

Youth tourism? Traveling in the biographies of young people of popular neighborhoods of Buenos Aires

Turismo juvenil? As viagens na biografias de jovens de bairros populares de Buenos Aires

¿Turismo juvenil? Los viajes en las biografías de jóvenes de barrios populares de Buenos Aires

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Abstract: In this article, I present results of my doctoral thesis whose general objective is to analyze the experiences of young people from Buenos Aires' popular neighborhoods, investigating the articulation between mobilities and corporalities in their individuation processes. A qualitative approach was used, following grounded theory procedures. Semi-structured interviews, biographical focus, and participant observation were conducted in a social organization that offers free circus workshops to young people from popular neighborhoods. Research has begun to examine youth tourism, highlighting the increase of young travelers and tourist centers created around them. However, the possibilities of traveling and 'vacation' differ between different social groups. Its approach becomes a way of recognizing inequalities. This paper identifies the characteristics of the trips present in the biographies of interviewed young people, the way they perceived those trips, the meanings around them, as well as the enabling and limiting factors for undertaking them. By analyzing the narratives, it is possible to distinguish three types of trips: those made possible and motivated by family bonds, those proposed by religious groups settled down in the city's popular neighborhoods for survival in nature, and those projected to future, as a desire of potential mobility.

Keywords: Child-youth tourism. Social inequality. Tourism and sociology.

Resumo: Neste artigo apresento resultados de minha tese de doutorado cujo objetivo geral é analisar as experiências de jovens dos bairros populares de Buenos Aires, investigando articulações entre mobilidades e corporalidades em seus processos de individuação. A abordagem qualitativa foi proposta, seguindo as diretrizes da teoria fundamentada. Entrevistas semiestruturadas, relatos biográficos e observação participante foram realizados em uma organização social que oferece oficinas gratuitas de circo para jovens de bairros populares. As investigações começam a alertar o turismo jovem, destacando o aumento de jovens viajantes e os centros turísticos criados em torno deles. No entanto, as possibilidades de viajar e sair de férias diferem entre os grupos

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sociais, por isso a sua abordagem torna-se uma forma de reconhecer as desigualdades sociais. Este artigo identifica as características das viagens presentes nas biografias dos jovens entrevistados, a maneira como eles as percebem, os sentidos ao seu redor, bem como os facilitadores e as limitações para realizá-los. Dos emergentes em suas histórias destacam-se três tipos de viagens: possíveis e motivadas por laços familiares, propostos por grupos religiosos estabelecidos em bairros populares da cidade para sobrevivência na natureza e projetados para o futuro, como desejo de mobilidade potencial.

Palavras-chave: Turismo infanto-juvenil. Desigualdade social. Turismo e sociologia.

Resumen: En este artículo presento resultados de mi tesis doctoral cuyo objetivo general es analizar las experiencias de jóvenes de barrios populares de Buenos Aires, indagando articulaciones entre movilidades y corporalidades en sus procesos de individuación. Se propuso un abordaje cualitativo, siguiendo los lineamientos de la teoría fundamentada. Se realizaron entrevistas semi-estructuradas, relatos biográficos y observación participante en una organización social que ofrece talleres circenses gratuitos a jóvenes de barrios populares. Investigaciones comienzan a advertir el turismo juvenil, destacando el aumento de jóvenes viajeros y los núcleos turísticos creados en torno a éstos. Ahora bien, las posibilidades de viajar y vacacionar difiere entre distintos grupos sociales, por lo que su abordaje se vuelve una forma de reconocer desigualdades. En este trabajo se identifican las características de los viajes presentes en las biografías de jóvenes entrevistados, el modo en que son percibidos, los sentidos en torno éstos, así como los facilitadores y las limitaciones para llevarlos a cabo. De los emergentes en sus relatos se distinguen tres tipos de viajes: posibilitados y motivados por vínculos familiares, propuestos por agrupaciones religiosas asentadas en barrios populares de la ciudad para supervivencia en la naturaleza y proyectados a futuro, como deseo de movilidad potencial.

Palabras clave: Turismo infanto-juvenil. Desigualdades sociales. Turismo y sociología.

1 INTRODUCTION

In the field of social studies that relates to spatial (im)mobilities, more attention has been placed on youth mobility associated, for example, with use of, and movement across, urban space, as well as on migration trajectories, as phenomena that alert us to the complexity and multidimensionality of the processes of social exclusion and inequality (Gough & Franch, 2005; Gough 2008; Saraví, 2014; Bastán & Paulín, 2015; Chaves & Segura, 2015).

At the same time, in the context of research in tourism, several particularities about youth tourism practices began to be distinguished. The increase in the number of young people who circulate around the world against the background of globalization emerges as one of the main arguments used

to justify this interest. Such an increase, moreover, is linked to the creation of new niches of youth tourism –for example, those related to educational exchange, volunteering, or backpacking–, whose impact is regarded as significant by the global tourism market. In their own way, these forms of traveling are understood as processes that generate autonomy and independence, and as opportunities for learning and becoming acquainted with new cultures (De Castro & Hidemi, 2010; Demeter & Brătucu, 2014; Richards, 2015).

