A imaginação cívica dos grafiteiros brasileiros sobre a Copa do Mundo 2014

Brazilian graffiti artists' civic imagination on the 2014 World Cup

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Resumo

Este artigo analisa grafites de artistas brasileiros sobre a Copa do Mundo de 2014 que viralizaram na internet. O objetivo é revelar as perspectivas políticas desses grafiteiros e identificar se eles foram capazes de expressar imaginação cívica. As peças foram realizadas em muros, cercas, casas, fachadas de edifícios e ruas das maiores cidades do Brasil. Eles se uniram às manifestações contra os investimentos públicos na implementação do megaevento e seus efeitos colaterais nas comunidades, promovidas pelo movimento mais amplo Não vai ter Copa. Parte dessas peças foi fotografada e reunida por pessoas de todo o país na página pública Movimento de Decoração Anti-Copa no Facebook. O estudo analisa o conteúdo das 108 peças de grafite publicadas nessa página. A conclusão é que o artivismo dos grafiteiros brasileiros foi expressão de imaginação cívica transformada em participação política, partindo do ponto de vista das suas próprias origens culturais e sociais.

Palavras chave

Artivismo; Mobilização social; Mídia social; Imaginação cívica; Cultura política.

Abstract

This article analyses viral Brazilian graffiti artists' work pieces on the 2014 World Cup. It aims to unveil their political perspectives and to identify if they were able to express civic imagination. The pieces were performed on walls, fences, houses, buildings' facades, and streets across Brazil's biggest cities. Those taggers joined demonstrations against public investments on the implementation of the mega-event and its side effects, headed by the wider Não vai ter Copa (No World Cup) movement. Part of their pieces was photographed and gathered by people from all around the country on the Facebook public page Movimento de Decoração Anti-Copa (Anti-World Cup Decoration Movement). The study analyzes all the 108 graffiti pieces' content posted on that web page. The conclusion is that the Brazilian's artivism was an actual form of civic imagination transformed into political participation deployed from the point of view of their own cultural and social backgrounds.

Keywords
Artivism; Social mobilization; Social media; Civic imagination; Political culture.

Networked social mobilization for the No World Cup

"World Cup for whom?" Corruption, expropriation, repression, the submission of the people, persistent poverty, inequality. Neglected children alone on the streets; kids' plates filled with soccer balls but empty of food. "Public Health 0 - 10 Stadiums". Richer soccer players, even happier tycoons. A people as mere spectator; a country sold. "We need education, hospitals, housing, respect."[1] All these issues expressed in dramatic and colourful drawings painted on walls, fences, houses, building's facades, and streets across Brazil, but also displayed on our screens. That was the way graffiti artists had taken to join social mobilizations against public investments on the 2014 World Cup, the Não vai ter Copa (No World Cup) movement.

Figure 1. A graffiti piece on a wood fence (São Paulo/SP)

Source: Facebook/Movimento de Decoração Anti-Copa

[1] Quotation watchwords excerpted from graffiti pieces displayed throughout the article.

Despite the heritage that the mega-event should allegedly leave – better arenas, improvements in transportation systems and tourism infrastructure, favourable publicity of the country abroad, and temporary jobs –, strong opposition was railed against it in Brazil since at least 2009. Costs and impacts of the preparations for the spectacle outraged people – as an example, ten Brazilian stadiums built for the 2014 World Cup are among the twenty most expensive in the world (Globo, 2013).

Figure 2. A graffiti piece on a wall

Source: Facebook/Movimento de Decoração Anti-Copa

Diverse social mobilizations pressured national and local governments by using the social media to call people to protest on the streets. Their calls found a breeding ground in Brazilian society, as the 2013 demonstrations showed the world. A week before the 2014 World Cup opening ceremony, a Datafolha Institute's opinion poll gauged that almost half of Brazilians did not want the realization of the mega-event in the country (Datafolha, 2014).

Figure 3. A graffiti piece on a wall (“You will have Demonstrations Cup!!”)

Source: Facebook/Movimento de Decoração Anti-Copa

Graffiti pieces were an important means for opinion expression in that unrest movement, one of its artivism forms. Their capacity for criticism, inviting people to think and imagine and provoking political debate should not be underestimated. They may or may not remain in public spaces after the local mobilizations, but the artists’ imaginations were turned into art and able to reach mass audiences when pictures of them were spread over digital social media.

According to Baiocchi et al (2016), the ways in which people individually and collectively envision a better political, social, and civic environment and work toward achieving that, namely, the civic imagination, is the kernel of the civic involvement. It requires a close examination in order to understand the nature of the ongoing engagement.

