction of symbols that communicate directly with passersby and make an occupation visible, marking a territory (Barros, 2020). These spaces question some design parameters and highlight the need for a case-by-case analysis. They are not actions to be replicated, but urban experiences far from the idea of a “model” that offer countless lessons to be analyzed and debated.

### *Madureira Overpass*

Opened in 1958, the Prefeito Negrão de Lima overpass (“viaduto”, in Portuguese) was one of the largest concrete structures in the city, with a length of more than 500 meters. The road infrastructure aimed to promote connections between parts of the neighborhood crossed by the railway line (Figure 5). The works resulted in expropriations of housing and a transformation of the local landscape. In 1990, the space that had been occupied by a large parking lot, began to be used by some musicians: Leno, Pedro, Edinho and Xandoca, creators of the carnival group “Pagodão de Madureira”.

Still in the 1990s, black culture began to take center stage in cultural movements, with emphasis on music marked by the popularization of charm and funk. On the other hand, the decade was marked by an extremely violent regime, involving conflicts between the police and drug traffickers, with lethal consequences for residents of the peripheries and suburbs. Musical movements, initiated by black and peripheral artists, emerge as a tool for denunciation and reflection from a context marked by racism, social inequality and state violence. In 1993, cultural producer Cesar Athayde took his “Baile Charme de Rua” to the underside of the overpass, articulating the creation of a cultural scene together with the “Pagodão de Madureira” group.

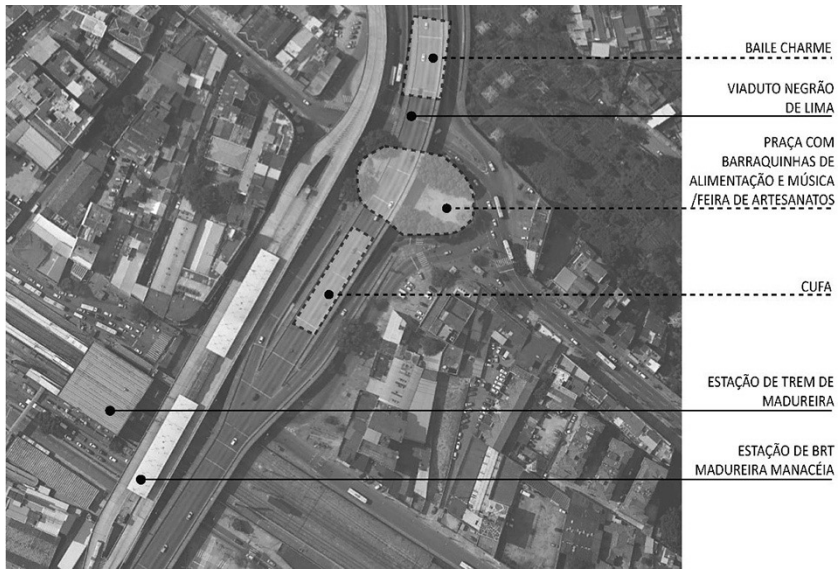
Since the founding of the train station in Madureira, at the end of the 19th century, the space has become an articulating node for the mobility system in the Rio suburbs, attracting

hundreds of workers daily from different neighborhoods in the region. Little by little, young people from all neighborhoods (mainly from the North and West zones) began to see the space as a meeting point, leisure and cultural expression. Until then, peripheral culture, extremely influenced by black culture, did not find representation in formal cultural spaces, which encouraged the occupation of spaces that were far from market interests and disputes.

In 2000, following a decree approved by the city council, the space became known as “Espaço Cultural Rio Charme” and became a cultural reference point for the entire city. In 2003, the name of the space was changed to “Rio Hip Hop Charme” and, increasingly, it finds, in institutionalization, a way of existing and perpetuating a cultural legacy. Currently, the “Rio Hip Hop Charme Cultural Space” and the “Central Única das Favelas” (Cufa) of Madureira are located under the overpass, making the space under the mobility infrastructure a point of support and social transformation for the community.

