

Vesperata in Diamantina and the Privatization of Public Space

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Abstract

This study investigates *Vesperata*, an event held in the historic center of Diamantina, Minas Gerais, and analyzes its cultural and economic impact on the city. It examines the transformation of *Vesperata* into a tourist spectacle and the privatization of public space for its execution. The event's privatization raises questions about the commodification of cultural events and the socioeconomic exclusion of residents who cannot afford reserved seating. Lefebvre argues that urban space is a social construct shaped by historical, political, economic, and cultural processes. This study contributes to the understanding of cultural events management, highlighting the need to balance cultural heritage preservation with economic demands. The research suggests that inclusive and participatory cultural policies are essential to ensure that local cultural identity is preserved and celebrated authentically and sustainably.

Keywords: Diamantina; *Vesperata*; cultural commodification.

Introduction

The three-hundred-year-old city of Diamantina emerged as a key economic hub in Minas Gerais during the colonial period, particularly due to the Portuguese Crown's exploitation of precious stones, which began in the 18th century. This economic development not only shaped the region's social dynamics but also left profound marks on the city's architectural and cultural identity.

Based upon the historical backdrop, this study examines The *Vesperata*, a musical event held in the streets of Diamantina's historic center, focusing on its role as both an instrument of cultural valorization and tourist attraction. Originally conceived as a community-centered gathering, the *Vesperata* has since evolved into a staple of the city's tourism calendar, drawing

diverse audiences to the Rua da Quitanda in the historic district, where tradition, music, gastronomy, and architecture converge.

According to Fernandes and Conceição (2007), the musical practice in Diamantina has been integral to its history, we have highlighted the colonial era, when it was actively promoted by religious brotherhoods and Third Orders. With the establishment of the Diocese of Diamantina and subsequent restructuring of the Catholic Church, musical expressions were reorganized, eventually leading to the formation of local bands a foundational element of today's *Vesperata*.

However, this study raises a central concern: the privatization of public space during the *Vesperata*, a practice that sparks debates about the commodification of an originally communal event and the potential exclusion of local residents, especially those with limited financial means. The installation of barriers, VIP areas, reservation fees, and the concentration of event organization in the hands of private companies all point to a trend that demands critical analysis.

Thus, this research aims to assess the social, cultural, and economic impacts of this privatization. It questions whether the event's current management prioritizes local communities or favors primarily to consumer tourism, potentially diluting the symbolic significance of Diamantina's musical tradition. This debate is particularly relevant given Diamantina's status as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, which entails a responsibility to preserve and democratize its cultural heritage.

The core issue guiding this study is the privatization of public space for the *Vesperata*, which raises questions about the commercialization of community-based cultural events and the socioeconomic exclusion of segments of the local population. The research aims to analyze how this privatization affects Diamantina's cultural and economic landscape while discussing the event's role in promoting tourism and preserving cultural heritage.

The justification for this study lies in the need for a critical examination of cultural event management in historic cities, especially those designated as UNESCO World Heritage Sites, like Diamantina. While *Vesperata* has been revitalized as a symbol of the interplay between culture, tourism, and local economy, its production has been outsourced to private entities without public consultation—a trend that reflects the broader commodification of urban space and deserves deeper investigation.

The shift from traditional musical arrangements to more commercial repertoires further illustrates *Vesperata*'s adaptation to tourist-market demands, often at the expense of local collective memory. This trend underscores the urgency of rethinking public policies and Community participation in cultural event organization.

This study contributes to understanding the social and economic dynamics of *Vesperata*, offering insights into how cultural events might balance heritage preservation with

contemporary economic pressures. Rather than proposing definitive solutions, it aims to stimulate dialogue and broaden awareness of the cultural and social implications of this event in Diamantina.

The City

The city of Diamantina emerged as a prominent economic hub in Minas Gerais during the colonial period. The relentless search for new deposits of precious metals attracted muleteers (*tropeiros*) and adventurers, who began exploring the vast and still largely uncharted territory of Minas Gerais. These explorers eventually settled in the region, founding the Arraial do Tijuco in 1691, a village that served as a base of operations, providing supplies and temporary shelter for miners in their quest for wealth.

