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Internet Memes and Representation of Contemporary Puerto Rican Cities: The Case of Bayamón as a NarcoCity

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INTERNET MEMES AND REPRESENTATION OF CONTEMPORARY PUERTO RICAN CITIES: THE CASE OF BAYAMÓN AS A NARCOCITY

ABSTRACT

The economic and social systems develop tangible cultural manifestations that seek legitimacy and visibility. This paper discusses internet memes as an alternative narration and representations of contemporary Puerto Rican cities. Memes are a new way of communicating and a new cultural product. The case study that will be analyzed in this essay encompasses Bayamon, the second-most populous city in Puerto Rico and is also considered one of the most violent cities in the Archipelago, by users on social media. The methodology for this research paper will include a semiotic analysis of memes related to Bayamón as posted on diverse social media platforms such as Facebook. The theories to be used for this paper include hybrid cultures and the boundaries of modernity.

Keywords

Digital Medias; Internet memes; Media Representations; Narcoculture; Puerto Rico

RESUMEN

Los sistemas económicos y sociales desarrollan manifestaciones culturales tangibles que buscan legitimidad y visibilidad. En este artículo se discute sobre los memes de Internet como una narración y representaciones alternativas de las ciudades puertorriqueñas contemporáneas. Los memes son una nueva forma de comunicación y un nuevo producto cultural. El caso de estudio que se analizará en este ensayo se refiere a Bayamón, que es la segunda ciudad más poblada de Puerto Rico y también es considerada como una de las ciudades más violentas del Archipiélago, por los usuarios en las redes sociales. La metodología que se adoptará para este trabajo de investigación incluirá un análisis semiótico de memes relacionados con Bayamón publicados en diversas plataformas de medios sociales como Facebook. Las teorías que se utilizarán para este trabajo incluyen las culturas híbridas y los límites de la modernidad.

Palabras clave

Medios digitales; Memes de internet; Representaciones mediáticas; Narcocultura; Puerto Rico

1 INTRODUCTION

In the context of the protests in Puerto Rico for International Workers' Day on May 1st, 2019, internet memes with a political and social satire against various Puerto Rican political sectors were published on multiple social media platforms. Some of these digital illustrations mocked the performance of the governor of Puerto Rico at the time, Ricardo Rosselló Nevarez¹. Other internet memes mocked the protesters who marched through the streets of *Milla de Oro* in Hato Rey, the financial district of the capital city of San Juan. One of the most exciting internet memes was an image that compares the operation hours on May Day in the main shopping malls of San Juan and Bayamón. This digital image shows a picture of Plaza las Américas in San Juan and Plaza del Sol in Bayamón. The image of the most important shopping center in Puerto Rico's capital city said: "*Por razones de seguridad[,] hoy permaneceremos cerrados*" ("For security reasons, we will be closed today"). On the other hand, the photo of Plaza del Sol said: "*Estamos 'ready' [.] El que tenga miedo a morir que no Nazca*" ("We are ready. Whoever is afraid to die should not be born"). The last quote projects Plaza del Sol as a place linked with the underground world. Also, the quote includes the name of a song of Anuel AA². This simple internet meme has a vital class and social relation element in the Puerto Rican context. This specific internet meme's main topic refers to the levels of violence, and the social distinction between these cities has compounded the San Juan metropolitan area. Other internet memes that present Bayamón on social media platforms, show images and phrases that refer to this city as a highly violent space. Some of these internet memes used local images. However, several memes referring to Bayamón use a transnational contain.



