THE RIGHT TO RIDE: AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF AN URBAN AND MARGINAL PRACTICE

O DIREITO DE GUIAR: UMA ETNOGRAFIA SOBRE UMA PRÁTICA URBANA E MARGINAL

EL DERECHO A CONDUCIR: UNA ETNOGRAFÍA DE UNA PRÁCTICA URBANA Y MARGINAL

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ABSTRACT
This text discusses structural aspects of the practice of roller-cart, based on an ethnography conducted in the Metropolitan Region of Belo Horizonte between 2019 and 2022. Initial impressions indicated that the roller-cart movement, with competition teams, associations and event organizers in the city, was a large and coordinated action of a cohesive group of people around the same purpose. With a dense and prolonged stay in the field, I found a movement marked by disputes, interests and multiple appropriations that limit, at the same time as they shape, a community of practice that emerges from a collective, urban and marginal construction. In this sense, this text highlights three structural aspects of the practice of roller-cart: the participation of women in events, based on the notion of the sexed city by Michele Perrot; the territorial disputes of these groups with the orders of the State and Capital, from the perspective of the city as a right, by Henri Lefebvre; and the search for legitimacy of a marginalized practice, through the prism of consumption as a constituent of identities, according to Michel de Certeau. Thus, men and women, adults and children, participate, constitute, and are constituted by a polysemic, contradictory, and essentially situated practice.

Keywords: City. Law. Roller-cart. Dispute. Resistance. Legitimacy.
estruturantes da prática do rolimã: a participação das mulheres nos eventos, a partir da noção de cidade sexuada de Michele Perrot; as disputas territoriais destes grupos com os ordenamentos do Estado e do capital, na perspectiva de cidade enquanto direito, de Henri Lefebvre; e a busca por legitimidade de uma prática marginalizada, pelo prisma do consumo como constituidor de identidades, segundo Michel de Certeau. Assim, homens e mulheres, adultos e crianças, participam, constituem e são constituídos por uma prática polissêmica, contraditória e essencialmente situada.


INTRODUCTION
This study examines the structural aspects of the roller-cart practice in the Belo Horizonte Metropolitan Region (BHMR) based on an ethnography conducted between 2019 and 2022. The research context is first established, followed by the reconstruction of the movement's history through interviews, informal conversations, and documentary and electronic records. This history encompasses the past decade and is constituted by a series of initiatives and events related to roller-cart practice within the BHMR.
The term “movement,” while occasionally used by individuals involved in roller-cart associations and teams, lacks widespread adoption within the community. It is employed here nonetheless to describe a collection of actions and roller-cart events with distinct characteristics and nomenclature (e.g. *encontros, mundialito, festival, rolê, corujão, gp*).

These terms collectively represent the diverse roller-cart practices within the BHMR. Ingold (2015) conceptualizes movement as a process of world exploration. Similar to pilgrims, we exist in a state of continuous, interwoven movement that leaves behind traces, paths, and stories that intersect, connect, and weave the fabric of an inherently inhabited world (Ingold, 2015). Therefore, the term movement in this work materializes from the entangled paths and interwoven memories of individuals who share a multifaceted and evolving practice of roller-cart.

Initial impressions suggested that the roller-cart movement in the BHMR represented a unified and coordinated action by a group with a shared purpose. However, with a sustained fieldwork, from close and internal perspective (Magnani, 2002) this understanding revealed a more nuanced reality. This study delves into a phenomenon characterized by alliances, collaborations, conflicts, and boycotts, while roller-cart serves as the unifying element, the various groups within this movement ascribe distinct meanings and experiences to the practice.

Chronologically, this movement has its origins in a project called Mundialito de Rolimã do Abacate developed by a collaborative organization group in Belo Horizonte, coordinated by Daniel. This event began in 2012, on Magi Salomon Street, in the Salgado Filho neighborhood, and became an annual event. In the first two editions, it only included the championship stage itself, divided into speed and style competitions.