Stones (2002) refers to Martha Nussbaum’s book Cultivating Humanity (1997) as bringing an earlier concept of civic imagination and says it is regarded to the role of education in training empathy and critical comprehension of different others; to the modern public sphere; to moral faculties in the course of social relations, to the vision involved in democratic deliberations; and to the necessity of the cultivation of enlarged thought. The last years, The

Civic Imagination Project, Baiocchi et al (2016), Jenkins et al (2016), and Dunagan (2013), among others, have been taking back the concept in order to understand participatory culture and civic engagement in the early Twentieth Century.

As The Civic Imagination Project currently supports, "research on the civic imagination has represented a space where the humanities meets the social sciences, where we can explore the political consequences of cultural representations and the cultural roots of political participation" (The Civic Imagination Project, n.d.).

This article analyses the content of those Brazilian taggers' work pieces in order to understand if they were able to express civic imagination taking advantage of the visibility brought by that international sports spectacle and to unveil their political perspectives. We ask if the wide concepts of civic imagination and political perspectives explain those Brazilians' political actions through the graffiti subculture, considering Brazilians' broad political culture. Had they worked as a networked imaginary community?

Civic imagination and political perspectives

Stones (2002) traces back to Wright Mills' conception of sociological imagination for discussing civic imagination. According to him, addressing concerns of the civic imagination requires a sophisticated comprehension of social relations and a range of mediating conceptions by recent social scientists. Those concepts allow more complex and detailed understandings of the relations between collectivity and individual. However, for this study, we embrace some up-to-date definitions. According to Baiocchi et al (2016), civic imagination consists:

> […] of the ways in which people individually and collectively envision better political, social and civic environments. Civic imagination are people's theories of civic life. They are cognitive roadmaps, moral compasses, and guides that shape participation and motivate action. These underlying frameworks helps people make sense of their place in the world and help people generate notions of what it means to work for change. Civic imagination underpins the processes of identifying problems and solutions, envisioning better societies and environments, and developing a plan to make those visions of a better future into reality (Baiocchi et al, 2016).

The Civic Imagination Project states that it is:

> […] the capacity to imagine alternatives to current cultural, social, political, or economic conditions; one cannot change the world unless one can imagine what a better world might look like. Beyond that, the civic imagination also requires the capacity to see one's self as a civic agent capable of making change, as part of a larger collective which has shared interests, as an equal participant within a democratic culture, and as empathetic to the plight of others different than one's self (The Civic Imagination Project, n.d.).

According to Jenkins et al (2016), civic imagination is the "Mental maps and moral compasses that guide how people think about engagement with public life, then expressions of civic imagination are how those ideas are translated into action, what people do as they seek to make a difference." (Jenkins et al, 2016)

The Civic Imagination Project considers that the need to a utopian thinking, to escape what is just possible and to imagine alternative paths can be shared within and across diverse

communities. It also states that shared imagination feeds debate and a thinking through new possibilities. “This movement from private towards public imagination often depends on images already familiar to participants, images drawn not from political rhetoric but popular narratives” (The Civic Imagination Project, n.d.).

Jenkins et al (2016) say that citizens have not wished their activism associated with institutional politics, which they consider corrupt, self-interested and combative. Thus, they creatively constitute and engage in what they imagine to be desirable forms of political engagement. “As people envision a future that goes beyond what they see as the contemporary problems of politics, they develop and modify working theories of civic life. These cognitive roadmaps or moral compasses help people make sense of their place in political world” (Jenkins et al, 2016). The authors also acknowledge that civic imagination can both foster democratic values and limit democratic possibilities.

In this context, The Civic Imagination Project considers that civic imagination requires political perspectives from which activism begets greater equality, creativity and agency; and relationships between citizens and their democracies are driven by scepticism and engagement, and by inequality and activism.

Political participation is any activity that seeks to directly or indirectly influence the political decision-making process (Kaase and Marsh, 1979). Unconventional political participation occurs through political actions that seek to interfere in politics through non-institutionalized means (Der Meer et al, 2009). Conventional ones are those such as voting, party affiliation and participation in political campaigns (Verba and Nie, 1987).

Studies on unconventional political participation relate people’s feeling of effectiveness to the engagement in it. They propose that individuals sense their actions do have some impact on the political process as long as their cognitive and action capabilities are expanded through practice (Verba, 1995; McAdam and Paulsen, 1993; Finkel, 1985). Tilly and Tarrow (2007) state that making politics autonomously can generate greater satisfaction than through institutional mechanisms offered by ruling elites. Thus, unconventional political participation can be a direct channel for agendas not addressed by traditional politics (Ekiert and Kubik, 2001). Gurr (1970) analysed economic contexts conducive to unconventional political participation and found that poverty, economic deprivation and bad living conditions can foster such sort of action. Among the main factors found by the author, is the perception of social and economic deprivation.

