

Cartographies of everyday life: A study of the neighborhood/school/subjects' series in urban poverty settings

Cartografías de la cotidianidad: Un estudio de la serie barrio/escuela/sujetos en contextos de pobreza urbana

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Background

In this article I propose, through the notion of cartography, an approach to the study of everyday life as a field of singularities. I intend to analyse the processes and their conditions of appearance that involves the experience, and its multiple connections and fissures. The mechanisms of power and its spatiality, the paths of resistance, the broken historicity. The map is immanent to the cartographer, it is connectable in all its dimensions, alterable, capable of constantly receiving modifications.

The school/subjects/neighbourhood series constitutes itself in an assembling of daily life where map and territory become one and multiple and materiality is not something isolated. To map is to approach to the traces of that intersection, to describe the mutual affection and the daily politics of urban life. The task of cartography is to produce a methodological approach partial, never exhaustive, capable of capturing the multiple and necessarily selective.

The relationship between the layout and the maps refers to paradoxical forces that work together. It is at the plane of consistency (Deleuze, 2017) that our ordinary lives are made of: matter and substance, content and expression, human and non-human. Mapping become an amphibious task that enable us to capture the everyday in its changing condition: sensations, expectations, impulses, dreams always in motion, immanence, with with an exceeding and elusive potential.

Aims

Framed in the debates of everyday studies, this article presents a conceptual and methodological approach to the art of mapping through materials produced as results of a research carried out at the intersection of school/neighborhood/subjects in contexts of urban poverty of the metropolitan region of Buenos Aires. A set of multisensory research practices is discussed as a methodological reservoir for the study of everyday life, in this case, in the precarious settlements of the global south.

Method & procedures

The article debates results of a longitudinal research carried out since 2004 in Carcova (a slum of the Metropolitan Region of Buenos Aires), through the discussion of: a methodological cache/reservoir made up of a battery of multisensory instruments (Renold and Mellor, 2013), and an analytical repertoire capable of capture linguistic aspects and images dealing with the multiple conditions that involve bodies and things. The reservoir includes: geographic information systems georeferencing (GIS) in order to locate the neighbourhood on the map of the city and its sedimented inequalities; participant observation and interviews with students and teachers; spaces for wording the world through written and visual language (in various formats), trying to break the abjection that usually falls on slums. Audio-visual production and artistic practices in research are an invaluable political resource (Hickey-Moody, 2017), in order to communicate and turn complex ideas into visible and thinkable issues.

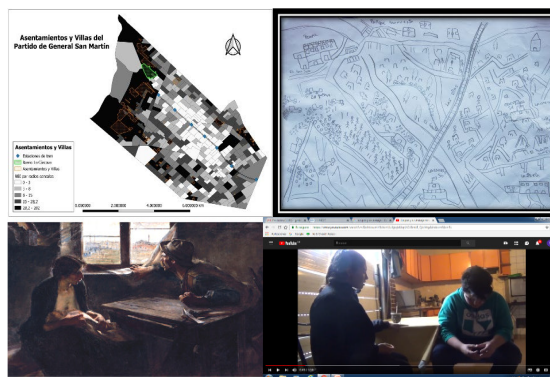
Results & discussion

I propose three lines in order to problematize the task of mapping, its effects and its multiple nature: an analytic of series that is the axis of this methodological reflection.

(i) The art of mapping: Each of the maps speak to the other. One is a *striated* space, a geographical demarcation made by computer, the other is a freehand draw. The first one presents sedimented urban inequality, the second one narrates its life far from suffering, pity and criminalization readings.

(ii) About multiplicities, affects and art practices: A painting, a video and a rap produced by students. How can someone choose to live in a slum? How can one respect what is always the object of denial? These artefacts dialogue, answer and affirm the sentences that hang on the slums. Far from the established stories about how to show the good side of the slums, they express fears and desires, they tell about life in slums showing its tensions. Mapping becomes a political act and shows other aesthetics of everyday life.

(iii) Old-new normalities: A meme (April 2020) that refers with irony to the immunity developed as a result of living in a slum. It shows the ways in which the human and the non-human affects each other, and this is exposed with sarcasm/humor. To the right, a photo that captures the windows of the neighborhood and concludes with the sentence "that is life". Both composes the old-new normal quotidian life, a life that the COVID19 does not dare to disturb.



Yo me llamo Alexis y siempre rapeo en la calle y en cualquier lado, nadie me jode porque yo ya estoy rejugado y si me hacen los malos los voy a agarrar a plumazos. No me importa lo que digan, yo vivo en mi barrio y mi barrio se respeta

Aunque digan los demás que esto es una mierda, yo as mi barrio lo veo de otra forma.
No me importan los pibes malos, no me importan los drogados
Porque los pibitos buenos están jugando
a veces hay cumpleaños, hay joda en todos lados*



Conclusion

This article proposes an analytic of series produced in between the lines of the everyday life of a slum: the desire for life, the will to learn; each of the texts, photos, drawings, video, rap, artifacts of research assemble scraps of stories that dialogue one to each other. It is an amphibious methodology capable of generating multisensory data, where the map, statistical information, audio-visual or art production make up layers of located bodies, objects and sounds. The methodological reservoir is used to approach the multisensory world/everyday life/daily life with powerful and mixed methodologies (Stewart, 2007). If reality is confused and tangled, why seek methodologies that turn it into something smooth, coherent or precise. It is about prolonging one singularity into the environment of the other and producing a configuration of events, a conjunction of singularities. This give rise to an amphibious cartography in the becoming of daily life.

Keywords: cartographies of everyday life, methodological cache, singularity, urban slums

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