

## Routledge Handbook of Graffiti and Street Art – Book Review

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### Abstract

*This review is of the Routledge Handbook of Graffiti and Street Art, included in the Routledge International Handbooks collection. Published in 2016, this book will be of great interest to Graffiti and Street Art scholars. This publication is of significant importance in a context where there is so much to share and understand about the phenomena of graffiti and street art. The shared common goals of the Routledge Handbook of Graffiti and Street Art with the Urbancreativity research network (which promotes associated conferences and the Street Art & Urban Creativity Scientific Journal – where I'm personally dedicated as a member of the Executive Committee and as Editor) made me propose the present review.*

*The structure of the review mirrors the structure of the book, with forewords, introductions, and four thematic parts. It also includes a prelude where the quantitative facts are presented – the number of chapters, authors, scientific fields represented, nationalities of the authors and case studies, among others. This review regards the book as an element integrated in a culture of research that is being formed. It analyzes the significance that it represents to the Graffiti and Street Art fields of study, but also how it can influence authorial or management practices. There are some omissions to this review regarding the relation of the book within the publishing realm as, for example, I do not analyze how it is related with other titles of the same collection.*

*As a general review that did not want to be partial, there were some concessions to be made – more emphasis is given to the introduction of the book and for each section, and to the overall considerations, balances, coverage, and generic ingredients than to any specific chapter or contributor, topic or approach, this way avoiding individual exclusions or emphases. The approach was developed in the most analytic way possible, whilst trying to exclude as many personal influences as possible in the review process (as it should be). Some consultations with other researchers were also made as a way of gaining other perspectives and to refresh my individual interpretations. This review also tries to provide the necessary information for researchers that want or need to know more about the content, generic approach and character of this publication.*

*Routledge Handbook of Graffiti and Street Art / Edited by Jeffrey Ian Ross, ISBN: 978-1-138-79293,*

*Routledge International Handbooks, NY, 2016*

### 1. Personal Remark

Although trying to exclude personal influences, my approach to this review will necessarily reflect my personal profile, so it is relevant to contextualize my personal concerns. I have two strong concerns, or two faces of the same coin, that drive my focused specialized and exclusive contribution since the 1990s to graffiti and street art research.

My first main concern is about the street, the urban fabric, the city, the landscape, open air, the outside, “nature”, the physical “thing” that surrounds us collectively, the space between buildings, including the building’s “skin” as walls, and the floor as stage, and or support for life, objects and visual signs (Gehl, 1987).

What concerns me about space is how do we deal with it so we can address our needs, how did we do this in the past, in the present, and how we will do this in the future. How do planning and usage interact, historically and today? This raises questions of the durability of resources, environmental awareness, the sensitive construction of space, relations of tension between conflictive usages, territorial narratives, organizational social structures, norms, and the absence of rules as policy.

My second concern is about research, methods, consolidation of knowledge, identifying the most concrete and objective facts, gathering knowledge about graffiti and street art at the broader spectrum. Again looking upon planning and usage, considering how they interact, now with reference to research academic tools focused on graffiti, street art and urban creativity in general. Both concerns work in the same direction, generically aiming to help us build a better environment, or in other words, use the available resources in the best way, and both foster top down and bottom up encounters, at distinct and moving scales, origins and objectives.

## 2. Quantitative Facts of the Book

The first contact with the book, as physical object, reveals that it has a considerable size and weight, specifically 7 x 1.4 x 9.7 inches and 2.2 pounds. The price, £150.00 (from the publisher's website), is also very relevant information at the first contact and determinant for the life of the book, its audiences, and ultimately the capacity for dissemination of its contents. I will get back to the price issue when approaching some of the Editor declared objectives of the book.

