

**Public Space: Appropriation and Valuation in the Historic Center of
Cuiabá**

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ABSTRACT

In 2017, through local public policies, an intervention program was implemented in squares in Cuiabá-MT, this program included the requalification of the main squares in the city's historic center. Using the two largest and most central examples as objects of study—Alencastro Square and Ipiranga Square—this essay aimed to understand the extent to which these squares, through their physical attributes, contributed to their appropriation as public spaces within the historical center of Cuiabá. With this intention, the research took on a practical nature through a case study of multiple units of analysis, selecting the historical center as the case study, and the two squares as distinct units of analysis. Issues such as the meaning of public space, and its role in the appropriation and valorization of historical centers were addressed in the theoretical review. Through the conduct of technical visits to these units, surveying and contrasting their physical aspects with the levels of appropriation observed, it was concluded that their physical attributes and central location revealed themselves as inducers of appropriation. However, differences in the conservation of these spaces showed that their potentials for sociability are impaired, resulting in less sense of belonging and consequent lower valuation of local identity.

KEYWORDS: Appropriation. Square. Public Space. Historical Center.

INTRODUCTION

Due to their prominence in the urban landscape and in the collective memory of the population, it is understood that public spaces, especially central ones, are pivotal in fostering feelings of belonging and identity among city inhabitants. The characteristics and specificities that mark these central spaces have attracted, in Cuiabá/MT as well as in other cities, the interest of municipal public administration in executing redesign projects—urban interventions in these spaces as a means to promote their management.

Such projects, by clinging only to visual and functional factors, have become disconnected from the population's memory and from their purposes of sociability common to public spaces, resulting in lesser reach of the potential for coexistence and leisure and distancing from their historical-cultural identities.

Therefore, this research aims, in general, to understand to what extent the urban intervention implemented in Ipiranga Square and Alencastro Square, through the renewal of their physical attributes, contributed to their appropriation as public spaces in the historic center of Cuiabá. Specifically, it aimed to: conduct a literature review on the concepts and notions of public spaces, appropriation, squares, and historic centers; map the physical attributes and assess the levels of appropriation in the analyzed squares; and relate the physical attributes to the observed levels of appropriation.

City centers are derived from a historical process of mankind, translating into their space the entire trajectory of the societies to which they belong. They are the product of constant conflicting processes, derived from a wide ethnic, religious, social, political diversity, among others, which favor contradictions derived from the cultural diversity typical of social agglomerations (CAMPOS, 2022).

Historic centers record the history of a locality in that they express the past through their physical spaces, be they streets, squares, or built environments. When considering the relationships between the organization of these spaces and the social life presented there, the public space plays a significant role. It holds the function of promoting and encouraging

appropriation and socialization among the different people who inhabit the city (LEITE, 2004).

According to Serpa (2004), public spaces are places where equality of opportunities, physical freedom, and expression to be experienced by individuals are manifested. At the same time, inequality is also more pronounced there, thus such 'equality' described by the author also arises from the possibility of contact between what is unequal. Moreover, the enjoyment of these spaces depends on the use given to them and their material and immaterial capacity to promote unplanned encounters, especially the intrinsic subjective relationships. Such capacity depends mainly on their physical attributes: accessibility, urban furniture, and primarily, the quality of their facilities (CERQUEIRA, 2013).

Due to their various physical attributes, the square, being the most well-known type of public space, presents itself as a scenario of significant value in building a positive image of cities, both for its materiality and for its subjectivity, insofar as it enriches the affective memory of those who use it (QUEIROGA, 2012). In this context, Alencastro and Ipiranga Squares, both nearly 300 years old, were chosen as objects of study due to their historical-cultural relevance and privileged location, situated on two main traffic corridors in the city of Cuiabá.

METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objectives listed, this study explores the potential of empiricism as a practical nature, as demonstrated by Yin (2015, p.70) through a single case study in multiple units of analysis - the historic center of the city of Cuiabá is understood as the case study, and each square studied as a distinct unit of analysis.

For this, the study was divided into three stages. The first stage consisted of a review of specialized literature to establish the conceptual foundations for analyzing the studied phenomenon. The second stage involved the collection of physical attributes and levels of appropriation for each square according to the methodology developed by Gatto (2022). The third and final stage involved correlating the levels of appropriation with the corresponding physical attributes, as well as mutually comparing the results obtained for each square.

As the most complex and central part of the research, the second stage - through surveys and interpretations - was detailed further below. The survey of physical attributes began with an initial reconnaissance visit to each square, during which the Documental-Physical Survey table was filled out. This table allowed for an objective comparison of design and local issues using standardized criteria.

For the survey of appropriation levels, two additional field visits were made to each square, one during the night and another in the morning – on weekdays¹, with the Behavioral Survey table being filled out. For this purpose, both squares were divided in half, into two portions. In each of these, the two researchers stayed centralized, allowing for the observation

¹ Due to the use and occupation of the historical center of Cuiabá being predominantly commercial, institutional, and service-oriented, this area becomes significantly emptier of people at night and on weekends, thus greatly impairing the possibility of observing appropriation. Therefore, weekdays were chosen for conducting surveys during times of high pedestrian traffic.

of all activities and people in these portions. During a 10-minute² period at each location, the movement (passage) and stationary activities (dwelling) were recorded, counting people – with identification of their age group and sex, as well as observing the ways the furniture and structures present in the space were used.

