

**Public spaces, stigmatization and media discourses of graffiti
practices in the Latin American press:
Dynamics of symbolic exclusion and inclusion of urban youth**

Dissertation

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Abstract

This dissertation focuses on the discourses about graffiti practices (including tagging culture and pichação/pixação) in two Latin American newspapers, namely *La Nación* in Costa Rica and *Folha de São Paulo* in Brazil. Considering ongoing processes of physical and symbolic exclusion directed towards urban youth, these discourses seem to be anchored in broader discussions regarding both the public sphere (in Habermas's sense) and shared public spaces. This research approaches "graffiti" in its multiplicity, emphasizing the diversity of (young) producers and their political, aesthetic and economic purposes. The all-encompassing notion of "youth" is also called into question, proposing a more open approach to what are called "youth cultures".

Five different (but intertwined) discourses have been identified in this research, targeting both graffiti practices and producers: First, the medical-epidemiological discourse linked to hygiene and social prophylaxis. Second, the legal frame, in which graffiti is considered a form of vandalism, a threat to common heritage and to the maintenance of social order. Third, the criminogenic discourse, in which graffiti inscriptions are related to the (re)production of social violence. Fourth, an emergent discourse of social value, highlighting the role of graffiti practices in social campaigns (mostly directed toward peripheral youth). And fifth, the discourse that emphasizes the aesthetic or artistic value of the practice, including its recognition in both art institutions and the art market. While processes of co-optation are visible in relation to some of these productions, the unauthorized form of graffiti inscriptions (mostly tagging and pichação/pixação) could be read as a form of political communication, in the sense of acts of civil disobedience.

The discussion of the notion of "space" is also included in this research, highlighting the necessity of recognizing the existence of *alternative* and *countercultural* spaces, as well as the affective/emotional uses of space. Therefore, considering the debate on the *right to the city* (proposed by Lefebvre), this research proposes approaching graffiti production as a form of dissent opposing the capitalist-oriented spatial rationality of contemporary urban environments. In short, an analysis of the discourses associated with practices such as graffiti production is crucial in order to understand the processes of production of urban environments, the policies associated with these spaces and the notions of "normalcy" and "order" that supposedly define them.

Zusammenfassung

Die Dissertation nimmt die Diskurse über Graffiti-Praktiken (einschließlich Tagging Culture und Pichação/Pixação) in zwei lateinamerikanischen Zeitungen in den Blick, *La Nación* in Costa Rica und *Folha de São Paulo* in Brasilien. Angesichts andauernder auf urbane Jugendliche gerichtete Prozesse der physischen und symbolischen Ausgrenzung, erscheint es als ob diese Diskurse über Graffiti-Praktiken sowohl in breiteren Diskussionen über die Öffentlichkeit (im Sinne von Habermas) als auch in jenen über den gemeinsamen öffentlichen Raum verankert sind. Diese Arbeit fasst 'Graffiti' in seinen diversen Ausdrucksformen auf, betont die Vielfalt der (jungen) Produzenten und ihre politischen, ästhetischen und wirtschaftlichen Absichten. Der allumfassende Begriff "Jugend" wird in Frage gestellt und ein offeneres Konzept der sogenannten "Jugendkulturen" vorgeschlagen.

Fünf verschiedene (aber miteinander verflochtene) Diskurse wurden in dieser Forschungsarbeit identifiziert, die Graffiti-Praktiken und ihre Produzenten umfassen: Zunächst wurden medizinisch-epidemiologische Diskurse verbunden mit Hygiene und sozialer Prophylaxe untersucht. Zweitens wurde der Rechtsrahmen analysiert, in dem Graffiti als eine Form von Vandalismus betrachtet wird, welcher eine Bedrohung für das allgemeine Gut und die Aufrechterhaltung der sozialen Ordnung darstellt. Drittens wurden die kriminogenen Diskurse verhandelt, in der Graffiti-Inschriften für eine (Re-)Produktion sozialer Gewalt stehen. Darüber hinaus wurde der zunehmende Diskurs betrachtet, der Graffiti gesellschaftlichen Wert aufgrund der Graffiti-Praktiken als Teil von sozialen Kampagnen zuschreibt (welche sich vor allem an die periphere Jugend richten). Zuletzt wurde der Diskurs analysiert, der die ästhetischen oder künstlerischen Werte der Praktiken einschließt, einschließlich ihrer Anerkennung in Kunstinstitutionen und dem Kunstmarkt. Während in Bezug auf diese Artikulationen Prozesse der Kooptation zu beobachten sind, könnte die verbotene Ausübung der Graffiti-Inschriften (meist Tagging und Pichação/Pixação) als eine Form der politischen Kommunikation - im Sinne von Aktionen des zivilen Ungehorsams - gelesen werden.

Die Diskussion über den Begriff "Raum" wird in dieser Forschungsarbeit ebenfalls aufgegriffen, wobei die Notwendigkeit der Anerkennung der Existenz von *alternativen* und *gegenkulturellen* Räumen, sowie die affektive / emotionale Nutzung des Raums, hervorgehoben wird. Folglich, unter Berücksichtigung der (von Lefebvre vorgeschlagenen) Debatte über ein Recht auf Stadt, schlägt diese Dissertation vor, sich der Produktion von Graffiti als einer Form von Dissens anzunähern, die gegen die kapitalistisch-orientierte räumliche Rationalität der modernen urbanen Umgebungen gerichtet ist. Kurz gesagt, die Analyse der Diskurse über Praktiken wie jene, die mit der Produktion von Graffiti in Verbindung stehen, sind erforderlich um die Prozesse der Produktion von urbanen Umgebungen zu verstehen, sowie die Politikentscheidungen in Bezug auf diese Räume und die Bedeutungszuschreibungen von "*Normalität*" und "*Ordnung*", die derartige Räume angeblich definieren.

Introduction

Do cities still belong to us?

Every city is an unfinished project. The location of parks, the type and quantity of available jobs, the meeting areas, the structural development of public transport and even the aesthetic components of each city have been previously defined and are subject to present and future transformation. Those who live in a city as inhabitants, by birth or by choice, face these limitations or potentialities in their everyday life. The structural composition of cities seems to be in concordance with the economic system of production, and therefore, every city also reproduces its own centers and its peripheries: Processes of gentrification, closed-circuit television (CCTV) and other surveillance systems, road and highway restructuring, restricted use of parks and gardens (through opening times) and the emergence of gated communities have been part of this contemporary synchronization of urban areas with control structures. But who has erected the city? Who has taken the decisions regarding the use of some areas for entertainment while others are dedicated to business or education? Are these decisions based on the moral, political, economic, cultural or *social* needs and interests of their inhabitants?

This research, however, touches the city only obliquely. As part of the current sociological – and other academic – efforts to explore the perspective of spaces and the conflicting points of view and ideologies associated with them, the main aim of this study has been to describe and, hopefully, comprehend *discourses*. Every city has several discursive realities emerging, struggling and disappearing. The image of the city – the *Stadtbild* (Löw, 2010: 140) – as an official construction created by governments and planners, global and local media, advertisers, tourism industries and other hegemonic actors seems to collide with the reality of some of those inhabitants – not only simple citizens, but also young people, children, undocumented immigrants, beggars and other populations partially or totally excluded from opinion-formation and decision-making processes – who live and work *in* or *around* the city and who have an alternative discourse of how cities should be experienced, constructed or lived. This *right to the city*, as Harvey, following Park, clearly identifies, refers not only to the right

to access the available resources but also to the right to change the city itself (Harvey, 2012: 3-4).

Tripido, a sixteen-year-old student from Bogotá, had an alternative vision of his city and decided to change it. Unfortunately, on August 2011, according to several media reports, Tripido was shot twice by a police officer while writing his signature under a bridge and died from his wounds. His graffiti productions were basically his *tag*, Tripido – Diego Felipe Becerra was his *real* name – and the cartoon character Felix the Cat. As the circumstances of his death were ambiguous, the police officer who shot him was initially suspended for 90 days, and the ensuing investigation has involved more than 26 officers in what has been considered an extraordinary case of police misconduct in Colombia. A similar fate was shared by Israel Hernández-Llach, an eighteen-year-old artist – a.k.a. Reefa – who died after being fatally Tasered in Miami in 2013. Along with them, many other young people – mostly male youth but also women – fight for an alternative urban environment and expose themselves to risks in what has been frequently called an *irrational* pursuit.¹

Graffiti, a controversial practice in our contemporary societies, seems to be more complex than mere scratching on the walls, as some naive commentators might imply. This appropriation – or *re-aestheticization* – of public spaces *places us* in the firing line of a complex dispute between discourses. Skateboarding, parkour, illegal concerts or art exhibitions, the criminalization of public demonstrations – as in the disputes about the right to camp in public spaces, which accompanied the *Occupy* movement – are all examples of other social practices that defy the so-called “public order”. These social practices may also allow us to read the power structures hidden behind the smokescreen of the usually overrated and oversimplified notion of *shared public spaces*.

Where exactly does the limit lie between what constitutes a *normal* use of public spaces and a *deviant* one? The role of mass media, through the gigantic network of global and local newspapers, television and radio stations, advertising industries and even the so-called new information technologies, is an unavoidable constituent in any

¹ This irrationality refers to the search for an adrenaline rush, the unnecessary exposure to danger for leisure, the animality of territorial markers and other emotionally sensitive dimensions that graffiti productions include in their relation to urban (public) spaces. I use the term “irrational” *only* to emphasize this *attributed* nature of the practice. However, I consider that the idea that emotions and affections are “irrational” by definition needs to be discussed.

effort to understand how these notions of public spaces are being re-created and re-produced.

The relation between mass media and urban young groups and their social practices is precisely the focus of this research. As it would be impractical to include the entire diversity of youth cultures and collectives, graffiti production has been chosen as the common thread running throughout this endeavor. Graffiti is – generally – interpreted as a spot *sprayed* somewhere on the spectrum between vandalism and artwork, or in other words, as a *practice of stigma* or a *practice of status* (Goffman, 1963). In this sense, some introductory questions are therefore necessary: How are urban young groups normally – and sometimes exclusively – associated with graffiti production as represented in mass media discourses? Do the mass media promote graffiti as an art form? Do the mass media censor graffiti production and warn youth about legal actions stemming from this type of so-called – or so-defined – vandalism? Do these discourses match the empirical data available about graffiti in Latin America and worldwide? Can graffiti production bring particular social issues into the public eye? Do mass media portray the political nature of graffiti? Do the media influence public policies regarding young groups and their social practices? Such inquiries demonstrate the diversity of potential approaches to this topic.

However, this research aims to provide as an indicative, preliminary view of the complexity of these phenomena, in order to sociologically identify the cues that may lead us to discovering different discourses about graffiti as a social practice. Keeping this in mind, two newspapers from two different countries have been selected: *La Nación* from Costa Rica and *Folha de São Paulo* from Brazil, with a period of study from January 1st, 2001 to December 31st, 2010 (ten years). In examining both news and opinion articles containing the word “graffiti”,² the goal of this research was to identify similarities and differences between both newspapers, and, taking into account previous studies on the topic, to evidence the emergence of what may be called a *network of global discourses* about the practice.

The subject of this dissertation has been divided into six chapters. A critical review of the notion of *youth* as a social construct, including a summary of theoretical

² Graffiti was not the only term employed for the selection of news and opinion articles, but also terms such as *grafiteiro/grafiteiro*, *grafite*, *pichação/pixação*. See Chapter III for the methodological approach. A table containing the news and opinion articles analyzed in both cases is included in the Annex.

approaches related to these populations, is presented in the first chapter. After this section, the practice of graffiti in Latin America and abroad is presented through a review of recent theoretical and empirical studies on the subject. Even when the production of graffiti is frequently considered as a series of youth phenomena, I propose an alternative reading of both the practice of production and consumption of these inscriptions (for example: tags, pieces, street art, political inscriptions, etc.), that without excluding the “adults” who may be involved in these practices, still addresses the youthful “nature” of the practice. I also propose a typology of what is frequently understood as *graffiti* in common speech, in order to emphasize the complex diversity of practices that are associated to this single term.

Given that graffiti practices – as well as tagging or pichação/pixação³ – are mostly urban phenomena, the discussion about public spaces, public opinion and public sphere has also been observed. Considering various contributions from the sociology of space, the sociology of cities and social geography, the second section addresses the notion of space as something more than the physical environment in which events or actions take place. Space is both this physical environment, but it also includes the combination of symbolic meanings, subjective perceptions, power struggles linked to both political and economic interests, affects and emotions, among others. The coexistence of different spaces in the *same* space (Löw, 2001) is of key importance for the understanding of graffiti as a social practice. The production and consumption of discourses regarding not only graffiti but also other urban phenomena intersect with these clashing interpretations of *space*, in singular. Related to this discussion about the concept of space, the processes of construction and deconstruction of “criminal” practices (*criminological verstehen*) and theories about *moral panics* are also reviewed, taking into account the current academic discussion of the *public sphere*, the concept of the *right to the city* and the notion of *citizenship*.

Third, some references to communication and media theory are included as a theoretical basis for the analysis of discourses in the press, which constitutes the methodological core of this research. Considering the theory of discourse analysis, particularly as proposed by Altheide, this section introduces the research scope, main questions, case selection criteria and methods of analysis applied to both news and

³ Pichação or pixação (pixo) is an autochthonous calligraphy that works as an act of transgression in urban environments in Brazil.

opinion articles in *La Nación* (Costa Rica) and *Folha de São Paulo* (Brazil). A summary of the categories used to interpret and classify discourses is also included in this chapter.

In relation to Costa Rica, the analysis of both news and opinion articles evidences an approach to graffiti practice that is mostly related to notions of *decency*, *heritage* and *social hygiene*. The practice is also valued for its social and artistic significance, but even these interpretations retain some negative connotations regarding both graffiti production and its producers. In the Brazilian case, the subject is more complex, including the aforementioned *discourses of contamination* – mostly related to *pichação/pixação* – but separating it from the *social, economic and cultural value* of graffiti practice (and some forms of street art). The institutionalization or co-optation of graffiti is also more evident in Brazil, as well as the emergence of *supergrafiteiros* (or graffiti celebrities). These two chapters include several quotations to illustrate the different discourses, frames and interpretations of graffiti (and *pichação*) as a social practice. The quotations were analyzed taking into consideration both the theoretical and empirical material included in the first sections of this dissertation.

Finally, the main discourses regarding the practice of graffiti production are related to several other discourses that arise during the analysis, in what may be called a *discursive matrix*. The main conclusion of this study is the necessity to interpret graffiti production as a practice associated with its producers, their identities, their contexts and origins, and the stereotypes that are attributed to them, while maintaining, however, a critical observation of the groups and individuals that oppose these practices and their motivations. In this section, I propose the notion of the *right to the (urban) protest* as a complement to the notion of *the right to the city*. Additionally, I offer further recommendations for new paths of research on the topic, which may help us to improve our knowledge not only of these diverse graffiti practices but also of other (“problematic”) urban social phenomena.

Chapter I

Youth: A social construction of otherness

The category “youth” is a modern social construct.⁴ The strong population growth in the mid and late 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, the emergence of urban spaces, the post-war economic expansion, the evolution and involution of middle classes, the appearance of mass media industries providing original juvenile prototypes and the new forms of socio-spatial exclusion and segregation have contributed, as Valenzuela suggests, to the construction of youth as a social label.⁵ Musgrove,⁶ in his notorious quote, expressed it thusly:

The adolescent was invented at the same time as the steam engine. The principal architect of the latter was Watt in 1765, of the former Rousseau in 1762. Having invented the adolescent, society has been faced with two major problems: How and where to accommodate him in the social structure and how to make his behaviour accord with the specifications. (1964: 33)

Youth, consequently, was engineered as a stage of life, as a hesitant state *located* somewhere between the hypothetical childhood and the socially renowned adulthood. Here, youth was defined accordingly to boundaries. Age, as a biological condition,⁷ was the primary feature. Social behavior – *normally* related to the notion of *deviance* – was also introduced as a way to distinguish youth from adults. However, as Valenzuela⁸ emphasizes, youth is not a specific age or behavior. The social perception of youth and

⁴ Valenzuela (Martín-Barbero et al., 2005: 115-142), Feixa (1999: 15-46), Reguillo (2000: 19-47), Macassi (2001: 54), Brito (Nateras et al., 2002: 43-58) and Alaminos (Trejo et al., 2010: 13-30) emphasize this social construction of youth.

⁵ Valenzuela (Martín-Barbero et al., 2005: 117) suggests that these processes were necessary to the creation of this social category and also points out the historical evolution of youth.

⁶ Musgrove (1964: 33) – and also Musgrove, as quoted by Manning (2006: 25) – associates the construction of youth with changing social conventions and social legislation. The notion of youth, as Musgrove’s quote illustrates, normally refers only to the masculine counterpart, and juvenile males are also most likely to be considered as criminogenic agents, as proposed by Kanazawa and Still (2000).

⁷ Age, as a biological condition, has been used for the construction of this social label. However, the notion seems to be insufficient. Youth refers to a multiplicity of social conditions – age, behavior, social representation, historical backgrounds and politics – that must be taken into account in order for it to be approached critically.

⁸ Valenzuela (Martín-Barbero et al., 2005: 123) defies the essentialist and behaviorist approaches to youth and proposes to understand this population in its complex networks of relations to other social actors such as institutions, governments, adulthood, mass media and even other representations of youth.

its *essential* characteristics are based on contextual and socio-historical patterns. To understand *youth*, Valenzuela says, it is necessary to consider *what it is not*, and to examine its complex and changing relationship with the rest of society.

Scholars consequently became interested in youth affairs, establishing links between this new social construct and traditional social phenomena such as poverty, crime, unemployment, identity, culture, political participation and similar subjects. These studies and researches, as Macassi⁹ clarifies, are mostly based on three broad scholarly approaches: the *social moratorium* approach, the *structural violence* approach and the *youth cultures* approach.

In relation to the social moratorium approach, Ariés¹⁰ has also emphasized the invention of the category *youth* as a result of the rise of capitalism and particularly the way in which the workforce was displaced from the domestic sphere to the factories in 18th-century. His interpretation suggests that *childhood* and *youth* appear as a *natural stage* in our modern societies. While childhood is the phase that is still controlled by the domestic sphere, the notion of youth refers to the phase in which these *potential adults* learn the abilities and techniques they will need to access the labor market. These processes of socialization are developed by the education system and the market itself. However, the labor market has no capacities to absorb this newly educated workforce and, in relation to the Marxist concept of the reserve army of labor, some of these young workers are condemned to wait for one of the few available jobs or are forced to settle for underpaid, stressful and overworked occupations.

Unemployment, underemployment, access to public or private education systems, consumption patterns and consumerism are the key factors in understanding the reality of youth phenomena in this approach. According to the International Labor Organization (United Nations),¹¹ 90% of the global youth population – those aged between 15 and 24 – live in developing countries and at least two-thirds are underutilized. In the Latin American scenario, as Durston¹² quoted by Valenzuela pointed out, most countries have shown an inability to reduce poverty, thus condemning

⁹ Macassi (2001: 14-21) notes these approaches and proposes to understand youth in its relation to economic or political forces, particularly the role of the market and the media.

¹⁰ Ariés, as quoted by Brito (Nateras et al., 2002: 47) relates these processes of industrialization to historical variants of the category *youth*.

¹¹ Valenzuela (Martín-Barbero et al., 2005: 115) and the ILO (2013: 1) describe the challenges that youth populations face both in Latin America and worldwide.

¹² Durston, as quoted by Valenzuela (Martín-Barbero et al., 2005: 131).

their youth populations to two decades of labor precariousness. The lack of jobs, the irregularities of the informal economy and the limited access to education have also contributed to the tendency to consider youth as a potential social threat, especially given that these factors produce an increase in leisure time. While some young people might use this time in positive activities or invest it in “*productive*” projects, it is also likely to expect that some would become involved in both deviant and criminal behaviors.

The structural violence approach, therefore, relates this young population to the production and reproduction of social violence, focusing on the participation of young people in criminal activities and the early detection of their manifest *risk behaviors*, observing the causes of their *deviancy/abnormality* and examining the available strategies for minimizing the possible effects of their transgressions. One example of this approach is the work of Kanazawa and Still,¹³ based on Hirschi and Gottfredson’s age-crime curve,¹⁴ in which the authors suggest that the competition for women among young men has produced a psychological response that translates into a likelihood to commit interpersonal and property crimes, particularly during puberty. Age, then, becomes a criterion for social surveillance and social control.

While not exclusively targeting young people but also including them, the so-called *Broken Windows* model¹⁵ proposed by Wilson and Kelling highlights the role of order-maintenance in the configuration of secure communities. This notion of order is a key component in the constitution of neutral spaces and their official aesthetics.¹⁶ Combining the mechanisms of informal control of the community itself and the law-enforcement capacities of police officers, the appearance of one single broken window – metaphorically, it could refer to young people drinking in the streets and playing

¹³ Kanazawa and Still (2000) propose this competition for women and emphasize the role of reproduction in the practice of criminal activities. The notion of the biological drive should, in my view, be considered in conjunction with other cultural approaches to the construction of crime and deviance.

¹⁴ Hirschi and Gottfredson (1983) suggest that age distribution of crime is invariant across social and cultural conditions. In their view, age can also help us to infer the length of the criminal career. However, a critical or cultural approach to crime construction, as proposed by Ferrell, Hayward and Young (2008) could help us to criticize these approaches and to challenge orthodox representations of crime.

¹⁵ Wilson and Kelling (1982) have been also criticized by Ferrell, Hayward and Young (2008). However, the model has been broadly accepted in right-wing conservative discourses against graffiti. Rosewarne (2004), for example, examines the relationship between graffiti and sexual harassment towards women in Melbourne, Australia.

¹⁶ See Chapter II for a discussion about the production of space.

music,¹⁷ prostitutes on the corner or unknown (suspicious) passersby – should be recognized as a *potential threat* and as a sign of social decline, one that would most probably lead to more severe manifestations of crime.

Such essentialist and orthodox behavioral approaches are contested by new tendencies in the field of criminological theory. The notion of deviance, for example, has been clearly separated from the notion of dissent, as Heath and Potter¹⁸ note:

We must distinguish, in other words, between *dissent* and *deviance*. Dissent is like civil disobedience. It occurs when people are willing in principle to play by the rules but have a genuine, good-faith objection to the specific content of the prevailing set of rules. They disobey *despite* the consequences that these actions may incur. Deviance, on the other hand, occurs when people disobey the rules for self-interested reasons. The two can be very difficult to tell apart, partly because people will often try to justify deviant conduct as a form of dissent, but also because of the powers of self-delusion. Many people who are engaged in deviant conduct genuinely believe that what they are doing is a form of dissent. (2004: 79-80) [Emphasis in the original]

The official hegemonic construction of crime, as Ferrell indicates (1999), fails to include a series of other illegal activities that are not labeled as “crime”, neither in the judiciary system nor in the mainstream media. The cultural criminology approach, accordingly, proposes to explore issues regarding image, meaning and representation of “crime” and “crime control”, considering the networks that produce them, the intertextual “media loops” that facilitate their circulation and the discursive interconnection between the media institutions – media industries – crime control agencies and criminal subcultures.¹⁹ This interpretation also proposes understanding some of these “criminal” or “deviant” cultures as subaltern counterpublics that have

¹⁷ Wilson and Kelling (1982) describe how people in a housing project told an interviewer that the most dangerous spot was a place where young people gathered to drink and play music, even when there was no evidence of a single crime in the area. This example helps us to understand the subjective dimension of crime, danger and vulnerability as perceptions. Youth, *naturally*, are most likely to be considered as threatening.

¹⁸ Heath and Potter (2004: 79-80) emphasize this distinction while considering the market value and the uses of counterculture both in advertising and media industries. A similar theory of co-optation is suggested by Klein (2002) and also by Frank (1998).

¹⁹ Ferrell (1999: 397) constructs his approach based on the Baudrillard’s idea of networks of connections, contact, contiguity, feedback and generalized interface, in Manning’s media loops and in Kane’s discursive interconnections between media institutions, crime control agents and criminal subcultures.

been framed as criminal.²⁰ Lowman (1986: 86), in his social geography of crime, also remarks that maps of crimes including white collar, governmental and other corporate offenses may defy the classic representation of the physical distribution of crime.

In relation to the definition of “moral panic”, Hunt²¹ suggests that these panics are no longer unchallenged, pointing out that those groups or individuals who were targeted by these depictions of deviance, abnormality and criminality are likely to fight back; and that media enterprises, as well, are more conscious of their participation in these moral “campaigns”. Sykes and Matza,²² as pioneers of this process of rejecting orthodox criminology, propose understanding crime and deviance also as the result of *techniques of neutralization*, which can permit the so-labeled “criminals” to temporarily unplug themselves from the moral institutions and to commit the criminal act. This idea suggests that *criminals* are normal individuals and that they commit crime under specific circumstances. One of these techniques of neutralization, the *appeal to higher loyalties*,²³ suggests that individuals or groups are willing accept the price of violating the law if their goal or primal motivation is understood (or perceived) as meritorious.

In acknowledging the relevance of the cultural and political contexts of “criminal” and “deviant” practices – or *dissident practices* – the above-mentioned theories help to expand the simplistic and naive conceptions of crime based on biological and behavioral statements. The stigmas, labels, stereotypes and similar symbolic representations of youth as criminogenic agents should be challenged, and the social practices related to this population must be reinterpreted.

The youth cultures approach, finally, emphasizes the cultural and symbolic dimensions of youth, in order to describe how this population produces, reproduces or changes social meaning through its practices, rituals, identities, “spaces” and values. Considering the multicultural and diverse nature of youth, this reading contributes to a

²⁰ Ferrell (1999: 137), by quoting Fraser, relates the subaltern counterpublics to the expansion of the discursive space. See Chapter II for a discussion on subaltern counterpublics and the public sphere in Habermas (1990 [1962]), Fraser (1990) and Avritzer and Costa (2004).

²¹ Hunt (1997: 644). For a discussion on moral panics, see Chapter II.

²² Sykes and Matza (1957) identify five *techniques of neutralization* that allow individuals to temporarily ignore moral notions and commit crimes: The *denial of responsibility*, the *denial of injury*, the *denial of the victim*, the *condemnation of the condemners* and the *appeal to higher loyalties*.

²³ In this sense, Sykes and Matza (1957) could offer us a possible explanation of the use of violence and transgressive acts – e.g. graffiti, blockades and other *illegal* forms of dissent – as an appeal to more *sacred* or higher loyalties, such as environmental struggles, abortion rights, freedom of speech, etc.

broadening of the restricted views of youth phenomena and to an understanding of how youth is experienced, created, contested, labelled and lived.

The delayed or irregular entry into the labor market, coupled with an abandonment of or prolonged stay in educational systems, is a dual process resulting in a substantial quantity of leisure time which, as Reguillo and Valenzuela²⁴ suggest, can naturally lead to the emergence of youth cultures. Peer groups and young collectives can be interpreted as *self-referential communities*, whose members can interact and share concerns, fears, hopes, interests and ideologies. These urban collectives, groups and associations may be temporary or permanent, and are undoubtedly linked to both global and local contexts. They can differentiate themselves through customs, clothing, social practices, ideologies, behaviors, etc. Their cohesion may be grounded on physical activities – parkour, skating, biking, breakdancing, raves – or can also have a certain degree of political and ideological basis – raggas, punk, graffiti writers, anarchists, okupas – as a constituent of their identity,²⁵ or as part of a *definitional ceremony*.²⁶

These young cultures have created new identities and lifestyles, with their own markets and commodities. Indeed, the relation between the youth population and the system of production and consumption is both complex and contradictory. On the one hand, the market includes them as part of the economic structure in the role of employees or consumers,²⁷ granting them an economic niche or a place in the social hierarchy. On the other hand, the market also excludes them, establishing high standards of consumption that are impossible for the majority of them to attain.²⁸ This uncertain panorama engenders a certain skepticism among young people and as a result they (or

²⁴ Reguillo (2000) and Valenzuela (Martín-Barbero et al., 2005) consider it necessary to revise previous theories of youth based on age and behavior, and propose analyzing young groups and their cultures from a socio-historical perspective. Youth, as suggested, could differ from one place to another and one period to another. The category is a social construct linked to the particularities of market production and consumption, media representations, social values and other contextual factors.

²⁵ Youth cultures are produced through both identity practices and discourses. As Valenzuela (Martín-Barbero et al., 2005: 129) points out, some of these collectives are tolerated while others are even promoted. Other collectives and groups are openly contested and prosecuted.

²⁶ Myerhoff, as quoted by Díaz (Nateras et al., 2002: 36) considers definitional ceremony as a *performative practice* in which those groups or collectives define themselves as they are but also in the way they want to be defined by others.

²⁷ Reguillo (2000: 23-24) compares the emergence of products and services exclusively oriented to youth with the uncertainty this population suffers regarding employment, education, housing, criminogenic stigmas and other forms of political or social exclusion. However, as mentioned above, the youth population is likely to suffer both unemployment and underemployment.

²⁸ Klein (2002) describes the role that advertising and corporations play in the represented construction of living standards and conspicuous consumption.

some of them) become *critical observers* of these processes of *progress*,²⁹ defining new strategies to alter the current order as a way of achieving opportunities and recognition, and of promoting their difference and singularity.

The exclusion of the youth population is not only economic or symbolic, but also political. Youth are excluded from the political public sphere – both opinion-formation and decision-making processes – mostly through governmental policies and programs, in which they are considered to be *just* a target group, with restricted or limited participation, despite the fact that the decisions taken in these spaces may affect them in several ways.³⁰ Additionally, some of these social programs and policies have no real effect because they are decontextualized or ignore the *real* demands and necessities of the young population. Public policies tend to erase and underestimate cultural and social differences and/or are openly prohibitionist.³¹ As this interaction with the rest of society is *arbitrarily* hierarchical, and considering both the lack of public spaces for amusement as well as the symbolic stigmas, labels and discursive “realities” that mass media industries, government and society have placed upon them, these young collectives, as Díaz points out, pursue the appropriation of time and spaces, predominantly through *performative* practices that promote their own *visibility* and expression.³²

Maffesoli proposes that these *ritual*³³ practices are a manifestation of “everyday politics” – *sociality* and *proxemics* – given that these groups perform rituals and construct a new sense of community and belonging as a self-affirmation strategy and in rejection of traditional power structures. Proposing the notion of tribal communities,

²⁹ Reguillo (2000: 15) emphasizes the process in which these groups and collectives have questioned the common idea that “No future is possible” with interpretations such as “Another future is possible”, particularly through action. As this discursive difference emerges, the youth population embraces a series of social causes: gender and LGBT rights, environmental issues, social justice and political parity. Valenzuela (Martín-Barbero et al., 2005: 115) also points out these processes of disenchantment among young people and their corresponding resentment towards the all-embracing notions of *future* and *progress*.

³⁰ Valenzuela (Martín-Barbero et al., 2005: 115-142) describes this gap between the policies towards youth cultures and their right to participate in the definition of these policies.

³¹ Nateras et al. (2002) suggests that the restricted effect of public policies also generates forms of self-organization among youth cultures in order to achieve recognition and *political power*.

³² Díaz (Nateras et al., 2002: 36) considers these symbolic and physical appropriations as acts of reassertion and resistance.

³³ Maffesoli (2004: 57) uses this notion of *Gemeinde* in Weber’s sense to refer the emergence of *hermeneutical communities* linked to specific political goals pursued through the use of micro-political daily actions.

tribes or tribalism, Maffesoli describes this “de-individualization” process as both alienation and resistance, as conformism and reticence towards hegemonic powers.³⁴

Extrapolating, it could be said that in this attitude there is no place for a frontal attack against the dominant powers, something that political organizations take over, but rather for cleverness or a detour. Let’s say, to appropriate a Situationist expression, that, instead of “fighting against alienation with alienated means” (bureaucracy, parties, militancy, postponement of pleasure), [we use] jest, irony, laughter, things that are practiced in an underground way, contravening the normalization and the domestication, the proper duty of all the guarantors of the order determined from the outside, and therefore, abstract. [Translation by the author] (2004: 155)

Tribe, it could be argued, has a relationship with the notion of *barbarism*. As Maffesoli clearly suggests, this idea of barbaric cultures not only refers to the obvious component of marginalization, exclusion or segregation, but also implies the construction of exoticism as an attractive asset of these groups. In simple terms, *barbarism* and *exoticism* sell.³⁵ The youth population or, to be more accurate, “youth” as a symbolic construction, has usually been employed to pump up profits and to create “cool” or “trendy” advertising campaigns.³⁶ Taking this into account, Frank³⁷ notices how revelry, transgression, rule-breaking and similar countercultural myths *normally* associated with youth cultures have also been employed to revitalize mass culture through both advertising and product design, and how these same youth cultures re-appropriate and re-signify mainstream values, ideas and merchandise:

In order for mass culture to be “popular”, it must make concessions to this impulse toward “heterogeny,” it must contain elements of such facets of “liberation” as “the carnivalesque”, “evasion”, and “*jouissance*”; it must allow for rebellion against the “patriarchy;” it must make gestures toward an “inversion” of values. And when these various things appear

³⁴ Maffesoli (2004: 164) points out that these practices do not suggest a frontal confrontation with power structures but a sort of *indifference* and *detour*.

³⁵ Comaroff and Comaroff (2009: 3), Heath and Potter (2004: 253) and Klein (2002) identify the emergence of a new market of consumers of the exotic. Ferrell, Hayward and Young (2008) also describe new markets of consumers of the *criminal experience*.

³⁶ Klein (2002), Heath and Potter (2004), Frank (1998) highlight this link between the market and the cool and trendy *performative* practices re-created and re-produced by alternative, countercultural and *deviant* youth cultures.

³⁷ Frank (1998: 18) describes this use of youth in advertising and media industries in United States. It is likely to think that this process have been also adopted in Latin American scenarios, particularly considering the influence of the vast market of commodities oriented towards the youth population, for example, the music industry, cigarettes, shoes and fashion, among others.

in mass culture, Fiske³⁸ hails them as instruments of subaltern empowerment. The values of consumer society are still those attacked by the mass society theorist: by its nature, capitalism requires rigid conformity and patriarchy in order to function. The transgressive practices of hipster are innately modes of resistance, and mass culture only make concessions to them from necessity. (Frank, 1998: 18) [Emphasis in the original]

This symbolic transference in which designs, trends, ideas, figures, tastes, words and other cultural elements originated, produced or reproduced in the daily routines of youth cultures are used, adopted, reinterpreted and commercialized through media, advertising and corporate industries is known as *co-optation*.³⁹ As mainstream culture is antagonist to countercultural youth cultures – at least in this mythological interpretation of youth cultures – the process involves an obligatory “loss of identity” and the resultant trivialization of the political, cultural and economic demands of the youth cultures/youth population. However, linked to this idea of co-optation, it is possible to identify another more nuanced interpretation of this binary relation between youth cultures and mainstream industries. As Comaroff and Comaroff⁴⁰ realize, one could consider this two-way process as both an *incorporation of identity* and *commodification of culture*: The first refers to the self-definition of groups through their commercial practices, as producers or consumers, adopting or reasserting their (political) identity based on – but also relatively independent of – market-related practices. The second, however, describes the use of their cultural, symbolic and ritual practices and objects as a profit-oriented strategy, commercialized by themselves or by others (from local businesses to corporations).⁴¹

³⁸ Fiske, as quoted by Frank (1998: 17-18), considers the mass-produced – or mainstream – culture as a *both a site of oppression and rebellion*. The reference quoted is John Fiske, *Reading the Popular* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989).

³⁹ On *co-optation* theory see Frank (1998: 27), Heath and Potter (2004: 34-35), Ferrell, Hayward and Young (2008: 18) and Klein (2002).

⁴⁰ Comaroff and Comaroff (2009) propose this two-way process regarding ethnic groups in both the United States and South Africa. However, according to my perception, this process could be also applied to youth cultures. A similar proposal can be found in Klein (2002) and Reguillo (2000), particularly remarking how young groups and collectives are able to re-signify and re-appropriate mainstream commodities, images and discourses.

⁴¹ These processes pointed out by Comaroff and Comaroff (2009) could be useful in understanding the emergence of small and medium enterprises self-organized by young people, in which it is possible to commercialize identity signs and products. I clarify this tendency with regard to graffiti production in the following pages.

Urban youth cultures – as part of the wider youth population – are *proper* and *allowed* as an appealing and sensuous background to profit-related industries, as they produce a social fascination through their practices of revelry, countercultural freedom and similar mass-mediated representations. However, the *real* and *concrete* experience of youth cultures is discursively related to the idea of threat, social decadence, immaturity and a lack of responsibility, thus marking them as a sector of the population that must be watched and controlled.⁴² Youth cultures, as *symbolic representations* and as *lived experiences*, are ambiguous but mutually intertwined. As youth is both a social imperative and a social proscription, the practices related to these groups and individuals are relevant to any serious conception of public spaces-public sphere dynamics.

Youth, as understood in this research, is a social construct related not exclusively to definitions based on age and behavior but also exhibiting a multiplicity of expressions, practices, routines and experiences; it includes both *hegemony-philic* and *hegemony-phobic* (subcultural, countercultural) ideologies or tendencies, as well as any middle position along this spectrum. Through this critical approach to youth, the mainstream and countercultural nature of youth cultures – as well as the representations of mass media and the daily experiences of these groups – can be read according to both their market value and their social value (including their symbolic value). Any essentialist interpretation of youth as a uniform, homogenous, socially or biologically determined population would be considered as inaccurate and biased. Or, in other words, youth is a category that is constructed as the outcome of economic and socio-historical conditions, dependent on local and global scenarios that determine its prescriptions, its sameness and its differences. As Kellner remarks:

Consequently, it is important to present globalization as a strange amalgam of both homogenizing forces of sameness *and* uniformity and heterogeneity, difference, and hybridity, as well as a contradictory mixture of democratizing and antidemocratizing tendencies. On the one hand, globalization unfolds a process of standardization in which a globalized mass culture circulates the globe, creating sameness and homogeneity everywhere. On the other hand, globalized culture makes possible unique appropriations and developments everywhere, thus

⁴² Other forms of youth, such as groups or collectives in rural spaces, cannot be directly linked to this assumption. The same could apply to other youth populations in urban spaces – linked to ecclesial institutions, political parties and voluntary organizations – that instead of being tolerated or prosecuted are mostly accepted and promoted.

encouraging hybridity, difference, and heterogeneity to proliferate. (2002: 292) [Emphasis in the original]

It is in this sense that these alternative youth cultures would be also considered as subaltern counterpublics promoting their own differences, as groups or collectives that originate in synchrony with broader process and transformations on a global scale. Their presumed “vandal”, “deviant” and “illegal” behavior would be read not only as *criminogenic* or *deviant* – if/when it applies – but also as forms of political dissent and difference. This approach to youth cultures is also based on new interpretations of democracy and contentious pluralism,⁴³ in which these groups and collectives are likely to respond and challenge the stereotypes directed towards them. This study of graffiti production as a social practice, in its efforts to connect these concerns about “youth cultures” and their “criminogenic” and “deviant” practices, may also serve to combine the three approaches mentioned above into a more holistic reading of the mass-mediated narratives, frames and discourses regarding shared public spaces and the youth population.⁴⁴

Graffiti as social practice

In order to understand the worldwide presence of graffiti phenomena it is necessary to examine the birth and evolution of this social practice, focusing on its features and particular contexts. Etymologically, as many scholars have previously noted,⁴⁵ the word derives from the ancient Greek term *graphein* and is also presumed to be a variant of the Italian past participle *graffiato*, from the verb *graffiare* in the sense of *scratch*. This “scratch”, translated to our contemporary use of the word *graffiti*, has been commonly used to label *any*⁴⁶ public expression consisting of drawings, writings or symbols, created by a single individual or a collective, placed on almost any surface of the so-called *shared public space* – walls, traffic signs, public transport, bathrooms,

⁴³ Contentious pluralism, according to Guidry and Sawyer (2003), promotes democracy and participatory parity.

⁴⁴ The discussion regarding media approaches and discourse analysis is presented in Chapter III.

⁴⁵ Silva (1986: 20-21), Kozak (2004:21-22) and Montoya (2002: 366) provide a detailed description of the origins of the word “graffiti” and its evolution.

⁴⁶ Austin (2001: 79) denounces the wide common-sense use of the term graffiti and points out that the practice of writing should exclude some of those “unauthorized” phenomena that are labeled as graffiti.

classrooms, halls, roofs, monuments, trees, outdoor advertising, police patrols, drain covers, sidewalks or other accessible surface – in either rural and urban environments, being particularly frequent in the latter.

These communicative signs, as Schlecht points out, are “*spatial and image-oriented, physical and symbolic.*”⁴⁷ Through the use of accessible surfaces and different techniques of production, graffiti appears as an alternative means of broadcasting private or “public” messages⁴⁸ and therefore of responding to an infinite variety of feelings, thoughts, ideologies, beliefs, motivations and interests of its (also diverse) producers.

The birth of graffiti as a social practice has also been a topic of discussion in both academic and graffiti literature. The presence of communicative signs and inscriptions founded in the ancient cities of Pompeii⁴⁹ or in the Athenian Agora⁵⁰ has been considered as irrefutable evidence of the role these inscriptions played in public life, in activities such as commerce, personal relationships and political struggles. Cave artworks have also been labeled as a primal manifestation of graffiti, particularly the Upper Paleolithic cave paintings of Altamira and some indigenous Amazonian rock carvings.⁵¹ Anonymous and satirical messages written on the white walls of the Spanish Conquistador Hernán Cortés’s residence have been documented by chroniclers⁵² and are considered one of the first examples of political graffiti in Latin America.

⁴⁷ Schlecht (1995: 37) defines graffiti as “aesthetic elements and communicative signs”. While the communicative function of graffiti could be taken for granted, this is not the case for its presupposed “aesthetic” nature. Aesthetics, as a subjective value, seems to be one of the multiple readings and interpretations of graffiti phenomena, and therefore it would be inaccurate to define graffiti through its aesthetic components.

⁴⁸ Graffiti could be oriented to a broad audience, as in the case of political inscriptions and some street art productions. However, there are some graffiti oriented to particular audiences, for example, in the case of territorial struggles between gangs or a single declaration of love.

⁴⁹ Kozak (2004: 22-27) offers an extensive analysis of the use of graffiti in ancient Pompeii and provides a comparison of these expressions to contemporary graffiti in Argentina. DaSilva, McCafferty & Teixeira da Silva (2011: 5).

⁵⁰ Lawall (2000) examines a series of symbols, letters and numeric inscriptions on amphoras in the Athenian Agora from 400 BCE to 430 CE, providing an interesting analysis of their possible meanings in the commerce industry of the epoch.

⁵¹ Manco, Art and Neelon (2005: 13) suggest that these indigenous Amazonian rock carvings could be interpreted as a Brazilian graffiti heritage. However, in addition to the differences between contemporary manifestations of graffiti and these primal rock carvings, Maffesoli (2004: 239) suggests that this relation could be established based on its ritual nature, or in simple terms, as a sign linked to territoriality and self-assurance.

⁵² Silva (1986: 56-57) recovers this case from the work of the Spanish chronicler Bernal Díaz del Castillo and suggests that these writings are one of the first modern manifestation of graffiti production on walls. Kozak (2004: 98-99) also refers to this case as an antecedent of the contemporary political graffiti.

However, the contemporary production of graffiti phenomena, as Kozak suggests, has certainly been influenced by two historical moments: the May 1968 revolt in Paris⁵³ and the “birth” of *hip hop* culture in 1970s New York.⁵⁴ In both of these experiences, the *subversive* and the *illegal* character of the practice was possibly the fuel that ignited its early adoption by young people. While in the first case graffiti was directly linked to political struggle and revolutionary ideas, in the second case its character seems to be more related to some kind of *prestige economy*,⁵⁵ the search for public recognition among young people.

The (alleged) first apparition of graffiti phenomena in mass media was a short New York Times reportage, published on July 21th, 1971 entitled ‘*Taki 183*’ *Spawns Pen Pals*. Taki 183 was a nickname employed by a 17-year-old delivery boy who covered the walls of New York City with his signature. In the reportage, it is evident how the newspaper described the *atypical* nature of his *passion* and emphasized the increasing number of followers (*imitators*) of this new practice. The New York Times also reported, if briefly, that according to the Transit Authority the removal of these inscriptions and signatures had a cost of 80,000 man-hours or about \$300,000 in just one year.⁵⁶

The emergence of graffiti in Latin American scenarios is also difficult to assess. Supposedly, the cities of Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Bogotá, Caracas and Rio de Janeiro⁵⁷ were the first hotspots of this – adopted – *fashion*. As many scholars suggest, there has been a process of appropriation and transformation of this practice from its original contexts to Latin American particularities.⁵⁸ Nonetheless, considering the

⁵³ The work of Julien Besançon, as quoted by Kozak (2004: 45) consists of a recompilation of the graffiti of the May 1968 revolt in Paris.

⁵⁴ Austin (2001) describes the nature and evolution of graffiti production in New York City and he discusses how the practice of graffiti became adopted by young groups and how authorities responded to this urban crisis. Austin also suggests that the writing practice did not begin in New York, but in Philadelphia, perhaps around 1959. The exact site of origin of these practices has no relevance for this analysis. See also Weller (2003) and Ventura (2009) for the case of hip-hop cultures in the Brazilian context.

⁵⁵ Prestige economy, as Austin explains (2001: 47), refers to the cultural rules by which status is allotted among a group of individuals. The graffiti producers, often called writers, become involved in this pursuit of symbolic status.

⁵⁶ New York Times (1971: 37). This article, as Austin (2001:49) clearly suggests, may have increased the number of writers and graffiti producers in New York City, considering the media attention given to the topic and the allusion to the illegality of the practice.

⁵⁷ Cruz (2008: 143) states that these cities were the first Latin American urban scenarios to adopt graffiti; however, her argumentation does not provide historical evidence of this fact.

⁵⁸ Reguillo (2000), Kozak (2004) and Manco, Art and Neelon (2005) emphasize this process of (re)appropriation of the graffiti practice in Mexico, Argentina and Brazil respectively.

influence of the new information technologies and the role of the mass media, advertising and entertainment industries in the configuration of youth identities and practices, one can presume that there are some similarities in the implementation of this practice worldwide. The use of a unique jargon, for example, is one of these “global” tendencies in graffiti production.⁵⁹

The multifaceted nature of graffiti phenomena can be summarized in an introductory typology,⁶⁰ based on the intended motivation of the producers of what is commonly – in both the mass media and in academia – labeled as *graffiti* (in singular): a) **Political graffiti**, in the sense of any legal or illegal *street propaganda*,⁶¹ which includes both hegemonic and “countercultural” or counter-hegemonic discourses; b) **Sponsored or branded graffiti** as a new form of *outdoor advertising* in order to promote certain goods or services⁶² associated with local or global businesses and corporations; c) **Commissioned or “official” graffiti** to designate the production realized *under the supervision* or *with the explicit approval* of institutions (local governments, NGOs and churches) as a way to promote social values, health campaigns, environmental conscience, etc.⁶³ This category includes forms of *muralism* that are (mis)labeled as graffiti; d) **Street art (graffiti)**, in the sense of any authorized (negotiated) or illegal transformation of the *public aesthetics* (counter-aesthetics could be also included), in order to improve or challenge the appearance of a given urban or rural landscape. Street art is *freely* created by individuals or groups, without the support of any local institution or business. This category refers to graffiti practice that is not co-opted. e) **Territorial graffiti** to refer to the use of inscriptions, signs and other

⁵⁹ Graffiti production involves a specific jargon including mostly English terms such as “tagging”, “bombing”, “masterpiece”, “writer”, “toy” or “throw up” (see Annex). Naturally, the jargon can be completed with local terms, such as “pichaço” in Brazil or “pintada” in some Spanish-speaking countries.

⁶⁰ This typology includes all phenomena that are usually labeled as graffiti. There is a debate about the boundaries and the definition of each of these types. The so called “latrinalia” type (messages, drawings and inscriptions written in public bathrooms) and personal graffiti (love declarations, honor struggles and similar) have been excluded from this analysis. This typology was created based on a preliminary review of mass-media contents related with youth and graffiti production. Some other less-known forms of graffiti practice not included in the media contents or in academic literature may be excluded from this typology.

⁶¹ Chaffee (1989) analyzes the use of graffiti and wall painting in political struggles in Argentina.

⁶² Klein (2002) in her book *No Logo* points out how and why corporations use “cool” strategies to reach young audiences. This type of advertising has been observed in Costa Rica and Germany as well, associated with energy drinks and cigarettes respectively.

⁶³ The use of graffiti as a strategy to congregate people in churches (Germany), to prevent HIV infection (Argentina) or to provide rehabilitation and reinsertion into society for prisoners (Spain) are some examples of this category. Although churches, NGOs and local governments have political interests, this use of graffiti goes beyond the political struggle and is focused on social issues.

varieties of symbols created to delimitate the *geographical-symbolic presence* of an individual or collective, which includes the “*individual*” practice of *tagging* (*pichação*) and any territorial demarcation of space by urban or rural gangs,⁶⁴ independent of any links of these groups to organized crime, drug dealing or any other *potential* risky behavior (as in the case of soccer/football gangs).

Since its origins, graffiti has been always interpreted as a youth issue. The emergence of *crews* (graffiti collectives) introduced graffiti – writing, tagging and street art in most cases – as a cohesive component in the dynamics of young subcultures or urban tribes.⁶⁵ The practice is related to the identity construction of these collectives.⁶⁶ However, this assumption can be inaccurate for at least two possible scenarios. First, as mentioned above, there is the impossibility of exclusively defining “*youth*” according to age or behavior. As not all young people are involved in the production and appreciation of graffiti phenomena, it is possible to infer the existence of another non-insignificant part of the young population who are *against* these practices. Considering graffiti as an exclusive “youth concern” immediately excludes the young graffiti fighters (anti-graffiti volunteers)⁶⁷ or denies their “youth”. Second, graffiti seems to be more than its production. Even when a prominent number of young graffiti writers can be clearly demonstrated, the exclusion of the adult population from this practice can also be misleading. The role of graffiti in political struggles, particularly strong in Latin America, is a perfect example of graffiti phenomena involving adults.⁶⁸ Moreover, the most aesthetic manifestations of this practice – namely hip-hop graffiti and street art –

⁶⁴ Ley and Cybriwsky (1974) analyze the role of graffiti in the definition of territoriality in Philadelphia, describing its function for young gangs as well as in ethnic conflicts. Graffiti has also been used in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador by the *maras* (a local-regional conglomerate of criminal gangs), as described in a regional comparative study done by Demoscopia in 2007. This study also included an analysis of soccer gangs in Nicaragua and Costa Rica.

⁶⁵ Maffesoli (2004), as mentioned above, relates the emergence of these urban tribes to the new micro-political acts of subversion and the reign of proximity and emotion.

⁶⁶ Reguillo (2000) in the case of Mexico, Villegas (2010) in the Costa Rican experience and Manco, Art and Neelon (2005) in Brazil provide an ethnographical interpretation of the bounds between young collectives, graffiti and identity construction. The work of Austin (2001) includes some references in this direction as part of his historical review of the evolution of graffiti and writing culture in New York.

⁶⁷ These are young members of church groups and right-wing parties who become involved in anti-graffiti campaigns and volunteer to repaint some private-public surfaces.

⁶⁸ Nevaer and Sendyk (2009) provide an interesting summary of the use of graffiti as a means of public protest in Oaxaca, Mexico. However, there is no available information to affirm or to deny the involvement of adults in the production of graffiti. Considering graffiti as something more than its production would allow us to understand it as a social practice. In this sense, even when graffiti is produced by young people, the contents or messages could be supported and promoted by adults. Empirical observations include the Costa Rican (free trade agreement referendum) and the Brazilian (agrarian reform) experiences.

have gained several followers among the adult population, who collect books about graffiti, photograph them, appreciate them and consume them.⁶⁹ Art critics and collectors, scholars, journalists and regular citizens are able to value some of these inscriptions, drawings and writings placed on public surfaces, which may suggest that graffiti phenomena cannot be restricted to graffiti production. Additionally, the boom of graffiti in the art institutions and the art market, for example, allows some graffiti artists to dedicate themselves to their creations, even when they are “technically” adults (as in the case of certain graffiti celebrities/supergrafiteiros).

This positive reading of graffiti productions is contrasted with the assessment of their *destructive* nature. Graffiti is frequently labeled as a form of “vandalism”. The defacement of public and private immovable or movable property, the increased perception of vulnerability and risk in the environment and the disturbance of the current order and cleanliness are the most typical anti-graffiti arguments. The *Broken Windows*⁷⁰ criminological approach mentioned above suggests that graffiti as a minor infraction increases the occurrence of more serious crimes, by sending the message that public spaces are uncontrolled⁷¹ or in decay. In response, strong policies and zero-tolerance approaches are implemented in order to send the “*right*” message. Nevertheless, graffiti production can be both legal and illegal.⁷² Graffiti producers are often included in social and political projects (sponsored and “official” graffiti or political graffiti⁷³) or sell their talents and abilities to private businesses and corporations (sponsored and branded graffiti). Indeed, independent graffiti producers

⁶⁹ Austin (2001) and Lachmann (1988) describe the early incorporation of graffiti in the elite art market. This aesthetic and artistic nature of graffiti will be discussed in the next pages.

⁷⁰ Wilson and Kelling (1982), as mentioned above, propose this criminological approach and suggest the relationship between social “disorder” and crime.

⁷¹ In connection with this approach, Rosewarne (2004) suggests a direct relationship between street harassment and graffiti. Her thesis points out how women are affected by the presence of graffiti and how it works as a reminder of their vulnerability (assault, rape or murder). Rosewarne also indicates, and this is debatable, that the territorial nature of graffiti is mostly a masculine pattern. Even when graffiti can increase the sense of vulnerability, the perception of the space is not attributable to a single component. Löw (2001) shows us how space can be interpreted in a sociological perspective and suggests the impossibility of a single reading of “spaces”.

⁷² A summary of Latin American anti-graffiti policies and laws is covered in the following pages.

⁷³ El País (27.11.2010) reports the use of graffiti in Alcalá Meco (Madrid II) prison as a strategy of social reinsertion [http://elpais.com/diario/2010/11/27/madrid/1290860664_850215.html]. Der Spiegel (06.10.2011) also writes about the use of graffiti in a church in the German town of Goldscheuer as a strategy to increase attendance and to refresh the image of the institution [<http://www.spiegel.de/panorama/gesellschaft/graffiti-gegen-das-kirchensterben-ein-segen-dieser-sprayer-a-766412.html>].

sometimes ask for permission to create a piece in private houses or buildings,⁷⁴ which may also be welcomed by the community.

The existence of *zones of tolerance* to promote expression and creativity among young people and the popularity of graffiti workshops as an urban art or hobby contribute to the decriminalization of this practice. As scholars have pointed out, graffiti production seems to be interpreted as illegal more frequently when it does not have any “adult supervision”, both in its contents and in its production.⁷⁵ The interpretation of graffiti as a destructive practice also excludes the *constructive* outcomes of the phenomena, for example, the insertion of specific and local topics or opinions into the public debate⁷⁶ or any other individual achievement⁷⁷ or social cohesion⁷⁸ derived from its production or consumption.

The *unauthorized* nature of graffiti is often correlated with the notion of “counterculture”, resistance or counter-hegemony.⁷⁹ It goes without saying that graffiti can be employed to protest against governments, corporations, public authorities, churches and other hegemonic institutions or discourses.⁸⁰ The freedom of speech in our contemporary societies is enacted and praised, even considering that the means to broadcast our beliefs, ideologies, critiques or ideas are mostly concentrated within specific (elite) social groups.⁸¹ The emergence of new technologies of information has democratized access to the production, diffusion and consumption of alternative or

⁷⁴ Manco, Art and Neelon (2005) highlight an example of this consent in the Brazilian *favelas*. Lachmann (1988) points out that this authorization could be also strategic for property owners and school officials, who prefer to consent to some works in order to avoid other types of vandalism against their property.

⁷⁵ Austin (2001: 6), for example, clearly emphasizes this dilemma in his research on graffiti in New York. While the authorities were investing money to eradicate graffiti and tagging, they were also supporting social programs to create murals – under adult supervision – in the same communities.

⁷⁶ Chaffee (1989) describes the role that graffiti played during the dictatorial regime in Argentina. Nevaer and Sendyk (2009) also relate graffiti to this idea of “alternative media”, particularly in relation to the Oaxaca teachers’ strike and the civil struggles against Governor Ruiz from 2006 to 2010.

⁷⁷ Lachmann (1988) includes references to school authorities who affirm that graffiti and writing culture may produce an improvement in student achievement. The hard work and perseverance as well as the ability to overcome obstacles in the production of graffiti could be interpreted as positive outcomes for the “retired” graffiti producer-writer.

⁷⁸ The work of DaSilva, McCafferty and Teixeira da Silva (2011: 15) regarding *conscientização* through graffiti literacies suggests how the use of portraits of street dwellers in Vila Maladena, São Paulo, could contribute to create a sense of community and promote inclusion instead of marginalization.

⁷⁹ Austin (2001), Reguillo (2000), Kozak (2004), Cruz (2008) and other scholars have linked this idea of “illegal” production with anti-institutional, countercultural, counter-hegemonic social movements.

⁸⁰ As mentioned, Nevaer and Sendyk (2009) describe the role of graffiti in the Oaxaca teachers’ strike. A similar case is also depicted by Silva (1986) in relation to the student revolt in the Universidad Nacional, Colombia.

⁸¹ Ramonet (2001) provides interesting references about media consortia and the subsequent economic and political power derived from these new concentrations of media ownership.

“countercultural” discourses. Nonetheless, it is necessary to take into account the existence of the so-called “digital divide” in particular contexts, as in the case of some regions and countries in Latin American, Asian and African scenarios, which may restrict the possibilities that people have to communicate their ideas, beliefs, and interests.⁸² In these circumstances, the wall and the paint seem to be more accessible to the citizenry.⁸³

However, it would be illusory to consider all graffiti production as “countercultural”. Corporations, governments and political parties, as hegemonic institutions, have often embraced graffiti to reach concrete or symbolic goals, as suggested in the *co-optation* theory.⁸⁴ By extension, it would be inaccurate to insist that all graffiti has a countercultural political meaning or even a *manifest* political content. To delve into this question – as a hypothesis – political and counter-hegemonic graffiti could be a priority target for anti-graffiti policies as a strategy of constricting the public debate. The substitution of these *countercultural* graffiti with more aesthetic and artistic pieces, by the creation of *zones of tolerance* or *official* murals, for example, could also reduce significantly the available space for public protest or generate a geographical marginalization of more explicit types of political graffiti productions. These zones may also contribute to turning graffiti production into a daylight activity, as a strategy to

⁸² This digital divide limits daily access to the worldwide networks of production/interchange/consumption of information and simultaneously reduces the chances of insertion of local, national and regional actors into the global market. According to Social Watch (www.socialwatch.org), the number of Internet users (per 1000 people) was approximately 400.1 in Uruguay; 385 in Colombia; 375.2 in Brazil; 324.7 in Chile; 323.1 in Costa Rica; 281.1 in Argentina; 274.9 in Panama; 254.9 in Venezuela; 247.2 in Peru; 217.1 in Mexico; 143.2 in Guatemala; 130.9 in Honduras; 108.3 in Bolivia; 106 in El Salvador and only 32.6 Internet users in Nicaragua for the year 2008.

⁸³ Austin (2001: 65) describes how the practice of shoplifting was common among writers and graffiti producers and also how theft or swapping were considered “the only ethical means of acquiring paint”. Weisel (2004:3) includes shoplifting as another graffiti problem that the police authorities cope with in their daily work. In contrast, Manco, Art and Neelon (2005) also point out the use of sponsors in the creation of graffiti pieces in some Brazilian experiences and suggests that the lack of means contributed to development of the writers’ and producers’ innovative abilities, encouraging them to create their own paint and develop new techniques.

⁸⁴ Converse shoes and Chesterfield cigarettes – as observed in cinema advertising as well as Gauloises cigarettes on billboards in Berlin – are some examples of the inclusion of graffiti references in advertising. Pfizer has also produced a viral ad (web only) as part of its campaign “More than medication”, and according to Media in Canada: “The powerful 90-second online film follows a teen graffiti artist spraying a message in a dark, urban alleyway, who then comes home to his seriously ill younger sister, and pulls back her curtains to reveal his tagged message of hope ‘Be Brave’” [www.mediaincanada.com/2008/09/16/Pfizer-20080916].

keep urban youth off the streets after dark, in what could be understood as a *colonization of night spaces*.⁸⁵

Aesthetic and artistic inscriptions on the walls, as Austin (2001) points out, have emerged as part of the natural evolution of the writing culture (tagging). Graffiti production was originally linked to the increasing number of signatures – *tags* – as a quantitative materialization of “*fame*”.⁸⁶ The inclusion of new character styles, colors and backgrounds surrounding these signatures provided an unexplored capacity for creation and imagination in these young collectives. These signatures or tags could be considered as individualized logotypes, being at the same time an alternative form of calligraphy.⁸⁷ Thus, the art market and other aesthetic-related experts – architects, fashion designers, art historians, journalists, among others – became interested in this “ghetto art”.

The discourse of graffiti as vandalism and the discourse of graffiti as art have collided since this process of creative innovation. New art works on canvas imitate the strength, the movement and the amateur techniques of some graffiti works. This process has been often interpreted as the birth of the *postgraffiti* movement. The notion of *street art* offers another possible reading of these phenomena and has undoubtedly helped graffiti producers to avoid the stigmas associated with them through campaigns of social labeling. The definition of art and its functions or its social meanings, however, has always been a matter of debate. As it could be feasible to view some graffiti productions based on their aesthetic attributes, it is also necessary to recall the existence of a manifest amount of counter-aesthetic movement in graffiti productions, as the case of tagging culture and *pichação/pixação* may represent.

Examining this creative innovation of styles and techniques and the inherited notion of prestige economy (Austin, 2001) associated with writing culture allows us to understand why graffiti is not always anonymous. Writers began using simple characters and words coupled with numbers (street numbers mostly) to identify themselves. The emergence of aesthetic graffiti – as “street art” – and its related markets provided advancement opportunities to some of its producers, symbolically and

⁸⁵ I propose this displacement of the practice based on the processes of deterritorialization and social control currently ongoing in night spaces, as proposed by Williams (2008).

