

IT'S TIME TO (RE)DEFINE: SPATIAL INTERVENTION TO MAKE THE KAINGANG VISIBLE IN THE CITY OF CHAPECÓ

É HORA DE (RE)TORNAR: Intervenção espacial
para visibilização do povo Kaingang na cidade de
Chapecóç

Es hora de (re)hacer:
Intervención espacial para hacer visible a la gente
de Kaingang en la ciudad de Chapecó

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Traditional
structures to
work with crafts,
references for the
project. Source:
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ABSTRACT

The Kaingang indigenous population has inhabited the space that comprises the heart of the municipality of Chapecó-SC, State of Santa Catarina in Southern Brazil, since before the formal foundation of the city. However, due to the urbanization process, this community has seen its history and relationship with the city made invisible by actions, originating mainly from the government. In order to contribute to the transformation of this context, a system of free spaces for intercultural dialogues was prepared collaboratively with the indigenous community, which proposes to tell the history of the city from the perspective of its traditional people and to redefine urban public spaces through spatial interventions at different scales. The methodological strategies adopted include bibliographic research, exploratory visits, oral history reports, a poem of wishes and participant observation, valuing the role of the Kaingang community in the design process. This paper presents the results of this project and highlights the possibilities for historical and cultural valorization through urban interventions. It is believed that spatial actions can re-signify both the places and the human interactions resulting from the experience of these spaces.

Keywords: Kaingang culture, cultural identity, urban intervention, city history, free space system

RESUMO

A população indígena Kaingang habita o espaço que compreende o centro no município de Chapecó, Estado de Santa Catarina no Sul do Brasil desde antes da configuração formal da cidade. No entanto, devido ao processo de urbanização, tal comunidade teve sua trajetória histórica e sua relação com a cidade invisibilizadas por ações oriundas principalmente do poder público. Para contribuir na transformação desse contexto, foi elaborado, de forma colaborativa com a comunidade indígena, o projeto de um sistema de espaços livres para diálogos interculturais, que se propõe a contar a história da cidade a partir do olhar de seu povo tradicional e ressignificar espaços públicos urbanos através de intervenções espaciais em diferentes escalas. As estratégias metodológicas adotadas incluem pesquisas bibliográficas, visitas exploratórias, relatos de história oral, poema dos desejos e observação participante, valorizando o protagonismo da comunidade Kaingang no processo de projeto. O presente artigo apresenta os resultados desse projeto e evidencia as possibilidades de valorização histórica e cultural através de intervenções urbanas. Acredita-se que ações de ordem espacial podem ressignificar tanto os lugares quanto as interações humanas decorrentes da vivência desses espaços.

Palavras Chave: Cultura Kaingang, identidade cultural, intervenção urbana, história da cidade, sistema de espaços livres

RESUMEN

La población indígena Kaingang habita el espacio que comprende el centro en el municipio de Chapecó-SC, Estado de Santa Catarina en el sur de Brasil, desde antes de la configuración formal de la ciudad. Sin embargo, debido al proceso de urbanización, dicha comunidad tuvo su trayectoria histórica y su relación con la ciudad se hizo invisible por acciones originadas principalmente por el gobierno. Para contribuir a la transformación de este contexto, se elaboró un sistema de espacios libres para el diálogo intercultural, en colaboración con la comunidad indígena, que propone contar la historia de la ciudad desde la perspectiva de sus pueblos tradicionales y redefinir los espacios. audiencias urbanas a través de intervenciones espaciales a diferentes escalas. Las estrategias metodológicas adoptadas incluyen investigación bibliográfica, visitas exploratorias, informes de historia oral, un poema de deseos y observación participante, valorando el papel de la comunidad Kaingang en el proceso de diseño. Este artículo presenta los resultados de este proyecto y destaca las posibilidades de valorización histórica y cultural a través de intervenciones urbanas. Se cree que las acciones espaciales pueden ressignificar tanto los lugares como las interacciones humanas resultantes de la experiencia de estos espacios.

Palabras Clave: Cultura Kaingang, identidad cultural, intervención urbana, historia de la ciudad, sistema de espacio libre

INTRODUCTION

The urbanization of the city of Chapecó, located in the eastern part of the state of Santa Catarina in Brazil, was marked by an ongoing process of disrespect, violence and actions to make native communities invisible, just like most of the country's inland cities. The historically built path, that involves the city and the indigenous *Kaingang* people, is reflected in the present, as by walking through it, there are countless symbols of the colonizer's triumph and the absence of any indigenous references, except for those of the Kaingang's descendants, who resist and return to their traditional land.