The completion of this table, according to Gatto (2022), was based on a model created by Cabral (2015), which establishes that people dwelling in these spaces appropriate them three times more than those just passing through. For the author, "the activity of dwelling is more important for the notion of a well-used square than the activity of passing through" (CABRAL, 2015, p. 69).

For better visualization and interpretation of the data obtained, maps and charts were developed to illustrate the levels of appropriation. The maps include the layout of each square with the compositional arrangement of its paths and the respective equipment and furniture. On top of this layout, the dwelling and flow of each observed user were symbolically allocated. The charts, in turn, were generated from the results of the appropriation calculation already presented in the table.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK PRESENTATION

The concept of public space is defined distinctly according to the theoretical perspective employed. According to Soriano (2006), there are four distinct streams: philosophical, sociological, legal, and urbanistic. As the object of this research, public space was delineated according to the urbanistic perspective. In this approach, public space is dealt with in its material dimension, as the scope of analysis used involves two public spaces in the city.

In this study, which includes two central squares, it is necessary to consider that the city, given its historical-cultural richness, is characterized by centrality – a place of high symbolic meaning, accessibility, and density of the urban center. Centrality has existed since cities first emerged and cannot be separated from its meaning. In summary, centrality is an essential part of the definition of a city (HASSENPFUG, 2007).

For Jacobs (2007), in addressing appropriation, cities that have their cultural life effectively established and nurtured by their residents are cities that offer activities for everyone, and, for the author, they demonstrate a sense of belonging within the community they inhabit. Thus, by feeling "owners" of the public spaces, they help in the quality of life and even in economic growth.

In this sense, public spaces play a fundamental role. Gomes (2018) states that these spaces assume numerous forms and sizes, ranging from a sidewalk to the landscape seen from a window. It also encompasses places designated or designed for everyday use, whose best-known forms are streets, squares, and parks. The word "public" indicates that the locations that embody this space are open and accessible, without exception, to all people in the city.

Lang (1994) and Gehl (1987) assert that for social interactions to occur in public spaces,

² This observation time stems from the methodology developed by Gatto (2022), which is composed of multi-methods and uses these 10 minutes based on the method of Tenório (2012). This method establishes that for more precise surveys, repeated measurements of appropriations should be made at equal intervals of 10 minutes.

there must be common denominators among people, whether these are interests, local cultural factors, or even common problems. One way to create these bonds is, for Gehl (1987), to unite people. The term is primarily conceptualized as a public space, as observed by Vargas (2011, p. 10). The author clarifies that the square, in its Latin origin, is characterized as a space for meeting and socializing, urban by nature, a space that conforms through various openings in the urban fabric, directing the most diverse flows in search of also the most diverse uses, which imprint to this space the character of a place and central point of the manifestation of public life. It is, broadly, the space for exchange.

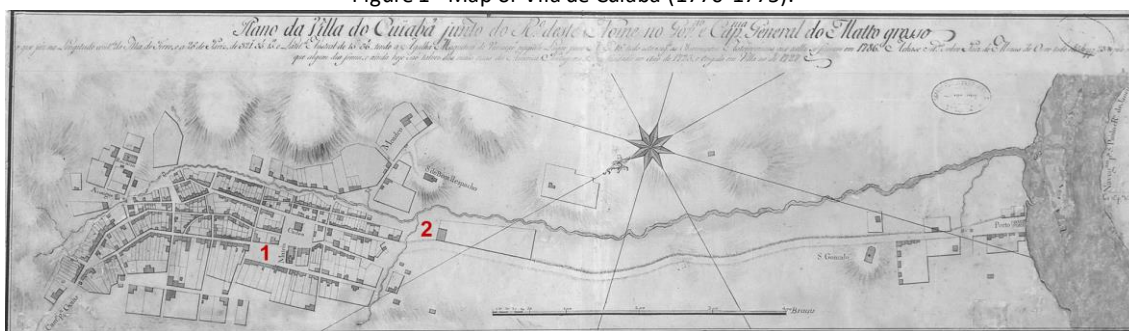
In this context, according to Campos (2022), the historic center represents a varied set of values that identify public spaces and also the buildings and differentiate them from ordinary constructions. They signify architectural, historical, symbolic, religious, socioeconomic, and identity values – as they physically represent part of the history of those who built them and of the locality itself – as well as emotional values, as they are directly linked to the city's memory.

Thus, the union of the terms public space, appropriation, and historic center leads to the typology of these spaces used in the scope of the research: the square.

STUDY SQUARES

Among the distinct public spaces in the city of Cuiabá³, this research addresses as objects of study the Ipiranga and Alencastro squares, two important structural elements of the city's colonial public space and protagonists in the collective memory of Cuiabá⁴. Originally named Largo das Almas and Largo do Palácio - respectively -, the first records of the delineation of both public spaces date from the Mining Cycle (DE LAMÔNICA FREIRE, 1997), between the years 1722-1820, and are illustrated in one of the first maps of the city (Figure 1).

Figure 1 - Map of Vila de Cuiabá (1770-1775).



Source: Historical Archive of the Army, Rio de Janeiro. Highlighted, 1: Alencastro Square and 2: Ipiranga Square. Organization: by the authors, May 2023.

³ Originally populated due to mining activities, where today its historical center is located, the city of Cuiabá was one of the most populous in the country from 1722 to 1726, comprising approximately 1,000 properties in its heritage area (Ferreira, 1993, p.11). Currently, with about 600,000 inhabitants, Cuiabá is famous for its temperatures that often reach 40°C and relative humidity below 15% during the driest months (from March to September).