⁸⁶ This quantitative significance of tags (signatures) is mentioned in Austin (2001) and Almeida (2008).

⁸⁷ See Almeida (2008) and Bowen (1999), respectively.

economically. These new aesthetic graffiti productions began to be followed by signatures – the graffiti writer and the crew – as well as other ways of establishing contact with their producers or their organizations, such as e-mail addresses or phone numbers. Anonymity is then negotiable. While some graffiti producers are also likely to get involved in social projects and to sign contracts with local business or corporations, other producers avoid this kind of link to hegemonic institutions while promoting the almost *sacred* or *mythical* interpretation of graffiti as *illegal* and *untamed*. Political and *official* graffiti, as in the case of public revolts and demonstrations, can also have identifiable producers, generally well-known groups, parties or social collectives, who may openly acknowledge their authorship, given their political goals.

Anonymity was necessary in the early stages of graffiti production (or writing cultures) particularly because of its illegal or untamed status. The act of defying public authorities – local governments, adult-centered society, police, school officials – also forced the producers to work under stressful circumstances. For this reason, graffiti has always been read as a masculine practice. In interpreting graffiti as territorial demarcation or based on production circumstances such as trespassing or climbing, this sort of reading denies – or segregates – the latent role that women have played in these phenomena. It has been argued that it can be more difficult for young women to avoid parental control and to escape during the night hours in order to produce graffiti, and that the practice may be considered as unfeminine or too dangerous for them (Austin, 2001: 60). As a matter of fact, graffiti production is *mostly* masculine, but it is possible to find examples of women becoming involved in this practice, and not necessarily in a *passive* role.⁸⁸ In the case of political and official graffiti, female participation may be even more visible or expected, as in the case of many feminist, environmentalist and social causes.

A similar misconception considers graffiti almost exclusively as a practice related to impoverished youth. The disadvantaged conditions of some (peripheral) urban young people were considered one of the most feasible explanations of their early adoption of writing culture and their subsequent *prestige economy system* (Austin, 2001: 47). These young people were usually unemployed and in need of status symbols, and as a result, these practices provided them an alternative means of achieving some

⁸⁸ Nina, Lady Pink, Swoon, Faith 47 and Claw are some of the worldwide renowned feminine writers in the graffiti scene. This gender gap has also been suggested by Austin (2001) and Reguillo (2000).

recognition without any significant economic costs.⁸⁹ However, scholars have also pointed out that graffiti producers do not belong to any specific class and their group aggregation seems to go beyond any ethnic, religious and gender differences. Naturally, this diverse atmosphere does not necessarily mean that any cultural or ideological conflict between individuals or groups is overcome; it only points out the existence of a “tolerant mood” while interacting with “others”. Often correlated to this notion of impoverished youth, and maybe because of its connections with the hip-hop culture, graffiti practice was originally associated with the *Black* and *Latino* ghettos in New York. However, as with gender and class categories, the ethnic identity of graffiti producers cannot be generalized,⁹⁰ particularly considering the global diffusion of the practice.

As these producers are located in different social categories – or situated at dissimilar levels in the power structure – in accordance not only with class, gender, or ethnicity but also dependent on their cultural and symbolic dimensions (social, “(sub)cultural” or political identities), the plurality of contents of these inscriptions may also be taken for granted. Scholars have identified the role of this dialogical nature of graffiti production⁹¹ and the use of rhetorical strategies⁹² to promote particular beliefs, feelings, ideas, social issues and similar. This dialogical characteristic could be understood as an exchange between different actors, as is likely with regard to political graffiti, or it could also be the result of a process of *emplacement* – *exophoric indexicality*⁹³ – that allows graffiti producers to dialogue with the structural environment in which their inscriptions or *pieces* (artworks) are placed. Additionally, the concept of *bricolage*, as introduced by Lévi-Strauss in his book *The Savage Mind* (1966 [1962]: 16-36) in his reflection on the differences and similarities between magic

⁸⁹ Manco, Art and Neelon (2005: 9-10) note this *do-it-yourself* attitude of graffiti culture in New York and Brazil.

⁹⁰ Austin (2001: 58) compares police reports with community perceptions about graffiti writers and concludes that while police authorities were able to recognize graffiti producers as a population of all classes and ethnicities, community members generally identified them as Black and Latino members of poor and working-class families. The ethnic and class composition remains unknown with regard to Latin American scenarios.

⁹¹ Kozak (2004: 25), Silva (1986), Ahponen (1990), Guerra (2009) and D’Angelo (1974) highlight this communicative nature of graffiti production as a dialogical and counter-hegemonic practice.

⁹² D’Angelo (1974) identifies the rhetorical strategies of textual graffiti production, particularly the use of satire and mockery to promote future actions, normally against the object or subject under attack. These strategies are allusions, puns, irony, alliteration, rhyme, antithesis, parallelism, apposition and parody.

⁹³ Scollon and Scollon, quoted by DaSilva, McCafferty and Teixeira da Silva (2011: 8), point out that this *emplacement* suggests that graffiti productions are influenced by the particularities of the environment. The *exophoric indexicality* indicates a correspondence between the internal semiotics of the sign and the external emplacement of the sign.

(mythical thought) and science (scientific thought), appears as a process that facilitates this new arrangement of elements (signs), a mixing of pre-existing material – including the remains and debris of previous forms – that create a (new) original form. The outcome of this process, Lévi-Strauss remarks, also includes part of the personality of his or her creator – the *bricoleur* – expressed through his or her unique use of these materials. In relation to graffiti production, as Zarzuri and Ganter (2002:61) suggest,⁹⁴ *bricolage* is evident in the use of subversive slogans, symbol inversion and recoding employed by graffiti producers. In this sense, graffiti productions frequently include a series of ideas, concepts, slogans, characters and other similar signs already available in contemporary (local, regional and global) mass cultures, which are then re-signified through or mixed with countercultural or counter-hegemonic discourses. As a result, some of these graffiti productions could be considered as *aesthetic forms of resistance*.⁹⁵

One of the arguments used to validate the production of unauthorized forms of graffiti (street art, slogans, signatures or tags) is related to the pervasive presence of outdoor advertising. Graffiti producers notice that the companies and corporations own the city, and they challenge this ownership with their personal marks. It is important to mention that outdoor advertising has also appropriated graffiti culture, employing some of these producers for commissioned works of graffiti or for art design. The result is the emergence of inner conflict among the various graffiti producers, those who believe that the practice should remain untamed and countercultural and those who allow it “*to dialogue*” with mainstream society. This is, for example, one of the basic differences between graffiti (in the sense of hip-hop and street art) and tagging culture or *pichação/pixação*.

This rejection of the official aesthetics of the city – referring to the organization of the space according to private interests, governmental agencies and advertising companies – can explain the counter-aesthetic character of some of these inscriptions. Tagging culture and *pichação*, as well as other non-communicative inscriptions, are closed, exclusionary and illegible. This illegibility of the sign (*Unlesbarkeit der Zeichen*) can be associated with that *what is not being said, what is not open to*

⁹⁴ Nateras et al. (2002: 13) also describes the *bricolage* as a process of re-signifying signs and symbols. Silva (1986: 34) uses Eco’s notion of *semiological guerrilla* to refer the same process. The main idea is the emergence of distinctive practices of symbolic confrontation.

⁹⁵ Zarzuri and Ganter (2002: 135) relate the aesthetic value of some of these cultural productions with the notion of the *micropolitical* (in Guattari’s sense) The authors do not provide further reference to Guattari’s work.

*interpretation, and what makes no sense.*⁹⁶ The inscription – the tag – is transgressive in its very presence because it denies a reading. The difference of these personal signs, in contrast to advertising, is that advertising is a readable, familiar form (medium) that offer us images, values, or even pleasure and emotions.⁹⁷ Unauthorized graffiti productions, particularly those that deny decoding processes, are “irrational” in the sense that they have no clear aim, providing neither decoration nor any (assessable) value. They simply exist.⁹⁸ Indeed, the body (the self) and the signature may be connected, considering that these signatures – tags and pichações – become a signifier of their producers.

A series of pleasures are associated with the practice of graffiti production, both in the commissioned and unauthorized forms, and are particularly visible in tagging culture and pichação. First, it is the satisfaction of the mark itself, the pleasure associated with the visibility of one’s own work (piece, street art, signature, etc.). Second, graffiti producers also experience an *adrenaline rush*, resulting mostly from the illegality of the practice. The adrenaline rush is linked not only to the creation of the graffiti itself, but to other activities that may result from its production (trespassing, encounters with the police, stealing of materials, or the avoidance of witnesses).⁹⁹ Ferrell (2004: 294) has related the emergence of graffiti production to boredom, an “unbearable experiential foreground of modernity”; an adrenaline rush seems a perfect antidote to this condition. Indeed, it is necessary to mention that graffiti producers are often labeled with a *discourse of youth at risk* because of their “passion”, not only because they may face fines or jail terms because of their “irrational” hobby, but also because they expose themselves to multiple dangers, from electrocution to falls.¹⁰⁰ As Campos suggests, some of these producers may consider themselves superheroes, not

⁹⁶ Scheffer (2002) explains the relation between the medium (Medien), the message and its legibility or illegibility.

⁹⁷ Frank (1998), Klein (2002) and Hellmann (2003) offer insights regarding this relation between the advertising industry and emotions.

⁹⁸ Hénaff et al. (1996: 25) explain how those elements of society which cannot be rationalized are not likely to be integrated into democratic society, given its foundation on principles of rationality (both reason and subjection to the law). I propose that unauthorized graffiti defies this (imposed) rational order of urban public spaces.

⁹⁹ Ferrell (1993: 171-172) states: “And as we do, we may begin to see differently all sorts of sensually appealing, if politically ‘unsophisticated’ criminal events: vandalism, shoplifting, graffiti writing, and the like. Until we understand the meaning of these events for their perpetrators, we would be hard pressed to dismiss them as without political content, or the possibilities of resistance”.

¹⁰⁰ Ferrell (1993:139) describes how this process of self-victimization attributed to graffiti producers could be understood as a form of social suicide.

only because they adopt an *alter ego*, through tags or a nickname (Campos, 2013: 16) but also because of the risk associated with the practice of graffiti:

The graffiti writers must transcend their very self, continuously challenging their limits. In order to do this, they will provide proof of their character and merit by risking their lives to paint in the subways, on top of buildings or on trains, eluding video surveillance and the police and enduring the violence of their rivals. Just as in the myth of the superhero, the idea of liminality always seems to be there. On the one hand, if there are liminal instances of space and time associated with the night, undergrounds, trains and abandoned factories, on the other hand, there are liminal identities: hidden, concealed, mutant and misunderstood. (Campos, 2013: 161)

This characteristics mentioned by Campos are particularly important when related to the origins of the graffiti culture in the urban ghettos. The prestige economy associated with the quantity of the signatures (tags or pichações) or the quality of the works (both artistic quality as well as the visibility of the inscription) may represent status not only to its producer but also to the group or crew to which he or she belongs. Following Feinberg, this could be interpreted as a form of *vicarious pride*, in which the actions of one of the members may signify status or prestige to the whole group.¹⁰¹ The same holds true when, for example, one (inexperienced) writer symbolically attacks a member of a group, an act that could be read as an affront against the whole group. This is particularly important, again, for understanding the dynamics and escalation of conflicts emerging between graffiti and street artists and those who exclusively practice tagging culture or pichação/pixação.

Another important aspect of the production of graffiti is that it also challenges notions such as locality and globality. As street artists, graffiti writers, new social movement participants – counterpublics – and any other potential graffiti producers travel from one city or one country to another, this social practice becomes migrant or nomad as well.¹⁰² Kozak and Silva have identified several examples of graffiti production that are mirrored, echoed and reproduced in other cities or countries,

¹⁰¹ According to Feinberg (1970: 236), *vicarious pride* may be the concept which explains why “[i]ndividuals sometimes feel proud or ashamed of their families, ancestors, countries, or races; and all or most of those who belong to groups may feel pride or shame over the achievements or failures of single members of their groups”.

¹⁰² Meyrowitz (2005) proposes the term *glocality* to refer to this simultaneity of local and global dimensions.

generally involving local adaptation or contextualization as well.¹⁰³ The emergence of new information technologies has also led to the emergence of websites, forums and other sites – including social networks – where graffiti producers can share designs, techniques, photographs and even graffiti-related issues (from police brutality and abuse to the strengthening of anti-graffiti laws).¹⁰⁴ This local-global dialectic also includes a sort of internship or collaboration between graffiti producers of different regions, in which they learn from each other, reaffirm bonds and create collectively. This fact, for example, defies any possible delimitation of U.S.-American, European or Latin American graffiti as a rigid category.¹⁰⁵

Local and governmental authorities as well as anti-graffiti grassroots groups also combine efforts by employing the new information technologies, particularly through websites, forums and social networks – indeed, the same networks used by graffiti producers as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube¹⁰⁶ – or through the formal coordination and matching of control policies.¹⁰⁷ In these discourses, graffiti productions are linked to notions of public hygiene, order, decency, law-abiding citizenship and security.¹⁰⁸ Ferrell indicates that these anti-graffiti movements may also represent only the private interests of a few, who rhetorically portray graffiti as a threat to the community as a whole:

Instead, anti-graffiti campaigners and the local media create moral panic by publicizing their concerns as concerns of the community as a whole. An intentional confusion of business interest and public interest is perpetrated and, in a sort of magical reversal, perspectives which business and political leaders wish to impart *to* the community are

¹⁰³ Kozak (2004) and Silva (1986), for example, describe the adoption and reformation of some political graffiti produced in the May 1968 revolts and re-adapted to Latin American historical struggles.

¹⁰⁴ Anti-graffiti legislation and policies are broadly described in the following pages.

¹⁰⁵ My preliminary observations indicate that some Latin American graffiti writers – for example the renowned OsGemeos, Nina and Nunca – have produced graffiti in cities like Athens, Greece and Berlin, Germany. However, this is not a one-way movement, particularly considering the presence of Belgian graffiti artists – such as BueTheWarrior or Roa – in Mexico. Manco, Art and Neelon (2005) also suggest such a process of interchange among Brazilian and U.S.-American graffiti writers.

¹⁰⁶ This includes forums and pages dedicated to promoting or to prosecuting graffiti as well as other commercial sites for both sides, offering spray cans and accessories to graffiti producers and surveillance technology and special anti-graffiti paint to householders, schools and businesses.

¹⁰⁷ The work of Weisel (2004) regarding public policies against graffiti production is one of these efforts of networking and experience sharing. The guide has drawn on research findings and police practices in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands and Scandinavia. A similar interchange has not been found regarding Latin American police but this does not exclude any *informal* cooperation among organized anti-graffiti groups based on new information technologies.

¹⁰⁸ As mentioned above, see Wilson and Kelling (1982). The next chapter includes some critical approaches to these notions of order and social hygiene.

presented as coming *from* the community. (Ferrell, 1993: 134) [Emphasis in the original]

Scholars have suggested that this repressive discourse is likely to be linked to *tagging* and *pichação* practices and it is not usually applied – or not with the same intensity – to other more “aesthetic” forms of graffiti production, as considered in “general” terms¹⁰⁹. The “American” New York styled hip-hop graffiti seems to be collectively more accepted than repressed while the monochromatic *tagging* and *pichação* are considered as a previous phase, as a primal ancestor of these more “evolved” – perhaps also more commercialized – inscriptions.¹¹⁰ The police,¹¹¹ as well, may be responsible for judging the aesthetic qualities of any *piece* in order to distinguish, *arbitrarily*, whether it is art or vandalism, or better, if they should bother to intervene or not when they spot graffiti producers at work. Moreover, as Rocha and Vieira (2009: 1290) remark, some of these producers appropriate the label of vandalism, and they considering themselves “vandals by choice” (as an affirmation of their existence).¹¹²

The debate presented here sheds light on the ambiguity and multi-expressive nature of youth cultures and the inner differences that may exist within the “same subculture”. Graffiti producers, labeled as *writers*, *taggers*, *street artists* or *counterpublics*, have different notions, discourses, interpretations and goals regarding public spaces – as do governmental authorities and the global market – and these divisions cannot be ignored if one is to critically approach mass-mediated narratives regarding this social practice.

The production of space, as well as access to the public sphere, is a social process that needs to be understood in relation to the political struggles of dominated groups for inclusion and recognition. Processes of exclusion, stereotyping and

¹⁰⁹ Manco, Art and Neelon (2005) broadly describe this difference between *pichação* and graffiti in Brazil and Austin (2001) also provides examples of this tendency in United States.

¹¹⁰ Austin (2001) notes this evolutionary interpretation regarding *tagging* in United States and Jung (2011: 7) suggests a similar explanation for *pichação* in Rio de Janeiro. Villegas (2010) also remarks these differences in Costa Rican experiences.

¹¹¹ Manco, Art and Neelon (2005) and Jung (2011: 7) point out the role of this aesthetic judgement in the prosecution of graffiti.

¹¹² Some graffiti producers have identified themselves as *graffiti criminals* or *graffiti vandals*. In relation to *pichação*/*pixação*, this is clearly evident in the names adopted by some groups of *pixadores* in Brazil, including, for example: *Os Piores*, *Os Tais*, *Cretinos*, *Mortos*, *Ossos*, *The Malocas*, *Corvos*, *Trapos*, *Arsenal*, etc. See the documentary *Pixo* (2009).

stigmatization are related to particular interpretations of space, in which boundaries are required to separate the “*deviant*” from the “*normal*”, the local from the foreign, and the center from the peripheries. What is at stake in these dichotomic oppositions is precisely the political significance of some of these spatial practices. This discussion is the topic of the next chapter.

Chapter II

Spatial socialization, criminological *verstehen*¹¹³ and the public sphere

Processes of socialization also entail a spatial socialization.¹¹⁴ The approach to the notion of space, as Löw has clearly identified, has been frequently associated with a biased idea of unity and order. Similarly, the construction of national identity and its related principle of *normalcy* work under parallel assumptions of uniformity and homogeneity,¹¹⁵ constituting *imagined communities* in Anderson's sense (2006). The fragmentation or collapse of the neat and regular environment – *Zerstückelung des Raumes*, according to Heitmeyer¹¹⁶ – and the burst of the conviction of homogeneity may contribute to the emergence of *moral tensions*¹¹⁷ and their resultant campaigns of *social hygiene* and *exclusion*. Public spaces, therefore, become the battlefield of these clashing ideologies or discourses, the conflict between the principles of normalcy versus the risks inherent in the incorporation of the *abnormal*, the *deviant*, the *untidy* and the *out of place*.

The perception of the physical and symbolic space of a nation or a city – or even of a singular fragment of the urban environment – is, of course, socio-historical, which helps to explicate why the imposition of a particular idea or discourse of space may be welcomed in some particular “place” (and time) but may be challenged and resisted in another. In addition to this complexity, this chapter aims to describe how different readings and interpretations of space intertwine themselves with broader political

¹¹³ This concept includes a process of (de)construction of the categories of crime as well as a reflection on the criminalization of cultural products and culture producers, as proposed by Ferrell (1999).

¹¹⁴ Löw (2001: 101) suggests the idea of spatial socialization as linked to other social constructs such as age or gender. Spaces, in this logic, are open to multiple interpretations, particularly through new technologies and flows of information.

¹¹⁵ The construction of the nation as a discursive experience in the work of Anderson (1991) implies the reinforcement of these ideas of homogeneity or community and the appeal to a common history, territory or similar symbolic constructions.

¹¹⁶ Löw (2001: 85) notes that, in accordance with interpretations of space as a uniform and orderly environment, Heitmeyer constructs his idea of the disintegration of the space and relates processes of de-socialization to the consequences of this process. The critical approach offered by Löw proposes to overcome this Euclidean perception of space and contrast it with another possible multiple interpretation of spaces.

¹¹⁷ The use of the terms “moral tensions” and “social hygiene” are some of my personal interpretations of Cohen's idea of *moral panic* and Goffman's idea of *discreditable-discredited subjects*. Both of these original references are explained in the following pages and, clearly, refer to mechanisms of social control.

processes in the public sphere. Space, for example, is also considered as directly influenced/affected/transformed by the economic inequalities anchored in the capitalist system of production and consumption. According to Harvey:

As Marx observed, the “annihilation of the space by time” becomes a historic necessity for capital, and with this comes the drive to create configurations of space that are “efficient” (for capital) with respect to circulation, production, exchange and consumption. Accumulation requires, then, the creation of a physical landscape conducive to the organization of production in all of its aspects (including the specialized functions of exchange, banking, administration, planning and coordination, and the like, which typically possess a hierarchical structure and particular form of *spatial rationality*). (2001: 81) [Emphasis added]

This spatial rationality, derived from both the economic structure and the political struggles for power, denies the recognition of other alternative readings of spaces. The sociological analysis of spaces may refer not only to the physical environment and the symbolic characteristics associated with representations of space (for example, aesthetics), but also to the actions or behaviors that these spaces may allow or forbid, or the emotional and subjective perception of these spaces by a given individual or group. Läßle, introducing his notion of *Matrix-Raum*, remarks the need to go beyond oversimplified readings of space:

An extended concept of space is obviously needed in order to explain social spaces in their “quality”, i.e. their social function and development context. “Space” is neither the neutral “vessel” nor the passive “result” of physical objects, but such a concept must also approach societal “forces”, that “form” and “shape” the material-physical substrate of this space and thus the spatial structures. (Häußermann *et al.*, 1992: 195) [Translation by the author]

Löw,¹¹⁸ in her interpretation of Läßle’s *Matrix-Raum*, identifies four central dimensions necessary to advance the definition of space: First, space should be read observing its material and physical substratum (*materielle Erscheinungsform des gesellschaftlichen Raums*). Second, considering class and power structures, space has an effect on and is an effect of social interaction (*gesellschaftliche Praxis der Produktion*,

¹¹⁸ Löw (2001: 137) points out that this interpretation constructed by Läßle is based on Einstein’s idea of relativity, but also emphasizes that Läßle’s approach does not forget to include the social dimension and the social functions of space.

Nutzung und Aneignung des Raums). Third, Löw calls attention to the institutionalized and normative regulation system of space, in the sense of forms of ownership and legal or aesthetic regulations (*Berücksichtigung der Vermittlungsformen zwischen Erscheinungsbild des Raums und der Praxis der Subjekte*), and concludes her assessment emphasizing the role of signs and symbols in the definition of spatial behavior (*Vorstrukturierung räumlichen Verhaltens durch Gestaltung*).

A similar approach was proposed decades before by Lefebvre in his reflection on *The Production of Space* (1974), particularly through his notion of *social space*. Considering it both a *product* and a *means of production*,¹¹⁹, Lefebvre indicates:

(Social) space is not a thing among other things, nor a product among other products: rather, it subsumes things produced, and encompasses their interrelationships in their coexistence and simultaneity – their (relative) order and/or (relative) disorder. It is the outcome of a sequence and set of operations, and thus cannot be reduced to the rank of a simple object. At the same time there is nothing imagined, unreal or “ideal” about it as compared, for example, with science, representation, ideas or dreams. Itself the outcome of past actions, social space is what permits fresh actions to occur, while suggesting others and prohibiting yet others. Among these actions, some serve production, others consumption (i.e. the enjoyment of the fruits of production). Social space implies a great diversity of knowledge. (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]: 73) [Parentheses in the original]

Knowledge, according to Lefebvre’s interpretation of Foucault, is perceived in two different readings. The first of them refers to knowledge as *savoir* (in French), or knowledge that serves power. The second interpretation is linked to the notion of *connaissance*, the subversive and critical form of knowledge (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]: 10). In this sense, it is possible to suggest that space is considered here in both ways, as spaces in synchrony with power structures and those spaces that defy them. Additionally, Lefebvre (1991 [1974]: 86-87) remarks that “[s]ocial spaces interpenetrate one another and/or superimpose themselves upon one another. They are not *things*, which have mutually limiting boundaries and which collide because of their contours or as the result of inertia.” This idea is important for understanding how the same space may be perceived, used or approached in different ways by different individuals or groups.

¹¹⁹ Lefebvre (1991 [1974]: 85) emphasizes that space is both a product to be consumed and a network that allows the circulation of raw materials needed for further production.

Moreover, Lefebvre – as interpreted by Purcell (2002)¹²⁰ – deemed “space” as three intersecting planes of social reality. The *perceived space* refers to the material, objective and concrete manifestation of any environment and it embodies the interrelations between institutional practices and routines. The *conceived space* includes the *representations of space*, creative ideas and similar cognitive constructions of space normally developed by city planners, urbanists, developers, social engineers and scientists. The lived space outlines the *spaces of representation*, or the arrangement of these two former levels, the perceived and the conceived space, configuring a new territory in which clandestine, underground and alternative experiences of space can emerge.

Considering these critical approaches, any reading of space as uniform and orderly is misleading, or at least reductionist and incomplete. This *dominant reading* of space defined here also parallels similar appraisals *a propos* urban spaces and cities. Uniformity and order, as discursive constructions, are related to the idea of security. As Bauman points out, our contemporary societies seem to be stuck in a dilemma regarding security versus freedom.¹²¹ While freedom could introduce some abnormalities or uncertainties into the “regular system”, security tends to promote homogeneity, equilibrium and stability. Cities reflect this impasse too. To achieve a rational and productive standard of security – and its subsequent economic gratifications – local governments and city authorities must restrict freedoms in order to avoid any potential disruption. Consequently, as some scholars affirm, public spaces have been privatized, reduced, transformed or restricted.¹²²

The necessary surveillance capacities, preventive strategies and punishment practices linked with the idea of security are synchronic and often strong correlated to

¹²⁰ Purcell (2002: 102) and Simonsen (2005: 6-7) highlight this contribution of Lefebvre to the interrelation of three different planes regarding spaces.

¹²¹ Bauman (2009: 13-15) reflects on this dilemma and emphasizes the difficulty in reconciling both human values. In his logic, the pursuit of security has also produced negative consequences for human liberties.

¹²² Ferrell, Hayward and Young (2008 :99) provide several examples of how public spaces have been altered in order to control the presence of individuals. These structural transformations, for example, include the design of public spaces in order to disincline long-term sitting and to provide a less comfortable environment to those who might linger, loiter or simply stand waiting. This strategy is known as *Crime Prevention through Environmental Design* – CPTED – and it has been employed in United States, United Kingdom and several other countries. Serpa (2007) notes how cities, particularly through the design of public parks and open areas, are defined in synchrony with economic and political goals. This design affects the cultural and symbolic manifestations, traditions and practices of nearby communities, increases social spatial exclusion and induces gentrification processes. See also Harvey (2012).

normative discourses. Recent architectural solutions have focused on this problem of security. Kaytal (2002) relates architecture to crime control, addressing how design and natural surveillance could produce better environments “free” of crime. This is the same principle held by the *Crime Prevention through Environmental Design* (CPTED) and the *Broken Windows* model. Environments that are clean and have aesthetic appeal may empower the inhabitants to exert social control against deviant/inappropriate/illegal/suspicious behaviors. In this sense:

Cleanliness and aesthetic appeal can attract people to an area, thereby generating more actual and perceived safety and creating a feeling of neighborhood pride. Instead of seeing disorder and assuming that it is commonplace to contribute to further disorder, people will see order and be less likely to disturb it. When lawbreakers congregate in places such as public parks, constraints on further law breaking erode. Furthermore, the group dynamics within enclosed spaces may lead to additional crime due to the tendency of groups to engage in riskier behavior. By eliminating visible disorder through architecture, the power of social organization to deter crime increases. (Kaytal, 2002: 1066-1067)

Even if one considers that better environments may produce more safety and foster security, this type of initiative has drawbacks. As mentioned above, multiple perceptions of space can coexist in the same space, which may lead some of us to experience a given area as liberating while others may find it suffocating. Indeed, Kaytal himself recognizes some problems regarding this social function of architecture. Not only can natural surveillance threaten individual privacy, but it may also signify the extension of the sphere of social control beyond the state. Additionally, Kaytal doubts whether these architectural solutions are efficient at reducing crime or if they simply displace it. The last criticism refers to the emergence of suboptimal forms of architectural protection against crime (Kaytal, 2002: 1128). It is necessary to add to these criticisms that such architectural solutions are also *commodities* which are not accessible for broad segments of the population, contributing to ongoing processes of gentrification and exclusion.

Indeed, Goold et al. suggest that the consumption of security is mostly *indirect consumption*, because the decisions regarding these solutions are mostly taken by other institutions – private organizations, the State – and not by “consumers”. Individuals and groups may even be the final target of these measures, as may occur in the case of

CCTV and other technologies used to advance social control.¹²³ Consumers do not necessarily agree with these technologies and architectural solutions, as Goold et al. remark:

How does the scale and mode of organizationally determined and purchased security affect how—or even whether — specific physical (or virtual) settings are consumed by shoppers, bank customers, students, transit passengers or employees? Such consumers may welcome, take comfort in and actively or unconsciously seek out, environments they consider to be safe, thereby rewarding organizations for the care taken in securing them on their behalf. Or they may not notice how safe a location is or the security measures its owners have bought and put in place. They may also object to, avoid or refuse to consume (and consume in) locations they judge to have been overly or inappropriately secured, places whose securitized atmosphere leaves them feeling *ill at ease*, *irritated* or *angry*. (Goold et. al., 2010: 13) [Emphasis added]

This is particularly important because those groups and individuals excluded or segregated from public spaces (i.e. prostitutes, homeless people, graffiti producers, peripheral¹²⁴ youth, minorities, etc.) may defy this authoritarian imposition of space, both through legal/political/deliberative means (including acts of civil disobedience) or by involving themselves in illicit-immoral-deviant-unauthorized behaviors in these public spaces. Additionally, the physical exclusion of particular spaces may be intertwined with specific discourses and ideologies that promote symbolic exclusion. As Lefebvre (1991 [1974]: 132) remarks: “Every discourse says something about a space (place or sets of places); and every discourse is emitted from a space. Distinctions must be drawn between discourse *in* space, discourse *about* space and the discourse *of* space.” I propose that these discourses are strongly intertwined.

Processes of stigmatization, discrimination and exclusion of these groups and individuals have had a long history of power struggles. The newly emergent counter-hegemonic or alternative ideologies and practices, as Ferrell, Hayward and Young

¹²³ Goold et. al. (2010: 19) perceive this indirect security consumption as hierarchically organized.

¹²⁴ For the purpose of this research, periphery is considered as a social representation opposed to a symbolic center, frequently referring to underdeveloped/impooverished urban environments. For the Costa Rican case, the periphery may include the *tugurios* and other informal settlements, as well as urban areas outside the Gran Área Metropolitana. For the Brazilian case, the term refers to the *favelas* and other impoverished areas of the cities. This research does not include rural or semi-urban periphery as part of this concept, restricting it to urban environments.

describe, are the target of some of these orthodox politics of criminology.¹²⁵ Cultural criminology thus offers a new approach to analyzing and comprehending power struggles and the dynamics of (re)construction of “crime” (in the sense of actions or behaviors that are presented as crimes, when they do not necessarily constitute a criminal offense). Considering the convergence of cultural and criminal processes in contemporary social life, Ferrell proposes the concept *criminological verstehen*¹²⁶ as a valuable strategy of dismantling dualistic epistemic hierarchies, a task of sociological deconstruction. The binomial “crime as culture” – the so-called adrenalin rush and the culture of pleasure and excitement – and “culture as crime” – public labeling of popular culture products as criminogenic – is interwoven with the mediated crime imaginary and the political agendas of the criminal justice system (Ferrell, 1999). The sociological approach of *criminological verstehen* helps to defy idealized notions of decency and community, or in other words, the “official definitions of reality”.

This criminalization of “the other”¹²⁷ has commonly been employed to produce the aforementioned symbolic and spatial segregation. Stigma, as Goffman has clearly suggested, is anchored in a two-fold process of social communication. On the one hand, physical evidence – age, gender, ethnic, clothes, behavior – serves to identify *discredited* individuals. On the other hand, due to the lack of any evident *stigma symbols*, some individuals are simply considered as *discreditable* – as in the popular maxim, *innocent until proven guilty* – and they engage in a series of tactics of covering, passing and other available ways of controlling social information in order to avoid

¹²⁵ The orthodox politics of criminality understand crime and deviance, as Ferrell, Hayward and Young (2008: 31) suggest, as an expected result of institutions unable to transfer social values and individuals unable to receive them. Consequently, the deviant and criminal are labeled as lacking culture. Biological immaturity, gender and race determinism and similar essentialist interpretations of social differences are often considered criminogenic, and Rational Choice Theory points to such factors as low levels of social control, crime opportunity and short-term-oriented individuals (2008: 65-66).

¹²⁶ Following Weber’s concept of *verstehen*, Ferrell, Hayward and Young (2008: 177) propose the need to create interpretation mechanisms of criminal and deviant practices based on the subjective, appreciative and emphatic understanding of actions and motivations. An analysis of media narratives regarding these criminal and deviant practices, according to Ferrell (1999: 401-403), would help provide the postmodern sensibility necessary to understand the public representations of crime and their related communicative strategies, or as mentioned, the binomial “crime as culture” and “culture as crime”.

¹²⁷ Otherness, as a concept, contributes to the construction of identity boundaries. This difference, between *us* and *them*, is key to understanding the idea of Sykes and Matza regarding the *techniques of neutralization*, which allows individuals or groups to temporarily disconnect from the “moral” code in order to commit a crime. Acknowledging the coexistence of *other moral codes*, for example, could help us to approach meanings, symbols and motivations regarding so-called deviant, dissident and countercultural practices.

social stigmas.¹²⁸ In particular circumstances, this apparent pseudo-normality translates not only into social acceptance but also into significant access to scarce resources.¹²⁹

Discredited and discreditable individuals or groups are likely to be the target of *moral panics*, and according to Hunt, these campaigns may be the result of *interest-group*, *élite-engineered* or *grassroots* discourses.¹³⁰ The concept of moral panic, as originally defined by Cohen,¹³¹ links this idea of segregation, stigmatization, dehumanization and similar tactics of exclusion with the role of power structures:

Societies appear to be subject, every now and then, to periods of moral panic. A condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media; the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians and other right-thinking people; socially accredited experts pronounce their diagnoses and solutions; ways of coping are evolved or (more often) resorted to; the condition then disappears, submerges or deteriorates and becomes more visible. Sometimes the object of the panic is quite novel and at other times it is something which has been in existence long enough, but suddenly appears in the limelight. Sometimes the panic passes over and is forgotten, except in folklore and collective memory; at other times it has more serious and long-lasting repercussions and might produce such changes as those in legal and social policy or even in the way the society conceives itself. (Cohen, 2002 [1972]: 1)

Sennett, in his books about the city, *The Fall of the Public Man* (2002 [1977]) and *The Conscience of the Eye* (1990), emphasizes how the transformation of the space of the city has debilitated former spaces of socialization, while imposing certain rules of

¹²⁸ Those who we are not – the “others” – have their own strategies, Goffman pointed out, to pretend to be like us, to *pass as normal* individuals. Goffman (1986) clearly proposes that some symbols of stigma can also be employed as symbols of status, a sort of re-appropriation and possibly politicization of the stigma. Considering this, and linked to Ferrell’s assumptions of *crime as culture*, Goffman provides us a possible explanation of why some youth cultures adopt a *performative* self-definition as criminals or vandals.

¹²⁹ One strategy could be to dress up in “proper” clothes in order to avoid persecution while accessing a semi-public or public space, such as a shopping mall or a park. (Peripheral) impoverished youth, for example, may pretend they belong to a higher class to fool gatekeepers.

¹³⁰ These three different actors could produce their own scapegoats – of folk devils, as Cohen defined them – in order to control social change, to achieve specific goals or simply to provide an explanation for lived experiences. Both Hunt (1997) and Cohen (2002 [1972]) point out the need to understand moral panics not only as mass hysteria and delusion but as a political phenomenon, linked to power struggles and to genuine fears, experiences and concerns about crime.

¹³¹ Cohen (2002 [1972]) criticizes the use his own notion of moral panic has had in contemporary media and political spheres. The idea of moral panic has become a double-edged sword: Media use the term to discredit other media, politicians attack media accusing them of promoting moral panics and vice versa. However, the concept provides an interesting link between symbolic exclusion through narratives and discourse and political ideologies.

proper behavior – *civility, social codes of conduct* – towards others.¹³² In the first text, Sennett (2002 [1977]) addresses how the fear of *involuntary disclosure* has translated itself into the maintenance of social distance, a withdrawal associated with the logic of maintaining silence as a principle of public order. As cities became a form of spatial rationality, mostly related to activities of production and consumption, leisure activities were geographically segregated or plainly forbidden. The public expression of personal feeling was also considered inappropriate, with the subsequent exodus of these emotions to the inner realms of the home (or to the privacy of its specific compartments). Taking this into account, it is possible to understand how discourses against graffiti producers or youth – and this could be extended to homeless people, prostitutes, minorities, etc. – are anchored in a refusal to concede these spaces for private use, especially if these practices or behaviors are also linked to “*unauthorized-deviant-irrational*” pleasures. As a result, this process becomes part of the strategies of social control of the body, both the individual and the social body.

Some of these behaviors or actions that produce disorder – in the sense that they alter the normality of the spatial rationality – are not necessarily illegal, inappropriate nor deviant. As Sampson and Raudenbush (2004: 321) – following Stinchcombe (1963)¹³³ – pointed out, some of these activities could be considered as legitimate (or normal) when done in a private space. This circumstance benefits those individuals or groups that have the resources to avoid the exposure of their disorder. In other words, it is not the mere act of painting things on the wall that is illegal; it is illegal when it is done on a wall that is not your *private* space.¹³⁴ If we consider the *Broken Windows* theory, youth who play music on a streetcorner are disorderly not because they are playing music, but because it is not the appropriate place to do it. The market itself provides them alternatives for the realization of their activities and the satisfaction of

¹³² Sennett (2002 [1977] and 1990) focuses on the process that produces the withdrawal of emotions from the public space and relates it to the emergence of the neutral space. This space is aimed at obscuring the differences between individuals or social groups. Habermas (1990 [1962]: 17), in his preface, questions the theoretical basis of these assumptions, remarking that Sennett misjudges the dialectic between *Innerlichkeit* and *Öffentlichkeit* in bourgeois society. However, I consider that Sennett has clearly identified part of the process of this imposition of normalcy in public spaces, which may be valid not only for former European cities but also for some contemporary Latin American urban environments.

¹³³ The reference quoted is Arthur L. Stinchcombe, *Institutions of Privacy in the Determination of Police Administrative Practice* (American Journal of Sociology, 1963).

¹³⁴ This point is important for understanding the difference between these *deviant* behaviors and their *illegality*. For example, while consumption of drugs may be prosecuted in public, people belonging to middle and upper classes can engage in these acts in the privacy of their homes or clubs. The market, also, may provide spaces for the satisfaction of eccentric needs while the same needs may be considered inappropriate when satisfied in public, even when there are not necessarily prohibited.

their pleasure, if only they have the necessary means to afford it. The idea of *purity*, as Duschinsky (2013: 64-65) following Douglas (1969) remarks, is (in some instances) “matter (dirt) out of place”.

Löw also points out how spaces are considered in terms of their insularity.¹³⁵ The daily commute is the perfect example of this view. Between home and work, between work and the places of entertainment-consumption, the streets are read as spaces *for transit*. The architectural and urban design has also acknowledged this tendency, producing spaces that are to be consumed only for a brief interval. These spaces are not only uniform and homogenous, but also neutral. This is an effort to overcome social differences, as Sennett remarks in *The Conscience of the Eye*:

It is the way the planner sees who designs neutral, sterile environments. The planner never meant to, of course. Still, it is curious how the designers of parking lots, malls, and public plazas seem to be endowed with a positive genius for sterility, in the use of materials and in details, as well as in overall planning. This *compulsive neutralizing* of the environment is rooted in part in an old unhappiness, the *fear of pleasure*, which led people to treat their surroundings as neutrally as possible. (Sennett, 1990: 42) [Emphasis added]

The neutral space eradicates pleasure by ignoring social differences. It is on this point that the thought of Lefebvre and the socio-historical analysis of the city can be related to the notion of countercultural spaces as proposed by Löw (2001: 131). If social spaces coexist and different groups or individuals – with their different cultures and political goals – are forced to coexist in the same neutral space, it is logical to presume that some of these groups or individuals will interpret this neutral space as an imposition. They may defy this subordination to space through the production of an alternative space, a countercultural space. The Foucauldian picture of power and resistance is complete.¹³⁶ As Lefebvre (1991 [1974]: 144) remarks: “Repressive space wreaks repression and terror even though it may be strewn with ostensible signs of the contrary (of contentment, amusement or delight).”

¹³⁵ Löw (2001: 88) describes how space could be perceived both as unitary and as fragmentary. In her words: “Wird Raum als verinselt und damit als einheitlich und gleichzeitig uneinheitlich erfahren, entsteht neben der Vorstellung »im Raum« zu leben, auch die Erfahrung, auf viele, stets unterschiedliche Räume Bezug zu nehmen.”

¹³⁶ Foucault (1983: 208-226) highlights this intertwinement between “power” and “resistance”, addressing for example the idea that through the study of forms of resistance (in this case, graffiti practices), it is possible to understand power relations.

One of the possibilities for challenging this subordination is through the political influence that these groups can exert in the democratic system and the mass media. The public sphere (*Öffentlichkeit*), following the concept proposed by Habermas (1990 [1962]), is the space – both physical and symbolic – in which interest-groups insert themselves in order to achieve political recognition, through processes of opinion-formation and (to a lesser degree) decision-making. This is the discursive and *deliberative model of democracy*, based on the decision of the majority and on consensus, which may be obtained through public debate of private arguments, oriented towards a “*common good*”. The arenas of discussion may be located in academic spaces, the “streets” or the networks of communication that have resulted from the expansion of mass media. These spaces have emerged between the private sphere and the State, as a result of the need for supervision or control of the citizenship (bourgeoisie), directed towards political institutions. *Publicity* may be considered as a synonym for political accountability and transparency. Habermas, partially based on Kantian thought, remarks that not only has the State adopted this principle of publicity, but also other social institutions and organizations are expected to offer some *public* access to both opinion-formation and decision-making processes. As Rabotnikof points out, this notion of the public sphere (in Habermas) has three key characteristics:

The public sphere is defined as *bourgeois, liberal and democratic*: it is bourgeois, insofar as those considered capable of generating a collective will through a rational process of communication free of constriction are independent property owners, whose status matches their qualifications in terms of training; it is liberal, as the rights that ensure the autonomy of this sphere and the rights that assure the extent of individual autonomy consolidate, at the same time, the public and private sphere of civil society and stand as barriers to limit the penetration of public power; it is democratic or potentially democratic in the sense that the bureaucratically organized power is balanced and controlled by law, as a general and abstract formulation, rationally articulated and knowable, and by the actual presence of a political public sphere, that emerging out of the civil society, enters the State in the form of the parliament. (Rabotnikof, 2005: 173) [Translation by the author; emphasis in the original]

In his preface for the 1990 edition, Habermas reformulates some of the characteristics of his former theory of the public sphere. He emphasizes the need to understand civil society and the State as separate entities, even while acknowledging processes of mixing and overlapping (*Vergesellschaftung des States – Verstaatlichung*

der Gesellschaft). Additionally, the public debate in the *Öffentlichkeit* cannot be considered without including those individuals or groups who, in addition to lacking of a means of production or property, are entitled to the right to participate in these processes of opinion-formation and decision-making. This includes, for example, the youth population and young cultures. Moreover, Habermas also addresses the importance of the mass media mentioned above, not only highlighting the opportunities that such media offer for political recognition, but also warning about the dominance that such media can exert on the citizenry, for example, through entertainment or advertising.¹³⁷ In his later book, *Between Facts and Norms*, Habermas explains:

In complex societies, the public sphere consists of an intermediary structure between the political system, on the one hand, and the private sectors of the lifeworld and functional systems, on the other. It represents a highly complex network that branches out into a multitude of overlapping international, national, regional, local, and subcultural arenas. Functional specifications, thematic foci, policy fields, and so forth, provide the points of reference for a substantive differentiation of public spheres that are, however, still accessible to laypersons (for example, popular science and literary publics, religious and artistic publics, feminist and “alternative” publics, publics concerned with health-care issues, social welfare, or environmental policy). (Habermas, 1996: 373-374)

Civil society, in this sense, has the power to influence decision-making through opinion-formation, but these decision-making processes must remain exclusively in the hands of the democratic structure and apparatus of the State. In this sense, Habermas (1996: 363) points out that: “Naturally, political *influence* supported by public opinion is converted into political *power* – into a potential for rendering binding decisions – only when it affects the beliefs and decisions of *authorized* members of the political system and determines the behavior of voters, legislators, officials, and so forth.”

Women, Black and Indigenous populations, young people, prostitutes, gay and lesbian communities, labor unions and other social groups that have historically been targeted by campaigns of moral panics and by physical or symbolic exclusion are now *relatively* more empowered to promote their own political causes;¹³⁸ for example, by

¹³⁷ Theoretical approaches to the analysis of both media institutions and media contents are presented in Chapter III.

¹³⁸ Fraser (1990) uses the concept of subaltern counterpublics to refer to any alternative or non-bourgeois public sphere excluded from the original idea of the – traditional, bourgeois, masculine and hegemonic –

challenging discourses that stigmatize them. In its original sense, the public sphere was considered the realm of social affairs, the space for public debate engaged in the definition of the so-called “*common good*”. This common good, however, was not “good” for all members of society. Remarking the bourgeois composition of the public sphere, Fraser exposes how this *space* was constructed on four basic assumptions: a deliberation between interlocutors considered as social equals, the emergence of the public as a single corpus, the harsh exclusion of any private or particular interest and finally the obligatory separation of civil society and the State.¹³⁹

This idealized notion of the public, following Fraser, needs to be transformed into a post-bourgeois conception of the public sphere. Emphasizing the role of *subaltern counterpublics*, Fraser remarks that the role of status differentials and the subsequent indispensable elimination of any structural social inequality, the recognition of the multiplicity of competing publics, the reassertion of so-called “private issues” and the inter-imbrication of civil society and State are compulsory components of any critical effort regarding participatory parity. The construction of a false “we” – a single and all encompassing “we” – reflects in reality the values and interest of the more powerful.¹⁴⁰

As *strong publics* participate in opinion-formation and also have the right to become involved in decision-making processes – as in the case of parliamentary institutions – while the *weak publics* are only involved in the former process and have restricted access to the latter,¹⁴¹ the idea of consent – or manufactured consent, as Herman and Chomsky¹⁴² have pointed out – is constructed under the premise of a “*common good*” that has been exclusionary since its beginning. The allusion to highly-

public sphere in Habermas’s sense. These groups form a network of intra-public and inter-public relations and constitute an expansion of the discursive space. See also the discussion on transnational politics in Fraser’s notion (2010) of intersecting scales.

¹³⁹ Fraser (1990) considers these assumptions as inaccurate and affirms that the bourgeois liberal public sphere is exclusionary and does not translate into any participatory parity.

¹⁴⁰ Fraser (1990: 72) reaffirms her idea of the existence of multiple subaltern counterpublics by contrasting them with the public recognition that this single – masculine, hegemonic, bourgeois – one has achieved. The notion of scalar politics in Purcell (2002) and the idea of contentious pluralism in Guidry and Sawyer (2003) also criticize this traditional interpretation of “the” public. This homogenous, uniform, single and all-encompassing public sphere translates, as I argue, into a homogenous, uniform, single and all-encompassing design of urban public spaces and their related official aesthetics.

¹⁴¹ Fraser (1990: 75) expresses her idea of strong and weak publics directly linked to the notion of participatory parity. In this sense, youth cultures could be considered as *weak publics*, particularly because these groups (or their single members) do not *usually* have recognized rights in both opinion-formation and decision-making processes.

¹⁴² Herman and Chomsky (2003) emphasize the political interests of media industries in the construction of public debate. This is discussed in Chapter III.

specialized fields¹⁴³ – or to specialized discursive arenas according to Fraser¹⁴⁴ – could be employed to exclude or to restrict the access (and participation) of several groups and citizens to the public debate on the topic of city planning, as well as serving as a strategy to keep decisions about the use and design of urban environments under the control of particular interest groups. Citizens and non-citizens – in the sense of inhabitants – become *spectators* of their own city¹⁴⁵ (when they do not have the necessary economic or political resources).

The expression of the claims and political goals of these excluded or subordinated individuals and groups is expected to be done in the *rational language* of the public debate. This means that the public sphere is the space of the written word and of rhetoric. In order to influence the decision-making process, the groups should argue within these rules. However, as Avritzer and Costa (2004: 11) – quoting Gilroy’s (1993) notion of *diasporic publics* – point out, some of these groups may not have access to the formal mechanisms of production and reproduction of discourses. In this sense, and particularly considering the Latin American cases included in this research, participation in the public sphere may go beyond the discursive realm of the word, including, for example, a universe of chants, dances, performances, narratives, practices, and finally graffiti productions (tags and pichações).

If spatial rationality promotes a space that is uniform/neutral/homogenous and imposes, as Sennett (2002 [1997], 1990) remarks, withdrawal and silence; then the very presence of emotions in public urban spaces may constitute another signal of chaos. I propose, following Sassen, that the fear of contamination, decay, disorder and evil associated with otherness could be related to the existential threat implied in the disappearance or the severe alteration of the ontological security that any city provides.¹⁴⁶ This nightmare of the destruction of the city, Thrift suggests, ignores the

¹⁴³ Serpa (2007) demonstrates, in the case of public parks, how projects are created, defined and generally executed with minimal participation of civil society, with particular emphasis on the exclusion of the disenfranchised and marginalized groups.

¹⁴⁴ Fraser (1990: 73) indicates that these specialized discursive arenas contribute to the exclusion of certain topics or political matters from public debate.

¹⁴⁵ Debord (2009 [1967]: 24-25) defines contemporary societies as spectacle, suggesting that social relations between people are mediated or constructed by an accumulation of images, and that this spectacle places them in a passive role with regard to control structures.

¹⁴⁶ Sassen (2011: 577) highlights the ontological insecurity that military destruction would produce not only in a given society but in a global public sphere. I propose to understand this existential threat as something that cannot be restricted to military attacks, but that includes other rational/irrational fears and uncertainties, from natural disasters to alien or zombie attacks.

currents processes of repair and maintenance that are usual in urban environments (Thrift, 2005: 138). Considering it a by-product of life in cities, Thrift proposes considering these spaces as emotional knots, where feelings of anxiety, hatred, aggression and threat are condensed into a *fear economy* of surveillance and security. However, cities not only produce negative feelings of vulnerability, but also may foster kindness, compassion and excitement. As Thrift emphasizes:

First, systematic knowledges of the creation and mobilisation of affect have become an integral part of the everyday urban landscape: affect has become part of a reflexive loop which allows more and more sophisticated interventions in various registers of urban life. Second, these knowledges are not only being deployed knowingly, they are also being deployed politically (mainly but not only by the rich and powerful) to political ends: what might have been painted as aesthetic is increasingly instrumental. Third, affect has become a part of how cities are understood. As cities are increasingly expected to have ‘buzz’, to be ‘creative’, and to generally bring forth powers of invention and intuition, all of which can be forged into economic weapons, so the active engineering of the affective register of cities has been highlighted as the harnessing of the talent of transformation. Cities must exhibit intense expressivity. (Thrift, 2004: 58)

In this sense, affect and emotions can be read as an integral part of the constitution of the physical space – *urban public spaces* – and as a legitimate form for the expression of political struggles – *urban public sphere* – related to subaltern or diasporic publics. In her interpretation of Goffman, Frehse understands *territories of the self* as the outcome of the physical demarcations, situations and similar, which result from the self-perception of these subjects and interactions with others. Thus, deviancy, accordingly, could be interpreted as the separation of the behavior from its social place, as determined by the group and its preformed notion of *normalcy*.¹⁴⁷ These territories of self, which could be read as countercultural spaces in Löw’s sense, are the natural result of the diversification of cities. In simple words, cities cannot be neutral spaces denying difference, because difference is inherent in the physical and symbolic constitution of cities.

¹⁴⁷ Frehse (2008: 158) follows the notion of space throughout the work of Goffman. The notion of territories of self could also be linked to the emergence of countercultural space, as proposed by Löw (quoted above).

Graffiti producers, particularly taggers and pichadores, who may be excluded from urban spaces in several ways, are considered “*deviant*” because they expose their emotions on both public and private surfaces, because they transform the neutral-rational environment into territories of the self. In simple words, they make their difference *physically* visible. This argument, however, does not excuse their infringement of the law. My point here is that the unlawfulness of their actions (when it applies) could be framed beyond the notion of *deviance*. One such possibility is to consider unauthorized graffiti production as a form of civil disobedience. Habermas (1996: 383), referring to Cohen and Arato, states that these illegal acts, through their public and symbolic nonviolent nature, have a *self-referential character* that is directed towards the law (rule or policies) that motivates such acts of civil disobedience. This communicative function of acts of civil disobedience is also identified by Lefkowitz:

For instance, agents who commit acts of civil disobedience may rightly believe that the legal means for contesting inadequate or unjust laws or policies will take too long, say, because many citizens are unaware of, or presently unable to appreciate, certain relevant information. In the time it will take to construct a majority supporting the reform of those laws, significant and perhaps irreversible harms may take place. By engaging in acts of civil disobedience, would-be reformers may reasonably hope to speed up the process by which a new majority can be created. In addition, civil disobedience is an especially effective mechanism for the expression by a minority of the *intensity* of their views. Civil disobedients’ willingness to risk the state’s imposition of various costs on them (e.g., fines, detention, etc.), and possibly the anger of their fellow citizens, can often communicate the strength of their convictions or preferences in ways that *legal means* for political participation cannot. (Lefkowitz, 2007: 214) [Emphasis added]

Considering the concept of techniques of neutralization proposed by Sykes and Matza, as mentioned in the former chapter, these acts of civil disobedience could be also read as an appeal to higher loyalties, which may justify their breaking of the law.¹⁴⁸ To write a political message on a wall or to beautify the city for its inhabitants may be an example of such commitments on the part of unauthorized graffiti producers. Indeed, the *voluntary* nature of these acts of civil disobedience also needs to be reviewed. As Feinberg (1970: 170) points out: “if A’s action is triggered by B’s, and especially if it is

¹⁴⁸ See Sykes and Matza (1957). Graffiti producers may argue that they have political goals or a moral duty to beautify the city. Some of these arguments have been recognized in the media discourses and included in both Chapter IV and Chapter V.

caused to happen by B's intentional triggering, how can it possibly be said without qualification to be A's own action, a free, informed, deliberate, that is 'fully voluntary' act?" Not only intentional but also unintentional triggering could result in acts of civil disobedience, considering the complex nature of feelings, emotions, subjectivities, and social representations that are involved in the political struggle for recognition. Acts of civil disobedience, considered in the self-referential character suggested by Habermas, constitute a politically-conscious disregard for the law. Moreover, as in the following quote by Lowman, they can also be read as a challenge directed towards the consensus that supposedly lies behind the law:

The argument that there is a clear social consensus over a core group of criminal laws poses problems for any extreme conflict position (although most conflict positions acknowledge consensus of opinion over certain laws). But this observation alone is not sufficient to deny that there is disagreement about the appropriate composition of criminal law, particularly when it comes to laws pertaining to drugs, abortion, sexual morality, delinquency, and laws at the boundary between civil and criminal jurisdiction. (Lowman, 1986: 84)

If these *acts of civil disobedience* are presented as mere *crimes*, obscuring the political nature inherent in them, then the discursive construction of crime is not only hegemonic but has itself become an instrument of social control. This means that the definition of crime is not directed towards the claimed "common good" but instead has become a strategy to protect the political – and sometimes economic – interests of a few. The process of exclusion of individuals and groups from both the public spaces and the public sphere may justify – for them – the use of symbolic acts of disobedience to challenge their subordination. These expressions of dissent can be linked to contested notions of citizenship, as well as to the idea of *the right to the city*. In his own words, Lefebvre explains how this right could be understood as a democratization of (urban) space:

The right to the city, complemented by the right to difference and the right to information, should modify, concretize and make more practical the rights of the citizen as an urban dweller (*citadin*) and user of multiple services. It would affirm, on the one hand, the right of users to make known their ideas on the space and time of their activities in the urban area; it would also cover the right to the use of the center, a privileged place, instead of being dispersed and stuck into ghettos (for workers, immigrants, the "marginal" and even for the

“privileged”). (Lefebvre, translated in Kofman and Lebas, 1996: 34) [Emphasis in the original]

Citizenship, following Dagnino, goes beyond the acquisition of legal rights, including for example the possibility for these citizens to become social subjects through action (Dagnino, 2007: 549). The concept must necessarily overcome essentialist parameters of belonging and become more open to the recognition of difference. In the particular case of Latin America, Dagnino states:

The struggle for citizenship has thus been presented as a project for a new sociability: a more egalitarian format for social relations at all levels, new rules for living together in society (negotiation of conflicts, a new sense of public order and public responsibility, a new social contract) and not only for incorporation into the political system in the strict sense. This more egalitarian format has implied the recognition of the other as the bearer of valid interests and legitimate rights. It has also implied the constitution of a public dimension of society in which rights can be consolidated as public parameters for dialogue, debate, and the negotiation of conflict. (Dagnino, 2003: 6)

Indeed, cities and urban spaces, as spaces of diversity, may need to go beyond the category of citizenship. The notion of *inhabitant* may be a better term for the population of a given urban space, including those who are citizens-to-be (such as children or youth) and those excluded from the legal dimension of citizenship (illegal migrants, refugees, etc.). The term *inhabitant*, as Purcell also indicates, goes beyond the restricted system of representation-participation based on old fashioned precepts such as citizenship or nationality.¹⁴⁹ Those who were *naturally* excluded from these categories have *normally* had few opportunities to set demands or to communicate their particular needs. These boundaries include their conscious necessities – as in the case of any material deprivations – as well as other unconscious or imperceptible subordination – as with any symbolic or cultural deprivations – that produce or reproduce a sense of not belonging.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ Inhabitant, as Purcell (2002: 102) points out, is related to the notion of *denizen* in Lefebvre’s work and proposes a rescaling of the definition of political membership. However, as Purcell also identifies, this category is limited and open to debate. The impossibility of defining which individuals and groups can have their rights recognized in both opinion-formation and decision-making processes in this global interconnected society should be faced as a challenge but it does not constitute a criterion to condemn this notion to failure.

¹⁵⁰ Sense of belonging, in this sense, could be linked to the binomial *Zugehörigkeit / Fremdheit* suggested by Löw (2010: 79) in her sociology of the cities. The sense of belonging could also include a

The *right to the city*,¹⁵¹ following Purcell's interpretation of Lefebvre's concept, aims to include this excluded and subordinated section of the population both in the physical spaces of the cities – as a right earned by their participation in the routines of daily life – and in the opinion-formation and decision-making processes of the public sphere.¹⁵² Harvey also understands this *right to the city* as the collective right resulting from the contribution of these individuals and groups to the creation of a public common, the collective creation of city life, which is coopted and appropriated by the powers of capital (through gentrification, for example) (Harvey, 2012: 77-78). The *right to the (urban) protest*, I propose, may constitute another of these liberties that must be granted to the inhabitants of a given urban environment. These inhabitants, challenging the official aesthetics of the spatial rationality and its (hegemonic) uses, may exert both the right to transform the physical space and the right to fight or oppose a given decision regarding public urban spaces.

Emphasizing this dilemma between the hegemonic-constructed-capitalist urban space and the multiplicity of alternative appropriations of this space, Serpa¹⁵³ proposes recognizing “*space*” as an instrument for homogenization and social dominance. Public policies of hygienism and pacifism, the transformation of collapsed or decadent areas into entertainment spots, the visual and functional uniformity of urban spaces and the adoption of standardized worldwide consumer lifestyles are some of the visible manifestations of the (re)presentation of power in our contemporary urban environments.

The juxtaposition of real and symbolic barriers, mostly through segregation and gentrification, has produced these contested interpretations of cities. However, Löw has

körperbezogener Sinn – body-related sense – that translates into a *Sich-hier-Wohlfühlens / Sich-dort-Fremdfühlens* – *feeling-good-here / feeling-strange-there* – perception, emphasizing the relationship between body and space. Lefebvre has also suggested, as according to Simonsen (2005: 4), that the body produces a practico-sensory realm in which space is both biomorphic and anthropological.

¹⁵¹ Purcell (2002: 106) argues for the constitution of urban politics of the inhabitant in order to recognize the heterogeneous and hybrid nature of urban geographies. This notion leads to empowerment processes and a redistribution of democratic rights. The idea of a right to the city is also revisited by Harvey in relation to Park's definition. This approach will be clarified in the following pages.

¹⁵² Rabotnikof (2005: 272) describes this controversy, pointing out how both Habermas and Arendt consider the public sphere as an ideal deliberative practice, and therefore suggests that the new manifestation of the so-called public sphere produces a virtual inclusion of the dominated – through welfare politics or suffrage – but normally excludes them from day-to-day political life. Tenorio (2009: 17) also suggests this relation between predominant social groups – the *ratio* that prevails in the public debate – and mass media as enterprises.

¹⁵³ Serpa (2007:24-26) correlates these transformations as part of a major process of gentrification, expulsion and segregation of disenfranchised and marginalized sectors of the population. His work also considers Lefebvre's triad with regard to spaces as well as Habermas's reflections on the public sphere.

clearly remarked how cities constitute their own discourses and distinctive logics. Engaged in the global competition for investors and corporations, city authorities and planners refine their strategies to create a *seductive atmosphere* as a way to create opportunities in the global market. This discursive “nature” of the city – *Eigenlogik der Stadt*¹⁵⁴ – is reinforced not only through official representations of the city but also by minimizing the incidence of any alternative non-official discourses. Considering tourism industries and the so-called *creative class* as vital resources for increasing their chances for profit, cities are implicated in what seems to be, as Florida quoted by Pratt notes, a 3T-model: Technology, Talent and Tolerance.¹⁵⁵ The development of such an environment would enhance both production and consumption but not automatically lead to any democratic enhancement of the quality of life of its inhabitants.