Figura 2. Internet meme of Plaza las Américas (San Juan) and Plaza del Sol (Bayamón) on May Day. Source: Facebook

This research paper's articulation is based on the Puerto Rican cities' approach as part of a postmodern society. The paper examines the case study of Bayamón and their representation on social media. The issues have focused on a particular deployment of humor as a form of social critics and the (re)valorization of the cities in the 21st Century. The hybridization of social interactions intersects the approach to understanding the contemporary narration of Bayamón

in social media. Scholars such as the anthropologist Néstor García Canclini suggest that seeing the contemporary symbolic interaction of the culture and their approaches is not homogenous. The cultural exchange also absorbs traditional and local practices with massive and transnational codifications of symbolic processes. For this paper, the representation of Bayamón in social media platforms has been mediated by a perception of violence related to drug trafficking. This reality is also highlighted by the traditional media, as the newspapers. The notions of violence and technology transformation affects the contemporary cultural practices and representations of everyday activities. Social media creates another lexicon to represent reality.

Additionally, the bulk of the research has been anchored on internet memes for social critique in the Puerto Rican context. The case study selected for this paper represents Bayamón in the internet memes as a NarcoCity. The top platform of study is Facebook, a social media platform chosen because it is the primary distribution platform of images, information, and internet memes in Puerto Rico (Rodríguez, 2018, p. 34). The primary source of information for this research has been “PR Memes”³ and the social media platforms of “Molusco.”⁴ This paper will also be based on information related to the hashtag #Bayamordor⁵ on social media platforms. The complexity of how memes are generated and reproduced on the internet does not allow us to precisely determine the time of creation. However, with the hashtag #Bayamordor we can find that the social media conversation about Bayamón as a dangerous city started in 2014.

2 NEW LEXICON AND VIRTUAL REALITY FOR THE REPRESENTATION OF CITIES

2.1 Puerto Rican and Caribbean cities and their transformation as a function of capitalism

The cities in the capitalist system are in a state of change and the urban spaces are functioning in the context of the economic reforms. The sociologist Saskia Sassen mentioned, “the cities have long key sites for the specialization of power projects” (2003:16). In this way, political institutions, religious organizations, and economic forces are often displayed as power projects. According to Sassen, the power projects like economic institutions surround the representation system in cultural and physical space (2003, p. 17). Sassen mentions that economic activities, licit and illicit, articulate connections, and representations of the urban at a global level (2003, p. 18). In the case of places such as Puerto Rico and other countries in the Caribbean, the United States’ factor as a hegemonic power in the region has influenced the cities’ contemporary development. According to sociologist Jennifer Jordan, the city in the globalization and American contexts has been replaced by other spaces such as shopping malls, sweetshops, and edge-cities (2003:31). In this point of view, contemporary cities are not characterized by homogeneity as by unevenness. In the Caribbean region, the rise of the modern urban spaces was often the product of the European imperialist expansion and the emergence of capitalism as a world/system (Dilla Alfonso, 2014, p.18).

García Canclini mentions that urban expansion in Latin America, the development of communication technologies, and the mass media have changed the symbolic production and social interactions and our perceptions toward the cities (1995, pp. 207-208). The classical notion toward the city and the urbanism hint that the most prominent cities “engendering anonymity” (García Canclini, 1995, p. 208).

2.2 The cyberspace as a community and the new (hybrid) narrations

The internet as a space of reproduction is a battleground for hybrid cultures and hybridizations. García Canclini, referring to the mass media and cultural industries, mentions that “fluidity of communications facilitates the appropriation of elements from many cultures, but this does not mean that we accept them indiscriminately” (1995, p. xxxvii). In places like Puerto Rico, the hybridization produces another lexicon, and one example is the use of Anglicism and Spanglish in everyday conversations. As with the use of Anglicism and Spanglish in the daily discussions in the physical sphere, the internet ecology adopts new vocabulary and ways to narrate, such as internet memes. According to McBeath and Weeb, cyberspace is an alternative structure that encompasses new forms of social and intra-personal relations with illusory mediations and metaphysical modes of talk and representation of time and space (1997, p. 250). Cyberspace is a complex system that opens to the possibility of the emergence of local and global communities (McBeath and Weeb, 1997, p. 257). Today, with the expansion of web 2.0, there is access to new media platforms, including social networking tools such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. Also, freeware and cross-platform messaging, such as WhatsApp, add an alternative way of communication and social narration to the current line-up of traditional messaging solutions like text messages (SMS).