Putnam (2001) argues that “[…] the younger generation today is no less engaged than their predecessor but engaged in new ways” (Putnam, 2001, p. 21). According to Kahne, Middaugh e Allen (2012), in the current global social and political context, participatory politics include diverse types of individual and group efforts to influence topics of public interest. In addition to elections, activism (protests, boycotts, petitions), civic activities (charity and community services) and the sharing of lifestyle values (vegetarianism, animal rights) are practices of participatory politics.

Aladro-Vico et al (2018) highlight artivism (an acronym to art and activism) as an educational form and a way of communicating and expressing autonomy, dissidence, and opposition. Artivism’s strength lies either in its aesthetic and in its power to point out injustice and inequality. “It introduces rupture, carnival, mockery, to traditional art styles. It integrates art into social environment, challenges traditional arts with life and imagination, while serves educational needs” (Aladro-Vico et al, 2018, p. 16).

Dunagan (2013) says that popular culture, art, narrative, vision, and fun can evoke emotions, and emotional responses can drive engagement. “We need absurd, playful, angry, emotional, intellectual, poetic, and kinetic citizens” (Dunagan, 2013, p. 74). However, according to The Civic Imagination Project, civic imagination mental models will be different

to people in different political and cultural contexts.

Brazilian political culture

Brazil is socially and politically distinguished by a patrimonialist descent, by authoritarian recurrent political periods, and, thus, by persistent social inequalities which prevent a significant part of the population from accessing even primary goods (O'Donnell, 2011). Schwartzman (1988) highlights that the relationship patterns between State and society in the country go through a strong but inefficient bureaucratic structure. Those who command it become despots and then society is increasingly less represented. For long, civil rights, such as the rights to life, freedom and equality, were completely neglected or overlaid by different political priorities.

This context has gradually changed since the urbanization and industrialization process promoted by the State in the 1950s. However, it made the population flee countryside poverty and end up in large cities' peripheries, composing the unequal and modern Brazilian urban scenarios and their widespread slums (Fonseca, 1989). So far, capital concentration is untouched.

The military dictatorship period (1964-1985) embodied State's domination over society, keeping both under the elites' control and imposing specific representation channels (De Riz, 1986). The citizenship model based on historical State's subjugation drove people to apathy, scepticism and detachment from conventional politics (Carvalho, 1996). Moisés (1995) says that, despite having had civic participation in the transition to democracy, the process was characterized by holders of power's control. Militaries were kept participating "directly in negotiations and agreements reached, with the objective of a slow, safe and gradual political opening" (Amorim, 2011, p. 125, our translation).

Thus, democracy rose by political arrangements, the people could not participate or have a fully democratic experience, and the political leadership's pacts ended up maintaining the authoritarian and conservative elites' privileges and power (Arturi, 2001). Moisés and Carneiro (2008) state that, although Brazilian democracy can be understood as consolidated by having achieved the so-called virtuous cycle of political stability and alternation of power, a significant part of the population does not trust political and public institutions, is not satisfied and is sceptical on the regime's functioning.

Carvalho (1996) states that citizenship development was emphasized by political discourses after the end of the dictatorship, which generated high expectations that democracy would bring progress. However, the democracy building process and the strengthening of a democratic political culture in Brazil have been facing difficulties.

In practice, the discrepancy between normative adherence to the regime and citizens' evaluation of the democracy functioning may indicate that democracy supply is insufficient to citizens' demands (Moisés, 2008). Social exclusion, human rights violations, police and criminal organizations' brutality have to be handled by people in peripheries day after day (Moisés and Carneiro, 2008).

Political parties are unable to place themselves as mediation mechanisms between State and society. The economic system is not able to promote wealth distribution. Finally, widespread corruption jeopardizes citizenship development and democratic values (Baquero, 2001). The maintenance of a model that prospers a few people in spite of the society's majority, whose survive under uncertainties, poverty and human rights violations, has led to continued weakening of social ties and status quo domination's maintenance.

Between 2006, a year before the country was chosen by FIFA, and 2014, when the

World Cup was performed, Brazilian Human Development Index (HDI) and GINI Index show a small improvement curve over time. However, according to GINI Index, inequality in Brazil remains relatively stable and very high, remaining above 50. The HDI shows some growth, reaching 752, but it is considered just average by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

In a structure within economic and political powers are centralized in anti-democratic elites' hands, a personalist political culture and an almost absent citizenship had been generated (Baquero, 2008). However, this does not mean that Brazilian citizens are passive, neither necessarily nor permanently: throughout history, the struggle for citizenship emancipation has become present.

The people, the mega-event and the outrage

Between June-July 2013, millions of Brazilians staged a series of protests organized through social networks, especially Facebook, across hundreds of cities and towns. The national social mobilization exploded after months of students' demonstrations against rising public transportation fares in several capitals, such as the southern Porto Alegre (Rio Grande do Sul), and brutal police actions in São Paulo (São Paulo) on the night of July 13. This demonstrations' first subject was then expanded to claims for better education, public transportation and health services, as well as calls against corruption and media corporations' manipulation.

