

THE URBAN STRUGGLE TO REGAIN AND REDEFINE THE PUBLIC SPACE IN LATIN AMERICA

LA LUCHA URBANA POR LA RECONQUISTA Y LA REDEFINICIÓN
DEL ESPACIO PÚBLICO EN AMÉRICA LATINA

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Desde su concepción en la antigua Grecia, el espacio público cumple un rol fundamental en la política y la democracia de las ciudades; rol degradado en la posmodernidad y que alcanza su más profunda crisis en plena madurez del sistema posfordista (a partir de 1990). Esta depresión económica y de representación y legitimidad institucional que viven los Estados ha potenciado el surgimiento y resurgimiento de distintos movimientos sociales que inundan las ciudades a nivel global. Así, nace la inquietud del colectivo Frente Urbano Amparo Poch y Gascón, conformado por las presentes autoras, de reconocer y caracterizar desde una lógica socio-urbana estas manifestaciones y los espacios públicos sobre los que han ejercido una ocupación sostenida en distintas ciudades de América Latina durante la última década. La presente investigación, enmarcada en el Encuentro Virtual Latinoamericano Utopías Líquidas, se propone, a partir de una metodología de mapeo colectivo, reconocer los espacios públicos y caracterizar la ocupación ejercida por los movimientos sociales latinoamericanos sobre éstos, en la disputa por resignificarlos y reconquistar el carácter político de los mismos y, de esa forma, poner en valor a los distintos movimientos sociales latinoamericanos y sus luchas, en un acto que dé aliento a la resistencia y a la solidaridad.

Palabras clave: Cartografía, ciudades, espacio público, movimiento social, reconquista.

Since its inception in ancient Greece, public space has played a key role in the politics and democracy of cities. Its role has been degraded in post-modernity, and reached its deepest crisis in the full maturity of the post-Fordist system (from 1990 onwards). This economic and representation depression, as well as institutional legitimacy, that States are experiencing, have promoted the emergence and resurgence of different social movements that flood cities globally. Here is where the concern of the Frente Urbano Amparo Poch y Gascón collective lies, formed by the authors, to recognize and characterize, from a socio-urban logic, these manifestations and the sustained occupation that public spaces have experienced in different Latin American cities during the last decade. This research, framed within the Virtual Latin American Meeting, Utopías Líquidas, is proposed starting from a mixed methodology of collective mapping, recognizing public spaces, and characterizing their occupation exercised by Latin American social movements, in the dispute to redefine them and regain their political character, and thus value the different Latin American social movements and their struggles, in an act that encourages resistance and solidarity.

Keywords: Cartography, cities, public space, social movements, reconquest.

I. INTRODUCTION

Standing up against a historical period marked by the obstacles institutionality imposes, to avoid the use of the public space for political purposes (Borja, 2012), multiple social movements broke out in different cities around the world, taking to the streets, squares, and parks, around a great social demand for the urban space (Inzulza-Contardo, J., 2020). Latin America has not been left outside: organizations like the National Campaign for the Right to Legal, Safe and Free Abortion in Argentina, protests for Free and Quality Education in Chile, the Movement for the 43 Students of Ayotzinapa in Mexico, among many others, flooded out into our cities.

The reflection on the mobilizations in Latin America and their great presence in the public spaces that post-modernity tried to snatch away (Lefebvre, 2013), has to be analyzed and discussed from the point of view of architecture and urbanism. This investigation intends, in this way, to contribute to the analysis that has been addressed by editorials of the latest issues of architecture journals in the country, like those published by Fuentes Hernández and Cerda Brintrup (2020) in *Arquitecturas del Sur*, Inzulza Contardo (2020) in *Revista de Urbanismo*, Zazo Moratalla in *Revista Urbano* (2019), and the unpublished book *Hilos Tensados* by Kathya Araujo (2019). This study begins to fill the vacuum that the state-of-the-art reveals in this area: the necessary investigation and practical recording of the process of regaining and redefining the public space in our continent, by its protagonists. This work falls within an effervescent political moment of great importance, both for our region and for Latin America, and it tries to contribute towards making visible and valuing the role that social movements and their claims play in the public space of cities, to contribute towards a reading of a common reality from the dialog among nations.

The general purpose of the research is to recognize public spaces and characterize the occupation exercised by Latin American social movements over these during the last decade, in a process to regain their political nature.

The specific goals are defined in chronological order. The first corresponds to recording the social movements that have been part of the phenomenon to recover public space in San Juan, Argentina; Concepción, Chile; San José, Costa Rica; Cusco and Tacna, Peru; Montevideo, Uruguay; and Caracas, Venezuela. Second, the routes protests followed are outlined, from the public space they began in, through the crowds, the streets these were mobilized on, and where they ended. After this, the public spaces of gathering and social protests are determined, recording

their nature, the adjoining buildings, and the symbolic evidence of their reconquering. And finally, the areas within the public space associated with standoffs with law enforcement, their adjoining buildings, and their context are identified.

To suitably meet these goals, the work uses a collective online mapping methodology.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The public space from a historic perspective

The notion of “public space” is of particular interest in the different branches of social science, as essentially it symbolizes, unlike the private, the territory that belongs to all society and is common for the people. Its more in-depth definition acquires new connotations on exploring its conceptual historicity in the different disciplinary approaches of knowledge and their multiple schools of thought.

In the framework of a historical-urban narrative, there is consensus in finding in the agora of classical Greece, the first conception of public space (Berroeta & Vidal, 2012) which, although it brings together multiple and varied social, commercial, and cultural uses, its most relevant role, as a platform of politics, was closely tied to freedom and against domination (Arendt, 2018). It is precisely this idea that has been degraded in western postmodernity, where the public space is relegated to leisure and trade, but essentially to a place to pass through (Sennett, 1977), where elements that favor being there are suppressed, and the population is watched to avoid any political expression understood as civil disobedience (Borja, 2012). In the words of Erik Swynegedouw, said depoliticization provokes constant urban insurgency that clamors for a political field of democratic disagreement (Valenzuela, 2020).

