

**Walkthrough Analysis by the Green Areas of Encosta Norte Housing
Complex, Itaim Paulista, São Paulo**

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to explore the green areas of the Encosta Norte Housing Complex, located in the Itaim Paulista district, East Zone 2 of the city of São Paulo, in order to figure out how the local community perceives those spaces from the identification of existing weaknesses and potentialities, as well as to recall the indications of wishes for improvements in its extensions. In addition to the technical field visits to the territory, some activities with the residents and other local agents were proposed as a methodology for the construction of this cartography. The methodological instrument applied to the population was the walkthrough analysis, or route-interview, that took place on 09/17/2022, aiming to record, through notes, audio recordings and photographs, the perceptions of the community about the inhabited place. The achieved results demonstrate that the participants of the activity relate to the place through affective memories of how the territory used to be, just before the urbanization process that began to be implemented in the mid-1980s. Some problems such as lack of maintenance of open spaces and springs and water courses were also pointed out as weaknesses. The researchers, proponents of the dynamics, reinforce the potential of transforming these available public areas belonging to CDHU as a strategy for the requalification of the area and for the improvement of the quality of life of local population.

KEYWORDS: Walkthrough analysis. Free spaces. Quality of life.

1 INTRODUCTION. PRESENTING THE STUDY AREA AND THE PROPOSED WALKTHROUGH ANALYSIS

The Encosta Norte Housing Complex was implemented in the East Zone of the municipality of São Paulo through the Company for Housing and Urban Development (*CDHU-SP*) between the years 1989 and 2009. Within an area of more than 50 hectares, the housing construction was divided into fourteen phases that included multi-family buildings of 4 to 5 floors and single-family lots with one-story houses of minimal dimensions. In addition to the houses, the extensive area provided lots for institutional use and large green areas (Figure 1). Currently, the complex has eleven schools in its extension, to which were added a Basic Health Unit, a Center for Integration and Citizenship (CIC), a Culture Factory, an Ecopoint, and the former Fundação Casa which has recently been adapted to become a Special Welcome Center (CAE). There are two other buildings in poor conditions: a former community center, originally built by *CDHU* and whose remaining facilities house some civil organizations, and a large building currently under negotiations to house a technical school.

Figure 1 - The green and institutional areas inscribed in the perimeter of the C.H. Encosta Norte.



Source: the authors, 2022.

Large green areas were initially planned in the complex to shelter preservation areas linked to springs and streams. The area corresponding to the source of the stream Tijuco Preto is totally occupied by the Jagatá favela, which lacks basic sanitation, paving, public lighting, etc., conditions that are aggravated by the risk of flooding and collapse of the houses near the watercourse. However, the two areas that shelter the springs of a left (unnamed) tributary of the Três Pontes Stream (Figure 2) remain unoccupied. These green areas have great landscape and environmental potential, considering that most CDHU areas of similar conformation (areas near streams located in other CDHU developments that date from the same period) are, today, occupied by slums.

Figure 2 - Indication of the Tijuco Preto stream bordered by the Jagatá favela (in yellow) and the springs and other streams that flow into Três Pontes river, east of Encosta Norte Housing Complex (in green).



To North and South, there are two other parks bordered by spring areas (Figure 3). To the North of the complex is the Santa Amélia Park, with a jogging track, a mini-square and mini-field for soccer, a volleyball court, a multi-sports courts, na accessible gym equipment, some game tables, playground, and two buildings: the Center for Children and Teenagers - CCA Xico Esvael and a Kindergarden (EMEI Profa. Maria da Conceição Vieira Pereira). To the South of the complex, located in an area of more than seven hectares, one can find the Waters Park that houses, in all its densely vegetated area, jogging and walking tracks, trails, soccer fields with bleachers, playgrounds, sand courts, a mini soccer field, tables for games, restrooms, deck for contemplation, and gym equipments. The implementation of one more park in this neighborhood, so close to the existing ones, reinforces the region's vocation for the maintenance of extensions of permeable soil and protection to the springs, to guarantee a less polluted water system and the permanence of spaces for accommodation and infiltration of water during the rain season.

Figure 3 - Santa Amélia and Water Parks located, respectively, to the north and south of the North Slope.



Source: the authors, 2022.

In order to recognize problems and future possibilities for the green areas inside the perimeter for the Encosta Norte, a workshop was organized making use of the methodological instrument called walkthrough analysis. The dynamics, also called walkthrough-interview, coincided with the world day of urban cleaning promoted by the municipality, and was attended by undergraduate, master's and doctoral students, as well as the local residentes, users, community Leaders and staff from the municipal government of Itaim Paulista.

2 OBJECTIVES

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate the application of the methodological instrument called Walkthrough Analysis directed to residents and local agents of the Encosta Norte Housing Complex on 9/17/2022.