The “coolness” of a city, as Heath and Potter¹⁵⁶ observe, is linked to the idea of *revelry* and *counterculture* as part of the strategies for pumping up profits:

They need to live in what have been called “cool communities”, with a large number of like-minded people. To attract talented professionals, it is no longer sufficient for a city to have a low crime rate, clean air and water, decent public transportation and a handful of museums and galleries. Now they need to cater to the specific needs of the creative class, which means the city needs a large-scale recycling program, plenty of funky cafés, vegetarian restaurants and specialty stores selling a full array of organic products. It needs a diverse, tolerant population with plenty of immigrants and gay people, and a thriving club and music scene, and it must have quick and easy access to areas for mountain-biking, rock-climbing and sea-kayaking. (Heath and Potter, 2004: 203)

This self-presentation of the city as a *spectacle*, according to Debord,¹⁵⁷ aims to restructure society without creating community. Through the planned needs of

¹⁵⁴ Löw (2010: 73-87) proposes her sociology of the cities to capture this particular logic and as a way to understand the role of tourists, organizations, corporations and advertising industries, writers, city planners and other *official* representations of cities in the construction of the discursive nature of spaces. This can be complemented with her idea of *countercultural spaces*, as I will explain in the following pages.

¹⁵⁵ Considering the logic of cultural industries, Pratt (2008: 108) examines Florida’s reflection on technology, talent and tolerance as premises for insertion into the globalized market. A similar reference is also found in Löw (2010: 13), noting the political role this 3T model plays in the definition of images and discourses about the cities.

¹⁵⁶ Linked to the previous 3T model, Heath and Potter (2004) reflect not only on the construction of these *cool environments* but also approach the renowned notion of *counterculture* as a motor for late capitalist industries. They suggest that the market has created a new set of commodities for so-called countercultural groups and has provided a new ideology of revelry and dissent almost completely based on consumption.

production and consumption and the emergence of a *pseudocommunity* or a community of *isolated individuals*, urbanism works as a technology of separation artificially created:

The society that reshapes its entire surroundings has evolved its own special technique for molding its own territory, which constitutes the material underpinning for all the facets of this project. Urbanism – “city planning” – is capitalism’s method for taking over the natural and human environment. Following its logical development toward total domination, capitalism now can and must refashion the totality of space into *its own particular decor*. (Debord, 2009 [1967]): 114-115) [Emphasis in the original]

In such a critical approach to the city, the idea of the *right to the city* provides important nuances that should be taken into account. Who owns the city? Do cities still belong to us? As mentioned above, the discursive nature and lived experience of cities collides with alternative and counter-hegemonic visions of these urban social spaces. Challenging the capitalist city, as Purcell¹⁵⁸ points out, signifies challenging the patriarchal, heteronormative and racist city as well. This, of course, also includes the adult-centric and market-oriented city.

Procedural, rhetorical and demonstrative modes of subversion have been always used, as Guidry and Sawyer propose, to open up the public debate to excluded and marginalized groups.¹⁵⁹ These strategies of the disenfranchised attempt to close the gap between democracy as an ideal and democracy as a lived experience. The emergence of this so-defined *contentious pluralism* aims to solve the inner contradictions of democratic societies, aiming at the creation of *real* principles of equality, citizenship, liberty and self-governance. The construction of networks and the impact of the mass media and new forms of global technology have also produced, Guidry and Sawyer

¹⁵⁷ Debord (2009 [1967]) relates the *spectacular society* to a series of fascist values such as family, private property, moral order and patriotism, and correlates these discourses with the idea of culture as a dead object for spectacular contemplation. In this sense, architecture and urban design are considered as control devices and are compatible with consumerism.

¹⁵⁸ Purcell (2002: 106) relates Lefebvre’s idea of *the right to the city* with the new political emergence of the counterpublics in Fraser’s sense. His work, however, contributes interesting questions about the translation of this discursive right into the lived experiences of the inhabitants.

¹⁵⁹ Following the emergence of new social movements and counterpublics, Guidry and Sawyer (2003: 273) propose that *contentious pluralism* has always produced improvements in both democratic and non-democratic systems. These contentious groups use their available resources to build, through concrete actions, their own pathway into the public sphere.

emphasize, a sort of *transnational public sphere*.¹⁶⁰ These plural and contentious – local, regional and global – organizations and networks of claim-makers are considered as a necessary condition for the development of democracy.

Media, therefore, become an important place for both the construction and circulation of discourses related to the production, consumption and transformation of social space. However, media institutions are complex organizations, with internal hierarchies and different political, economic and communicative goals. The consumers of these mainstream media – television, radio, newspapers – are seduced in different levels and different ways by media content. Additionally, the emergence of new technologies of communication – social networks, smart phones and the like – may contribute to the creation of new channels of information, which may offer alternative discourses, interpretations and perceptions of social phenomena. Chapter III of this dissertation offers some theoretical approaches regarding media institutions and media content as well as delineating the methodological strategy employed in this research.

Interim Summary

A short summing-up can be formulated as follows: First, there is a need to expand the category of youth in general and urban youth in particular. The concept must overcome its delimitation through the use of mere quantitative measurements such as age or of more qualitative categories such as behavior. The youth population should be approached in its diversity, not only referring to broader themes such as class, gender and ethnicity, but also including the range of ideologies, subcultures, interests (both aesthetical and political), beliefs, emotions, etc.

The term graffiti (in singular) should also be submitted to a similar process of deconstruction. Graffiti as a social practice should not be immediately equated with the countercultural and ghettoized nature of its thus-attributed original production. The typology proposed in this dissertation can be considered as an effort to recognize the diversity of forms and producers related to graffiti phenomena. While some graffiti may

¹⁶⁰ The notion of *transnational public sphere*, as Guidry and Sawyer (2003: 275) clarify, refers to the creation of networks – for example, through the use of new information technologies – that help to unify procedures, exchange information and provide other positive interchange between organized contentious groups and organizations.

be considered as criminogenic or as a form of vandalism, this reading should be counterbalanced with the discourses of its producers. The adoption of graffiti as a form of advertising or its inclusion in festivals and other activities oriented towards capturing the attention of young consumers evidences the ongoing processes of co-optation of urban cultural products, which are not restricted to graffiti practices but may include other cultural manifestations, from rap to skateboarding. Additionally, the admission of graffiti productions to art institutions and the art market also points out the need for a critical approach to the phenomena, in order to comprehend why some forms of graffiti may be fostered while other are strongly persecuted, such as tagging culture and its Brazilian relative, the *pichação-pixação*.

The discourses associated with both the practice of graffiti and its (young) producers are anchored in particular ideologies and discourses of space and the city. Urban spaces, as scholars such as Lefebvre (1991 [1974]), Löw (2001, 2010), Sennett (2002 [1997], 1990) and Harvey (2001, 2012) have clearly remarked, are developed following a spatial rationality that is in synchrony with the needs of the production and consumption of commodities (the powers of capital), as well as with strategies oriented to activities of surveillance and social control (Lowman, 1986). However, these scholars also remark the emergence of alternative spaces in the cities, both as a result of the (spontaneity of) everyday life as well as of processes of resistance. This coexistence of capitalist-oriented spaces with the diversity of social spaces anchored in the practices of the citizens/inhabitants, is particularly relevant for the comprehension of the phenomena of graffiti production as a social practice.

These discursive struggles over the definition of space and its production or transformation also reach the public sphere, particularly through discussions in the mass media. According to Habermas (1990 [1962], 1996), the deliberation in the public sphere – *Öffentlichkeit* – constitutes one of the core characteristics of democratic societies. It is through this debate that subaltern groups – for example, *youth* in general and *graffiti producers* in particular – are entitled to participate in both opinion-formation and decision-making processes. This public sphere is, however, far from idyllic. As Fraser (1990) and Avritzer and Costa (2004) emphasize, following Habermas's reformulation (1990 [1962]), power struggles as well as structural inequalities need to be closely observed in order to understand how these subaltern and diasporic publics include themselves in this public debate. While these groups may

prefer to express themselves through written manifestos or by creative/emotional means such as dances or parades, from time to time these groups also get involved in acts of civil disobedience to promote their own political goals. This approach seems to be useful for the analysis of discourses targeting graffiti practices and producers, particularly considering their attributed (peripheral) low-income status and their power struggles (using inscriptions mostly as a form of political communication, and denouncing various phenomena from economic and power inequalities to environmental issues).

Habermas (1996) highlights the self-referential character of these acts of civil disobedience. The transgression of the law is understood here as a means of emphasizing opposition to that specific law. In this sense, acts of civil disobedience are, as Heath and Potter (2004: 79-80) indicate, a form of dissent, given that these acts express some objection and are not oriented to the satisfaction of self-interested desires. Considering this, unauthorized *graffiti* productions and similar manifestations such as *tagging culture* and *pichação/pixação* can be approached as a form of political dissent, targeting not only the aesthetic-symbolic level of the city but also its physical or geographical forms of segregation. A process of deconstruction of the discourses targeting these groups and their practices, a *criminological verstehen* (Ferrell et al., 2008), is necessary in order to understand why some of these behaviors, lifestyles and cultural manifestations are presented merely as “crime”, therefore marginalizing their political or socio-cultural value. Ferrell (1999) points out that this process of deconstruction needs to consider both the political agendas of the criminal justice system as well as idealized notions of decency and community.

Essentialist notions of citizenship can be observed and challenged in the public sphere. Dagnino (2007), for instance, considers citizenship as something more than the mere acquisition of rights, involving also a process of becoming through social action. Subaltern, marginalized and countercultural groups – from time to time targeted by moral panic campaigns (Cohen, 2002 [1972]) and other forms of social stigma (Goffman, 1963) – are nowadays able to challenge these discourses, claiming their difference both in the mainstream media but also through the creation of their own media channels. This contentious pluralism, as Guidry and Sawyer (2003) observe, targets the inner contradictions of democratic societies, while pursuing real inclusion and representation.

The *right to the city*, originally proposed by Lefebvre (1996), posited a right to access to the city center, considered as a privileged space. However, modern readings of this right have emphasized the need to consider it not only as access to the resources contained in the city, but also as a right to the transformation of the city itself (Harvey, 2012). This right also implies the perception of the city beyond the spatial rationality created in accordance with capitalist demands of production and consumption, observing for example the everyday life of cities (routines), the space of emotional knots (Thrift, 2005) and other social practices, such as those of dissent and protest.

Chapter III

Following stories in media: Discourse analysis

In our mass-mediated and interconnected global environment, in which news travels almost instantaneously from one place to another; where messages are encoded and decoded according to particular social contexts, individual experiences and knowledge; a world composed of social networks, of feelings created and transformed via advertising; of information being produced-manipulated-improved-challenged-refuted and commercialized; in these local and global mediated environments, the insight of media and communication studies in the social sciences becomes indispensable, if not a priority, if we are to comprehend the societies in which we live.

Three approaches to media and communication studies have been acknowledged in previous academic literature (Martini, 2000; Ramonet, 1998; van Dijk, 1988a; Hall et al., 1980): (a) studies focusing on production phases – i.e. the decision-making processes of editors, journalists, advertisers, illustrators – and the inner dynamics of media institutions; (b) studies focusing on effects and audiences – times and forms of media consumption, decoding of messages according to specific targets; and finally, (c) studies focusing on media content and discourse – themes, headlines, the spatial distribution of the news, use of visual or auditory stimuli and sentence structure, as well as represented or under-represented sources, omissions and forms of formal/informal censorship. These different processes or dimensions are generally intertwined in the complex routines of the production-circulation-consumption of media content, and are separated here for the sake of scientific intelligibility.

As part of the latter approach, focusing on media content and discourse, this research examines the diversity of media messages regarding *graffiti as a social practice* – including its *producers*, its *social functions* and its *representations* – in two Latin American cases, namely the Costa Rican and Brazilian press. For this reason, this study is therefore limited in its analytical scope in two ways: First, it can only infer, to a certain extent, the dynamics of message production, the intentions or motivations of the journalist, columnists and sources, or any other process related to the production of news and opinion articles. Second, this research can only suggest possible effects and

consequences of the themes, frames or discourses identified,¹⁶¹ expressly taking into account that they cannot be reduced to a single interpretation. In this sense, the main goal of the research consists in identifying and describing the discursive approaches in the contents of these media messages.

The first of these limitations is important because media enterprises, as institutions, respond to political and economic interests. The agenda-setting role of the media, as Herman and Chomsky (1988: 1-35) pointed out in their reflection on the *propaganda model*, cannot be isolated from five filters: (a) size, ownership, and profit orientation of the mass media; (b) advertising as a primary source of income; (c) the reliance of the media on information provided by official sources – government, businesses and “experts” – that function as agents of power; (d) negative responses to a media statement or program; and finally (e) “anticommunism” as a control mechanism. Even though Herman and Chomsky proposed this model to explain the performance of the media in the United States, the model could be exported to our Latin American research. This last filter, historically linked to the anticommunist fear of the McCarthy era in United States, is translated for this research into a “conservative or pro-hegemonic” principle, in order to facilitate the adaptation of this model to different social contexts, as in the case of the Latin American media we examine.¹⁶² The newspapers selected in this study can be considered as center-right in both their political and economic orientation.

However, this propaganda model should also be critically approached. The emergence of the so-called *new media* – some of them being local, grassroots and independent media – must be taken into account in order to understand the dynamics of the media system as a whole. Even if media corporations might overtly exclude a given topic or set it under a particular spotlight, these rising new media can function as *counter-voices*, offering alternative interpretations and points of view. In considering the more explicit forms of censorship that the propaganda model suggests (i.e. the exclusion of specific topics from mainstream media or the manipulation of

¹⁶¹ This notion of frames/discourses refers to what I understand as a *discursive matrix*, in which some frames or discourses – including everyday practices – that are directed towards a specific social practice are also used against other different social phenomena. For example, the framing of graffiti as highly contaminating may be inserted into a broader discourse of the threat of contamination stemming from, e.g. prostitutes and homeless people, as well as migrants, refugees and lower-income populations. I refer to this in the Chapter VI in more detail.

¹⁶² The criteria for the selection of the cases are presented in the following pages.

information), Ramonet (1998: 40-42) points out that these have been replaced by a new form of *invisible* censorship: the over-abundance of information. This means that the quantity of available information is so vast that this very information becomes an obstacle to identifying the topics, sources, and details that are missing or are being underrepresented/misrepresented.

This political approach can also be complemented with an examination of the series of criteria necessary for determining that a given *event* is newsworthy. An event, as some scholars (Martini, 2000; Hall et al., 1980; van Dijk, 1988b) have suggested, is not a communicative event per se. It requires a media decision, based on the characteristics of a given event, to *re-present* it as a story (Martini, 2000; Ramonet, 1998). Some of these criteria or *news values*, according to Martini (2000: 84-99), include: (a) novelty, such as new and up-to-date information, with the event as a turning point; (b) originality, impressibility, unpublished character (*ineditismo*), as criteria that could reinforce the idea of novelty and foster curiosity about the event; (c) future evolution of the event, considering the development of the event itself and the possibilities of relating it with other news-events; (d) importance and severity, the impact this event could have on society as a whole, the possible transformations both in the present and in the future and the element of shock (*conmoción*); (e) geographical proximity of the event to a given society: a local event is more likely to be selected as newsworthy; (f) magnitude, as in the number of people or places involved and the quantity of individuals, groups or spaces affected by the event; (g) hierarchy of the involved figures (*personajes*), their popularity and public sympathy towards them; and finally, (h) the inclusion of displacements, as in the case of massive migrations, public rallies and demonstrations, travels of any important public figure and similar changes of location or spaces. Additionally, the newsworthiness of a given event can also be created, manipulated or increased/reduced based on the economic and political goals of media institutions. This is how an event becomes a story, a framed media event.

In relation to this inner dynamic of media institutions, Habermas has also pointed out the potential significance of these communication processes in a discursive-deliberative model of democracy:

Moreover, before messages selected in this way are broadcast, they are subject to *information-processing strategies* within the media. These are oriented by reception conditions as perceived by media experts, program

directors, and the press. Because the public's receptiveness, cognitive capacity, and attention represent unusually scarce resources for which the programs of numerous "stations" compete, the presentation of news and commentaries for the most part follows market strategies. Reporting facts as human interest stories, mixing information with entertainment, arranging material episodically, and breaking down complex relationships into smaller fragments—all of this comes together to form a syndrome that works to depoliticize public communication. This is the kernel of truth in the theory of the culture industry. (Habermas, 1996: 377) [Emphasis in the original]

The second limitation of this research is related to the consequences or effects that these media contents and discourses may have on their respective audiences or readership. Following Hall et al. (1980: 133-138) media contents are encoded to give a certain priority to predefined *dominant or preferred meanings* (those that reflect the institutional, political or ideological order of media institutions). These meanings are expected to be accepted uncritically in the subsequent process of being decoded by their consumers. The audiences, readerships or publics can also, however, approach media contents by *negotiating* these dominant meanings and completing them with their particular experiences, knowledge, ideas, values and contextual conditions. The last level of this process of encoding-decoding is the *oppositional code*, referring to the interpretation made by consumers who clearly refuse to accept media contents in the way these were intended to be read or interpreted, and therefore engage in a sort of counter-reading. The traditional hypodermic needle model of media contents and messages implied in the description of *dominant or preferred meanings*, consisting of contents that are simply injected into a passive audience, is considered as insufficient for the purposes of this research. Some negotiation and opposition is expected in the interpretation of news and opinion articles, as well as from a reactive readership, who may also write back or act against the discourses-narratives-frames depicted in the media.

Audiences and readers, however, can face certain problems understanding news reports, as a result of inner practices in media institutions. As Martini (2000: 40-41) also emphasized, media contents and discourses operate from four distinct premises related to the readership or audiences: (a) Informative assumptions – *supuestos informativos* – authorize media to report current events without the necessity of specifying what particular conditions triggered a given event; (b) Historical assumptions – *supuestos*

históricos – allow media to omit certain background or past information, presuming it to be familiar to its audiences; (c) Interpretative assumptions – *supuestos interpretativos* – empower media to place the responsibility of news interpretation onto their audiences and readership, by minimizing or nullifying the role of the producers of the information, in other words, relieving the media themselves of responsibility; and (d) Relationship assumptions – *supuestos de relación* – allow media to consider their audiences and readers as subjects able to establish relationships between given topics or events. Martini also points out that the influence of these relationship assumptions in media contents and discourses disentangles the macro-structural level in which any event is located. As a result, the event itself – particularly when the information provided by the media in relation to this event is insufficient – seems (to some extent) isolated or exceptional.¹⁶³

An additional concern regarding readerships and audiences is the process of diffusion of information. As Rogers (2003) suggests, media channels are generally able to convince innovative individuals, but in order to persuade and promote any massive social change – in this case, an idea could be considered as an innovation – the role of face-to-face communication or *interpersonal channels* must be taken into account. Rogers (2003: 465) notes the differences among countries or regions and the role of socioeconomic levels as determinants of media consumption, suggesting that television should have more relevance than newspapers in specific contexts – as in the case of Latin America, Africa and Asia (poorly defined by Rogers as “*developing nations*”) and among non-literate populations; or claiming that the printed press is preferred by higher socioeconomic consumers (his “ups”) while lower socioeconomic consumers (his “downs”) are more likely to prefer television.¹⁶⁴

These two observations are relevant to this research, considering that the units of analysis are news and opinion articles in web-based/printed newspapers. In relation to

¹⁶³ These assumptions can be partially or totally overcome by audiences or readerships depending on a series of individual factors such as education, access to information, past personal experiences, etc.

¹⁶⁴ Rogers (2003) is mentioned here to emphasize the complexity of the media system as a whole; however, I disagree with his assessments regarding both upper and low classes and their media consumption. For example, it may be a matter of distinction – in Bourdieu’s sense (1984 [1979]) – that holds the idea that upper classes do not watch television, but prefer to read. It could result from a process of self-distance from the habits of the poor and the lower classes. Additionally, as a physical device, newspapers are simply news printed on a piece of paper. This device can support high-quality journalism such as the New York Times as well as tabloids specializing in celebrity news, sports, etc. Rogers’s interpretation of the newspaper as a device seems monolithic and biased. However, it is included here to illustrate the complexity involved in approaching one single medium, i.e. television versus newspaper.

the first statement, the main conclusions and tendencies of this study are thus restricted exclusively to the number of readers who in fact consume the newspapers, even when some mouth-to-mouth *diffusion* of the information is expected. Considering the second assumption proposed by Rogers, newspapers have been selected because they provide easier access to and collection of information than television or radio shows. Even considering that newspapers as a format may enjoy a certain preference among a given high-educated or high-income section of the population, the information published in these newspapers is likely to affect society as a whole; for example, by proposing a specific media agenda or by defining and influencing arenas of public discussion affecting opinion-formation and decision-making processes. The idea that newspapers are only consumed by an “educated” citizenship while television is for the “popular” masses should be brought into discussion; taking into account not only the ongoing processes of diffusion of contents (topics or themes that flow from one medium to another), but also that the supposed “relevance” of some matters presented in the press and the supposed “irrelevance” of some topics presented on television is hard to verify. In this sense, both media channels – newspapers and television – are equally able to provide high-quality information or to draw attention to relevant topics in a given community (local, regional or global).

Ramonet (1998: 18-26) addresses another distinction of current media phenomena, acknowledging the processes of media mimicry (*mimetismo mediático*) and hyper-emotion (*hiper-emoción*). The first tendency emphasizes the growing similarities among different media and the ways these media enterprises may influence each other. Once a topic or a given event has been defined as newsworthy, it is likely that coverage in other media soon follows, considering it as central, relevant or crucial information. This leads to more media focusing on the same issue, more time or more pages to display it, and more journalists working on it. The second tendency is the appeal to the thrilling, sensational, shocking or spectacular nature of a given event. Mostly in relation to the prominent role of television and media images, Ramonet suggests that this hyper-emotion, by producing true emotion in the audience, leads them to believe that the broadcasted/printed information is true. This hyper-emotion has also produced a transformation of the print press, by assimilating its design to the television format: the front page serving as a television screen, the size reduction of news articles, excessive personalization by journalists, priority given to sensationalism, systematic disregard of

out-of-date issues, etc. (Ramonet, 1998: 25). As information should now be instantly available – *live*, instant breaking news – images have become a core principle in agenda-setting, so that an event rich in images is expected to be considered as more interesting or more important (Ramonet, 1998: 23).

The search for this type of emotive response in the readership and audience has also been noted by Altheide (1997: 653-654), who considers media messages as a mixture of discourses of fear and entertainment conjoined in a type of *problem-frame* that works in a similar fashion to a *morality play*, in that it (a) includes a narrative structure (a beginning-middle-end, as well as being both universal-specific and abstract-real) of the proximity of the event to the target audience; (b) appeals to universal moral meanings; (c) occurs in a specific time and place; (d) is presented as “unambiguous”; (e) is focused on disorder – and this, I suggest, could be complemented with other ideas of moral or physical chaos as identified in several orthodox criminological approaches; and finally (f) is culturally resonant. Altheide (1997: 647) also remarks that this type of problem-frame is linked to the idea of a “*quick fix*”, in the sense of the construction of both the *problem* (such as a complex event or phenomenon transformed into an over-simplified problem) and the recognition of the related *repair agent* (such as the government, for example). This problem-frame is focused on the allocation of responsibility:

The “problem” frame is a feature of information technology (IT), news media formats, and a pervasive media-source relationship that fuels rocket-like expansion of sources attempting to transform misery, cruelty, brutality, and so on into a particular kind of “problem.” The driving force of the news coverage, however, can actually distort understanding of the issues, leading politicians, funding agencies, academic disciplines, and even agency personnel who actually deal with the alleged problem to make adjustments that are counter-productive and make matters much worse. (Altheide, 1997: 655)

When complex events are forced to fit into this specific news format and some individuals or groups are targeted as “problematic”, the same frame can produce both fear as well as responses specific to the problem, whether deviancy-disorder-crime, as Altheide (1997: 663) notes. This idea of fear as a principle of news production-consumption – both in Ramonet and Altheide but also in the concept of the *security-*

entertainment complex proposed by Thrift¹⁶⁵ – allows us to draw a line between rating-oriented advertising-news-entertainment production and consumption and the private interests of specific economic or political groups related to the media business. The more media audiences and readership consume, the greater the profits from advertising (Gamson et al., 1992; Herman & Chomsky, 1988). Fear and problem-focusing capture attention and this attention translates into profits.

A similar idea is addressed by Stallings (1990), concerning the social construction of risk and the role of the mass media as a relevant actor in this process. The notions of risk and safety, as Stallings proposes, are seen as objective conditions that exist per se and are perceived by the citizenship. The result is the exclusion of risk as a subjective interpretation of a given fact. In his view, news articles therefore affect reality creation and reality perpetuation through the inclusion or exclusion of sources (Stallings, 1990: 87). The selection of these sources – scientists, local authorities, experts – contributes to the creation of mono-causal explanations of the event, while other multi-causal or complex interactions of social forces go unnoticed.¹⁶⁶ Indeed, these experts, academics, local authorities, art critics and other sources – such as the police – may have their own credibility based on their use of expert language, which grants them membership and authority (Tonkiss, 2004: 375).

However, these media contents and images, as mentioned above, are not necessarily decoded or consumed in the ways their original producers intended. In the specific case of the press, it is likely that readers only pay attention (or pay more attention) to the so-called *paratexts* – headlines, photo captions, highlighted notes or quotes – while partially ignoring the body of the news report, with only some readers actually reading the whole article while others merely scan the text¹⁶⁷ (Holsanova, Rahm & Holmqvist, 2003). Considering that readers also have different interests, scholars have acknowledged the need for more studies oriented at examining how readers retain or recall specific information from their newspaper consumption, both in

¹⁶⁵ Thrift (2011: 11) defines this complex as “an era of permanent and pervasive war and permanent and pervasive entertainment, both sharing the linked values of paranoid vigilance (Truby, 2008) and the correct identification of the potential of each moment.” In this research, this concept is used to refer to this intertwining of fear and spectacle.

¹⁶⁶ Stallings (1990:90). This reflection on the use of sources is also mentioned by Martini (2000: 71-72).

¹⁶⁷ This study compares the socio-semiotic analysis of a newspaper spread with eye-tracking technologies in order to identify how readers interact with both texts and visual elements. The experiment was developed in the Netherlands and was applied to five people. Further studies were also recommended.

online and printed formats (D'Haenens, Jankowski & Heuvelman, 2004).¹⁶⁸ Taking such habits of reading into account, this research has focused exclusively on the media contents and discourses as they were published, independent of the decision-making processes affecting their production or the consumption habits and individual-social backgrounds of the readership. Additionally, a more dialogic approach to the news and opinion articles has been taken, instead of a confrontational review of the texts. In other words, the news and opinion articles are considered as a guide to understanding the diversity of opinions, interpretations and discourses on the topic of graffiti as a social practice, without intending to discover or confirm any universal truth.

Methodological approach of the research

Emphasizing the ways in which news and opinions articles are intertwined with social processes, this study focuses on how these texts express specific discourses about the city, the urban environment and youth (*graffiti producers*, in particular) as a unitary category. As van Dijk (1988b: 9) points out, news reports are considered a *specific type of public discourse*, linked to particular cognitive, social and political contexts, including both their production and their interpretation-consumption. By evoking the existence of shared *scripts* (previous forms of knowledge of the world accumulated in our memory) and *models* (forms of social knowledge and beliefs, including language, frames, scripts, codes and attitudes) that help to assimilate new information, van Dijk (1988b: 21) addresses the role of social representations in our understanding of news articles:

Whereas some elementary processes and constraints may be general properties of human information processing (e.g., memory limitations), and although our biographically-rooted unique understandings may be represented in the personal models of our experiences, these processes and representations are thoroughly dependent on social information processing and interaction. Knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, knowledge of the language, and all other shared information are acquired, used, and changed in social contexts. Social actors continually express and communicate such cognitions to others, test and compare them with those

¹⁶⁸ Comparing the reading habits and recollection of both online and printed versions of newspapers in the Netherlands, the researchers concluded that it is not possible to identify a clear pattern of how people recall newspaper content. The experiment was conducted with university students and there are also doubts as to whether it could be generalized to different socio-economic groups.

of other members of the same group or culture, and presuppose such cognitions in their interactions and discourse with other social participants. The very structures of scripts and models are probably derived from our participation in social interaction through a long and complex learning process. This appears to be one of the reasons why in scripts, models, and even in semantic representations or syntactic structures of sentences or stories, we find similar organizing categories such as setting, event/action, and roles of participants rather than the shapes, colors, or sizes that organize our visual perception. In other words, memory and cognition are as much social as they are mental phenomena. (van Dijk, 1988b: 25)

The units of analysis, as mentioned above, consist of news and opinion articles related to graffiti as a social practice, its producers, its social uses and its representations. The search was based on the keyword *graffiti* – with the variation of *grafite* in the Brazilian case¹⁶⁹ – and also included related words such as *street art*, *grafiteiro* (*grafiteiro*) and *pichação-pixação*. The aforementioned “web-based/printed” indicates that the printed version of the newspaper was explored via its official website, creating a digital data-base of results that include every uniform resource locator (URL) for each news report. This strategy had two weaknesses: First, it was not possible to obtain a visual representation – photography, illustration or other images – depicting a form of “graffiti” if it did not include any of the above-mentioned keywords in its related photo caption. Visual representations of graffiti practices have therefore been excluded, with an analysis exclusively focused on text. Second, the search was technically limited to the accuracy of the search engine of the selected newspapers, a constraint that could produce bias.¹⁷⁰ The scope of the sample was restricted to a period of ten years, from January 1st, 2001 to December 31st, 2010. A total of 246 articles were

¹⁶⁹ In the Costa Rican case, the word *graffiti* was the main search criteria, including also *grafiteiro* and *grafitera*. Given common misspelling of the word, an additional search was done for *grafitti*. The term *pintada* was not included in this research, even though it is sometimes used colloquially to refer to this social practice. The search for the word *grafite*, in the selected Brazilian case, also provided results related to the column *Grafite* of the cartoonist Paulo Caruso, to the soccer player Edinaldo Batista Libânio (aka Grafite), to the term *grafite* as a form of the chemical element carbon, *grafite* as a color in the fashion industry, cars and computer designs, and finally *grafite* as the artistic technique and the grade of a pencil, as in the case of requirements for school or university tests. All these results were excluded from the sample. *Pichado* and *pichada* were also excluded. The annex includes two tables with the news and opinion articles selected in each case.

¹⁷⁰ In the Costa Rican case, for example, *La Nación* updated its search engine during the process of this investigation, which may have affected access to some articles. In case of doubt, articles were excluded when they appeared to have been published only online. In the Brazilian case, the search engine of *Folha de São Paulo* was configured to retrieve exclusively printed articles. When necessary, the Acervo Folha was also used to verify some of these texts.

reviewed for *La Nación* (Costa Rica) and 682 articles for the newspaper *Folha de São Paulo* (Brazil) (see Annex).

The sample was strictly restricted to news and opinion articles, excluding entertainment calendars and other schedules, television programs, television criticism, advertising, or classified ads. In the case of cinema and art reviews, when these articles were related to graffiti as a social practice or to its producers, they were included as part of the *valid news articles* corpus. Editorials were also included, when available. The content of blogs, comments, forums and other forms of interactive response from readers were not considered in this investigation. Any errata – in acknowledgement of ambiguous or misleading information, typos and the like – were included with the corresponding article, in which the mistakes or inaccuracies were found by the newspaper. News reports that were produced by a news agency – such as Reuters, Associated Press, AFP, EFE – but were published by the newspaper were also included as part of the sample, while noting their original source. When some of these news or opinion articles offered links to video references, websites or any other forms of additional information, these external elements were visited and sometimes referred to only as examples.

The following analytical categories were constructed in order to examine the samples of news reports for every selected case. This set of categories was constructed based on previous empirical and theoretical literature on the subject:

Table 1
Analytical categories

Category	Definition
<i>Criminogenic</i>	Graffiti and/or its producers as a form of crime or as an activity that fosters criminal behavior in the form of vandalism of public and private property, robbery, rape, murder or any other act of delinquency.
<i>Protest</i>	Graffiti as a form of political protest, contentious pluralism, civil disobedience, political unrest, and any similar interpretations regarding new-counter-diasporic-deliberative publics.
<i>Art</i>	Graffiti and/or its producers as an artistic or aesthetic transformation of public spaces. This includes both authorized and unauthorized works, such as murals, pieces and hip-hop graffiti. This category excludes any form of post-graffiti (canvas) as well as any forms of tags or signatures.

<i>Post-graffiti</i>	Graffiti as a form of art that moves from the public spaces to the galleries. This includes graffiti on canvas, as a new artistic movement and as artworks ready for consumption. <i>Light graffiti</i> and <i>laser graffiti</i> are also considered a form of post-graffiti.
<i>Commissioned</i>	Graffiti as linked to any kind of official organization, including local governments, NGOs, churches, prisons and schools. This category includes any form of graffiti as part of a health or social campaign. Tolerance zones are also considered as a form of sponsored graffiti.
<i>Tags</i>	Graffiti as a form of territorial marker, as part of a status-economy. This includes the forms of signatures, tags, characters, and numbers. This category includes any relation between graffiti practice and sports fan clubs, particularly soccer.
<i>(Sub)cultural (Youth)</i>	Graffiti as part of any youth subculture, especially hip-hop culture. This category includes references to other young groups as bikers, skaters, rappers and MCs, break-dancers and practitioners of parkour (traceurs). This category includes the countercultural “nature” of some graffiti practices.
<i>Anti-graffiti</i>	Any public figure, organization, policy and institutional approach related to the eradication-prohibition-punishment of graffiti, tagging culture, or <i>pichação</i> .
<i>Enforcement (Police)</i>	Any reference to the role of police regarding <i>graffiti</i> , including both positive and negative perceptions, as well as the new role of the police as responsible for distinguishing between graffiti and forms of tagging and <i>pichação</i> . Also any case of police brutality or police corruption related to graffiti producers.
<i>Sponsored (Advertising)</i>	Graffiti as part of an advertising campaign or any other reference to the commercialization of graffiti as a social practice. This category is not restricted to corporations, and therefore, it also includes the use of graffiti by any local commerce or business.
<i>Global</i>	Any reference to graffiti practices as a series of global, international or transnational phenomena. This includes news reports from different countries included by the newspaper and also includes the uses of the internet – websites or social networks – to promote local graffiti production in other contexts.

Following the discourse analysis method proposed by Tonkiss (2004: 369), some new categories emerged during the analysis, particularly considering that while some categories may be predetermined in order to reflect the aims and theoretical framing of the research, other categories are the result of the detailed reading of textual content. Given the exploratory nature of this research, its goals were related to three tasks also proposed by Tonkiss (2004: 378):

- a) Identifying key themes and arguments
- b) Looking for variation in the text

c) Paying attention to silences.

This research did not consider quantitative content analysis methodology chiefly for three main reasons, again following the arguments put forth by Tonkiss (2004: 373): First, qualitative judgments often underlie the definition of coding categories used in quantitative analysis. Second, the counting of words reproduces dominant themes and narratives, reinforcing the power of these categories. And third, it presupposes a shared world of meaning that lies in the content of the articles: One example in relation to graffiti production may be the attributed criminogenic nature of the practice. Even when the discourse appears a few times in the media articles analyzed, it is impossible to know the impact of this type of affirmation, especially when pronounced by an important source, such as a local authority or some “academic” expert. Indeed, unauthorized graffiti producers – such as pichadores or taggers – can mention in several articles that their productions are art for them, but the mere quantitative frequency of this affirmation neither communicates their reasons or motivations, nor signifies that the audience or readership might be convinced by this repetition.

The qualitative analysis of both the news and opinion articles was preferred over quantitative analysis. However, some frequencies are mentioned in subsequent chapters, the footnotes and the annex. Certain segments of the text have been included in the chapters that follow, with the specific goal of illustrating a particular frame or discourse, allowing the original text *to speak for itself*. In relation to this approach, Tonkiss (2008: 377) remarks: “It is usually more appropriate and more informative to be selective in relation to the data, extracting those sections that provide the richest source of analytic material.” Keeping this in mind, the analysis of discourses (and/or frames) regarding graffiti as a social practice has been *theoretically oriented*.¹⁷¹

The methodological strategy of this research is also partially based on the *tracking discourse* analysis proposed by Altheide (1997: 659), consisting of following words, themes and frames over a period of time. Indeed, as Altheide has pointed out elsewhere, themes are recurrent in news reports, while frames constitute how a given

¹⁷¹ In the Costa Rican case, some news and opinion articles seemed to be published only online, with no evidence of their inclusion in the printed version. These articles were read and decoded but excluded from the analysis in Chapter IV. A similar case is the columns written by journalist José Simão for the Brazilian cases. These texts were also read and coded but then excluded from the analysis, because they do not provide relevant information in relation to the goals of this research. However, the references to these texts were also included in the annex.

phenomenon will be discussed. In his words: “Discourse refers to the parameters of relevant meaning that one uses to talk about things. Frame refers to the particular perspective one uses to bracket or mark off something as one thing rather than another. Meaning and language are implicated in both. We can simply say that discourse and frame work together to suggest a taken-for-granted perspective for how one might approach a problem” (Altheide, 1996: 31). I propose to understand some of these frames as part of broader discourses that are not restricted to the practice of graffiti (constituting a discursive matrix). Indeed, these interpretations and approaches may go beyond the actions and behaviors of youth cultures, reaching a series of different activities of other individuals or groups.

Additionally, the recognition and classification of represented sources helped to identify what kind of public figures, organizations, authorities, citizens, graffiti producers or *experts* contributed to the construction of the news report. The identification of these news and opinion actors-sources-producers provided information about how media channels contribute to reproducing *preformulated ideologies* (van Dijk, 1988: 12). This point is important because media enterprises may not necessarily agree with the opinions or arguments broadcasted/printed in their own media contents and discourses. It also signifies that media messages and discourses are likely to change over time, when other sources are included or excluded.

The headlines were also included but they were not considered in a separate level of analysis, even when it could be argued that these paratexts may work as attention-getters and may predetermine the reading. Headlines are in general short and simplified forms, a particular reference produced of keywords and main topics. Some well-known sources or public figures can be included in order to attract readers or audiences. When headlines are relevant enough for the present analysis, they are mentioned in the quotes or referred to explicitly in the following chapters. The microanalysis of grammatical structures, as van Dijk proposes, can help to identify ideological contents and discourses of headlines in media:

Grammatical analysis of language use in the press may also reveal the perspective of the journalist or newspaper. Sentence syntax expresses the semantic roles of participants in an event by word order, relational functions (subject, object), or the use of active or passive forms. A headline like “Police kills demonstrator” puts police in first, subject

position and expresses that the police has agent role. In the passive sentence “Demonstrator killed by police”, the police is also agent, but in this case, the phrase referring to the demonstrator is in first, subject position, which means that police is assigned a less prominent role. Finally, the headline “Demonstrator killed” may make the role of the police implicit. At the same time, the headline becomes syntactically ambiguous: It could also be read as a description of an event in which the demonstrator was the killer or more generally associate demonstrators with killing. (van Dijk, 1988b: 11)

In relation to photographs and other images included as part of the news or opinion article, these images were considered as a unit of two elements: the photography-image itself and the photo caption related to it. The images and photographs were excluded from the analysis. A more exhaustive analysis of the composition of the photography – such as angle, body posture of the persons depicted, backgrounds, or colors – and other interpretative visual elements was excluded, given the time constraints of this research. Other forms of visual components – such as diagrams, graphics, illustrations – were also excluded. In contrast, photo captions were included in the sample for codification, particularly when the word *graffiti* was part of these samples.¹⁷² However, no single conclusion has been made in relation to photo captions alone.

This study, even considering the relevance of the semiotic space acknowledged by Holsanova, Rahm & Holmqvist (2003), does not include an analysis of the newspaper spread as a whole. In other words, this research did not pay any attention to design, colors, layout, or article length or position. Any advertising surrounding the valid news articles was also ignored. If, for example, an article describing graffiti as a form of vandalism was strategically positioned next to advertising featuring a given surveillance technology, this type of relationship between different elements of the newspaper spread was not considered in terms of this research.

The samples of news and opinion articles were examined, following van Dijk (1988b: 13), by identifying their *semantic macrostructure*, with the purpose of recognizing global topics and themes. The aforementioned categories – Table 1 – were the basic criteria of analysis. Any available text under the headline (subheadlines), as

¹⁷² Most references to graffiti in photo captions are related to political graffiti. These results are mentioned in subsequent chapters.

well as quotes and other forms of subtitles were methodologically considered as part of the article, even considering that these elements could play an attention-getting role, which may have justified a separate level of analysis.

The main analysis was aimed at the recognition of the themes and the referenced sources – such as graffiti producers, police, local authorities, neighbors, average citizen – included in the news and opinion articles. This analysis of news actors or sources also has limitations: For example, the opinion of a local authority or an *expert* on graffiti practice may have more credibility for readers than the opinion of a local graffiti writer or *pichador*. The point of interest here was their inclusion as one of the multiple sources offered by each media channel, not the credibility attributed to them (which is hard to assess from discourse analysis alone). The newspapers selected for this research are the *Folha de São Paulo* (Brazil) and *La Nación* (Costa Rica):

- *Folha de São Paulo*, online website *folha.uol.com.br*, is part of the media group *Grupo Folha*, established in 1921. The conglomerate also includes the portal UOL – which provides internet and content services in the forms of news, sports and entertainment; the publishing house Plural; the newspapers *Agora*, *Valor Econômico* and *Alô Negócios*; the research center *DataFolha*, the news agency *Folhapress* and other several subsidiaries.¹⁷³
- *La Nación*, online website *nacion.com*, founded in 1946, is the main newspaper of the media corporation *Grupo Nación*, which also includes the newspapers *Al Día*, *El Financiero* and *La Teja*. The media group also offers the magazines *Perfil*, *Sabores*, *Soho*, *BienESTAR*, *Su Casa*; internet services including the job search engine *empleo.co.cr*, the cinema and movies website *cinemania.co.cr*, and the image stock website *emagestock.com*; three radio stations – *ADN* (90.7 FM), *Bésame* (89.9 FM), and *Los 40 Principales* (104.3 FM), and the newspapers *Al Día* and *Siglo XXI* in Guatemala, among other subsidiaries such as *PAYCA* (*Papel y Cartones, S.A.*) in the paper, cardboard and graphics business.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ Information available at the website www.folha.uol.com.br.

¹⁷⁴ Information available at the website www.gruponacioncr.com.

According to the Associação Nacional de Jornais (ANJ), *Folha de São Paulo* was the most widely-read Brazilian newspaper between 2002 and 2009 (but in second place in 2010, with a daily circulation of 294,498 copies).¹⁷⁵ In the case of the Costa Rican newspaper *La Nación*, the average daily circulation in 2009-2010 was 85,663 copies.¹⁷⁶ Both cases were selected based on operational criteria, as they provided easy access to their news and opinion articles from abroad. Contextual factors, such as the relative accessibility to previous studies and other publications regarding graffiti as a social practice or previous contact with graffiti producers, were also reasons for the selection of these cases. Neither a random sample or selection of cases in the Latin American press nor the inclusion of television broadcasting were considered, given both the methodological and time limitations of this research. This means that other cases (different newspapers in the selected countries or other Latin American countries) may provide different results or even refute the results of this study.

Given the exploratory nature of this research, the inclusion of two countries must be interpreted not as a comparative effort, but as a way to relate global social practices such as graffiti production with local contexts and discourses. Structural conditions as well as historical background also make difficult any comparison in a strict sense. The news and opinion articles were approached with the same set of analytical categories, but differences were also obvious from the beginning. Not only does the Brazilian experience present a more complex phenomenon, but it has also captured more press. The Costa Rican case, with its own particularities, mostly emphasizes the discussion of graffiti as a form of vandalism and destruction of heritage. The Brazilian case, even when it includes this dimension, is broader, including, for example: discussions on the definition of art, peripheral youth, graffiti as an asset in the job market, etc. However, it is interesting to note that, even when the study expected differences, the similarities in themes have been substantial.

Finally, it may be necessary to address the critical approach to discourse analysis offered by Bell (2011), based on the work of Ricoeur and the philosophical branch of hermeneutics. Suggesting that discourse analysis seems more like discourse interpretation, Bell highlights the inherent difficulty of working with texts and the

¹⁷⁵ Information available under “*Maiores Jornais do Brasil*” at the website www.anj.org.br (accessed on March 28th, 2014).

¹⁷⁶ Information available under “Informe Anual de Accionistas 2009-2010” at the website www.gruponacion.co.cr (Retrieved on March 28th, 2014).

related problems of validating a *single interpretation* among all other possible readings. The German notion of *Verfremdung* is necessary to understand the complexity of discourse analysis-interpretation:

Most obviously, readers are estranged from the author, and the text is no longer bound to the author's intention. The text and its interpretation are also autonomous of its first readers or addressees – it does not necessarily and only mean what its first audience took it to mean. And third, it is independent of the sociocultural context in which it was produced (and probably received), having moved into a new context. (Bell, 2011: 528)

This condition of *estrangement* addressed by Bell – originally defined as *distanciation* in Ricoeur – produces a series of phases in discourse or text interpretation: (a) the initial point of estrangement regarding the text; (b) a first pre-view, consisting of the preconceived ideas and pre-notions that any reader holds before interacting with the text; (c) a phase of proto-understanding or first guess about the meaning of the text; (d) the analysis of the text in its alternative readings, challenging the supposed dominance of the author's intention, the structural analysis – its form – of the text, and the idea of unlimited polysemy; (e) the process of understanding, based on this previous phase of analysis; and finally (f) a process of appropriation-ownership (from the German word *Aneignung*) of this discourse interpretation. Any researcher, as Bell clearly remarks, proposes his or her interpretation based on previously acquired ideas, pre-notions, ideologies or political views. In order to overcome this ambiguity, Bell proposes the integration of both discourse analysis and discourse interpretation based on hermeneutics. This is the effort at the core of this research.

Chapter IV

Graffiti as social practice in Costa Rica

The early manifestations of graffiti production in Costa Rica appear linked to the realm of political struggle and can therefore be framed within certain theories of public opinion and subaltern-countercultural-diasporic groups (Habermas, 1990 [1962]; Fraser, 1990; Avritzer and Costa, 2004). Such graffiti was employed strategically as an alternative form of communication. The social complaints expressed in these productions, as identified by Jiménez and Donas (1997: 40-42), were related to a series of particular issues: the case of ALCOA in the 1970s,¹⁷⁷ election boycotts and other political issues, the promotion of LGBT rights, and others. Such graffiti was also known as “pintas”¹⁷⁸ and was considered exclusive to “minorities” or “segregated groups”, both social and political (Barzuna, 2005).

Barzuna also remarks on the difference between internal and external graffiti, describing the presence of *latrinalia* – personal or political inscriptions, messages or drawings in public bathrooms – as an incipient form of graffiti production. Such graffiti productions are understood as vernacular and inappropriate, and, as Barzuna pointed out, are excluded from established notions of *culture* (Barzuna 2005, 1989). Similarly, Bussing López (2004) emphasizes the importance of *jail graffiti* in Costa Rica as another form of political and personal communication.

These previous studies mentioned above do not provide information about recent manifestations of graffiti production, however.¹⁷⁹ The history of tagging culture and

¹⁷⁷ The political struggle against the Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA) was one of the most important cases of environmental protection in Costa Rica. The company was granted permission to extract bauxite in San Isidro del General. The concession ignited social turmoil, particularly among neighboring residents, but also among student movements and labor unions. More information about this chapter of Costa Rican history can be found in Montero (2003).

¹⁷⁸ “Pintas” has been colloquially employed to refer to political messages on public surfaces. The word also has a second meaning, more colloquial, related to the social representation of a man/woman who asks people for money. This individual may be a drug addict or a mugger, who is likely to accost you in the street. For methodological reasons, the word graffiti was preferred over “pintas” for the collection of news articles, because of its direct relation with young groups and their cultures.

¹⁷⁹ For example, Barzuna (2005) includes references relating graffiti to its emergence in New York and the protest in May 1968 in Paris, but does not include any particular reflection on graffiti as produced by young cultures or street artists. Bussing López (2004) includes a reference to the book *Crimes of Style* by Ferrell (1993), but also distances herself from any reference to tagging culture, given her interest in jail

hip-hop graffiti in Costa Rica has not been properly documented. In a short documentary called “*Graffiti o el lenguaje de los deslenguados*”, produced by Marvin Rodríguez between 2010 and 2012,¹⁸⁰ an interview with philosopher Jorge Jiménez offers some background regarding the evolution of graffiti culture in Costa Rica. According to Jiménez, an initial phase of political graffiti or “pintas” linked to social, political and economic struggles was particularly strong between 1970 and 1995. After 1995, a second wave of graffiti productions began, characterized more by “crews” or groups of producers and writers, as well as the dramatic improvement of the artistic/technical quality of the productions. A recent study by Villegas (2010) emphasizes the role of graffiti in the appropriation of public spaces, but again does not include any reference to the historical evolution of the practice in Costa Rica.

In terms of legislation, however, graffiti production has been considered as a threat to *patrimonio* or heritage, usually depending on the historical value of the surface upon which it is placed. The *Ley de Patrimonio Histórico Arquitectónico de Costa Rica* (Law N° 7555) establishes in its Article 25 a jail term – one to three years – for those who damage or destroy property considered as architecturally or historically significant.¹⁸¹ Defacement of any other, non-historical, surfaces is considered as a misdemeanor,¹⁸² punished with a fine of ten to sixty days, according to Article 387 of the *Código Penal de Costa Rica* (Law N° 4573).

In 2010, a new law was proposed in order to regulate and control the production of different types of graffiti, including also the category of *muralismo*. The *Ley de Regulación de Rayados, Pintas, Graffitis, Murales y similares, sobre Bienes Públicos y Privados* (N° 17741) aims to combat unwanted or unauthorized inscriptions, messages and drawings on public surfaces (Article 4); establishes procedures to regulate the

graffiti. This fact is relevant because as Ferrell (1993), Austin (2001) and other scholars have remarked, graffiti writers and producers do not consider any other inscriptions, messages or drawings as “graffiti”, but only those produced according to graffiti culture rules and regulations. I included these studies to emphasize to the polysemy of the practice.

¹⁸⁰ The short documentary is available on Youtube [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xd5hbHKsNu8>] (accessed on April 19th, 2014).

¹⁸¹ In the original: “Artículo 20: Prisión. Será sancionado con prisión de uno a tres años, quien dañe o destruya un inmueble declarado de interés histórico-arquitectónico.”

¹⁸² In the original: “Artículo 387.- Se impondrá de diez a sesenta días multa: Dibujo en paredes 1) A quien escribiere, exhibiere o trazare dibujos o emblemas o fijare papeles o carteles en la parte exterior de una construcción, un edificio público o privado, una casa de habitación, una pared, un bien mueble, una señal de tránsito o en cualquier otro objeto ubicado visiblemente, sin permiso del dueño o poseedor o de la autoridad respectiva, en su caso. Si reincidiere, la pena será de cinco a veinte días de prisión.” This text was the result of a modification of the Article in 2010, according to Law N° 8720, Article 19.

practice, for example, through written authorizations (Article 5) or the creation of official contests (Article 9); defines the fines and punishment associated with illegal production (Articles 11 to 16) and even suggests that the materials involved in the creation of street art, graffiti or murals should be *eco-friendly* (Article 8, d). This document has been proposed as a substitute for the aforementioned Article 387 of the Costa Rican Criminal Code. The proposal is in discussion in the Congress.

The law also proposes the creation of an index of graffiti producers or street artists (Article 10) to facilitate contact between them and any private businesses that may be interested in hiring them.¹⁸³ The risk of this kind of record – as has also happened with graffiti contests in other countries¹⁸⁴ – is that it may become a mechanism for exerting social control. The emergence of so-called “tolerance zones” may also work to the detriment of the graffiti producers and writers, for example, by restricting their freedom of speech in form and content or by curtailing the lifestyle associated with graffiti practices.

The discourses of graffiti practice in *La Nación* newspaper¹⁸⁵

This chapter presents the main discourses and frames identified through the qualitative analysis of both news and opinion articles in the newspaper *La Nación*. The political and communicative dimension of graffiti production¹⁸⁶ has been considered the first of these discursive interpretations. The second refers to both the social uses of

¹⁸³ Two official institutions are related to the execution of this law: First, the Instituto Nacional de la Persona Joven, created by Law N° 8261 in 2002, with the objective of ensuring the rights of youth; and second, the Ministerio de Cultura y Juventud. These institutions would be responsible of creating an index of graffiti writers, producers and street artists, and are also in charge of promoting spaces or official contents for these cultural productions. However, the risk, as noted by Austin (2001), is that these practices will be mediated by adults, possibly affecting the agency of young groups and individuals.

¹⁸⁴ Records of graffiti taggers, artists and other producers may be used for law enforcement purposes. Austin (2001) and Ferrell (1993) have mentioned some of these strategies in cases in United States. Marcial (1997:137) reports how fake graffiti contests have even been promoted by the authorities to obtain information directly from graffiti writers in order to prosecute them.

¹⁸⁵ All the quotations in this chapter have been translated by the author. The original quotation in Spanish can be provided upon request.

¹⁸⁶ I use *graffiti practice* and *graffiti production* interchangeably to refer to this social practice. The concept of “graffiti producers” is more neutral than other labels identified in both media and academic sources. I reject the use of “graffiti vandals” or “graffiti criminals” because of the determinism of these interpretations. The same critique applies to the more positive label of “graffiti artists”. However, this category has been used in this dissertation to refer to graffiti producers who have achieved some recognition in art institutions or the art market (such as the *supergrafiteiros*).

graffiti and its potential aesthetic value as a social (youth) practice. The last section of this chapter refers to the themes, interpretations and sources that were absent or underrepresented in the articles.

A. From graffiti production as political communication to vandalism/criminality

Graffiti production is discussed here, in reference to the origins of the practice in Costa Rica, as an alternative form of communication used to emphasize political struggles, both national and international. At the international level, graffiti – both in pictures and texts – has been related to political struggles in Venezuela, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic and Spain, among others.¹⁸⁷ Conflicts such as the war in Iraq, the meetings of the G20, neo-Nazism in France as well as remembrances of May 1968¹⁸⁸ have also been illustrated with references to graffiti production.

National texts mentioned the term “graffiti” principally in relation to social protests against the CAFTA (Central American Free Trade Agreement) – commonly known as TLC for *Tratado de Libre Comercio* – and the referendum held to decide about the agreement, which took place in 2007.¹⁸⁹ The lack of resources for accessing traditional media could be one of the explanations of the strategic use of graffiti by CAFTA opponents in this context, even when both sides were actively involved in graffiti production. However, the articles in the newspaper *La Nación* are oriented against the use of graffiti as an alternative medium of communication – and possibly against the CAFTA opponents as well – and accentuate the dirty, vernacular and vandalistic “nature” of this practice:

¹⁸⁷ Some of these conflicts related to graffiti – in photographs or photo captions – are: the struggles between supporters and opponents of Hugo Chávez, the state of freedom of belief and religion in Latin America, the electoral campaign in Ecuador (Álvaro Noboa-Rafael Correa in 2006), the expulsion of the U.S. Ambassador Goldberg from Venezuela and Bolivia in 2007, among others.

¹⁸⁸ As mentioned in the first chapter, the student revolt of May 1968 is considered one of the worldwide events that may be responsible for expanding the use of graffiti as an alternative political form of communication.

¹⁸⁹ Eight articles refer to this use of graffiti as a form of political communication during the negotiations of the CAFTA agreement. See, for example: “*Graffitis del NO causan grave daño a paredes de las Ruinas*” (*La Nación*, 01.10.2007).

The referendum, is it an historical milestone? I don't think so. Is it a fabrication to meet the local incapacity for making serious decisions with the necessary attitude? I believe so. Is it the tombstone of the future of decision-making by those who know or those who have been delegated to make decisions? It is this as well. This is the time of the simpleton slogan, the vulgar graffiti and of the "peanut gallery", this is clear. This is the time of the power of the minority, the empire of the masses, and in general, of the kitsch (sic). (*La Nación*, 16.05.2007) [Opinion article by Mauricio Viquez L. (Church Elder and University Professor)]

With some astonishment and some fear I have been witnessing for a while a proliferation of wrong and dangerous messages and ideas. Messages that one sees on the street, in graffiti, in flyers pasted on the wall and in certain clandestine forums that appear on the internet and that call, for example, for a "street struggle"; speak of "dominant empires", "evil plans", tyrannical leaders and an oppressed people. Messages that sometimes champion the worn image of Che Guevara (who, incidentally, is still called... Commander!).

Moreover, it is concerning that the spread of this message dominates and that in some cases it is repeated like an echo using the public resources provided for higher education.

This is a campaign based on almost apocalyptic visions; one that speaks of "imperial domination", of the systematic kidnapping of our institutions (including TSE) and at the same time, incites people to be "up in arms", to paralyze [society] and to rise up. (*La Nación*, 21.09.2007) [Opinion article by Dennis Cordero Gamboa (Architect)]

Saddening practices. The use of graffiti, writings, and paste-ups are political practices that had been previously eradicated; but today, with great sadness, we see that these practices are being revived, condemned by all, because they litter our neighborhoods, affect the landscape, and more worrying, hide in anonymity the unscrupulous persons who take advantage in order to offend the adversary. May God grant that anyone who has used a wall, a post or a street to express his/her opinion will also have the decency to erase it, clean it or repaint it, to the relief of all. (*La Nación*, 21.09.2007) [Opinion article by Walter Zavala Ortega (Chemist)]

It's almost sickening to see on the faces of homes, businesses, walls, schools, etc., in cities such as Naranjo, San Ramon and others, scratches with "writings" or graffiti saying "No to CAFTA", "The devil is behind CAFTA", "Arias wants to sell us out with CAFTA", etc. (*La Nación*, 27.02.2007) [Letter by William Ulate Arlet (Reader)]

These opinions describe graffiti as something linked to bad taste – the reference to *kitsch* – and vulgarity, sadness, ignorance, credulity and even disgust. The first quote clearly emphasizes the *gradería de sol* – a term that metaphorically refers to people in lower social strata – and subtly suggests that *they* are prepared neither to take political

decisions nor to express them publically (on surfaces). The last quote also generalizes the opposition to graffiti production, affirming that these practices are censored by *all*.

La Nación published these opinions against graffiti as an alternative communication form, but at the same time the newspaper employs graffiti in both text and pictures to address political struggles, in Costa Rica and abroad.¹⁹⁰ This could indicate that *La Nación* does not necessarily agree with the authors of the opinion articles, and therefore assumes a “neutral” position. Indeed, the news article entitled “*Referendo aviva humor y creatividad del tico*” associates graffiti with positive concepts such as creativity, imagination and humor. The news article also validates graffiti as another possible means of capturing votes and highlights the role of jokes and puns in the Costa Rican identity:

There also jokes being circulated in text messages or informal propaganda in posters and innumerable graffiti. Streets, poles, walls of buildings and houses, stones in the road and many other spaces are transformed into a sort of canvas, where the creativity of the citizen during these elections is reflected. Some are inappropriate, others even offensive, but most of them show the humorous tone that many Ticos inject into the important decisions of the country. (*La Nación*, 30.09.2007) [News article by Ana Lupita Mora (Journalist of *La Nación*)]

Additional negative representations of graffiti production in articles focusing on political struggles were found in two different interviews with prominent political sources. The first case is also related to the discussion of the CAFTA agreement mentioned above and it involves the former President of Costa Rica, Dr. Óscar Arias Sánchez, who was questioned about the so-called “*Memorando del Miedo*”, a memorandum created by his former Vice-President and one Congressman proposing strategies to manipulate the image of the opponents to the CAFTA agreement.¹⁹¹ The quotation notes the President’s complaint:

¹⁹⁰ Other news articles about national issues that mentioned graffiti were about the murder of the radio journalist and comedian Parmenio Medina, the allegations of fraud in the national elections in 2006, the presence of fecal material in some districts of San José, demands for the right to abortion and even the border conflict between Nicaragua and Costa Rica. Graffiti is portrayed in these cases as a form of political communication. The contextualization of these cases and the analysis of the use of graffiti in each particular struggle are not relevant for this research, but they are mentioned to demonstrate the link between graffiti and political struggles.

¹⁹¹ The “*Memorando del Miedo*” was a series of recommendations focusing on possible de-legitimization strategies that the government could employ against opponents of the CAFTA agreement. The use of

ARIAS: “No one apologized to me when I read in a graffiti that the Constitutional Court is the whore of Oscar Arias, or that every time the Court rules against their [the opposition] interests, they question it,” he said. (*La Nación*, 25.09.2007) [Interview by Carlos A. Villalobos (Journalist of *La Nación*)]

The *Sala IV* or Constitutional Court, in charge of constitutional issues, was heavily criticized by its decision to grant Presidential re-election, a reform that made possible a second administration for Dr. Óscar Arias.¹⁹² This same court was particularly significant for the approval of the CAFTA agreement, especially for its decisions on the constitutionality of the legal text. The graffiti producer aimed to express his or her disaffection with both the Constitutional Court and the President, and when the President mentioned this graffiti in the interview, he partially validated graffiti as an alternative form of communication, given the fact that it actually reached its addressee. However, the former President clearly censors graffiti and even considers it an act that should be followed by some kind of (public) apology.

The second interview in which graffiti is mentioned by a political figure also allows us to introduce another frame identifiable in the discourses about graffiti in *La Nación*: The linkage between graffiti and forms of vandalism and criminal behavior. This interview occurred in a different political setting and is related to the national Presidential elections in 2010. The political source in this case is the candidate Román Macaya, member of the *Partido Acción Ciudadana*. In this interview, when asked about how to face the problem of criminality, he declares:

INTERVIEWER: There are polls that say that people are willing to accept a more heavy-handed approach. You are going to say “vote for me”. Don’t you think this is what people are asking for?