The crisis of the system and the city

Right from the highest point of Post-Fordism (starting in 1990), a system violently and repressively put in place in several Latin American countries (Klein, 2007), and when the financial market has already privatized the national companies and public services that guaranteed access for the population to their social rights, today it becomes ever more marked, on even privatizing reproduction of life itself (Fumagalli, 2010). Social malaise, the fruit of a long international economic depression present since 2007 (Roberts, 2019), and the crisis of representation and legitimacy that Latin American institutionality is undergoing (Mayol, 2012), reached critical levels,

triggering a wave of global movements that boomed as of 2011, from when there has not been a season without mass-scale protests taking to the public spaces of Latin American cities (Players, 2018).

For the sociologist Marcos Roitman (2012), the causes raised vary greatly in content, but there is an important element in common: the attempt to regain restricted public spaces to deepen their political and democratic nature, as the crisis of the current economic model is closely linked to the crisis of the public nature of the city (Harvey, 2008). In this sense, Roitman (2012) suggests that the immediate result of these protests is the need to recover the public space.

Reconquering and renaming

The social uprising that began in October 2019 in Chile, constitutes for the architect and urbanist Tai Lin, an emblematic example of the protests that have been brewing for decades, of urban violence that fights for the public space and that regain, among others, the former Plaza Italia – or Plaza Baquedano., renaming it Plaza de la Dignidad (Dignity Square) (Lin, 2019). About the renaming processes, and thus, the redefinitions of the public space, it is essential to highlight the importance of meanings and symbolisms nowadays. For the urban sociologist, Manuel Castells (2006), in information societies, both the manipulation of communication and its preparation in terms of knowledge tend to superimpose the material dimension of existence.

Refining the limits of the public is, according to the studies of Tejerina (2005), an urgent priority for social movements. The connotation of this sphere, for Rizzo (2011), is not universal but is unpredictable and disputed. It is the very attempts of appropriation of the mobilized groups, who load the public space with meanings. The phenomenon described by Roitman (2012) of taking over squares and other places with a strong political and social content to try to recover them is, agreeing with Fernández (2013), a phenomenon before opposing the same regime and the structures of power. According to his analysis, this is a battle for the use that they have given to the space, through practices of resistances and domination, before the system itself. Meanwhile, Swynegedouw (2018) proposes that social movements, in their attempt to recover the public space from postmodernism as a meeting and political place, redefine the city beyond a productive-economic device, enriching the *polis* with political and democratic status. Ultimately, “squares and streets are renamed, questioned symbols are brought down, the iconic architecture of the established model is attacked. The stormed city is not silent, it screams out clamoring for urgent transformations” (Fuentes Hernández & Cerda Brintrup, 2020, p. 4).

III. METHODOLOGY

The decision was made to face the goals of this research using a methodology based on collective mapping, capable of gathering knowledge within the current South American context, narrated by the *civitas*, conceived as subjective and diverse, beyond the strictly physical, a dimension that, in line with what has been outlined by Jirón and Fada (2000), is of great importance within the framework of urban studies.

Collective knowledge building methodologies, where the “sum or combination of academic knowledge with the popular can end up being an element of a new scientific paradigm” (Fals Borda, 2015, p. 5) emerges through a narrative strategy that contributes towards information gathering (Iconclastas, 2013, p. 58), being of both a qualitative and quantitative methodological nature.

The main methodological tool used in this study, to produce intuitive maps, is collective mapping, understood as a:

creation process that subverts the place of enunciation to challenge the dominant narrations about territories, starting from the day-to-day knowledge and experience of participants. Making the most pressing issues of the territory visible on graphical and visual support (Iconclastas, 2013, p. 12).

Among the most recently published research that has addressed the aforementioned tool, are those dynamized in a pandemic context by Iconclastas (2021), “Problemáticas y resistencias, Mujeres del Chaco Americano” (Problems and Resistance, Women of the American Chaco), by René Squella Soto (2021), “Conflicto socioambiental, participación ciudadana y disputa territorial: La mirada de la Psicología Ambiental Comunitaria” (Socioenvironmental conflict, citizen participation, and territorial dispute: the view of Community Environmental Psychology), and the article of Liliana Lapomarda (2020), “Diagnóstico del espacio vivido para contribuir a aprendizajes situados” (Diagnostic of the lived space to contribute towards situated learnings). These publications in different territories (El Chaco Americano: Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay; La Ligua, Chile; La Plata, Argentina, respectively) successfully record, by collective mapping, substantial elements to confirm their respective hypothesis from first-person experiences of their protagonists.

This recording was made during the workshop “The City as a Platform for Social Movements”, proposed by the collective Frente Urbano Amparo Poch and Gascón (Retamal & Pavez, 2020), in the Latin American Virtual Meeting – Utopías Líquidas (Liquid Utopias), by groups of countrymen and women that developed the online mapping of their respective city. This was done while they shared with all the participants on

the same virtual platform, which allowed constant feedback and dialog among them and those running the workshop. This form of focalized and group work made it possible to reveal similar and/or different knowledge and experience that people living in the same territory narrated, provoking dialog, and giving as a result, a map that is capable of representing a more democratic truth.

The case studies are Latin American cities inhabited by two or more participants of the aforementioned workshop. This is not a selection based on a supposedly political or urban standard, but rather a methodological decision focused on recording territories of the people who randomly signed up for the activity. The cities studied are: San Juan, Argentina; Concepción, Chile; San Jose, Costa Rica; Cusco and Tacna, Peru; Montevideo, Uruguay; and Caracas, Venezuela.

By linking the maps of different cities, it was possible to generate a broader and continental vision of the phenomenon of reconquest and redefinition of the public spaces occupied over the last decade by social movements, where the reflection from participative construction is key.

To guide the flow of action and representation of urban realities, it was defined to collect the following elements: collective organizations, buildings of sociopolitical importance, crowds, routes, and conflicts with law enforcement; considered relevant when it came to analyzing the platforms of expression of social movements, and as indicators of the struggle to reconquer to enrich the political and democratic content of the public spaces.

