

vive **Latinus**



“...everything in the life of the city, in the construction of the city, in the interactions between the inhabitants, is cultural. Culture permeates all our relationships. I usually tell my students that everything that is not nature is culture. Thunder is nature, calling thunder Tupã as the indians used to do is culture.”

Maria Elisa Cevasco

Brazilian Specialist, Material Culture

WELCOME

A consequence of the meetings and mismatches of those who were born here and those who landed here, the metropolises are a stage for diversity that cannot be found in any other place. Complex, intense, dynamic territories that arouse different feelings in its inhabitants and are also influenced by the moment that each individual is going through in their particular life. As the Welsh cultural critic Raymond Williams wrote:

“Every aspect of personal life is radically affected by the quality of general life, and yet the general life is seen at its most important in completely personal terms”

‘The Long Revolution’

We know that it is not possible to account for all the images and stories that inhabit the big cities. We don't have this pretension. In building this authorial project we are going to remark how is life in four Latin American metropolises: Sao Paulo (BR), Mexico City (MX), Santiago (CL) and Buenos Aires (ARG), by means of documental research, photos, interviews and reports/statements.

“ViveLatinus” is an invitation to stroll through the streets, get to know the neighborhood and visit some houses. An exercise of connection and inspiration will be able to help us as Latin Americans to understand how much these Metropolises show us what we have in common and what make us unique. Who we are and what we want to be.

Cities: what they are and represent

From a panoramic view of the four Latin metropolises that we selected for this study, Sao Paulo (BR), Mexico City (MX), Santiago (CL) and Buenos Aires (ARG), we can identify a variety of common elements: tall buildings, large avenues packed with cars, people walking around and the presence of nature as urban landscape or simulacrum that Marcelo Tramontano, Brazilian specialist in housing, calls “artifacts for housing surroundings”. As we move away from central regions, we can identify that the number of houses increases, the streets often become narrow, and in some places the colors stand out from the urban grid.

In the text “O que é cidade?” (“What is the city?”) Raquel Rołnik, architect and urbanist, defines it as something that is “*the result of the imagination and of the articulated work of many men and women*”. These are collective and mixed constructions that never stop changing.

What we observed on the four Latin metropolises showed us that they have much more in common among themselves than there are differences although these, of course, also exist.

Through images that our team and collaborators captured in the locations, we identify elements, signs, and behaviors that indicate that we are more connected than we think.

LATIN CONNECTIONS

The way we inhabit our homes and neighborhoods as well what we seek to surround us are great representations of this connection between the latin cities in our study. Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Mexico are countries that share a history of European colonization and this heritage can be identified beyond the social ramifications and dynamics, in the facades and designs of historic buildings and old houses spread out both in the centers and in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Although there are similarities in the surfaces of the architecture of the four metropolises, the spanish influence from the three “hermanos” are different from the portuguese influence represented in Brazil. Even so, we notice that the preservation of these structures have different qualities. Santiago and Buenos Aires appear to be cities that have a more pre-

dominant and conserved colonial aesthetic, by virtue of having expanded less over time and being smaller in relation to Sao Paulo and Mexico City.

The contrast between the historical and the modern is present in all the cities. On one side, signs announcing the construction of new real estate developments demarcate the transformation of the streets; on the other, existing mirrored residential and commercial buildings share the block with small markets, little shops, coffee shops and houses with older structures. These temporal meetings and mismatches of facades show how the urban grid reveals to us that there is a tension between those who we have been, those who we are, and those who we are becoming.

It is also evident the differences mentioned when looking at the



PHOTO: PAULINA MALVAEZ, MEXICO CITY

neighborhood level of the cities. In the images and reports we collected, the original centers seem to reveal more energy, showing regions of heavy movement, noise and activity. The further one moves away from these centers, neighborhoods, especially the middle and upper class, can be read as more placid, controlled areas with less urban noise and often with more limited access to public transportation and less social and commercial diversity.

As we get further away from the center we notice another type of existence where living in quietness can awaken the feeling of not being in a metropolis.

They are a refuge within the urban landscape.