Currently, most of the urban population of Chapecó do not recognize the Kaingang people as the native inhabitants of the territory, disregarding their culture and disrespecting the specific aspects of their way of life, giving grounds to a feeling of discrimination and rejection towards indigenous peoples, who still today look to renew their relationships with their traditional land. Facing this context and starting from the demands of the *Kaingang* community, dialog and reflections about a possible spatial intervention in the center of the city began in 2016, aiming at developing, through a collaborative design process, a system of free and public urban spaces that consider the foundations of the *Kaingang* culture and that, at the same time, promote the interaction between the indigenous peoples and the surrounding society. In short, spatial intervention proposals were sought, to revive the *Kaingang* culture in the city's daily life, to provide knowledge about the history of places from the perspective of their traditional people and to promote recognition and respect for cultural diversity.

This article looks to explore the possibilities of historic and ethnic valuation, as well as the resignification of places in the city through spatial interventions. For this, the methodology adopted for the project had, as a goal, giving a voice to indigenous peoples and valuing the memory of the *Kaingang's* elderly in the preparation of proposals. It is believed that, to think about and rebuild urban meanings, it is necessary to understand the free or built spaces as potential cultural communicators. As a result, we begin with a brief theoretical discussion about culture and identity from both a human and spatial perspective. Next, the methodological resources adopted in the research to understand the Kaingang people and the relationship between the Kondá people and the city of Chapecó, are explained. Finally, the resulting project is presented and discussed, based on its potential to make the Kaingang culture visible, and the resignification of urban spaces that may contribute to improving intercultural relationships in the contemporary city.

In this study, it is understood that culture must be thought of as a matter of ideas and values, a collective mental attitude (KUPER, 2002). The values, cosmology, moral principles, the way of life, the spatial organization and aesthetic, are expressed through symbols, characterizing the culture as a symbolic system, that is to say, it refers to all learned behavior; all that does not depend on genetic transmission (TYLOR, 1958). Culture is understood as a potential tool for collective identification, where the way of life of a group establishes limits with other societies and these interactions materially produce the physical space, reflection and identity of the cultural context they belong to (DILL, 2019).

This trait of collective identification linked to culture means that the question of identity is broadly discussed in social theory and, also, in the areas of knowledge used to understand space, to the extent where the appropriate territory is an expression of the cultural identity. Architects like Amos Rapoport and Simon Unwin argue that both architectonic and urban spaces have identity, which is closely linked to that of their users and/or designers, revealing identification and attachment to their cultural context. On thinking about identity in terms of traditional societies, Giddens (2002) highlights that they

have veneration for the past, where the symbols are valued on having experiences of generations and tradition as a means of handling time and space; thus, the identity of a people is directly linked to its historic construction and to the history of the spaces where their forefathers lived. In contemporaneity, the so-called identity crisis is discussed, as a result of globalization and the homogenization of the ways of living and thinking about the world, where identities are being decentralized, displaced and in some cases, fragmented. It is thought that, starting from critical reflection, this observation allows building an identity mosaic, where the identities and not "the" identity, whether collective or individual.

It is perceived that identity, as well as culture, is established in the relationship with the other. The identification in contemporary society appears like the representation of what you want to be, to seem or to be part of. In this context, where rules for human relationships emerge, it is essential to understand the role of the place and the territory, as a setting for these interactions which, on occasions, are compound and contradictory. The place transcends the limitations of the geometric space, as through social relationships, the groups give them a value (TUAN, 1983) and, complementarily, the territory represents the relationship of affinity with the historically built geographical space, the basis of the social and cultural relationships established over time. Thus, in the interaction with the space, different ethnic groups build meanings and relationships that may, from the influence of the place, soften or reinforce ethnic boundaries. The identity of the place is born in the construction of these meanings. In architecture and urbanism, the place's identity is defined as a substructure of human identity that incorporates knowledge about the world the individuals live in, considering memories, ideas, social relations, feelings, attitudes, values and preferences about the different environments they are inserted within (PROSHANSKY, 1983).

The creation of the place is not exclusive to architectonic or urbanistic planning, since the people continuously confer meanings to spaces (UNWIN, 2013). In the case of the *Kaingang* communities, the indigenous importance is seen in the demands not just for space, but also for participation in the design process, guided by the intention of cultural strengthening (ZANIN & DILL, 2016). These factors facilitate the identification of the user with the place and "[...] maybe the idea of collective involvement is the most important aspect of thinking about architecture and urbanism as the identification of the place (...)" (UNWIN, 2013, p. 23). Given that places house human relationships, they can influence behaviors and provide experiences related with cultural recognition and valuation.

