

COLLECTIVE SUBJECTS AND POLITICAL MOBILIZATION IN THE PUBLIC SPACE: TOWARDS A MULTITUDE CAPABLE OF GENERATING TRANSFORMATIVE PRACTICES

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Abstract: During the last twenty years in Latin America, there has been a rise in governments drawn from self-defining progressive political currents. Consequently a revitalization is underway of the debate on the viability, pertinence, and characteristics of the welfare state in the twenty-first century. In this context, the present article explores emerging social practices that redefine the various senses of the public space; practices that go beyond nation states, situated in a global territoriality, articulating languages and eliciting emotions capable of producing new socialities. The multitude is discussed as a social subject capable of generating transformative practices. Specifically, the article analyzes the way in which the singularities of occupations raise further questions for nation states. The analysis focuses on global movements such as #Occupy camping out on squares.

Keywords: #Occupy, public space, square, emotions, multitude

Introduction

Since the mid-1990s and during the first decade of the 21st century new forms of demonstration, communication and gathering have emerged in different cities (Buenos Aires, Genova, Madrid and Seattle). Collective practices have taken place in “camps” and constitute a singular kind of material and symbolical occupation of public spaces. The malaise over the lack of jobs and the economic crisis brought multitudes of people together, who occupied squares, streets and cyber-space, turning them into reclaimed public spaces. Consumers—mainly, but not exclusively young people—a product of neoliberalism, have become modern citizens connected through a history of fighting and a long list of social claims. Thus, the permanent camps have become spaces of debate, meeting, organization and life. This camps have been used to promote discussion and reflection among journalists, researchers, politicians and thousands of pedestrians.

This article covers five dimensions of analysis. The first is the notion that public space has many recognizable meanings that focus especially on resistance dynamics and urban

rebellion. The second is the daily practices that emerge in the particular context and the subject who performs these practices, that is to say, the multitude along with its emotions. The third is the metamorphosis of transformation, which is defined paying particular attention to its resistance tools—the visible and the creative. The fourth is the conflicts that these spaces generate, from a “state-centric” view and in terms of definition, management and control. Lastly, we analyze the place that emotions occupy in these daily resistance scenarios.

One of the first steps of our research was to conduct a bibliographical review, from which we can conclude that there is a large amount of quantitative analysis which neglects the important role of collective emotions in these kinds of social mobilization. It was therefore necessary to resituate the meaning of public space in the context in which the neoliberal discourse of the 1990s was questioned and the return of the inspiration of the welfare state in designing public politics .

Methods: Mapping the transformation

In urban territory, the square becomes the protagonist space in the occupations held by different collectives with claims that have their own singularities, but nonetheless share the adoption of critical positions before the deployment of integrated global capitalism (Félix Guattari, 2004). The #Occupy movement was chosen, as it is an appeal that that is still heard to this day and because of its global nature (Belli, Lopez & Romano, 2007). In previous eras, the adoption of the square as an occupied space replaced the occupation of other spaces in the practices of resistance, resilience and rebellion. Thinking about the historical precedent of global occupation, events spring to mind such as the protests against the Vietnam War and around May 68, when, although the revolutionary center was located in the universities of Berkeley and the Sorbonne in Paris, similar events were taking place in many other Latin American cities, like Mexico City, Buenos Aires and Sao Paulo. Many of these youth demonstrations ended up being diverted into occupying the factories. In this sense, there is a fundamental difference between the main spaces of these revolts; the squares are open spaces, while universities and factories are closed spaces.

When analyzing this displacement regarding the kind of occupied space, we will quote Michel Foucault (1975) to help us understand the productive nature of modern spaces of discipline and the social meanings of these productions. Foucault distinguishes in productive spaces “the principle of elemental localization or of the division in zones” with the function of “decomposing collective implantations; of analyzing the confusing, massive or elusive pluralities”, and this is why the transcendence of the materiality of these localizations is in the individuation of the bodies from a relational system of “ranks” (1975, pp. 86–87); the results of these spaces are thereby “architectonical, functional and hierarchical at the same time” (p. 90). These categorizations can be seen in modern institutions like factories, schools or universities and prisons.