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1 In a brief description of these roller-cart events, I can say that “gatherings” (*encontros*) are recreational events, held at tourist spots in the city, for people of all ages and levels of experience. “Ride” (*rolê*) events are more restricted, in deserted places and on steep slopes, markedly aimed at an audience of adult men with great experience and that function as a kind of training for the championships. “Night rides” (*corujões*) are similar to *rolê*, but held at night and in the early hours of the morning. Finally, “gp’s,” from the expression “Grand Prize”, are championships organized by roller-cart associations and teams. In these events, despite having male, female and children’s categories, the audience is mostly adult and male.

2 To preserve the identity of the research subjects, the names given to the people are fictitious. However, the names of the places, groups and teams were maintained to enable the verification of the places, events and facts made available on virtual social networks and the internet.
In 2013, Tarcísio learned about the Mundialito de Rolimã do Abacate and decided to try this practice on the esplanade of the Governador Magalhães Pinto football stadium, known as Mineirão. A few months later, he discovered that another group, composed mainly of the family members of a gentleman named Augusto, used to ride roller-carts on the esplanade on Sundays. They decided to join forces and started holding roller-cart events (*encontros*) every Tuesday night, as they still do today. Although the initial idea came from Tarcísio and Augusto, these *encontros* at Mineirão is the most regular and one of the longest-lasting roller-cart events in the BHMR scenario. With its own dynamics, its dissemination is done word of mouth and, mainly, through the digital social networks of its regulars. This group, called *Rolimã das Gerais*, organized around promoting the practice of roller-cart through *encontros*, a native term designated for events with an essentially playful bias, where the participation of children and apprentices is always encouraged.

In January 2017, a derivation of the *Rolimã das Gerais* group was created. Called *Rolimã BH Minas*, this group began to organize itself independently with its own schedule and events, but with the same organization and dissemination strategy through virtual social networks. This group has the presence of numerous competition teams that are always discussing regulations and standardization of rules for the events. *Rolimã BH Minas* establishes a very clear distinction from *Rolimã das Gerais*, with greater interaction with people from other states and a strictly competitive purpose, with an emphasis on promoting a competitive roller-cart practice. Thus, most of the events organized by this group are characterized as *rolê* and *gp’s*, held in deserted places, with long and steep slopes, favoring the presence of more experienced riders.

It is important to recall that, in a temporal spectrum of associations and events related to the practice of roller-cart, the last decade has been marked by alliances, breakups and disputes. The first attempt at an alliance was between the *Rolimã das Gerais* group and the organizers of the *Mundialito de Rolimã do Abacate*. The group that organized the *Mineirão* events had a large number of followers and the event in the *Salgado Filho* neighborhood, a remarkable repercussion in the television media. The union of these groups seemed
inevitable, but it did not prosper. This was not the only, nor the greatest, divergence between roller-cart associations in the BHMR. The *Brutos do Rolimã* team, for example, was created from a divergence between the organizers of the *Loucomotiva* team. Surely, the most impactful split in the movement was the creation of the *Rolimã BH Minas* group. From this new association, teams, events and people had to make choices and take sides. As an outsider, with academic intentions, I was one of the few people with free access within these two groups.

The *Mundialito de Rolimã do Abacate*, being an annual event with editions suspended in 2020 and 2021, was not part of the fieldwork of this research. Therefore, I choose to present below only the contexts and events organized by the groups *Rolimã das Gerais* and *Rolimã BH Minas*. The emphasis given in the following text is focused on three structural aspects of the practice of roller-cart in the BHMR: the participation of women in events, the territorial disputes of these groups with the State and Capital orders, and the search for legitimacy of a marginalized practice.

![Figure 1. Roller-cart event at Assis Chateaubriand Avenue](image)

**THERE’S A WOMAN IN THE RACE**

Roller-cart enthusiasts in BHMR engage in various events with distinct dynamics and purposes, attracting participants with diverse backgrounds and skill levels. While women’s participation is often limited or absent in events like
Rolês, corujões, and gp's, Neusa (48 years old) stands out as an exception. She regularly attends these events, despite often being the only woman among the men. Despite proving her skills and conquering challenging slopes like Morro do Cavalo Doido (a 3km downhill track), Neusa is not recognized as a competitive rider. This becomes evident when roller-cart events are shared in messaging groups and some man tries to gloat over another, saying that “so-and-so even lost to Neusa”. Such comments reflect the lack of space for addressing macho behavior in these environments, emboldening some men to engage in sexist conduct. These attitudes are particularly prevalent in groups with a competitive roller-cart focus.