These contrasts and the urban dynamic are also noticeable in the mutant aesthetics printed on the walls. The debate around inequalities and the struggle of social movements are stamped on the walls and surfaces of the cities. Graf-

fiti and murals expose the injustices and show protests, such as racial, gender, and political issues - in images that we capture of the city of Buenos Aires, the walls bring to the present a memory of the dictatorship.

When discussing this topic, Tiaraju Pablo D'Andrea, a Brazilian expert in Latin America, says that "mainly in Santiago do Chile and in Buenos Aires" it is common to see "many types of visual expressions as memories of the dictatorship". According to him, "there is a very graffiti thing" that goes against forgetting the evils of the dictatorship. A great example of that is the grafite-memorial in honor of prisoners who disappeared during the dictatorship, registered by us on a neighborhood wall in Yungay, in Santiago.



PHOTO: MÁRIO ÁLVAREZ, SANTIAGO

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o VENDE





PHOTO: SOFIA COSSARI, BUENOS AIRES

MOBILITY

Besides “the walls that talk” another similarity crosses the metropolises: the challenge of moving through their spaces. How much freedom do we really have to move? Maria Elisa Cevasco, a Brazilian material culture specialist, reminds us that *“each person inside their car thinks is going where they want, but everyone is subjected to the city grid”*. It is not we who determine our path, but the grid of streets and the public transportation maps.

More than this, the lack of entertainment options, educational centers and quality public spaces in some neighborhoods forces people to drive through the city in order to enjoy those that exist in other neighborhoods. Tiaraju Pablo D’Andrea, a Brazilian expert in Latin America, says that “moving around the city has to be a choice, not an imposition”.

“So this story of us thinking focused on the car makes a huge difference. We have to put an end to that, the city has to be designed for people and what matters can’t be the mobility of vehicles, right? What matters is the mobility of people.”

**EDUARDO COSTA, ESPECIALISTA
BRAZILIAN CITIES SPECIALIST**

According to D’Andrea, “It should have spread all over the city public theaters, Unified Educational Center, cinemas and public squares” but this is not what happens. For this reason, she adds - using Sao Paulo as an example - that “suburb residents are very dependent on what the Southwest quadrant offers” and because of this lack of structure, “they have to keep going there”.

For most people, public transportation is responsible for access to the city; or, in the-

ory, it should be. According to Ezequiel Fernandes, an Argentine specialist on Latin America, “In most of the Latin American cities public transportation is a major cause of frustration, stress and conflict”. Public transportation ticket prices, limited public transportation lines, and lack of safety are factors that impact the lives of those who need to commute. This is a fact that affects all social classes and the lower the quality of public transportation, accessibility and safety, the more cars we have on the streets, more traffic jams, more pollution. As Eduardo Costa, a Brazilian specialist in cities, add-on: “the city must be thought of for the people and the mobility of the vehicles should not matter, what should matter is the mobility of the people.”

Moving safely as pedestrians in places that are less and less designed for walkers has become an adversity. In order to overcome this obstacle, some ideas are be-



PHOTO: MÁRIO ÁLVAREZ, SANTIAGO

ing studied to improve the experience of public spaces. One of them is the sharing of avenues and streets that are closed to cars and open only to pedestrians, at least on specific days and times. Is the case of Avenida Reforma (Reforma Avenue), in Mexico City; or Avenida Paulista (Paulista Avenue), Elevado Presidente João Goulart and Minhocão, in Sao Paulo. A theory that Costa has shared is that “the flow of people on the street is inversely proportional to the size of the storefront [...] the pedestrian flow depends on the storefront, the size of the storefront, and store-

fronts will tend to be smaller.”

We notice how numerous the intersections between the cities we chose for this study are. The similarity between the streets and the art interventions, the options between restaurant and street foods. Especially in Sao Paulo and Mexico City, the lack of care and preservation in several places, among many other elements that may go unnoticed in everyday life, leap to the eye in the photos that we captured.

Although it reveals similarities between Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Sao Paulo and Santiago, the images captured also show that they are multifaceted.

Appear to be several different cities within one, and each region is an ecosystem with its own stories, dynamics, and contrasts.

Neighborhoods: how we relate to them



Maria Elisa Cevasco, Brazilian specialist in material culture, defined the neighborhood as “a place where relationships are built”. With the people who live there, but also with the territory itself and its public spaces.