The knowledge collected through the mapping and narratives is materialized in a homogenized map, transcribed information, and a final summary table. The data systematization, its analysis, comparison, and finally the crossing of these aspects with the bibliographical discussion, allows reaching the goals of this research, which will corroborate its main hypothesis on registering the dispute for the sustained use of public spaces as a political platform between two crucial players: on one side, the group of protestors and, on the other, institutionality, represented in practice by law enforcement, as "the reconquest by protestors of a space appropriated by the regime, makes the place a public element in dispute, whose occupation in itself is considered a success, given the ideogrammatic load this entails" (Navarro de Pablos, Navas Carrillo & Pérez Cano, 2021, p. 188).

V. RESULTS

San Juan

During the "City as a Platform for Social Movements" workshop, the group of participants highlights, among the social movements there have been in the city of San Juan, feminist protests, like "Ni Uno Menos" (Not one [woman] less) and the "National Campaign for the Right to a Safe, Legal, and Free Abortion".



Figure 1. Map with the location of the Latin American cities studied. Source: Preparation by the Authors.

Pictogramas	
Manifestaciones	
	Recorridos
	Aglomeración
	Conflicto con las fuerzas del orden
Organizaciones colectivas	
	Organización política
	Organización social
	Organización cultural
Edificios de importancia sociopolítica	
	Edificio gubernamental
	Edificio eclesiástico
	Edificio educacional
	Edificio institucional

Figure 2. Table of pictograms. Source: Preparation by the Authors.

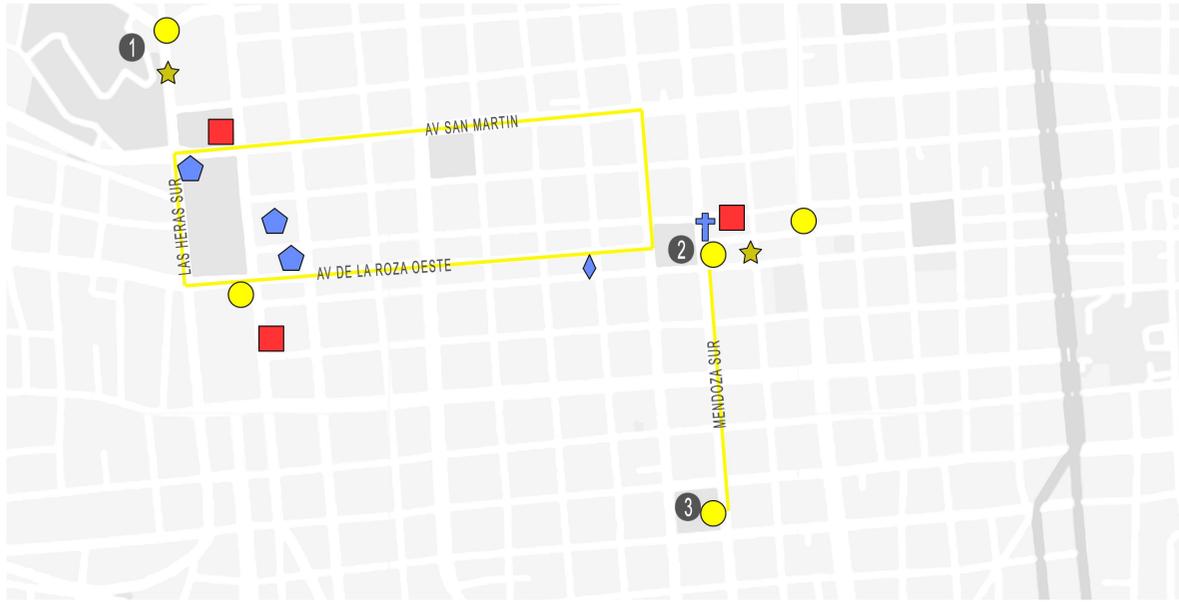


Figure 3. Mapping of the city of San Juan, Argentina. Source: Preparation by the Authors, based on the content developed by the workshop's participants.

The routes are represented in Figure 3 and begin at Parque de Mayo (point 1), surround the sociopolitical area, which coincides with the historic hub, in an act which the feminist movements have called “hugging the conservative sector of the city” and that, as can be seen on the map, bring together political groups located right at the turns of the march. This ends in a gathering in Plaza 25 de Mayo (point 2) or Plaza Hipólito Yrigoyen (renamed by citizens as Joroba (Little Hump) Square) (point 3), a space with the ideal qualities to have public acts of a political and cultural nature.

In San Juan, face-offs with law enforcement are not usual, according to what was mentioned in the workshop: the police stuck to escorting the protest and protecting important buildings.

Concepción

The group of participants highlights, among the many social movements that have taken to the streets of Concepción, the student protests for free quality education, citizen, union, indigenous, and feminist movements.

The routes followed by the march are shown in Figure 4.

They start from educational buildings, as mentioned during the workshop, such as the University of Bío-Bío (point 1) ⁴, the University of Concepción (point 2), and Enrique Molina Secondary School (point 3). An important number of social organizations can be distinguished on the map, concentrated especially in the northeast of Concepción, which seem to be added by the route that runs along Av. Los Carrera. The Penquista protests have the particular feature of surrounding the city's sociopolitical center before often returning to their initial gathering spaces.

It is seen that the gatherings are mainly associated with squares and parks, among which Plaza de la Independencia, renamed Leftraru Square (point 4), and René Schneider Square, renamed Tribunales (point 5), both alongside buildings of sociopolitical importance, stand out. An interesting case is the recent use of the intersection of Av. Paicaví and Av. Los Carrera – renamed by the social movements as “Paicarrera” or Rotonda de la Resistencia (Roundabout of Resistance) (point 6)-, as a point for social gathering.

Regarding conflicts with law enforcement, these are associated with the same public spaces adjoining buildings of interest or educational buildings and gatherings.

⁴ The University of Bío-Bío is outside the boundaries of the map, as such it is only indicated on the plan to understand the origin of this route.