3 THE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH TO DATA COLLECTION - WALKTHROUGH ANALYSIS

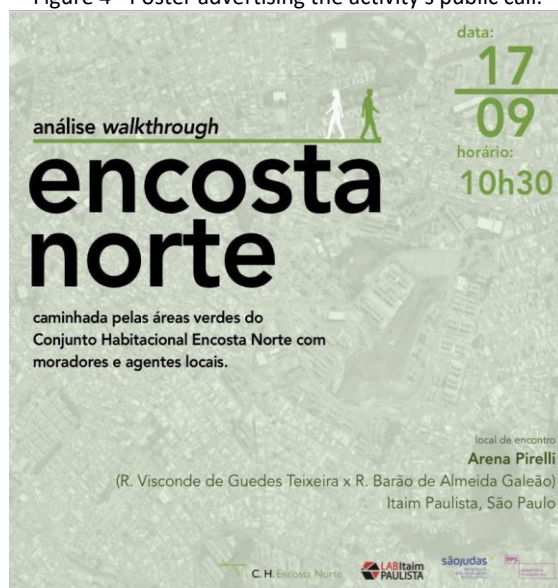
According to RHEINGANTZ et al (2009, p. 23), the Walkthrough Analysis "simultaneously combines an observation with an interview and enables the descriptive identification of the negative and positive aspects of the environments analyzed". It is understood that the Walkthrough Analysis can be considered a device that precedes other instruments of post-occupancy evaluation or performance evaluation of the built environment, suggesting a first approach to the object of study and with some of its users. This analysis is responsible for pointing qualities and defects of a particular built environment¹ and its uses (RHEINGANTZ et al 2009, p. 23).

¹ In the book written in partnership with other researchers from the Graduate Program in Architecture and Urbanism at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Professor Rheingantz focuses on nine instruments applied to the performance evaluation of the built environment, one of them being the walkthrough analysis. This set of devices

For the application of the device, it is important that the team members are equipped with blueprints of the building or territory to be visited and record sheets where their respective physical characteristics must be noted. Along the way, the interviews can be recorded (video or audio), while the environments can be recorded from photographs, sketches and diagrams. The difficulties concerning this device, pointed out by RHEINGANTZ et al (2009, p. 29) involve: (a) the non involvement of users with field work; (b) restricted access of researchers to the environments; (c) the difficulty of forming multidisciplinary teams or specialists.

The execution of the activity on the Encosta Norte consisted of distinct and well delineated stages. Its preparation (stage one) comprised a series of meetings among the proponents of the activity aiming to: discuss the methodological approach based on readings; understanding the stages of the activity and the preparations to be made; dividing the tasks among the proponents; to define time, meeting point, route, recording instruments and key questions to conduct the interview route; to prepare the base map of the route and the forms to fill in the data collected; to prepare the material for publicizing the activity for the public call; to prepare the Informed Consent Form (ICF) to be filled by the participants.

Figure 4 - Poster advertising the activity's public call.



Source: the authors, 2022.

The subsequent stage corresponded to the execution of the activity. First of all, the participants were welcomed at the meeting point: Pirelli Arena; the welcome was

appears as a conceptual repertoire in the publication Dialogues between architecture, city and childhood: educational territories in action, organized by professor Giselle Arteiro Nielsen Azevedo, also from Proarq-FAU/UFRJ. In this publication, other devices are introduced, some of them deriving from the instruments treated by Rheingantz et al, so that their applications are registered in articles resulting from experiences carried out by several researchers around the country. Beyond this information, it is important to note that both Rheingantz and Nielsen Azevedo, from this vast repertoire of instruments capable of diagnosing the built environment, explore the experiential approach, characterized precisely by "focusing on the experience lived by an observer in a given environment in use" (RHEINGANTZ et al, 2009, p. 11), so that this observer assumes himself as the subject responsible for establishing the dynamics between the environment and its users, revealing, therefore, subjectivities inherent to the individual and also collective experience of the individual.