Similar dynamics can be observed in practices like street skateboarding, which, like roller-cart, has historically been dominated by men. Beyond symbolic violence, Figueira and Goellner (2009) argue that women's invisibility in this practice stems not from their absence but from the construction of a discursive network that marginalizes them, both historically and presently.

Neusa confronts physical challenges (steep hills) and symbolic ones (pejorative comments), gaining access to places and experiences that other women haven't yet. In doing so, intentionally or not, she paves the way for women in the competitive, male-dominated world of roller-cart. As Perrot (2014) argues, the city's history is one of women conquering spaces for survival, creating solidarity networks, and increasingly participating in public life. These achievements stem from collective feminist struggles that intensified since the mid-20th century, but also from individual actions by women who have historically broken down barriers and overcome exclusion. Perrot (2014) recounts numerous examples from Paris, like Simone de Beauvoir’s insistence on accessing the National Library and Julie Daublié’s groundbreaking bachelor's degree in 1891, illustrating the deconstruction of sexist paradigms and the expansion of female access to various fields, from politics to modern sports.

Beyond Neusa's presence as a driver in competitive events (incipient but symbolically important), I highlight other forms of female participation, often silent and peripheral but crucial nonetheless. Larger events rely heavily on women's participation. They not only care for children and prepare food, but many are...
directly involved in organizing the event, recording race times, communicating between start and finish lines, and driving trucks that transport drivers and their roller-carts uphill.

On the surface, these roles might seem to reflect the well-known historical and social conditions of women's subservience to men. In the Brazilian context, for example, from the 19th to the 20th century, women were assigned the roles of guardians of the family space, responsible for housework and childcare, while the streets were seen as detrimental to a woman's identity (Gomes and Gouvêa, 2008). However, my research revealed a much more complex reality of power and agency, one that challenged the patriarchal culture once prevalent in our country.

In addition to effectively facilitating much of the logistics and organization of some events, men's participation in *encontros, rolês, corujões and gp's* almost always depends on the consent of their wives. Jokes about needing spousal permission for roller-cart events are common in message groups, and sometimes reflect reality. Some men even openly admit it.

For competitive events, some men choose to sit them out with their wives' blessing. They believe these events aren't ideal for families, leading former competitive riders like Pardal to prioritize *encontros* and inclusive events where everyone can enjoy the roller-cart practice. At a recent *encontro* at Mineirão, Pardal, a man in his sixties, recounted his retirement from competition. These days, Pardal prioritizes family time over frequent *encontros* and weekend *rolês* in the roller-cart community. That night, his boys were properly dressed in personalized uniforms of a roller-cart team and with their respective roller-carts. Pardal also informed that, in addition to those carts, each of his sons also had a *nave* (“ship”), a model of roller-cart used only by competition riders.

Machado (2013) finds that skateboarding spaces in downtown São Paulo reveal relationships between men and women. Men tend to occupy the central obstacles, pushing women to the margins. However, women are actively challenging this marginalization. For instance, Machado highlights the mobilization of women skateboarders worldwide leading to equal prize money for men and women at the X Games, a major skateboarding event (Machado, 2013).
In roller-cart, men appear to be the main focus at first glance. But my observations suggest that seemingly secondary roles occupied by women grant them a subtle influence and power within the BHMR roller-cart movement.

It's important to acknowledge the limitations of my research, however. As an adult male outsider, gaining access to subjects, locations, and practices wasn't difficult due to the significant, sometimes exclusive, presence of men at most events. However, participating in women's conversations or establishing deeper connections with any female participant proved nearly impossible. My interactions with women happened in large groups or when they were with their husbands and children.