One of the public outrage's sources was the public spending in preparation for the 2014 World Cup. With shouts of No World Cup, protesters engaged in clashes with the police during that period of 2013 and during the matches of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)'s test tournament for the World Cup, the Confederations Cup.

Despite the decrease in the number of street mobilizations in the second half of 2013, the political debate remained heated in social media throughout 2014, with groups opposed to the World Cup calling for new forms of action. Between June 5 and July 6, 2014, about 150 demonstrations were called in the host cities, most of them taking place in Rio de Janeiro (Rio de Janeiro), São Paulo and Belo Horizonte (Minas Gerais). During the first week of the World Cup, there were more than twenty protests, many of them ending in police brutality. After the end of the event, protests on the streets faded away, although an array of those movements had kept evaluating and monitoring impacts of the event through digital social media and other initiatives, such as committees, meetings and reports (Penteado, 2014).

The choice of Brazil as the host country of the 2014 sports event was announced by FIFA in October 2007. Fifa chose the cities of Belo Horizonte (Minas Gerais), Brasília (Distrito Federal), Cuiabá (Mato Grosso), Curitiba (Paraná), Fortaleza (Ceará), Manaus (Amazonas), Natal (Rio Grande do Norte), Porto Alegre (Rio Grande do Sul), Recife (Pernambuco), Rio de Janeiro (Rio de Janeiro), Salvador (Bahia), and São Paulo (São Paulo) for hosting the matches.

At first, Brazilians celebrated: thanks to the event, in a few years the nation would experience football even more, and Brazilians would be able to follow closely some of the best teams in the world in modern stadiums in their own cities, cities which in turn would receive investments from governments and tourists from different cultures around the world. This perception was stimulated by the government and the media.

However, that feeling was far from unanimous in the country. The construction of comfortable billion-dollar football stadiums, which were supposed to meet the requirements of the so-called FIFA standard – an international sports and non-governmental organization –,

outraged people.

They also drew attention to historical problems of Brazilian society that were either ignored or amplified by the authorities in order to bring about the event: schools and hospitals in need of investments; sex tourism and child and adolescent sex abuse; lack of housing; waste of public money on boondoggles. The everyday poverty contrasted with the luxury of the stadiums: an exacerbation of social inequality.

Thus, in 2009, activists, social mobilizations and communities from the host cities began to organize committees with one main objective: to report social injustices and corruption by FIFA, the Federal Government, States and local administrations. In 2010, World Cup Popular Committees (CPC) were established with the mission of watching urban impacts and rights violations arising from the preparations for the event. They also organized a number of activities in host cities, some of them performed along the matches of the Confederations Cup and the World Cup. The mobilization was called No World Cup, and this expression was spread via social media with the hashtag #naovaitercopa. They started taking to the streets and social networks to express their revolt against the World Cup and its organizers.

Expropriations of entire poor communities, including under violence; violations of laws and human rights; lack of information to residents; lack of community involvement in the discussion of projects; individualized negotiations; low indemnification values for expropriation; and harassment of community activists and leaders were reported in several cities, especially in Rio de Janeiro. There were also indirect consequences, such as rising living and housing costs due to real estate speculation, which not only hit the cities as a whole, but also pushed the poorer workers away from the cities centres to places where public transportation is inefficient and insufficient (Oliveira, 2014).

The conflict between citizens' criticism and dissatisfaction and the diverse interests with a stake in the success of the event, the latter mainly linked to the political and economic elites, exposed the discussion about urban policies developed to host major sports events. Oliveira (2014) tells that the host cities' inhabitants, especially in the affected regions, were poorly informed and sometimes outright deceived about the intended legacies of the event and began suspecting that it served more the contractors than the people of the cities.

Simultaneously, expressions of dissatisfaction revealed resistance actions of those who desired a more humanized urban life. The expressions of imagination gave subtlety to the harsh criticisms made by the outraged. Plastic arts, music and videos evidenced the struggle for meanings, and ideological confrontations took to the streets and social media in the form of political and cultural manifestations: meetings, marches, occupations, carnival blocks. They were accompanied by cartoons, street decorations and graffiti, turning indignation into artivism as an outcome of imagination. Each piece created may not have had a relevant meaning when seen in isolation, but together they can be understood as actions of opposition to the image produced by the political and mediatic diffusion of a false consensus on the World Cup (Oliveira, 2014).

Graffiti for social criticism and recognition

Graffiti first appeared in Brazilian streets in the late 1970s, in the city of São Paulo. From then on, Brazilian taggers added their own touch to the original American art, and nowadays their style is recognized as one of the best worldwide. São Paulo is still the main centre for graffiti in Brazil, but Rio de Janeiro is another important international reference (Almeida, 2008).

