

the Youth

and the
RIGHT
to the
CITY

REFLECTIONS FROM
BARCELONA
CALI &
NAZARETH



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01 INTRODUCTION

What is the 'right to the city'?

The concept of the 'right to the city' was first articulated by philosopher Henri Lefebvre in the article *Le Droit à la Ville*, published in 1967. In general terms, Lefebvre emphasised the need for inclusivity, accessibility and democracy in urban spaces, and also highlighted that urban space should not be solely controlled by market forces such as commodification and capitalism, but should instead be shaped and governed by the citizens who inhabit it. He proposes 'rescu[ing] the citizens as the key element and protagonist of the city that they themselves had built' and presents the city as 'the meeting point for building collective life'.

This concept has been widely discussed, criticised, interpreted and adapted to the changing situation of modern cities, particularly over the past three decades.

As anthropologist Manuel Delgado (2018) explains: 'All of Henri Lefebvre's work was just the opposite of what is intended to be made of him. [...] The result is false and falsifying spaces, even if disguised behind complex languages that make them unquestionable. They are the spaces of planners, administrators and civil servants, and also of the doctrinaires of citizenship and civic virtue, always willing to sprinkle urban planning policies with "good tone" to make them digestible for their victims, the urbanised.'

In 2008, geographer David Harvey defined the right to the city as follows:

“The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanisation. The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights”
(Harvey 2008).



Research Methodology

Qualitative research on the youth and the right to the city, the results of which are presented here, was carried out at different times and in different locations.

Firstly, participants were observed as part of the 2023-24 Youth Act! participatory process, alongside the collection of data produced by the participants. This initiative brought together 70 young people across 3 cities (30 in Barcelona, 20 in Cali and 20 in Nazareth).

Secondly, the participants of the International Youth Act! Forum 2024, which was held in Barcelona, were observed (39 young people from Catalonia, Colombia and Palestine). In particular, a half-day working session was organised, in which four issues were worked on collectively with the participants: 1) housing, and urban planning models; 2) (in)security and oppression; 3) sustainability; and 4) mobility. Using sensitive mapping methodology, the participants' subjective experiences and reflections on the right to the city and the four dimensions listed above, as well as the tools for political action used in the three territories, were shared in a participatory and creative way.

Lastly, eight semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with eight young people (aged between 22 and 32) who took part in the participatory process in Barcelona. The objective of these interviews was to deepen, at an individual level, knowledge of personal experiences and subjective perceptions in relation to the right to the city, and participants' lived experiences on this subject. The qualitative data was analysed thematically with an inductive categorisation arising from the collected data.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTE: Among the limitations of this study, it should be noted that the material situation in Nazareth and elsewhere in the occupied territories, due to the attack and invasion of Gaza by the state of Israel as well as the upsurge of discriminatory treatment towards the Palestinian population, has enormously hindered data collection, and made impossible even the physical participation of almost all the young Palestinian participants in the International Forum. In addition, the grave human rights situation caused the participants from Nazareth to focus their reflections mostly on the treatment they had received from the state of Israel, avoiding other axes that, given the exigency of the situation, did not seem very relevant.

With regards Cali, the reflections formed in the participatory process have already been the subject matter of an autonomous publication. This is why we will present only some of the fundamental threads here, in order to avoid redundancy.





02 THE YOUTH ACT! PARTICIPATORY PROCESS

Activities involving young people from Barcelona, Nazareth and Cali

The activities of the participatory process involving young people were carried out in parallel in Barcelona, Nazareth and Cali. The various sessions allowed them to reflect on and choose their work priorities, with the aim of having a political impact in each city. The participants additionally shared their thoughts at the Third International Youth Act Forum! 2024 meeting.

These processes have come about thanks to a previous phase, carried out in January 2023, which featured the coordination and systematisation of different entities: The Barcelona Youth Council (CJB) and International Civil Service of Catalonia (SCI-cat) in Barcelona, the District Youth Council (CDJ) of Cali in Colombia, and Baladna – Association for Arab Youth in Palestine.

The project's initial phase began at the start of May 2023, and was carried out first in Barcelona, then replicated in the other two cities. During this first phase, the participants identified the problems to be addressed in each context through facilitated dynamic debates. The starting points were six different issues: oppression and insecurity; discrimination based on identity; mobility; production and urban planning models; the privatization of public space; and the climate crisis. Each group proceeded to specify which of these problems most affected their reality and which would be most suitable for initiating a process that would be politically impactful. The participants defined the causes and consequences, ally figures or entities, blocking figures, and existing projects and resources for each issue. In parallel, several cartographies were created which represented these reflections.



Barcelona

02 The Youth Act! participatory process

Activities involving young people from Barcelona, Nazareth and Cali

After this initial phase, online contrast sessions were attended by all the participants, to share the direction of the debates. The second phase of the participatory process took place in Barcelona in October 2023 and in Cali in November 2023. During the sessions of this second phase, definitions for how the problems were being confronted were completed, and proposals for political advocacy were outlined. Immediately after, meetings were held with collectives from social movements and with public administration officials, to enrich the proposals based on their experience and expertise. It is important to note that the second phase of the participatory process could not be replicated in Nazareth, due to the escalation of the conflict to war between Palestine and Israel. Given the Palestinian context, the political impact in Nazareth was foreseen at the community level, and not at the level of associations as in the other two cases.

The context of each of the cities in which the participatory process took place shaped the form and degree to which the proposal for political impact landed.



Nazareth



Activities involving young people from Barcelona, Nazareth and Cali

In Barcelona, the process of influence within institutions took place during the third session of the second phase, in which the participants could discuss their political impact proposals with public administration officials. In this session, work on political advocacy began with several officials: the Barcelona Ombudsman, the Head of the Mobility Service of the Department of Territory of the Government of Catalonia, the Management team of the Barcelona Municipal Institute of Housing and Renovation, the Barcelona Office for Non-Discrimination, the Directorate of Urban Ecology Participation of the Barcelona City Council, and the President of the Housing Accumulation Research Commission of the Parliament of Catalonia.

In Cali, the CDJ, together with the participants, framed a proposal within their own project that they named ***Mandato Juvenil*** [Youth Mandate], consisting of a series of proposals that they conveyed to the City Council and municipal political representatives, to be implemented within the '2024 Municipal Development Plan' for Cali. It should be mentioned that municipal elections were held in Cali that year, and this meant the CDJ had to accelerate its pace in terms of political advocacy. During the electoral campaign, a public event was organised where various mayoral candidates committed to take on the CDJ's proposals as their own. Once the elections were over, they met with 14 of the 21 elected councillors to achieve that same commitment.



Cali





YOUTH ACT

International Forum BARCELONA

The International Youth Act! Forum 2024

Thirty-nine young people from Catalonia, Colombia and Palestine participated in the International Youth Act! Forum 2024. Fifteen people from Nazareth, who could not attend in person due to airspace closures as a result of the Israeli war, followed the session in parallel, connecting online.

The participating entities were the Cali District Youth Council (CDJ), Baladna – Association for Arab Youth in Palestine, Barcelona Youth Council (CJB), International Civil Service of Catalonia (SCI-cat), and Catalan Youth Agency of Catalonia.

Previous work had been undertaken in the different cities, individually and simultaneously. Two main objectives were set:

1. Firstly, to respond to how young people feel in their respective cities. Beyond the problems that we know exist, we wanted to compare and contrast the emotions we feel in the city in which we live against the imagery we have of that city.
2. Secondly, to set out different strategies for political struggle and assess their implementation locally, to create an exchange between cities and so that strategies can be replicated.

In the session, reflections were shared on four issues: 1) the housing, and urban planning models (insecurity related to housing: prices, self-construction, expropriation); 2) security/insecurity and oppression; 3) sustainability; and 4) mobility.

Methodology

The reflections were structured by applying a methodology of sensitive mapping. This tool was developed in human geography to capture subjective forms of spatial perception. It is regarded as an alternative to objectivist ways of representing space, and opts for an embodied approach, situated in the body of the person who creates it, with its meaning arising from a plastic enquiry: as in plastic arts, maps are generated on paper with paint, stickers, cutouts. Due to their subjective nature, sensitive cartographies were the subject of participatory creative work with participants



The International Youth Act! Forum 2024



HOUSING

On the topic of housing, we mainly considered the value of land, how it is currently being used in the different cities and which urban planning model is being promoted by the city councils. Related to this, we discussed insecurity in connection to housing: the high prices that prevent youth emancipation in Barcelona, the self-construction of housing on the hills of Cali, and expropriation by an authoritarian state in Nazareth. In all these cases, the result is an exodus of young people from their hometowns, and it is argued that housing should be a right, and that the State should ensure it.

