

## CRITICAL REPORT

### UrbanSus Seminar

#### *Dwelling in the São Paulo Streets During the Covid-19 Pandemic: Experiences, Interventions, Research*

Location: São Paulo (Online), Institute of Advanced Studies – University of São Paulo

Dates and times: 10.11, 26.11 and 07.12.2020 between 2 pm and 4 pm

**Fraya Frehse**

<http://www.iea.usp.br/pessoas/pasta-pessoaf/fraya-frehse>

**Luiz Kohara**

<http://www.iea.usp.br/pessoas/pasta-pessoal/luiz-tokuzi-kohara>

**Carmen Santana**

<http://www.iea.usp.br/pessoas/pasta-pessoac/carmen-lucia-albuquerque-de-santana>

**Maria Antonieta da Costa Vieira**

<http://www.iea.usp.br/pessoas/pasta-pessoam/maria-antonieta-da-costa-vieira>

São Paulo, November-December 2020

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	2
Report on Session 1 (“Experiences”) – 10 November 2020.....	6
Report on Session 2 (“Interventions”) – 26 November 2020.....	10
Report on Session 3 (“Research”) – 7 December 2020.....	19



## INTRODUCTION

*Author: Fraya Frehse*

The UrbanSus Seminar “Dwelling in the São Paulo Streets During the Covid-19 Pandemic: Experiences, Interventions, Research”, which this report refers to, is part of the actions of the Global Center of Spatial Methods for Urban Sustainability (GCSMUS), which I coordinate at the University of Sao Paulo (USP). Founded in 2020, under the auspices of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the Center is the result of a broad international scientific and academic exchange project between Technische Universität (TU) Berlin and 47 universities from 7 regions in the so-called Global South, from Asia to Latin America (<<https://gcsmus.org>>). The proposal of the GCSMUS is to identify how empirical research methods of the social sciences sensitive to the social and relational dimension of space may contribute to tackle concrete challenges of the UN 2030 Agenda for urban sustainability (<<https://brasil.un.org/pt-br/sdgs>>).

To this end, the GCSMUS, and in particular Dr. Ignacio Castillo Ulloa – one of the opening speakers at the UrbanSus Seminar – and myself – the event coordinator – opted to explore a specific dimension of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) no. 11: “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.” (<<https://brasil.un.org/pt-br/sdgs/11>>) – above all during the pandemic. As such, homelessness – dwelling in the streets of cities in the four corners of the world – gains particular sociospatial importance. I conceive homelessness as a pattern of *bodily use* of urban public spaces (Frehse, 2016). But it is a specific pattern, which concerns the regular physical permanence of human beings in streets, squares, and other public urban places for overnight stays and, thus, for dwelling (the etymology of the term “to dwell” comes from the Middle English *dweller*: to physically delay, live, remain, persist). In Brazil, on the other hand, there is a lack of a proper noun for the sociospatial dimension implicit in the term “homelessness”. The phenomenon is often associated with its protagonists. It is presently called “população em situação de rua [population in street situation]” or, succinctly and affectively, “PopRua [StreetPop]”; and over a decade ago referred to as “população de rua [street population]”, while the protagonists themselves call themselves “moradores de rua [street dwellers]”.

How may this phenomenon be of interest to the GCSMUS, a university research and outreach center which proposes to include spatial methods from the social and spatial sciences (i.e., ranging from anthropology and sociology to architecture and



urbanism, as well as geography) in benefit of the SDG 11 of the 2030 Agenda? Precisely the fact that this phenomenon is sociospatial in nature and inseparable from social inequalities, which flow into urban public spaces that are of relevance to the 2030 Agenda: places with unrestricted legal access marked by social exclusion, insecurity, and vulnerability, in addition to being environmentally, socially, and economically unsustainable (Kim & Kwon, 2018). Dwelling in the streets is a particular sociospatial characteristic of an urban society which produces and reproduces itself globally precisely by way of, among others, this phenomenon. Even though dwelling in the streets entails myriad social, health, and cultural dilemmas for cities, it has become an integral part of how cities are spatially produced and reproduced day after day, especially from the 1970s when dwelling in the streets became an object of scientific research and public policy – first in the United States and later in England and continental Europe (Frehse, 2021, p.48). Nonetheless, it was in particular since the 2000s that dwelling in the streets became a global phenomenon, in the wake of neoliberal urban policies and their global expansion.

The fact that we are faced with a sociospatial characteristic typical to this “mode of production of space” – as aptly summarized by philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre in his *La production de l'espace*, from 1974 – explains, on the one hand, why it is fruitless to debate circumscribed or localized solutions for dwelling in the streets. As the author emphasized, “changing society” depends on the production of a new space, for it is through this space that society produces and reproduces itself (Lefebvre, 2000, p.72).

On the other hand, the sociospatial nature of dwelling in the streets underlines the social drama behind this phenomenon, especially in socially unequal cities such as São Paulo during the Covid-19 pandemic. There we find a striking increase in men, women, and above all families dwelling in the streets – although we still lack specific research on the period prior to the UrbanSus Seminar. Until November 2020, the only available data was the 2019 census of the “population in street situation”, which indicated, taking as reference October of that year, circa 24 thousand people staying overnight on the streets, mainly in the downtown areas (Sé, República, and Mooca). (<[https://www.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/cidade/secretarias/assistencia\\_social/observatorio\\_socioassistencial/pesquisas/index.php?p=18626](https://www.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/cidade/secretarias/assistencia_social/observatorio_socioassistencial/pesquisas/index.php?p=18626)>). The picture was not realistic, according to movements and organizations working with this phenomenon.



As such, it is pertinent to ask how spatial methods may contribute to a qualitatively more consistent understanding of the phenomenon and thus, indirectly, contribute to a less painful everyday life for people in street situation in São Paulo. Our search for answers benefits from different perspectives regarding the everyday life of people dwelling in the streets during the pandemic: views from people who dwell or have dwelled in the streets; from people who, although without a street background, work daily alongside this population and for their well-being; and from scholars at the University, who have been scientifically researching the daily lives of these men, women, and children.

From these reflections emerged the proposal of the Seminar hereby in focus, which the Global Cities Synthesis Center of the USP Institute of Advanced Studies (IEA) keenly selected to host within the framework of one of its main events, the UrbanSus. Organized by the GCSMUS in partnership with the USP Global Cities Synthesis Center, the three event sessions sought to bring together socially diverse perspectives around the same question: *What is the everyday life for men, women, and children for whom the streets of São Paulo have become dwelling spaces during the Covid-19 pandemic?* The life trajectories of the Seminar presenters and discussant have been marked, respectively, by sleeping on the streets on a more or less regular basis, by the professional work with/about the so-called population in street situation, and by scientific research about people who live in the city's public spaces. By bringing together diverse social angles for understanding and reflecting upon this sociospatial phenomenon, the proposal of the UrbanSus Seminar "Dwelling in the São Paulo Streets During the Covid-19 Pandemic: Experiences, Interventions, Research" was to implement at USP a space for cross-methodological exchanges between theory and empiricism, experience and intervention, knowledge and practice on the issue.

The following three sections of this report address the contents shared throughout the three Seminar sessions. For communicative purposes, each section begins with an online link to the digital recording of the corresponding session, followed by its abstract and program. The goal is to provide the reader with a written summary of the progress of each of the three sessions encompassed by the seminar at stake.

\*\*\*



I use this opportunity to reiterate my gratitude to professors Marcos Buckeridge, Marcelo Nery, and to the IEA-USP employees Sandra Sedini and Fernanda Rezende for their unconditional support and devotion in coordinating and implementing the UrbanSus Seminar in focus.

I am also grateful to my colleagues Luiz Kohara, Carmen Santana, and Maria Antonieta da Costa Vieira for their willingness to prepare the reports on each of the event's sessions.

### References

FREHSE, F. Da desigualdade social nos espaços públicos centrais brasileiros. *Sociologia & Antropologia*, v. 6, n. 1, p. 129-158, 2016, <<https://doi.org/10.1590/2238-38752016v616>>.