MACAYA: “When one is talking about heavy-handedness, what is being discussed is more repressive measures; when I say enforce the law it means enforce the law. Many other times the law is not being enforced,

“fear” in these recommendations was clearly emphasized. For example, the authors suggested linking the opposition to international political figures such as Fidel Castro, Daniel Ortega or Hugo Chávez; exploiting the fear of unemployment and job losses; expressing the idea of the decay of democratic institutions; and raising doubts among the voters about the potential negative consequences that success of the opponents would have for the country, particularly in terms of governability. The document also exposes the use of threats against local governors and the need to call for a recess in the parliament, in order to allow congressmen and congresswomen to join the pro-CAFTA campaign in their local communities.

¹⁹² Óscar Arias Sánchez was the first re-elected president of Costa Rica. He was also particularly renowned for winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 1987. His first period as President was from 1986 to 1990 and he served a second term as President from 2006 to 2010.

and only enforcing the law is harder than what is already happening. It is about enforcing the law regardless of the crime, which is another measure implemented by Mayor Giuliani. With the slightest infraction, someone who wrote graffiti on a wall, he [Giuliani] enforced the law, whatever it was, but he did not let it go unpunished. Impunity is what needs to be eliminated because when we go to this rhetoric of harder and harder... I do not know what the polls say about the death penalty but I think these are not solutions. The death penalty has been implemented in states where it has not had a deterrent effect to prevent violence. (*La Nación*, 27.05.2009) [Interview by Irene Vizcaíno (Journalist of *La Nación*)]

Based on the criminological approach known as the *Broken Windows* theory (Wilson and Kelling, 1982), the control of minor crimes (which are a threat to public order and neatness) is considered fundamental for the avoidance of more “serious” forms of crime. This reference, however, does not take into account the contextual differences between a metropolis like New York and a small city like San José, or any other city in Costa Rica.¹⁹³ Several other references to the Broken Windows approach were found in both news and opinion articles:

The example of New York. With this theory we can think of society as a building with many windows. If the building is not well-maintained and is neglected (faded walls, stained or with graffiti, maybe even with some broken windows), it is much more probable that the next passer-by who walks in front of the building decides to try his luck, taking a stone and with it trying to break one of the windows that is still intact. (*La Nación*, 26.02.2006) [Opinion article by Mauricio Jenkins (Business Manager and Professor at INCAE¹⁹⁴)]

Report if you see someone doing graffiti or murals. Do not allow your neighbors to neglect their property. Speak up to repair glass, paint houses, change light bulbs or fix sidewalks. An orderly environment keeps crime away. (*La Nación*, 22.10.2007) [Opinion article by Pablo Rojas Herrera, (Business Manager)]

Epidemics. It is hard to believe that in 1993 the mafia and all criminals in New York suddenly decided “to behave” and to be good citizens. It is also improbable that the Police found the “magic formula” to prevent crime. In the city of New York there was “something else” that played a

¹⁹³ Macaya mentioned other social problems in his interview, including for example, drug trafficking, gun ownership and domestic violence. He also noted the need to increase the number of police and to facilitate the applicability of the law, but he also clearly pointed out the contribution of social programs – education, infrastructure and others – to solving crime-related issues.

¹⁹⁴ INCAE is an international business school located in Costa Rica and Nicaragua. The official website is www.incae.edu.

primordial role in the decrease of crime in the city. The theory by Gladwell is that this “something else” is what the criminologists James Q. Wilson and George Kelling call: “The Broken Windows Theory”. They argue that crime is the inevitable result of disorder. If a window breaks and it is not repaired, the people who walk in the surroundings would conclude that nobody cares and no one is in charge.

In a short time, more windows will be forced and the sensation of anarchy spreads contagiously from the building to the surroundings, conveying the signal that “everything is allowed”. According to Wilson and Kelling, in a city, minor problems like graffiti, public disorder, robberies and aggressive behaviors are the equivalent to the “broken windows”, which at the same time are invitations to more serious forms of crime. This is the theory of crime as an epidemic. Its principle is that crime is contagious, much as music, the fashion or the flu could be.

The metro. Kelling advised the New York Transit Authority and efforts were redoubled to fight crime in the trains. Despite the advice given by many to pay attention to “more serious crime”, David Gunn, director of the metro, followed Kelling’s advice, and devoted himself to eradicating graffiti. He thought about it as a symbol of the collapse of the system. This type of small crime was overlooked before, because the authorities believed that it was too expensive to combat. However, the signal that they send is that of “broken windows”, of chaos, of no man’s land. (*La Nación*, 28.01.2007) [Article by José Pablo Rodríguez (Reader)]

In this last quote, graffiti and crime are considered as a form of contagious behavior compared to an epidemic (outbreak). If a political form of communication produced by minorities or political parties, or simply artistic manifestations placed on walls and public surfaces are described as an outbreak, then following this same metaphor it is possible to describe their producers as microbes, bacteria and viruses. The following text, a quote from an article entitled *Zancudos con revólver* (Mosquitoes with revolver), also emphasizes this medical approach and reaffirms the need for *social prophylaxis*:

Dengue fever and delinquency are identical. The first time the patient’s blood boils, when he is bitten by a pickpocket with 300 robberies who is still free. As soon as the fever passes 44 degrees he decides to get immunized; he buys a gun. The next attack of the mosquito-wrongdoer will be hemorrhagic: blood will be shed. The bugs evolve quickly and decide that, beyond the chokehold, they now need a revolver and it is better to shoot first. A mortal epidemic on the streets. The spiral may continue until we all see each other as actors in a cowboy movie. The one with the faster trigger wins the duel and lives to tell the story.

Stop the epidemic. It is necessary to stop the epidemic, as with dengue fever, or it will finish us. Eliminate the breeding places and use repellent. If there is a minimal outbreak, fumigate consciously.

In his book “Tipping Point”, the sociologist Malcolm Gladwell analyzed the crime wave in the metro of New York as a health epidemic. It was suicide to get inside it. The police restored lights and painted the wagons, but also attacked petty crimes: graffiti and fare evasion. By combatting these trivialities, he also eliminated the armed robberies and public fear. A spring of warm water came out of this study: the dirty environment favors crime, but one neat and clean generates security. The one who writes on a wall today, robs people tomorrow. (*La Nación*, 12.05.2008) [Opinion article by César Monge Conejo (Engineer)]

The elimination of the viruses, bacteria and microbes that produce the scourge of criminality are suggested but not clarified. Does this mean social exclusion or physical elimination? The use of the verb *fumigar* (to fumigate) advocates fundamentally for extermination. Moreover, the final sentence also naturalizes the relationship between graffiti production and criminality, assuming that every single graffiti writer or artist will become a mugger. The underlying idea of order and neatness is also interesting, particularly because it proposes that certain high and middle classes – a segment of the population that generally lives in clean and arranged environments – are not involved in any kind of criminal behaviors. What kind of crimes are committed in *orderly environments*? The idea of epidemics also refers symbolically to a sort of purified social body, and it should be understood as a moral pursuit of social hygiene.

The idea of preventing crime and using new technologies to fight it was also emphasized in an opinion article entitled *Precrimen* (“Pre-crime”). This text addresses the need to find ways to punish crime even before it is committed and suggests how the use of technologies such as CCTV could contribute to this cause. It is interesting to mention that graffiti is subtly linked in this scenario to crimes such as pedophilia and mugging:

The new systems of surveillance in San José, called “electronic police”, and the paraphernalia that surrounds them are a good example of what the future will bring us. And I am speaking about a short-term future. For the time being they are used to support the daily repressive tasks of foot and bike police, although other possible and questionable uses are, for some, just around the corner. If they are not already being put to such use. The new technology would serve well to carry out preventive work like identifying the most dangerous muggers and giving them timely monitoring, informing personnel “in the field” of their movements so they could always be around in case of any “activity”. As soon as one of these muggers gets too close to another human being, zap!, the system of detection, siege and takedown promptly appears and

stops the suspect. Even before he has committed any felony. The new equipment will also be able to recognize the patterns of probable vandalism against monuments and public property. Long before someone from the group of “writers” takes out the spray can for graffiti on a dark wall, a police patrol stops in front of them and...

I understand that the cameras can identify faces. With luck it could begin to detect old men looking lustfully at little children and accuse them of future pederasty. For now, let us think whether the use of this technology will force us to question if it violates our right to freedom of movement or if, on the contrary, it helps us to be free from the ravages of the criminal world. (*La Nación*, 01.03.2004) [Column by Mauricio Leandro (Reader)]

The legal ramifications of capturing a “criminal” before he or she has committed the “crime” are ignored by the author of this text.¹⁹⁵ The author also employs suspense to dramatize the action. What would the police do? The reader can fill the gap with her imagination. Would they arrest them, kill them, torture them? The question remains “open” to interpretation. However, as Ferrell remarks in relation to rape, the idea is to present the practice of graffiti in the worst possible scenario.¹⁹⁶ Graffiti producers are, in the text, *symbolically located* among robbers and child abusers.

One last theme between crime and graffiti may be linked to geographical and socio-historical conditions: the fear of the spread of the so-called *maras* from the violent contexts of Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras to “peaceful” Costa Rica. Some news articles dedicated to these gangs describe the meanings – territoriality and identity – associated with graffiti and tattoos in these collectives.¹⁹⁷

This fear is also extended to the soccer fan groups – another form of *pandilla* (gang) – that also emphasize these ideas of territoriality and identity.¹⁹⁸ However, the reality of the *maras* is complex and their high level of violence cannot be compared to

¹⁹⁵ Pre-crime is also the main topic of the movie “Minority Report” (2004), starring Tom Cruise, in which his character – a pre-crime police officer named John Anderton – is accused of the *future* crime of killing a pedophile, who was supposedly responsible for abusing Anderton’s son. The similarities between the arguments in this article and the movie are self-evident.

¹⁹⁶ Ferrell (1993: 142). In his words: “It is difficult to say whether such tactics are more offensive to rape victims or graffiti writers; it is not difficult to see that such tactics are designed to locate graffiti in the worst possible context.”

¹⁹⁷ Graffiti and *maras* are linked in ten news articles, nine of them related exclusively to the gangs. Six of these articles are available only in the online version of *La Nación*, and for this reason this topic was excluded from the analysis. “Graffiti” appears mostly in the photo captions of these articles. The images depict various groups of *mareros* posing in front of a wall covered with graffiti as well as graffiti inscriptions. A study focusing on the *maras* in Central America, in which I was involved as part of the research team, can be found on the website of Demoscopia S.A. (2008). [http://www.demoscopia.co.cr/files/news/files/19_Maras2008.pdf]. The references to the printed articles are included in the annex, while the online articles were excluded.

¹⁹⁸ See: “*Las paredes tienen la palabra*” (*La Nación*, 05.01.2003).

the violence exerted by Costa Rican soccer fans. The following quotation exemplifies fears related to Costa Rican soccer fan groups and their violent criminal behavior:

The Doce, the Ultra and the Garra are the lowest embers of individuals devoid of God and morals. With the most shameful incivility they have been charged with the task of dirtying the entire country with disgusting and offensive graffiti. In the stands they have made blood spurt and after games, they have led to destruction and pulverized windows and windshields.

The incident on Sunday 18th at the stadium in Alajuela is an event to forget. Having compatriots of this ilk is the greatest national shame. (*La Nación*, 26.04.2004) [Opinion article by Enrique Rosales Álvarez (Teacher)]

Less related to the idea of crime, the notion of *vandalism* is a major concern in both news and opinion articles. These texts denounced cases of graffiti writing – frequently *tagging culture* – located on public surfaces as bridges, monuments, schools and sculptures. Graffiti is opposed mainly because it is painted without any formal authorization, but also in reference to aesthetic criteria. *Tags* or signatures are considered as something that defaces, disfigures or *uglifies* the city. This idea is exactly the opposite of the motivation expressed by some graffiti writers, who believe that their works help to beautify the city and to enliven previously gray-and-white environments.¹⁹⁹ These quotes emphasize this approach to graffiti production:

From a “Marcela was here” written with white concealer pencil to phrases with poetic intentions written with paint, these are found by inspecting the monuments, statues and busts that adorn the spaces of the capital. (*La Nación*, 30.04.2001) [News article by Doriam Díaz (Journalist of *La Nación*)]

With their gaze lost in the infinite, monuments, statues and busts located in San José recall some fragment of our history; however, the people and the authorities seem to have forgotten about them, even when they are close to the busiest routes used by Costa Ricans. These works have become some kind of indigents made of bronze, concrete and stone.

The majority of the monuments of the capital produce embarrassment: some are dirty and damaged by pollution, the passage of time and climatic conditions; others are full of graffiti, waste and even chewing gum, and a good number suffer all these aforementioned evils. (*La Nación*, 20.10.2003) [News article by Doriam Díaz (Journalist of *La Nación*)]

¹⁹⁹ See Austin (2001) and Chapter I of this dissertation.

The young ladies of the Colegio de Señoritas threw themselves into the street yesterday and closed the roads around the institution. The reason? It was neither a protest nor a parade, but the beginning of a campaign to clean up the façades of the heritage buildings of the school.

Some 65 student volunteers armed themselves with gloves, sponges, hoses, and especially with the water and soap needed to clean the four sides of the school.

Yesterday they abandoned their traditional uniforms and showed up in shirts and jeans to carefully erase dozens of graffiti, to remove remnants of old advertisements and to scrape off the dark layer of soot that covered the walls. They also collected lots of rubbish that passers-by had deposited in the empty spaces of the façades' ornamentations. (*La Nación*, 18.02.2006) [News article by Doriam Díaz (Journalist of *La Nación*)]

The Edificio Central de Correos, in the center of San José, shows the result of 10 years of deterioration and abandonment: its façades are cracked and have little plants and small trees growing in the concrete, many of the ornaments are broken and it looks dirty, discolored and full of graffiti. (*La Nación*, 17.07.2006) [News article by Doriam Díaz (Journalist of *La Nación*)]

In these examples, all texts written by the same journalist,²⁰⁰ it is possible to recognize the relation between graffiti and notions such as abandonment, dirt, waste and indigence. The fact that all these graffiti productions – including personal graffiti like the “Marcela estuvo aquí” – are placed on monuments and historical façades suggests that some degree of indifference towards predefined concepts of history, national identity and *patrimonio* characterize graffiti producers. However, another possible explanation (not mentioned in the text) could be to consider that graffiti producers target these particular surfaces as part of their political dissent, challenging official history or the assumption of a “*common past*”. Do these monuments and heritage sites represent the citizenry or are they imposed reminders of national history as narrated by Costa Rican elites? The following quote embodies this conflict between heritage and vandalism:

Many walk around ignoring the large footprint that he left on the country when the Presidential sash crossed his chest. But Mr. Julio Acosta García

²⁰⁰ The production of news articles is a complex process and its analysis should consider different levels of hierarchy: The journalist – in this case Doriam Díaz – could have a personal point of view regarding graffiti as something dirty or disgusting. However, the interest of this research is to identify how graffiti as a social practice has been framed in *La Nación*, partially ignoring the inner process of news article production, for example, the dynamics between journalist and editors.

is not alone. In squares, parks, *plazoletas* (small squares) and the capital's streets, dozens of sculptural monuments are also victims of contempt. Politicians, liberators, artists and distinguished citizens immortalized in stone spend the day on a pedestal without anyone knowing who they were. Some of them have become objects of vandalism and have received as a reward mutilations, graffiti or theft. (*La Nación*, 17.10.2010) [News article by Randall Corella V. (Journalist of *La Nación*)]

In addition to politicians, artists and illustrious citizens, the article also points out that conquerors, kings, writers, composers, military figures, philanthropists and intellectuals are represented among the sculptures dedicated to both Latin American, U.S.-American and European culture. Graffiti, in this sense, like other forms of vandalism such as *mutilaciones* and *robo*, is framed as an offence against the past, a threat to the collective memory and the common heritage. The unavoidable question regarding this sort of framing is whether this collective memory exists at all, as well as its role in the power relationships that are solidified in these physical spaces.

The idea of graffiti as something dirty and improper, as a stain on public monuments and on social imaginaries of a shared history, is often included in the analyzed articles. One subtle intention of this type of discourse can be related to moral campaigns of social hygiene, and therefore, symbolic forms of social control against “minorities” – in the sense, paraphrasing the former quote, that the citizens who are not kings, military, intellectuals or some other such form of illustrious citizens are not entitled to be physically “immortalized” in the public space. In simple words, this discourse is against the symbolic *Marcela*: unknown, invisible, without any particular merit. The city is transformed into a space that belongs to a symbolic national collective represented in the public sculptures and monuments and is not perceived as the interactive space that belongs to its (current) inhabitants. Whether some of these inhabitants have the *legitimate* right (or not) to *violently* appropriate these spaces is still open to debate.²⁰¹ Even when this rhetorical strategy does not seem to be explicitly related to the idea of criminality, the *crime* committed here is against some idyllic notion of national identity, which also rests on a principle of purity²⁰² and integrity²⁰³.

²⁰¹ See Chapter II for a discussion about acts of civil disobedience. Chapter VI emphasizes this point as part of the general conclusion of this dissertation.

²⁰² This discussion, based on the work of Duschinsky (2013), is included in Chapter VI.

²⁰³ Sennett (1990: 98) defies this idea of “integrity”. In his words: “It seems wrong to alter or change an old building with an addition at the side or new windows, because these changes seem to destroy the

Unauthorized graffiti production also has an impact on local business and private ownership, particularly evident in the cost of its removal and its negative influence on property prices. This problem is addressed only tangentially in the analyzed articles by referring to cleaning campaigns and restoration costs.²⁰⁴

Additionally, the presence of graffiti and other inscriptions is also used in the news articles to illustrate the apparent lack of interest that some local authorities or even the government have shown towards specific social projects or public infrastructure in Costa Rica. The news articles combine this campaign for political accountability with the broader moral discourse of cleanliness-order-purity. For example:

Graffiti and soot on loaned mobile station.

The mobile station that Riteve loaned to the MOPT in September 2002, with the objective of inspecting the 6000 vehicles that the Government owns, currently carries on one of its surfaces a crusty layer of soot and, on the other, an inscription that in polite terms means: “I defecate on the law.” (*La Nación*, 13.09.2004) [News article by Esteban Oviedo. (Journalist of *La Nación*)]

Only few could imagine that these four settlements received 4000 million Colones in the last two years to improve their community infrastructure. Instead of becoming model sites, today these settlements have green areas full of weeds, destroyed playgrounds, sidewalks and benches painted with graffiti, pipes that are blocked when it rains and potholes. That is how La Capri and Sector 1 of Los Guido look, as well as La Angosta and El Futuro, located in La Guácima and San Rafael de Alajuela, respectively.

Although these communities have benefited from the collective bonus program, the million-colones investment is in jeopardy due to vandalism, and the inaction of both neighbors and municipalities. (*La Nación*, 13.06.2010) [News article by Alonso Mata B. (Journalist of *La Nación*)]

“They (the constructors) said that one has to be constantly on top of that. I have never seen the bridge being maintained”, said Ligia Quirós Sachun, President of the Chinese Association of the Península de Nicoya. Before leaving the country, the construction company revealed to this group of Chinese-Costa Ricans the necessary details for the maintenance of the bridge.

Affected. “I remember that they (the people from the company) told us that the superior parts of the bridge (between the tension cables) should

‘integrity’ of the original object. Changing historical needs are seen as threats to the integrity of the original form, as though time were a source of impurity. Groups dedicated to urban preservation sometimes speak, indeed, of a city as though it ought to be a museum of buildings, rather than a site for the necessarily messy business of life.”

²⁰⁴ See, for example: “*Vándalos causan 3.200 daños al mes en teléfonos*” (*La Nación*, 17.07.2009).

be painted every two years in order to protect them from corrosion”, stated Quirós.

The metallic pieces have not received a coating since the inauguration of the structure. The layers have been lost to sun exposure and to the graffiti written by strangers. (*La Nación*, 08.03.2009) [News article by Otto Vargas M. (Journalist of *La Nación*)]

To summarize, this first section presented the discourses about graffiti as an unauthorized form of political communication. The practice is recognized sometimes as political, but also as meaningless vandalism, which threatens both the neatness and the order of the physical environment as well as other more symbolic social representations, such as those of heritage, civility (codes of conduct) and security. Graffiti is also considered as criminogenic, being the expression of territoriality among illegal gangs (including also some gangs related to soccer teams). The presence of graffiti may also predict more severe forms of criminality, if left unattended by the respective authorities or private owners. These serious crimes can range from robberies to murder.²⁰⁵

This negative depiction of graffiti production contrasts with the second dimension identified in the news and opinion articles, which relates the practice to notions of art, education, social campaigns, etc. However, in the case of *La Nación*, even when graffiti is presented in a more positive frame in several articles, the negative attributes of the practice are still present and identifiable.

B. Aesthetic and social value of street art/graffiti productions: From unauthorized to commissioned/sponsored graffiti

The attributed artistic (and counter-aesthetical) nature that graffiti producers give to their creations has been also recognized as a part of the discourses and frames identified in the analyzed articles. Graffiti producers, as mentioned in the first chapter of this study, often refer to their works as something that beautifies the city. In relation to this interpretation regarding graffiti, three tendencies are identified in the case of *La Nación*: First, there is a relation between graffiti and art, in the sense of considering a new popular type of public expression. Second, some articles portray graffiti as part of a

²⁰⁵ For example, protest graffiti – as well as Marilyn Manson’s music – is presented in one article as some of the interests of an Argentinian young man who was responsible for a school shooting in 2004. See: “*Un día de furia*” (*La Nación*, 03.10.2004).

subculture, namely the *hip-hop* culture that has become an expression of urban and city life. And third, the link is made between graffiti and social projects (especially *education through prevention*), describing how the practice may foster self-assurance and community cohesion.²⁰⁶

In terms of its artistic value, graffiti and its producers are depicted as “members” of the broad artistic institutions and are linked to music, literature, theater, dance, painting, cinema, and even sport. Indeed, the several mentions of graffiti as belonging to festivals, museums and galleries could signify a sort of co-optation of the practice,²⁰⁷ or perhaps it expresses a sort of recognition of the artistic qualities of these graffiti productions *when they are located in their right place and time*.²⁰⁸

Don Quixote of La Mancha is a phenomenon in the fifth centenary of its publication: It is not only one of the year’s best-sellers, but it also inspired around 600 people in the country with his adventures, who participated in the National Contest of Visual Arts.

The contest, promoted by the Ministry of Culture, had an impressive response in the two categories that were convened: 329 young people and 230 adults participated.

The submitted proposals are varied and include painting, sculpture, drawings, engraving, photography, video and even graffiti. (*La Nación*, 17.08.2005) [News article by Doriam Díaz (Journalist of *La Nación*)]

Graffiti. The “dirtiness” of the street assaults the white space of the gallery through the work of Costa Rican Alejandro Ramírez. The artist presents an aerosol painting on canvas and on a wall.

“I have always liked the design of the graffiti of the New York metro and I wanted to bring this, which we are accustomed to seeing on a street, into a gallery,” explains Jacobo Karpio.

Ramírez presents three murals composed of several racks of canvas placed on the wall, in which [the racks] host a grand design that by far exceeds the boundaries of the cloths.

²⁰⁶ This prevention strategy refers to the idea of using graffiti and other street art projects as a way to attract the young population in order to avoid their involvement in drug trafficking or criminal gangs. A process of social rehabilitation may also be put into practice when these young people are in jail or probation, and graffiti becomes part of their process of social reinsertion, as for example, in Spain. There is no evidence of the use of graffiti as social rehabilitation in the news and opinion articles analyzed in this dissertation, but graffiti is used in different prevention campaigns.

²⁰⁷ Following both Comaroff and Comaroff (2009) and Kramer (2010), the idea of co-optation is considered a possible form of dialogue between group identities or cultures and the market economy. This dialogue may be perceived as asymmetric, but some social groups and individuals take advantage of the co-optation to promote their own culture, identity, ideologies and even counter-discourses. See Chapter I for more detail.

²⁰⁸ The *when* and *where* axis refers to places, spaces, or surfaces where graffiti is tolerated. These spaces include post-graffiti exhibitions, some museums, the interior of jails, the so-called “tolerance zones” in open streets or parks, and legal walls, among others. The main problem is the possibility that graffiti production may end up controlled and filtered by adults.

“I think I crossed the line...”, confesses the artist in the curatorial text. He also states: “In a painting done directly on the wall, the space and the architecture play a role as important as the painting itself.”

Two video productions that take *graffiti* as the starting point complete Ramírez’s exhibition, which is the first solo show of the artist in Costa Rica. (*La Nación*, 14.10.2007) [News article by Darío Chinchilla (Journalist of *La Nación*)]

The first sentence of this article is particularly significant for two reasons: First, even when graffiti is being portrayed as an art form that could be formally exhibited and appreciated by an audience, the journalist also disqualifies the practice by linking it to the idea of “dirtiness”. The second point is the verb “*tomar por asalto*”, which still refers to the idea of an attack in the sense of “take by assault” or “storm in”. The verb, therefore, emphasizes the supposedly violent nature of graffiti productions, remarking the vulnerability of the “white cube”.²⁰⁹

When graffiti is depicted as art, controversy is likely to emerge. In 2004, for example, Alejandro Ramírez, a graffiti artist, was the main topic of the article “*Alejandro Ramírez: Del Taki al TLC*”. The text focused mainly on his artistic career, but also included some references to his political influences, which were also linked to the aforementioned struggles against the CAFTA agreement (TLC, for *Tratado de Libre Comercio*). Alejandro Ramírez is also the most frequently mentioned Costa Rican graffiti producer in the news articles analyzed in this study.²¹⁰ This excerpt reveals his merits as an artist, even when an association with violence is still present in any description of his backgrounds and personal achievements:

What does not get published. The NO to CAFTA has captured Ramírez’s attention once more. It is not a secret that national public opinion has been very uneasy during the last months. The endorsement of CAFTA seems to have incited hordes of outraged scratchers and the city has become the bearer of everything that the media does not publish. But each political contingency has unleashed urban creativity, as was the case with the popular slogans that emerged in May ‘68. It is this dissimilar and opportune transit in its contemporary development the one that legitimizes graffiti, despite the criminal codes. If the literature of common people is its maximum expression, in San José you can find it in the bathrooms of bars, on the benches of churches and on the slopes of those concrete mountains that are the Mall. The graffiti in the hands of

²⁰⁹ White cube is the reference to the ideal form of a given art gallery.

²¹⁰ Alejandro Ramírez was frequently mentioned between 2001 and 2010 in eight articles, referring to his individual work but also when the artist was part of collective exhibitions.

Alejandro Ramírez has begun to recover its aural sense. The complexity with which he arranges his artistic activity in conjunction with social (or political) action renews this praxis on the reflective plane. In the recent Concurso de Emergentes, convened by the MADC, Ramírez brought face-to-face, through graffiti, the country's two most violent soccer fan gangs, meriting him an award. It is neither the spectacle nor the textual revelations but the challenge, the defiled walls of the Museum and the reinsertion of the pictorial mode, on which weighs the depreciation. (*La Nación*, 22.02.2004) [News article by Clara Astiasarán (Columnist of *La Nación*)]

In this text, graffiti production is not only valued as an art form itself but also praised as an alternative means of communicating all the themes that are “not published”, emphasizing the reading of graffiti as political communication, as mentioned above. However, the article also fuses different types of graffiti production into one single counter-cultural movement, including latrinalia, artistic graffiti and political graffiti indiscriminately.

The name Alejandro Ramírez, however, refers not only to the famous graffiti superstar in Costa Rica. The other one – as an opinion piece linked to the above-cited article clearly emphasizes – is a chess grandmaster. The author of this second article, identified as Carlos Vargas, remarks that he felt cheated when he read the article about the graffiti producer, having expected something related to the *real* Alejandro Ramírez, the chess player. To Vargas, the graffiti artist Alejandro Ramírez is just “another gangster”, with “no talent greater than the ability to choose the color of a paint spray can and the cleverness and agility to avoid being caught by police”. The opinion article, with the title “¿El grafitero o el ajedrecista?”, was both a complaint against the newspaper for including in its art section a reportage exalting this “illegal practice” and a complaint against society, referring in particular to the degradation of *our* values and reaffirming that “something serious is happening to us as a society”. The opinion article also included a phrase that could ignite gender struggles, as the author blamed the graffiti artist's mother for never teaching him to “not paint on the walls”:

Let's be realistic. To paint these signs you need no more creativity than the indispensable ability to choose the color of the spray paint nor more genius than the cleverness to stay out of sight of the police. (Because painting public walls is illegal; or am I naïve about it too?) It is true that from time to time they include clever phrases, like the ones that come out of the canteens and the bars of the ill-mannered. But, if all this is praised as art (with its well-known parameters of aesthetics and critique, as one

can infer from the article), and if it is presented by a celebrated cultural supplement, then there is something wrong that is happening to us as a society.

What kind of unusual change has our value system experienced? Is there any possible point of comparison between the discipline, the effort and the brilliant reasoning of a chess champion and the questionable behavior of his namesake, to whom his mom never taught that one does not paint on the walls? Is it that we now appreciate more the ability to take action in the darkness and to cheat rather than to demonstrate authentic cleverness and human worth?

Maybe I can be accused of being ignorant, given that graffiti has been considered art for years. But that would only confirm my point. I should add that on the same day, in the sports sections of *La Nación*, which I don't usually read, I found a good story about the adventures of Alejandro Ramírez, the other, the real one. (*La Nación*, 01.03.2004) [Opinion article by Carlos Alonso Vargas (Reader)]

Whether it is the mother or father who is responsible for teaching the youngster that “authentic cleverness and human worth” mean not writing on walls, even considering that such an instruction could curtail his or her artistic potential, is not the central issue here. What the quotation clearly shows is that even a well-established and celebrated graffiti artist can be labeled as a gangster, vandal or criminal.²¹¹ Such youngsters are portrayed as responsible for moral decay, against (the all-encompassing) “us”. Such moral panics, of course, are directed not only against young people, but also against racial, sexual and other so-called *minorities*.²¹² A cultural process of distinction is also noticeable in this narrative, where chess – not a sport, because the author says that he does not read that section – is referred to as high culture and graffiti is considered as a vernacular cultural form, a sort of low culture.²¹³

The urban culture of hip-hop, linked since its beginnings to graffiti production, constitutes another common reference found in the news articles. This hip-hop culture is frequently presented as part of other cultural formats such as festivals, theater or

²¹¹ Graffiti writers and crews sometimes label themselves as “gangster” or “criminal” and value the vandalistic nature of graffiti production. However, other producers reject this definition and distance themselves from this category. This fact can be found in Austin (2001), Ferrell (1993) and other scholars mentioned in Chapter I.

²¹² The works of Cohen (2002 [1972]), Ferrell (1993) and Young (2011) emphasize this tendency.

²¹³ Bourdieu (1984 [1979]) describes this contested nature of the aesthetics in the first chapter of the book on social distinction.

dance.²¹⁴ Graffiti productions are framed as something positive, a practice that contributes to the emotional and identitary development of urban youth. Two examples are included here:

On the wall. Graffiti is [the title of] the play with which the littlest ones of the Giratablas Theater (aged between 7 and 12 years old) complete their graduation. Directed by a team of professionals, the children will tell a story in which the drawings and texts that inhabit the urban walls have a leading role.

In this case, the graffiti is not the dirty stain on the concrete, but instead a colorful palette that helps the actors to express situations that occur in the school, the family, the neighborhood and the city. The play does not have much dialogue, because almost everything is said through body language, in which the most urban of all dances, hip-hop, is a vital piece. This play is directed by Ofir León, with the assistance of Amadeo Cordero. According to Michelle Piedra, spokeswoman for the Giratablas, the idea to utilize graffiti came from the children, who, for one year, have been investigating and learning about the topic and how to approach it as an expression of street art.

Besides talking with several graffiti artists and visiting places where the walls speak for themselves, the little ones have also taken urban dance courses, have dialogued with a disc jockey and a rapper and have learned to create objects with recycled material. All this knowledge is combined in the production. (*La Nación*, 21.10.2005) [News article by Víctor Fernández (Journalist of *La Nación*)]

From tomorrow and until Saturday January 30th, the First Festival Urban Epicenter: Hip Hop and Urban Art for Peace will take place in the Museo de los Niños.

The backbone of the festival is hip-hop and its diverse forms of creative expression, hence the graffiti and the breakdancing.

Therefore, the festival version of Urban Epicenter is a platform, for which urban artists of graffiti, music, video, dance and poetry collaborate and publicize their work.

“Urban Epicenter fosters freedom of expression and responsible communication, promotes art with a conscience and a lifestyle in which respect for the environment and for people are [sic] the fundamental basis for achieving better living conditions and to revive the sense of community among young people,” states one of the principles of this first festival. (*La Nación*, 24.01.2010) [News article by Ana María Parra (Journalist of *La Nación*)]

Clearly aimed at children and adolescents, these activities are orchestrated by official institutions or cultural organizations, both private and public. The first quote,

²¹⁴ For example, the FADAU (Festival de Arte y Danza Urbana) has been promoting urban culture in San José city center for the last five years. The festival also includes graffiti workshops or provides panels for the creation of graffiti in the “public space”. This could be considered a temporary zone of tolerance.

indeed, separates the dirty practice of unauthorized graffiti from this other dimension of graffiti as a component of this particular artistic festival. The second example shows how the festival employs graffiti – as part of hip-hop culture – as a mechanism for producing (or pleading for) “peace”. It is worth mentioning that this festival praises a freedom of speech that is linked to the idea of “responsible communication”, promoting respect for the environment and for other people. Freedom of speech is also the goal of many of the illegal-unauthorized graffiti productions, with the difference that their placement may represent a threat against ownership as a right, a sort of *disrespect* against others.²¹⁵

If graffiti can be used to promote peace, and it includes value as artistic practice at the same time that it fosters creativity, then it is understandable why the Ministry of Public Education decided to include graffiti in its *Festival de la Creatividad* while excluding non-creative practices as oratory. The following quote mentions graffiti as part of the Festival, implying that it possesses qualities that oratory lacks:

The Ministerio de Educación Pública (MEP) eliminated the oratorical contest from the Festival de la Creatividad.

This contest, which has been traditional and had a national final for primary and secondary levels, is out because the MEP argues that students memorize the speeches.

Kattia Rivera, coordinator of the “Plan 200”, which organizes activities to fill up the 200 days of school [required by law]²¹⁶, indicated that the regional offices can include the contest, if they want to, but there will be no national final.

“This doesn’t show any creative effort because they memorize the text. In former years there were people who wrote the speech and sold it to the student,” she said.

The official indicated that there are 31 other categories for the Festival of Creativity, including story, written poetry, painting, graffiti, cartoons, modern dance, garage bands, masks, kites, cimarrona, folk dances, marimba, estudiantina, choir, solo voice, poster and theater. (*La Nación*, 02.09.2008) [News article by Jairo Villegas (Journalist of *La Nación*)]

²¹⁵ As mentioned in the first chapter of this dissertation, Ferrell (1993:174) remarks that this type of rhetoric portrays victims of graffiti productions as vulnerable and weak, without considering that some of these “victims” are actually upper-middle class sections of the population, business, organizations or governmental institutions, invested with more power and resources than the graffiti producers, writers and artists. Chapter IV includes a reflection on this graffiti/anti-graffiti dynamic, particularly through the concept of civil disobedience.

²¹⁶ By law, the scholar year consists of at least 200 days of school. A common criticism against this policy is that children do nothing at the end of the year and are forced to go to school for extracurricular activities.

The mixed composition of this *Festival de la Creatividad* is also interesting: here graffiti joins other social practices related to the emergence of contemporary young cultures, such as garage bands and comics. The Festival also includes practices that represent Costa Rican idiosyncrasy, for example, traditional folk dances, *marimba* and mask design. Here, graffiti production is presented as another cultural form, one that can be in synchrony with national identity. However, the depiction of graffiti identified in the previous section described it as a threat to heritage or *patrimonio*; which is indeed a contradiction when both discourses are compared. This conflict between both interpretations of the “same” practice lies in the legal or authorized (or controlled) nature of this second type of (institutionalized-commissioned) graffiti production.

Social projects and health campaigns, for example, are also related to these positive uses of graffiti production. The *cool nature* of graffiti (and similar youth productions) is employed strategically in order to catch the attention of the general population and to promote specific social causes. Even when such graffiti production is perhaps more closely related to a form of *muralismo*, *La Nación* employs the term *graffiti* to describe it. The social value of graffiti can be observed, for example, in relation to a campaign against illegal car racing:

As part of this project, one graffiti alluding to street racing was inaugurated last Sunday. The mural was painted on one of the walls of a bridge of San Juan de Tibás (near the fire station).

The painting aims to educate and warn drivers, because on one side it portrays the concept of life, represented by a speedometer that marks 80 km/h.

On the other part of the graffiti, the night is shown, associated with death. In this painting a speedometer is also included, but it marks 180 km/h, a form of driving that evidences reckless speed.

Moreover, the painting includes buildings in ruins representing victims of street racing. One of the buildings shows a heart similar to the one painted on [Costa Rican] roads²¹⁷.

Finally, a street is plotted in the mural with a juncture between life and death, symbolizing that the path taken can determine the driver’s life. (*La Nación*, 14.08.2008) [News article by Ana Yancy Flores (Journalist of *La Nación*)]

In short, this second section has thus far focused on positive depictions of graffiti in the news and opinion articles. When graffiti or its producers are mentioned in

²¹⁷ A heart symbol is painted on Costa Rican streets as a reminder of those who have died in car accidents, to encourage drivers to drive more carefully.

this particular light, it is likely to be related to an authorized and legal production of the practice. Graffiti located in museums or galleries, as part of school projects or other organizational structures, may even help to promote high-value social causes, such as “peace”, “creativity”, “health”, and “security”. The creative and artistic components of these productions may play no role at all, as they are considered art forms only by virtue of being defined as such by someone invested with the effective or symbolic authority necessary for this designation.

Relating this conclusion to the illegal-unauthorized works and graffiti productions mentioned in the previous section, it is crucial to remark that this does not mean that illicit graffiti is not considered as art. Indeed it means more or less the opposite: authorized-commissioned works are considered “artistic” per se, independently of the quality of the works or their pro-hegemonic or ideological contents. For example, the use of graffiti murals can also be employed as a strategy to avoid other unwanted forms of graffiti production, such as *tagging* or political graffiti. If the wall is already occupied with something, graffiti producers, writers and artists may move somewhere else. This type of legal or authorized *muralismo* aims at graffiti deterrence by eliminating the “blank” spaces. The following quote shows how the Universidad de Costa Rica grants a wall (as well as paint) to some producers in order to create a mural that will show artistic images, a clear effort to avoid other more political and unauthorized forms of graffiti:

Dozens of advertising posters that were plastered on the walls announcing concerts, social support groups and even money-lending will no longer be visible on a stretch of the Universidad de Costa Rica (UCR) in San Pedro de Montes de Oca.

Now, this space that covers about 200 meters north of the Librería Universitaria is occupied with graffiti, which was authorized by the chiefs of the higher education center.

Indeed, at some point the possibility was considered of “granting” this stretch to “graffiti writers” who exhibited political, social and other messages, but then this opinion changed.

The idea of repainting those walls with the institutional color of the UCR was also discarded, and the help of five young people was solicited in order to convert the 200 meters into an outdoor mural.

“We wanted to give life back to the avenue of the Librería, but this time with artistic paintings so that the people who pass through the surroundings have something to look at while walking. Now we want to convert this place into an Avenue of Culture, explained Fernando Durán, one of the initiators of the project.

Undoubtedly, the “graffiti artists” were more than ready to use the space and the University contributed the paint.

The initiative has been well received by neighbors and businessmen of San Pedro, and even the local council supports the plan.

For Sonia Montero, Mayor of Montes de Oca, the project is a creative way to put an end to the disagreeable walls.

She believes that “the graffiti problem” is due to a need on the part of the population, especially the young people, for whom adequate spaces must be generated to stimulate their expression. (*La Nación*, 12.12.2004)

[News article by Luis Eduardo Díaz (Journalist of *La Nación*)]

What is clear in this example is that different types of authorities have joined efforts in order to fight unauthorized graffiti, as the mural clearly satisfies the needs of University authorities, local governments and surrounding neighbors or businesses. The place will become an *Avenida de Cultura*, which is clearly in synchrony with the hegemonic ideas of property, order, official aesthetics and a sort of *mediated or authorized* freedom of speech.

A second case also shows how the creation of a mural clearly aims to remove graffiti from the community, and how this practice is linked to the evils of drugs, “leisure” and “uncertainty”. Linked to the fight against human trafficking, the mural supposedly metamorphoses the darkness of graffiti (and correlated is also the darkness of human trafficking and drug abuse) into the colorful rainbow of hope. Hence:

One of these workshops concluded on February 10th in the community of Rincón Grande de Pavas, with the painting of a mural alluding to human trafficking on one of the walls of the “Polideportivo”. Aided with a paintbrush, with their creativity and energy, young people wielded their brushes and made disappear part of some graffiti, which is sometimes art and sometimes the rebellious cry of despair in the midst of endless leisure, drugs or uncertainty, of those who express in this form. The shades of gray were substituted by all the tones of the rainbow.

Sky of colones. The mural could not be more significant. It is composed of four sections. “Dreams”: A girl sleeping placidly with a sliver of moon and amid stars and flowers. “Deception”: a man in a small plane drags a boy and a girl behind him, as if they were kites, towards a sky painted with signs of colones, the currency of Costa Rica. “Abuse” is a strong painting: a child with a shackle and a heavy burden on his shoulder, in the midst of a dark world with rats, bats and broken hearts. “Freedom”: it is always our hope to liberate ourselves from the shackles, all shackles, and the symbolism could not be otherwise: a woman receives a child in a cheerful mural, with musical notes, a butterfly, a star, a flower and a spiral that reminds us, as the Eye of Horus did for the ancient Egyptians, of the cycle “birth-death-rebirth”, in this infinite process of continuing

life each day, after having woken up at a higher point of this spiral that lifts us precisely because of the learning of our experiences.

We will have to return another day to know the fate of the mural: whether it is still a cheerful window and one of hope, or whether it disappeared into the hands of those who paint dark messages in sad graffiti. No matter how long it lasts, I'm sure that for those who painted some of its parts, this mural will live forever and will enliven the dreams of truly building a more human world, without any form of slavery. (*La Nación*, 08.03.2008) [Opinion article by Yalena de la Cruz (Dental Surgeon)]

Murals, in this article, are distinct from “sad” graffiti. This passage demonstrates that the frontier between the two is not clear, with graffiti productions sometimes being art and sometimes being *something else*. It is important to highlight how graffiti is here considered “sad”, consisting of “dark messages”. This depiction intertwines darkness (obscurity) with the illegal activity of human trafficking, which is also dark and sad. Where is the borderline of this “darkness-obscurity” as opposed to the colorful rainbow praised by the author of the article? How does it relate to other perceptions of darkness-obscurity as threatening (from the darkness of the Enlightenment through the undergrounds of religious evil or racial prejudice)?²¹⁸. Indeed, it could be argued that the “sad” graffiti alluded to here – which I deduce refers to *tagging culture* – was originally born in New York at the hands of the “dark”-skinned Latino and Black adolescents, who may be considered as a potential threat.

This intertwining of borderless discourses (frames, images and representations) complicates the claim to any single interpretation regarding graffiti as a social practice, and it clearly shows that even when graffiti is described as art – as in the case of commissioned works – or valued for its positive outcomes, negative depictions about the phenomenon and its producers may still lie beneath, without there necessarily being any contradiction. In other words, graffiti can be perceived as cool and artistic while its producers are still perceived as potentially threatening or deviant.

Indeed, when the news and opinion articles report exclusively about tagging culture and untamed-illegal-unauthorized forms of graffiti, the role of its producers, (writers and artists) comes to the fore. The practice is represented as youthful, linked

²¹⁸ The notion of *implicit bias* or *implicit association* may be of use here, referring to someone who consciously rejects stereotypes and discrimination, but however may show stereotypical unconscious expressions or behaviors directed towards minorities or any other traditionally disadvantaged groups. An online test – Implicit Association Test (IAT) – and more explanation about this concept can be found in *ProjectImplicit*, developed by Harvard University [<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>].

with the idea of non-conformity to society and its structures, a mix of rebellion and counterculture. This depiction also includes references to graffiti producers as a closed community, emphasizing the difficulty that outsiders have in reading or understanding the “essence” and hidden meanings of the productions. This enigmatic nature of the practice grants graffiti a veil of both *excitement* and *exoticism*, which also tends to increase the artistic value of the production.

For example, the article “*Las paredes tienen la palabra*” (*The walls have the word*) describes the diversity of graffiti production in Costa Rica, pointing out the different motivations and goals of its heterogeneous producers. The sources vary from graffiti producers or painters to psychologists, and include the opinion of the philosopher Jorge Jiménez as well as extracts from a book written by philologist Guillermo Barzuna.²¹⁹ Comparing graffiti to the childish game of writing with crayons on the wall, the text then explores its multiple manifestations – *latrinalia*, political graffiti, street art, graffiti created by soccer fans, among others – and finishes with a short history of graffiti, including the etymology of the word. The following quotes are all part of this article:

The big red crayon contained within it thousands of designs and stories. As children, the temptation to make it speak made us press it against mom’s clean wall, and then suffer persecution and punishment for our artwork. The scribbles and our written name with some characters backwards, despite what ensued, seem to us worthy of inspiring admiration and respect.

This childish scene encompasses many of the elements of graffiti: It is a challenge against authority (as the moms and the policemen of the world would say), private property is being damaged and it is the outcome of the innate necessity of being heard, read and understood.

It could be said that most people are born “graffiti writers”, but after a while, the repression, the taste for cleanliness and age keep us away from that task.

Public diary

Graffiti artists today are a very heterogeneous group and, therefore, their intentions are quite different. (*La Nación*, 05.01.2003) [News article by Andrea Vásquez (Journalist of *La Nación*)]²²⁰

²¹⁹ Both works are referred to at the beginning of this chapter. See: Jiménez and Donas (1997) and Barzuna (1989).

²²⁰ In this article, as with the mention a few pages previously, the mother is apparently the one responsible for teaching children not to write or draw on walls.

In Costa Rica, maybe the most frequent are the “tags” or labels with names and nicknames, written in a very particular calligraphy that is shared by a certain group.

Some football fans mark all kinds of walls and buses, writing in such a particular way that only people from their gang can understand it. “Ultra” and “Cachorro 12” are some of the most easily identifiable phrases in this type of graffiti. “It’s a fanatic graffiti that has as its primary interest to demarcate territory and promote a rematch”, points out Rojas.

Their goal is to fill as many places as possible with their signatures and calligraphy, so that the opposing group knows that they were there. It’s like a popularity contest that occurs within the same ghettos.

In many places around the world, “tags” have evolved to create new types of letters: such as the well-known bubbles (extremely round and with multicolor fillings), typical of the subways of the world’s great cities, like New York.

This type of graffiti that functions as a secret key are [sic] made with calligraphies that are common in other countries. “Here we are absorbing foreign currents” says Alberto Moreno, a painter who has studied this social phenomenon as part of his work as a teacher of fine arts. (*La Nación*, 05.01.2003) [News article by Andrea Vásquez (Journalist of *La Nación*)]

Graffiti artists are a diverse group united by one activity. It is not possible to say that all share a common characteristic. “Do not put everyone in the same mold because they act from different contexts,” pointed out Ignacio Dobles, psychologist.

There is the occasional graffiti writer who, due to special circumstances, decides to write on a wall but does not consider himself as such.

One day he finds himself in a public bathroom, pen-in-hand, and decides to blow off steam. It is likely that this same person would be terrified at the idea of going in the morning around San Jose, writing poetry or having a heated political discussion with the wall.

This is also the case of the one who decides to write on a public wall because there was an event that outraged him but who does not have an established habit. “When that happened to Parmenio (Medina), I felt so much anger that I had to go to ‘write graffiti’” said a university professor who scratches the walls when he feels that a cause is meritorious.

Their age – because of their anonymity – is difficult to say with exactitude, but various sources have agreed that it is between 13 and 28, and men tend to outnumber women. Their socioeconomic status is varied. Whether in the most marginal and poor areas or in the most ostentatious mansions, the sprays, polishes and markers are furtively kept, and they will walk at night in search of new canvas.

Graffiti artists do not like the blackboards that invite them to blow off steam in allowed sites, nor the museum-graffiti that now is worth even more than the wall where they were written. (*La Nación*, 05.01.2003) [News article by Andrea Vásquez (Journalist of *La Nación*)]

This representation of graffiti as a myriad of different practices is more accurate and therefore less linked to simplistic explanations and negative stereotypes about its

producers. Indeed, the article addresses the fact that graffiti cannot be considered as something exclusive of poor and (peripheral) youth males, and it proposes understanding it as open to wealthy youth and women. It also emphasizes core elements of the culture of graffiti production, such as the multiple levels of sociability involved in the practice and its identity component. For example:

Going to “write graffiti” can be quite a ceremony. Some people act in groups, in pairs or individually. Many seek company so that one can keep a look out while the other writes, and then they switch.

During the day, the graffiti writer studies the wall, the movement of people and the street surveillance. They dream of a wall that is seen by many people and has no textures nor very pronounced coatings, because the sponge for liquid shoe polish, one of the favorite tools for writing, deteriorates in contact with these irregularities.

Although in these cases aerosol is more practical, it is also more expensive. Moreover, when it is being used it tends to be noisy and that hissing could give them away. Markers and sharp instruments are mostly used in indoor environments such as bathrooms, classrooms and buses, for graffiti that could be called “small scale”. The most convenient hours to perform their duties is late at night or early in the morning; however, during protests, it is common to see demonstrators “graffitear” in broad daylight. The chosen place is almost a message in itself. The bathrooms – even public ones – are tremendously intimate places where people come to cry, to laugh silently and to tell secrets. Therefore, to “graffitear” in bathrooms represents the making of their own personal confession.

The walls of slums tell stories of deprivation, satisfaction and fights. In many affluent towns messages with anonymous protest appear: “Therefore everyone ‘graffitear’ [sic] in Barrio Amón, because it is a wealthy neighborhood”, said one “graffiti writer”.

There are those who prefer to scratch churches and public buildings because their claims relate to ecclesiastical institutions or government.

By its very diverse nature, there are graffiti writers who do not plan in advance what they will write and prefer to wait for the adrenaline rush of the moment. Equally, there are others who study their favorite phrases during the day, whether their own or borrowed from some other author.

(*La Nación*, 05.01.2003) [News article by Andrea Vásquez (Journalist of *La Nación*)]

Besides being one of the few articles in which graffiti is portrayed as a multiplicity of phenomena, this text metaphorically links “prostitution” and graffiti. By comparing walls with graffiti to prostitutes and also using adjectives like *ultrajada*, graffiti practice is framed as an aggression against virginal walls, an unwanted and violent aggression in which the walls become *victims*. The binary discourse of purity-

contamination is again implicit but subtly related to the appropriation of the wall through the (violent) use of (sensual) force:

San Pedro de Montes de Oca is a good place to meet. The old Sapriisa building looks at them with faked disdain. Its walls have been witnesses and victims of dozens of graffiti. They start to walk in search of a wall that allures them.

Although they don't talk about it, they already feel the adrenalin: the alert eyes and the nervously sweaty hands. They make a short comment, one that pretends to get rid of tension and, that on the contrary, makes it more evident.

The turquoise wall they choose has already been prostituted with various designs, some of them blurred and others more recent.

She wields the black bitumen. He remembers with a whining tone – while making sure that police do not get close – that day in which she went back to some graffiti because she forgot an accent mark. In some street in Barrio Amón, she wrote: “Life is heaviest when it is emptier” and when they were finally out of risk of being caught, she remembered her omission and her orthographic awareness forced her to go back.

She had chosen her classic Fito Páez, whom she preferred not to trivialize, and she gave him the copyright, writing “F.P.” at the end. Now a wall of Barrio California sings: “In this fucking city they kill lonely hearts”.

The artist rejected the offer to write on the wall and they walked in search of another one towards Barrio Dent. He made the pea of the spray can dance from side to side and on one of the walls he drew his erotic, obscene and feminine strokes, while she looked around to make sure no one was approaching.

Her small leap and his smile with applause celebrated the work. The ambience was even quieter as if the city, sensing the defilement of her walls, had been absolutely stunned. (*La Nación*, 05.01.2003) [News article by Andrea Vásquez (Journalist of *La Nación*)]

This sensual and erotic atmosphere is aimed at capturing the attention of the reader by presenting the seductive nature of the *transgression* of graffiti producers. The quote also promotes pristine discourses of the city (i.e. versus the city as a whore), by addressing the purity and chastity attributed to *untouched walls*.²²¹ The city is also described as an entity that can feel this abuse. At the end, graffiti is presented as a risky activity, linked to adrenalin and illegality, clearly emphasizing the idea of pleasure. The writing itself is described as something unchaste and feminine, which reinforces the

²²¹ See the discussion about the neutral and anti-social city in Sennett (1990). This reflection is partially included in Chapter VI of this dissertation.

aforementioned idea of prostitution. Prostitution and graffiti are not only crimes, but threats to the social order.²²²

This type of extensive article focusing exclusively on graffiti is clearly an exception, if compared with the other news and opinion articles analyzed for the Costa Rican case. One possible explanation is that it was included in a section only published on Sundays, a supplement called *Dominical*.²²³ The main argument of the text is that graffiti is a complex phenomenon, that even when it depends on personal and political motivations, it is *essentially an alternative form of communication*. However, certain omissions can be mentioned. The article completely ignores the citizenry as a source, ignoring both supporters and opponents of graffiti practices. One reference to Article 228 of the *Código Penal de Costa Rica* is included, emphasizing the illegality of some graffiti productions, but ignoring the broader social contexts in which these productions are embedded (as acts of civil disobedience, for example). In summary, the text remains superficial, depicting graffiti as cool, artistic, transgressive and sensual. Even considering these details in the article, this single text presents graffiti in a more “truthful” way than other articles which only highlight negative or positive characteristics of the practice and its producers.

Another subject related to this more positive interpretation of graffiti production, mentioned in the text by Andrea Vásquez, is included in several news articles: the idea that graffiti can help you to make it, to become an artist and achieve social status through graffiti production. In her article, the journalist emphasizes that some *graffiti* have more value than the wall on which they are placed. Additionally, the frequent exposure of local artists such as Alejandro Ramírez or Osvaldo Orias (with exhibitions in Costa Rica and abroad) in *La Nación*, as well as news about global graffiti superstars like Banksy, subtly frame the practice within an aura of success. Graffiti is also

²²² Ferrell (1993:142) points out that, in relation to the connection between graffiti and rape, some discourses against graffiti tend to be framed in order to present the practice in the worst possible scenario. He remarks that this is probably offensive for both rape victims as well as graffiti producers. I consider it necessary to say that more positive depictions of the practice may also sell this idea of transgression, seductiveness and deviance, as a form of exoticism. I agree with Sennett (1990) in his interpretation of cities as both seductive and threatening encounters with “the difference”.

²²³ *Dominical* is a section more focused on cultural and social phenomena, with longer texts and more images. The format is different from the regular news article. In terms of production, it could mean that a journalist has more time and space to explore one topic. In terms of consumption, it could also mean that readers have more time to consume this type of news.

mentioned as integral part of the music, cinema and fashion industry.²²⁴ The practice is also linked to a global metropolis like New York (considered as its place of origin), from time to time including news articles about exhibitions in London or Berlin. The relevant idea here is that graffiti is presented as a new form of entrepreneurship, frequently without questioning how many graffiti producers, writers or artists actually manage to achieve success or experience social mobility because of the practice. *La Nación* includes a short article on this market (economic and artistic) value of graffiti:

Valuation of graffiti

Many of the legendary American graffiti artists have decided to leave the shadows of illegality to enter the world of big business, where their talent is highly valued. Nike, Toshiba, Levi Strauss and even Louis Vuitton are among the companies that have successfully incorporated the cachet of graffiti in their designs.

To these are added Samsung Mobile, which is considering displaying graffiti on the screens of its mobile phones and Altari Inc., which will launch a new video game in which the work and personal experiences of 50 artists of this urban and marginal expression would be mixed.

The commercial use of graffiti, which began as a protest movement in metropolises like New York in the early 1970s, causes hope and skepticism. (*La Nación*, 29.11.2004) [News article by EFE]

Even when the article evidently refers only to artists in the United States, the idea that graffiti could become a sort of self-entrepreneurial business based on merit is introduced or reinforced. Whether this kind of information could influence young people to get involved in graffiti practice is hard to tell. However, one could also question why *La Nación*, through the EFE news agency, considers that this information is relevant enough to be published in Costa Rica.

Silences and absences in the themes about graffiti in *La Nación*

Even when it is difficult to identify which sources or topics are missing in a series of news and opinion articles, this section attempts to address some of these themes. The importance of this exercise is to find out what kind of information we are

²²⁴ In *La Nación*, graffiti has been mentioned as part of the cover design of music bands like Aterciopelados, Christina Aguilera and Guns N' Roses, as background or sets in concerts of musicians like Ricardo Arjona or Ojos de Brujo, as inspiration for fashion accessories designed by Gucci, among others.

consuming, and particularly, what these silences and absences could mean in the general presentation of a given subject.²²⁵

Between 2001 and 2010, graffiti was interpreted by a limited number of sources, including philosophers, psychologists, painters, local authorities, and architects in their role as experts. The few graffiti producers included are frequently established artists, who may have previously succeeded in art institutions and are recognized for it. In general, graffiti writers (taggers), members of soccer fan clubs or producers of political graffiti are absent as sources, with the exception of the special article on the topic written by Andrea Vásquez. In general, the actions of graffiti producers are constantly interpreted and framed by a third party. This exclusion surely diminishes the quality of information exchange between citizens and graffiti producers through the press. The readership ends up consuming only the interpretation that experts and journalists have provided regarding the subject.

The second theme underreported in the articles is related to anti-graffiti groups. The information available does not clearly focus on these groups or individuals. Even when some of these citizens – mostly professionals – published opinion pieces between 2001 and 2010, there is no single article dedicated to anti-graffiti groups. With the exception of individual cases, for example graffiti in public schools or churches, we do not know who *these others* who oppose graffiti are and why. There is also a lack of numbers about how much graffiti costs local communities or even references considering whether such calculations exist or not. If graffiti productions are actually a struggle between the State, businesses, private owners and graffiti producers, how can the former protect their properties from the latter? This type of information is also neglected, with the exception of two notes about strategies and new technologies for removal that were published only in the online version of the newspaper (and that referred to Spain and Mexico, respectively, not to Costa Rica).²²⁶

The processes of law enforcement and graffiti deterrence are also absent in the articles analyzed, as well as their most important actor: the police. Throughout the news articles, the police are often mentioned as in charge of controlling graffiti. However, do

²²⁵ See the methodological strategy in Chapter III and also Tonkiss (2004).

²²⁶ “Sistema de ceras, único capaz acabar hasta con ‘sombra’ pintadas” (28.03.2003) and “Cruzada ciudadana para limpiar de grafiti las fachadas de Oaxaca” (15.03.2003). These articles were not included in the annex, given that they were published only in the online version of *La Nación*.

we know what kind of reality police officers face in their daily work? Do they care about prosecuting graffiti? Do they consider it a priority or would they prefer to focus on other “more serious” crimes? All such questions regarding the role of police are overlooked in the articles published by *La Nación*.

Chapter V

Graffiti, pichação and pixação as social practice in Brazil

The practice of graffiti, street art, pichação and pixação (pixo) in Brazil might at first glance appear to refer to a single phenomenon, but indeed each variation constitutes a particular experience of its own. While graffiti and street art may consist of authorized or unauthorized works or pieces of art – often highly welcomed, considering both their aesthetic and economic value – pichação and pixo remain perceived as illegal and unwanted. Pichação, a noun derived from the verb *pichar*, refers to messages written on public and private surfaces that do not satisfy the aesthetic criteria of artwork, being generally political or economic protests or even forms of interpersonal communication, such as declarations of love. Pixação, or pixo, in a distinction made by its own producers, describes a practice of Brazilian youth – some of them marginal or belonging to the periphery, though not exclusively – that may be characterized as an autochthonous form of writing (calligraphy), typically found in large metropolises such as São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro or Belo Horizonte. However, these definitions are ideal categories that in practice may be mixed, intertwined and difficult to delimitate.²²⁷

The use of political inscriptions, mostly labeled as pichação but also including some graffiti pieces and street art, can be considered as a legacy of the times of the dictatorship in Brazil²²⁸. Rocha and Vieira (2009: 1283), for example, suggest that during the sixties graffiti became a way to oppose the official spaces of public debate and artistic expression, constituting a sort of countercultural movement aimed at creating new civil liberties. Pichação, as mentioned in the following pages, is frequently used in the *Folha de São Paulo* newspaper to refer to political struggles, both in national and foreign contexts.

Franco (2009: 32), however, proposes that the dictatorship was a restrictive period for almost any artistic manifestation, noting the power of the military forces and

²²⁷ In Chapter I of this dissertation I propose a typology of graffiti productions. The boundaries of these manifestations can be hard to assess, for example, when graffiti artists are also pixadores or when both graffiti and street artworks are illegal and political.

²²⁸ The Brazilian military government ruled the country between 1964 and 1985.

the use of methods of torture against those who opposed the regime.²²⁹ His research considers Brazilian graffiti as resulting from the influence of the same movement in New York, and explains how a group of pioneers (including artists like Rui Amaral or Alex Vaullari in the 1980s²³⁰) was the necessary inspiration for the emergence of the Old School of Brazilian graffiti (1990-2000) – among them such well-known names as OsGemeos, Tinho, Speto, Onesto – characterized by the adoption of the tenets of hip-hop culture. The New School of Brazilian graffiti – from 2000 until today and including artists such as Boleta, Zezão, Nigazz as well as the pixadores²³¹ – represents a rupture with hip-hop culture and constitutes an exploration of new forms of expression, more abstract and collective than those of the previous generation (Franco, 2009: 32-165).