Emotions

- ▷ Emotions that express sadness: Hopeless, Vulnerable, Inferior, Abandoned, Helpless
- ▷ Emotions that express disgust: Critical
- ▷ Emotions that express fear: Threatened, Humiliated, Scared, Rejected, Worried, Unsafe
- ▷ Emotions that express annoyance: Disappointed, Angry, Furious, Mad, Reluctant, Sceptical, Frustrated, Hostile

Vision

En general, tant els integrants de Cali com l'integrant de Barcelona van Largely, both the participants in Cali and the group in Barcelona shared ideas or phrases. The following stand out:

- ▷ Housing should be a right.
- ▷ Housing should be a public good, in order to avoid price speculation.
- ▷ Moreover, the State should promote policies for the integral improvement both of housing and the entire habitat, since neighbourhoods are fundamental for the development of a community.
- ▷ Housing should be of a better standard, with enough space for families to develop. It should be of good quality and provide a safe environment.
- ▷ We should be thinking sustainably; there is no need to build further housing. We already have enough physical space for everyone to live in dignity; the issue is that it is not available to the people who need it.
- ▷ The question arises as to whether there should be state ownership.
- ▷ Unionisation comes up as a response to self-organisation when searching for alternative ways of acquiring housing, at present.
- ▷ Housing cooperatives emerge as a collective alternative when seeking private property that affords dignity.

The International Youth Act! Forum 2024

The primary emotions shared in the group were negative, with frustration, anger, fear and insecurity quickly surfacing, as participants raised being unable to have a home of their own. The Cali and Barcelona team members shared these emotions, highlighting the following:

- This is a widespread problem for young people, which participants have seen worsen over recent generations and has led to changes in the ways they form relationships with each other, in their ways of thinking about life as part of a couple and even plays into their decisions around having a family.
- In addition, forced displacement into and within large cities requires people in general, and young people in particular, to search for affordable accommodation on the periphery or even the outskirts of those cities.
- In the case of Barcelona, the sharp increase in short-term lets of flats has skyrocketed prices in emblematic neighbourhoods that have had a strong local presence for a significant time. In recent times, residents of these areas have felt compelled to move to other areas in search of a sense of neighbourhood community and peaceful environment.
- The participants from Cali shared that they have observed increased land grabbing and self-constructed dwellings in the hills around the city, generating new, unsafe zones of conflict on the outskirts. The participants did not justify these courses of action, but could understand why people would seek ways to become independent if the State cannot provide solutions or alternative options that give access to decent housing.

On the other hand, it is worth highlighting how, in the second part of the activity, all this negative emotionality turned into hope and fostered a spirit of self-organisation, with the participants firmly believing that things can be done better and that their convictions could mobilise others to fight for what should be considered by all as the fundamental right to have a better future.



The International Youth Act! Forum 2024



(IN) SECURITY

With regards the security-insecurity dimension, we took an intersectional approach. In this exercise, security could be defined as the sense of peace a (young) person feels in not being afraid to live where they do. This mainly encompasses someone's physical security, their sense of security (or lack thereof) as established by police forces (which should elicit confidence), conflicts between the different communities that coexist within the same city, and any existing oppression based on race, religion, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, etc.

Emotions

- ▷ Emotions that express disagreement: Angry, Enraged, Annoyed, Frustrated, Unhappy, Concerned, Critical, Surprised, Mad
- ▷ Emotions that express vulnerability: Unsafe, Anxious, Terrified, Overwhelmed, Afraid, Scared, Vulnerable, Distrustful, Devastated, Exhausted, Powerless, Helpless, Hopeless, Sad, Threatened, MiserableHurt, Abandoned, Lonely, Weak, Surrendered, Jealous

The Palestinian group that did not travel to Barcelona due to the war elaborated on the section below.

- ▷ GENERAL FEELING: insecurity + uncertainty. Experiences differ from one person to another, and depend on gender or gender expression (e.g. verbal aggression).
- ▷ POLICE AND MILITARY PRESENCE: the space is policed, we fear the police, and we feel unsafe with the police presence because we know they are here to do mass control of us as Palestinians and to keep the space militarised.
- ▷ INFRASTRUCTURE: experience of chaos because there is a lack of basic infrastructure, which causes tension between the neighbours/ community.
- ▷ ORGANISED CRIME
- ▷ POCKETS OF SAFETY: We experience safety, familiarity and belonging in our city despite all the oppressive systems that attempt to destroy our right to the city and our relationship with our space, and this is a result of community efforts and community building.

There is no public space but no personal space either, which is also a source of insecurity and daily stress.

The International Youth Act! Forum 2024

Vision

Applicable to both contexts (Cali and Nazareth):

- ▷ Healing: reconciliation between communities. Social and emotional capacity must first be improved in order to make a political impact.
- ▷ Governments' attention to vulnerable areas in order to respond to their needs: lack of employment, unwanted pregnancies...
- ▷ Generating mutual support networks: not only institutional but also collective.
- ▷ Bottom-up solutions: when people are aware of the problem, more life opportunities can be created.
- ▷ Peace education in schools.
- ▷ Cross-cutting solutions (not simply money and security): emotional and psychosocial support; education to change mentalities.
- ▷ The role of youth organisations such as Baladna, which can bring together people from across the city.
- ▷ Within the context of Nazareth: this becomes difficult to imagine while the Israeli occupation is still underway.

The Palestinian group that did not travel to Barcelona due to the war elaborated on the section below.

- ▷ Good infrastructure that can be expanded: streets where we can easily get around, park, play and meet each other.
- ▷ Fewer cars, more space for walking and public transportation.
- ▷ A city that is easily accessible from outside.
- ▷ Names of streets that give us a sense of belonging; names that are part of our culture and history.
- ▷ Spaces for nightlife and to spend time.
- ▷ More public libraries.
- ▷ Museums with different themes (art, science, history).
- ▷ Better maintenance of the city's archaeological findings.
- ▷ A city without organised crime.
- ▷ A city without police control.
- ▷ A city where we can express our Palestinian identity without risk of persecution.

- ▷ A city connected to the rest of the homeland, the rest of Palestine, and the wider Levant.
- ▷ We want to be able to go by train from Nazareth to Beirut and the rest of the Levant, which would mean there would be no colonial presence in our land whatsoever.
- ▷ A place where we can express our queerness openly and without pink-washing.

The emotions shown in the group were negative for the most part, distinguished between those that denote or express vulnerability and those that show disagreement. Yet, at the end of the group work, it was possible to consider imagery that dealt with all these emotions. Below are the situations discussed, connected to the emotions of the participants in each city:

► Colleagues from Cali talked about the physical violence among very young people that is generated in vulnerable neighbourhoods for reasons of drugs, money and invisible borders. The CDJ knows of examples of young people who have left these violent groups, and they explain how difficult it is to get out of these dynamics. Vulnerable territories are excluded and in greater need. They are inhabited mostly by people coming from rural areas, displaced by the armed conflict and the control of fields for cultivating coca. Despite the peace process, there is still concern about the dissidence of this conflict, which has continued for 50 years. There is no adequate security system; the government doesn't focus on the social concept of security but on oppression, and it is the most vulnerable who suffer most in this situation; the insecurity is intersectional (women, LGBTIQ+ collective...).

► Nazareth is located in Israeli-occupied territory (Palestine of 1948). It is one of the most populous cities in the north and has the largest Palestinian population (both Muslim and Christian). Part of the Palestinian population of Nazareth had to leave their villages and houses and were left to live in the suburbs or slums of the city. The socioeconomic and historical situation determines security. The population cannot access weapons, even though the military gives them away, especially in the suburbs. The interest of the military is dividing the Palestinian population so that 'they kill each other', which is why they allow the circulation of weapons. The participants from Nazareth agree with those from Cali that the military and the police generate more insecurity and oppression than security for the Palestinian population.



The International Youth Act! Forum 2024



SUSTAINABILITY

Within the topic of sustainability, we mainly focused on how to live sustainably in cities. This topic not only covers environmental change and policies that address global warming, but also relates to the human footprint, to see how we can move forward as a society, how easy or difficult it is for us to be sustainable within the city, and the obstacles we encounter. Related to this, we analysed local policies and whether or not they favour the sustainability of the city and of its inhabitants.

Emotions

- ▶ Negative Emotions: Sad, Furious, Confused, Guilty (many), Disillusioned, Frustrated, Puzzled, Unsafe, Afraid, Useless, Resentful, Angry, Powerless, Outraged, Desperate, Overwhelmed, Feeling of being used, Distressed, Anxious, Uncertain
- ▶ Positive Emotions: Hopeful, Optimist
- ▶ Neutral Emotions: Curious, Humorous, Conscientious, Sensitive

Vision

The imagery raised was negative, suggesting that, as a society, we are not moving forward in the best way:

- ▶ A state of frustration affects mental health and can lead to suicide in some cases.
- ▶ A collapse is imagined, which will lead to a new state of nature. Society will hit rock bottom, and this needs to happen in order for us to then adapt and take responsibility as a society.
- ▶ The future is uncertain; recurring issues such as deforestation or not wanting to have children due to overpopulation and consumerism are discussed.
- ▶ There are many assassinations of environmental leaders; if you get too involved and you are visible, they kill you. This generates despair.

With regards solutions, environmental innovation was proposed:

- ▶ Introducing the concept of sustainable planning in cities (administrations) and stricter laws, at the city level and at the unit level (apartment blocks).
- ▶ More innovative sustainability systems for a sustainable future through science and culture.
- ▶ More government support for these issues, such as greener cities or more environmental awareness in schools.
- ▶ Rivers and nature reserves with rights; applying to give rights to natural spaces, for example, in the flat areas, to protect them.