The growth of Arraial do Tijuco gained momentum after the discovery of gold and, later, diamonds in the Jequitinhonha River Basin. This development triggered a cycle of urbanization and population expansion, ultimately giving rise to what is now the municipality of Diamantina. The prosperity generated by gemstone extraction led to the settlement's elevation to village status in 1831 under the name Diamantina and, later, to city status in 1838 (IPHAN, 2014).

Diamantina stands out for its well-preserved architectural heritage, characterized by Baroque-influenced mansions and centuries-old churches adorned with precious materials. The city also maintains important cultural traditions rooted in the colonial era, including folk religiosity, cuisine, music, and handicrafts. Festivities such as the Festa do Divino and Festa do Rosário continue to be celebrated, keeping alive a cultural tradition that has endured for generations (Lacerda; Sancho *et al.*, 2011).

National recognition of its heritage came in 1938. Later, through the efforts of public institutions and civil society movements, Diamantina was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). To achieve such a status, the city had to submit a dossier demonstrating compliance with at least one of UNESCO's ten selection criteria. For this purpose, the Comissão por Diamantina Patrimônio da Humanidade (Commission for Diamantina as a World Heritage Site) was formed, comprising representatives from government and organized civil society.

Costa (2011, p. 84) emphasizes that heritage recognition involves not only symbolic value but also practical and economic interests, such as tourism promotion. The valorization of cultural heritage becomes a strategic tool for economic and social development, preserving local identity while generating income through cultural and touristic activities.

However, this process of heritagization also generates tensions. Heritage preservation takes on a dual role: on one hand, it seeks to safeguard memory, history, and local knowledge; on the other, heritage can be transformed into a cultural product — “packaged” and marketed

to specific audiences. This is a contradictory dynamics yet still present in global contexts (Costa, 2011, p. 85).

The dossier submitted by Diamantina's commission was based on three criteria, later accepted by UNESCO:

UNESCO Criteria for Diamantina's World Heritage Designation Criterion (ii): Diamantina exemplifies how, in the 18th century, the explorers of Brazilian territory—diamond prospectors and agents of the Crown were able to adapt European models to an American context, forging a culture that remained faithful to its origins yet entirely original. Criterion (iv): The urban and architectural ensemble of Diamantina, seamlessly integrated into a wild landscape, stands as a striking testament to the fusion of adventurous spirit and refinement that is the reason why it represents a significant chapter in human history. Criterion (v): Diamantina is one of the most recent examples of how Brazil conquered its territory and developed its culture, and it is even more exceptional as it is related to such a rare agricultural system as its resource: the Diamond (IPHAN, p. 2)

Today with a population of 47,000 and passed 25 years since its UNESCO designation, Diamantina's economy has diversified to include agriculture, mineral extraction, commerce, and higher education (IBGE, 2022). However, it is tourism, especially ecological and cultural tourism, that stands out as the main economic activity, with a direct impact on job creation and the dynamization of the local economy. (Lesann & Silva, 1997).

The consolidation of Diamantina as a tourist destination is largely due to public policies that sought to explore its cultural heritage as a competitive differential. Transforming the city into a tourist hub is not limited to the formal recognition of its cultural assets, but also involves their monumentalization: certain spaces come to be treated as historical artifacts, subject to preservation regulations often imposed by external institutions. This reality raises important questions: who do these assets belong to? And who are they being protected from?

Thus, the *Vesperata* emerges, considered the main cultural and tourist attraction of the city, an event held on fixed dates, consisting of concerts performed on the balconies of historic mansions in the center, with the audience positioned on the steep streets paved with rough stone, a striking feature of the historic urban layout. The format of the spectacle creates a unique sound and visual ambiance, enchanting both residents and visitors. Therefore, the *Vesperata* has become a symbol of the city, but it also illustrates the clash between cultural preservation and tourist exploitation, one of the central focus of this work.