Coelho's (2011) research with Pataxó children highlights the importance of understanding cultural norms regarding gender interactions. He learned that certain behaviors, like looking at a married woman for too long, visiting her home without her husband, or walking alone with her, were inappropriate for a man, especially an outsider (Coelho, 2011, p.112). Similarly, at roller-cart events, the temporary nature of the setting made it difficult to build the kind of trust necessary for deeper conversations with women. I acknowledge these limitations and the resulting gaps in my analysis of women's presence in the roller-cart movement. However, I view this as an inherent challenge in ethnographic work.

Figure 2. Neusa riding her roller-cart

Source: Mundo do Rolimã Facebook Page
THERE’S A HOLE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE TRACK

Just as women have developed diverse ways to access and appropriate the practice of roller-cart, the roller-cart movement itself, which has emerged over the past decade in the BHMR, has faced numerous challenges, conflicts, and restrictions imposed by urban planning agencies, institutions, and actors.

These challenges are subtly evident at the encontros held at Mineirão Stadium. The esplanade’s access and use are regulated by the stadium’s management company, and as a concession of public space, the company is not authorized to impose arbitrary restrictions on the people and activities that take place there. However, there are observable forms of resistance and discouragement to the use of this space. A clear example of this was the installation of fences on the access ramp, between gates C and D of the stadium, where the roller-cart encontros take place. These fences were introduced in November 2020 to create a zigzag pattern on the ramp and reduce the speed of bicycles, roller-carts, skateboards, and other activities that take place there. According to some roller-cart encontro attendees, this intervention was motivated by a serious accident involving a cyclist who was descending the ramp at high speed.

While the intention was plausible, for the roller-cart encontros, this intervention proved counterproductive, as the mandatory zigzag pattern created by the arbitrary design of the fences increased the unpredictability of the carts’ trajectories and thus increased the chance of collisions between them during the descents.

The railings put up by the stadium team stopped people from following their usual ritual. They used to go up with their carts in a line, on the left side of the track. Now, the up and down flows of people clashed with the winding path of the railings, making their event chaotic and stressful. This change also squeezed

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3 According to the website of the government of the State of Minas Gerais, the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) the main obligations of the concessionaire involve guaranteeing access, circulation and safety conditions, promoting and supervising artistic, musical and sports activities, in addition to improving the visibility of the pitch, modernizing changing rooms, bathrooms, seats, parking lots and common areas. The remuneration received by the concessionaire is directly linked to the standard of services offered for the management and maintenance of the stadium. Accessed on 06/27/2022, through the website [http://www.ppp.mg.gov.br/projetos/contratos-assinados/mineirao](http://www.ppp.mg.gov.br/projetos/contratos-assinados/mineirao)
the space available for downhill runs.

Team members were furious. They tried to cheat at first, pushing the railings to create space in the center of the track. But security guards on the esplanade were quick to react. They reorganized the railings and warned some people. Some roller-cart teams even thought about complaining to the stadium administrator. Others, defeated, threatened to quit coming to Mineirão altogether.

Neuza, a regular at the events, summed it up: "Mineirão is ruined for me!"

Haussmann's Parisian boulevards and Moses' New York urban renewal projects exemplify a long history of urban design that prioritizes state and capital interests over the needs of the general population (Harvey, 2008). The company that manages the Mineirão stadium has no economic interest in this type of use of its esplanade, as admission is free and there is no overt commercialization of products to the public that frequents it. Instead, the space is subjected to restrictions and rules that discourage non-revenue-generating activities.

Roller-cart enthusiasts at the Mineirão also regularly complain about the potholes on the track, particularly in a section of the ramp's curve. This defect in the pavement has been present since the beginning of the fieldwork, and according to the most experienced participants in these encontros, this problem has been around for a long time. The potholes, in addition to causing damage to the carts, increase the risk of collisions for those who venture to cross the curve through the narrow section that remains intact. This less damaged section is located near the fence and does not allow two carts to pass side by side, making it the most accident-prone spot.

Urban landscape interventions can either hinder or promote certain uses of city spaces. In contrast to the situation at Mineirão Stadium, Machado (2012) reports that the replacement of the traditional Portuguese cobblestone pavement with a smooth concrete surface transformed Paulista Avenue into one of the most popular skateboarding spots in São Paulo.