In this context, the free public space is a key element of the urban landscape and structure. It makes the relationship between materiality and society possible, looking to qualify social interaction as a support (MAGNOLI, 2006, p. 241). Streets, squares, yards, gardens, parks, avenues, among the most common kinds of free spaces, form the system of free spaces of every city and it is this system that integrates it and makes the interface between private places and the urban network permeable. Thus, free spaces are understood as structuring elements, which are built as meanings, systemically, and are not sustained just on themselves, but in the relationship with the other places that constitute the urban landscape. It must be highlighted that spatial urban intervention projects, especially in the public sphere, play an important social role in the extent that they carry out the intentions of their designers and are committed with the group whose demands they intend on addressing.

Understanding the relationships between identity, cultural valuation and open spaces and trying to bring them closer, is the undercurrent behind this work, as it is from the proposal of integrating open spaces in Chapecó that the aim is to bring the *Kaingang* culture into the limelight.

METHODOLOGY

Considering the complexity that the analysis of the culture of a group and its relationships with the territory implies, the research adopts a qualitative approach to understand and explain the socio-spatial dynamic. The table of Figure 01 defines the specific goals proposed for the project, as well as the methodological strategies considered to reach them.

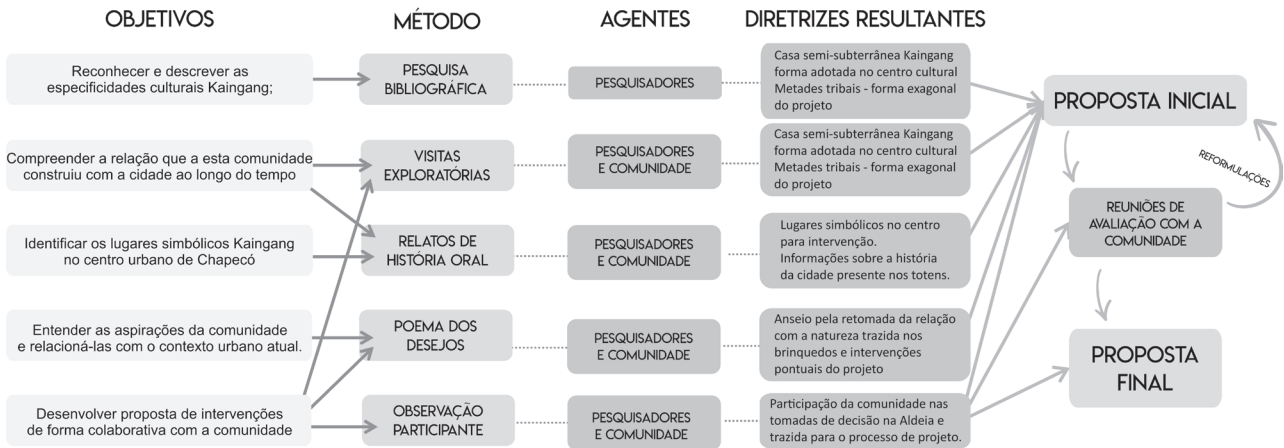


Figure 1
Project goals and research methods adopted.
Source: own preparation

Bibliographical research: This was done with the goal of providing theoretical support for the analysis of field data, comprehension and description of the *Kaingang* traditional culture, as well as the history of the city of Chapecó.

Exploratory visits: These represent the first approaches with the subject of study and may be recorded through drawings, notes and photographs (REINGHANTZ et al. 2008). The goal was to understand the relationship established between indigenous people and the territory of the city center, and later, enable the participation of the communities in the preparation of the spatial intervention proposal.

Oral accounts: This is a practice of grasping accounts electronically, looking to collect testimonies and to promote the analysis of social processes of the present. Starting from an initial project and in the choice of the group being researched, the records became documents based on the history of the present, or living history (MEIHY, 1996). The attention focused on identifying symbolic places for the community in the center of the city and in understanding the cultural specificities of the *Kaingang*.

Wish poem: Developed by Henry Sannof (1991), this is a group dynamic where the researcher asks the users of a given place to describe or express verbally, or through sketches, their needs, feelings or wishes related to the building or setting analyzed. The method was used with an approach on idealized spaces; in this way, a form was given to the participants, that contained an open phrase, "Our ideal town would be like...", who spontaneously answered through sketches and writing. Thus, the spatial elements observed in the representation of the ideal township could be contemplated in the spatial proposals for the center of the city.

