Machines for living in

Communication technologies and everyday life in times of urban transformation

By

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Supposing that the planet earth were not a sphere but a
gigantic coffee table, how much difference in everyday life
would that make?

Haruki Murakami
Hard-boiled wonderland and the end of the world

Index

Index of pictures, graphics, tables and boxes

Executive summary

This thesis investigates the degree to which our everyday conceptions of 'place' have changed in contemporary society, especially in relation to the use of information and communications technologies (ICTs). The empirical evidence is a case study of 20 low-income families who live in Santiago, Chile. These families had just moved to a new social housing estate from the shantytowns and/or situations of extreme overcrowding.

The first section of the thesis examines how their conceptions of 'place' have changed as a result of the move. On the one hand, it is difficult for them to perceive the housing estate as a 'place' with the same characteristics as their former home environments (close social networks, common history, etc.) due to a difficult and still incomplete adaptation. On the other hand, their social exclusion, especially demonstrated in terms of their limited spatial mobility, means that their everyday life still unfolds in a limited and relatively static number of places. In these circumstances they develop a minimal concept of place based not on an emotional attachment to a space, but rather on particular practices located in certain time and space. This concept of place is labelled here as 'localities of practices'.

The second part of the thesis examines how these 'localities of practices' are becoming increasingly 'mediated,' or the increasing degree to which the use of ICTs permeates the conceptions of place of the members of these families through an analysis of practices related to the use of three particular technologies. The first study shows how the home is a project that has to be constructed in a constant competitive interplay with the place created by television use.

The second analyses how the noise produced by hi-fi technologies at very high volumes is used to redefine the spaces of the housing estate against the background of their quite limited material surroundings. The third shows how the use of mobile phones, and the 'media space' created by them, reconstitutes and gives a new meaning to the limitations that these families face when moving through the urban environment of Santiago.

As a result of these continual processes of mediation the thesis concludes that along with the physical environment of the housing estate, the spatial environments created

by the use of media technologies are key to the construction of 'place' to such a degree that is almost impossible to consider one without the other. They, together, are their "machines for living in"; the setting in which their everyday lives unfold.

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Acknowledgments

research was key to the success of the project. I hope their ideas and perceptions, their hopes and dreams are well reflected in this piece of research.

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Introduction

Going to Tucapel Jimenez II

Plaza Italia is one of the important landmarks of the city of Santiago, Chile. This square, located in the city centre at the junction of three of the main boulevards of the city (Providencia, Vicuña Mackenna and Bernardo O'Higgins thoroughfares) is the obvious meeting place for all kinds of public demonstrations and rallies, to celebrate and to protest alike, and marks the frontier or the boundary between the east (the 'oriental' sector, traditionally middle and upper class) and the central and western areas of the city.

Plaza Italia is the departure point for our journey. This journey will let us explore some key aspects of the everyday life of a group of 20 families who inhabite a social housing estate called "Villa Tucapel Jimenez II", located in the Borough of Renca, in northwest Santiago. Like every other journey, a journey to Tucapel Jimenez II involves some sort of movement, but in this case it is not restricted to just crossing some distance in a determined period of time. It entails pausing for observation as well, as analysis and comprehension. The travelling involves more than going from one place to another, like some sort of social tourists, but also trying to observe a variety of different aspects of the everyday life of the members of these families in order to learn directly how they are adapting to their new urban environment and what is the role of media technologies in this process.

In order to reach the housing estate from Plaza Italia, our departure point we have to take some form of transport. As Santiago's Metro (underground) does not reach the area where the housing estates is located, it is necessary to take one of the white and yellow Santiago public buses in the direction of Renca. From Plaza Italia there are three possible bus routes that we can take: numbers 128, 321 and 443.

The route is similar whichever bus you take. The bus goes along Boulevard Bernardo O'Higgins in a westerly direction and then turns right along San Antonio Street as far as Mapocho Station, a former train station. Then it crosses the Mapocho River entering the borough of Independencia. It goes straight along Independencia

Avenue in a northerly direction until it reaches Gamero Street (later Salomon Sack), then it turns left in a northwesterly direction until the junction with the Panamericana highway and the boundary of the borough of Renca.

At this point the bus crosses a bridge into Renca and then continues in a northwesterly direction along Domingo Santa Maria Avenue until it reaches Renca's Plaza de Armas (central square). From Plaza de Armas, the bus goes along a series of small streets in a broadly northwesterly direction until it finally reaches the junction of Jose Miguel Infante Avenue with Vicuña Mackenna Avenue, almost at the end of the line. There we have to get off the bus and cross the street to enter Tucapel Jimenez II Housing Estate. This journey takes around an hour from Plaza Italia.

During this journey we see how the landscape, how the city itself, is changing rapidly. There are new buildings everywhere, a new high-speed highway that goes under the River Mapocho and crosses the Borough of Renca. The Metro network is being extended to the north, crossing the Mapocho River (a natural, but also a symbolic boundary). These changes reflect the changes that Chilean society has experienced over the last decades (INE 2003; PNUD 2000a; PNUD 2002; Ramos 2004). Santiago is now a different city to the one it used to be fifteen or twenty years ago. These changes are not always improvements, because along with the improvements in the urban infrastructure and social housing for low-income groups, old problems such as air pollution and the social segregation of space (Sabatini 2003) are still present and others like gated communities (Torres 2004) appear. But in general, the journey from Plaza Italia to Renca shows a dynamic urban environment in the process of accelerated structural change.

Along with these macro changes, changes in terms of neighbourhoods, or the meso-scale of the city, can be seen on this journey. We start with the old buildings and tower blocks of central Santiago and then we move through the fifties-style housing estates that cover vast areas of the Boroughs of Recoleta, Independencia and part of Renca (especially near the Panamericana Highway). After that we see the disorganized 'poblaciones' (housing areas that started as shanty towns but are now semi-organized, legally owned, neighbourhoods) that start to appear after passing Renca's Plaza de Armas.

Finally the order and planning of a new social housing estate like villa Tucapel Jimenez II demonstrates quite clearly a different approach in the way the inhabitants

of Santiago, and its authorities, have been dealing with the problem of providing appropriate housing for the continually growing population of the city. This is particularly pertinent to lower income individuals and families. The new social housing estates also have different architectural and aesthetic features from earlier schemes.

In this context, the housing estate or 'villa' (as it is called by its inhabitants) can be seen as a good example of one of the most revolutionary social housing provisions occurring not only in Chile, but also in the more general context of developing societies throughout the world (Tironi 2003; Tironi 2004). Since the inception of the current public housing policy in the late eighties, the urban and social geography of poverty has changed in all Chilean cities, The traditional 'campamentos' (shanty towns) and 'poblaciones' have been replaced by social housing estates. This change not only represents an improvement in the material standards of living of these families and individuals but also a radically different way to perceive and live everyday life.

The differences in housing are clearly visible even to an external observer without any knowledge of the current Chilean public policies on housing. On arrival at Tucapel Jimenez II you see the differences with the neighbourhoods that you have already seen in the Borough of Renca. The first differences are in order and scale.

The 'poblaciones' of the borough (and especially the 'campamentos') are characterized, above all, by the lack of planning and rationality and by an almost organic development. They both resulted from frequently illegal appropriation of land by residents, a process not subject to any planning procedures or ordered urban development, but mostly dependent on chance, opportunity and processes outside the control of local authorities and/or private developers. In these places, planning, if it ever came, came after living, and not the other way round. Its organic character, in contrast to a geometrical or rational one, can therefore never be erased completely. It coexists with later urban developments and normalization processes such as street paving, lighting and naming and the implementation of sewage systems.

On the other hand, another feature of these settlements, in terms of scale, is their spaciousness. Not being subject to urban housing policy, 'poblaciones' and 'campamentos' try to occupy as much space as they can. Although this does not translate into houses with big plots of land, it is evident from their preference for one-

storey individual houses commonly with garden or some kind of private space around them (garage, storage places, etc). A space in which even two-storey buildings seem quite out of place.

Pictures 1 to 4, Tucapel Jimenez II housing estate
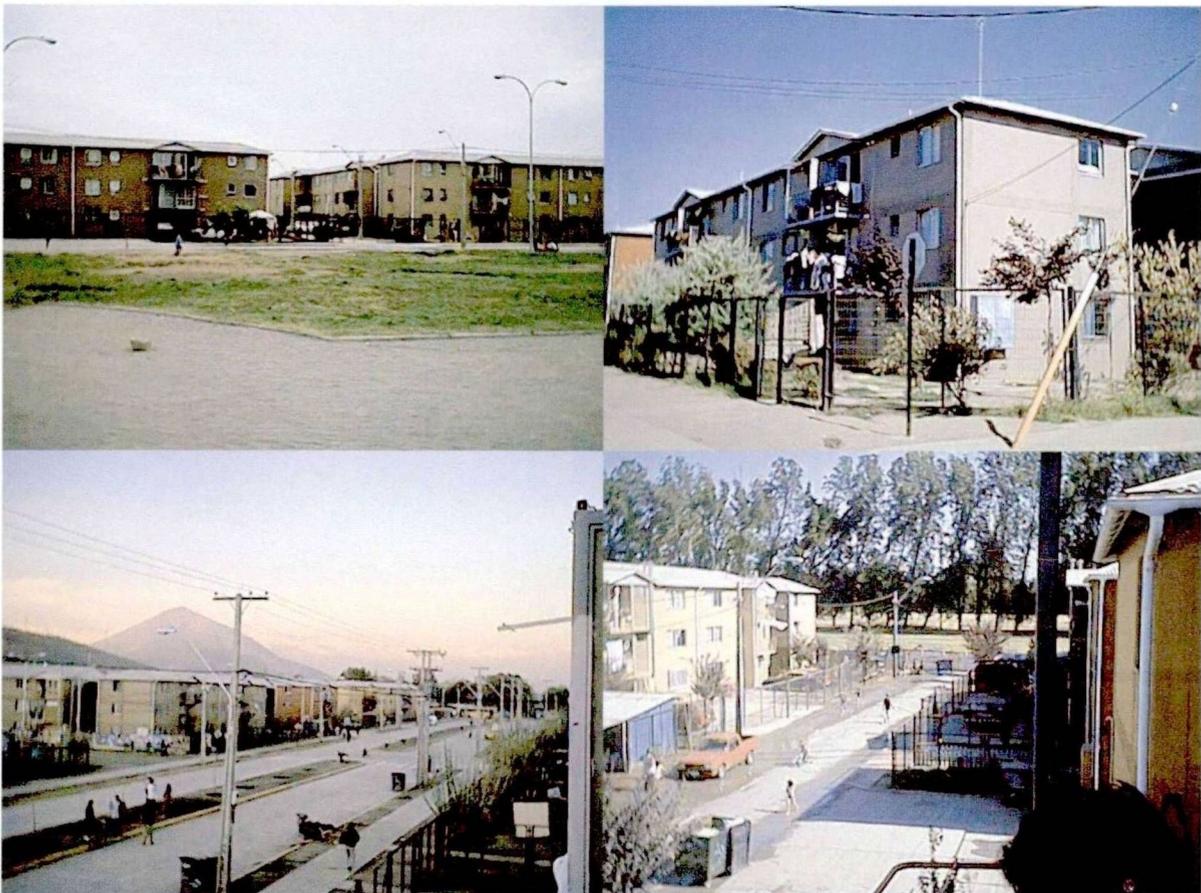
The housing estate looks completely different as can be seen in pictures 1 to 4. As you walk through its central street, Jose Manuel Infante, it is quite difficult to find anything organic or spacious about the development. To the left, you will see a succession of three storey yellow and red buildings separated by little streets and alleyways. To the right you will see at first the same succession of buildings and then, in the middle of the street, the community centre, the square with two tiny football grounds at the rear, surrounded by more buildings, and the nursery, just before the end of the street.

In general the outlook is quite structured and rational - ordered blocks of o-shaped buildings, with flats connected by halls and stairs. At the same time, the scale of the housing estate, the concentration of people in space that a three-storey building

structure provides is quite different from the way these families used to live. For most living in a flat is a new experience. For many including those who came from shanty towns living in a solidly constructed building is something quite new. In many senses this is a new approach and their inhabitants have to learn how to live with it.

They are not alone in this process. From of the moment we reach the housing estate, especially at weekends, we hear one of the most distinctive ways in which people fill their new surroundings: noise. We hear all kinds of music and radio broadcasts, amplified through speakers located commonly in the windows and balconies of the flats, facing the street and at full blast. In some senses to enter the housing estate is to be subsumed into a sea of different sounds and rhythms ranging from the transmission of football matches to religious music and preaching. Noise is always present in the extreme that is one of the main problems raised by people about living in a housing estate (INVI 2002). As we approach the flats, we soon see that radios and other hi-fi equipment are not the only technology that mediates between the inhabitants and their physical environment.

If we continue on our imaginary journey inside the home of one of these families we will see another source of sound and, in this case, images: the permanently-on television sets. Television is everywhere. It is impossible to understand the way these families give order and structure to their lives, and their surrounding environment without considering the centrality of television. . As family members have limited space and mobility, the flow of information from the outside world is mediated through radio and, particularly, television. But television is not only a source of communication but also a material commodity in family life. In relation to material possessions, television always has a central place in the family home, and in some sense structures the way families live in their new homes.

Alongside these well known technologies, there is another less public sound beginning to be ever present in the lives of these families. This is mobile telephony. For many families this is their first ever personal communication technology, permitting them to bridge distance with their absent loved ones and to take advantage of public services. The new living spaces and mobile phones are deeply connected. They arrived in the lives of these families at more or less the same time so they are adapting to both of them. In theory the possession of mobile phones affects the way people manage time and space in their everyday lives. We can therefore expect that the new times and spaces of the housing estate and mobile

13

phone use will be related, each one modifying the way the other is perceived and used.

Arriving at the housing estate was just the first, and easiest, step. The subsequent steps will be more difficult. They will force us to enter in the daily lives of these 20 families in order to try to understand and analyze, from their own words, the way they use and give sense to their new temporal and spatial reality and the role that communication technologies have in this process. We start this journey here.

In doing so, this thesis will try to answer two related research questions. It examines how the conceptions of 'place' of the members of the families under study have been affected as a result of the change in their physical living conditions. Conceptions of 'place' mean here the quotidian perception of space that family members use to give sense to their surrounding physical environment. Also the material conditions of living refer not only to their new homes, but also to the whole set of new commodities (especially communication technologies) that have entered the everyday life of these families in recent years. The second question deals with one more specific point: to what degree are these new conceptions of 'place' connected with the use of communication technologies. The particular communication technologies under consideration are television, hi-fi equipment and mobile telephones.

In order to answer these questions the thesis will be divided in two parts. The first part entitled 'localities' will try to answer the first question concerning how the conceptions of place of the families under study have changed as a result of their new living conditions. In chapter 1 the concept of 'place' will be developed. Using a diverse array of theoretical approaches, mainly from sociology and urban studies, we develop an operational concept of 'place', especially in relation to contemporary urban societies. In chapter 2 the particular field of study will be presented in depth along with a description the methodologies used and the different activities involved in the collection of the empirical material that underpins this thesis.

In chapters 3 and 4 we test the empirical validity, for the case under study, of the arguments related to the concept of 'places' as defined in chapter 1. We will see in Chapter 3 how the traditional understanding of place based on the idea of the existence of an attachment to certain relatively static spaces, does not enable us to understand how these individuals relate to their surrounding space. The aim of the chapter is to show how difficult it is for them to perceive 'places' in the traditional,

sense of the word, in relation to their houses, the housing estate or Santiago's urban landscape.

In chapter 4 the contrasting conception of place as a mere intermediate point in a process of constant mobility, will be tested. Again through the analysis of the empirical material collected in the field, the existence of a 'mobile society' in the everyday lives of these families is disproved. The development of a new type of social exclusion related to the limited mobility of low-income families and individuals will be brought out.

As a result of the findings presented in both chapters, chapter 5 introduces an alternative concept of place. Based on recent developments in social theory and the analysis of the empirical material, the concept of 'localities of practices' will be proposed as a way to understand the way these families perceive their surrounding environment. Here place will be constituted only as the meeting point between a determinate/s social practice/s and the particular space in which this practice is located. This is a minimal concept of place that neither needs attachment nor high mobility to be perceived, only the existence of determinate social practices that create local space.

In the second section of this thesis entitled 'mediations', the increasing mediated nature of these localities of practices in contemporary society will be explored. In Chapter 6 the concept of mediation and its relationship with the usage of media technologies will be analyzed. Through the analysis of a diverse array of theoretical approaches it will be shown that in contemporary society our conceptions of space are becoming increasingly interrelated with media technologies (both as media – mediators of faraway communications – and as material objects). It is difficult to study our 'localities of practices' without taking into consideration the place that media technologies have in their development and characteristics.

In the following three chapters of this section the empirical validity of this idea is tested using the specific case under study here. Chapter 7 shows how the television set, as a central part of the material culture of the households under study, constitutes a key determinant in the way different home spaces are perceived by their users. It shows how the presence of the device in the heart of the home (ceremonial, functional and private) in some sense is disruptive. As television is in

15

itself a place, a 'locality of practices', it cannot be fitted in any preconceived place without provoking a certain degree of change and *dis*-location.

Chapter 8 shows how noise, in the form of very loud music, is used to reshape the local areas of the housing estate. Through the analysis of perception and attitudes towards the noise produced by their neighbours, the aim of this chapter is to show how it is used by the inhabitants of the housing state to reconstruct in a sonic level the common parts of the estate. Due to their limited capabilities to change their physical environment, the sonic space constituted by noise appears as an alternative way in which neighbours can themselves reshape their living space.

In Chapter 9 we will see how the use of mobile phones by the members of the families under study helps to reshape the way they use and perceive urban space. Putting to one side the common utopian arguments about the effects of mobile phones on society, here we will develop a model reflecting the way in which the low-income population in developing countries uses mobiles phones in everyday life. The specific aim here is to show how the communicational space established by this practice is on a different plane to the limitations that this population faces in their daily use of urban space.

Finally, we will extract some general conclusions of the analysis presented in the thesis. The main arguments presented will be summarized and ordered. Then the idea of continuity and the complementary nature of living in a housing estate and using communication technologies as the ones studied here is proposed. They are both the "machines we live in" or, more precisely, the machines in which the low-income urban population in contemporary Santiago lives. Flats and mobile phones, urban landscape and radios, television sets and housing estates; they all constitute elements of the new geographies of social exclusion, characteristic of contemporary Santiago. The thesis finishes considering some potential implications that this perspective can have on the development of public policies that more effectively enhance the social integration of this population.

In relation with the last point, this thesis can be seen as a contribution to the development of an interdisciplinary analysis of urban space, especially in relation with the study and policies related to the life in social housing estates like the one under study here. In doing so this piece of research can be located close to what Stephen Graham (Graham 2004a) has called "urban new media studies". This new

research focus challenges Media Studies to engage "powerfully with the complex intra-urban and inter-urban geographies that so starkly define the production, consumption and use of its subject artifacts, technologies and practices" (ibid. p.19). In doing so it recognizes that "the use and experience of new media is associated with myriad of urban changes in different spaces, times and contexts" (ibid. p.21).

This focus on media technologies and urban phenomena does not only challenge Media Studies. It also offers the opportunity to Urban Studies and policies to develop a more holistic approach to the conditions of life in contemporary cities. Until recently research on aspects of social housing has mainly focused on the physical environment and its inhabitants, commonly leaving aside the networks of communications that cross and connect housing estates with their surrounding social and spatial environment. A view that takes into consideration the immaterial flows of symbolic content through the use of media technologies is central to understanding the way people inhabit these spaces, and to develop policies that more efficiently help them to alleviate the problems that they face in the process of doing so. This perspective will be supported by an analysis that explicitly takes both a low-income population living in a social housing estate *and* their use of media technologies as it main focus.

The fact that the research is rooted in one particular case study, obviously limits the universality and potential applications of it results. There are many aspects of the life in housing estates that can be seen as universal. At the same time the case under study here presents some unique fundamental elements which cannot be generalized, even in the Chilean context. In this sense these results have to be taken strictly as nothing more than a study of one particular group of families at one particular moment of their lives. More research (especially international comparisons) is necessary to develop a consistent body of research and grounded theory that will give a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between housing estates, their inhabitants and the technologies among which their everyday life unfolds. I hope this particular piece of research, with all its weaknesses and strengths, will make a contribution to this task.

Part I

Localities

When I walked outside the building on Central Park West, I looked across at the trees that had burst into full leaf and had a sensation of ineffable strangeness. Being alive is inexplicable, I thought. Consciousness itself is inexplicable. There is nothing ordinary in the world.

Siri Hustvedt
What I Loved

Chapter 1

Looking for places in mobile times

Introduction

Everyday life has been said to be quite a difficult field to study. This is because it is an "impossibly evasive terrain" (Highmore 2002:21); we are immersed in it at the same time as we study it. It has "defined a terrain of experience and determined the conditions for all reflections" (Harootunian 2000:1). It is the place in which "we develop our manifold capacities, both in an individual and collective sense, and become fully integrated and truly human persons" (Gardiner 2000:2). In researching everyday life we cannot achieve the scientific precondition of distance between subject and object, between the knower and the known. They are intrinsically united in the fact that we live within our object of study. We stand at the centre of our field and, in doing so, we use its different elements in our everyday activities.

This does not mean that everyday life cannot be studied. In contemporary societies especially there is a need to develop social research at the micro level to see how the macro processes that characterize our times (globalization, urbanization, massive consumption, technological development, etc.) impact at the level of the commonplace. In searching for the theoretical tools to undertake this urgent task Nigel Thrift (2004) argues that the literature in the field is lacking theoretical developments that allow it to fully grasp the complexity of current social processes.

> A general dissatisfaction with the literature on everyday life ... [because] it does not take recent technological developments in any meaningful way and indeed in some senses actively resists them by concentrating in conventional structures and sites of communication. In particular its emphasis on a kind of proto-authenticity – as found, for example, in the stress of 'evasive everydayness' (Morris 1998) or the renewed emphasis on rhythm as a practice of feeling right with the world, taken from the historically specific accounts of authors like Bachelard, de Certeau and Lefebvre - seems to me to express a yearning for a romantic holism that it has taken a long time to unlearn (Thrift 2004:462).

19

As a result of this limitation, even though this area has received a growing amount of attention in the last decade (see for a general introduction to the field Bennett 2002; Chaney 2002; Gardiner 2000; Highmore 2002 or the volume 18 (2-3) of Cultural Studies), operational frameworks for empirical analysis are lacking, especially in terms of the experience of the inhabitants of the contemporary world's cities.

At a time when "everyday modernity begins to look like a patchwork of different times and spaces" (Highmore 2002:174), we need to develop models that permit us to study the changing nature of space perception and use of space. In doing so we have to answer the question, 'how do people use and perceive space in their everyday life?' Have these perceptions and utilisations changed in the last decades?

The review of the literature on the subject shows that most of the debate about these issues concentrates on the concept of 'place' and its ability to reflect the way people perceive space in contemporary societies. In the following sections we will first summarize the arguments and ideas that surround the concept of place. Secondly we will examine some of the critiques and counter critiques that this concept has attracted in recent times.

1. Defining places

One of the most common assumptions about everyday life is the idea that the most basic spatial distinction that human beings make is to distinguish a place to live[1]. This is because, from a phenomenological point of view, "dwelling is the manner in which mortals are on the earth" (Heidegger 1971:2). To dwell, in Heidegger's terms, is not merely to inhabit some geographical or physical space, because "the space provided for in this mathematical manner may be called 'space', the 'one' space as such ... [but this] space contains no spaces and no places. We never find it in any location" (Heidegger 1971:7). This is because "the spaces through which we go daily are provided for by locations; their nature is grounded in things" (Heidegger 1971:8). So, in order to establish the correct nature of space and places, we must first ask what it is to dwell, and what is the relationship this activity has with our own perceptions of space.

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[1] For the sake of clarity, from now on I will use 'space' and 'places' as different terms, even taking in consideration that in spatial theory, and in general social theory, their meanings have not always been clearly differentiated (not even established in many cases) and what one author identify as 'space' means for other 'place' or 'places' and the other way round. For this reason, I decided that I will use, from now on, the term 'space' to refer to the Cartesian, abstract, space and the term 'places' for the particular configurations of this space when it is inhabited, or dwelled, by human beings.

To dwell is "to stay in a place" (Heidegger 1971:2). We cannot dwell in an abstract Cartesian space (Genocchio 1995:33-35) because with the act of dwelling in them we change these spaces; we distinguish them as different and unique. To dwell is not only to distinguish some space from another, it is to give it a certain identity, a meaning. To dwell is to live *in* places. In the act of dwelling we transform a geographical space, an empty distinction, into a significant place, with its own meaning, identity and coordinates. "Place, we must emphasize, is a notion different from that of space with which it is sometimes conflated" (Orum 2003:15). Place is always inhabited space, human space. It has all the characteristics that we can recognize in space, but at the same time is something different. "Place is a unique and special location in that space notable for the fact that the regular activities of human beings occur there" (ibid.). The most important reference points of places are not their longitude, width or depth; those are secondary; it's the people who live in them, its human geography that gives them existence and meaning (Massey 2005). We not only inhabit places, we create them by living in them.

"We do not live in a kind of void, inside which we could place individuals and things. We don't live inside a void which can be coloured with diverse shades of light, we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely non superimposable on one another (...). These heterogeneous spaces or sites of relations — Foucault's heterotopias — are constituted in every society but take quite different forms and change over time, as 'history unfolds' in its adherent spatiality" (Soja 1989:17).

Places are not space, but social constructions that mix, in different quantities, geographical space, human beings, objects and the network of relations that exist between them. For this reason we speak of 'places' in the plural, because these configurations are always particular to each space, objects and inhabitants. In everyday life we cannot find places that are exactly the same because, even if their physical environment looks very similar, every place is the result of a different, and quite particular, set of relations between its components. We must always understand places as a multiple reality, rather than the universal and stable reality of geographical spaces.

Places, as human constructions, are always "unfinished" (Massey 1999:284), in the sense that there are always things to happen, contacts to be made or elements to be included. In this sense, places, in contrast to spaces, always have a future as well as

21

a past; places are located in a history of interconnections between people, spaces and objects. Space, in comparison, only exists in the present; it does not have a history because it's an empty distinction (or the environment of a distinction at the latest). Places are located in human history, so they have a past that can be remembered and a future that can be anticipated or imagined.

Time is always a crucial dimension of places because places without history remain an empty receptacle. Only in time, along with space, do places acquire their identity as social and individual distinctions integrated in a multiple (and often contradictory) universe of other past and possible future temporal and spatial distinctions that constitute places.

> Space [or places in our case] without time is a disabled concept: a moving body occupies space, but these spaces are not fixed moments with individually recoverable co-ordinates; they are acts of duration, of space-in-time. The moving body has succeeded in being (spatial) and becoming (temporal) by expressing duration (Munt 2001:5).

But places, the places in which we dwell, are not undifferentiated. As Barbara Tversky affirms, "human activity occurs in a multitude of spaces [places]. Each of these spaces [places] is conceptualised differently, depending on the function it serves, the activities invoked, and the entities involved" (Tversky 2003:77). In contemporary urban life, we need to distinguish between different kinds or types of places in order to reduce the complexity of our spatial environment. We cannot conceive, much less understand, entire urban settings as gigantic and undifferentiated places. They are too large and the social networks that compose them too complex and diverse to be understood. For this reason we make distinctions within distinctions in order to delimitate certain places from others.

Human beings developed a cognitive mapping capacity to give some sense to their spatial environment because "to act effectively in space, people need mental representations of space" (Tversky 2003:66). These mental representations "differ from the external representations of space of geometry or physics or of maps" (Tversky 2003:67) because "in human conceptions of space the things in space are fundamental, and the qualitative spatial relations among them with respect to a reference frame form a scaffolding for mental spaces" (ibid.). But along with these elements, our mental maps are composed, to a high degree, of emotions, ideas and personal evaluations of them, giving the result that

22

"Places are fusions of human and natural order and are significant centres of our immediate experience of the world. They are defined less by unique locations, landscape and communities than by the focusing of experiences and intentions onto particular settings. Places are abstractions of concepts, but are directly experienced phenomena of the lived world and hence are full of meanings, with real objects, and with ongoing activities. They are important sources of individual and communal identities, and are often profound centres of human existence to which people have deep emotional and psychological ties (Relph 1976:141 quoted in Davies 1993:100).

We thus construct mental images of our places of dwelling through a mixture of our perceptions and our evaluations and feelings about them. At the same time these mental maps are not fixed or static. They are subject to change and evaluation over time. Every new element that enters a space will be subject to analysis and reconsideration and can potentially change the order and meaning of our mental images. It is therefore crucial that the temporal derivation of the mental structures that make up a cognitive map of a place must be taken into account if we want to understand it in its full historicism and contingency.

In addition, our mental representations of places are not developed in isolation from one another. They are a system of representations. If we aggregate one place or change the location, size or meaning of one already in existence, our complete set of representations and maps will change, to a greater or lesser degree in response to the changes.

It is important, finally, to note that, "although the term 'place' in everyday language is often used to designate limited physical settings, places may indeed be of very different spatial scale" (Gustafson 2002:23). Places can vary from our bedrooms or living rooms to much larger spatial entities such as cities, regions and even countries or continents. The spatial size of the place does not necessarily reflect our mental maps of it. It is not central to them. Quite frequently our emotional attachment or our moral evaluation has more to do with the mental map that we construct, than the size or the geographical dimensions of a place.

From an everyday perception there are three main places that can be distinguished: the home, the local environment particularly the neighbourhood, and the general urban landscape of the city. In the following subsections each one will be analysed.

23

1.1. Home

Home is a very complex subject to define. Historically the idea of home, especially after the Enlightenment, was associated with the idea of a constituted space in which the individual can be free from the constraints and impositions of the public space, a place of autonomy (Kaika 2004). But today as then home has also many other meanings, which are also contradictory, as demonstrated by Shelley Mallet:

> "Clearly the term home functions as a repository for complex, inter-related and at times contradictory socio-cultural ideas about people's relationship with one another, especially family, and with places, spaces, and things. It can be a dwelling place or a lived space of interaction between people, places, things; or perhaps both. The boundaries of home can be permeable and/or impermeable. Home can be singular and/or plural, alienable and/or inalienable, fixed and stable and/or mobile and changing. It can be associated with feelings of comfort, ease intimacy, relaxation and security and/or oppression, tyranny and persecution. It can or can not be associated with family. Home can be an expression of one's (possibly fluid) identity and sense of self and/or one's body might be home to the self. It can constitute belonging and/or create a sense of marginalization and estrangement. Home can be given and/or made, familiar and/or strange, an atmosphere and/or an activity, a relevant and/or irrelevant concept. It can be fundamental and/or extraneous to existence" (Mallet 2004:84).

Every definition of home will be, more or less, arbitrary and fictional, because it can never include all the multiplicity of meanings and processes that the word 'home' has in everyday life. It is therefore impossible to give a definitive definition of home, but at least some of the general characteristics of this place can be delineated.

We can broadly define home as the most basic urban distinction or the most basic unit of our dwelling, "a spatial context in which the day to day routines of human existence are performed" (Hiscock 2001:51). We can sustain this idea, from a Heideggerian focus, with the assertion that we don't dwell *on the* world, we dwell *in the* world "only by means of building" (Heidegger 1971:1). We can't dwell without building, and the home constitutes the most basic form of building to our everyday perception[2]. From this somewhat simplistic definition, we can abstract some key elements that define the meaning of home.

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[2] For this same reason, we cannot construe our self or our body as the most basic unit of dwelling, because we cannot inhabit ourselves, we cannot dwell inside ourselves because to dwell is to be in the world through building, through material and spatial structures for living. Even homeless people need some material structure in which they can dwell, although sometimes we can hardly recognize these places as homes.

In the first place, and central to this research, homes must be understood as a spatial reality, as places. Our homes as places are characterized first of all by a principle of exclusion (Kaika 2004:273-275). The initial idea of the home was to exclude natural elements (rain, cold, heat, etc.) from dwelling places in order to establish a controlled space of comfort and well-being. This exclusion is not only natural but also social; it includes the exclusion of the stranger or the unknown outside a determinate sphere of the known.

Behind the idea of the home, is the search for some certainties in a world where certainty is at best infrequent. For most, the homes where we live, are located within determined coordinates and have certain characteristics that do not change in the short run. In this sense a home can be for many people a source of ontological security.

The home for many authors is central to the development of identity because "we build the intimate shell of our lives by the organization and furnishing of the space in which we live. How we function as persons is linked to how we make ourselves at home" (Ginsburg 1988:31 quoted in Mallet 2004:307). The places in which we live *are* part of us. We belong to our homes as much as we belong to our ideas, feelings and thoughts.

Our material surrounding, the material cultures in which we move during our everyday lives, especially at home, are central to what we are, or what we want to be. The idea of a radical separation between mind and body, between 'spirit' and nature is a false one. We are united and every aspect of this unity (the material or the mental, the cognitive or the aesthetic) forms a central part of who we are in the world.

Home is central to our constitution as individuals in another crucial way. Home is the place of routine and repetition. Routine can be defined as "the mundane process by which meaning is created and maintained even in the face of the chronic flux and disturbance of experience" (Martin 1984:23 quoted in Highmore 2004:307). Through routines we learn and participate in certain cultures at different level (from the cultures of the home to national cultures).

We learn the socialized meanings at the same time as we participate in a particular rhythm of actions in society. Through routines and habits we become full members of

a particular society or culture to the extent that we can affirm that "our identity ...is comprised by habits" (Macgregor Wise 2000:303). Then "home is not an originary place from which the identity arises. It is not the place we 'come from': it is the place we are" (Macgregor Wise 2000:297).

Homes are not alone. In societies with high degrees of interconnectedness at every level we must consider home in a relational way, in continual interaction with "streets, open spaces, other settings and neighbourhoods" (Rapoport 2001:147). We therefore cannot fully understand homes, as spatial and meaningful phenomena if we don't locate them within a network of continual relations with other homes, localities and the urban landscapes, as we are planning to do here.

1.2. The 'local'

As with the term 'home', 'localities' is a very complex word to define. As John Urry states, localities "like other terms [is] used in quite diverse ways by different writers, it plays a variety of functions in different social scientific discourses. The same term therefore denotes a variety of concepts" (Urry 1995:71). Despite its complexity, if we look at its development in social theory we could distinguish three main moments in its history.

The first moment is related to the idea of 'localities' in the context of pre-modern, mostly rural, societies. Here the locality matches almost point to point with the space of the village or little town. A great part of the daily activities of most inhabitants were limited to the physical extent of the village. This resulted in the material space of action, the locality, also intersecting with the space of the collective, the symbolic space of community.

Here locality and community are deeply related and it is difficult to consider one without the other. This concept of locality did not distinguish "between geographical space and distinctive way of life. It seemed to assert that spatial proximity created social interaction and on the basis of that interaction, a distinctive collective social reality" (Byrne 2001:69).

This model of locality enters into crisis with the massive urbanization movements of the ninetieth and twentieth centuries. For most of the social theorists of this period "the rampant urbanization ... was seen to be producing a social order in which the

traditional ties of community – shared space, close kinship links, shared religious and moral values – were being replaced by anonymity, individualism and competition" (Forrest 2001:2125).

This change in the status of community, or its disappearance from the most pessimist outlooks, was closely related to changes in the concept of the locality. The change from the small scale village to the city also represents a big change in the geographical scale of human action. The locality can no longer be limited to the little area of the village/community. The scale has expanded greatly. In order to adapt to the new environment, individuals have to extend the reach of their everyday action, and with it, their understandings of the local, well beyond the small-scale space of their places of origin.

It should be noted that the connection between locality and the community has not disappeared completely in this new environment. Even though the space of the locality has been expanded well beyond the immediate surrounding space of each individual, most of their activities are still located within a limited, easily reached space. The concept of neighbourhoods was borne.

For this vision, neighbourhoods tend to be seen "in terms of informal relationships or social networks among persons living in a geographic space" (Small 2001:30) 30, a definition in which commonly when researchers "use the term 'neighbourhood' ... tends to mean 'community'" (Small 2001:31). This is because neighbourhoods in this period tend to be seen as "relatively class homogeneous, small-scale, easily delineated areas with clear borders, hosting relatively cohesive communities" (Blokland 2001:268). Here then, even though the idea of the local has greatly expanded its reach, its core still remains attached to the surrounding space in the form of the neighbourhood/community.

This model suffered another crisis in recent times. The close proximity between the spaces of the locality and the well-defined space of the neighbourhood increasingly appeared much more as a lament for the lost community than an everyday reality. This was caused by a mixture of social and urban changes (decrease in social capital, suburbanization/gentrification, etc.) and technological developments (especially the massive spread of communications technologies and the personal car). Neighbourhoods are increasingly being composed of

> "Individuals with very different lifestyles and social networks [who] live in close proximity without untoward interference with each other ... Each of these attitudes ... suggest distinct pattern of social activities belonging to network of social relations of very different intensity, spanning widely different territorial extents, form a few to many thousands of miles" (Albrow 1997:51).

Then today we can see the development of two related processes. On the one hand, the view of neighbourhoods as communities starts to fade away because in late modern societies "this type of concentration upon place alone as a basis for friendship [and community] formation is inappropriate in an age of high mobility" (Davies 1993:64). On the other hand, the scale of our everyday concepts of 'the local' effectively extends well beyond the area of our immediate surrounding space. Due to advances in both communication and transport technologies, we are not fixed to one place. We can live in permanent physical or virtual contact with social networks and spaces that are not located in our immediate physical environment.

These changes also have limits. Empirical research has shown that even in areas with high spatial mobility "neighbourhood attachment and neighbouring, local friendships a primary bonds [still] exist in urban areas" (Woolever 1992:99). This fact shows us how

> "Theorizations of social change derived from observed macro processes of disorder, dislocation and social and economic transformation may underestimate the importance of the lived experience of the dull routine of everyday life and its role in undertaking 'ongoing repair work to normalize social relations' (Turner, 1991, P. 18)" (Forrest 2001:2127).