Ventura also highlights the relevance of the hip-hop movement in the formation of the graffiti scene in Brazil. Hip-hop culture – including such elements as break dance, rhythm, poetry (rap) and graffiti – contributed to the creation of a sense of identity, establishing a link to black identity as well as a sense of belonging to the periphery.²³² The cultural products of hip-hop also functioned as claim-making strategies, becoming a political act of resistance. Indeed, Ventura remarks how the *gangster* expression of hip-hop culture (neo-underground), uses stigma, as well as allusions to crime and violence, as resources of expression and “*moral*” *propaganda*.²³³ The hip-hop movement promotes social inclusion, emphasizing moral critique and providing strategies for self-development to its practitioners. (Ventura, 2009: 605-609, for quote see 609). Weller (2013: 12) also points out that the language of hip-hop could be

²²⁹ This vision of the role of the military coup is also shared by Manco et al. (2005: 13), remarking that graffiti became too dangerous and that it was only from the mid-seventies onward that the scene became more active.

²³⁰ John Howard is another artist included among this pioneer group, and he is considered the first one to bring graffiti to the streets of São Paulo, according to an introductory text written by the OsGemeos in the book *Nuevo Mundo: Latin American Street Art* (Ruiz, 2011). They also consider themselves the “second generation of graffiti”, the pioneers being therefore the “first generation”, an alternative reading to the Old School / New School division proposed by Franco (2009). This ambiguity could be explained because of internal differences and struggles among graffiti artists, writers, pixadores and street artists.

²³¹ The distinction between *pichadores* and *pixadores* is a symbolic one. Most media articles refer to *pichação* as a term meant to include both political messages or inscriptions and *pixo*. I decided to maintain the difference to respect the auto-designation of its own producers. Franco (2009: 20) also emphasizes this point.

²³² Weller (2003: 17-18) describes this influence of hip-hop culture on the practice of rap in São Paulo and Berlin, highlighting the identity component of hip-hop culture (in relation to the diaspora and the Black Atlantic, for example).

²³³ Yar (2012) proposes that the new media have provided a platform for “celebrated criminality” (see Chapter I) in which youth can depict themselves committing criminal acts in order to gain attention from their peers and the public. Similarly, Lupton (1999) describes how pleasure is part of some risk-taking cultures, what I consider as a key element in this self-representation as criminal or vandals. In the following pages, I will clarify this point in relation to the pixadores.

considered in part as a critique of the conditions in which these young people live, as well as a form that emphasizes both collectivity (a sense of belonging) and resistance.²³⁴

Pixação, a series of typographies, was born in São Paulo in the eighties and constitutes a practice mostly developed by youth from the periphery.²³⁵ It is described as “essentially” illegal and unauthorized, a form of aggression against the broader society, highly valued by its producers precisely for its transgressive nature. The emergence of these calligraphies was influenced by the logos and covers of heavy metal, hardcore and punk bands, combined with Anglo-Saxon runes – from the alphabet used by ancient cultures such as the Germanic tribes, Scandinavians and Anglo-Saxons – and adapted to the Brazilian context.²³⁶ Pixação can be considered as an alternative form of aesthetics and is valued by its producers as a legitimate artistic expression. Some of its pioneers were Cão Filha, Juneca, Pessoinha (Franco, 2009: 29), as well as Di and Xium. Pixadores write on walls, windows, and even climb buildings to reach higher sites in order to gain recognition, popularity or prestige (*ibope*²³⁷, in common slang), both for themselves and their groups (*gangue*, a group of pixadores, and *grife* – a group of gangues²³⁸), participating in a form of *vicarious pride*.²³⁹ Adrenalin, social protest and social recognition are mentioned among the producers as motives for getting involved in this transgressive practice.²⁴⁰

In terms of legislation, graffiti, pichação and pixação are considered illegal, except when their producers can produce some sort of written authorization by the private owners or the local authorities in charge. The *Lei de Crimes Ambientais* (Law

²³⁴ Several news articles in *Folha de São Paulo* include references to graffiti when the main topic of the article is dedicated to rap in favelas or the urban center of Brazilian metropolises. This relationship between different elements of hip-hop should be considered for further studies. The work of Weller (2003) may be a useful introduction to the rap (sub)culture in São Paulo.

²³⁵ Franco (2009: 79) suggests that pixação became significantly important during the late nineties, produced mostly by youth from the periphery. The documentary *Pixo* (2009) also highlights this composition, but does not exclude the participation of youth from middle and upper classes (known locally as *playboys*).

²³⁶ This information is presented by several sources in the documentary *Pixo* (2009).

²³⁷ *Ibope* is a slang word derived from the acronym for Instituto Brasileiro de Opinião Pública e Estadística. According to McCann (2004: 220) – in his study of Brazilian music – *ibope* stands for audience and polls; it signifies “star quality” and the mere presence of celebrities in an event “give[s] it more *ibope*”.

²³⁸ The pixação generally includes a sign for the individual, one for his or her group (*gangue*) and another for the *grife* to which this gangue is associated. See: Medeiros (2006) for a glossary of terms related to pixação. (This book is produced by pixadores themselves, with the collaboration of Editora do Bispo).

²³⁹ Feinberg (1970: 236) labels it vicarious pride when individuals feel proud or ashamed of the groups they belong to.

²⁴⁰ See documentary *Pixo* (2009).

9.605), in its Article 65, proposes both fines and imprisonment – three months to one year – for those who are caught engaging in these practices.²⁴¹ Law enforcers have also strategically used – or abused – the former Article 288 of the *Código Penal Brasileiro* (Law 2.848), ascribing the illegal formation of gangs to some pixadores²⁴² (for example, in cases in São Paulo and Belo Horizonte). The prison term for this type of crime is one to three years. Additionally, the law *Cidade Limpa* (Law 14.226) constitutes another effort to protect the urban landscape of São Paulo and establishes a series of restrictions on the citizenry and local businesses.²⁴³

In 2011, the government of Dilma Rousseff (2011-) introduced Law 12.408 to clearly distinguish the practices of graffiti and pichação (including pixação). A first modification relates to Article 65 of the *Lei de Crimes Ambientais* (Law 9.605), declaring the decriminalization of graffiti under the condition of previous authorization by private owners or local authorities.²⁴⁴ The law also forbids the sale of spray cans to minors,²⁴⁵ setting a fine for this misdemeanor. Retailers may sell the product only to customers who produce proof of age²⁴⁶ and manufacturers are required to include two warning labels on the sprays cans: “*Pichação é crime*” (Pichação is a crime) and “*Proibida a venda a menores de 18 anos*” (Not for sale to persons under 18 years of

²⁴¹ In the original: “Art. 65: Pichar, grafitar ou por outro meio conspurcar edificação ou monumento urbano: Pena – detenção, de três meses a um ano, e multa. Parágrafo único. Se o ato for realizado em monumento ou coisa tombada em virtude do seu valor artístico, arqueológico ou histórico, a pena é de seis meses a um ano de detenção, e multa.”

²⁴² In the original: “Quadrilha ou bando. Art. 288: Associarem-se mais de três pessoas, em quadrilha ou bando, para o fim de cometer crimes: Pena – reclusão, de um a três anos. Parágrafo único – A pena aplica-se em dobro, se a quadrilha ou bando é armado.” However, this article was modified by Law 12.850, published in August 2013. The modification changes “quadrilha ou bando” to “criminal association” (associação criminosa, in original) but it maintains the same jail term (one to three years). This jail term could be increased by half if the criminal association involves children or teenagers or if the organization is armed.

²⁴³ This law, according to some of the news articles analyzed, contributed to the use by local business of graffiti as an advertising strategy, given the new restrictions regarding outdoor advertising.

²⁴⁴ In the original: “Art. 6: O art. 65 da Lei nº 9.605, de 12 de fevereiro de 1998, passa a vigorar com a seguinte redação. Art. 65. Pichar ou por outro meio conspurcar edificação ou monumento urbano: Pena – detenção, de 3 (três) meses a 1 (um) ano, e multa. §1 Se o ato for realizado em monumento ou coisa tombada em virtude do seu valor artístico, arqueológico ou histórico, a pena é de 6 (seis) meses a 1 (um) ano de detenção e multa. §2 Não constitui crime a prática de grafite realizada com o objetivo de valorizar o patrimônio público ou privado mediante manifestação artística, desde que consentida pelo proprietário e, quando couber, pelo locatário ou arrendatário do bem privado e, no caso de bem público, com a autorização do órgão competente e a observância das posturas municipais e das normas editadas pelos órgãos governamentais responsáveis pela preservação e conservação do patrimônio histórico e artístico nacional.”

²⁴⁵ In the original: “Art. 2: Fica proibida a comercialização de tintas em embalagens do tipo aerossol em todo o território nacional a menores de 18 (dezoito) anos.”

²⁴⁶ In the original: “Art. 3: O material citado no art. 2º desta Lei só poderá ser vendido a maiores de 18 (dezoito) anos, mediante apresentação de documento de identidade. Parágrafo único. Toda nota fiscal lançada sobre a venda desse produto deve possuir identificação do comprador.”

age).²⁴⁷ This is clearly a preventive measure aimed at *systematic predetection*,²⁴⁸ and it could be argued that it represents a sort of pre-crime policy, presuming that the act of possessing/acquiring a spray can is irrefutable proof of *future* faulty behavior.

In the following pages, the main discourses about the practices of pichação/pixação and graffiti are summarized, including quotations from both news and opinion articles published in the newspaper *Folha de São Paulo*. The first section of this chapter shows the results regarding the practice of pichação/pixação, focusing on both its stigma and criminalization and the debate about its contested artistic nature. The second section is dedicated to the practices of graffiti and street art, their use in social projects and by governmental institutions, as well as their adoption by corporations, businesses and the art market.

The discourses of pichação/pixação production in the newspaper *Folha de São Paulo*

The term *pichação* is used in both news and opinion articles to refer to political inscriptions on public surfaces and to the different forms of calligraphy found in São Paulo, Belo Horizonte, Rio de Janeiro and other Brazilian cities. The term *pixação* (*with an X instead of CH*), preferred by the producers of the aforementioned typographies, appears only in a few articles [n=12], which could be an indication of the relative powerlessness of this self-definition.

Several articles mentioned *pichação* to emphasize political struggles, both in Brazil and abroad. In the Brazilian cases, *pichação* has been used as to spread political propaganda in local elections, to express fascist ideologies (mostly Neo-Nazism), to criticize the work of media enterprises (Rede Globo), to denounce state corruption, to protest crime, and also to promote other social causes such as the legalization of marijuana or the defense of animal rights.²⁴⁹ Journalists have applied the term *pichação*

²⁴⁷ In the original: “Art. 4: As embalagens dos produtos citados no art. 2º desta Lei deverão conter, de forma legível e destacada, as expressões ‘PICHACÃO É CRIME (ART. 65 DA LEI Nº 9.605/98). PROIBIDA A VENDA A MENORES DE 18 ANOS’.”

²⁴⁸ Lupton (1999: 93) considers this concept for tasks of identifying and monitoring risk.

²⁴⁹ This political use of *pichação*, including when the term was part of a photo caption, is only mentioned here to illustrate the complexity of the term. The objectives of this dissertation do not include this type of

to illustrate political struggles in Argentina, Iraq, Venezuela, Mexico, Nicaragua, Portugal, Spain or Honduras.²⁵⁰ Pichação is therefore valued as an alternative form of communication, depicted both in text and in photographs.²⁵¹

When *pichação/pixação* is used to refer to the Brazilian calligraphy created by youth from the periphery, however, the practice is considered as something utterly negative.²⁵² Pichação is described as an epidemic (outbreak), related to the ideas of dirt and pollution. The producers are considered as illiterate, sometimes are even described as uncivilized and non-human. The social costs of *pichação/pixação* are also emphasized, not only its economic impact on the real estate business, but also in terms of notions of heritage, identity and morals. The *pixadores/pichadores* are considered to be a population at risk, and sometimes graffiti is proposed as a means of rehabilitating them.

A. Stigma and criminalization concerning the practice of *pichação/pixação*

Pichação, commonly made with black ink or paint (*tinta*, in Portuguese), can easily be linked to notions of dirt and pollution. The characters, signatures and inscriptions are considered as something that defiles the wall or surface, altering its aesthetics and consequently damaging it, even in cases when it can be removed without any problems. The following quotes highlight this hygienic reading of *pichação*:

The depressing *pichação* of São Paulo.

This is not a political insinuation, because I am not affiliated with any party and I am not candidate for anything. I am a simple paulistano who loves São Paulo deeply and who is horrified by the ugliness of the city

political inscriptions as a main goal, except when used by *pichadores/pixadores* to protest their own exclusion and stigma.

²⁵⁰ *Pichação* was mentioned in the following political struggles: demonstrations against G8 Summit 2001, the crisis in Argentina, the war in Iraq, internal elections in the United States, support for President Hugo Chávez, against the CAFTA agreement in Central America, protesting U.S. interference in South America, the referendum for the independence of Catalonia, schoolteachers' strikes in Oaxaca, pro immigration in Lisbon, against the coup in Honduras, among others.

²⁵¹ The analysis of these photographs is not included as part of this dissertation.

²⁵² Some of the positive outcomes related to the practice, such as a sense of belonging or the exercise of the right to political dissent, are obscured or ignored in the public debate.

caused by the pichação that dominates the walls, bridges and viaducts from the north to the south and from the east to the west.

[...]

I know that the problem is difficult to resolve. Pichação is a form of physical aggression. It makes up part of the urban violence. I recognize that all this is insufficient. But, if nothing is done, the filth is going to increase, and that cannot happen. The “little pigs” need to be contained. The citizens and tax-payers have the right to demand from the authorities public policies of surveillance and education that ensure a minimum of order and cleanliness in the cities which they inhabit. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 20.07.2003) [Opinion article by Antônio Ermírio de Moraes (Entrepreneur and Columnist)]

Enough with the filth. No more pichação. The central value of the city must be its beauty, according to the proposal made by José Teixeira Coelho, professor of the Escola de Comunicações e Artes da USP, coordinator of the Laboratory of Cultural Policies and former director of the Museum of Contemporary Art.

[...]

The beauty of the city, for the researcher, is a classic question, already debated by the Greeks 2000 years ago, which needs to be incorporated into the contemporary world. Pichação, according to Teixeira Coelho, is at the top of the list of the section “not allowed”: It needs to be forbidden because it is an imposition of a minority (the pichadores) on the majority of the population. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 31.10.2004) [News article by Mario Cesar Carvalho (Journalist of *Folha de São Paulo*)]

Pichação and filth contradicting the greatness of São Paulo

If there is one thing that strikes those who visit the city of São Paulo, it is the amount of pichação scattered throughout the streets, squares and buildings. There is no neighborhood that does not show an indecent filthiness made by people who take pleasure in plundering public and private heritage and in offending the aesthetic sense of our city.

[...]

São Paulo has everything to eradicate this shameful picture. It is a matter of taking the appropriate measures. And these are not complicated. In the first place, the municipal government has to act more rigorously against the pichadores – either banning pichação or educating them to become artists. In the second place, a large educational campaign should be promoted among children and teenagers in public and private schools. In the third place, a continuous effort through the major media is necessary to promote the culture of cleanliness.

Dirt has nothing to do with poverty. Brazil has millions of poor households that are well arranged and are inhabited by a clean and neat population.

The pichação that spreads through the city is the result of vandalism, poor education and neglect of the authorities, not to mention the misrepresentation of aesthetic values in a youth who has been mostly

abandoned. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 15.05.2005) [Opinion article by Antônio Ermírio de Moraes (Entrepreneur and Columnist)]

The representation of pichação as something dirty and polluting is emphasized by the description of its producers as “pigs” that “need to be contained” if we are to keep this contamination from spreading everywhere. Indeed, the argument against pichação stated here by Antônio Ermírio de Moraes is also related to homelessness in some of his other articles,²⁵³ where the author – one of the richest men in Brazil²⁵⁴ – denounces how public spaces have become the bathrooms and living rooms of a few. Homelessness, as Lupton suggests (1999: 135), is also linked to the social category *reserved for animals* – “[they] have no permanent homes, live outdoors, roam about, void their wastes outside, do not wash, smell offensive and have little control over their actions”. This animality seems to be directed towards the pixadores as well, in the sense that these “porcolinos” or “bichos” pollute, do not respect boundaries, trespass, destroy, climb the walls and behave irrationally. As animals, they are also *illiterate*. In this sense, the fight against dirt and pollution justifies social control towards these (perceived) *non-human* or *less-than-human* inhabitants of the city. The following quotes highlight the intertwining of these interpretations of animalism and irrationality/illiteracy:

An interesting study has identified the feelings that drive the activity of pichadores: (1) desire for personal affirmation through the challenging of established rules and the exhibition of unintelligible logotypes and messages; (2) an existential emptiness, which reflects a lack of emotional and psychological protection within the family; (3) their attraction for adventure and danger, by which they seek to show that they are strong and courageous despite the destruction that they produce; (4) an absence of life perspectives arising from the lack of job opportunities (Maurício da Silva, “Violência nas Escolas e Caos na Sociedade”, Editora Virtual, 2000).

²⁵³ Three articles written by de Moraes established a relation between pichação and homelessness: “450 anos, progresso e a triste realidade” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 04.01.2004); “Pichação e imundice contrariando a grandeza de São Paulo” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 18.03.2005) and “Um programa que jamais deve ser esquecido” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 18.09.2005). The only news article relating pichação with homelessness was written by the journalist Afra Balazina, with the title “Sé e República já estão abandonadas após reforma de R\$ 7,2 mi” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 23.10.2007); here the practice is mentioned among other problems usually found in public spaces, such as theft and abandonment.

²⁵⁴ According to Forbes, Antonio Ermírio de Moraes is the third wealthiest Brazilian billionaire and is in 74th place worldwide, with a net worth of US\$12.7 billion (as of March 2013, see <http://www.forbes.com/profile/antonio-ermirio-de-moraes/>).

It is clear that such feelings cannot be counteracted only with punishment. Addressing them requires a continuous valuation of young people in the family, at school, at work and in leisure groups. It is about very complex actions, of difficult efforts to educate, ones that require time.

What to do in the meantime? Vigilance is essential. You cannot turn a blind eye to those who assault property with dirt and the population with foolishness. The authorities must identify the pichadores. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 20.07.2003) [Opinion article by Antônio Ermírio de Moraes (Entrepreneur and Columnist)]

“zfkolprajwlitdaniurdx”

SÃO PAULO – On the wall, one could read, in sharp and bold letters: “UN NOVO NOME”. The young man, however, strives in vain: “Ummm...”. He tries to continue: “Umma renova...” and he quits.

For the filmmaker who is filming him, he explains: “Letters in print no bro. I don’t understand, dude. I spent eight years in school, like eighth grade. And those kind I don’t understand. I can only read picho, only. Now, these letters here I don’t understand.”

He concludes: “I am kind of illiterate, but pichação can be understood.” Soon afterwards, he deciphers on camera, with fluency, the meaning of acronyms and words written as pichação on another wall, where we, literate, could only see unintelligible gibberish.

This scene is part of the documentary “Pixo”, by the brothers João Wainer and Roberto T. Oliveira. The young pichador (or pixador, in their own language) is called William, lives on the outskirts of Osasco, in greater São Paulo, is married and has a son. He was 18 years old when he was filmed.

[...]

But how many generations of young people will still climb walls as bichos [small animals] and invent their own language to tell us that, yes, they are people? (*Folha de São Paulo*, 06.07.2010) [Opinion article by Fernando de Barros e Silva (Journalist)]

The question posed by Fernando de Barros e Silva in the last quote illustrates how the practice is perceived as irrational, with pixadores trying to provide evidence of their human status to the rest of us. Even when the intention of Fernando de Barros e Silva is probably to emphasize his critique of this kind of comparison (by the use of sarcasm), the idea of pixadores behaving like animals is still present or reinforced. The author could have questioned the discourses against the pixadores without utilizing this unnecessary comparison.

Additionally, any positive outcome related to the practice of pichação/pixação is ignored or minimized in these quotations, which exclude, for example, the sense of

belonging among the participants or their right to political protest and to involvement in acts of civil disobedience. In line with the idea of dirt and pollution, the practice is sometimes framed in medical language, described as a form of plague, outbreak or epidemic in progress (or threatening to spread and contaminate us in the future). This concept was only found in two editorials,²⁵⁵ and it is possible to consider it as the official posture of the newspaper regarding pichação/pixação at that particular time:

Some years ago, the pichações that obliterate houses, buildings and monuments in São Paulo – and other large Brazilian cities – began to gain new characteristics. Incomprehensible at the first attempt to read them, these scribbles remind one of primitive writing. No political or aesthetic intention comes out of them, at least in the conventional sense.

This is a demonstration initiated by low-income youth, organized in groups, who imprint the four corners of the city with the marks of their social exclusion. Now, as shown in a report published yesterday by *Folha*, the “joke” is seducing more and more middle-class young people. As much as one tries to comprehend the socio-economic and cultural reasons for the phenomenon, the fact is that it contributes to further degradation of the city, in flagrant disregard for property and for historical and cultural heritage.

One could question whether repressive policies are the best way to confront the problem – even when, on this issue, the public authorities seem to be simply complacent, given that, according to the report, the gangs meet weekly at a specific place and time.

Initiatives that could attract pichadores into less predatory activities, in a positive way, deserve to be supported. It is unacceptable that several government administrations have shown themselves unable to control this true urban plague. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 01.07.2003) [Editorial]²⁵⁶

There is no doubt that any type of vandalism committed against public and private property should be punished with exemplary rigor. Pichação constitutes an intolerable aggression, besides being a factor of degradation of the already very inhospitable urban space of São Paulo. Moreover, writing pichação and defiling public buildings are both crimes prohibited by law.

A plan to address the problem, however, requires recognizing pichação as a complex phenomenon, which also demands socio-educational measures. The groups or gangs that congregate around this activity are mostly composed of low-income youth who search for channels of

²⁵⁵ The two editorials are: “*Cidade pichada*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 01.07.2003) and “*Cerco à pichação*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 30.03.2005). The epidemic discourse was also originally used against the tagging culture in New York.

²⁵⁶ The reportage mentioned in this quote was composed of three articles dedicated to the practice of pichação: “*Pichadores ousam e chegam à classe média*”, “*Prejuízo com pichação pode chegar a R\$ 8 bi*” and “*Pionero, Juneca atua hoje como grafiteiro*”, written by Sérgio Dávila (*Folha de São Paulo*, 30.06.2003). The reportage included photos of pichação on several buildings, as well as a glossary and examples of these inscriptions by grifes such as Abstratos, Wolf’s and Dinha, a collective of only pixadoras, according to *Folha de São Paulo*.

expression and some degree of notoriety, by leaving their marks on the city landscape.

Experience has shown that repressive measures, although effective in some cases, are insufficient. Other solutions should and could assist in the effort to ban this practice. In the previous administration, there were positive initiatives – some of them attained in partnership with NGOs – that sought to offer new possibilities to the pichadores, such as education focused on art and graphic design, but also on the demarcation of spaces for graffiti writing.

The prefecture would have nothing to lose if it broadens or intensifies actions of this nature in its efforts to combat the plague of pichação and to encourage respect for the city. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 30.03.2005) [Editorial]

These editorials, remarking the lack of respect that the pichação supposedly represents against others and against heritage, describe the producers as excluded youth – from low and middle classes – and emphasize the need for governmental policies aimed at these *gangs*. These young people should be inspired to get involved in positive, less *predatory* activities. In other words, the predators (in the sense of *animals*) need to be civilized. Not surprisingly, graffiti has been formerly considered as the *antibody of pichação*, or as a form of *evolved pichação*.²⁵⁷ Pichadores are simultaneously framed as *at risk* and as a *risky* population, in need of salvation and in need of punishment.²⁵⁸

Pichação is considered as a self-induced risk because its producers not only risk their lives – by accidental death (electric shock, falling or being shot by the police or property owners) – but also their futures (by imprisonment), with no foreseeable positive outcomes in exchange. This is a sort of senseless (unproductive) risk. The impact of the action of pichadores on the lives of other inhabitants is depicted in several allusions to the criminal nature of the practice, with this notion of risk related to vandalism against private property or even to other more serious forms of victimization, such as burglaries, drug dealing and gang violence.²⁵⁹ The link between adolescence and criminality, including pichação as one of its expressions, is relevant:

²⁵⁷ The last part of this section describes this interpretation of graffiti as an evolved form of pichação, or as a legal and more aesthetic alternative. In the case of graffiti being considered the antibody of pichação, this statement can be found in the article “*Guerra do grafite mancha túnel da Paulista*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 06.10.2004).

²⁵⁸ This difference between being at risk and being the cause of risk to others can be followed in Lupton (1999).

²⁵⁹ One article relates pichação to house burglaries, arguing how these signs work as a code among criminals to get information about their targets “*Pichação em casas vira código para assaltantes na zona*”

The teenager begins with the construction of his own identity by keeping a distance from the family. He goes on to coexist almost exclusively with friends of the same age, with whom he shares the same anxieties, desires and dreams. The identification with a new group is absolute. The construction of identity of the future adult rests on the use of extravagant outfits common to the group and in the differentiated language with slang and new expressions indecipherable to the “old folks”.

In the most difficult cases, as a result of conflicted personalities or a hostile social environment, the new group constitutes itself in gangs, common in urban centers around the world. In these cases, the identification of the teenager with the group is achieved through deviant behaviors ranging from pichação on the city walls to violent crime.

[...]

Adolescence creates social problems that adult generations were never able to solve. The proposals range from total liberty to the Febem [State Foundation for the Well-Being of Minors], in the case of our State. There is no satisfactory solution. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 02.02.2004) [Opinion article by João Sayad (Economist and Columnist)]²⁶⁰

The mentioned report studied the day-to-day lives of these young people. Most of them wake up at noon and surrender to videogames, skating, pichação, street conversations and other activities that extend until midnight or later. They themselves complain of boredom. At the end, it is 12 hours a day of an empty life.

There is no work for them, nor school. Most of them stopped searching for work out of discouragement. They are tired of hearing that there is no position for those who have no experience, as if experience could be acquired outside of work. Others stopped studying due to lack of resources for paying the tuition and the monthly rates of private schools, which, with few exceptions, are of low quality, despite what they charge. The concrete fact is that job and education opportunities are extremely scarce for our youth. That is sad. We are losing a good portion of new generations. Besides the social prejudice of idleness, these young people regularly frequent environments that are dangerous and inadequate for their personal growth. Many are exposed to crime and drugs, with all its pernicious consequences. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 26.02.2006) [Opinion article by Antônio Ermírio de Moraes (Entrepreneur and Columnist)]

Unproductive youth, in the form of pixadores or other collectives such as skaters or video-gamers, are considered at risk, as young people that are likely to become

leste” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 30.07.2006: The article was found on the website but was not located in the *Acervo Folha*). The link between pichação and drug dealing/gang violence is evident in two articles: The first text is about the explosion of a homemade bomb close to a journalist team documenting pichação in a favela, “*Bombas caseiras explodem perto de equipe da Folha*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 14.06.2002). The second article describes a new form of tourism in favelas and explains how the pichação ADA (“Amigos dos amigos”) represents the drug dealing gang of the morro da Rocinha in Rio de Janeiro. See “*Pacote turístico inclui passeio por boca-de-fumo*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 04.05.2008).

²⁶⁰ In his article “*Punks*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 02.04.2004), João Sayad uses this reflection about the behavior of youth collectives to point out the “adolescent” state of the Banco Central do Brasil.

criminals.²⁶¹ They are tempted by their surroundings, probably in the periphery and in low-income dwellings. The following text, extracted from the article “*Pichadores ousam e chegam à classe média*”, describes the imminent threat that pichação represents both for society and for the pichadores, who are depicted as ignorant of the consequences of their own actions, addicted to their non-rational practices – for example, the adrenaline rush²⁶² – and to their superfluous status or prestige economy:²⁶³

It gets dark in São Paulo. It is the sign for the students and brothers Mauricio, 20, and Vinicius, 21, to leave the family’s apartment in Vila Mariana, to place the retractable ladder on the roof of the Celta owned by their parents and to search for the ideal spot to do what they like most.

And what they like most is doing pichação on a wall, any wall.

The more “cornado” the spot, more “ibope” they win (read the glossary on this page). The objective is to leave inscribed, in places with visibility and with characters that are difficult to read for the uninitiated, the name of their gang (Os Loucos) and their grife (Toda Hora).

The future lawyer and industrial designer, respectively, who served as guides for the *Folha*’s reportage that penetrates the closed world of pichadores, personify two recent trends of that tribe that contribute to the current appearance of abandonment of several regions of the city:

* The increasing boldness of the practitioners, who begin to use not only ladders but also scaffolds and even Bosun’s chairs;

* The attraction that this world, until now restricted to poor youths from the periphery, begins to awaken in São Paulo’s middle class.

“What they do is for protest, typical of teenagers who have no prospects in society,” said the scholar Arthur Lara, one of the leading scholars of pichação as an urban phenomenon, author of the thesis “*Grafite-Arte Urbana em Movimento*”, USP. “And what moves them is the adrenaline.” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 30.06.2003) [News article by Sérgio Dávila (Journalist of *Folha de São Paulo*)]

Here, again, the idea of a plague or epidemic is present, considering the practice as something typical of the poor neighborhoods, a deviant behavior that is somehow reaching and seducing the youth from middle and upper classes. One interesting article,

²⁶¹ This approach is similar to the one proposed by the Broken Windows model, mentioned in the first chapter of this dissertation.

²⁶² References to this adrenaline rush as one of the motives of pixadores were found in several articles: “*Guerra entre pichadores desfigura a paisagem urbana*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 30.10.2004); “*Documentário mostra ação de pichadores em SP*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 15.06.2008), referring to the upcoming documentary *Pixo* (2009); “*Grafitêiros criticam obra por encomenda*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 27.07.2008); and one letter written by the reader Gustavo Lassala, designer and professor, “*Arte nas ruas*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 17.11.2009).

²⁶³ In addition to the adrenalin rush, the status economy of graffiti production – and in this case, of pichação – is considered as a relevant motivation for tagging culture, as pointed out by Austin (2001). Pixadores refer to this status economy with the term “*ibope*”, in the sense of visibility, fame or notoriety.

“*Pichador usa gravata para diblar fiscal*”,²⁶⁴ relates how one group of pichadores disguised themselves with suits and ties, only with the objective of writing their *pixos* in areas of high surveillance. The pichadores also described the practice in terms of drug addiction:

Three men with formal pants and shoes and long-sleeved shirts. Two of them with a tie and one with a blazer. The typical garments of a business meeting are the strategy used by three pichadores to be able to leave their marks on the walls in the most watched areas of São Paulo, such as the neighborhood dos Jardins (West), Avenida Paulista and its surroundings, Moema (South), Tatuapé and Vila Prudente (West). To inscribe a signature on the walls of these places “dá ibope” among colleagues. The disguise keeps away the distrust of the police, vigilantes and taxi drivers (seen as enemies). “Police officers even greet us when they see people like this”, comments one of them, who identifies as Os Bicho Vivo, a mark that he leaves on the walls, or OSBV, 28. His friend, Teimosos (TMS), 25, was the one who had the idea of writing pichação in formal clothes. Tumulus Tatei, 28, had used the strategy in the city center.

Last Tuesday, the group went in character to a meeting of pichação in the region of Paulista. One pichadora friend, who writes as Piroboys, 22 (see box at the side), was with the trio. The chosen place was the wall of a house in the street São Carlos do Pinhal and a wall near the viaduct Professor Bernadino Tranchesi (both in Bela Vista, central region). The names registered on the wall represent a group that began writing pichação together.

[...]

The three boys reported that they have tried to stop writing pichação, but they failed. “The pichação is worse than drugs because there is no treatment. If they were to give assistance to a bunch of pichadores, it would not be like that today”, commented Tatei.

Being caught by the police does not necessarily discourage the activity. Teimosos, who has been arrested five times, was already shot in his right leg, when he was 16 years old, by an angry resident because of the marks in his walls and even then he didn’t quit spraying.

According to them, the biggest attraction of the activity is to be recognized in the circle and to be able to excel at something. “We always try to write pichação in places of great circulation of people. The more difficult a place is, the more repercussions it gives”, comments Teimosos. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 05.06.2005) [News article by Luísa Brito (Journalist of *Folha de São Paulo*)]²⁶⁵

²⁶⁴ This article referring to the strategies that pichadores use to write their inscriptions was published in times when a new anti-pichação campaign was already being implemented. I refer to anti-pichação strategies in the following pages.

²⁶⁵ Piroboys, mentioned in this article, is a school teacher and she was the subject of another article published on the same page, “*À noite, professora vira Piroboys*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 05.06.2005). In the text, the pichadora declares that pichação is form of social protest.

Pichação, to summarize the first sequence of interpretations, is presented as a deviant behavior typical of poor or low-income youth, most of them inhabitants of the periphery, who not only damage the city's heritage or put at risk their futures and their lives, but who also become a sort of contaminating threat to other youth from the middle and upper classes. The practice is dirty, aggressive, lacking any evident political purpose, constituting an offence against order, decency and private property. The producers are poorly-educated or illiterate, or simply do not care about social conventions, which makes them more likely to get involved in more serious forms of crime. In its extreme manifestation, this rejection of pichação simply reduces its producers to the category of animals, who need to be (physically) controlled.

However, even when some of these descriptions are undeniably supported by their own producers (highlighting, for example, the deviant or aggressive nature of the practice), it is argued that pichação represents a political transgression, an alternative form of art aiming at appropriating the city and constituting a sort of reactive form of social protest. The following section shows this interpretation of pichação as a form of countercultural aesthetics and as transgressive art.

B. Social protest and alternative aesthetics concerning the practice of pichação/pixação

The difference between pichação and graffiti and related forms of street art seems to be – to a certain extent – the result of the transgressive, aggressive or counter-aesthetics nature of the former, the latter being more easy to digest and to appreciate. This distinction has also produced new legislation and policies in order to regulate both phenomena. It is necessary to remark that both practices are considered illegal when they are executed without any written authorization. However, graffiti artists in Brazil seem to have achieved a better social status, with their respective superstars and

fandom.²⁶⁶ Pixadores, on the other hand, have been fighting for recognition, even through a series of “attacks” against major art institutions.

According to news articles in *Folha de São Paulo*, the first of these attacks – in the period of study – was against a work by the artist Lenora de Barros in 2002.²⁶⁷ After this, in 2004, the pichador (and later *grafiteiro* and artist) “Não” – Diego Salvador – wrote his signature on two pieces on exhibition in the 26^a *Bienal de São Paulo*.²⁶⁸ Four more attacks took place in 2008: First, a group of pixadores organized by Rafael Augustaitiz “attacked” the building of the *Centro Universitario Belas Artes* as part of his graduation project.²⁶⁹ Second, there was an attack against the gallery *Choque Cultural*, also considered to be led by Augustaitiz, aimed at fighting the commercialization of street art.²⁷⁰ Third, a group of pixadores wrote all over the second floor of the Oscar Niemeyer building during the 28^a *Bienal de São Paulo* (known as *Bienal do Vazio*²⁷¹), with the subsequent arrestment of Rafael Vieira Camargo and Caroline Pivetta de Motta.²⁷² And finally, the works of some *grafiteiros* and artists placed in Avenida Paulista – commemorating the Japanese Immigration to Brazil – were written over (*atropelar*) by a group of pixadores, once more drawing attention to the commercial nature of graffiti.²⁷³

The outcome of this series of attacks over the years was the inclusion of pichação as part of the official program of the 29^a *Bienal de São Paulo*, in 2010. It is important to mention that in 2009, a group of pichadores was invited to take part in the

²⁶⁶ The section of this chapter dedicated to graffiti and street art emphasizes this status differential between graffiti artists and pixadores.

²⁶⁷ See “*Obra de Lenora de Barros sofre pichação*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 17.10.2002).

²⁶⁸ The inscriptions of Não were referred to in eight news articles. For more information, see “‘*Não*’, pichador da Bienal, diz que também é artista” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 03.10.2004).

²⁶⁹ Eighteen articles mentioned the intervention organized by Rafael Augustaitiz as his final project in the Centro Universitário de Belas Artes. The first article exposes clearly the debate about the artistic nature of pichação, see “*Pichadores vandalizam escola para discutir conceito de arte*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 17.10.2002).

²⁷⁰ The gallery Choque Cultural is a well-known spot for established graffiti artists, including exhibitions from OsGemeos, Titifreak, Zezão, among others. The attack organized by the pixadores was mentioned in thirteen articles.

²⁷¹ The curator team of the 28^a *Bienal de São Paulo* proposed a reflection on the “vazio” (void) and for this reason the second floor of the Oscar Niemeyer building was empty. The attack of the pixadores refuted this idea of the void and proposed the (violent) appropriation of the space.

²⁷² Caroline Pivetta de Motta became a sort of symbol of the fight for the recognition of the pichação. Her case was interesting because she was held 52 days in jail because she did not have a permanent address. I refer to her case in the following pages.

²⁷³ The attack against the graffiti works commemorating the Japanese Immigration to Brazil was reported in the article “*Pichadores agora destroem marcos do grafite em São Paulo*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 28.10.2008). The Avenida Paulista, see Franco (2009: 127-128), has usually been a contested space claimed by graffiti artists, pichadores and the local government with selected muralists-graffiti artists.

exhibition “*Né dans la rue – Graffiti*” (Born in the streets) in the *Fondation Cartier* in Paris. The documentary *Pixo* was also exhibited in this show dedicated to worldwide manifestations of graffiti and street art.²⁷⁴ In this sense, it can be debated whether pichação was included in the 29^a Bienal de São Paulo because of the longstanding struggle of its practitioners or the innovative vision of the curatorship; since it may, in fact, have been the result of neither, but rather of the recognition achieved by pixadores in artistic institutions outside Brazil. However, in addition to this official recognition, this Biennale also had its own “inner” conflict between the pixador Djan Ivson and the artist Nuno Ramos, with the conflict emerging because of some vultures kept in captivity in the work of the latter.²⁷⁵

Considering that pichação/pixação is a controversial practice and is legally defined as a crime, the efforts of the pixadores to gain artistic recognition are challenged by some segments of the population. In the following pages, the debate about the aesthetics and artistic nature of the practice are illustrated and analyzed, taking into account both pro and contra arguments. This discussion emphasizes the cases that occurred between 2008 and 2010, given the exposure that these events received in both news and opinion articles.²⁷⁶ However, quotations from earlier discussions about the recognition of pichação as an artistic practice are also included.

Gilberto Dimenstein,²⁷⁷ for example, dedicates one of his columns to reflections on the artistic and transgressive nature of the practice, relating it to the discussion of rights and the limitations of these rights:

Activity exposes tension between rights

Pichação is one of the most visible expressions of human invisibility. They are more than gibberish. They are a way to establish a relationship of belonging to a community – even through aggression – and, at the same time, of giving the author a sense of self-identity. In that scrawl, incomprehensible to many, art mixes with necessity to simply say “I

²⁷⁴ See: “*Paris celebra pichação de SP*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 04.07.2009).

²⁷⁵ See: “*Pichador ataca obra com urubus na Bienal*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 26.09.2010). The pichador allegedly wrote a message to demand the liberation of the vultures, after a local NGO protested inside the building of the Biennale, drawing attention to the conditions in which the animals were kept. The pichador was arrested but no charges were made against him.

²⁷⁶ See Annex.

²⁷⁷ Gilberto Dimenstein is the founder of the Cidade Escola Aprendiz, a NGO that uses graffiti as a way to foster self-esteem and opportunities in the job market for young people. Franco (2009: 73-75) believes that Dimenstein was the big winner in this project, emphasizing the “symbolic profits” obtained by the journalist.

exist, pay attention to me”. Note that the pichadores don’t climb buildings to rob, but only to draw.

This cry for existence in the form of letters is, therefore, a search for acceptance, but by using transgression. And, in that, emerges the focal point of tension. It discharges the transgression in the society that excludes them, while, as in a vicious circle, the scrawls keep the pichadores excluded. Those who do not see the pichação from that perspective do not understand a whole underground world that, in its own way, searches for the light.

But the pichação – and here is its most controversial side – ends up imposing, by force, without any right to an option, an aesthetic. It forces the owner of a wall or the façade of a house to accept that expression, as if it has to bear the memory of the marginalization of others. If many of them are driven by an infringed right – the right to free expression – they infringe the rights of others to paint their houses as they please. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 21.01.2006) [Opinion article by Gilberto Dimenstein (Journalist and Columnist of *Folha de São Paulo*)]²⁷⁸

The aesthetic nature of pichação, as proposed here by Dimenstein, is imposed on the general population. However, it could be argued that the “official” aesthetics of the city – mostly based on decisions taken by private owners, businesses or local authorities – are also imposed on the citizenry (including the pixadores), who indeed may have limited power to challenge these decisions.²⁷⁹ Since pixadores began to create their own books and documentaries to promote their art and to contest discourses against them, the idea of pichação/pixação as a legitimate art form has begun to take shape and to win supporters. For example:

The art of “pixo”

Rectilinear and angular like the city skyline, the polemic traces of the pichações of São Paulo once again have their supposed artistic character in discussion, due to the publication of a book: in bilingual edition, “Ttsss....A Grande Arte da Pixação em São Paulo, Brasil”, which features images of the actions of the pichadores, records of the pichações around the city, an essay by the artist Pinky Wainer, a chronicle by the *Folha* columnist Xico Sá, and reproductions of the agenda of the graffiti artist Daniel Medeiros, Boleta, organizer of the volume.

The starting point of the book, the agenda is a type of diary that, according to Boleta, every pichador worth his salt has. Its pages show invitations to meetings and actions in the “points” and “special

²⁷⁸ Gilberto Dimenstein is also included in the credit section of the documentary *Pixo* (2009). In his short participation, Dimenstein expresses similar arguments to the ones mentioned here.

²⁷⁹ Gould et al. (2010: 11-14) suggest that surveillance and other security technologies are consumed by organizations and not (necessarily) by individuals, who constitute the final users. They called this a process of indirect consumption. In the final chapter of this dissertation, I propose a similar conclusion for the case of public “aesthetics”.

participations” of the colleagues of “pixo”. In that way, with an X, as they prefer, themselves rebelling against the cultural norms.

“They are signatures collected between 1988 and 1998, including people who have died”, says Boleta, whose records divide the pages of the book with images of João Wainer, collaborator of *Folha*. Boleta cautions that the intention is not to create an encyclopedia, but to show “a bit” of his art.

“If the role of art is to disturb, then pichação is art”, he advocates – maybe even forgetting that there are lots of things that disturb that, definitely, are not art. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 21.01.2006) [News article by Eduardo Simões (Journalist of *Folha de São Paulo*)]

Documentary shows action of pichadores in SP

- Movie records youngsters climbing buildings and uncovers their codes of conduct
- With no title yet, the documentary explains how the capital São Paulo became the “calligraphy book” of pichadores

Is pichação an artistic expression or a crime against property? The polemic question was again news last Wednesday, June 11, when Rafael Augustaitiz, 24, a student of visual arts of Fine Arts, was arrested for doing pichação, with his friends, on the exterior and interior of the São Paulo faculty building. To Augustaitiz, the act was his work of course completion. For the college, it was vandalism.

Whether graffiti is an artistic expression or a crime against property is discussed in a documentary that has just been filmed in São Paulo.

The directors of the film (yet untitled), the brothers Roberto T. Oliveira and João Wainer – the latter a photographer for *Folha* – are negotiating the theatrical release with distributors.

The documentary not only registers various actions of pichadores (or “pixadores” as they write) but reveals some of their codes of conduct.

(*Folha de São Paulo*, 15.06.2008) [News article by Thiago Ney (Journalist of *Folha de São Paulo*)]

“It is a crime, but it is also art”, specialist says.

It is crime. But it is also art. The opinion is that of the North-American photographer and writer Martha Cooper, specialist in urban art. “As an art, it could be compared with calligraphy. It requires knowledge and practice to be done well. But when this writing is made without permission, on a surface that has an owner, it is indeed illegal.” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 15.06.2008) [News article by Thiago Ney (Journalist of *Folha de São Paulo*)]²⁸⁰

The “attack” – or intervention – on the second floor of the Oscar Niemeyer building during the 28^a Bienal de São Paulo, with the incarceration of Caroline Pivetta

²⁸⁰ This quote is followed by a statement of the police authorities remarking that pichação is a crime, including references to the law that punishes it.

de Motta as its outcome, was the tipping point for this debate. Caroline Pivetta, member of the group of pixadores Sustos, declared that they appropriated the empty space to propose their own art,²⁸¹ arguing that she identified herself with the void (*o vazio*)²⁸² proposed by the Bienal curatorship and even suggested that the hate directed against the pixadores was the *real* reason for her retention in jail.²⁸³ The resulting discussion about the imprisonment of this pixadora exposed both pro and contra arguments about the artistic value of pichação/pixação:

The incarceration of this young girl seems to me an absurd and cruel exaggeration. Yes, there is the law. But imagine, dear reader, if the “artists” of real estate speculation were in jail for each depredation of the public good that they sponsor, often in collusion with the government, to build this tragically horrible and inhuman city.

That does not justify other vandalisms, of course not. The arts of pichação can make sense as group ritual, catharsis, or therapy, but the result is socially and aesthetically regressive. There is no artistic value associated with the transgression inscribed on the dirty walls. It is, rather, the outbreak in cryptic language of a poorly understood Brazilian cultural malaise. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 15.12.2008) [Opinion article by Fernando de Barros e Silva (Journalist and Columnist)]

The pichadora girl

“IDEOLOGY, I want one to live.” This phrase by Cazuzza might seem stupid. But it is not. We need, indeed, to believe in something. Even if it is something that almost the rest of the world finds silly, such as, for example, the pichação. Caroline Pivetta da Mota, 23, believes the same. So that, when she was arrested, shortly after she wrote pichação with her friends in the Bienal de São Paulo, she screamed: “Long live the picho!” Right now, we can see the e-mails from our readers piling up in our mailbox. “But writing pichação is a crime”. Yes, we know that. “But pichação is not art”. About that we are not certain, but this is a very long discussion that won’t fit in this column.

What interests us: Carol has been imprisoned for nearly 50 days in São Paulo. Attention. She was the only girl of the group. She is the only one that is imprisoned. The guys ran and they managed to get away. One of them was also arrested, but he is facing the process in freedom. We find it absurd that she is still imprisoned for writing pichação at a biennale of art whose theme was the void. If it is a void, it can be occupied. And let’s discuss pichação later, with calm. What we can say with certainty is that all people express themselves as they can. (*Folha de São Paulo*,

²⁸¹ See: “Após mais de 50 dias presa, TJ manda soltar pichadora” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 19.12.2008).

²⁸² See: “‘Picho para o povo olhar e não gostar’, diz jovem presa na Bienal” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 05.12.2008).

²⁸³ See: “Ódio a pichadores me deixou tanto tempo presa, afirma jovem” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 20.12.2008).

15.12.2008) [Opinion article by Jô Hallack, Nina Lemos and Raq Affonso (Writers and Journalists)]²⁸⁴

Caroline Case: some issues not considered

[...]

WITH THE intention of opening new perspectives in the sensational and passionate debate created by the press in relation to the 28^a Bienal de São Paulo and the imprisonment of Caroline Pivetta da Motta, 24 years old, we, the curators of the event, would like to raise some considerations and questions that seem to us pertinent to the question.

First, we should not forget that, in contrast to the nocturnal and silent operation that is characteristic of pichadores, the event at the Biennale was far from an aesthetic and peaceful event: 40 youths invaded the pavilion of the Biennale like an organized gang, looting, tearing everything down, physically assaulting people, with the objective, according to the online call of their leader Rafael Augustaitz [sic], of writing pichação on the second and third floor, destroying all the works.

It was a peculiar gesture of this destructive group that, since the invasions of both the Centro Universitário Belas Artes and the gallery Choque Cultura, uses pichação as a means of erasing and damaging the work of other artists.

Could it be that the art world does not realize the authoritarianism of that gesture, what it means regarding the censorship of the other? Is it not worrying to realize that the tactic of a former art student is to make a media phenomenon out of erasing other artists?²⁸⁵ Yes, because the press and the internet channels were warned three hours before the attack on the Biennale and they were ready waiting for the show! It was not, therefore, a filling of the void or a response “em vivo contato”, which proves that the curators never anticipated the use of violence. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 18.12.2008) [Opinion article by Ivo Mesquita and Ana Paula Cohen (Curatorship 28^a Bienal de São Paulo)]²⁸⁶

The case of Caroline Pivetta was considered by some as an obvious instance of Draconian punishment,²⁸⁷ not only because she remained in jail for more than fifty days for her pixo, but also because she was charged for damaging the Oscar Niemeyer building²⁸⁸ – considered a crime against the *patrimônio cultural* – and not with the law that already punishes pichações.²⁸⁹ Caroline Pivetta was also charged with the crime of the illegal formation of gangs, (*formação de quadrilha*).²⁹⁰ The release of the pixadora

²⁸⁴ The authors are the writers of the blog *O2Neuronio* [<http://02neuronio.blog.uol.com.br/>] and their article was published in the section *Folhateen*.

²⁸⁵ This refers to the “attack” against the Centro Universitário de Belas Artes, early in 2008.

²⁸⁶ See: “*Para ex-ministro da Justiça, punição foi ‘draconiana’*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 20.12.2008).

²⁸⁷ See: “*Grupo invade prédio da Bienal e picha ‘andar vazio’*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 27.10.2008).

²⁸⁸ See: “*Para ex-ministro da Justiça, punição foi ‘draconiana’*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 20.12.2008).

²⁸⁹ See: “*Justiça condena pichadora da Bienal*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 20.12.2008).

²⁹⁰ See: “*Após mais de 50 dias presa, TJ manda soltar pichadora*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 19.12.2008).

was supported by public figures including the Minister of Human Rights, Paulo Vannuchi;²⁹¹ the Minister of Culture Juca Ferreira;²⁹² the former Minister of Justice Fernando Henrique José Gregori;²⁹³ the former director of the Museo de Belas Artes, Paulo Herkenhoff;²⁹⁴ and the art historian Jorge Coli. The readers of *Folha de São Paulo* also got involved in the discussion through letters in favor and against the actions of the pixadores, the artistic value of pichação/pixação and the sense of justice represented by the case.²⁹⁵

In 2010, the curator of the 29^a Bienal de São Paulo Moacir dos Anjos included pixação as part of the official program, granting it artistic recognition and proposing the need to rethink the limits between art and politics. In his words:

FOLHA – *Why include the pichadores of the 28th Biennial at the 29th?*
MOACIR DOS ANJOS – This is not an apology or a confrontation with the previous year. We want to include pichação or simply pixo, with an “x”, a spelling used by their practitioners to distinguish them from partisan political pichações that have filled the walls of the city for years. Pixo blurs and questions the usual limits that separate art from politics. This question is of great interest to the Biennale. Politics is understood here not as a space for the appeasement of differences, but just the opposite. The space formed by the acts and gestures that open fissures in the conventions that organize common life. As philosopher Jacques Rancière puts it, it is politics as a sphere of “misunderstanding”.
FOLHA – *Isn't this demagoguery?*
DOS ANJOS – It would be demagoguery if we were inviting pixadores as we invite many other artists. We know that this equality does not exist, and they also know that. What matters is to understand these differences and the limits and possibilities of this approach. Nobody is trying to dodge anything. The bet is on the explicit character of these questions, not on the easy answers. Our commitment is to demonstrate that the Biennale can be a privileged platform for the formulation of these issues. If we achieve this, we have already made an important contribution. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 15.04.2010) [Interview by Fernanda Mena (Journalist of *Folha de São Paulo*)]

The work of the pixadores in the 29^a Bienal de São Paulo included the participation of Djan Ivson – the main narrator of the documentary *Pixo* and one of the exhibitors in the *Fondation Cartier* in Paris – and Rafael Augustaitiz, who was

²⁹¹ See: “*Para ex-ministro da Justiça, punição foi ‘draconiana’*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 20.12.2008).

²⁹² See: “*Ministro pede a Serra que ajude a libertar pichadora*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 11.12.2008).

²⁹³ See: “*Bienal age de modo cínico e intolerante ao lavar as mãos*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 20.12.2008).

²⁹⁴ See: “*O país do homem cordial*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 14.12.2008).

²⁹⁵ Five letters were found in relation to Caroline Pivetta (four against her actions and one in favor).

responsible for the intervention at the Centro Universitário de Belas Artes.²⁹⁶ However, this inclusion of pichação in artistic circles did not seem to translate into social recognition of the practice, when one considers the later emergence of “new” laws that regulated the commerce of spray cans or distinguished graffiti from pichação (in 2011). Indeed, in August 2010, a group of pixadores – *Os Piores de Belô* (Belo Horizonte) – was arrested and charged with *formação de quadrilha*.²⁹⁷ Outside of artistic institutions, the efforts against pichação/pixação clearly remained manifest.

C. Anti-pichação strategies between 2001 and 2010

The strategies to control the spreading of pichação/pixação – as well as *tagging culture* in other contexts²⁹⁸ – are mostly a combination of legal measures, social policies and technological solutions (anti-graffiti coating, surveillance devices, CPTED, among others). The removal of these inscriptions from the walls is one of the main concerns of both local authorities and private owners.²⁹⁹ Some of these solutions are oriented to the individual actor – a local business or private person – and may constitute a market in itself. The last resource is based on education, aiming to “rehabilitate” offenders and to seduce them with more “productive” activities. These efforts also aim at preventing “future” offenders from getting involved in the practice in the first place.

The concerns about pichação are also economically grounded, considering its (attributed) effect on property values and the costs associated with the removal of the inscriptions. One article in the *Folha de São Paulo* – “*Prejuízo com pichação pode chegar a R\$ 8 bi*” – refers explicitly to this economic loss:

A facade with pichação in São Paulo makes the building in question lose up to 10% of its total value. The calculations are made by Luis Fernando

²⁹⁶ Rafael Augustaitiz is also one of the pichadores included in the documentary *Pixo* (2009).

²⁹⁷ See: “*Pichadores mineiros são presos e acusados de formar quadrilha*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 25.08.2010). The article, written by journalist Rodrigo Vizeu, points out that while in Minas Gerais the practice of pichação is criminalized, in São Paulo it is considered an art (in reference to the inclusion of the practice in the 29^a Bienal de São Paulo).

²⁹⁸ Pichação and tagging share some characteristics, for example, the predominance of signatures, the status economy associated with the practice, the constitution of crews or “grife/gangues”, the adrenalin rush and their territorial nature. However, pichação is considered here as original in Brazilian contexts.

²⁹⁹ Removal is considered particularly important in anti-graffiti (anti-tagging or anti-pichação) strategies because writers and artist avoid walls and public surfaces that are frequently painted over.

de Queiroz, author of the books “TPD – Direito Imobiliário” and “Guia do Condomínio IOB” and vice president of the Associação dos Condomínios Garantidos do Brasil.

According to the survey that Queiroz made in collaboration with other real estate entities, the total loss that the pichações cause to the city are now close to R\$ 8 billion, or nearly the annual city budget (currently R\$ 11.4 billion). “It is absurd, but it’s true”, he says to Folha. The number is far from being unanimously accepted in the sector, however.

“Unfortunately, it is not possible to make this calculation and any attempt to do so would be to take one’s best shot”, refutes the specialist in the real estate market Luiz Alvaro de Oliveira Ribeiro, of the Adviser Consultores e da Associação Viva o Centro. He agrees, however, that the practice devalues the property that was targeted.

“The pichação is almost like an acknowledged signature that this part of the city is in a state of inexorable deterioration”, he affirms. Ribeiro cites as examples the structures along the bus lanes in the avenues Santo Amaro and Nove de Julho, and large parts of the city center.

“The act shows how vulnerable you are to an enemy that is not clear, is not known and is not punished by the government”. Some pichadores who spoke with Folha agree with this last part of the sentence of the expert. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 30.06.2003) [News article by Sérgio Dávila (Journalist of *Folha de São Paulo*)]

The official campaigns against the action of the pichadores have been continuous, at least in the case of São Paulo. From an examination of the news and opinion articles, three different campaigns can be clearly recognized: First, the *Projeto Belezura*, during the administration of Marta Suplicy (Partido dos Trabalhadores).³⁰⁰ Second, in 2005, several articles referred to anti-pichação strategies adopted by Major Jose Serra (Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira),³⁰¹ including the covering up of pichações (and a proposal to charge pichadores with the costs of removal), the placement of plants on walls (*target hardening*³⁰²), heavy surveillance in particular areas of the city, and the successful arrest of six pichadores (even when they were later released after promising to involve themselves in social projects).³⁰³ The removal of pichação, even when it can be considered as a relevant action for those of the population

³⁰⁰ In an interview with Folha in 2001, Major Marta Suplicy stated her concerns about the few achievements of the anti-pichação project during her administration. See: “*Marta afirma que regionais estão entre suas piores dores de cabeça*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 28.01.2001).

³⁰¹ For the covering up of pichações, see: “*Plano antipichação tem início com críticas*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 18.05.2005); for the charging for removal costs: “*Prefeitura quer cobrar limpeza de pichador*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 26.03.2005); for the use of plants as target hardening: “*São Paulo vai plantar 186 mil trepadeiras*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 01.09.2005); for surveillance strategies: “*Prefeitura promete maior fiscalização em áreas visadas*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 05.06.2005); and finally, for the arrest of pichadores: “*10 dias após plano antipichação, 6 são detidos*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 28.05.2005).

³⁰² Target hardening refers to technological, structural or spatial components that complicate access to a target, or delay/deter potential criminals.

³⁰³ See: “*Prefeitura promete maior fiscalização em áreas visadas*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 05.06.2005).

who suffer its direct consequences, was not always welcome, especially when the execution did not satisfy the needs and expectations of the residents. For example:

Anti-pichação plan begins with criticisms

Instead of the stains of pichação, stains of concrete cover the walls along a stretch of the street Cardinal Arcoverde, in Pinheiros, West São Paulo.

The anti-pichação project of the Prefecture of São Paulo was released yesterday and surprised the residents, who hoped to see clean walls. “What they are doing is horrible, because they are only covering [the pichação] with another color,” complained the merchant Emerson Bonfim Correia, owner of the bar and coffee Arrastão, whose wall, painted in deep blue, was the first to have the pichação removed with brushstrokes of paint in concrete color.

Without believing that this attitude will prevent the actions of the pichadores, Correia said he will paint the wall blue, but he will not insist in the event that his property is covered with pichação again. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 18.05.2005) [News article by Luísa Brito (Journalist of *Folha de São Paulo*)]

The third campaign – not directly aimed at pichação, however – is the law *Cidade Limpa*, signed by Major Gilberto Kassab (Democratas). The decree regulates a series of topics related to urban aesthetics, from dumpsters and public toilets to outdoor advertising.³⁰⁴ As part of this project, some public surfaces were painted with an anti-pichação coating.³⁰⁵ The law was also controversial in the case of graffiti and street art, as will be explained in the following section.

Even graffiti and street art can be considered as another anti-pichação strategy. The use of “graffiti” is proposed as a rehabilitation therapy for pixadores, who would be able to explore their artistic nature without transgressing the social order. The following quotes highlight this effort:

The workshop is in its beginning, but it already reflects in a positive way in the lives of the teenagers. “I want a better future”, say Reginaldo, 16. A pichador, he affirms that he intends to change his scribbles for the more elaborate drawings of graffiti. “One has to preserve”, preaches the recently-converted. Reginaldo is so excited that he does not mind walking 40 minutes to get to the association where the workshops take place. “There is no bus.” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 23.07.2001) [News article by Augusto Pinheiro (Journalist of *Folha de São Paulo*)]

³⁰⁴ The law of the city 14.223 *Cidade Limpa* is available at the website of the Prefeitura de São Paulo. The law does not mention pichação in its text.

³⁰⁵ See: “*Lixeiras e floreiras da avenida receberão produto antipichação*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 07.01.2009).

To arrest them is not the same thing, according to the vision of the main NGOs that deal with the problem in the city and that of the coordinator of youth of the Prefecture, Alexandre Youssef, 28. “It is better to educate the pichador, to turn him into a graffiti artist and to teach the Guardia Municipal how to deal with the problem”, he says. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 30.06.2003) [News article by Sérgio Dávila (Journalist of *Folha de São Paulo*)]

The Prefecture of São Paulo intends to restrict the action of pichadores with the constant cleaning of the walls and the supervision of the most targeted areas. In addition to identifying the creators of pichação, through the actions of the police and the municipal guard, the proposal is to encourage the use of graffiti workshops and training courses. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 05.06.2005) [News article by Luísa Brito (Journalist of *Folha de São Paulo*)]

Salvador turns pichadores into graffiti-providers

A project of the Prefecture of Salvador turned pichadores – many of them with histories with the police – into graffiti-providers. Approved in a competition five months ago, 37 juveniles who used to leave their protest messages every night on public and private walls of Bahia’s capital now have a new profession – they are professional graffiti artists.

“I spent seven years of my life doing pichação and I achieved nothing out of it. Now, I have a few months working with graffiti and I already feel socially recognized”, says Jackson Jesuíno Barbosa, 25, who is part of the group of graffiti artists hired by Sedes (Secretaria Municipal de Desenvolvimento Social) and Limpurb (Empresa de Limpeza Urbana de Salvador). (*Folha de São Paulo*, 30.10.2005) [News article by Luiz Francisco (Journalist of *Folha de São Paulo*)]

The metamorphosis of pichadores into graffiti artists not only signifies the elimination of the “grotesque” aesthetics of the pichação, but its substitution for a (supposedly) more productive and more “social” practice (referring subtly to the antisocial nature of pichação/pixação). Eventually, as will be noted in the following section, graffiti may also be represented as an alternative option for employment (or constitute an asset in the job market). Pichação, considered here as something unwanted, is rejected because it lacks both aesthetic seduction and (economic) utility.

The discourses of graffiti and street art production in the newspaper *Folha de São Paulo*³⁰⁶

The origins of graffiti as a social practice in Brazil can be dated to the end of the 1970s and early 1980s, and, as mentioned above, there are references to the existence of several generations of graffiti producers or artists.³⁰⁷ Graffiti is broadly framed as another element of the *hip-hop* movement, which also includes break dancing, rap (rhythm and poetry) and DJs. The aesthetics of contemporary Brazilian graffiti are partially the result of this movement.³⁰⁸ As revealed by the articles published in the newspaper between 2001 and 2010, *grafite* – the Portuguese word for graffiti – seems to be more accepted and tolerated than *pichação/pixação*. The following pages summarize these discourses about graffiti and other similar forms of street art (such as stickers or stencils).