The International Youth Act! Forum 2024

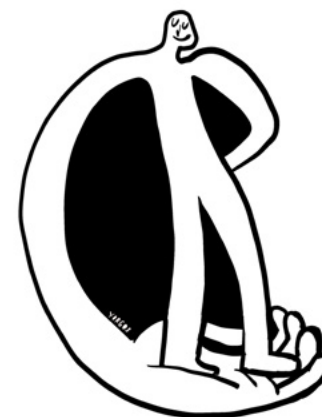
The participants of this group came from the same city: Cali. Most of the emotions expressed by the group were negative. The emotion most shared was the guilt of not taking responsibility in the violent context of Cali, since people who took on leadership or activist roles ended up being punished and even murdered. Instead of these more visible positions being taken, small actions were taken that weren't transformative. These negative feelings were combined with the frustration of being unable to do anything beyond individual actions or campaigns that lasted only a day.

There was a general sense of feeling useless; participants observed that no matter how many campaigns there were, any changes had been minimal: 'what we do has little impact or reach.' They shared the frustration of feeling that there was always something more to do.

In the current context of Cali, a lot of frustration, anger and resentment was perceived towards the organisation of COP16, since the local institution undertakes local actions that the young people considered inadequate and perceived as superficial, such as the campaign '*Mi Cali Bella*' (My beautiful Cali).

During the conversation, positive emotions such as hope and optimism were also shared, which are driving forces that encourage young people to stay engaged. Examples of good practice were given, such as the urban gardens movement at Puente de Las Mil Luchas (Bridge of a Thousand Struggles).

A dichotomous state was identified where negative emotions coexisted with positive ones: 'I feel hope mixed with despair'.



The International Youth Act! Forum 2024



MOBILITY

When considering mobility, we covered having a walkable city, public and private transportation, city congestion, and the fight for space between cars and buses. In the main, we discussed public policies relating to infrastructure. We also covered accessibility and physical spaces, whether they are accessible for people with reduced mobility, and whether they are in good condition. Finally, we talk about associated migration, the condition of the entrances and exits to the city, and diagnosed whether or not young people are being pushed to live in the outskirts, and whether or not they can enter the city easily.

Emotions

- ▶ Negative Emotions: Angry, Fearful, Concerned, Overwhelmed, Unsafe, Enraged, Worried, Irritated, Sad, Ignored, Frustrated, Insecure, Inferior, Aggressive, Hostile, Desperate, Vulnerable
- ▶ Positive Emotions: Intimate, close or solitary, depending on whether public transport is in good or poor conditions, Valuable

Vision

- ▶ Since the 1990s, public transport in Cali has been in decline. Some investments that have been planned since previous mandates remain half complete or not even started. Beyond this, some neighbourhoods were essentially disconnected from each other, which generates invisible borders. A commuter train exists, but it is not efficient. The tracks and infrastructure are inferior and leave a lot of room for improvement.
- ▶ The goal in Nazareth is to make transportation affordable or even free. A friendly and connected public transport system was imagined: comfortable for people and truly a public space.
- ▶ Barcelona has made improvements in recent years, creating connections of less than 30 minutes between neighbourhoods and trying to make the city more accessible. Even so, there is much improvement still to be made to the entrances and exits to the city, both for commuter trains and for cars.

The International Youth Act! Forum 2024

Generally, all the contributions focused on the negative emotions generated by issues around mobility, expressing that this is a necessity and it was not in a good state. The participants were enthused by the idea of a well-connected city that would be a friendly space favourable to walking and having fun. Public transport greatly affected the participants' positive and negative emotions; generally, their experiences were bad.

If we distinguish the discussions by city:

- ▶ With regards Cali, there was a reflection that transport is barely planned, and the city does not have a metro, unlike other cities of its size. The climate in Cali is hot, and the state of public transport is terrible (both trains and buses), which generates mental health problems due to the irritability and vulnerability provoked by having daily bad experiences. It was also discussed that young people are always viewed suspiciously and that there is a lack of solidarity among users. There is sadness, and discontentment with decision-makers.
- ▶ The Nazareth group reflected on what public transport should be like: connecting people, welcoming and well-kept. On the one hand, the duality that exists between cities was raised – that each has different problems at different scales – but the feelings are practically the same. If the condition of the public transportation system were improved, it would foster connections between users; however, in the condition it is now, it creates the exact opposite: loneliness. On the other hand, participants were in agreement that their city should be friendly and also safe for walking and strolling.
- ▶ In Barcelona, the main problem is the city's entrances and exits, which is also the case in Cali. Regardless of the means of transport (public or private), there is always congestion, generating problems of coexistence. In terms of internal transport, it was raised that efforts are being made to make transport facilities more accessible, thereby valuing people with disabilities. In recent years, public policies that connect neighbourhoods have also been implemented that now make it possible to travel from one side of the city to the other in less than 30 minutes.



THE VISION OF THE YOUTH



**03 VISION OF THE
YOUTH OF BARCELONA**

INTERVIEWS

REFLECTIONS FROM BARCELONA

Introductory note

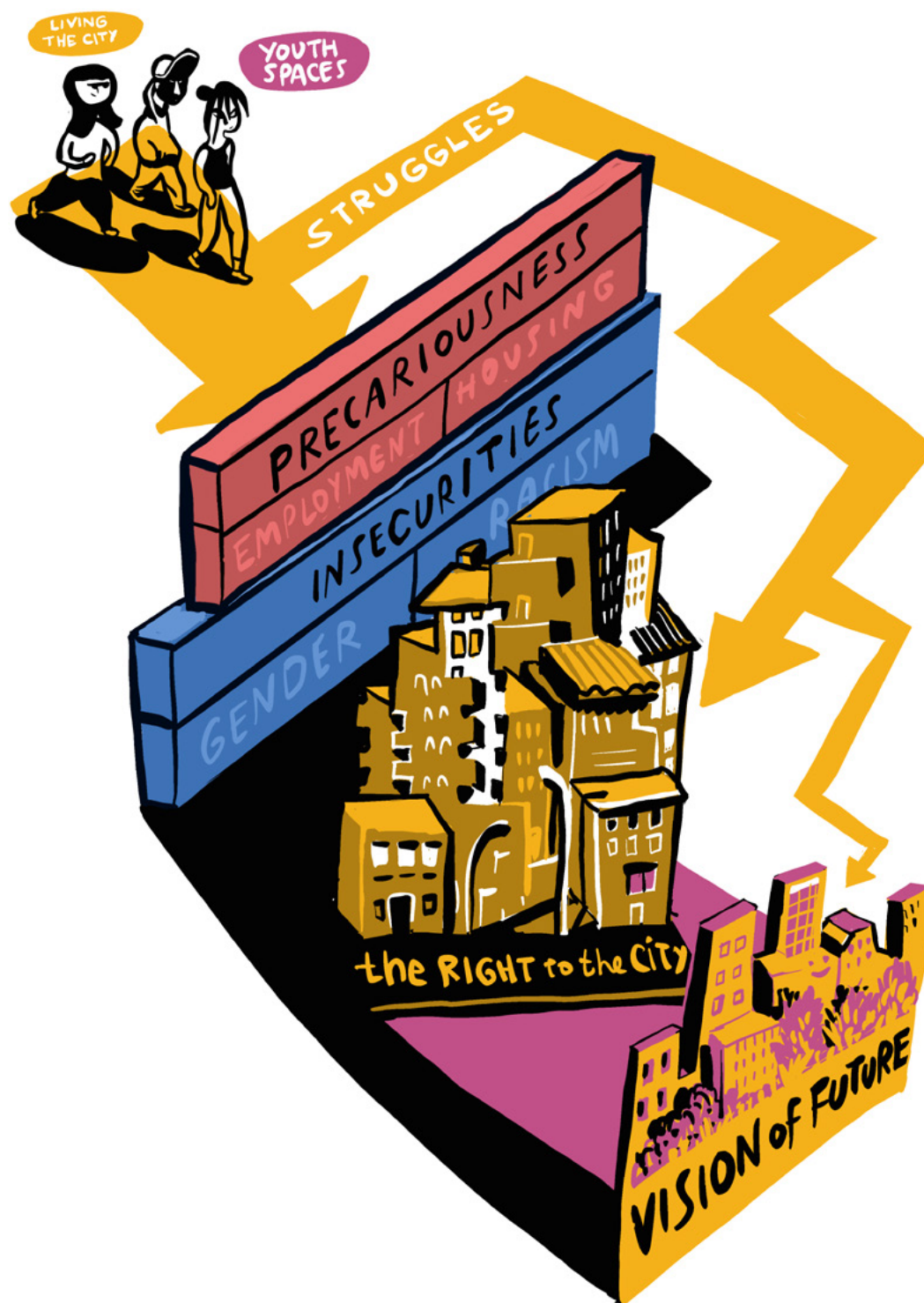
In this section, we present the results of in-depth interviews conducted with young people in Barcelona between October and November 2024 about their personal experiences in the city, and the elements that make it difficult for them to enjoy their right to the city, as well as their viewpoints on the potential for change, their strategies to achieve that change, and their visions for the future.

When presenting the results of the data analysis, we realised that organising the interview fragments thematically generated a clear narrative line that explained the different topics quite well. In addition, the fragments formed a dialogue with each other.