The permanence of certain degree of neighbourhood attachment is also reflected in our conceptions of the local. In contemporary society "people's extended 'fields of action' are still woven around *significant places*, where their daily routines are focused, providing a localized kind of situatedness" (Durrschmidt 1997:64). Even though in practice our local areas have been extended and diversified, not all of them mean the same to us. People still distinguish between different localities, not only in functional terms, but also in affective ones.

1.3. Urban Landscape

Urban landscape is the most diffuse of the three types of places that we distinguish in our everyday lives. In some sense it is more symbolic than real. We construct our

urban landscapes in our minds rather than inhabiting them. We make a hybrid in which we put, on the one hand, our knowledge about our city and its components from direct observations and other indirect sources (media images and texts, conversations, etc.) and, in the other, our expectations, evaluations and beliefs about it. As De Certeau recognizes "'The city', like a proper name, thus provides a way of conceiving and constructing space on the basis of a finite number, isolatable, and interconnected properties" (De Certeau 1984:95).

This is not a completely arbitrary process, as the architect Kevin Lynch recognizes in his classic book *The Image of the City (1960)*:

> "Environmental images are the result of a two-way process between the observer and the environment. The environment suggests distinctions and relations, and the observer - ... - selects, organizes and endows with meaning what he [or she] sees ... Thus the image of a given reality may vary significantly between different observers. ... Each individual creates and bears his own image, but there seems to be substantial agreement among members of the same group (Lynch 1960:6-7).

This agreement is based in the fact that every environment suggests to us a series of common elements or attributes of urban spaces (identified by Lynch as paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks) that we use as the base for our mental constructions. At the same time our common experiences as members of different social networks (families, groups of friends, neighbours) provide us with a series of socially accepted meanings and ways of interpreting these attributes. In terms of the latter, there is always space for personal creativity and perception. Resulting from this the meaning we ascribe to each of these attributes, and the whole picture of the urban landscape that we form with them, may vary radically from individual to individual.

Through the continual processes of individual and social construction of urban landscapes, we can see how "the living space of the city exists as representation and projection and experience as much as it exists as bricks and mortar or concrete or steel" (Donalds 1997:182 quoted by Jacobs 2002:110). We do not inhabit these spaces; they are always beyond our concrete dwellings, but we use them as reference frameworks to give meaning to and locate our experiences in everyday life. They constitute, in some sense, the spatial counterparts of the socio-political "imagined communities" (Anderson 1991) that we create in relation to the national and institutional order.

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Then

> "Cities are understood and experienced in a range of contradictory yet reinforcing ways. Fundamental is the interplay between the 'Real' city of lived personal experience and the 'imaginary' city of representation and fantasy. ... While the real city appears to be soundly located and constructed within personal biography and the physical world, the imaginary city somehow seems to defy time, space and identity ... The imagined city thus intersects with the real to construct intimate personal relationship with place" (Stevenson 2003:113).

2. Critiques (and Counter-critiques) of Place

We can ask to what degree this definition of places represents the perception of place of the inhabitants of contemporary societies. A model of place based on the distinction between homes, localities and urban landscapes could be seen as characteristic of urban life since the start of the great urbanization processes related to the Industrial Revolution of the late eighteenth century. Is this division still of use to our societies? Do we have to develop new definitions of place that, based on developments in social theory, allow us to better understand how individuals perceive their surrounding environment?

Among these recent developments there is one area that is crucial to the study of the changes in space perception in everyday life: mobility studies. This area of social research argues that among the changes that our societies have seen during recent times there is one of special relevance to the field of space perception: the high, and ever increasing degree of mobility.

The roots of this process can be traced to the beginning of modern society. From its start "the experience of modernity is about movement. Mobility is a very basic constituent of the modern" (COST269 2002:27). If we look at the different elements that have been included in the diverse notions of the word "Globalisation", mobility is always defined as a principle factor, a cause and also a consequence, of it. From Castells's notion of the 'network society' (Castells 1996; Castells 2000) to Appadurai's idea of the 'global cultural flows' (Appadurai 1996) mobility of money, ideas, images, objects, money, etc. appear at the centre of the dynamic of late modern societies. In this context we can understand globalisation mostly as "the growing interconnectedness of different parts of the world, a process which gives rise to complex forms of interaction and interdependency" (Thompson 1995a:149).

At the level of the everyday, this mobility is central to the experience of globalisation. Ulrich Beck states,

> If we are to understand the social figure of a globalisation of personal life, we must focus on the oppositions involved in stretching between different places. This requires, among others things, that mobility should be understood in a new way. Mobility in the old sense -- mobility of a single unit (family, couple or individual) between two places (points) in the social hierarchy or landscape – has been losing or changing significance. What is coming is the fore in the *inner* mobility of an individual's own life, for which coming and going, being both here and there across frontiers at the same time, has become the normal thing ... Inner mobility is no longer the exception but the rule, not something alien but something familiar, constantly occurring in many different forms ... Inner, as opposed to outer, mobility thus denotes the extent of mental and physical mobility that is necessary or desirable to master everyday life between different worlds (Beck 2000:75-76).

Different kinds of mobilities are at the very centre of the experience of living in contemporary society. From the availability of foreign produced clothes or food to the global adoption of concepts of private property, capital, citizenship or human rights, living in a modern society is to have access to a vast amount of non-local material and immaterial products, symbols and ideas that can be divided in two main groups: material and symbolic.

Physical mobility involves the moveability of people and objects. In relation to the first, one of the characteristic features of this period is the ever increasing number of people in transit from one place to another. Tourists, migrants, executives, students, refugees are all at the centre of the dynamic of contemporary societies. Mobility of people is also much more quotidian. One of the main characteristics of contemporary urban life is the high increase in the number of people who move inside and between cities. Mobility has become central to thinking that it is seen as a "political right" today (COST269 2002) or as one of the worst types of social exclusion generated by the global capitalist society (Bauman 1998; Shove 2002).

The relevance of mobility in everyday life is not exclusive to the movement of people; the movement of objects is also central to the dynamic of contemporary society.

> "Objects travel often in conjunction with the movements of people. This implies that in some senses cultures travel and are not simply fixed in terms of a set of objects which are

rooted in place. Rather objects follow diverse and complex *routes*. The dwellingness of
objects is not fixed of given – they appear to travel as much as they dwell" (Urry 2000:64).

Objects are central not only because the considerable disposition of commodities
constitutes a central component of capitalist society, but also because they are never
just innocuous objects. Urry acknowledges that they carry culture; they carry certain
meaning and ways to see the world that, in conjunction with other processes,
constitutes a central part of what is like to live in contemporary society. From the
global dissemination of fashion trends to alternative ways to perceive the relations
between work and leisure, the access to non-local objects are central to many of the
constitutive aspects of our everyday lives. Objects, as well as people carry symbols.

Symbolic mobility refers to the mobility of all symbolic content. This includes all kinds
of mobility of information from personal communication between non-present peers
to television programs, movies and popular music. We must also include in these
categories all kind of ideas, discourses and ways to see the world that can be
extracted (through a process of second-order reading) from the content of any of this
symbolic material. Access to material mobilities (both in the form of people and
objects) also plays a key role in the circulation of symbols in contemporary societies.
It is difficult to have a clear picture of contemporary society without considering the
enormous amount of non-local symbolic content that pervades almost every aspect
of our everyday lives with the innovations in the field of media technologies.

In contemporary societies mobility can be seen,

> "In a broad-ranging generic sense, embracing physical movement such as walking and
> climbing to movement enhanced by technologies, bikes and buses, cars and trains, ship
> and planes. It also includes movements of images and information on local national, and
> global media ... the study of mobility also involves analysis of the immobile infrastructures
> that organise the intermittent flow of people, information and image, as well as the border
> or 'gates' that limit, channel and regulate movement or anticipated movement" (Urry
> 2004a:27).

It is important to keep in mind that most of these mobilities are still heavily based on
spatial mobility, despite all the mid-nineties discourse on the new media revolution
and how it will give us access to the world-from-our-living-rooms (Rheingold 1993;
Turkle 1996).. As has been said, "the modern world produces no reduction in the
degree to which co-present interaction is preferred and necessary across a wide

range of tasks" (Urry 2002:259). This compulsion to proximity "limits the degree and kind of organizational, temporal, and spatial reshaping that the new technologies can induce" (Boden and Molotch 1994:277 quoted by Urry 2002:260).

Returning to our main theme of enquiry, in this context of high mobility the idea that people still perceive more or less fixed places in their everyday life could seem a little outdated. In a world of constant movement, in which even objects and institutions that used to be defined by their immobility (public services, portable video players, etc.) have gained a certain degree of mobility, it is difficult not to think that place perceptions have also been transformed in response to these changes. In this context a schema of places ordered around the distinction between home-local-urban landscape seems to maintain "a tendency in the existing literature to think in terms of 'spheres' or 'spaces', concepts that are often static and 'regional' in character" (Sheller 2003:108).

It is therefore necessary to start to develop models of places that take these changes into consideration. Whilst this task has not been completed, some elements needed for this new concept of places have been outlined by Mimi Sheller and John Urry in their "new mobilities paradigm":

> "Places are thus dynamic – 'places of movement' according to Hetherington (1997). Places are like ships, moving around and not necessarily staying in one location. In the new mobilities paradigm places themselves are seen as travelling, slow or fast, greater of shorter distances within networks of human and nonhumans agents. Places are about relationships, about the placing of people, materials, images and the systems of difference they perform ... [The new mobilities paradigm] sees places as contingently stabilized sources of deeply held meanings and attachments but where these stem from networks that enable embodied and material performances to occur. So forms of transport do not determine places, places are not fixed or authentic, nor do nomads overwhelm them and not de non-places of movement evade practices of place stabilization and significance (Sheller and Urry 2005:4)

From this perspective of contemporary society we leave behind 'fixed' places as something from history. We open ourselves to the almost chaotic contemporary highly connected society, in which constant flows set the tone for a growingly number of social relations, institutions and processes. Under these conditions the only concept of places that people can develop is the one of 'mobile' places, highly flexible concepts of place formed by contingent elements grouped by a diversity of causes in a fixed moment of time. The general statement here seems to be that "in a

world characterized by virtual communication, institutional deregulation and the movement of capital, information, objects and people at great speed across large distances, social life cannot be seen as firmly located in particular places with clear boundaries" (Savage 2005:1).

But there are two main critiques that we can make to this focus on 'mobile', rather than 'fixed', places. Firstly "most mobilities are nothing new" (Favell 2001:392). A certain degree of spatial and symbolic mobility is a constant in human history. Even in periods commonly perceived as "static", like the Middle Ages, there was movement of all kinds of objects, symbolic communications and people throughout Europe, as the work of the French historian Jacques Le Goff (2004) has shown:

> "Our vision of a static medieval population is mistaken. In a very slow and footsore version of the internet, students used the network of awful roads to crisscross the continent in the search for masters and knowledge; pilgrimages ensured a stirring of the rural porridge (...); while poets, by singing at the dusty heels of their royal benefactors, helped to secure the Europe-wide success of the two great and now much-lamented ideals of the period - courtliness and probity (the latter a mixture of wisdom and moderation)" (Thorpe 2005:23).

High degrees of mobility were a central aspect from the very beginning of the historical period known as 'Early Modern Times'. The idea of a 'static' modernity, in opposition to a 'dynamic' or 'fluid' or 'liquid' one, is a fiction in terms of spatial mobility[3]. Mobility and modernity are intrinsically related and we cannot think in any kind of modern society, even the proto modernity of the Middle Ages, without counting higher degrees of spatial and symbolic mobility as a constitute element of its dynamic. This is why because

> "The dissolution of a simple presence at the nexus between technology and the every-day is one of the defining characteristics of modernity right through the ages. In fact, both the historical and the contemporary presence of modernity can be said to be contaminated by different forms of absence" (Strohmayer 1997:156)

The absences that constitute modernity as defined by Strohmayer - with the development of money as a symbol representing absent goods - appear as a consequence of the social need to coordinate action over vast territories and this is only possible with mobility of different goods and symbols. From its very beginning "the space we call Europe and its colonial expansion was furthermore to be

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[3] In this sense what is new is not mobility as such, but the speed of the process.

transformed in an increasingly fluid space in which the presence of wealth in one region was potentially forever on the move" (Strohmayer 1997:157). This condition, if the scale and the speed of the process is speeded up, is no different from contemporary high-speed global flows of capital, people, risks, objects and symbolic communications.

Secondly, these visions tend to "underestimate the importance and contradiction of 'border management' in a world of flows and networks" (Beck 2004:44). The flow of symbols, people and objects is not free and random in our societies, and in more than one sense is more structured and determined than ever before. This unequal structure operates not only in terms of access to contents of services but also in terms of access to the infrastructure necessary to receive them (For some examples see the introduction of Graham 2001). Globalisation has to be seen "as a repatterning of fluidities and mobilities on the one hand and stoppages and fixities on the other, rather than an all-encompassing world of fluidity and mobility" (Beck 2004:45), in which mobility "is full of detours and non insurable risks" (Vogl 2004:6).

In contemporary society mobility is still unequally distributed and "those individuals who are best able to move geographically are also most likely to achieve inter-generational social mobility (Savage 1988:554). Whilst "the connection between spatial and social mobility is getting weaker[4]" (Vogl 2004:1), this weakness "does not mean that the compulsion to geographical movement is declining, but social and physical mobility can be uncoupled" (ibid.). This results in a situation "for many social groups it is the lack of mobility that is the real problem and they will seek to enhance their social capital through access to greater mobility" (Urry 2002:264). In practical terms, global mobilities of all kinds have to coexist "with an undeniable, stubbornly enduring physical distance between places and people in the world, which the technological and social transformations of globalisation have not conjured away" (Tomlinson 1999:4). For most people "the world beyond the local exists as a visible totality only in discourse and image" (Durham Peters 1997:91).

Against the arguments of Putnam (2000), for whom higher degrees of spatial mobility represents one of the key elements in the reduction of social capital in contemporary society, John Urry argues that "social capital depends upon the range, extent and modes of mobility, especially vis-à-vis the mobilities of other social groups.

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[4] "People have to be mobile but this doesn't always mean in a spatial way. More and more they do not need to be spatially in motion to be accepted as a mobile person" (Vogl, 2004:1)

Interventions that reduce, channel or limit such mobilities will weaken social capital and generate new forms of social exclusion ... [because] participation involves issues of transportation and mobility" (Urry 2002:265).

This exclusive character of mobility is quite clear if we analyse, as an example, the access to what Mike Featherstone and others[5] calls *automobilities*, "the combination of autonomy and mobility" (Featherstone 2004:1). If we understand cars as "a major factor shaping everyday life in modern societies and continually broadening the individual's optional places of mobility" (Canzler 2004:69) we can see how limiting is the exclusion from this means of mobility. New shopping places, public services and recreational areas are progressively being located and designed for people arriving and leaving by car, not for people arriving by public transport (Graham 2001:5). The car functions as a key stratifying factor (in the classical meaning of the term). Those who have a car can participate in urban life. Those who do not are left behind, stuck in their immobility and only able to take 'second hand' alternatives and opportunities.

In contemporary society mobility can be seen as a scarce resource. Like any other scarce resource, it has a certain value (even an economic one) that can be measured (in hours, kilometres, money etc.) and it is unequally distributed in society. In this respect mobility is no different to any other commodity or service that possessed in different degrees by individuals and groups and to which a definite economic, cultural and social value can be attributed. Thus mobility has to be seen as a potential with "the competence to move and a specific set of capabilities and skills which enables actors to realize specific plans and projects" (Bonss 2004:15).

Conclusions

How can we define the way places are perceived in contemporary societies? The somewhat traditional position recognizes the existence of certain meaningful spatial spheres (houses, localities and urban landscapes) structured around more or less static individuals. This vision has been criticised for being too static to permit a full understanding of the way people perceive urban space in contemporary societies. With the increasing levels of all kinds of mobilities, there is a suggestion to replace the primacy of static places with the concept of 'mobile' places, or spatial

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[5] See the special issue of Theory, Culture and Society 2004, vol 21 (4/5) devoted entirely the different aspects of car cultures (but curiously none of the articles is devoted to the theme put it here, the exclusion of automobility, a phenomena as powerful as automobility not only in developing countries but between low-income groups in developed countries also).

configurations based on the idea of constant mobility and change. This second position has been criticized as most mobilities are not new and, commonly these 'new mobilities' are based to varying degrees on both material and symbolic immobility.

Despite the differences, the validity of the concept of place in understanding the way people perceive space in their everyday lives is still recognised. There was a tendency during the late eighties/early nineties to declare "the death of place" (Meyrowitz 1985; Virilio 1998), partly due to new developments in communication technologies.. But, as we saw here, the perception that pervades current developments is related to a change in the characteristics of places rather than a complete dismissal of the term. People still live in places; they still 'dwell' in Heidegger's terms. The main question is about in what kind of places do they live.

In answering the second question, the relationship between traditional approaches to urban places and recent developments in mobility theory seems to be less harmonic. Although they both recognize places as the structuring principle, the characteristics that they both attach to them are quite different: stable, structured and a source of attachment on the one hand; mobile, fluid and contingent on the other.

Both positions represent different approaches to place and in some sense they are both correct. Places can be either stable or mobile', structured or fluid. We can feel a certain degree of attachment or just relate to them in a contingent way. We conclude from this review of different approaches to urban space and place in social theory that there is a lack of a conception of place that permits the integration of both static and mobile positions

The rest of this section of the thesis hunts for such a concept of place in the social context under study: the everyday life of a group of 20 families living in the social housing estate in Santiago, Chile[6]. In order to do so in chapter 3 we see how the idea of places as stable and structured works in the contexts under study. Then in chapter 4 we will try the other position and see how a model based on mobilities works in the same field. Finally in chapter 5, and based on our empirical findings both in chapter 3

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[6] In this sense it is important to keep in mind that all our findings and conceptualisations are, first and foremost, in reference to our particular case study. Any application of the findings to any other social field will need further research and analysis.

and 4, we put forward a way to define the conceptions of place of the members of the families under study.

Chapter 2

Studying everyday life in Santiago, Chile

Introduction

The fieldwork of this thesis was conducted in the city of Santiago, Chile, over 8 months from October 2003 to May 2004. During this period a series of in-depth interviews were carried out with members of 20 families living in a social housing estate called "Tucapel Jimenez II" located in the borough of Renca, Santiago. In addition to the interviews, their homes and the physical locality of the estate was subject to explicit observation and examination using field notes and photography which were used with the information collected during the interviews in the final analysis.

Diverse secondary information was collected about the characteristics of everyday life in contemporary Chilean society (ranging from time-use studies to the spatial diagram of the area) to provide the framework within which the qualitative information was located and compared in order to give a more general picture of the field of study.

In this chapter we first describe the field under study, both in general terms (the city of Santiago and the Borough of Renca) and in particular relation to the housing estate and the families under study. In the second part we describe and analyse the methodology and research tools utilized in the empirical research. This chapter concludes with a reflection on the problems and advantages of the fieldwork together with a consideration of the ethical aspects of this research.

1. The Field

1.1. Changes in the last decades

From the beginning of the 1990's, Chilean society has achieved a series of important economic, political and social advancements that can be viewed as a part of a bigger process of social modernization. "The country has maintained a high rate of growth, real wages have increased, and inflation and unemployment have decreased to historic levels. In addition, the quantity, variety and destination of exports have increased substantially" (PNUD 1998:34). Over the past fifteen years Chile has more than doubled its *per capita* income level. In addition, poverty continues to fall as human development rises. At the same time "social spending has doubled, particularly in education, health, and housing. Both regional and communal decentralization has advanced, and people are increasingly prioritised in the design of public policies" (PNUD 1998:23).

As an example of these changes, we can see in graph number 1 the decreasing level of poverty in the metropolitan area of Santiago, in comparison with other South American metropolitan areas. Between 1986 and 2002, poverty in the metropolitan area of Santiago was consistently reduced from 38.3% to 13.5%. This is especially relevant in the context of South America where a clear trend in this direction cannot be seen and in some cases (especially Argentina) the reverse is true with a marked impoverishment of the metropolitan population.

Graph 1. Evolution of poverty levels in metropolitan areas
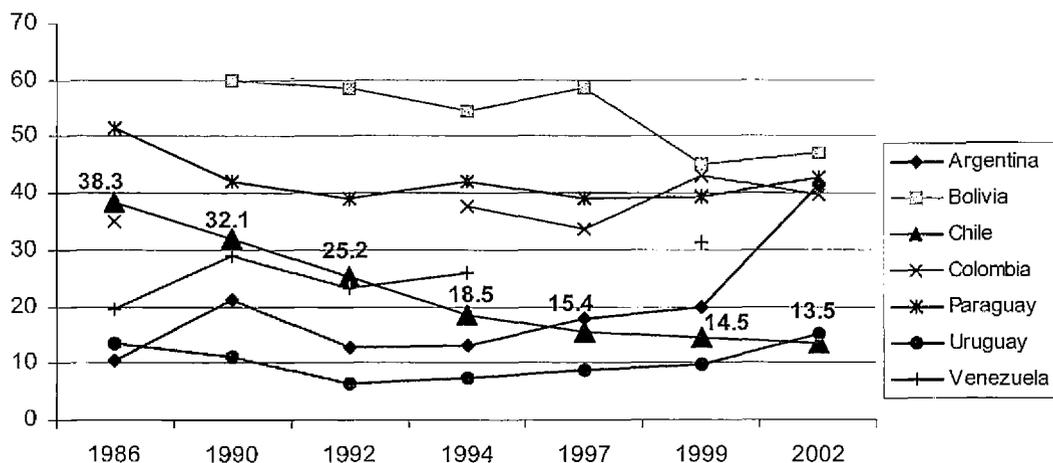
Source: BADEINSO (CEPAL 2004)

These accelerated processes of change coexist with the maintenance and/or appearance of some socio-economic and cultural problems. The principle economic issue in Chile currently is the fact that Chile is a society with one of the highest rates of inequality in the distribution of income in the world (Contreras 2003; Raczynski 1999). This inequality leads us to the reality that often "the high levels of macroeconomic growth exhibited in Chile bear no relation whatever to the unsatisfactory quality of life of a large sector of the population" (Berardi 2001:48). According to data of the Inter-American Bank of Development (IDB) in Chile, the richest 20% of the population have incomes that are 17 times greater than the poorest 20% (BID 1998).

On the cultural side, the main problem is the erosion of the traditional image of the country. As the human development in Chile report affirms: "the inherited image of 'Chilean' has become blurred and is not very credible for most people. The sense of belonging has also weakened. Today, Chilean society does not seem to have a self-image of that allows it to be an agent. A conflicting image of its past and a weak plan for its future contribute to this" (PNUD 2002:34). This process is related to the fact that contemporary Chilean society is characterized by the growing importance of the process of individualization: "more and more, people have to define their objectives, values, and projects on their own. This process has not been coupled with a matching development of the social resources needed to fulfil it. This causes anxiety and social withdrawal in people" (PNUD 2002:35). These changes lead to a reformulation of the views about themselves, and society as a whole. In this new social environment, the contemporary Chilean population is forced to reformulate or change its well-understood traditional set of definitions and values to give meaning to their everyday experience.

In general we can conclude that

> "Everyday life [in contemporary Chilean society] is full of paradoxes. In 12 [now 15] years of democracy, Chileans have enjoyed a remarkable improvement in the standard and quality of their everyday life. There is no doubt that the country's facade has changed, with the intent to attune democracy, economic growth and social equality. But together with acknowledging opportunities, the changes in people's ways of living are sometimes perceived as alien processes, removed from human decisions. The confusion about who we Chileans are is an inkling of how fragile the idea of a collective agent capable of conducting the social process has become. It

would seem that most Chileans do not have a strong image of themselves in terms of a 'We' (*collective actor*)" (PNUD 2002:47).

As a result of these changes the first thing to make clear when discussing urban poverty in Chile, especially in the city of Santiago, is that this is a modern phenomenum. In other words, we are dealing with modern poverty (Bengoa 1995), a "product of the changes and own characteristics of modernity, and not of the delay or absence of it" (Tironi 2003). This modern poverty is mixture of "on one hand, the old and well-known face of the absence of opportunities and innumerable difficulties to satisfy an important number of basic needs, but, on the other, today poor people are absolutely different to those of 20 and 30 years ago. They are integrated, symbolically and as consumers in society, although they are still segregated in social and spatial terms" (Raczynski 1999). Some of it specific characteristics can be seen in box 1.

We are seeing the rise and development of an heterogeneous poverty, as "in reality poverty is not a unitary phenomena but a plurality of different poverties that coexist in the same social environment" (Tironi 2003:25).

1.2. Tucapel Jimenez II housing estate

Tucapel Jimenez II[7] is a social housing estate located on the eastern boundary of the Borough of Renca, Santiago. This borough is located at the northwestern end of the city of Santiago and has clear boundaries with neighbouring boroughs with the Pan-American Highway to the east, Mapocho River to the south, Renca hills to the north and Americo Vespucio Avenue to the west.

Box 1. Some characteristics of Chilean new urban poverty (Raczynski 1999:10-13)

- The poverty is urban, concentrated in the great cities of the country where the poor increasingly reside in remote places in the outskirts.
- Demographic life expectancy, access to education, health and to urban services of water and light have risen significantly.
- The poor sections have been integrated, effectively and symbolically, into a consumer society and the values and attitudes associated with it.
- The number of children borne by women has reduced and there is a tendency towards the primacy of a nuclear family model.
- The manifestations of poverty, that in the past were associated with deficiencies of feeding and shelter, and access to health and education, today are expressed in the deficient quality of the accessible services, in addition to small homes, absence of communitarian equipment, green areas and facilities for recreation.
- For these groups the reality of poverty is intermingled with the new problems that society faces including drugs, violence, citizen insecurity and environmental deterioration.
- Poverty is more heterogeneous than in the past in terms of work. Today different rates of economic participation, types of work insertion, and stability in the workplace exist.

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[7] Named after Tucapel Jimenez (1921-1982), a union leader assassinated by Pinochet's intelligence agency (DINA) members in 1982.

42

According to the 2002 Chilean census (INE 2003), the borough had in 2002 a population of 133,518 people (3.7% more than in the 1992 census). This population tends to be predominantly children and young adults (as reflected in the population of the housing estate). On the other hand, both education and unemployment indicators show us that the borough is inhabited mostly by people with low degrees of formal education (more than 70% of the population does not have a complete secondary education) and with high levels of unemployment in the economically active population (20%).

This situation is reflected in the indicators of poverty. Graphic 2, based on information given by the National Socioeconomic Characterization Survey (CASEN) for the year 2000 shows us that approximately 20% of the population of the borough is below the poverty line and, most important, almost half of this group is recognized as indigent people (the most critical condition of poverty in the terminology of the survey), a quantity that triplicates the percentage of indigents for the metropolitan area of Santiago. The problem of the borough is not that they have too many poor people, but that an important number of poor people live in a situation of extreme poverty.

Graph 2. Population under the line of poverty in 2000
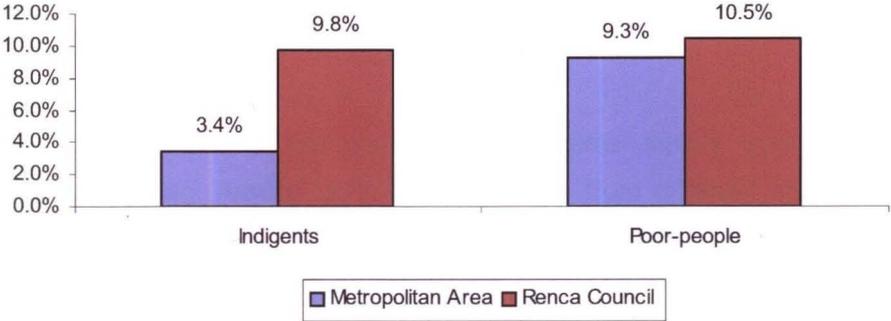
Source: CASEN 2000 (MIDEPLAN 2001)

As with the rest of the country's population, the comparison between the data from the 1992 and 2002 censuses show that the population of the Renca has experienced important improvements in education levels especially in terms of access to secondary education (INE 2003).

43

Using a more holistic approach to human well-being, the report "Desarrollo Humano en las Comunas de Chile" (Human Development in the Boroughs of Chile) (PNUD 2000a) ranks the borough of Renca in 114th position out of the 333 boroughs considered. This position seems quite good for a borough with high unemployment and poverty, but putting the information given into the context of the boroughs of the metropolitan region of Santiago, the reality looks quite different. Renca occupies the 42nd place out of the 52 boroughs that form the region. In relation to the urban areas, there are only three urban boroughs that are in a worst position than Renca (the three poorest boroughs in the city). This position reflects the borough's deficiencies in terms of access to health (156th in national ranking), access to education (111th) and low income (107th).

Tucapel Jimenez II housing estate was built by a private housing company on behalf of the Chilean housing and urbanism service (SERVIU) of the government of Chile and it has been inhabited since June 2002. The housing estate in composed by 876 flats arranged in groups of three-storey o-shaped buildings with an average of 24 flats each as can be seen in the map presented in picture 3.

In terms of its environment, as previously stated, the housing estate is located on the western edge of the borough, surrounded mostly by empty fields used for agriculture. The main access to the estate is from a dual carriageway Vicuña Mackenna, that works as a very clear boundary between the housing estate and other areas of the borough (the bottom in picture 5).

The current inhabitants of the housing estate came mainly from two different conditions of dwelling. Around 30% of them came from different shanty towns or campamentos[8] in the borough of Renca: Apostol Santiago (110 families) and El Cerro (125 families), along with people from a campamento called El Castillo (20 families) located in the neighbouring borough of Pudahuel. The living conditions in this campamentos were very basic, especially in terms of the quality of housing (made commonly of light materials) and of access to social services such as health and education.

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[8] Like the most well-known terms 'Favelas' (in Brazil) or 'Villas Miseria' (in Argentina), 'Campamento' is a term used commonly in Chile to describe areas of poor quality housing typically (but not always) located in the outskirts of the cities in which lives the most poor groups of the population.

Picture 5. Map of Tucapel Jimenez II housing estate

Source: Research department, Ministerio de Vivienda y Urbanismo (Housing and Urbanism Office), Government of Chile

These informal settlements usually have three key characteristics in spatial terms (Kellet 2003a:87):

- These environments are conceived and constructed by the inhabitants themselves independently of external controls and professional advice.
- Occupation and construction frequently takes place simultaneously.
- Such places are usually in a process of dynamic change and demonstrate considerable ingenuity and creativity within limited resource constraints.

45

The remainder of the inhabitants (around 70%) came from families that were applying to the different regular social housing programs offered by SERVIU and they used to live in Renca or in other neighbouring boroughs, such as Recoleta, Pudahuel and Cerro Navia (Carrasco 2002:18). Most residents had previously lived with their extended families (especially parents) in overcrowded houses, a condition known as 'allegamiento'[9] [backyard accommodation]. This situation is common in the country in an international context (Crankshaw 2000) for many reasons including the resistance of military authorities to informal settlements during the Pinochet Dictatorship, "the distinct lack of rental accommodation" (ibid. 844) and "the absence of consolidated self-help housing" (ibid.). As a result of this situation

> "In Santiago backyard accommodation is part of a family survival strategy. The allegados are either facing economic, matrimonial or social problems, or they are waiting in the long queue to receive their subsidy from the state and to move into their own house" (Crankshaw 2000:847).

The different origins gives rise to various problems in terms of the community life inside the housing estate. On the one hand, the people who came from campamentos often use to criticise their social situation in contrast with the strong communal ties that characterized life in shantytowns. On the other hand, the families that came from situations of allegamiento commonly evaluate themselves as different from, or superior to the people of campamentos. This is because "many household accommodating allegados are not at all poor" (Crankshaw 2000:851). Commonly backyard living was used not to alleviate an immediate need of housing, but as a tactic to save money for a house of one's own.

As can be seen in picture 4, the spatial distribution of the flats is quite simple. There is a living and dining room, a kitchen, a toilet, and two bedrooms, all compressed into 38 square meters on average. Taking into consideration that for these groups the average number of family members is 4.4 (Tironi 2004), an average that is higher for the 20 families under study (4,9), there were situations of overcrowded homes no different from those where these families used to live.

The 20 families under study can be characterized mostly as middle aged couples (with an average age of 35 years) that have around 2,8 children each one with an

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[9] The term allegamiento refers to the condition of families or individuals that don't have a house of their own, so they are forced to live in the houses of close kin or friends, or to rent a place in the house of others, often in overcrowd conditions.

average age of 10 years. In terms of education, none of them received university or technical studies and only 68% has finished secondary education. For this reason the majority work in the primary sector (as security personnel, taxi-drivers, blue-collar workers, etc.) and the levels of integration of women into the formal work market is still very low. Only in two families both parents have permanent jobs. Finally, in terms of religion, they are mostly Catholics, but there are also a significant number of Evangelics (35% of the households) [10].

Picture 6. Map of the houses
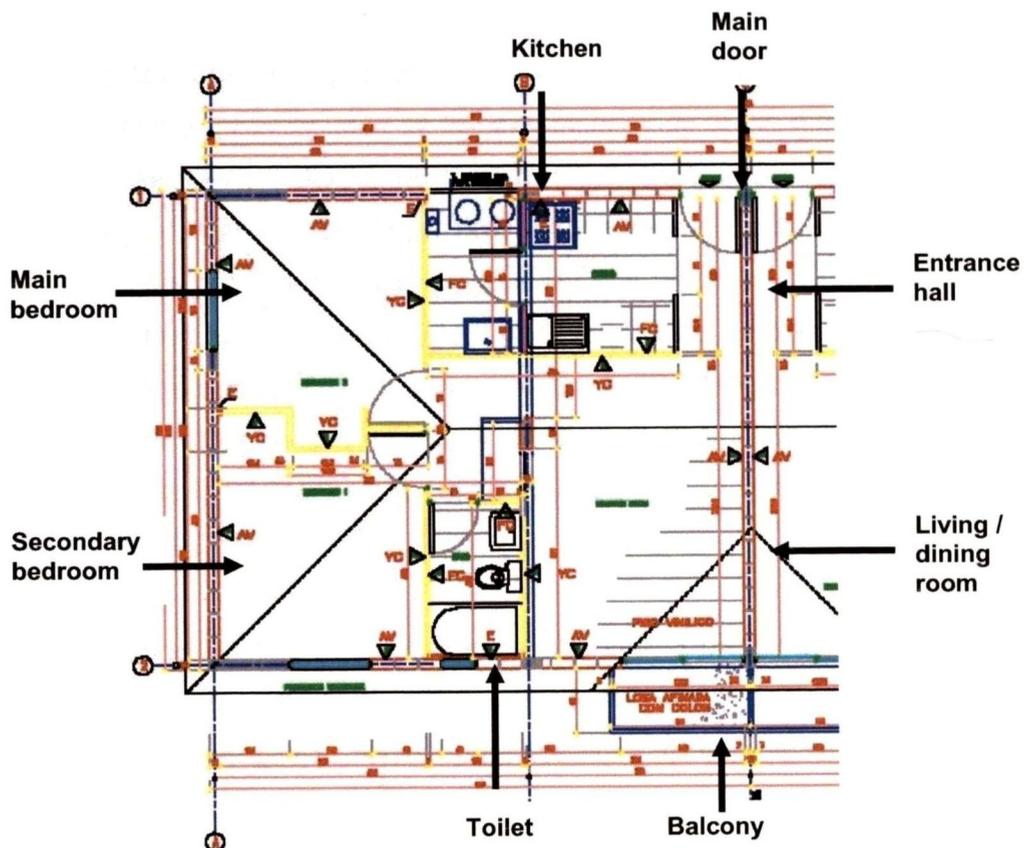
Source: Research department, Ministerio de Vivienda y Urbanismo (Housing and Urbanism Office), Government of Chile

In terms of its origins, the families are also divided between the ones that came from *campamentos* and the ones that came from the regular social housing programs of SERVIU. In this sense both groups of families were selected because they replay, in a small and easily researchable scale, the problems and tensions related to the integration of the inhabitants into life on the housing estate.

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[10] A more detailed description of each family group studied can be found in annex 1

2. Methods used

How can we empirically study the everyday? How can we describe, using the words of the French novelist Georges Perec, "what is happening when nothing is happening?" (quoted by Becker 2001). More specifically, how can we analyse social conceptions and processes that are generally unconscious (or not fully formulated) to the actors involved in its creation and development, as the use and perception of time and space are?

In this scenario, ethnography is the branch of research that gives us the best tools to study the everyday use and perception of space and its relations with media technologies. Ethnography "focuses on the empirical study of the mundane practices through which interactive order is produced" (Flick 2002:23). It therefore shows through the study of everyday practices how the routines (like time and space use) and conceptions (like time and space perception) that we have in our everyday life are adapted, constructed and used inside a particular social field. In order to do this, we understand ethnography as "a family of methods involving direct and sustained social contact with agents and of richly writing up the encounter, respecting, recording, representing at least partly in its own terms the irreducibility of human experience" (Willis 2002:56).

In doing ethnography "we are interested in recording and presenting the 'nitty-gritty' of everyday life. But the 'nitty-gritty' of everyday life cannot be presented as raw, unmediated data – the empiricist fallacy, data speaking for themselves – nor can it be presented through abstract theoretical categories – the theorist and idealist trap, the lack of interest in empirical findings" (Willis 2002:78). Ethnography then has to be seen as "the sensitive register of how experience and culture indicate, as well as help to constitute, profound social and structural change, and that change and continuity in change have to be conceptualised in ways not contained in ethnographic data themselves" (Willis 2002:67).

> 'In understanding what ethnography is, or more exactly *what doing ethnography is,*
> that a start can be made toward grasping what anthropological analysis amounts to as
> a form of knowledge. This, it must immediately be said, is not a matter of methods.
> From one point of view, that of the textbook, doing ethnography is establishing
> rapport, selecting informants, transcribing texts, taking genealogies, mapping fields,
> keeping a diary, and so on. But it is not these things, techniques and received
> procedures that define the enterprise. What defines it is the kind of intellectual effort it

is: an elaborate venture in, to borrow a notion from Gilbert Ryle, 'thick description"
(Geertz 1975:45).