As we see nowadays around the world, graffiti are a contemporary practice of writing, drawing and collage on cities' walls, primarily with the use of ink sprays. It has been practiced in metropolises since the 1960s, initially in the American cities of New York and Philadelphia, although Australian artist Arthur Stace had already graffitied the entire city of Sydney with the word Eternity in the early 1950s, tell Blauth and Possa (2012).

Initially, those were just stylized signatures, the artists' tags. The notoriety earned by early taggers among young people and the press attention they received helped to popularize tagging, making it a competitive activity, eventually related to gang territory dispute. It was based on the number of tags spread throughout the city and on the difficulty of reaching the surfaces, not on creativity or content.

Innovations in style and the incorporation of illustrations and drawings consolidated graffiti as art. From its original supports – tunnels, underground passages, walls and buildings' facades – it nowadays occupies cars, surf boards, bodies, gallery canvases, traditional museums exhibitions, and even haute couture pieces. The pieces became more elaborate, but they kept the artist's tag as the main theme.

However, in spite of the development of its technical language seen in those decades, which was expressed in a diversity of styles, supports, and instruments of inscription, graffiti are still an urban language and a subculture. This kind of street art claims urban spaces not only as support for artistic expression with aesthetic valuation, but also as a form of social recognition.

Practiced without consent and under various risks, graffiti create marks circumscribed to a subculture and its members. It is a form of expression that rose linked to the countercultural movement of an era, in tune with the manifestations of the emerging hip hop. Aladro-Vico et al (2018) include graffiti among artivism expressions. They mention the English graffiti artist Banksy as an example of global political artivist whose anonymous work pieces show political and social criticism around the world.

In Brazil, there is a specific type of graffiti called pichação. They are simple scribbles or tagging done in a distinctive, cryptic style, mainly on walls and vacant buildings. There is a difference between pichação and graffiti in Brazil: graffiti are considered a form of art, as long as the properties' owners agree to having their walls graffitied, while pichação is disavowed, as it often includes rude messages and displeases Brazilian onlookers.

Nonetheless, Almeida (2008) explains these very simple Brazilian scribblings in black lines are also recognized as evidence of the radicalism of their manifestation: their poverty in terms of aesthetic resources and their harsh messages denounce other kinds of poverty and harshness: the economic and social ones. A motto by the graffiti artists from São Paulo is: "as long as there is poverty, there will be graffiti". This is precisely the main graffiti's engine: the struggle for visibility by the populations and the poor young people from the peripheries (Almeida, 2008).

Figure 4. An example of pichação behind the poster of a neglected boy

Source: Facebook/Movimento de Decoração Anti-Copa

From the harsh rejection in the late 1970s to a recognition as an art in the mid-1980s onwards, deep changes have happened in the way graffiti are perceived by the Brazilian cultural elite. In the late 1980s, graffiti artists had been called by the São Paulo local government to participate in debates on urban public policies, and new legislation has set public spaces for practicing graffiti. Graffiti, so far, a symbolic violation of the social order and the public space and as a means for pointing to social inequalities and contradictions, began then to give tacit support to the hegemonic culture and weaken its social and political impact availing city halls and advertising campaigns (Almeida, 2008). Along that, from the productive 1980s, basically rooted in São Paulo, to the second half of the following decade, graffiti gained different forms, volumes and combinations of colours in their compositions, directly associating itself with youth musical and leisure practices.

Since then, Graffiti artists have also been erasing the image of outcasts, asking for

authorization for their performances and participating in social actions. Mainly, they work helping communities to keep their children and young people off the streets and far from drugs consumption and trafficking, behaviour that have always been associated with this subculture (Blauth and Possa, 2012).

Silva et al (2010) highlight that graffiti can be used both as a didactic resource and as a cross-cutting theme in education, teaching respect and improving school environments' diversity. Through graffiti, students can express themselves and affirm their identities producing their public speeches, often silenced by social suppression. Thereby, graffiti artists' contribution to teaching can be based on a libertarian pedagogy and on an education to reduce social inequalities. Some public policies in Brazil already make it possible for taggers to organize art and social education weekend workshops in public schools (Silva et al, 2010).

Thus, as Cartaxo (2009) says, graffiti are an undue appropriation of the social spaces of the city. Its improper textual quality, which borrows the public space and the passers-by free audience, adds a distinct face to contemporary cities. It is a means of expression in the struggle for the constitution of individual and collective identities, for social and cultural belonging, loaded with a critical view of social reality. It transforms the cities' walls into vehicles of communication and dialogue, creating discourses on the social structure, a venue for social and political criticism. It is an outcome of communication with peers and people's needs, a sort of channel for the flow of daily life tensions and of participation for an urban group that is excluded from the clean city (Blauth and Possa, 2012). Thus, one can acknowledge that graffiti is an instrument of social action and can be assumed as a form of political participation.