Now we can return to what it means to occupy closed spaces like universities or factories, understanding these as disciplinary spaces whose primary feature is the production of social meaning. From this, we can also say that the occupation of these spaces can be seen in terms of resistance practices against production models. From here, we want to consider the mobilization of spaces of resistance, from the spaces of production to others that respond

more to models of urban interaction, which, in the context of integrated global capitalism, are conceived as spaces of consumption.

Richard Sennett (1990) in his book *The Conscience of the Eye* talks about the notion that modernity grew out of the impossibility of reconciling inner life with outer life. For Sennett, inner life or subjective experience is represented by the self, while outer life or world experience corresponds to the city. The city is, then, the experience of otherness: "Our human problem is how to revive the reality of the outside as a dimension of human experience" (Sennett, 1990, p. 13).

So far, we might think that the fact that the occupation model claims the use of urban squares is already a great achievement, insofar as the limiting social meanings of distribution, typical of closed spaces of production in modernity, have been overcome. Nevertheless, the square is a modern space because it has maximum visibility; it signals that public space is a potential outside place. Naturally, as Foucault would say, visibility is a trap and the square is not that different from other examples of the panoptical architecture of modernity, like schools, universities, factories, and prisons.

Martin Jay (2007) wonders if a kind of Foucaultian parrhesia can be applied to the rhetoric of image and whether a visual parrhesia can be seen as a way of taking the risk of expressing a truth in a public space. Jay concludes it is not; however, to expose oneself in speech is a basic form of autopoiesis, and differs from both instrumental rhetoric and confession, produced under the shadow of guilt.

Fernando Broncano (2013, p. 27) affirms that "The modern subject is a being that raises his voice in a public space, and his words obey only his reason's authority." City squares can be seen as scenarios in which modern subjects become protagonists in open and visible spaces. However, we must consider what we mean by public space and how this concept should be approached in relation to resistance dynamics and urban rebellion.

As David Harvey points out (2012), when confronted with the most recent social movements, nation states have come under the spotlight for claiming the exclusive right to regulate and dispose of public space, reawakening the political debate about the public and the urban. From this perspective, the occupation of public spaces is a claim that continues the historical rupture with the productivist use of modern spaces; before it was the factory or the university, now it is the square. Nevertheless, the critical view of Manuel Delgado (2009, p. 56) shows us that, despite everything, this is a hegemonic evaluation of public space, which is not exempt from the institutional and liberal tensions around public control. The occupation of factories and universities ended up politicizing modern production devices, and so one wonders if #Occupy has politicized public space and involved the city in the wider processes of consciousness and debate.

Analysis: Public space in Latin-America

Just as in the European context, the discussion about public space in Latin America has similar actors and development processes, though these are framed by diverse modernization processes. In this context it is hard to assimilate the discussion processes about western welfare states in a non-critical form, especially those referring to the concept of public space, its use, regulation, appropriation and signification.

If the European welfare state developed in response to territorial and urban planning as a means of eliminating social segregation, in Latin-America (with some exceptions) it has emerged in the absence of planning and so public space has been a privileged reflex of that segregation. Avenues, streets, parks and squares have acquired significance as public spaces for gatherings and rebellion, and as a reflection of inequality.

Squares have been the location of the worst massacres by authoritarian states such as in Mexico in 1968, a few days before the inauguration of the Olympic Games that were to take place in Mexico City. The Three Cultures square was where the slaughter took place against those claiming the square as a public space for protest. That day armed groups, in collaboration with the Mexican army, shot the young people gathered, destroying hopes of a better and fairer future.

The Colombian Constitution of 1991 recognized the right to use public spaces, which were defined as

urban areas for pedestrian and vehicle circulation, recreational areas, both active (for sports) and passive (parks and gardens); free spaces between buildings, bodies of water and their surroundings, natural areas inside the city, areas around the public facilities required to operate these systems; and in general, all areas of public interest and collective use (Vergara et al., 2015).

However, these attempts to acknowledge public spaces have focused on the centers of the formal city, while neglecting the informal city. An example is the city of Bogota (Beckett & Godoy, 2010), which developed out of migratory processes of a different nature. The public spaces of the invisible city are one of the most important differences that set them aside from European cities (Burbano, 2014). The center and the suburbs reproduce segregation.