Neighborhoods are by definition a community, and the more cultural or material variety there is in that community, the more vibrant it can be. In Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Sao Paulo and Santiago there are common neighborhood typologies: historic centers where with time, in the surrounding areas, new neighborhoods with different types have been formed- commercial, residential and mixed; bohemian neighborhoods; cultural neighborhoods; among many other types.

Each neighborhood has its own aesthetic and rhythm, but there are elements that are present in

many of them: we see in the sidewalks tables and chairs, churches, the fusion of different aesthetics between building and houses; small shops on the street or on the ground floor of buildings designed for mixed use, squares, parks, cafes, grocery stores, magazine stands, and street vendors.

Contrasts that coexist - houses versus buildings, churches versus bars, stores versus residences - end up becoming a common landscape among neighborhoods. The plurality of styles also reflects on the people who live in these neighborhoods. Choosing a neighborhood to live in says a lot about the moment that we are in our lives and what we want, in the same way that it also says something about our financial condition, our needs, priorities, personal tastes, and even our dreams. Often, for example, there is a desire to find a

quiet place to live – if you are someone who prefers calm, wooded places and can afford to live in a region with these attributes.

Asking for references from family and friends, or even using memory as a guide to recall previous positive experiences, are common practices used when choosing a region to live in; and as some of the residents we visited told us to be near by the loved ones.

All these factors together create a strong sense of belonging, of embracing your values, your ethics, and your aesthetic preferences.

“We plan to have kids, too, so we keep checking our surroundings, the schools...”

DWELLERS OF AN APARTMENT IN TATUAPÉ

SAO PAULO, COUPLE, 34 AND 36 Y-0

TRANQUILITY AND SAFETY IN THE NEIGHBORHOODS

Quiet environments and recognized as safe may even present, as an interesting neighborhood classification, the presence of elderly people in the streets, which signals that the region is quiet. In the case of the neighborhood Saúde, in Sao Paulo, a young resident associates the presence of elderly people in the region to the existence of stores and spaces for board games, which he also loves. On the other hand, when we visit central neighborhoods and talk to people who live there, we realize that living in the middle of the high flow of people, cars, buses, motorcycles, shopping malls and gastronomic centers can be stimulating, but it can also generate anxiety but this does not mean that it is impossible to find tranquility in these places: a resident of the iconic building Copan, located in the center of Sao Paulo, says that she chose an apartment on the building backside because she was looking for the sensation of living in a “little house” and from the apartment window she can even see hawks.

The concern with safety, according to the people interviewed, also stands out in Latin American cities. In Mexico City, for example, Santa

“I like living in the city, despite the noise. The benefits, being able to go to the movies, the theater, easily, riding a bike; there is space to do other things. I like the diversity, despite the noise.”

DWELLER OF AN APARTMENT IN LASTARRÍAS

SANTIAGO, 35 Y-0

**ABOUT WALKING IN
THE NEIGHBORHOODS**

Maria la Ribera, an old neighborhood and still with little real estate development, is charming and attractive because of the old buildings and even lower prices than in other charming regions however, the feeling of carelessness, such as the presence of abandoned cars and objects in the street and its localization, near areas identified as dangerous, coexist with the feeling that some people have of insecurity at night. But, this feeling can also be different for everyone, as Stu Etnicknap told us, our partner from 8th Day, in London: *“The codes and signs of what makes one person feel safe in an environment may pass unnoticed to another, because it can be very sensory, it may have to do with olfactory references or sounds that give a sense of recognition, security, and belonging.”*

Many people, regardless of their city, feel the urge to walk around calmly, without feeling intimidated, with the possibility of getting things done by foot and within walking distance. Going to the market, walking the dog, drifting and working close to where they live brings us to the concept of the “15-minute city”, which concentrates the triad housing-work-leisure in the same region. A series of “15-minute cities” put together leads to polycentric cities, where, in theory, there are a number of neighborhoods that accommodate the triad of everyday, basic needs and wants. In this scenario, going to other parts of cities is a choice,



PHOTO: SABRINA GUIMARÃES, SAO PAULO

not a necessity imposed by the city.