Nevertheless, the ability to undertake these kinds of trips, with the characteristics they may present, differs significantly across the spectrum of youth from different social and regional sectors. Since it is not a practice accessible to everyone, questioning the (im)mobilities associated with vacationing

and, particularly, with traveling – whether domestically or internationally – becomes a way of identifying social inequalities (Frändberg, 2009; Quinn & Stacey, 2010; Schenkel, 2013).

In my doctoral thesis², based on the contributions made by the sociology of individuation³ (Martuccelli, 2007; Araujo & Martuccelli, 2012), my aim was to identify the main *challenges* that emerged in the lives of young people who engaged in free artistic and sports activities in popular neighborhoods in the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires (CABA), the *supports* they employed to face those challenges, and the work they themselves did to overcome them, analyzing times, spaces, and links of relevance to them.

From a qualitative approach – observation and biographical focus–, this analysis, which followed the procedures of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), identified two significant tests in these youths' lives: *a trial of relationship with others and a trial of mobilities*. In particular, the latter refers to tensions between the desires and motives to leave certain spaces and to create, enter, and dwell in others. This presupposes possibilities and regulations to be overcome – everything from migration processes and multiple residential changes in search of well-being and

employment opportunities, to day-to-day commutes across the city in order to fulfill obligations such as studying, working or taking care of others, in addition to engaging in artistic and sports activities.

Providing continuity to this analysis in the framework of a post-doctoral scholarship, I intend to identify other experiences of mobility, which have not yet been explored in the biographies of these young people, seeking to investigate the following: What trips do the young people who reside in popular neighborhoods of the City of Buenos Aires carry out? What characteristics do these travels display and how do the young perceive them? How do they gain access to these kinds of trips? What are the possibilities and the obstacles that can be linked to “vacationing” and tourism? Based on these questions, the objective is to analyze the meanings associated with traveling and vacationing in order to identify the types of travels that occur in the lives of young people who reside in popular neighborhoods in the City of Buenos Aires, the way in which these travels are perceived and experienced by them, as well as the enabling and limiting factors these young people encounter while undertaking them.

² Thesis title: "Bodies, emotions and individuation: an analysis of the experiences of young people who perform artistic and sports practices in popular neighborhoods of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires" (2016). Doctorate from the University of Buenos Aires in Social Sciences. Funded by: Council of Scientific and Technical Research (CONICET), Argentina. Director: Dr. Pablo F. Di Leo. Co-director: Dr. Danilo Martuccelli.

³ The sociology of individuation is proposed here as an approach meant to “[...] reconstruct the specific character of a historical society at the scale of individuals” (Araujo & Martuccelli, 2012, p.15). To that end, it utilizes notions such as *trials* and *supports* as analytic tools. The category of *trials* refers to the identification of large structural and historical processes, unevenly distributed, that individuals are forced to traverse. The social *supports*, whether material or immaterial, are what enables the individuals to face such challenges.

Acknowledging the mobilities and immobilities generated requires, likewise, observing the intentionality and potentialities necessary for young people displacements. Their study enables us to record the capacities for being mobile, as well as the desires and intentions to move or remain – and their links with practices that are developed –, making evident the way in which such capacities are unequally distributed among different social groups (Kaufmann, Bergman, & Joye, 2004; Clark & Lisowski, 2016).

In the case of the interviewees, even when they expressed economic difficulties at different moments of their own lives and those of their families, they were still able to undertake travels, which amounted to events of great importance to them. Analyzing the narratives, we can distinguish three types of experiences: a) trips made in the context of family ties, b) trips associated with camping and survival in nature, organized through institutional proposals, and c) desired and projected trips towards the future.

The presentation of the article is organized in the following manner: first, we review several approaches associated with tourism and youth based on literature on youth and mobility studies. Next, we describe the methodology followed in this doctoral research, and finally, we introduce the analysis of young people's experiences in light of three emerging categories: *family-related travels, survival trips, and travels concerning the future*, which account for the mode in which these mobilities are manifested in the lives of the interviewees. Lastly, we present the conclusions of this study.

2 YOUTH AND TOURISM: ON MOBILITY AND IMMOBILITY

When speaking about youth, it is necessary to bear in mind that the very definition of the word implies a conflictive process related to the establishment of classificatory boundaries by other social actors. Far from being a self-evident category, it refers to a relational, social, and historical construction, which, as such, is dynamic and polysemous. Nevertheless, certain institutional and media discourses have sought to homogenize and universalize a single way of being young: in transition, incomplete, disinterested, problematic. In particular, by “invisibilizing” the unequal social and economic life-conditions, it is the lower-class youth who are mainly stigmatized and stereotyped by these discourses (Duarte Quapper, 2000; Chaves, 2005; Reguillo, 2012; Di Leo & Camarotti, 2013; 2015).

Upon reading previous research that addresses what is known as *youth tourism*, it becomes noticeable that the standard definition of “youth” by the World Tourism Organization (WTO, in Bizirgianni & Dionysopoulou, 2013) is taken as a starting point:

youth travel includes all independent trips for periods of less than one year by people aged 16-29 which are motivated, in part or in full, by a desire to experience other cultures, build life experience and/or benefit from formal and informal learning opportunities outside one's usual environment (p. 654).