Some members of the teams and associations that frequent the Mineirão encontros believe that the lack of maintenance on that potholed section of the track is not due to a lack of resources on the part of the stadium's management, but rather intentional negligence, in an attempt to dissuade the groups that meet
and use that section of the esplanade. It is worth remembering that the administrative concession agreement signed between the State of Minas Gerais, through the State Secretariat of Planning and Management (SEPLAG) and the company Minas Arena (Gestão De Instalações Esportivas S.A), includes the following obligations of the stadium's management, as specified in Chapter IV, Clause 12, Subparagraph 12.3, Paragraph t (Secretaria de Estado de Planejamento e Gestão, 2010, p. 15, my translation):

The concessionaire shall maintain and preserve all goods, equipment, and facilities employed in the ADMINISTRATIVE CONCESSION in perfect working condition. The concessionaire shall also repair its units and promptly make any replacements required due to wear and tear or technological obsolescence. Furthermore, the concessionaire shall carry out any repairs or upgrades necessary for the proper execution and preservation of the adequacy of the activities and services, as determined in this CONTRACT.

The prolonged presence of these potholes on the stadium’s esplanade, whether intentional or not, violates the contractual terms established between the State and the contracted company, as well as the rights of users of that public space. According to Lefebvre (2008, p.99), "State and Company, despite their differences and sometimes conflicts, converge on segregation." In the context at hand, the breach of contractual terms, coupled with a lack of oversight, constitutes a well-coordinated process of gentrification, where the population, especially the low-income population, has its appropriation of the space unrecognized and this public leisure facility becomes predominantly used for large events with generous economic returns for the private sector.

In addition to the tension between roller-cart practitioners and employees of a public-private partnership, the controversial relationship between the roller-cart movement and the city's public security agents is also noteworthy. Many roller-cart team riders frequent the Mineirão encontros, mainly to participate in the resenha (relaxed conversation). This conversation that takes place at the top of the track is fueled by stories experienced at other encontros, rolês, corujões and gp’s. The events that generate the most stories are the corujões. Due to their itinerant nature, on various streets and avenues of the city, and happening late at night, these events have already produced many unusual events, such as falls,
disputes with residents and reprimands from police officers. This relationship with the police is quite contradictory, as while it generates threats, warnings and fines, on some occasions it was able to produce concessions and relationships of empathy.

The corujões on Américo Vespúcio avenue perfectly illustrate this relationship. At the beginning of this avenue, the 34th Battalion of the Minas Gerais Military Police is located, exactly where the roller-cart riders usually start their descents. When the corujões began to happen there, there was resistance from some military police officers. The warnings were due to the noise caused by the carts to the local residents, but also to the possible traffic violations committed by the teams in transporting carts and pilots by support cars. Over time, the most assiduous attendees of these corujões created a close relationship with the police, which guaranteed them full access and use of that road for the practice of roller-cart. This concession was made in a laborious way and demanded time and assertiveness on the part of the pilots. However, if this was possible in that context, the consent and empathy of the public authorities is not the rule that is repeated in other places in the city.

Lefebvre (2008) conceptualizes “lived space” as the outcome of a complex interplay between "conceived space" and "perceived space". This dynamic interaction shapes contemporary cities, giving rise to both order and subversion, planning and improvisation, conflict and collusion. From this perspective, Lefebvre goes beyond viewing cities as mere physical spaces and instead recognizes them as a right to be demanded, especially by the working class.

“THIS IS MY FOOTBALL”

The marginalization of roller-cart practice, both in terms of time and location, by the city has a profound impact on the individuals involved in this movement. The formation of roller-cart groups and teams fosters a strong sense

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4 Because these are longer descents, a car is used to tow people in their carts to the top of the hills. This type of improvised “towing” can result in some traffic violations for the driver of the vehicle providing support to the group.

5 The roller-cart practice is sometimes marginalized in terms of time, as evidenced by the need for late-night sessions (corujões) to occupy streets that are busy during the day. Similarly, the locations chosen for rolling cart can also be marginalized, as seen in the case of gp’s and rolês, which take place during the day but in remote and deserted areas.
of identity among enthusiasts of this practice, which, despite its diversity and complexity, is driven by a shared desire for legitimacy and recognition.