Something remarkable in Buenos Aires, according to Ezequiel Fernandes, an Argentine specialist on Latin America, is the fact that “walking around the city is a feature that generates a lot of happiness”. This is a feeling that can be amplified with local experiences. The diversity of activities, the cultural life of the neighborhoods – involving music, parks, physical activities, and even the act of going out to eat – besides the local services offers ways to experience the surroundings in the best way. There are even routine habits being strengthened daily within this relationship – such as going to cafes, restaurants, markets, and local businesses.

“Outdoor public spaces are so important. I’ve always been one to walk around the neighborhood I live in, I like it a lot, as a distraction but also to take ownership of the neighborhood, so to speak.”

CULTURAL COEXISTENCE IN THE NEIGHBORHOODS

When we talk about the relationship between people and neighborhoods, we cannot forget the experience of immigration. We create bonds with people who share with us the Latin American existence or other regions. It is in this connection that we often add and transform our culture. One of the greatest expressions of this influence is food. There is a strong relationship between the neighborhood’s gastrostomy and the immigrants. As we can observe in Buenos Aires with the Paraguayan immigrants: according to Ezequiel Fernandes, an Argentine specialist on Latin America, Paraguayan immigration changed an important gastronomic habit of the city, as “in five years, all of a sudden, we started eating arepas”.



PHOTO: SABRINA GUIMARÃES, SAO PAULO

DWELLERS OF AN APARTMENT IN TATUAPÉ

SAO PAULO, COUPLE, 34 AND 36 Y-0

GENTRIFICATION OF NEIGHBORHOODS

Last but not least is the neighborhood's gentrification. Besides the inconvenience caused by construction work, the change in the typology of buildings, the impact of new residents, their material and aesthetic predilections, the impacts transform the regions to the point of harming some people who become opposed to the changes. Many of them end up having to move away. An iconic case, reported in the interviews we conducted, happened in the Mexican neighborhood La Condesa, where because of the tourists commercial establishments began charging in dollars. Other neighborhoods in the city have also been suffering from the impact of rentals via AirBnB and equivalents, which attract temporary residents, who by nature, do not engage with the neighborhood, but stimulate the increase of rents in the regions.

And in the current situation of crisis and economic recession - occasioned and accelerated by the global impact of the pandemic - specially in Sao Paulo, Mexico City and Buenos Aires, an issue even more relevant than it was already in the past are the prices. The value of rents and square meters, the conflictive relationships with the tradicion-

al real estate and the high cost of living in the cities, limit the options to live in more central locations or spacious/larger places, it is something that happens in every city in this study. Mercedes di Virgilio, Argentine specialist in housing, reinforced that, in the Latin American cities, the housing issue is both characteristic and structural.



PHOTO: DIANA BUENO BIELETTA, MEXICO CITY



PHOTO: ANTONELLA ROBILOTA, BUENOS AIRES



This issue marks these cities agenda.[2]

The Latino relationship with public spaces in the four cities we have chosen happens in different ways, reinforced by Tiaraju Pablo D’Andrea, a Brazilian expert in Latin America. According to him, Buenos Aires, Mexico City and Santiago are cities that “there are many more squares” and that “every weekend there is some cultural activity in these squares”, something that doesn’t happen in Sao Paulo, “unless you live near Ibirapuera Park, which is for a specific social level”.

In this aspect, parks and squares are green oases that encourages a healthier city, not only by improving air quality, but also by providing spaces for leisure and meetings. According to D’Andrea, Buenos Aires and Mexico City are cities that have the “Best use of public space with parks and squares” - and Sao Paulo the worst. In Buenos Aires and Santiago we see the thought reflected



PHOTO: MÁRIO ÁLVAREZ, SANTIAGO

in planting and recycling practices, with composting and community gardens, well-manicured parks to provide entertainment and public areas that encourage people to stay. It is also interesting to see how the dogs play the role of connectors. Connecting with neighbors and other people often comes from walking with pets. For our partner in London, from 8th Day, Stu Etnicknap “to build a genuine community, some degree of common commitment is required.”

We notice, through the expert’s report, that public spaces can and should be environments for sociability, not just for transit.

Places that welcome people and encourage involvement and familiarity with the public

surroundings bring a sense of belonging.