The development of participatory practices in the digital culture has propitiated internet memes. Globally, many protests are expressed with memes on the internet, and even in the streets, people are protesting with these printed images. According to Milner, internet memes are “discursive artifacts spread by mediated cultural participants who remix them along the way – balancing the familiar and the foreign. They are universal and particular” (2014, p.1). Rodríguez (2018) mentions that “internet memes have become a new vernacular form that permeates many spheres of digital and non-digital expression”. Also, Rodríguez highlights that “internet meme communities often use irony as an antagonistic rhetorical form to foster critique and spark public discussion.” Additionally, as mentioned by Rodríguez and based on Milner, “internet meme production is heavily dependent on the creation, circulation, and transformation of artifacts outside of traditional media gatekeepers.”

The ecology of cyberspace is dominated by the capitalist logic of consumption. Under the neoliberal perspective, internet memes have the logic of a commodity. Internet memes have redesigned the ways of political communication and marketing (García Canclini, 2019, p.141). The reproduction of internet memes is also related to our “basic mode of activity in our society.” The contemporary social networking tools and platforms have created a social ecology with their respective identities and languages. Besides generating a particular language, cyberspace’s ecology is a “new world of information order” where the cultural representations and their flow exceeds the national boundaries (Yúdice, 2004, p.167).

Internet memes are a social construction, and sometimes they come with several pejorative burdens. Milner also discusses internet memes and their articulation influenced by racism and other types of social prejudice. In a broader context, Homi Bhabha said:

Such contradictory articulations of reality and desire - seen in racist stereotypes, statements, jokes, and myths - are not caught in the doubtful circle of the repressed return. They are the effects of a disavowal that denies the other’s differences but produces forms of authority and multiple beliefs that alienate the assumptions of ‘civil’ discourse. (1997, p.158)

Unfortunately, as another cultural product, the internet memes reproduce explicit identity antagonism and reinforce stereotypes against marginal groups (Milner, 2016, p. 123). Sometimes, this antagonism uses an emergent vocabulary product of the social and economic transformations.

3 DRUG TRAFFICKING AS AN ECONOMIC MARKET AND THEIR OUTSTANDING CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

The economic and social systems develop tangible cultural manifestations that seek legitimacy. Similarly, the emergence of a middle class as a Fordism product and modern industrialization created a different lifestyle. This new middle-class lifestyle caused several transformations in consuming cultural commodities (Wortman, 2003). In general, culture is defined as the norms and values that affect the expression of emotion, but not the reality of the emotion or norms or values that affect practices within different economic institutions and the organization and practice of economic life (Berezin, 2005, p. 111). Also, the culture is an intangible space of battle that imbricates everyday life, moral values, political power, and popular practices (Campbell 2009, p. 7).

Similarly, as the cultural transformation of the Fordism model, the narcoculture's existence is a social manifestation which depends on the mass media and other contemporary cultural production and reproduction. According to Miguel Cabañas, the definition of narcoculture encompasses the various visual and linguistic statements and representations about drug traffickers and the world of growing, processing, distributing, and consuming illegal drugs (2014, p. 6). Narcoculture is thus a theoretical concept anchored in War on Drugs spaces, which refers to historical marginalization (Campbell, 2009, p. 7). It involves drug production, drug slums, and conflicts with the legal and hegemonic cultures.