This definition highlights but one

kind of independent travel made by a group that is essentially defined by its age condition. In the above-mentioned works, there are minimal discussions about youth and the implications behind the social processing of age in our societies, and relatively little reference to the presupposed diversity and complexity in the study of young people's experiences (Chaves, 2013; Demeter & Brătucu, 2014). In methodological terms, many of these studies prioritize a quantitative approach through the conduction of surveys or the analysis of secondary data produced by the WTO and the Association of Tourism and Leisure Education (ATLAS).

Likewise, the research highlights the ways of traveling adopted by young people and identify new tourism niches and destinations that emerge from processes of segmentation in the context of current tourist demands. In other words, the creation of new groups of users differentiated by certain characteristics or preferences, in addition to social and cultural circumstances (Ansarah & Panosso Netto, 2009, p. 20, cited by de Castro & Hidemis, 2010, p. 7). In this sense, the typology put forth by Demeter & Brătucu (2014) is noteworthy, since it distinguishes the modalities of travel, whether individual or facilitated by institutional programs, the latter more frequent among European youth who engage in educational trips, cultural exchanges, volunteerism, travel for work, and other trips associated with sports, adventure tourism, recreation, and pleasure. (p. 116). Based on this categorization, it is possible to notice that academic production in the field of

youth tourism has followed a similar differentiation in the definition of its objects of study, whereby, among other things, there is research on backpacking, volunteerism, as well as educational and leisure trips. (Richards & Wilson, 2003; Gallegos Granero, Ruiz, & García Montes, 2005; Laborda, 2007; Morgan & Xu, 2009; Lyons, Hanley, Wearing, & Neil, 2012; Cavagnaro & Staffieri, 2015).

Among the most studied segments are backpacking trips in all their current variants, as well as the emerging destinations associated with these, which are recognized as one of the pioneering forms of traveling adopted by youth tourism. Unlike most research that uses surveys to investigate the link between youth and tourism, in the studies about backpacking, ethnographic approaches are more frequent. An investigation that particularly stands out was conducted by Greg Richards (2015, p. 344), who, based on the analysis of an association between "nomad" thinking and the study of backpacking tourism, proposes a comparison with a new category of travelers, flashpackers, and global nomads, which includes their motivations for traveling, the activities they carry out, and the way in which they configure their identities. According to the author, addressing these new forms of mobility requires that we acknowledge the diversity set forth by the youth's trips nowadays and, by extension, their multiple approaches.

Another relevant aspect was the analysis of the link between the characteristics of youth tourism and the use of new

technologies (ICTs) and social media. Since young people are the main users of both, they present themselves as a substantive dimension for the understanding of tourism practices such as the planning of itineraries, as well as communication during and/or after the trip (Grellmann & Pozobon, 2010; Bizirgianni & Dionysopolou, 2013).

Lastly, other research has highlighted the inequalities of youth tourism mobility and their connection with youths' place of residence, life conditions, or ethnic origins, as well as those of their family. Thus, for example, the study by Lotta Frändberg (2009), countering the images that present transnational mobilities as "normal" and "necessary" practices in wealthier countries, asserts instead that they demonstrate the unequal possibilities of physical mobilities between groups of young Swedes in light of their social sectors of affiliation, ethnic origins, and residency in urban or rural areas. Based on these observations, the author points out that transnational mobility amounts to a critical differentiating factor among youths.

Although some approaches highlight freedom of movement as something positive – associating mobility with the tendency to change location easily and quickly, or with prioritizing flows and speed above stasis and stability – it is important to problematize the dimensions that render conditions prompting or restricting mobility invisible. Faced with these perspectives, it becomes crucial to acknowledge the relations of power and domination that produce, and are the product of, inequalities that (re)create (im)mobilities, whether potential or actual (Sheller & Urry, 2006; Cresswell, 2010; Sheller, 2014). It

becomes relevant to consider this *potentiality* for movement in order to identify the margin of maneuverability that each individual exerts in his or her daily life, that is, to put into practice his or her ability to be "mobile," as well as the social, economic and symbolic consequences that this entails (Kaufmann et al., 2004). In particular, it is possible to think of tourism as a form of mobility that constitutes itself on the basis of different (im)mobilities – of people, objects and information-, and which presupposes a series of practices that construct and reconstruct established places as tourist destinations, but also:

Tourism also concerns the relational mobilizations of memories and performances, gendered and racialized bodies, emotions and atmospheres. Places have multiple contested meanings that often produce disruptions and disjunctures. Tourism mobilities involve complex combinations of movement and stillness, realities and fantasies, play and work. (Sheller & Urry, p. 1).

It should be noted that the ability to take a vacation, and engage in practices associated with it, are not equally accessible to all social groups. Enjoying time off, even with benefits, does not necessarily translate into access to tourism. The ability to engage in tourism varies according to revenue, available time, age, gender, ethnic and national conditions, sickness and disability, paid time off, and travel opportunities (Quinn & Stacey 2010; Frändberg, 2013; Schenkel, 2013).

3 METHODOLOGY

This doctoral research was developed from a qualitative perspective, situating itself

within the framework of the interpretative paradigm (Vacilachis, 2012),⁴ whose aim is to “understand the meaning of social action in the context of the lifeworld and from the perspective of its participants” (Vacilachis, 2009, s/p). It seeks to prioritize, as part of its analysis, the profound, the intensive and the particular above the superficial, the extensive, and the general.