One of the most common ways these groups promote the roller-cart practice is by taking photos and videos at *encontros*, *rolê*, *corujões*, and *gp’s*. This visual production is done intentionally and involves processes ranging from acquiring their own equipment (e.g., action cameras that are attached to riders' helmets) to filming, editing (there are professional photographers and even a cinematographer among the roller-cart groups), and sharing on social media. In messaging groups, over 2,049 media files were shared in the *Rolimã BH Minas* group and 583 in the *Rolimã das Gerais* group in the first half of 2022 alone. In February of that same year, there was a lengthy discussion among members of the *Rolimã BH Minas* group about strategies that could be adopted to increase the number of roller-cart enthusiasts. Numerous actions were suggested, some divergent positions emerged, but one self-criticism made by Leandro and unanimously recognized was the need to expand the recording and dissemination of footage during events.

The shared desire for legitimacy and recognition unites individuals, teams, and groups, even among those who rival each other within the roller-cart movement. This becomes evident when opportunities arise to participate in events with significant media coverage. The two largest roller-cart groups in the BHMR, *Rolimã das Gerais* and *Rolimã BH Minas*, have already participated in numerous events covered by print, digital, radio, and television media. Over the past decade, these groups have diverged in their purposes and methods of promoting this practice, but depending on the level of media attention, they can be seen participating in the same event to promote roller-cart. This has occurred several times at the *Mundialito de Rolimã do Abacate* in the Salgado Filho neighborhood of Belo Horizonte; at the first stage of the *Copa Sudeste de Rolimã* in June 2022, on the *Cavalo Doido* hill in Brumadinho; and, for the first time, in July 2022, at an event called *Bop Games*. This latter event brought together competitions in over 20 sports on the esplanade of the Mineirão stadium. Roller-cart was introduced at this event as a "sports workshop." This means that, unlike the other activities, roller-cart was not offered in a competitive format but as an
experiential opportunity for people to have their first contact with the practice.

The *Rolimã BH Minas* group is driven by a desire for media attention and recognition of roller-cart as a sport. The *Federação Mineira de Carrinho de Rolimã (FEMCAR)*, despite not being legally registered as a sports federation\(^6\), is a parallel initiative of the organizers of this group, with its own social media profile and the aim of creating an entity to represent roller-cart. Although legally *FEMCAR* does not exist, its actions are materialized in the creation of competitive events, the definition of regulations, categories, and standards for the manufacture of roller-carts. The transformation of games and play into sports is a recurring phenomenon observed in the postmodern period. On this subject, Ariès (1981, p.124) points out that "in England the nobles did not abandon, as in France, the old games, but transformed them, and it was in modern and unrecognizable forms that these games were adopted by the bourgeoisie and the 'sport' of the 19th century."

This intentional attempt to associate the roller-cart practice with the concept of sport aligns with Michel de Certeau's (1998) notions of "strategy" and "tactics" in consumer relations. As discussed earlier, modern sport has been the dominant form of leisure activity since the 19th century, as it caters to the various consumption strategies put forth by capital, from the standardization of rules and universalization of practices to the endless possibilities for the production of consumer goods. Despite these strategic relations of domination and consumption, Certeau (1998) highlights that we, as potential consumers, do not act passively and employ various "tactics" of survival. Faced with the insurmountable and predominant logic of sport, what roller-cart practitioners do is disguise themselves as athletes. While there is an evident effort to standardize rules among enthusiasts of competitive roller-cart, I hesitate to claim that this categorically represents a break with a practice once known as play to embrace a new sport. The organization of championships, the definition of categories, the formation of teams, and the pursuit of media attention endorse the "tactics" (Certeau, 1998) of a collective seeking legitimacy for a practice that is constantly

\(^6\) Sports Federations are formed as associations through the union of individuals, clubs, or sports entities that organize themselves for non-profit purposes, thus classifying themselves as private law legal entities, in accordance with Articles 44 and 53 of the Brazilian Civil Code of 2002.
marginalized by society.