The cover image by the Editor, framed by the Routledge International Handbooks' black and red design, is conveniently hybrid, showing in one Photo a very eclectic mix of overlapping languages that generically represent graffiti and street art, a collective composition made by time and by some anonymous interventions, that could be in any place. Reference to the image is made in page V, reproducing again the Photo in black and white, in a bigger frame, where can now be seen the prominence of pasteups, with the legend Photo: Jeffrey Ian Ross, June 3, 2013.

At the first glance of the book's interior it is identified that the initial 39 pages are numbered in Roman numbers (IX to XXXIX) and from the introduction until the end of the book Arabic numerals from 1 to 491, in a total of 530 pages. In these pages are spread the Content listed on page IX. In the initial 39 pages, there are the List of Figures; List of Tables; List of Contributions; Editor's Foreword; Foreword; and Acknowledgments. The following 491 pages are used by the Introduction; four Parts (with collected chapters) and in the last pages the Glossary; Chronology and Index.

Each Part has an introduction and several chapters: Part I - History, types and writers / artists of graffiti and street art, has 10 chapters in 120 pages; Part II - Theoretical explanations of graffiti and street art/ causes of graffiti and street art, has 6 chapters in 72 pages; Part III - Regional/ municipal variations/ differences of graffiti and street art, has 12 chapters in 166 pages; Part IV - Effects of graffiti and street art, has 7 chapters in 86 pages.

With a more analytical approach to the written content we can find other kinds of data. Relevant to mention is the quantity of written work done by the Editor, in 120 pages (of the 530 total), distributed across the Editor's Foreword, Introduction, three chapters (one in Part III, and two in Part IV) and in the introductions of the book's four Parts. There is an impressive amount of work that includes the pages of the glossary, chronology, and index plus the time and work needed for the coordination of the contributors and the organization of the book in general with publisher.

Specifically looking at the contributors that are listed by surname in alphabetic order we can identify in their academic degrees a domination of PhDs, many of them are authors and co-authors of already published books, mainly professors - academics above all. There are 36 contributors identified, two chapters with two contributors, and (excluding the Editor) two contributors with two chapters, with a significant number of authors that are from the USA, or are USA-based (16). If we add to this the authors that are Anglophone (6) we have a great majority of 22 authors that are from, or based in, Anglo-Saxon countries, having 14 authors remaining to represent the rest of the world.

This cultural and or nationality information regarding the authors necessarily influences the chapters, and in the end, the book in general. Looking at the title and the subject of the 35 chapters, 10 have a direct relation with US (example: city or state in the title of the chapter) going up to 14 if we consider case study specificity (example: freight trains, gang graffiti) and New York City – which has three dedicated chapters – necessarily leading us to conclude the prominence of a US perspective. Twenty-one other perspectives demonstrate no regional approach and or other geographies, more specifically ten in Part III (I will expand on this subject when analyzing the Part III – Regional/ municipal variations/ differences of graffiti and street art).

Another factor that significantly influences the book's profile is the authors' scientific background, and more specifically the areas from where they approach the phenomenon of graffiti and street art. Regarding this subject, the fact that the Editor, while formally trained as a Political Scientist, is primarily coming from the discipline of Criminology/Criminal Justice. Although there appears to be a clear effort to diversify the scientific approaches – beside criminologists, there is also a dominance of anthropologists and sociologists, and in the minority art historians and one or two approaches form the urban studies perspective. In a bookstore or library it is likely then that one will not find book in the architecture and urbanism shelf (where they are substantially missing from my perspective) nor in the art history shelf, but in the shelves of criminology, anthropology and sociology.

### 3. Forewords and Introduction

Before the four Parts that contain the chapters and structure the book, there are the not less relevant Forewords and Introduction. In a sandwich of texts, Jeffrey Ian Ross authors the Editor's Foreword and the Introduction, and in between the Foreword is authored by Jeff Ferrell.