The fieldwork was carried out during the second half of 2014 in a social organization referred to from now on as “el circo”⁵ (the circus) that has been operating in Buenos Aires since 1998 and whose purpose is to contribute to personal, communal and social transformation through art. During the period of fieldwork, the organization consisted of four venues (at present, they only operate in two different venues). In each of these locations, they offer free art workshops, such as circus art, hip-hop, artistic make-up, theater, and kung fu. To participate in these workshops, young people register through “Programa Adolescencia” (*Teen program*),⁶ a municipal program of the City of Buenos Aires (CABA), or else, as “guests” in connection with other young participants and their direct involvement with the venue.

Having obtained the consent of the organization's staff, and by implementing a participatory-observatory strategy, which in-

cluded keeping a field-journal, I attended four workshops during the second half of 2014: trapeze and aerial silks; acrobacy, and juggling; hip-hop and tango, which took place in three of the four venues of the circus. As a technique of social research, my observation was considered a relevant tool for the production of knowledge within the space in which youths participated, and served as a way for me to develop relationships with them, and construct narratives about their lives, which I was interested in doing (Scribano, 2008).

In this manner, together with the process of observation, a biographical focus was developed which involved “reclaiming” and recording the experiences of a selected group of young people over the course of time, with the final aim of formulating, through a series of interviews, a cohesive biographical story (Leclerc-Olive, 2009; Di Leo & Camarotti, 2013; 2015). The construction of these biographical narratives was made possible through a series of semi-structured interviews which, as dialogic instances, allow to examine the way these young people constructed their experiences, as well as their relationships, conflictive situations, and other changes in their daily lives (Souza Minayo, 2007).

Within the framework of the propo-

⁴ Here, we follow the analytic proposal of Irene Vacilachis (2012: 46-47), who defines paradigms as “(...) the theoretical-methodological frameworks used by the researcher to interpret social phenomena in the context of a given society”.

⁵ “El circo” is the way in which those who partake of the space informally call this institution.

⁶ This program is managed by Niñez y Adolescencia [*Childhood and Adolescence*], a secretariat belonging to the City of Buenos Aires's Ministry of Human Development and Habitat. <http://www.buenosaires.gov.ar/desarrollohumanoyhabitat/ninezyadolescencia/adolescencia>

sed qualitative and interpretative approach, the directives of grounded theory were used as a guide for developing the analysis and establishing the samples. From this vantage point, the theoretical sampling “(...) will be performed to discover the categories and its properties, and to suggest interrelations within a theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967: 62 cited in Soneira, 2012, p. 155). Hence, the selection of the following cases was based on their potentiality for contributing to the generation of new categorizations or extension of existing ones. Their demarcations were based on the criteria of theoretical saturation – that is, when the inclusion of a new case makes it clear that it cannot yield any additional information for the construction of new categorizations.

With previously informed consent, 7 men and 4 women between 18 and 24 years of age were interviewed. The participants

were residents of popular neighborhoods of CABA and had participated in some of the workshops for at least one year (see Table 1). The neighborhoods in question – where The Circus venues are located – are situated in the south of CABA, in the areas with the most urban poverty, especially in the city's shantytowns, referred to locally, in Rioplatense Spanish, as “*villas*.” These are urban settlements created by squatters, which spring up in vacant or private lots that are generally uninhabited or abandoned. The characteristics of these settlements include high population density, precariously built houses, little or no access to public services, and green or recreational spaces. The inhabitants of these shantytowns – who are frequently socially stigmatized – are primarily unskilled workers who engage in “under the table” work (Cravino, Del Río, & Duarte, 2008).

Table 1 – Data on the young people interviewed

Pseudonym ⁷	Age	Occupation	Level of education	Place of birth	Children
Iván	23	Informal jobs	Tertiary level in progress	Province of Salta	No
Omar	20	Informal jobs	Incomplete high school	Buenos Aires	No
Gustavo	20	Does not work	University level in progress	Buenos Aires (Mother from Bolivia)	No
Lolo	18	Does not work	High school in progress	Buenos Aires (Parents from Bolivia)	No
Portal	18	Does not work	High school in progress	Buenos Aires (Parents from province of Jujuy)	No
Sofía	18	Does not work	Complete high school	Buenos Aires	No
Chinita	20	Does not work (take care of her younger sister)	University level in progress	Buenos Aires (Mother from Paraguay)	No
Romina	19	Does not work	Complete high school	Buenos Aires	No
Edrul	19	Works in family workshop	High school in progress	Bolivia	No
Solanch	20	Works	Complete high school	Paraguay	Yes
Mateo	23	Does not work (looks for a job)	Complete high school	Buenos Aires	No

These young people were contacted following their participation in the workshops, yet the interviews conducted with them took place by and large outside of The Circus's institutional venues. Between three and seven meetings were scheduled with each youth, for a cumulative total of 48 interviews between all the selected youth. At the beginning of each interview, the participants identified the events that established an existential turn in their lives, that is, events, situations, and relationships that they identified as “turning points” – crucial moments that marked a before and an after in their lives. In this sense, “(...) an event becomes biographically significant due to the fact that it precipitates the re-writing of one's life's

story: in this fashion, the event is an object and a trigger for the narrative” (Leclerc, 2009, p. 3). In the second interview, the participants were asked to bring along objects such as photographs or mementos that were directly connected to the significant moments that each of them chose. Based on excerpts from the recordings of the interviews, and a selection of events, a written narrative was consensually constructed between researcher and interviewee. This facilitated the understanding of the relationship between relevant moments, which together constituted a singular temporality, neither lineal nor univocal (Leclerc, 2009, Di Leo y Camrotti, 2013).

