



THE SOCIALISATION OF THE YOUTH

di Rossana Reguillo



Abstract

(Faced with an “epistemology of distance” the conference is based on an “epistemology of enchantment”, that is the respectful recognition of the condition and quality of the youth subject)

More than a decade has passed in this difficult, fast and troubled 21st century. In this time many processes have impacted on the world of youth, alas mostly negatively. More poverty, unemployment, growing distance of youth from institutionalising processes, which means there are many young people who are “*desafiliados*” (not belonging) and “*informalizados*” (unformalised), in a system precarious symbolically and materially; episodes of violence have become more frequent in Latin America, especially in Venezuela, Brazil, Mexico, El Salvador and Colombia, with levels of fatal violence that are those usually encountered in war zones.

Reflecting on youth issues is urgent; we face a bulimic society which engulfs its youth and vomits it out. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the youth population is the most affected by poverty when defined by the level of family wealth. 41% of youth between 15 and 29 years live in poverty, and 15% in extreme poverty; in Bolivia, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Peru more than 50% of youth live in poverty. There are, though, great differences between the urban and rural zones: for example, 1 in 3 youth in urban areas is poor, whereas in the rural areas the statistic is 1 in 2; again the probability of youth being the poorest is 64%, much higher than in those living in cities (OPS, 2007). In this context many young people have no choice but to sell risk, that is their strength, their work, and there are many sectors willing to trade in the product.

Structural precariousness, subjective temporary employment, absence of social politics and collapse of the institutions, intersected in a distinct manner according to local contexts and types from urban to rural areas, all give form and concretise the dynamics in which the youth become actors and social protagonists.

Of course the structural data which account for the deterioration of conditions of millions of young people in Latin-America (and the world) must be considered together with the whole of their many struggles, constant searching and courage in speaking publicly, their

generous and liberty-centred actions and growing protagonism in the critical necessity of the established order.

If today there is an enormous diversity within the so-called “youth universe”, their practices and the expressions (micropolitical), what brings them together is the research for a narrative of the future. There is still time.

Curriculum

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Fields of research: Comunicación, identidades y culturas urbanas; culturas juveniles; antropología del las emociones y violencias.

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