FREHSE, F. The Historicity of the Refiguration of Spaces under the Scrutiny of the Pre-Covid São Paulo Homeless Pedestrians. In: MILLION, A.; HAID, C.; CASTILLO ULLOA, I.; BAUR, N. (Org.) *Spatial Transformations: Kaleidoscopic perspectives on the refiguration of space*. Oxford: Routledge, pp. 46-59, <<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003036159>>.

KIM, S.; KWON, Hyun-ah. Urban sustainability through public architecture. *Sustainability*, v. 10, p.1-21, 2018., <doi:10.3390/su10041249>.

LEFEBVRE, H. *La production de l'espace*, 2.ed. Paris: Anthropos, 2000.



SMUS

## 1. REPORT ON SESSION 1 (“EXPERIENCES”) – 10 NOVEMBER 2020

*Author: Luiz Kohara*

*Editor: Fraya Frehse [FF]*

**Event link:** <<http://www.iea.usp.br/eventos/urbansus-morar-nas-ruas-covid-19-vivencias>>

**Video link:** <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2oS8eIKcuDI&t=993s>>

### **Abstract:**

What are the challenges and surprises in the everyday life of men, women, and families who spend their days, and sometimes their nights, on the streets of São Paulo during the Covid-19 pandemic?

### **Program:**

#### **Opening Speeches**

Guilherme Ary Plonski (Director IEA-USP)

Marcos Buckeridge (Coordinator of the USP Global Cities Center – IEA-USP)

Fraya Frehse (GCSMUS-USP-TU Berlin/USP Global Cities)

Ignacio Castillo Ulloa (GCSMUS-TU Berlin)

#### **Presentations**

Robson Mendonça (Coordinator of the State Movement of the Street Population)

Eliana Toscano de Araújo (Commissioned employee of the Secretariat of Human Rights – City of São Paulo [PMSP])

Video: “The Masked Street (São Paulo, 5 November 2020)” (34’36”) - <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DDhrEFczyko>> [Director: Fraya Frehse; Photography: Marcus Repa; Editing: Fraya Frehse, Marcus Repa, Anna Flávia Hartmann]

#### **Discussion**

Luiz Kohara (urban planner, executive secretary of the Gaspar Garcia Center for Human Rights)

**Main points of Robson Mendonça’s exposition** (<http://www.iea.usp.br/pessoas/pasta-pessoar/robson-mendonca>):

Mendonça began by emphasizing that “we die learning” and that people are not in street situation, but in “sidewalk situation”.

He emphasized that there are myriad situations in the reality of the streets, such as the “*trecheiros*”, “wanderers”, among others, while there are also those who “impersonate” the StreetPop to carry out petty crimes.

I list below some quotes from the speaker that I deemed most relevant for the purposes of the UrbanSus Seminar.



- The census should serve as guideline for federal, state, and municipal public policies; however, people continue to stay in shelters or on sidewalks as they lack access to public policies.

- Nobody enjoys dwelling on the sidewalks or not having an address to look for a job. The first thing we need is a house to live in.

- Capitalism is cruel and turns misery into a profitable industry.

- We have the political pandemic, the Covid 19 pandemic, and the financial pandemic.

- In São Paulo, the population in street situation endures a cruel situation: the city administration donates blankets inasmuch as it takes them away, by way of the urban cleaning service.

- There is talk of including the StreetPop into society, but it is society that does not accept the population in street situation. Society does not see the StreetPop as human beings, treating them as if they were from another planet.

- There has been a growing debate in recent years about training professionals who serve and care for the StreetPop; but what they effectively need to learn is to treat them like human beings.

- Social distancing has been a recurrent topic during the pandemic. However, the StreetPop crowds together in the streets for protection. How can someone stay at home if they don't have a home? In addition to this difficulty, the City Administration has confiscated the StreetPop tents.

- While the 2030 – Millennium – Agenda has been an ongoing discussion, Brazil's current president [Jair Bolsonaro] believes that any problem can be solved with a gun.

- The police are discriminatory: they treat “criminals” differently in wealthy neighborhoods such as [the so-called] Jardins and in the periphery.

- Many people come here for food [the place where Robson speaks from and from where he participates in the UrbanSus Seminar is the so-called Football Pitch of the Bank Workers Union within the Unified Workers' Central Union in São Paulo <<https://spbancarios.com.br>>, which currently distributes food for the StreetPop during the pandemic; FF]. These are people who have been in the streets for a long time, people who were victimized by the pandemic and are now in the streets, and people who don't have money for food. When the Covid-19 pandemic broke out, we began distributing food to 2 people, then to 20, then to 50 people, then to 200 people. We are now distributing food every day to 2200 people.

-- What will Christmas “effectively” be like for these people who can't buy things? Jesus Christ – the young boy born in a manger because he had no home and who constantly moved around because he had no home – was a “person in street situation”: he had no home and was rejected by society.

- Let's look at the StreetPop as human beings. They don't just need a plate of food, they need to be seen as people, as people in need of care.



- Politicians say that the StreetPop does not vote, but we saw that 70% of them voted in the last election.
- The StreetPop or people who live on the sidewalks need an opportunity.
- The largest wound is society's rejection.

### **Main points of Eliana Toscano de Araújo's presentation**

(<<http://www.iea.usp.br/pessoas/pasta-pessoae/eliana-toscano-de-araujo>>):

Below are quotations from the speaker that this rapporteur deemed most relevant for the objectives of the UrbanSus Seminar:

- Only those who have experienced dwelling in the streets know what it's like to live in the streets. I left the street a year and a half ago, I pay rent; it's a continuous struggle to sustain myself.

- Being a woman in the streets in a patriarchal and sexist society is hard, even more so when using drugs. There is a lot of hypocrisy, prejudice, and lies in society about what is socially accepted: alcohol is acceptable, marijuana isn't.

- When I was going *manguear* [panhandling at the traffic light; LK], people acted surprised: "You're white and beautiful and in this situation?!" As if I had to be black, ugly, and toothless to be out there.

- Women dwelling in the streets are seen as sluts.

- Everything happened in an avalanche. I don't like saying I'm a victim. I'm not a victim, I suffered violence from my husband. I used to help the StreetPop at Princesa Isabel Square [in downtown São Paulo; FF]: I helped to arrange hospitalizations, acquire medication for them. I would stay on the streets during the day and go back home. I met my partner when he was in street situation and so I ended up staying in the streets.

- I've always been a very strong person; my experience in the streets made me even stronger.

- Life in the streets can be very difficult for women, for example, when it comes to menstruation. Bar owners rarely let us use the restrooms. I wasn't denied that use because I was pretty.

- Dwelling in the streets is unsanitary, lonely.

- What the StreetPop needs today is opportunity, they need to be respected.

- The greatest challenge once you leave the streets is the fear of going back: it's an everyday struggle.

- When I see a brother in street situation, I ask myself: Why did I have the privilege to leave while he didn't?

- In the streets you find many people with wisdom and knowledge. I really like the streets.

- I ask society to respect the StreetPop.



- Presently, many people who leave the prison system go straight to the streets. The street welcomes everyone. There is solidarity in the streets: they distribute food and water whenever someone is in need.

- The pandemic showed that the StreetPop are human beings, and that they deserve respect.

**Concluding Comments** (*author: Fraya Frehse*):

The above testimony, from two influential activists on the issue of the population in street situation in São Paulo, who themselves have personally experienced dwelling in the streets, reveals that the everyday experience of those who dwell in the São Paulo streets during the Covid-19 pandemic is crossed not only by socioeconomic, medical-sanitary, and physical violence emergencies. Their routine is equally constrained by symbolic violence, which silently pervades – above all in the bodily dimension – the gazes, gestures, and postures of people whose relationship with the streets is merely transitory and fleeting. The testimony indirectly exposes the prejudices of passers-by in the city streets and squares, as well as of passengers and/or drivers whose home is *not* the street. Added to this are casual fleeting remarks and scornful comments spoken in passing, albeit in a daily rhythm.