Participating observation: It starts from the premise that grasping a specific social context can only be done if the observer can submerge into and beco-

me a member of the social group being researched. According to Mann, it is an “[...] attempt to place the observer and the observed on the same side, making the observer a member of the group to live what they experience and work within their system of reference” (MANN, 1970, p. 23). Only then can the relationship between the spaces and meanings attributed by the group, in daily life, be understood.

After adopting these strategies, the guidelines that generated the first project proposal were defined, which changed from the dialog with the community until reaching the final proposal. From these experiences, apart from the project built collectively, more information and knowledge than expected appeared, information that without the coexistence and dialog, possibly would not have been discovered and that was essential to think about spaces with an intercultural nature.

RESULTS

THE KAINGANG OF THE KONDÁ PEOPLE AND THE HISTORY OF THE CITY

The indigenous *Kaingang* inhabit the southern and southeastern regions of Brazil, from the state of Sao Paulo to the Rio Grande do Sul. They are part of the Macro-Jê linguistic line and, together with the *Xokleng*, who live in other areas of the same state, they form the *Jê-Meridionalis* group (JUNIOR, 2010). Tommasino and Fernandes (2001), describe the *Kaingang* as a group, above all, established from a social dualist, patrilinear, exogamic and matrilocal organization. That is to say, there would be two groups of kinship lineage, transmitted by the father to the descendants, where marriages always take place between individuals belonging to opposite halves and, after the wedding, the groom will move in with the bride's parents.

In origin myth collected by Telêmaco Borba (1908), there is a summarized version of the *Kaingang* dualist cosmology: the cultural heroes Kamé and Kairu produce not just the divisions among humans, but also the division among the living beings of nature. The members of the halves are also differentiated through body paint or markings [Figure 02]. As Nimuendanju says (1913), the Kamé represented themselves through long markings, vertical stripes and the Kairu, had a round marking. “(...) the Kamé is made with pine tree sawdust that is burnt and then dampened. Those of the Kairu group are made like blood-soaked wood” (KRESÓ, 1997, p. 82). Thus, the colorings of the groups are defined in the following way: Kamé-black, Kairu-red-

Regarding the local context, shortly after the political emancipation of the city of Chapecó, the persecution of the indigenous people intensified, keeping them from occupying the city. As of 1927, some local authorities began to request new measurements in these territories and, when the space was already under the jurisdiction of Santa Catarina, the possession of these areas also began to be reclaimed by authorities who acted on their own behalf (CAMPOS, 2004).

Figure 2
Graphology *Kaingang* – Kamé and Kairu.
Source: own preparation



In the mid-20th century, with the construction of Chapecó city, the indigenous peoples continued to be disrespected and evicted from their lands. The city housed a large native population, formed by two large distinct groups: the first, comprising families who lived in neighborhoods of the city that adapted to the new culture imposed at this time and who became almost invisible. The second group, a more extensive one, comprised families who resisted and formed a kinship relationship based on the preservation of the culture, thus building the peoples of the city (TOMMASINO et al., 1998). These were visible and provoked varied reactions among the urban population, with all the accumulated prejudice against indigenous people unfolding, becoming a social problem. This population represented an estimated total of 64 families and 212 people.

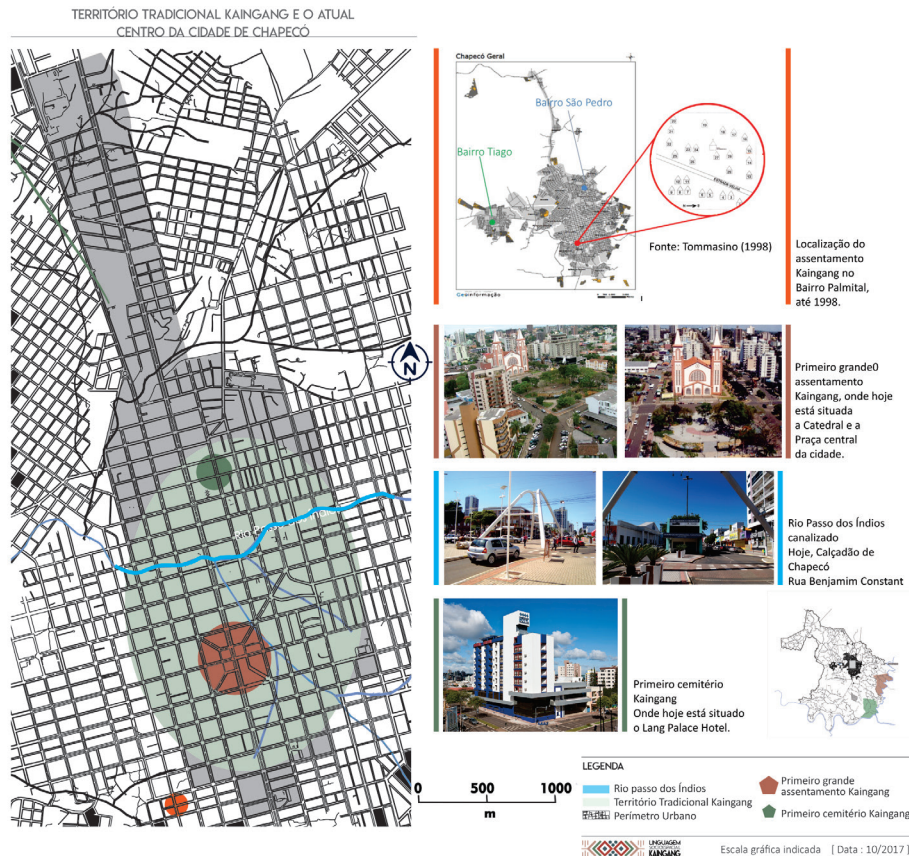
The Kaingang describe the city of Chapecó as their traditional land, where they hunted, gathered and also where they buried their dead (TOMMASINO, 1999). The land of their forefathers, according to stories of the community's elderly, coincides with the current city center, revealing why the Kaingang of Aldeia Kondá insist that the city of Chapecó is their traditional land.