Capitalism and neoliberalism have violent anchors and asperities of classes, such as social inequality and marginalization. This tension has created a new social performance that gives visibility to social inequality by deciding who dies in scenes that seem to be fiction. The Mexican philosopher Sayak Valencia-Triana defines this phenomenon as "Gore Capitalism" (2011, p. 6). Valencia Triana uses the dichotomies of a film genre that focuses on dark and extreme violence to describe the contemporary dynamics of drug trafficking in a capitalist and globalized world. It's also focused on core issues within the "cultures closer to *narcos*," such as sexism and the armed struggle to gain respect. In addition to adopting elements closer to drug violence, narcoculture shows local components and crossroads to a global context and global markets. One example of this international projection of narcoculture is the exportation of *telenovelas* (soap operas) related to "*capos*," "*sicarios*," and drug dealers. In this direction, the Mexican anthropologist Rosana Reguillo highlights some analogies between the narco activities in contemporary Mexico and the Nazis, as sharing an ontological dimension of bodies and their operation as "degenerate" signs. This ontological dimension and degenerate signs constitute a new way of communication: (I) The dissolution of the person and their transmutation in a dismembered body; (II) the broken bodies that act as an index of a scene (space) and a power; and (III) his ghostly presence. This emerging language produced by narcoviolence integrates a specific vocabulary into the mainstream culture. In the Mexican context, the emerging lexicon often contains words such as "*ejecutados*," "*ahorcados*," "*decapitados*," and "*embolsados*". In the Puerto Rican context, words as "*bichote*," "*chambea*," "*jala*," "*periquero*," "*borra'o*" and

“*explota’os*” had emerged. Reguillo names this emerging language and their narratives as Narcoñol and define the same as a universalization of narco concepts in everyday discussion and discourses. This issue highlighted by Reguillo shows the “tense dialogue within society”, in relation to the use of the prefix “narco” to name abroad and disperse a group of cultural practices and products (2011, ¶ 237). In this way, we can find in our everyday words concepts such as “*narcocorrido*,” “*narcoliteratura*,” “*narconovelas*” and “*narcoarquitectura*.”

With regards to the visual aspects of narcoculture, Sharp (2014) talks about the images of and information about the drug war and drug trafficking that has recently circulated and shaped an interest in drug traffickers, including scenes and news of assassinations, shootouts, and other violent acts in the newspapers and internet. These images have created representations of drug traffickers in *telenovelas* and music, and rumours and descriptions of drug traffickers’ extravagance that people share in face-to-face interactions (2014, p. 161). These images influenced the development of a new cultural product and a new cultural market. According to Mark Edberg, the narcoculture reflected in music -like *narcocorridos*- is a contemporary way of populism and a cultural exposition of power and social exclusion (2011, p. 68). The narcoculture’s music product is a public representation of cultural subjects shaped by the narco trafficking experience and their repression by part of the state, a constant resistance by part of the drug traffickers and their ideological fight (Edberg, 2011, p. 69; Campbell, 2014, p. 7). In addition to the musical scene, internet memes have become a battleground for narcoculture in recent times. Cesar Albarran Torres and Gerard Goggin (2021) argue that memes about drug lords such as Joaquín “El Chapo” Guzmán play an important role in widespread communication around narcoculture, functioning as opportunities for political contestation.

4 THE CITY OF BAYAMÓN IN THE LOCAL AND GLOBAL CONTEXT

Bayamón is an autonomous municipality in the San Juan metropolitan area. As of today, this municipality is the second most populated city in Puerto Rico (see fig. 2). This town was initially founded as a sugar cane plantation village. According to the anthropologist John Stinson Fernandez (2014), the sociocultural and economic aspects of Bayamón in the first part of the 20th Century were caused by a transformation of the local farmer families into petite-bourgeoisie owners of land. Currently, the farmlands have become sites of commercial and industrial complexes in the city. According to the United States. Census Bureau (V2018), the population of Bayamón is 170,480. Around 73.1% percent of the people of Bayamón have computers and internet in their homes. The level of persons in poverty is approximately 34.7%.