'Thick description', in Geertz's sense, is a special kind of description, a description that not only takes into account the things viewed or the sounds and words heard, but also includes the ethnographer's opinions and evaluations, and interpretation of the situation. "Thick description rests on a rich material drawn from intensive fieldwork and satisfies the professional desire for depth of interpretive detail and analysis. Its opposite would be a thin description, when the ethnographer's description and interpretations rely on a limited bulk of material" (Kalocsai 2000:64).

The first characteristic of this kind of ethnography is "the recognition of the role of theory as precursor, medium, and outcome of ethnographic study and writing" (Willis 2002:23). In this context "theory must be useful in relation to ethnographic evidence... so, we are not interested in 'grand theory', 'pure' scholastic reason, or 'abstracted' empiricism. We seek to promote... all means of teasing out patterns from the texture of everyday life, from 'pure' descriptive ethnography" (ibid.).

A second central characteristic of this kind of research is the centrality of 'culture' because of "the increasing imperative for all social groups to find and make their own roots, and 'lived' meanings in societies undergoing profound processes of restructuring and detraditionalization, processes that are eroding the certainties of previous transitions and inherited cultures" (Willis 2002:76). In this context "the renewed importance of everyday cultural practices, understood from below, is picked up in different ways by virtually all the sub-categories and hyphenations of the social sciences" (Willis 2002:25). This research requires great care because in ethnographic practice, especially today, "the dangers of over-simplified readings and generalization from case examples are ever present. Since any ethnographic account of development and globalisation is necessarily partial and selective, at best it can provide a focused illumination of a part of a complex whole" (Molyneux 2001:13).

It is important to stress here that while our research had an ethnographical approach and sensibility, it cannot be considered as a pure ethnography. It was based on the use of a different set of methods; some of them (like semi-structured interviews and general quantitative information) could hardly be considered as ethnographic in a strict sense as shown by Table 1. The reason for this is that here we are not only

49

looking to make a "thick description" of a determinate site (the everyday life of these 20 families) but also to locate our findings within the bigger picture of the changes in Chilean society in the last decades, especially in relation to urban poverty.

Table 1. Summary of fieldwork's actions

Sources	Method	Applied to	Products
Primary	Semi-structured Interviews	Adults and Children	Nvivo nodes
			Temporal and spatial trajectories
	Observation	Households	Notes
			Pictures
		Villa Tucapel Jimenez II	
Secondary	General Quantitative Material (surveys, census, etc.)	A Representative Sample of Santiago's Population	General Descriptive Information

In relation to the primary sources, the fieldwork was based on semi-structured interviews and observation. Semi-structured interviews can be defined as an interview conducted using a script of a set of general questions as a starting point to guide the interaction. Nevertheless, as the aim is to capture as much as possible the subject's thinking about a particular topic or a practical task, "the interviewer follows in depth the process of thinking posing new questions after the first answers given by the subject. Consequently, by the end every interview can be different from each other" (Del Barrio 1999:67).

It is also important to note that we took a constructivist approach here to interviewing in the sense that we don't believe that "those being interviewed have access to knowledge which they can share with the researcher when they are asked" (Davies 1999:97). In everyday life people do not normally know, or at least they cannot explain or verbalize with clarity many aspects and realities in which they live, especially if they are as abstract as space perception. For this reason the interview here was understood as a process in which "both interviewer and interviewee begin with some necessarily incomplete knowledge about another level of reality – the social – and through an analysis of the character of their interaction including, but not limited to, the content of verbal interaction, they may develop this knowledge" (Davies 1999:98).

Three different sets of semi-structured interviews were conducted for this research:

- *First wave of interviews with parents[11].* At this stage 36 interviews with parents of both sexes (20 women and 14 men) from the 20 family groups selected were conducted. In each interview a set of general questions about time and space perception and use together with media technologies perception and use were asked in order to obtain a first insight of the everyday life manifestations of the research questions. Each interview lasted around one hour and a half and was recorded on tape and then transcribed and organized using NVivo software for qualitative analysis.

- *Second wave of interviews with parents.* After a first analysis of the information collected on the first wave of interviews a number of key issues regarding the questions of study arose. In order to obtain a more in-depth access to them, a second series of interviews were conducted with 33 parents[12] of both sexes (19 women and 12 men). Each interview lasted around one hour and was recorded on tape and then transcribed and organized using NVivo software for qualitative analysis.

- *Interviews with children.* One of the central issues of the second interview was the time and space perception and use and media technologies use by children. In order to obtain a first hand view of these matters a series of 14 interviews were conducted with children of both sexes (8 girls and 6 boys), ranging in age from 9 years to 14 years, members of 14 of the 20 families groups under study. Each interview lasted around one hour and was recorded on tape and then transcribed and organized using NVivo software for qualitative analysis.

In addition to the interviews, each parent was asked to give a complete account of the temporal and spatial trajectories of family members during a normal week. In order to do so, first, a time use questionnaire was given to them (prior to the interviews) in order to know the temporal distribution of their everyday lives. On a second occasion, they were asked to give a complete account (with the exact address where possible) of all the places where they went in a normal week, in order to establish their use of urban space.

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[11] The detailed script of these interviews, and of the following sets and tools, can be found in annex 2.
[12] Three parents (one women and two men) were unable to be interviewed again due to various reasons, although the whole 20 family groups has at least one of its members interviewed in the second stage.

But, as Charlotte Davis (1999) said, many researchers doing ethnography combine interviewing with observation because "at the very minimum semi-structured interviewing requires attention to the interviewee context and the relationships between participants beyond simply what is said" (Davies 1999:95). This is especially true if along with social realities, some aspects of the material culture of the social groups are being studied, as here, because "artefacts need to be explicitly distinguished from language" (Miller 1987:96). We believe that one of the better ways to do so is to study artefacts, and in general space, through a methodological approach that integrates, along with interviews, the observation of the social environment in which the social reality takes place.

Observation was a fundamental part of the research because what we seek to learn here is not only the perception of the members of the families under study, but also their current use of its physical environments, because materiality is "not natural or given, is itself a social product and as such it feeds back on the development of social forms – institutions, rituals, practices, modes of interaction activities beliefs" (Dant 1999:12). Everyday places, and especially the objects that fill them, are central to our research due to "its ability thereby to act as a bridge, not only between the mental and physical world, but also, more unexpectedly, between consciousness and unconscious" (Miller 1987:99). Meaning is only constructed in relation to a specific physical environment and the best way to research in this materiality, our very physical beings, is not only asking about it, but also making first person observation and record, for a posterior analysis in conjunction with the verbal outcomes of the semi-structured interviews.

The type of ethnographic observation developed during fieldwork is known as direct observation, a technique that is very similar to participant observation but differs in some very central ways (Delgado 1995):

- A direct observer does not typically try to become a participant in the context.
- The researcher is watching rather than taking part, providing a more detached perspective.
- This tends to be more focused than participant observation. The researcher is observing certain sampled situations or people, rather than trying to become immersed in the entire context.
- Direct observation tends to take less time than participant observation.

Direct observation can be seen as a more operational or concept-guided type of observation. In the current research two main interests guided this observation. The first of them is to know how the family members under study inhabit its urban space and the place that objects (especially media technologies), or its material culture, occupies within it. Secondly, the observational interests goes in the direction of the common parts or the housing estate, in order to describe them and try to document how its inhabitants use them.

In order to cope with the first interest, field notes of each home were made based on a semi-structured script. In addition to the notes a series of 20 to 40 photos were taken in each home trying to visually document the way the families under study use their living spaces, with a special focus on their media technologies and their use.

To study of the urban space of the housing estate, a series of pictures were taken during the months of fieldwork (October 2003 to May 2004) centred around five key places: common parts (the central square, the football grounds, the community centre, the nursery), streets, little shops, buildings and the interior spaces of them. Regular pictures of each of these spaces were taken over the months of the fieldwork that permits me to see and study in a visual way how people inhabit the physical space of the housing estate.

These images were analysed in relation to texts, in this case the material of the interviews, and other secondary sources as the only way to contextualise images that, for its own very technical characteristics have two central limitations (Davies 1999:121):

- In relation to time: the camera records a slice of time and in the case of the still photograph, quite literally an instant.
- In relation to space: the camera sees and records only a limited selection of what is to be seen by a human in the same position.

For these reasons "contemporary visual ethnography uses photography not so much to claim 'this is what is', but to create a dialogue around the competing and complementary meanings of images" (Harper 2003:244). We cannot a priori assume that images are the reality they try to represent, because they "only tell part of the truth" (Harper 2003:246). Images must always be seen and analysed in the context

of social meanings and relations that go far beyond the materiality that they represent.

Finally a wide variety of secondary materials were collected during the months of fieldwork. Most relate more to the general population of Santiago rather than the borough of Renca or the micro-social environment of Tucapel Jimenez II Housing Estate, but they help us to locate and give sense to the specific information collected in the field. At the same time, the kind of information is quite diverse ranging from official statistics and ethnographic studies to aerial pictures or architectural maps (as the ones that can be seen in the preceding section of this chapter), but they all share a reference to the city of Santiago and its contemporary inhabitants.

More specifically, the secondary information that we will use to complement the analysis can be summarised as follows:

- *Official information*: in this group we include the statistics and studies developed by the different agencies of the Chilean Government related to the issues of interest here, as well as studies and statistics developed by international organizations (UNDP, World Bank, etc.).
- *EOD study* ('Encuesta de Origen y Destino', Departure and Destination Survey) by Secretary of Transport (Sectra) of the Chilean Government. The EOD study was conducted in Santiago during 2001 and consisted of a complete questionnaire (60.000 cases) in which people were asked about their movements throughout the city in their everyday lives (destination, frequency, reason for movement, mean of transport used, etc.).
- *Time Use and Communication Technologies Survey*. This study was conducted by the Department of Sociology of Universidad Catolica de Chile in 1999 and consisted of a diary and two different questionnaires applied to a sample of 2,000 individuals, representative of the inhabitants of Santiago.
- *Other sources*: here we include a variety of different sources like theses, articles, research reports, etc. that will give us information about specific characteristics of the current living conditions of the inhabitants of Santiago, with a special focus on low-income families and individuals.
- *Graphic material*: finally, we use different visual materials, especially architectural maps of the homes under scrutiny in order to give a clear, visual, image of the social reality of the families under study.

Very diverse primary and secondary information was collected, from time use diaries to pictures of the houses, passing through personal perceptions about home furnishing to international comparative studies about the current developments in Chilean society. The problem then was how to organize the analysis of such different types of information without losing sight of the final objective of this thesis. In order to do so the information obtained during fieldwork was ordered in a structure provided by the two main theoretical questions that guide this research: how people perceive space in everyday life and what is the role of media technologies in this perception. The results of the use of this structure will be seen in further chapters of this thesis.

3. Reflections on the fieldwork

The practice of empirical research always involves a series of issues that are difficult to foresee before the start of fieldwork. In this particular piece of research there were two related types of issues: the issues related to the specific field selected for the study and secondly the issues related to the methods selected and its application to the field. In addition the ethics of this research also seemed to be an area of concern.

Firstly the decision to choose Santiago proved to be correct but also problematic. As a former resident of the city, access to the field (in this case Tucapel Jimenez II Housing Estate) was greatly facilitated by my knowledge of the city. Santiago, like any other city of over 5 million inhabitants in the developing world, is very complex mixture of different spaces, objects and people. Especially today, when the whole city is experiencing important processes of structural change, knowing the city beforehand appears as an advantage. My personal knowledge of some of the key players and institutions who have been doing research and applying policies into low-income urban settlements for many years proved to be very helpful. With their help, the selection and access to the field of study was speeded up and facilitated, with the result that only a short time has to be devoted to preliminary research activities.

My fluency in Spanish and understanding of the particular slang of low-income inhabitants of Santiago proved to be invaluable. As members of a particular culture defined by their social exclusion and its urban location, the members of the families under scrutiny express themselves in a version of the Spanish language full of neologisms and normal words with new meanings attached. Some of them are obvious and easy to identify, but many others are not explicit, even to their users.

55

Obviously access to these meanings is always limited; they are highly complex and embedded in the particular conditions of life of these families. Even the recognition of this specificity needed a certain familiarity with Chilean urban slang. With research heavily based on the analysis of interviews, this previous acquired knowledge was a great advantage both during the interviews and in the analysis of them.

This familiarity with the field of study also presents problems. These problems are mostly related with the position of the researcher as observer of reality. In ethnography there is no claim for a complete separation between the knower and the known (something completely impossible in empirical social research). The opposite alternative is also not recommended. Too closer relationship between the researcher and his/her field of study also present a problem. It may contribute to the development of 'blind spots'[13] in our perception of the field due to the lack of perspective, or spatial and perceptual distance, from it. In everyday life we tend to overlook or take for granted the practices and phenomena that we experience frequently, in order to devote more cognitive resources to un-usual practices and phenomena, which require more conscious attention. In doing so we exercise a more efficient way to deal with the world, but at the same time we tend to develop 'blind spots', areas of social reality in which we only concentrate our attention when something goes wrong or in an unexpected way. We tend to be blind to normality.

The risks involved in this blindness are especially strong when we study our own social environment because this is, by definition, the realm of normality and repetition for us. In the current case this blindness was attenuated, but never completely eliminated, by the selection of a field of study located quite distant (both spatially and in terms of social networks) from my own place of residence. After the first wave of interviews, the information collected was transcribed and analysed before the second wave in order to identify and correct weaknesses and misrepresentations of areas and issues due to my own familiarity with the field.

In general the risks involved in the election of a field of study close to my own place of residence were exceeded by the advantages of doing research in a field that I know well. There was benefit from easy access to the field and knowledge of language, and also the selection of a local field allows me to avoid the common

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[13] This concept is different, but related to what neuroscience calls 'blind spots'. These blind spots are the areas the eyes in which there are not photoreceptors because there the optic nerve meets the eye. As a result of this any image that we perceive is incomplete and have to fill in by the brain.

exoticism that tends to permeate ethnographic practice in developing countries. While the classical image of the anthropologist travelling to faraway places to live among 'pure' natives is less and less common (especially because almost no 'pure' natives exist any longer), there is a tendency to associate ethnography with certain exoticism. This is especially true when speaking about ethnographies in developing societies. This is due to a variety of causes including lack of funding, insufficiently qualified ethnographers, un-development of research institutions and the resulting fact that much of the ethnographic research is still carried out by foreign personnel and institutions. In most cases these projects were, and are, central to the development of a profound understanding of the social dynamic of these societies and its application to policy. This is particularly true for countries with structural difficulties to fund social research. But in many others this intromission results only in the confirmation of the researcher's prejudices and ideas in a new social context.

In the case of advanced developing societies, such as Chile, where funding and qualified researchers are becoming more available there is a need to develop the field of ethnography from-within. Comprehension of the deepest aspects of social life, of culture, cannot rest uniquely in research carried out by foreign actors. It has to be complemented and contrasted with local research. This is the only way in which both 'blind spots', the one of the local researcher and the one the foreign one, can be reduced, allowing a better understanding of the complexities of everyday life in these societies.

The second fieldwork issue was the people under study. The first decision here was either to select families from one housing estate or from more than one. The latter option could possibly permit the study of families who have been living in housing estates for different lengths of time, in order to compare their perceptions of space and its relations with the use of communication technologies. At the same time the selection of families from different estates in different areas of the city, would diminish the depth in which we can analyse and understand the particular dynamics of their different living environments.

In this scenario the decision taken was to do a case study, to select just one housing estate that presents the characteristics of interest to the research: relatively new (not less than one year old but no more than two years old) and a mixed group of their residents (from shantytowns and overcrowded conditions). After a first visit to four housing estates known to meet the preconditions, Tucapel Jimenez II was selected

because as its very diverse composition of families and its age were of interest and met the objectives of the research.

The second decision in relation to the people to study was the number of families to select. At the start the selection of 20 families appeared to be a good number, allowing us to reach quite a diverse array of living conditions and perceptions without being too big to be manageable or too small to finish up discussing each individual family. Having completed the fieldwork the perception is that possibly a smaller number of families, around 10 would have been better. Less families could allow us to develop a stronger and deeper insight into the lives of each one of them, something that happened with some of the families under study here (families who, consequently, are more present in the analysis) but not with all of them.

Without underestimating the value of diversity, concentration on a small number of families appeared in our case as something desirable and that was difficult to attain due to the rigid fulfilment of the number of 20 families to be studied. In general terms, the conclusion is that the very idea of a pre-determined number of entities to study (families, individuals, institutions, etc.) appears misleading. The number required is that which best supports the defined research objectives. It doesn't matter if it is one or one hundred (although it does matter in terms of time, resources and accessibility to the field).

The last remark points in the direction of my personal research background. Until starting my PhD an important part of my research experience was founded in quantitative analysis, especially surveys and time use research. This presents some problems and advantages to ethnographic practice. The main problematic area, as it seen in the case of the number of families selected, is the tendency to try to be representative of the whole rather than focus on the inner value of each case in itself. This propensity can be found throughout the thesis and in practical terms mean that, with exceptions, the analysis tend to be focus not in particular cases but on the group of 20 families as a unit, or at least in the group of families that came from the shantytowns and the ones that came from other dwelling situations. In some cases this focus means the loss of a more in-depth analysis of some particular cases that could allow a more complete understanding of the phenomena under study. In this situation the analytical richness of some cases was sacrificed for the sake of an emphasis on a choral focus.

This focus also has advantages. In general terms the choral perspective permits a holistic perspective in the analysis. The absence of such perspective is a common critique to this kind of social research (Fetterman 1997) 19. Here the unit of analysis is not each individual family, with all their particularities, but a group of families who reside on a particular housing estate. The relational aspects of everyday life are of particular interest in this field. It is insufficient to describe each family as a unit in itself. It is central to the study to see how families relate to each other, especially in terms of our key distinction between their former places of living. In these circumstances the weaknesses derived from a limited in-depth analysis of each family as a case study is compensated, at least partially, by the analysis of the whole group of families as a part of a social network among whom meanings and perceptions about everyday life are conceived, communicated and readapted.

It should be noted that the first approach to the housing estate was through a former member of the residents association. Although at the start he was quite positive and enthusiastic he was unable to secure access to other families on the estate. The second approach was through the current secretary (at the time of the fieldwork) of the residents association. The contact was fruitful and she became our gatekeeper in the estate. With her help contact with families was established based on two selection criteria: that half of them came from shantytowns and half from other living situations and that they live, when possible, in different areas of the estate.

At the start of the contact each family member, with only a few exceptions, had a positive attitude to participation in the research. At this stage the main problems were two: coordination and content. Due to the precarious integration of the members of these families into the labour market they usually had unstable schedules of work that change from week to week. It was often difficult to arrange with them (especially males) a convenient time to meet for the interviews.

The second problem was associated with the content of the interviews. Space and time perception are not easy subjects to deal with. They have to be carefully grounded to obtain information that really represents the perceptions of the subjects under study. In the current case this grounding was made by developing an open questionnaire about different issues related to time and space. This questionnaire was first tested among a reduced group of housing estate residents to check the validity of the responses to the research objectives. After some corrections this open questionnaire was applied to all the adults of the group. During interviews the

application of it was adapted or exemplified, as a way to ease the understanding of the subject when some questions proved to be difficult to understand by the interviewee.

Finally we have to discuss the research ethics. Following the guidelines of the new Research Ethics Framework published by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC 2005) there are six principles of ethical research that any social research has to address:

- Research should be designed, reviewed and undertaken to ensure integrity and quality.
- Research staff and subjects must be informed fully about the purpose, methods and intended possible uses of the research, what their participation in the research entails and what risks, if any, are involved.
- The confidentiality of information supplied by research subjects and the anonymity of respondents must be respected.
- Research participants must participate voluntarily, free from any coercion.
- Harm to research participants must be avoided.
- The independence of research must be clear, and any conflicts of interest or partiality must be explicit.

The first point was addressed throughout this thesis. From the very first steps in the planning the research until the last analyses the underlying concern was to complete a piece of high quality research that would constitute a real contribution to the understanding of the phenomena under study. The final result could be perfected at most of its stages, like any other social research, but its imperfections are not caused by any conscious misconduct or lack of integrity but are mainly the result of limited research experience and the complexity of the field under study.

From the very beginning all the participants in the research were informed in full about the purpose, methods and use of the results of this piece of research. It is important to note that all of them participated voluntarily in it addressing point four,.

Anonymity was given from the beginning of the analysis of the study. All the names of the individuals under study have been replaced by fictitious ones in order to protect their identities. All other identifying personal information (address, telephone number, place of work) has not been disclosed. Some other generic personal information like gender and age has been revealed being necessary for research purposes and not enabling any individual to be identified. Through these means, any

60

potential harm to any of the participants (although quite small in a research like this) was avoided in accordance with the fifth point.

This research is completely independent in line with the sixth point. The period of study was partially funded by "Presidente de la Republica" scholarship given by the government of Chile whose sole requirement was the analysis of a certain social field to produce a thesis fulfilling the requirements to obtain a PhD in Media and Communications. The information has not been used in any other way.

Chapter 3

Changing places

Introduction

In chapter 1 we saw how the traditional approaches to everyday space perception see places as a mixture of material objects and spaces that have a certain meaning to us. This meaning is not only characterised by the main features of these spaces, but also by the history of our relationships with the place. In this sense, places are always 'lived space' (Lefebvre 1991), the meeting point of the physical and the social. Places constitute our way to inhabit the world as human beings, or way of dwelling the world, in Heidegger's terms. We develop relations with our everyday space, (attachment, isolation, belonging, strangeness, identity, etc.) and in doing so we transform it into places, spaces filled with meaning.

But today the idea that we perceive and order our everyday environment as places has been widely criticised. This idea of places has been shown to be too static particularly by developments in the area of transport and communication technologies, and the increase in both spatial and virtual mobility that they cause. In a constantly changing world, critics say that there is no space or time to develop the kind of attachment to space that a 'place' concept like this seems to see as a precondition of our involvement with the world. We therefore have to reformulate the concept in order to make it sensitive to the series of mobile objects, people and symbolic communications that form a constitutive part of our everyday lives.

In this chapter we attempt to validate this traditional approach to 'place' using our field study. In order to do so we analyse empirically the existence of the three main types of places previously mentioned: houses, neighbourhoods and urban landscape. In each case we try to elucidate from the perception of the people under study and from secondary sources (in the case of the urban landscape of the city) how these 'places' have changed in recent times, and how this change affects the perception of them as 'place' by the members of the families under study.

1. 'Building' the house

To clarify the current status of the home as 'place' in the minds of their users, we have to return to their former places of residence. Making the distinction between families that came from shantytowns and families that came from other residential situations is central as we are dealing here with buildings, not only with homes but with houses. The build environment is one of the largest single factors that differentiate the two urban residential experiences, shantytowns and overcrowded homes from which these families originally came from.

The family members who came from shantytowns commonly remembered their former living quarters as composed by large amounts of available housing space filled with low quality and even highly precarious structures. On the one hand, almost all interviewees remembered the shantytowns as places where they lived "with full land". Due to their organic and unplanned character, shantytowns can be seen as places where the availability of land to build on is much greater than in other more urbanized areas, at least in terms of low-income people's standards.

On the other hand, it is quite common for houses in shantytowns to be built of second-hand light materials, like wood and plastic, that offers little protection from the natural elements, especially in winter. This is because "poverty and the struggle for survival mean that the self-build residences of low-income groups, especially those which they have created by themselves, respond essentially to the basic need for shelter" (Kellet 2003b:125). At the same time the almost complete lack of urban services made the situation even worse, as reflected by this account of Paloma and Cristobal, a couple who used to live in a shantytown in Renca:

> "In the shantytown we used to keep our room quite clean, but as soon as the rain started, it was only mud. Do you understand? For example in the summer the dirt, the dust, especially the garrapatas [ticks] that came in the summer made it unbearable. You could be eating and then you saw a dog pass, full of garrapatas, f***. It was totally disgusting" (Cristobal, 24 years).

> "I almost broke up with the father of my children [Cristobal] because of the situation in which we were living - a room of three by three meters and then the rain... it didn't happen every year, but the last year, with the big rains, everything ended up wet. My daughter had to go to stay with my step mother, and I had to go there to see her, and everything was so wet that I had to put it all in my mother's house" (Paloma, 24 years).

In this case their former home did not fulfil its primary function: to keep the natural elements outside and to create a space in which 'the natural' as a threatening indeterminacy can be excluded (Kaika 2004). These homes offered little space for the taming of nature characteristic of the modern house[14], not even in terms of its most basic processes such as the domestication of water, in the form of a shelter from rain (as we saw in the case of Paloma) and in the most prosaic form of the absence of tap water and sewage systems.

In the case of the families that do not come from shantytowns, their former homes were remembered as quite overcrowded places in which the management of the always limited space was a central problem, as reflected by the experience of Pepa, a single mother with four children with whom she used to live in a small rented room in which

"I had a double bed, a closet with clothes, a freezer, a washing machine, this [she points to a quite big, even industrial size, sewing machine that she had in her living room], some other furniture.. I don't really know how we walked there [laughs]" (Pepa, 36 years).

This lack of space was exacerbated by the fact that many families had to share limited space with other people, commonly members of their extended family, with the associated problems in terms of intimacy that this situation had.

"We used to live with my mother. She had her house and we lived at the back of it in a mediagua [shanty] ... we didn't have a toilet; we only had the toilet of my mother's house, but sometimes we tried not to bother them by using it, [so] when we arrived here the children spent all day in the toilet. My youngest daughter said 'the toilet, the toilet'. It was a novelty ... because as i am telling to you, the situation of living allegado [in the house of others] annoyed me. We are fine here, more comfortable. ... Its my home, more private. There no strangers came. Strangers will knock on the door ... this is my house and I decide if I let them in or not" (Ruben, 36 years).

In some cases this demand for privacy appears even more important than the demand for space. Families were keen to move from bigger places to the quite small flats of the housing estate in order to gain some seclusion, especially from their extended families.

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[14] A space in which "*good* nature (purified water, conditioned air, electricity, etc.) became part of (and a basic precondition of the construction of) the protected inside of the modern home. At the same time the domestically metabolized *bad* nature (dirty water, polluted air, sewage) became part of the outside, 'the other', the antipode to the comfortable protected inside of the home" (Kaika 2004: 270).

64

The search for privacy is not however the main driver in a change that commonly presents so many different risks and difficulties. More important is the desire to become a property owner. Peter Kellet also finds this desire in his research on low-income inhabitants of informal settlements in the city of Santa Marta, Colombia (Kellet 2003a; Kellet 2003b). In the case of these groups the concept of ownership

"... Has added significance by providing a level of stability which is usually lacking in their employment situation, as well as offering residential security and the possibility of passing something on to their children. To possess something as tangible and basic as a piece of land with a house on it, undoubtedly sends a clear message to others that they have a stake in society. The value of having a home is therefore as much symbolic as practical" (Kellet 2003b:133).

Most of the families under study perceived their new homes as a triumph. It represents to them not only a more comfortable place to live but also a key indicator of the improvement in their social status, in their integration into society. In the case under study, this symbolic factor appears to be key.

"When they took us out [from the shantytown], in the rain, completely wet, and arrived here, at your own house, where not even one drop of water will fall, where you won't get wet, when you won't be cold, its all a different thing, a marvelous thing ... I always dreamt about having a house, but you always see it as a faraway dream and when they said 'all right, you are going to your house' I screamed; I jumped for joy; I cried, everything" (Cristina, 42 years)

"I moved here on the day they gave us the house. The only thing I wanted was to have my own house and it was very gratifying to have one. You wait all your life to have one. Even though it's small, I dream of moving in time and going to live in a [proper] house" (Patricia, 30 years).

Ownership is just the one of the stages of a complex process of home-making that can be defined as

"...Active processes in which most people are permanently engaged. It is a reflective, developing relationship between individual [or group of individuals] and key domestic places. This process is shaped and heightened by developmental, personality, and demographic factors, as well as by the goals and purposes that influence human behaviour and endeavour" (Rivlin 2001:329).

This attitude of constant home making is quite clear when we analyzed the perception of family members of their current homes. They tended to have quite contradictory views about them. On the one hand, as can be seen in box 2, almost all of the interviewees recognize some improvement in their lives with their move to their new flats.

Box 2. Positive Perceptions of Their New Homes

Ownership	"This is something solid. Here many people will die. It gives you some security because it's yours. We are up to date with the dividendos [monthly installments for the house]. This will be left for our children" (Leonardo, 30 years)
Dignity	"In the shantytown we had the best house. But living there was like we had nothing. It was shameful. Now my children can invite their friends, and there's no problem" (Carla, 31 years).
Intimacy	"The change has been very good. We lived before too near to our [extended] families so we had no privacy in our own home. This is what we needed, to have more intimacy, to be closer as a [nuclear] family We felt a little bit overwhelmed as a family when grandpa arrives, then grandma and then my brother." (David, 33 years).
Individualizatio n	"We wanted space for them [their siblings] because they were always using our space and we occupied theirs. it was all ?too close, but not here. Here they have their space. They have a place to relax, to watch television relaxed, unlike before" (Rosa, 31 years)
Aesthetics	"The flat is beautiful, in comparison with the ones that we saw before is much more beautiful, we apply for 5 years to it and every year they are making them better and better" (Edith, 49 years).
Comfort	"[Before] we had not as much comfort as we have here, here if I want to take a shower, especially in winter, I just have to turn on the boiler and I wash myself with hot water, but there I have to boil in the kitchen and then carried it to the bathroom, it was a 'show' as I call it" (Nicolas, 39 years).

As indicated in box 3, there are also plenty of problems related to their new homes. In general we can see that most of the problems identified by the interviewees can be associated in varying degrees with the increasing levels of urbanization where they live now. To live in an urban environment as nuclear families on a housing estate (in contrast with the imperfect urbanity of shantytowns or/and the communality of living with extended family in overcrowded homes) gives these families not only opportunities and (at least formal) integration into the rhythms of the city, but also the recognition of the problems associated with the imperfect way in which they are integrated into contemporary Chilean society. In many cases these problems were

already present in their former places of residence but for others the moving makes them more acute or even acts as a trigger to their appearance.

Box 3. Negative Perceptions of their New Homes

Lack of space:	"At the beginning the move was bad. We had quality of life there [in the shantytown]. My partner had freedom to walk in the countryside; you had space. Here you feel trapped. Its like they closed all the doors on four sides. There is no garden. The only thing is the balcony. You look in this direction you see homes; you look on the other you see homes, everywhere." (Diego, 39 years).
Lack of Privacy:	"Privacy does not exist here. Well, you have privacy inside your house, but you cannot open the door, you cannot open a window. There is too much noise and there is always someone looking at you" (Valeria, 52 years).
Bad neighbors:	"They give us beautiful homes all shut up, but here the people do not take care of anything. They broke the doors" (Ramon, 39 years).
Distance from family:	"My life changed in 360 degrees. I was used to being with my sisters, with my mother, my friends and then to arrive here, not knowing anyone. Everyone's so uncommunicative. Ror me it is hard to be so faraway from them" (Ines, 31 years).
Costs	"It is different from living in a shantytown where you don't pay for electricity; you don't pay for water; you don't pay rent or anything and then to arrive in a flat where you have to start paying all these bills" (Cristian, 38 years).

We can see the move to the housing estate as a step forward (but not definitive) in the process of urbanization being undergone by low-income families which started with the massive migration from the countryside to the city at the start of the twentieth century. In this context the new homes represent their entrance to the way of life of low-income city dwellers, especially in Chile, a developing society in which social housing solutions such as the housing estate under study have become the containers of urban poverty (Rodriguez 2004; Tironi 2003). To be poor in Chile presently is increasingly to live in a flat like the ones on the housing estate. In this sense the move from shantytowns and other precarious living arrangements to the housing estate can be seen as an inclusion - not as a general social inclusion, but an inclusion in terms of a change from a more or less 'traditional' urban poverty (associated with the life in shantytowns and/or overcrowded conditions) to a 'modern' one (Bengoa 1995; Raczynski 1999).

It is important to consider that for the family members this move to new homes is not a definitive state. As previously seen with the concept of home making, to dwell is always an active process and never a definitive state. This is confirmed in the case under study, where it is almost impossible to talk about any aspect of the home

without some mention of 'the home of the future' being made. This is not just due to the problems associated with current living conditions on the housing estate, but is a central element of their own personal and family plans.,. For most of them the dream is about their own *house*, not about their own *flat*.

> "We always wanted a house. I am happy with what was given to me [the flat], but we always wanted a house. The great majority of the people with whom I talked wanted a house ... We are always thinking about selling this to buy a house." (Pepa, 36 years)

> "Here is too small if you were used to live on a huge piece of land and here ... I had a house and the house was big; it was lovely. I had a garden, and I could put my plants on it. Everything was good, but here you have to give up these things, because here you have to share with everyone. If you grow something you have to share it with everyone." (Johanna, 50 years).

Why is this image of a house present when they think about their ideal homes? There are many different explanations for it, but in general all points towards the search for a personalized and controllable intimate space, a space of certainty in an uncertain world (Beck 1998 [1986]; Bhatti 2004). This is particularly true in connection with children who simultaneously use more open spaces to play and are the subjects of the most intense risk perceptions by their parents. To have a delineated and controlled space where they can play safely appears as an aspiration for most parents. A house with a garden seems to then as the perfect image of a contained place with more available space (for home extensions amongst others) and with a safe space for the children through the garden.

> "In the future [my plan is to] pay for the flat and then sell it, and if work goes well and I want to sell here and buy a house, so we'll have a garden, in which you can put flowers or some fruit trees, something that I can't do here, and also here if the children want to play they have to go into the street, full of cars, as ther is no a garden." (Cristobal, 24 years)

For these families the process of home making is still on going, and in some senses will never stop. Their current home will never be their definitive home. In some sense the definitive home does not exist. It is on the horizon of family plans, always a little bit further away. In the very few cases where family members advise that they have no intention of leaving the flat, the flat did not seem to be their definitive home, at least in its current configuration, characteristics and elements. There are always alterations to be made and new features to be added. In their heads the home is never settled or stable, but a flux of past and futures changes. For them, the house

is above all else the key indicator of their achievements in recent years but also functions, with all its problems and limitations, as an indication of the imperfectness of their social inclusion. The home is always a reality as well as a project. The whole temporality of the family history is embedded in the house, and they are both constantly changing and redefining themselves.

2. The end of the 'barrio'

Traditionally social research on poverty sees neighbourhoods, or 'barrios' in Spanish, as a social space in which low income individuals and families can develop the social capital necessary to enhance their participation in society (Warren 2001). For a variety of reasons including lack of mobility, this space constitutes the privileged, or even the only, area of contact between them and society. Along with this, these spaces appear as a place formed by strong community ties and solidarities that constitute one of the main forms of social support together with direct public assistance that these groups can rely on. In the case study the situation is unclear, especially when we compare their current situation with their memories of their former places of residence.

On the one hand, the people who came from shantytowns remember their former neighbourhoods (in their case commonly limited to the area of the shantytown) for their strong sense of community which was the background for their daily social interactions. Due to their low degree of everyday mobility for a variety of reasons including lack of economic resources, peripheral localization of shantytowns, low integration to the labour market, most of their practices were limited to the local area of the shantytown.

Also the need for a permanent and stable place of residence (especially in the form of a privately owned house) held central position among the diverse needs of the people. Such a goal unifies the aspirations of families who live in shantytowns and constitute the reason of existence of community practices. Both factors made the shantytown residents developed a strong culture of collective practices that was manifest in "communitarian initiatives such as *ollas comunes* [common cooking], bazaars, between others, that try to overcome the economic difficulties and confront food [and clothing] problems in a communal way" (Carrasco 2002:24).

69

On the other hand, the families that came through the regular selection process for housing also came from an environment with strong social networks. These networks were made up of members of extended families with whom they were living (in the case of families who where living backyard) and/or who live close by. Here the networks were founded on affection and friendship and provided a strategy to improve access to goods and products that would be difficult to achieve alone (Espinoza 1999).

In both cases the move to the housing estate represents a complete reconfiguration of social networks and practices. Due to the limited spatial mobility and the lack of fast and reliable means to communicate, contact with the former social networks of the residents weakened, and in many cases disappeared, when the families moved. Thus in this new context, the families have to reorganize their current neighbourhood as a place that resembles the one that they leave behind, because it is central to their survival strategies. This task has been far more difficult than expected, and this type of problems change radically the way they perceive and give meaning to their local environment, as we shall see with the comparison between the cases of Alicia, who has developed a 'good' relationship with her neighbours, with Johanna, who has developed a 'bad' one.

Alicia (40 years) and her husband David used to live in the borough of Lo Prado in a rented flat located next-door to the flat where David's parents live. They now live in a ground floor flat located in the eastern section of the housing estate where she is quite happy firstly because they can now live their own lives, without the influence of David's parents. Also she is pleased that the relationship with their neighbours "in general is good ... there are people that are a little hostile, but I think that everything can be fixed by talking and with good manners. I don't treat people badly and I had access to people that no one here could ever have. People are considerate [with me], like me, because of that". The relationship with their neighbours is described by her as "100% good, very good", a perception that moves her not only to show concern when they have any problem but also to frequently use the common public space as a meeting point with their neighbours.

> "100% of Saturday evenings we bought something to eat and share it amongst us. We made a habit of it.... [We use the stairs] even if we don't want to because we are all smokers and I don't want my flat to be full of smoke, and they all prefer to smoke outside, so, for example, if we make some food, we eat the food inside and then we go out to talk

and smoke. ... Everyone knows that we meet here on Saturdays. [Some people] come from other areas of the housing estate and we are very quiet in comparison with other places, because the people of the next block also meet to drink something and they start fighting, but not us; that's the difference."

In this case, her strong community feelings directly correlate to the way she appropriates a public space such as the stairs. This example is very demonstrative of the way in which urban spaces are appropriated (and transformed in a 'place') when people feel that they are members of something common that goes beyond the personal and intimate space of the household. This is quite different for families and individuals that do not perceive this neighbourly aspect on the housing estate, as happened to Johanna.