Consequently, we chose to keep ourselves in the background during the presentation of the analysis, instead following a documentary-style format that allows the young people to speak directly through the accounts they give. Undoubtedly, as is the case in documentaries, our intervention is not hidden: firstly, by the selection of the most pertinent accounts and secondly, in their thematic organisation and the order in which they are presented.

In this manner, we will outline the structure we chose, so as to guide readers through this extremely rich collection of first-hand perspectives concerning how young people live their city and experience it, what they would like to change about it, the barriers they face, and how they see their future.

The first section addresses people's 'lived experience of the city and its public spaces' (1), and is accompanied by an essential appendix dedicated to specific spaces for the youth (2), in which the young people express their desires, and a detailed analysis of the situation. The second section addresses the main elements blocking the right to the city: firstly, precariousness (3), mainly within an economic-employment context, and in the context of housing (4); and secondly, (in)security (5), where racism and gender issues predominantly emerge. Finally, the third section focuses on change, and particularly the struggle to effect change (6), and prospects for the future (7).



Lived experience of the city and its public space



A SPACE FOR LIVING AND A SPACE FOR PASSING THROUGH

"For me, it's important that public space – let's say the physical space – is welcoming and doesn't make you not want to use it; so that it's not difficult to find a place to sit and rest, or talk with friends or do whatever. That resting, stopping for a second, doing things, [...] going from one place to another, isn't difficult; [so that a space for doing these things isn't something] that you have to search for but something accessible, easy." [Interview 3]

"I believe it's important that there are places like squares because they create shared spaces for citizens, where people who wouldn't normally be in the same place can interact. Green areas, and also public facilities... I mean, I don't know: for example, the importance of having libraries or community centres. That makes a huge difference because, at the end of the day, [these things] create a community. Otherwise, everyone just goes their own way, and there is nothing to unite different people and at the same time generate, like, an identity, right? A neighbourhood identity." [Interview 1]

"Being young sometimes affects how you experience public space, too. Also: the hours when you spend time in or pass through [a public space], you know? Going out partying...all that... At the end of the day, that also shapes my experiences in public spaces – for better or worse, you know? [The space] allows me to live in it in very different ways, at very different hours – but this also entails... certain hours entail a certain risk for me, or slightly more risk and insecurity." [Interview 5]

ARCHITECTURAL EXCLUSION

"Some architecture or spaces [are] deliberately [designed to] have a controlling effect: places where people are not allowed to sit down, to do whatever, depending on the activity [...] They play a similar role to the police." [Interview 3]

"I felt comfortable when I lived in places... I don't know, I could say that, at best... It's not exactly feeling uncomfortable [in general], but physical discomfort. There are spaces where it would be good if there were more benches. Yeah, [I wish] there were spaces where you could sit, without having to consume something." [Interview 1]

"I like to feel safe. I guess that's pretty basic, but it also relates to my personal experiences in public spaces. And that's related to it not being very dark or that there are no... well, it's not a very masculinised space, for example, which sometimes also has an effect." [Interview 5]

Lived experience of the city and its public space

(LACK OF) GREEN SPACE

"I think the inclusion of green spaces is something that... Having lived in other places, when I go back to Barcelona, it's always like... I really like Barcelona, but that's something I miss..." [Interview 3]

PRIVILEGE

"I think that, fundamentally, it's to do with being a woman, and also being white, which at the same time gives me a lot of privilege. It's also about being normative: sometimes we forget about this, but it also sets a lot of things in your favour. But, well, being a woman is the other side [of the coin]. You're much more scared in certain spaces; they are much more hostile." [Interview 5]

"I'm always very aware of my privilege as a white, cisgender man, and I think that in my life, I've been fortunate to have a Spanish passport. I've been able to travel to a bunch of countries, and I was able to live in Lisbon without any problems. I don't consider that I have ever suffered racism, but I have seen it up close." [Interview 7]

OTHERING AND DISCRIMINATION IN PUBLIC SPACES

"I think Catalonia is a welcoming country, but it also has a significantly racist side. And the discrimination... The migration that took place in the '60s and '70s, the internal migration within Spain, is not the same as it is now." [Interview 7]

"Although I consider myself to be someone who is politically engaged and who tries not to hold various prejudices, inevitably, a lot of the time when I'm walking or I pass through certain neighbourhoods, I automatically have this perception of insecurity and of being a bit alert [...] Maybe [I] avoid certain streets, I do that, and [I] separate myself from certain people who, as a result of my prejudices, I feel shouldn't come near me." [Interview 8]

"Because, obviously, we live in a city that is structurally racist, and that brings a lot of prejudices along with it." [Interview 5]

"Often, the things we see every day in cities, [...] we have normalised them. Someone from outside Barcelona might be much more shocked [...] by the Columbus monument in Barcelona. Latin American friends come and explain what it represents and, to us, it's like... normal. Someone from outside won't see it that way. It represents violence [to them], because something that had such a destructive impact is being celebrated." [Interview 3]

"It's very important to me not to feel inhibited; I mean, let's not say resources, but access, and not feeling excluded. Well, let's see... I'm an immigrant, so it has been tough for me here, to adapt and feel part of the environment and not be constantly reminded that I don't belong where I am." [Interview 2]

"I think an obvious example is how a person is racially profiled. So, like in the case of my father, who has some quite dark physical features: I mean, you can see that he's not white. I think this has an effect on a daily basis, even though he has been here for many years, speaks several languages, has worked here all his life, is very politically engaged, and participates in certain spaces that other migrants don't. So this affects [you] a lot when you are walking around, when you go down the street, how people look at you. I believe that it affects you emotionally, no matter how little you express it outwardly. And to a certain extent, it limits your willingness to get involved in the public space." [Interview 8]

"Sometimes I do feel that... I mean, you have to prove that you are the same as everyone else. [...] When you're with new people or in a new environment, often, indirectly, in subtle ways, you have to make the other person understand that you are just another person, and that's all." [Interview 1]

"In this type of neighbourhood [where the community is Latin American], for example, I know where I can walk or who to talk to or not talk to. Because I already know precisely how they behave, what makes them laugh and what doesn't, if we can dance or not, and so on. It's more like, let's say, when I don't feel so comfortable... For example, I don't feel very comfortable when I have to be [in a situation where I am] surrounded only by Catalans. Not because I don't like them, but because I feel I have to make a big effort to fit in." [Interview 2]

"It's very subtle, very indirect. You perceive how [others] see you, what preconceptions they have about you. Because when you dress differently, and you are also racially different, at the end of the day, it's inevitable and natural: everyone will project a series of preconceived positive or negative ideas [onto you]. [...] Yeah, I don't know. Sometimes I feel like I have to explain more things than a non-racialised person would have to explain." [Interview 1]

Lived experience of the city and its public space

"I really like seeing the diversity. Young people, kids, adults, older people, being together in one space... And also the cultural diversity. But it's true that, like everything else, we are also socialised in a system that encourages racism a bit, or aporophobia [fear and rejection of poor people], etc. It's something that I, too, had to gradually deconstruct in my life, you know? Now I like seeing this diversity much more." [Interview 5]

"It's just that when you're a minority, everything you do inevitably affects all the people who are perceived as being the same as you. I mean, if I'm the only person of reference for some people for group X, what I do will be reflected onto everyone else – whether I like it or not. Every mistake, and every single thing... what's the opposite of 'mistake'? Every virtue and every flaw will be reflected in their perception of others [like me]." [Interview 1]

SOCIAL CLASS BOUNDARIES

"I was fascinated by a neighbourhood in Pedralbes, a super-rich area: you could tell there was a lot of money there. I mean, the difference compared to the El Poble-sec neighbourhood – I thought... it's just, it's totally another place. I mean, I can't believe this is [part of] Barcelona, you know?" [Interview 4]

"I think, unfortunately, Barcelona is a very unequal city. People are already talking about [the inhabitants of] La Ciutat Meridiana having a life expectancy ten years lower than those in Sarrià-Sant Gervasi. [...] Perhaps what makes me most uncomfortable is the social inequality. Well, not exactly uncomfortable: [it's] frustration, indignation and anger. You can see how homelessness is getting worse and worse; it is affecting the youth." [Interview 7]

"Obviously, it's logical that these [differences between neighbourhoods regarding public spaces, noise, cleanliness, pollution] would affect people's standard of living. So I think, ultimately, the administration also has the task of trying to positively discriminate. Because I believe there is no fairness here, regarding urban structures in the city." [Interview 4]

"There are all sorts of contradictions, right? You have the five-star hotel, which is very clean, you know, but super private to users. And next door is a playground for kids, which is disastrous and full of beer cans." [Interview 5]

"In my experience of having been to neighbourhoods like Sarrià, I've also seen that... I mean, the difference... Meaning, those areas are very calm. I mean, yes, people do use cars; however, I remember feeling totally safe that there were cars, but [there was not] the noise that I hear here in Eixample. [...] It's, whether you like it or not – what's it called? – class difference. It's very present, you know? I believe more financial resources have been allocated to improve the urban planning of these upper [class] areas than here. I mean, I've also noticed the level of cleanliness. For example, [in] Raval and Pedralbes... I mean, it's not even close!" [Interview 4]