⁴ Both squares were selected for this study because they have equivalent characteristics, considering the flow of people through the air-conditioned bus stops, and because they are the two largest historical squares in the city of Cuiabá.

Alencastro Square

Established since the mid-18th century, Azevedo et al. (2018) elucidate that the large open space that was the Largo do Palácio was used for numerous bullfights. During the period of Consolidation of Public Administration (1820-1940), the Largo was transformed into Jardim Alencastro, featuring a gasometer, bandstand, and belle époque style fountain imported from Hamburg, Germany, by the then Municipal Intendant Avelino de Siqueira (AZEVEDO et al., 2018). The entire landscaped area was delimited by railings in harmony with the neighboring colonial-style buildings.

The years between 1968 and 1999 are marked by the modernization movement of the historic center of Cuiabá. To some extent hygienic in nature, many properties representative of the colonial architectural ensemble were demolished to make way for new modernist architecture buildings⁵, as shown in Figure 2. Being located at the heart of these changes, to meet the new dynamics of the urban context, the square is remodeled to also receive new features.

Figure 2 - The temporalities of Alencastro Square.



Source: Figures 2a and 2b - View of Alencastro Square, 1956. Figure 2c - Alencastro Square, 1968.

Development and organization: by the authors, May 2023.

Consequently, during the last renovation of the public space in 2017, the entire area of the square was paved with a type of flooring that, in a short time, resulted in the appearance of pathologies such as cracks, fissures, and detachment of the paving pieces, compromising, albeit partially, the state of conservation of the square. Furthermore, a new large bus station was constructed on-site, built with a metal structure and air-conditioned, completely altering the landscape and obstructing the visual permeability of the square⁶ – the changes can be identified in Figure 3.

⁵ For example, the New Alencastro Palace (headquarters of the Cuiabá Municipal Government), the first mixed-use building in the city (Maria Joaquina Building), and the new Matriz Church, among other famous buildings. For Lynch (1997), visibility and visual contact are essential qualities for public spaces. In this context, Jacobs (2007) argued that these places should facilitate interaction among people, where buildings should not obstruct visibility and contact.

Figure 3 - Alencastro Square Before and After the 2017 Renovations.



Source: Figure 3a - View of Alencastro Square, 1950s. Figure 3b - Alencastro Square on April 20, 2023. Development and organization: by the authors, May 2023.

Next, the main current physical characteristics of Alencastro Square are organized in Table 1.

Table 1 - Documental-Physical Survey of Alencastro Square.

Documental-Physical Survey - Alencastro Square							
Características Gerais	Address	Getúlio Vargas Ave. Corner with Pedro Celestino St. and Esq. Joaquim Murtinho St.					
	Area	3.910 m²	Situation	Revitalized	Opening	September 2017	
	Format	Rectangular. Occupies the entire block.			Furniture and Equipment	Posts	8 Units
	Surroundings	Institutional / Commercial / Multifamily residential				Recycle bins	3 Units
	Function Used	Civical / Contemplative				Water sources	1 fountain
	Edification	Fixed trailer for pastries and snacks				Monuments	10 bustos / Monumento 10 mandamentos
	Ponto de ônibus	Alencastro Station. First air-conditioned bus station in the city				Loose Benches	—
	Topography	Flat with occasional slopes visibly lower than 8%.				Other furniture to sit	18 small flower boxes / Extensive bench around water / Wooden bench around Figueira.
	Street trading	Candy sellers					
	Formal Commerce	Fixed trailer for pastries and snacks. Surrounding the square with different food stores.				Bandstand	1 in modernist style
	Parking	Around 20 spaces on the sides of Pedro Celestino St. and Cândido Mariano St. On Joaquim Murtinho St. there are parking spaces for taxi drivers. There are bus stops on Getúlio Vargas Ave.					
	Acessibility	It has ramps on every corner. The existing unevennesses have ramps and handrails in accordance with NBR 9050.					
Conservation and Maintenance	Good Conservation / Good cleaning of the sidewalks / Vegetation with up-to-date pruning / Garbage not accumulated / Benches with small sections of graffiti / Points on the sidewalk with coverings in need of replacement.			Gym	—		
Environmental Comfort	Shading	Around 30% of the area, due to the large existing fig tree and other scattered small trees. The rest of the area is permanently exposed to the sun, depending on the remaining buildings neighboring the square.					
	Natural lighting	Abundant, the trees allow light to enter.					
	Artificial Lighting	Good quantity and distribution of poles with LED panels.					
	Ventilation	Few barriers, the biggest of which is the bus station. In general wind circulation depending on the local climate.					
Landscaping	Afforestation	Common non-fruit trees in the region: Figueira, Oiti, among others					
	Ornamental Species M and L Size	Royal Palm, Imperial Palm, Areca Palm, etc.					
	Ornamental Species S Size	Phoenix Palm, Cica Palm, Linings, Spring, Foliage etc.					
	Soil Cover	Linings / Raw earth / Crushed stone					
Project	Accesses	On all corners and in three cross lanes.					
	Coatings	Walkways covered with ceramic coating in ocher and red colors.					
	Sectorization	Figueira / Fountain Surroundings					
	Composition Arrangement	Straight paths, rectangular flower boxes and flower boxes surrounded by large straight white flowers.					

Source: Own authorship (2023).

The area surrounding the square is characterized by a series of buildings that house institutional, commercial, and religious bodies, such as the City Hall of Cuiabá, various financial institutions, shops, restaurants, and other commercial activities. The streets around the square, Rua Pedro Celestino, Rua Cândido Mariano, and Rua Joaquim Murtinho, are characterized as local roads with less intense car traffic. However, Av. Pres. Getúlio Vargas has intense traffic in its four lanes (one-way).

