**YOUNG ACTIVIST, MUSICIANS AND COSUMERS: A LOST WORLD?**

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The young worlds recreated in the chapters that make up this book refer to a world of resistance, creativity and alternative or countercultural forms of sociability -therefore, submerged, hidden, in the peripheral neighbourhoods and in the associative centres-. All of them show agencies that oppose the typical adult-centrism of heteropatriarchal societies as Duarte and Escobar describes in their chapter. As Appadurai (1996) points out, what is imagined by the young protagonists of the scenarios and practices described throughout the pages of this book, directs us to something critical and new in youth global cultural processes: imagination as social practice. The imagination, the imagined, has become an organized field of social practices, a form of work (in the sense of culturally organized practice), and a form of negotiation between individual agency positions and globally defined fields of possibility. "Imagination is now fundamental to all forms of agency, it is itself a social fact, and it is the key component of the new global order" (Appadurai, 1996: 11]. Anyway, reading the amazing youth experiences analysed through the pages of the book, a feeling of melancholy assaulted my mind. I feel the sensation that a world not entirely born, it may be disappearing as a consequence of the politics in the pandemical times.

## Images of a lost world: Street, activism and youth

The different cases analysed in the book prove that the street was the central space for young people to create resistances and empower themselves. As Oliart explains, youth collectives played a crucial role in Chile to configure a new cartography of activism in the country. In this line, Duarte and Escobar remarks the experience of recognition carried out by male and female youngsters from impoverished sectors also in Chile, starting from the expulsion processes experienced by them from adult-centric institutions such as school and family. They build, thus, transgressive, and creative experiences, through performative actions, new types of groups and ways of organization, different ways of space occupation and critical, anti-patriarchal gender relations. The case of Casa Kolacho in Medellin analysed by Pérez Torres also showed us the significance of urban art and graffiti as a way to prevent violence in the outskirts of global South cities.

But, as is proved in next section, despite the repression and violence suffered by margialized, the young people were creating strategies to escape of their situation using new forms of cultural creativity. In Rio de Janeiro, São Paolo, Lisbon and, generally speaking, in Global South cities the hip-hop culture is the main protagonist. After the description and analyses read, it is undeniable that nowadays hip-hop culture has become, more and more, a common language used by young residents of the "suburbs" of the global south worldwide. From the North American neighbourhoods where rap was born (Lamotte 2014), to the popular housing Latin American neighbourhoods, European marginal areas to North African cities (Sánchez-García and Feixa Pàmpols 2019), has been proved to be an accessible, malleable and easily hybridisable instrument to affirm one's own position in specific urban contexts. From there i tis possible to build transnational social and symbolic ties. In short, rap has become (or has it always been?) A substantial means of "making the city" or "producing it" (Lefevbre, 1975; Agier, 2015).

All the cases of the studies had popular arts including hip-hop, grassroots movements and cyber communities as common traits. These are some of the avenues in which young people are taking a more proactive stance, thus generating alternative awareness and action on citizenship issues, justice and multiculturalism. In the same line, the collective LGTB in Sao Paolo, analysed by Grunvald, remarks the experience and occupation of city space and their transgressive uses in the urban experience of these peripheral youth proving both their forms of social organization and the growing politicization of LGBT families. Likewise, the last section of the book shows us how important is for young people the appropriation of public space, or better the "street", to create spaces to socialize themselves, share and produce cultural production and insolent ways to use leisure time beyond the capitalistic manner to understand leisure.

Through these experiences and practices described in the different chapters, young people were finding new avenues of cultural expression, openness and awareness as their economic opportunities and the possibilities of securing a future are diminishing. The dynamism of the networks constructed in this way allowed the emergence of new strategic ways of escaping from social margins to attempt to undermine the moralizing and adult-centred social discourse. In this way, young people's actions are recognized as a creative imaginative process based on meaningful symbolic and material practices (Willis, 1990) that may, in many cases, be classified in more than one way, but which in all cases may be understood as resilience and resistance strategies. Reciprocity, class solidarity and communitarianism are the fundamental mechanisms of youth groups.