The public spaces of formal cities then become a dual space of symbolic and emotional production. They are conceived as spaces of circulation, interaction and enjoyment from a neoliberal perspective, deprived of all political connotations and expurgated of the contradictions of the informal city. Occupying them is not just a political fact in the traditional sense but in the emotional sense as well. It implies the resignification of the use of that public space beyond sporadic traffic and the commercialization of its symbolic centrality.

In contrast, in Ecuador, the 2008 National Plan for Good Living approached public spaces in a welfare sense. The Metropolitan District of Quito (DMQ) is an illustrative example of how Ecuador created these general objectives at the local government level. Many proposals have been implemented through the “DMQ Metropolitan Development Plan 2012 – 2022.” One of the objectives is to ensure universal access to and use of public space. One of the main elements of ensuring access and use is the re-categorization of the concept of communality, as a means of fostering emotional and relational links among the vast numbers of excluded people in Latin-America: the descendants of the native peoples (Cueva, 2010).

From the perspective of public space occupation, these groups have always been accused of using their subsistence economic practices to usurp public spaces. The fact that these groups are considered in the planning and given a voice in the use of public spaces is progress in the right to use the city that historically segregated groups have. Nevertheless, these policies still make excessive use of anachronistic cultural categories and reinforce gaps between the different groups that constitute the collective.

In order to finish this brief tour of the conception of public space in Latin America we will go back to the starting point: Mexico City. In recent years Mexico City, a megalopolis in which more than 20 million people coexist every day, has been turned into a laboratory of the reappropriation of public space. In 2008 the Public Space Authority of the Federal District was created to support the activities of the Government's Headquarters for the integral management of public spaces in Mexico City. The purpose of this institution is to develop public life in urban space with the aim of returning public spaces to society and of improving the quality of the services offered in the city, while revitalizing urban culture.

After decades of uncontrolled growth fed by the endemic institutional corruption and the absence of welfare state policies, the autonomous government of Mexico City came up with a proposal to reclaim these spaces at the beginning of the new millennium, which was achieved under progressive governments. These policies are all about reclaiming public spaces and mobility. At the same time, they are a response to two big problems: the loss of common space in the city, primarily because of the traffic, and the construction of the commons regarding public space.

In this context, we find again that efforts have focused on the central zones of the formal city and the segregated and chaotic zones of the informal city lie forgotten once again. However, the fact that reclaiming public space is now considered a means of enabling the construction of the commons brings us back to the idea that the multitude is creative and institutive. It is in the meeting of affections and emotions, often in unfavorable situations, that all the differences and scarcities in Latin American cities disappear to be connected to the wave across global cities. This is where the resistance to the normalization of spaces, programmed activity and creative irreducibility become more important.

Results: Construing daily time as common time

Paolo Virno (2003) shows how the multitude moves between innovation and negation, which is about opening up to a world full of uncertainty and danger, but it also represents a source of innovation and creation. The multitude constitutes the "infrastructure" where the contemporary subject can find reasons to act and trust at the same time (Belli & Broncanco, 2017). The innovating action and creativity thus represent forms of verbal thought that enable the diversification of behavior in emergency situations, as they are an unexpected deviation in routine.

The multitude, according to Edgar Straehle (2013), is presented as a social subject born out of a "massive social infection" (p. 50), and that is why, when faced with different forms of cooperation, all kinds of sovereign authority are avoided in its organization. Gathering in these squares, the precariat has the capability, the strength and the time to occupy public spaces and show that there is an alternative way. This is the fear that the multitude produces in the political class, because a precedent has been created, before and after, in the social movements to come (Hardt & Negri, 2004).

The action of occupying a space not only means occupying a physical materiality like a square or a building, but also the act of re-appropriating "something", "something" that we thought was already ours, but in some way no longer is because it has changed. "I Occupy" means that I do something, like when I say "I am here and I am alive", and this produces an

action and a movement. A performative act that does not imply a territorialized action, but that adds “deterritorialization” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972). Performativity, thus understood, is a device of individual will, and this is how a multitude gathers. According to Ignacia Perrugoría and Benjamín Tejerina (2013), positive emotions emerge when spontaneously erecting a camp. Joy, efficacy and empowerment are the “primary” emotions in these spaces. The #Occupy movement, then, becomes a daily practice, a continued action in our lives.