Johanna (50 years) came from a shantytown in Renca. She now lives in a ground floor flat located in the centre of the housing estate. At the time of the interview she had just closed down a little shop that she had in her own flat and her economic situation was worse than where she used to live. This situation made her say that "if they said to me 'do you want to return to the campamento [shantytown]?' I would say yes, with my eyes closed. I swear it, with my eyes closed. I'd return there, because I can't get use [to living here], I can't get used to it".

Her problems with living on the housing estate are not purely economic,

"In the campamento I had all my doors open. I had a garden; it was a big garden, and nobody could see me. I went out; I walked in the hills, but not here. Here I go out and they are looking at me from the front [flat]. You go to eat something and they are looking at you. At the moment I have a very serious problem, very heavy, with my next door neighbour, because my husband started to have sex with her, then for me it is complicated. In the campamento I didn't know if someone had sex with another, but at least not with my husband, because I went to everywhere with him, and everything was at my place, barbecues, parties, because it was big and I borrowed it. We were all very neighbourly, but never, never, never happened what it is happening here in the housing estate, I swear, because since we arrived here, neighbours are f****** neighbours ... even the other day my daughter left her husband and went out with another guy. Here we arrived to be damned. Here is as if everyone fell in despair. I don't know what happened, I don't understand."

In this extract we can see quite clearly how strong are the neighbourly characteristics of shantytown life. When they move to the housing estate, it dissolves in a situation in which, at least from Johanna's point of view, is quite hard to find any element

71

indicating the existence of any communal identity or social cohesion between the residents. This perception correlates with practices. Johanna not only does not now participate in communal life (as she said, she used to do in the shantytown) but also her personal use of public spaces is limited. It is remarkable how her feelings of strangeness and alienation about the changes in her situation since moving from the shantytown whilst related to her other problems is translated into the public spaces of the housing estate through the generalization of, supposedly, 'bad' practices (such as unfaithfulness). Places appear to be closely linked to the practices that took place at them. This does not mean that this relationship is teleological, at least in terms of the 'construction' of something. Practices, even community practices, can go against the very existence of the community that supports them. Practices can destroy communities as well as create them

In summary, these two accounts show how the housing estate as 'place' in the traditional sense is far from being settled or clearly structured. Families and individuals are still struggling to create social networks with their neighbours and, in doing so, attachment to their local space. In this process their memories, both real and imagined, of their former living places become the standard to which their current practices are compared and judged. These practices constitute not only the way in which people inhabit their current places of living, but also the material from which people extract the elements to judge and evaluate their present living conditions.

The relevance of social factors in the construction of local places is highlighted by the fact that for most of the interviewees the housing estate is a better material space than the one where they used to live. This is true for people who came from less advantaged material conditions like shantytowns, as Isabel does,

"[Here] there is less space [than in the shantytown] but anyway life is better. I have a decent toilet. I have tap water all day, so I can do my washing anytime I want, not like before" (Isabel, 25 years).

In general, people like the physical surroundings of their homes. The housing estate appears to them as a well planned space where they can theoretically develop their everyday social life. This positive evaluation of the space does not correlate with a perception of it as a 'place' using the characteristics that they used to attach to their former homes.

The social aspect of the housing estate appears in the view of the interviewees, as a limit to the appropriation of the public space by them, to its constitution as 'place'. In some sense we can say that they inhabit the housing estate, but they do not dwell there, because to dwell implies more than the physical space in which we develop our everyday activities. To dwell is to build, and to build a neighbourhood as community is a task that the inhabitants of the housing estate still have to undertake in order to transform their physical space into a lived space, 'place'. The housing estate as a community is still, more or less, a project, a utopia that needs to be realized.

All these perceptions and the limitations to the housing estates as a 'place' of attachment are very clear in the following quotation from Jessica (30 years).

"I don't know why but since we arrived here bad luck came to us. My older son died here ... in less than a year and half since we arrive here My son catch fever, he got sick and died. He was 14 years old. This had a big impact on me. To arrive here and see our son die., Other people got sick too. The problems become worse here; I don't know why these things happen.] It wasn't this way in the years that we lived there [in the shantytown]. In the shantytown was poverty, it was cold, it was hot, but never the situations that we have had living here of sickness, of disgrace. I don't know if it's because we live closer to each other, but there we were also close there, just one house next to the other. There it was more relaxed because we didn't had so much [bills] to pay, because everyone lived in their space free. It was a house, not a flat, and nobody annoyed each other over space. Maybe it is because since we arrived here we are on top of each other. It is true that we have more physical comfort, but we were used to the life we lived there. Then I think that they are good changes and bad changes, and if you ask to me, and many other people, if they give me the possibility of going elsewhere, I would go. I like my house; I like it here,. I'm happy with the inside of my house, but I go out and I don't like this system of living, one on top of the other. No, and many other people don't like it also, because you have to reduce the noise; you cannot have animals. Many people like to have animals and they can't have them here. You cannot have a personal life, trying all the time not to annoy anyone. For this reason I say to you that life was better there, more relaxed. Here life is much more tense".

Although Jessica's views are understandably influenced by the death of her son, her words are interesting as they summarize many of the negative perceptions that people have of the housing estate as local place, its negative impact on the perceived well-being. The housing estate appears to many of them as a space where they do not fit, where "you cannot have a personal life" because others are always present, even in the private spaces.. The extract also shows us how for these

families living on the housing estate is to live in a new space, a space that is still strange and difficult to manage due to the disruption that it has caused in terms of their past places of residence.

One conclusion that we can draw from this account of everyday life of the inhabitants of the housing estate a category of analysis such as a 'local place' as a source of attachment is not valid in this case if we are trying to see the way people use and give meaning to their surrounding space. As we saw, to feel 'at home' in the housing estate is something alien to all but a few families. For most families, the housing estate is still a strange and potentially harmful space. The process of adaptation to it is on-going and in many cases is only in its early stages, distant from what we perceive as community or neighbourhood life. As Isabel, one of the interviewees said, "here people is too close and too disunited", the housing estate appears to many of them as a space of more or less isolated families living in close physical proximity with unknowns, a situation that little resembles for them their former way of living. In this context the complete way in which they perceive and interact with their social environment has changed, and this change is reflected in their use of urban space.

It is clear that the current situation of the families results from the recent move to the housing estate and that their sense of strangeness and alienation could improve in the future. This is likely due to the fact that usually "the strongest predictor of individual friendship is length of residence: the longer you live in an area, the more local friends you are likely to have acquired" (Forrest 2001:2131). Time is the key factor in the creation of social networks within a certain group of people, the longer you live in a certain area, the more networks that you will have there. Jonathan recognizes this:

> "At first it was shocking. Too many fights and everything but now it's like the people are starting to get used to their places, and it seems quieter. More activities have happened. People are coming together. there was rivalry between the people from reserva ministerial [normal process of selection] and the people from shantytowns, but now its seems more ...for the children, because the children go to the model school. There has been fights, then the children start to join in, and you cannot separate the children, [like] 'you are from here' or from other place. Then the children started to get the people together, so it is starting to get fixed. It's becoming more peaceful" (Jonathan, 34 years).

For Jonathan things are already changing. New solidarities are starting to develop among the neighbours and are assisted by new practices such as the model school for their children. This change does not mean a return to the practices and belongings typical of their former places of living. They are lost, and any effort to reconstitute them as they used to be could fail, because the people that conformed to these networks and alliances have also changed. While their integration into Chilean society is still precarious, these families have changed along with their material and socio-cultural environment. At the least they have been integrated into the so-called 'new urban poor' inhabitants of housing estates such as Tucapel Jimenez II, a situation that is a change in their social and economical needs, but also in their self perception and their use of the urban environment.

3. Changes in the urban landscape of Santiago in the last decades

Living in Santiago today is a radically different experience than it was ten, or even five years ago. Since the reestablishment of democratic rule in 1990 (and even before, from mid eighties) the city has suffered a series of radical transformations at every level, including from huge developments in infrastructure to the very basic level of street life. These changes are the urban correlates of the more general socio-economic and cultural changes that the country has experienced in this period (INE 2003; PNUD 2000b; PNUD 2002; Ramos 2004), appearing as a material correlate, but also as a cause of them. The effects of these changes can be seen more profoundly in Santiago due to the fact that on a national scale, the city "continues to occupy the dominant position without any demographic or economic competition" (Sabatini 2004) 3. Thus any change in the country will be reflected to a higher degree in Santiago than other cities and areas of the country.

Some of the main changes can be summarized in the following points:

- *Population growth and geographical extension.* In accordance with the data of the Chilean 2002 Census the population of inner city of Santiago was 4.668.473 (INE 2003), but if the entire population of the metropolitan area is included, there are more than 6 million people living in the city, covering almost 40% of the entire Chilean population. These numbers represent an increase of 7.5% in the total population of the city in the last 10 years (INE 2003). In terms of its extension, the urban area of the city covers 61.395 hectares (Ducci 2002:3), which represents an increase of 1,339 hectares per year during the nineties, the highest in its

75

history. 40% of this growth is explained by the construction of houses, almost double the amount of land used for industry (22%). In general, we can see how the city has been and is still constantly growing, not only in terms of people, but also in terms of the area that it covers.

• *From macro to micro segregation.* Latin American cities historically have been characterized by high degrees of social segregation of space (Sabatini 2003) in terms of a radical spatial separation between different social classes. Santiago was no exception, with the upper classes living in the north eastern zones of the city, mainly in five boroughs that was found in 1987 to have (along with the central borough of Santiago) "80% of the squares, parks and other green areas and 95% of the health, commercial and administrative equipment" (Eliash 1989:1). This has changed in the last decade thanks to the liberalization of the land market and the development of infrastructure projects along in addition to other changes (Sabatini 2000). In contemporary Santiago it is increasingly common for segregation to occur at a micro level, the level of the gated middle class neighbourhoods surrounded by low income ones (Torres 2004) or big shopping centres located in middle to low income areas which are only accessible by car. This situation has contributed to the creation of more areas of contacts between different social groups and, in general, a growing hybridisation between different kinds of inhabitants and land uses.

• *New infrastructure and means of public transport.* Along with the enlargement of the city, sometimes as a consequence but also as a cause, some big infrastructure projects have been carried out in Santiago in recent years[15] including Costanera norte, a high speed highway located above the Mapocho River and the transformation of Americo Vespucio, a road that encircles the whole city, into a highway. Three new Metro lines (Santiago's Underground) have been built, to reach highly populated areas such as Recoleta or Puente Alto. The system of mainly privately owned buses has not changed radically, but some core changes are expected shortly due to the planned application of the *TranSantiago* Transport Plan, which includes some rationalization and progressive interconnecting network of buses, the Metro and suburban trains.

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[15] Thanks to the system of private concessions developed by the Ministerio de Obras Publicas (Ministry of Public Infrastructure) of the Chilean government.

- *Increased spatial mobility.* One of the main consequences of the changes above mentioned is the increase in mobility of the population of Santiago. As the Origin-Destiny survey (SECTRA 2002), a comparison between the degrees of mobility of the population in the years 1977, 1991 and 2001 shows that the total number of journeys per person per day increased from 1.04 in 1977 to 2.39 in 2001, with an increase in the number of people using a motorized means of transport from 0.87 in 1977 to 1.75 in 2001. Journeys by car from represented only 11.6% of the total motorized travel in 1977 and 39.2% in 2001. The sharpest increase occurred between 1991 and 2001 when car travel more than doubled. The comparison between the 1991 and the 2001 studies shows that there is an increase in almost every type of reason for travel (to work, to study, etc.) but there is a marked increase in those choosing to travel to shop (three times more) and for social reasons. In contemporary Santiago people are more mobile than ever before, a tendency that can only intensify in the years ahead due to the high inversion in infrastructure and the growth in car possession.

Graph 3. Daily trips by person
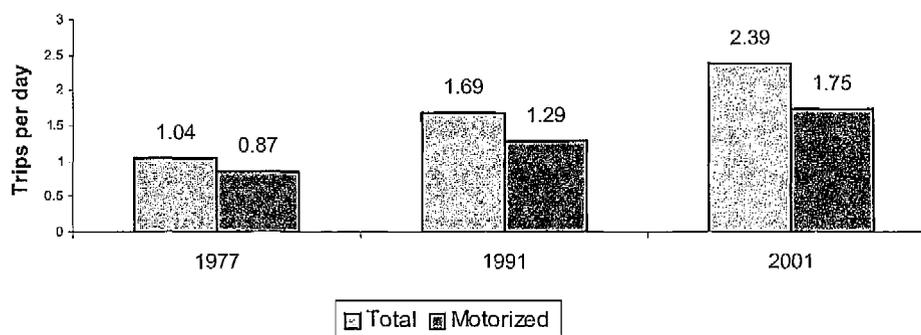
Source. Encuesta origen-destino (SECTRA 2002)

- *Huge increase in access to both transport and communication technologies.* The changes presented above are also intimately related to a massive increase in access to technology by individuals. This change is especially relevant in relation to both spatial and virtual mobility. In relation to the first type, the data shows that in the period from 1992 to 2002, the percentage of the general population who have a car increases from 24,3% to 36,7% (CEP 2002). Amongst 20% of the population with low income, the number of families with a car doubled, rising from 5% to 10%, as shown in table 2. The changes are not only related to spatial mobility. Communicational mobility (or mobility related to usage of media technologies) has also changed the way the inhabitants of the city use and

77

perceive the urban landscape (Graham 2004a). As can be seen in table 2, during the same period access to media technologies by the poorest 20% of the population also increases dramatically, especially in relation to televisions, mobile phones and hi-fi equipment.

Table 2. Access to Home Technologies by the Low Income Group in 1992 and 2002

	1992	2002		1992	2002
Motor vehicle	5.0 %	10 %	Hi-fi equipment	3.2 %	33.7 %
Colour Television	7.3 %	56.8 %	Computer	N.D.	0.3 %
VCR	0.3 %	4.4 %	Mobile Phone	0.0 %	29.8 %
Cable Television	N.D.	2.1 %	Land line Phone	0.1 %	4.9 %

Source (Larranaga 2004) 78

- *The social public housing revolution.* Between 1980 and 2000, around 173.000 social homes were built in Santiago (Tironi 2003:35). This amounts to 29% of all homes built in Santiago, at least in the period from 1991 to 2000 (Ducci 2002:20). As a consequence of the increase in public housing stock today approximately 67% of the low-income population of the city lives on a social housing estate (Tironi 2003:37). These homes are not only a solution to the housing shortage, but at the same time these houses "propose a complete fracture with previous models, stating the need for a compromise with modernity and the future" (Funari 2002:43). The impact of social housing can be found not only in relation to the population that already lives on one of the housing estates, but also in the structure of the city itself. As the private developers of these housing projects look for the cheapest land on which to build, the estates tend to be located on the periphery of the city (Tironi 2003), contributing to the enlargement of the urban area (as happened with Tucapel Jimenez II). Having a peripheral location has certain consequences on people's perception of the public space. It is very difficult to develop an integrated perception of position in society if the perception of one's position in the city is relegated to places outside the urban centre or place of work (Rodriguez 2004).

For most of its inhabitant life in contemporary Santiago is a completely new experience. This is true even for those groups (like the families studied here) that

traditionally have been left behind the changes and improvements in the physical conditions of the city.

> "[The rhythm of Santiago] is tiring. You can feel it in your own work. The work is accelerating so you have to hurry up and in the evening you arrive only to rest, and the next day is the same rhythm, or even faster or a little bit slower, but it is the same. The days pass faster, and faster and faster. There are new technologies that appear and you have to advance. You cannot stay there. You are exploding more and the physical and psychological tiredness increase" (Jonathan, 34 years).

> "Everything is more modern. As I rarely go out, every time I go to the city centre I keep saying 'ohhh!', 'ahhh!' and my husband makes fun of me saying that I'm acting like an old lady, but 'it's not my fault that I go out and things have changed' I say to him 'it's not my fault that things change while I'm at home and when I go out I found everything ohhh! ahhh! [Laughs] ... He said to me that I'm huasa [peasant], I'm huasa then! I don't have a choice, everything has changed so much" (Isabel, 25 years).

> "I think that times are faster, because you see in the city centre when you go to the city centre all the people dashing, everyone in a hurry. You don't see relaxed people; everything is rushed, before it was much more relaxed" (Luis, 41 years).

Santiago is now a different city for almost all of its inhabitants and to live in it requires different attitudes and abilities in order to deal with new problems and opportunities.

Conclusions

Places are in transition. As can be seen from the analysis of the houses, neighbourhood and urban landscape of our field study. We have seen that the perception of these families of their current accommodation as homes is far from stable, and in many ways will never be again. A house now becomes a plan for the future, rather than a stable reality. This perception is even more acute in the case of the neighbourhood and the urban landscape of the city of Santiago as both are in a process of redefinition and constant change. This alienates them from the stable and meaningful image of places proposed by traditional approaches to urban space perception.

Even in this state of constant change and redefinition it seems that people still recognize some spaces as places. Even in the case of families who feel negatively towards their current living conditions, there is still a certain recognition of the space as a 'home', a particular place. These definitions seem to be more practical than

emotional in the sense that the recognition is not based in a history of relations with the place, a sense of belonging or attachment to it, but merely on certain kind of 'practices' that are developed in the current place. This 'detachment' from their everyday environment is understandable given the short time that they have been living on the housing estate, but also reveals a certain new way to relate to their surrounding space. This perception seems to be based not in their own attributes of places or their history within it, but mainly in the kind of operations that they develop.

In this new social context, the classical perception of local urban space as meaningful places, 'homes', located into neighbourhoods/communities appears as too static and fixed. As we saw here, not only Santiago's urban space is currently in a time of high dynamism, but also the individuals and families under study are experimenting their urban space in a different way, that have continuities but mainly brakes with their former living conditions.

Given these circumstances it seem that in the case under study the traditional vision of places (fixed, clearly structured, a source of attachment and meaning) has lost much of its power to describe the way these families perceive their surrounding space. The questions that arise is if we just have to leave this idea aside and embrace a paradigm based on the existence of 'mobile' places? We will try to answer this question in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

To move or not to move

Introduction

In the past chapter we saw that a model based solely on the concept of static places cannot allow us to fully understand the spatial configuration of a housing estate such as the one under study here. Some of the main elements that constitute spaces as 'fixed places' including clear structure and sense of belonging, are hard to find in the urban space under study. This difference is particularly true in relation to the understanding of the housing estate as a local space, as a neighbourhood. Along with that, the urban environment of Santiago is undergoing central processes of change and redevelopment that point towards the constitution of a new kind of highly dynamic urban space, based on constant movement of people, objects and symbols.

It is impossible to fully understand the dynamics of contemporary urban life if we only look at such fixed places. Places are not isolated. Different urban places are deeply connected and related to each other through multiple systems and means of transportation and communication from street and highways to electrical supply and sewage systems. All these networks "are the mediators through which the perpetual process of transformation of nature into city takes place" (kaika 2000:120) and show us the city as "a flux that is always material (in all possible senses, including symbolic and discursive flows), but never fixed" (ibid.).

These transportation and communication systems constitute the technical (although never fully innocuous) background to multiple kinds of mobilities that are at the centre of the contemporary dynamics of urban life. Telephone calls, clean water, visitors, electricity, soap operas, bread and vegetables. All of them are examples of the enormous amount of mobile material and immaterial, visible and invisible, wanted and unwanted elements that cross our everyday places at every given moment of time.

At the very basic level of daily life, the different ways of inhabiting the housing estate of the people under study always "involve complex relationships between belongingness and travelling" (Urry 2000:157). This travelling does not have to relate to any transnational movement. It goes with the quotidian movement in the city, even between different areas of the borough and the housing estate. The fact that the range of actual mobility of many members of these families is low does not mean that mobility is not an important, or even central, aspect in their everyday lives. In the following sections of the chapter, following the distinction made by Ulrich Beck (2000), we analyse this spatial mobility as dual phenomena composed of *outer* mobility, or long term mobility, and *inner* mobility, or everyday movement. In a later section, we will analyse the information presented in terms of social exclusion.

1. *Outer* mobility

Our research findings show that in general the general perception of improvement in the material living conditions of the group under study goes along with some form of spatial movement. contrary to the idea that in contemporary society "the assumed intense connection between social and geographical mobility breaks up" (Bonss 2004:12),

> "[My parents] were from the countryside. They lived in the mountains. In winter they used
> to send their older daughter to buy food. She took 4 or 5 days to reach the nearest town
> because of the snow. It was a very hard life. There weren't the advances we can see
> today: there were no supermarkets, there was nothing. Now it's easier" (David, 33 years)

Most of the people interviewed still perceived spatial mobility to be central to the improvements in their material living conditions. This connection is due not only because living in Santiago gives easier access to opportunities and goods hard to find in other parts of Chile, but also because spatial mobility is associated with positive things and an image of self-improvement. In Chilean popular language "*moverse*" [to move] or "*ser una persona movida*" [to be someone who moves] means someone who actively searches for something better than his or her current situation. This vision is particularly true for low-income groups where mobility (as the opposite to standing still) appears as a key to deal with the problems associated with their situation, a central constituent of their own conceptions of resilience[16], as we can note in the account of Jonathan (37 years):

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[16] Resilience can be defined as "the ability to spring back from and successfully adapt to adversity" (Miller, 2003).

"My family came from the Borough of Carahue, on the coast in Nehuentue [900 km south of Santiago]. I was born there and lived there until I was 20 ... We were fishermen and the fish stocks began to be in short supply. We had less work and less money and I said to myself 'what I will do here standing on street corners?' I always tried to go out. I was always more on the streets, but I wasn't standing still as I was working. I always liked to go out and search for things; I didn't stand still but was always looking, working and then I decided to come. I said to myself 'I will go out to look for a another life' and then I arrived in Santiago"

Moving for them is to be doing something positive, to be looking for something better, as Jonathan put it, "I will go out to look for another life". Quite surprisingly this statement resembles almost to the point Goethe's famous formulation "travelling to Rome to become another" (quoted in (Bonss 2004) 6). Here what we are seeing is the traditional modern (or romantic) ideal of mobility fully at work, "the idea to use spatial movement as a vehicle (instrument) for the transformation of social situations and in the end to realize certain projects and plans" (Bonss 2004) 11. For Jonathan, and for many others like him, "the essence of mobility as a general principle of modernity remains stable" (ibid.), even in the context of high socio-cultural change as in contemporary Chilean society.

How can we characterize this mobility? First, this mobility has to be seen as a collective project. In the great majority of the families under study, the movement to Santiago was a communal project that usually involved more than one member of their social networks in addition to themselves.

"My brother emigrated first and then I emigrated.. I arrived at the home of cousins of mine in San Miguel. It was a crazy idea to go here. One summer I went to the house of an aunt of mine in Angol and there I met a cousin and he said to me 'let's go to Santiago'. I thought it was a joke; 'ok' I said 'let's go'. I thought he was joking but then suddenly there was a harvest of beans that was very well paid, and then I came to Santiago with him" (Diego, 39 years).

This communal aspect was the origin of another central characteristic of these movements: its directionality. Even though there is a high degree of uncertainty in the movements, there is a firm direction, at least a temporary arrival point represented by the home of a relative or friend. This directionality is not only exclusive of internal migration, or migration within a country, but also as a characteristic of trans-national

migration too, as has been shown by different research studies on migration and diasporas (For a example see Banerjee 1983).

There are high degrees of risk and uncertainty in the migrations of low-income groups and individuals despite the directional character and presence of members of their social network at their destination. Commonly the members of the social networks that the new arrivals use as reference points are not themselves fully integrated into society so the help that they can give consists, in the best cases, of offering a temporary place to sleep and some general indications and first contacts in the city. This situation is quite clearly demonstrated by the case of Johanna (50 years).

Picture 7. Movement of Johanna in the metropolitan area of Santiago
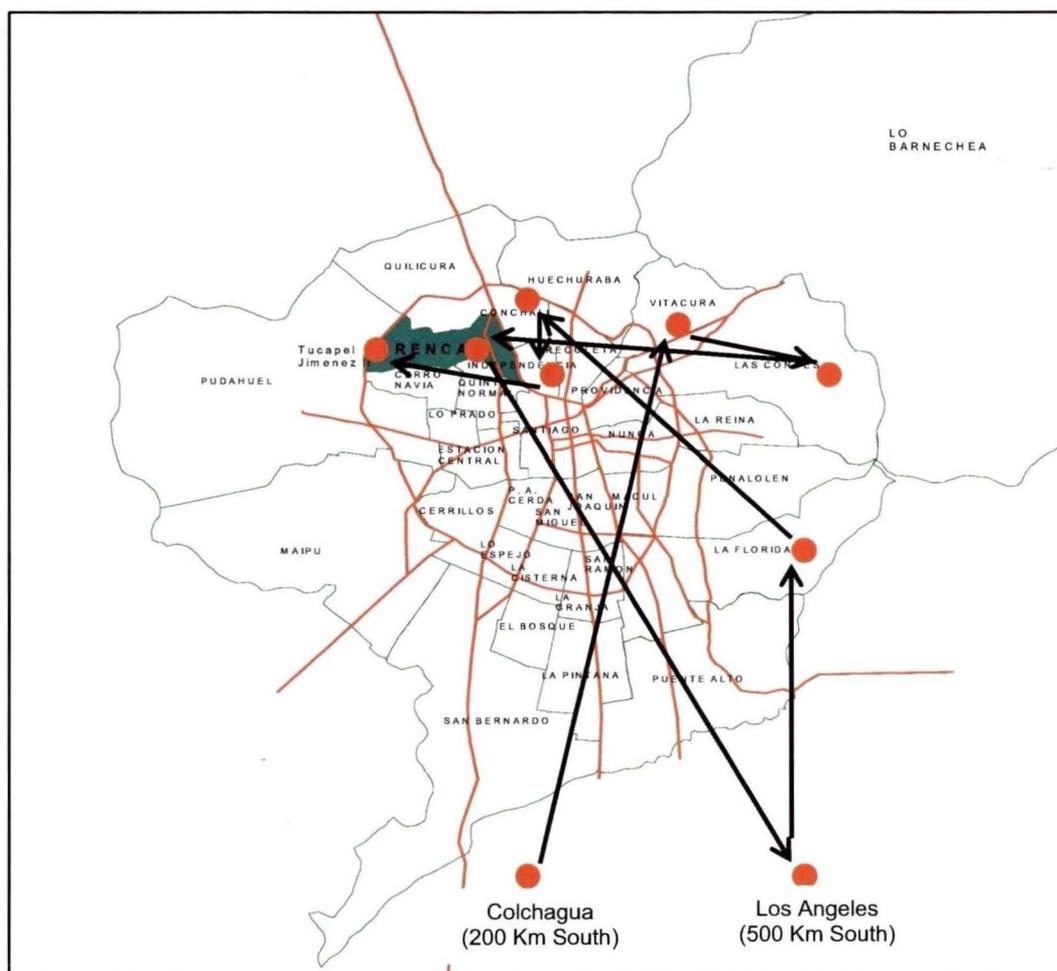
Johanna was born in Colchagua, a rural area located approximately 250 kilometres south of Santiago. She migrated to Santiago when she was 14, after her mother became ill.

"I had a brother living in Vitacura who worked as a foreman on a construction site and there I arrived, in Las Tranqueras. After that I went to Colon Oriente [in the borough of Las Condes] to live with an uncle. I lived there for several years. After that I came to Renca, to the shantytown of Las Palmeras. Then they moved us out to the Valle de Azapa [housing estate], where they gave us a house. Because of my husband I sold it and we went to live in Los Angeles [500 kilometres south of Santiago]. ... A friend of him had told him that there was cheap land there, so I sold the house ... but there they were no jobs. Life was very difficult there. ... I lost everything, the piece of land, everything. I didn't keep anything".

After spending four years there she returned to Santiago.

"I talked to my mother-in-law and she welcomed us into her home. I lived there for quite a long time, right next to the bus stop for the 22 on La Florida street. Then we went to Conchali, to the other home of my mother-in- law, where my sister-in-law lived. We lived there for a long time. We suffered miserably; they didn't even allow us to use the toilet. My sister-in-law is a very bad person. Then a minister of the evangelical church suggested that we go to take care of a church and we said yes because the suffering iwas too much. We couldn't live there any longer.. We went to Zapadores [in the borough of Independencia], but there they made our life very hard. The wife of the minister made our life very hard, and what was the worst was that they humiliated us ... and then one day I came to visit my daughter who was living in a shantytown here in Renca, the Apostol Santiago and by chance they were building a new shantytown. I sent my husband to talk to the minister of the church on the corner and he said 'yes, come here'.' We were very happy and started enclosing a piece of land right away and then we brought a little house, and from there they took us here [to the housing estate]".

Having arrived first at one definitive location (the place where her brother was living and working) she moves every few years including a failed trans-regional migration. In almost all of the moves there is a certain element of chance and uncertainty. Most of the movement was forced by unfavourable circumstances rather than as a result of the free will of the members of Johanna's family group. One of the main drivers to move was the lack of proper housing. This situation forces them to be 'on the move' constantly over a wide area of Santiago where they found cheap (or free) temporary housing. Obviously, their lack of income drives them towards the poorest areas of the city in general, but not exclusively[17],.

Finally, in terms of trans-national mobility we found only two failed attempts to emigrate abroad, and in general the possibility (or even the issue) of trans-national

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[17] The first areas where Johanna lived, the boroughs of Vitacura and Las Condes, are high-income areas, especially the first one, the borough of highest income of the whole country.

emigration did not appear in any of the interviews. This fact seems to confirm that idea that trans-national migration is not relevant in contemporary Chilean society, despite the persistence in the media and in popular discourse of the image of the "*Chileno patiperro*" [traveller Chilean][18],. For to a variety of reasons (including the stable, but not buoyant, economic situation and the distant geographical location) the country did not receive or send large numbers of migrants in recent times, particularly in comparison with other Latin American countries (OIM 2004; Price 2001).

2. *Inner* mobility

Inner mobility refers to any spatial movement that people make during their everyday lives. This movement does not represent any novelty, nor require any extraordinary preparation and it is perceived as a part of the flow of events that constitutes our 'normality'. These mobilities are implicit in our habitation of the city consisting of the dynamic or mobile area of our 'being in the world'. We are mobile; we are subjects with a certain personality and physicality located within a determined temporal, spatial and social environment.

None of us move in the same way. As we saw in chapter 1, in modern societies mobility can be seen as a form of scarce resource distributed in an unequal way in society. Especially in contemporary 'Hypermobile' societies (Adams 2005), everyday mobility can be seen as a key indicator of the position of individuals in the social and spatial urban order and can give us useful insight into the way individuals materialize their position in social categories and stratifications into concrete behaviours.

This is evident when we compare between the patterns of mobility of the inhabitants of the borough of Renca with the inhabitants of two of the richest boroughs of the city, Vitacura and Barnechea and the two poorest, Cerro Navia and La Pintana based on the information given by the Origin and Destination Survey (Encuesta de Origen y Destino) carried out in the city of Santiago in 2001.

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[18] A quite extended romantic image that sees Chilean people as good for travelling abroad and living in different countries, summarised in the phrase "everywhere you go, you can find a Chilean".

Table 3. General Indicators of Spatial Mobility for Five Boroughs of Santiago

Borough	Journey / inhabitant	Car/House relation	Mean of transport used				Reason to move		
			Public	Private	Walk	Others	Work	Study	Others
Vitacura	2.9	1.47	17.3%	69.1%	10.4%	3.1%	28.8%	19.5%	51.7%
Barnechea	2.5	1.61	14.4%	64.8%	14.0%	6.8%	25.2%	27.5%	47.3%
Renca	3.1	0.39	35.1%	21.6%	38.8%	4.5%	26.5%	14.4%	59.1%
Cerro Navia	3.1	0.37	33.4%	13.9%	46.1%	6.6%	22.5%	16.6%	60.9%
La Pintana	2.3	0.21	36.1%	9.6%	48.1%	6.2%	25.8%	22.3%	51.9%
Total	**2.8**	**0.56**	**32.4%**	**25.2%**	**36.7%**	**5.7%**	**26.3%**	**18.0%**	**55.7%**

Source: Encuesta Origen y Destino, Santiago 2001 (SECTRA 2002)

Contrary to expectations, the indicator of individual mobility per inhabitant shows that the inhabitants of the borough of Renca make more journeys per day than the average inhabitant of the high-income boroughs of Vitacura and Barnechea. This greater number of trips can be explained as the way inhabitants cope with the limitations of not having a car. The shortage of private means of transport (as seen in the third column) is reflected by walking representing a 38% of all the movements and the use of public transport such as buses or collective taxis representing35%.

This seems to support the idea that "the space in which people in low income households travel is more restricted than the others" (Murakami 1997:1). In terms of reason to move the only relevant difference is given by the comparatively low number of journeys for the purposes of study in the boroughs, although the high fragmentation of the reasons to move (the 'others' category is always beyond the 50%) does not permit any valid inference to be drawn about the reason for this difference.

In graph 4 we can see more clearly the relationship between family income and the number of motorized journeys per day. People with higher incomes made more motorized trips than the rest and every increase in the income of the family is directly translated in terms of higher spatial mobility. In the case of the city of Santiago, the empirical information suggests that the connection between income (and also with social mobility, at least when understand as higher incomes) and everyday spatial

mobility is also still pretty high[19], against the assumptions that affirms that this relation is weaker than ever (Bonss 2004). This linear negative relation has also been found in other countries, such as the USA (Murakami 1997).

Graph 4. Individual Average Number of Motorized Trips per day in Relation to Family Income
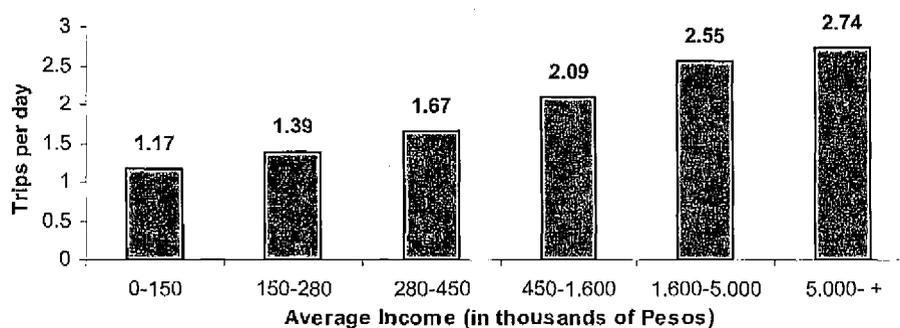
Source: Encuesta Origen y Destino, Santiago 2001

In this context, the spatial mobility of these families beyond the housing estate (or the using motorized means of transport) tends to be restricted to places to where it is absolutely necessary to go:

> "Nowadays I don't move that much, because I leave work at a certain time and then I come home. I only go out when I have to do something specific [paying bills, the instalments of the house, visits to doctors, etc.]. Clearly I only go out when I have to do something and, for no other reason, and it's not that frequent" (Jonathan, 34 years).

These restrictions on spatial mobility are provided by a variety of interconnected and mutually dependent limitations (for a summary see Church 2000:198-200) some of them of a structural character and others more variable, but that in common ,limit to a great degree the everyday mobility of these individuals.

The main limit to mobility is the the financial restrictions resulting from their imperfect (and even nonexistent) integration into the labour market and the lack of other sources of income. For the vast majority of these families, movement implies an extensive use of money, money that is necessary to satisfy their basic needs. As an interviewee told us, with the $1,500 Chilean pesos that she spends in tickets for one-way bus travel with her family (five tickets, at around $300 Chilean pesos each), she

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[19] And this relation can be even higher is we sum to the 'effective' or material mobility of individuals, the 'communicational' ones in the form of the use of Internet, mobile phones and other communication technologies, a use that is also positively related with income.

can buy food to feed the family for a whole day. Every spatial movement that involves the use of any paid means of transport has to be decided against the background of all the needs that the family have to satisfy with their limited monetary resources:

"I only move from here to work and from work to here. I don't like to go out that much. Today is my free day and I didn't go out. I prefer to stay here. It's not that it is a problem to move, [but] one must have money at least for the 'micro' [bus]" (Ruben, 36 years).

"Sometimes I don't go out for economic reasons, because to go out implies spending money that you have to put into a scheme of costs. Going out with the children too means that you have to have something to feed them, that you have to have money to transport, you can't leave them all the day without food, so we have to plan our going outs. Even if we are just going to *vitrinear* [window shopping] we have to take something to eat. You can not go out everyday and at every moment" (Pedro, 36 years).

Above all mobility represents money. Money is *per se* a scarce resource for them. It is almost impossible to make a clear distinction between mobility (or in general any other activity) and the economic costs involved in it. This situation makes non essential spatial mobility seem to be a luxury with high opportunity costs.

This is strongly related to the second constraint on mobility: the actual location of their current residences within Santiago. As we saw in chapter II, the housing estate is found literally on the urban zone boundary of Santiago, in the western corner of the Borough of Renca. This borough is also quite isolated, being located in the north-western end of Santiago with a few industrial areas to the east, the river Mapocho to the south and Renca Hills to the north. This location that makes one of the inhabitants exclaims that:

"In my opinion, here we are far from all, like in an un-civilization. It is as if we were a little town in the south [of Chile] and [when we want to go out] we have to go to the city. That's the way I see it, because here there is no supermarkets. There is nothing at hand. Even the micros [buses] to go to the centre [of the city] take at least an hour. It is as if we were very far away, like a little town far away from the city" (Paola, 32 years)

"[We] spend a lot of time going from one place to another. I think that the things [stores, health centres, schools, etc.] should be closer in order not to waste time, besides if we consider the number of buses, the amount of vehicles on the streets, sometimes it takes you more time in going to and returning from one place than the time that you spent in the place itself, if you analyse the time that you use" (Alicia, 40 years).

This isolated location of the Housing Estate under study means that any movement takes significant amounts of time. Just to reach the city centre takes residents approximately an hour, and in many cases work-places and the homes of relatives are located farther away than that. Carla (36 years), one of the interviewees, worked in a supermarket located in the Borough of La Florida, in the southeast area of Santiago.

"I leave every day at 5:20. 5:30 is the latest I to take the bus because I start work at 7:30". In the afternoon she leaves at 4:30 and "at 4:45 I'm taking the micro [bus] and I'm arriving more or less at 7:00 or 7:30. Sometimes there is congestion and I arrive here at 7:45 ... The work day seems very long to me. The micro [bus] journey is boring, generally I carry a magazine. I spend two hours on the micro ... the distance is what bores me the most".

