

## Highlights

> The central objectives of the project are as follows:

- i) to document the way in which young people occupy public space, appropriate it and claim their right to do so and the way in which they define it;
- ii) to understand the meaning that transgressive practice (consumption of marijuana in public spaces) has for the young people who carry it out;
- iii) to identify the formal (legal and social) and informal (defined by the young people themselves) regulations in the development of their transgressive practices;
- iv) to deepen the relationships established by young consumers with their families, neighbours and occupants of public space such as police and civil authorities, vendors, young people who do not consume or who consume other substances (such as inhalants, alcohol);
- v) to accompany young people's activities in public space with regards to their transgressive practices and the way they appropriate the space, facilitating access to useful information and supporting the expression of their artistic and other interests;
- vi) to identify the authorities and organizations that act in the selected public spaces and explore their perception of youth transgressive practices, as well as the activities that develop around these practices and the presence of young people in public space.

> These objectives reflect the central concepts of the general project: youth, transgression, public space and regulation, while contemplating intervention processes, seeking that young people linked to the project are not only "objects" of research, but actively participate in the process and benefit from it.

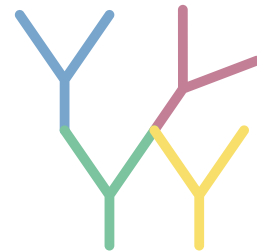
> Currently, the development of the project is concentrated in the street market El Salado, located in the Iztapalapa Delegation, east of Mexico City, which takes place every Wednesday. It is a space frequented by young consumers of marijuana, as well as other drugs or non-illegal substances, such as pulque and inhaled substances («mona»), but whose consumption in public spaces is transgressive; >

in the market there are also young people who work as vendors or loaders, some also consume in their stalls and meeting spaces within the market, in a mixture of work and leisure.

- > We are developing a qualitative methodology, which privileges participant observation and field diaries of the visits made to the space and interviews with young people, as well as with authorities and nonconsuming adults, to contrast with the points of view of the community as a whole.

### Type of products envisaged in the coming year

- > Multimedia coproduction;
- > Event;
- > Scientific publication;
- > Presentation at a conference.



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## YOUNG MARIJUANA USERS IN PUBLIC SPACES IN MEXICO CITY

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**Students:** Luis Alberto Domínguez (Geography), David Jiménez (Sociology), Ricardo Betancourt (Sociology), Elizabeth Aristizábal (Comunication) and Lorena Paredes (Anthropology).

**Youth:** Víctor Tonatiuh Martínez Moreno (23 years old), Irene Flores (25 years old), Alcira Rosendo (27 years old), David Aramburo (23 years old), Juan Aramburo (29 years old), Carlos Benjamín Roque Rosales (29 years old), Arturo Tapia Palacios (31 years old), Leticia Martínez (28 years old), Vianey Castilla Navarro (30 years old), Yovanna Alin.

**Socio-community partners:** Fábrica de Arte y Oficios de Oriente (FARO). Centro Cultural Público de la Ciudad de México, has been operating for more than 15 years, during which time it has set the standard in the diffusion of arts and crafts among young people in the eastern part of the city.

**Techno-Artistic Partners:** *Fosa Común*. Artistic collective with young people from the Faro community.

**UNDERSTAND HOW YOUNG MARIJUANA CONSUMERS IN PUBLIC SPACES IN MEXICO CITY DEFINE THEIR TRANSGRESSIVE PRACTICE AND THE RELATIONSHIPS THEY ESTABLISH WITH FAMILY MEMBERS AND AUTHORITIES BASED ON THAT PRACTICE.**

## What is planned for the next year

- > Fieldwork will continue to strengthen and maintain bonds of trust with young people. As well as to initiate the evaluation of possible changes in their way of thinking or to develop their practice of marijuana consumption in public spaces.
- > A questionnaire addressed to the neighbours (between 50 and 70) will be applied and the answers will be systematized in a database and analyzed. Interviews will continue to be conducted with young marijuana-consuming women (between 4 and 6). To facilitate analysis, qualitative analysis software such as Atlas Ti will be used to identify patterns, make associations and classify them.
- > It is planned to participate in at least two national and one international discussion forums, in which advances in the analysis of the information collected throughout the fieldwork will be presented. Likewise, it is expected to have at least two draft articles on the topic to be sent to scientific journals.
- > There will be an event in collaboration with FARO de Oriente, at the end of October and for 3 weeks of November. The theme of the event is the regularization of the use of marijuana in Mexico, and the objective is that the artistic community of the community center FARO and interested public, but mainly young people from the community, participate with the presentation of various artistic pieces. At the same time, the event will include discussion tables, workshops and other informative activities, aimed at young people, neighbours and the community in general.
- > This event, which will be financed with a knowledge mobilization grant, will allow one of the young women who participate in the living lab (Alcira, 27 years old) to be actively, paid, and involved in the logistics and another of the young men (Tonatiuh, 23) will act as a photographer and communicator of the event. With the leadership of these two young people, audiovisual materials will be produced in different formats (documentary, information capsules) that visually capture the experience of young marijuana consumers in the public space. For the event, the Iztapalapa Mayor's Office, through its health promotion office, will participate, as well as educational institutions from the eastern part of Mexico City. At the same time, the event will feature the participation of teams and actors from other TRYSPACES Mexico case studies.