Mendonça and Toscano's testimonies suggest that dwelling in the streets also means striving, often unknowingly, to survive amid the constant coercion of bodily behaviors forged in movement and at home. For there is a great risk of incorporating – both physically and symbolically –, as if they were their own and “natural”, the discriminatory modes of feeling and thinking of those who, by virtue of their rushed passage, dehumanize people who stay day to day and/or night to night in the city's streets and squares.

The testimony reveals, among other things, the drama that these disparate gazes entail, beyond the mere socioeconomic survival of people dwelling in the streets. The drama also affects their very survival, i.e., the possibilities of living a dignified life endowed with emancipatory potential.



SMUS

## 2. REPORT ON SESSION 2 (“INTERVENTIONS”)– 26 NOVEMBER 2020

*Author: Carmen Santana*

*Editing: Fraya Frehse [FF]*

**Event link:** <<http://www.iea.usp.br/eventos/urbansus-morar-nas-ruas-covid-19-intervencoes>>

**Video link:** <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j2rOD6k0ty0&t=313s>>

### **Abstract:**

What are the everyday experiences of those who work professionally to provide care and assistance for the population in street situation in the city of São Paulo during the Covid-19 pandemic?

### **Program:**

#### **Opening Speeches**

Marcos Buckeridge (Coordinator of the USP-Global Cities Center – IEA-USP)

Fraya Frehse (GCSMUS-USP-TU Berlin/USP- Global Cities)

Ignacio Castillo Ulloa (GCSMUS-TU Berlin)

#### **Presentations**

Luiz Kohara (Gaspar Garcia Human Rights Center)

Mariza Rangon (Support – East Zone Mutual Aid Association)

Video: “The Masked Street” (São Paulo, November 5, 2020)” (34’36”), directed by Fraya Frehse

#### **Discussion**

Carmen Santana (psychiatrist, Unifesp-FMUSP/StreetPop Network)

### **Introduction:**

The second session of the UrbanSus Seminar focused on the care and assistance work for the population in street situation (StreetPop). Based on the account of professionals who work directly with the StreetPop, the panel included presentations about human rights, social assistance, and health amidst the Covid-19 pandemic. A complex scenario was outlined to explore different facets of the problem and propose improved public policies based on an analysis of concrete experiences.

Pursuant to the proposal to embrace different perspectives on ways of experiencing life in street situation as well as to promote further reflections on the topic, the panel also included the screening of a video made during the pandemic, which featured the testimony of a transgender woman dwelling in the streets.



### **Opening talks:**

Marcos Buckeridge began by welcoming the participants, introducing the speakers, and detailing the dynamic of the presentations planned for the second session.

Next, moderator Fraya Frehse conceptualized and contextualized “dwelling in the city streets” and discussed some of the contemporary methodological challenges of this topic:

- How may we quantify the increase of the city’s population in street situation during the pandemic?
- How may we use social science research methods and, more specifically, spatial methods to assist and alleviate the daily suffering of the population in street situation in cities?

This was followed by a longer speech by Ignacio Castillo Ulloa (<https://gcsmus.org/people/dr-ignacio-castillo-ulloa/>). Initially, he summarized the conceptual framework of the term “homelessness”, its etymological origin, and myriad dimensions: ethical, social, investigative, and spatial. He emphasized the need for an interdisciplinary approach to the topic capable of addressing the tension between the academic and normative dimensions. He called attention to the risk of limiting the debate by focusing solely on the instrumental dimension.

In his view, the contemporary moment intertwines three pandemics: health, political, and financial. He emphasized the need to humanize research/investigation initiatives on the subject, incorporating the psychological dimension when seeking to understand the meanings related to life in the streets.

Subsequently, he discussed how the notion or idea of space intertwines with different philosophical trends. This reflection would allow us to broaden our understanding, stemming from the postmodern notion of time and future, about the mental health implications of homelessness, which may lead to feelings such as uncertainty, risk, unpredictability.

The speaker also presented a summary of how the definition of “space” has changed in international research. He integrated principles of spatial organization into his synthesis-framework of the conceptual matrix of space as well as other conceptual components, such as time and future. He recognized the transcendental dimension in



this issue: there is something that “transcends” borders, which allows us to investigate life in the streets in both Berlin and São Paulo, for example. On the other hand, we must also comprehend this phenomenon within specific space-temporal conditions, within a specific reality.

He concluded his presentation by emphasizing the importance of what he called “interpretative syncretism”, an attempt to integrate the perspective of diverse actors (sociologists, urban planners, leading professionals, academics, the general population) when addressing this issue. The goal is not to generate a formulaic solution, but to observe what happens when an action/intervention is implemented in the empirical reality and, from there, work in cycles of “investigation – action – reflection”. This would enable us to learn from what “did not work” and build a continuous flow of better actions resulting from the interaction between academia and practice.

In his conclusion he underlined the importance of communicating research results, both to those who develop public policies and to the general community. In this process, the goal is to replace expectations that the research will result in an “absolute solution to the problem” with the more feasible response that the investigation will contribute to a progressive mitigation of the problem.

By articulating Castillo Ulloa’s speech with the subsequent presentations, moderator Fraya Frehse posed that the mediation between knowledge, communication, and intervention in public policies is both a challenge and a dilemma for the University.

### **Presentation by Luiz Kohara:**

Luiz Kohara began his speech by reinforcing the importance of this issue, providing data to illustrate how social vulnerability together with housing insecurity had a dire impact on Covid-19 infection and death rates. The highest concentration of deaths and infections were in peripheral neighborhoods (which concentrate higher poverty rates) and in some downtown districts (which harbor a high incidence of people in street situation, tenements, and illegal occupations).

Kohara described an even more dramatic vulnerability for the people in street situation amid the pandemic: the closing of facilities that provided food as well as mobility restrictions. The current scenario dramatically underscores the precarious situation experienced by these people: lack of public restrooms, lack of places for personal



hygiene, lack of access to drinking water, etc. The conjuncture also evinced the solidarity of sectors of society, which began to distribute clothes and food.

The speaker argued that the problems faced by the population in street situation (StreetPop) are structural, marked by prejudice, discrimination, and stemming from a neoliberal market logic that treats people as disposable. Social assistance considers them irrecoverable, and therefore in need of protection by the State through assistencialism and “step-oriented” programs. In the urban context, the group is treated as an undesirable population that should be removed from public places.

Kohara considers housing a pivotal issue that needs to be addressed by public policies. In his argument, housing is a fundamental right that underpins access to other rights. Without housing there is neither health nor disease treatment; no education or work; and family structure and bonds would be fragile.

The speaker presented the results of a research carried out by the Gaspar Garcia Center titled “Housing as a structuring basis for the effective social insertion of the population in street situation” (<http://gaspargarcia.org.br/ausencia-de-politicas-publicas-efetivas-para-populacao-de-rua/>; FF). The study consisted of interviews with 52 people who have already been in street situation in São Paulo, Belo Horizonte, Fortaleza, and Salvador. Kohara alluded to testimonies that demonstrate the benefits gained from access to housing. Based on the research findings, he criticized the myth that the StreetPop “does not get used” to housing.

The speaker concluded by presenting the implications of the research and experiences of the Gaspar Garcia Center for public policies:

- 1) Housing should be the first step and serve as a structuring basis for the inclusion of other needs;
- 2) Housing, according to the proposal of “House First of All” (<https://www.gov.br/mdh/pt-br/navegue-por-temas/populacao-em-situacao-de-rua/acoes-e-programas/moradia-primeiro>; FF), should not be contingent upon prior steps, such as treatment for chemical dependency;
- 3) The right to housing must be associated with access to a service and not to property – following a dynamic similar to the one applied to health and education services [in Brazil; FF]. Right to housing must not be equated with right to property, as found in the market logic of Brazil’s traditional housing policies;



- 4) Access to housing must be guided by principles of equity and justice. Thus, those in need of extra support should have this right secured, supported by sectors such as Health and Social Assistance in the pre- and post-access to housing;
- 5) Social work should be intersectoral and interdisciplinary, encompassing the various living conditions to which people in street situation are exposed;
- 6) Housing policy for the population in street situation should be concerned about not segregating, isolating people in ghettos, nor endorse gentrification;
- 7) Challenges: public institutions are not adequately prepared for managing the social, patrimonial, and condominium diversity of dwelling models;
- 8) People in street situation must be included in intersectoral urban policies.