#### 3.1 About the Editor's Foreword

The Editor's Foreword is constituted by Ross' statement of his personal motivation to produce this book. In a very open and sincere approach it sets a comfortable tone for the reader, establishing the frame from which the book

emerges, and the profile of the Editor. Ross also identifies the dispersed and uneven quality of scholarly work on graffiti and street art. Also it is stated that the book exists as a reply to the identified lack of an academic reference book in the area. I tend to agree to the first part, otherwise the Street Art and Urban Creativity Journal (where this review is originally published) wouldn't make sense, but regarding the reference book objective, that only the time will tell.

In relation to the structure of the book, the Editor in the Foreword and throughout the publication is very consistent, generating a very well structured book. The book has defined rhythms, and good dimensioning of the Parts (with a slightly bigger Part III). Each part has an introduction (by the Editor) always with the same structure: introduction, overview of chapters, and omissions. The omissions give us a very relevant idea of the areas that have been identified by the Editor as missing for a realistic appraisal of each Part.

There is a methodological approach to the structure of the book, with attention to detail and horizontality in terms of the relation of each contributor. The inclusion of a variety of methods (with a tendency to criminology, anthropology and sociology as already mentioned), and the good practice of including the glossary and chronology, among other reasons, accomplish Ross' stated objective of avoiding a textbook style.

Regarding the contributors, it is assumed in the Foreword that not all aspects and areas of knowledge are included in the book. Positive factors assumed by the Editor are the contributions of world experts and scholars, confirmed by the profile and production of the contributors. The Editor also identifies as positive such matters as country coverage and diversity of disciplinary focus. However, this is contradicted by the already mentioned US and Anglo-Saxon predominance of the contributions.

The Editor's Foreword also identifies the intention of publishing the book for an eclectic audience. As much as this is an understandable and valued intention, in a certain sense it enters into conflict with the text book style format – an eclectic audience is difficult to achieve when the intention is to publish original chapters that represent groundbreaking revelations from the research point of view.

### 3.2 About the Foreword

Jeff Ferrell in the Foreword gives a positive complement to the book. Although he reaffirms the dominance of US topics in the book, he reveals a relevant opinion, stating that since the 1970s graffiti is being assumed to be “urban folk art” with significant extensions to commercial art, in triangulation with advertising, street and gallery in parallel with cleaning campaigns. He states generally that street art and graffiti are complex and contradictory.<sup>1</sup>

In a synthesis exercise Ferrell attempts to simplify by identifying two trajectories – broken windows theory (Maskaly & Boggess, 2014) (cleaning campaigns) and gentrification (Lees, Slater & Wyly, 2013) (promotion disposable campaigns). He identifies issues for research on street art and graffiti such as visibility and invisibility, act and art, and the hopeless durability of the works. The digital is also mentioned as something that is altering the essential meaning of work, giving the specific example of style sharing, that with no personal contact does not work. Some paradigms such as city wide are proposed to be now shifted to global wide, and he alerts us that the digital is generating free floating signifiers.

Ferrell proposes Banksy and Espo as high profile examples of the legal/illegal tension, and all this in a Foreword full of knowledge – something only possible from someone that has been following the subject closely for such a long time. This is a Foreword that makes relevant statements, but that with very few changes could had been published independently or in any other book. Beside the initial references to the book itself, almost not any other part of this Foreword is reactive to the book’s contents.

### 3.3 About the Introduction

Jeffrey Ian Ross identifies approximately four interrelated contextual axes that one can use to identify, classify and/or examine graffiti and street art: legal/illegal; content/aesthetic; author/perpetrator; location. This identification

serves the purpose of framing the subject, at the same time distinct authors are mentioned by way of illustrating the knowledge produced about each of the four axes. The Introduction also mentions the absence of a sustained series of scholarly studies on street art and graffiti, dividing the existent literature into popular and scholarly, ranging from distinct theoretical concerns such as iconographic models, classification methods, to youth subculture, step to crime, political content analysis, and gender.<sup>2</sup> Ross specifically mentions Waclawek’s (2011) book as more useful to art history than to the social sciences, and a lack in the demystification of the gang graffiti subject (there is one chapter dedicated to this topic in the book).