On the one hand, there is a narrative that we do not see the public space as our own, and this impacts the care we direct to it. According to the Brazilian specialist on housing, Milene Correa Soares, many times the public space “has a relationship of abandonment”, being “a space that nobody takes care of”.

On the other hand, there is an unanswered question: what stories do collective spaces tell us? Being a highly disputed territory, especially when talking about those cities that value the private’s architecture, a dichotomy “public = unprotected” and “private = protected”. Marcelo Trantomano, another Brazilian specialist in housing, adds: “we are used to thinking that the public space is ‘deficient’ and ‘a problem’, sentencing everything that is not protected by the private to be a place of “danger”,

a “place to be avoided” and “this causes a great emptiness in these places”.

Also for Enticknap, “forgotten” spaces can become culturally vibrant and authentic spaces over the years, spontaneously, if fulfilled the needs of safety and occupied by people. But another possibility is privately owned appropriation, which for Etnicknap, usually takes place with some clear functional intent (e.g., dog park or playground) or assigned to a specific social group (e.g., people practicing Tai Chi Chuan or skateboarders). However, for him, the impacts on the city are different: “I wonder if a lot of that genuine pulse isn’t being lost with this corporate layer, with the standardization of cities. [...] I think there is probably less difference between London and Sao Paulo today than there was 30 years ago.” Our partner from Humankind, Alex Bennett-Clemmow, sees the difference between these conditions of public spaces in a similar way: “(In privately owned public spaces), there is no litter and they are perfectly trimmed, nothing is broken, the design of seating and shade places have been thought out, there is much more dedication in thinking about the space. As citizens, we also have the right to public



PHOTO: DIANA BUENO BIELETTA, MEXICO CITY

(not privately owned) spaces that have been well thought out.

There are many initiatives to think about for the repair and occupation of these spaces, whether for housing or leisure. Retrofits that adapt old buildings to current needs or projects to insert vegetation into the city with revitalization and construction of parks and the increasingly bumper constructions of vertical gardens. According to Laura Lagos, a Mexican expert on cities, “green areas are essential”. And another issue in big cities is: which space should nature occupy?

A landscape element inherited from Europe, many streets in these four cities have trees planted along their edges/sidewalks, but it is almost a standard that the richer the neighborhood is, the more plants and green areas it has.

Resuming the words of Raquel Rolnik, “a city is not only about housing but about a whole ecosystem”. Just as the balance of natural ecosystems is necessary for their good development, the urban environment also requires harmony, for people to relate to each other in a healthy, safe, and fluid way in common spaces.

Housing: how do we live?

From the point of view of the bourgeois model of living, Brazilian specialist in housing, Marcelo Tramontano tells us that “house” and “street” are two terms in opposition. While the streets are collective and common spaces, homes are exclusive and intimate spaces, shared only with those we trust.

ABOUT SPACE DEPLOYMENT

Just as there is the city grid, the residences have architectural plans that guide how this space is divided. According to Tramontano, the similarities between the housing in the four metropolises in this study come a lot “from a historical point of view, because Latin America received housing models from other places, especially Europe”. Consequently, the four cities “received exactly the same European model” - a tripartite model.

Although with multiple influenc-



PHOTO: PAULINA MALVAEZ, MEXICO CITY

es and configurations, the division of the tripartite model almost always goes through the three main characteristics that Tramontano calls “reception field”, as the living room being “a room that commands the others; “rejection field”, spaces reserved for employees, such as kitchens; and “intimacy spaces”, which are the bedrooms. A model to shelter the bourgeoisie “spread during the Belle Epoque period”.

When we look at the residences in Sao Paulo, Mexico City, Santiago and Buenos Aires, we noticed that although we have particular architectural differences in the external areas, the interiors are similar. Inside the residences/homes, we find a behavioral trend that revolves around three archetypes:

***The expressive home*, an affective and emotional way of living;**

***The sociable home*, always open to friends;**

***The functional home*, in which practicality is highlighted.**

Each one reflects the identity of those who live in them; a private territory to fulfill desires and wishes. For our partner in London, Stu Etnicknap, from 8th Day: Our homes reflect not who we are, but who we want to be.