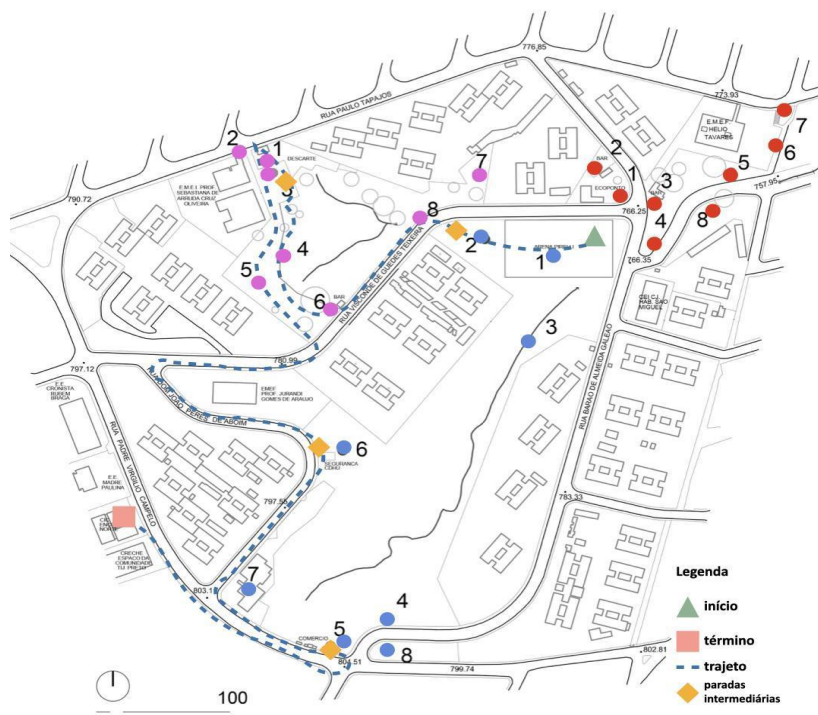
complemented with the explanation of the dynamics and the organization of undergraduate students into two groups with the determination of tasks for each of the members. In this way, some students were responsible for audio recording the reports, others took on the task of taking photographs along the route, and the others were in charge of the annotations on the memorial and on the map of the place itself.

Finally, the third and last stage consolidated the closing of the activity in an appropriate room inside the Citizenship Integration Center, CIC Leste. At this point, it was possible to reflect on the apprehensions arising from the route and discuss what was experienced by the participants, local residents and agents, as well as by the group of proponents, graduate researchers and undergraduate students in architecture and urbanism. Later, the researchers analyzed the collected material, in order to produce maps and tables from the results, as well as to elaborate a research report, the basis of the present article.

4 RESULTS. THE PRACTICE OF WALKTHROUGH ANALYSIS THROUGHOUT ENCOSTA NORTE GREEN AREAS

According to the previously organized route, the course to be made was divided into three areas, marked with points of interest from 1 to 8. Each area received a color (red, blue, and pink). Despite being close, these areas have different characteristics. Due to the stipulated route time, the red area was not visited. The route ended in the CIC, which is very close to point 8, at the end of the blue route, after passing through all the points of the blue and pink areas. (Figure 5)

Figure 5 - Roadmap with route divided into three areas and their eight points of interest.



Source: the authors, 2022.

The meeting point, welcome point and place to start the Route was the Pirelli Arena (point 1 in the blue area), denomination given by the residents to the dirt field located at the lowest level of the housing development (Figure 6). The Pirelli Arena, one of the most important free spaces in Encosta Norte, hosts not only weekend soccer matches, but it is also the stage for events such as solidarity soccer and the distribution and collection of food for the highly vulnerable population.

It is worth mentioning that the Pirelli Arena, as a meeting place, covers one of the streams (see Figure 3) that flows into the Três Pontes stream, an important tributary water course of the Tietê River in the Itaim Paulista district. The stretch of the stream under the field was canalized by CDHU-SP, so the neighborhood community associations took charge of the landfilling of the area, giving rise to one of the most important places of the whole complex. Still in the Arena, the group of participants formed by a resident of an area contiguous to the green area visited; two employees of the Women's Service Center (CAM) headquartered in the CIC; an old resident of the region who participated in local movements for the implementation of the Parque das Águas; two community leaders of the Nélia Mabel Association and the Central Única das Periferias, reaffirm not only the importance of that place, but also reveal, from accounts of the past and the constitution of that place over time, relationships of belonging.

Figure 6 - Group of bidders and participants at the Pirelli Arena. In the background, some of the single-family residential blocks of Encosta Norte and one of the remaining green areas.



Source: the authors, 2022.

The accounts are able to translate different times from the affective memories shared by the ancient residents of the region. The old rural landscape composed by small farms, where fresh milk was sold in the area corresponding to the soccer field, was completely transformed affected by the urbanization process resulting in the implementation of the Encosta Norte housing complex. The reports of the way of life at that ancient time and also at the time of the formation of the housing complex point to the absence of streets, generating difficulties in walking and accessing public transportation. These problems were mitigated due to the implementation of a road network that brings bus lines, some of which guarantee access to the CPTM train stations located in the surrounding neighborhoods.

One of the participants, active in the formation and consolidation of Santa Amélia Park, a spring area transformed into a park located north of the study site, brings an account of the process of transformation of that area into a park, accompanied by a description of the local landscape before the implementation of the complex. It is pointed out that the site has many water mines.