Ipiranga Square

With the first records dating from 1770, the former Largo das Almas was a site for various activities: from bullfights and public executions to open-air markets. As highlighted by Azevedo et al (2018), between the years 1820 to 1940, the Largo was restructured and transformed into Jardim Ipiranga, and began to feature in its landscape several imperial palm trees, a bandstand, and an art nouveau style fountain, surrounded by low walls and railings (Figure 4).

Figure 4 - The Temporalities of Ipiranga Square.



Fonte: Figura 4a - Vista da praça – Rua 13 de Junho, 1930. Figura 4b - Festejos comemorativos, 1906. Figura 4c - Coreto que hoje está instalado na praça Ipiranga, 1930. Elaboração e organização: dos autores, maio de 2023.

From 1968 to 1999, following renovations, the garden was converted into a square with the incorporation of elements from the old Largo do Palácio, such as the German bandstand, lampposts, and a fountain, as well as a public transport stop. Finally, in the contemporary period, starting in the 2000s, various renovations recharacterized the square, such as the construction of a building to house restrooms—which was demolished in less than a year—and the construction of a new bus station, built with a metal structure and air conditioning. As with Alencastro Square, the compromise of visual permeability is emphasized, considering the obstruction caused by the placement of this equipment on the sidewalk of Avenida Tenente Coronel Duarte, popularly known as Avenida Prainha. (Figure 5).

Figure 5 - Ipiranga Square viewed along its main visual axis – On Avenida Prainha.



Source: Own authorship, April 20, 2023.

Next, the main physical characteristics of the Square are organized in Table 02.

Table 2 - Documental-Physical Survey of Ipiranga Square.

Documental-Physical Survey - Ipiranga Square						
Características Gerais	Endereço	"Prainha" Ave. corner with Generoso Ponce Ave.				
	Área	3.617 m²	Situation	Revitalized	Opening	September 2017
	Format	Rectangular. It occupies an entire block.			Posts	18 Units
	Surroundings	Trades/Services			Recycle bins	5 Units
	Function Used	Contemplative			Water sources	-
	Edification	—			Monuments	—
	Bus Stop	Ipiranga Station. Second air-conditioned bus station in Cuiabá.			Loose Benches	—
	Topography	Totally flat.			Furniture and Equipment	Other furniture to sit
	Street trading	Sellers of food, drinks, plants/herbs and clothing.				
	Formal Commerce	—				Bandstand
Parking	Around 10 reserved spaces on the side of Rua 13 de Junho. Around 10 spaces on Travessa Lôbo. On "Prainha" Ave. there are bus stops.			Gym		
Accessibility	It has 10 ramps on every corner. The existing unevennesses have ramps and handrails in accordance with NBR 9050.				Playground	—
Conservation and Maintenance	Good Conservation / Good cleaning of the sidewalks / Vegetation with up-to-date pruning / Garbage not accumulated / Benches with small sections of graffiti / Points on the sidewalk with coverings in need of replacement.					
Environmental Comfort	Shading	Around 30% of the area, due to an existing large Mango tree and other scattered medium trees. The rest of the area is permanently exposed to the sun.				
	Natural lighting	Abundant, trees allow light to enter.				
	Artificial Lighting	Bad. Of the 44 LED bulbs recorded, 21 are not working (burned out or missing).				
	Ventilation	There are few barriers, the biggest is the bus station. In general wind circulation depending on the local climate.				
Landscaping	Afforestation	Common fruit and non-fruit trees in the region: Mangueira, Oiti, among others.				
	Ornamental Species M and L Size	Royal Palm, Imperial Palm, Fan Palm, Cerrado Palm, etc.				
	Ornamental Species S Size	Phoenix Palm, Cica Palm, Lining, Jasmine, Foliage etc.				
	Soil Cover	Linings / Raw earth / Crushed stone				
Project	Accesses	On all corners and in two cross lanes.				
	Coatings	Walkways covered with ceramic coating in ocher and red colors.				
	Sectorization	Mango surroundings / Larger planter				
	Composition Arrangement	Straight paths with rectangular planters.				

Source: Own authorship (2023).

Beyond the historical and cultural aspects that Ipiranga Square possesses, another characteristic is its surroundings. The square is located at the intersection of two important avenues in the city, Av. Generoso Ponce (with four lanes) and Av. Ten. Cel. Duarte (with six lanes), both of which have heavy traffic, and two other lower hierarchy roads, Rua 13 de Junho and Tv. Des. Lobo. According to surveys by Guimarães (2019) and onsite observations, the properties around it are characterized as commercial, except for Ganha Tempo.