In the first analysis, the exceptional nature of the #Occupy movement is placed in a collective subjectivity, molded by the “others” that are in the same position as the subject, sharing the social malaise, generating a space for innovating speech and claiming it in public. It is a visibility that is present not only in discursive practices, but in the whole of public space. It is this that enables the invisible to become visible; this supposes that the panoptic function of the square is not denied but re-appropriated and thus made beneficial out of that vigilance and made truly public and controversial. These emotions hosted inside the subject, insofar as isolated individuals (unemployed, poor, precariat at home) develop this infrastructure within the multitude, and the multitude allows them to have a platform where they can go outside, into the streets, with placards and technologies to express their emotions, and to prove that they are warm and strong, among subjects who occupy and share the same public space.

In contexts of crisis, collective emotions appear and give sense to and interpret what is happening (Jasper, 1997). The multitude develops similar processes to those adopted by people searching for affection, recognition and security at the time of belonging to groups (Langman, 2003).

The exceptional nature of the #Occupy movement gives a place to the collective subjectivity that shares its social malaise through innovating and reappropriating the discourse of the public space. The people (in the streets of Sao Paulo, Bogotá and Mexico City), the voices (ideas, placards, tweets, assemblies) and the emotions (something invisible) constitute this mixture, which can be understood as a social technology, and that is embodied in the #Occupy movement.

While many of the people in the square are yelling, approving, debating, and writing banners, they also share tweets and text messages that appear on social networks, and they share pictures, images and videos of other subjects present in the square. Common objects, like the tools to set up a camp and mobile phones, make for a polyphonic multitude in a system that does not usually allow these voices expression. A camp is a place in an offline world that when combined with a mobile phone and a connection in the online world acquire their own agency that makes it possible to subvert formal institutions. Thanks to the new technologies, the body combines the digital and the analogical, and their multiple experiences.

Discussion: Mobilizations in the Mexican context, beyond the #Occupy movement

We can find examples of these new forms of organization that combine the digital and the analogical in the Latin American context. Mexico has been sensitive to this process since the rise of Zapatistas in January 1994. EZLN used the internet to convey its statements, claims and situation to the international community, thereby introducing this new means of social

protest (Zaid, 1994). More recently, two important movements have been created that have left their mark in the Mexican imagination: the #IAm132 Movement and The Global Action for Ayotzinapa.

In Mexico the name of the #IAm132 movement is a pretty clear reference to the appropriation and use of social networks in social protests and mobilization¹. The indignity triggered by the biased manipulation in the traditional media led to 131 students making a video showing their school I.D., identifying themselves as the subjects of the protest and uploading it onto YouTube.

The name #IAm132 was chosen later, after many citizens had demonstrated their solidarity with these young people by calling themselves “the 132nd”, the next one in the multitude that was being generated. From that moment on, students from public and private educational institutions gathered and helped form the movement that was strengthened through social networks. Subsequently, the movement joined other social organizations in an electoral context, and took action, like the rallies known as “Anti Pe a Nieto”, which were assembled through social networks and which were attended by 100 thousand protesters in Mexico City (Herrera, 2012).

At the same time, the #OccupyTelevisa hashtag was used to call for a peaceful 24-hour occupation of Televisa, thus drawing attention to one of the parties responsible for the disinformation spread by the main media outlets and their complicity with national political authorities. This mobilization gathered around 10 thousand people who occupied the offices of Televisa in July 2012 as a means of protest (Poy & Olivares, 2012).

Of the mobilizations in Mexico, the “Ayotzinapa case”² caused the most indignation and led to an increase in the number of protests and mobilizations over the last few years.

After twelve days of the authorities giving contradictory versions of the facts and the mass media’s uncritical validation, the first national rally protesting at the events took place on October 8 in 25 states around the country. Many cities and media outlets in other countries joined the rally and engaged in virtual spreading. It started with the #WeAllAreAyotzinapa hashtag and internet users used the phrase: “They took them alive, we want them back alive,” as they demanded the return of the missing normalistas from Ayotzinapa.

“Global Action Day for Ayotzinapa” was a global event that took place on October 22 through the digital mobilization of affection and solidarity across the world. About 70 Mexican educational institutions ceased operating in protest. Some of the mobilization took place in 18 cities in Mexico, and in cities like Barcelona, Paris, Helsinki, Copenhagen, Florence, Madrid, London, Buenos Aires, Santiago of Chile, La Paz, and Bogota.