**Comment by Fraya Frehse:**

Frehse summarized Kohara's presentation as a narrative that stems from a framework of socially diffuse prejudices about the population in street situation to arrive at a systematic outline of elements deemed crucial for public policies.

**Mariza Rangon's presentation (<http://www.ica.usp.br/pessoas/pasta-pessoam/mariza-rangon>):**

Mariza Rangon is a psychologist and Social Assistance professional who works in a social assistance facility complex which serves approximately 1500 people per day: the Boracea Complex (<http://apoio-spl.tempsite.ws/blog1.html>); FF). More specifically, Rangon works at the Barra Funda 2 Care Center (<https://www.facebook.com/CA-Barra-Funda-II-332562627402169/>); FF), which serves 400 adult men (between 18 and 59 years old) within the Complex.

Rangon began her presentation by stating that the pandemic laid bare the lack of an effective concern with "how" to accommodate and care for the population in street situation. The speaker also emphasized the government's disregard for people who work with this population.

She also argued that the media coverage of the pandemic has focused on people with minimal housing conditions, able to socially distance themselves, and with access to hygiene. The media made no mention of specific preventive measures for people in street situation nor guidelines on how to provide more dignified care. In fact,



discriminatory responses were common at first, such as, for example, the proposal of a specific hospital to serve only the population in street situation.

Professionals in her field of work wore masks and received donations to provide masks to people in their care. But there was huge turnover of assisted people, extremely high demand, and insufficient personal protective equipment (PPE). According to Rangon, services could not keep pace with the demand for masks, especially considering their proper usage. Employees were unable to properly sanitize reusable cloth masks and, in many cases, the masks themselves became vectors of infection.

In her speech, Rangon reinforced that public policies often promote mechanisms that perpetuate social exclusion. By way of several examples, she argued how the lack of access to housing also hinders access to work, inhibiting the autonomy of the person served. Furthermore, she shed light on the immaterial dimension of housing as essential for constructing a new identity and generating a sense of belonging. The speaker also discussed urban mobility difficulties as one of the barriers to access to work for people in street situation.

She also described her day-to-day work as marked by continuous struggles and discrimination. She said the workers strive to circumvent legal barriers to provide dignified care services for the population in street situation.

She specified some changes in social assistance services during the pandemic:

- Reduced number of people served by some services;
- Reduced number of people participating in activities offered by services: for example, educational groups were suspended to avoid crowding;
- Sheltered people were no longer mandated to stay for a maximum of 16 hours in the social facility (i.e.: entering at 4 pm and leaving at 6 am the following morning). All vacancies offered by the service, during the pandemic period, covered a 24-hour period. Therefore, service users had free access to the facility during the day.

The speaker described her work, in the field of Social Assistance, with people in street situation as very dynamic, full of surprises; unpredictable.

The sheltered people rarely sought or accepted contacting family members due to prior difficulties and broken ties.

According to Rangon, one gain during the pandemic was the institutional partnership through the “A Cor da Rua [The Color of the Street; FF]” Project, which



comprises the Federal University of São Paulo (UNIFESP) and the USP School of Medicine alongside health and social assistance NGOs, social movements, and people in street situation to promote mental health care at the Barra Funda 2 Care Center (<https://dccunifesp.com/extensao/central-de-extensao/acordarua/>; FF). The project provides weekly mental health services and monthly training meetings for professionals in that facility. According to Rangon, the main benefit of the care services, within the scope of the project, is the constant presence of a qualified listening professional devoted to mental health issues. This would promote, for both workers and service users, the feeling that “someone is looking at me”.

#### **Video session:**

Following Rangon’s presentation, there was a screening session of part 1 of the video “The Masked Street (São Paulo, 5 November 2020)”, directed by Fraya Frehse, with photography by Marcus Repa, and editing by Marcus Repa and Anna Flávia Hartmann. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DDhrEFczyko>).

#### **Comments by discussant and rapporteur Carmen Santana about the presentations:**

As a psychiatrist and coordinator of the “The Color of the Street” project, the rapporteur presented the concept of health with which she works, grounded on the perspective of human rights. A human rights perspective on health encompasses two essential elements:

- Intersectoral action;
- Social participation.

Next, the rapporteur discussed the methodology behind that “community-based participatory research” project.

She then advocated the need to develop social technologies for intersectoral work practices. The mere installation of social assistance facilities in spatial proximity to health facilities would not be enough to enable an intersectoral approach. Social participation must be integrated in public policies and in the promotion of unique therapeutic projects.

When describing the research-action cycles of the project in recent years, which resulted in continuous educational actions for workers and people in street situation



during the pandemic, the rapporteur emphasized the need to care for the mental health of workers who work with this population. Public authorities largely neglect this dimension of health care work.

Housing and food security would be structuring elements for effective health care. In effect, the current scarcity of resources as well as uncertainty about where the next meal is coming from or where to sleep are barriers to effective care.

The pandemic led to crowded and under-resourced reception centers, as hundreds of people, strangers to each other, were confined in precarious and poorly ventilated environments. There was an overwhelming feeling of solitude and isolation when staying in overcrowded spaces in social assistance facilities.

Psychosocial care for users of psychoactive substances was also heavily impaired during the pandemic. Insofar as drug supply dropped, how can we work on harm reduction in confined and crowded spaces?

The rapporteur concluded her presentation by citing practical examples that reflect the healthcare challenges amid the pandemic:

- The installation of chemical toilets, showers for bathing, and sinks for washing hands in public spaces provide health gains for the population in street situation;
- Specific primary care professional teams for the population in street situation (known as Consultório na Rua, i.e., Street Clinic - <https://aps.saude.gov.br/ape/consultoriorua/>; FF) are an efficient public health care policy, especially during the pandemic. On the other hand, criticism should be directed at the lack of information about other levels of care (hospitals, emergency rooms, and emergency services);
- In line with Rangon's arguments, the creation of a specific hospital for people in street situation would potentially reinforce exclusion; this kind of project would run counter to emancipatory and inclusive care policies.

Finally, the rapporteur underlined the importance of the street clinics: their work prevents the population in street situation from being decimated by the pandemic.

**Comment by moderator Fraya Frehse:**



SMUS

Frehse opened the discussion for the online participants by thanking the session participants for their contributions and pointing out two common elements in the presentations:

- the importance of intersectoral actions;
- the need to dismantle prejudices and social preconceptions about the population in street situation.

Conclusively, she underlined the importance of broadening the concept of alleged opportunities for the population in street situation (recalling the concept of poverty outlined by Luiz Kohara in his presentation) insofar as we must consider the heterogeneity of the subjects in street situation.



SMUS

### 3. REPORT ON SESSION 3 (“RESEARCH”) – 7 DECEMBER 2020

*Author: Maria Antonieta da Costa Vieira*

*Editor: Fraya Frehse [FF]*

**Event link:** <<http://www.iea.usp.br/eventos/urbansus-morar-nas-ruas-covid-19-pesquisas>>

**Video link:** <[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3l\\_PQLtaCsU&t=15s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3l_PQLtaCsU&t=15s)>

#### **Abstract:**

What kind of scientific knowledge comes to the fore when postgraduate researchers in the areas of health, social sciences, and architecture and urbanism gather together to share research findings from their fieldwork with people in street situation in downtown São Paulo during the month of November 2020?