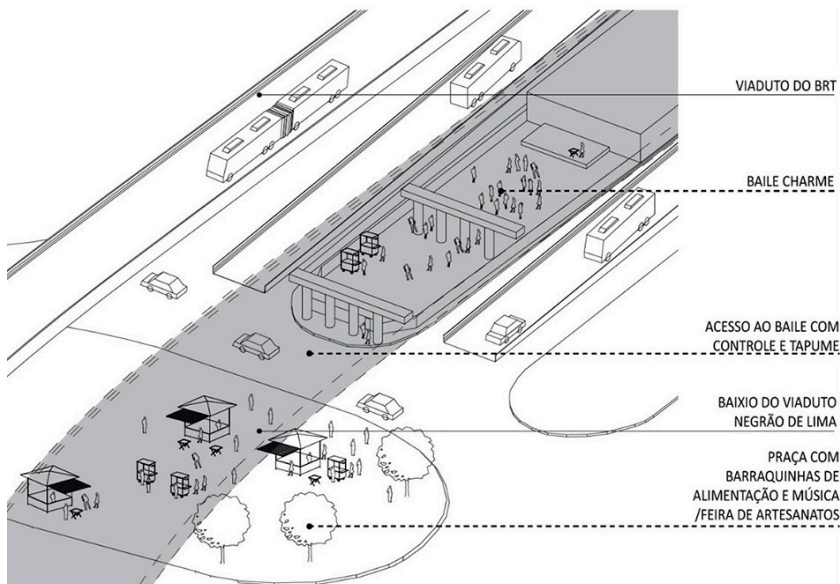
The occupations take advantage of characteristics such as the roof and the large interspace between the pillars, provided by the structure of the overpass (Figure 6 and Figure 7), which create large spaces for large groups of people to meet. The high daily flow of people, at different times, reinforces the potential of establishing a meeting place where different activities can take place over time (by day, craft fair and, by night, food court and dance, for example) transforming local urban dynamics.

Figure 5 – Map of the surroundings of the Madureira train and BRT stations



Source: made by the authors based on Google Earth image.

Figure 6 – Underside of the Negrão de Lima overpass currently with the Baile charme and the nighttime “food court”



Source: made by the authors.

Figure 7 – Photo of the baile charme at the Madureira Overpass



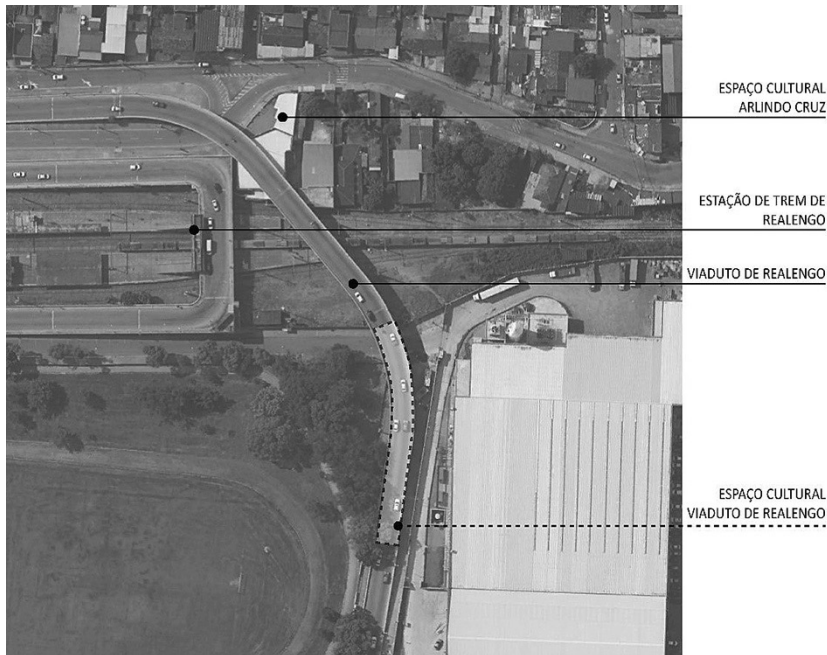
Source: photo by Renata Leal (report by Viola, 2021).

### *Realengo Overpass*

Located in the Realengo neighborhood, in the suburbs of Rio, is the Aloysio Fialho Gomes Overpass. The highway, built in 2012 (Figure 6), was part of the mobility infrastructure works that prepared the city to host two mega events (2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics). It was built as a way to shorten the route in the Realengo neighborhood and free up some important access roads to the Deodoro Radical Park. The construction made possible a connection between the two parts of the neighborhood, crossed by the railway line. This railway line was an articulating element of the urbanization of the neighborhood which, from the second half of the 19th century, began to house some military and industrial institutions.

Since then, road construction has been the result of constant efforts to improve the system itself. To ease traffic, the city council decided to build the overpass. A 300 m long structure, which passed through two busy roads, Bernardo de Vasconcelos Street and Marechal Joaquim Inácio Street, overlapping a small street that previously had no exit. This street was located between an extensive military property and an empty plot of land, a space mostly used by pedestrians seeking access to a train station. According to Oberdan Mendonça (Oliveira e Mendonça, 2021), one of the founders of *Espaço Cultural Viaduto de Realengo*, the street, before the overpass, was also a meeting space between young people and children from the community.