The *Vesperata*

The city of Diamantina has historically maintained an intense musical production. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the Brotherhoods and Third Orders were primarily responsible for encouraging this artistic practice, hiring musicians and composers to perform, especially in religious ceremonies though (Fernandes; Conceição, 2007). However, with the creation of the

Diocese and the establishment of the first bishopric in the city, these brotherhoods lost economic and administrative autonomy. This change significantly limited their ability to finance cultural activities. The transition to a more centralized ecclesiastical structure, aligned with the directives from Rome—a process known as Romanization—imposed even greater restrictions, including on the musical repertoire allowed within churches (Oliveira, 2016).

As a consequence, local musical practice was affected; musicians who had exclusively performed at religious celebrations began to engage in other activities to ensure their livelihood, becoming, according to authors Fernandes and Conceição (2007, p. 52), “semi-professionals.” Thus, although music did not disappear from the city’s daily life, it became primarily sustained by the spontaneous initiative of the musicians themselves. This gave rise to civil bands, which began to perform at popular festivals, civic celebrations, and eventually religious ceremonies when authorized by the bishopric.

Among the bands that stood out during this period were Corinho and Corão, whose rivalry was widely known among residents and may have directly influenced the demoralization of the musical movement that, due to a lack of institutional support, culminated in the disappearance of these and many other groups (Fernandes; Conceição, 2007).

In 1891, the first band of the Military Police of Minas Gerais was created: the band of the 3rd Battalion, composed mostly of musicians remaining from other groups in the city. Here, besides their military obligations, members received remuneration from the State, which allowed for greater dedication to musical practice. Thus, the band began to perform various presentations, including traditional retreats (public concerts), concerts in public squares and bandstands.

It was the then conductor of the band, João Baptista de Macedo, known as Maestro Pururuca, who suggested an innovative variation of the retreats: a performance with the musicians distributed on the balconies of the historical mansions. This idea was specifically conceived to perform the piece *La Mezza Notte*¹, by the Italian composer and conductor Orestes Carlini. Originally written as *Fantasia Brillhante* for band and fanfare, the work was composed in the first half of the 20th century and carries a strong dramatic appeal, favoring solos and dialogues between the instruments.

According to Amaral (2012, p. 8), the arrangement of the musicians on the balconies reinforced the structural elements of the work:

It is a very well-crafted fantasy, whose melody offers the instrumentalists the opportunity to perform solos in a situation quite similar to a question-and-answer

¹ There are not many recordings of the song *La Mezza Notte* available on the internet, but to enrich the readers’ experience, it is recommended to access the recording of the song through the following link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xvdn4llc6ZE&ab_channel=AngeloFleri. The recording features an excerpt from the summer concert “Note d’estate 2021”, held on August 12, 2021, performed by the Associazione Musicale Fiumedinisi (Me), under the direction of Maestro Giuseppe Minurili

system, so that the impression given is that the musicians are engaging in a musical provocation, with emphasis on the trumpets, trombones, euphoniums, and cymbals.

The first performance with this configuration caused great emotion among the residents, but it was not conceived as a tourist attraction. It was, rather, a way to strengthen the ties between the military band and the local population (Amaral, 2012). The name *Vesperata* arose in reference to the time of the performances, held at the end of the afternoon — on the eve. During the 20th century, the *Vesperatas* persisted sporadically, with less frequency and organization, but over time, this practice was gradually abandoned until, in 1946, *La Mezza Notte* was performed publicly for the last time in this format in Diamantina.

Decades later, during meetings of the Commission for Diamantina World Heritage, the Canon and Major Chaplain of the Military Police, Monsignor Walter Almeida, suggested the return of musical performances on the city's balconies. The proposal aimed to recover a local tradition and present it from a new cultural perspective. According to Fernandes and Conceição (2007, p. 167):

[...] Monsignor Walter Almeida suggested the return of the Military Band to the balconies, as a cultural attraction to be recovered and offered within a new context that was emerging. [...] The performances were to be held for the delight of the authorities who had increased the flow of visitors to the city, as a way to demonstrate the richness of our musical heritage, the result of a past in which music, interwoven with the sounds of voices, birds, and bells, transformed the afternoons in Diamantina into evening afternoons (Fernandes; Conceição, 2007, p. 167).