Based on the reports of the Elderly from Aldeia Kondá and Tommasino's anthropological report (1998), the following map was prepared [Figure 03], where the city center in 2019 is seen as the original Kaingang territory: The Passo dos Índios river, currently channeled, represented an important meeting space for the group, the first great settlement, where the Matriz Church and the Coronel Ernest Bertaso Square are located and the Kaingang Cemetery, where today an important hotel of the city is located.

Starting from the research made, considering the pre-existence in the urban center of the city and with the participation of the Aldeia Kondá community, the project's guidelines were set and later, the intervention proposal was prepared, whose goal is valuing the city's history and allowing intercultural dialogs in the present day.

Figure 3

Kaingang traditional land in the center of Chapecó. Source: Own preparation from the oral accounts of the elderly from the Aldeia Kondá community and from Tommasino (1998)



INTERVENTION PROPOSAL IN THE URBAN CENTER

Considering the research done, the community's demands and the symbolic places for the indigenous people in the city center were identified. Starting from the analysis of the public spaces in the city center and the Governing Plan, green areas, appropriated squares, and urban vacant plots were found, which were considered as potential intervention areas.

Four scales of intervention were proposed, which constitute an ethno-historic route in the urban center, as shown in Figure 04. The colors mark the different scales of intervention considered from the route defined, as is described below.

The route is based along Getúlio Vargas Avenue with two detours, that are detailed below. The formal makeup of all the scales of intervention is based on a hexagonal shape, chosen to balance the straight lines (identification elements of the Kamé tribal half) and the circles, or closed shapes (identification elements of the Kairú half), considering the complementary duality of the Kaingang culture. To mark off the route, a signed paving was proposed. Its design was inspired by the tribal halves of the Kaingang people, as detailed in Figure 05.

For each type of path, the floor's position was defined considering the width of the sidewalk and the design defined for the tactile floor in the Master Plan. Figure 05 shows the profiles and plans of the route's main two paths.