Since the work of some Brazilian graffiti producers and street artists has achieved outstanding recognition, both in national and foreign art institutions, some articles published in *Folha de São Paulo* are dedicated to this (exclusive) group of artists. The “commodification” of graffiti is not only visible in relation to the art market, but also involves new forms of graffiti ownership, for instance, as a new fashion in the business of interior design.³⁰⁹ Moreover, festival and similar events sponsored by corporations – such as concerts or shows – also include graffiti among their other attractions, in an effort to lure young consumers.³¹⁰

Additionally, beyond the seductive nature of its aesthetics, graffiti is also considered as a key element in social projects directed towards populations “at risk”. Graffiti may help to foster self-esteem among (underprivileged) youths, and may also help them to avoid potential involvement in criminal activities, such as drug dealing or gang violence. This youth population may also profit from the abilities acquired in

³⁰⁶ All the quotations in this chapter have been translated by the author. The original quotations in Portuguese can be provided upon request.

³⁰⁷ See: Franco (2009), Manco et al. (2005:13-18) and Ruiz (2011: 14-15).

³⁰⁸ For the Brazilian case, see: Zan et. al (2010), Ventura (2009), Franco (2009), Manco et al. (2005) and Pardue (2004). The relation between hip-hop culture and graffiti practice is also explained in Austin (2001) and Ferrell (1993, 1995).

³⁰⁹ This commodification is not necessarily something negative, and it can produce new forms of identity and empowerment through production-consumption practices. See: Comaroff and Comaroff (2009) (also mentioned in Chapter I).

³¹⁰ This co-optation is also discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation.

graffiti workshops, enhancing their chances in the job market. NGOs and other local projects highlight this social value of graffiti as a social practice.

A. Aesthetic and commercial value of street art/graffiti productions: From unauthorized through commissioned/sponsored graffiti to “art products”

Several news and opinion articles emphasize this artistic value of graffiti and street art, reporting the inclusion of these productions in local art galleries, the biographies of their producers and new literature or documentaries about the practice. In line with the history of the graffiti movement proposed by Franco (2009:32), the references include the three stages or generations of street artists: the pioneers, the Old School and New School. Graffiti has also achieved its own national celebration day – *Dia Nacional do Grafite* – in commemoration of the death of Alex Vaullari, considered one of its most important pioneers in Brazil:³¹¹

It used to be underground

[...]

When it started, in the 70s, graffiti was linked to hip-hop and to ethnic minorities in New York. Today, the conversation is another: the public and the critics respect the movement as a form of autonomous urban art. Around here, we even have a National Day of Graffiti, since 1988, commemorated on March 27th.

The expression “graffiti writer” refers less to the vandals that blast buildings and monuments and more to the artists that have the city as an inspiration and object. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 29.03.2010) [News article by Tarso Araujo (Journalist of *Folha de São Paulo*)]

In light of its artistic nature, as the quote highlights, graffiti seem to be less related to vandalism and pollution than pichação/pixação. This does not mean the absence of criticism or disapproval from particular groups or individuals, who still consider the practice as problematic.³¹² Indeed, graffiti producers and streets artists often use the term “vandalism” to refer to their creations, framing their work as a

³¹¹ Franco (2009: 34-37) describes the relevance of Alex Vaullari in the graffiti culture of São Paulo. The reference to the *Dia Nacional do Grafite* could also be found in Manco et al. (2005: 14).

³¹² Some references to anti-graffiti discourses and strategies are included in the following pages.

countercultural practice (Austin, 2001; Ferrell, 1993). Graffiti is appreciated for its aesthetics, its openness – in contrast with the exclusive (exclusionary) world of high art – and the ephemeral character of the works (or pieces). It is important to mention that not all graffiti productions are legal and authorized, but some projects may be developed in cooperation with local authorities, NGOs, private businesses and corporations. The following quote is an example of this artistic depiction of graffiti productions:

Subversive Belezura

GRAFFITI TAKES THE LANDSCAPE OF SP BY ASSAULT, WINS STATUS OF ART AND SEDUCES YOUNG PEOPLE

In the visual chaos of São Paulo, that no operation Belezura (the project of the local government to clean walls and façades of the city) seems to take into account, there is an anonymous coloring, full of shapes, that is revealed between the extreme pichação and the multiplication of advertising.

Vandalism for some, urban art for others, the graffiti takes the landscape by force, subverts both the gray of São Paulo as well as the unreadable characters scattered by pichadores, and increases the delirium of images of the city.

In São Paulo, it is everywhere, it has already seduced many middle-class young people who walk around with spray cans in their backpacks and it is emerging worldwide as one of the best and most creative graffiti that exists.

Some artists are vainglorious and assess Brazilian graffiti artists as the best in the world. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 28.03.2004) [News article by Fernanda Mena (Journalist of *Folha de São Paulo*)]

Some of these grafiteiros and street artists have achieved a celebrity status (including their own fans or followers), being valued not only for their work or pieces placed in the streets, but also for artworks exhibited in local galleries, such as Choque Cultural or Fortes Vilaça.³¹³ The work of these graffiti artists generates its own niche in the art market, with the subsequent translation of their graffiti creations into post-graffiti products (productions on canvas ready to be acquired and consumed). This recognition

³¹³ The gallery Choque Cultural [choquecultural.com.br] was created in 2004 by Mariana Martins, Baixo Ribeiro and Eduardo Saretta. The space has exhibited the work of graffiti artists such as Nunca, Zezão, TitiFreak, Speto and Nove. It was also the place of the official presentation of the book “Graffiti Brasil”, by Manco et al. (2005). The gallery Fortes Vilaça [fortesvilaca.com.br] was created in 2001 by Márcia Fortes, Alessandra d’Aloia and Alexandre Gabriel. It has exhibited the work of the celebrated Os Gêmeos, as well as Zezão and TitiFreak (in collaboration with the gallery Choque Cultural). Both spaces have played an important role in the circulation of graffiti productions into the art market, as suggested by Franco (2009).

includes graffiti producers such as Nina, Nunca, Zezão, Boleta, Juneca, Speto or Titi Freak³¹⁴, but the best example may be the case of OsGêmeos:

The monozygotic [identical] twins Otávio and Gustavo Pandolfo, 31, graffiti artists known as Os Gêmeos, have exhibited their work since January 2005 in London, Paris, Milan, Tokyo, Los Angeles, New York, Berlin, Havana, Hong Kong and Athens. They are represented in New York by Jeffrey Deitch, from the gallery Deitch Projects, which represents Basquiat, Keith Harry, Barry McGee, among others. Nike has just launched a sneaker designed by them, and The New York Times newspaper published a story praising the duo and stating that their works could be valued up to \$15,000 (R\$ 34,200) in the United States. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 30.10.2005) [News article by João Wainer (Journalist of *Folha de São Paulo*)]

On the second floor there are eight canvases by the pair. Each of them costs US\$ 19,000 (approximately R\$ 41,000). The price for “emerging artists in New York”, explains Márcia Fortes, a partner of the gallery, emphasizing the name of the city at the end of the phrase.

The value is not defined by her, she explains. It is part of the unusual path of Os Gêmeos that they already had international representation, with the important Deitch Project – which today dictates their prices – in New York, before they came to be represented by someone in Brazil.

Surrounded by works valued at more than R\$ 320,000, they tell about the moment when they decided to devote themselves exclusively to their work as artists, in the early 90s. They were working then as office-boys in two different agencies of Bradesco in São Paulo. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 27.07.2006) [News article by Rafael Cariello (Journalist of *Folha de São Paulo*)]

[...]Zezão and Titi are at the Fortes Vilaça, give lectures in universities and are invited to create graffiti in urban spaces, restaurants and the houses of modern residents. And they charge: one wall painted by a top graffiti artist costs, at least, R\$ 2000.

Sign of the new times: on his own since he was 13 years old, the former office boy, seller and motorcycle courier (for four years) Zezão can now live only from graffiti; he lives with his girlfriend in an apartment in the northern zone and he no longer needs extra jobs to survive. “I do a lot of work for decoration. I am not rich, there are months in which I make lots, in others, I make less, but it is enough to live only from that.”

[...]

Speto painted graffiti in four rooms of a hotel in Copenhagen, Denmark. He does not say how much he made or makes. “But it is enough to be spoiled,” he jokes.

This year, for the second time, Speto is taking part in an advertising campaign for a beer brand: he does illustrations in ads published in the

³¹⁴ This chapter refers to these graffiti artists by their pseudonyms; the “real” names of these artists are included in the annex, as well as their websites (when available).

European market and he acts as a sort of Brazilian representative for the brand in the world market. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 26.03.2006) [News article by Nina Lemos (Journalist and Columnist of *Folha de São Paulo*)]

Not only beer, but beverages like Red Bull or Coca-Cola have used graffiti culture and its aesthetics in their campaigns or festivals.³¹⁵ Graffiti and street art have also negotiated their insertion in public spaces with corporations or local business, as in the case of exterior advertising, public clocks or light posts.³¹⁶ Graffiti has also become a sort of fashion in the interior design industry, for example, in exhibitions like Casa Cor.³¹⁷ Not only has the formal art market commodified graffiti and street art, but there is also evidence of the emergence of an informal (underground) art market in the news articles analyzed for this research. For example:

The twin brothers Gustavo and Otávio Pandolfo – os gêmeos, the most successful couple of the national urban art – are the main targets and they have observed the appearance of holes in the walls where they created graffiti.

A little over a year ago, they were participants in an unusual scene in the studio that they keep in Cambuci. They received a distinguished art collector, who was carrying on his arm a piece of a wall painted by them. The man, who had prevented the demolition of the wall and paid for its removal, wanted the signature of the artists to validate the newest work of his private collection. He had no success. The *Folha* tried to talk several times with the pair, who did not return any calls.

“What was done for the street has to remain in the street. When it is removed, it loses value” says the gallerist Alexandre Gabriel, from the Fortes Vilaça, who represents os gêmeos and did not want to reveal the name of the collector. “This type of artwork has no commercial value,” he warns.

That is not the finding of the dealer Carlos Puliti. Late last year, he made off with the gate of a mechanical workshop in Liberdade, painted by graffiti artist Titi Freak, who is represented by the gallery Choque Cultural and who exhibited at MASP until the 14th.

³¹⁵ The following corporations and business have used (hip-hop) graffiti aesthetics or have been related with graffiti projects: Red Bull, Pão de Açúcar supermarkets, Coca-Cola, Skol, Nike, Puma, Bank Boston, Nokia, Motorola, among others. For the reference about Red Bull, see: “*O Hip Hop toma posse da cidade*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 05.05.2002). For Coca-Cola, see: “*“Passatempos” são atração de megafestival*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 14.02.2003).

³¹⁶ For outdoor advertising, see: “*Grafite deixa gueto, seduz a classe média e vira moda*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 23.06.2007). The project of graffiti on public clocks was developed with the collaboration of the company Publicronos, as reported in: “*Grafites substituem anúncios publicitários em relógios digitais*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 10.07.2002). Similarly, the placement of graffiti on lights posts was done in coordination with Eletropaulo, as mentioned in: “*Associação pinta postes no Cambuci*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 16.11.2004).

³¹⁷ For example: “*Branco de hospital dá lugar ao grafite na Casa Cor 2003*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 18.05.2003).

To get the piece, Puliti bought a new gate for the workshop, which cost him R\$ 3000. Now, he is negotiating the sale of the work with a collector, whose name he does not want to reveal, for R\$ 10,000. He says that it was precisely the unusual support, a gate, which attracted the possible buyer. “You don’t see this type of work in the galleries.” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 28.02.2010) [News article by Leticia de Castro (Journalist of *Folha de São Paulo*)]

While this commodification of the practice is welcome by some of the graffiti producers or street artists, some of them are opposed to this process of co-optation. Graffiti is considered as countercultural or unauthorized, defying the official aesthetics of the city and constituting an appropriation of public (or private) surfaces. Indeed, some of the graffiti artists included in galleries clearly differentiate their canvases (art products or commodities) from their street art. Some of these producers even suggest that “something is lost” when graffiti moves from the backstreets and the alleys to the tidy atmosphere of the “white cube”.³¹⁸ The authorized works of “graffiti” placed on public surfaces are considered as something else (murals, public art), and they are not necessarily considered graffiti pieces:

Thirteen years later, what today Rui prefers to call a mural (“graffiti for me is only truthful when it is not allowed; when it is allowed it is a mural, which is also valid and necessary”) wins restoration supported by the Prefecture of São Paulo and by companies of paint and brushes. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 26.07.2004) [News article by Alexandra Moraes (Journalist of *Folha de São Paulo*)]

“If you re-appropriate a space that has been bought”, he says, in reference to the outdoors, “this is re-appropriation to the maximum.” Schiller³¹⁹ affirms that the use of new resources, from propaganda to other forms of street art like graffiti, is a “global tendency”, because the traditional media “have become more and more inefficient”.

“Advertisers try to explore non-traditional ways to reach people. Street art is a good resource because it is energetic and it can impact people”, he says.

“But it is not art, it is not graffiti, it is an imitation”, says the “curator” of these new forms of propaganda.

He cites the specific example of graffiti, which, for him, by definition, could not be paid or legalized, given that part of its realization is the conquest of a place – and the purchase would completely pervert it. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 03.07.2006) [News article by Rafael Cariello (Journalist of *Folha de São Paulo*)]

³¹⁸ This discussion is included in the first chapter of this dissertation.

³¹⁹ Marc Schiller, director and curator of the virtual gallery Wooster Collective Gallery, created to promote artworks placed in public streets [woostercollective.com].

Graffiti writers criticize work on demand

The partnership between the local government and graffiti artists who paint panels on the streets generates divisions in a movement that still sees illegality as its driving force. The pichador Não, who wrote on three works of the Bienal Internacional de São Paulo in 2004, is one of the most vocal critics of “legal” graffiti. For him, to create graffiti requires the ability to avoid being caught. “The consented painting is not graffiti, it is something else, it is a panel, mural, who knows...”

The pair osgemeos admits some loss of bonding with the root movement. “From the moment that graffiti comes out of the street and enters a gallery, it ceases to be graffiti. In the street, each one acts as he wants, inside a gallery, no”, explains Gustavo Pandolfo.

The graffiti artist Ise, one of the few who remains in the streets since the 90s, says that graffiti has lost much of its ideology: “There are few who paint only for pure pleasure and who stay on the walls”. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 27.07.2008) [News article by Juliana Nadin and Gustavo Fioratti (Journalists of *Folha de São Paulo*)]

The nature of graffiti is presented as something wild, free, untamed, opposing the usual dynamics of the city. Under this spotlight, the productions are expected to surprise people – the citizens – in their routines, granting them art and beauty at no cost. This debate about the “real essence” of graffiti expresses the inner struggles developing among grafiteiros, street artists, and pichadores/pixadores; each group with its own moral principles, goals, ideologies, and strategies for appropriating and transforming the public space. As mentioned above, “attacks” against (official) graffiti or murals by pixadores have condemned this selling out of graffiti and street art. In other circumstances, graffiti and pichação/pixação producers coexist and collaborate.

B. Social value of (hip-hop) graffiti and street art production

Interestingly, the discourse of the aesthetics of graffiti and street art seems to be related to the origins of the practice in the hip-hop movement, which is linked to a series of social markers such as “race”, “poverty” and “periphery”. Hip-hop culture is not only the result of the physical and symbolic exclusion that these (minority) groups have experienced, but also includes a political dimension of recognition, revindication and

belonging. Hip-hop, indeed, has suffered a process of commodification itself.³²⁰ However, graffiti – and other practices, such as rap – still provide strategies of both cohesion and political criticism to their “producers” and “consumers”.

The social value of graffiti as a practice – in impoverished communities, mostly – is related to its capacity to foster self-esteem, offering young people at risk the opportunity to get involved with something creative and productive, rescuing them from their potential involvement in criminal activities. Graffiti is offered among other courses and classes, which are conceived as *prevention strategies* aimed at transforming the life in these communities and at mitigating a series of social issues (from drug dealing/addiction to health and education):

According to DJ Hum, one of the pioneers of the hip-hop wave, it was in 1998 that the thing exploded: “Many hip-hop workshops were emerging, with people bringing information and self-esteem to the periphery. People teaching graffiti, break, the work of the DJs and the poetry of the MCs to the young people there.” In addition to the works that use hip-hop as a tool for social action and are mainly performed by posses (organizations of groups), DJ Hum attributes the growth of rap to the quality of the new harvest of artists. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 22.01.2001) [News article by Fernanda Mena (Journalist of *Folha de São Paulo*)]

“I feel like I am in a void, there is nothing to do here”, comments the student Michely, 17, about Lajeado, where she lives. The neighborhood, located at the eastern end of São Paulo, is first on the list of the ten most excluded regions of the city, according to the study “O Mapa da Exclusão/Inclusão Social da Cidade de São Paulo”, coordinated by the councilwoman Aldaíza Sposati, PT (read the text on page 8).

It was also selected by the Prefecture of São Paulo as one of the points of focus for the program Bolsa-Trabalho, directed at young people between 16 and 20 years old. Michely is one of the 46 teenagers who have just joined a graffiti workshop. The idea of the project is to offer the residents of these areas – deprived of leisure facilities, health and education – both professional opportunities and socialization. The prefecture pays R\$ 81 per month for each student.

The artist and graffiti writers Juneca, 32, and Celso Gitahy, 33, in charge of the workshop, highlight two points at work: “We want to sensitize them, to awaken in them the taste of contemplation, and to offer them the chance to make a few bucks, by decorating storefronts.” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 23.07.2001) [News article by Augusto Pinheiro (Journalist of *Folha de São Paulo*)]

³²⁰ This discussion is included in the Chapter I of this dissertation.

Considering the aforementioned process of commodification of the practice and the typical dynamics of the art market, graffiti is presented at this juncture as an asset in the job market; providing some abilities (capabilities, capacities) that may translate into better opportunities to earn an income or become (self-)employed or an entrepreneur. Some of these projects are developed with the collaboration of local authorities, such as the Bolsa-Trabalho:

Citizenship

Another alternative, this one more oriented towards the concern of social inclusion, are [sic] the programs Bolsa-Trabalho and Começar de Novo, of the Secretaria Municipal do Trabalho, Desenvolvimento e Solidariedade of São Paulo.

According to the coordinator of the Bolsa-Trabalho, Dulce Helena Cazzuni, 38, the programs aim to rescue the citizenship of the people.

“We offer between 30 and 40 categories”, affirms Cazzuni, citing, among others, courses and workshops on civic education, community work for housing, graffiti and community work for transit.

The Bolsa-Trabalho accepts applications from people aged between 16 and 20 years old, who have been unemployed for at least six months and who have lived for at least two years in the locality of São Paulo. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 10.02.2002) [News article by Guilherme Cuchierato (Journalist of *Folha de São Paulo*)]

Others may be the result of the work of specialized NGOs, such as Quixote Spray Arte³²¹ or Cidade Escola Aprendiz³²², that were formed with the explicit goal of rescuing young people through graffiti practice, and subsequently teaching them how to commercialize their productions:

The agency turns into a profession what the majority views as a hobby. It emerged four months ago in the social project Quixote, which has already rescued 1,500 young people, most of them street children involved with drugs and former interns of the Febem.

The guys and girls start as students and then go to work at the agency, whose motto is Between Spray and a Gun, It's Only a Matter of Opportunity. Many of the apprentices do not know how to read or write and, with the spray, they learn to draw the alphabet. “The objective is to

³²¹ Quixote Arte Spray [projetoquixote.org.br], created in 1996 by psychiatrist Auro Lescher and psychologist Graziela Bedoian (and also linked to the Department of Psychiatry of the Universidade Federal de São Paulo), proposes the use of graffiti and the commercialization of graffiti products as a way to help the youth population at risk, particularly in relation to drugs, mental health, and child homelessness (crianças da rua). See also: “*Psiquiatra vê na arte uma poderosa aliada terapêutica*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 07.12.2006).

³²² Escola Cidade Aprendiz [http://cidadeescolaaprendiz.org.br], funded by Gilberto Dimenstein, is an NGO located in Vila Magdalena, São Paulo. It aims to create opportunities for education in several communities, through access to technologies and the use of art and culture.

give them culture, and not to create supergrafiteiros. Passing on culture, we give means to the person to fit into society,” says “Angel” (Alexandre Ricardo dos Santos), 20, educator at the graffiti workshop. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 07.06.2001) [News article published in the section *Coluna Social*]

Graffiti is the greatest example. From outside walls, it moved indoors and even to decoration shows. The marginal art turned into a professional skill in places like Choque Cultural and the NGO Projeto Cidade Escola Aprendiz.

“Graffiti is growing and it is losing its most aggressive stereotype. There is a more conceptual work, which has been well applied in interior design and which has guaranteed the survival of many new graffiti artists”, says the artist Eymard Ribeiro, 37, from the Projeto Cidade Escola Aprendiz. “We teach how to deal with other galleries and set prices”, for example, explains the architect Baixo Ribeiro, 42, founder of the school-gallery Choque Cultural. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 18.12.2005) [News article by Giovanni Gerolla (Collaborator at *Folha de São Paulo*)]

These initiatives should not be simply interpreted in terms of the commodification of the countercultural practice of graffiti or as the opportunistic effort of local authorities, aiming to ingratiate themselves with the impoverished “periphery”. The emergence of these projects must be welcomed, particularly because their positive outcomes could escalate and actually produce a change in the lives of these excluded individuals or groups. However, this does not signify that these projects are the best that local authorities can do for these communities. Without a doubt, criticism is necessary, and in the case of this social value of (hip-hop) graffiti, the following text is exemplary:

The program of the government of the State of São Paulo, Parceiros do Futuro, for example, promotes 17 graffiti workshops and ten for break [dancing] during the weekends, when the doors of the schools perceived as problematic remain open to the public. The instructors are service providers.

Fábio Féter, 22, began work for the Prefecture of Santo André four months ago as an instructor for disc-jockeys. Since then, he has managed to live only from hip-hop.

He also gives private lessons to future DJs and he is the rap singer of the group Sistema Racional.

His monthly income is around R\$ 800. “To live from hip hop is difficult because there is no stability.”

According to the sociologist Helena Abramo, 42, although some young people manage to survive on hip-hop, the issue of unemployment is not yet resolved.

“If on the one hand, the young man affirms his creativity and cultural identity by working with hip-hop, on the other hand, the work is often developed in a precarious way and without formality,” she says. (*Folha*

de São Paulo, 23.12.2001) [News article by Mirella Domenich (Freelancer at *Folha de São Paulo*)]

Hip-hop and graffiti projects function in this social dimension in synchrony with the broader system of production and consumption. The projects developed in communities focus on the voluntary participation (rational choice) of their beneficiaries, who are the ones responsible for recognizing these initiatives as an (economic) “opportunity”. Graffiti (among other activities) is offered as a way to gain recognition and hopefully economic benefits, without referring, for example, to the merits of the activity or the role of taste and prestige in art consumption.³²³ If *supergrafiteiros* – to use a term mentioned in one of the quotes – sell their work for a couple of thousands, this does not signify that all other graffiti producers would get any contracts or even achieve any recognition. In other words, not all graffiti artists become as well-known as OsGemeos (not to mention the internationally renowned British street artist Banksy³²⁴).

Indeed, some of the graffiti producers (impoverished youth) trained in these projects may be able to sell some murals or paint some stores, but this does mean that all their problems (or the problems of their families and communities) are solved. They could be even talented and creative, but if the art market is not interested in their proposals (or if it follows some particular fashionable trend), these producers could find themselves excluded, independently of the “value” of their works. The contracts would generally depend on adults too, who may influence the content and message or even the aesthetics of the works.³²⁵ In this sense, graffiti becomes like any other job, satisfying the needs of a previously established market, with the new graffiti producers (impoverished youth) being trained to adapt to any circumstances in order to sell. One of the quotations also mentions the transformation of a “hobby” into a “profession”:

³²³ Franco (2009) suggests that both the art market and graffiti artists profit from the commodification of their productions, while pichadores are highly excluded from the art institutions. Following this argumentation, it is likely that the buyers would respond only to trends in fashion (i.e. colors, forms, etc.) or to the creations of some specific graffiti artists, while ignoring other emergent or less-known graffiti producers, independently of how talented they are (or may be).

³²⁴ Banksy – one of the most celebrated graffiti artists – is highly valued in the art market, not only because his works have been acquired by Hollywood celebrities, but also because of the “political” nature of his works. In 2013, OsGemeos and Banksy placed a collaborative work in New York, consisting of two canvases hanging in an improvised gallery under the High Line at West 24th Street, Chelsea.

³²⁵ This discussion is mentioned in Chapter I of this dissertation. See also: Austin (2001).

Does this mean that impoverished “at risk” youth should embrace as a *profession* what other young people (middle or upper classes) practice as a *hobby*?³²⁶

If we consider the aesthetics and success of (hip-hop) graffiti in both the art market and the interior design industry, then graffiti producers (impoverished youth) are likely to sell their work to middle-class and high-income customers. Graffiti producers may sell superhero figures to decorate rooms for children.³²⁷ *Supergrafiteiros* may be free to create whatever they like and offer it to the art market, relying on their international recognition in the streets and galleries. What if, for example, a drug dealing gang offers some cash for a graffiti piece depicting police officers being shot to death? Or what if they offer nothing and threaten the graffiti artist in their community to paint the “mural”? One article refers to such an (exceptional) case of coercion:

According to the police, the drug dealer would have commissioned a work that shows bloody PMs [military police]

Graffiti leads painter to prison in Diadema

The painter Emerson Gomes Elias, 26, was arrested and fined by the Delegacia de Investigações sobre Entorpecentes (Dise) in Diadema, in Grande São Paulo, for creating graffiti of a series of panels extolling the banditry of the favela of the Samba hill.

Elias said he received R\$ 800, in two installments, for painting a wall on the street Botucudos, last December. One of the panels represents a hardtop vehicle of the Rota (Rondas Ostensivas Tobias de Aguiar) and a group of PMs, covered in blood, being shot by gangsters, one of them with a cap with the initials MDS (Morro do Samba).

In the other two panels, heavily armed bandits and a group of people are apparently selling drugs. A fourth panel was not concluded. Elias says that he was scared of the consequences of the work and he stopped providing the service. The graffiti only now caught the attention of the police due to the attacks against PM bases. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 14.01.2006) [Article published in the section *Cotidiano*]

In this case, even if it may be considered as an exceptional circumstance, “graffiti” – a mural – was indeed the cause of the involvement of this young painter with drug dealers. But what if the graffiti producer was hired to do the same violent depiction of dead police officers in a private room instead of on a public wall? Is it art?

³²⁶ It could also be interesting to consider the relationship between the demand for graffiti productions by the middle and upper classes in Brazil and the emergence of graffiti projects in peripheral communities. In this sense, the idea is to see whether the demand for cultural products is reflected in the supply of graffiti, or vice versa.

³²⁷ Juneca (graffiti artist Osvaldo Júnior) is included as an example of these commissioned works in private houses, as mentioned in the article “*Na sala ou no quarto, desenhos enfeitam casas de descolados*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 23.06.2007).

Is it *still* a crime? This is precisely the result of the ambiguity in the use of the term *grafite* to refer to a diversity of phenomena: some lawful, others unauthorized, some voluntary, others coerced. This example raises questions about the limits of the “commercialization” of the practice. Indeed, “graffiti” is personalized in the headline (“*Grafite leva pintor à prisão em Diadema*”), in which it is implied that the practice itself is threatening the young painter, while the drug dealers remain out of the picture.

Keeping this atypical example in mind, the emergence of projects such as *Quixote Spray Arte* and *Cidade Escola Aprendiz* could be considered as something positive for these impoverished and excluded communities, but they should also be combined with other official initiatives that aim to improve the structural conditions of the so-defined “periphery” and its inhabitants.

Another social value of graffiti practices, as mentioned in the former section, is their strategic use in the fight against pichação/pixação. This refers not only to graffiti as a form of *evolved pichação*, portraying pichadores as in need of *rehabilitation* (through some metamorphose into graffiti artists); but also includes the intentional use of the practice to “occupy” empty walls before pichação/pixação does. Murals, commissioned “graffiti” and similar forms of public art would function here as a type of target hardening, similar to the use of plants (climbers) or any anti-graffiti coating. The following quotes refer to this strategy of social control:

In addition to developing specific policies for the 2 million young people between the ages of 15 and 24 who live in São Paulo, the prefecture has gauged that there are two immediate ways to quell the practice of pichação: 1 – to defeat the pichador by fatigue, by maintaining bridges, viaducts, walls and facades in a perfect state of conservation. The Pacaembu, the avenida 23 de Maio and the cemetery of Consolação are good examples of this; 2 – to promote and stimulate a cultural change, transforming pichação into art. In this sense, the prefecture, the NGO Aprendiz and the Foundation BankBoston inaugurated last July 12 the SP Capital Grafite. Hundreds of former pichadores – currently grafiteiros – are going to intervene in 50 points in the city, especially those that are preferred targets for pichadores[...]. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 27.07.2003) [Letter by Alexandre Youssef (Youth Coordinator of the City of São Paulo)]³²⁸

³²⁸ Alexandre Youssef is included in another 13 news articles, as a source on graffiti. He is presented not only as a youth coordinator in the local government but also as a grafiteiro. It is possible to argue that from this privileged position, both organizational and symbolic, Youssef is interested in portraying pichação/pixação in synchrony with the discourses of both local authorities and the mass media.

Tinted and resistant ceramic, climbing plants and graffiti prevent vandalism

Wall does not remain white in the fight against pichações

[...]

Another solution is to ask graffiti artists to create drawings on the wall. “After I did this, they never wrote pichação again”, affirms Hugo Crespi Junior, 47, a partner of the restaurant Vila Harmonia.

He says that, next to the restaurant, there was an alley that “was a hell of so much pichação”, so he thought about making a big mural with graffiti and got in contact with the young people from the NGO Projeto Cidade Escola Aprendiz.

“It turned out to be very beautiful, it enlightens the alley”, he says. “Instead of hiring a policeman to watch, it is much more productive to encourage the boys to become artists.”

Like this initiative, the Agência Quixote Spray Arte, part of the Projeto Quixote, gives professional graffiti courses to young people. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 19.06.2005) [News article by Bruna Martins Fontes (Assistant Editor of Construção E Imóveis)]³²⁹

This “social use” of graffiti against pichação/pixação is based on the (informal) code of respect existing between graffiti artists, writers and pixadores: Producers generally do not paint over (*atropelar*) the work of others, preferring to find new empty surfaces for their pieces or signatures.³³⁰ However, graffiti is here at the service of those who commissioned it, restricting the emergence of political graffiti (pichação) or counter-aesthetics (pixação). This does not mean that graffiti is recognized as a rightful practice or artistic expression, but simply indicates that it is preferred over other forms of “vandalism”. Under this interpretation, graffiti seems to be perceived as the “lesser of two evils”. Again, the political communication of pichação/pixação (for example, as an act of civil disobedience) is ignored or simply denied.

C. Anti-graffiti and anti-street art strategies between 2001 and 2010

Even considering that graffiti and other forms of street art have achieved some recognition in Brazil, there are still some discourses, initiatives and strategies against these practices and their producers. The law, for example, is the first “strategy” against

³²⁹ As mentioned in Chapter I, commissioned graffiti and murals are used to reduce the available space for alternative – unauthorized and countercultural – forms of graffiti production.

³³⁰ See Chapter I. Austin (2001) and Ferrell (1993) also mention this in their respective works.

these practices.³³¹ In relation to the official aesthetics of urban environments, one of the arguments refers to the difference between high and low art. Graffiti and street art are framed as something popular or of “bad taste” (being related to other practices like rap or samba). It is interesting that some of these “despised” cultural products, considered as unworthy because their only aim is entertainment, are popular practices that happen in public spaces. Even the work of supergraffiti artists – like OsGêmeos – is occasionally framed in this discourse, despite the international recognition and commercial value attached to their work:

In the case of the Gêmeos, who have already achieved success in the American market, where the exotic usually has a guaranteed space, the result of their first solo exhibition in Brazil is a production that is far from understanding art as an example of knowledge and the exercise of language. Pure entertainment, no matter how well it is done, deserves a place more appropriate than a contemporary art gallery. What one sees in the Fortes Vilaça would be better suited to the parade of a samba school. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 21.08.2006) [News article by Fabio Cypriano (Journalist of *Folha de São Paulo*)]

A similar argument is presented by Barbara Gancia, in reference not only to graffiti but also including “popular” dances and other cultural manifestations mostly associated with impoverished or low-income groups. This article, for example, clearly relates to the epidemic and medical discourse mentioned above, remarking the foreign nature of hip-hop and expressing criticism of the official projects promoting the practice of graffiti in the periphery:

Culture of bacilli

If we use public funds to teach hip-hop, rap and funk, why not include in the list the axé or the bottle dance?

DURING THIS WEEK, in the wake of the visit of the Minister of Culture, Gilberto Gil, to Austin, Texas, where he went to talk about digital culture and related topics, a correspondent from The New York Times newspaper, Larry Rohter (him, always him), produced a report entitled “Brazilian government invests in hip-hop culture”.

In it, Rohter tells his North-American reader that, in Brazil, the government is using the money of taxpayers to disseminate “hip-hop culture” among young people on the periphery. He says that, because he was boycotted several times in his early career, Gil “feels some affinity” for these musical movements, and that, for this, he conceived the program Pontos de Cultura do Brasil, which distributes donations of up

³³¹ The discussion regarding the laws against grafite and pichação/pixação is included in the first pages of this chapter.

to US\$ 60,000 to community groups on the peripheries, in order to develop “new forms of expression of the latent creativity of the poor people of the country”.

In a country in which the President of the Republic considers it witty to talk in “ponto G” at a news conference, to distribute public money to teach the disadvantaged youth the techniques of graffiti and aspiring rappers how to operate pick-ups, it may seem a natural thing. But I ask: What point have we reached? Since when are hip-hop, rap and funk, culture? If these forms of expression deserve to be promoted with the use of taxpayer money, why not include in the list the axé, the sertaneja music or, who knows, even courses to teach the bottle dance? The axé, at least, is our creation. Unlike hip-hop, rap and funk, which were born in the North-American ghettos. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 16.03.2007) [Opinion article by Barbara Gancia (Journalist and Columnist)]³³²

This interpretation of the hip-hop culture and graffiti, considering their producers as bacteria, does not take into account any possible appropriation of foreign culture by Brazilian youth. In the case of graffiti, for example, the (hip-hop) aesthetics have been frequently considered as one of the most impressive and original creations in the world.³³³ This distinction between high art and low art (national versus foreign, cultural products that “only entertain” versus those that are to be “comprehended, appreciated, contemplated”) seems to be intertwined with broader discourses about ethnicity, social class, gender, education, as well as with any other symbolic exclusions and barriers between “us” and “them”.³³⁴

Another form of anti-graffiti is related to the official efforts to remove and fight pichação/pichação. As mentioned before, graffiti is sometimes considered as an evolved form of pichação, and some projects have been developed by local authorities and NGOs with this in mind. However, as graffiti is illegal except when it is created with the (written) authorization of the property owner, some projects and local authorities

³³² This opinion article by Barbara Gancia evidences not only the distinction between supposedly high art and low art, but also includes a sort of essentialism of what belong to Brazilian culture and what is foreign. This argument gives clues that the same argumentative frames used to oppose graffiti may be part of broader discourse targeting several other social (peripheral) practices. Gancia, daughter of two legends of Brazilian auto racing (Piero and Lula Gancia), describes herself as passionate about auto racing, tennis and golf in the article “*Sou apaixonada pelo golfe*” (*Golfe Amador*, 21.09.2005) [http://www.golfeamador.com.br/pg_dinamica/bin/pg_dinamica.php?id_pag=469]. The journalist has been awarded several international prizes and writes frequently for magazines like *Vogue*, *Status* and *Elle* [<http://perfil.caras.uol.com.br/barbara-gancia>]. Her personal interests, it is evident, are diametrically opposed to the passions of popular (peripheral) youth.

³³³ Manco et al. (2005: 7) describes Brazil as the “place to go” for artistic inspiration in the graffiti scene.

³³⁴ See Chapter II for the theoretical insight regarding spaces and normalcy. This point is also reviewed in the conclusions of this dissertation (Chapter VI).

also fight graffiti because it indirectly encourages pichação.³³⁵ The project *Cidade Limpa*, as reported in one of the articles, did not differentiate between graffiti and pichação.³³⁶ Indeed, the “accidental” removal of graffiti pieces in the fight against pichação/pixação has also been reported, with the subsequent protest of their (celebrated) creators.³³⁷

Retaliation

Osgemeos say that many of their works have already vanished from the urban landscape. “Three big murals were erased. About the smaller, I don’t know what to say” tells Otávio. Indeed, the artist Nunca affirms to have had between a hundred and 150 works covered with paint. “I am outraged and I warn about retaliation. They did not erase a mural, they erased a part of the history of São Paulo’s art. The prefecture needs to publicly apologize for it,” says Nunca.

Nina Pandolfo adds: “How can art be considered some filth to be combated with the Cidade Limpa law? Does art dirty the city?” For her, “São Paulo does not have a horizon anymore, only buildings. And they are in tones like gray, yellow or white. When people put colors on the wall, it opens a horizon.” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 04.07.2008) [News article by Audrey Furlaneto (Journalist of *Folha de São Paulo*)]

This complaint was published in relation to the removal – in 2008, during the administration of Gilberto Kassab – of a commissioned graffiti mural painted in 2002 with the support of the former Major Marta Suplicy.³³⁸ Whether this was an “accident”, or the intentional removal of graffiti, is open to debate. However, even if the local authorities are against graffiti, it seems that some (exclusive) group of graffiti and street artists have achieved an extraordinary degree of national and international recognition, making it easier for them to denounce any “attack” on their productions. It is likely that the removal of pieces created by less-known (less-important) *grafiteiros* could go unnoticed. As demanded by Nunca in the former quote, the local authorities indeed “apologized” in public to these (celebrated) graffiti artists:

Prefecture apologizes for the removal of graffiti in SP

[...]

³³⁵ See “*Prefeitura quer cobrar limpeza de pichador*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 26.03.2005). In this article, the secretary of the Prefeitura de São José dos Campos states that graffiti clearly encourages pichação.

³³⁶ See “*Grafiteiros acusam prefeitura de implantar política antigrafito*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 24.06.2007).

³³⁷ I refer to the celebrated graffiti artists, because these producers have the symbolic power necessary to place their demands in the media. However, non-famous graffiti producers may have their works erased, without any possibility of demanding a public apology from the local authorities.

³³⁸ See “*‘Por equívoco’, prefeitura apaga painel de artistas*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 04.07.2008).

After conquering territory in the rooms of museums and art galleries, as well as forging an international path with the support of multinationals and foreign institutions, the paulistano graffiti artists scored, last week, another super goal. The Prefecture of São Paulo admitted to the error that they have been committing for years.

The team of the grafiteiros changed the score of the game when the Mayor Gilberto Kassab called for a conversation, held last July 16, with the couple osgemeos, formed by the brothers Gustavo and Otávio Pandolfo. Two of the more recognized artists of the city, the brothers now have a work on the façade of the Tate Modern in London, one of the most important museums in the world.

The chat was a sort of apology for the act committed on July 3, when the program Cidade Limpa erased a mural of 680 meters that decorated the Avenue 23 de Maio. There were collected works by Nina Pandolfo, osgemeos, Vitché and Herbert Baglion, among other names that make up the history of graffiti in São Paulo.

For the Prefecture, the act was accidental. “The company hired to paint the city is not a curator of art in graffiti”, justified the secretary Andrea Matarazzo, of the Coordination of Subprefectures. “The painter does not know to differentiate between a work that has value and one that does not.” To recant, the Prefecture commissioned the two artists to produce a new project, a panel to occupy the same space. There is no date set for the project to be put into practice. (*Folha de São Paulo*, 27.07.2008) [News article by Juliana Nadin and Gustavo Fioratti (Journalist of *Folha de São Paulo*)]

One may argue that it is positive for local authorities to recognize the work of these (celebrated) graffiti artists and to admit their responsibility for the removal. However, this case is about a commissioned piece or mural. In the graffiti and street art culture, as mentioned in the first chapter of this dissertation, works are expected to be temporary, ephemeral and exposed to the elements. Indeed, graffiti artists, writers and pichadores are always in search of new blank spaces to place their art or their inscriptions and signatures. Taking this into account, it is interesting that this commissioned work lasted six years, and even after it was “accidentally” removed, the wall was again granted to the same (celebrated) artists who had occupied it before, instead of being offered to other (unknown, emergent) graffiti artists.³³⁹ Does the space remains in the hands of those graffiti artists who already have political, symbolic and even economic power?

The celebration and recognition of graffiti and street art, associated not only with its (hip-hop) aesthetics and economic value but also including the social uses of the

³³⁹ See “*Artistas refazem painel apagado por engano*” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 10.12.2008).

practice, may explain why this practice is less opposed than its “ugly” relative, pichação/pixação. The public debate about graffiti/street art and pichação/pixação in the newspaper *Folha de São Paulo* is complex, with a series of discourses and interpretations intertwined with other social phenomena (race, social class, center-periphery, high art versus low art, order-disorder, among others). The sources can also be considered balanced, including the views of local authorities, academics, graffiti and street artists, pixadores, private owners, citizens and police officers.

Chapter VI

Conclusions

Graffiti, street art, and writing culture (including tagging and pichação/pixo) are associated with multiple discourses, interpretations, perceptions and practices, which take form in relation to the polysemy of each of these terms, the social use or (economic) value attributed to each production, political and economic interests, as well as cultural and aesthetic (dis)approval. The news and opinion articles analyzed in this dissertation – published and/or produced by *La Nación* (Costa Rica) and *Folha de São Paulo* (Brazil) – share some of these discourses, but differ in many others.³⁴⁰ This final chapter highlights the main conclusions of this research, not only addressing the discourses held in common as well as their discrepancies; but also proposing new paths for further theoretical and empirical research.

The polysemy of the term “graffiti”, as mentioned in the first chapter of this dissertation, complicates the possibility of establishing clear boundaries among different productions, and the social implications associated with each of these practices are also elusive. One general conclusion may be valid for both countries: Graffiti, as an artistic (hip-hop inspired) practice is promoted and welcomed, but censored or punished when created outside the normative frame (of commissioned artworks, written permissions, zones of tolerance, or in simple terms, when it is not linked to a particular social project). Other forms of inscription, such as tagging culture (writing culture) and pichação/pixação are widely opposed, rejected and persecuted.

Why is this conclusion relevant and what kind of theoretical reflection can be obtained from this statement? Even if this conclusion can be considered as a “well-known truth” (in both academic literature and “common” knowledge), it is only after its confirmation – through the systematic analysis of news and opinion articles – that the way in which these discourses intertwine and oppose each other can be assessed (for

³⁴⁰ As mentioned in Chapter III, this dissertation takes a dialogical approach to both news and opinions articles published by these newspapers. In this sense, *La Nación* and *Folha de São Paulo* are considered as actors (for example, in editorials), but also as a support or medium for the transmission of other actors’ ideas, opinions, beliefs, etc. The discourses were expected to be multiple, diverse and even contradictory.

example, by considering their ideological components and their possible outcomes and repercussions). Indeed, some discourses identified in this research have been overlooked or were poorly analyzed in previous studies on the topic, being recognized for the first time in this research.

To present these outcomes, this section has been structured in three separate but interconnected explanatory frames: First, discourses opposing the practice of graffiti (specifically unauthorized or illegal graffiti, tagging culture, and pichação). Second, the notion of the *right to the city*, an interpretation that may work as a counterargument to the first interpretation proposed here. Associated with this idea, I propose the need to address what may be called the *right to the (urban) protest*, a concept that may include both legal forms of dissent and acts of civil disobedience. And finally, the third subdivision refers to perceptions of otherness, which are linked to ideas of both physical and symbolic processes of inclusion and exclusion, as well as to their interrelations and dynamics.

Discourses against unauthorized graffiti productions, tagging culture and pichação/pixo

The key element in understanding the variety of discourses referring to unauthorized inscriptions on public and private surfaces (namely graffiti, tags, or pichações) is based on the concept of the legal protection of property. In interpreting this as something almost *sacred* (emphasized in the idea of purity and integrity), both public and private property are perceived as a core principle in our capitalist-democratic systems. The producers of these unauthorized inscriptions, no matter their needs for expression or their ultimate political goals, are held responsible for their acts against this “natural” and “inviolable” arrangement of (urban) social life.³⁴¹

This argument is not only presented in strict reference to its legal connotations (including for example, laws, articles, enforcement methods and punishments), but also translates into economic value (i.e. the costs of graffiti removal, the impact on property

³⁴¹ Sennett (1990: 98) remarks how a notion of wholeness is associated with the sacredness of the building – or in this case, the public or private surface. The unauthorized placement of inscriptions, no matter their aesthetic value, is perceived as a form of impurity.

prices, etc.). I consider this the “normative” form of the anti-graffiti (anti-pichação) discourse, because the wall (the public or private surface on which graffiti may be placed) constitutes the frontier that cannot be crossed: One cannot allow graffiti, pichadores or political dissenters to appropriate any wall they want, just as one cannot allow anyone to appropriate the property of others (money, food, weapons, information, etc.). This idea is anchored in the capitalist structure of democratic Western societies.

Moreover, this “normative” form of the anti-graffiti struggle is intertwined with other discourses, which I call here the discourses of contamination. Two different (although related) readings are possible here: the medical/epidemiological discourse and the discourse of hygiene. The first refers to the practices as something imminently contagious, spreading from “them” to “us”.³⁴² The graffiti producers are sometimes reduced to the category of animals, germs or insects, reinforcing the idea of the pathogen agent responsible for the outbreak. Graffiti (tagging/pichação) are read as a disease that threatens the (physical) social body, which needs to be purified through the elimination of the signs (tags, pieces, pixos, explicit political inscriptions, etc.) and through the eradication of the contaminating agents, the writers/painters (through incarceration, social service, transformation of the producers into graffiti artists – and, as subtly implied, even through physical disappearance, their elimination).

The so-called epidemic of graffiti is associated with the idea of the destruction of property (rather than being considered as the emergence of countercultural spaces, in Löw’s sense (2001, 2010)). But how is property destroyed by inscriptions? Graffiti, tagging and pichações do not tear down a building or alter its function significantly (with the exception, perhaps, of public signs).³⁴³ It is an act against a specific form of *official aesthetics*. If graffiti is considered as something that defaces or disfigures, then human characteristics – a face – are being attributed to walls (and things). The medical/epidemiological reading rests on the rhetorical use of “the body” as constituting our surrounding environment, relating any “attack” against public/private surfaces as

³⁴² Han (2011) describes these processes as based on a scheme of negativity, in which a physical or symbolical separation emerges between those who belong and those who are considered as a threat to a given group.

³⁴³ Ferrell (1993: 174) suggests that homeowners, corporations and the city have the economic and technological resources to eliminate graffiti in a few minutes, as compared to the resources of graffiti producers. I consider this argument as extremely problematic. Even considering that some of these “victims” have the resources to deal with the damaging effects of graffiti, the producers place themselves above the law. The most appropriate interpretation for these actions is to understand them as acts of civil disobedience.

body-threatening, as an unauthorized inscription on “our” own (symbolic) skin. References to attacks against the (symbolic) body can produce fear and anxiety in the public, a situation that can be avoided when the discourses opposing the practice are maintained exclusively within the realm of legal discourse (perceiving graffiti as a form of crime or as vandalism).³⁴⁴

Related to this medical/epidemiological discourse, the discourse of hygiene opposes graffiti and other unauthorized inscriptions by relating them to ideas of dirt, pollution, disorder and messiness. The *spatial rationality* (Harvey, 2001) of the social space is based on its neatness, order, purity, lack of disturbance or accessibility. This is the reason why unauthorized graffiti is considered as a quality-of-life offense. Not surprisingly, and taking into consideration the previous medical/epidemiological discourse, the practice is paired with homelessness, prostitution and occasionally with drug addiction. All these practices are not only in clear opposition to all-encompassing notions of *public decency*, being threats to the ideals of social order; but they are also interpreted as highly contagious. If not contained, these unwanted behaviors can spread, signifying a threat to “our” lives,³⁴⁵ to our own *real* bodies. In this logic, graffiti, pichação and tagging are reduced to “irrational practices” without any evident purpose or goal, a damage or vandalism that makes no sense.

Against this rhetorical device, it is necessary to point out that graffiti is not the only “polluting” agent to be found in the urban environment of a given city: From smog to waste disposal, and including the acoustic contamination of traffic and the harmful effects of electromagnetic radiation attributed to cell towers, all these may constitute quality-of-life offenses. Are all these practices opposed as graffiti is? Should we consider advertising as a similar problem against the “common good”, as some graffiti producers insist? One explanation could be that most of these “externalities” are the outcome of the logical and rational, and therefore expected, functioning of the urban

³⁴⁴ Altheide (2002: 3) points out how discourses on media – based on entertainment formats – emphasize the notion of “fear” instead of the notion of “danger”. I propose to understand this tendency to frame “graffiti as an epidemic” as a way of relating the social practice to intrinsic fears about the body and contamination. In this sense, Han (2010: 8) also remarks that the last century could be considered as an “immunological era” (*immunologisches Zeitalter*); characterized by the division between inside/outside or friend/enemy; as well as the notions of attack/defense.

³⁴⁵ Duschinsky (2013) warns in his reflection about the “politics of purity”, that it may be a mistake to consider order as a monolithic concept. Based on the work of Valeri, he proposes that what is at the center of one concept of order may be peripheral in a different arrangement.

environment, while graffiti and other unwanted inscriptions come “out of nowhere” – the result of affective-emotional (and therefore “irrational”) drives or passions.

This idea of pollution is also subtly included in the perception of unauthorized graffiti as a destruction of heritage. History, as a concept, is celebrated in public spaces through the inclusion of monuments, obelisks and sculptures. Whether this “common past” is imposed on the citizens or inhabitants is open to debate. However, the inscriptions, pieces, tags or pichações placed on these surfaces are frequently interpreted as a *lack of something*: education, respect, sense of belonging. While some of these productions may have an explicit political goal, by contesting the celebration of history itself or because of their content and message, other more “innocent” inscriptions – such as “I love you Marcela” or “Marcela was here” – could also be *indirectly* interpreted as transgressive or political, constituting a (re)appropriation of the so-defined *shared public spaces*. It could be argued that this series of monuments and busts are based on the merit of those depicted, and that the illegal placement of signatures or deletions defies this supposed “meritocracy” (which is anchored in structural inequalities, expressed through oppression/domination/exploitation processes or the distribution of (symbolic) privileges).

In this sense, graffiti writers, street artists and pichadores are not necessarily ignorant – neither of the laws they are breaking, nor of the notion of heritage they are contesting or altering.³⁴⁶ Indeed, this idea of the producers as “uneducated” or unable to understand the “damage” that their “deviant” behavior is creating (both against themselves and against society) can be related to broader discourses about periphery, poverty, laziness (unproductive hobbies), etc.³⁴⁷ As noted in several news articles, some graffiti writers, activists and pichadores have produced inscriptions for or against specific causes (politics, crimes, specific rights), using graffiti and pichação as political media, as a way to reach the public sphere (*Öffentlichkeit*, in Habermas’s sense).

³⁴⁶ In the Brazilian case, recent pichações (2013) on the Monumento às Bandeiras in São Paulo could be considered as an example of this political use of the practice. This targeting of symbolic spaces is also found in Costa Rica, for example, with recent pro-abortion messages (2012) being placed on the building of the Conferencia Episcopal in San José. These cases may help to illustrate that both graffiti producers and pichadores may have specific goals in mind, even when sometimes their practice is more random.

³⁴⁷ These discourses targeting graffiti production could be considered as failed *moral panics* (Cohen, 2002 [1972]), given that the discourses against the practices do not dominate the public debate, and are challenged by some of the graffiti producers.

However, despite this political goal and given the current legal and judicial system protecting both public and private property, the practice of graffiti and pichação constitutes a form of vandalism or a crime (misdemeanor). The producers of any such inscriptions should expect to be punished if they are caught, and they have no legal right to place themselves above the law. If they *freely* decide to defy the law, then their actions can be considered as *acts of civil disobedience*, when politically and publicly justified as such.³⁴⁸ Accountability and the ascription of responsibility are the inevitable outcome of these acts. But what does “freely” means here?³⁴⁹ The conditions in which some of these producers live may be so harsh and unjust, or their political (aesthetic, social, cultural) goals so compelling and urgent, that their “voluntary participation” or involvement in acts of civil disobedience can be called into question. According to criminological theory, for example, the members of these groups may appeal to higher loyalties as a technique of neutralization, facilitating their involvement in illegal acts.³⁵⁰

Even if the production of inscriptions is a form of vandalism, the medical/epidemiological discourse and the discourse of pollution go beyond this legal-judicial frame and promote other more dangerous rhetoric/ideological devices.³⁵¹ It is interesting that the process of removal of these unauthorized productions is read as a process of cleaning (of eliminating “dirt”), and not as simply covering up or painting over. The difference may seem negligible, but it is in this interpretation where the idea of “purity” comes into play. And this purity relates not only to the whiteness/grayness of the public and private surfaces, but also to ideas of race, heritage, and national identity, among others. This may also represent the purity attributed to the concept of

³⁴⁸ Habermas (1996: 383) defines this as the self-referential character of an act of civil disobedience.

³⁴⁹ Feinberg (1970: 152-176) argues how difficult is to determine what a “fully voluntary action” may be and he considers “voluntariness” as a matter of degree, particularly in processes that seek the attribution of responsibility.

³⁵⁰ Sykes and Matza (1957) propose the theory of techniques of neutralization to explain how people may temporarily ignore moral notions and commit crimes. Can we consider these as fully voluntary actions? The actions seem to be context-specific and may vary according to each case. My interest here is to emphasize that the transgression involved in some graffiti productions may be the result of structural violence against graffiti producers or the groups/ideas/behaviors they seek to protect/represent.

³⁵¹ Discourses here are intertwined with ideologies through practices and anchored to particular institutions and groups or individuals, who may also be included in the newspapers as sources (or producers, in the case of opinion articles). This interpretation of discourses is partially based on the notions of ideology, hegemony and intellectuals proposed by Gramsci. See: Becker et al. (2013).

rationality, considered as cleansed of any irrational (in the sense of affective/emotive) passion.³⁵²

The medical/epidemiological discourse and the discourse of pollution do not seem to be exclusive of graffiti and pichação, but may also be used towards several other social practices and social phenomena (from behaviors to ideas). Even when these arguments were found in only a few articles (frequently, opinion columns), this fact does not necessarily indicate their lack of force, especially when these rhetorical devices and interpretive framings are intertwined with other discourses and practices of (symbolic/structural) exclusion or when they are attributed to relevant sources (police officers, academics, politicians, etc.).

This deconstruction of the portrayal of graffiti (as criminogenic and highly contaminating) works here, as Ferrell (1999) suggested, as a task of *criminological verstehen*; in which the structural inequalities and political agendas of the opponents of graffiti are observed, or in the long run challenged.

From *the right to the city* / *the right to the (urban) protest to the commodification/institutionalization of graffiti as a social practice*

The problem of “graffiti” (street art and pichação) as a form of vandalism is related, as mentioned above, to its unauthorized or illegal “nature”. This transgression has political meaning. While for some producers (like street artists) this transgression may constitute only an inevitable outcome of their purpose of “beautifying” (or appropriating) the city, for other producers (like pixadores or taggers) the illegal transgression may represent an identity constituent, if not an essential characteristic of the practice. This “violent” and “aggressive” appropriation of public surfaces, from the transformation of the official aesthetics to the inclusion of political or personal

³⁵² Emotions, passions and irrational behaviors are undervalued by the imposition of rationality as the ultimate form of (political) public life. See, for example, Adorno and Horkheimer (2002) and Sennett (2002 [1977]).

messages on the walls, could be related to both the notion of the *right to the city* and the *right to the (urban) protest*.³⁵³

As mentioned in the second chapter of this dissertation, the idea of the *right to the city* is “problematic”. Cities and urban spaces are complex systems, open and closed at the same time, constituting physical environments as well as representations, discourses, subjectivities and feelings, structured according to the current mode of production (following a capitalist spatial rationality) but also subjected to constant (authorized/unauthorized – functional/non-functional) transformations. To whom does the city belong? Who is excluded or feels as if she or he were excluded? Graffiti producers, street artists and pichadores refer to this need to appropriate the city and claim their right to transform the public surfaces: their right to the city (in both Lefebvre’s and Harvey’s sense, as the right to access the center and the right to transform the physical space). However, when this right is put into practice, the result may also be read as an imposition from this (subcultural) group on the citizenry as a whole (or at least on particular individuals and groups). However, this resulting imposition may be better read as a form of resistance, by taking into account power relations. Indeed, the transgressive work may also be welcomed and celebrated, not only by other producers or “fans” but also by members of the wider public, by members of the “citizenry”.

In relation to this *right to the city*, I also propose to include here the discussion about the *right to the (urban) protest*, which seems to apply to this emergence of “illegal” inscriptions, pieces, artworks and pixos.³⁵⁴ Some of these creations are simply personal messages or signatures, as well as other inscriptions that directly refer to political or social events (from social struggles to local murders). Other more artistic creations challenge the dominant discourse on a multiplicity of themes, including sexuality, race, inequality, the environment and notions of beauty. Particularly evident

³⁵³ For a discussion regarding the *right to the city*, see: Purcell (2002) and Attoh (2011). This particular right may be linked to the notion of *spatial politics of affect*, as a means to protest and appropriate the city, following the theoretical approach proposed by Thrift (2004). See also Chapter II.

³⁵⁴ One interesting exercise may be to consider these rights in the broader perspective of the Declaration of Human Rights: The right to access the city and the right to protest could be equated with the right to free expression (Article 19) and the right to demonstrate (Article 20 and 21). However, there is also a right to own property (Article 17), which has neither more nor less value than the right to expression or political dissent through demonstrations. In this sense, graffiti production can also be considered as both an offense against human rights and as the exercise of one human right – even in the case of unauthorized inscriptions, it could be argued that these actions do not challenge the structure of property itself, but the aesthetics, which may be considered as a part of a given property.

when they are illegal or unauthorized, but also visible in some commissioned works, these productions constitute a (primitive) form of an emergent public sphere, where some individuals or groups expose their ideas or feelings to the public (citizens/inhabitants). Should tags (signatures) and pichações be considered as (counter-aesthetic) protest? In a strict sense, they are, not only because of their transgressive (counter-hegemonic) nature, but also because they seem to appeal to other emotional-affective-“irrational” forms of politics. In line with this interpretation, graffiti producers can be considered as *subaltern* or *diasporic* publics, with specific political goals (Fraser, (1990); Avritzer and Costa (2004)) and with a claim for recognition. It is necessary to address the *political nature* of these acts without reducing them to the interpretation of the (explicit) *political content* of these inscriptions. Should graffiti writers and pichadores be punished because of their transgressions? Unless the law is transformed and rewritten, the practice constitutes a form of vandalism that violates the rights of others, and therefore should be punished.

The *right to the (urban) protest*, I suggest, should be considered as the right to get involved in acts of political dissent (protests, graffiti, parades, acts of civil disobedience, etc.), as an act of resistance. Following Foucault (1983: 211), it is through the analysis of these acts of resistance that power relations become evident: “Rather than analyzing power from the point of view of its internal rationality, it consists of analyzing power relations through the antagonism of strategies.” This right should be also considered as a complement to the *right to the city*, which grants access to the city (and participation in the opinion-formation and decision-making processes), but that can be ambiguous about political dissent. The *right to the (urban) protest* may help us to reconquer the city as a place for the promotion of political causes. It may include the right to the spontaneous occupation of public (and semi-public) places, which are currently oriented to the capitalist principles of production and consumption. This right may safeguard the anonymity of the dissenters, their right to free speech and to the communication of their ideas, including the right to share and broadcast images or videos depicting the abuses perpetrated on them by local authorities, corporations, churches and/or the police. Even if these dissenters *freely* involve themselves in acts of civil disobedience (like some forms of graffiti and pichação/pixação), the punishment for these transgressions should be proportionate, avoiding any Draconian measures.

If graffiti and pichação/pixação are considered forms of public protest and an (illegal but not illegitimate) appropriation of the city, then the arguments considering the practice as a form of *senseless* or *meaningless* vandalism need to be reviewed. On the contrary, such practices are signs of a (re)active citizenship (Dagnino, 2007). Indeed, when characterized under this discursive frame, the political dimension of the practice is obscured. The question is not whether graffiti is a form of vandalism, which in legal terms it is, but rather to whom it is *only* meaningless vandalism. In synchrony with this interpretation, some opponents remark that the social protests expressed in graffiti or pichação would be better expressed through ordinary (legal and authorized) channels of protest, namely, letters to the editor, lobbying, signature campaigns, etc. This argument reinforces the (hegemonic) idea that the only form of protest that has meaning is the one expressed in the formal language and rationality of the political system, denying the value of other forms of protest based on emotional and affective principles (such as the celebration of bodies, music, artwork and graffiti and pichações).³⁵⁵ As mentioned above, when citizens “freely” involve themselves in this type of “illegal” protest, the resulting act constitutes a form of civil disobedience, instead of being merely *pointless* vandalism.

To palliate the consequences of the unauthorized (illegal) placement of inscriptions and messages (pieces, artworks, tags) on public and private surfaces, local authorities and private owners have taken a somewhat more open stance regarding some graffiti productions (particularly street art). This is visible in reference to the creation of so-called *zones of tolerance*, or particular spots in the city where graffiti is allowed, promoted, or even commissioned and funded. By granting some spaces to graffiti producers and street artists, local authorities and private owners may avoid other unwanted inscriptions (in the sense of political messages, tags or pichações) through the premeditated/strategic occupation of available surfaces.³⁵⁶ This strategy is evident both in Brazil and Costa Rica. This may not only help to erode the emergence of (unauthorized) forms of the public sphere that use these spaces for social protests in acts of civil disobedience (or for emotional or affective forms of protest), but may also provide symbolic benefits for both local authorities and private owners (including

³⁵⁵ Avritzer and Costa (2004) refer to this type of politics in their definition of diasporic publics. Fraser (1990) points out this process for a much broader notion of subaltern (counter)publics.