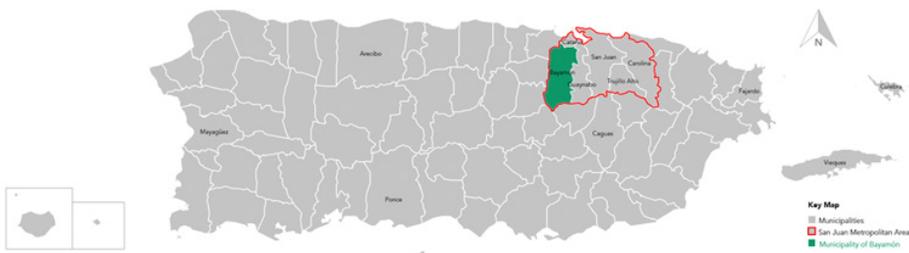


Figura 2. Map of Puerto Rico

The Bayamón Urban expansion process started in the 1930's and soared in the post-World War II period (Stinson Fernandez, 2014, p. 62). With the post-war social dynamics and the end of the sugar production era, the Puerto Rican population migrated from rural areas to San Juan and its vicinity (Pérez Herranz, 2012, p. 190). According to Haroldo Dilla Alfonso, other elements which helped the growth of the municipalities around San Juan are: (I) The federal and local intervention in the construction of highways; (II) the faster industrialization of Puerto Rico in the period of *Manos a la obra* (Operation Bootstrap); (III) the adoption of urban and suburban American models such as *Darlington Long and Levitt & Sons Inc.*; and (IV) the saturation of population in the cities of San Juan and Río Piedras. After the overload of San Juan and Río Piedras between 1950 to 1970, the municipality of Bayamón recorded output growth of 106% in 1950 and 253%, respectively (Dilla Alfonso, 2014, p.153).

In line with the theory introduced by Jennifer Jordan, Downtown Bayamón was a vibrant city with robust commerce around the traditional plaza. However, this municipality's contemporary urban phenomena is also based on the shopping mall experience. This city close to San Juan is considered the mecca of consumption as an "American way of life." Bayamón is anchored by several regional malls and small shopping centers with multinational shops and food chains.

After the economic transformation in Puerto Rico and the Western Hemisphere in the last decades of the 20th Century, the social dynamics have changed. The evolution of Bayamón caused the emergence of social problems and marginalization. The different economic models adopted in Latin America have not led to the social inclusion of economically marginalized sectors in the formal economy. In the 1980s, the first contemporary news about drug trafficking between Latin America and the United States started with institutional inefficiency in wealth distribution. The television and newspaper began covering about Griselda Blanco, Pablo Escobar, and most recently "El Chapo" Guzmán and other drug lords and the new economic order around this illicit activity. Between 2013 to 2019, Puerto Rico's District of the United States Attorney's Office issued 19 press releases related to Bayamón and crimes such as drug trafficking and carjacking. Also, a notorious criminal organization *Organizacion de Narcotraficantes Unidos* – LA ONU, was based in Bayamón. The iconic drug lord of this organization was Ángel Ayala Vásquez, aka "Ángelo Millones" (El narco puertorriqueño, 2011). In addition to Ángel Millones, other criminal organizations with local recognition in Puerto Rico were based in Bayamón. Some examples are José R. Jiménez Echevarría, aka "Cuba", (Rivera Puig, 2017) and the notorious "capo" in Puerto Rico and Dominican Republic José D. Figueroa Agosto, aka "Junior Cápsula" (El gran capo, 2009). However, the *Boletín Social sobre Criminalidad en Puerto Rico: Serie Histórica 1900-2009*, published by Puerto Rico's Planning Board, highlights that there have been some moments in Puerto Rico's recent history where the *Delitos Tipo 1* (Crimes Against a Person) rate has been higher in Bayamón than the average for Puerto Rico. While it is true that since 1974, the municipality of Bayamón has appeared many times as one of the top 10 cities with the highest rates of *Delitos Tipo 1*, it is also important to note that San Juan was typically at the top of the list. In some instances, Puerto Rico's capital city has had twice as high as Bayamón's crime rates. In 1992, Bayamón's rate was around 60% while San Juan's was 82%. In 1994, the crime rate in Bayamón was 53.6%, while San Juan had a rate of 72.2% (see Fig. 3). Between 2014 to 2020, the rates of Crimes Against a Person were higher in San Juan when compared with the municipality of Bayamón.