Travel is not only limited by money, but also for the time that they have to spend in transit to get from one place to another. It is important to note that perceptions about time loss appear against a background where the value ascribed to time is changing rapidly. Traditionally low-income people perceive themselves as a social group who is rich in time quantitative terms[20], especially due to their low levels of integration into work market and, in general, to the rhythms of city life.

The information collected in the fieldwork, along with other processes of modernization demonstrates that the modern notion of time as an 'scarce resource' (Adam 1995; Nowotny 1994) seems to have entered into this group of the population. Increasingly for them time appears, if not as a concrete scarcity (because their levels of integration into scheduled activities is still low in comparison with other groups of society) at least as a valuable resource. While analysing the content of the interviews it was very common to find frequently expressions like 'I don't have time to... ', 'Time was flying when I was at ...', or 'it was a loss of time' used in reference to their perception and use of time. For them time appears increasingly to be a resource that they have to manage wisely, even if they don't need to do it. In many cases this time management represents both a concrete need for it and a symbolic integration into the way time is conceived for the rest of society (which they access in their places of work, from other peers and, importantly, through the media). To have too much free time, or to declare that they have it, is increasingly seen as being lazy or unoccupied, something morally reprehensible.

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[20] As well as poor in terms of 'qualitative' time. This distinction between quantitative (in terms of hours) and qualitative (in terms of experiences and meaning) is relevant especially if we make a comparison between this group and middle classes, who are less rich in terms of quantitative time (the have less hours of free time), but they are certainly richer in terms of qualitative one (they can fill these free hour with a quite diverse and meaningful set of activities).

In third place, risk perception seems to limit inner mobility. During the interviews, it was mentioned frequently as a reason why they don't move more often in relation to daily journeys.

"... It scares me to walk alone. It scares me. I have seen so many things on television that scare me to go out. Then if I have to do something I wait until the end of week or I tell my husband to ask for leave from work, because I do not go alone" (Isabel, 25 years).

This was also true in relation to seasonal mobility.

"... We used to go frequently to Rengo [for holidays], where some relatives of my wife live, but a long time has passed since the last time we went there. ... Since we arrived here [at the housing estate], into this house, we have not travelled a lot for security reasons. You can't leave your house alone. Besides we don't have a security system, so we can't leave the house alone" (Christian, 38 years).

In both cases the perception of risk appears to be the main limit to mobility. The members of the families under study perceive their environment as insecure and potentially harmful. This perception leads them to prefer, unless strictly necessary, to be inside the known and less risky space of their homes rather than out or in transit. This situation is especially relevant to the use of the immediate environment - the housing estate and its public spaces. As already seen, for the families under study the move to their current residence resulted in the dissolution, or at least the reduction, of strong social and community ties.

This perception is particularly strong in relation to children. Many parents perceive these spaces as particularly dangerous for them, so they don't let them use them, unless necessary or they are watching the children themselves. This perception reduces the mobility of the kids, along with their parents, to the minimum. In practical terms their movements are limited: travel to and from the school and a few hours of playing time during the weekends, always personally invigilated by an adult, commonly one of the parents, because "nowadays there is no trust in anybody" as advised by Patricia.

Thus, if we want to understand better the social dynamics of contemporary societies, we have to extend the reach of the 'risk society' thesis (Beck 1998 [1986]) in two complementary directions. It needs to be extended in the direction of the everyday..

Not only do big trans national organizations and governments operate in a risk environment, but also risk perception is "an inevitable part of everyday life, pervading everything we did" (Tulloch 2003:19). Secondly, risk perception needs to be focused sharply in relation to the more mundane threatening experiences (such as crime or drug-related malaises) rather than see it only in relation to technological, environmental and other so-called 'global risks'. People under study certainly live in a risk society, but their risks have nothing to do with ecological disasters or genetically modified (GM) food. Their risks are more prosaic but no less important. These are the risks associated with an imperfect social inclusion including violence, robberies and drug dealing. In this sense, we can see how, to live in a risk society is not a new experience, a experience of late modernity. It is only new in the globalisation of its reach (or, even better, the 'elite-tisation' of it), because in relation to the risks themselves, especially the most basic, they have been always present in the lives of millions of low income people throughout the world, especially in developing countries.

The fourth explanatory factor of the spatial immobility of these families is, as we saw with the information of the 'Origin and Destination' survey, their limited access to the key technology of urban spatial mobility: the car. As has been stated elsewhere (Featherstone 2004 and in general the whole number 21 (4/5) of Theory, Culture & Society) cars represent *the* key technology of contemporary urban mobility. With the process of extension and suburbanization undergone by world cities in recent years, the car has become a necessary possession to be an active member of contemporary societies to the extreme that

> "Social life more generally was irreversibly locked in to the mode of mobility that automobility generates and presupposes. This mode of mobility is neither socially necessary nor inevitable but has seemed impossible to break from" (Urry 2004b:27).

For millions of people throughout the world cars are still remote objects faraway from their everyday lives[21]. In most urban environments, as in Santiago, the ownership or lack of ownership of a car appears drive mobility between individuals and social groups. This is clear in the case under study when we compare the declared mobility patterns of most of the families with the few families who own a car. Leonardo and

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[21] In accordance to the data analyzed by John Adams (2005 on press: 5) "despite a ten-fold increase in the world's car population since 1950 – to about 500 million – because of the population increase, over this period the number of people who do not own a car has more than double – to about 6 billion".

Jessica were the only family group with a car not for work related reasons (the other two were taxi drivers).

"I have had the car for two years. I bought it more as a luxury, because my father had one and I wanted to have one. I didn't buy it because I needed it. I bought it as a luxury ... [but today] it is not a luxury any more, because sometimes my child gets sick and I go with him [to the hospital]. It doesn't matter what time, so I think it is not a luxury. it's a little bit more necessary, not very necessary [though]. ... I tend to go out more than my neighbours, to relax more, because sometimes when I feel bored, I just go out and they stay here. I go where I want. I go to a dinner, to a party and if I am sleepy I come back. In this way itis useful; it gives me freedom [of movement]. I can do more than those who move about on foot or by bus" (Leonardo, 30 years).

Leonardo believed at least in comparison with the neighbours that the car makes him more mobile, a situation that he related as having more freedom and control over their use of space and time. The strength of this perception, and the way he related an increase in their general well being, can be seen in the change of status of the car, from being a 'luxury' to being a 'need'. Once he got used to life with a car, his perception about it changes radically. This perception of the car as an essential in everyday life[22] is also present as shown by other people under study here.

Now he [her husband] wants to buy a car because sometimes we need it when we want to go out and we have to take the bus, and the children cry. My mother lives in Puente Alto. It takes 3 or 4 hours by bus. We get on it here at the beginning [of the route] and we stay on to the end of the route, from bus stop to bus stop. We have not been there for a long time. With a car it's shorter and you can go out more often and it's not so expensive [to go out]. I think it is more comfortable" (Isabel, 25 years).

In this sense, the car can be considered as some sort of 'emergent' need. For the families under study home ownership constituted the classical dream and plan to be fulfilled. In their new context where the dream of home ownership has been partially fulfilled, new needs and plans start to appear on the horizon of the family wish-list. These tend to include owning a car and a personal computer.

Finally, another source of immobility is the simple disinterest in being on the move, or generally outside, in any other place other than the home. The cause of this vision, along with a perception of risk, is the symbolic, and even moral juxtaposition, present in almost all the interviewees, between the home environment and the outside,

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[22] That can be seen as a first step in the process of domestication of the technology, at least in their imagination (Silverstone 1996).

particularly 'the street'. The home represents the space of order and normality (Hiscock 2001; Kaika 2004), the space of 'good habits, where any time dedicated to it is positively valued.

In contrast, the street, which is "an idea or conceptions perhaps as much as it is a real place" (Hamilton 2002:95), appears as a space of strangeness and anomie. This perception relates not only to the dissolution of community ties already mentioned but also to other social problems associated with contemporary urban life. The 'bad influences' that the street can have over young people of all ages are well known. This is a space where one must try not to spend too much time. In terms of mobility, this perception demonstrates an overvaluation of the time spent at home above all other places.

The group under study clearly has very limited inner mobility, restricted often to essential moves. The different patterns of mobility are not only limited to the differences between these families and the general mobility in contemporary Santiago. Within each family there are different patterns of mobility to note.

In the case of male adults, this mobility is limited mainly to the journeys from the home to the workplace. As one interviewee said, "this is the life that I live now: from here the home to the micro [bus], from the micro to work, work, then the micro home. Everyday has always been the same," (Victor, 32 years). In general, the levels of mobility are moderately high due to the distant location of places of work in relation to the housing estate.

> "When I was [working] in Bago and lived in [the borough of] La Granja I was at work in less than half an hour. Not now ...because, [in the mornings] it takes me 45 minutes. Then in the evenings, to get home, it take me an hour or an hour and fifteen minutes, but well, I do not believe that it be so far. I prefer not to be so static, just in one place. We are fine this way" (Nicolas, 39 years).

Commonly the journeys involve crossing large areas of the city using public transport that can take several hours per day. Against this background travelling to any other place is resisted and, if essential, is left for days off. An additional problem is that quite frequently these days off do not correspond to weekends, a fact that make it more difficult for them to coordinate with their families in order to go out. This is particularly problematic for those with children at school.

In the case of the women who are mostly housewives, mobility responds to diverse needs. Their moves are limited to the minimum required for the maintenance of the home and the care of the children and grandchildren:

"Where do I go? I go out to pick up my boy [at school], and then I get home to do homework, nothing more" (Cristina, woman, 42 years).

"If I don't go to look after the kids, I won't go anywhere" (Alejandra, woman, 35 years).

Child care could also appear to limit mobility. The arrival of the children forces the women to stop working or to lessen the carrying out of other outside activities.

Another important justification for mobility more relevant to housewives, is to visit relatives and, to a lesser degree, friends. Here the move from their former homes in some cases has enhanced mobility:

"Nowadays, because I have my family so far away, I have to go out more. But when we were closer I went out in my free time rarely. I only went out to my mother's home as it was close [to my house], but not now. Today I have to travel to be able to see her" (Edith, 49 years).

It also limits it:

"Before it was easier [to go out] because I had my sisters, and I could go out and leave the children with my sisters, and that was easier than going out alone with the children. But not now, now that I am alone here I have to go [out] with them and this is quite stressfull and very complicated" (Paola, 32 years).

The mobility of the children is strictly controlled by their parents. This true in the group under study because "the pivotal aspects determining the character of children's mobility is still the parental perceptions of stranger-danger and general insecurity" (Fotel 2004:547). As we saw above there is strong perception of risk among them and materializes in the form of constant control of their children's mobility. Oscar advised,

"I don't go out that much. I like to be here in my home. During the week I can't go out because there's nobody home. I have to stay with my brother until someone comes and then I don't go out because it's already dark. Only from time to time, on Fridays I go out because I don't have anything else to do, because I don't have to go to school the next

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day [also. I can stay out late on Saturday, but not on Sundays because I have to go to school the next day. I have to take a bath and organise myself." (Oscar, 12 years).

A happened with Oscar, many of the children interviewed did not see the limits to their mobility as something negative. They did not even see it as something externally imposed, but as some sort of natural order of things. They would like to go out more, but at the same time recognize the need for certain limits. Like their parents, children evaluate their environment as being potentially dangerous.

"I don't go out very often. I would like to have our own garden. Here [she shows the space just outside the flat] would make a garden, so we would avoid problems, not break things that are not ours and have our own garden and invite the friends that we want, and to have our things, a swimming pool." (Ruth, 10 years)

"The housing estate is good. The problem is the behaviour of the people and their way of life. For example, a friend of mine was assaulted last year. He was walking there, in the nets, and they asked him what time it was, and he told them 'it's three o'clock', 'give us your watch' ... I am always here inside. I never go outside, not to the square nor to the field. My friend was assaulted at three in the afternoon" (Mercedes, 14 years).

Mobility at weekends, for holidays, and other free times is in general highly prized but not considered to be a priority. In the eyes of almost all interviewees mobility associated with free time seems to be some sort of precious dream, but very difficult to come true. In fact they do not go out for pleasure very often, not even in the summer or during school holidays. There are two main reasons to this: financial and adult resistance. For most of them the amount of money needed to travel (even to places close to Santiago or inside the city) represents an important part of their income, so most of the families prefer to stay in during free time. Also there is strong resistance, particularly at weekends, to go out amongst the working adults after a week of work and commuting. Many of them worked in precarious and unstable first sector jobs demanding physical effort and longer daily hours than other areas due to their precarious position in the labour market and their low qualifications. Most of the families therefore limit their mobility on free time to occasional visits to relatives.

3. Spatial mobility and social integration

As we saw in chapter 1, in the current urban order, people are forced to move. Zigmunt Bauman indicates, "immobility is not a realistic option in a world of permanent change" (Bauman 1998:2). Even in a world filled with technologies that

permit 'virtual' travel from one place to another, the need of spatial movement has not diminished. The availability of communication devices "implies no dissolution in the degree that face-to-face – or, more precisely, 'copresent' – interaction is both preferred and necessary across a wide range of tasks" (Boden 1994:258). Individuals have to be 'on the move' permanently, and the amount of movement is increasing. "Our life styles have become increasingly mobile in the sense that the speed of transportation and hence geographical reach within to a given time span is dramatically augmented by modern technological developments" (Kakihara 2002:1).

In our case study this need to be 'on the move' is even more directly translated into spatial mobility due to the fact that its replacement by the use communication technologies (making calls, sending e-mails, etc. instead of travelling) is quite low. The reasons for this are discussed in chapter 9. Family members under study have to move if they want to reach opportunities, places and other people, as Diego and Valeria acknowledge.

"[Nowadays] one must move to have good things, things that make life more or less easier for us. If I do not move many things stop ..., practically. When one is trapped, it feels as if everything is falling down. For the most desirable things we have to be on the go, so that things continue functioning. Imagine if the motor stops, [then] everything go to hell. Then if I stop, everything goes to hell, it is quite clear" (Diego, 39 years).

Since I broke up with my partner the moving has been constant. I cannot stand still, because at the very moment when I stop [everything will collapse] ... My family depend on me so I can't stand still (Valeria, 52 years).

The members of the family groups under study are forced not only travel relatively frequently, but also since the move to the housing estate they have had to enlarge their levels of mobility in order to respond to demands related to their growing integration into a social order that puts spatial in addition to social mobility as one of the central elements of its present dynamic.

"[Before] there were less needs, less things to do. We didn't care that much about materials things or time. Now we do. This is very important. Before we didn't have to do so many things, now everything is a procedure. Nowadays we want to put in a telephone line here. Then we have to follow a procedure. They [the telephone company] don't want to put telephone in here so we have to go to complain. Everything is go out and go out. You have to go to follow a procedure there, then we have to go to pay the dividendos [monthly instalments for the flat. We then have to go to the SERVIU with documents that you

need, [to pay] water bills, light bills, medical assistance. Everything is go out and go out, to follow procedures and processes" (Jessica, 30 years).

For Jessica living in her own flat introduces her to a system that is not only more complex but also that requires higher degrees of spatial mobility. This requirement for mobility, although perceived by the member of the families under study, cannot be completely met. The current situation of these families seems to conform to the idea posed by various studies of urban poverty that,

"In poverty neighbourhoods, the action spaces and social networks of most residents indeed seem to be restricted to the local area ... [the] consolidation of household and family is linked to minimal everyday mobility, and an almost complete loss of social contacts, leisure activities and other forms of participation beyond the area ... the horizon of everyday life shrinks to the neighbourhood and the positive social status individuals attribute to themselves depends almost exclusively upon comparisons with people in the area" (Friedrichs 2002:102).

This extract highlights one important side effect of spatial immobility. Limited mobility means that these people lose work opportunities and they often cannot access better education or health. To be immobile also has some devastating effects on the way they evaluate their daily life, as declared by Isabel,

"I would like to study, or to do something, something that take me out from here [the flat], because it makes me ill to be so enclosed. ... I think that my life is passing within these four walls. I've been bringing up [my children] since I was 16 years old. My life has always been this way, nothing more. It's the only thing I know how to do. Sometimes it makes me sick ... at times gives me a great loneliness, gives me the desire to leave everything and go out, and to walk, walk, and walk, and not to stop ever again, because I feel that my life is passing very [fast] ... I am wasting my youth. After 40 years they will ask me what I have done, and I have done nothing, nothing of what I can feel proud of, except for my children, but nothing more, nothing more" (Isabel, 25 years).

This extract shows us how mobility is also a valuable indicator of personal well-being. In a world in motion for many people not moving represents being left behind. Being 'on the move' has an almost metaphysical meaning, because movement is not understood only in terms of distance or space crossed, but also as a change, as an improvement in the conditions of existence. For this reason, the low degrees of mobility found in these groups limits their integration into a style of urban life that demands high degrees of spatial mobility as one of its central elements, but also limits their development as human beings in a 'mobile' social order.

The connection between social and spatial mobility is clearly demonstrated by official statistics (SECTRA 2002) and the personal accounts of the individuals under study. Even if we accept that this connection is weaker today than years ago (Bonss 2004), it is still central for these groups. There is also a "mobility apartheid" (Adams 2005:5), a situation where disadvantaged individuals and groups are commonly being socially excluded purely on the ground that they cannot move as freely as other groups within society. This situation reflects the fact that "between the increasingly connected nodes of city centres and high income areas, through which the 'mobile individuals' move, there are increasingly zones poorly connected to these flows in which mobility frequently encounters more boundaries and barriers rather than highways and high speed networks" (Graham 2001:34).

In this context the contemporary social effect of mobility seems to be that being on the move does not necessarily imply anything, but to have a minimal 'reserve' for potential mobility appears to be a prerequisite to fully participating in the social order. Then "the issue is not so much of movement as of spacing and timing" (Shove 2002:7-8), a temporal and spatial coordination between individuals and opportunities in a dynamic urban environment.

Motility is therefore a key tool to analyse the relationship between mobility and social integration (Kaufmann 2002; Kaufmann 2004). Motility was first defined by biology as the "ability to move spontaneously and independently" that some living creatures have, even if they don't use it actively (Miller 2003). In social terms motility can be defined as "the capacity of entities (e.g. goods, information or persons) to be mobile in social and geographical space, or as the way in which entities access and appropriate the capacity for socio-spatial mobility according to their circumstances" (Kaufmann 2004:76). The potential of mobility is more important that actual mobility, or at the very least it is of the same relevance. In a world where the availability of mobility (understood as a scarce resource) is strictly limited for various reasons, the efficacy of such a movement becomes central.

This strategic use of motility resources is key in the case under study. These families used to replace the lack of *inner* or everyday mobility with a certain degree of *outer* or long-term mobility historically as indicated by Johanna. As these families did not have a permanent home they could change their place more easily than others more fixed groups, moving from one place to another in search of better living conditions.

On the housing estate this situation changes radically. Their new homes provide a legally owned stable place to live, but also the fulfilment of a long awaited dream. While many of them do not see their current flats as their definitive home, a move to a new home in the short term seems quite improbable in their present socioeconomic situation.

In fact even if they want to the families cannot move to a new place. In accordance with the article 23 (52) of the Subsidio Habitacional [housing subsidy] Regulations (SERVIU 1984:24) the beneficiaries of the social housing program, such as the ones under study here, cannot sell or rent their houses out for a period of five years from the date of receipt, unless they return in full the financial support given by the State. While only some of them can pay the low monthly instalments for their homes, the payment in full of their debt seems almost impossible in the short run.

If long-term mobility to achieve improved access to opportunities, places and people is not an option for them, inner mobility becomes their only way to be 'on the move'. As we saw here, their current inner mobility is restricted due by a series of different limitations. They are not immobile; nobody is fully immobile, but their mobility has to be chosen and selected carefully. Every movement beyond the walking sphere including the use of public transport, has high opportunity costs in terms of the economic resources used. Mobility has to be planned and is commonly directed towards clear destinations, certain points in urban space that they have to reach using the most inexpensive means.

These families have found themselves in a paradoxical relationship with spatial mobility. On the one hand they are members (if not fully active) of a society in which the temporal and spatial dimensions of human activity, included mobility, are undergoing a process of deep change and reconfiguration. On the other hand, their practices (and the meaning they attach to them) are still located within the sphere of what can be seen as a more or less static framework, or at least not as 'fluid' as other social groups. These differences, as we saw here in the case of spatial mobility, cause more than one problem and tension, and constitute new manifestations of the more general and well-known conditions of lack of opportunities and social exclusion in which low-income families live, especially in developing countries.

Conclusions

The study of mobility of a low-income population permits us to approach differently the impacts of social exclusion on everyday life. As we saw here, many of the central problems associated with a precarious integration into society have an empirical manifestation in the way people move in the city and the meaning that they attach to these moves. Then to move or not to move is not innocuous but a powerful indicator of the way societies are ordered and of the positions that individuals occupy within it. In cotemporary societies, mobility is becoming a determinant not only in relation with practical access to goods and opportunities but also in terms of a general sensation of well being and satisfaction with personal life.

In terms of our specific case study the information analysed here points towards a rejection of the hypothesis of a 'mobile' society proposed by current developments in social theory. It is true that mobility is at the centre of many processes and changes in contemporary society, but from there to affirm that mobility changes contemporary society as a whole is an overstatement. In general the problem of social theory in the field is to assume the 'mobility revolution' as something general without taking into consideration specific contexts, dismissing the fact that "neither lifestyles not mobility can be separated from macro-structural frameworks" (Scheiner 2003:323). Maybe an explanation of this tendency is the still weak association between theoretical models and empirical research. In many cases this association is completely non-existent, and in the cases where it is present tends to universalise findings from very particular, and commonly elitist, social settings such as the use of mobile phones among Finnish teenagers (Kopomaa 2000) or the whole series of 'Mobility pioneers' project (Kesselring 2004) to the whole world population[23].

With its lack of universalism, social theory relating to mobility has been particularly blind to the other side of the mobile revolution: the development of a "new" immobile society being as important as the mobile one. This immobile society is a type of social order in which social exclusion is defined by the comparative immobility of all

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[23] Also it seems to me that social theory on mobility is still 'intoxicated' with virtuality (another version of the well-known technological determinism) in the sense that there are still too much Internet-based visions of mobility, non-directionality above all. From a common sense point of view non directionality sound very much as looking for something in Google rather than our current everyday movement, who move without knowing the direction of this mobility? And how often does not arrive to their final destination? Maybe it'll take more time or we will have to take other routes, but the destination is clear from the very beginning and we reach it. Well, almost all the time.

101

elements, including not only human beings, but also objects and communications[24]. The point here is not demonise the 'negative' or 'perverse' effects of mobility per se as has happened in the literature related to globalisation and developing countries but to locate the so-called 'mobile revolution' in the context of the hundreds of new immobilities that it produces. Mobility and immobility are part of the same social phenomena and we can only understand them contrasting and analysing their continuities, differences and points of friction, as we have tried to do here.

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[24] A good example of these immobilities is the 'fair trade' movement (http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/), an organization specifically devoted to improve the mobility of commodities produced on developing countries, trying to avoid the commonly negative effects associated to it (unnecessary intermediaries, high taxes, corruption, etc.).

Chapter 5

Localities of Practices

Introduction

As we have seen in the preceding two chapters, neither of the two different concepts of place presented in Chapter 1 allow us to fully grasp the complex urban space perception held by the members of the families under study. On the one hand, the model based on 'fixed' places seems to be too rigid to fit either a dynamic social context as that of the families under study, or in the case of well-defined spatial structures such as the home. They still live in places (houses, neighbourhoods, cities) but the fundamental spatial attributes of such places have changed to such an extreme that it is difficult to ascribe to them the properties that social theory traditionally identifies with the word 'places'.

We also cannot fully apply a model where mobility is the structuring principle of the space for the housing estate inhabitants. Even though the general urban context of Santiago is becoming more mobile than ever, the everyday life of these families is still locked inside the same old limitations to spatial movement. In this sense above the relevance of the new mobilities in which they live, the lack of mobility is becoming increasingly an important indicator and source of social exclusion.

The aim of this chapter is to propose an alternative approach to the problem of how the family members use and perceive space in their everyday lives. This approach is based on two concepts: the concept of practices and the concept of localities. Both concepts will be discussed in depth in the first sections of this chapter. We develop in the second section the concept of localities of practices as a way to study the way these families engage with their surrounding space in everyday life. Finally, in order to illustrate our concept with an empirical example, the case of the pool located in the

central square of the housing estate during the summer will be analysed using the concept of everyday space developed here.

1. Practices *and* localities

The search for a concept that allow us to understand better the way these people perceive and use space in their everyday life, has to start by trying to define the most basic way in which individuals and groups engage in social life. As a way to do so, we have to start looking to the personal recount of the interviewees about a normal, for example Nicolas (39 years):

> "I wake up at 6:30 in the morning. Then I wash myself and take a cup of coffee or Milo depending on what we have, and I leave at 7:00. I take a bus to the Panamericana Highway from where a coach hired by my company picks me up and I arrive at work around 7:45, more or less. I always carry a sandwich or some plain bread so I can have breakfast more quietly,. My work is in Quilicura and I work from 8:00 until around 10:30, when we take a short break until 10:45, a cup of tea or coffee, and after that... around 1:15 in the afternoon we have lunch until around 1:45 and then I have to keep working until 6. This is the normal timetable for work. From 8:00 to 6:00. I am stuck at work. At 6:30 the coaches from the company leave for the city centre and they drop off at Gamero Street from where I take a bus to my home, to which I arrive around 7:30 in the evening. I get home and have a cup of tea or eat something. My wife usually gives me dinner and then a cup of tea. I get home to listen to Christian music because I miss it during the day. Christian music or Christian preaching helps me to recover in a way, because I miss it, because there everything is work. Then [I listen] until nine approximately, because I like to see the news; everyday I like to see the news. After that it is already 10 at night. I listen to a little bit more of Christian music and I fall sleep around midnight every day. By midnight we have to all be in bed, because we have to get up at 6:30, in my case. My children wake up at 7. We sleep six hours and a half which is not that much I guess. I like to be with my family. I like to be with them so I don't stay to do overtime at work. I don't like to go to work on Saturdays. I already lost too much time away when I was a drug addict and an alcoholic.. I am away from my family too much.

Reducing Nicolas' day to its basic units we arrive at the following list: wake up, wash, take a bus, take breakfast, work, take a break, work, take a bus, eat, listen to music, watch television, listen to music, sleep. Although the list is definitely incomplete, it is useful to see from the perceptions of the interviewees how their daily routines can be broken down into a series of practices, through which they not only satisfy their basic needs e.g. eating, sleeping but also engage socially e.g. work,

watch television. Each one of these practices is the total of a variable number of individual and collective actions in a diverse settings and vary from very simple ones like sleeping at night to very complex ones like working or seeing television. In themselves they represent the smaller unit into which we can dissect Nicolas' day without losing the social context that surround and immerse most of our daily actions.

The understanding of practices as the basic units of social order is one of the few general principles that can be found in the work of some of the main social theorists of the last thirty years, such as Bourdieu, Giddens, Latour and Garfinkel (Reckwitz 2002b). Giddens clearly recognized it:

> "The domain of study of the social sciences ... 'is neither the experience of the individual actor, nor the existence of any form of social totality, but social practices ordered across time and space. Human social activities ... are recursive. That is to say, they are not brought into being by social actors but continually recreated by them via the very means whereby they express themselves as actors'" (Giddens 1984:2 quoted by Warde 2005:134-135).

All these authors, dissociating themselves from a focus on social action based on the vision of an *homo economicus* (a purpose-oriented theory of action) or an *homo sociologicus* (a norm-oriented theory of action) embrace different versions of what we can call 'cultural' theories. These theories try to explain and understand "actions by reconstructing the symbolic structures of knowledge which enable and constrain the agents to interpret the world according to certain forms and to behave in corresponding ways" (Reckwitz 2002b:245-246).

This change of focus is openly manifest when they have to answer, explicit or implicitly, the question about where we can localize the small unit of the social. Against the previous ideas[25] and other parallel developments in cultural theory[26], these authors locate the smallest unit of social in practices, phenomena that can be defined as,

> "A routinized type or behavior which consists of several elements, interconnected to one other: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, 'things' and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and

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[25] That saw the smallest union of the social in single actions (homo economicus) or normative structures (homo sociologicus) in accordance with Reckwitz (2002b).

[26] That saw the smallest unit of the social on mental structures (in the culturalist mentalism approach of Levi-Strauss), texts (in the culturalist textualism of early Foucault) or interaction (in the culturalist intersubjetivism of Habermas) in accordance with Reckwitz (2002b: 247-249).

motivational knowledge. A practice – a way of cooking, of consuming, of working, of investigating, of taking care of oneself or of others, etc. – forms so to speak a 'block' whose experience necessarily depends on the existence and specific interconnectedness of these elements, and which cannot be reduced to any of these single elements" (Reckwitz 2002b:249-250).

Practices are "embodied, materially mediated arrays of human activity centrally organized around shared practical understanding" (Schatzki 2001:2). Practice theory not only "moves the level of the sociological attention 'down' from the conscious ideas and values to the physical and the habitual" (Swidler 2001:75), but also "this move is complemented with a move 'up', from ideas located in individual consciousness to the interpersonal arena of discourse" (ibid.). Social practices are the intermediate ground in which our personal actions and ideas meet our social environment forming a complex of actions and meanings that cannot be separated in smaller units without losing its social character.

In the words of Theodore Schatzki , any practice "is a set of doings and sayings". As any single practice is in relation with other former and future practices "the set of actions that composes a practice is broader than its doings and sayings" (Schatzki 2002:73) 73. We cannot think of any single practice, but always in practices, in the plural. At the same time, these practices are not without a structure and order that is given through the distinction between 'tasks' and 'projects'.

"Different doings and sayings often constitute the same action ... I call such actions "tasks". The performance of tasks often consists of aggregated doings and sayings ... Tasks, in turn, constitutes still higher-order actions; many tasks that particular or aggregated doings and saying constitute themselves, singly or in groups, further actions ... I label those actions that consist of tasks 'projects' ... A practice thus embraces a set of hierarchically organized doings and sayings, tasks and projects; and at any given duree, a participant in the practice is likely, though not necessarily, to be carrying out actions of all types" (Schatzki 2002:73).

Whilst practices can be divided into tasks and projects there are other characteristics of the term worth highlighting. First, in terms of organization, the different doings and sayings that compose a practice "are linked through (1) practical understandings, (2) rules, (3) teleoaffective structure and (4) general understandings" (Schatzki 2002)[27]. In sum all these elements give a determined, specific structure to every single practice.

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[27] For a detailed description of each one of these elements see Schatzki 2002: 77-86.

We can then arrive at the idea that,

"In sum, social orders are largely established in practices. The relations among, meanings of, and, hence, positions of, the components of social orders are beholden, above all to the doings and sayings that compose practices, in conjunction with practice organizations. The arrangements of people, artifacts, organisms, and things that help form the site of the social are laid down primarily in the interweaving and inter-related nexuses of activity that entities of the first of these sort carry on. ... It can be further concluded that practices are the site where much social order transpires. Many, though not all, of the meanings/identities and causal as well as intentional relations that orders exhibit occur as components of the fabric of practices" (Schatzki 2002:101).

We have to be careful in the application of such a concept to empirical research, due as according to Alan Warde,

"Philosophical descriptions of practices often seem to presume an unlikely degree of shared understanding and common conventions, a degree of consensus which implies processes of effective uniform transmission of understandings, procedures and engagements. It is almost inconceivable that such conditions be met. And if they were to be, the often voiced criticism that the concept of practice makes it difficult to account for change would appear to gain additional force" (Warde 2005:136).

In order to avoid this problem "sociological applications of the concept may deal equally with persistence and change in the forms of practices and their adherents, with manifest differences in the ways in which individuals and groups engage in the same practice, and with the social conflicts and political alliances involved in the performance and reorganization of practices" (ibid.). There is nothing necessarily teleological in social practices. Practices, as we will see in the following chapters can create, but also destroy social order and commonly are object of conflict and disputes as well as the basis for social order.

Practices do not occur in any kind of void. They are always located both in time and space as demonstrated by the account from Nicolas. In terms of time, "the idea of routines necessarily implies the idea of a temporality of structure. Routinized social practices occur in the sequence of time, in repetition; social order is thus basically social reproduction" (Reckwitz 2002b:255). In terms of space, due to the fact that practices always involve a certain degree of bodily activity (even if they don't have a

concrete manifestation in the body, as, for example, thinking) they are always located within the spatial frameworks in which the bodies involved in the action are located.

Material objects and places "provide more than just objects of knowledge, but necessary, irreplaceable components of certain social practices" (Reckwitz 2002a:210). In this sense, and in accordance with Bruno Latour's Actor-Network-Theory (Latour 2005), "not only human beings participate in practices, but also non-human artifacts form components of practices" (Reckwitz 2002a:212). Social practices then always exist in certain locales and in relation with objects; they are always 'located' within certain time-space coordinates that define, and at the same time are defined by, the kind of practices being developed with them and the meaning that we attach to them.

These localities have also received explicit attention from social theorists in recent years. After the "spatial turn" in contemporary social theory (for a goof review see Gieryn 2000), locality appear to be one of the key concepts used to understand and give meaning to globalization and its characteristics and empirical manifestations. Starting from the excellent account of Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst (2005, chapter 1) we can identify two phases in the development of social theory about the relation between locality and globality.

The first stage can be identified as the *deterministic* or *naïve* phase. At this stage "early globalisation theorists used these dramatic developments to repackage longer standing concept regarding the fate of community" (Savage 2005:3) based on the idea that "technological revolutions in transportation and communication have all but eliminated the drag once imposed by location and distance on human interaction and on the flow of goods, capital, and information" (Gieryn 2000:463). Joshua Meyrowitz's concept of "no sense of place" (Meyrowitz 1985) or Howard Rheingold's statements on the 'virtual community' (Rheingold 1993) were some of the key ideas used here.

In specific relation to the term 'locality', the critique against 'Americanization' or 'Westernization' "seems to be intrinsically related to a vision of authentic cultures that have to be protected against the onslaught of cultural imperialism" (Geschiere 1998:604) or what John Tomlinson calls (1999:128) "the myth of the pre-modern localism". On the other hand, and in direct contrast, there is a "strong tendency to consider globalization only as a macroscopic issue, speaking of it as if it were

108

analogous to a massive tidal wave sweeping over our everyday lives" (Robertson 2003:5).

According to George Ritzer (2003) what lies behind both considerations is a rigid identification (and opposition) of the pair globalization/localization with the pair nothing/something. Understanding these as "nothing is defined here as a social form that is generally centrally conceived, controlled and comparatively devoid of distinctive substantive content" (Ritzer 2003:195). Something is "a social form that is generally indigenously conceived, controlled, and comparatively rich in distinctive substantive content" (ibid.).

The second stage, started around mid nineties influenced by the work of Arjun Appadurai (Appadurai 1996), can be labelled as a *dialectical* one. Here writers "did not emphasise the erosion of place but rather focused on new forms of connection and mobility, and their potential to rework social relationships and re-construct localism" (Savage 2005:3). Roland Robertson's concept of "glocality" (Robertson 1995) was the key term here. In it we find the idea that "Collapsing the antinomy between the global and the local into the single, but complex, theme of glocal [because we live in] and age in which the quotidian synthesis of the local and the global is an ever-present feature" (Robertson 2003:2).

Much social research has shown not only that "globalization involves 'real people' in their everyday lives" (Robertson 2003:5) but also that "'locality' is never an inert primitive or a given, which pre-exists whatever arrives from outside itself. Locality – material, social and ideological – has always had to be produced, maintained and nurtured deliberately ... the local is thus not a fact but a project" (Appadurai 1999:231). In everyday live "there are not absolute boundaries unaffected by global flows" (Geschiere 1998:605). Then "globalization is without meaning unless it takes with the utmost seriousness that this concept involves the complex linking of socially constructed 'localities'" (Robertson 2003:5).

We can conclude that despite all the changes occurring in recent years and centuries, "localities – chosen or fated – still govern the lives of most humans, even the rapidly increasing numbers with access to global, regional, national and local media" of communication and transport (Durham Peters 1997:91). Despite all the changes "local life - ... - is the vast order of human social existence which continues,

because of the constraints of physical embodiment, to dominate even in a globalized world" (Tomlinson 1999:9).

These localities are different inform those of the past.

> However, while many people remain local and many are 'kept in place' by structures of oppression of various form, the experience which is most truly global is perhaps that of locality being undercut by the penetration of global forces and networks. To this extent, almost everywhere in the world, experience is increasingly 'disembedded' from locality and the ties of culture to place are progressively weakened by new patterns of 'connexity'. It is, as Tomlinson argues, in the transformation of localities, rather than in the increase of physical mobility (significant though that may be for some groups) that the process of globalization perhaps has its most important expression. (Morley 2000:14)

In this situation we have to forget any concept of locality that refers explicitly or implicitly to any substance or something unique or original about our local places. This originality or substance may exist and cause a degree of attachment that can be central to our perception of our local spaces. It is however not a precondition for the existence of our localities. Our localities, the existence of our spatiality, are based in a fundamental fact: the fact that our everyday practices occur in a certain space.

2. Localities *of* practices

Combining both concepts in differing amounts, the concept of localities of practices is proposed as the basic unit of our everyday involvement with our material surroundings and the source of our personal conceptions of space. This concept can be defined simply as the meeting point between social practices and space as a result of which a locality is created. These localities of practices have certain properties.

First, localities and practices are *mutually dependant*. There can be no locality/ies without practices being developed with it/them and there are no practices without a locality/ies where they are performed. In contemporary society, localities, as we saw, do not represent a community or a pre-social reality, but are constructed through our everyday life practices with them. Localities are dwelling places, in Heidegger's terms (Heidegger 1971), and they only can exist if something inhabits them and develops in them the basic social actions and practices.