There is an array of graffiti styles. The tag is the simplest graffiti, which uses one colour and the artist's name or identifier. A throw-up is a more complicated tag, usually in two or more colours and bubble-style lettering, that can be done quickly and repeatedly. A blockbuster is a massive throw-up, usually in blocky letters, used to cover a large area quickly and can be painted with rollers. Wildstyle is an elaborate version of a throw-up and is particularly hard to read, consisting of arrows, curves, spikes and other symbols that non graffiti artists might not understand. Heaven is a tag or an artwork in an extremely difficult place to get to and who manages to put one up gains a lot of respect from other artists.

A stencil is an easy way to put up detailed pieces: by spraying over a stencil, the artist can produce a more detailed piece than by doing it free hand. A poster is made at home and then pasted up anywhere. A sticker is a downsized poster, sometimes simply tags on postage labels. A piece is a picture that had been painted free hand, taken the longest to paint and contained at least three or more colours. 3D graffiti pieces create an illusion of the third dimension.[2]

Method

Part of Brazilian graffiti artists' work was gathered on the Facebook public page Movimento de Decoração Anti-Copa (Anti-World Cup Decoration Social Mobilization).[3] People from all around the country posted on that social media platform from April 23 to July 6, 2014 pictures of 108 graffiti pieces that they had found in their cities. The page is currently offline.

[2] Information retrieved from the websites https://graffitocanberra.wordpress.com/styles-of-graffiti/, http://leakestreetarches.london/ten-topgraffiti-styles/ and https://designlike.com/the-7-main-styles-of-graffiti/

[3] Retrieved in 2017 from de Facebook public page https://www.facebook.com/756062381094860/photos/?tab=album&album_id=756093194425112

Those pieces had their content analysed with the support of the NVivo software. They were organized in cases – the cities where they were performed. Then, they were coded by graffiti style and according to the categories extracted from the concepts of civic imagination and political perspectives.

From the civic imagination concept, we have two categories and their subcategories:

1. Cognitive roadmaps: Create imaginary communities and networks; Identify steps for getting us there; Imagine a better world; Recognize new forms of civic agency

2. Moral compass: Encourage thoughtful empathy and solidarity; Learn from progressive and regressive histories; Re-imagine hope, equality, freedom and justice

From the political perspective concept, we have three categories: Scepticism, Inequality and Participation.

Brazilian taggers' civic imagination and their political perspectives on the World Cup

Brazilian graffiti artists retained their political action when joining the creative activities of the No World Cup movement. The graffiti pieces were created by Brazilian taggers and crews – sometimes including foreign taggers who were in Brazil or travelled there in order to join the movement. Some of the crews are Coletivo Naviu, Coletivo Bagaço, Assembleia Popular do Grande Méier, Matilha Cultural, Coletivo Fora de Frequência, Fuso Coletivo, Coletivo na Raça, and Coletivo Máá Niggs.

Among the pieces analysed, seventeen were from Rio de Janeiro; fourteen from São Paulo; six from Recife; two from Natal; one from Brasília; and one from Porto Alegre, all of them host cities of the 2014 World Cup. One piece was from South Africa – the country that hosted the 2010 World Cup – and the other 66 did not have their cities informed on the posts.

None of them is exclusively a pichação and three show stencils created in black ink. Ten photos show posters, which consist of black and grey stickers pasted up on walls, often with some elements sprayed with a few colours, such as the three colours of the Brazilian flag.

Figure 5. A poster pasted up on a wall over a few pichações

Source: Facebook/Movimento de Decoração Anti-Copa

In sixty-nine pictures, we can see blockbusters with writings, either displayed separately or together with other element styles. They displayed diverse writing styles – from cursive and capital letters to handwriting, bubble, blocky and wildstyle lettering –, multiple colours, and critic content, most of them related to other components of the frame.

Figure 6. A blockbuster piece in a decayed building wall: "FIFA go home" (the letter "O" is a reference to the 2014 World Cup mascot, the armadillo Fuleco)

Source: Facebook/Movimento de Decoração Anti-Copa

Despite the attempt to classify them in categories, most pictures, precisely 91, brought pieces that mixed elements in diverse levels of refinement. Brazilian taggers used multiple elements, such as lines and colours, symbols, writings, portraits, characters, scenes, and landscapes, creating images that can tell complete stories.