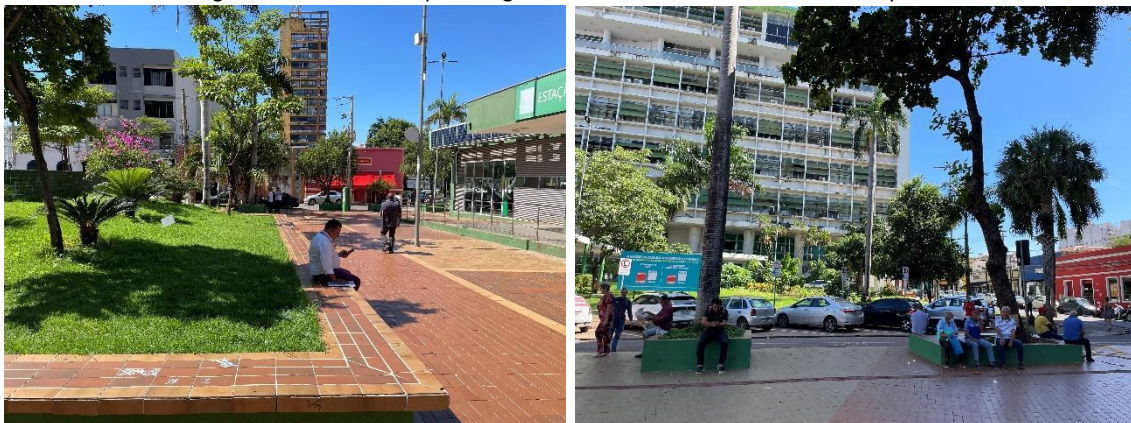
APPROPRIATION SURVEY

The appropriation surveys were conducted in both squares on the same days and at similar times, both during the week - in the morning and at night. The duration of the appropriation observation was ten minutes in each part of the squares, according to the methodology used by Gatto (2021), since the squares were divided into two parts, totaling twenty minutes in each. The chosen days were a Monday night, from 18:00 to 19:00 hours, and a Thursday morning, from 10:00 to 11:00 hours

Appropriation of Alencastro Square

In Alencastro Square, during the surveys conducted, it was observed that the user profile is diverse, however, there is a certain predominance of adult women and men. The activities observed were socialization, waiting, and leisure/contemplation, through the use of furniture that allows sitting and even lying down - raised flowerbeds and benches that frame the fountain and the trees (figures 6 and 7).

Figures 06 and 07 – People using the raised flowerbeds of Alencastro Square.



Source: Own authorship, April 20, 2023.

The difference in the audience observed between the surveys was the presence of elderly men in the morning and young people and teenagers of both sexes at night. Such differences are due to the time of day; in the morning, there is a greater presence of elderly people socializing, generally near taxi stands waiting for passengers and close to the entrance

to the city hall (which operates only during business hours) (Figure 8). Teenagers and young people are more present at night due to their reliance on buses that stop at the station located in the square. It is inferred that their presence is due to the survey time being just after the end of school classes and the closing of businesses in the vicinity. These young people and teenagers were generally engaged in socialization or leisure, and even dating, typically situated around the fountain (Figure 9), the bandstand, and the Figueira benches.

Figure 08 and 09 – Taxi drivers and customers.



Source: Own authorship, April 20, 2023.

The only existing commerce is a trailer selling pastries and snacks that has six attendants and operates only during the day (until 6 PM). In the morning, under the large Figueira tree, tables are set up that serve the trailer's customers, making this area a focal point of permanence in the square (Figure 10 and 11).

Figures 10 and 11 – Pastry shop and customers under the large Figueira tree.



Source: Own authorship, April 20, 2023.

The difference in the location of activities between morning and night is due to lighting and climate. In the morning, square users occupy areas that allow seating and are at the same time shaded. This explains the high concentration of people under the Figueira tree and in the tree planters. At night, the occupation is more evenly distributed, as the square is well-lit overall,

except under the Figueira tree. For this reason, the use of benches and planters continued, but occupying those that are sunny during the day, with fewer people under the Figueira tree.

Next, Table 3 presents a synthesis of the observations reported and the calculation of appropriation generated, which totaled 257 in the morning and 214 during the night. Both are graphically demonstrated by maps 1 and 2 followed by charts 1 and 2.

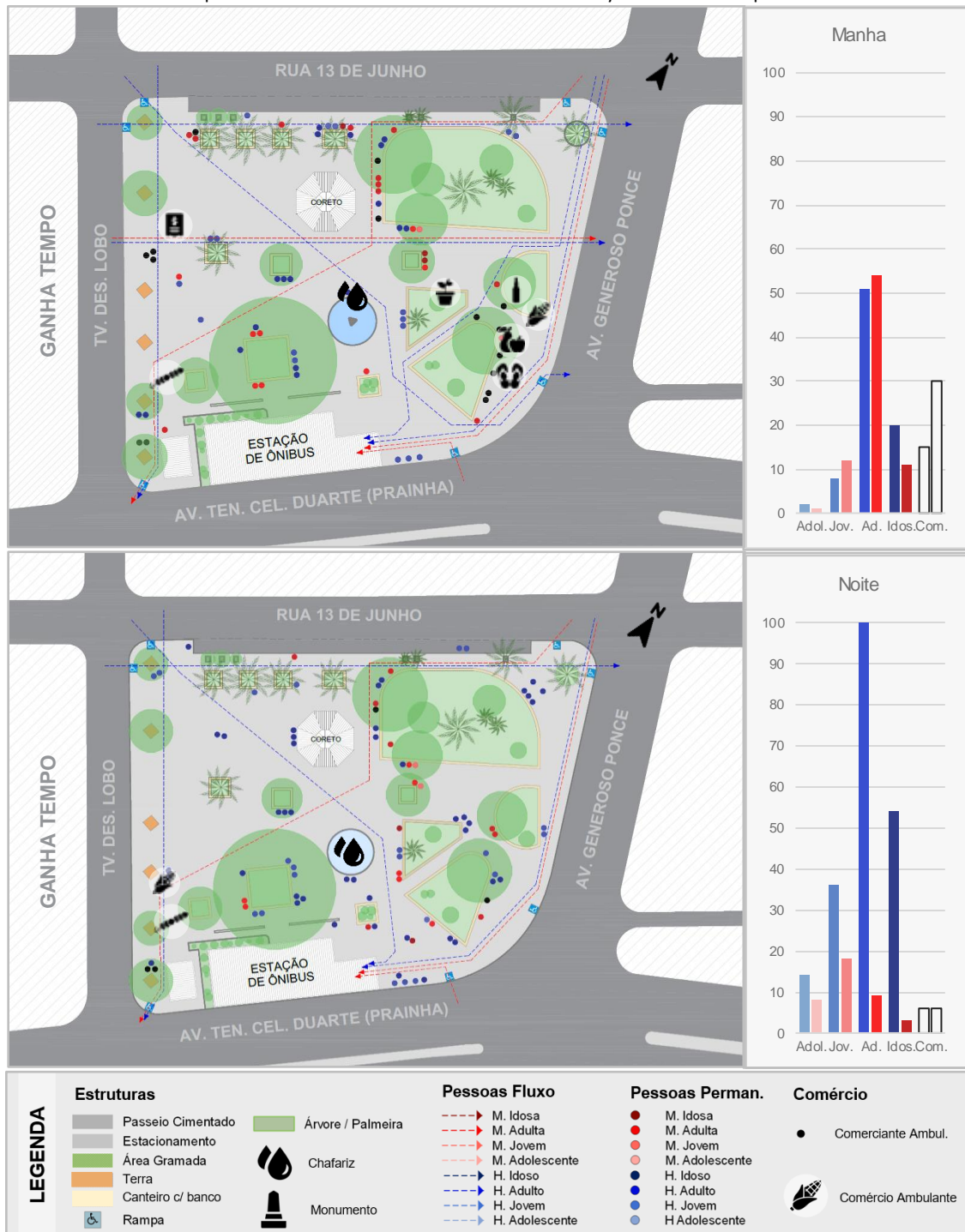
Table 3 – Behavioral Survey of Alencastro Square.