Ross notes the absence of the themes of culture jamming, ad-busting and subvertising, which opens the way for the conclusion of the Introduction which is constituted partially as a repository of assumed omissions and potential avenues for future development, positioning the book as a comprehensive base from which to grow from. The field lacks a consistent identifiable body of hypotheses/propositions, theories, and models. Something of this nature may be helpful in order to move beyond descriptive studies. Ross also identifies that a considerable number of untested and unquestioned assumptions about street art and graffiti exist.

Specific suggestions for improvement are made, such as researchers needing to have a better grounding in art, art history, and aesthetic theory – and that this, according to the Editor, would help criminal justice responses. More time should be spent around authors during times when they are not painting. More surveys and geo-mapping studies could help in patterns of dissemination (here is where my personal research fits in), more literacy in respect to the wider public, being as open minded and as objective as possible, more studies about the relation between graffiti and street art with adbusting/culture jamming, and a better understanding of communicative and transgressive elements as tools for developing alternative and progressive approaches.

1 - This reminds me of the seminal book, Venturi, R. (1977) Complexity and contradiction in architecture. Vol. 1. The Museum of Modern Art.

2 - A fact that, as already mentioned, is being worked through by the Journal where the present review is published originally, “Street Art & Urban Creativity Scientific Journal” - Urbancreativity.org

## 4 The Parts and Chapters

As already mentioned, this review does not consider each chapter individually, in this sense the analysis and review is focused on each Part's content as group. The structure of each Part is similar: it starts with the Part opening, written by the Editor and is composed by an Introduction to the Part, an Overview of the Chapters and Omissions. They are consistent with the titles, and always structured in the same way: an overview of the contents in the introduction, three or four paragraphs for each chapter in the chapter's overview, and desirable but missing subjects and topics in the omissions.

An overall tendency is identified in the relation of the contributor's expertise and the subject of the article, sometimes revealing more detailed facets of their work, and at other times reaffirming the already published material in the author's books and or thesis.

The quantity of chapters and pages in each part was already analyzed in Section 3 of this review (above). But it is again relevant to mention that Part III – Regional/municipal variations/differences of graffiti and street art - is slightly dominant although this does not represent more regional variations in the book (as already mentioned).

In the analysis of each Part I have taken into consideration the opening written by the Editor, and secondly the approach taken by chapters themselves, identifying key concepts in both sources, and confronting them chapter by chapter in a very uncompromising approach.

### 4.1 Part I - History, types and writers /artists of graffiti and street art, 10 chapters in 120 pages;

In the opening the Editor identifies the first chapter (Baird & Taylor 2016) of the first Part as an opportunity for readjusting the cultural value of today's works. The chapter's subject, ancient graffiti, opens the historical narrative of graffiti in the dawn of mankind. Regarding graffiti as historical data it prompts critical reading of the content of the graffiti and also shows the importance of the context. From this point of view the legal/illegal, art and not art issues are erased from the equation.

This very appropriate opening gives way to the subcultural world of hobo graffiti (Lennon, 2016), a regionalized type mainly studied in the US (which originated as a video documentary) considered by some as a form of ancestral train writing, having in common the goal of linking individuals through the "same type of canvas" (Hall, 2011). In connection to this emerges the third chapter of the book (Weide, 2016), also about trains and US freight trains, identified by the Editor as filling in a gap in the literature. This genre of graffiti writing is assumed to have a particular relevance within the graffiti subculture.

The next chapter (Phillips, 2016) focuses on gang graffiti – according to the Editor, this is a specific communicative genre. The acute expertise of this contributor helps – as already mentioned – to demystify this graffiti type, and at the same time to focus graffiti studies on the dynamics of social groups (Phillips, 2014). In the same line, the next chapter (Wilson, 2016), about prison inmate graffiti, although less regionalized than the previous articles is focused on the Australian prisons and one in the United Kingdom. This works as a diary as stated by the Editor, but it shows more about social group dynamics than anything else – something relevant to, but not specific to, graffiti and street art. The following chapter in reality and by logical sequence may have fitted better after the research on latrinalia (Trahan, 2016). Being also focused on a social dynamic, it splits analysis in terms of gender, the subject of the previous article (Pabón, 2016). Both chapters approach identity, and particularly gender, as a valuable contribution to the literature (Parisi, 2015).