¹ Former candidate Enrique Peña Nieto, of the Institutional Revolutionary Party, was jeered by students when visiting the Iberoamerican University, Mexico City Campus, in March 11, 2012. The national media tried to play down the event stating that only a small number of people had protested and they were not even students from that university.

² The death of nine people and the forced disappearance of 43 students from the Raúl Isidro Burgos Rural Normal School, belonging to the Ayotzinapa community, in the municipality of Tixtla, Guerrero, Mexico, on September 26, 2014. Police brutality was involved and many acts have been exposed revealing the corruption on the part of state authorities and the complicity between the public security services and criminal groups and drug dealers.

This global mobilization propelled the case to international importance and led to human rights institutions in Latin America and around the world becoming involved. More than 2 years later, the students are still missing, but the mobilization has prevented the Mexican government from hiding behind the official “alleged” version of the facts. The virtual and physical demonstrations, affection and support shown in the “Ayotzinapa case” are indicative of the power of the new forms of social mobilization, which combine the digital and the analogical, and multiple experiences.

The multitude does not want individuals to occupy the space in the name of the people; it wants these people to occupy spaces and speak for themselves, making active use of the space. For this reason, Virno (2003)—as we have already noted—affirms that the multitude moves between innovation and negation. His first question is: how can this fragile multiplicity create a fair social order? Virno finds ambivalence in the fact that the kind of political participation that takes place in a state of exception is rooted not in formal rules, but in their suspension and in their exceptional nature. Political decisions are not governed by rules but by regularities, and these regularities are not constant or stable, so they operate like an emotional performance that constitutes an opening up to the world, full of uncertainty, danger, and innovation. The unstable, the temporary, and the exceptional are ideal contexts for system change. These regularities ensure uncertainty, oscillation and distress.

With this argument, Virno wants to establish a source for the “right to resistance”. Virno (2003, p. 71) defines innovating action and creativity as ways of verbal thought that allow behavior to be altered in emergency situations. That is to say, they are a denial of the established way of resisting obsolete governance practices. For this reason, the multitude is located within the infrastructure of innovating action, as it is an unexpected deviation in routine. The multitude is able to consciously launch its own action as a decisive moment in the balance of historical development (George Lukács, 1922). It has an agency that, although referring to a collective imaginary, is presented within the #Occupy movement as a collective that always acts in the first person plural referring to “us”. An example of this is the hacker collective, until recently isolated and stigmatized as individualist, bringing together the multitude and collaborating on digital platforms. The revolt and rebellion movements provide us with means not just of rejecting the oppressive regimes that these subjective figures endure, but of subverting these subjectivities in power relationships; in other words, they discover new forms of dependence and security in social ground.

The occupying subject is polyphonic and located (Medina, 2012) in multiple perspectives and voices through a collective responsibility. The agency of responsibility acts as an emotional “illness”, warning about the responsibility of being silent or inactive. For Michel Maffesoli (2007), collective emotions dwell in the present, a crystallization point for the past and the future, and they occupy a place in this symbolic and non-symbolic reality, which is to be-together. According to Virno (2003), the main feature of emotions is that they lack a space in intimate and private spaces such as rooms, existing only in public spaces, like squares.

The “other mobilizations”: Right-wing populism in Europe and America

The occupation of public space is not restricted to progressive movements seeking to express themselves. The need to regain the political sphere has been taken up by the so-called “Populist

Wave” as well. The rejection of the forms of government that have been established in the last 40 years under the name of neoliberalism has caused a series of formations to emerge on the political scene that attempt to capture the disaffection with ultra-right positions. Such movements are heterogeneous but share some features such as the rejection of the foreign-born population, referring to the dangers of immigration; and criticizing traditional political parties, corrupt elites and the impossibility of improving the living conditions of the population.