For the subsequent analysis, which

⁷ We used pseudonyms chosen by the young people interviewed during the construction of their stories.

follows the guidelines of grounded theory, we used a software tool called Atlas.ti as an aid. Using it, we identified expressions associated with “travel” and “holidays” as recurring terms in the narrative. Based on the dialogue in the selected bibliography – which also yielded recurring themes – and the empirical data, we established three categories, which the interviewees’ experiences fell under: *family trips, survival voyages and future travels* – categories to which we now turn.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Family Trips: on Reunions and Estrangements

One of the most common types of travel that surfaced from the series of narratives in this study was that of family reunion during the holiday periods. A large part of these family reunion trips was linked directly to the family’s migration history, as many of the young people and their families in this study were immigrants, especially when the youth in question were still children. In some cases, there was migration from different Argentinean provinces or Latin American countries in the region, such as Bolivia and Paraguay, towards Buenos Aires, in search of a better life, which included – mainly – improved labor, housing, and education prospects. Following these types of relocation, whereby the migratory families settled down in CABA, the bond with their extended family was often maintained through trips made during the summer holidays, which, in Argentina, generally take place in the months of December, January, and February.

Different authors have suggested the need to address migration and tourism from the perspective of what the two subjects have in common. As non-sequential or non-linear mobilities, they do not refer to a movement from one fixed place of origin to a single final destination, but rather to practices that are dynamic, simultaneous and often strongly interconnected. One aspect, which is particularly considered in this regard, was ethnicity. Its analysis has emerged from the way in which the occurrence of temporary trips is frequently motivated by the rediscovery of family and community histories, as a means of reaffirming and recreating inheritance and identity (Timothy & Coles, 2004; Glick Shiller & Salazar, 2013; Schrooten, Salazar, & Dias, 2015).

For the interviewees, both in their childhood and in the present, holidays represent the possibility of visiting and getting to know other members of their families, as well as the places in which they reside. In certain cases, they even imply meeting their extended families for the first time. Lolo is 18-years old and resides in one of the “villas” of CABA with his family. His mother emigrated from Bolivia at a young age. After arriving in CABA, she lost contact with one of her brothers, who she re-encountered years later in Cordoba, another Argentinean province that Lolo became familiar with when he travelled there:

All the moments I lived and experienced there [in Córdoba] – the very few weeks I spent there – were beautiful. I grew incredibly close to them [my family members]; everything happened so much faster than I had anticipated it would. And when I had to return [to Buenos

Aires] it was like... "I don't want to go!" (Lolo).

To Lolo, visiting his uncle and his family gave him the opportunity to meet them, and helped establish a bond that is maintained through social media during the year. In addition, during the summer, Cordoba becomes a place he looks very much forward to returning to.

Iván, another interviewee who is 23-years old, currently resides with his parents and brothers in their own house to the south of CABA. Before his arrival in Buenos Aires, he and his family lived in different provinces in the north of Argentina. To him, his childhood holidays are associated with the places where his cousins, uncles, and grandparents continue to reside:

Before, when I was a child, I went on vacation for 2 months (...) when I was 7 or 8, we got together again with my cousins, and it was better because we were all together (Iván).

The trips in these narratives make family reunions possible while, at the same time, present the opportunity to go on vacation, which provides enjoyment and a sense of well-being. In a study about tourism and young Japanese descendants residing in São Paulo, Brazil, it becomes evident – through a survey of middle-class youth between 15 and 30 years of age – that, even though leisure and pleasure are this demographic's main reasons for traveling, “socio-familiar” tourism is also relevant. Indeed, visiting family and friends ranks as one of the most cited reasons to go on a trip during holiday periods, an aspect which (in this survey) was as-

sociated with the significant value placed on family in the Japanese community, and the influence of this factor when it comes to making decisions about the characteristics and destinations of holiday traveling. (de Castro & Hidemi, 2010).

The trips in question, though still family related, start to be experienced in a different way as young people mature. The possibility of traveling alone, without the company of adults, enables them to experience new and challenging situations. Gustavo is 20-years old and, even though as a child he traveled to Bolivia on many occasions –the place where his mother was born and where his grandmother and cousins still live-, when he traveled there by himself for the first time, the feeling was very different:

(...) I felt, like, a mini change. I felt, like, an independence . . . that I had been given a responsibility (...) I had to get off the bus at each stop and be mindful that it wouldn't leave, I had to eat, I had to survive for the entire day (...) I had to take a different bus, because the first one drops you off somewhere in Jujuy, and then another to the border. Next, I had to take a taxi in Bolivia, which drops you off at the terminal, and make it to my grandmother's. I guess it must have been hard for my mom and my dad, but yes, it's true, I felt right there as though things had changed, as though they had let me go (...) [Before then] I had never traveled on my own because the only trip I had made was to University or to school. That's all I knew (Gustavo).