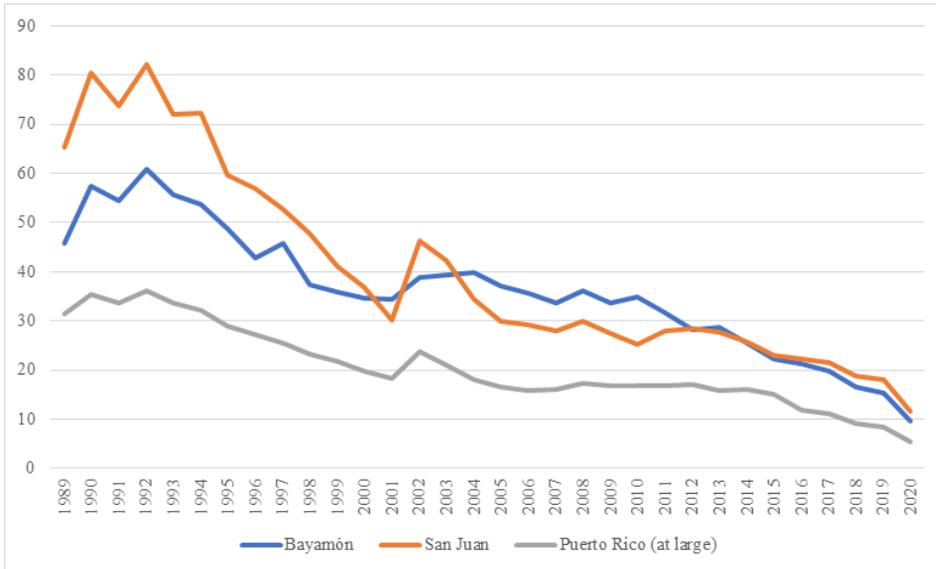


Figure 3. *Delitos Tipo 1* (Crimes Against a Person) Rate in Bayamón, San Juan, and Puerto Rico (at large). Source: Puerto Rico’s Planning Board, and Puerto Rico’s Police Department

5 THE REPRESENTATION OF BAYAMÓN IN THE INTERNET MEMES

The contemporary telenovelas and newscasts as a commodity show the contemporary problems related to drug trafficking in Latin America and the Caribbean. The new lexicon formed by the development of social media platforms and the rise of a narcoculture in Puerto Rico has created new narrations regarding the urban experience and everyday activities. The contemporary representation of internet memes is an excellent example of hybridization. Internet memes of Bayamón integrate the persons’ local experience related to this city and the use of several global cultural images as a vehicle of narration.

5.1 Welcome to #Bayamordor

A famous Puerto Rican hashtag used on social media platforms is #Bayamordor. This hyperlink in social media is an excellent example of hybridization and rethinking Puerto Rico cities using internet memes and the internet lexicon. In this narrative, Bayamón is represented as the “Land of the Shadow” from *The Lord of the Rings* novels and movies. The following meme puts an eye fire on the top of the Observation Desk at Parque de las Ciencias, a local theme park administrated by the municipality, one of the most iconic places in Bayamón, and a tourist destination for locals.



Figure 4. "Bayamordor." Collected in 2019

The concept of #Bayamordor in social media platforms is most often used to speak about any urban violence problem in Bayamón. One example is a tweet from @edducho on Twitter, who used #Bayamordor to talk about gunfire on May 28th, 2018. Another person on Twitter, @anjaromat, used the hashtag to project his sense of fear and helplessness of going out of his residence. In other words, this hashtag and image have a magnifying glass effect.