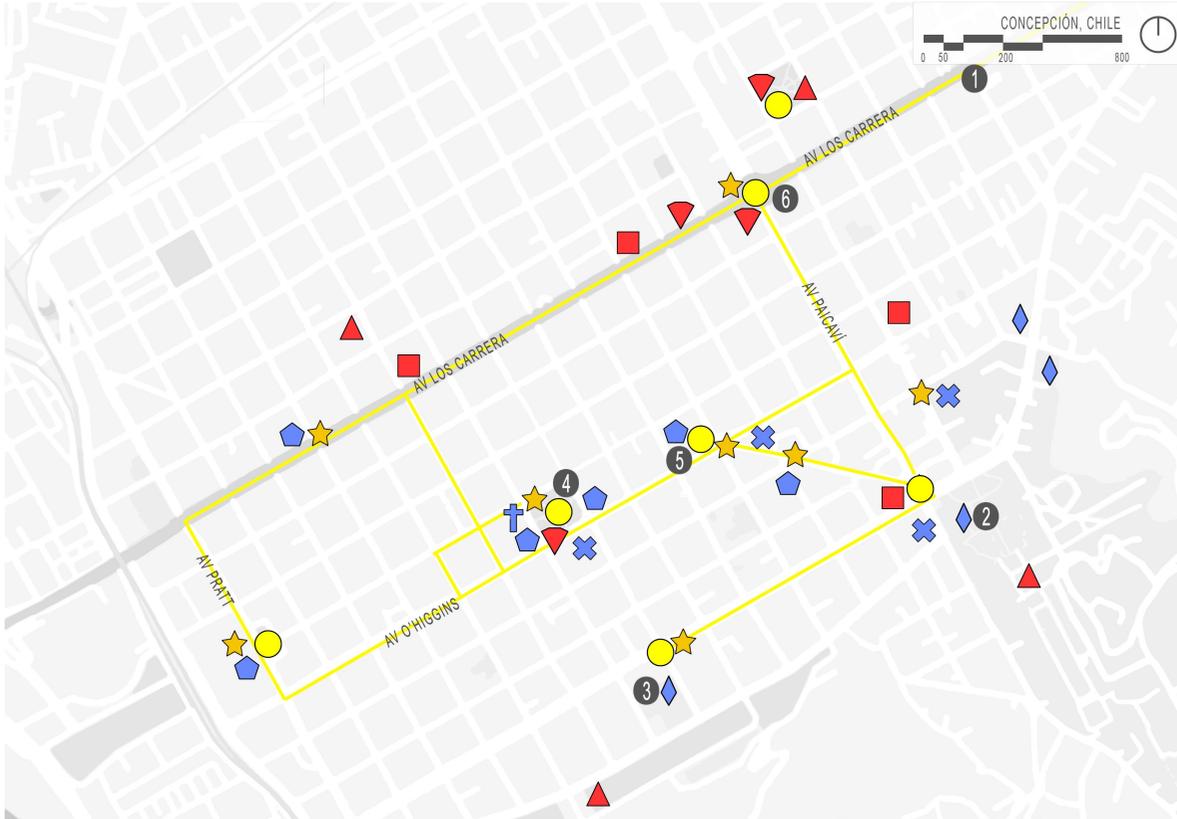


Figure 4. Mapping, city of Concepción, Chile. Source: Preparation by the Authors, based on the content developed by the workshop's participants.

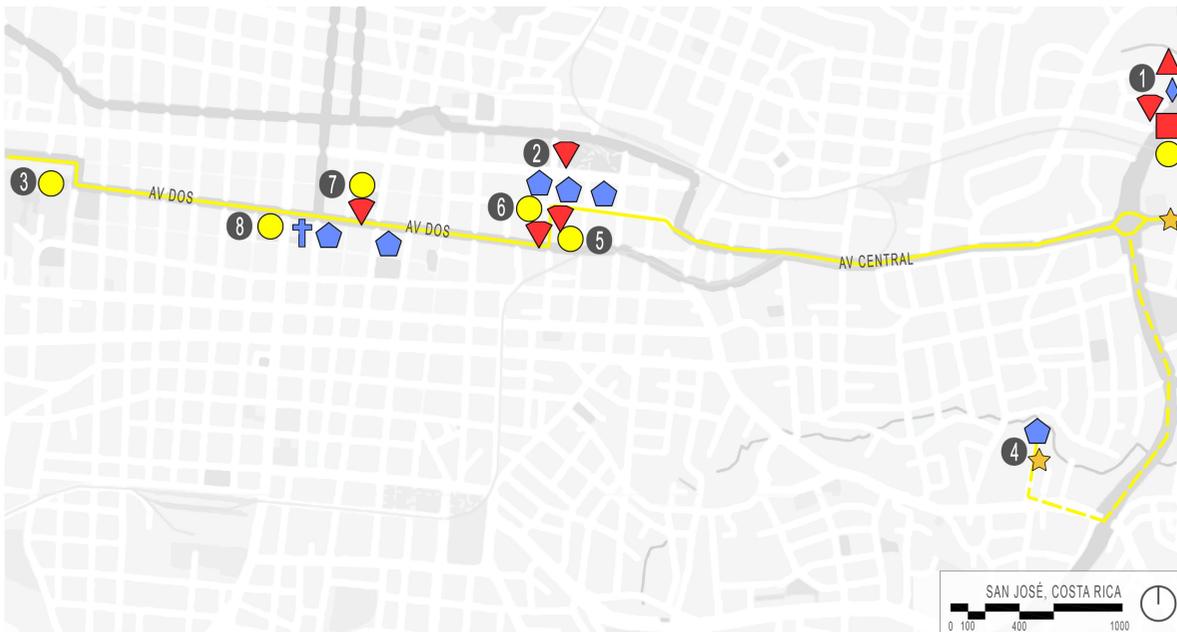


Figure 5. Mapping of the city of San José, Costa Rica. Source: Preparation by the Authors, based on the content developed by the workshop's participants.