Figure 4
Intervention proposal – Free space system.
Source: Own preparation

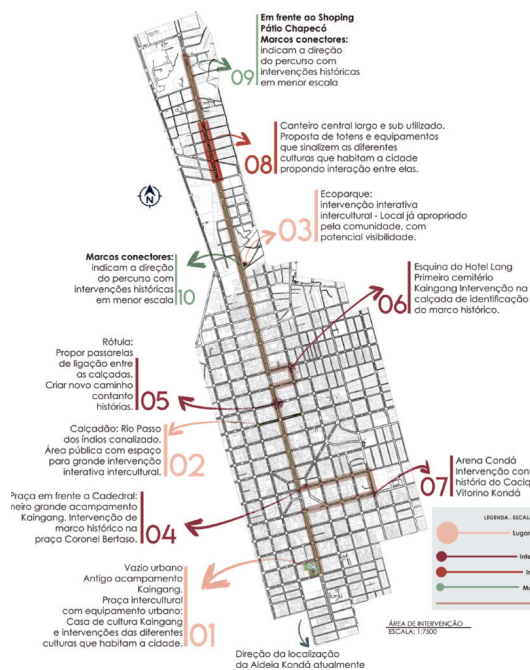
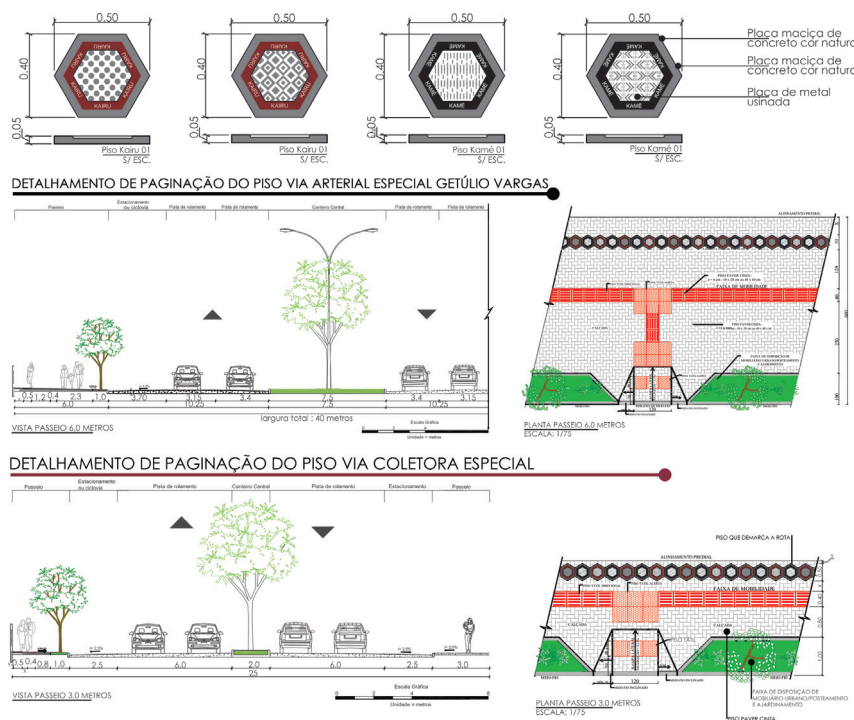


Figure 5
Route's floor markings.
Source: Own preparation

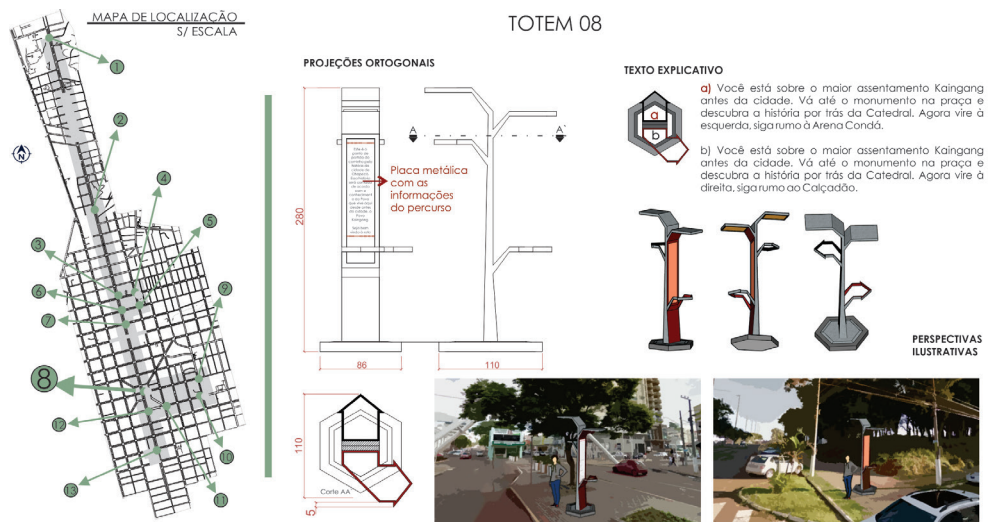


LANDMARKS

The proposed elements are those responsible for the urban visual communication, having the role of guiding changes of direction and the next interventions found along the route. This is done through ten totems, mainly positioned on the corners. As an example, Figure 06 illustrates Totem 08, with informative text and illustrative perspectives.

The information talks about historic facts and places whose meaning is important to appreciate the city's native peoples.

Figura 6
Totems – connectors.
Source: own preparation



SINGLE AND LINEAR INTERVENTIONS

The symbolic places, essential to understand the city's history, stop being invisible and gain a leading role along a linear park, playgrounds, monuments, and urban visual communication, as seen in Figure 07.