Figure 5. Use of #Bayamordor in Twitter. Collected in 2019.

5.2 The guns as an icon of Bayamón

According to the designer of sociocultural studies, Theo Deutinger, firearms have increased the human range and have led to the rise of individual power. (2018, p. 13). Guns, in general, have been a tool that has defined the physical limits of humans and their territorialities. Within the online world of Facebook, we can see how guns and bullets becomes a symbolic meaning to define Bayamón. A common thread in internet memes from MemesPR is the excessive exhibition of guns and weapons in the images. Figure 6 shows a picture of a white couple posing with Santa Claus. The white couple has some assault weapons in their hands. The image includes a caption that says: "When you go to take a picture with Santa in Bayamón." It is worth remarking that this picture, in the first instance, does not have a visual element that links the use of weapons with the local culture in Bayamón or Puerto Rico at large. This portrait of Santa Claus posing with rifles was an offer to the customers of a Gun Club in Arizona in 2011, which generated many controversies related to the Second Amendment of the United States. Constitution (Billeaud, 2011).



Figure 6. "What a beautiful memory." Collected in 2019
<https://me.me/i/cuando-vas-a-tomar-te-una-foto-con-santa-en-bayamon-19713538>

Another internet meme from PR Memes shows a dinner plate with a short gun and bullets together with the rice. The caption of this meme reads: "When you got to have lunch, but you remember that you live in Bayamón" (see Fig. 7). In the same, the image in Figure 8 shows a shoted can of Chef Boyardee, an American brand of canned pasta. On its label, the can displays a fake flavor of *Tripleta de Bayamón*, a Puerto Rican sandwich of three types of meat, potato sticks, and a local sauce called mayo-ketchup.

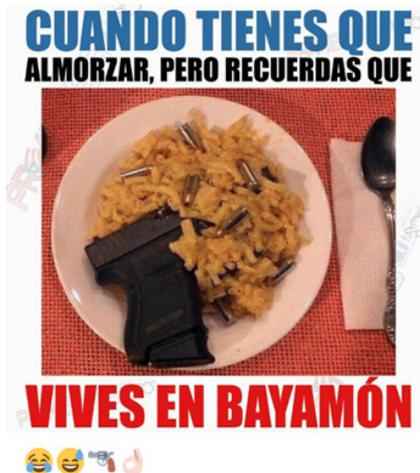


Figure 7. Lunch in Bayamón. Collected in 2019
<https://me.me/i/cuando-tenes-que-almorzar-pero-recuerdas-que-vives-en-bayamon-19253744>



Lo nuevo de chef boyardee 😊
👍👍👍

Figure 8. “New on Chef Boyardee.” Collected in 2019.

<https://me.me/i/ano-artificialno-artificial-s-preservedes-rs-he-boyardse-tripletas-de-19208530>

5.3 Notorious visitors in #Bayamordor

According to Aldona Bailowas Pobutsky, Pablo Escobar “would reign in a Colombian’s dark folklore as an infamous antihero” (2020, p. 5). In 2012, the telenovela/soap opera “Pablo Escobar: El patron del mal” gained wide popularity in Puerto Rico. This Colombian *narconovela* was the hit of the year in Puerto Rico and other countries in Latin America. Pablo Escobar’s characterization, a notorious drug lord in the Americas, would influence the everyday culture in Puerto Rico. One example is a comedy segment starred by the actor Danilo Beauchamp which parodied the notorious drug lord and adapted him to Puerto Rican plots. The name of this comedy sketch was “Pablo Escoba,” which would be “Pablo Swiper” if translated into English. Another example is the penetration of this cultural product from the television in the cyberspace ecology. The following image shows a picture of Pablo Escobar with the quote “Chilling in Bayamón.” In the Puerto Rican context, chilling is a synonym for relaxed.