#### **Program:**

##### **Opening Speeches**

Ignacio Castillo Ulloa (GCSMUS-TU Berlin)

Marcos Buckeridge (Coordinator of the USP-Global Cities Center – IEA-USP)

Fraya Frehse (GCSMUS-USP-TU Berlin/USP-Global Cities)

##### **Presentations**

Father Julio Lancellotti (coordinator of the Episcopal Vicariate for the Pastoral Care for the Street Folk)

Ana Carolina Gil (PhD candidate at PUC-SP/Trainee at GCSMUS)

Anna Carolina Martins (PhD candidate at Unifesp/Trainee at GCSMUS)

Caio Moraes Reis (PhD candidate at USP/Trainee at GCSMUS)

Ednan Santos (PhD candidate at UFABC/Trainee at GCSMUS)

Giovanna Bernardino (PhD candidate at UFABC/Trainee at GCSMUS)

Giulia Patitucci (MA candidate at USP; employee at SMDH-PMSP/Trainee at GCSMUS)

Paula Rochlitz Quintão (MA in Architecture and Urbanism; at StreetPop Network/Trainee at GCSMUS)

Tales Siqueira Cunha (PhD candidate at USP/Trainee at GCSMUS)

##### **Discussion**

Maria Antonieta da Costa Vieira (anthropologist, member of the Brazilian Network of Researchers on the Population in Street Situation and director board member of the Fraternal Assistance Organization, advisor at the National Pastoral Care for the Street Folk/StreetPop Network)

#### **Introduction:**



This report refers to the third session of the UrbanSus Seminar, devoted to contemporary ongoing scientific research on the subject, as developed by eight postgraduate students advised by Professor Fraya Frehse in a training program financed by the GCSMUS (November 2020 to January 2021).

The program provided specialized training for collecting qualitative data on the spaces and times through which transpires the everyday life of the population in street situation during the Covid-19 pandemic in São Paulo. The goal is to make use of localized empirical evidence to contribute to urban development.

Still within the scope of the opening speeches, Ignacio Castillo Ulloa proposed the following underlying question for the UrbanSus Seminar: *Is urban sustainability compatible with homelessness?* He resumed the interconnection between the previous sessions, which sought to reflect on what underpins the issue of the population in street situation. While the first session addressed the experiences of people in street situation, the second session gave voice to the people who work with these people on a daily basis. The third session explored more general questions, among which: *How can we bring academia and the world of practice closer together, and how may we reflect on the street situation spatially – i.e., as an urban issue that is not restricted to the city of São Paulo, but which bears a global dimension?*

The third session began with the testimony of Father Julio Lancellotti.

**Julio Lancellotti's presentation** (<http://www.iea.usp.br/pessoas/pasta-pessoaj/julio-lancellotti>):

Father Julio Lancellotti is a Catholic priest with a degree in pedagogy and theology. He served as a primary and university teacher and has been a member of the Pastoral Care for Children and Adolescents (Pastoral do Menor) since its inception. For more than 10 years he has served as the episcopal vicar of the Street Folk (Povo da Rua) and as a parish priest at the São Miguel Arcanjo Church, which lies in the eastern-zone São Paulo neighborhood called Mooca and where he works with the population in street situation (StreetPop).

In his speech, he emphasized the importance of *coexistence (convivência)* in his work. His speech is reproduced below:

- I don't work with the street population, I live together with the street population. Living together means facing challenges together. During this pandemic, we continued to live together with the street population in a co-experience that spans over 35 years. Everything was new to us during the pandemic, including the way to live together. First, we've seen a very substantial increase in the number of these people. We had to find another way to organize our living together, based on social distancing, prevention measures, and hygiene actions. To this end we relied on a series of activities – from action that served as tools or means to the most important thing: living together and “breaking” incommunicability, understanding how these people were



seeing that moment and recognizing the challenging situations that they were experiencing. We focused heavily on preventive healthcare. The street population ends up replicating, in their own particular way, what society experiences as a whole. Among them we also find people who deny the pandemic, those who minimize it, those who are afraid, those who want to care for themselves, those who want to confront the situation.

As the pandemic closed down the city, they became very visible. They, who were invisible. Suddenly, what everyone saw in the city under lockdown were the street dwellers. Traffic slowed down, movement slowed down, and everyone saw them.

Initially, this elicited immense solidarity, because in the beginning everyone believed that the street population would be decimated; everyone would die. Despite underreporting, the number of Covid-19 deaths in the street population was not as high as imagined. The number of infected people in the streets was also not as high as initially thought.

This leaves researchers, especially in the field of health, with an issue that has not yet been understood.

The Street Clinics were strongly present and active [<http://www.capital.sp.gov.br/noticia/consultorio-na-rua-aumenta-atendimentos-durante-a-pandemia>] - FF], measuring people's temperature and monitoring flu-like symptoms and cough. Tuberculosis is a common problem in the street; as well as respiratory problems. Many people were referred to medical care. The street clinics were of great help.

Municipal and state governments were very slow in responding to the street population, and they often replicated the same method: increasing the number of vacancies in social assistance services.

We asked and pressured for the use of hotels. In São Paulo, it took the city 120 days after the onset of the pandemic to provide 50 beds in the hotel chain, which increased to 150 for the elderly. Women were not included, and so we had to help many women with children. There was a huge increase of this group on the streets: family groups.

Their imagery about the coronavirus is very interesting: that it is an invisible enemy. They are used to visible enemies; yet this was an invisible enemy not only for them, but to everyone else.

The belief at first was that the street population would become a serious public health problem: that they would become major Covid-19 infection vectors. However, that was not what happened.

One issue that we discussed at large with the street clinics was mental suffering. I'm not talking about mental disorder, but mental suffering, especially during the most stringent lockdown periods. Members of the population in street situation were the only ones passing by the streets. It took a while for the City to install sinks, showers, drinking water, washing machines in some areas of the city



[<[https://www.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/cidade/secretarias/licenciamento/desenvolvimento\\_urbano/p\\_articipacao\\_social/comissao\\_de\\_seguranca\\_hidrica/index.php?p=300891](https://www.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/cidade/secretarias/licenciamento/desenvolvimento_urbano/p_articipacao_social/comissao_de_seguranca_hidrica/index.php?p=300891)>; FF], albeit still in insufficient numbers.

Important actions were implemented in the city of São Paulo, such as the actions at the Largo [Square] São Francisco, by the Franciscan Friars [<https://franciscanos.org.br/noticias/franciscanos-ampliam-atendimento-a-populacao-de-rua.html#gsc.tab=0>>; FF], later replicated at Largo da Carioca, in Rio de Janeiro. Our parish community did not stop living together with the population at any time. We ate breakfast and, together, we delivered survival kits, hygiene items.

There are many questions we must consider. With the masks, we performed a literacy of our gaze, because only the eyes are plainly visible when wearing masks. We worked on and developed what we call a *pedagogy of the gaze*. That was my password to live together with the street population. The gaze.

Regarding the so-called public policies (I don't really like this term), the state and municipal governments were very unassertive.

There is one thing that I want to share with you: there is too much academia and not enough living together. Many people conduct research but barely live together with the street population. Scholars see the street folk as a research object and not as a person to live together with. That's why I suggested to you (referring to Fraya Frehse), for your students to participate in the House of Prayer [<https://www.facebook.com/Casa-de-Oraçao-do-Povo-da-Rua-280595155379721/>>; FF], to listen to them first-hand. We must not idealize the street population. They are neither angels nor demons; they are people who survive in the street, within the framework of an extremely meritocratic, neoliberal, waste-producing model. We live in an aporophobic society, one which rejects the poor, and not only the poor, but also those who live alongside the poor in poverty.

In conclusion: I am not a researcher, but I believe that research should always give something back to the street population, so that they may discuss these studies. Take, for example, the censuses here in São Paulo: they (the street population) are called when it's convenient, and when it's not convenient they are not called. They become a number and cease to be people. Censuses never reflect what the street population is. And these censuses are very expensive. The money spent on censuses could build many houses for the street population. After all, housing is a major issue, alongside work, since without work there is no housing and without housing there is no work.

#### **Comments by Fraya Frehse and Marcos Buckeridge:**

Reacting to Father Julio's comments, Fraya Frehse emphasized the importance of two dimensions in his speech: the criticism towards academia with "too much research and not



enough living together”, and the lack of feedback of the research results to the investigated population.

She informed that, once the training program is concluded, the research group will return to the fieldwork sites to exhibit the video produced during the research and hold a conversation circle with people in street situation about the research results.