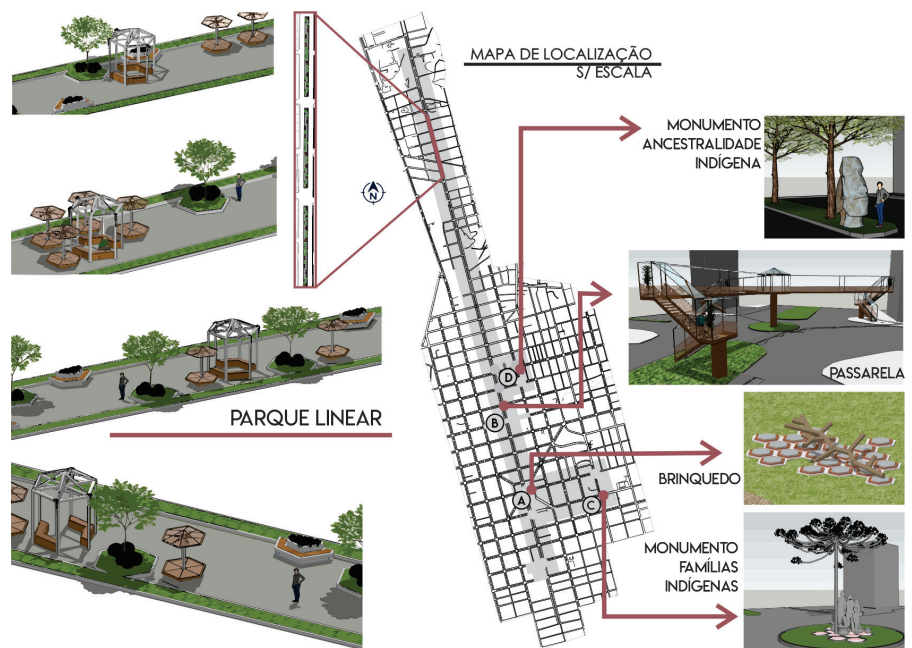
The linear park in the middle of the city's central avenue, a site that has already been consolidated and appropriated by the population, with the intervention will allow social interaction for the neighbors and the historic knowledge of the territory. Setting up this area through landscaping, urban fittings, and visual communication transforms the landscape which, from the changes, gains bush-lined beds, meeting spaces with benches and vegetation coverage that provides the spaces with shading.

One of these places is identified as point A in Figure 07. The place where Coronel Bertaso Square and Matriz Church are found, was the first Kaingang settlement. The elderly say that the church was built with gold that the Jesuits stole from the natives. In this way, a playground is proposed for this square, that seeks to make the social exchange between indigenous and non-indigenous visible, by simulations of elements of nature where these exchanges took place, as a reference to the indigenous infancy and to the games with the tree branches.

At point B, one of the busiest traffic intersections of the city, a set of railings is proposed, referring to the bridges the indigenous people built to cross rivers or dangerous places. The goal was to offer the users a new experience for crossing, considering a place to stop and contemplate. The materials proposed include the natural raw material of the ancient indigenous constructions, giving priority to the wooden covering and the use of some species of vines.

Finally, at points C and D, monuments are proposed. At point C, the Kondá Arena is located, whose monument must represent the indigenous families, who resist until today, despite members of their own people turning against them in favor of economic and political interests. At point D, the first warrior chief of the Kaingang people of the region is buried. As the location indicated is exactly where the Hotel Lang Palace stands today, the intervention proposed is a monument that refers to the importance of ancestors for the *Kaingang*.

Figure 7
Linear park and specific interventions.
Source: own preparation



STRUCTURING OF PLACES

This is the greatest scale of the planned intervention, that comprises architectonic and urbanistic works, the creation of free spaces, urban fittings, and visual communication. Three structuring sites are evaluated [Figure 8].