MOBILITY — NOISE — CLEANING

"When I walk around the city, I always try to avoid crowded areas with lots of cars. [...] When I have no choice but to go down a street like that, where I just see car, after car, after car, I just face it and go down it. But I feel a lot of discomfort, and [I'm aware of] all the noise. The noise bothers me a lot, and I think the city is nothing but noise. It also makes me really unwilling to think about [building a] life here in the city and [makes me] think that I want to move because I don't like it. [...] Ultimately, I think the city basically centres around cars." [Interview 4]

"In Barcelona, what I think about a lot that I would change is, for example, how the city is looked after in terms of noise, pollution, circulation... When I go into the city, it makes me feel very uncomfortable because there are so many stimuli all at once." [Interview 6]

"I think if there wasn't so much noise in the city, I wouldn't have this feeling of 'jeez, I want to take the car to avoid the noise.'" [Interview 4]

"When I go into the centre, the fact that I can't move, that I don't have [enough] space, that people don't respect your pace, or your space: that's something that I notice when using public spaces." [Interview 7]

"The jobs are here. If you move outside [the city], you [are forced to] have a car. If you have a car and you are environmentally conscious, then you feel that guilt, too... The places you can get to by public transport tend to be more expensive." [Interview 1]



Spaces for youth



“So I do think that there is a lack of a space where young people can meet. Young people spend time in the street because there is not a space where they can create this network but alongside others.” [Interview 4]

“When I’m with friends, I just think ‘oh, why don’t we go to a bar, have a beer, play cards, and stay here all afternoon?’ I don’t think it’s possible to do that right now, because the city is overcrowded. Having something as simple as a space where you can spend time with your friends that isn’t home, right? [...] So you think ‘where can I find a peaceful place where [we] can do this?’” [Interview 6]

“I often have the feeling that, in Barcelona, so much is going on, in every sense of the word. That is to say, in Barcelona, if you like heavy metal, if you like classical music, you can go right now, you know? There are so many things going on simultaneously, and sometimes it’s like, it’s overwhelming, you know?” [Interview 7]

“I think that specifically in Barcelona, there are a lot of options, so to speak. And yes, there are many things that are free, too.” [Interview 1]

“What I really miss is the access to cultural or leisure activities, although now they’re much more accessible than before. There are lots of spaces for leisure activities, but it’s also true that almost all of them are privatised to some extent. [...] [Cultural activities are] a kind of leisure activity I would love to do much more regularly but I can’t afford. Although there are initiatives that make it more accessible... If we want to have a beer or something, you can’t do it in the park, you know? Because you’d be fined, because it’s illegal, you know?” [Interview 5]

“I think, in terms of leisure, Barcelona is fully covered. For me, this has negative repercussions because we have become a materialistic and capitalist society. We constantly need to gratify everything that happens to us, whether at home, at work, or with family or friends...right? Going out, to spend money: whether it’s to eat, to buy shoes, or to buy bags... In other words, they have created automated people who, as it stands, respond to their pain with consumption.” [Interview 6]

Spaces for youth

“Spaces intended for the youth don’t necessarily have to be places where you can drink alcohol. I think this is a fairly important issue, right? That is: normally, when we think of public spaces, leisure, and the youth – I don’t know if *normally*, but *often* – we connect them directly with the consumption of alcohol. [...] Also: spaces for exercise or doing a sport, right? – and not having to pay [to do] sport in private centres.” [Interview 8]

“Cultural spaces are more or less accessible, but you also have to have the information, and sometimes it’s only circulated within certain circles. You don’t get to [know about] it, depending on who [you mix with]. So I don’t know if it’s truly accessible, at the end of the day.” [Interview 3]

“One thing that, for example, I also like a lot about Barcelona and that I would like to see promoted a lot more are the community centres and the *casals* [places intended to be a base for organisations that are usually of grassroots nature and specific to the Catalan Countries, with cultural, scientific, sporting, recreational or political purposes]. I think this is a very good thing, but they should be made more accessible to everyone.” [Interview 5]

“There is room for improvement, and there is still room to make an effort to represent the different cultures of the city of Barcelona. I believe there is also a lot of work to be done to [better] circulate [the information about] the free cultural activities that take place in Barcelona. Because they exist, but most of the time, people don’t know about them. Many people haven’t set foot in a community centre, *casa*, or cooperative athenaeum [a socioeconomic centre for the promotion of social and solidarity economy, according to the principles and values of cooperativism, by means of public workshops and debates, and community collaboration]. So, I think that in that sense, there is a lot of work to be done to disseminate [this information], and the budget for it must be increased.” [Interview 7]

“Let’s see: types of leisure [...] If I go out, for example, [I go to] public parks. Bars, nightclubs, things like that... I don’t have much experience of those because I’m not really a person who likes to go out, because I feel like I don’t fit in, that it doesn’t work for me. Fortunately, I have the dance group. Like I say, being with that group feels like relaxation.” [Interview 2]

“[...] The fact that you can be sitting on the terrace [of a bar] drinking and yet you can’t be sitting on a bench next to it drinking something. [...] It’s just that it isn’t necessarily an open-air drinking session: maybe you have a big group of friends and can’t fit around the table. You want to sit somewhere else, for whatever reason, and drink your beer...and you can’t.” [Interview 3]

“I believe that in the end, the leisure activities available in Barcelona at the moment are leisure activities that are connected with needs that have been socially constructed. So I think everything is about money in the end, and so all leisure has to be connected to money.” [Interview 6]

SEGREGATED SPACES vs HETEROGENEOUS SPACES

“Yes, [I wish there were another type of space where I felt comfortable], but I don’t want it to be labelled, like, that’s for...for example, ‘this bar is [for] Latin Americans’ or ‘this place is just for people who don’t speak Catalan’. You know what I mean? I don’t want that. Because right now, studying the issue of integration and everything... It’s just that there’s no reason for it: it’s like, spaces are for all people. So I don’t want it to be labelled, but more like ‘look, [this place] has been adapted so everyone here can enjoy it.’” [Interview 2]

SELF-MANAGED HETEROGENEOUS SPACES

“One thing I really like about Barcelona is the neighbourhood festivals, the community street festivals, the fact that community street festivals are allowed. I think this is definitely a very positive thing.” [Interview 5]



Precariousness



JOB INSECURITY / BECOMING INDEPENDENT

“I think that as a single person, if I lived alone now... I mean, I couldn't become independent because my job is [only] four hours a week. Given that, it's already unviable from the start. I mean, with that, I would be in a precarious situation, as a young woman.” [Interview 4]

“At my age, given current salaries, it's impossible to even consider becoming independent in such precarious conditions. So, of course, that determines everything. It also shapes [where you live]: for example, if you are thinking about becoming independent, you will just end up living in outlying neighbourhoods. And the neighbourhoods on the outskirts don't have the same transport connections or facilities.” [Interview 1]

“To start with, being young, [and then] you combine that with being a woman... I notice it at work, for example, like paternalism, you know? Or that the combination [of the two] puts you in a position where you are given a little less, right? Sometimes you're infantilised.” [Interview 5]

“I mean, at the end of the day, young people and the elderly are the two [social] groups that are quite forgotten about among other groups of people in situations of vulnerability, but [the fact is that] young people and the elderly are overlooked, I think.” [Interview 4]

“Economic issues are something I always bear in mind when deciding what to do with my life.” [Interview 3]

“As young people, when looking for work, we are mistreated by adults, because they are the ones conducting the interview, or you don't even get an interview during the selection process... I think this has a direct impact on how we view our aspirations, our life, and the desire to effect change in society.” [Interview 8]

“Also, I have a wide network, you know? I have resources that keep me connected, too. In this sense, I think I'm in a privileged position. But if I leave out this network and my parents, if I were on my own, I would totally be in a precarious employment and economic situation. Because in terms of work – as I explained, right? – I don't have enough income to provide for myself.” [Interview 4]

Precariousness

“I really like Barcelona a lot, [...] and [I enjoy] living here; however, it *does* limit my ability to become independent. I don't think it's a viable option, so... This generational thing of moving north to other countries, etc... like, yes, for me, it has always been something I've wanted to do, but it's also out of necessity.” [Interview 3]

“I have thought about it many times, also in terms of an experience: not so much in terms of wanting to leave Barcelona but wanting to experiment or build something elsewhere. In that sense, there are many limitations. The first one is economic. I don't have the resources right now to do it independently and autonomously, unless I get a job or a scholarship.” [Interview 5]

“If I wanted to become independent now, I wouldn't be able to. Simply because I'm in a precarious economic situation, given that I don't want my parents to support me financially.” [Interview 4]

“I think precarity doesn't affect me as much as it affects other people because I'm privileged enough to live with my parents and I have a job, and at the same time I'm able to save. But basically, when I think about precariousness, that's what I'm thinking about.” [Interview 8]

“As for me, being an immigrant, I had to really turn things around to get to a place where I could say 'look, I have my papers.' So, in that sense, it's just that I have fought a lot. So I feel like people here, well, young people my age, [can access] opportunities more easily than I do. In other words, I have to go and *get* it. But, like, I [have to] fight a lot to *get* it, while others, like, just go there. They just have to turn up, and that's enough.” [Interview 2]