# What was done this year

## A Making us known in the study area

A regular permanence has been maintained in the study space, which is attended on Wednesdays, the day on which the market El Salado is open. The bonds of trust with the young people mentioned above have been strengthened and relationships have been established with younger people in the community, although priority has been given to approaching 4 young people who are key to the space (3 women and 1 man). The process of rapprochement and strengthening of relations with the young people was supported by events they held in the study area. They carried out 3 “Marijuana Encounters in the East” (November 7, 2018, April 17 and August 14, 2019), in which the young people linked to the case study actively participated, as well as other young people who visit the space. They were in charge of planning the event, the dissemination materials and directing them; during the Encounters they proposed to explore the topic of arrests for marijuana carrying, they reflected on the techniques of care for smoking in public streets and they spoke about the opinion of their relatives before their consumption; likewise, diverse artistic activities were developed (music, poetry, theater, juggling).

## B Data collection

There were 43 field diaries, one for each visit to the workspace; the diaries are prepared collectively by the members of the team who attend each occasion.

Eight young people (4 women, 4 men) and six adults were interviewed, including local authorities, FARO and other key people. For these last interviews, a guide was given to the authorities exploring their opinion of marijuana consumption and the participation of young people in the public spaces of the community, mainly in the market El Salado. All interviews have been transcribed.

A questionnaire was designed for the neighbours of the market el Salado, which will explore their opinion on the consumption of marijuana by young people in the area.

## C Participation in academic events

The paper “Young marijuana users in public spaces. El tianguis de El Salado”, in the table “Counter-cultural Spaces”, within the framework of the International Colloquium “Urban Transgressions”, held on April 3, 2019, at the Faculty of Political and Social Sciences of UNAM.

Presentation of the paper “Consumo de marihuana entre jóvenes de barrios marginados”, at the table “Activismo e Intervención” of the Colloquium “Un toque académico: Hacia la despenalización del uso lúdico de marihuana”, held on November 12, 2018 at UAM Iztapalapa.

Presentation of the paper “Young marijuana users in public spaces of Iztapalapa: is harm reduction possible?”, in the Forum “From prohibitionism to harm reduction”, held on June 26, 2019 at UAM Iztapalapa.

## D Publication of results

The article: “Young marijuana users: Ideas for an intervention respectful of their rights”, elaborated by Carlos Zamudio, was presented for publication in the collective book derived from the Colloquium “An academic touch: Towards the decriminalization of the recreational use of marijuana” is in the process of publication.

Elaboration of the chapter “Young marijuana consumers in Mexico City: the struggle for the transformation of social representations” by Ángela Margoth Bacca Mejía, which will be part of the book Representaciones sociales sobre la transformación urbana y el derecho a la ciudad. The case of Mexico City. Mexico—FCPyS—UNAM is in the process of publication.

# Preliminary results

- There is a progressive claiming of the right to use marijuana by young people, which is based, on the one hand, on the growing information published on decriminalization and legislative proposals in the matter; and, on the other hand, on the interpretation they make of this information. Their claim for using is manifested in the practices of consumption, carrying and public use of larger paraphernalia in order to manipulate marijuana with greater care; as well as in the practices of access and transformation, little by little younger people indicate that they already cultivate the plant or that they have an interest in it, and transform the product, whether in foodstuffs or extractions, mainly for consumption, but also for sale.
- A line of analysis is based on gender. Marijuana consumption practices by young women are qualitatively different from use by young men. In a preliminary way, it can be said that women have less confidence to consume in public spaces, not only for fear of being apprehended by the police—which is shared by men—but also for the constant harassment of which they are subjected by users with whom they live; likewise, they are more questioned, both by friends and relatives, as well as people from the neighborhood, with respect to their sexual behaviour, which is presumed inappropriate, unrestrained or without choice, because they use marijuana; on the other hand,



Photo credit: TRYMexico.

- in the relationship with the police, they approached are less the male consumers on whom the stigma of delinquent falls more directly; but, on the other hand, they deal more with the latent or explicit threat of sexual violence when approached by the police. We have also been able to identify differences in family reactions when they learn about their daughter's marijuana use: the most severe reactions occur with respect to women and the quietest in the case of men.
- In the relationship of the young men and women with their families, there is not much expectation and mention of the legal changes that seem imminent in Mexico with proposals to be discussed in the legislature. It is interesting that youth who advocate for the right to use marijuana do so on the basis of their personal trajectories: they see marijuana as an element to evaluate their own condition of consumers, with the conviction that beyond the prohibitionist legal framework, what they are and do, being marijuana consumers is proof of the fact that consuming is not necessarily something bad or harmful.
- It is not that young people do not know that there are movements and legal transformation possibilities; rather, it does not seem to be the central channel for the generation of change. The story of one of the young women interviewed in this sense is eloquent: “If a change is being made out there, I don't think there won't be one with marijuana, it's going to happen, but I don't think it's a matter for the politicians, or the high spheres, I think it's happening from below, from us, that's what I notice.”

- Legal transformations do not exhaust change. Change must take place on a daily basis, in the confrontation of representations and practices based on experience itself. The stories of the young people show different ways of reacting from the families and, above all, from mothers and fathers; even though some did not face strong questioning and changes in their treatment once they learned that they were using, in all cases, youth expressed the need to show through their example. They refer to the need to “demonstrate”, “prove”, “set the example” that it is possible to use marijuana and develop their projects, claim that “I am marijuana user and I am working, I comply, I do not know, I am a good niece, aunt”.
- In methodological matters, a system of alert and support has been developed among the field-work team; this is due to the harassment that the women of the team have come to suffer, as well as the repeated acts of violence in the public space; such as sexual harassment against women, fights between young people, and even shootings. Because of this, there is still a need to go to the field as a team, to leave the field together, to constantly observe where the rest of the team is, to maintain communication, to be in permanent contact with the young people we know, among other precautions.