PHOTO: MÁRIO ÁLVAREZ, SANTIAGO

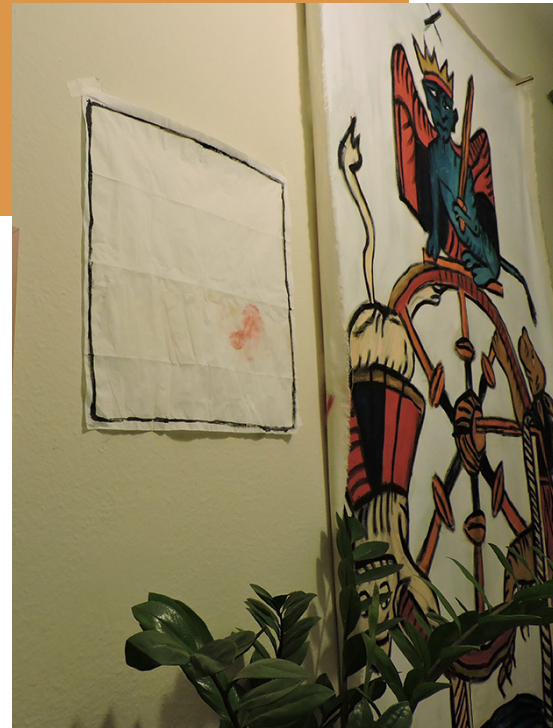


PHOTO: SABRINA GUIMARÃES, SAO PAULO

ABOUT HOME TYPOLOGIES

Amid these types of homes and manifestations of personalities, the duality between house and apartment is present. Living at a house gives people the feeling of being able to enjoy the indoors and outdoors in the comfort of their own home. The apartment, on the other hand, brings a stronger issue of space: many are tiny and the lack of space annoys (much more noticeable during the pandemic restrictions). This condition influences the seeking, by some people, for apartments that somehow give the feeling of living in a house. And, even when the residence is rented, there is an effort in the decoration to make it look like the residents and to avoid the impression that the occupation of this space is temporary.

An important point to note is that the offer directly influences the way we live. For Tramontano, “certainly the people from Buenos Aires and Santiago live much better than the people from Sao Paulo and

Mexico City, because they have an architecture that is studied for them. That is thought out and that listens to these people”. On the other hand, in Brazil, according to the specialist, the physical arrangement “underlies a funding”, and many - like a couple we interviewed who live in Tatuapé - need to hire an architect to customize the interiors. “It is a physical arrangement that enables the best cost-benefit. Another question is what they need. What is necessary, because nobody can live in a 10 square meter apartment. That is absurd.” adds Tramontano.



DESIGN AS AN EXPRESSION OF IDENTITY

Milene Correa Soares, Brazilian specialist in housing, says that “in the interior design world every choice is a reflection of an acknowledgement of one’s own identity”. Regardless of the format, all homes accumulate stories, and interior design plays a significant role in this process.

In the photos that we took from homes in Sao Paulo, Buenos Aires, Mexico City, and Santiago, we were able to identify preferences in both decoration and distribution of internal spaces. Very important attributes for places/ambiences are when they make the best use of light, space and quietness. Since the pandemic, the

PHOTOS: MÁRIO ÁLVAREZ, SANTIAGO



relationship with spaces has intensified and for our partner Stu Etnicknap, from 8th Day, “people are more sensible to the impacts of the environments themselves”.

There are also common symbologies in the homes we visit that says a lot about who lives there. It is not hard to find components that connect the homes in the four cities. Decorative elements that express engagement with soccer, religion, politics, and regionality are common. Images of entities of



various religions - such as those of African descent in the case of Sao Paulo, Brazil, and Catholics in Mexico City; and flags that represent support for certain social struggles, and even political candidates and soccer team objects are mixed with regional icons-like the Mexican skulls (Calavera).

We can also find a lot about pop culture and travel. Pictures, fridge magnets, and small sculptures are used both to remember good times on past trips and to display cultural interests in movies, series, games, music, photography, and all kinds of art. Even a certain national pride, seen in flags of countries and identity cultures fixed on walls, windows, and balconies, spaces that restrain public and private.