Housing



“Basically, the right to live here is being erased in this city, essentially, because many people who were born and raised here [end up] leaving for villages or other cities [...], because they cannot afford to live here.” [Interview 1]

“Housing, as we all know, is a serious problem that’s only getting worse. Living in Barcelona is becoming ‘mission: impossible’. Things are different if you own a flat or not, or you could end up, maybe, inheriting a property.” [Interview 7]

“I have experienced it, yes, in recent years; all my close friends... Like, making short-term plans was very easy. They’ve already left the city. [...] You end up losing a sense of belonging, and when there is no sense of belonging, lots of things become much weaker. [...] It’s mainly a housing problem. Not in all cases, obviously. But even in those cases where there was a desire for change, the desire for change presupposed having already ruled out the option of living in Barcelona.” [Interview 1]

“Renting here in Barcelona...don’t even think about it! [...] If you don’t have friends or acquaintances who have a house and can give you a lower price, forget about it.” [Interview 4]

“What many people my age do is share a flat, for example. And so, to find a space for themselves [...], they end up having to go out. But if, at the same time, outside spaces are becoming touristified, [that means that] ultimately, public spaces are getting smaller and smaller.” [Interview 1]

“Also an inability to save money. And, at the same time, there’s this uncertainty in terms of housing, [you don’t feel you can say] ‘now I’m doing really well, and I’m very happy living in this house,’ but in terms of planning for the future... Well, for me, that’s a utopia. The very idea of contemplating buying a house is a utopia.” [Interview 7]

“Housing... the lack of economic resources to leave home. In the sense that [leaving home] means spending more and more money on housing... [It makes you] dependent. That’s right. And all this translates into being unable to access certain experiences.” [Interview 1]

“I’m familiar with economic precarity. [...] I still live in my parents’ house, because renting somewhere in Barcelona is impossible. I think not just for young people, but for everyone. I’m privileged to have a job now. Having a

Housing

job doesn't mean I'm thinking about becoming independent right away, but [rather, I'm thinking] about saving money and focusing on the various resources I can save for the future." [Interview 8]

"If it feels like the city is becoming some sort of amusement park, that it's difficult to access housing, basically, and difficult to keep living here and, on top of these barriers, [if] the sense of community and the heart of the city are being lost, in the sense that the people who live here, who feel that this city is theirs and who want to improve it and see it grow [leave]... If that doesn't exist here, then what's the point – right?" [Interview 1]

HOUSING AND MIGRATION / OTHERING

"I always want my home to be here, [I want this] to be my place to come back to. But it's very difficult because of the housing issues. The problem, I think, for everyone in general, is that rents are so high, and people can't afford them. Yes, I feel that the city... I mean, you want to [live] here forever, but it isn't easy; somehow, the doors are being shut on you – especially on me." [Interview 2]

"What's happening is that people, especially people who have come here in the past few years, can't find... There is a barrier [that denies them] access to this city, basically. Because they come here to work but then they can't find a flat to rent. And, especially anyone with a different name... It's just...when they call up [for a flat] and they are directly told 'no, no, it's already taken,' and in actual fact, it hasn't been... So they have an [affordability] barrier, a barrier because of their name, and then you end up with most families living outside Barcelona." [Interview 1]

"In terms of housing, I do feel a bit more discriminated against because of things that have happened to me... Let's say I want to go and get a room, and the owner is like, 'but where are you from?' [They're] like, 'no, I'm sorry – but no.' They don't say it to me directly, either... Like: '[it's]



Housing

not because you are Latin American,' but they do add a 'but'. 'No, I can't because I already have someone else interested,' and so on. This happens a lot, not only to me, but to my Colombian friends as well..." [Interview 2]

TOURISTIFICATION-GENTRIFICATION

"Originally, I always thought I would want to live here for ever. This past few months has been the first time in my life when I've considered whether it is actually viable. First of all, [due to the lack of] opportunity, but also because the touristification is becoming really noticeable. So much so, that if there end up being no neighbourhoods, if there is no sense of neighbourhood, if more and more people are in [and out] the buildings, if they are transient, with people [only] staying a few days and no connections are built, then of course: what kind of city is left behind, right?" [Interview 1]

"The centre is extremely overcrowded, [and] very gentrified... So that really reinforces [your] desire to leave. I haven't yet reached that crisis point, but I'm sure [I will] when I am 30 years old and still [only] earning around a thousand euros..." [Interview 5]

"There are increasingly more areas for businesses: [...] not for the people who live there, but for tourists. So an entire neighbourhood [community] ends up being conditioned by that, right? Because...I don't know: if, before, you had a supermarket, a laundrette, etc – things close to your home that you might need for your everyday life – now some people are having to go to a nearby neighbourhood [for those things]. And this – the lack of public housing – is obviously a problem, too, right? But all this gives me the sense that today, most problems are as a result of the housing situation." [Interview 1]

"So, when I go for a walk, right? – well, I get a lot of memories. I remember lots of good moments, but it also makes me sad because the Sagrada Família neighbourhood and various other parts of Barcelona have lost much of their essence. Everything is very homogeneous. You go to Burger

King, McDonald's, and [it's] the same [as being] in the centre of Paris, London, Berlin... So I think that [Barcelona] has still kept its essence, but it's exhausting. The rate of tourists and the overall price increases in the city are exhausting. But I think it's important to resist it, because if we throw in the towel already, those with the most power will just take over Barcelona." [Interview 7]

"I mean, sooner or later, there will come a time when it will be unsustainable for this to continue. The direction it's taking... and, obviously, what good is a city if it has no inhabitants, right?" [Interview 1]



(In)security



(IN)SECURITY AND GENDER

"I have places and neighbourhoods where I feel very comfortable, which also has a lot to do with my familiarity with the neighbourhood. I think if I don't know the space and it's dark – night, or evening – I feel much more unsafe than if it's daytime or if I'm in a familiar space." [Interview 5]

"In general, I feel comfortable in places where there are people, and I feel uncomfortable when there are no people. That is, there are neighbourhoods where I have lived, or neighbourhoods that are apparently dangerous, but it's not a major problem for me to be there at night. Because I feel that there are people there, they might be there with bad or good intentions, [but] the fact that there is a community there and more people around makes me feel more comfortable. [...] I really do notice how my experience changes a lot as a result. There are neighbourhoods that are safer in theory, but going there at night alone, when there's no one around, makes it a bit more scary. [...] I don't like changing my habits too much because of fear or because I feel uncomfortable. I don't like the feeling that these kinds of things limit my life just because I'm a woman." [Interview 3]

"No matter which neighbourhood I go to, I don't feel 100% comfortable at any time: [...] without feeling that people are constantly staring or bumping into you. [...] Just today, for example, this happened: I was walking down a street, and I thought 'I'll go down there, and [that] group of men will say something to me.' And that's exactly what happened. I walked along there, and they made comments." [Interview 6]

"Yes, especially at night, when I'm alone, or at times like... I mean, [there are] moments when I feel more unsafe. Related to this: the tiny alleys... For example, at night, I don't go through the very small alleys in El Born, El Raval, or El Gòtic. I don't go there, or I avoid them a lot, you know? I already know the routes I want to take. For me, especially, not feeling safe or this fear of public spaces is closely linked to it being night or evening and to being in enclosed or smaller spaces that I don't know. And how do I manage [that situation]? What really works for me is wearing headphones but with my music not up too loud, but that gives off the vibe of 'don't come near me' or that 'I won't hear you if you say something to me', etc., so it looks like I wouldn't. Then, I don't know, walking comfortably and confidently, which is also a matter of choosing streets. I can already see myself going down the streets where I feel most comfortable. I've already chosen my routes; I have my own particular streets." [Interview 5]

"Being a man is not the same as being a woman, of course. Because at night, when I walk around here or in Barcelona, I feel much more vulnerable

(In)security

if I see a man walking nearby, right? I'm always thinking [about everything]; I'm constantly on the alert, thinking that someone will come and do something to me. I think that, at the end of the day, this has a huge effect [on you]." [Interview 6]

"Sometimes, sending my location to a girlfriend, my mum or whomever, also gives me a sense of security. My strategy regarding feeling uncomfortable in public spaces is to always be careful and always be a bit on guard, but without worrying too much, you know? Because I don't like to feed this fear internally. But, well, why take action? To prevent it, a little." [Interview 5]

(IN)SECURITY AND RACISM

"[For] someone who has immigrated [and is] in an irregular situation [...] The police may be suspicious [of them]. How you move around the space and what you allow yourself to do, or not, is quite different." [Interview 3]

"Yesterday, for example, [...] there was a lady; I don't know if she was drunk – I don't think so. There was also an immigrant in the street at that moment. And she comes over and shouts at them, literally shouts: 'You're not from here, go back to your bloody country! You don't have the right to do anything here, and stop bothering us!' But she was yelling, like, really harsh[ly], and she scared me because it was really aggressive. [...] Of course, I knew it had nothing to do with me, but this person felt really vulnerable. And I was, like, what do I do? Do I interfere, do I not interfere? They will just go for me even more [than that, so] I'd best not do anything. So, it's like, I prefer [...] not to say anything. This person also got away with it, [...] but let's just say that actions like these scare me; it's beyond scary..." [Interview 2]