Figure 8 – Surroundings of the Realengo train station showing the location of Realengo overpass and Realengo Cultural Space



Source: made by the authors based on Google Earth image.

With the construction of the overpass, the landscape was completely changed, there were some housing removals and a suffocation of the small street affected by the construction. The absence of commerce and services also worsened the situation, generating an intense increase in the feeling of insecurity, confirmed by reports of incidents and robberies (Barros, 2020). The presence of the train station and bus stops around it formed a node, an important point for the mobility of the neighborhood crossed by hundreds of people daily.

In 2013, a group of local cultural producers called “Original Black Sound System” – OBSS, including Oberdan Mendonça,

identified potential in that space. The group was responsible for building a space where meetings could take place between rappers, graffiti artists, skateboarders and many other activities practiced by some young people in the neighborhood. The group's initiative resulted in the creation of the “Viaduto de Realengo Cultural Space” (Figures 8 and 9). The project received government encouragement through public notices and began to attract local businesses. There, community meetings of a political nature were also held, such as in 2015, when then federal deputy Marcelo Calero held a meeting with the community to debate proposals and demands for the space.

Figure 9 – Photo of Espaço Cultural Viaduto de Realengo



Source: Lab IT (s.d.).

In an analysis of the development of the space as a cultural facility, it was found that more than half of the visitors (89%) come from neighborhoods in the West Zone, a region with very low numbers of cultural facilities in relation to the South and Central zones, and 59% are residents of the Realengo neighborhood (Seldin et al., 2020). The numbers point to the formation of a local centrality that actively contributes to the existence of a breather in a region marked by State neglect.

Oberdam (Oliveira and Mendonça, 2021) talks about the influence he received from the example of the Madureira Overpass, highlighting the force of propagation and inspiration that this type of action represents. Although the problems generated by a highway system and the negative impacts caused by

structures such as overpasses are noticeable, once these structures are transformed into spaces that benefit communities, this project becomes a type of hacking.

In an interview given to the podcast “Vozes de Realengo” (Oliveira e Mendonça, 2021), the project organizers talk a little about the project's process and highlight the resignification of an “architectural gap” and highlight the importance of being a space with a large flow of people from the mobility system: “It gave life to this circulation space, it gave color with the graffiti whenever the people passing by to catch the train at 6pm, 7pm, during rush hour, the guys coming home from work and we were there playing music, exchanging ideas, creating culture and art in that territory with the guys from realengo.”

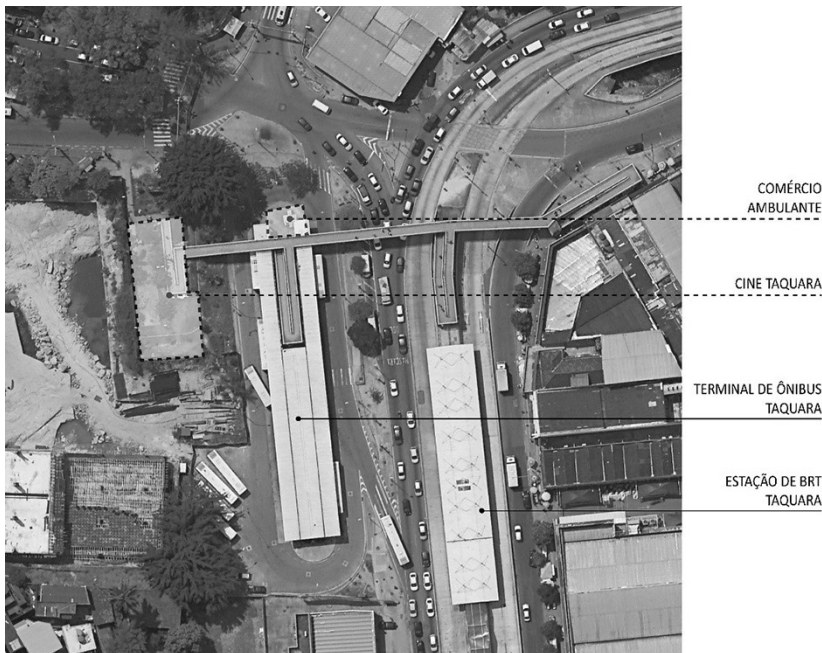
### *Cine Taquara (Stela do Patrocínio Square)*

Like the Realengo neighborhood, the Taquara neighborhood is also located in the West Zone of Rio de Janeiro and was directly impacted by mobility infrastructure works to prepare the city for mega events (2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics). The neighborhood was directly affected by the BRT route, which completely changed the central region of the neighborhood and prevented the number of bus lines, in addition to causing a major transformation of the landscape. Many residents report the negative impacts of the construction, such as the difficulty of crossing, the reduction of

important bus lines that make transportation difficult and the intense deforestation of the central region.