Behavioral Survey - Alencastro Square																
Conditioning	Morning								Night							
	Thursday, April 20, 2023				09:45 - 10:05 A.M.				Monday, April 17, 2023				06:03 - 06:23 P.M.			
Temperature	28°C Clear weather								29°C Clear weather							
Sun	Full sun with scattered clouds								Night							
Wind	Average Wind								No wind							
Passage Axes	Diagonals / Borders in general								Diagonals / Longitudinal Edges / Transverse Edge bus Stop							
Permanence Poles	Fountain / Taxi flower boxes / flower boxes / Figueira								Fountain / flower shops close to city hall							
Predominant Uses	Waiting / Contemplation / Socialization / Leisure / Commerce								Waiting / Contemplation / Socialization							
Street trading	Snacks								Snacks							
Predominant Audience	Adults, elderly, young people and adolescents of both sexes								Adults and Young People of both sexes							
User (years)	Permanence				Pass.		ΣM	ΣF	Permanence				Pass.		ΣM	ΣF
	M	F	Activity		M	F			M	F	Activity		M	F		
	Sector 01								Sector 01							
Teen (13-18)						0	0	1	1	Couple bench Xafariz / Floreiras		4		7	3	
Young (18-22)		1	Eating pastries		2	3	2	6	6	3	Wait at the corner flower stand / Wait at the bandstand			3	18	12
Adult (23-60)	15	15	Pastry tables / Waiting for bandstand and fig tree / City hall flower boxes		2	4	47	49	5	8	Wait beneath the fig tree		5		20	24
Elderly (60+)	7	3	Waiting below the fig tree / flower boxes			1	21	10							0	0
street trading	4	3	Pastel Trailer				12	9							0	0
Sector 02								Sector 02								
Teen (13-18)						0	0	2	4	Wait Banco Xafariz / Floreiras		6	7	12	19	
Young (18-22)	1	4	Conversation in the shadow		1	2	4	14	5	4	Conversation at the Xafari Bank		9	9	24	21
Adult (23-60)	4	3	Waiting / Contemplation xafari bench		4	5	16	14	7	2	Taxi drivers idle around floreiras / Waiting for xafari bank		10	8	31	14
Elderly (60+)	15	2	Leisure flower boxes taxis / Wait in Fountain			2	45	8	2	1	Espera Floreiras / Fontain				6	3
street trading							0	0							0	0
All Users	Full Appropriation					257		Full Appropriation					214			

Fonte: Autoria própria (2023)

The flows in Alencastro Square are, in a small part, along the perimeters, but the vast majority of people passing through opt to cross diagonally, shortening the path, always around the fountain, avoiding its structure. The survey conducted in the morning differs from the night survey regarding the destination of these flows. While in the morning many people avoid the bus station and head towards the buildings surrounding the square, at night the station becomes the main point of arrival for the flows due to it being the time when people most commonly use public transport to return home.

Maps 1 and 2 and Charts 1 and 2 - Behavioral Survey of Alencastro Square.



Source: Own authorship (2023).

Appropriation of Ipiranga Square

Unlike Alencastro Square, during the surveys conducted at Ipiranga Square, it was found that the profile of the users of the place is predominantly composed of adult men and

women. The activities observed were socialization, waiting, and leisure/contemplation on the benches that surround the planters with vegetation (Figures 12 and 13).

Figures 12 and 13 – People waiting and socializing in Ipiranga Square



Source: Own authorship, April 20, 2023.