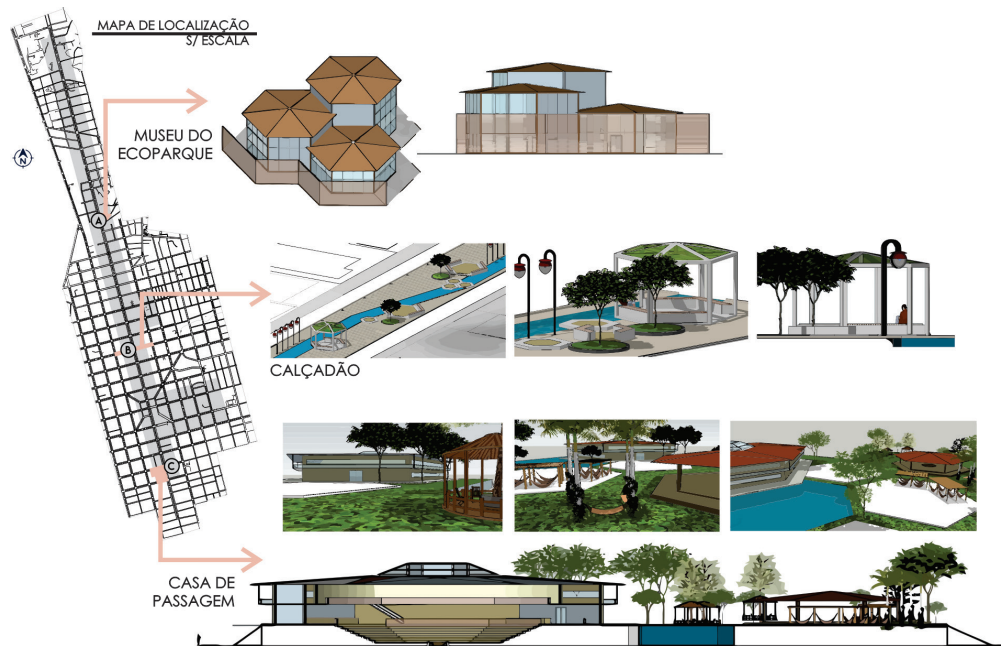
In the Ecopark (Point C), it is suggested to build a Museum of Indigenous History, built using three hexagonal structures. Each one of the towers will be responsible for housing a historic moment of the city from the perspective of the Kaingang. Tower 1 will house archaeological artifacts of the indigenous people in the region. Tower 2 will tell the story of the city's urbanization process, where indigenous peoples who occupied the entire central urban area, saw their territory devastated and their area reduced to less than one block of the city. Finally, Tower 3 will tell about the contemporary Kaingang culture and its relationship with the current city; therefore, it houses artisanry and the tools used by the Aldea Kondá community.

On the Benjamim Constant boulevard (Point B), where the now channeled Passo dos Índias river is found, reference is made to its existence in a reflecting pond that marks the route of the Boulevard. Social interaction, contemplation and open-air market places are created, leading the urban hub into a space where people walk through and remain in contact with nature and, through visual communication, can get to know a little more about the city's history.

Finally, the urban vacant land (Point A) leads to a square that is open to the community, which has a shelter and the Kaingang Cultural Center. The breakthrough architecture present in the setting, rescues the traditional knowledge, using semi-buried structures, covered with woven and earth-burned straw sections.

This area responds directly to the demand of the Aldea Kondá community and provides the indigenous peoples a point of support in the city. For visitors, it provides the opportunity to try typical foods, see traditional dances, hear lessons from elders, learn about the language and the Kaingang culture and, especially, the possibility to resignify this space through the respect of diversity and cultural valuation. The proposal was built together with the community and was presented to other indigenous leaders of the region, who, on feeling represented in the spaces created, accepted the project and fight for its viability and materialization.

Figure 8
Structuring of places.
Source: Own preparation



DISCUSSION

It is understood that the creation of the place is not exclusive to the architectural and urbanistic planning, but rather an association of this with the uses and meanings that people assign to spaces in an uninterrupted manner; that is to say, the place arises from the interactions and dialogs between human and spatial aspects. In the proposal presented here, the collaborative process behind its development and the focus on the valuation of a historically marginalized traditional community, allow a new view of these urban spaces, until now marked only by interventions that symbolize European colonizers and cultures. It is thought that these proposed interventions can resignify the urban center and promote human interactions based on the recognition and respect for diversity.

There are historically built relations between places and the cultural identities of the groups who occupy them. It is possible to see the space and perceive through it, the cultural representation of its people. With a sensitive attentive view, marks of appropriation or abandonment of spaces can be perceived, and this information can tell so much about the history of a community, their places, and their culture. No form of spatial intervention can be thought out without considering how this change alters the social and cultural dynamics of the people involved in this space. Through planned places, it is possible to confirm, value and respect the cultural values of a people. On the other hand, when the wishes of the community involved are not heard in the design process, there is the risk that, through the materiality of the architecture and urbanism, the entire community is denied the right to be and live in the world in the way of life they believe in.

With the development of the proposal, both through its results and the route followed to reach them, it became evident that the spatial products designed by architects and urbanists can and must value the cultural context these are inserted within and the specificities of the communities involved in the process, taking onboard their importance and social responsibility. In collaborative design processes, that consider interdisciplinary and horizontal creation methods, there is a possibility to affirm, from the planned spaces, the cultural diversity, their adherence to a local context and the commitment for futures increasingly marked by plurality. It is worth mentioning that this project was made with the community. This collaborative construction made it possible for the community to appropriate the proposal in the design phase and support its mobilization, demanding from public authorities, the subsidies that allow its implementation.

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