Another piece of evidence that supports this thesis is the summary made by Renato, a rider on the Sapolândia team, to explain his relationship with the Mineirão events: "this is my football, I'm here every Tuesday." The comparison of roller-cart specifically with football is not arbitrary. According to DaMattta (1982), the success of football in Brazil is due to the fact that this modern practice serves as a privileged instrument for dramatizing many aspects of Brazilian society, allowing for the expression of a series of national problems, alternating perception and intellectual elaboration with concretely felt and lived emotions and feelings. In addition to being a widely practiced sport in our country, it is exalted to the point that Brazilians forget its English origin and affirm in the popular saying "that in Brazil there are only three serious things: liquor, gambling, and football" (DaMattta, 1994, p.10).

By comparing the roller-cart to a national symbol, Renato gives legitimacy to a practice that is often marginalized in urban dynamics. Furthermore, the practice of soccer in Brazil carries with it a very particular symbolism in relation to other leisure activities, influenced by a competitive bias that denotes commitment and seriousness. When studying soccer among veterans in public spaces in the city of Porto Alegre, Stigger (1997) states that the game itself is quite serious and very focused on the search for victories, which greatly determines the characteristics of the group that practices it. Even in their free time, the group of veterans plays a type of soccer whose logic is very similar to that promoted by high-performance sports (Stigger, 1997). This notion of “serious leisure” is widely explored by Canadian sociologist Robert Stebbins, who defines it as a systematic practice of amateurs, hobbyists or volunteers that launches them into a leisure career centered on the acquisition and expression of a combination of special skills, knowledge and experience (Stebbins, 2008). In this sense, associating roller-cart with football is, ultimately, an attempt to bring it closer to the practice of leisure in the Brazilian context that is closer to the notion of work. Such strategies can also be seen among other urban groups and practices.

Among skateboarders in the city of São Paulo, Machado (2012) identified
other tactics to legitimize the practice of street skateboarding, associating it with the dimension of work. According to the author, when questioned by security guards or municipal guards in places where skateboarding is prohibited, they use cameras and video cameras as an argument to justify that they are not there “just for fun,” but doing “a job,” that is, producing footage for specialized skateboarding magazines. In this case, the explicit association of skateboarding with work goes back to a predominant ideological construction in capitalist social practice that overvalues work, as it treats it as an element that defines the identities and roles assumed in society, being the common denominator of people (Werneck, 1998).

In this way, associating roller-cart with the notions of “serious leisure” or “work” and attributing the status of “sport” to this practice is not a way to mischaracterize it, but rather a “tactic” (Certeau, 1998) used by adults who “play,” “ride,” and “pilot”8 their roller-carts to avoid the embarrassment and prejudices of a capitalist and adult-centered society that systematically distances play from adult life.

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Footnote:

7 According to Machado (2012), street skateboarding is a modality where skateboarders travel through parts of the city looking for urban equipment such as benches, handrails, stairs, flowerbeds, among others, to perform their tricks.

8 These native terminologies are used to describe roller-cart in order to establish distinctions. The term “play” (brincar) is used when there is no intention to establish any type of competition between the practitioners at a given moment (e.g. “let’s go down, just to play a little”). “Ride” (andar) is a more generic term that is used in various contexts. “Pilot” (pilotar) is a very specific task, used in situations in which practitioners exceed 100 km/h in their carts.
CONCLUSION

In this text, I highlight three structural aspects of the relationship between the roller-cart movement and the urban context of the BHMR. The analysis of women’s participation suggests that these contexts (the city and the roller-cart movement) still reveal themselves to be sexist and misogynistic. However, the power relations and agency of women in this movement have proven to be far more complex than the patriarchal culture that once dominated our country. Similarly, the quest for legitimacy of this practice, marginalized by society, has revealed some well-coordinated tactics by its practitioners in the face of the strategies of domination and consumption of contemporary sports logic. Finally, the disputes between roller-cart associations and teams and the orders of Capital and State have revealed that the city, as a lived space, is the result of a complex equation with elements of orders and dodges, planning and improvisation, conflicts and collusion. From this perspective, it is necessary to overcome the notion of the city as a physical and static space and to conceive it as a right to be demanded, especially by the working class.

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