In this square, the difference in audience observed between daytime and nighttime surveys is striking: in the morning, adult and elderly women are more present, especially as vendors of various products and pedestrians heading towards the surrounding streets (Figure 14). At night, however, the presence of adult men is up to three times greater than that of women (Figure 15). These differences can be attributed to the poor lighting in the area, which includes art nouveau-style lampposts, with many of the bulbs burnt out, creating a sense of insecurity (Figure 16).

Figure 14 – Presence of women and daytime vendors / Figure 15 – Presence of men at night



Source: Own authorship, April 20, 2023.

However, as observed on-site, this situation seems not to apply to adult and elderly men (Figure 17). They appear more at night due to their dependence on the buses that stop at the station located in the square. During the survey, it was noted that very few of them were alone in the square, with most being accompanied by two or three people. The use of narcotics by two young men was also identified. Unlike the morning period, at night only three out of nine

vendors were active in the square: sellers of skewers, corn, and medicinal herbs.

Figure 16 – Poor nighttime lighting / Figure 17 – Presence of adult and elderly men



Source: Own authorship, April 20, 2023.

Just like in Alencastro Square, lighting and climate directly influence the occupation of the space. In the morning, users of the square occupy shaded areas that allow seating. At night, occupation is more concentrated around the public lighting posts.

Figure 18 – Users in shaded areas / Figure 19 – Users in illuminated areas



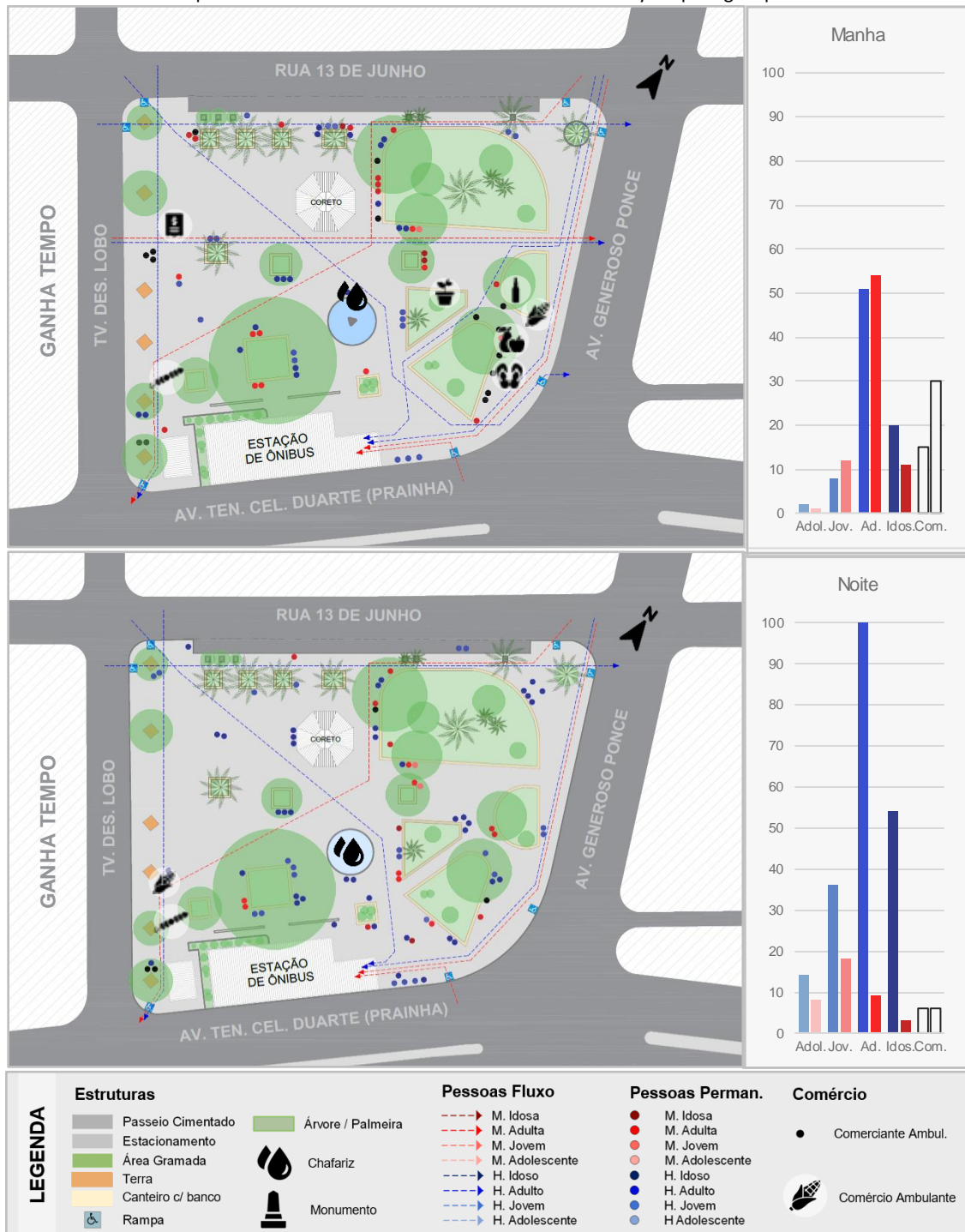
Source: Own authorship, April 20, 2023.

Next, Table 4 presents a synthesis of the observations reported and the calculation of appropriation generated, which totaled 204 in the morning and 286 at night. Both are graphically represented by Maps 3 and 4 followed by Charts 3 and 4.