110

On the other hand, social practices need determinate localities to exist not only as a defined context in which they occur, but as a constituent element of them, at least in three senses, as Theodore Schatzki (2002:60-63) showed:

- *They surround or immerse.* In the relationship between localities and practices "it is best to avoid the expression 'outside', for this expression connotes a definitive or at least clear division between regions. 'Surrounds' and 'immerses' more adequately capture the phenomenon of being caught in something broader that embraces and holds in its grasp" (Schatzki 2002:61)

- *They determine.* Localities "determine the entities or phenomena caught in them" (ibid. 62).

- *They have composition.* Certain localities are "not a diaphanous atmosphere or medium ... [they have] composition, the precise character of which varies with the entities and phenomena that exist in context" (ibid. 63).

Second, localities of practices are *places*. As we saw in the first chapter, places are the point in which the social intercept our time-spatiality and create a different reality, a hybrid mix of human beings, objects, and geographical space in a determined time and space. At an everyday level "people identify as places those spots that they go [and use] for some particular purpose or function. The sequence of places along one's daily rounds (home, shopping, employment, entertainment) is often the core cartographic feature of subjective cityscapes" (Gieryn 2000:472). Thus, localities of practices are the places where we carry out our everyday practices. In this sense, this concept of places can be seen as close to the concept of 'site' in the sense that:

> A site is, first, the location where something is or takes place. Something's spatial site, for instance, is its location in space. It is where in space it is or occurs and can, thus, be found. The spatial site of an activity, for instance, is where in physical, activity or activity-place space is located. Location, however, it is not spatial matter alone. All entities and phenomena that exist or occur in broader phenomena and regions have locations in those phenomena or regions. It is at these locations that can be found. (Schatzki 2002:64)

Third, localities of practices are *not static*, neither in time nor space. In temporal terms, locality has traditionally been seen as a fixed place in space and time, a place with a determined spatial form and characteristics e.g. a home, the workplace and with a history in which the 'roots' of a certain community or individual can , commonly be found. "localities of practice" are not like this. Although they can be fixed in time and space and frequently are, "localities of practice" only exist as long as certain

practices develop with them. Once practices are finished being developed there, we cannot see them or understand them any longer as localities of practices.

In spatial terms, localities of practice are also not necessarily static or fixed simply because the point of meeting between a social practice and a certain locale have no need to be static. It can also be mobile. With the development of communication and transport technologies, an increasing number of social practices in contemporary societies are developed not in fixed places but in mobile ones, such as talking to friends on mobile phones while commuting or working as a courier or bus driver. In this sense we agree with the ideas of George Marcus in relation to the multi-sited aspect of everyday life in contemporary society, in which identity is "produced simultaneously in many different locales" (Marcus 1995 quoted in Morley 2000:10).

This change from fixed to mobile localities of practices does not mean a radical change in the way people experience space in their everyday lives, as has been suggested in the literature on mobility (Kakihara 2002; Sheller 2005; Urry 2000). The concepts of place are based first and foremost on the meeting point between a social practice and a certain space. The characteristics of this space, among them its degree of mobility, is only one of the aspects of the locality to be taken into consideration, which can change the way we perceive these places but not the experience of the place as such.

Fourth, localities of practices are *particular*. The localities of practices that we recognize in our everyday lives depend on our activities. We cannot identify as localities of practices places in which we are not developing any practices in a definite period. We also cannot identify as our "localities of practices' those of other people, even for people close in our social networks. The workplace of our parents or the school of our children do not constitute localities of practices for us, unless we develop a practice in them.[28]). These places can be relevant, and even more relevant than our actual localities of practices, but they are not our localities. This particular characteristic does not mean that we cannot identify the localities of others as localities. In order to understand and coordinate social action in everyday life, we construct, based in our own experience and knowledge Weberian 'ideal types' of localities ('the workplace', 'the school', etc.) that help us give a certain unity to our particular localities of practices and those of others.

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[28] We could visit regularly our parents at their workplaces or pick up our children from the school every day.

Fifth, 'Localities of practice' are *plural and non-exclusive*. There is nothing like a correspondence between one locality and one practice. As practices are plural, "localities of practices' are always plural. In everyday life there are multiple localities deeply interwoven with multiple practices, related to other practices and localities. Also localities are non-exclusive in the sense that there can be one or more localities to each practice and vice versa and there can be more than one practice in one locality as commonly it is. As an example, the local branch of an individual's bank could be one the locality of certain very specific and meaningless practices e.g. withdrawing money, viewing the bank statement. For someone who works at the bank the same material space becomes the locality of a large number of practices, some of them meaningful such as working, talking to colleagues and her/his loved ones, some of them not such as going to the toilet, drinking a coffee.

Sixth they are always in *dialectical* relation with the other two general types of localities that we recognize in our everyday life: localities of *memory* and localities of *imagination*. Localities of memory are our former "localities of practices'. Places that can be much more meaningful than the ones in which we are dwelling at the moment including places of memory and remembrance, places of identity and personal or social history, and deeply missed, but that are not 'localities of practice' as they are not actually a social practice in development there[29]. Localities of imagination, on the other hand, are imaginary localities that we construct based on the information that we receive from other people and through different media (linking to Appadurai's (1996) 'work of imagination'). In practical terms, both localities of memory and localities of imagination constitute the background against which commonly our current "localities of practices' are compared, evaluated and criticised.

"Localities of practices' can be seen as a concept that tries to integrate two different, but complementary ways to understand everyday life in contemporary societies. It takes the idea of social practices as the basic unit of social action adding to it the local character that any social practice has. This results in a concept that focuses specifically on the way individuals perform actions on a micro level and the way these practices affect how they perceive (and in doing so construct) their surrounding urban environment.

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[29] As a way a simplifying measure, here we will only consider remembering as a social practice when this includes a social action and, for this, this become a practice (e.g. seeing pictures of the children or reading letter from the loving ones).

3. An example: the swimming pool

In order to clarify the concept and show some potential applications to empirical analysis of everyday life, we are going to apply the concept of "localities of practices' to the analysis of one particular event that occurred on the housing estate while fieldwork was being carried out.

Pictures 8 and 9, the square during winter

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the housing estate is built around a central square. As can be seen in pictures 6 and 7 this central square is barely used. It is sometimes used by youngsters in the afternoon and young adult males who play football on the pitches located at the end of it. Lack of use is prompted by a variety of causes including the lack of play equipment for the children, the perception of both parents and children that the public spaces of the housing estate are dangerous, the shortage of free time of workers. As a result, this space has a limited number of social practices developed by a reduced number of actors and it is used mostly as a reference point of the housing estate's spatial distribution; a space rather than a place.

This situation changed radically during February. In Chile February is the month in which families and individuals traditionally take summer holidays, commonly outside Santiago. As demonstrated in Chapter 4, these families have severe limitations in relation to seasonal mobility, being forced commonly to spend their entire holidays at

home. Acknowledging this situation, and the limited spatial mobility of the low-income inhabitants of the borough, the local authorities of the Borough of Renca developed a couple of years ago the policy of installing temporary swimming pools during February in the central squares of highly populated low-income areas such as Tucapel Jimenez II housing estate.

Pictures 10 and 11. The summer swimming pool
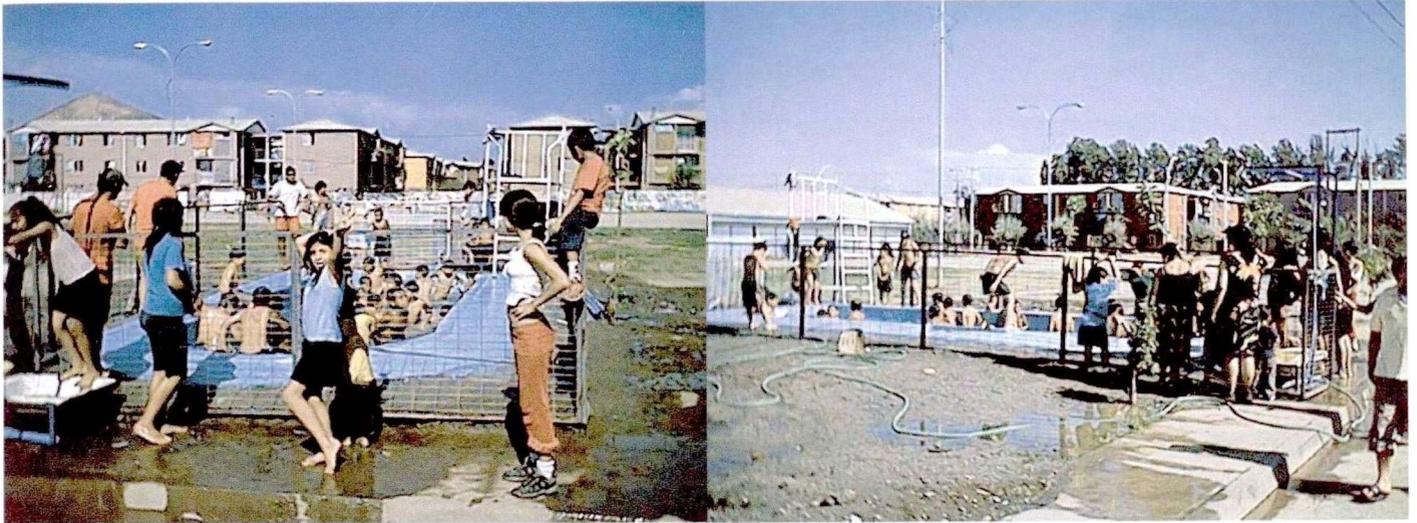
As can be seen in pictures 8 and 9 this policy changed transformed the traditionally empty and potentially dangerous square in the middle of the housing estate into a new locality of practices related with swimming and, in general, participating in 'summer activities', something that used to be pretty strange for the members of these families.

This change shows how we cannot separate localities from the practices being developed there; they constitute a system from which our perception of space arises. Here, the new character of the square as a place of entertainment cannot be separated from the practices related to swimming in the pool. The pool is only fully recognized as a pool when someone is allowed to swim in it. It can otherwise only be seen as a pool in connection with some locality of memory in comparison with a pool from the past or imagination (guessing that is a pool), but not as an actual place in which you can develop the practice of swimming. On the other hand, and obviously, the practice of swimming can only be developed if there is a locality where you can swim, in this case a pool.

This example also shows us how "localities of practices' are not static. In relation to time, the pool is only open in February. After and before this month the square returns to the same space that it used to be and its existence as locality of practices reduced to a great degree. In relation to space, even though the pool in this particular February when the fieldwork was conducted was located in one specific part of the square, this specific location could be moved next year to any other area of the housing estate without using its status as "the place where I can swim".

The swimming pool of the housing estate is a very particular locality, situated in a certain space (the square of the housing estate) during a defined time of year (February), but at the same time it also can be recognized as a swimming pool, like any other swimming pool. The swimming pool is also non-exclusive in the sense that different actors developed different practices in it: children swim; mothers watch the children and chat and even one male wearing a white tee shirt and red swimsuit works there as a lifeguard.

The space of the central square is transformed as a result of all these interrelated processes. During February the central square, the space of 'bad' practices including alcohol consumption, drug abuse and robberies as it is often perceived, becomes a place where children can enjoy themselves and mothers can be distracted from their daily routines and chat while looking after their children. The material surroundings are more or less the same although it has a pond of water in one corner. The fact that the practice of swimming is developed there changes completely the way the space is used and perceived while this practice is developed.

Conclusions

'Localities of practices' as a concept to understand the way people use and perceive their surrounding space offers some advantages in relation to the two concepts of place shown in Chapter 1. On the one hand it allows us to exceed the limitations that the traditional definition of place put to the study of the use and perception of space in contemporary society. With the increase in the degree of both spatial and communication mobilities of all kinds, it is more difficult to see emotional attachment commonly based on a history of interactions, as a precondition for place recognition. In contemporary society our involvement with places is much more pragmatic and transient than previously. In this context, a concept based only in current social practices and how they create space without a necessary reference to any substance

or history of interactions (but not excluding it as part of the perception) appears to be more adaptable to this dynamic environment.

On the other hand, "localities of practices' allow us to include mobility as a central character of contemporary space without rejecting the existence of places. There is a fundamental continuity between mobile and fixed "localities of practices' that is given by the fact that certain practices are developed in a determinate space by certain actor/s. The fact that these localities are mobile or immobile, changes some of the characteristics of these localities but in the end they maintain their identity. The two different kinds of "localities of practices' complement each other.

In contrast with both place models, the great advantage of a model based on the idea of "localities of practices' is the fact that this model allows us to remove the focus of temporal and spatial concepts from the actors (actors being immobile or actor being 'on the move') and concentrate the chore of the social enquiry on social practices. The value of this change is the belief that the most basic units of social order are social practices, not actors. Some actors are always involved in social phenomena, but their mere presence is not enough to constitute a social order. A social order, as we saw here, is only constituted when certain social practices are developed that involve "forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, 'things' and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge" (Reckwitz 2002b:249). These practices, always located within determinate temporal and spatial frameworks, create our quotidian time-space, our "localities of practices' in which our everyday lives occur. In summary:

> "Space, in these terms, is a practice, a doing, an event, a becoming – material and social reality forever (re) created in the moment. ... Space is not a container with pregiven attributes frozen in time; rather, space gains its form, function and meaning in *practice*. Space emerges through a process of ontogenesis" (Dodge 2005:172).

Part II

Mediations

But it was not only the earth that shook for us: the air
around and above us was alive and signalling too

Seamus Haney
Nobel lecture, December 7, 1995

Chapter 6

Mediated practices

Introduction

In the first section of this thesis we saw how our conceptions of place are constructed through the social practices that we develop in everyday life. Each social practice is always located in a determinate temporal and spatial framework. This framework constitutes what we recognize as a locality, the time-space units in which our everyday lives unfold.

It should be noted that all social practices do not have the same characteristics. From the very beginning of human society, social practices start to vary widely encouraging categorisation into types. Schatzki (1996) first makes a general distinction between 'dispersed' and 'integrative practices'. 'Dispersed practices' are "about 'knowing how to do' something, a capacity which presupposes a shared and collective practice involving performance in appropriate contexts and mastery of common understandings" (Warde 2005:135). On the other hand, 'integrative practices' involve "complex entities joining multiple actions, projects, ends and emotions" (Schatzki 2002:88), generally include more than one dispersed practice and constitute systems that correspond with the different areas of our everyday life.

Among these, there is one particular area of 'integrative practices' that is central to the understanding of contemporary society: the practices related to the use of media technologies. One of the main factors behind the development of modern society is the creation of a set of technologies that allow individuals to exceed the limitations imposed by their embodiment, their location in a certain and determined time and space. On the one hand we find the development of all kinds of transport technologies that allow individuals and objects to travel to distant places. On the other hand we find the development of media technologies, technologies that allow individuals and groups to send and/or receive communications to or from different places and times without having to travel physically to those places.

119

The 'integrative practices' that surround the use of media technologies are central to the development of modern society, as has been widely noted (Giddens 1990; Kern 1998; Thompson 1995). But this centrality is not exclusively based at the level of the big processes (or meta-narratives) of modernity. Perhaps more important is how the use of these technologies change the way we relate to the world in our everyday life. Media practices, as demonstrated in this section, not only constitute an addition to our quotidian sets of practices but are themselves a radically different set of social practices. These new mediated practices change the nature of social practices and, in doing so, change the way we perceive our everyday places, our localities of practices.

1. Multiple mediations

Mediation can be understood as "the act of intervening between two parties in order to affect/effect a relationship between them" (O'Sullivan 1994:176) or as "the act [or practice] of bringing together two parties (through third-party intervention) by the provision of some form of link in order to convey the massage or provide agreement or reconciliation" (Casey 2002:135). In both definitions the central element of the concept is clear: the intromission of a third party or element between two. This concept leads us to the basic idea of communication studies, that

> "Human interconnectedness is achieved not just through direct contact of people's bodies but also through external forms – media in the widest sense. People can interact through 'mediational means' (Scollon 1999: 153). This is not just a matter of journalism, television or computers communications, the often assumed meaning of 'the media', for, as Scollon continues, 'virtually everything is a medium of may be a medium for social action' (1999:153). This 'mediation' may be in the form of other human beings, sometimes a conventional and routinised part of performance. ... But it also often take place through the use of material objects and technologies" (Finnegan 2002:41)

Then mediation is *the* constitutive element of any communicational process. At the basic level of a bi-personal face-to-face communication, mediation constitutes a central element of the process. From the use of a 'mediation technology' such as language to non-verbal (such as gestures) or material tools, any form of communication is permeated by different kind of mediations in a continual process. For this reason "no matter whether we study language or gesture or representations that involve materials things, we always deal with a *continuum of symbolization*, not

with dead matter but with living processes of symbolic creation" (Streeck 1996:382). This continuum "means that symbolization is an ongoing transfer between kinds of experience, types of action, and media of representation" (Streeck 1996:383).

The misunderstanding of the continuity of mediation, from personal to massive communication, from 'old' to 'new' media, gives birth to one central problem in communication theory, especially in relation with media technologies: the exaggerated sense of novelty given to technologically mediated communication. This perception tends to ignore the fact that "mediation, and its attendant cultural politics, necessarily precedes the arrival of what we commonly recognize as 'media': that, in fact, local worlds are necessarily the outcome of more or less stable, more or less local, social technologies of mediation" (Mazzarella 2004:353).

Mediation is a constitutive part of communication from the very beginning of it. Due to the fact that human beings, as biological entities, operate in a state of 'operational closure'[30] (Maturana 1984), they have to use tools to mediate in their communication with their natural and social environment. Then every communication is a form of mediation, including the most basic such as communication through touch. When we touch somebody we maintain our identity and uniqueness. Our skin is still a boundary, being our sense of touch (through pressure and heat) the mediator between us and the object being touched. This same principle can be applied, with variations in scale and means used, to any other form of human and non-human communication.

In this context, the argument developed by John Durham Peters (1999) that we cannot establish a primacy of face-to-face communication over other forms of communication, has merit. There is nothing more intrinsically 'pure' or 'real' on face-to-face communication in comparison with any other mean of human communication because even in their most intimate forms, communication always operates under the same principles and constraints.

"Conversations, after all, consist of single turns that may or may not link successfully with following turns. To put it a bit archly, dialogue may simply be two people taking turns broadcasting to each other ... The image of conversation as two speakers taking turns in order to move progressively toward fuller understanding of each other masks two deeper

[30] Operational closure is a term developed by Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela (1984) to explain the fact that biological beings need to be structurally closed in order to maintain their identity as such (e.g. we cannot communicate directly the material of our thoughts and cognitions, from our neuronal system to others without loosing our identity in the process).

facts: that all discourse, however many the speakers, must bridge the gap between one turn and the next, and that the intended addressee may never be identical with the actual one" (Durham Peters 1999:264-265).

This vision "has demolished, once and for all, the romantic notion that communication must *either* be based on face-to-face dialogue *or* doomed as defective; from which it follows that mediation (communication that is mediated, and therefore cannot in principle be based on face-to-face dialogue) is not, for that reason alone, flawed" (Couldry 2003:136). Mediation, then, is structural to communication. We cannot communicate unless we use a third party that mediates between ourselves and the object/s of our communication/s. "All social interaction involves mediation in so far as there are always 'vehicles' that 'carry' social interchange across spatial and temporal gaps" (Giddens 1990:104 quoted by Farre Coma 2002). We cannot escape mediation. Our biological structure forces us to continually use mediators in all our processes of communication in a continual process that 'naturalize' certain means (such as face-to-face or tactile communication) against the background of other 'new' or 'explicit' means (such as mass media technologies) that could "with a slight shift of perspective, begin to appear arbitrary or externally imposed" (Mazzarella 2004:346).

Every single practice includes certain elements of mediation even if we are unaware of it, because everything communicates. We cannot escape the attributions of meaning that practices could have for third parties. Even the most basic or simple practice (such as walking or breathing) can mediate meaning for others in a way that we cannot control or expect from the onset.

2. Media mediations

Since the development of the telegraph or perhaps the first newspapers and printed books, the main objective of media technologies has been to mediate between us as individuals or as members of a determinate social entity located in some specific places and distant, known or unknown, others. This specific type of mediation can be defined as a "dialectical process in which institutionalised media of communication (the press, broadcast radio and television, and increasingly the world wide web) are involved in the general circulation of symbols in social life" (Silverstone 2002:762). With the development of these technologies, the symbols (in reference to many diverse forms of symbolical contents) that we manage and use in our everyday lives depend less and less on our surrounding localities. We can access relevant others

and information without the need to leave our homes in a process of mediation known as 'time-space distantiation' (Giddens 1990). Through the use of media technologies, social interactions are "lifted out of immediate interactional settings and stretched over potentially vast spans of global time-space – a dramatic disembedding of social systems – but is it one that involves a secondary-complementary moment of re-embedding" (Moores 2000:106). As a result of such a process we can see the development of a new form of interaction termed 'mediated interaction' (Thompson 1995).

"By creating a variety of forms of action at a distance, enabling individuals to act from distant others and enabling to respond in uncontrollable ways to actions and events taken place in distant locales, the development of the media has given rise to new kinds or interconnectedness and indeterminacy in the modern world, phenomena whose characteristics and consequences we are far from understanding fully" (Thompson 1995:118).

This form of interaction is a central element in the development of the experience of being an member of contemporary societies. We live our lives surrounded by communications that come from places quite far away from the quotidian terrain of daily life. This situation forces us to permanently add new content to our stock of knowledge, in a process of continual variation of the symbolic frameworks of understanding that we use to give meaning to everyday life.

It is important to always consider these specific processes of mediation practices in the context of all other practices and other mediations, because "these material media of various kinds are often surrounded by clusters of uses and practices which in themselves present accepted options and constraints for communicating" (Finnegan 2002:41-42). In addition "the apparently straightforward distinction between external media and those more directly located in the body turns out to be far from clear-cut: more a matter of degree than an unproblematic opposition" (ibid.). We therefore have to take a holistic approach to mediated communication that considers that

"Mediation not only enjoins us to analyse the medium of transmission as a practical process of transmission, but it also asks us to consider its objects of analysis in relational terms: the medium is not a thing but a dynamic, dialectical praxis and process that interrelates and integrates objects, peoples and texts (Vanderberghe 2001:11).

These media technologies are embedded within and constituted by particular sets of human praxis. "Any technology takes its uses and meanings from its cultural context and environment of use and does not necessarily take the same role when its relocate in another context. Technologies in use are always contextual and relational" (Lally 2002:174). Here technology is defined more appropriately in terms of machine/human interface, that is, in terms of "how particular machines and mechanisms accomplish tasks of configuring, effecting, mediating, and embodying social relations" (Terry 1997:4).

If from a theoretical point of view technologies can have an standardizing or globalising effect over everyday life, through everyday practices they are "always appropriated and re-embedded in a local context when it is put to use" (Lie 1996:17). Technologies acquire meaning only when they interact through practices with their users and other possessions in everyday life. At some stage technologies are instigators of change, catalysts of new actions and structures, the embodiment of dreams of a better life (part of the "work of imagination" in Appadurai's sense), but then they usually become a part of daily routines, a stabilizing force of our quotidian life. As with every socially meaningful phenomena, "Media technologies are not pre-given, fully-formed, automatically determining of the manner of their use, but rather their meanings depends on the complex, contingent ways in which they are inserted into specific contexts and practices of use" (Livingstone 2002:23).

This process of integration, physically and symbolically, is know as domestication (Silverstone 1996) and can be defined as the "practical as well as emotional adaptation to technologies. ... It is a process of appropriating an object to make it meaningful to one's life. Once meaning has been attributed to it, it functions as an expression of the self. This is the way of making them part of everyday life" (Lie 1996:17). Domestication is "the complex social processes through which the technological commodities are integrated into the everyday life of the household; it is when nature becomes culture. It is the complexity of the myriad of factors interacting with each other, in unpredictable ways that leads to the unpredictability of the system" (Lally 2002:53).

Considering the scale of the process is also central to this process of domestication, and for the more general process of mediation. Mediated communications vary greatly, in terms of their characteristics and their social impact, depending on the reach and the actors included in them. Here the key distinction is between mass

mediation and interpersonal mediation. Although the usefulness of this distinction has been under constant revision in recent years since the development of the so-called 'new media', it is still a valid way to order different mediation processes in a continual scale that goes from intimate personal communication with an absent other to global communication flows like the ones from international broadcast organizations like CNN or BBC.

The relationship between both concepts is not a simple one. An important part of the development of communication theory in the twentieth century was driven by a critique of the 'perverse' mass communication from the standpoint of the 'pure' or 'original' interpersonal communication. This critique is located inside the framework of a general critique to capitalism and its 'mass' society, started by the Frankfurt School's theorists.

Mass mediation, on the one hand, can be defined as "the practice and product of providing leisure entertainment and information to an unknown audience by means of corporately financed, industrially produced, state-regulated, high technology, privately consumed commodities in the modern print, screen, audio, and broadcast media" (O'Sullivan 1994:173). In general terms, massive mediation has to be with the creation and distribution of symbolic content to an unknown group of people.

On the other hand, *interpersonal mediation* can be seen as a process of communication that "involves the use of a technical medium (paper, electrical wires, electromagnetic waves, etc) which enables information or symbolic content to be transmitted to individuals who are remote in space, in time, or both" (Thompson 1995:83). Here the technology mediates between two or more people involved in a dialogic communication in which each one is, supposedly, the only recipient of the communicated content and meanings.

In contemporary society it is not easy to find pure manifestations of each kind of mediation. We find multiple examples of how the limits between both forms of mediation have become more and more porous, prompting innumerable combinations, or hybrids, of mass and interpersonal communication as demonstrated by things such as reality television and mobile phone usage in public places. This fact leaves us in doubt as to the pure existence of each type if possible, a central question for the future of communication studies that still has to be answered.

125

Even taking into consideration this unanswered question, it is clear how media mediation goes in the same direction in both cases: to and from the localities of everyday life, to and from other spheres of social reality. The study of this process of mediation, especially at a time of great change not only in the specific mediators (from television and radio to the internet, from landline telephones to mobiles) but also in society itself, is central to gain an understanding of how people live in contemporary society.

3. Media technologies use as practices

Even though media technologies have received an enormous amount of attention both in academic and market research since their massive spread a focus media technologies as practices has not been developed. Nick Couldry (2004) argued in a recent paper that media technologies study needs to focus on practices that "decentre media research from the study of media texts or production structures (important though these are) and to redirect it onto the study of the open-ended range of practices focused directly or indirectly in media" (Couldry 2004:117). The main goal of such research would be to answer the question, "what, quite simply, are people doing in relation to media across a whole range of situations and contexts?" (p.119). The need to answer this question is based on the idea that "there undoubtedly are a whole mass media of media-oriented practices in contemporary societies, but how they are divided up into specific practices, and how those practices are coordinated with each other, remains an open question" (p121).

Especially in relation to space, this focus on media practices seems to be especially fruitful because,

"A practice lens more easily accommodates people's situated use of dynamic technologies because it makes no assumptions about the stability, predictability, or relative completeness of the technologies. Instead, the focus is on what structures emerge as people interact recurrently with whatever properties of the technology are at hand, whether these were built in, added on, modified, or invented on the fly" (Orlikowski 2000:407).

In the field of everyday life being our field of interest here, this focus on media as practices could be particularly rewarding. In the last ten years a more 'practical' focus on the study of the use of media technologies in everyday life has emerged, especially in the studies related to 'domestication' processes (Lally 2002; Lie 1996;

Livingstone 2002; Moores 2000; Silverstone 1994; Silverstone 1992). There is still a need to "redefine the aim of media research as the analysis of media's consequences for social practice[s] as a whole, studying the full range of practices oriented towards media (not just direct media consumption)" (Couldry 2004:128).

There is nothing like a clear break between practices related directly to use of media technologies (or 'media' practices) and any other practice that we develop on our everyday lives. All practices mediate. They could all possibly communicate meaning between two or more interacts, and in this sense media practices only represent a different way in which this mediation comes to be manifest. As Silverstone affirms in the case of television:

> "We engage with television through the same practices that define our involvement with
> the rest of everyday life, practices that are themselves contained by, but also constitutive
> of, the basic symbolic, material and political structures which make any and every social
> action possible" (Silverstone 1994:170).

We could ask, what is so unique about media as practices? The possible answers to this question are many and various and go far beyond the objectives of this research. We will concentrate here on the aspects of such an answer that are directly related to the ways in which practices of mediation at the everyday level affect the way people perceive and use time and space..

The specificity of media as practices can be found in the fact that media 'remediate' social reality. As was clearly recognized by Bolter and Grusin (1999), media in general (and not only the so-called 'new media') all re-mediate. They represent one or more mediums in another fashion looking to create a sensation of 'immediacy' through increasing levels of medium transparency. This logic of remediation "can function explicitly or implicitly, and it can be restarted in different ways" (Bolter 1999:55).

The unique characteristic of the practices of mediation is how electronic media explicitly remediate other media, how they refashion the content of other media in new ways and, in doing so, they change the character of the 'mediated' reality itself. Because 'mediated' contents not only represent a new way to present reality, they change the way it is perceived and lived by the actors involved in the practices of media use. They 'reform' reality, as recognised by Bolter and Grusin.

One of the main ways in which media practices change the reality is by creating a 'second order' reality of practices. Through mediation, media practices constitute a new level of reality, a 'mediated' reality (or 'remediated' reality, to be more exact) that represents reality in a different way. It is formed by the content of the mediation practices: television images, telephone conversations, journal articles, magazine pictures, etc. This mediated 'reality' commonly resembles 'first order' reality but also changes and challenges it and is deeply interlinked with it. In contemporary society it is difficult to think of one of them without referring, directly or indirectly, to the other. As described by John Durham Peters (1997), in contemporary 'global' society this 'second order' reality is a central part of the process of 'social envisioning' that allows human agents to form an image of their surrounding world

> "Part of what it means to live in a modern society is to depend on representations of that society. Modern men and women see proximate fragments with their own eyes and global totalities through the diver media of social description. Our vision of the social world if bifocal ... the irony is that the general becomes clear through representation, whereas the immediate is subject to the fragmenting effects of our limited experience" (Durham Peters 1997:79)

Mediated practices not only constitute a parallel world of fantasies but also are key in the process of making "society imaginable to itself" (Mazzarella 2004:357). "Because they are also intimately tied to the very possibility of imagining and inhabiting our social worlds in particular ways, these mediations are also commonly naturalized" (ibid.). In constituting this 'second order' reality, mediation practices are central to the constitution of the own everyday perception of living in a globalized world.

Memory and imagination are both central to this process. As Arjun Appadurai (1996) observes in the case of imagination, both cognitive processes are key to understanding the centrality that media practices have in contemporary society. The only way in which we can inhabit our everyday space are through practices that constitute certain localities.

In the case of the 'mediated' constitution of reality, or the 'second order' reality, the possibility of a directly constituted locality of practices is limited as we are always located within a determinate temporal and spatial framework. We cannot be physically present in two or more places at the same time. We therefore cannot form (or inhabit) more localities than those associated with our everyday practices. This

128

physical limitation determines the degree to which we can constitute localities that are beyond our everyday reach, leaving human beings condemned to various degrees of forced 'localism' as the only valid level of space recognizable, or empirically existent.

This 'dead end' is broken through using memory and imagination. Both cognitive processes allow us to obtain, re-actualize and manage non-local information and in doing so construct mental images of spaces that could not be directly related to our everyday perceptual reality. As Benedict Anderson (Anderson 1991) acknowledged in the case of the idea of 'the nation', this mental construct is the key element that allows human beings to imagine spatial and temporal units bigger than the ones in which they are actually located including 'the city', 'the borough', etc.

In contemporary societies, media practices are central to the articulation of memory and imagination. Due to a variety of social processes, the information used by people to construct their spaces of imagination and memory, has become increasingly mediated through the practices related to the media. In our everyday lives, it is increasingly difficult to establish a clear distinction in the origin of the elements that form our cognitive representations of time and space. As always, some came from our direct, first hand experience, but an important part came from the content of different media.

Our everyday places are thus not only our localities of practices, but also, and commonly simultaneously, they become places of mediation.

"The places at which we come to be who we are through the detour of something alien to ourselves, the places at which we recognize that difference is at once constitutive of social reproduction and its most intimate enemy" (Mazzarella 2004:356).

Conclusions

The double nature of media practices, located within our everyday space but also always in contact with non-present times and spaces, and its connection with our localities of practices constitutes the main focus of research in this section of the thesis. We consider in the subsequent chapters how this connection is empirically articulated in the everyday lives of the members of the families under study. The relevance of this question is shown by the fact, as seen in chapter 2, that not only the

spaces in which this re-mediation occurs have changed, but also the technological means through which it takes shape are different. This group almost all have traditional communication technologies such as television sets and hi-fi equipment, but also new devices such as mobile phones which are changing the way this processes of re-mediation take place and its effects over 'place' perception and use.

In the particular context of this research and given the relevance of such technologies in the construction of our perceptions of 'place' in contemporary society, if we want to fully understand the way these families construct their "localities of practices' we not only have to look at their changing physical environment, but also at their changing 'technological' one. Only at the meeting points of both spaces, the physical environment of the housing estate and the 're-mediate' space of communication technologies' usage, can we find more comprehensive answers to the question about the perceptions of place in contemporary society.

This research contributes to the development of what Stephen Graham has called an "urban media" research agenda (Graham 2004a) for two reasons. It uses the concept of social practices as its basic units, the standpoint from which social research (included media research) should study, and give meaning, to everyday life in contemporary society. Media use as social practice always appears located in the context of other practices, some meaningful, some not. The intertwining is necessary to understand if we want to obtain some conclusions that go beyond the quite reductionist focus on production, reception and audience behavior (Couldry 2004).

The concept also explicitly highlights the temporal and spatial environment of media as social practices. Localities are always located within a material context that, in contemporary society, is given mostly by the experience of living in a city. Then in the analysis of media as social practices we cannot separate the urban context from the practices that occur within it, even within the intimate atmosphere of the household.

We have outlined here the framework to be used to study the concrete effect that the possession and use of a determinate set of communication technologies has over the use and perception of their localities of practices by the members of the families under study. In the following chapters we apply the concepts developed here to the empirical study of the everyday life of our sample of families. In doing so we try not only to prove empirically the validity of such an analytical construct, but also to

describe and analyze how everyday life is articulated at a local level and the role of media technologies on these processes.

In Chapter 7 we see how the location of the television set inside the house affects the way these spaces are used and perceived. In Chapter 8 we see how the use of hi-fi equipment as a source of noise acts as a way of reconstructing the space of the housing estate. Finally in Chapter 9 we see how the limited use of mobile phone handsets by the members of these families affects the way they perceive and use the urban space of Santiago in their everyday lives.

Chapter 7

Locating the TV

Introduction: Living in 'dull homes'

In recent years many of the rhetoric and scholarly research on the relation between the home and its technologies has been centred around the concept of the 'smart home'. This concept refers to the idea of a flexible home space filled with "a set of intelligent home appliances that can provide an awareness of the users' needs, providing them with a better home life experience without overpowering them with complex technologies and intuitive user interface" (Park 2003:189). A 'smart home' is a kind of home that, through the intensive use of 'user friendly' technologies "negotiate a dual impulse for domesticity on the one hand and the escape from it on the other" (Spigel 2001a:400) that lead to an ideal situation in which the "nostalgic appeal for domestic comfort and stability exist alongside a futuristic fantasy of liberation and escape" (ibid.).

Taking into consideration high level of fantasy and imagination that pervades most of the visions, especially in the media, of the 'smart home'[31] it is difficult not to acknowledge a change in the status, or at least in public demand, in relation to home technologies. Contemporary homes, or 'the home of future', are spaces that theoretically combine a high degree of automatisation along with a demand for a return to pre-mediated forms of domesticity and intimacy. In the search for the fulfilment of both objectives, home technologies have a paradoxical status: they have to be present but invisible, always there but out of sight.

In these new scenarios, the basic home tasks and procedures become invisibly automated, or unconsciously mediated. Then, in its pure state, a 'smart home'

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[31] One good example of this perception is the Microsoft Home Project: "Homes, like people, have personalities. Vacation homes, our laid-back seasonal friends, offer us quiet refuge from our chaotic lives. Primary homes, our stalwart companions, meet our practical, daily needs for comfort. Someday, we may have the Microsoft Home, a seamlessly automated home with a formidable IQ. Its personality is that of a devoted personal assistant—albeit an invisible one—tirelessly catering to your preferences and needs. In short, this home aims to please" (see http://houseandhome.msn.com/improve/MicrosoftHome0.aspx)

resembles the idea of a cyborg, "an hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction" (Haraway 1991:150), rather than a solid and stable material building located within determinate geographical coordinates. In this environment, technology and inhabitant are so deeply embedded that it is difficult to imagine one of them without the other. To inhabit becomes to mediate and to mediate, inhabit.

It is difficult to conceive the homes of the families under study here as 'smart homes'. The use of home technologies in their domestic environments is still limited for many and nonexistent for others. In these houses there are no video players or dishwashers. Many lack some house technologies that are standard for most individuals in western societies such as microwaves ovens or compact disc players. When these technologies were present, they were quite old and often second hand and in such poor condition that their actual use was not always possible. In this sense, and using a negative version of the 'smart home' concept, we can say that these families inhabit 'dull homes', places in which the level of automation of everyday routines and quotidian involvement with a variety of hi-tech domestic technologies is low. 'Dull homes' represent, the other side of the 'smart home' phenomenon. They are homes where the level of technologically-mediated experiences is still limited and an important number of home practices are based on a direct involvement, commonly involving physical activity, by their inhabitants in the procedures and actions needed to develop them.

In this context, the question arises about the centrality of technology, and particularly media technologies, in the construction of these style homes. A common sense perception could lead to us to believe that, due to the relative lack of home technologies, media practices are less central to the construction of home spaces and their inhabitants base their construction, use and perception of home space in their direct, unmediated, experience. But the use of media technologies, and the mediated practices that it generates, are in fact central to the construction of what these families call 'home'.