Marcos Buckeridge, in turn, discussed the perspective of the “USP Global Cities” Program regarding this subject, stating that program’s goal is precisely to promote an interaction between academia and society. In his words: “It’s a delicate balance in which we must learn together. We must jointly organize this kind of interaction. Perhaps we can contribute with scientific knowledge. I would say it’s a team game. We want to play together with you to provide what’s best for this population. Part of the process entails universities promoting and creating means so that academia does not turn its back on society. We need to find that path and we need help for that to happen.”

Frehse, the project coordinator, subsequently discussed the process behind the formation of the research group and its proposal. The concept was to set up an interdisciplinary group comprised of postgraduate students, with prior engagement with the issue of street population and currently conducting research on the topic. The goal was to train students from different backgrounds in spatial methods, gradually putting their newly acquired knowledge into practice by investigating the following question through ethnographic fieldwork with the São Paulo population in street situation: *What has been the everyday experience of dwelling in the city streets during the Covid 19 pandemic?* The underlying epistemological proposal is to engage students involved in the project with what Frehse calls an “ethnographic perspective” (<<https://www.revistas.usp.br/cadernosdecampo/article/view/50119>>; FF]. The approach proposes to sensitize the researcher’s gaze, at all stages of the investigation, to the importance of seeking an “actual dialogue” with the researched subjects through a dual epistemological dialectical procedure: to make strange what is familiar and to make familiar what is strange.

Students have conducted 10 hours a week of fieldwork and produced ethnographic reports, which are read and discussed by all group members. Until this present session, 28 field reports have been prepared, based on participant observation and direct observation, and which served as the basis for the reflections and presentations in this session.

The pedagogical strategy used to sensitize students to “defamiliarize” themselves with the everyday life on the streets was grounded on four major themes, whose axes are the social dimensions of space and time, but in this particular case referred to the past and present of the pandemic: *present spaces* refer to everyday spaces from the standpoint of this population – their daily routine and what transcends it (the so-called non-everyday); *past spaces* refer to the spaces before the pandemic. The same reasoning was applied for *present times* and *past times*. Each of these four themes was undertaken by a pair of researchers.



After these explanations, Frehse introduced the eight students participating in the training program:

- *Ana Carolina Gil*, psychologist, PhD candidate in psychology at the Pontifical Catholic University (PUC) of São Paulo with an extensive background in research and intervention in the Street Clinics (<https://www.escavador.com/sobre/277702530/ana-carolina-martins-gil>); FF);

- *Ana Carolina Martins* holds a BA in nursing from the Federal University of São Paulo (UNIFESP) and is currently a doctoral candidate in nursing at the same university. She has background experience working with women prison inmates and women in street situation (<http://www.iea.usp.br/pessoas/pasta-pessoa/anna-carolina-martins-silva>); FF);

- *Caio Moraes Reis* holds a BA in social sciences (anthropology, political science and sociology) from USP, an MA in Political Science, and is currently a doctoral candidate in sociology at USP. He has a research background in Berlin and his doctoral project addresses the death of people in street situation (<https://gcsmus.org/people/caio-moraes-reis/>; FF)

- *Ednan Santos* is a PhD candidate in Human and Social Sciences at the Federal University of ABC (UFABC), holds an MA in the same course and from the same University with research on the so-called Cracolândia [literally Crackland, i.e., a region in downtown São Paulo which is publicly known for the high incidence of open-air drug use and trafficking; FF] and the issue of drugs in São Paulo, particularly regarding the population in street situation. Within the context of the GCSMUS training program, he conducts his fieldwork in Father Julio's parish (<http://www.iea.usp.br/pessoas/pasta-pessoa/ednan-silva-santos>); FF);

- *Giovanna Bernardino*, doctoral candidate at UFABC in Human and Social Sciences, with research on the love stories of those who live in the streets (<http://www.iea.usp.br/pessoas/pasta-pessoa/giovanna-olinda-dos-santos-bernardino>); FF);

- *Giulia Patitucci* holds a BA in architecture and urbanism from the USP Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism (FAU), an MA from the same institution with research on social leasing and social rent policies. She coordinates the public policy for the population in street situation at the São Paulo Municipal Secretariat of Human Rights and Citizenship (SMDHC) (<https://www.escavador.com/sobre/7981979/giulia-pereira-patitucci>; FF);

- *Paula Quintão* holds a BA and an MA in architecture and urbanism from FAU-USP. She has worked for several years with research on the population in street situation. Her MA discussed the challenges of promoting an architectural design for people dwelling in the streets (<https://www.escavador.com/sobre/4378386/paula-rochlitz-quintao>);

- *Tales Fontana Cunha*, holds a BA in Law from USP, an MA from FAU-USP on public policies for the street population, and is a PhD candidate at the same institution with research on financialization of social assistance in Brazil (<https://www.escavador.com/sobre/378761137/tales-fontana-siqueira-cunha>); FF).



**Presentation by Caio Moraes Reis and Paula Quintão on “Present Spaces”:**

The researchers identified five *present spaces* as they sought to understand what these spaces reveal about society during the pandemic:

- *Tent spaces* – There was a substantial increase in tents in the urban setting, especially in downtown regions. The tents serve as housing for people to spend the night, being sometimes dismantled during the day. These people may be alone or in groups, sheltering single individuals, groups of friends, or entire families. The installation of the tents depends on the characteristics of the place, such as land relief (the population seeks flat places to sleep), shade and cover (for protection from sun and rain), and trees (which serve as lines to dry clothes). While the tents serve as protection against misfortunes, they may also protect against different types of violence: theft or aggression, especially against women and children;
- *Infection spaces* – The researchers identified pandemic denial in some spaces on the streets, wherein people did not follow prevention practices. In their dialogue with the student-researchers, these people revealed their skepticism in the pandemic and in the effectiveness of the measures to tackle it;
  - *Public power intervention spaces* – The City conducted several interventions as an attempt to curb infection rates. Specific urban facilities (water fountains, sinks, bathrooms, washing machines) provide some comfort insofar as they enable hygiene practices. The users have praised these structures and many ask for them to be permanent. It is worth mentioning that the number of facilities is much lower than desired, given the amount of people dwelling in the city streets;
  - *Donation spaces* – There was a reduced flow of people passing by the streets during the pandemic. Stores were closed for the most part, which drastically changed the dynamics of access to food and other survival resources for the population in street situation. At the same time the donation dynamics changed. It grew more frequent and largely concentrated in certain spaces, particularly in the Sé and Mooca districts;
  - *Care spaces* – Some people in street situation saw an improvement in living conditions during the pandemic, especially in relation to food and hygiene. When referring to changes during the pandemic, a street person said to the student-researchers: “I can see that it’s getting better. People always come to take care of us. They give food, clothing, blankets, money. And it’s just like [right-wing politician; FF] Russomano said: ‘Not a single street person caught the coronavirus’. And they really didn’t!”

The duo concluded that public authorities, social assistance organizations, and people in solidarity felt compelled to comply with certain health guidelines. Thus, even if only partially, some needs of this population who dwell in the streets were met.



**Presentation by Giovanna Bernardino and Giulia Patitucci on “Past spaces”:**

The researchers discussed their ethnographic experience in the field and how it enabled them to perceive certain regularities and patterns, which proved useful for reflecting upon ways to improve the everyday lives of people in street situation. The Information gained also allowed the researchers to qualify the quantitative data retrieved from the Census of the Population in Street Situation

[<[https://www.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/cidade/secretarias/assistencia\\_social/observatorio\\_socioassistencial/pesquisas/index.php?p=18626](https://www.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/cidade/secretarias/assistencia_social/observatorio_socioassistencial/pesquisas/index.php?p=18626)>; FF].