In the yarn bombing chapter (Haveri, 2016) both the contributor and the Editor raise some doubts regarding this type of work being accepted within the study of street art and graffiti study. It is identified as fragile and is even identified as decaying as a genre by the contributor. In a non connected leap the next chapter (Kramer, 2016) unexpectedly named NY City's legal graffiti writing culture, a puzzling title that uncovers, in the words of the Editor, a multifaceted and fluid culture. Going back to the pre Columbus period, North American Indians today are approached in the last chapter (Martín, 2016) of Part I, signs of resistance according to the Editor, and extracted from the chapter is the claiming of rights as key concept.

#### 4.1.1 Part I - Review partial conclusion

The Editor nominated omissions for Part I address several subtypes and topics such as hate graffiti as a potential genre, and the specificity of subway graffiti. Topics that are not directly approached include race and ethnicity; political graffiti and street art, and how they interact; and wartime graffiti as a specific type.

Part I opened with a chapter about the usually undervalued topic of ancient graffiti. The following chapters revealed a US perspective, folk, and (freight) train subcultures, NY legal writing, with emphasis for the very specific social group dynamics in the gang, prison and North American Indian graffiti. The rest of the chapters presented other types, such as latrinalia and yarn bombing (also US context case studies). The title of Part I identifies a focus on history, to be found above all in the first chapter, but in this section there can also be found a discussion of different types of graffiti and street art with an emphasis on US as context. I did not identify any chapter specifically about writers/artists of graffiti and street art.

#### 4.2 Part II – Theoretical explanations of graffiti and street art/causes of graffiti and street art,

6 chapters in 72 pages;

The first chapter of Part II is about graffiti and street art as ornament, a chapter title in line with the contributor's book (Schacter, 2014). According to the Editor, this chapter serves, with other similar chapters, to identify how the subject fits with art history and theory. This is a chapter constituted by selected ideas from the contributor's monograph, partially deconstructing supported dictionary references and removing it from the art/vandalism dialectic, and full of architectural space relevant references. In a similar tone, the second chapter (Brighenti, 2016) of Part II addresses the issue of the divergent synthesis of place valorization with a key concept referenced by the Editor on the economic process of valorization. This chapter also mentions urban eventfulness, constituted by the expulsion, capture and re-inscription of graffiti and street art. In the third chapter (Evans, 2016) the place approach is maintained, dealing with the

relation between piece-making and place-making, framing in the Editor's opinion, city branding and cultural tourism. Other aspects addressed by this chapter, among others, include numbers for cleaning graffiti (as vandalism) and an identified tension between high street art and unpopular graffiti.<sup>3</sup>

In a topic shift, the following chapter (Macdonald, 2016) addresses gender, specifically the changing gender dynamics of the graffiti subculture, mentioned by the Editor as a reexamination of the research direction of this topic. The following chapter (Taylor, Pooley & Carragher, 2016) identifies a relationship between the post internet era and an increasing number of women as authors. Generic social analyses are present such as the socially conforming or non-conforming identity of youth, as they desire a sense of place, belonging and connection with society. The last chapter (Snyder, 2016) of Part II, the shortest chapter of the book, has the subject: graffiti and subcultural careers. The Editor mentions that this is an analysis of how subcultural capital changes into actual capital, and the chapter confronts the Birmingham School's assumption that subcultures are futile, and proven to be false by the success of old school graffiti writers.

