



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

Forms of coexistence and conflict management in public spaces

The fields of research-action highlighted challenges of living together and conflicts of use. The aim of our work is to see how these conflicts are regulated. Regulating often involves restrictions in the name of public order or peace. Any practice or expression that could potentially disturb other people is prohibited. The realisation that we have reached this level of regulation by prohibiting things in public space awakens us to the possibility of everyone taking their place in this space.

To try and highlight the cultural rights involved in this type of approach, we can talk about the right to identity. It's clear that, depending on who we are and the cultural references we're assigned or wish to place in these public spaces, we won't all have the same opportunity to express ourselves. We can also question the feeling of legitimacy that is more or less present depending on the type of person, their history, age and migratory background. We need to encourage people to take their legitimate place. We have to realise that certain forms are allowed to coexist, or not as much.

Rather than prohibiting or allowing everything, cultural rights refocus our attention on how we regulate public space. Cultural rights rely on the fact that by getting to know each other better, we can organise ourselves together to regulate public space. Living together and conflicts of use are inherited from the history of the territory and the relationships forged. Cultural rights call on us to examine the history of relationships, what we inherit in terms of relationships between groups or practices that are culturally rooted in certain spaces. New practices can generate conflict.

Regulation often aims to end the conflict, but this may not be possible without denying someone the ability to express themselves. Regulating means putting the problem at the centre of the table so that everyone can contribute their views, express the importance of a practice and find a solution. The way in which these conflicts of use and living together are desired is often based on discriminating criteria. So, who decides what's legitimate? Who internalises the legitimacy of their own practices? Who self-censors in public space?

Many practices voluntarily make themselves invisible because they don't feel invited to be there. Others, not considered, express themselves loudly and visibly, sometimes with the intention of harming other, better-recognised practices. Cultural rights are invaluable in organising a space where everyone can have a place and a role in problem-solving. This calls for the right to participate, but this right also needs to be learned. Learning to harness collective intelligence is essential.

Our fieldwork has shown that a presence in public space, through artistic projects or local structures (social centres, community centres, prevention programmes, cultural organisations, etc.), helps to mediate between different groups and expressions. This helps to move on from conflict to living together.

When it comes to the right to information, many conflicts of use are based on preconceived ideas. The informative role played by local players in public space helps to resolve many conflicts and to improve the way people live together.