On the night of August 16, 1997, in the context of the launch of the National Cultural Tourism Program of the Ministry of Culture, the *Vesperata* was officially resumed, now as part of a cultural project articulated by the public authorities. From then on, financial and human investments were mobilized to transform the event into a regular tourist attraction, integrated into the city's official calendar (Rodrigues; Pereira *et al.*, 2019).

After this return, the *Vesperata* began to be organized with the joint participation of the 3rd BPM Band and the Mayor Antônio de Carvalho Cruz Children's Band, supported by the city hall. The event consolidated as a nighttime spectacle, moving to later hours. At the same time, the repertoire underwent significant changes, and the piece "La Mezza Notte" was gradually replaced by more well-known works for the general public, such as arrangements of popular Brazilian songs, movie themes, and universal classical pieces. Today, "La Mezza Notte," the music that originated the event's format, is no longer part of the official repertoire.

The new version of *Vesperata* also came to be seen as an economic development project. Partnerships were established with bars, restaurants, and hotels in the historic center. The tables organized on Rua da Quitanda were reserved exclusively for tourists through partner establishments. Meanwhile, the general public was separated by barriers and

positioned on the sidewalks, creating a spatial division that reflected the commercialization logic of the spectacle.

The impact of the new *Vesperata* gained national recognition and, in 2010, the event received first place in the “Sustainable Events in Brazil” category awarded by the Ministry of Tourism. Later, in 2015, it was registered as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Minas Gerais. The official recognition as heritage and the awards received increased its visibility, consolidating *Vesperata* as the main tourist-cultural attraction of the city. Its impact is expressed not only in Diamantina’s cultural calendar but also in increased tourist flow and reorganization of urban space during weekends when the event takes place.

The Process of Privatization of Public Space

Since its new conception in 1997, the *Vesperata* has been thought of as an asset aimed at tourism. However, in 2011, the city hall of Diamantina launched a bidding notice with the aim of hiring a company to take over the production of the event. The Minas Gerais Agency, responsible for part of the tourism activities in the city, was the selected company. According to Public Notice No. 001/2011, bidding process No. 043/2011, the goal of the Municipal Executive was to delegate to a company specialized in event organization and tourism product commercialization the execution of the *Vesperatas*, including the sale of tables and the executive production of the show (Official website of Diamantina).

This privatization of public space raises various critical questions. Firstly, the decision was made without any prior consultation with the population, disregarding citizen participation in a process involving one of the most significant cultural events in the city (Rodrigues; Pereira *et al.*, 2019). The transfer of control of the event to a private company not only alters its operational logic but may also alienate the local community from a tradition that historically belongs to them.

The relationship between public power, organizing company, and consumer public was formalized more recently by the Decree No. 109, dated March 5, 2024, which regulates the *Vesperata* and the Seresta events in the municipality. It details the functions of public power, the promoting company (responsible for table sales and guidance to tourists), and those referred to as “buyers,” a name given to tourists who purchase wristbands granting access to the event.

As determined by the Decree No. 25, dated January 10, 2023, the privatization process also encompasses windows and balconies of the mansions on Rua da Quitanda. Although they are private properties, these spaces must be ceded to municipal administration for the realization of *Vesperata*, which is organized by a private company.

With increased demand for the event, street space became insufficient to accommodate both tourists and residents. As a solution, measures were adopted to improve service for those

who reserved tables. The sidewalk, previously accessible to the general public, also became isolated. On event nights, all of Rua da Quitanda is fenced off, occupied by numbered tables and a small stage designated for the conductor.

It is problematic that delegating the *Vesperata* to a private company represents a clear process of commodification of an originally public and free space. This results in excluding people who cannot afford to pay for tables, creating an evident division between those who fully participate in the event and those limited to peripheral spaces.