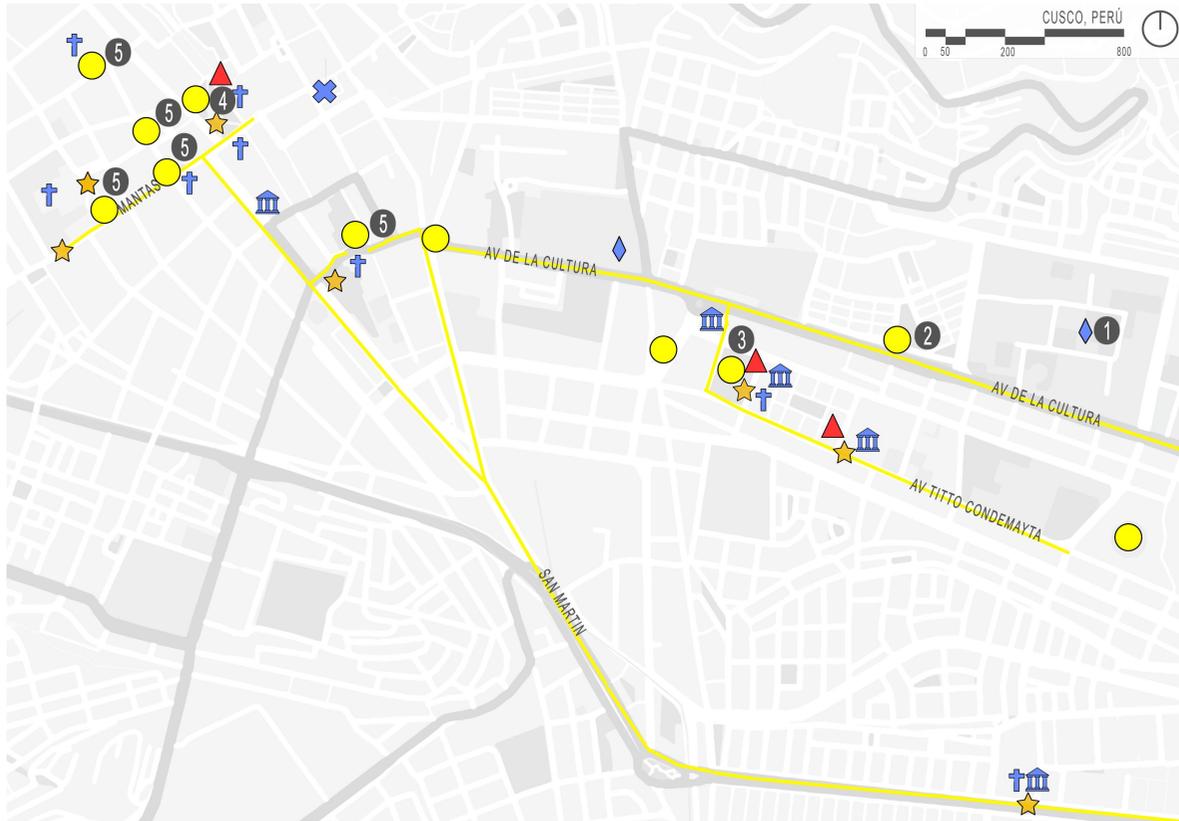


Figure 6. Mapping of the city of Cusco, Peru. Source: Preparation by the Authors, based on the content developed by the workshop's participants.

San José

During the discussions held in the workshop, the group of participants highlights the intervention of citizen and university movements in the Josefina protests. For this reason, it is not strange that the route, represented in Figure 5 is extremely linear, almost pilgrimage-like, beginning at the University of Costa Rica (point 1). The marches head along Avenida Central, crossing many streets, squares, and parks with Anglo-Saxon names that the citizens do not use, using instead, important buildings as reference. It is worth highlighting that the march goes through the sociopolitical heart of the city (point 2). In this sector, it pauses for a moment but does not stop until reaching La Sabana Park (point 3). However, on some occasions, it continues to the Government House (point 4). Regarding the gathering spaces, the importance of the University of Costa Rica in San José is left clear on the map, with this being the home to social organizations of a political, artistic, and social nature. Likewise, at the points associated with the political center of the city, it is possible to identify gatherings related to cultural organizations and public spaces.

According to comments made in the meeting, conflicts with law enforcement are pretty rare and the group of participants

clarifies that the symbols placed on the map refer to two specific events. One associated with the Presidential House and the other, the university.

Cusco

In the discussion held during collective mapping, the group from Cusco, emphasized social movements against Presidential destitutions, protests against gentrification from the touristic nature assigned to the city, citizen movements, and indigenous movements.

The routes, illustrated in Figure 6, begin from spaces alongside the National University of San Antonio Abad del Cusco (UNSAAC) (point 1), and from the Mariscal Gamarra Park (point 2), where the mobilized masses meet. The linear nature of the marches is highlighted on the map, progressing along Avenida de la Cultura and Avenida Titto Condemayta, before stopping in Tupac Amaru Square (point 3), a central public space home to buildings of a sociopolitical nature and social organizations. The route ends in the squares of the historic hub of the city, mainly the Plaza de Armas de Cusco (point 4) and, on occasions, it heads back south. On the plan, it shows that the crowds mainly gather in squares associated with churches, part of the colonial urban