As stated elsewhere (Chapman 2001; Dupuis 1998; Easthorpe 2004; Macgregor Wise 2000; Mallet 2004), homes are, unlike other places, not only a physical or material reality. A home is not necessarily a house or flat, a hut or cave. It is a symbolic reality, a 'lived space' according to Lefebvre(Lefebvre 1991) that only exists at the point where temporal and spatial phenomena cross individuals, practices and

133

emotions. A home is a meeting point, relatively stable but never fixed. Then "clearly the term home functions as a repository for complex, inter-related and at times contradictory socio-cultural ideas about people's relationships with one another, especially family, and with places, spaces and things" (Mallet 2004:84).

While the 'ideal' construction of home is central to our own perceptions of them; homes cannot be purely structures in the mind. They need to be also real, lived-in space where our everyday lives unfold. Above all, homes are places in which our everyday lives are developed through practices; they are localities of practices in all the senses ascribed to the concept in Chapter 5. They are *mutually dependant* on the practices being developed in them. They are *places* that are *not static* in time or in space. They are *particular* and at the same time *plural* and *non exclusive*, and finally they are also always in a *dialectical* relationships both with homes of memory (our former homes) and homes of imagination (or dreamed/future homes). This definition of homes links but at the same time differentiates with any other localities of practices that we inhabit in our everyday lives.

Homes are not different from other places where we live out our everyday lives. There are contrasting views who tend to see home as a completely different sort of place, even a completely different ontological entity on its own. Identifying home as a 'locality of practices' show us how there is always continuity between homes and their social and spatial environment. "Homes, like all 'places', are nodal points, open to, and created by, the social relations which extend beyond them" (Easthorpe 2004:137). Homes are located within, and in continual relation with, other localities, bound to them by common practices and actors.

But Homes are a specific kind of "localities of practice's'. This is not caused by some sort of essential nature, property or characteristics such as a specific sense of belonging or attachment to a particular space. This is given simply by the fact that the place we call 'home' concentrates certain types of practices and actors, located within a determined space in a way that no other everyday place does. There is a certain concentration of practices that, under certain circumstances, contribute to the identification of a place as 'home'. This is true for the practices related to the satisfaction of biological needs such as cooking, sleeping and increasingly leisure, particularly since the development and diffusion of media technologies. These types of activities do not make automatically make us identify a place as home.

We can cook eat, and even sleep in many places such as parks and buses but we do not identify these locations as 'homes'. What is needed for this is the involvement in these practices of certain actors and the exclusion of all others. In the case of people who live alone, where the principle of exclusion means more than the one of inclusion, the place called home is characterized by the recurrent involvement/exclusion of certain actor/s in the realization of the practices. By actors we not only refer to human beings, but also non-humans such as material objects[32].

The meeting of practices and actors does not automatically make us identify a certain place as 'home'. The recurrence of practices and actors in a determinate temporal and spatial setting is the essential missing element. In terms of time, this recurrence is the routine nature of the practices developed at home. These routines, defined as "the mundane process by which meaning is created and maintained even in the face of the chronic flux and disturbance of experience" (Martin 1984:23 quoted in Highmore 2004:307), give certain temporal structure to a determinate set of practices and actors in time. It fixes them in the flux of our everyday lives.

When there is a temporal recurrence of certain practices and actors occurring in a determinate recurrent setting, commonly a house or flat, we can talk of a 'home' as a 'locality of practices'. This place attracts a high degree of emotional involvement, an intensity of feeling that also forms part of the mental image that we have of 'home'. This attachment does not constitute a necessary element in terms of its existence as a 'locality'. We can love or hate 'home', or even not feel anything special about it, but this does not mean that we didn't recognize as 'home' if the conditions mentioned above met.

Returning to our argument about the nature of 'dull homes', it should be noted that the nature of the practices developed in the place known as 'home' affects the way it is perceived and used. Tuan affirms "every activity generates a particular spatio-temporal structure" (Tuan 1997:130 quoted in Adams 1992). Every practice we take on in our everyday lives effects the way we perceive and use time and space. In many cases these effects are not conscious or easily recognizable by us, especially in the case of infrequent, meaningless or, in contrast, in the case of deeply internalised practices. Some of them are more closely related to spatiality than others, and its effects are acted out in a different way.

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[32] For example: the use of a determinate bed (my bed) can be as important, or even more important, in the practice of 'sleeping at home' than with whom I'm sharing the bed.

Brushing our teeth and opening a window are both quite quotidian practices in the everyday lives of inhabitants of contemporary societies. They are quite similar being actions that do not involve high degrees of cognitive involvement that are carried out in a semi-automatic fashion. Their relationships with time and space are quite different. Brushing teeth does not seem to be connected to time-spatiality at all. If we analyse the distribution of the action during the day we can see how deeply it is linked to the cycles of feeding and/or sleeping. Most of us brush our teeth in the morning, commonly after breakfast, marking or even ritualising the start of a normal day. During the day we brush our teeth again to not only clean them, but also to signal the start and end of different temporal periods such as lunch time or bedtime. Opening a window can change profoundly the way we perceive a determinate space, because an open window allows the entrance of air and other elements such as light and sound. A diversity of elements can and usually will change our spatial perception of the particular space where we are located.

Our homes are made of practices (and actors) in addition to the 'bricks-and-mortar'. They bring together not only all the material elements that exist in a determinate space, but also, all the practices developed and the particular actors involved in them. Our 'home' is the meeting point of all of them, regardless of whether it is a house, area, city or country, or any other unit, geographical or not. In the case under study here we are referring to its more basic unit: the dwelling, the place we reside. In this particular case, 'homes' are the flats in which these families live and the kinds of practices being developed in them set the tone for the kind of 'home' these places are.

In order to establish the centrality of media practices in the construction of these 'dull homes' we have to study these practices in the context of the general practices developed inside the home. A way to show the relevance of these practices is the amount of time devoted to each one of them. Using the data from the 1999's Time Use Survey conducted in Santiago (DESUC 1999) presented in graph 5 we can see the general allocation of time to several areas of activities during normal working days and the weekend. First, in the left chart, we can see that media practices (labelled as 'ICTs use') constituted, after the time devoted to the satisfaction of biological needs including sleep, the activity to which low income individuals invest the most time during both the working week and at weekends. They use 'media practices' on average for three hours per day with little variation between the week

136

and weekends. These activities, at least in terms of time, are therefore fundamental in the lives of these individuals.

Graph 5. Time use by low-income inhabitants of Santiago (1999)

Use of time of income group E

ICTs use per income groups
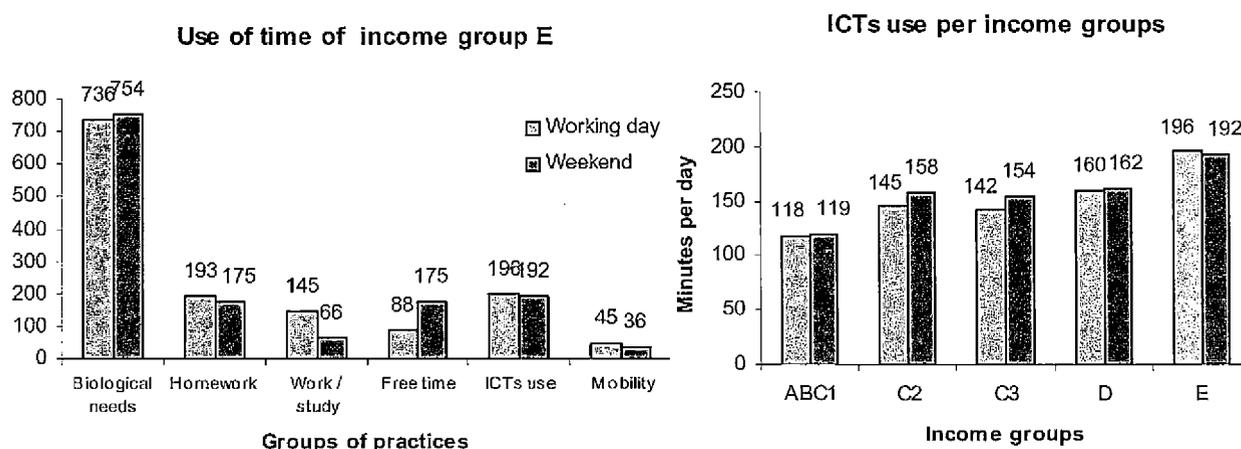
Source: Data from Time Use Study (DESUC 1999)

The chart on the right, on the other hand, shows the large amount of time devoted by low income individuals to media technologies is relevant in terms of the others groups of activities developed, but also in comparison with other income groups of inhabitants of Santiago. Low-income individuals (Group E) spend far more time using ICTs during both and the week and weekends. This data also suggests that, at least in terms of communication technologies, there is no evidence of a positive relationship between the number of technologies available in the home and the amount of time devoted to its use. It is clear that media practices are central for low-income groups and the fact that the availability of them is lower than in other groups of the population does not mean that they spend less time in media use related practices. These groups use more intensively the technologies that they have.

In this scenario, 'dull homes' are places where media practise are as central, if not more central, than in the 'smarter' kind of homes. Then the question here is how does this centrality operate and what are the consequences of it for the general perception and use of home as place. Different media practices have to be studied in depth to resolve this issue. In this case we are going to concentrate in one particular communication technology: television.

137

1. The Place of Television

When thinking about the place of television at home it is clear that the relationship between television related practices and the rest of the practices that we identify as forming what we called 'home', is very complex. Unlike any other media technology, television occupies a central place in home practices to the extent that it is difficult to imagine or think about home without recalling its presence and its related practices. From the distribution and use of home spaces to the scheduling of individual actors in time, television practices constitute one of the central nodes around which, and in connection with, domestic life is lived.

To acknowledge this fact we have to understand television practices as a complex set of activities, sequences and operations that involve a diversity of actors in different moments of time and in different scenarios. Television practices involve much more than just the practice of watching television. From the very first notions that we develop about television when children, to conversations about celebrities, the place of television in our everyday lives involves more than the mere fact that we spend a couple of hours per day in front of the 'box'. In some senses we can say that television is directly or indirectly involved with all major areas of practices developed at home to the extreme that today it is almost impossible to think of one without the other.

As the number and complexity of these practices largely exceeds the scope of the present chapter we are going to study one specific practice related to television: the practice of locating the television set and its relation with home space. The reason for choosing this particular practice is the double nature of television both as technology and media and the relevance of material culture in contemporary society, especially at home.

When studying television it is to note that

> "Media technologies are doubly articulated into the social: both as technologies whose symbolic and functional characteristics claim a place in both institutional and individual practice, but also, as media, conveying through the whole range of their communication the values, rules and rhetorics their centrality for the conduct of the quotidian" (Silverstone 2001:26).

Media technologies are not only an empty receptacle of transmissions generated elsewhere, but also a material object, a technology, physically located in the temporal and spatial structure of the home. Whilst the double nature of the medium has been acknowledged, the empirical study of television as practice has been focused heavily on viewing and its effects on the audience, implicitly seeing this practice as the unique, or central, activity related to media technologies consumption at home. As Anna McCarthy recognizes,

> Viewing is not the only everyday use of television that routinely involves creativity, unpredictability, problem-solving, indeterminacy and expressiveness. A vast repertoire of ideas and gestures comes to life in the placement of the screen in a particular environment, in the things that decorate it and in the images it sits near in social space (McCarthy 2000:307-308).

The positioning of the television set at home is as central, if not more central than the practice of watching television as it effects the temporal and spatial structure of home. . Locating it is an activity that necessarily involves both the use of television as media or communication and also its physical nature, being a piece of furniture. Along with McCarthy's research on the location of television sets in public areas (McCarthy 2000; McCarthy 2001) this centrality of location has been also recognized by Ondina Fachel Leal in her study of the sitting of the television set in working class homes in Brazil, for whom, for example,

> The plastic rose in the 'golden' vase, the photographs, the laboratory flask, and most of all the television set and the spaces they occupy in the domestic order are meanings that comprise a cultural rationale. That is, a symbolic system, including an ethos of modernity, that is itself a part of a larger symbolic universe that has as its principal locus of significance the city and the industry. This system of meanings see to 'conquer' the urban power state (that of capitalistic relations), while insistently trying to differentiate and delimit urban cultural space from the rural space that is still very close to the actors, by manipulating signs that are shared by their group as indicators of social prestige (Fachel Leal 2003:187).

As demonstrated by this quotation, the positioning of the television set is not innocuous or meaningless. It is central to the way home places and its content are structured and the meanings that their inhabitants attach to them. This centrality of the television set as an object and its relationship with home space has received little attention until now at least in terms of empirical research, beyond mostly theoretical concepts such as "no sense of place" (Meyrowitz 1985) or "mobile privatisation" (Williams 1992 [1974]). This is with the exception of the work of Lynn Spigel in

139

relation the historical changes caused by television in postwar America (Spigel 1992; Spigel 2001a; Spigel 2001b),

Our homes are first and foremost lived-in spaces filled with material objects. In concrete terms, homes "may be a place that is held principally in the imagination, but it is bricks and mortar too – a vessel for our most cherished things too" (Chapman 2001:138) . This materiality of homes is not innocuous but filled with meanings because in the domestic context "the most banal domestic objects and structures are not simply physical entities, but also routinely laden down with values and symbolic meanings" (Morley 2000:20). We do not inhabit our houses as the empty receptacle of our routines, but as meaningful places that express who we are, not only to ourselves and our families but also they "function as a social act that transmits non-verbal messages and meanings" to our social environment (Malkawi 2003:25).

This is especially true in contemporary society, a type of society in which many activities and expressions associated with a more 'public' being are declining (Putnam 2000) or are increasingly coming under the control of different kinds of 'expert systems' (Giddens 1990). In this context all activities related to the private sphere become core to the construction of personal and social identity. The construction of a space called 'home' and its modelling and furnishing appears to be a way in which we can make public our personal meanings and perceptions and, in doing so, differentiate ourselves from others (Bourdieu 1984). Our material possessions are not only a form of comfort to us but also their existence, and the way we arrange and distribute them, function as an "extended self" (Belk 2001) of each one of us, being an extension of our own sphere to the material world.

The 'home' is a 'stage', in Goffman's terms (Goffman 1990), a place where we perform our beings, commonly in an unconscious way, to ourselves and others. The idea of home as a stage shows us how it "functions as a social act that transmits non-verbal messages and meanings" (Malkawi 2003:25). For most of us our homes are "the theatre of domesticity with front and back places that call for different types of action and interaction according to family status, gender and age, as well as indicators of race, ethnicity and religious identification" (Sydie 2003:8).

In the context of poverty as in the study here, homes and their contents are one of the few spaces where these families can create and reaffirm their own identity and reflect it on their surrounding social environment given their social exclusion from

many other more 'public' activities and places. "Inspite of the apparent permanency, presumed security and privacy of home in the imagination, in reality the experience of home is characterized by change" (Chapman 2001:136). This change is related not only to the obvious reality that each family is different and, for this reason, the way they reflect themselves in their homes is different but also in the sense that homes are not stable in time. Even in a context of poverty, homes constantly change with the addition or suppression of commodities and the small redistributions and/or changes in the already available stock of goods and home spaces. Homes, like their members, are always unfinished. In this sense it is even better to see them as a process or a project rather than a stable materiality, the distance between the real and remembered or ideal home.

At the juncture of both processes, the location of media technologies at home is central to the way the home as material culture is lived by its residents. In the specific case of television, we examine the specific practices of locating the television and the meaning that different locations have to the members of the different homes under study, especially in relation to the perception and use of homes spaces as a whole.

'Home' is not an undistinguished entity. Susan Kent affirms, "as a society becomes more socio-politically complex its culture, behaviour, or use of space and cultural material or architecture becomes more segmented. This occurs particularly with respect to increasing segregation of partitions" (Kent 1990:127). This increasing segmentation of space is quite clear in the case under study, even for the members of the families under study:

> Nowadays we live in a more organised way. You can be more relaxed as before we had just one room. The living room, the kitchen and the bedrooms were all together so there was no separation of spaces or surroundings. Not here though. Here there is the kitchen, the living [room], then you have one bedroom and the other bedroom. Everything is divided up. It is more comfortable and there is privacy for the children and the couple (Jonathan, 34 years).

When studying homes we have to consider that "for most individuals the "home" (however that is understood or physically structured) is a theatre of domesticity with front and back places that call for different types of action and interaction according to indicators of family status, gender and age, as well as indicators of race, ethnicity, and religious identification" (Sydie 2003:8). Thus in order to study homes we have to differentiate between the different types of front and back spaces, using Goffman's

concepts (1990). There is a distinction made by Rich Ling and Kristin Thrane (2001) between ceremonial, functional and private home spaces. *Ceremonial* area, namely the living room, "It is that portion of the home into which guests are directed. It is often where objects are purchased and placed with the intention of impressing visitors. In Goffmanian terms it is the front stage of the home" (Ling 2001b:9). *Functional* areas are those areas related to the maintenance of the home and its members like the kitchen and the bathrooms, but also those areas related to work (home office) or storage (garage, cupboards). Finally, *private* areas in this case are the two bedrooms and represent for many of their inhabitants the only spaces where individuals can express themselves.

In practice however all these spaces are mixed and their location and extension vary considerably in time, sometimes temporarily when children are playing in the living room, sometimes permanently as when a sibling leaves home and his/her bedroom becomes a home office. This is especially true in homes formed in social housing estates like the ones under study here as the available space is always limited and many tasks and practices have to share the same space. It is better to think about ceremonial, functional and private as different 'uses of space' rather than 'spaces', explicitly recognizing the existence of these different places to the characteristics of the concrete practices being developed in them rather than the mere spatial configuration of them.

Prior to analysing each home space separately, it is important indicate the changes that the relations between home space and television have suffered since the movement to the housing estate. As it can be noted from Jonathan's words, what is new in the life of most of these families is the division into different spaces, not the presence of television sets. Without exception, all the families under study had television sets in their homes well before their move to the housing estate. The position of television set as a central part of the house space is not new. Its presence has already been deeply internalised and for most people the television set forms a central part of the 'normal' group of available home technologies.

We examine therefore not the placement of the device as such, but how its presence interacts, and in some sense reshapes, the newly divided home spaces. For families from both shantytowns and overcrowded housing, the opportunity to differentiate between different spaces at home seems relatively new. Many of them used to live in single-space homes where it was almost impossible to make any distinction between

spaces. The entire home was a kitchen when cooking was happening, a dormitory when sleeping was occurring, or a television room when television was being watched. In their new houses for the first time they were able to clearly distinguish between different home spaces. In this process the location of the television set was one of the central issues to be clarified.

2. Television and ceremonial spaces

For these families the possibility of clearly marking out a ceremonial space inside their homes has a central meaning in the perceptions of their own well-being and the position that they occupy in their surrounding social context. The change from their former places of living to the housing estate also represents a change in the way they express their individuality, or the way in which they obtain 'distinction' in Bourdieu terms (1984) through their homes.

Both in shantytowns and in 'poblaciones', people "establish identities, perpetuate social norms and mediate community through architecture" (Colloredo-Mansfeld 1994:845) due to the personalized and non-standard characteristic of the physical environment. The external appearance of the homes is one of the central ways they differentiate one from another. Architecture appeared as a form of "conspicuous consumption" (Colloredo-Mansfeld 1994; Klaufus 2000). In these homes "the exterior is the representation of the current state of affairs in the household and the plans for the future" (Klaufus 2000:353). It is central to the image that the family projects to others; it is the material expression of the extended self of the family. It is therefore not unusual to find large and solid constructions quite poorly furnished inside[33].

This situation changes on the housing estate due to the external homogeneity of the buildings and flats of the housing estate. While it is possible for the families to express themselves or to show their concept of aesthetics on the external areas of their homes[34], the interior is now the main space where they can develop their own aesthetic concepts, especially in the public areas of it. For these families "the front region of the house is a place where a performance is given. The front is relatively

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[33] But also the other way round, quite poor houses from the outside filled with high-tech apparatuses and new sofas and tables, it is quite common, especially in a context like a shantytown, in which the permanence of the house is always in danger.
[34] Any extension of the house is at the same time an expression, they are all different and they reveal certain aesthetics concept and appreciation of the inhabitants of the houses, especially due to the fact that, for the financial restrictions of the families, the extension always has an important component of "home made" or DIY work, something that give them even more space to express their creativity through its construction.

143

well decorated in order to show social status and claim prestige. It is a place for display, maintaining and embodying certain standards" (Ozaki 2003:105). The living/dining room represents the ideal place to reflect their own tastes and initiatives in order to transform them in unique places as shown by Jessica's account of the living room of her home:

> "For me it's always been important to live well, in my economic situation. I prefer to put up just one beautiful painting rather than have too many things. I always try, with the money I save, to buy nice things for the home, maybe not so much furniture or other things, but beautiful things. I like people to come and find my house beautiful, so they say 'huuu, this is very beautiful', but... I put up this painting and my husband hung these pictures and ruined it all. So, I like to have it beautiful" (Jessica, 34 years).

The concept of the aesthetics of the pubic spaces is clearly important to her, something for which she saves money and about which she has some pre-established ideas (not too many things, but beautiful ones).

In the particular case under consideration ceremonial spaces also have an ambiguous meaning being both public and private spaces simultaneously as,

> In larger homes this area can be vestigial in that it is only used for ceremonial occasions such as parties, visits etc. However, in the smaller homes and apartments, the living room is also where the family relaxes. Thus, to use Goffman, the living room has characteristics of being both the front and the back stage alternatively (Ling, Nilsen and Granhaug 1999). This can make it difficult to integrate both the functional use of the space and the need for a ceremonial area within the home (Ling 2001b:9).

This tension between the public and the private character is always present when members of these families use and perceive these spaces, something that will be very clear in relation with the placing of the television set in them. This is seen in pictures 10 to 13. The analysis of the material collected in the field shows that this ambiguous nature of the place is translated into a differential evaluation and centrality of television in terms of location and practice.

144

Pictures 12, 13, 14 and 15, television in ceremonial places

In terms of location, the above pictures show no ambiguity about the centrality of the television set in the living rooms of these families. In most the cases, television sets constitute one of the central commodities for families and individuals, something to be displayed to visitors and other residents. This centrality closely resembles the one found by Ondina Fachel Leal (2003) in working-class homes in Brazil, a social environment in which

> The repertoire of objects in a house in a working-class neighbourhood is strategically located in the most evident corner, next to the television, as a point of magical contagion. There is a common quality among all its elements – that of fetish: from the non-control over their production, from their nature as commodities, and because they reify knowledge of another order, and are thus cultural capital from another social class

(Bourdieu, 1979). In other words, the things do not reflect their qualities as things, but rather their social qualities, precisely in the sense Marx employed the notion of commodity fetishism. ... The TV is the most important element among the set of objects in a home of the working-class group. The TV sits on its own small table, with the importance of a monument, and it is typically decorated with a crocheted doily. The TV, on or off, represents the owner's search for social recognition of TV ownership; this is why it has to be visible from the street. (Fachel Leal 2003:186)

Looking at the pictures here we can identify some of the elements highlighted by Fachel Leal in her research. All the television sets pictured could qualify to be described as a 'monument' or a 'fetish', in the sense that they all have a symbolic value that is different from its functional value as receptors of communications from faraway places. Although all the television sets pictured were turned off when the photographs were taken, the visibility is evident. Without exception they occupy a central place in the living rooms of the families. They are often the focal point to which the different pieces of furniture, especially sofas and chairs, are directed to.

Along with its visibility, in all the images presented here we can see how the location of television sets is always established in relation with other objects or, even better, as a system of meanings with different parts and relations. The television sets are never alone, and the distribution of the surrounding objects is never casual, or innocuous. As Anna McCarthy puts it:

The routine combination of the TV screen with other objects, images and written texts alters the kind of thing that TV seems to be. The TV set in its TV setting thus serves as many things as once: an image among others, a three dimensional stand on which to put things, an appliance and a flat surface on which signs are affixed (McCarthy 2000:313).

The change in the nature of television for residents and strangers alike, through its introduction into the 'normality' of domestic life or 'domestication' (Silverstone 1996). also changes the place where television is located. Television sets always form a determinate arrangement with their environment. Things are not located in a random fashion in relation to the television. They are arranged in accordance with certain ideas, values and aesthetic judgments. From the picture of the children on the living room of Ramon and Alejandra (Picture 12) to the piece of embroidery behind the set in Alan and Edith's home (Picture 13), television sets and their environment constitute a system of meanings on their own. These meanings are diverse but the presence of a television set in the living room is a symbol of normality and social participation, in a context in which symbols of social inclusion are quite scarce. For

146

this reason Jessica said that she would like to have a television in her living room because "in every home there is one, but still I didn't have the chance to buy one. It will be much better, definitely".

For these families, then, the possession of television set and its public display is primarily related to status or 'distinction' in its most basic form: the status of having what 'every home has', the minimal set of commodities that serve to identify a modern urban home as such. The television set also has more powerful status attributes as demonstrated by the pictures. All sets are relatively new. They are all around 21 inches wide, in contrast to the more traditional 14 inches wide that can be found in the bedrooms of many of these homes. In the case of the picture number 13 the television is accompanied by a Hi-fi system of some kind.

While most of the families have television, the kind of television that they have on display still matters. Commonly the biggest and newest set occupies the 'ceremonial' space, even though the set that was used more was the smaller and older one located in the bedroom. Along with being a commodity, television sets are symbols and if in a situation of almost universal access to sets, distinction cannot be obtained through the mere ownership, then it has to be obtained through the relative differences in terms of the type of set owned.

Television sets as objects have a central position in terms of its public location in the ceremonial spaces of the home. This positioning does not mean that the practices related to the use of television sets in these places are so easily accepted or welcomed.

For some families, the practice of watching television in public places is central to family life, echoing the classical image of television as a "gathering place" (Spigel 1992), or just taking a more pragmatic approach in terms of comfort.

> I think that here in the living room is where the family can be together to watch television more often, because if we, me and my husband, go to our bedroom to see television, then my child will not come with us. He will be [here], so I think that you share more as a family if you have the television here in the living room (Edith, 49 years).

> I'm accustomed [to use the living room to watch television]. Sometimes I'm still having a cup of tea and then it's nine o'clock, so 'turn on the telly' time. Then I can sit where I am and watch television, 'turn the television in this direction'. This is a good space for

147

everyone. If the television was on in the bedroom it would be uncomfortable for all of us there. Instead here we have seats. There are the sofas. [They] sit down and watch television with me or whatever they want to see (Nicolas, 39 years).

In both cases the location of the set and the practices related to it are not seen as controversial or problematic. The living room appears to be the natural place for the television, especially in a context where lack of space is one of the main problems in their everyday lives, as shown by the account by Nicolas.

Not all the families share these positive perceptions about the practice of watching television in ceremonial places.

At the table, while we are eating, it [the television] is turned off, because these are the only times when we can be like a family and if the telly [is on] nobody speaks and they don't even know what they're eating because they are watching telly (Rosa, 34 years).

What I don't like [with television] here [in the living room] is that sometimes at tea-time they watch television, but the ideal would be not to watch television when eating because if you do, you only pay attention to what you are seeing and do not talk (Cristian, 39 years).

[In the bedroom] is the only place in which I can watch television. I never liked to watch here [living room] because I like to talk here, to pray and I like a nice place. It, is more comfortable here. Afterwards I go to bed to watch television and not to talk. I like to see concentrate on the program I'm seeing and nothing else. At least I have a [differentiated] space; I can talk here, think about what we can do, do things right (Diego, 39 years).

As shown by these three extracts the place of television and the practices related to it can also conflict with the practices related to family life, or at least what the interviewees consider as "good" family life. The first two extracts show how conflictive the interviewees perceive the effects of watching television in public areas at also public or communal times has on the quality of the practice related to family life such as eating together.

In addition to these criticisms, which are in line with the more traditional critiques about the television 'effects' on family life (Goodwin 1990; Morley 1986; Seiter 1989), there are another type of critiques about the use of television in the public areas of the home connected to the clearly ceremonial use of those spaces.

We have never liked to have a television in the living room because when you are having lunch you're seeing the television and not eating. You can be watching television and

someone arrives and it is quite rude to have the television on when people want to talk and everyone is concentrating on what's happening on the television rather than on what the people are saying (Paola, 30 years).

I don't like television in the bedrooms, but if I have to choose between the living room and the bedrooms, I prefer the bedrooms, because I don't like when people arrive and there's a telly on in the living room. It is as if everything that we have to talk about is gone, because everyone is watching the telly. I think that is better to leave it in the bedroom and then if people come we really can talk and not be just seeing television. This is why I don't like it that much. In the bedrooms I don't like it either because sometimes instead of talking or doing other things you're seeing telly. If it's one things it is not the other, this is why I don't like it that much, but well... you have to put it in somewhere (Carlos, 32 years).

Television as practice is regarded as having a negative influence over the use of space not only in terms of family life, but also in terms of the use of ceremonial spaces in the relations between the home and its external social environment. For Paola and Carlos to watch television in the living room while strangers are visiting seems like a disruption of the place, the introduction of an alien practice that does alter the performance that is being developed on the 'front stage' of the home. Here, television practices 'privatised' spaces, affecting the kind and quality of the publicity of the family, imposing over the visitor a certain degree of intimacy that is not necessary or beneficial to display publicly.

Both uses of ceremonial spaces, as ceremonial and as gathering places for the family, establish relationships with television use that are potentially, if not manifestly, conflictive, from the point of view of the interviewees. Why have the television in the ceremonial place as most families did, even whose never watch television there? Television in ceremonial space is clearly valued not as practical object, a source of entertainment or information but, above all, as a symbol. Its symbolic qualities overcome its functional ones transforming the object into a receptacle of images and meanings, not a medium of external communication but an end in itself. The negation of the practice, or even the negative practice of turning off the television when someone suddenly steps in as frequently happened during the interviews, does not negate the effect of the apparatus, because its strength is based in its presence as a material object, and not in its use, as technology. Television sets embody values, represent ideas and concepts to themselves and others through sheer physical presence in ceremonial spaces. Its use can add unwanted complexity and confusion to the factual quality of its existence.

3. Television and functional uses of space

In relation to space, functional places have a certain specific quality that differentiates them from other places in the home. This quality can be seen as a certain plasticity that we cannot find in both ceremonial and private places. In absolute terms, functional spaces are limited to those spaces specifically designed to satisfy the needs of the users of the home. They are in this case kitchen, bathroom and a variety of small areas like cupboards, shelves and any other storage spaces.

But in practice functional spaces are more flexible than is immediately apparent. In order to be recognized as home, each single home space has to be transformed periodically into a place of functional practice. This can range from cooking to washing the windows and involves passing through any single practice related to the maintenance of the home and its residents. When ceremonial spaces are used as functional space they loose their visibility. This also happens with private ones.

When functional, spaces lose their intimate character because functional practices not only represent compulsory maintenance homework, but also, and in a profound sense, renew the marks of the residents on their lived space, domesticating it, reducing its entropy, its tendency to chaos.

> I feel good with it. I feel that if I put things in order I'm also putting order into my life, into my way of being, [and] I'm teaching my children that everything has its place and time, that they have its time to play as well as I have my time to do my duties, to order my house and I like it. I like to have everything ordered and clean; it's my hobby (Rosa, 34 years).

> Not many people come here but I like it when they do come that they feel comfortable. I don't know, maybe it's only for me, but I like it when they come into my home with its order and cleanliness. I feel good (Jessica, 30 years).

Order gives meaning not only to Rosa and Jessica, but also to most the members of the families under study. Functional practices have a symbolic quality; they constitute a way of appropriating the world. In the context of poverty, in which access to new commodities is difficult, order and cleanliness obtain a new meaning for the members of the families under study as members of a consumer society. They are important not only for hygiene or in relation to an aesthetic value, but also as a moral

quality that speaks about the respectability, even the decency (Martinez 1996) of the family that resides in the home.

> I think that you can be poor but with dignity. To be poor does not mean to be dirty or not in order. No, for me to be clean is important. It does not matter if you don't have good things or too many things, but if they are clean, everything is all right (Patricia, 30 years).

> It is important than your house is clean, because it's yours and you have to care for it. ... There are people who're poor but clean and there are people who're poor but dirty, you realize that when you go in ... for example my neighbour's. If you saw her bathroom,.... its so dirty, it's like she never does any housework. It look like an old bathroom. ... She is so dirty, imagine she even brought some rats with her from the shantytown!! (Andrea, 40 years).

Functional spaces and practices are central to the position of women in the home against a background where there is little integration of women into the labour market and traditional gender divisions are still very strong. For most of them, these practices constitute their main activity during working days and the meanings attached to them go far beyond seeing them as the necessary chores that need to be done to keep a home working. They constitute a central element to their own identity and the way they see themselves and others, as we see from the extracts from the interviews with Andrea and Patricia.

In this context the television set and its related practises are more often a source conflict than those in relation to ceremonial space. This situation is pretty clear when we analyse the position of television, and the practice of television viewing when functional uses of home space are in progress, especially in comparison to radio, a technology that has already found its place in these spaces.

> [I like to see television] but when I have everything done. When I start doing chores I prefer the radio, because with the telly you have to be there, sitting and you can not move but with radio I can be doing everything and it doesn't take up space (Carla, 31 years).

> I think its boring to be sitting there watching television without doing anything else. With music, if you have to do something you can move about doing chores, but if you are watching television you have to be there looking and not doing anything else (Edith, 49 years)

As can be seen from these extracts, in contrast with television, radio has already found its place in relation to functional spaces. Due to its lower demands in terms of

sensory involvement, radio allows its users to combine listening with other activities, something that is very handy in the case of housework. The use of radio at certain moments, particularly weekday mornings, seems to turn the house as a whole into a functional space. Radio use melts the distinctions between spaces.

> I like radio, because I don't have to be there watching it. I mean, I listen to radio and I move about round the home. I do my chores. It gives me joy; it gives me information and what I like the most is the music. It gives me freedom of movement. I can do things and I don't have to be still. Because with telly you have to be static, you have to be in one place to see it, the radio no. The radio lets me move all over the home and do my chores. I get bored if I don't turn on the radio (Rosa, 34 years).

> If you turn on the television you cannot move to other space [because] you cannot see the images. This is why in the morning I turn on the radio. I also put it on moderately loud in order to listen to it in the back bedroom, in the kitchen. ... I have one speaker turned in this direction [bedroom] and the other in that direction [kitchen], so I can hear it everywhere (Mariela, 43 years).

Radio is related to mobility in a way that television is not. Watching television is a fairly static activity inside the home. It requires a higher involvement in the practice, especially visual, making it difficult to combine it with any other home practice. Television as practice does not fit within the practices related to home maintenance unlike radio, as Alicia explained in the following extract. Radio listening permits freedom of movement and dynamism while television is static and immobile.

> We turn on the telly only when we sit down to eat., We put it on just for a short time. The telly makes you to be sit there watching it so you are forced to be there, unless you are doing something important and just listen to what the television is saying. The radio is the one that fits in better in the sense that when you are occupied with housework or making lunch, you don't need to be close to it to listen. You do have to be there in order to see what's happening on television. Radio adapts better to what we do during the day. This is not the case with television, because if we have a sit-down to see television we know that we are going to use most of the time to watch what is on screen, but not with radio. With radio you can do all the other things and you can listen. You don't lose the plot of what is being shown. But with the television you lose the story if someone calls you or you have to go to the toilet, so television requires more time (Alicia, 40 years, emphasis added by author).

This perception of television in relation to functional places and practices shows an interesting comparison with the relation of the medium with temporal and spatial mobility inside and outside home. Raymond Williams' widely known thesis about

"mobile privatisation" (Williams 1992 [1974]), advises that one of the main effects of television in terms of our everyday times and spaces, is its capacity to bring the world to us inside our living rooms in almost real time. It brings in images and sounds from all over the world to the private spheres of our home to a degree unimaginable with any other preceding media technology. This mobility of content with its sensorial demands, however, also causes immobility at the micro level of the home. This immobility is not really acknowledged, or even raised, when home spaces are used in a ceremonial or private way, but it becomes a problem when mobility is needed such as when we are doing housework. In such situations, as here, the radio is preferred.

The relationship between the two technologies has to be seen as complementary rather than opposite or conflicting. Both occupy different spaces and times establishing a continuum where each practice follows the other during the flow of a normal day. This media routine is deeply embedded in the current everyday life of the members of the families under study here as shown by Isabel.

> [Television] is like a routine for us. For example we have a routine to wash the dishes, a routine to see telly. They are a part of our contemporary life. In the morning I listen to the radio until I have finished cleaning the house. When I have finished the housework the radio [time] is finished and the telly is turned on [laughs] (Isabel, 25 years).

This perceived incompatibility between the practices of watching television and those related to home maintenance also has consequences in terms of the location of the devices. None of the homes under study has a television set in the kitchen. Even in the case of the families where the television set is moved frequently between different home places, this was limited to public and private areas (from/to the living room to/from the main bedroom typically) but never involves the temporal location of the set in the kitchen. The kitchen, and in general, functional areas, is not a 'place' for television. When other home spaces become functional places, the television set loses temporally its attributes as a communication technology, being seen only as any other item of the material culture of the household.

4. Television and Private Uses of Space

As happened in the case of ceremonial space, the place of television sets in private spaces at home is not without controversy or resistance. On the one hand, television sets constitute for most of us one of the most common objects to be found in a

bedroom. Even in the case of the low-income groups it is not unusual to find a television set in the bedroom, commonly in the master bedroom. On the other hand, amongst the members of the families under study there is still an important degree of criticism of and disquiet at the effects of television on family life.

The pictures presented below show how pervasive the presence of television sets is in the bedrooms of these families. The superior images, from parents' bedrooms, show us how usual the set is present in these spaces. In contrast to the television sets sited in ceremonial places, the placement of these sets lack any formality or ceremonial character.

Picture number 16 shows the television set in the bedroom of Pepa. She is a single mother with three children without permanent work so the financial situation of her family was quite difficult. This was reflected in the material culture of her home. Her television set was on a shelf almost without any kind of decoration surrounding it and accompanied in the picture by a supermarket trolley in which she stores clothes.

On the right picture number 17 shows the television set found in the bedroom of Isabel and Victor. Here again the extreme simplicity of the location is notable. There is no decoration and the set is partially covered by what looks like a chessboard facing and there is an unmade bed with clothes scattered over it. Both images clearly show that both television sets, and their environment, are not to be seen by anyone outside the immediate family and its most intimate circle. Here the visibility of the screen is important, not the television as such, and the symbolical meaning of the apparatus seems to be minimal.