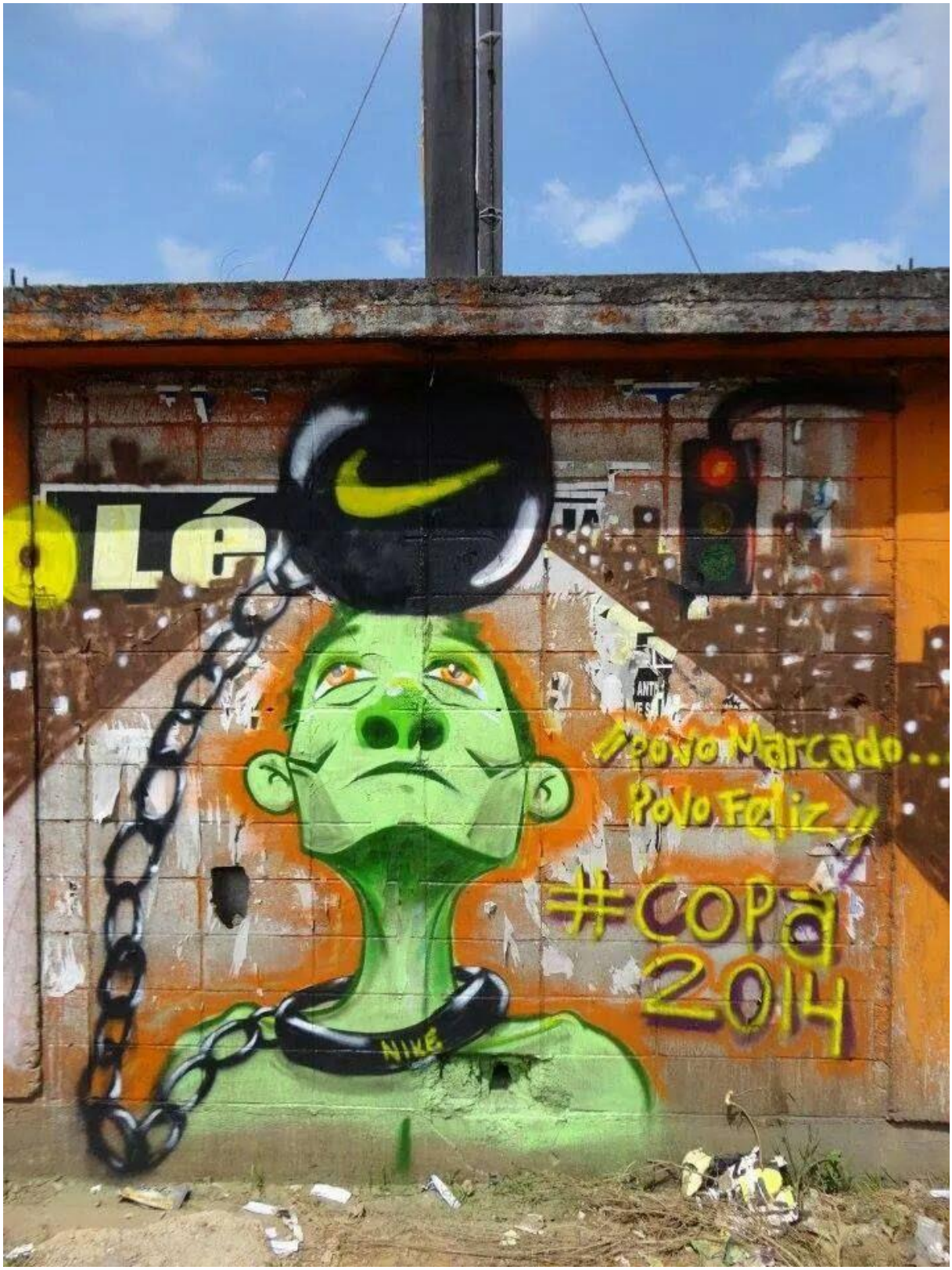
Those stories were loaded with political perspectives. Brazilian taggers expressed scepticism, reported inequality and called for political participation. Scepticism was actually their main perspective, as evidenced in sixty pieces. They did not believe in a better future or a better country. One of them sent tourists the following message: "Welcome to hell." They blamed the World Cup and painted scenarios in which the investments on the sports event will not change Brazilians' lives.

Figure 7. A piece on a wall: "World Cup for whom? We need education, hospitals, housing, respect".

Source: Facebook/Movimento de Decoração Anti-Copa

They did not trust the State and claimed politicians had sold the country. The irony is that FIFA was not going to provide education or health services. Whole communities were expropriated. The event would produce trash and worse city traffic. Children, black people, native people were all mere spectators, and soccer, corporations and media enslaved people's bodies and minds.

Figure 8. A piece on a wall: an excerpt from a popular Brazilian music critical song by musician Zé Ramalho – "branded people… happy people"



Source: Facebook/Movimento de Decoração Anti-Copa

Soccer millionaires were the ones who profited, laughing. Only money rules. "World Cup for whom?". The scepticism was not simple pessimism. It was an outcome of Brazil's historical and enduring inequality and lack of a full democracy.