Thus, as we can understand reading the chapters, young people were establishing 'border spaces', uniting the possibilities of the global and the local, both physical and symbolic, that endow them with means of subsistence, their own cultural practices, scenarios for political disruption, identity ascription and to reclaim their individual dignity as a human being. Cultural associations and peripheral neighbourhoods are safe spaces where youth groups build their strategies to achieve their economic, cultural or political objectives.

## Border spaces and youth

Each of the experiences presented in the chapters, combining the possibilities of the global and the local to construct spaces, in a physical and symbolic time, which give them livelihoods, cultural practices, scenarios for political disruption, identity ascription and individual dignity as a human being. The centres of cultural associations, and the neighbourhoods occupied by the was safe spaces where youth groups build their strategies to achieve their objectives, whether economic, cultural or political. This spatialization and peripheralization of youth cultures, which often do not renounce occupying the central spaces of the city or passively accept their marginalization, was a fundamental variable when exploring the conflicts and mediations that are generated in governance contexts that are, to a greater or lesser degree, authoritarian. These border spaces were located on the margins of the social world, so that subjects can think of themselves as subjects between two worlds.

In this way, young people constitute border spaces that use strategies from both the global world and local memory and practices, conferring power to that space that young people re-signify as response spaces, that are always constituted as a disruptive or defiant political space. There is, therefore, a social, political and cultural occupation on the border that takes on a conjugation of different positions in the social structure, in the political space and also in the processes of cultural hegemony and counter-hegemony (Feixa & Sánchez-García, 2019; p. 70). As Mignolo points out, border space is not exclusively a question of visible borders (nation-state), but, more importantly, it is a political and social positioning within the modern/colonial world that seeks to break, consciously or unconsciously, with decreed and also unique epistemic and ontological forms (Mignolo, 2015). Consequently, we can understand these spaces of sociability of youth groups as border areas between the subaltern produced by modernization and colonization processes and the marginalization suffered that considers the members of youth groups as separate subjects who do not accept the options or conditions that (from power) are presented or imposed on them (Mignolo 2015).

In consequence, the public space is a hybrid between physical public spaces and virtual commons spaces (Di Siena, 2009). However, it is difficult to determine, in a general way, if this hybridization makes the relationships established in physical spaces less important and intensifies the virtual ones. As we can observe in all the chapters, the members of youth groups use both public spaces - physical and virtual - at the same time, causing a more intensive use of the physical public space, through its hybridization with the virtual one. Young people consider public spaces -both virtual and physical- as a central place for coexistence, either to obtain livelihood resources or to socialize, are being forced to transform their habitual forms of relationship, with more intense and durable effects for them. This way of action has been restricted by the measures taken to stop the pandemic, which is why it is necessary to analyze the use of hybrid public spaces in relation to those measures adopted by youth street groups. As Urteaga points out,

> *The territory of these young people had been shifted into the cyberspace, while researchers approached them in the conventional space of presence, trying to carry out ethnographies, interviews, old-fashioned life stories, unable to immerse themselves in the territory where the wealth of linguistic, ethical and aesthetic productions shone without fuss: blogs, forums and chats. A new territory appeared to the researchers, which for these young people was the natural space of expression. (Urteaga and Moreno, 2020, p. 7)*

Thus, we find out that the tendency of young people to use cyberspace as a meeting place, but the street is still the central place of coexistence and social relationships for them. The street - not the public space- continues to be the central space for them to solve the deficiencies magnified by the current situation[1]. We observe in the experiences described, a different way of understanding public spaces. While youth groups understand the street as the central place for social exchanges, where trust and ties are established -also with researchers-, the authorities understand the street as a public space to be controlled. The dynamism of the networks analysed shows us how young people were creating strategic ways to escape of social margins. As Jean and John Comoroff point out, "one of the hallmarks of the present moment, the era of

[1]As Manuel Delgado points out, public spaces can be understood as politically controlled spaces. The idea of public spaces is constituted as an axis that justifies and legitimizes the management of what would be a coercive consensus or a coercion, agreed, up to a certain limit, with the coerced subjects themselves, versus the concept of street, which would be the place of spontaneously and customarily regulated relationships (Delgado, 2014).

globalization and postcolonialism, is the decline of the ability of the governments—if not the forces of the market they foster—to control the bodies, energies and intentions of young people. The nation-State harbours forces that it can no longer adequately control" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2005: 22). XXI century youth cultures were, then, strategies for escaping from these situations, and generate action [border] spaces, cultures of resistance and social protest that challenge the established social order as a whole.