Figure 9. Escobar saying “Chilling en Bayamón.” Collected in 2019

Figure 9 is an example of an internet meme full of prejudices. In this case, the picture shows a younger Osama Bin Laden with two more persons. This digital photo with a twist of islamophobia includes a quote that says: “Three Kings entering to Bayamón.” This meme integrates the Three Kings Day’s Puerto Rican and Hispanic tradition and the notion of Muslims as an enemy.



Figure 10. Three Kings Day in Bayamón. Collected in 2019.

6 CONCLUSIONS

All in all, this essay has discussed the role that social media has played in representing the everyday life of urban spaces. Like other media technologies such as radio or television, internet memes have become a contemporary way of transmitting and preserving memories in the digital era. Also, internet memes are a new visual manifestation with which subjects can experience the sociocultural fabric of cities. They also serve to narrate society’s contexts in a satirical way. In addition, the internet memes serve as a mirror where our social myths and prejudices are reflected. Regardless of the narratives demonstrated in the memes about Bayamon, these digital images are projecting a dialogue about the social tension that drug trafficking has generated in Puerto Rico.

Memes in the digital era have opened paths to inhabit the city in a hybrid way. In the case of Bayamón, the reader can see how memes are articulating a narrative about violence linked to drug trafficking and the use of weapons. These images of digital consumption express the integration of violence as part of everyday life. The individual sees how the narration of the city from internet memes includes transnational figures associated with criminality and evil. In this way, we see how internet memes about Bayamon, including figures such as Pablo Escobar, or even a mythification of the use of weapons almost equal to the American culture, support the carrying of firearms because of the Second Amendment of the United States Constitution. Although statistics shows that Bayamón has a high incidence of Crimes Against a Person, internet memes do not do justice to the quantified reality of other cities having a much higher incidence of crime. In other words, the social media ecology projects Bayamón as a NarcoCity and violent space but does not reach the same conclusions regarding the same issues in San Juan.

In the future, it would be interesting to explore how social network narratives about Bayamón contrast with other cities in Puerto Rico, the United States, and Latin America. It would also be interesting to explore the trend, virality, and other metadata of memes related to the theme of violence and drug trafficking.

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NOTAS

1. Ricardo Rosselló Nevarez was a Puerto Rican Pro-Statehood leader of the *Partido Nuevo Progresista* and former governor of Puerto Rico. In July 2019, the people of Puerto Rico unleashed several protests in San Juan and most of the towns and cities in the archipelago against Governor Ricardo Rosselló, that concluded on July 24th with his resignation. A scandalous chat held by the governor and the members of his cabinet on Telegram, framed the protests against the Rosselló administration. The conversations had included mockery and contempt for women, the LGBTQ+ community, poor people, and the people killed due to Hurricane Maria in 2017. The classic political organization in Puerto Rico is seen through a point of view regarding the relationship with the United States. For more information about this event, consult the section of “Verano Boricua/#RickyRenuncia” in the *Puerto Rico Syllabus* (<https://puertoricosyllabus.com/syllabus/verano-boricua-ricky-renuncia/>).
2. Anuel AA is a Puerto Rican MC, Rapper, and Trap singer. Some people consider Anuel as a pioneer in the Latin Trap. In 2016 Anuel AA was arrested by the United States. Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) for gun possession charges.
3. “PR Memes” is a Facebook Fan Page that shows cultural and political internet memes focused on Puerto Rico. This case represents a local cyberspace community with approximately 290,000 likes. Their current webpage is <https://www.facebook.com/prmemes2/>.
4. Jorge Pabón (Molusco) is a Puerto Rican Radio Host and a local comedian. The character of “El Molusco” is a controversial figure in Puerto Rico. According to *Índice*, Pabón has become one of most influential figures in the social media ecology in Puerto Rico and their diasporas. Molusco’s Fan Page on Facebook has approximately 1,300,000 “Likes” and followers.
5. The hashtag Bayamondor directly alludes to the unfriendly and hostile space narrated in the *Lord of the Rings* novels and movies.