As we talked with people who have outsourced the interior design of

their homes, we identify the tendency that they feel that these spaces do not reflect their individuality and their particular stories.

The affinity between home and resident is diluted in delegated decorations; decorating the spaces becomes more pragmatic when it is not done by the resident.

In further conversation with our partner Etnicknap, he explains that delegating decoration is asking for help designing who we want to be, in the future, but not necessarily who we are, today: "Can you show me who I should be in the future?" "How should I live?", "What does a better life look like?" We all know we need and want to live a better life, but we don't always know what that looks like. Sometimes people need to delegate that to professionals."

ABOUT THE USE OF THE SPACES

We notice some attributes that are also valued by people. The kitchen is an important space and one of continuous use, whether it is for preparing and consuming daily meals or for receiving friends. The balcony reveals a leisure space, a corner for relaxing - some of these balconies have enough space to meditate, escape from routine or bring a bit of nature into the home. In the bedrooms and living rooms there is a greater care for comfort and the possibility of hosting guests. “In my everyday life, I relate more to the bedroom, evidently the bathroom, the office and the kitchen. This large living space, we reserve for guests or meeting with friends.”, told us a resident from the neighborhood of Nunõa, in Santiago.

Another remarkable thing is how the pandemic has transformed the internal dynamics with structures designed for work or adapted for this kind of need. Office tables and chairs and spaces dedicated to the home office emerged, highlighting how the historical context and contemporaneity directly impact homes. For Eduardo Costa, a Brazilian expert on cities, “housing, leisure and work, which is the trend in polycentric neighborhoods, will happen indoors as well.” Homes are not static places, they live

the rhythm of life of the inhabitants, their plants and their pets.

The sink full of washed dishes, the jars with spices ready to be used, the photos and memories that never stop resurfacing; the spaces occupied by pets, the drawings and toys that emphasize the presence of children; used furniture, inherited or customized; plants carefully nurtured frequently as a gift from friends and memories of special moments - books, family items, sentimental objects. All this nourishes the vital energy of the homes, gives cadence to the spaces, and leaves an impression of the residents' identity in the spaces. Even more when the choices are made by the residents themselves.



HOME PARADOXES

Home is a space of intimacy and sharing, but beyond this, it is also a place of paradoxes.

Maria Elisa Cevasco, Brazilian material culture expert, reminds us that *“we don’t need to idealize the home”*. Beyond physical structures, a house is made of the subjectivity, complexity, and diversity of those who live in it. Marcelo Tramontano, Brazilian specialist in housing, says that *“the living space is that intersection of individual lives and is where all the issues of society are reflected and constructed.”*

Although homes are defined as private and exclusive places, the social dynamics that are outside the door are also there. Invariably, neighborhoods and homes nourish each other.



PHOTO: PAULINA MALVAEZ, MEXICO CITY

The caring city

As we look at people's relationship with a handful of Latino cities and homes, we find a complex trajectory built on inherited social and spatial divisions.

The word metropolis refers to social conflicts, but from the experience of the cities it is possible to think about how to stimulate them to alleviate them.

EQUANIMITY IN DECISIONS

If we want more equitable cities, we need to stop making so many individualistic, segregationist and utilitarian decisions and shift to other perspectives. In order for coexistence to become better than surviving in the city, it is vital to consider two words: care and collective.

To think about a caring city, that evolves from people's needs, is something that has already been debated. The caring city is concerned as well with people as with cars, public spaces and private businesses alike. A more egalitarian city stimulates a population more interested in experiencing and contributing to it, than just extracting from it what it needs. It is a place that nourishes diversity, of its inhabitants, of business, of jobs, of leisure,

LIVING WELL

and that motivates the dissolution of social and material boundaries in order to allow its inhabitants, each in their own way, to feel welcomed as a whole part of it. For Cleo Henry, our partner from Humankind, “inclusivity is always iterative, so flexibility can be a form of care.”

In this way, thinking about spaces that embrace the plurality of all kinds of people who live in the metropolis, in different neighborhoods and from different economic and social realities, is an indispensable requisite for caring cities - even if we think about smart cities, which should go far beyond simply being technologically connected, they should be humanity-smart cities.