Regarding *past spaces*, the researchers observed continuous references to different pasts during their participant observation of the population in street situation. The researchers then distinguished between a *pre-Covid past* (prior to the emergency situation) and the *pre-street past* (the memory of a time prior to each research-collaborator’s relationship with the social network in the streets):

- *Pre-Covid past spaces* – Several families and people were already living in a situation of insecurity and vulnerability when the economic crisis affected them directly, forcing them to head out to the streets for lack of other option. Four reference spaces were identified in this context:

- *Rented housing* in São Paulo by way of informal contracts: i.e., houses, slum shacks, tenements, and pension rooms for people and families in vulnerable housing situations and for people who, due to unemployment, ended up in the streets;
- *Conventional housing* in São Paulo and other cities of the São Paulo hinterland: people who had a home somewhere else, but due to the economic crisis and subsequent unemployment migrated to São Paulo in search of better opportunities. When they couldn't find a job in the capital city, they ended up in the streets. The student-researchers also collected testimonials from people who ended up in the streets not necessarily because of the pandemic, but because of family conflicts, mental health problems, LGBTphobia. In some cases, these people made a conscious choice to head out to the streets. In one of the testimonials, a person stated that the street was the solution to cure her depression;
- *City shelters*: housing for people who subsequently headed out to the streets and negatively evaluated these shelters to the student-researchers. They emphasized the existence of too many rules and the fact that such spaces were shared by too many people during the pandemic. The students found cases of people who were drawn to the streets given the availability of services and tents;



- *The street* as a dwelling space in pre-Covid times: the street comprising fewer services, no public restrooms, no drinking fountains, and relatively lower number of donations. The reports indicate that people felt such changes;
- *Pre-street past spaces*: The spaces experienced by the people before going to the street are extremely varied, but the researchers could identify some regularities and patterns in these peoples' spatial trajectories. The identified spaces were:
  - *Other cities and states*: usually original birthplaces of single men who came to São Paulo from other states in search of a better life and, upon arriving, did not find the opportunities they wanted and entered the "institutional circuit" of the streets. Some went to shelters, while others did not adapt and ended up on the street;
  - *Prison system and Fundação Casa* [i.e., the São-Paulo state Foundation for Socio-Educational Care for Adolescents; FF]: prior dwelling spaces of people who spent a long time in these institutions and, upon leaving, faced numerous difficulties and ended up on the street;
  - *Shelters for children and teenagers*: prior dwelling spaces of people who grew up in city shelters and, upon reaching the age of 18, either failed to adapt to the city shelters or went directly to the street;
  - *Therapeutic communities*: prior dwelling spaces of people who, upon leaving, experienced a similar situation and similar difficulties to those who passed through the prison system;
  - *Collective occupations, tenements, and pensions*: prior dwelling spaces of families vulnerable to constant threats of repossession and ended up on the streets when repossession effectively occurred – as indicated by four field reports;
  - *Conventional homes*: people who experienced myriad family conflicts, such as drug use, religious and gender conflicts related to sexual identity, and as such began dwelling in the streets. Some women also reported going to the streets because they suffered abuse at home. The street, in these cases, appears as a solution, a prospect of freedom to be who yourself.

In relation to pre-street past spaces, the reports confirmed the considerable complexity of cases, while also shedding light on different contemporary social problems, such as issues related to the economic structure, gender and morality, sexism, patriarchal structures, among others. The material presented by the student-researchers evinced that people are not excluded from society, but perversely included, to use José de Souza Martins' reference [in *Exclusão Social e a Nova Desigualdade*, São Paulo: Paulus, 1997; FF].



The duo of students concluded their exposition by raising two questions for further reflection:

- 1) How may we devise solutions for these overlapping vulnerabilities?
- 2) Did emergency services installed during the pandemic (hygiene infrastructure facilities, increased donations, and intensified care services by street health clinics) make the everyday lives of these people less painful compared to the pre-Covid period? Should, therefore, these emergency services be renewed in the long term?

**Presentation by Ana Gil and Tales Cunha about “Present times”:**

The duo addressed the routine of people who dwell in the streets during the pandemic and what they deemed positive or negative in their everyday.

Nine points were listed to characterize the routine everyday activities of the people observed:

- 1) Waking up: Some people wake up very early, around 5 am, others as late as 9-10 am;
- 2) First activity of the day: Get breakfast, take a shower (usually done in the emergency facilities), dismantle the tent to prevent it from being collected by the urban cleaning services, popularly known as the “Rapa”;
- 3) Meals: Planned according to the operating hours of public facilities that organize the street routine;
- 4) Unemployment (“*manguear*”): Excessive free time is often associated with unemployment. People complained that they don't have a job, they spend a lot of time “*mangueando*” [i.e., begging in the streets; FF], and they also reported many difficulties finding odds jobs;
- 5) Time for care: more commonly found in testimonials by women, in which they reported providing care to children, animals, and partners;
- 6) Time in queues and waiting time: People commonly spend hours in queues, waiting for access to showers, food, and shelter services;
- 7) Rainy season: Especially in the present rainy period, people must find shelter and wait for the rain to cease;
- 8) Socialization time: often associated with alcohol consumption;
- 9) Time to sleep (evening and late night): Some people make use of cell phones by sharing them with partners.

The field reports registered many complaints referring to “*atrasaladores*” or “rats”, people who dwell in the streets and steal from other street dwellers. The students also reported complaints about having to dismantle tents every morning to prevent their removal by the Rapa. This is a strong complaint, which mostly threatens regions of the city such as the *Pátio do Colégio*.



They also mentioned abusive consumption of narcotic substances by some people, which causes suffering and violence, sometimes with the involvement of “street partners”. Respondents also expressed dissatisfaction towards the city shelters, above all the fact that they are overcrowded, have dirty bathrooms, and the employees often engage in abusive behavior. There were also complaints about the taste of the food.

Regarding the existing problems on the streets during the pandemic, lack of employment was the first point mentioned in the field reports, according to the student-researchers. Many people lost access to income sources from life on the pre-pandemic streets. A second point refers to the scarcity of donations in the first months of the pandemic, when the streets were very empty. Another problem was the difficulty in accessing the Emergency Income Benefit (EIB) (<<https://www.gov.br/cidadania/pt-br/servicos/auxilio-emergencial>>), which demanded an online registration through a phone app. Many people needed help from volunteers to register. Another issue was the decreased value of the EIB after October 2020. The lack of leisure on the streets, which were empty and without activity, was also mentioned in the reports.

As for the mothers dwelling in the streets, the student-researchers mentioned their complaints regarding the closure of daycare centers, which directly impacted their everyday lives as they had no one to leave their children with.

Many collaborators also mentioned prejudice: people in street situation feel made invisible and mistreated.

As for the positive side of being in the streets during the pandemic, some collaborators mentioned that “nothing has changed or even improved”, referring mainly to the increased donations. Regarding immunity to Covid-19, many collaborators stated that “the street population does not catch Covid”, or that “If you drink corote [low-cost alcoholic drink, very common in the city streets – FF] you won’t catch Covid-19.”

Some collaborators listed the Emergency Income Benefit and lunch meals offered in the donation spaces as positive points. The children also mentioned donations as a positive point to the student-researchers.

In conclusion, the duo said that some collaborators mentioned discontinuities between a past time and a present time, even though continuities were more perceptible. Covid-19 was not strongly referenced in the testimonials, and some collaborators argued that the street population is allegedly immune to the virus.

#### **Presentation by Anna Martins and Ednan Santos about “Past times”:**

The duo's guiding question was: What have been the inflections in the health and work experience of the population in street situation during the Covid-19 pandemic?

Regarding health, according to the student-researchers the collaborators signaled difficulties in accessing water, including drinking water and hygiene items. As for health services,



the collaborators reported difficulties in accessing care and follow-up care services, especially for chronic diseases such as diabetes, which may lead to aggravations and complications. Conversely, some collaborators underlined the relevance of the work of the family health teams and the Street Clinic.

The duo also addressed the issue of family ties and relationships in the background history of people dwelling in the São Paulo streets during the pandemic. Some had worked in the streets since childhood to help their families or took on the role of caregivers both for other children and the home. Still regarding family ties, some collaborators mentioned, according to the panelists, the importance of current affective ties on the street, not necessarily related to blood ties.

Another issue mentioned by the respondents was employment and unemployment during the pandemic: what it was like before, what had changed, and the alternatives they found.