## Then suddenly Covid-19 arrived...

In the spring time of 2020, the coronavirus interrupted our daily lives. The political management of the pandemic modified the possibility of practice this kind of activities described in the chapters. In this sense, one of the biggest obstacles has been the physical distancing measures introduced by the authorities that have led to a closed control of the populations on the street and increased surveillance by technological means. Young people have become the most exposed to the disease and the repressive measures and to the risk of contamination because they live in an environment where confinement is not respected. In this case, for a big number of young people, physical distancing means social isolation, marginalization and precariousness. While youth groups understand the street as the central place for social exchanges where trust and ties are established, also with researchers, the authorities understand the street as a public space that needs to be controlled to turn it into an aseptic space, form of governance hyperbolized by the pandemic.

The greatest obstacle for young people has been the physical distancing measures established by the authorities. In a general way, the different governments have followed, with nuances, the same guidelines: sanitary measures based on population confinement; social aid policies with greater or lesser intensity and success depending on the available resources; increase of police presence and control of the streets, and greater surveillance by technological means. These measures of physical distancing[2] range from confinement (that is, imposition of the obligation to stay at home, and restrictions on mobility with repressive measures ranging from financial fines to prison sentences) to the appeal to individual responsibility without repressive measures in case of transgression of the provisions. What has been proposed is a control of proxemics, that is, of the physical distance of social relations established through cultural logics

[2] Although in these months the use of the expression "social distancing" has been normalized, we consider the term "physical distancing" to be more accurate: "To begin with, "social distancing" was the wrong term. We should think of this moment as "physical distancing" to emphasize that we can remain socially connected even when separated. In fact, I encourage everyone to practice distance socialization. (De Witte, 2020)

according to the type of space where the relationship between individuals or groups occurs. Proxemics establishes four large types of spaces: intimate, personal, social and public, according to the distance established between the subjects for their relationships (Hall, 1992); therefore, the object of the social-physical distancing measures pervert and transform the customary established proxemic social rules. In fact, the use of the term "physical" as an adjective of distancing is paradoxical since it seems to obey the idea that, despite the forced or recommended physical distancing, the virtual world would save the social distancing caused by quarantines.

In this way, we observe the imposition of a governance model whose obsession is the control of mobility and physical contact, pointing at those individuals who are forced to continue on the street to earn their daily livelihood and, especially, to those who are homeless, as dangerous members of society as some young's can represent. We are attending, very quickly, to the implementation of the biopolitics of containment of bodies, in which the wanderer, and, especially, those who have no means of subsistence and are obliged to transgress the new imposed proxemics, are seen as a threat to public health. Foucault (2006) pointed out, two potentially fundamental issues, among others, to understand current government measures: 1) the concept of population to "evaluate" the effectiveness of the measures through "numbers" of infected, severe cases and mortality (when a single victim is already a tragedy); and 2) the brand of the "passer-by" as being dangerous because they cannot be counted among the members of the sedentary population, but also the consideration of any person wandering the street as a "transgressor", turned into a potential social criminal. Thus, it is the subordinate sectors that are the most exposed to the disease and repressive measures and, especially, young people. However, for young people, the street is perceived as a fundamental space to develop their disrupting activities. The experiences described here collides with the reinforced measures of biopolitical control and repression of the free movement in the street and public space carried out by State authorities in the context of a pandemic crisis.

As it is proved in the different chapters, social networks for individual communication also need that trust previously established in the physical contacts. Faced with the increase in social control, justified by the exceptional measures to fight the recent pandemic, how young people correspond to this biopolitical control of the population? Will young people continue with the same strategies of adaptation, resilience and resistance? Will the street continue to be a contested space or a vital space for identity, survival and means of life? Maybe, this book can be read as a testimony of a lost world producing a melancholic feeling of loss, as when you read an old ethnographic text about some extinguished culture.

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