Part of the Transcarioca BRT line, Taquara station was built next to a bus terminal, thus linking two road modes (Figure 10). The construction of Taquara station also involves the construction of a walkway that provides access to both stations. The design of the walkways, in addition to directly marking the landscape, suffocated pedestrian passage on one side and, on the other, created a gap between the end of the walkway and the division with the neighbor's lot (Figures 10 and 11).

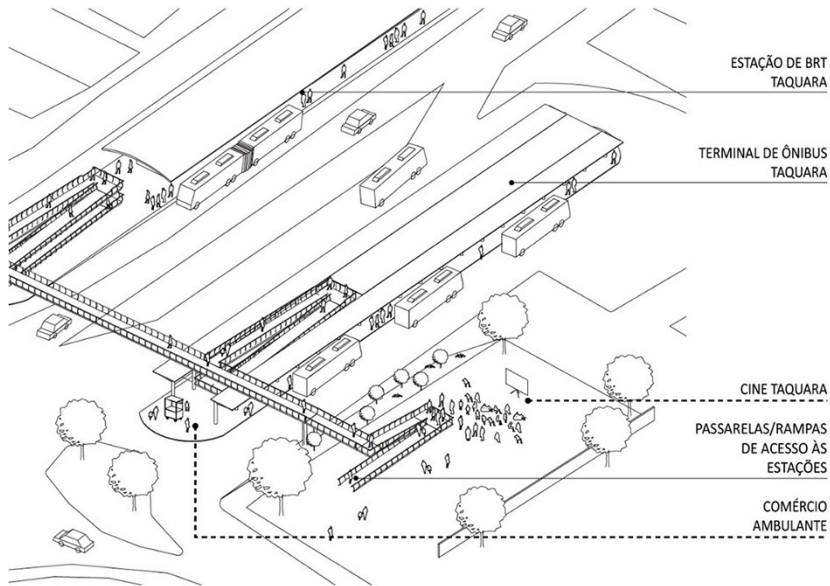
Figure 10 – Surroundings of the BRT stations and Taquara bus terminal



Source: made by the authors based on Google Earth image.



Figure 11 – Surroundings of the Taquara bus and BRT stations showing the spatiality of the walkways and street cinema.



Source: made by the authors.

The implementation of the BRT in the neighborhood caused the street and central public spaces to become arid and repulsive to pedestrians, giving the center of the neighborhood a passing character where the interior of the commercial buildings, responsible for the verticalization of the landscape, become more attractive. Just like the Realengo viaduct, two factors contributed to a group of young black people appropriating the empty space left by the design of the walkways: the space seen as waste and the intense flow of people who cross the walkways daily because of the terminals. The excess space between the walkway and a private lot (which was empty when Cine Taquara's activities began) initially appeared empty without any purpose and far from any speculation. However, it also

represented an accessible space, with lighting, a bicycle rack, and a central location in the neighborhood. It was then that Gleyser Ferreira and Celso Oliveira decided to occupy the space.

Gleyser and Celso are two young black people living in the neighborhood who used public transport as a way to obtain extra resources, they sold sweets accompanied by poetry on buses and BRTs. Both were interested in the study of culture and art and sought to combine the need to sell sweets with their passion for literature. After the changes at Taquara station, in 2017, they saw, in this small space with no function, a potential for local transformation. The idea was to spread a tarpaulin over the grass and position a white fabric at one end of the space to then create "Cine Taquara: Cinema for free in the square",

a project with the aim of showing independent Brazilian films that were capable of generate discussions among viewers at the end of each session. The idea, which began as a temporary cinema, soon brought together several other activities such as soirees, classes, musical performances, slams, and rap battles. With the range of activities increasing with each session, it now takes place every first Saturday of the month. After occupation, the space also began to attract local traders who actively contributed to the events.