The opportunity to travel by himself to visit his grandmother is expressed as a new responsibility that, at the same time, grants Gustavo's independence. There is a “change”

in the bond with his parents and, at the same time, in his daily commutes. Traveling alone is not the only aspect that produces these sensations. Distance, and undertaking each of the different legs of his trip required to arrive at his grandmother's residence, also reveals a learning experience for this traveler: being mindful of timetables, the combination of transports, and food.

Some juvenile trips are associated with practices that are experienced as “rites” of passage, in which certain modalities, moments or chosen places establish a passage to “adulthood” which grants the participant greater autonomy and freedom. For example, consider the way in which backpackers, especially males, use this practice to become young adults (Noy, 2004; Martín-Cabello, 2014). Similarly, as seen in a study about the celebrations of *quinceañeras* (15 years-old birthday celebration) in high school Peruvian classes, juvenile trips abroad reinvigorate this traditional celebration that expresses the coming of age. Here, for the young girls in question, the gift of a trip abroad implies their first time away from their families, and the possibility of being independent for the first time. (Cavagnoud, 2012).

In the same way that everyday commutes contrast with the yearly trips that take place during family vacation, to 18-year-old Portal, each summer is a catalyst for meaningful personal transformations that affect his way of being: “There [when I’m on vacation], I’m a different person.” Traveling to the place where his cousins and uncles reside in the northern Argentine province of Jujuy allows him to meet other people, as well as to

experience “intimate relationships” – something he did not have the chance to do in Buenos Aires. When asked about the way in which he perceives this contrast, he stated:

(...) it's just that when I'm there [in Jujuy], I'm a different person compared to the one I am here [in Buenos Aires]. Maybe it's because being with my cousins and people I haven't seen for a long time causes me to show a different side of myself, and become doubly charismatic (...). I travel there [to Jujuy] with a different mentality, and tell myself, I'm in a different place and I'll be there for short period of time... I don't care so much about what I'm going to say or about what may or may not happen (...). On the other hand, I'll be here [in Buenos Aires] almost the whole year, so while I'm here I want to be the person I am on a daily basis. I don't want one day to stand out from the rest (Portal).

The distance from “the daily grind” that being in a different place affords, as well as the duration of the trip, allows one to be “other” while traveling. During this time, it is possible to “enjoy oneself,” be free from worry, and embrace “a different mentality.” In this way, while going on vacation is associated with strengthening family ties, it is also associated with the possibility of meeting people and engaging in an agreeable and pleasurable experience that only going on holiday can permit.

4.2 Survival Trips: experiences in Scout Camping.

Another kind of trip that recurs in the narratives collected during this study were

those related to Scout groups⁸ – associations which are by and large associated with Catholic Churches⁹ that are located in many of the young people's residential neighborhoods. Among the activities proposed by such groups are camping trips, which involve traveling to different places within the country, and practicing survival skills in natural settings.

In the life stories recorded, these experiences enabled young people to travel to other Argentine cities – cities, which in some cases, were renowned for being important Argentine tourist destinations. However, the type of trip made by the Scout groups were not supposed to follow common touristic circuits, but instead to challenge the youth to deal with adverse conditions such as a lack of clean drinking water, toilets, and comfortable lodging. For two of the interviewees that participated in these survival trips, the experience was considerably different:

20-year-old Chinita resides in one of CABA's shantytowns (“villas”) together with her family. Thanks to a scholarship, she studies psychology at a highly reputed private university in the city. When she was still in high school five years ago, she had begun to participate in one of the Scout groups that was active in her area, which she had joined

due to her involvement in a local neighborhood church. It was in this context that she had the opportunity to take her first camping trip. She recalls:

I thought I could adapt to any situation, but traveling to a remote place and living in the middle of nowhere without a bed, mattress, internet connection, phone, music, or any other kind of technology affected me, it changed me [What expectations did you have before travelling?] namely, that I was going on vacation; that I was going to go to an apartment, a cabin, I don't know – that at least I would have a mattress and a bed, a cell phone charger, something! So, it's like I went with a plan but when I arrived there it changed, and I didn't really like that (...) I enjoyed being in nature, but I would have preferred to enjoy it while staying in the comfort of a cabin, and being able to go out and walk quietly whenever I liked (Chinita).

The distance between Chinita's expectations for the trip, and what actually happened, turned out to be very significant for her. In stark contrast to the typical comfortable holidays associated with “amenities,” when the purpose of a trip is not tourism, but learning survival skills, and facing the rawness of nature and spirituality, there is a very different experience for travelers. A qualitative study analyzed a project in Rio de Janeiro that offered low-income youth the

⁸ “The Mission of the Scout Movement is to contribute to young people's education through a system of values based on the Scout Promise and Law, with the final aim of helping to build a better world where people can develop to their full potential and play a constructive role within society. This Mission is achieved by: actively engaging young people during their formative years through a non-formal educational process. Using a specific method, that makes each youth, the principal agent of his or her development, a person who is sure of him or herself, caring, responsible, and committed. Helping the youth establish a system of values, based on spiritual, social, and personal principles as expressed in the Scout Promise and Law.” (<https://www.scouts.org.ar>).