³⁵⁶ Craw et al. (2006) analyze one case of graffiti deterrence through the use of a mural in New Zealand.

businesses and corporations), by portraying them as *liberal* and *open* to new artistic manifestations and social causes.

Other studies have also warned that these zones of tolerance may become areas where adults (local authorities, NGOs, or private owners) supervise the activities of young people, defining the rules in which graffiti, pieces, murals and the like are produced. This process may limit not only the form but also the content of the productions.³⁵⁷ Indeed, this also presupposes the value of certain particular aesthetics over others, for example, when comparing hip-hop graffiti with pichação-pixação or tagging culture. More aesthetic or easy-to-digest production will be fostered, while counter-aesthetics may be neglected. While some of the works by celebrated street artists may be allowed and tolerated, the work of other emergent or unknown artists, producers and writers may not even be considered. More likely, some social programs will be created in order to rehabilitate those young people who prefer “deviant” aesthetics, with the explicit goal of directing them into more (productive) artistic forms. In this sense, zones of tolerance do what the name suggests: they *tolerate* what local authorities and private owners need/want to tolerate, while excluding what is not part of this “*pseudoalternative*” (but still *official*) aesthetic. The assumed “deviant” and “rebel” nature of graffiti needs to be reconsidered when related to commissioned and sponsored productions (like those placed in “zones of tolerance”).

Moreover, it is precisely because of these symbolic *countercultural*, *innovative* and *exotic* (hip-hop) aesthetics that graffiti and street art have achieved recognition in galleries and museums, facilitating a more positive portrayal of the phenomena. Graffiti and street art productions are frequently included in festivals, parties, concerts and other similar activities, sometimes organized by local authorities and NGOs, or associated with particular corporations. This (hegemonic or institutional) co-optation of the practice is also paired with the increasing demand for (post)graffiti products – *graffiti on canvas* – by the consumers of both the interior design markets and the art markets. Graffiti (considered as something cool, urban and trendy) has become an art form in

³⁵⁷ Austin (2001: 6) emphasizes how these works are created by young people under adult supervision, which may signify restrictions both in form and content of the graffiti productions. The opposite is the production of graffiti (tags, pieces, street art, pixos) in environments that are exclusively controlled and organized by peers. As I mentioned in Chapter I, these zones of tolerance may also help to turn graffiti production into a daylight activity, even when this practice has been a nighttime activity for urban youth since its origins.

itself, with the subsequent production of specialized books and literature, documentaries and the like.

As in the case of Banksy, one of the most renowned graffiti artists in the world, some local graffiti artists (particularly in the Brazilian case) have gained substantial recognition, not only because of their works on the streets but also because of their solo or collective exhibitions in galleries and museums. These artists travel around the world, collaborate on projects with both local authorities and businesses/corporations, and enjoy their own *fandom*. Because of the recognition achieved by this select or elite group of artists (*supergrafiteiros*), they are frequently mentioned in news and opinion articles and are even able to create “news”, for example, by publicizing their new projects or condemning any attacks by local authorities against their productions.³⁵⁸ This process, however, is not exclusive of graffiti artists or producers. Some pixadores have achieved similar recognition both in mass media and in art institutions in Brazil and abroad, representing the “movement” in cities like Paris and Berlin.³⁵⁹ The emergence of both *supergrafiteiros* and *superpixadores* needs to be taken into account when understanding the involvement of (peripheral) youth in these practices, which may be motivated in part by this pursuit of (social and economic) recognition.

This economic and artistic value of graffiti productions is also complemented by what I define as the “social value” of the practice. Some graffiti writers and artists collaborate in official projects organized by both local authorities and NGOs, aimed at helping youth at risk. Graffiti, as a social practice, is used here in a myriad of cases, for example, to rehabilitate pixadores, to foster self-esteem among peripheral/impoverished youth, to provide assets for the job market, among others. This use of the practice is in synchrony with the recognition of the artistic and economic value of graffiti and street art. The key element is that graffiti must somehow be *useful*, an idea that at the same time *devalues* any use of graffiti or street art for other “unproductive goals” (such as the

³⁵⁸ This trend is more visible in the Brazilian case. For the Costa Rican case, the work of Alejandro Ramírez could be interpreted as part of this movement from the streets to the galleries. However, the worldwide recognition of this artist is minimal when compared with Brazilian *supergrafiteiros* (such as OsGemeos, Nunca or Speto).

³⁵⁹ Some examples of these tendencies are included in Chapter V. Franco (2009) also refers to this process of commercialization/co-optation of graffiti, but he does not extend his analysis to the case of *pixação*. I consider that some elite pixadores have emerged, achieving both symbolic and economic recognition. The documentary *Pixo* (2009) includes some of these celebrated pixadores. Additionally, a new film by Amir Arsames Escandari, from Helsinki-Filmi, is about to be released. For more information about this film, see <http://pixadoresfilm.com/>.

expression of political dissent or the manifestation of *affective politics*). This, indeed, is an interesting contradiction, considering that both of the newspapers analyzed here frequently illustrated political struggles – both national and international – with pictures of (political) graffiti (inscriptions).

Perceived as lacking the aesthetic seduction of graffiti and street art or as something utterly meaningless, the practices of pichação (political inscriptions), pixação (calligraphy) and tagging culture (signatures) seem to be intertwined with broader perceptions of otherness: Not only are these productions *ugly*, *nonsensical* or *valueless*, but this framing may also be extended to include their (young) producers, who may be judged by the same discourse used to describe their creations, which subtly refers to both physical (geographical) and symbolic forms of exclusion, segregation and stigmatization.

Perceptions of otherness: Periphery, “low art” and worthless social practices

According to previous studies of “graffiti” in all its expressions (from writing culture through hip-hop graffiti to more autochthonous forms like the Brazilian pixação), the origins of this practice can be found in underdeveloped neighborhoods, backstreets and ghettos.³⁶⁰ The producers, sometimes adopting their own *stigma* as a form of *status*,³⁶¹ have created a parallel status economy, based on the achieved social recognition granted by the practice (both through quantitative criteria, such as the number of inscriptions produced by a writer, as well as through qualitative criteria, such as his/her aesthetic innovation and technique).

The emergence of these practices has captured the attention of both art institutions and the mass media, particularly considering the transgressive nature of the

³⁶⁰ The case of political graffiti, understood as messages or inscriptions made on public and private surfaces with a specific political goal, can be considered an exception when referring to these physical origins. However, it is possible to argue that these ideas or causes also originate in a part of the public sphere that is not central, but rather unrecognized, neglected or ignored.

³⁶¹ Graffiti producers, particularly taggers and pichadores but also graffiti and street artists, sometimes refer to themselves as “bad”, “gangs”, “vandals”, “criminals” and other similar labels. Goffman (1963) refers to this process of re-appropriation of the stigma and its transformation into a status symbol.

productions, which grants them a certain exoticism or novelty (not only because they were created in extreme circumstances but also because of their subcultural – low class, peripheral – origin). The practice is framed as located somewhere between the struggle for recognition of these (young) groups and the safeguarding of the rights of private owners and local authorities. It is precisely at this point that the discourses about graffiti as a social practice are directed towards the (peripheral) otherness from whence they originally emerged.

As mentioned above in relation to the medical-epidemiological discourse, graffiti is portrayed as highly contagious, as a danger to the (social) body.³⁶² Graffiti producers are depicted as uneducated, lacking respect for the property of others as well as for the common good (including the “common heritage”). The practice is occasionally compared to drug addiction, which may refer to the adrenaline rush associated with the creation of these inscriptions. Unauthorized graffiti, framed as vandalism and senseless (irrational) damage, contributes to public disorder, constituting a risk to society as a whole. The practice also endangers their own producers, who may become victims of their meaningless *hobby*, exposing themselves to unnecessary risks (police violence, high-voltage power lines, fines or jail terms, among others).

The notion of *periphery* symbolically includes these characteristics attributed to graffiti producers and their inscriptions. Such areas (neighborhoods, backstreets, ghettos, etc.) are expected to be places where disorder reigns, threatened by drugs (both consumption and dealing) and senseless violence (transgressive and *abnormal* behaviors) and populated by highly uneducated inhabitants (driven by “irrational” passions, laziness, etc.). In this sense, *urbanism* and the acceptable behaviors associated with this type of (capitalist) neutral space may contribute to the emergence of a sense of belonging among those who perceive themselves as law-abiding/well-mannered citizens, justifying both the symbolic exclusion of those who do not know how to behave and the geographical exclusion of those who do not deserve the city, to spatial

³⁶² Han (2010: 12) differentiates between two types of otherness, namely *Andersheit* und *Differenz*: While “Andersheit” refers to an otherness that cannot be included and whose characteristics cannot be reconciliated, “Differenz” evokes an otherness that is like the rest of us, at least to some degree. In this sense, taggers and pichadores can be placed in this first interpretation, because their transgression cannot be in synchrony with the principles of the social order. The second otherness may be more appropriate for understanding graffiti and street artists, considering that these producers may ask for permission to work or may produce their commissioned pieces in collaboration with organizations or local authorities.

and discursive *peripheries*.³⁶³ This discourse does not seem to be directed exclusively towards (unauthorized) graffiti producers, but may also include other unwanted populations or minorities (homeless, beggars, prostitutes, migrants) and other broader but “suspicious” populations (young people, ethnic groups such as Blacks and Latinos, etc.).

The distinction between *high art* and *low art* identified in some of the news and opinion articles is also related to these perceptions of otherness. Graffiti (tagging and pichação/pixação) is paired with other cultural practices that are considered as *popular* forms of entertainment (samba, carnivals, etc.). As the lower classes are frequently perceived as uneducated and unable to appreciate *higher* artworks, because they lack the means of appropriating and deciphering them,³⁶⁴ these popular productions are sometimes read as being in *poor taste*. However, the practice of graffiti has also become trendy, particularly through its recognition in art institutions and the mass media, which has led to its mainstream consumption (through the art markets, advertising industry, specialized books, etc.).

When graffiti becomes recognized in this way, it is mostly because of the *merit* of its producers. Indeed, as mentioned in the first chapter, the informal status economy of graffiti (tagging and pichação) shares some of the characteristics of the capitalist method of production (because status is also associated here with quantity, hard work, quality of the productions, innovation, etc.).³⁶⁵ Both individual and collective producers (such as OsGemeos in Brazil or Alejandro Ramírez in Costa Rica) are recognized because of the aesthetic and economic value of their productions, which also migrate from the streets to the galleries, museums and occasionally to the walls of middle and upper class residences. These producers, now considered *artists*, may have begun illegally but have *rehabilitated* themselves through the lawful production of graffiti (with written authorization or as part of social and corporative projects) or through the production of artworks/commodities (canvas, advertising, merchandise, etc.).

³⁶³ Both Lefebvre (1991 [1974]) and Sennett (2002 [1977]) point out how urban spaces demand particular behaviors from individuals and groups (keeping a distance from strangers, remaining silent, etc.), or even reject or relocate collective ceremonies such as the carnival or political protests.

³⁶⁴ Bourdieu and Darbel (1991: 39) describe how the definition and perception of art depends on the characteristics of those who have the means to appropriate the artworks and decipher them.

³⁶⁵ Austin (2001: 47-55) defines this as *prestige economy*.

Once these graffiti producers are recognized through the merits (value) of their works, their creations are in synchrony with the (capitalist) system that produces the same periphery in which these works originally emerged. The idea of *transgression* is taken out of the picture. Graffiti, as a social practice, is interpreted in a more positive way, connected with social projects that may foster youth employment or reduce criminality while also contributing to the development of self-esteem in the (peripheral) youth population. The exoticism of the productions, their *cool* or *hip* nature, is also appropriated by the (capitalist) industry, which pursues its own specific goals of accumulation through the co-optation of the practice.

As a result, the graffiti producers – who through their merit achieve a sort of *celebrity* – become a sort of role model (the symbol of the *self-made man*), such that even when they still produce (peripheral) art or live in underdeveloped (impoverished) neighborhoods, they are seen as not that different from the average citizen/inhabitant. These producers have overcome their origins and are able to produce value (both aesthetic and economic). This discourse is evident, for example, in articles referring to efforts to promote graffiti as a source of income for peripheral youth³⁶⁶ as well as in the references concerning official programs aimed at the rehabilitation of *pichadores*.

The perception of otherness, in this sense, works on two levels: On the one hand, when the production of graffiti (tags, pieces, pichação) is unauthorized and transgressive, the discourses tend to separate its producers from the citizenry as a whole, promoting both symbolic and (physical) geographical exclusionary practices. On the other hand, when graffiti is created in synchrony with the values of mainstream society, its producers are likely to be presented as celebrities and role models, who through their merit (talent, effort, and ability) achieve social recognition and produce value (both aesthetic and economic), conquering their (peripheral) low-class origins. While some unauthorized producers may achieve social recognition too, this seems to be the result of the incipient status or prestige economy of graffiti culture, which means that such recognition occurs mostly among countercultural groups or individuals. When celebrated graffiti producers get involved in forms of unauthorized/illegal productions, these transgressive works are still welcomed, partly because they are considered in

³⁶⁶ The articles analyzed in *La Nación* do not include references of this use of graffiti in peripheral communities. However, the practice is promoted in schools and other art institutions (from galleries to theaters) and festivals.

relation to the social recognition achieved by these producers in other spaces (again, the art institutions, the art markets, the advertising industry, etc.).

Indeed, some graffiti writers and pichadores also perceive the celebrated graffiti artists as *sell-outs*, considering that through their commissioned works they become “traitors” to the transgressive (“countercultural”, “deviant” or “rebel”) origins of the practice. The celebrated graffiti and street artists may occasionally refer to pichadores and writers (taggers) as lacking the ability to create beauty or the necessary discipline to create something of value. These internal struggles emphasize the difficulty, mentioned above, in defining what graffiti is and what constitutes its “true” nature. Again, the polysemy of the term refers to a series of phenomena, each with its own distinctive characteristics (motivations, identities, sense of belonging, practices, opponents, principles, etc.).³⁶⁷ “Graffiti” practices need to be recognized in their diversity and should be acknowledged in their particularities, not only in the media, but also in academia.

Graffiti producers (street artists, taggers, pichadores and the like) discursively separate themselves from the *average* citizen/inhabitant, arguing that they appropriate public spaces by altering the official aesthetics of the city, instead of conforming with the *passive consumption* of these urban spaces. This argument is used to justify, for instance, the unauthorized appropriation of urban surfaces, both public and private. In the articles analyzed, as well as in previous studies, graffiti producers declare that they are beautifying the city, which they perceive as monochromatic, homogenized, standardized, and so on. If the city and its official aesthetics are imposed upon them, they *freely* impose their own countercultural or transgressive aesthetics on the other inhabitants. These citizens are the “others” to graffiti producers, and include those individuals/groups who do not question the spatial domination exerted upon them, who passively accept the imposition of the urban space.

This argument needs to be reviewed carefully. First, if the imposition of a particular type of aesthetics on the whole population is the problem (i.e. official aesthetics); then the imposition of an unofficial-countercultural-alternative aesthetics is merely substituting one problem for another, not providing a solution. Second, there

³⁶⁷ Pichação/pixação could be considered as an exception, given that the producers distance themselves from graffiti and define their own practice, labeling it “pixação” instead of “grafite”.

seems to be a diversity of “victims” of graffiti production. Local authorities and the government, police, private business and organizations, private owners and the average citizen/inhabitant, all of them can feel threatened by these social practices. Each of these “victims” may not only have different interpretations of the phenomenon, but also may deploy different resources to fight it or to mitigate the unwanted consequences of graffiti production. Third, the notion of passivity is also problematic. The citizens/inhabitants may be aware of the spatial domination exerted upon them, opposing this imposition in other ways that do not necessarily constitute “illegal” behaviors or acts of civil disobedience. Indeed, there is no contradiction between rejecting the imposed official aesthetics or the spatial distribution of the city and also opposing graffiti production (tagging or pichação/pixação).

In this sense, while some of the graffiti producers (authorized graffiti and street artists) may be considered as *different-but-like-us*, because they do not necessarily threaten the social order and even produce value (through the economic, social and aesthetics use of the practice, as framed in relation to the notion of merit), other graffiti producers (unauthorized graffiti writers, political dissenters and pichadores) are perceived as *different-from-us*: They deliberately reject the social order (of private property and the common good), defying established ideas of identity and heritage with their “irrational”/nonsensical behavior. They are perceived as ignorant, vicious and antisocial members of society, who – even when they have been excluded from the city (an unwanted outcome of the unjust system of production/consumption) – also show themselves (through their actions) as unable to behave in the urban spaces from which they were excluded in the first place. These individuals and groups should be persecuted, prosecuted, punished, rehabilitated (even *eliminated*), if these actions guarantee the preservation of the order and the social fabric.

In conclusion, this dissertation has examined how different discursive strategies relating to graffiti production are intertwined with a myriad of other social practices (medical, artistic, architectonic, surveillance, among others), emphasizing not only the discussion about the *right to the city* or the *right to the (urban) protest*, but also the preservation of the *social order* and the *right to private property*. Unauthorized graffiti production needs to be interpreted as an act of civil disobedience, as a form of political communication (of dissent or resistance), which may attempt to promote a different form of debate in the public sphere. Some of these productions should be considered as

a result of the emotional/affective (rather than “irrational”) utilization of both public and private surfaces and its effects on the body (involving anger, boredom, frustration, an adrenaline rush, etc.).³⁶⁸ This interpretation defies the perception of graffiti as simple vandalism, as a meaningless social practice. The prosecution and punishment of unauthorized graffiti practice as an act of civil disobedience should be reviewed, prioritizing retribution via fines or community service while rejecting jail terms as a form of social control. The transgressive nature of tagging culture and *pichação/pixação*, for example, can be more easily comprehended if these practices are framed as acts of civil disobedience, which may facilitate the discussion of this topic in the public sphere.

Authorized graffiti productions (such as murals, zones of tolerance, open art galleries, etc.) have emerged as a solution to the conflict between the *right to the city* and the *right to private property*. Whether these processes also guarantee the *right to the (urban) protest* is also debatable. While some productions may oppose particular ideologies, certain limitations as to content or form are to be expected in these commissioned works. Indeed, the adoption of graffiti by local authorities and NGOs to promote social causes or to foster self-employment are positive steps towards the recognition of the needs of (peripheral) young populations. However, the co-optation of the movement is also evident, considering for example that the exoticism of graffiti as a social practice – based on its transgressive and subcultural nature – may serve the commercial goals of corporations, advertising companies, art markets, design industries, political parties and others. The emergence of *elite* or *celebrated* graffiti producers (*supergrafiteiros*) may be representative of this tendency, which also validates the notion of *merit* as a core principle of individual success in the capitalist system of production and consumption.

The ambiguity of the discourses may have real consequences in the lives of (peripheral) youth, who may decide to get involved in graffiti production. These young people may opt for producing only legal graffiti (sponsored or commissioned) or they may also opt for unauthorized productions, if they are not provided surfaces upon which

³⁶⁸ Maffesoli (2002: 288) proposes to understand this boredom in relation to the aforementioned discourse of hygiene. In his words: “The logic of the hygienicists of the 19th century, and other enlightened philanthropists, is identical to the ‘terminalist’ vigipirate strategy: eradicate adventure, the unforeseen, the animal in the human. Be afraid of everything, and most of all of one’s own shadow. But the abstract order always leads to a dead society, in which security and well-being are purchased with the certainty of dying of boredom.”

to express themselves. Some of these new painters may be disappointed to discover that not all graffiti producers will achieve the social and economic recognition of the celebrated graffiti artists, independently of how talented they are (or they believe they are). Other producers, such as taggers (graffiti writers) and pichadores, may feel even more excluded from the city and the social fabric when discourses about them and their productions portray them as unworthy, “irrational” and unwanted.³⁶⁹ This may become a constituent of their identity, fostering more acts of transgression (civil disobedience) against the general population, and subsequently generating more resentment and rejection against them. The efforts of the pichadores to be included in artistic milieus represent another possible outcome of this process, which may offer them some social recognition and inclusion, but also carries within it the risk of co-optation, institutionalization and assimilation.

The following table presents a summary of the conclusions regarding the five discourses identified in this research:

Discourse / Frame	Graffiti as social practice	Producers
<i>Medical-Epidemiological: Hygiene and the politics of dirt</i>	Graffiti is perceived as a contaminating agent, threatening the order of the social body. The practice needs to be controlled before spreading. This spreading is from the periphery to the center as well as from lower-middle classes to upper classes. The practice is considered irrational, like territorial demarcation. This discourse targets mostly forms of tagging culture and pichação/pixação (territorial graffiti in the typology)	Producers are reduced to a status inferior to humans, being depicted as animals (pig, rats) or germs. A process of humanization is proposed through education/civilization (especially aimed at graffiti writers or pixadores).
<i>Legal: Vandalism, heritage and order</i>	The practice is described according to the legal system. Graffiti is a form of vandalism or crime (misdemeanor) against public or private property. The preservation of order in the physical space is anchored in the legal system. A symbolic reference to heritage and identity is implied in some of the discourses (when the graffiti is placed on public monuments). The practice could also be recognized as political; however, it is defined as a negative form of politics. This discourse is directed towards both territorial graffiti and political graffiti .	Graffiti is attributed to uneducated youth, without a sense of belonging and indifferent to the legal order. These producers should be punished for their actions. However, this discourse recognizes the lack of opportunities for leisure available to this segment of the population.

³⁶⁹ This exclusion may also become a form of status, as when graffiti producers or pichadores identify themselves with the labels imposed on them (as the naming of some crews or gangues suggests). However, this appropriation of the stigma does not signify the overcoming of any negative emotion (i.e. resentment) directed towards the society that originally expelled them.

<p><i>Criminogenic: From drugs to robbery</i></p>	<p>Graffiti is perceived as an introduction to more serious forms of criminality. The practice is related to the territoriality of illegal gangs or drug dealers. Some graffiti are considered signs used to mark properties for future robberies. This criminogenic effect cannot be reduced to graffiti producers, because the practice could be an invitation for anyone to transgress. This discourse targets mostly forms of tagging culture and pichação/pixação (territorial graffiti in the typology).</p>	<p>Some producers are considered delinquents, associated with violent gangsters, drug dealers, thieves, etc. However, this is not clearly mentioned in the articles, but can be inferred from the qualitative analysis of the texts, particularly in relation to the Broken Windows theory.</p>
<p><i>Social use: Individual and social assets</i></p>	<p>This discourse relates graffiti production to social causes and projects. The practice is understood as a way to promote community, especially in peripheral neighborhoods. It may not only create a sense of belonging or provide information about some specific topic (i.e. health campaigns, environmental causes, etc.), but may also foster individual self-esteem. Graffiti is understood as a valuable asset in the job market, improving the chances for insertion into the market. This discourse is manifest in sponsored and commissioned graffiti productions.</p>	<p>Producers are considered youth at risk, who may need social projects to become included in the social fabric, with the specific goal of avoiding their insertion into criminal or violent gangs. This is mostly related to poor peripheral youth, but not exclusive. Additionally, they may learn graffiti techniques that would give them chances to gain employment or even to become entrepreneurs.</p>
<p><i>Artistic value: Street art, canvas and private walls</i></p>	<p>Graffiti, mostly associated with the global hip-hop movement, is perceived as an art, a way to beautify the city and improve the physical landscape. The street art located on public and private surfaces, the creation of zones of tolerance for graffiti production, as well as the inclusion of the practice in the realm of galleries and museums are included in this interpretation. Also, the products may be consumed for the decoration of houses or businesses as well as in advertising. This discourse generally applies to the category of street art (graffiti).</p>	<p>Graffiti producers are artistic and creative youth, who may have also succeeded in the formal art market. Some creators are elevated to the category of celebrities, with their own fandom. This exclusive group is also well-known internationally, as active participants of a global graffiti culture. Their works are sometimes welcomed and also celebrated, if not promoted.</p>

In *La Nación*, news articles presented graffiti production as an artistic manifestation, particularly through commissioned works in public spaces. This perception of graffiti's artistic value was evident throughout the entire time period of the study. The practice was also presented as an urban form of political communication. As noted in the articles, some institutionalization of the practice has occurred, which is visible not only through the inclusion of "graffiti" in official contests in education curricula but also through its achieved status in artistic institutions (in workshops and public festivals and on canvas and other post-graffiti, etc.) However, unauthorized and territorialized illegal inscriptions continue to be considered as an annoyance, a social

problem that evidences lack of education while threatening a supposedly “common heritage” or “common past”.

Opinion articles in *La Nación* have been defiant of the idea of graffiti as an art form, relying mostly on U.S.-American criminological models such as the Broken Windows theory to express criticism against the practice. These articles are sporadic, but powerful in their rhetorical argumentation.³⁷⁰ Other articles present signatures, tags and other political messages as something dirty and contaminating, and occasionally criticize the local authorities (and the government) for the irresponsible (lack of) maintenance of public infrastructure and monuments.

The newspaper includes several references to the worldwide graffiti scene, not only in the political sense (such as the graffiti painted on the Berlin Wall) but also referring to street art exhibitions abroad (New York, London, etc.). Moreover, as a result of their geographical proximity as well as of the incipient problem of street criminality, graffiti production is also associated with the presence of Central American *maras* (in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador) and soccer gang violence. Political struggles in Costa Rica and abroad are also illustrated through references to political graffiti, with the combined use of photographs and photo captions. These two different dimensions of graffiti production were not taken into account in this research, and are mentioned here as an example of the diversity of themes associated with graffiti practice.

Folha de São Paulo offers a more complex and diverse intertwining of themes and discourses about graffiti (and, by extent, about pichação/pixação in this research, even when the producers may emphasize the differences between these practices). Graffiti and street art are portrayed under a positive spotlight throughout the period under review, which may be a direct result of the celebrated position that some elite graffiti producers have achieved both among the “public” and in art institutions in Brazil and abroad. Their productions are appreciated because of their aesthetic and economic value, including for interior design, the art market and the advertising industries. The practice is also associated with social projects, meant to provide not only potential psychological benefits (self-esteem, sense of belonging, etc.) but also economic security, through access to the job market. Exhibitions of *grafite* are frequent

³⁷⁰ These articles are concentrated in the first five years of the period of study (2001-2005).

and news articles report about them, including also biographical pieces on particular (celebrated) graffiti producers. Some arguments against graffiti (and street art) refer to its attributed U.S.-American origin and to the lower-class or ghettoized element of the practice. However, graffiti seems to have conquered the upper class, at least through consumption and appreciation, if not directly through production. The legal and commissioned dimension of the practice has been openly recognized and fostered by the local authorities.

Graffiti (grafite) and pichação are also recognized as a political form of communication, especially in reference to particular national or international social struggles. The terms are used indiscriminately, but pichação seems to be preferred for expressing this type of political inscription. The notion pichação is also used to refer to the practice of pixação (with an “x”, as defined by its own producers), consisting of an autochthonous form of calligraphy in Brazil. The discourse about dirt, pollution, and vandalism, as well as the attributed criminogenic nature of some inscriptions, is particularly evident in the discourses about pichação/pixação. The practice is considered as an irrational behavior (for its adrenaline rush, animal territoriality, etc.) and almost exclusively linked to peripheral youth. Indeed, this subject constitutes the more palpable transformation of a discourse throughout the period of study. Pichação/pixação is presented mostly in negative terms at the beginning of the research period (2001-2006 approximately), but is perceived more positively at the end (2007-2010). This may be the direct result of the actions of pixadores themselves, who have fought for recognition both in the media and in the art institutions. From 2008 on, pixadores have not only protested their exclusion through (violent) acts of appropriation of spaces (what can be considered as a *forced inclusion*), but have also produced their own documentary movies, books and “academic intellectuals”. The public debate recognized in the last three years of the period of study reflects these discursive struggles to define the legal, aesthetic and political significance of pixação.

These positive and negative discourses about graffiti productions (including tagging culture and pichação/pixação) should be observed as part of a network of multiple frames and discourses about the city, the center and the periphery, the value of art, political communication and the emergence of countercultures and subcultures, etc. The discourses identified in this research are by no means exclusive to graffiti practice as a product of urban youth groups, but could be extrapolated to other social practices in

public spaces: homelessness, prostitution and sexual revolution, unauthorized leisure activities, social protest and dissent, among others. I propose to consider this entanglement as a *discursive matrix*, in which frames and discourses go beyond a specific social practice and become part of a multiplicity of frames and discourses targeting different social practices. Scholars should consider these intertwining approaches as new avenues for academic research.

Further theoretical and empirical research

Several new possibilities for research have been identified in this analysis of media articles in *La Nación* and *Folha de São Paulo*. Frequently, graffiti practices are approached only through the analysis of graffiti productions (texts, images, etc.) or through the use of interviews with their producers (taggers, street artists, *pichadores*). This dissertation focused on a different type of empirical evidence, following discourses about this social practice through news and opinion articles in the press. However, this process has led to the emergence of a series of new questions as a result of this research.

Considering both the social and economic value attributed to commissioned-commercialized-institutionalized manifestations of graffiti practice, it would be interesting to pay attention to the actual consumers of these productions – not only in reference to the multiple values that graffiti productions may have for the middle and upper classes (economic, symbolic, aesthetic, etc.), but also in relation to the social projects associated with the practice. Strategically, graffiti has been included in “official” programs to foster youth employment, to avoid the involvement of young people in criminal activities (for example, drug dealing or drug consumption), to rehabilitate *pichadores*, among others. As a result, in order to comprehend the production of discourses about graffiti and the subsequent processes of inclusion/exclusion of its producers, it is necessary to understand how graffiti may work in these institutionalized environments.

Graffiti producers (street artists and *pichadores*) have become creators of their own media, especially through the use of new technologies (websites, documentaries, fanzines, etc.). These formats offer additional information about the practice and its

producers, which may include discourses other than those included in traditional media and academic literature. I also propose examining the production of graffiti in its interactions with other youth cultures/practices (for example, skateboarding or rap). This approach would provide a better understanding of the relationships among a diversity of youth practices, as well as making accessible contemporary definitions, perceptions and ideologies associated with the reductionist notion of “youth”. This point is relevant, for instance, in relation to festivals and art events, where several manifestations of youth culture may coincide/collide, instead of existing in isolation.

As mentioned in some of the reviewed opinion and news articles that include graffiti producers as sources, the unauthorized production of inscriptions may also result in negative outcomes. Graffiti producers may have conflicts with private security, police officers, local authorities and private owners. Even when some *anti-graffiti* and *anti-pichação* discourses have been identified in this study, these graffiti opponents seem to be neglected from both media discourses and academic literature. More research is needed to determine who these opponents are, what types of aesthetics they value and why, what they think about the physical/symbolic processes of exclusion in the city, what actions they take in order to avoid further “victimization”, and how graffiti production impacts their particular lifestyles. Graffiti, often considered as a quality-of-life crime, could be compared discursively with other systemic negative outcomes that are present in urban environments (pollution, noise, excessive public lighting, etc.), in order to determine similarities or differences among the social representations of these “urban problems”.

An interesting unexplored approach may be to focus on police officers, who frequently and directly deal with the producers of graffiti. These officers may have their own perception of the “problem” and of the solutions implemented to fight it, as well as their own subjectivities and affections/emotions about the practice and its producers.

Political graffiti is also used in both newspapers to emphasize social and political struggles in the public sphere. This study only refers to these articles in passing, but it may be necessary to analyze why this specific format is used. Political and social struggles could be illustrated in other forms, for example, portraits of relevant sources or images of a political demonstration, of documents, or of symbolic places. It may be interesting to discover why the media prefer to illustrate these topics with

images of political graffiti (political inscriptions). Additionally, this inclusion of political graffiti (messages, inscriptions) in both photographs and captions may suggest that these strategies may actually be useful for attracting media attention to specific causes (from neo-Nazism to environmental movements), which increases the importance of further research in this direction. The discourses about graffiti, tagging, street art and pichação/pixação could also be approached by comparing several newspapers, or by including television broadcasts.

The two cases analyzed in this research, when compared with former studies, suggest the existence of a *global discourse* about graffiti as a social practice. How these discourses are created, transformed or rejected depends on cultural, historical, political and economic factors. In the case of pichação/pixação, for example, the discourse about the practice may differ geographically (São Paulo to Belo Horizonte, Brazil to Germany), institutionally (local government versus art institutions), or temporally (2010 in comparison to 2015), etc. This is also true in the case of graffiti and street art, which have become global through the emergence of celebrated graffiti producers, as the case of OsGemeos clearly exemplifies. A grasp of the similarities and differences of these discourses about graffiti – as well as their intertwining with other practices (homelessness, prostitution, etc.) – is necessary for a sociological understanding of notions like “normalcy”, “order”, “neatness”, “cleanliness” and other similar characteristics attributed to neutral-urban (anti-)social spaces. An analysis of how these notions take form in a given *discursive matrix*, targeting a myriad of social practices, could be useful to advance our knowledge of everyday life in urban environments.

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Annex

Graffiti and street artists mentioned in the news and opinion articles in *Folha de São Paulo*

Pseudonym	Name	Website	Number of articles
Binho	Fábio Ribeiro	<i>binhoribeiro.com.br</i>	4
Boleta	Daniel Medeiros		7
Dev	Isaac de Oliveira Szebeny		2
Finok	Raphael Sagorra		2
Flip	Felipe Yung	<i>flipon.com.br</i>	5
Jana Joana	Janaína Gonçalves	<i>janajoana.com.br/graffiti</i>	1
Juneca	Oswaldo Júnior		7
Kboco	Márcio Mendanha de Queiroz		9
Nina	Nina Pandolfo	<i>ninapandolfo.com.br</i>	12
Nove	João Paulo Cobra		1
Nunca	Francisco Rodrigues da Silva		16
Onesto	Alex Hornest	<i>alexhonest.com</i>	3
Orion	Alexandre Orion	<i>alexandreorion.com</i>	7
OsGemeos	Otávio and Gustavo Pandolfo	<i>osgemeos.com.br</i>	49
	Paulo Ito		3
	Rui Amaral		7*
Speto	Paulo Cesar Silva	<i>speto.com.br</i>	7
Titi Freak	Hamilton Yokota	<i>tfreak.com</i>	18
Tinho	Walter Nomura	<i>walternomura.com.br</i>	2
Vitché	Vicente Rodrigues		4
Zefix			1
Zeão	José Augusto Amaro Capela		12

* This number includes a reference in a section “Erramos”, in which the newspaper recognizes some mistakes and imprecisions.

Reports of pichação actions against art institutions in *Folha de São Paulo*

Case	Year	Number of articles
On the work of Lenora de Barros	2002	2
Pichação at 26 ^a Bienal by Diego Salvador (a.k.a. “Não”)	2004	8
As “graduation project” in Belas Artes by Rafael Augustaitiz	2008	18
“Against art” in gallery Choque Cultural	2008	13
On the public mural commemorating the Japanese immigration	2008	2
28a Bienal (Bienal do Vazio and Carolina Pivetta de Motta)	2008	40

News and opinion articles reviewed for the analysis of *La Nación*, Costa Rica³⁷¹

	Date	News articles	Journalist /Author	Section
2001				
001	15.02.2001	La cueva se renueva	José Andrés Quesada	Tiempo Libre
002	22.02.2001	Los graffiti	Enrique Casanueva Rojo	Tiempo Libre (Cartas)
003	11.03.2001	Historia, nación/pueblo e individuo en el testimonio nicaragüense y centroamericano	Werner Mackenbach	Ancora
004	30.04.2001	Monumentos al abandono	Doriam Díaz	Viva
005	10.07.2001	Expertos piden resultados	Montserrat Solano C	Nacionales
006	13.07.2001	La muerte de unos periodistas	Víctor Valembos	Opinión
007	25.07.2001	Las mazmorras psiquiátricas	Mario Osava	Viva
008	02.09.2001	Osvaldo de tierra	Ana María Parra Aravena	Viva
2002				
009	14.01.2002	Perú: imágenes de hoy	Camila Schumacher	Viva
010	17.02.2002	Prensa venezolana acosada		Internacionales
011	20.03.2002	Mundo joven: Antihéroes héroes	Alberto Morales Bejarano	Viva
012	12.04.2002	Crítica de música: ¡Salsa, nous Voici!	Alberto Zúñiga	Viva
013	04.07.2002	Coleccionismos contemporáneos	Marcela Quirós	Tiempo Libre
014	19.07.2002	Crítica de arte: El dibujo, tan reciente, tan antiguo	Tamara Díaz	Viva
015	15.09.2002	El correo que cambió la historia	Ignacio Santos P.	Dominical
016	19.10.2002	174 días de bienestar	Juan Fernando Cordero	Opinión
017	02.11.2002	Muralismo chicano en fotos		Viva
2003				
018	05.01.2003	Año nuevo, vida dura	Carlos Cortés	Nacionales
019	05.01.2003	Las paredes tienen la palabra	Andrea Vásquez R.	Dominical
020	16.02.2003	Venezuela: Los laberintos de la crisis	Mauricio Herrera	Dominical
021	21.02.2003	Arte en aerosol	Mariamalia López	Viva
022	20.03.2003	Bar y Restaurante Reflejos	Yazmín Montoya	Tiempo Libre
023	22.05.2003	ONU levantaría hoy sanciones a Iraq		Internacionales
024	16.06.2003	Planean restaurar templo	Kalina Quirós	Nacionales

³⁷¹ Five articles (published exclusively online) referring to the maras (gangs) in Central America and mentioning “graffiti” are included in this table only as examples of the existence of this link between graffiti as a social practice and regional criminal gangs. These articles were not included in the analysis, and are therefore skipped in the enumeration.

025	19.06.2003	Exposición de lujo en Londres		Viva
026	23.06.2003	Viva la red: Cazador web		Viva
027	11.07.2003	Hip hop ¡al chile!	Ana María Parra A.	Viva
028	19.07.2003	Breves: Muestra con animales		
	25.07.2003	Se inicia lucha contra “maras” en El Salvador (online)		Internacionales
029	17.08.2003	El muro todavía divide a Berlín		Viva
030	01.09.2003	Limón se retrató	Israel Oconitrillo	Viva
031	11.09.2003	Ciudad nuestra de cada día	Marcela Quirós	Tiempo Libre
032	14.09.2003	“Maras”, violencia en carne viva	Sergio Arce A.	Internacionales
033	18.09.2003	Éxodo en Estados Unidos por ‘Isabel’	Kitty Hawk	Internacionales
034	01.10.2003	Sin ser iguales...	Ernesto Calvo	Viva
035	20.10.2003	Indigentes de bronce	Doriam Díaz	Viva
	24.11.2003	Comisión policial estudia “perfil” de pandillas para combatir las (online)	EFE	Última hora
2004				
036	19.01.2004	Tienen mucho que aprender	Mauricio Martínez	Opinión
037	22.02.2004	Alejandro Ramírez: De Taki al TLC	Clara Concepción Astiasarán	Ancora
038	01.03.2004	¿El ajedrecista o el graffitero?	Carlos Alonso Vargas	Opinión
039	01.03.2004	En el futuro: Precrimen	Mauricio Leandro	Viva
040	01.03.2004	Breves: Artexpo muy variado		Viva
041	31.03.2004	Columna O sea: Jim Morrison	Walter Campos O.	Viva
042	15.04.2004	El arte invade Cartago	Yazmín Montoya	
043	26.04.2004	Una vergüenza nacional	Enrique Rosales Álvarez	Opinión
044	30.04.2004	Colombia llora por tragedia		Internacionales
045	16.07.2004	¿Otra mejilla; otro Mejía?	Víctor Valembois	
046	25.07.2004	Érase una vez El Romeral	Luis Chaves	Ancora
047	15.08.2004	Librero: Bitácora de tragedias	Fernando Contreras	Ancora
048	16.08.2004	Paredes escandalosas	María Montero	Viva
049	24.08.2004	Un informe revelador	Eugenia M. Flores	Opinión
050	27.08.2004	Breves: Alcalde y escritor		
051	03.09.2004	El compositor en el olvido	Francisco Angulo	Nacionales
052	11.09.2004	Patriotismo urbano	Carlos Alberto Montaner	Opinión
053	13.09.2004	MOPT desperdicia equipos para revisar vehículos	Esteban Oviedo	Nacionales
054	03.10.2004	Un día de furia	Yuri Lorena Jiménez	Dominical
055	06.10.2004	Multan a propietarios de locales por fachadas sucias	Jairo Villegas S.	Nacionales
056	27.10.2004	Un siglo de rieles, aventuras y horror	Alfons Luna	Viva

057	02.11.2004	Mujeres acosan una estatua		Viva
058	07.11.2004	El Muro, 15 años después	Victoria Elles	Dominical
059	16.11.2004	La Celdita forrada de serigrafías	Israel Aragón	Viva
060	29.11.2004	Breves: Cotización del graffiti		Viva
061	08.12.2004	Casa de Cultura domingueña	Francisco Angulo	Viva
062	12.12.2004	Gráfica: Donde quiero estar	Clara Concepción Astiasarán	Ancora
063	12.12.2004	Murales de "arte callejero"	Luis Eduardo Díaz	Nacionales
2005				
064	19.01.2005	Graffiti que nos desnuda	Juan Fernando Cordero	Opinión
065	07.02.2005	Guatemala prepara ley contra 'maras'		Internacionales
066	30.03.2005	Puente a color: Una obra original	Francia Zavala	Zurqui
067	03.04.2005	Ena Aguilar: Graffiti de trazos vitales	Aurelia Dobles	Dominical
068	06.06.2005	Dos artistas dan coordenadas para redescubrir San José	Marcela Cantero	Aldea Global
069	23.06.2005	Crítica de Danza: Hip Hop bajo la lluvia	Marta Ávila	Viva
070	18.07.2005	MOPT dañó estación prestadade Riteve	Esteban Oviedo	Nacionales
071	18.07.2005	Metro lleva veinte años de arte en las entrañas		Aldea Global
072	10.08.2005	La Galería Jacob Karpio se llena de visiones del paisaje y de la tecnología	Doriam Díaz	Aldea Global
073	17.08.2005	Cientos retrataron al Quijote	Doriam Díaz	Aldea Global
074	15.09.2005	Plaza de la Independencia en Cartago está en el olvido	Fernando Gutiérrez C / Marcela Cantero	Aldea Global
075	19.09.2005	Polémica por regreso de habitantes tras 'Katrina'		Internacionales
076	24.09.2005	Breves: Cárcel por graffiti		Deportes
077	27.09.2005	Idealismo frente a realidad	Kenneth Mora Flores	Opinión
078	27.09.2005	En Guardia	Jorge Guardia	Opinión
079	06.10.2005	Ventanas y más ventanas	Amalia Chaverri	Opinión
080	21.10.2005	¡A Escena!		Tiempo Libre
081	16.11.2005	Casas para pobres están listas hace cinco meses pero sin dueño	Vanessa Loaiza N.	Nacionales
082	23.11.2005	Exhibición se refresca con arte contemporáneo	Doriam Díaz	Aldea Global
083	14.12.2005	ARCO acogerá arte urbano		Aldea Global
2006				
084	21.01.2006	Alejandro Ramírez gana premio internacional	Doriam Díaz	Aldea Global
085	29.01.2006	Contaminación daña fachada norte de Colegio de Señoritas	Doriam Díaz	Aldea Global
086	11.02.2006	ARCO 2006 se viste con las nuevas tecnologías	Melissa Arce	Aldea Global
087	18.02.2006	Colegio de Señoritas bajo agua y jabón	Doriam Díaz	Aldea Global
088	19.03.2006	Voluntarios dan una manita de pintura al Señoritas	Doriam Díaz	Aldea Global
089	20.02.2006	Garantías de alternabilidad	Gonzalo Castellón	Opinión

090	26.02.2006	(In)seguridad ciudadana y ventanas rotas	Mauricio Jenkins	Opinión
091	12.03.2006	Lugar Común: San José	Luis Chaves	Ancora
	29.03.2006	Policías Iberoamérica temen expansión pandillas a todo el continente (online)	EFE	Sala de Redacción
092	19.04.2006	Intentaron robar cañones de parque Juan Santamaría	Jairo Villegas S.	Nacionales
	21.04.2006	Policía y Ejército despliegan grupos conjuntos contra pandillas (online)	EFE	Centroamérica Hoy
093	02.06.2006	Municipio quiere remozar Plaza de la Democracia	Álvaro Murillo M.	Nacionales
094	04.06.2006	Reinvención: graffiti y piel urbana	Luis Fernando Quirós	Ancora
095	11.06.2006	Alberto Moreno: Acciones mestizas	Aurelia Dobles	Ancora
096	26.06.2006	Panorama Cantonal: Escuela es víctima del hampa	José Hernández	Nacionales
097	04.07.2006	¿Ir sin pagar?	Víctor Valembois	Opinión
098	05.07.2006	Breves: Arte del grafiti en museo de Brooklyn		Aldea Global
099	09.07.2006	Berlín, siempre mundial		Proa
100	17.07.2006	Edificio de Correos sufre 10 años de deterioro y abandono	Doriam Díaz	Aldea Global
101	08.09.2006	Se creyó "una rata"		Tiempo Libre
102	10.09.2006	Vitrina		Proa
103	01.10.2006	Maras: La nueva guerra	Yuri Lorena Jiménez	Proa
104	10.10.2006	Exposición 'Ticos en Chepe' se convierte ahora en libro	Doriam Díaz	Aldea Global
105	18.10.2006	Llega el horror: empieza festival de terror con filme de Snoop Dogg		Viva
106	10.11.2006	Guerra sucia domina campaña		Internacionales
107	12.11.2006	Abbey Road apaga hoy 75 velitas		Viva
108	03.12.2006	Venezuela elige presidente tras dura campaña de miedo	Maricel Sequeira	Internacionales
2007				
109	28.01.2007	Ventanas rotas	José Pablo Rodríguez C.	Opinión
110	10.02.2007	Artistas urbanos toman la Roosevelt	María Montero	Viva
111	27.02.2007	Cansados de "pintas"	William Ulate Arlet	Opinión (Cartas)
112	08.03.2007	Bush y Chávez inician el pulso		Internacionales
113	02.04.2007	Deterioro genera emergencia en el Monumento Guayabo	Doriam Díaz	Aldea Global
114	22.04.2007	Píntalo de negro	Ólger Sánchez	Ancora
115	26.04.2007	Encuentro ciudadano I Festival Abierto de Danza y Arte Urbano en Chepe	Sergio Arce A.	Viva
116	29.04.2007	Hoy termina el FADAU	Mónica Morales M.	Viva
117	16.05.2007	Referéndum: ¿hito histórico?	Mauricio Víquez L.	Opinión
118	26.05.2007	Diez tesis aberrantes	Javier Solís	Opinión
119	03.06.2007	Asesinos en serie	William Venegas	Viva
120	01.08.2007	Sin temor ni confusión	Mauricio Víquez L.	Opinión
121	31.08.2007	Porque es tan linda	Víctor Valembois	Opinión

122	05.09.2007	Se inicia remodelación de Plaza de la Democracia	Marcela Cantero	Aldea Global
123	05.09.2007	Sin visión de futuro	Leynel Alvarado Rodríguez	Opinión
124	06.09.2007	Plaza de la Democracia será más transitable y más verde	Doriam Díaz	Aldea Global
125	14.09.2007	¿Fábrica de pobres?	Wilbert Arroyo Álvarez	Opinión
126	19.09.2007	Cinco artistas exponen su mirada urbana	Doriam Díaz	Aldea Global
127	21.09.2007	La vida continúa	Walter Zavala Ortega	Opinión
128	21.09.2007	Revoluciones imaginarias del NO	Dennis Cordero Gamboa	Opinión
129	25.09.2007	“De ganar el Sí, PAC, Merino y López deben Apoyar agenda”	Carlos A. Villalobos	El País
130	01.10.2007	Grafitis del NO causan grave daño a paredes de las Ruinas	Fernando Gutiérrez / Doriam Díaz	El País
131	05.10.2007	Campaña electoral cerró con repunte publicitario	Álvaro Murillo	El País
132	09.10.2007	Vandalismo	Oliver Rivera Mena	Opinión
133	14.10.2007	Quinteto urbano	Darío Chinchilla	Ancora
134	22.10.2007	Acción ciudadana	Pablo Rojas Herrera	Opinión
135	10.11.2007	Mediodía a lo Digital y muy 80	Ana María Parra	Viva
136	11.11.2007	Artista nicaragüense rememora la guerra y sus secuelas latentes	Doriam Díaz	Aldea Global
137	26.11.2007	‘La isla San Lucas tiene potencial turístico’	Ronny Soto	El País
138	28.11.2007	Departamentos bolivianos inician huelga de dos días		El Mundo
	16.12.2007	Las maras adoptan un perfil más bajo en Centroamérica (online)	Juan Carlos Llorca	El Mundo
139	17.12.2007	Menor de los Casiraghi hace grafitis		Viva
140	17.12.2007	Pandillas adoptan ‘bajo perfil’ en el Istmo		El Mundo
2008				
141	08.01.2008	Isla del Coco nominada para las maravillas naturales del mundo	Juan Pablo Carranza / Alejandra Vargas	Aldea Global
142	10.01.2008	Arqueólogos hallan cementerio del siglo XIX en isla San Lucas	Alejandra Vargas	Aldea Global
143	13.01.2008	Visita guiada		Ancora
144	07.03.2008	Ticos y nicas se hermanan en la bienal Conjunciones	Esteban Córdoba A.	Aldea Global
145	08.03.2008	Sueños, esperanza y libertad	Yalena de la Cruz	Opinión
146	08.04.2008	Bulevar tendrá fiesta	Gustavo Sánchez	Viva
147	09.04.2008	Wayne Frost		Obituario
148	13.04.2008	Caos en casa de Lenox		Viva
149	14.04.2008	Subastarán fotos de Moss		Viva
150	14.04.2008	MEP sustituye revisión de bultos por arte y campamentos	Alonso Mata B.	El País
151	27.04.2008	‘Cabalgando con la muerte’	Yamil de la Paz	Ancora
152	30.04.2008	Pedir lo imposible	Jorge Arturo Chaves	Opinión
153	12.05.2008	Zancudos con revólver	César Monge Conejo	Opinión
154	18.05.2008	Poetas en el Sol	Carlos Cortés	Ancora

155	24.05.2008	Grafitis se adueñan de fachada de la galería Tate Modern	Violeta Molina	Aldea Global
156	26.05.2008	Colegiales piden integrar comisiones y tomar decisiones	Jairo Villegas S.	El País
157	13.06.2008	Bailar al ritmo de la calle		Viva
158	19.06.2008	Crítica de danza: Trajines cotidianos	Marta Ávila	Viva
159	23.06.2008	Olores a materia fecal invaden calles de varios cantones	Alonso Mata B.	El País
160	03.07.2008	Vándalos plagan de grafitis tapia de iglesia de Alajuelita	Otto Vargas M.	Sucesos
161	15.07.2008	Costarricenses parroquiales	María Teresa Gutiérrez	Opinión
162	08.08.2008	San José tiene oasis lleno de sabor y paz	Doriam Díaz	Viva
163	10.08.2008	Fisión constructiva	Vladimir Carazo	Proa
164	14.08.2008	Estudiantes contra 'piques' callejeros	Ana Yancy Flores M.	Caja de Cambios
165	22.08.2008	Amenazado magistrado presidente de la Sala III	Giannina Segnini	El País
166	26.08.2008	Calabozos del antiguo Cuartel Bellavista reabren sus puertas	Andrea Solano B.	Aldea Global
167	31.08.2008	Visita Guiada		Ancora
168	31.08.2008	Próximos lejanos	Víctor Hurtado Oviedo	Ancora
169	31.08.2008	Los museos de Munguía	David Delgado Cabana	Ancora
170	02.09.2008	MEP eliminó oratoria de Festival de la Creatividad	Jairo Villegas S.	El País
171	21.09.2008	Arden las relaciones entre Estados Unidos y América Latina	Sylvie Lanteaume	El Mundo
172	12.20.2008	Las paredes hablan	Gabriela Villalobos	Ancora
173	22.10.2008	Artistas restauran pinturas en el Muro de Berlín	Andrea Solano	Aldea Global
174	10.11.2008	Sea nor mall	Víctor Valembois	Opinión
175	11.11.2008	Nuevo disco de Guns N' Roses parece que sí va en serio	Gerardo González	Viva
176	24.11.2008	Talento juvenil sube al escenario	Francisco Angulo Z.	Viva
177	03.12.2008	Alumnos irán solo a ferias próximos 15 días	Jairo Villegas	El País
178	05.12.2008	Sapriisa tiene su propio mundo	Irene Traube	Viva
179	10.12.2008	Estudiantes llenaron de creatividad la capital	Mónica Cordero S.	Aldea Global
2009				
180	26.01.2009	La imaginación al poder	Manuel D. Arias	Opinión
181	25.02.2009	Banda de seres imaginarios se apropia del Teatro Nacional	Andrea Solano B.	Aldea Global
182	26.02.2009	Museo de Arte celebra 15 años con muestra retrospectiva	Andrea Solano B.	Aldea Global
183	01.03.2009	Aterciopelados navega en un Río de conciencia	Ana Yancy Flores M.	Viva
184	08.03.2009	Ingenieros advirtieron que obra necesita cuidados	Otto Vargas M.	Sucesos
185	08.03.2009	Colonia china cierra filas para salvar Puente de la Amistad	Otto Vargas M.	Sucesos
186	08.03.2009	Memoria de corto plazo	Darío Chinchilla Ugalde	Ancora
187	15.03.2009	El arte convirtió a San José en una ciudad irreconocible	Camila Schumacher	Aldea Global
188	20.03.2009	Tecnológico abre puertas para atraer nuevos estudiantes	Ana Nieto	Aldea Global

189	01.04.2009	Miles de manifestantes y policías se enfrentan en Londres		El Mundo
190	07.04.2009	Colorido mural embellece la Universidad Creativa	Andrea Solano B.	Aldea Global
191	26.04.2009	Leer en voz alta	Iván Molina Jiménez	Ancora
192	30.04.2009	Pintura, tapagotas y macetas mejoran la sede del Congreso	Irene Vizcaíno	El País
193	10.05.2009	¡Se dice gracias!	Lars Nicolaysen	Proa
194	27.05.2009	‘Soy un fuerte candidato para enfrentar al PLN’	Irene Vizcaíno	El País
195	30.05.2009	Paseo ciudadano	Darío Chinchilla Ugalde	Ancora
196	30.06.2009	Armas de fuego detonan en documental	Alexander Sánchez	Viva
197	06.07.2009	Miles de fans estuvieron en el 5to.Piso con Arjona	Ana Yancy Flores M.	Viva
198	07.07.2009	‘Súbditos’ despiden hoy al rey del pop	Ana María Parra A.	Viva
199	08.07.2009	Bailarines pelearán para ir a Brasil	Yendry Miranda	Viva
200	17.07.2009	Vándalos causan 3.200 daños al mes en teléfonos	Esteban Oviedo	El País
201	30.07.2009	Breves: ‘Pinta el farolito’ hasta el 7 de agosto		Aldea Global
202	02.08.2009	Bienvenido al Paraíso	Catalina Murillo	Opinión
203	08.08.2009	Fans celebran 40 años de foto de Los Beatles		Viva
204	11.08.2009	Arte infantil y juvenil definirá programa de educación artística	Irene Rodríguez S.	Aldea Global
205	12.08.2009	Festival unirá lo mejor del arte urbano	Yendry Miranda	Viva
206	17.08.2009	Grafitis ‘resguardan’ el Palacio de Bellas Artes		Aldea Global
207	20.08.2009	Mañana comienza el Festival de Arte y Danza Urbana		Viva
208	21.08.2009	Expresiones urbanas agitarán a Curridabat	Yendry Miranda	Viva
209	06.09.2009	El graffiti sigue vivo en Nueva York, su ciudad natal	Sebastian Smith	Viva
210	20.09.2009	México D. F. refuerza seguridad en el metro		El Mundo
211	27.09.2009	Felices en su mundo	Ivannia Varela Q.	Proa
212	04.10.2009	La maña de pensar con sonidos	Edgardo Moreno	Ancora
213	04.10.2009	Lucha por la tilde	Natalia Kidd	Proa
214	24.10.2009	Amenazas previas a incendio en Puerto Rico centran pesquisas		El Mundo
215	30.10.2009	Sección del Muro de Berlín en EE. UU. para "mantener la memoria"	Romain Raynaldy	Aldea Global
216	07.11.2009	Berlín festeja la caída del Muro con coloridas obras de arte	Andrea Solano	Aldea Global
217	08.11.2009	El “qué habría pasado” de 1989	Michael Meyer	Opinión
218	08.11.2009	Berlín en trozos de muro y recuerdos	Hassel Fallas	Proa
219	08.11.2009	Mexicanos llenan su capital con grafitis		Aldea Global
220	19.11.2009	Empresarios nicas temen violencia en marchas		El Mundo
221	05.12.2009	Desatinado enfoque en la juventud		
222	08.12.2009	"No es un camino fácil, pero se puede lograr"	Ana María Parra / María del Mar Cerdas	Viva
223	16.12.2009	Sonámbulo deja sonar hoy a su primer hijo: el disco A puro peluche	Ana María Parra	Viva

2010				
224	24.01.2010	El hip hop matiza San José	Ana María Parra	Viva
225	03.02.2010	Jóvenes pintan grafitis políticos en basílica	Jairo Villegas S. / Fernando Gutiérrez	El País
226	07.02.2010	Cultura y vandalismo	Paul Woodbridge	Opinión
227	09.02.2010	Música y deporte se adueñan del TEC	Alonso Mata B.	El País
228	12.02.2010	José Joaquín Trejos Fernández		Obituario
229	21.02.2010	La UCR	Rodolfo Arias Formoso	Proa
230	23.02.2010	Estudios Abbey Road están bajo protección como monumento		Viva
231	18.04.2010	Andanzas en una calle centenaria	Aday López	Proa
232	21.05.2010	Moravia celebra con su juventud	Amy Ross A.	Viva
233	23.05.2010	Especies de vandalismo	Armando González	Opinión
234	08.06.2010	Una princesa del pop reclama su trono		
235	13.06.2010	Descuido municipal y vandalismo deterioran obras de bono comunal	Alonso Mata B.	El País
236	18.06.2010	La cultura argentina de las mantas	Gustavo Jiménez M.	Deportes
237	20.06.2010	Gatos y garabatos	Darío Chinchilla Ugalde	Ancora
238	14.07.2010	Hacen grafitis en mausoleo de Jackson		Viva
239	23.07.2010	Mariposas de tela 'revolotean' en las salas del Museo Nacional	Catalina Elizondo / Andrea Solano	Aldea Global
240	30.07.2010	Espray, abducir y jet lag llegan al Diccionario de Lengua Española	Andrea Solano	Aldea Global
241	04.08.2010	La Asamblea en Zapote	Yalena de la Cruz	
242	19.08.2010	Arte y ciencia motivan a ticos para seguir en las aulas	Irene Rodríguez S.	Aldea Global
243	22.08.2010	Dice la Fundéu		Ancora
244	17.10.2010	¿Y vos quién fuiste?		Proa
245	08.11.2010	Insulza apoya propuesta de Ortega de amojonar frontera	Ronny Rojas / Esteban Mata	
246	12.12.2010	Secretos guardados	Jurgen Ureña Arroyo	Ancora

News and opinion articles reviewed for the analysis of *Folha de São Paulo*, Brazil

	Date	News articles	Journalist /Author	Section
2001				
001	04.01.2001	Política sertaneja		Brasil
002	08.01.2001	Oficinas culturais do Estado		Folhateen
003	14.01.2001	LG abandona tráfico e "recria o mundo"	Armando Antenore	Cotidiano
004	22.01.2001	A nova cara do rap	Fernanda Mena	Folhateen

005	29.01.2001	Mube da curso de grafite		Folhateen
006	02.02.2001	Festa de rádio da Unicamp acontece hoje		Folha Campinas
007	23.03.2001	Confusão lembra confrontos de Davos	Gilson Schwartz	Cotidiano
008	27.03.2001	Estudantes depredam faculdades da USP	Carolina Alves	Cotidiano
009	28.03.2001	USP abre sindicância por danos		Riberão
010	29.03.2001	"O Brasil quem USA sou EEUU"		Mercado
011	01.04.2001	Rapper Criminal D lança disco de estréia, "O Conteúdo do Sistema"	Marcelo Valleta	Acontece
012	08.04.2001	Thaíde		TV Folha
013	08.04.2001	Pelas velas de Havana	Guillermo Cabrera Infante	Mais!
014	08.04.2001	Quem são os grafiteiros?		Mais!
015	11.04.2001	Marta afirma que regionais estão entre suas piores dores de cabeça		Cotidiano
016	30.04.2001	E tome cone de sorvete na testa!	Barbara Gancia	Ilustrada
017	06.05.2001	Sesc traz Walter Franco e Anima	Cássia de Souza	Folha Campinas
018	07.05.2001	Música negra de raiz conquista paradas	Carolina Federico	Folhateen
019	17.05.2001	Eventos: Sesc		Riberão
020	17.05.2001	Héroí		Equilíbrio
021	27.05.2001	Extinção	Paulo Arantes	Mais! (Painel do Leitor)
022	02.06.2001	Kusnet apresenta roteiro para ver e rever	Luciana Pareja	Acontece
023	07.06.2001	Speto grafita com quixotes		Equilíbrio
024	18.06.2001	Walter Silveira lança coletânea de poemas visuais		Acontece
025	05.07.2001	Eventos: Villa das Artes		Riberão
026	08.07.2001	A porção colorida do Brasil	Gilberto Dimenstein	Cotidiano
027	08.07.2001	Sousas vê hoje grafite, break e rap		Folha Campinas
028	12.07.2001	Psiquiatra ousa ao tecer dialética do regional	Gilberto Felisberto Vasconcellos	Ilustrada
029	14.07.2001	"Ooze" faz escoar diferentes culturas	Ana Francisca Ponzio	Acontece
030	23.07.2001	Buracos no muro	Augusto Pinheiro	Folhateen
031	26.07.2001	Macc expõe forma de expressão do movimento hip hop em "O Jovem e a Cidade"		Folha Campinas
032	27.07.2001	Aos pés da cruz	Marcelo Beraba	
033	06.08.2001	Menor é morto com três tiros em Sertãozinho		Riberão
034	09.08.2001	Eventos, teatro e exposição: "O Jovem e a Cidade"		Folha Campinas
035	23.08.2001	Eventos, teatro e exposição: "O Jovem e a Cidade"		Folha Campinas
036	23.08.2001	Grafite e break completam trilogia	Cássia de Souza	Folha Campinas
037	23.08.2001	Cultura "adotou" o hip hop		Folha Campinas
038	23.08.2001	Rap depõe contra violência social	Cássia de Souza	Folha Campinas
039	23.08.2001	Hip hop em Campinas		Folha Campinas