According to the panelists, street work is largely precarious and informal, including activities such as juggling, guarding cars, and assembling structures for concerts and events. A significant share of this population works in the downtown districts of Mooca and Brás loading and unloading trucks - informal and poorly paid work, with a daily income of approximately R\$15 [i.e., c. 2,5€ in December 2020], in addition to lunch. Only those in a very dire situation resort to this kind of work. During the Covid-19 outbreak all these work opportunities were suspended. The research collaborators said: "I want to work, but the doors are closed." In this scenario, according to the panelists, people resorted to alternatives to support themselves: one such alternative was the rental of bicycles to work for food delivery apps. Some mentioned working 12 hours non-stop, without lunch breaks.

It is also worth mentioning that these people are extremely underpaid, to the point that they have no access to housing.

**Comments by discussant and rapporteur Maria Antonieta da Costa Vieira about the presentations:**

The comments about the expositions were preceded by a contextual background of the research on the population in street situation in São Paulo since the 1990s. Thus, this discussant and rapporteur was able to deem the ongoing GCSMUS research project as relevant insofar as it incorporates, within the scope of the University, a theme that has increasingly become a social and urban issue, especially in major metropolises.

For someone like myself, who has been following the research and professional work alongside the street population for the past 30 years, the resulting progress has been undeniable. In the early 1990s, during the Luiza Erundina municipal administration in São Paulo, repression was the main intervention tool for the street population, added



to the assistencialism of religious entities. The street population was also excluded from the University, a neglected research subject with rare noteworthy exceptions, such as the work of Marie-Ghislaine [Stoeffels *Os Mendigos de São Paulo*, Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1977; FF] and Delma Pessanha ["Mendigo: o trabalhador que não deu certo", *Revista Ciência Hoje*, 3, 1983, pp. 15-27; FF]. Furthermore, the total number of people living in the street was unknown, and estimates spoke of 100,000 people.

The research developed at that point combined with the public intervention with the StreetPop defined a specific approach, both in the realm of research and intervention, which unfolded over time.

We may highlight some guiding points/principles of the research and intervention practices in the 1990s in São Paulo. Especially because they seem in tune with the proposal of the GCSMUS project: namely, to implement a specific environment for cross-methodological exchanges between theory/empiricism, experience/intervention, knowledge/practice.

An intervention proposal for the street population developed during the Luiza Erundina administration was coordinated by the Municipal Assistance Secretariat, especially in the [downtown] region around Praça da Sé, [the São Paulo Cathedral square], which concentrated much of the street population. At that time, the action and research prospect was to accomplish an interdepartmental and interdisciplinary work, with the participation of the Health and Housing Secretariats alongside the Subprefectures, encompassing different approaches.

Furthermore, the proposal also envisioned including Universities and social organizations working directly with the street population, including the subjects themselves as much as possible. Father Julio was a major partner in this process. This experience led to a work method in which research alongside the constant exchange of ways of seeing operated as vitals elements [cf. de Costa Vieira, Maria Antonieta et alii (eds.). *População de Rua: Quem é, como vive, como é vista*, São Paulo: Hucitec/City of São Paulo, 1992; FF].

Research conducted at that time, which included a census survey and the participation of several agents, provided a reference point and dynamized the early debates and elaboration of a public policy. This ultimately resulted in a law proposal for the street population, which envisaged periodic censuses as important guideline tools for public policies (Municipal Law 12.316/1997).

Complementary gazes are important when it comes to research. A census allows us to detect the quantitative dimension of the problem, identifying whether there are 5,000 or 50,000 people living in the street, which in turn substantially alters the design of public policy. However, this data by itself does not provide all elements. We can only grasp certain dimensions through qualitative research. Thus, a complementary approach is vital.



Regarding the research presented at the UrbanSus Seminar, we may initially mention the importance of considering Covid-19 as an analytical tool. The pandemic triggered changes in the dynamics of social relationships. However, more than understanding what happens within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, this approach gives visibility to what the street is. Regarding services, for example, we find not only what has become a necessity during this emergency scenario, but an actual demand of the street population for care since before the pandemic. Shouldn't the emergency thus become permanent? This is an important moment to discuss not only the Covid-19 pandemic itself, but what lies behind.

The field reports reveal a vivid and dynamic life in the streets, refuting the notion that the streets are comprised of excluded people who are outside society. People in street situation make use of the city spaces in an extremely agile manner, quickly rearranging themselves depending on the circumstances. The tents, for example, serve as a form of protection: further research is necessary on this issue. A question emerges: What is dwelling for these people? What kind of housing do they want? Do these people want housing?

Another recurrent theme refers to the streets as liberation from oppressive relationships, or as a choice, as is the case of people who leave their family. Going to the streets sometimes emerges as a solution for escaping an oppressive relationship. This does not happen, however, within the realm of romantic freedom, but as a choice within a limited and restricted universe of possibilities.

Regarding dwelling, we must ask what type of housing is suitable for these people. To this end, we must listen to them, and qualitative research provides an important tool to contribute to this process.

Regarding the research project presented, I believe that the chosen axes serve as guidelines to reflect on the dynamics of space and time in the streets. However, at various times it is difficult to pinpoint which dimension is at stake insofar as they overlap. Regarding time, I was unable to precise the changes in the everyday routine caused by the pandemic. Anyhow, this dimension calls for further exploration.

**Other comments:**

Father Julio made some remarks and asked some questions regarding the presentations of the student-researchers. They are listed below:

Which people did you survey? In which region of the city? There are differences between street dwellers in different regions of the city. How long have they been in street situation? How many people were heard? How long did you live together with them?

The Father argued that we must become better acquainted with the street population, their feelings and thoughts. The researcher who inhabits this universe must strive to interpret this



universe alongside these people. Their gaze is different from ours. They look at the city differently.

In answer to the remarks, Fraya Frehse recalled that participant observation, the foundation of ethnography, does not envisage tallying the respondents. Nonetheless, this does not prevent researchers from providing data about who they interviewed and in which regions of the city. She also called attention to the fact that the work had started just a month ago.

She also called attention to the fact that the pandemic is less important by itself, and more for what it reveals. It is a singular moment when everything becomes more visible, including the situation of the population in street situation.

Ignacio Castillo Ulloa also made some remarks. His first comment was that any research is inherently a localized exercise in time and space, but through which we discover new lines of investigation that require a constant re-evaluation of the knowledge produced. Furthermore, he referred to the challenge of addressing the phenomenon of the street population as an axis that traverses almost all societies on the planet today, afflicting societies as different as the cities of Berlin and São Paulo.

The student-exhibitors made some remarks, listed below:

- They underlined that street mothers were severely affected during the pandemic, mainly due to the lack of services, the closing of daycare centers, and the decreased values of the Emergency Income Benefit;

- Infrastructure services for the street population in the city must be built in accordance with the needs of this population, such as, for example, in areas which concentrate more people, and the architectural design of these facilities must compose the urban scenario and not serve as improvised and precarious solutions;

Frehse, in turn, concluded by saying that one of the goals of the UrbanSus Seminar is to make places evident: the place of science, with all its problems; the place of those who live in the street; the place of those who, in their professional work, live alongside this population every day; the challenges of bridging the gap between science and practice; and the potential role of knowledge production, anchored in methodology, for bridging this gap. Frehse also referred to the video she produced during this period with the participation of two students: “The Masked Street” (São Paulo, 5 November 2020).

Marcos Buckeridge concluded the session by saying that the IEA “Global Cities” Program has taken a first step to understand this process. He stressed the importance of using available quantitative data as guidelines for action. He drew attention to the myriad issues addressed, some of which controversial – such as installing infrastructure services in the city for the street population, and the assertion that the street would mean freedom for those who live there.

Lastly, he returned to a topic addressed in previous sessions: the complexity of this phenomenon, regarding both the process of understanding and intervention. Complexity calls for



SMUS

a transdisciplinary approach, in which scientists from different fields work together and cooperate to tackle the problem. The process is challenging as we constantly strive to find ways to improve society, the main role of science.