"I think being white clearly shapes my experience in public spaces a lot; it's what defines my experience the most. When sharing experiences or chatting with friends who are not white about the various things that happen to them in their daily lives, such as the precautions they take, etc... I think

that what most determines how I am in public spaces is being a white person." [Interview 3]

"[People] have never said something like that to me so directly. I don't know if it has anything to do with [me] not giving an opinion: that is, not standing out so that they skip over me, because of this fear." [Interview 2]

"There are many people who perceive me racially in one way because of my name, right? But at the same time, I was born here, I speak Catalan and Spanish, and physically, I don't have a very dark skin tone... So that also contributes to the ambiguity. I don't know, it's hard [to tell]. It's just that depending on the context and the moment, I feel more secure, and I feel that people don't have fixed prejudices. It doesn't affect me, depending on what comments [are made]. But throughout my life, although in my case [only] very occasionally, I have also lived through some situations which have left their mark." [Interview 8]

"I think being a woman does influence how I am in public spaces. I think less so, or in a different way, but certainly less so than race." [Interview 3]

"It's more because, also, when you hear comments in the street, you make yourself invisible and listen to what they're saying about... not only... I mean, not about me exactly, but, let's say, about people from Pakistan, Morocco [...] And I think 'what's the difference between me and these people?' Nothing. So, what they're saying about those people, they [would] also say about me. They just don't say it directly to my face because I'm there. But they [must] think it [about me] too. And at the same time, it makes you feel powerless because it's, like, they don't realise that we also contribute massively to this country." [Interview 2]



Fighting for change



“[Barcelona] is a city with a very unique social and political character, which we often take for granted. Then you go somewhere else, and the political perception is different; there is not so much organisational strength.” [Interview 3]

“I think there is high political illiteracy. They don’t teach politics in the education system, which ends up having a direct consequence. So the fact that there is such a huge disconnect between young people and the political world leads to them becoming disaffected, and also to that precarity itself, along with the dizzying pace of everyday life...” [Interview 7]

“I live very much in a bubble, or [at least] I have built a bubble, in which, even if I’m in a public space, I’ve got this safe circle for talking about all these [political issues]. [...] But it’s also down to a number of things, of which I’m aware: that I’m Catalan, that I speak Catalan, I’m white, etc., and that I spend time in spaces with a social context in which many of the ideas are shared, and those that are not shared [can be] talked about or discussed without resorting to violence.” [Interview 5]

“The housing protests will explode at some point because [there is] a whole generation that doesn’t have access to it. It’s fermented to a point where, sooner or later, the bubbles will have to burst. Well, I also think that this situation would have already created a few mass demonstrations, ten years ago. There has been a huge generational change, in terms of this.” [Interview 1]

“Even if we have different political ideologies, I believe that on a social level, my generation has a much wider set of values, beliefs, thoughts, respect... like, we empathise more. So it doesn’t create as much conflict.” [Interview 6]

“I could probably say that my association with political affiliations hasn’t been very stable. [...] I got disappointed. After that, I was in another [political space], and I was disappointed again. And maybe now it’s been a while since I’ve been active or directly involved with any [particular] space.” [Interview 8]

“I like fighting on a small [scale] more, because for me, on a big [scale]... The feeling I get is that, from the outside, [it’s like] ‘well, it’s being protested, so let’s just leave it be, and that’s enough.’ I also think that I have lost hope a bit, in this sense, in the massive format and all. I think it was also very frustrating. [...] In the end, I said [to myself] ‘I think I can contribute a little bit at a time’, in order not to feel frustrated, and I am satisfied with that. I mean, obviously, it takes a lot more work.” [Interview 4]

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"I don't mind expressing myself publicly, in terms of my political ideas, but I think that in my case, it also has to do with – [I'm] talking about privileges again – because I had access to university studies. This, in a certain way, provides an intellectual strength; I don't know how to explain it: it gives you a certain security." [Interview 8]

"It's true that on certain issues you have to argue your position [because you have a migrant family]. This has nothing to do, directly, with whether you are in a public space or not; it's something contextual." [Interview 1]

"I've always been very clear, never concealed my [views]. I defend my leftist ideology. I've attended demonstrations and been able to express myself, for example, [being] pro-Palestine. Then, of course, there's the 'gag law', and they can fine you, [and there are] even very serious prison sentences. It hasn't happened to me. I did join a friend of mine a couple of times, who is very active with housing unions, and he told me that going to an eviction [to prevent it] can really ruin your life. It's very sad, isn't it? The right to protest... Anyway, I feel comfortable expressing my ideology virtually – on the Internet, on my social media – and also on the street. I don't hide it." [Interview 7]

SELF-REPRESSION / INTERNALISATION

"One day, I was wearing a T-shirt that read 'anti-fascist' or something like that. I walked in front of a terrace, and a man, who was not very old either, maybe around 30 or 40 years old, started yelling at me and saying to me 'what I was doing with that T-shirt'. I don't know; it was a very awkward situation, [and] it puzzled me because I was a minor. It has undoubtedly affected me, as time has gone on, even though I didn't give it much importance [at the time]. But often, I've thought 'it's best not to show [this]' – depending on the symbol – because there could be consequences. This also happened with another T-shirt. There was a store in Barcelona called ACAB, as in 'All Cops Are Bastards'. They wanted to play with this acronym

and sold clothes playing around with the initials. So I bought a T-shirt from that store, and I literally never put it on because, by then, they had started fining people who wore those sorts of emblems. And that affected me, too." [Interview 8]

POLITICAL STRUGGLES AND DIVERSITY

"In the activist spaces that I've been in so far, it's just that we are all European: we're all Catalan, all white, or most of us are. For example – and I see this quite a lot in *casals* – there is a self-organisation [there] around specific interests, and [these places] are very accessible for us. However, maybe a racialised family has not found this space yet. [...] In L'Antiga Massana, in El Raval, they do it very well, for example, and I like them very much. There are very different backgrounds, and it's [a space] for the housing union." [Interview 5]

"Being a citizen of the European Union also makes it easier to get involved politically... I mean, obviously, there might be retributions and [it might have] an impact, but it's not the same as for someone who could end up being deported. So, at the end of the day, some people do have a lot more at stake if they want to expose themselves politically." [Interview 3]

"I feel like I have to restrain myself somehow because I can't express myself like I normally do, because [I know] they won't understand me. Not only, let's say, in terms of my slang or vocabulary, but also in terms of what I want to express. So, it's like, for example – I don't know... In this kind of environment, I am like, being... I'm fairly quiet. I listen, or I observe what they are doing. And then based on that, I know how to behave. [Using] the knowledge I already have, I make it work. But it's not that I feel free here and say what I think, because I know they won't understand me." [Interview 2]

"When you are different, or in the case of those of us who are second generation [immigrants] or have a multicultural identity, [...] there are many things that you have to explain a lot more so that your argument or the position you hold is understood. Yeah, perhaps in some cases, you have to justify much more. Because there is a...how can I put it? Not because someone asks you to, individually, but [there is] a kind of invisible pressure of having to explain yourself." [Interview 1]

"I always tend to keep quiet; I won't deny it – I always do. It's just I don't feel comfortable, let alone in front of someone [who's] from here. Because I feel like I don't have – and they also show me that I don't have – the right

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to express an opinion, because I wasn't born or grew up here. So, in a way, [that] I have no reason having an opinion on politics or issues that 'they' – yes, in quote marks – have been affected by throughout their lives." [Interview 2]

"It's not the same, being Catalan, a local, someone from here as [it would be] if a migrant in an irregular situation were doing it. Well, they are much more suppressed. So that's why I think putting our bodies into it and not putting our friends at risk is important, right?" [Interview 7]

SUPPRESSION OF PROTEST

"Clearly, in certain political demonstrations, the authorities have an interest in displaying them as violent and painting a very specific image that benefits the political figures in power at that time." [Interview 1]

"Yes, I do think there is already the fairly oppressive position of the public administration, and this, I think, ultimately, also exhausts the people demonstrating, to the point that they become frustrat[ed] and are no longer able to participate. So either you resist, then sort of throw in the towel, or maybe participate on a smaller scale." [Interview 4]

"At the end of the day, we organise demonstrations with the goal of expressing what we think, right? En masse and in the community. [...] But all the suppression [...] [creates] a very negative experience for me, and it means I repress myself a lot." [Interview 6]

"I used to attend demonstrations, and now it's been, I don't know, ages, since I've actually felt like it. Firstly, because the city no longer invites me to express myself. That's right from the outset. Well, from the outset, because in a demonstration, [...] there is already more than enough of a police presence, which makes you say 'now, we're not doing anything wrong, either, are we, for there to be twenty vans...?' Then the cleaning workers come right in after the demonstration. It's like erasing the presence of the

people who have just demonstrated, right? It's just – you can't erase that." [Interview 4]