⁹ The Catholic Church in Argentina has a long history of intervention in different social areas geared towards the population of popular neighborhoods of Buenos Aires (Esquivel, 2000).

opportunity to visit different tourist spots throughout the city. Its organizers promoted it as a space that fostered a renewed consciousness regarding the right to use and enjoy the city – as opposed to a purely recreational outlook – and made it possible, additionally, for young people to experience “tourism” for the first time. However, in the study, youths did not quite perceive the city tours and activities as tourism, or even as a recreational practice. In a similar vein, in the case of Chinita, even though it was possible for her to travel to and experience life in a new place, it did not end up translating into an overall enjoyable experience for her.

24-year-old Mateo resided in children’s homes until he was 18, due to a family incident of domestic violence that separated him from his parents and siblings. While attending a Catholic Church during those years, he joined a Scout group:

(...) they organized camping trips during the summer and winter, and thanks to them, I was able to go everywhere. I went to Córdoba, I went to Neuquen, and to San Martin de los Andes as well. I went to Misiones, Corrientes – everywhere. I did survival drills and we were in tents instead of cabins. They rent, how can I describe it?. . . a field, something like that, filled with trees, filled, filled with trees, like a campground (...). We lit a fire, set-up a tent, built a wood-pile, assigned someone to be in charge of getting water, and so on (...). For me it was a great pleasure and pride to share those moments with the boys, with the scouts; it was something new in my life, so to speak. It led to many places, opened many doors, and allowed me to travel to many places, many towns, I did many things, a little bit of everything and it was a beautiful part of my life (Mateo).

Mateo’s narrative highlights the diversity of places he had the opportunity to travel to through his involvement in the aforementioned scout group, as well as through the duties that come with those kinds of trips, where Christian values such as service and solidarity also play a role. In the study of youth tourism, the trips related to survival were associated with the search for emotional stimulation and adventure (De Castro & Hidemi, 2010). However, being young does not necessarily imply that everybody gets to experience such practices in the same way. On the contrary, of all the narratives cited in this study we notice that trips similar to the ones mentioned here express different sensations and expectations: from the enjoyment, interest and pride expressed by Mateo to the anxiety and discomfort experienced by Chinita.

However, despite the fact that the two interviewees perceived each of their trips in such different ways, in the (re)construction of their biographical narratives, their experiences still turned out to be very significant. It was noteworthy, for example, that in both cases, when choosing personal objects that reminded them of relevant moments of change in their lives, the selection of objects, and photographs alluded to, by and large, the aforementioned trips and what they had made possible: meeting new people, and visiting new places.

4.3 Trips in the Future: between desire and possibility

As stated at this beginning of this article, the observation of mobilities and immo-

bilities not only concerns effective practices, but also the potentialities and capacities of people's (im)mobilities. Andrea Gutiérrez (2013) – building on the contributions by Kaufmann (2002) and Hernández (2012), whom she both cites – addresses the links between the concepts of “motility” and “accessibility” when thinking about mobility. Whereas “motility” refers to the potentiality for movement by individuals both as measure of personal capacity and social capital, “accessibility” is what enables reflection on the interaction between the opportunity structures for said mobility and resources, as well as on the assets and other means of support that individuals and families make use of to take advantage of such opportunities. In this sense, the potentiality turns out to be central to the revelation that “accessibility” (and mobility) are a capital linked with the ability to get to places” (p. 64).

In the framework of the construction of the participants' biographical narratives, it became significant that, when asking them about their vision for the future, and about the ways in which they imagined and desired their lives to unfold over the next ten years, their chief expectations included matters related to work, housing, and family, but also related to “travel, travel, travel.” Sofia, an 18-year-old interviewee, lives in one of CABA's shantytowns with her mother and brother. She is completing high school in a reputed urban institution, and aspires to study engineering afterwards. In her narrative, she expressed the desire to travel once her studies are over:

And after that, well, to go traveling, nothing except going traveling...and afterwards, after many years of having traveled and having had a good time – a good time – to have a family, but that would only come afterwards, that would only come second (...). But I see myself traveling, with a stable job or owning house of my own, with my mother in her own house, out of this area [the shantytown], say, in a quieter place (Sofia).

Traveling, in the instance above, manifests as an experience that is opposed to the project of having a family. A project which is not a priority for Sofia, at least not before reaching other goals, such as professional development, building her own house outside of the shantytown she lives in, and also, traveling. On the other hand, the kind of future that Mateo projects in his own narrative is “to be a professor, to teach classes, to have a son, to build a family, maybe to marry, I'm not sure, to have a house,” but also, “to travel and travel.”

Traveling, therefore, becomes associated with practices that, at present, are not contemplated as entirely possible, but instead require time, and the satisfaction of various conditions, such as studying and working, in order to finally take place. In their research about “O Lazer Brasileiro,” Edmur Stoppa, Luis Gonzaga Godoi Trigo, and Helder Ferreira Isayama (2017) sought to study the meanings related to tourism practices associated with leisure and free time during holiday seasons on a national level based on a qualitative/quantitative approach. In their research, they highlighted the important distances between desire, intentions, and the effective experience of vacationing. In this

sense, they noticed that, owing to the financial costs associated with such practices, and the limited accessibility to financial resources by the majority of the Brazilian population, vacations end up being more of a desire than an experience that can actually be accessed.