040	09.09.2001	A pressa e a retórica do confronto		Mais!
041	10.09.2001	Cultura vira arma eficaz contra a opressão		Folhateen
042	10.09.2001	Prefeitura aposta na prevenção para conter violência		Folhateen
043	17.09.2001	Cartas: Meus pêsames		Folhateen
044	24.09.2001	Peça é intercâmbio com Brasil		Ilustrada
045	24.09.2001	Revolusom / Curso		Folhateen
046	14.10.2001	A batida que vem das ruas	Maurício Santana Dias	Mais!
047	14.10.2001	Saiba +		Mais!
048	17.10.2001	Jano ilustra contrastes do Rio de Janeiro	Diego Assis	Ilustrada
049	05.11.2001	Arte vasculha cotidiano do Capão	Carol Frederico	Ilustrada
050	11.11.2001	Programa jovem ou programa de índio?	Rodrigo Dionisio	TV Folha
051	27.11.2001	Minas vão ao palco para mostrar, nas rimas, sensibilidade	Carol Frederico	Acontece
052	17.12.2001	Mangá sai dos quadrinhos e espalha-se pelos muros	Mirella Domenich	Folhateen
053	21.12.2001	O último panelaço		Especial
054	23.12.2001	Periferia molda perfil do mercado		Empregos
055	23.12.2001	Vagas no ritmo do hip hop	Mirella Domenich	Empregos
2002				
056	22.01.2002	Cores do grafite invadem a Casa das Rosas	Alexandra Moraes	Acontece
057	22.01.2002	Cabresto público		Brasil
058	23.01.2002	Grafite em homenagem a Celso Daniel	Gilberto Dimenstein	Cotidiano
059	25.01.2002	Arquivo confidencial		Brasil
060	03.02.2002	Uma seleção de livros e eventos culturais indicados pelo caderno		Mais!
061	10.02.2002	Cursos grátis privilegiam desempregados	Guilherme Cuchierato	Empregos
062	06.03.2002	Pichação		Esporte
063	07.03.2002	Erramos		Opinião
064	18.03.2002	Morte do Hip Hop	Igor Gabriel	Folhateen (Cartas)
065	23.03.2002	Suassuna brota do Centro da Terra	Pedro Ivo Dubra	Acontece
066	28.03.2002	"Fome, Miséria e Imperialismo"	Paulo Nogueira Batista Jr.	
067	05.05.2002	O Hip Hop toma posse da cidade	Pedro Alexandre Sanches	Acontece
068	06.05.2002	Grafites são a vedete no 1º dia de festival	Diego Assis	Ilustrada
069	06.05.2002	Projeto oferece cultura e aprendizado gratuitos		Folhateen
070	15.05.2002	Grafiteiros entram na USP	Gilberto Dimenstein	Cotidiano
071	03.06.2002	Na sexta, acabam as aulas e começa a festa	Mirella Domenich	Folhateen
072	12.06.2002	Conheça pilares da cultura que engloba o grafite		Informática
073	12.06.2002	Muro		Informática

074	12.06.2002	Grafiteiros mostram seu trabalho na rede		Informática
075	13.06.2002	Egípcios sinalizam hostilidade a Israel		
076	14.06.2002	Polícia apura suposta base do PCC		
077	14.06.2002	Bombas caseiras explodem perto de equipe da Folha		
078	17.06.2002	Pichação virtual	Sérgio Dávila	Folhateen
079	19.06.2002	Capital do skate	Gilberto Dimenstein	Cotidiano
080	24.06.2002	Cartas: Rebeldes?	Sérgio Pantoja	Folhateen
081	26.06.2002	Pichação		Esporte
082	27.06.2002	Hip hop		Fovest
083	01.07.2002	Alunos mostram resultados de projeto digital		Cotidiano
084	09.07.2002	"Brigamos sem saber o motivo"*		Especial
085	09.07.2002	Auto-estima cresce com quadrinho e grafite	Flávia Marreiro	Especial
086	10.07.2002	Grafites substituem anúncios publicitários em relógios digitais	Paloma Cotes	Cotidiano
087	14.07.2002	Rappers do Racionais MC's lançam disco com a crônica da periferia	Xico Sá e Israel do Vale	Acontece
088	23.07.2002	Muros aparecem pichados em S. Paulo		
089	26.07.2002	Quadrinhos desenquadrados	Diego Assis	Ilustrada
090	05.08.2002	Mano chega aí	Fernanda Mena	Folhateen
091	05.08.2002	Mostra Internacional de Grafite		Folhateen
092	07.08.2002	Campanha limpa		Brasil
093	18.08.2002	A geração H	Marcos Flamínio Peres	Mais!
094	19.08.2002	Evento conecta a cultura do rap entre grandes cidades		Folhateen
095	19.08.2002	Faculdade promove oficinas de arte a preços populares		Folhateen
096	21.08.2002	Manos vêm da Europa e invadem a cidade	Luciana Macedo	Acontece
097	25.08.2002	Cultura na Rua leva ao Brás talentos que emergem do hip hop	Diego Assis	Acontece
098	27.08.2002	Trajectoria de DJ é ligada à criação do hip hop		Ilustrada
099	02.09.2002	Catamarã oferece "hidro" natural		Turismo
100	17.10.2002	Obra de Lenora de Barros sofre pichação		Ilustrada
101	31.10.2002	Acabou o cessar-fogo virtual	Sérgio Dávila	Ilustrada
102	09.12.2002	Nos Porões do Hip Hop reúne grafite e música		Folhateen
103	18.12.2002	Se ao menos Saddam fosse brasileiro	Nicholas D. Kristof	Mundo
2003				
104	24.01.2003	Curto-circuito~		Ilustrada
105	30.01.2003	Escapismo fashion dá o tom do terceiro dia	Erika Palomino	Ilustrada
106	31.01.2003	Grafite acende a Triton	Erika Palomino	Ilustrada
107	14.02.2003	"Passatempos" são atração de megafestival	Thiago Ney	Ilustrada

108	01.03.2003	O campeonato da perversidade	Manuel da Costa Pinto	Ilustrada
109	06.03.2003	Cursos fogem dos temas clássicos e educam	Katia Deutner / Gustavo Prudente	Equilíbrio
110	06.03.2003	Aulas do balacobaco*		Equilíbrio
111	08.03.2003	Shows de rap, MPB e palestras incrementam Dia da Mulher		Acontece
112	31.03.2003	SP exhibe releitura atual da paisagem holandesa	Fabio Cypriano	Turismo
113	31.03.2003	Agência Quixote abre inscrições para aulas de break e grafite		Folhateen
114	02.04.2003	Uma internet mais turva	Marcelo Coelho	Ilustrada
115	05.04.2003	Misturama		Folhateen
116	08.05.2003	Eu sou o espinho~	Mônica Bergamo	Ilustrada
117	08.05.2003	Hora de partir		Mundo
118	10.05.2003	Benji Reid dança "linguagens híbridas"	Katia Calsavara	Acontece
119	12.05.2003	"Cosmococa" resgata o experimentalismo reprimido	Felipe Chaimovich	Ilustrada
120	12.05.2003	De olho nas ruas	Fernanda Mena	Folhateen
121	18.05.2003	Branco de hospital dá lugar ao grafite na Casa Cor 2003	Bruna Martins Fontes	Construção
122	30.05.2003	Keith Haring incorporou grafites de NY		Ilustrada
123	01.06.2003	Andy Warhol e Keith Haring		Mais!
124	02.06.2003	Arte também é POP	Fernanda Mena	Folhateen
125	09.06.2003	Workshop gratuito de mangá, quadrinhos, ilustração e grafite		Folhateen
126	16.06.2003	Gotas de pop se fundem ao centro paulistano	Felipe Chaimovich	Acontece
127	30.06.2003	Pioneiro, Juneca atua hoje como grafiteiro	Sérgio Dávila	Cotidiano
128	30.06.2003	Prejuízo com pichação pode chegar a R\$ 8 bi	Sérgio Dávila	Cotidiano
129	30.06.2003	Pichadores ousam e chegam à classe média	Sérgio Dávila e Juca Varella	Cotidiano
130	01.07.2003	Cidade Pichada		Opinião
131	02.07.2003	Veja o hipertexto nascido nas ruas	Ana Paula de Oliveira	Informática
132	09.07.2003	Casa Cor 2003 fecha hoje as suas portas		Acontece
133	10.07.2003	Prefeitura entra na moda		
134	12.07.2003	Fashion Rio termina com novos estilistas	Erika Palomino	Ilustrada
135	20.07.2003	A deprimente pichação de São Paulo	<i>Antônio Ermírio de Moraes</i>	Opinião
136	26.07.2003	Buamba! Maluf pegou uma prisão de ventre!	<i>José Simão</i>	Ilustrada
137	27.07.2003	Pichações	Alexandre Youssef	Opinião (Painel do Leitor)
138	28.07.2003	Hip Hop toma posse de São Paulo	Fernanda Mena	Folhateen
139	04.08.2003	Não escondam o grafite	Isadora Adamy	Folhateen (Cartas)
140	05.08.2003	Para EUA, Saddam é questão de tempo		Mundo
141	06.08.2003	A invenção da Hip Hopera	Gilberto Dimenstein	Cotidiano
142	25.08.2003	Agência Quixote Spray Arte dá curso de grafite em SP		Folhateen

143	27.08.2003	Testemunhos de dor	Marcelo Coelho	Ilustrada
144	31.08.2003	Lugar de estudante é na rua	Gilberto Dimenstein	Cotidiano
145	06.09.2003	Acadêmico analisa mídia de olho na rua	Diego Assis	Ilustrada
146	08.09.2003	Tese mostra boa ação do hip hop		Folhateen
147	09.11.2003	Hip hop		Mais!
148	22.11.2003	Projeto Belezura		Ilustrada
149	17.12.2003	Art Crimes		Informática
2004				
150	04.01.2004	Uma sanfona para São Paulo	Sérgio Dávila	Cotidiano
151	11.01.2004	450 anos, progresso e a triste realidade	<i>Antônio Ermírio de Moraes</i>	Opinião
152	19.01.2004	Hip hop se alarga da periferia ao centro	Thiago Ney	Ilustrada
153	21.01.2004	Uma euforia artificial e sufocante	Marcelo Coelho	Ilustrada
154	25.01.2004	São Paulo Narcísico		Mais!
155	02.02.2004	Punks	<i>João Sayad</i>	Mercado
156	23.02.2004	O homem-espelho	Lucrecia Zappi	Ilustrada
157	01.03.2004	Produção independente	Guilherme Werneck	Folhateen
158	02.03.2004	Grafite		Mercado
159	08.03.2004	Pelo direito de se divertir	Guilherme Werneck	Folhateen
160	22.03.2004	Curso de grafite		Folhateen
161	28.03.2004	Grafiteiro critica falta de espaço		Cotidiano
162	28.03.2004	Grafite de SP é vanguarda mundial		Cotidiano
163	28.03.2004	Belezura subversiva	Fernanda Mena	Cotidiano
164	29.03.2004	Grafite	Edson Martins	Opinião (Painel do Leitor)
165	03.04.2004	Racionais MC's e Benjor preparam show inédito	Thiago Ney	Acontece
166	05.04.2004	Os Cinco Elementos		Folhateen
167	09.04.2004	Casa é pichada com nome de testemunha		
168	25.04.2004	O guru do design sul-africano	Juliana Monachesi	Mais!
169	01.05.2004	Tricampeão é alento contra violência na periferia de SP	Marcus Vinicius Marinho	Esporte
170	11.05.2004	PF sabia de ronda ilegal no Alto de Pinheiros	<i>Sílvia Corrêa</i>	Cotidiano
171	16.05.2004	Quem quer "ficar" com São Paulo?	Gilberto Dimenstein	Cotidiano
172	22.05.2004	Histórias do olho	Luiz Caversan	Ilustrada
173	09.06.2004	Pato Donald completa 70 anos hoje	Diego Assis	Ilustrada
174	10.06.2004	Clube de São Paulo inventa a "festa junina urbana"	Adriana Ferreira	Ilustrada
175	21.06.2004	Grafite on-line	Bruno Freitas	Folhateen (Cartas)
176	21.06.2004	Tráfico alicia mais em bairro da zona norte	Gilmar Penteado	Cotidiano

177	06.07.2004	Campanha aberta	Nelson de Sá	Brasil
178	17.07.2004	Eventos reúnem grafite, shows e discotecagem em São Paulo	Adriana Ferreira	Acontece
179	26.07.2004	Mural entre avenidas ganha revitalização	Alexandra Moraes	Ilustrada
180	26.07.2004	Tinta fresca	Alexandra Moraes	Folhateen
181	28.07.2004	Novos britânicos ressuscitam a pintura	Tereza Novaes	Acontece
182	02.08.2004	Pop frio	Luiz Fernando Oliveira do Vale	Folhateen (Cartas)
183	27.08.2004	Operárias de Reichenbach resistem à barbárie	José Geraldo Couto	Ilustrada
184	29.08.2004	Guru, Giovane cria ritual com pichação para motivar equipe		Esporte
185	13.09.2004	Arte na rua	Guilherme Coube	Folhateen
186	27.09.2004	O quinto elemento	Diego Assis	Ilustrada
187	27.09.2004	O que eles pretendem para vocês	Leandro Fortino	Folhateen
188	27.09.2004	26ª Bienal começa com pichação e atraso	Gustavo Fioratti	Ilustrada
189	28.09.2004	Público recorde abre a Bienal de São Paulo	Fabio Cypriano	Ilustrada
190	29.09.2004	Artista diz que ter obra pichada é "positivo"	Gustavo Fioratti	Ilustrada
191	02.10.2004	Pichador atacou outra obra na Bienal	Fernanda Mena	Cotidiano
192	03.10.2004	"Não", pichador da Bienal, diz que também é artista	Fernanda Mena	Cotidiano
193	03.10.2004	"É vandalismo mesmo", diz grafiteiro	Fernanda Mena	Cotidiano
194	03.10.2004	Guerra entre pichadores desfigura paisagem urbana		Cotidiano
195	06.10.2004	Guerra do grafite mancha túnel da Paulista	Mario Cesar Carvalho / Fernanda Mena	Cotidiano
196	07.10.2004	Retoque		Cotidiano
197	08.10.2004	Clinton deve ressurgir na campanha		Mundo
198	10.10.2004	Os dez +: 26ª Bienal		
199	10.10.2004	Seguranças ensinam e contêm visitantes		Ilustrada
200	14.10.2004	Graffiti homenageia TV no musical "Terezinha" ~		Ilustrada
201	18.10.2004	Sinagoga é alvo de pichação com suástica e frase racista em Campinas		Cotidiano
202	20.10.2004	Justiça em SP manda prefeitura apagar pichações apócrifas		Brasil
203	22.10.2004	Pichado		Esporte
204	26.10.2004	Hackers picham site da Prefeitura de SP		Brasil
205	31.10.2004	Beleza deve ser valor central dos projetos	Mario Cesar Carvalho	Cotidiano
206	31.10.2004	São Paulo ainda precisa fazer o óbvio	Mario Cesar Carvalho	Cotidiano
207	04.11.2004	Trem grafitado começa a circular hoje		Cotidiano
208	16.11.2004	Associação pinta postes no Cambuci		Cotidiano
209	01.12.2004	Pichação anti-semita em banheiro da PUC do Rio provoca protestos	Katia Calsavara	Cotidiano
210	05.12.2004	A PUC-RJ não vê nem lembra	Elio Gaspari	Brasil
211	08.12.2004	Mosteiro de São Bento abre teatro após restauração	Amarílis Lage	Cotidiano

212	09.12.2004	Festa Paulistana		Cotidiano
213	10.12.2004	Decifrando o rap alternativo	Lulie Macedo	Ilustrada
214	12.12.2004	AXN expõe o cinema de pichação de John Carpenter	Paulo Santos Lima	Ilustrada
215	19.12.2004	O corpo e a lingugem de Maio de 68	Ivana Bentes	Mais!
216	20.12.2004	Elas pintam o sete	Flávia Mantovani	Folhateen
2005				
217	03.01.2005	De volta aos anos	Denise Mota	Folhateen
218	05.01.2005	Autor indicou a estrada que eu procurava	Laerte	Ilustrada
219	05.01.2005	Sob pressão após tragédia em boate, Kirchner decide interromper férias	Silvana Arantes	Mundo
220	07.01.2005	Longa mistura aventura juvenil e crise política em terra em transe	José Geraldo Couto	Ilustrada
221	04.02.2005	"Conselho é frankenstein", diz Feldman	Fabio Schivartche	Cotidiano
222	13.02.2005	Um fato novo na agenda social brasileira	Gilberto Dimenstein	Cotidiano
223	21.02.2005	Fazendo arte na Universidade	Alessandra Kormann	Folhateen
224	24.02.2005	Mostras se completam em embates da arte		Acontece
225	13.03.2005	Formatura~		Mais!
226	14.03.2005	Mostra em NY confirma atualidade de obra de Basquiat	Roberta Smith (New York Times)	Ilustrada
227	15.03.2005	EUA querem conter influência de Chávez	Jorge Silva	Mundo
228	18.03.2005	"Pixei e Saí Correndo" flagra cultura de rua	Valmir Santos	Ilustrada
229	25.03.2005	DJs, MCs e produtores investem em "mixtapes"	Adriana Ferreira	Ilustrada
230	26.03.2005	Gestão do PT apostou no ensino do grafite		Cotidiano
231	26.03.2005	Prefeitura quer cobrar limpeza de pichador	Amarílis Lage	Cotidiano
232	30.03.2005	Cerco a pichação		Opinão
233	04.04.2005	Performance provoca polêmica no Itaú	Tereza Novaes	Ilustrada
234	28.04.2005	Ação antipichação terá início em Pinheiros	Amarílis Lage	Cotidiano
235	09.05.2005	Submarinos azuis (ou seriam dirigíveis?) aportam na Augusta	Diego Assis	Ilustrada
236	15.05.2005	Pichação e imundice contrariando a grandeza de São Paulo	<i>Antônio Ermírio de Moraes</i>	Opinão
237	16.05.2005	Cidade pichada	Eduardo Guimarães	Opinão (Painel do Leitor)
238	16.05.2005	Cidade pichada	Iwao Utsumi	Opinão (Painel do Leitor)
239	17.05.2005	Pichação	Rui Amaral	Opinão (Painel do Leitor)
240	18.05.2005	Plano antipichação tem início com críticas	Luísa Brito	Cotidiano
241	20.05.2005	Cultura Fashion, Hip Hop, Hype E Raiz	Erika Palomino	Ilustrada
242	25.05.2005	Grafite ganha exposição e debate	Diego Assis	Acontece
243	25.05.2005	"Jovens pela paz" são presos pichando muro		Brasil
244	28.05.2005	10 dias após plano antipichação, 6 são detidos	Luísa Brito	Cotidiano
245	03.06.2005	Zona leste terá Domingo de Lazer no parque Tiquatira		Cotidiano

246	05.06.2005	À noite, professora vira Piroboys		Cotidiano
247	05.06.2005	Prefeitura promete maior fiscalização em áreas visadas		Cotidiano
248	05.06.2005	Pichador usa gravata para driblar fiscal	Luísa Brito	Cotidiano
249	06.06.2005	Pichadores	Carlos Matias Kolb	Opinião (Painel do Leitor)
250	18.06.2005	Pioneira iniciou com edição de gravura		Ilustrada
251	18.06.2005	Galeria expõe trabalhos de grafiteiros	Tereza Novaes	Ilustrada
252	19.06.2005	Muro não fica em branco no combate às pichações	Bruna Martins Fontes	Construção
253	20.06.2005	Artistas criam salão de humor engraçado	Diego Assis	Ilustrada
254	20.06.2005	Projeto cinematográfico "une" a Iugoslávia	Matthew Robinson	Ilustrada
255	03.07.2005	Grafiteiro faz arte no subterrâneo de SP	Tereza Novaes	Ilustrada
256	25.07.2005	Policiais aprendem grafite com jovens		Cotidiano
257	29.07.2005	Governo brasileiro teme impacto do Cafta	Iuri Dantas	Mercado
258	22.08.2005	A proposta do PMDB para a crise	Anthony Garotinho	Opinião
259	30.08.2005	Caminho das Pedras		Sinapse
260	01.09.2005	São Paulo vai plantar 186 mil trepadeiras	Afra Balazina	Cotidiano
261	08.09.2005	Nova Orleans e a confiança básica no mundo	Contardo Calligaris	Ilustrada
262	18.09.2005	Um programa que jamais deve ser esquecido	<i>Antônio Ermírio de Moraes</i>	Opinião
263	24.09.2005	Pro GP agora eu vou	Fábio Seixas	Esporte
264	25.09.2005	Presença dos EUA no Paraguai é profunda	Rene Gonzalez	Mundo
265	26.09.2005	Titi Freak "invade" e "desorganiza" galeria	Tereza Novaes	Ilustrada
266	15.10.2005	Governo quer que britânicos tenham boas maneiras	Cesar Soriano	Mundo
267	26.10.2005	Animal exposto sofre com furto	Afra Balazina	Cotidiano
268	30.10.2005	Salvador transforma pichadores em grafiteiros-servidores	Luiz Francisco	Ilustrada
269	30.10.2005	Livro reverencia grafite brasileiro		Ilustrada
270	30.10.2005	Os Gêmeos colorem o Cambuci e o mundo	João Wainer	Ilustrada
271	10.11.2005	Rappers põem CT de R\$ 4 mi sob viaduto	Sérgio Rangel	Esporte
272	15.11.2005	Arqueologia do Hip Hop	Adriana Ferreira Silva	Ilustrada
273	20.11.2005	Nossa querida biblioteca	<i>Antônio Ermírio de Moraes</i>	Opinião
274	22.11.2005	Buamba! Timão vai ser o TRETA campeão!	<i>José Simão</i>	Ilustrada
275	27.11.2005	Oba! Tá acabando o Roubrasilão 2005!	<i>José Simão</i>	Ilustrada
276	29.11.2005	Homenagem ao brasileiro é removida		Mundo
277	09.12.2005	Encadernada	<i>Mônica Bergamo</i>	Ilustrada
278	11.12.2005	Noite da Barra Funda revê pico dos anos 80	Sérgio Dávila	Cotidiano
279	18.12.2005	Maquetes e teste de cor evitam surpresas	Giovanny Gerolla	Construção
280	18.12.2005	Arte na parede	Giovanny Gerolla	Construção

2006				
281	14.01.2006	Grafite leva pintor à prisão em Diadema		Cotidiano
282	21.01.2006	Atividade expõe tensão entre direitos	Gilberto Dimenstein	Ilustrada
283	21.01.2006	A arte do "pixo"	Eduardo Simões	Ilustrada
284	30.01.2006	Grafite do bem	Leticia de Castro	Folhateen
285	01.02.2006	Fábrica de criatividade	Gilberto Dimenstein	Cotidiano
286	03.02.2006	Mulher pelada "pára" o trânsito nas ruas de São Paulo	Tereza Novaes	Ilustrada
287	13.02.2006	Avenida Pacaembu vive crise de identidade		Cotidiano
288	13.02.2006	O ritual brasileiro do trote	Vinicius Torres Freire	Opinão
289	26.02.2006	Um absurdo que precisa ser evitado	<i>Antônio Ermírio de Moraes</i>	Opinão
290	26.03.2006	Invasões bárbaras	Nina Lemos	Cotidiano
291	03.04.2006	Erramos*		
292	13.04.2006	Fora do gancho	<i>Mônica Bergamo</i>	Ilustrada
293	04.06.2006	Abandono	Fábio Roberto Ribeiro da Silva	Opinão (Painel do Leitor)
294	06.06.2006	Berlim vê ação brasileira antiracismo	Valmir Santos	Ilustrada
295	19.06.2006	Catalães aprovam maior autonomia em referendo		Mundo
296	03.07.2006	"Arte quer se reapropriar das ruas"		Ilustrada
297	03.07.2006	Briga de rua	Rafael Cariello / Tereza Novaes	Ilustrada
298	03.07.2006	Pichação em casas vira código para assaltantes na zona leste		Cotidiano
299	14.07.2006	Com fuligem dos carros, artista plástico desenha caveiras em túnel de SP	Gabriela Longman	Ilustrada
300	17.06.2006	Beneficiados dizem que renunciariam ao cartão se tivessem profissão e renda	Paulo Peixoto	Brasil
301	24.07.2006	Vão Repaginado	<i>Mônica Bergamo</i>	Ilustrada
302	27.07.2006	Exame de sangue	Renata Lo Prete	
303	27.07.2006	Critérios são diferentes no mundo da arte	Marco Augusto Gonçalves	Ilustrada
304	27.07.2006	Estranhos no ninho	Rafael Cariello	Ilustrada
305	30.07.2006	Na boca do povo	Peter Burke	Mais!
306	07.08.2006	Risco fiscal aumenta com novo decreto	Guilherme Barros	Mercado
307	21.08.2006	Apelo comercial dos Gêmeos frustra	Fabio Cypriano	Acontece
308	27.08.2006	Burrice mata	Gilberto Dimenstein	Cotidiano
309	29.08.2006	Sugestões para uma abordagem d'osgêmeos	Márcia Fortes / Alexandre Gabriel	Acontece
310	29.08.2006	Insegurança pública	Gustavo Ioschpe	Brasil
311	03.09.2006	"Cracolândia" expande os seus domínios	Laura Capriglione	Cotidiano
312	08.09.2006	A moda espreita a arte		Ilustrada
313	10.09.2006	Revolta de Oaxaca é Chiapas ampliada	Raul Juste Lores	Mundo
314	11.09.2006	Sem outdoors, políticos invadem muros	Andrea Murta e Marcela Campos	Brasil

315	11.09.2006	Como proceder		Brasil
316	18.09.2006	Jovens artistas passam toda a madrugada em "maratona" de grafiteagem	Daniela Tófoli	Cotidiano
317	29.09.2006	Comitê de Pallocci enfrenta protesto		Cotidiano
318	20.10.2006	Pichação Pedre a Saída De Dualib E Faz Ameaças A Jogadores		
319	22.10.2006	A vergonhosa pichação	Antônio Ermínio de Moraes	Opinião
320	23.10.2006	Museu Afro Brasil completa dois anos		Ilustrada
321	23.10.2006	Pichações	Fernando A. Cavazzoni Junior	Opinião (Painel do Leitor)
322	30.10.2006	Grotões dão vitória a Requião na mais acirrada disputa	Mari Tortato	Especial
323	17.11.2006	Connecting street/Resfest	Gustavo Fioratti	Especial
324	18.11.2006	Cracolândia	Florian Pesaro	Opinião (Painel do Leitor)
325	20.11.2006	Hip Hop e os 4 elementos		Folhateen
326	20.11.2006	"O rap de protesto acabou", diz DJ Hum		Folhateen
327	24.11.2006	Breakdance nasceu no gueto nova-iorquino		Ilustrada
328	24.11.2006	Break volta à cena em batalha mundial	Adriana Ferreira Silva	Ilustrada
329	25.11.2006	Grupo Facção Central vence Prêmio Hutúz		Ilustrada
330	07.12.2006	Psiquiatra vê na arte uma poderosa aliada terapêutica	Renata de Gáspari Valdejão	Especial
331	14.12.2006	Índia pede que cidadãos parem de cuspir em atração		Turismo
332	16.12.2006	Glicério recebe a Mostra Cultural Nós do Centro		Acontece
333	18.12.2006	Alunos são condenados por pichar a USP	Fábio Takahashi	
2007				
334	12.01.2007	Sede da Renascer em São Paulo é alvo de pichações durante a madrugada	Matheus Pichonelli	Brasil
335	23.01.2007	A agonia do Metrô	Mario Cesar Carvalho	Opinião
336	29.01.2007	Av. Paulista ganha grafites sobre o Japão	Marianne Piemonte	Cotidiano
337	01.02.2007	Erramos*		Opinião
338	05.02.2007	Em Contato	Mônica Bergamo	Ilustrada
339	04.03.2007	A violência da desinformação	Gilberto Dimenstein	Cotidiano
340	05.03.2007	Movimento questionava a carece		Folhateen
341	08.03.2007	Cia. Elevador olha para trás em "Ponto Zero"	Valmir Santos	Ilustrada
342	09.03.2007	"Assassino"	Nelson de Sá	Brasil
343	11.03.2007	Recepção negativa nas ruas vira tônica	Sérgio Dávila	Mundo
344	11.03.2007	Vázquez elogia Bush e pressiona Brasil	Sérgio Dávila	Mundo
345	13.03.2007	Chalita reage a críticas e ataca gestão Serra	Fábio Takahashi	Cotidiano
346	15.03.2007	"NYT" destaca os Pontos de Cultura de Gil		Ilustrada
347	16.03.2007	Cultura de bacilos	Barbara Gancia	Cotidiano
348	25.03.2007	Instalação~		Mais!

349	15.04.2007	Dois Córregos quer ser a "capital da poesia"	Roberto de Oliveira	Cotidiano
350	13.05.2007	Grafito anônimo é hype da arte britânica	Tereza Novaes	Ilustrada
351	14.05.2007	Polícia cerca o público no desagravo à Virada Cultural		
352	03.06.2007	era uma casa muito engraçada...	Mônica Bergamo	Ilustrada
353	03.06.2007	Subsolo		Acontece
354	10.06.2007	Mercado gay no Brasil é muito pouco explorado, diz InSearch	Guilherme Barros	Mercado
355	18.06.2007	Quatro artistas brasileiros de grafite pintam, na Escócia, um castelo mais antigo que o Brasil	Natalia Viana	Folhateen
356	21.06.2007	Vila tenta lidar com a sombra de Hitler		Turismo
357	23.06.2007	Na sala ou no quarto, desenhos enfeitam casas de descolados		Cotidiano
358	23.06.2007	Cidade Limpa: Grafite é usado em fachadas para driblar lei		Cotidiano
359	23.06.2007	Grafite deixa gueto, seduz a classe média e vira moda	Daniela Tófoli	Cotidiano
360	24.06.2007	Grafitos acusam prefeitura de implantar política antigrafito	João Wainer	Cotidiano
361	03.07.2007	Caravana do Grafite	Mônica Bergamo	Ilustrada
362	04.07.2007	Arte que nasce da fumaça	Gilberto Dimenstein	Cotidiano
363	30.07.2007	Cine hip hop grátis	Dolores Orosco	Folhateen
364	04.08.2007	Núcleo atenderá 300 jovens na comunidade		Cotidiano
365	04.08.2007	AfroReggae cresce com gestão empresarial	Luis Fernando Vianna	Cotidiano
366	05.08.2007	Galerias viram espaço para baladas	Silas Martí	Acontece
367	08.08.2007	File		Informática
368	12.08.2007	Loja exhibe grafite sobre data festiva		Negócios
369	12.08.2007	O que mudar		Negócios
370	12.08.2007	Sem placa, lojista usa grafite e vidro para atrair clientes	Johanna Nublat	Negócios
371	13.08.2007	Eletro show	Tereza Novaes	Ilustrada
372	24.08.2007	Um tiro que entrou na história	Carlos Heitor Cony	Ilustrada
373	23.09.2007	Invasão da PUC marcou a redemocratização	José Alberto Bombig	Brasil
374	29.09.2007	Macaco no templo da peruagem	Lígia Mesquita	Vitrine
375	03.10.2007	Timão! Macumba com frango de goleiro!	José Simão	Ilustrada
376	23.10.2007	Freqüentadores de praças criticam falta de segurança		Cotidiano
377	23.10.2007	Sé e República já estão abandonadas após reforma de R\$ 7,2 mi	Afra Balazina	Cotidiano
378	30.10.2007	O Kassab já sabe?	Mônica Bergamo	Ilustrada
379	04.11.2007	Mercado de imóveis desaloja mais pobres	Fábio Zanini	Mundo
380	20.11.2007	Racismo: Suástica É Pichada Em Cartaz Na Ufrgs		Cotidiano
381	20.11.2007	"Vão de Almas" mitifica Kalungas em mostra na Pinacoteca do Estado	Eder Chiodetto	Acontece
382	02.12.2007	Hiato de uma vida	María Lucia Pallares-Burke / Peter Burke	Mais!

383	05.12.2007	"Street World" mostra cultura urbana periférica	Bruna Bittencourt	Ilustrada
384	08.12.2007	Nokia Trends põe grafiteiros para desenhar com laser	Silas Martí	Ilustrada
385	17.12.2007	Grafiteiros vendem gravuras na internet	Tereza Novaes	Ilustrada
386	28.12.2007	O novo vinil		
2008				
387	17.01.2008	Arte urbana de SP recebe italianos e americanos	Bruna Bittencourt	Ilustrada
388	18.01.2008	Artistas respondem à SPFW com intervenção "Fashion Freak", no Sesc Santana		Ilustrada
389	19.01.2008	Oposição a técnicos esquenta clássico	Mariana Campos	Esporte
390	20.01.2008	Santos esquece ataque, blinda sua zaga e alivia Betão	Maurício Eirós	Esporte
391	22.01.2008	Grafites no MAC discutem outra visão da arte		Fovest
392	24.01.2008	Sem gol ou vitória, Santos joga para encerrar escassez	Mariana Campos	Esporte
393	27.01.2008	Leão reúne time e insinua que há complô contra ele	Mariana Campos	Esporte
394	01.02.2008	Novo 'Aqui Agora' se inspira no 'Pânico'	Daniel Castro	Ilustrada
395	11.02.2008	Em Nova Orleans, "Katrina Tour" mostra cicatrizes da catástrofe		Mundo
396	13.02.2008	País tem muitos hackers, diz caçador		Informática
397	16.02.2008	Ueba! Ronaldo usa tênis Titanike!	<i>José Simão</i>	Ilustrada
398	09.03.2008	Nove mostras animam Ibirapuera	Silas Martí	Acontece
399	17.03.2008	Os 12 ninjas	Leticia de Castro	Folhateen
400	30.03.2008	Zimbábue conta votos no escuro em disputa apertada	Andrea Murta	Mundo
401	01.04.2008	Para analistas, lei é o 1º passo, mas há mais por fazer		Cotidiano
402	02.04.2008	Pichação	Mônica Bergamo	Ilustrada
403	05.04.2008	Pichação em muro do clube provoca time		Esporte
404	12.04.2008	Divisão de classes	Ricardo Perrone	Esporte
405	15.04.2008	Ueba! Naomi Campbell cospe no mosquito	<i>José Simão</i>	Ilustrada
406	19.04.2008	Mórbido e divertido, livro traz obituário de nomes da cultura pop	Ricardo Bonalume Neto	Ilustrada
407	21.04.2008	Alcapão ferve, funciona, e Palmeiras chega à final	Márvio dos Anjos	Esporte
408	03.05.2008	Nas ruas de London		Folha Corrida
409	04.05.2008	Pacote turístico inclui passeio por boca-de-fumo		Cotidiano
410	04.05.2008	Agência oferece papo com traficante em tour por favela	Viníciuz Queiroz Galvão	Cotidiano
411	10.05.2008	Kboco explora transição entre ateliê e pintura de rua		Ilustrada
412	13.05.2008	Rubinho, 257 corridas! Devagar e sempre!	<i>José Simão</i>	Ilustrada
413	17.05.2008	Após dois anos, reforma da 1ª vila operária de SP começa a sair do papel	Mariana Barros	Cotidiano
414	19.05.2008	Cidadãos com cidadania	Ruy Castro	Opinião
415	20.05.2008	Uma miss à minha porta~	João Pereira Coutinho	Ilustrada
416	25.05.2008	O iluminado~	Maria Andrea Muncini	Mais!

417	25.05.2008	Casa Cor Revisitada~		Construção
418	28.05.2008	Refundação da rua Augusta	Gilberto Dimenstein	Cotidiano
419	09.06.2008	Por tras dos muros		Folhateen
420	10.06.2008	Brasileiros modificam a fachada da Tate Modern	Pedro Dias Leite	Ilustrada
421	13.06.2008	Pichadores vandalizam escola para discutir conceito de arte	Laura Capriglione	Cotidiano
422	14.06.2008	"Não" irlandês a tratado põe Europa em crise		Mundo
423	14.06.2008	Os sábios da bola	José Geraldo Couto	Esporte
424	14.06.2008	Felipe fica fora até do banco corintiano	Luís Ferrari	Esporte
425	15.06.2008	Documentário mostra ação de pichadores em SP	Thiago Ney	Ilustrada
426	15.06.2008	"É um crime, mas é arte também", diz especialista		Ilustrada
427	19.06.2008	Pichações	Contardo Calligaris	
428	04.07.2008	"Por equívoco", prefeitura apaga painel de artistas	Audrey Furlaneto	Ilustrada
429	06.07.2008	Dançando na luz	Gilberto Dimenstein	Cotidiano
430	18.07.2008	Escola expulsa aluno que vandalizou prédio para discutir arte	Laura Capriglione	Cotidiano
431	24.07.2008	Onde foi parar o campinho?	Anna Veronica Mautner	Equilíbrio
432	27.07.2008	Grafitos criticam obra por encomenda	Juliana Nadin e Gustavo Fioratti	Cotidiano
433	27.07.2008	Prefeitura se retrata por ter apagado grafite em SP	Juliana Nadin e Gustavo Fioratti	Cotidiano
434	04.08.2008	SP recebe grafite eletrônico no File	Bruna Bittencourt	Ilustrada
435	11.08.2008	Cidade Limpa faz paulistano reinventar fachadas de lojas		Cotidiano
436	21.08.2008	Projeto veta a venda de tinta spray a jovens		Cotidiano
437	24.08.2008	Onesto começou em São Miguel Paulista		Especial
438	24.08.2008	Almoxarife do Itaim Paulista gasta 4 h para ir e voltar	Willian Veira	Especial
439	24.08.2008	O terrível Godard	Nigel Andrews	Mais!
440	24.08.2008	Feira revela as novas faces do concreto	Edson Valente	Construção
441	30.08.2008	Começa em BH a 1ª Bienal dedicada ao Graffiti		Ilustrada
442	31.08.2008	Speto é o artista convidado desta edição		Especial
443	31.08.2008	Mito Sandino ainda é norte político do país		Mundo
444	06.09.2008	Consumo inspirado	Lígia Mesquita	Vitrine
445	06.09.2008	Secretaria de Cultura lança edital para quadrinhos	Silas Martí	Ilustrada
446	07.09.2008	Grafitos feitos por Pato ilustram esta edição		Especial
447	09.09.2008	Autores de ação não conhecem contexto da arte	Fabio Cypriano	Cotidiano
448	09.09.2008	Cerca de 30 pichadores invadem galeria de arte e danificam obras expostas	Daniela Mercier	Cotidiano
449	09.09.2008	Da Rua Para A Galeria		Folha Corrida
450	14.09.2008	Psicodelia de Presto ilustra a edição		Especial
451	16.09.2008	Além da construção	Mario Gioia	Ilustrada

452	25.09.2008	Se essa rua fosse minha...	Amarílis Lage	Equilíbrio
453	28.09.2008	Finok ilustra última edição do DNA Paulistano		Especial
454	18.10.2008	MIS e Paço discutem as fronteiras do artístico	Silas Martí	Acontece
455	24.10.2008	Bienal é aberta amanhã com ameaça de pichação	Fabio Cypriano	Ilustrada
456	25.10.2008	Antes da inauguração, Bienal sofre ataques de "coladores" de "stickers"	Sara Uhelski	Cotidiano
457	26.10.2008	O Mundo do Grafite		Mais!
458	27.10.2008	Grupo invade prédio da Bienal e picha "andar vazio"	Adriano Choque	Cotidiano
459	28.10.2008	"Ataque é coisa de gente ressentida", diz grafiteiro	Laura Capriglione / Adriano Choque	Cotidiano
460	28.10.2008	"O grafite formou uma panela", afirma pichador	Laura Capriglione / Adriano Choque	Cotidiano
461	28.10.2008	Pichadores agora destroem marcos do grafite em São Paulo	Laura Capriglione / Adriano Choque	Cotidiano
462	29.10.2008	Em crise, Palmeiras encara Goiás	Renan Cacioli	Esporte
463	30.10.2008	"Não consigo fechar a boca", afirma Marcos		Esporte
464	02.11.2008	Cotação da semana		Folha Corrida
465	08.11.2008	Vândalos atacam sala de pesquisa biológica na USP	Afra Balazina	Ciência
466	14.11.2008	Escola do crime	Barbara Gancia	Cotidiano
467	25.11.2008	Galeria Bergamin celebra grafite, cultura urbana e skate		Ilustrada
468	27.11.2008	Com néon colorido, coletivo refaz pichação da Bienal em galeria	Silas Martí	Acontece
469	27.11.2008	Bonnie "Prince" Billy mostra seu folk misterioso	Daniela Arrais	Acontece
470	05.12.2008	"Picho para o povo olhar e não gostar", diz jovem presa na Bienal	Diógenes Muniz	Cotidiano
471	10.12.2008	Artistas refazem painel apagado por engano	William Vieira	Cotidiano
472	11.12.2008	Bienal tem catálogo em forma de jornal	Silas Martí	Ilustrada
473	12.12.2008	Pichação	Geraldo Santos	Opinião (Painel do Leitor)
474	13.12.2008	Isso é o meu número~		Vitrine
475	13.12.2008	"É uma tática terrorista", diz Ivo Mesquita	Ivo Mesquita	Ilustrada
476	14.12.2008	O país do homem cordial	Jorge Coli	Mais!
477	15.12.2008	Bienal age de modo cínico e intolerante ao lavar as mãos	Paulo Herkenhoff	Ilustrada
478	15.12.2008	Pichação na Bienal	Marlene Mendes Martins Bastos	Opinião (Painel do Leitor)
479	15.12.2008	Pichação na Bienal	Pedro Tavares Maluf	Opinião (Painel do Leitor)
480	15.12.2008	O vazio e a fúria	Fernando de Barros e Silva	Opinão
481	15.12.2008	A menina pichadora	Jô Hallack / Nina Lemos / Raq Affonso	Opinão
482	18.12.2008	Caso Caroline: algumas questões não consideradas	Ivo Mesquita / Ana Paula Cohen	Ilustrada
483	19.12.2008	Após mais de 50 dias presa, TJ manda soltar pichadora	Diógenes Muniz	Cotidiano
484	20.12.2008	Após 150 h de spray, cores voltam a painel da 23 de Maio	William Vieira	Cotidiano
485	20.12.2008	Pichação	Martin Cezar Feijó	Opinião (Painel do Leitor)
486	20.12.2008	Para ex-ministro da Justiça, punição foi "draconiana"	James Cimino	Cotidiano

487	20.12.2008	Ódio a pichadores me deixou tanto tempo presa, afirma jovem	Laura Capriglione	Cotidiano
488	22.12.2008	Dupla Osgemeos Faz Trabalho Hoje Em Associação		Ilustrada
489	25.12.2008	Frases	Kboco (Frases)	Ilustrada
490	25.12.2008	Raio-X		Ilustrada
491	25.12.2008	Mano chique	Silas Martí	Ilustrada
492	28.12.2008	Pelas Ruas	Jorge Coli	Mais!
2009				
493	07.01.2009	Lixeiras e floreiras da avenida receberão produto antipichação		Cotidiano
494	18.01.2009	O carteiro	Juan Cruz	Mais!
495	24.01.2009	Pichadora	Túllio Marco Soares Carvalho	Opinião (Painel do Leitor)
496	08.02.2009	Menino leva explosivo para assaltar prédio	Elvira Lobato	Cotidiano
497	14.03.2009	Volta da violência assombra Irlanda do Norte	Pedro Dias Leite	Mundo
498	29.03.2009	Frase	Solveig Barlow (Frases)	Ilustrada
499	29.03.2009	Garota é vista como "Picasso do grafite"	Fernanda Mena	Ilustrada
500	03.04.2009	Milhazes expõe colagens em Paris	Gabriela Longman	Ilustrada
501	05.04.2009	Novo museu no Ibirapuera muda projeto	Mario Gioia	Ilustrada
502	20.04.2009	Casa ampliada	Eduardo Arruda	
503	22.04.2009	Site coloca rosto em moeda, cartaz e revista		Informática
504	22.04.2009	TV Cultura, passado e futuro	Marcelo Coelho	Ilustrada
505	25.04.2009	Museu acusa estudantes de danificar escultura durante invasão na USP	Rafael Sampaio / Maurício Moraes	Cotidiano
506	07.05.2009	Artista expõe a poluição de São Paulo na Europa	José Orenstein e Pedro Andrada	Cotidiano
507	07.05.2009	Senado aprova veto a spray para menor de 18 anos		Cotidiano
508	14.05.2009	Um mês de emoções	Juca Kfourí	
509	14.05.2009	Protesto contra prisões bloqueia marginal	Laura Capriglione / Luis Kawaguti	Cotidiano
510	03.06.2009	O sonho de pichar em Paris	Gilberto Dimenstein	Cotidiano
511	07.06.2009	Para demonstrar o amor, paulistanos se utilizam de grafite, pichação e tatuagem	Leticia de Castro	Cotidiano
512	10.06.2009	Rota do Graffiti		Ilustrada
513	10.06.2009	Frases	Yara Amaral (Frases)	Ilustrada
514	10.06.2009	Turistas exploram grafites de São Paulo	Fernanda Ezabella	Ilustrada
515	16.06.2009	Chão de Giz~	Mônica Bergamo	Ilustrada
516	26.06.2009	Prefeitura de São Paulo patrocina aulas de "dança do poste" na Lapa~	Daniel Bergamasco	Cotidiano
517	29.06.2009	Agenda		Folhateen
518	01.07.2009	Um rinoceronte entre NY e Grajaú	Gilberto Dimenstein	Cotidiano
519	03.07.2009	Da rua ao museu, grafite vira sensação		Ilustrada
520	03.07.2009	Desenho De Banksy É Alvo De Pichação		Ilustrada

521	03.07.2009	Invasão bárbara	Fernanda Mena	Ilustrada
522	03.07.2009	Mudanças no ensino médio são apenas experimentais	Laura Capriglione / Hélio Schwartzman	Cotidiano
523	04.07.2009	Paris celebra pichação de SP	Fernanda Ezabella	Ilustrada
524	04.07.2009	Sob Encomenda		Folha Corrida
525	06.07.2009	Pichação Liberada		Folhateen
526	13.07.2009	Honduras põe fim a toque de recolher	Fabiano Maisonnave	Mundo
527	14.07.2009	Governo golpista recruta dupla ligada aos Clinton	Fabiano Maisonnave	Mundo
528	19.07.2009	Janelas quebradas	Drauzio Varella	Ilustrada
529	27.07.2009	O rei dos "hipsters" (gente legal parte dois)	Rolando Lemos	Folhateen
530	03.08.2009	Lambe-lambe da periferia	Cíntia Acabaya	Folhateen
531	14.08.2009	Governo argentino desiste de estatizar o futebol na TV	Alec Duarte / Silvana Arantes	Esporte
532	16.08.2009	Prédio de classe média vive cercado pelo crack	Gustavo Fioratti / Leticia de Castro	Cotidiano
533	19.08.2009	Público interage com arte eletrônica na Pixel Park		Informática
534	19.08.2009	Frases		Informática
535	29.08.2009	Buamba! Achei o Belchior!	José Simão	Ilustrada
536	14.09.2009	150 pichadores atacam a av. 23 de Maio em protesto		Cotidiano
537	16.09.2009	TV pela internet mostra arte urbana no mundo	Gustavo Villas Boas	Ilustrada
538	19.09.2009	Lixo	José Roberto Andrade Amaral	Opinião (Painel do Leitor)
539	19.09.2009	Osgêmeos assinam cartaz do festival	Fernanda Ezabella	Ilustrada
540	26.09.2009	Justiça condena pichadora da Bienal	Mônica Bergamo	Cotidiano
541	29.09.2009	Grafite Chique	Mônica Bergamo	Ilustrada
542	30.09.2009	Museu da rua	Gilberto Dimenstein	Cotidiano
543	12.10.2009	Um Dia com Gero Camilo		Ilustrada
544	18.10.2009	Uma voz, muitas vozes	Ferreira Gullar	Ilustrada
545	20.10.2009	Escola na zona sul é alvo de depredação e pichação com catchup		Cotidiano
546	25.10.2009	OsGemeos compartilham seu universo particular	Lara Crepaldi	Serafina
547	29.10.2009	"Metropia" usa fotos como base	Fernanda Ezabella	Ilustrada
548	29.10.2009	Grafite No Museu	Mônica Bergamo	Ilustrada
549	09.11.2009	Berlim discute arte e política na celebração da queda do muro	Nina Lemos	Ilustrada
550	14.11.2009	Festival da fibra		Vitrine
551	16.11.2009	Dupla cria "cosmética da pobreza"	Fabio Cypriano	Ilustrada
552	16.11.2009	Movimento ainda se confunde com vandalismo	Fernanda Mena	Ilustrada
553	16.11.2009	Contra a parede	Fernanda Mena	Ilustrada
554	17.11.2009	Arte nas ruas	Gustavo Lassala (Painel do Leitor)	Opinião
555	18.11.2009	Desenhos invadem antigo galpão	Mario Gioia	Acontece

556	20.11.2009	Claque	Mônica Bergamo	Ilustrada
557	25.11.2009	Ueba! Serra, filho do Zé do Caixão!	José Simão	Ilustrada
558	26.11.2009	Em sessão de 8 h, prefeito de Orlandia é absolvido	Jean de Souza	Ribeirão
559	01.12.2009	Masp apresenta exposição sobre a arte do grafite		Fovest
560	05.12.2009	São Paulo ganha bienal de grafites e de pichações a partir de 2010	Fernanda Mena	Ilustrada
561	22.12.2009	Grafite vira arma política para jovens iranianos	Fernanda Ezabella	Ilustrada
2010				
562	08.01.2010	O imperador no muro	Mônica Bergamo	Ilustrada
563	20.01.2010	SPFW! Jesus ressuscitou de jeans!	José Simão	Ilustrada
564	20.01.2010	São Paulo é mais aberta e receptiva à arte nas ruas, afirma curador inglês	Leticia de Castro	Cotidiano
565	23.01.2010	Sampa! É o Feriadão da Afundação!	José Simão	Ilustrada
566	24.01.2010	Buamba! Zé Mayer é o Pai Herói!	José Simão	Ilustrada
567	31.01.2010	Frases	Magda Montenegro (Frases)	Cotidiano
568	31.01.2010	Biblioteca na área do antigo Carandiru será aberta em fevereiro	Maria Eugênia de Menezes	Cotidiano
569	02.02.2010	Um grande garoto	Thiago Ney	Ilustrada
570	02.02.2010	Macchu Picchu! Voltei mutcho putcho!	José Simão	Ilustrada
571	07.02.2010	Ueba! Vou no Bloco do Balança Rolha!	José Simão	Ilustrada
572	16.02.2010	No Escuro / Troco		Ilustrada
573	22.02.2010	Ônibus leva turista a gangues de LA	Randal C. Archibold	New York Times
574	28.02.2010	Da rua para casa	Leticia de Castro	Cotidiano
575	01.03.2010	O refúgio do relojoeiro	Gisela Williams	New York Times
576	15.03.2010	Arte de rua ocupa espaço nobre em NY	John Strausbaugh	New York Times
577	18.03.2010	Grafite marca presença com coletivos como Run Don't Walk	Priscila Pastre-Rossi	Turismo
578	18.03.2010	Chef Cassio Machado mostra cozinha caseira no novo bar Farofa Paulista	Josimar Melo	Ilustrada
579	22.03.2010	Orion exhibe caveiras feitas da poluição	Fernanda Ezabella	Ilustrada
580	22.03.2010	Agenda		Folhateen
581	27.03.2010	Dia Nacional do Grafite		Folha Corrida
582	29.03.2010	Era uma vez underground	Tarso Araujo	Folhateen
583	04.04.2010	Acusado nega ter pichado morador de rua		Cotidiano
584	05.04.2010	Grafite na Terrinha	Mônica Bergamo	Ilustrada
585	12.04.2010	Pichadores de volta à Bienal	Mônica Bergamo	Ilustrada
586	14.04.2010	Artes Visuais		Ilustrada
587	15.04.2010	"Pixo" racha opiniões nas artes		Ilustrada
588	15.04.2010	Para Bienal, "pixo" pode ser arte e política		Ilustrada
589	15.04.2010	É permitido pichar	Fernanda Mena	Ilustrada

590	16.04.2010	Pichação	Ester Grinspum	Opinião (Painel do Leitor)
591	16.04.2010	Pichação	Carlos Alberto Pessoa Rosa	Opinião (Painel do Leitor)
592	16.04.2010	Cristo Redentor é alvo de pichação	Audrey Furnaleto	Cotidiano
593	17.04.2010	Islândia! Acenderam um baseado!	José Simão	Ilustrada
594	18.04.2010	Kboco		Mais!
595	19.04.2010	Por ruas limpas	Ruy Castro	Opinião
596	19.04.2010	O "x" da questão	Fernando de Barros e Silva	
597	20.04.2010	200 Anos		Folha Corrida
598	20.04.2010	"Pixação"	Gilberto Assad	Opinião (Painel do Leitor)
599	20.04.2010	"Pixação"	Humberto Mendes	Opinião (Painel do Leitor)
600	20.04.2010	"Pixação"	Felipe Augusto Vicari de Carli	Opinião (Painel do Leitor)
601	20.04.2010	Ueba! Gol de mão, Santos campeão!	José Simão	Ilustrada
602	21.04.2010	Monstros urbanos	Fernando de Barros e Silva	Opinião
603	23.04.2010	Pichação	Alexandre Machado	Opinião (Painel do Leitor)
604	24.04.2010	Jovens de Cidade Tiradentes desfilam suas estampas no Mercado Mundo Mix	Luisa Alcantara e Silva	Cotidiano
605	25.04.2010	Alconsciência	Gilberto Dimenstein	Cotidiano
606	26.04.2010	Coautor de pichação ao Cristo Redentor se entrega no Rio		Cotidiano
607	28.04.2010	Fla e Timão! O clássico da balada	José Simão	Ilustrada
608	01.05.2010	Dupla que pichou estátua do Cristo Redentor ajuda a limpar túnel no Rio	Diana Brito	Cotidiano
609	02.05.2010	Feira do Livro quer saída de jovens das praças 15 e Carlos Gomes	Veridiana Ribeiro	Riberão
610	07.05.2010	Captação 1	Andréa Michel	Ilustrada
611	07.05.2010	Ueba! É o Centenada do Corinthians!	José Simão	Ilustrada
612	11.05.2010	Para curador da Virada, rap ficou estigmatizado	Thiago Ney	Ilustrada
613	11.05.2010	Lá e Cá		Brasil
614	12.05.2010	São Paulo encara pressão em MG	Rodrigo Mattos	Esporte
615	13.05.2010	MuBE terá novo anexo e foco em arte de rua	Silas Martí	Ilustrada
616	13.05.2010	"No meu trabalho, não há esperança nem explicação"	Fernanda Mena	Ilustrada
617	14.05.2010	Álbum da Copa! A seleção não cola! ~	José Simão	Ilustrada
618	15.05.2010	Poeira experimental	Manuel da Costa Pinto	Ilustrada
619	15.05.2010	Frase De Série Foi Escrita Em Muros Do Rio		Ilustrada
620	16.05.2010	Mano Chao, Titãs e Lobão estão entre as atrações		Riberão
621	16.05.2010	Região aposta na consolidação da Virada	Ligia Sotratti	Riberão
622	16.05.2010	Gritos de independência	Sylvia Colombo	Mais!
623	23.05.2010	MAM aposta em grafite e DJ para atrair jovens	Ricardo Gallo	Cotidiano
624	28.05.2010	Traz o Caneco que nós enche!	José Simão	Ilustrada

625	28.05.2010	"Bikes" Fora Da Faixa		Cotidiano
626	06.06.2010	Aos 10 anos, Feira do Livro se expande	Juliana Coissi	Riberão
627	07.06.2010	Jornalismo on-line bomba festivais	Ronaldo Lemos	Folhateen
628	10.06.2010	Feira do Livro começa hoje e espera recorde de público	Ligia Sotratti	Riberão
629	11.06.2010	Minhocão ganhará pintura antigrafito	José Benedito da Silva e James Cimino	Cotidiano
630	16.06.2010	Feira tem baixa adesão em oficinas para adolescentes		Riberão
631	20.06.2010	Dois inéditos de Vergílio Ferreira	Isabel Coutinho	Ilustríssima
632	25.06.2010	Portuga joga de camisola!	José Simão	Esporte
633	25.06.2010	Pelo direito de ser contra	Xico Sá	Esporte
634	28.06.2010	Totem "fascista" volta à Guarapiranga	Ivan Finotti	Ilustrada
635	03.07.2010	Grafite Chique	Mônica Bergamo	Ilustrada
636	06.07.2010	"Zfkolprajwliitdaniurdx"	Fernando de Barros e Silva	Opinião
637	11.07.2010	Grafite fora da lei	Fernanda Ezabella	Ilustríssima
638	14.07.2010	Exposição mostra 20 anos de pichação em São Paulo	Leticia de Castro	Cotidiano
639	19.07.2010	Mandamentos Hip-hop		Folhateen
640	19.07.2010	Aula de hip-hop vai além do visual	Mayra Maldjian	Folhateen
641	25.07.2010	Artistas unem pichação e vídeo no MIS		Ilustrada
642	25.07.2010	Obras de arte nas ruas não atraem apoio de empresas	José Benedito da Silva	Cotidiano
643	31.07.2010	SP vê centena de obras de Keith Haring	Silas Martí	Ilustrada
644	02.08.2010	Artes Gráficas		Folhateen
645	05.08.2010	Câmara de SP quer vetar skate sobre as calçadas	José Benedito da Silva	Cotidiano
646	06.08.2010	Viva a gentileza!	Barbara Gancia	Cotidiano
647	10.08.2010	A pichação do BNDES	Vinícius Torres Freire	Mercado
648	12.08.2010	Cidade é inspiração para novos artistas	André Zará	Turismo
649	15.08.2010	Economista escreve próprio nome em muros há 16 anos	Emilio Sant'Anna	Cotidiano
650	15.08.2010	Reativada há 3 anos, fonte da praça da Sé é furtada		Cotidiano
651	25.08.2010	Pichadores mineiros são presos e acusados de formar quadrilha	Rodrigo Vizeu / Leticia de Castro	Cotidiano
652	28.08.2010	Exposição de grafite no Mube se espalha pelos muros de SP	Leticia de Castro	Cotidiano
653	29.08.2010	João Sayad promete nova reformulação para março		Ilustrada
654	04.09.2010	Ueba! O Serra tá Tiririca!	José Simão	Ilustrada
655	05.09.2010	Exposição de Keith Haring termina hoje		Ilustrada
656	05.09.2010	Pintor de dia pichador de noite	Leticia de Castro	Cotidiano
657	09.09.2010	Deixe grafites e esculturas guiar em seu passeio por SP	Priscila Pastre-Rossi	Turismo
658	22.09.2010	Beco com saída	Gilberto Dimenstein	Cotidiano
659	26.09.2010	Pichador ataca obra com urubus na Bienal	Juliana Vaz / Silas Martí	Ilustrada

660	27.09.2010	Eu <3 Hello Kitty	Mayra Maldjian	Folhateen
661	27.09.2010	Hello Kitty "reloaded"	Mayra Maldjian	Folhateen
662	27.09.2010	Em muros e tocos de árvore, artista cria obras com objetos tirados do lixo	Raphael Veleda	Cotidiano
663	28.09.2010	Curadoria da Bienal faz reunião com grupo de pichadores	Silas Martí	Ilustrada
664	29.09.2010	Ataques reacendem debate na Bienal	Silas Martí	Ilustrada
665	02.10.2010	Ibama pede retirada de urubus da Bienal de SP	Silas Martí	Ilustrada
666	03.10.2010	Público da exposição deixa de lado urubus e pichadores	Silas Martí	Ilustrada
667	13.10.2010	Fotos gigantes vão estampar prédio no Anhangabaú	Leticia de Castro	Cotidiano
668	16.10.2010	Grafite Beneficente	Mônica Bergamo	Ilustrada
669	17.10.2010	Pichações e urubus	Lorenzo Mammì	Ilustríssima
670	18.10.2010	Filme estimula deleite visual e debate sobre o mundo das artes	Marco Aurélio Canônico	Ilustrada
671	19.10.2010	"Não quero impor minhas histórias"		Ilustrada
672	22.10.2010	Senhor das Imagens	Mônica Bergamo	Ilustrada
673	31.10.2010	Mostra exhibe filme salvo de incidente	Morris Kachani	Ilustrada
674	12.11.2010	Imagens psicodélicas vão invadir prédios da Augusta	Leticia de Castro	Cotidiano
675	20.11.2010	Ueba! Agora é Pão com Mantega!	José Simão	Ilustrada
676	20.11.2010	Movimento pró-imigrantes picha Lisboa	Mateus Parreiras	Mundo
677	24.11.2010	A namoradinha	Ruy Castro	Opinão
678	04.12.2010	Ueba! Saiu o iPad do Bope!	José Simão	Ilustrada
679	07.12.2010	Documentário registra arte da periferia de SP		Ilustrada
680	12.12.2010	Bienal de São Paulo chega hoje ao fim	Silas Martí	Ilustrada
681	14.12.2010	Hora de reflexão	Gustavo Fioratti	Ilustrada
682	21.10.2010	Unesp registra 7,9% de abstenção no último dia de provas		Cotidiano