This adoption of malaise is reflected in the rise of the most conservative populist positions, known as “radical right populism” (Betz, 2004), the “new extreme right” (Rodríguez, 2006) or the “populist radical right” (Mudde, 2007). Although all these formations communicate with one another, there are programmatic differences and they hold different combinations of principles depending on the contextual conditions in which they exist. One difference between them and former ultra-right anti-systems is that members of the radical populist right are “(nominally) democratic, although they oppose some fundamental values of liberal democracies, while the extreme right is essentially anti-democratic, opposes the fundamental principle of people’s sovereignty” (Mudde, 2007, p. 31). Most of these movements make appeals to nationalism, which is their central ideological core (Betz, 2004; Rydgren, 2007; Mudde, 2007). The appeal of these movements lies in their shared idea of a constant anti-establishment mobilization that implies the occupation of public space.

They capture this malaise by appealing to us, being easily identified with “the people” and bearing some virtues and advocating the return of common sense to politics. Subsequently, this “we” is presented in opposition to the external element. Here the popularity of these movements differs in Europe and Latin America, since in Europe it is usually the migratory flows and, therefore, the foreign-born population, which symbolizes the “other”. By contrast, in most Latin American countries, the “other” denotes the corrupt political elites (Betz, 2002).

In Latin America, the capture of this malaise has been evident on the left in recent years. Evo Morales, Rafael Correa and Hugo Chávez are clear examples of that. All rose to power promising revolution: a post-colonial one in Bolivia, a citizen one in Ecuador and a Bolivarian revolution in Venezuela (Gratius & Rivero, 2018). The reactionary wave on the continent was immediate. On October 28, 2018, Jair Bolsonaro of the Social Liberal Party (PSL) won the second round of the Brazilian presidential elections on 55.13% of the vote. The rise of Bolsonaro was down to his campaign and ability to capture the malaise of the population elicited by the ongoing corruption in the country.

Perhaps the most representative cases of the popularity of the right have occurred in two Central American countries without much geopolitical weight. The first is the case of Jimmy Morales, who in 2015, when faced with the collapse of the party system and the Guatemalan political class in the wake of the La Línea scandal, emerged from outside the system to win the second round. His profile runs counter to all of the above as he is a comedian with no money and no political structure. He endorsed the elements that gave substance to the malaise, did not belong to the political establishment, and was neither corrupt nor a thief. The other case is that of Nayib Bukele in El Salvador, who led the New Ideas Movement. The appropriation of the language of social networks and the arguments of social unrest is a dangerous phenomenon that combines the worst of classical conservatism (authoritarianism, militarism, religiosity of political life) with the language of contemporary social movements.

In the European sphere, it is in the East that this malaise has been most evident. The most notable cases have been Hungary, where the Fidesz government—a nationalist conservative party—and Poland, where the Law and Justice party is in government, have strengthened their positions by adopting an anti-immigration stance. But the clearest example of this capture by right-wing populism is found in the Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004. In this case, the process of capturing and mobilizing the malaise did not occur until February 2014, a decade later, when a wave of protests, especially in the capital, Kiev, against the then president Viktor Yanukovich brought about a true political revolution in the country. The protests began with marches against the president's decision not to sign the agreement with the European Union, but there was a broad consensus denouncing the corruption and economic stagnation. On February 20, after the violent clashes in Maidan (square), that led to more than a hundred victims, a provisional government formed of right-wing parties took office. In the rest of Europe, the growth of populist right-wing formations has gained renewed momentum in the south (Spain, Greece and Italy) and has consolidated its position in the rest of Europe (France, the Netherlands and Belgium). All of them have tried, with varying degrees of success, to create their own language and spaces for the mobilization of social unrest.

An archaeological look at the mobilization and social movements

In the cultural archaeology of social movements, the World Social Forum represents the point at which the series of changes condensed in the actions of contemporary collective mobilizations. This process is a response to the new political, economic and social reality, historically located in the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dismantling of the Eastern European bloc. This moment, known as the neoliberal phase of capitalism, was the point of acceleration of the policies promoted by most Western democracies. This new phase can be summed up as the so-called free market trinity: deregulation, privatization and social spending cuts (Klein, 2001; George, 2004 and Amin, 2007). This neoliberal symbolic construction proclaims and naturalizes many of the traditional liberal dogmas (Fernández Buey, 2005), but also posits that there is no alternative, using the Hegelian term “the end of history” (Fukuyama, 1992).