#### 4.2.1 Part II - Review partial conclusion

There are various omissions noted by the Editor such as the absence of any analysis of the relationship between graffiti and hip hop, and the detailed treatment of the subject of gentrification, and specifically the role of graffiti and street art in property development and as an engine for tourism. Part II presents contributions that are focused on theoretical explanations/causes which share both not very well known insights and already widespread considerations. This part can be characterized by two main angles of approach to the subject: one on the part of place, and its role in art history, economics, and urban planning; and the other from human sciences, looking to gender, digital influences, and a subcultural approach.

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3 This contributor presented a paper on related issues at the Lisbon Street Art & Urban Creativity 2014 International Conference (Evans, 2014).

### 4.3 Part III – Regional/ municipal variations/ differences of graffiti and street art, has 12 chapters in 166 pages;

Part III is the longest section of the book and gathers 12 chapters from distinct regions. The first three chapters are from North America. The first chapter (Austin, 2016) is about New York City, a key site, and provides relevant time coverage (1969-1990). This is the second chapter directly about New York City in the book. It also addresses digital influence as a factor that has changed style and innovations that are no longer locally based – aspects already mentioned in prior chapters. New York City is a reference for both cleaning and promoting graffiti and street art, and the chapter provides some interesting mentions, such as the euro taggers in 1997, that generated specific cleaning policies. The second chapter (Piano, 2016) is about graffiti and street art in the “new” New Orleans, with reference to the post-hurricane period and how it influenced the development of graffiti and street art, the increasing use of social media, and non-accessible places. Further research is also mentioned as needed (D’Amico, 2014). The next chapter (Waclawek, 2016), graffiti and street art in Montréal (Pop culture and politics) mentions among other events, the Under Pressure Festival as an example, and mentions the legal issues faced by local author Roadsworth that echoed globally, and by this example extrapolated the influence that local phenomena may have internationally.

The following chapter (Palmer, 2016) is the only representative of the South American context. An honorable reference goes to Santiago de Chile, and a specific approach to the Mapocho River battle in the usage of public space, mentioned by the Editor in Part III’s opening text as a mixture of propaganda and hip hop graffiti. It is very interesting to understand the long history of mural production in Chile, and the abyss between political murals and graffiti that only converged in 2008 in the Open Air Museum of San Miguel. This chapter could serve as a good link to the chapter about Lisbon, by the similar trajectory of relations between political murals and graffiti, but in between there are the chapters about two the major global cities, London and Paris.

The chapter about London (Ross, 2016), authored by the Editor, mentions aesthetic and economic benefits, and uses London as a case study, to provide an analysis that

could fit many other major cities that are embracing street art “murals”. There are clear similarities to the chapter about Paris (Fieni, 2016), although with local particularities, in this case starting from Brassai, generating some interesting contrasts with the almost hegemonic discourse about New York City/Philadelphia graffiti history. Still in Europe but at another level of centrality, the Lisbon chapter (Campos, 2016) considers local developments in a similar approach to the Chile example (political murals to graffiti) in a generic overview of the development of Lisbon’s political murals and street art (with the omission of graffiti from the title but not from the content).

The Middle East is represented by two chapters. The first (Abaza, 2016), about Egypt post-January 2011 graffiti and street art, where the conditions that occurred post revolution configured specific outcomes, intensified by the relations between the Occident and Egypt. This context gives space for colonial critical culture and the parallel between writing in Egypt and the Anglophone world. The second chapter about the Middle East region is focused on Palestinian graffiti (Peteet, 2016), more specifically about the wall that divides this country from Israel. This is a chapter that exposes the fact that there is a significant circulation of images and words on the subject of the wall that are fostered by street art and graffiti, but in reality these have not opened a proper space for conversation, and are thus (just) reminders of the “occupation.”