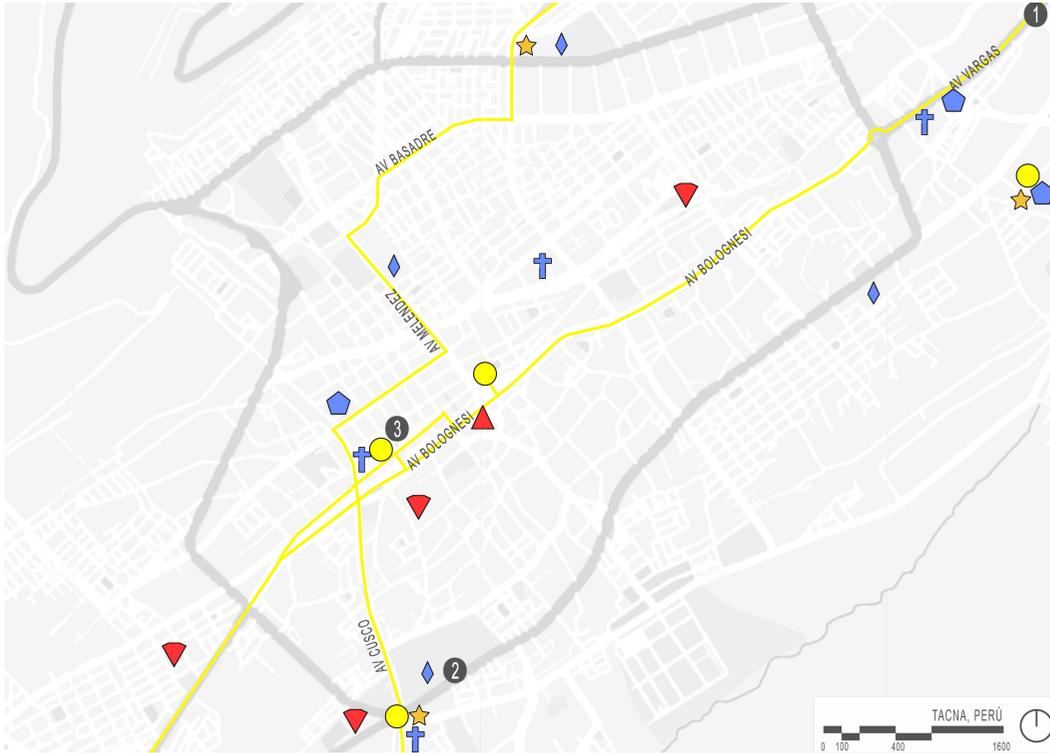


Figure 7. Mapping of the city of Tacna, Peru. Source: Preparation by the authors, based on the content developed by the workshop's participants.



Figure 8. Mapping of the city of Montevideo, Uruguay. Source: Preparation by the authors, based on the content developed by the workshop's participants.

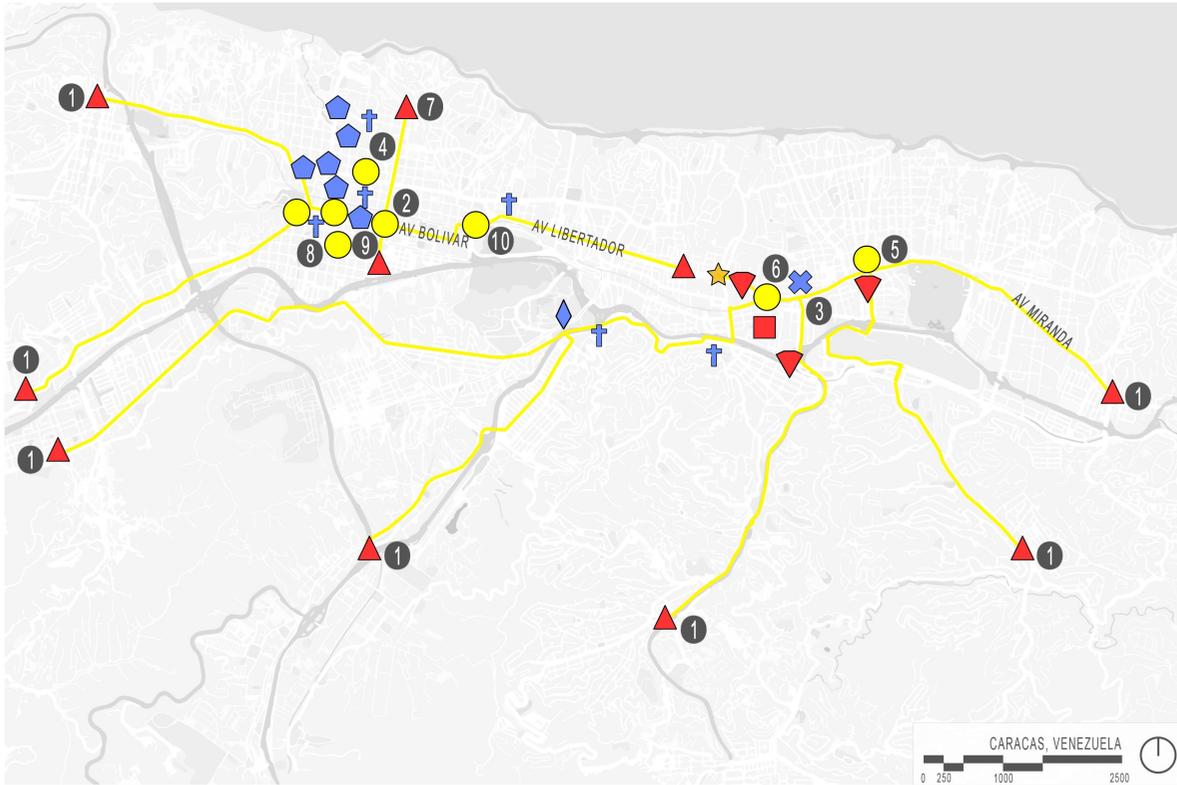


Figure 9. Mapping of the city of Caracas, Venezuela. Source: Preparation by the authors, based on the content developed by the workshop's participants.

planning whose intention was to suppress indigenous temples, and to a lesser extent, at highway intersections.

In the planimetric record, it is seen that conflicts with law enforcement tend to mainly happen in sectors alongside churches or sociopolitical buildings.

Tacna

During the dialog, the group of participants highlighted social movements against Presidential destitutions, feminist movements, agrarian organizations for a fair salary, and country folk of the area, cyclists groups, and protests against the EPS Reservoir (point 1) **5**.

The most common route, represented in Figure 7, starts at the intersection of Avenida Cusco, alongside the Jorge Basadre Grohmann National University (UNJBG) (point 2), with gatherings and cultural presentations, before then heading to the Plaza

de Armas of Tacna (point 3). Sometimes it can head along Av. Bolognesi, passing Greg Albarracin Oval and Av. Celestino Vargas, to the EPS Reservoir.

There are many alternative routes because of the distance of certain important buildings of the center. The marches are linear and tend to make different stops in squares linked to social and political organizations. The gatherings tend to be associated with public spaces and significant sociopolitical buildings, while conflicts with law enforcement are coincidentally seen on the periphery of Tacna, as well as at municipal and educational buildings.

Montevideo

In this case, the group of participants referred to multiple social movements, among which they highlighted actions for remembrance, feminist movements, and student movements. The place where the Mothers and Family Members of

5 The EPS Reservoir is outside the map's boundaries, which is why it is indicated on the map just to understand the origin of the route mentioned.