Figure 9. A piece on a shack wall

Source: Facebook/Movimento de Decoração Anti-Copa

Inequality itself was another important political perspective manifested on those graffiti, as seen in forty-seven pieces. They talked from the poor people's perspective, as it is traditional for this sort of art. Those were hungry and black children and people who would not take any advantage of the World Cup, living in poor communities while seeing fancy, luminous and police-controlled stadiums from the outside. The only trophy they got was poverty. "A World Cup for the rich".

Figure 10. A piece on two houses walls

Source: Facebook/Movimento de Decoração Anti-Copa

In this context, participation was both in their own initiative and in their work. They saw it as a path for channelling outrage and it was invoked in thirty-four graffiti. In spite of not proposing any new forms of civic agency, they spread the No World Cup movement, called people to the streets, and shouted “FIFA go home”.

Figure 11. A piece on a wall: “More education, less corruption. Come to the street. Together for a new Brazil. Imagine.” (Rio de Janeiro/RJ)

Source: Facebook/Movimento de Decoração Anti-Copa

Their civic imagination came more from their moral compasses. They showed they were able to learn from progressive and regressive histories in 54 pieces, while in 42 they tried to encourage thoughtful empathy and solidarity, and in other four they re-imagined hope, equality, freedom and justice. Their cognitive roadmaps were displayed in 29 pieces, where they identify steps to getting people there, and in nine others with recognition of new forms of civic agency. There is none piece where they imagine a better world.

Final Considerations

Graffiti pieces were an important expression of civic imagination in the No World Cup movement. Their capacity for criticism and unrest, inviting people to think and provoking a participatory culture, is clear. The Facebook public page Anti-World Cup Decoration Social Mobilization worked as an imaginary community and a network of taggers and people participating by posting pictures and given massive visibility to those graffiti pieces.

Those Brazilian artivists's work is an intrinsic form of civic imagination transformed into political participation. They were talking to the cities' public, but also to politicians and to the State by impertinently borrowing those public surfaces. They were denouncing politicians, policies and practices they did not approve of, such as corruption and undesirable public enterprises regarded to the 2014 World Cup. Their messages were also spread to distant communities through digital social media.

They were keener to express their civic imagination through moral compasses, learning and teaching from progressive and regressive Brazilian people and communities' histories, and encouraging thoughtful empathy and solidarity, than to drawing cognitive roadmaps to solve the country's issues they denounced. Although several pieces suggested steps for getting Brazil there, they were mainly calling people to the streets and reporting all the above-mentioned issues. Actually, they lived, built and rebuilt their communities and networks – imagined, urban and digital –, but their pieces on the 2014 World Cup did not show imagination of a better world, just as they did not display any hope or belief in equality, freedom or justice.

Brazilian historical problems make it difficult for activists to imagine beyond their political, social and economic constraints. The dissatisfaction with the political system is at the core of how Brazilians experience politics. Actually, Brazilian political culture cannot fall within Almond and Verba (1989)'s ideal type of civic culture: in Brazil, people lean more towards the output aspects of its political system than towards the self as an active participant. Actually, most of the pieces analysed show political scepticism and reported inequality concerns rather than suggesting forms of mobilizing the citizenship and imagining a better world.

In terms of modernization and democratization (Inglehart and Welzel 2005), Brazil is a country with relatively good levels of formal democracy, but it still has a long journey ahead of it to develop better levels of self-expression values and an effective democracy. Furthermore, Brazil is the tenth most unequal country in the world, according to the United Nations (UNDP, 2016).

Besides that, scepticism is also based on the incongruence between the institutional offer of democracy and the existing cultural demand of citizens for it. Governments and institutions fail to provide citizens with the democratic system they want. Brazilian political elites either have been neglecting the situation or do not feel encouraged to face the problem of democratic supply and work to meet the demand from the citizenship (Moisés, 2008).

While formal democracy has been strengthened in the country, there is a crisis of

political mediation that is expressed in the increasing withdrawal of young people, for example, from traditional political mechanisms due to their disillusionment with politics (Baquero and Baquero 2012). However, that does not mean that people and young people are absent from informal channels of participation, as graffiti artists showed.

Despite all that, Brazilian taggers dealt with their country's political culture characteristics. Their activism against the 2014 World Cup translated their abilities of civic imagination seeking to make a difference (Gordon and Mihailidis, 2016), as the tagging subculture usually strives to do. When they impertinently borrowed public surfaces and painted their imagination on them, they acted in order to encourage their fellow citizens to reflect on their scepticism, become aware of the inequality, and to participate of political actions.

Their artivism were actual political participation and civic engagement stemming from their civic imagination, and, from the general Brazilian culture and their own subculture, they deployed their imaginary community. The 2014 World Cup was performed orderly, but those artivists can still hope their action will influence the state by affecting the making and implementation of future public policies. By showing their art language and abilities, and their civic imagination, they also showed that they are well qualified to keep leading workshops on art and social education for Brazilian public schools' students as they already do.

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