The final three chapters of Part III are from Asia. Graffiti/Street Art in Tokyo and surrounding districts is a chapter (Yamakoshi & Sekine, 2016) that develops the (risky) exercise of reaching general conclusions from a specific case study, reminding us, with a marvelous quote from Ferrell, that “exclusionary controls and commercialization often destroy the history of alternative culture.” (Ferrell, 2002: 191) Beijing and Shanghai, claiming spaces for urban art images (Valjakka, 2016), is a chapter that beside many other specifically mentioned facts, reveals that that these practices are tolerated to some extent, and that removal is made mainly due to the fact that authorities are concerned with political implications. The author also recommends that research about this subject cannot rely on the internet due to the fact that there is real censorship of the contents that are in circulation. Also by the same author, the final chapter is about Hong Kong.

(Valjakka, 2016) This region is characterized by the author as transcultural and transnational, with a constant in- and out-flux of people. This has specific consequences such as that international authors/artists are still the ones that are given access to the commissioned production opportunities for their work. However, the author of this chapter notes that there is also an emergence of a more local scene, where street credibility is still a core value, even given the short life of the creators' works.

#### 4.3.1 Part III - Review partial conclusion

The Editor identified omissions regarding approaches (at the very least) to the following regions/municipalities: Barcelona, Bologna, Buenos Aires, Moscow, Perth, São Paulo, Sydney, and Toronto, raising the possibly unanswerable question of: how many cities are necessary in order to provide a comprehensive treatment?

Also not discussed here is the neglect of any detailed consideration of the South American context, which has rich and meaningful centers of production and quality authors, not to mention this region's relevance in the history of mural painting involving also Central America. This is a very meaningful absence in Part III.

There are so many gradients and regional distinctions in Europe that proper studies of regional variations only about Europe would be encyclopedic and a colossal research endeavor, so it is understandable that there are choices that were made by the Editor. In this way, this Part is only constructively criticized here in that the reasons for the presented selection are not fully identified by the Editor (a question that is more developed in the final conclusion to this review).

#### 4.4 Part IV – Effects of graffiti and street art,

7 chapters in 86 pages.

The first chapter (Ross, 2016) of this final section of the book develops an overview of how major centers in the US respond to graffiti/ street art, an approach that examines the effectiveness of the several processes used, concluding that (even if desirable) it is not possible to completely eliminate or

eradicate graffiti. The second chapter (Kramer, 2016) is focused on New York City 's moral panic over graffiti: normalizing neoliberal penalties and paving the way for growth machines. This is a chapter that addresses the reproduction of sound bites in association with neoliberal non-reflective actions.

The next chapter (Bengtson, 2016) is not based on any specific regional approach, giving a break to the tendency of US based chapters, with the title *Stealing from the Public: The Value of Street Art Taken from the Street*. This is a subject of some controversy and urges reflection. This chapter tends to the general conclusion that without context there is no art work. Coming back to the US context, the Editor authored chapter (Ross, 2016), entitled: *How American Movies Depict Graffiti and Street Art*, is a relevant chapter about the crossroads between graffiti and movies, but is also somehow challenging due to the fact that if not analyzed, the core of the intersection tends to repeat the recurrent issues that surround graffiti such as legal and illegal, or art and vandalism.

The following chapter (Bloch, 2016) considers a core and sensitive issue, not totally captured by the title: *Challenging the Defense of Graffiti, in Defense of Graffiti*. In reality, this chapter is about the fringe of non-contactable graffiti authors and the "barrier" made by the (non designated) spokesmen that have their own specific interests. This specific aspect is very relevant to have in mind when developing serious research projects.

The two final book chapters address graffiti and street art from an economic point of view. The first is about whether copyrighting law can protect graffiti and street art (Schewender, 2016). It is relevant to mention here that the legal framework adopted by this chapter is related to US copyright law. The chapter concludes that while it is possible to try to legally protect work, it is not advisable due to the vulnerability to direct public response. The final chapter: *Graffiti, Street Art and the Evolution of the Art Market* (Wells, 2016) reveals that the evolution of the art market is also built by generations. The teens of the 80s and 90s now are in their 30s or 40s so they have gained the capacity for assuming meaningful decisions in the context of artwork selection, which is associated with internet use, and their travels, which generates today's paradigm.

