




# ALTERNAUTAS

(Re)Searching Development: The Abya Yala Chapter

Vol.10 – Issue 2 [December 2023]

## Introduction: Streets of Latin America: New Battlegrounds of Change

Helton Levy 

*London Metropolitan University, UK*

Accepted: 20 December 2023 / Published online: 21 December 2023

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Alternautas is a peer reviewed academic journal that publishes content related to Latin American Critical Development Thinking.

It intends to serve as a platform for testing, circulating, and debating new ideas and reflections on these topics, expanding beyond the geographical, cultural and linguistic boundaries of Latin America - Abya Yala. We hope to contribute to connecting ideas, and to provide a space for intellectual exchange and discussion for a nascent academic community of scholars, devoted to counter-balancing mainstream understandings of development.

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How to cite:

Levy H. (2023), Introduction. Streets of Latin America: New Battlegrounds of Change, *Alternautas*, 10(2), 1-3. DOI: 10.31273/an.v10i2.1492

University of Warwick Press

<http://www.alternautas.net>



ISSN - 2057-4924

Helton Levy<sup>1</sup>

## **Introduction: Streets of Latin America: New Battlegrounds of Change**

Latin America's vibrant and complex urban landscapes have given the world narratives of change and resistance shaped by culture, politics, and popular struggle. Walking in Brazil in the 80s, Suely Rolnik and Felix Guattari defined what they saw as a *molecular revolution*. They walked the streets made of the archaic and the new, informal assemblages, where “minoritarian becomings” were revitalising a new militancy. According to them, all these movements would lead to new processes of “subjectivisation” and the birth of a new form of politics. This *Alternautas*’ special edition asked how the same actors, including artists, activists, practitioners, and citizens, could enhance the city as a renewed micropolitical battleground of change. What innovations and limitations could forge or obstruct discussions towards a democratic consolidation?

These questions are difficult to answer, especially during new changes left and right in the region. While Brazil and Argentina traded places on where the populist right sits at the moment, the rest of the region awaits or is in turmoil. Discontent grows in Peru, as divisions become apparent between Venezuela and Guyana. Other countries, such as Mexico and Panama, wait for a power change in 2024. The same streets that have been occupied by the military, populists, and anarchists can also offer more than institutional politics. The streets seen by this edition’s authors continue to bridge past and present, as discussed by Rolnik and Guattari. These streets remain as transformative for artists and activists as during the movements that succeeded the falling dictatorships in the 1980s. More importantly, memories of repressive events taken on the streets continue to base a new generation of change-makers read here through a series of indigenous, decolonial, and feminist methods.

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<sup>1</sup> Helton Levy is a journalist, researcher, and Lecturer in Digital and Visual Media at London Metropolitan University. Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4986-7954>

Building on Graciela Sacco's (1956-2017) legacy, Clara Garavelli celebrates the 30th anniversary of her iconic *Bocanada* images. The Argentinian artist projected a series of impactful interventions on the urban fabric. The first intervention in Rosario in 1993 marked a turning point, challenging power dynamics and signalling a state of emergency. The article explores the evolution of Sacco's "interferences" from the streets to gallery spaces and museums, reflecting on their renewed vitality over three decades. Still in Argentina, Eva Youkhana and Cilia Saed Hedayati focus on the bustling metropolis of Buenos Aires. They adopted a feminist lens for the challenges of urbanisation. They question the efficacy of safety measures and investigate who benefits from them. Drawing on the insights of Argentine activist Ana Falú and others, the researchers aim to decolonise traditional knowledge production methods. Utilizing participatory mapping tools designed in Latin America, the study promises to unveil diverse perspectives on safety and city renovations, from the elderly to security forces.

Beyond the design and safety of the streets, this edition opens space for a discussion on the evolving role of public spaces in Latin America. Erich Hellmer scrutinizes the post-neoliberal vision pursued by Mayor Gustavo Petro, who sought to democratize urban life through public space expansion and recovery. Hellmer argues that previous projects for the city inadvertently led to new forms of exclusion. Instead of relying on a notion of abstract universal citizenship, Petro's approach have utilized local heritage and communities, fostering a more endogenous form of public space politics. This, the author contends, laid a stronger foundation for democratization and the pursuit of the right to the city, allowing grassroots efforts to assert the order of things in the city's settings.

In a significant addition to this exploration, Natalia Stengel Pena focuses on the *Glorietas de las Mujeres che Luchan*, a feminist urban intervention in Mexico City. Inaugurated in 2021, the site has remained a constant site of mourning, protest, and resistance for feminists worldwide. Pena examines if the *Glorieta* acts as a permanent site of feminist activism, continuing the ongoing transfeminist struggle against the patriarchal system. The author argues that the *Glorieta* has the potential to continually remind Mexico of its colonial past and the enduring challenges faced by women. It serves as a demand for the government to guarantee justice and a life free of violence for all women.

Shifting gears to Peru, Eliana Otta paints a poignant picture of art as a tool of resistance. Since Dina Boluarte took office, the country has witnessed police repression and military violence resulting in tragic fatalities. Mass mobilizations rejected her presidency, giving rise to initiatives like *Retablos por la Memoria*. Rooted in traditional artistic expression, this movement, initiated by feminist artists, acts as a bridge in a fragmented and depoliticised society. In a nation scarred by past armed conflicts and grappling with the aftermath of COVID-19,

*Retablos por la Memoria* stands as a regenerative form of activism, contesting impunity and demanding radical change.

Creative forms of urban intervention also pivoted new discussions in Brazil during difficult times. Amid the devastating consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, Alessandra Simões Paiva explores the relationship between a decolonial turn in the arts and times of the right-wing government of Jair Bolsonaro. Projects like *Vozes contra o Racismo* and the *CURA* Urban Art Circuit, involving Afro-descendant and Indigenous curators and artists, have become powerful symbols of visibility and affirmation. As museums closed their doors, urban spaces became epicentres of artistic and political expression, coinciding with the rise of the decolonial movement in Brazilian arts. The author defends that decolonial and Latin American methods are needed to further understand these new paradigms of expression.

Together, these articles weave a rich tapestry of resistance based on new parameters guided by feminist and decolonial initiatives. Drawing on the reality of Latin America's largest cities, there are surely many others to discover. In this edition, the invited authors eventually offer insights into the evolving debates that were non-existent or silenced until a few decades ago. In this interplay between culture, politics, and modern urban life, the street emerges not only as a space for outsourcing discussions not held in parliament, media, or mainstream politics but also where the conditions are forged to test new ideas and include new publics and their political priorities. We invite you to explore these innovative perspectives and engage in the dialogue established with new molecular agents of change in Latin American streets.