The WSF will condense the traditional social movements and the new social movements gestated in the heat of May 68 (Wallerstein, 2004). The main movements that emerged out of the disenchantment of the institutional left were feminism, pacifism and environmentalism (Riechmann & Fernández Buey, 1995), not forgetting the anti-authoritarian, anti-democratic, anti-militarist, anti-imperialist, anti-pro-activist, anti-patriarchal and even anti-capitalist and anti-socialist movements (Fernández Buey, 2005).

In Seattle, the indignation was directed at the main exponents of the world economic government, as in previous years: the IMF, the World Bank, the G-8, the FTAA, the WTO, the EMF, the OECD, the OAS, among others. The WSF institutionalized, with the risks that this process entails, the experiences of Seattle and the rest of the protests that took place in the heat of the advance of globalization (Bello, 2004). Thus, a new route for social mobilization is being outlined in which old and new movements, anti-globalization and social movements and organizations of all kinds mix together, forming what has been termed a global civil society in response to neoliberal globalization (Kaldor, 2005).

The issues articulated by the movements occupying public spaces have already appeared in the first discussions and manifestos of the WSF, such as the rejection of the institutional policy and political parties (establishment). On the one hand, it is difficult to describe the institutional program of the movement, since it is open to anyone who wants to join. However, the internationalist and global character of the demands and mobilizations, through a network strategy made possible by its decentralization and organizational autonomy, gives it its current performative dimension (Fernández Buey, 2005).

Like the WSF, which was defined in its first meetings as open, free, horizontal, creative, diverse and pluralist, with a horizontal structure, leadership, hierarchies, official representatives, political resolutions or taking power, the movements of Occupation of the squares endorse that claims history. That is, the WSF is the direct antecedent of the current claims to a space for debate, reflection, proposal, exchange, articulation and networking, as well as the mutual recognition of activists and organizations around the world (Calvo Rufanges, 2008).

Conclusion

According to Andoni Alonso and I aki Arzoz (2011), camps are a way of doing politics and thereby express the will of citizens engaged in hyper-politics and citizen politics through the *agora* and play a key role in common life in the public space.

But can a place such as a square be defined as a public space? Having the same questions as the author of the tweet mentioned above, we think the way #Occupy has politicized public affairs and especially public spaces holds value. The occupation of public spaces such as squares has surprised pedestrians, those of us who make appropriate use of public spaces (Baltasar Fernández-Ramírez, 2010).

The visibility of the squares is also related to the continued negotiation of emotions between those who live nearby and those who think of it as theirs. According to Broncano (2013), the idea of an “us” is supported by emotional communities in which bonds are defined by affective closeness. Thus, occupying a square means holding a political debate in time (going beyond being mere pedestrians), proposing to make the square an object that belongs to “us”, an object of our own, in order to show that previously it did not belong to everybody but to someone, in this case the institutions, commercial laws, the state, and in so doing to politicize public space somehow. Will the same happen to the notion of social subject? Will subjectivity remain a territory to be conquered by integrated global capitalism just as Felix Guattari (1972) thought?

In the late 1950s Hannah Arendt published her famous book *The Human Condition* (1958/2009). In it she suggested that a dialectic existed between the public and private spheres, and this ties in with the analysis of public space. As we have already commented, the experience of occupying a public space is connected with enduring historical-political events. Arendt reminds us that Aristotle drew a distinction between a social being, a political being and, above all, a being capable of speech.

It is in the social sphere that the *zoon logon ekhon* writes the story of his identity, of shared meanings. In this sense, the public space acquires meaning when its inhabitants can create it through their histories. This performative-discursive practice is not the only means

of representation, in fact, it is not always present. The possibility of narrating a history of the public space is also disputed territory in which many actors play a role.

Now we can get at the notion of public space as an urgently required territory for considering the political debate of public issues in that public space. Now we can better understand Delgado's thinking (2009, p. 49) that "public space" has been established "not only as a space of mutual visibility and access" but also through the political and daily practices of the place: "the proscenium for particular civic practices (...) whose generation and sustenance does not depend on legal norms but on sensible auto-organization (...) founded on non-discursive competencies, on practical disposals and devices". Thus, we try to understand the #Occupy movement as a practical device rather than a form of discourse.

In this article, we have reflected on the practices of occupying a public space through collective and visible action. Consequently we have come to understand that social movements are not Utopian or emancipatory, and that they politicize spaces in the heterotopian sense (Foucault, 1994), that living in a place implies being with the otherness in that place.

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