#### 4.4.1 Part IV - Review partial conclusion

The Editor lists a number of omissions and makes reference to the absence of a chapter about the graffiti removal business, and on how graffiti and street art is taught to students in different settings. In this final Part of the book, there are several particularities – two of the chapters are from the Editor, and there is also a third book chapter directly about New York City.

#### 5. Conclusion

This publication is of significant importance for the culture of research that is being formed around the topic of graffiti and street art. In reality, this culture of research has distinct trajectories depending on the disciplinary background of the researcher (or consortium leader). The book's Editor is a Professor in the School of Criminal Justice, at the University of Baltimore, formally trained as a Political Scientist, is primarily coming from the discipline of Criminology/Criminal Justice. However, the Editor makes the suggestion that researchers need to have better grounding in art, art history, and aesthetic theory, and that this, according to the Editor would help criminal justice responses.

To confirm the Criminological angle of approach, or the book project's departure, in a "back jacket endorsement", Professor Keith Hayward, Faculty of Law, University of Copenhagen, Denmark, writes: *Considering graffiti is both the world's most visible crime and a global subcultural phenomenon, it's strange that mainstream criminology has spent the last four decades steadfastly ignoring the subject. Finally, this seems to be changing. With the arrival of the Routledge Handbook on Graffiti and Street Art, criminology now has the sophisticated and comprehensive benchmark collection the subject deserves* (Hayward, 2016: n.p.).

Some contributors are criminologists, but there's a dominance of anthropologists and sociologists, and a minority art historians and (unfortunately) only one or two contributors that approach from the urban studies perspective. The lack of a substantial share of contributions from the urban studies field means that the volume may be overlooking some key relevant applied research on graffiti and street art.<sup>4</sup>

4 - This thought was recently confirmed at the Lisbon Street Art and Urban Creativity Conference 2016, the third day of which was dedicated to the relation of graffiti and street art with architecture and city planning.

The book includes contributions by world experts confirmed by the profile of the contributors. The diversity of disciplinary focus could be extended, but it has some variety as already mentioned. On the other side, the country coverage could be considerably extended, in the regional dedicated part and but also in the rest of the book. From the 35 chapters 10 have a title referencing the US. New York City, for example has three dedicated chapters, and there are 14 chapters that consider US based case studies. The prominence of a US perspective is reinforced by the fact that 22 contributors are from or based on Anglo-Saxon countries, leaving 14 authors to represent the rest of the world.

The concrete factors of book size and price are determinants for targeting an audience. In this sense although there is a stated intention to publish the book for a eclectic audience, the price of the book will make it difficult to access for singular researchers. The understandable and valuable intention of creating a reference book on the subject is accomplished, generating one more source of potential references, but it is hard to achieve the "ultimate" reference book in the presented format – original chapters are usually groundbreaking revelations from the research point of view, and there are already referential publications, that include work from many of the contributors.

It is also clear that this book represents an immense amount of work that needs to be recognized. The Editor has written 120 pages alone, without considering the glossary, index, chronology and the time and work needed for the coordination of a volume with 36 contributors and the organization of the book in general with the publisher. This is a very well structured book, with defined rhythms, and good dimensioning of the Parts (with a slightly bigger Part III). Each Part contains an introduction (by the Editor) always with the same structure: introduction, overview of chapters, and meaningful omissions.

Notwithstanding the difficulties in finding and securing appropriate contributors who are willing to produce a high quality chapter, the reasons for the choices that have been made about the topics included (and excluded) are not totally explained. In any case, I agree with Jeffrey Ian Ross when he states that this book is a respectable base from which

to grow and hopefully to move this research topic beyond descriptive studies. This handbook will be an important resource that can help in our efforts to clarify the untested and unquestioned assumptions about street art and graffiti that exist.

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