The accounts collected reinforce the connection of the population with the place based on affective values related to memory. The type of testimony obtained is in line with the reflections of Menezes (2009). According to this author, the constructed data do not fall into the category of historical values, because they relate to subjective bonds and the personal experience of each participant, revealing a sense of belonging and identity.

Beyond the rescue of the past, the participants shared their perceptions of the territory. One of the recurring points in the speeches is the inappropriate disposal of garbage in some places visualized along the path. This observation is complemented by the lack of landscaping of the vegetated and non-vegetated open spaces. Another issue dealt with incisively is the lack of safety, aggravated by inadequate night lighting, not mentioned by the participants, but perceived by the group of proponents of the Walkthrough. These weaknesses were highlighted in one of the stops made along the path (see Figure 5, point 3 in the pink area), where it was possible to observe the accumulation of garbage, the poor lighting, besides the lack of maintenance of the vegetation in one of the open spaces located at Paulo Tapajós Street, next to the EMEI Profa. Sebastiana de Arruda Cruz Oliveira (Figures 7 and 8).

Figure 7 - Open paved area without adequate lighting and maintenance next to EMEI Profa. Sebastiana de Arruda Cruz Oliveira.



Source: the authors, 2022.

Figure 8 - Garbage accumulation in contrast to vegetation.



Source: the authors, 2022.

Upon approaching the highest elevation of the complex, the group was led to an area provided for disposal with fencing and temporary facilities in a stretch of the extensive central green area. Contiguous to this site, the installation of irregular commercial use was observed in the green area.

Due to the problems that were pointed out, some desires for change were also signaled by the participants. The concern of the residents and other local agents regarding the maintenance and requalification of the public Spaces was clear and evident, especially aiming at reconnecting and increasing the contact with nature. For both the green area and the paved areas (Figures 7 and 8), the desire for the implementation of a park was mentioned. During a quick visit to the site and in contact with the activity group, the sub-mayor of Itaim Paulista signaled the intention of adapting the building next to the green area, in poor condition, for new uses (Figure 9). The first hypothesis, already discarded would be the implantation of a Metropolitan Civil Guard base; the second alternative, under negotiation, is the adaptation of the space to receive a technical school. In this sense, the desires for this same space, although aiming at improvements, are not unanimous among the agents, considering that other participants signaled the importance of implementing a public veterinary hospital, for example, due to the amount of street animals that, according to them, roam around the region.

Figure 9 - Occupied by social movements and associations, this building, as well as the free spaces, receives the attention of local agents.



Source: the authors, 2022.

The end of the Walkthrough by the green areas of the Encosta Norte Housing Complex was in the CIC. That was the moment when the dialogue between the proponents of the activity and the participants took place in a more effective way, so that the researchers could share their perceptions and the diagnosis made of the studied territory.

At this moment, when mentioning the history of social movements and their importance for the constitution of this place, the participants gave spontaneous testimony of their participation in building the houses through participatory process, and also mentioned their contact with Father Ticão² and other leaders, resuming the historical testimony that marks the memory of those residents.

5 CONCLUSION. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS AND ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WALKTHROUGH ANALYSIS

It was noted that the use of Walkthrough Analysis constitutes an initial stage of approach to the reading of the territory from the point of view of residents and local agents, without the pretension of deepening or proposing. The diagnoses find the evidence on the walkthrough, but little progress is made towards building proposals, since this is not the purpose of the device. It is worth pointing out, therefore, that the methodological instrument in question can be categorized as an approximation device, unlike devices of other categories such as mapping, building and deciding, as suggested by Giselle Arteiro Nielsen Azevedo, researcher at PROARQ-FAU/UFRJ.

Given the instruments analyzed by Rheingantz et al (2009), walkthrough analysis pairs with other mapping and approach devices, such as mind map, behavioral map, visual mapping, interview, questionnaire. They are complemented by construction devices (wish poem and wish

panel), mapping and construction device (visual selection) and mapping, construction and decision device (discovery matrix).

As a complement to the results, it was noted that the outdoor walkthrough arouses divergent interests and subjects, not always related to the Walkthrough theme. Besides historical accounts, the lack of engagement of the population in local problems and safety issues whose causes are beyond the reach of the disciplinary field were mentioned. These points are not contemplated by the methodological device chosen for the research, and it is necessary to expand the range of actions of the research to contemplate these aspects.

To achieve concrete results within a collective proposal, the Walkthrough Analysis is an initial tool and should be applied with complementary devices that are focused on the formulation of desires and expectations and the construction of proposals, among which, the requalification of green areas. Experiments from the application of other complementary devices, eventually combined together, may compose other stages of the work to be carried out in the future.

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