

Urban Futuristic Heritage: Rethinking “Hybrid” Traditions on Latin American Border Settlements

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Abstract

According to the forecasts, Latin America is the most urbanized and unequal region in the world; approximately 124 million of urban inhabitants live in poverty. This number is manifested as “bordering” fabric (squatter settlements). Still the general idea, the megacities of the *south continent* only concentrate 14 per cent of the population, while more than a half of urban inhabitants live in “secondary metropolis”. Border settlements represent the linking element between this city-categorization; thus, they are fundamental pieces in the construction of urban traditions.

Despite the fact that urban-architectural narratives and cultural heritage programs have been included spatial experiences, the obsession for physical materiality (architectural objects), purity (conventional heritage), and modern functionality (formal planned cities), although it still remains; the professional proposals are focused on three-dimensional forms in the space, leaving the multidimensional everyday life activities of the border inhabitants without considering that they represent meaningful practices of intangible heritage.

“Borders”, are informal-formal spaces of contradictions and ambiguities; they are contingent zones where the happening allows new ways of bonding; multiple, shifting and changing are the key cultural elements of the “margins”. Hence, this paper argues that hybridity and hyper-hybridity are the urban condition for the construction of border identities. In the Latin American border settlements, urban heritage is re-building daily, the “residuum” is used as raw material, here, all that once was thought as the end of tradition, now it represents the urban futuristic heritage.

Using examples from Mexico and Brazil, I firmly propose to rethink the hybrid in the border settlements with an *avant-garde* vision (virtual reality, evolving traditions, urban rights); in order to re-shape the idea of heritage; it will be essential to face the new changing urban structure.