"For example, I was at the eviction of the Espacio del Inmigrante [Migrants' Place] in El Raval – and it's now in the newspaper Ara – and you could see that the Mossos d'Esquadra [Catalan regional police] didn't act the same way if you were a Catalan, [as if you were] a racialised person. So in some evictions that I've been to, you could also see [they acted] cocky, [and] with brutality, which was insulting. So I think there is a clear intention to silence the collectives, collective movements, the world of activism, and the civil society, and we see this with Collboni's government. [...] There is more oppression. Yes, it's a Socialist Party government... But in general, you get this feeling of the privatisation of public space, [away] from the world of activism or protest. It's like, [they] don't like it, right? So they try to silence, belittle, and, yes, sometimes they also – well, they respond directly, with brutality." [Interview 7]

"I have friends who have suffered more oppression... I know people who have been in court proceedings, people who have been violently suppressed in public spaces. [...] I believe that the main objective of this oppression is fear. There's a culture of fear, suppression, and silence." [Interview 5]

"The thought that when we demonstrate for or against something, they want to stop us and in a violent way... [This thought] builds rejection and fear in me at the same time. [...] Why can't I express myself, and why is violence the response? I believe that's what deters many people from going to these demonstrations, at the end of the day." [Interview 6]

"It's done with the intention of instilling fear, silencing [people], demobilising any organisation, demobilising collective action, separating [people], to shrink it. I was in an organisation that was infiltrated by a national police officer, you know? It was a legal organisation, a students' union. In the end, having experienced that... Not so much for me, but I think about my friends, and it breaks any and all personal bonds you might build in the future. It can be quite traumatising, too; not just at the level of direct oppression." [Interview 5]



Prospects for the future



“When it comes to future plans, I see my friends, and myself... It’s something that causes me a lot of anxiety, that makes me question things and myself a lot, which is not always positive.” [Interview 5]

“Barcelona is a very gentrified city where we, as young people, see ourselves being in very precarious jobs, with very little stability and few opportunities to grow. Also, there’s this thought that we will never be able to create everything we want, that we won’t be able to live better lives than our parents, and that getting what we want will be a very uphill task...” [Interview 3]

“Yes, I do think cities are spaces where there is still room [for improvement]. In other words, change is inherent in society. I think everywhere will experience change. If we talk about changes that benefit the youth in different ways, in the case of Barcelona, there is still a big network of organisations through which young people can express their concerns. But in any case, and because I’ve seen it myself, no matter how much they mobilise, I believe that the vision of adults always ends up really limiting the things young people are asking for, and [stifling] their desire to participate.” [Interview 8]

“I think that in some spaces [young people] have [a voice], but I believe that the important decisions end up being taken by people from other generations. [...] Maybe for a sustained period of time, there weren’t any very outstanding or very visible spaces. The fact that they were first given this space – if there *was* one – then gradually resulted in them not participating. And if they don’t participate, then these spaces become fewer. But I think they don’t have that much of a voice, because it’s true that many problems basically affect a lot of young people, and the people who are making those decisions are not the ones affected by them.” [Interview 1]

“Politically, there are a lot of young people in political parties: [I know] from friends and because I’ve also seen it myself, that when they propose certain things to political organisations, these proposals are viewed through a kind of paternalism, treated with contempt, and considered to be unimportant. And I think this also fuels the young people’s frustration.” [Interview 8]

“Because there is this adult-centrism, it seems like only people in their thirties, late thirties to sixties, are heard. After that, you don’t exist any more. And also children... I think it’s also really important to listen to them.” [Interview 7]

Prospects for the future

“I’m always very much in favour of trying to demand change, and thinking about change, from the city and in the city. I mean, I think cities have many negative aspects, at the end of the day. They are also spaces where many people from very different contexts and situations encounter each other and mix. And I believe this is propitious for change and [also a] coming together, the raising of issues, etc. In other words, I don’t want to give up on finding a place in the city or trying to make the city a more viable space.” [Interview 3]

“I think the city *can* be a space for change and transformation, but at the same time, I think that communities that think about this change... Yes, some small communities *can* have an impact, but I think it’s very difficult to promote this change at a general level. Because people live in automatic [mode]; they are unaware of the reality of consumption, the importance of climate change, excessive consumption, and the monetisation of everything. They live in ignorance of everything that is going on around us.” [Interview 6]

“My response to this [uncertainty about the future] is to say that we are going to build alternatives. We’re moving towards cooperative housing. We will evaluate [the possibility of] purchasing houses outside the city and, perhaps, buying [housing] in a way that each person has 10%, 20%, right? [We will] consider different possibilities. Because, otherwise, your spirits sink lower and lower, and you [are still renting] with your friends, and it’s always housing, housing...” [Interview 7]

“I think it comes much more from the top, the decision-making. I’m not saying that there is no will to make it inclusive because it depends on who is in this position, at the top. But I think, at the level of direct participation, it’s much more difficult for young people to be a part of this decision-making.” [Interview 5]

“I think Barcelona is a good city [to enable] change [to happen], but this is very much connected to the different governments: the municipal government, the Catalan government, and the central government. [...] So I think young people could play a more active role in the city of Barcelona. [...] For example, this whole participatory budget thing called ‘Decidim Barcelona’ [Let’s decide, Barcelona] is all very well, but how many people actually participate, and what kinds of people participate?” [Interview 7]

“There is a change happening in grassroots organisations, and I’ll go back to El Raval... But there, I can see it there a bit, that it’s the *people* who change the neighbourhood, and often from the grassroots, although it has its limitations. I think [El Raval] remains more accessible in terms of participation, or [at least,] the direct participation of young people.” [Interview 5]

“If you want to fight for housing, or if you want to advocate for the environment – [but] when?! If you don’t have time...if you work for maybe 8 hours [a day]: you have to eat, you have to sleep, and you also have to have some leisure time. You have to really juggle just to get yourself organised each day. That’s why I think it’s so important to keep weaving networks of activism and change... Because, if not, in the end, Barcelona will end up being just a theme park, with the America’s Cup [for sailing], with massive events, the Mobile World Congress... and there is the risk that it loses its essence and that there are no longer any people rooted in the city.” [Interview 7]

In-depth interviews

Interview 1: Female, 32 years old, 1st October 2024, Barcelona.

Interview 2: Female, 22 years old, 3rd October 2024, Barcelona.

Interview 3: Female, 23 years old, 14th October 2024, online.

Interview 4: Female, 23 years old, 17th October 2024, Barcelona.

Interview 5: Female, 22 years old, 25th October 2024, Barcelona.

Interview 6: Female, 25 years old, 8th November 2024, Barcelona.

Interview 7: Male, 29 years old, 12th November 2024, Barcelona.

Interview 8: Male, 30 years old, 14th November 2024, Barcelona



Conclusions

From the fieldwork undertaken through the use of different methodologies, a number of different dimensions have emerged that mark the lived experience of young people in cities. The questions that stood out as priorities across the board were housing and the urban planning models, precariousness, (in)security, sustainability and the environmental crisis, and mobility.

Among the main issues that create differences in people's experiences of public space in the city, we found that gender and being a migrant or racialised person both play an extremely important role in someone's lived experiences of the city, in their enjoyment of the city, and in the opportunities they have to enact change. This situation is further exacerbated in the case of Nazareth, where being Palestinian marks even more profoundly someone's experience and use of the city, their margin for action to bring about eventual change, and also their prospects for the future.

Some of the fundamental issues in each city are determined by political, social and economic conjuncture, as well as the historical trajectory of each context. However, issues emerged across four topics that relate to the same dynamics of global capitalism – or perhaps it would be better to say, of a racial global capitalism – that impact the three cases somewhat differently.

Firstly, there is the issue of housing, which is a widespread problem in all three cases but with different manifestations. In the case of Nazareth, the problem is caused by the Israeli occupation, the human hierarchy and the necropolitics that generates. In Cali, gentrification expels the inhabitants from the city or steers them (for people from rural areas) to settle down more towards the periphery of the city, where the only options are self-constructed housing and the occupation of land. In Barcelona, the problem relates to financial speculation in the real estate sector and to tourism, a phenomenon that we could define as the colonisation of a space. Whether it is being Palestinian, working class, or simply not being a tourist from the

Global North, the people who inhabit these three cities are increasingly having to endure problems with finding housing and all that entails.

Secondly, insecurity was discussed, which is related to the power dynamics typical of the global economic system and its local manifestations, and which are connected with the criminal economy (mainly in Cali), machismo and racism (in Barcelona) and the violence directly or indirectly caused by the Israeli state (in Nazareth). It is interesting to stress that, in three cases, insecurity was also associated with the presence and actions of security forces (especially in Nazareth and Cali, but also in Barcelona), and connected to the suppression of political protests. In this respect, gender and racialisation play a critical role in defining and amplifying the insecurity perceived in these cities.

Thirdly, we raised the question of sustainability, which is not only related to climate change but also, and predominantly, to the environmental crisis, our protection of the ecosystem, our human footprint and environmental (in)justice. In particular, there emerged great and extensive sadness and frustration in all three work locations, due to the lack of effective actions to counteract these phenomena. There is also the additional issue in Cali of environmental leaders being assassinated. This situation generates a very uncertain and not very optimistic outlook towards the future, in addition to its potential effect on people's mental health.

Fourthly, we looked at mobility, a dimension partially connected with the previous point, which encompasses accessibility as it relates to reduced mobility, alongside issues related to the walkable spaces of a city, public transportation (and its relationship to private transportation), and public policies associated with infrastructure.

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