To think about a caring city, we can take advantage of philosophies such as the Bem Viver / Well Living (from Alberto Acosta in his book “O Bem viver - uma oportunidade de imaginar novos mundos”), that seeks, in community and solidarity relations, in common spaces for socialization, in conscious production and consumption, in collaborative work, and in diversity and respect for others and for nature, a way to maintain harmony between the nature and the urban environments and the people.

Paola Martinez, Chilean expert on cities, argues that each metropolis has unique knowledge and specificities, but that they all have a common horizon: the need to “more than patch roads or patch up streets, to patch up life”.

PHOTO: DIANA BUENO BIELETTI, MEXICO CITY



PHOTO: SOFIA COSSARI, BUENOS AIRES

URBAN NARRATIVES

If our spaces “tell stories”, say Julián Woodside, a Mexican specialist in material culture, we have heard the stories that are being told today, but which ones do we want our city to tell us from now on? How can we take action in urban structures to make this happen? For Eduardo Costa, a Brazilian expert on cities, who believes in the empowerment of the occupation of public space, “the transformation of the city will happen starting from the squares.” Living in a city is not just about enjoying what it has to offer, it is also to live it in a conscious, collaborative and active way, contributing to the narrative of the stories it tells. According to Costa, “we need to participate more, this is an individual thing, we have to change, this is the new world.”

With all these questions in mind, it is possible for us to understand that the city is not only about offers, of housing, work, services and entertainment, but about the constant development of a living ecosystem, and that to be healthy it needs to be in balance and meet material and emotional needs, which are connected, fulfill and stimulate desires and dreams. And for this, as Costa explains: “the best city that exists, is the city that already exists,” we must polish what it already offers us so that it can help us tell the stories we want to live.

For us, with this study, we understand that city, neighborhood, and home should be synonymous with well living, diversity and vitality.

“I live here because it’s a very well connected area, there are many places to buy food and it’s relatively cheap, and I like exploring the region because I’ve lived here for many years of my life, since I was a kid, so, it gives me some comfort and some feeling of safety in this neighbourhood.”

**DWELLER OF AN
APARTMENT IN PORTALES**
MEXICO CITY, 37 Y-0

Some books and essays that guided us through this study

A nova América Latina; Fernando Calderón, Manuel Castells, editora Zahar (2021)

A questão urbana; Manuel Castells, editora Paz e Terra (2020)

Cidade de Muros – Crime, segregação e cidadania em Sao Paulo; Teresa Pires do Rio Caldeira, Editora 34 Ltda, Edusp (2000)

Ciudades vibrantes: Sonido y experiencia aural urbana en América Latina; Natalia Bueno Bieletto (editora), Ediciones UM (2021)

Consumidores y ciudadanos: conflictos multiculturales de la globalización; Néstor García Canclini, editora Grijalbo (1995)

Junkspace; Rem Koolhaas, editora Quodibet (2006)

La era de la información. Economía, sociedad y cultura. Vol.2: El poder de la identidad; Manuel Castells, editora Alianza (2000)

Long Revolution; Raymond Williams; editora Parthian (2012)

Não lugares, Introdução a uma antropologia da supermodernidade; Marc Augé, editora Papyrus (1992)

Networks of outrage and hope; Social Movements in the Internet Age; Manuel Castells (2012)

O Bem Viver uma oportunidade de imaginar novos mundos; Alberto Acosta, editora Autonomia Literária (2016)

O que é Cidade? Raquel Rolnik, Editora Brasiliense, Série Primeiros Passos (1988)

METHODOLOGY

For the elaboration of this study, we developed a process with some steps:

1. Desk Research

Analysis of secondary materials available in text, video and images format.

2. Interview with Experts

Conversations with 10 experts about the four pillars on which we structure our preliminary thoughts: Material Culture, Latin America, Cities and Homes.

3. Ethno-photographs

Photographic immersions in neighborhoods and homes in: Buenos Aires (Argentina) Mexico City (Mexico) Sao Paulo (Brazil) Santiago (Chile)

4. Local Testimonials

Stories about 35 homes and lives in neighborhood in 4 cities in Latin America: Buenos Aires (Argentina), Mexico City (Mexico), Sao Paulo (Brazil), Santiago (Chile)

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TEMPO 2