This division can be interpreted as a contemporary form of socioeconomic segregation within a public space. It is not uncommon to draw parallels with the slavery period when seats in churches were distributed according to social class or color. Similarly, at the *Vesperata*, local musicians and their families as well as city residents are often excluded from experiencing the event as a musical sociability experience as it was originally conceived.

The analysis of this commodification of public space can be enriched by Guy Debord's ideas on alienation and spectacularization of social life. For Debord (1997, p. 27), "the man alienated from what he produces, even while creating details of his world, is separated from it. The more his life becomes a commodity, the more he separates from it." In a society of spectacle, all social relations and practices are transformed into commodities mediated by images and consumption. As stated by the author: "the spectacle is capital at such a degree of accumulation that it becomes image" (Debord, 1997, p. 28).

From this perspective, the *Vesperata* when appropriated by market interests loses its character as a spontaneous cultural manifestation and transforms into a choreographed tourist event formatted to meet market demands. This transformation alienates local populations from their own tradition, replacing communal experiences with sellable and aestheticized experiences where participation is mediated by purchasing power.

Furthermore, isolating Rua da Quitanda and restricting access to privileged spaces reinforce spectacle logic, turning spectators into passive consumers. The cultural experience turn to be offered as a product rather than as a shared practice. For Debord, spectacle not only separates people from their own reality but creates a false appearance of unity where real inequalities are masked by a facade of democratic participation. As stated by the author: "the success of the economic system of separation means the proletarianization of the world" (Debord, 1997, p. 23).

Thus, the *Vesperata*, once a symbol of musical and communal gathering, becomes a showcase for economic privilege where capital determines who can or cannot fully participate in the tradition. The street which once served as a space for coexistence and sharing is transformed into territory marked by symbolic and real fences where local culture is displayed as entertainment for external consumption, emptying itself of its original function: collective celebration of music and memory.

Between Merchandise and Celebration of the Local Population

The economic exploitation of public bands, such as the Military Band and the Mirim Band, funded by the state and the city hall, reveals a contradiction between their public character and their transformation into private commercial attractions. By placing them into a context of commodification, there is a risk of diverting their original purposes, which should prioritize broad and community cultural access. However, it is worth noting that the participation of these bands in the *Vesperata* does not compromise their regular agenda, which goes beyond the days of event.

As a social counterpart, 20 free tables are reserved at each performance for local residents. Moreover, on at least on two occasions per season, “extra” *Vesperatas* are held exclusively for the community. Despite this, these off-season events tend to have low attendance, and the tables for residents almost never get fully occupied.

Thus, on one hand, the *Vesperata* consolidates itself as the main attraction of tourism in Diamantina; on the other hand, rising prices in local commerce and restrictions on the movement of people and vehicles imposed by travel agencies and city hall distance local residents as a consequence. The free admission and offer of tables are not enough: residents do not feel part of the event; they perceive that the *Vesperata* is not for them but rather for tourists and precisely for this reason, the tables and events dedicated exclusively to them do not attract public audience. The *Vesperata* has transformed into a spectacle for tourists, ceasing to be a community celebration. This tension reveals how *Vesperata* ceased to make sense for those who once viewed music as a means of sociability; it has now become “business,” distancing community members from city center activities.

In 2006, Elaine Porto Guimarães and Wanyr Romero Ferreira published an article addressing the impacts of the tourist use of the *Vesperata* in Diamantina. The text helps to understand how the event functioned before its organization was centralized through bidding. Many of the positive and negative effects they pointed out still persist today:

1. Positive Impacts

- Generation of direct and indirect jobs in the hotel, food, and handicraft sectors.
- Increase in occupancy rates in hotels and inns during the event.
- Diversification of local commerce—improvement in product and service quality.
- Expansion of commercial hours in restaurants, bars, and shops.
- Creation of new cultural and tourist projects.

- Self-sustainability of the event, with its own revenue financing other cultural initiatives.