Categoría/ Ciudad	Movimientos sociales pregnantes	Recorridos	Espacios públicos utilizados como plataforma política	Espacios públicos renombrados	Conflictos con las fuerzas del orden
San Juan (Revisar Figura 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ni Una Menos Campaña Nacional Por El Derecho Al Aborto, Seguro, Legal y Gratuito 	Del Parque de Mayo(1) a Plaza 25 de Mayo(2), rodeando el centro socio-político e histórico. De carácter circular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parque de Mayo(1) Plaza 25 de Mayo(2) Plaza de la Joroba (Hipólito Yrigoyen)(3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plaza Hipólito Yrigoyen a Plaza de la Joroba(3) 	No son habituales
Concepción (Revisar Figura 4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manifestaciones Estudiantiles Por La Educación Gratuita Y De Calidad Movimientos Ciudadanos Movimientos Sindicales Movimientos Indígenas Movimientos Feministas 	Desde edificios educacionales, rodeando el centro socio-político, para retornar a espacios de concentración inicial. De carácter circular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plaza Leftraru (de la Independencia)(4) Tribunales (Plaza Renée Schneider)(5) Paicarrera o Rotonda de la Resistencia (Rotonda Paicavi)(6) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plaza de la Independencia a Plaza Leftraru(4) Plaza Renée Schneider a Tribunales(5) Rotonda Paicavi a Paicarrera o Rotonda de la Resistencia(6) 	Asociados a espacios públicos contiguos a edificaciones de interés y a edificios educacionales
San José (Revisar Figura 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Movimientos Universitarios Movimientos Ciudadanos 	Desde la Universidad de Costa Rica(1) por Av. Central, pasa por el centro socio-político(2), hasta el Parque de la Sabana(3). De carácter lineal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Universidad de Costa Rica(1) Parque de la Sabana(3) Plaza de la Democracia y de la Abolición del Ejército(5) Plaza del Museo Nacional de Costa Rica(6) Plaza de la Cultura(7) Parque Central San José(8) 	No se renombren, se omiten los nombres originales	No son habituales
Cusco (Revisar Figura 6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Movimientos Sociales Contra Las Destituciones Presidenciales Protestas Contra La Gentrificación Del Turismo Movimientos Ciudadanos Movimientos Indígenas 	Desde la UNSAAC(1) y el Parque Mariscal Gamarra(2), por el centro socio-político, hasta el casco histórico. De carácter lineal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNSAAC(1) Parque Mariscal Gamarra(2) Plaza Tupac Amaru(3) Plaza de Armas del Cusco(4) Plazoletas de distintas iglesias(5) 	No se registra renombre	Sectores aledaños a iglesias y a edificios de importancia socio-política
Tacna (Revisar Figura 7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Movimientos Sociales Contra Las Destituciones Presidenciales Movimientos Feministas Organizaciones Agrarias Por Un Salario Digno Movimientos De Ciclistas Protestas Contra El Reservorio EPS 	Desde el nodo vial de Av. Cusco(2), hasta la Plaza de Armas de Tacna(3) o en Ocasiones hasta el Reservorio EPS(1). De carácter lineal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNJBG(2) Nodo Vial de Av. Cusco(2) Plaza de Armas de Tacna(3) 	No se registra renombre	En la periferia de la ciudad, junto a edificios gubernamentales y educacionales
Montevideo (Revisar Figura 8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acciones Por La Memoria Movimientos Feministas Movimientos Estudiantiles 	Desde la UDELAR(2), por el centro socio-político, hasta el Palacio Legislativo(4) o la Plaza de la Independencia(5). De carácter lineal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UDELAR(2) Plaza de la Libertad(3) Plaza de la Independencia(5) Callejón de la Universidad (Plaza Frugoni)(7) Plaza de los Desaparecidos en América(8) Plaza Primero de Mayo(9) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plaza Frugoni a Callejón de la Universidad(7) 	No son habituales

Categoría/ Ciudad	Movimientos sociales pregnantes	Recorridos	Espacios públicos utilizados como plataforma política	Espacios públicos renombrados	Conflictos con las fuerzas del orden
Caracas (Revisar Figura 9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movimientos En Apoyo Al Gobierno • Movimiento De La Oposición 	Desde sectores residenciales(1) hasta el centro histórico(2) ocupado por movimientos oficialistas o hasta el Municipio de Chacao(3) en el caso de movimientos de oposición. De carácter lineal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plaza Bolívar(4) • Plaza Altamira(5) • Nodo vial de Av. Libertador y Av. Francisco Miranda(6) • Plaza Caracas(7) • Plaza de la Concordia(8) • Parque José Antonio Luis García(9) • Plaza Morelos(10) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Una de las esquinas de la Plaza Bolívar se renombra Esquina Caliente(4) 	Límite del Municipio de Chacao(3)

Table 1. Summary Table. Source: Preparation by the Authors.

Disappeared Detained Uruguayans organization (point 1) is housed, is marked on the map (Figure 8).

The marches tend to start from University of the Republic (point 2) and progress along Avenida 18 de Julio to Plaza Libertad (point 3). On some occasions, the route extends to the Legislative Palace (point 4) along Avenida Libertador or to Plaza de Independencia (point 5), in front of the Executive Tower (point 6). It is seen that the gatherings are mainly associated with public spaces, like Plaza de Independencia, Plaza de la Libertad, Plaza Frugoni (renamed “University Passageway”) (point 7), Plaza a los Desaparecidos en América (point 8), and Plaza Primero de Mayo.

According to what was said in the workshop, conflicts with law enforcement are isolated and infrequent.

Caracas

From the start, the conversation with the group of participants about the Venezuelan capital, focused on two antagonistic social movements, the official one, supporting the Government, and its opposition, a planimetrically evidenced phenomenon (Figure 9). Due to the great size of Caracas, the routes of mobilizations begin from neighborhood gatherings (point 1) and head to the Central Area (point 2) and the so-called “Municipality of Chacao” (point 3), occupied by official groups and the opposition, respectively. The gatherings of groups supporting the Government take place in squares (with the groups in the so-called “Hot Corner” within Plaza Bolivar (point 4) standing out) and emblematic parks, alongside buildings of sociopolitical importance, in the historic hub. While those organized by the opposition focus on Plaza Altamira (point 5) and the intersection of Av. Libertador and Av. Francisco Miranda (point 6), from where they try to mobilize towards the Central Area. It is here where law enforcement begins to confront the protesters.