Table 4 – Behavioral Survey of Ipiranga Square

Behavioral Survey - Ipiranga Square																		
Conditioning	Morning							Night										
	quinta-feira, 20 de abril de 2023				10:17 - 10:37 h			segunda-feira, 17 de abril de 2023				18:42 - 19:02 h						
Temperature	28°C Clear weather							29°C Clear weather										
Sun	Full sun with scattered clouds							Noite										
Wind	Average Wind							No wind										
Passage Axes	Diagonals / Longitudinal edges / Transversal edge. G.P. Ave.							Diagonals / Transverse Edge. A G. Ponce Ave.										
Permanence Poles	Flower Boxes G.P. Ave / Larger Flower Boxes / Shade tree							larger flower boxes										
Predominant Uses	Waiting / Contemplation / Socialization / Leisure / Commerce							Waiting / Socializing / Leisure / "Dormitory"										
Street trading	Snacks / Fruits / Drinks / Plants / Herbs / Perfumes / Clothing							Snacks/Fruits										
Predominant Audience	Adults and young people of both sexes							Adults and elderly men.										
User (years)	Permanence				Pass.		ΣM	ΣF	Permanence				Pass.		ΣM	ΣF		
	M	F	Activity		M	F			M	F	Activity		M	F				
	Sector 01								Sector 01									
Teen (13-18)							0	0							0	0		
Young (18-22)	2	2	Conversation, leisure and waiting for the shadow Oiti				6	6	3	2	alking and waiting while standing under lampposts			4	1	13	7	
Adult (23-60)	7	5	Conversation, leisure and waiting in the largest flower box			2	2	23	17	14		Conversation and leisure in the flower boxes. Consumption of alcoholic beverages and cigaettes.			4	1	46	1
Elderly (60+)	2					2		8	0	8	1	Conversation and leisure in the smaller flower boxes			2		26	3
street trading		4	drinks seller					0	12	2	2	Cooked corn / Skewer / Herbs					6	6
	Sector 02							Sector 02										
Teen (13-18)						2	1	2	1	4	2	Talking and waiting while standing under lampposts			2	2	14	8
Young (18-22)		1	Wait in the shade			2	3	2	6	7	3	Chat and wait in the middle planter.			2	2	23	11
Adult (23-60)	8	11	Conversation, leisure, waiting and contemplation. Two men using drugs.			4	4	28	37	27	2	Conversation, leisure and waiting in the largest flower box. Four men drinking alcoholic beverages.			5	2	86	8
Elderly (60+)	4	3	Conversation, leisure and waiting in the largest flower box				2	12	11	9		Conversation and leisure in the largest flower box. Homeless			1		28	0
street trading	5	6	Fruits / Skewer / Corn / Water / Açai / Slippers / Plants / Herbs / Capitalization					15	18	1	1	Cooked corn / Skewer					3	3
All Users	Full Appropriation							204		Full Appropriation							292	

Maps 03 and 04 and Charts 03 and 04 - Behavioral Survey of Ipiranga Square



Source: Own authorship (2023).

From the analyses conducted—highlighted and contrasted by the resulting maps and charts—it is appropriate, at this final stage of the study, to offer more comprehensive insights regarding a macro perspective on both squares. These insights are presented in the following conclusions.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

From the on-site visits conducted, it is evident that although both squares are located merely five hundred meters apart from each other, they possess distinct physical characteristics: Alencastro Square is in good condition with regards to maintenance and conservation, featuring quality public lighting, cleanliness, and fully functional amenities such as fountains and benches. In contrast, Ipiranga Square is at the opposite end of this spectrum, with damaged paving, poor lighting, and a deactivated fountain.

The differences in physical attributes, especially in terms of conservation, have distinctly defined the public space of these squares and resulted in notably different user profiles between them. Especially at night, Ipiranga Square showed a significant male predominance across all age groups. This situation is explained by its lesser conservation, deactivated amenities—such as the fountain—and particularly due to darkness arising from an inadequate lighting system. This combination of inferior qualities renders the environment of this square less suitable for full utilization, thereby being more usable by those less impacted by this feeling of insecurity, typically men. This fact limits the potential for sociability that the space could provide at night, as it already does during the day.

Both squares have been the subject of urban intervention, renovated in the same year to include new paving, landscaping, lighting, and restoration of the pre-existing planter structures. However, as observed in the surveys, Alencastro Square, located in front of the Cuiabá City Hall, maintains noticeably better conservation, a characteristic that has also allowed it to be appropriated by a more diverse range of users. This factor, to some extent, implies a stronger reinforcement of memory and the feeling of belonging among the local population.

In this regard, based on the observations made, it can be concluded that the physical aspects of both squares directly influence their appropriation. Both contain elements of recognized historical value that express, in their materiality, the memory, culture, identity, and affection of the traditional city, which, unfortunately, are not as well preserved as they should be.

As previously mentioned, city centers are derived from a historical process of human interference in the territory, which translates into the space the entire trajectory of the society to which it belongs. From a certain distance, the transformations/interventions of the studied squares, although contentious, reflect the thinking and values that mark the current moment.

This moment has brought to the studied squares the existence of two of the main bus stops in the city, conferring upon them a function as stopping and meeting points. Added to this, the ensemble of observed people—workers, service providers, public servants, students, retirees, etc.—who circulate and appropriate both squares creates a scenario rich in possibilities for meetings and new uses. For this reason, studies like this need to happen frequently in the pursuit of encouraging people to increasingly appropriate public spaces for their numerous potentialities, especially as bearers of attributed meaning, thus enabling them to identify with their cities, since these spaces provide a sense of identity intertwined with the potential for sociability and the exercise of citizenship.

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