Cine Taquara started to bring together, mainly, young people and residents of the west zone who found, in the space, an alternative for leisure and access to cultural programming. The organizers make clear their desire to strengthen community ties and contribute to restoring self-esteem among residents, always raising issues that address local memory

and identity. Little by little, the space gained prominence and developed. One of the ways the group found to preserve its permanence was to demand that the city recognize the space as a square. “Cine Taquara” (Figure 12) presents itself as a proposal for political action based on the agency of public space and finds, in culture, a tool for claiming rights such as the construction of a city based on planning that is aligned with policies social and combating inequality.

Currently, with the construction of Shopping Taquara Plaza, Cine Taquara was removed from the space that was transformed into a decorative garden for one of the commercial establishment's entrances.<sup>2</sup> Despite the various negotiations and proposals for a coexistence capable of benefiting both agents, according to the organizers, those responsible for building the

Figure 12 – Photo of film screening at Cine Taquara



Source: Dhiego Monteiro (2019).

shopping center were not willing to articulate possible exchanges and partnerships. However, as a form of resistance, Cine Taquara transformed itself into an itinerant film club and began to operate in various locations, in partnership with other collectives, such as events such as “Mostra Marabu” held in April 2023, alongside the, mentioned here, “Viaduto de Realengo Cultural Space”. In addition to showing films, Cine Taquara has been working on the production of its own films and educational activities.

Cine Taquara presents itself in a politically declared way and takes advantage of a lack of care in the rigidity of the architectural design to break with the daily flows of passengers. The project presents such a robust character of resistance that, despite being expelled from its space, it expands its reach by becoming itinerant through cooperation, operating in multiple spaces and affecting populations in other regions. We highlight resistance as a quality, but also as a denunciation of groups that need to develop strategies for existence in the face of a market logic of city construction.

## Final thoughts

In the North and West Zones of Rio de Janeiro, the creation of urban mobility infrastructure is directly related to the construction of the territory based on social and economic inequalities. The mobility system and the movement of bodies in the city reflect the consequences of an urban dynamic marked by the center-periphery relationship. Intermodal terminals have great power in everyday life and

are indispensable devices in the construction of more democratic and accessible public spaces (Gonçalves, 2020).

By identifying some insurgent interventions, both commercial and cultural, carried out by local agents in the spaces that make up the urban mobility network, we realized that these actions provide clues on how to “hack” urban infrastructures. Then, it is up to us, as urban planners, to understand how we can insert ourselves into these processes in order to learn from these spontaneous and concrete actions and contribute to their development.

The initiatives analyzed show how design can often be circumvented to meet the needs of some community groups that end up claiming an urbanity denied by formal projects. The importance of knowledge about space and the city can be complementary in a shared construction of public spaces. Some actions that we mention as feints and tricks can be allies of the urban planner who seeks to carry out significant transformations for the articulation of the metropolis, being relevant parameters for thinking about any type of intervention.

The plan can often be paralyzing and frustrating in the face of the various forces that can cross the distance between the design and reality. On the other hand, the occupations analyzed show us that some articulations with the community and the understanding of the territory itself can point us to alternatives for acting in gaps in infrastructural spaces, which are effective due to their versatility and powerful due to the power of reach provided by mobility networks.

Graphical analyzes allow us to look further into how architectural elements provide support for appropriation. In other words, how do viaduct spans, walkways, guardrails, etc. become devices that allow uses not initially planned in the infrastructure project.

It is worth highlighting that these actions cannot be interpreted as a model to be followed and replicated in a pasteurized and “formalized” way, ignoring the value and meaning of the uniqueness of these collective practices. However, we learned that the close and unique relationship of these actions with communities and territories, as well as their spontaneous and flexible nature, make their transformative power latent.

Finally, these infrastructures are often seen as passage spaces that only serve the urban mobility structure, designed in

a strictly technical logic and based on the flow and control performances of transport users. However, these initial studies point to the centrality of these spaces, which end up becoming the stage for demonstrations and interventions that are essential for the cultural, social and economic understanding of these neighborhoods. From the moment we recognize the architectural condition of these structures, we begin to speculate about architecture as a structuring element of the territory. We therefore highlight the importance of the participation of design professionals in public spheres, in community institutions and in constant dialogue with the different scales that make up the city, perhaps it is essential that we act as mediators between local actions.

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## Notes

- (1) Data from the study carried out by the Federation of Industries of the State of Rio de Janeiro (Firjan) (2015).
- (2) Information taken from posts made by the group on their social media pages. Available at: <https://instagram.com/cinetaquara?igshid=MTk0NTkyODZkYg==> Accessed on: 11/18/2023.

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