2. Negative Impacts

- Income flight: a large portion of profits does not remain in the city due to the absence of local agencies operating within the *Vesperata* circuit.
- Access difficulties: residents face barriers to obtaining tables and invitations that are prioritized for tourists.
- Shift of focus: tourism has come to value almost exclusively the *Vesperata* at the expense of Diamantina's architecture and history.
- Cultural descharacterization: traditional repertoire is replaced by popular music, compromising authenticity.
- Inequality in income distribution: resources concentrate in the hands of establishment owners and tourism operators.
- Decline of religious festivals: historical manifestations such as those for Divino and Rosário have lost relevance (Guimarães; Ferreira, 2006, p. 84).

It is important to emphasize that the mapped impacts primarily focus on economic aspects, offering indirect benefits to local residents. The question remains whether these gains effectively reach owners and representatives of tourism-oriented commerce. Thus, although economic aspects were highlighted as positive impacts, the authors also emphasize unequal resource distribution as a negative element.

The change brought about by bidding to organize the event—and consequently centralize table reservations—aimed to facilitate table purchases. Before this change, they were negotiated directly with representatives from the hotel network which prioritized their own guests. In recent years, several travel agencies based in Diamantina have emerged, including one that won the bidding process. Nevertheless, most generated revenue does not remain in town.

Other negative points raised by authors concern local cultural dynamics. First, tourist movement that was previously directed towards traditional manifestations such as religious festivals has shifted almost exclusively to the *Vesperata*. Second, the repertoire performed at the event ignores much of Diamantina's historical composers' production while privileging easily digestible music for tourists—such as pieces from more popular genres like rock, sertanejo (Brazilian country music), and radio classics.

When analyzing both positive and negative impacts highlighted by Guimarães and Ferreira (2006), it is evident that the *Vesperata*'s commercial success increased both tourist circulation and money flow within town but maintained resource concentration among a few individuals. Therefore, a major dilemma within cultural tourism is balancing commodification with community celebration. As use value—the social and cultural significance of the event for

local populations—is replaced by the exchange value—its economic potential as a tourist product—a significant tension arises.

This tension reveals how the *Vesperata* ceased to make sense for those who once viewed music as a means of sociability; it has now become “business,” distancing community members from city center activities.

Theoretical Notes

A city transcends its streets and buildings, being essentially shaped by the interaction between people and their relationships with the environment. Beyond its constructions and urbanized areas, the city is defined by urbanity, which represents the experience of the social world. This urbanity reflects the mediations between urban planning, individuals, social practices, and norms (Miranda, 2012). This process allows for the recognition of differences, where opposing forces coexist in the same social space-time, revealing a play of power, tensions, and transgressions. The way municipal managers authorize the privatization of public road segments for the benefit of private institutions refers to the same dynamic of coexistence of antagonistic forces. It is here that the commodification of public space and the spectacularization of cultural manifestation are configured. Power relations become evident in analyzing the territory where the *Vesperata* occurs, as hegemonic power uses public entities and the discourse of “tourist events” to justify segregation imposed by deterritorialization.

According to Corrêa (1994), deterritorialization is the loss of appropriated and lived territory due to processes derived from contradictions capable of undoing that territory. It is a rupture that affects a specific social group, triggered by various factors. This loss exemplifies the tensions and disputes inherent in urban space, where market forces and public policies converge to redefine uses, impacting everyday life and cultural practices, even if only for a short period, as occurs with the *Vesperata* when functions and uses of Rua da Quitanda are re-signified in favor of tourists.

Henri Lefebvre offers valuable contributions to the study of urban space. In his work “The Production of Space” (1974), he argues that urban space is not merely a neutral backdrop where social life occurs but a social production forged by historical, political, economic, and cultural processes. Schmid (2012) complements this view by stating that using Lefebvre’s concept of space production proposes a theory that understands space as fundamentally tied to social reality.

Lefebvre (2006, p. 66) proposes three dimensions of urban space: perceived space: the physical and material space of the city including streets, buildings, infrastructure; conceived space: representations and plans that shape space among them including maps, plans, regulations produced by architects, urban planners, and authorities; and finally, lived space:

the social practices and everyday experiences of inhabitants such as appropriations, resistances, and interactions in daily life.