VI. FINDINGS

Based on the results obtained in the discussions, and the map developed in the collective mapping workshop within the Latin American Virtual Meeting – Utopías Liquidas in 2020, it is possible to state the following findings.

-In the maps, it can be seen that marches begin from one or several periphery gathering or organization points, before then heading towards the socio-political-economic heart of the cities.

-As for routes, two essential forms of movement of the marches are recorded: the most common is linear, seen in Tacna, Caracas, Montevideo, Cusco, and especially in San José de Costa Rica, while Concepción and San Juan, this is done in a circular march along their streets.

-Crowds are generally seen in the relevant public spaces and are also associated with sociopolitical buildings. Another phenomenon that is repeated on the participative elaboration maps are the gatherings at intersections, spaces that, despite not necessarily being planned as meeting places, have been redefined as a platform for social movements in Concepción, Cusco, Tacna, and Caracas.

-Regarding conflicts with law enforcement, it is worth mentioning that these involve different degrees of violence. In San Juan, Montevideo, and San Jose, police repression events, according to the stories of the workshop participants, are rare and are remembered as specific cases in the immediate history of the social movements. Participants from the cities of Concepción, Cusco, Tacna, and Caracas, on the other hand, talk about constant and systematic face-offs with the police -institutional law enforcement- the result of using the public space as a platform of protest, thus outlining the dispute for their occupation as a political space, in an attempt to regain them. It

is important to add that law enforcement, in these cases, tends to use excessive force, with the events ending with a group of detainees and not a small number injured.

The spaces of conflict tend to be linked to gathering places or buildings of sociopolitical and/or symbolic importance. In the case of Concepción and Tacna, a considerable part of their confrontations with law enforcement take place in educational spaces. In Tacna, Cusco, and also Concepción, they take place in spaces close to ecclesiastical buildings.

VIII. DISCUSSIONS

According to what was revealed in the virtual workshop dialog, the Latin American cities studied are continuously occupied by social movements with common demands, like citizen, feminist, and student organizations. The regular confrontations mapped by the participants, in four of the seven case studies, and those of a sporadic nature, in a further two, agree with what has already been said by Players (2018), Lin (2019), Harvey (2008), Fernández (2013), Swyngedouw (2018), Rizzo (2011), Navarro de Pablos *et al.*, (2021) and especially, Roitman (2012), that nowadays social movements dispute public spaces with institutionality, somewhere which, without a doubt, they have a legitimate right to, in an act to regain and define their political and democratic nature.

However, this phenomenon is not the only valuable investigation that the agora continues to have for the *civitas*, but also the recording of intersections on busy avenues, marked as important landmarks for gathering in the mapping of the protests of Concepción, Cusco, Tacna, and Caracas, which, unlike the rest of the public spaces used as a platform of protest, do not correspond to a space designed for meeting, nor are they surrounded by relevant buildings. As was expected, the social movements that have risen with extraordinary force in the last decade in Latin America, turn to the public space to claim and present their demands and even, take from the institutionality, spaces destined for other purposes to satisfy their needs of platforms for political exposure (Retamal & Pavez, 2020).

The information collected regarding renaming urban spaces in five of the seven cities studied is especially interesting. This is the case of the "Plaza de la Joroba", previously Plaza Hipólito Yrigoyen in San Juan; "Plaza Leftraru", "Tribunales" and "Paicarrera" or "Roundabout of Resistance", previously Plaza de la Independencia, Plaza René Schneider and Rotonda Paicavi, respectively, in Concepción; the "Callejón de la Universidad", previously Plaza Frugoni in Montevideo; the omission of Anglo-Saxon names assigned to squares, parks, and streets in San Jose; and the "Hot Corner" corresponding to one of the corners of Plaza Bolívar in Caracas. This phenomenon, understood as

a political act of suppression of one that is not representative, renaming it (or omitting it), to redefine and resignify it -outlined by Tai Lin (2019) and Roitman (2012), from an urban perspective, and by Castells (2006) from a more sociological side-, are literally and accurately presented in this study.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS

The research here manages to record the routes the protests follow, the public spaces where they begin, the streets they move along, and the sites where they end, as well as identifying the public space associated with conflicts with law enforcement, their adjoining buildings, and contexts. Starting from this mapping, accompanied by narrations of their protagonists and by crosschecking this information, a sustained and mass scale occupation of the public spaces in each case study is evidenced, and from the analysis of bibliographical sources, it can be confirmed that, despite the many obstacles that institutionality imposes on social mobilizations, in an attempt to eradicate the political nature of the public space, through the use of law enforcement, this continues to have for the *civitas* as a whole, symbolic relevance as a platform of revindication and to present their demands. It is for this reason that the groups of protestors dispute their reconquest and their redefinition as a political place in themselves.

This same phenomenon of dispute evidenced in the cases analyzed also reveals, the enormous importance the public space has, both for social movements and for institutionality. This explains, in part, the vigor with which protests have been repressed by institutionality and the sustained insistence of their political occupation by the groups of protestors.

Regarding the finding on the use of intersections as spaces for meeting and a political platform, it has been concluded that this matter does not just apply to a demand to conquer them, but rather, a phenomenon that sketches the aforementioned importance of political space for democratic disagreement; a character that, on being shut down, is imprinted, by the *civitas*, in spaces set aside for other ends, in an act of symbolic resignification.

As for the renaming of public spaces shown in the research, it has been concluded that this is a redefinition dynamic both of the name, in its symbolic nature, to replace one that was not representative, and its practical scope, considering its use as a democratic political platform, in a resignification process for them.

These conclusions, although premature to make a full reading of the phenomenon under study, document from a socio-urban perspective and through a direct participation method, in that the narration of their protagonists plays an essential role, the pulse of a historic political moment of social uprising, that is still shaking Latin American cities and their political events.

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