In Gustavo's narrative, his aspirations for the future include going on a backpacking trip. He imagines that such a trip – which is one of his main desires for the near future – will have the following characteristics:

(...) I'm currently thinking about taking a backpacking trip with a friend (...) I'd like to go out into the world and see what's up, meet new people, observe how they survive, and all that. It would be an experience that'd teach me a lot [What's your plan?] To see what people are like in other places (...). Sometimes, when we take my dad's car out, I realize that everything is different, but if I were able to take it out on my own, stay however long I'd like in each town, be able to stay in a small town that's quiet, for example – I don't really like noisy places or crowds (...). I would like to travel to a quiet town and see how life is there, how different it is from the urban life people live here [in Buenos Aires] ...when you head out [here in the city] there's a ton of trains, buses, and people passing by, everyone pushing each other around (Gustavo).

In studies about backpacking (“mochilero”) trips, this modality has even been identified as a “youth subculture” (Martín-Cabello, 2014), given the characteristics attributed to it: the search for authenticity and genuineness in the place that is explored; the search for freedom and the rejection of materialism; the search for adventure and one's own path (Noy, 2004; Martín-Cabello,

2014; Richards, 2015). Becoming a backpacker would grant Gustavo the opportunity to survive, meet new people, and observe how life is lived in less populated places, away from the city, and its noises and rhythms. An experience is fundamentally associated with a certain kind of learning that is only possible through undertaking this type of trip. In Gustavo's opinion, part of being a “backpacker,” is the freedom that is associated with it, the possibility of getting away, discovering new places, clearing one's mind, and doing as one sees fit.

The desire to travel is present in these young people's life stories, and, at the same time, there is a counterweight – a need to fulfill duties such as studying, working, and finding better housing, not only for them, but for the other members of the families as well. Even though tourism in Argentina has been recognized as a basic human right, something to be enjoyed equally by people of all social groups, for a significant part of the population this has not yet become a reality, primarily due to financial constraints. As Érica Schenkel (2013) pointed out, based on statistical data, “(...) once we head down the staircase of income, the proportion of family income destined to tourism and recreational practices is noticeably less, due to the fact that there are more urgent needs to satisfy” (p. 198).

For the young people interviewed, even when their life conditions were not the most favorable, and their vision of the future was primarily associated with the fulfillment of duties related to work and education, they still expressed the desire to be able to travel

in the future and experience a moment of enjoyment and rest, which reflected the idea that: “enjoying an uncommitted pleasure can be better when carried out in a space that is not quotidian, systematic, and in most cases, monotone” (Stoppa, Godoi Trigo & Isayama, 2017, p. 144, own translation).

5 FINAL REMARKS

Analyzing tourism practices and considering the interplay between structural and subjective conditions enables us to catch a glimpse of the inequalities expressed through (im)mobilities. Travel opportunities and limitations are not possible to anticipate solely based on social status or age. In this article I undertook, it was possible to identify the ways in which youth from working-class neighborhoods of CABA had traveled at different moments in their lives, even when experiencing financial difficulties, and how the trips they took provoked significant shifts in their lives. In the analysis of their narratives, three modalities of travel were distinguished relating to family, survival, and the future.

The young people I worked with maintain long-distance relationships in virtual form, but also through taking trips that they value highly. Family trips, as other studies show, illustrate the relationships between migratory and tourist mobilities, where it becomes evident that the trips they undertake make first-meetings and family reunions possible, while also granting the opportunity to visit the places where their extended families reside. The youth perceive these trips as holidays, associated with enjoyment and the op-

portunity to change. The possibility of traveling on their own challenges them to take on new responsibilities, but also permits them to be more independent as they undergo new experiences that contrast with the trips that they take with parents, or across the city, regularly.

It is, furthermore, through institutions such as Scout groups that traveling becomes possible, albeit in a more regulated way. These kinds of trips presuppose adaptation to a rather grueling routine, and isolation from the comfort associated with a tourist stay. Although these trips make it possible to travel to places that would be otherwise inaccessible to the participants, they do not necessarily produce positive feelings in them. Nevertheless, they impart fond memories and represent moments of significant change in the youths' lives.

Statistics have made it clear that the ability to take a vacation varies greatly among different people of different incomes. However, even in the face of financial difficulties, traveling appears in the narratives as a potential way of imagining a desired future. Together with other projects such as securing home ownership, finding a dream job, and completing high school studies, traveling is associated with something that, as adults, they would like to experience. With that said, it would seem more difficult to identify the concrete possibilities of making those trips a reality, or even, of actually being able to take them in a not so distant future. Likewise, these desires are in direct conflict with the ideals of progress to which young people must respond: social discourses that often

stigmatize them as lazy or problematic, or that seek to lump them in with middle and high-middle class youth, by characterizing them as careless and free.

To acknowledge the situated character of youth analysis – its diversity, multiplicity, and tension – upon referencing its experiences with mobility, entails that we consider young people’s socio-economic conditions in conjunction with the singular modes of dealing with and/or overcoming them. The approach to mobilities associated with tourism emerges as one possible route, albeit one that is not often taken in studies carried out on youth, to give an account of the singularities as well as the points of contact in the experiences of young Latin American people, problematizing the stigmatizing images that befall them, especially in working-class sectors. At the same time, observing the historical and social formation of youth renders the issue more complex, and reveals new dimensions in the approach of tourism practices where, also, the methodological dimension – particularly from the perspective of the biographical approach selected – allows identifying the meanings that the youth assign to their own practices of mobility.

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