These concepts help understand the privatization of public space for the *Vesperata*: in perceived space, we have the streets and balconies used by the event; in conceived space are the organization and planning of the event; and in lived space reside the experiences of residents and tourists during the spectacle. Privatization introduces a socioeconomic division where those who cannot bear the cost of reserved tables are excluded, transforming community celebration into a tourist product.

The urban dynamics of Diamantina reflect Henri Lefebvre's concept of urbanity where the city is shaped by interactions between its inhabitants and the space they occupy. The city always reflects social, political, and economic segregation; Lefebvre argues that urban space is not only physical but also a social construction resulting from historical, political, economic, and cultural processes (Lefebvre apud Cavalcanti, 2008).

However, it is important to highlight that this construction is not neutral; its architecture and spatial organization reinforced such hierarchies shaping social and cultural dynamics that persist today. The city was configured in a way that reinforces this segregation with architecture and spatial organization reflecting power hierarchies.

This segregation directly influenced cultural practices; over time, the suppression of autonomy provoked profound transformations especially in the music area. Social and economic divisions reflected in power structures and local institutions including Brotherhoods played a central role in organizing social and cultural life for people. These institutions often linked to specific groups with some autonomy helped define spaces for coexistence and cultural expression.

Henri Lefebvre's (2006) view on production of space dialogues with Guy Debord's (1997) critique on spectacularization of social life. Lefebvre shows that urban space is constantly shaped by social relations and everyday practices reflecting conflicts and tensions among groups disputing its use and control. Debord (1997), in turn, warns about consumable mediation of social relations; according to him spectacle replaces social relations with consumable representations. Thus both Lefebvre and Debord criticize loss of citizen autonomy and commodification of public space highlighting how political and economic control redefines uses and alienate people from their cultural traditions.

The commodified *Vesperata* exemplifies this convergence: lived spaces for residents convert into spectacle—a fetishized version of local tradition shaped by tourism interests. When Diamantina transforms *Vesperata* into a privatized tourist event it removes authentic collective experience from people shaping it as a product adapted to economic interests. The event once an expression spontaneous from the community becomes represented in fetishized form visually

consumed by an external audience. The interaction within lived spaces according to Lefebvre transforms into merchandise alienating citizens from their cultural territory.

Moreover privatization of streets and reserved tables for tourists evidences socioeconomic separation: the access becomes restricted to those who can pay while the remaining population is marginalized or alienated through ideation for full experience. This division reproduces inequalities within a spectacular society where public spaces which should be inclusive accessible become territories for exclusion. Rua da Quitanda which should belong to everyone becomes controlled mercantiled scenery reinforcing power dynamics inherent to spectacle idea.

Final Considerations

This text discusses how the *Vesperata* has been transformed into a tourist event. The event is a manifestation that originated from an option by the conductor of the 3rd BPM Band of Diamantina: placing musicians on the balconies of historical houses to perform a specific piece during the traditional *retretas* held by the group already in the 19th century. This presentation was repeated many times and was acclaimed by the local audience until 1946, when its last performance took place.

As part of the movement for recognition of the title of Cultural Heritage by UNESCO, the tradition of the *Vesperata* was revived, but upon its reestablishment, its objectives and organizational structure were altered, turning it into a tourist spectacle with economic potential. Thus, the urban space became a stage for cultural interaction aimed not only at visitors but also at the economic interests of activities orbiting this field.

The revitalization of *Vesperata* as a tourist attraction generated an increase in visitor flow and significant economic benefits, including job creation and strengthening of local commerce. However, these resources were distributed unevenly, concentrating in the hands of a few.

Additionally, the privatization of public space for the realization of the *Vesperata* presents challenges. The commercialization of the event through the sale of reserved tables alienates part of the local population and creates socioeconomic divisions, limiting residents' access to a cultural heritage that should belong to everyone. This dynamic raises questions about the commodification of cultural events and the need to balance economic interests with the preservation of musical sociability practices.

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