This is not the case for all the television sets pictured here. If we study the two lower images, numbers 18 and 19 a slightly different picture appears. Picture 18 shows the bedroom of Pedro (aged 12) and his sisters, children of Teresa and Nicolas. As a member of one of the biggest families under study, having seven members, he has very few intimate spaces. In this context the use of a portable television set while resting on his bed, under the bed of his sisters and almost hidden by a locker offers him, quite literally, a space of his own, a 'gathering place', where he can have a certain amount of privacy.

Pictures 16, 17, 18 and 19, television and private spaces

Picture 19 shows the bedroom of Jeanette (aged 22), the daughter of Mariela. This picture shows an interesting continuity between the decoration of the walls and the television set.. Putting the same stickers as on the wall on the television Jeannette puts the set into its own space, transforming it from a mass produced technology into something personal and unique with an identity and meaning for her. In both cases, the position of the set in the bedroom permits them to mark out, in the case of Pedro, or reinforce, in the case of Jeanette, a degree of privacy and individuality over home space. Here the location of the television is unlike the sitting of any other commodity, but is an element of their owners' search for personal space through media technologies' domestication (or privatisation) and use.

In terms of practice of watching television, for some of the people under study primarily males, bedrooms seem to be the ideal setting to watch television, offering privacy and comfort.

I prefer the bedroom [to watch television] because I can watch lying on the bed. In the living room it is sort of uncomfortable, and sometimes our front neighbours start to scream or the other neighbour puts on his stereo very loud, and in the bedroom you just close your door and that's all (Cristobal, 24 years).

I like to see it there [bedroom], because I'm more relaxed in bed. I take off my shoes and I lie all over the bed and that's all. Here [living room] I cannot be bare-foot because there's people coming.... The bedroom is more relaxed. You can take off your shirt, and lie on the bed. Anyway there's nobody looking at you, so you have more privacy inside your square metre (Alan, 48 years).

Not all the family members under study share this positive perception. Especially in connection with the bedroom of the children, some interviewees (commonly women) consider that watching television is a practice that interferes with traditional usage of bedroom space. Most see bedrooms are spaces for rest and the television only introduces unwanted changes in the sleep patterns of their children.

In the other house we had [a television] in the children's bedroom, but they stayed up late watching cartoons so never slept. Now when they go to bed, they go to my bed for a while and then I send them to their bedroom and they fall asleep fast. If they have the telly here they don't sleep. It can be midnight (Alejandra, 36 years).

[Q: Would you like to have a television set in your children's bedroom?] I don't think so, because they have to have enough time to sleep; they have to have their space to rest,; they have to concentrate on what they are studying and they have to relax, to rest so no television (Pepa, 34 years).

I would like to have [a new television set] in my bedroom, not in the children's, because they have their own sleep routine. The telly is turned off and they go to their bedroom. If they want to talk, they can talk, but no television in the bedroom, no games, no computer,as the bedroom is for rest (Rosa, 34 years).

This is not the only problem related to the use of television in a bedroom. There are complaints about the effects of television on the couple's communication in their own bedrooms, as Marta shows:

Television is killing the way of life, this as I see it. I think that television, and in part music, has killed off communication. My husband is uncommunicative. When he gets home we talk a little ... I even said to him "no, we have to have space for us, we have to have a space to talk. We cannot have the television or the radio always as there has to be separate space for each thing (Marta, 31 years).

156

This perception of intromission, of disruption of privacy is quite common. Television is seen as an alien form that has caused a negative change in the way in which family, and particularly couples communicate. In some cases this perception leads the couples to take action to delineate a space for intimacy moving the television set, as described by Ruben and Patricia:

We used to have it here, in the bedroom and then one day we went to my sister's wedding and during the mass the priest said "the worst thing for marriage is to have a television in the bedroom. It is not recommended and is not good for marriage", then there's no television in the bedroom. ... It is good for marriage because it gives you more time to talk, or for your marital life also, "nooo, I'm watching telly" [laughs], it's good. My wife said to me after we heard that "from now on, nevermore" and little by little we move it. We sort one problem and have another. Communication is good, you can talk. We talk about things, not "I'm watching telly, talk to you later" (Ruben, 36 years).

My husband would like to have a telly; his dream is to have a big telly, but not in my bedroom. His dream to have a [new] telly, but I don't like telly in my bedroom, because I once heard a priest that said that telly is a bad for marriage, because your husband starts watching football and you want to talk about the day and your husband doesn't listen to you because he's listening to football. [Then] you don't want to see the news, but your husband does, so your husband is immersed in the news and not even a single fly can fly. Then this intimate moment in the bedroom when you can talk or use any other energies, is stolen by the telly. This is why I found [the comments] very very real (Patricia, 31 years)

Ruben and Patricia established a clear distinction between space for intimacy and the space of television. For them intimacy is a place constructed by certain practices related to the patterns of communication of the couple where watching television brings negative influences.

The place of television in the private spaces of the home is, as with the ceremonial and the functional, resisted by the families under study. Here again television seems to be more accepted as an object (because, after all, as Carlos recognized it "you have to put it somewhere") rather than as a practice from a normative point of view. The location of the television set did not reveal everything about the acceptance of watching television, even though that they are mutually dependant.

Conclusions

Today it is easy to assume that television occupies a 'natural' place in the home. For many of us, some of our very first memories are associated with the practice of

watching television, and since then it is very difficult to imagine a home without a television in it, from its public display in the living room to the intimacy of a bedroom. This 'natural' image of television does not mean that it is not subject to conflict. Television, like any other technology, is in a continual process of adaptation, or domestication, to the home dynamics. As with any other technology, television still has to fight to conquer its place[35], and its location constitutes one of the main fields over which these fights take place.

What we can conclude about the location of television and its relation with home practices? The first point to make is about the singularity and difference in the relationship between television and space in each different social setting. The way people perceive television and its location and related practices varies from home to home. A location that in some houses is perceived as threatening or disturbing can be perceived in the next one as natural and even enriching of family life. Sometimes the location is normal, but not the practices related to it, or vice versa. As the specific shape and characteristics of domestic space varies from home to home and from individual to individual, , the relationships established with the television vary greatly from case to case in the same way. Anna McCarthy recognizes it:

> For just as social space cannot be fixed, conceptually, as one unvarying way of experiencing relations between public and private (...) neither can we hope to come up with a general set of social operations that television *always* performs, regardless of its place. If categories like public and private are variable and ambiguous, changing their meaning and expression from site to site, then so too, surely, are the ways in which television screens and images materialize these abstract categories as particular lived and experienced elements of a place (McCarthy 2001:4).

Television is a multiple phenomena and in order to understand its location, both in practice and in space, in the home we have to take into consideration other social and material phenomena that surround the television set and its immediate location. There are however some general principles about television and the space called

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[35] For example, for these families computers are still placeless, they don't have a place in their homes. Because of its incomplete domestication (more in the imagination [they are important for the children, for its future, its education, not for me] than in practice [they don't know how to use them and don't believe they are important for them]), computers still have not a space in the house, and even they finish locked in some unnatural spaces. As the TV, the computer do not have a natural space, because in a type of house like a social housing (in which every single square meter is counts) there is no a natural space for technologies, they have to make it,. And the only way they can make it is through practices, practices create localities. Against a technological determinist position (for whom the mere disposition of the PC imply certain practices [but maybe other practices: hide it or keeping it in the closet] and the development of a locality around it) we can se how is not the technology itself that creates a specific set of practices (and localities associated to it), nor the 'social shaping' of it by its users, but an active and complex mixture of technologies and individuals who create the practices and its related localities.

'home'. In relation to the constitution of home space we can see how television as an object has already secured its place.

The practice of watching television still generates resistance and criticism, especially when it is confronted with the 'correct', 'normal' or 'traditional' ways of using the different home spaces identified here. Even private spaces that theoretically appear as ideal for television practices, are disrupted in a way by the intromission on them of the set. This seems to show that there is something structural about the kind of relations that television establishes with the places in which it is located and practised.

This structural quality of television is shown by the way that television as practice is not only located within a pre-determined place, but it also creates its own place, with almost all the characteristics that we associate with other places that form our homes. *Television is a place*, and for this reason its introduction into home spaces in always contested by all the other places in the home that have to reaccommodate themselves to, and learn to cohabitate with, this new spatial context.

The 'place-ness' of television is given by the fact, as discussed in chapter 5, places, understand them as 'localities of practices', only exists in and through practices being developed in them. The home as place only exists if certain types of practices are developed by and/or with (or without) certain actors in a certain time and space. In the case of television its 'place-ness' is given by the fact that the practice of watching television not only shares certain characteristics of space, but also because it involves a relationship with space that is not to be seen in any other practice that constitute the home and its different places. In relation to the first point, if we understand places as social construction rather than geographical entities, we clearly see how practised television also includes some of the social elements identified with place, as Adams recognizes it,

> "The idea of "television as place" adopted here refers to (I) a bounded system in which symbolic interaction among persons occurs (a social context), and (2) a nucleus around which ideas, values, and shared experiences are constructed (a center of meaning)" (Adams 1992:118).

In addition to its social 'character' that can be found in all other practices, , television practices at home constitute a place because they have a relationship with time and

159

space that cannot be found in any other practice developed at home and that constitute the core of its identity as place, as locality.

In terms of time, television constitutes a new temporality, a new of way of perceiving time that is experienced quite differently from that of everyday life:

> When I start seeing movies I feel that the time passes fast. A movie last for an hour and a half, sometimes they last for two hours so I am locked inside TV for two hours, two hours locked in the movie. If I want to go to the toilet I have to stop it and then there's a knock on the door and I have to stand up to open the door. The two hours locked inside this miserable movie is quite a lot, as they say, 'time is gold'. In these two hours I could be doing other things, put everything ready for the next day but I do not do it. If I go and watch TV , I remain locked to TV, glued to it, , as if I were inside it, doing the same things that they do on TV. Things are different; life is not like this, It is as if TV gives you another picture, another way of thinking (Victor, 32 years).

While being in this place called television we are in a different time. As Victor recognised, the time of television does not match point to point to the time of everyday life. This is true for any sensation of time protraction (Flaherty 1999) common to every other activity that requires as much sensory involvement as television does. Television also has different temporalities inside it; it presents us with a variety of temporary orders including the movie, the programming and the actors involved with whom we have to confront, because, as Victor indicated, "life is not this way".

Television also constitutes a different way to perceive space, especially the space outside the home:

> [Is important to watch television] for information, because even if you don't see the news, I think the best way to keep up to date is television, the speed, the image, how the way the world is. Something happens in Israel and you know it in 5 minutes here, even before... You are not alone in the world and Chile, even though that we are the last piece of South America, is affected by the things that happen in the world. In one way or another they impact the country and if the country is affected. I am affected, of course because of the job... or something as simple as the bus ticket going up 10 pesos, the oil goes up 10 pesos and 10 pesos a month hurts. You have to be aware that now, the way the world is, something happening in one country affects the others. In this sense television is good because you can get information, even though you can only get information because you don't have any power to make decisions. You don't have any influence on what Chile said to United States or Europe. At least you do know what is happening so you will understand and know what is going to happen (Cristian, 38 years).

160

[Television allow us to] know things that you don't have to opportunity [to know]. This is
what I like about television. It bring you to the world we are living, the distance in kilometres
is huge, but television brings things into our house. ... Television is important for me in that
sense, to bring you closer to things, to show different ways of life, the traditions, different
places... see the advances, see what will happen in the future, the technology and all this.
... In this sense I believe it is essential to educate yourself, because sometime you don't
have any way to bring culture into your home. Television brings it, things that you will never
experience in person, to widen yourself, to learn, to widen, not only what surrounds you,
your square metre. Television opens a window on to the world, to learn what is happening
in the world. You travel without leaving your home, as you can say, and learn things that
you don't know before, like books (Rosa, 34 years).

Television constitutes not only "a window to the world" as Rosa said, but the world in itself, particularly in this type of context., For low-income populations and in general for populations with problems of spatial mobility, television not only 'represents' but also 'creates' the world in the same process. By watching television 'the world' is created and actualised as something 'real' outside the limits of their localities of practices, as a background in which their localities or practices are located.

Television as practice constitutes a place where time and space are experienced in a slightly different way to that which we use in the rest of our everyday life. This explains why it is difficult for the members of the families under study to make compatible traditional uses of space with the practice of watching television. While uses of space tend to reinforce home boundaries and routines, those associated with television go in the other direction, making home boundaries more permeable and introducing into the home different experiences and information. In this sense we can understand television as, paradoxically, the place in which displacement occurs. As the image of a "window on the world" reminds us, television builds location through dislocation and in doing so shows many of the contradictions and complexities that lie behind the assumed 'normality' of everyday life in contemporary societies.

Chapter 8

Noise and the battles for space

Introduction

If we study Tucapel Jimenez II as a locality of practices it becomes clear that the estate acts as the meeting point of different spatial-related aspects but beyond that as a place constructed through practices. As seen, practices constitute the minimal social units and without them no social attribute exists in a determinate field. For a housing estate to be considered more than a group of buildings and streets, means that some social practices are developed there. In other words, housing estates are social entities as long as they are localities in which certain social practices are being developed.

It is important to look at the kind of social practices constituting contemporary urban housing estates. Not all these practices are communal in character or ends. Social practices developed on a housing estate can be, and commonly are, strictly individual or familiar, and include only the actor and or next of kin. These practices are definitely local in character but are not community-wide, explicitly excluding other neighbours. In addition these practices can be anti-social in terms that they can go against a established community in a determinate locality. Drug dealing and substance abuse, crime and violence are all social practices being developed in a determinate locality, but they can hardly be considered as the material from which a community can be developed or in whom a community will be involved as a whole with the exception of mafias and other forms of criminal organizations.

Contemporary urban housing estates have to be seen, first and foremost, as the place in which certain kind of social practices are being developed. These practices are very diverse in nature such as playing with the children in the central square, buying vegetables in the local shop or chatting with the neighbour on the stairs. They all have in common the use of an intermediate space between the small areas of the home and the anonymity of general urban landscape. For social groups of quite

limited spatial and virtual mobility, this intermediate space has a special relevance it constitutes the main "real" place in which their involvement with the social order occurs (in contrast with the "virtual" places of television described in the last chapter). Their perception and evaluation of the society in which they currently live will be influenced by the nature and quality of their quotidian relations with the local spheres of the housing estate.

As happens in any other area of social life, the construction of the local place they call 'Villa Tucapel Jimenez II' is constantly crossed and deeply embedded with media practices. Much of the experience of 'the local' cannot be separated with practices that involve the use of media technologies to a certain degree, ranging from news reports about the crime rates in the borough to the use of public phones, . In this sense the integrative social practices (Schatzki 1996) that constitute housing estates as places have to include more and more dispersed practices related to the use of different media technologies, from which the experience of local areas cannot be separated. As can be seen in this chapter this continual processes of re-mediation of the local place is not without problems, commonly reflecting the tensions and contradictions that characterize the life in low-income housing estates such as Tucapel Jimenez II.

1. Intimate strangers

The third segment of one of the most successful Chilean movies of all times, 'El Chacotero Sentimental' [the Sentimental Teaser] of 1999[36] transformed everyday life in social housing estates into a matter of national concern and debate. This debate was driven not by the poor quality of the buildings or its high crime rates, as frequently happened but something much more commonplace: the lack of intimacy suffered by the residents. This segment, called 'Todo es cancha' [everywhere is a pitch], told the story of a young couple, residents of a housing estate and the problem they have to enjoy sexual intimacy due to the fact that everyone can hear what their next-door neighbours are doing at anytime due to the poor quality of the building.

This story reflects, in an extreme way, a problem that is common for all the inhabitants of social housing estates like Tucapel Jimenez II. Both surveys (INVI

[36] Based on supposedly real stories that members of the audience told between 1997 and 1998 to Rumpi, a famous Chilean DJ, during his daily radio program, called 'El chacotero sentimental'

163

2002) and ethnographic studies (Carrasco 2002)[37] show that relations with neighbours appear to be one of the main problems of families who live on social housing estates.

> We knew that were coming to live in a flat, but we didn't knew that we would have to cohabitate with 47 more families. We are 48 in each community. If in a family group like us, we are 7, there are problems, imagine how it will be if there are 48, with everyone very different characters (Patricia, 30 years).

These short statements from Patricia illustrate quite clearly the problem that under consideration: the relationships with strangers. This situation is not so extraordinary. In our everyday lives we continually divide our time between our intimate networks of family, friends and acquaintances and unknown people, especially the one with whom we share our 'public' localities of practices such as on buses, in cafes and in supermarkets. In general this is not a problem for us, being part of our 'normality', or the recurrent way in which we live our everyday lives.

The real difference of the situation suffered by the families under study is not relations with strangers as such. Contact with strangers is always part of everyday life, even for individuals with acute mobility problems as the ones studied here. What is different in the case under study is that these relations are not developed in places where we normally expect to find strangers but in a situation of quasi intimacy prompted by their extreme spatial proximity.

> It is different here. We live in match boxes, do you understand? All the residents were hysterical at the beginning; because they were used to live on open land, and everything is different (Diego aged 38)

Among the main characteristics of the living conditions on housing estates such as Tucapel Jimenez II is a tendency towards concentration (Tironi 2003). This occurs for different reasons including the fact that the private entrepreneurs who build estates try to minimize costs. The recent massive developments of social housing estates in Chile show a strong tendency towards concentrating the maximum possible number of flats in the smallest number of blocks. The results are that more and more people are living in smaller and smaller spaces, with the consequence that, as Diego

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[37] This problem is not unique to Chilean. On social housing estates in the UK the complaints about loud music as one of the main problems, are also common (**Burney, E.** 2000 'Ruling out trouble: anti-social behaviour and housing management', *The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry* 11(2): 268-273.)

described in the interview, neighbours perceive themselves to be living "in a match box".

Picture 20. Plan of the buildings, Tucapel Jimenez II housing estate

8 Meters

42 Meters

This situation can be seen graphically in Picture 20. Flats on the housing estate are close to each other, not just to the ones in the same block but also to the ones in the adjacent buildings. The fact that all the flats are single-storey enlarges the area of contact with neighbours in contrast to two-storey flats where the spatial concentration of each flat is larger and the areas of contact lower. We also have consider the commonly poor quality of the building materials[38], including the lack of any type of sound isolation between flats. This spatial closeness is routinely perceived by the inhabitants of the estate:

I'm always complaining. I'm a complainer, wanting them to please turn down the music, that I don't want to hear as I need to sleep or sometimes I have a headache, because here everybody listens to loud music. It is quiet now only because a baby died so people are mourning but here there is always a terrible racket.

Q: Is it different here than in your former place of residence?

Here is different. Here is different in every sense, because being so near and too close makes everything different. ... The whole world knows what you said, what you talk about, what you do. The whole world can see you. Life changed a 100% because in the shantytown we had a house ... [here] the noise is everywhere. It's very different" (Valeria, 40 years)

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[38] Something that gained national notoriety during the winter of 1997 with the famous case of the 'Casas de nailon' [Nylon houses]. These were newly built social housing estates that could not keep out normal winter rains and had to be covered with nylon temporarily in order to prevent water ingression.

165

The residents of the housing estate find it quite hard to be apart from one another, even if they want to. The housing estate is always full of people Even during the working day the estate is populated by women and children, older people and unemployed male adults. This situation means that dealing with strangers is a compulsory activity not only in matters of space but also in matters of time. These families, quite literally, live their lives with their neighbours, in almost every time and place.

This forced proximity characteristic of the life on social housing estates is not only related to encounters with strangers in public spaces as even in the intimate sphere of the household, 'behind closed doors', neighbours are commonly present , if not in person in some kind of background noise. Due to the inefficient sound isolation of the flats, especially on the lower floors, you can always hear different noise from the neighbours, whether music, conversation, noise associated with housework or movement of furniture. To be in one flat is always to be located on the housing estate. It is impossible to forget that you have people around you because you can hear them easily almost all the time. In this sense one of the most basic objectives of a home as space is only partially fulfilled: the isolation of its inhabitants from the surrounding natural and social environment (Kaika 2004). Through sound, strangers can enter the intimate spaces of the home against the will of the inhabitants.

2. The Noise made by People

Of all the different kinds of outside noise that family members hear during a normal day there is one that stands out: the noise emitted by communication technologies at loud volume, especially music.

> The music is too loud. In fact in the mornings I don't turn on my stereo because I listen to the stereos of my neighbours. I can't open the door also ... we lived for 6 years in other flats and it wasn't like here. Sometimes they put the music up loud, but in a house. It is not the same living in a house as in a flat. You hear everything; even when the children jump you hear. I try to ensure that the children don't jump too much, because I know it is annoying for downstairs, or they move furniture. I try not to do it (Alejandra, 30 years).

> Thanks to my neighbours I spend all day listening to music. I don't need to put it on. I don't like radio that much; I don't like to listen to music ... It is good that everybody has their music, but they should play it just for themselves. I never like that. You have to be patient, because I don't want to get upset with my neighbour, you have to know how to live and do the correct things, but I really don't like music (Diego, 39 years).

166

This extracts from the interviews with Alejandra and Diego are representative of the general perception of the members of the families under study: noise, mainly in the form of loud music, is a constituent part of their everyday lives. For many of them, to listen to noise appears to be a compulsive practice, a practice that is not voluntarily chosen, but imposed from outside the home space, even against their will, as happens to Diego.

As mentioned in the introduction, to walk through the streets and passageways of Tucapel Jimenez II particularly at weekends, is to be immersed into a sea of different sounds, mainly music coming from stereos and television sets located inside the homes. The management of this all embracing and ever present, noise constitutes one of the main ways in which individuals and family groups interact with their social environment.

Paloma, for example, is a young mother who came from the shantytown of 'Las Torres' in the Borough of Pudahuel. She is quite happy with her flat. It represents a big improvement in her material living conditions. She only shares it with her husband Cristobal and her two small daughters so the space seems adequate for their needs. Coming from a shantytown, a recognized noisy environment, could lead us to believe that they are used to living in a social environment where noise is ever-present..

"In the shantytown it was even worse. We lived 6 families to one piece of land, everyone with different music. Some listened to 'rancheras', others to 'cumbias', others to disco music, others classical music, others romantic music, and you can also listen to the music of all other houses that were around" (Paloma, 24 years).

The analysis of the interviews shows that noise is an everyday issue with which she has to deal, and that mediates the relationships that she has with their neighbours.

There is a woman who since she arrived here has music on from 7 in the morning. You cannot even open your windows because you hear all the music. In fact we talk to other people about how annoying it is also for the kids. Sometimes at weekends you want to sleep a little bit later and because of her you cannot sleep, and the kids are bad tempered for the same reason. They are woken up early by the music she puts on. In fact on Friday night I had to ask the man who lives in the flat in front of us to turn down the volume because it was 2 in the morning and the girl couldn't sleep and I couldn't sleep. I went and said to him could he possibly close the door and turn down the volume a little bit, because he was sitting on the stairs with the door open and the stereo at full blast. Without

167

everyday noise at night, with a little more peace, it was as if the stereo was right next to my ear. The girls were bad tempered. I had to go out and tell him. It's the first time I asked him for anything. I asked him not to get mad at me, but at least let my daughter sleep, so please turn the volume down a little. He closed his door and went inside, but it was 2 in the morning. ... [During the day] if you want you can close the door and you won't here anything, but at night it is more annoying. It's annoying because at night there is less noise and more calm, and the music is always there, even if you close the door (Paloma, 24 years).

In an urban environment, sound is an ever-present reality that permeates everything. In contrast with vision, "sound engulfs the spatial thus problematizing the relation between subject and object. Sound inhabits the subject just as the subject might be said to inhabit sound" (Bull 2001:180). If the neighbours want to avoid visual contact with each other, they just have to stay behind closed doors, engaged in private practices, as many of them do. To avoid aural contact with neighbours is more difficult. As Paloma recognized, the neighbours are always present, in any home space at almost any hour, in the form of noise.

What exactly is noise? The Encyclopedia Britannica (1974) defines noise simply as "any undesired sound, either one that is intrinsically objectionable or one that interferes with other sounds that are being listened to". Noise is a kind of sound. It has no particular content, but is defined by its relations with other sounds or with silence, as can clearly be seen in the case of Paloma. In contrast with physical measures like weight or speed, there is no way to determine objectively which sounds will be considered noise and which will not. This consideration will always depend on the relationship that each sound establishes with other sounds and, more crucially, of the evaluation of a determinate listener.

The central issue is that recognition of sound as noise requires a listener to do the classification. This judgment is usually based on many different criteria and varies considerably from listener to listener. But it has one central element in common. A sound to be considered as noise, has to produce some degree of discomfort. It has to interfere in a determinate way with the sounds that the listener considers normal or pleasant.

The unpleasant aspect is quite clear when we consider the etymology of the word in English. The word 'noise' in English can be traced back to the Latin word *nausea*, meaning 'seasickness, feeling of sickness'. A noise is always a sound that causes

disturbance and is an unwanted interference. In this sense, the content of noise is irrelevant. Regardless as to whether it is loud music, radio broadcast or a football match on television, the only thing that matters is the perceived unpleasantness, and not the particular sounds that prompt such a sensation.

This unpleasant character of noise shows a second character of noise: tends to be attributed to externally produced sounds. As it can be seen throughout this chapter, every time the interviewees use the word noise (or any synonyms) they are referring to sound produced by other people. In this sense noise is an external and passive concept, rarely created but commonly suffered. In most of the cases where people talk about their own use of sound they refer to them as 'playing music', 'listening to radio', etc. but never noise. The closest that they get to considering their own sound as noise is to acknowledge that they like to listen to 'loud' sounds. These are loud sounds, usually in the form of loud music, not noise. Noise is made by others.

Dealing with noise is a constitutive part of being a city resident. Urban spaces are filled with people. They are also filled with the sounds that people make. As a result of this most of the sounds that we hear in our everyday lives have not been produced by us so are perceived as irritating and, therefore, considered to be 'noise'. This situation is also true for the former homes of these families. As Paloma said, noise "in the shantytown was even worse". Both shantytowns and overcrowded houses are spaces filled with different sounds, many of which could be perceived as 'noise' by its inhabitants.

There are several potential explanations for the centrality of the problem of noise for life on the housing estates (INVI 2002). There is the degree of high spatial concentration on these estates. Both shantytowns and overcrowded houses even with their spatial proximity, were structured as a series of usually detached single-storey houses (especially in shantytowns). In the housing estate this extensive use of land is replaced by an intensive one in the form of three-storey buildings increasing the physical proximity of the families. Also shantytowns used to be formed by smaller numbers of families, so the potential sources of noise were also fewer than in their current situation.

This last point provides a complementary explanation of the centrality of noise on housing estates. Due to the small size of the shantytowns in comparison with the housing estates, and the long-term relationships between many of their members

169

(usually part of their extended families), the people who made noise were people they knew and cared about. In many cases this factor made them not perceive sound as noise and when they did recognize them as noise, to reach agreement for the reduction of the noise. As seen in Chapter Three, the social capital necessary for such a perception and arrangements has greatly diminished on the housing estate.

Another potential explanation of the change of status of noise on the housing estate is related to the moral evaluation of their inhabitants about how the life on a housing estate should be. As we saw, for the people under study the movement to their current flats represent not only an improvement in their physical living conditions, but also an integration into a 'normal' way of residing in contemporary cities. Noise used to be tolerated in the past as an usual aspect of living in a shantytown or in a overcrowded house. But inside the 'new normality' of the housing estate the constant presence of noise appears to be something strange and that must be controlled.

3. The Politics of Sound

The question under consideration now is: what is the origin of such practices? Why do people produce noise knowing that it will annoy their neighbours? In order to answer these questions we have return to the very beginning of process of appropriation of space by people during their daily life. For most of the families who live in Tucapel Jimenez II, the process of transforming the anonymous space of the housing estate into a meaningful place is in progress and in many cases just in the early stages. They still have to appropriate the space that appears strange and alien.

In more affluent groups this transformation of space into place could take the form of a transformation of the physical environment into a visual appropriation of space. This can be achieved through a transformation of their materiality like house refurbishment and construction of extensions, the building of public spaces such as gardens and squares and, increasingly, the delineation of the boundaries between themselves and others using walls, gates and technological invigilation equipment such as closed circuit television (CCTV).

Within groups of people with long established social networks, appropriation of a new place could use some of their already available stock of social capital to domesticate space through community practices like social meetings or through some of them related to the material transformation of the environment like communal work to

install locks at the entrance of the buildings. In the case of groups or individuals with high motility, or capital in terms of potential mobility, the domestication of space could take the form of the negation of it through constant movement outside the alien space to other already domesticated places such as the homes of relatives and friends. In these cases the availability of some sort of capital (financial, social or in terms of mobility) appear to be a necessary condition for the domestication of local space.

With few exceptions, the members of the families under study do not possess any stock of any of these forms of capital. Financial capital (and its related motility) in many cases is insufficient to satisfy the needs of the nuclear family, even less to devote some of it to practices not enclosed directly within household boundaries. Social capital, in terms of availability to associate with strangers, is also low, even in terms of the low structural levels of this type of capital in Chilean society . This is due to the specific moment in the story of these families marked by their move to the housing estate and the spatial distance with or dissolution of their former social networks.

The families under study appear particularly powerless in relation to their environment. They only have limited access to financial or social resources necessary to transform their surrounding environment into a place of their own. The more affluent can transform their personal space into some sort of private haven through extending the house space and the closure of some parts of the public space, through locks on the doors and bars in the windows. Others can organize themselves into small groups and can plant up the area or invest in more secure ways to delineate 'their' space from the rest of the housing estate. In general there seems to be a limited capacity to deal with material space at both communal and individual (or familiar) level. The 'immediate' space appears to them as outside their control, an imposition of material structures and spaces over which they have little, if any, power in terms of its distribution or attributes.

In contemporary society people do not only live in 'immediate' spaces and places. Mainly through the development and spread of information and communication technologies, and the set of mediated practices that such technologies permit, people can begin to live in mediated worlds. While engaged in media practices, individuals "must to some extent suspend the space-time frameworks of their everyday lives and temporarily orient themselves towards a different set of space-time coordinates"

(Thompson 1995:94). In doing so individuals create through imagination a different temporal-spatial reality in which they live thanks to the double character of media practices as located within a determinate temporal-spatial framework. It is at the same time mobile in terms of the access to mediated content developed, related and broadcasted from faraway places. This character of the media, especially in relation to individuals with low degrees of spatial mobility, is central to the way in which they experience, and live out worlds different from the immediate spatial environment.

These mediated worlds not only exist in reference to access to faraway places and life through "work of imagination" (Appadurai 1996). Media practices also allow us to recreate our surrounding physical environment, to transform space into place. The places where we live are built through practices. We cannot inhabit abstract, or geographical, space. Just by being in predetermined coordinates we create something that is different from the mere materiality that makes up such a space, 'lived' space in Lefebvre's terms. Then "places are defined as delineated geographic areas that become space through human action and practice" (Peterson 2002:262). If media practices are a central part of the practices in our everyday lives, they have to be implicated in the creation of our "localities of practices", not only as a source of 'mediascapes' but also as a constituent element of our temporal and spatial realities.

This is clear in terms of the internal space of the household. As many classic studies in the field of media technologies and everyday life have shown (Ang 1982; Fiske 1987; Morley 1999; Silverstone 1994), media practices are deeply embedded in the creation of the mundane, not only in terms of routines, but also in relation to existence and characteristics of everyday localities themselves. The way we use and conceive our intimate localities is structured by our media practices, in a complex and continual process of relations with all the other practices that constitute what we know as everyday life.

This transformation of space into place not only takes place in relation with the intimate atmosphere of the household. As Michael Bull (2001) in his research on the use of Walkmans shows us

> The use of personal stereo represents something that is both individual and intimate, helping the user to maintain a sense of identity within an often impersonal environment. Use can be understood as facilitating a 'memory bank' of 'significant narratives' by providing an aural mnemonic while users move through the 'alien' spaces of everyday life

... represents a re-appropriation of the past in the present. ... Walkman use enhances experience, providing the mundane with an exiting sensual or spectacular soundtrack. Alternatively users may reconstruct their experience through the construction of imaginary scenarios in which they are either spectators or performers. Throughout all these examples, users describe walkman use as enhancing their sense of control both internally and externally (Bull 2001:188).

In that case using a walkman was not only simply related to mix the practice of be 'on the move' with the practice of listeingn to music but also, and a as result of this mixture, to experiencing everyday spaces in a different way. "Using walkman in public places is part of an urban tactic that consists of decomposing the territorial structure of the city and recomposing it through spatio-phonic behaviors. Double movement of deterritorialization and reterritorialization" (Thibaud 2003:329). The use of the apparatus does not negate our environment, but transform it and domesticate it through familiar sounds and rhythms. Walkman use transforms urban space into places of listening, remembering and feeling. As Bull said, listening gives a sensuous form to the mundane, exchanging alien into known, detachment into belonging. This is because "sound, especially within the context of the urban environment, is never a neutral phenomenon. Each sound is imbued with its own lexical code: sound as sign, symbol, index; as ostensibly defining personal territory in the case of the guettoblaster or car stereo; as creating a portable soundscape in the case of Walkman" (Arkette 2004:160).

In this sense the mediation of experience produced by sound permeates the visual limits, trespassing on the so-called fixed or material boundaries and creating new configurations of space into place.

Space and place are here presented not simply as sites where or about music happens to be made, or over which music has diffused, but rather different spatialities are suggested as being formative of the sounding and resounding of music. Such a richer sense of geography highlights the spatiality of music and the mutually generative relations of music and place. Space produces as space is produced. To consider the place of music is not to reduce music to its location, to ground it down into some geographical baseline, but to allow a purchase on the rich aesthetic, cultural, economic and political geographies of musical language (Leyshon 1995:425).

Sound is not innocuous. It forms part of our being in the world and the way in which we perceive and order our surrounding temporal and spatial environment. In this sense we agree with the idea that "music in much more than a decorative art ... it is a

powerful medium of social order ... music's presence is clearly political, in every sense that the political can be conceived" (DeNora 2000:163). The use of sound and music in everyday life is not only about aesthetics or taste. It is also about power and agency in our relations with the world because "music is a tool of power" (Attali 1985:20). In the case under study here we can see how "the production of place through music is always a political and contested process" (Cohen 1995:445) 445 and it is deeply rooted within the development of Western urban life:

> Embedded within the urban soundscape was a hierarchy of authority, which determined who could make what sort of noise and when. ... the power to change the rhythms of urban life, to control sound (...) was a formidable symbolic tool in the construction of absolutist state ... whoever controlled sound commanded a vital medium of communication and power (Garrioch 2003:16-18).

But the meaning of sound as a social practice has evolved since this time. First, the processes of reshaping space through sound will not have a central place in everyday life if they do not go together with another central process in contemporary society: the democratization of sound in the form of music. Until the beginning of the twentieth century, access to music in intimate places was a luxury commodity, only available to the wealthiest social groups. The rest of the population has to content themselves with occasional access to it in public spaces such as gatherings, public houses and other places. With the development of modern media technologies of reproduction and reception such as gramophones and radios, huge numbers of people can access the reproduction of music on an everyday basis with the result that not only the intimate space was filled with sound but also "technology has amplified the projection of private musical tastes into the public sphere" (Cloonan 2002:31).

Second, with the entrance of music into the field of the everyday practices, it has become a central element in the reflexive construction of the self, characteristic of contemporary societies. "People regard music as a personal tool, something to be used ... for emotional self-regulation. As a 'technology of the self', music has become crucial to the ways in which people organize memory, identity, their autonomy" (Frith 2003:43). At the same time as general or social meanings (especially related to the idea of the state, the church and other hegemonic powers) disappear or became a matter of debate, their meanings to the individual increase.

This process leave us in a situation in which "we can better understand the domestic relations of intimacy and distance, power and affection, by mapping patterns of musical use than we can explain musical tastes by reference to social variables" (Frith 2003:40). Music and personal identity are deeply linked in contemporary society, not only in terms of the importance of a definite musical taste as a source of distinction (in Bourdieau's terms), but also in the more general sense that the relation between sound (in the form of music), noise and silence in which we live our everyday lives is increasingly becoming an indicator of status and position occupied in the social order. Today sound not only indicates the rhythms of society, but most importantly, it indicates the rhythms of the self.

In sum, this reconfiguration in the meaning of sound in the form of music in everyday life

> "It has promoted a view of music and place not as fixed and bounded texts or entities but
> as *social practice[s]* involving relations between people, sounds, images, artefacts and the
> material environment" (Cohen 1995:438, emphasis added)

The management of sounds allows individuals to confront and change their physical environment. It gives them the power to redefine limits, shapes and emotional attachment to the material, transforming space into places as sound "creates the illusion of enlarging our own physical scope" (Arkette 2004:164). In a subtle, but powerful, way sound gives certain plasticity to space. It transforms rigid borders and surfaces into a matter of practices, places-to-be, not absolutely static, nor completely fluid, but in a state of dynamic stability that allow either change and/or continuity.

4. The battles for space

Applying this conception of sound and space to the case under study we can affirm that sound-production practices, especially through the use of media technologies, allows the neighbours to rebuild their spaces, transforming this materiality into something different. As Tia DeNora said "in public, music may be most effective at the times when individuals experience *social and aesthetic uncertainty*, ... , where music may proffer cues and models for 'appropriate' agency within a setting" (DeNora 2000:159, emphasis added). In fact 'social and aesthetic uncertainty' is a concept that well describes the current situation on the social housing estate under

scrutiny. In this context media practices appear as one of the key practices through which this space could be appropriated and transformed into something meaningful.

> Sound colonizes the listener but is also used to actively recreate and reconfigure the space of experience. Through the power of sound the world becomes intimate, known and possessed. This point to the powerfully seductive role of sound that appears to root users into the world with a force that differs from the other senses (...). Sound enables users to manage and orchestrate their space of habitation in a manner that conforms to their desires (Bull 2003:178).

This use of music to symbolically re-build new space has a long history in migrant and diaspora communities. As Sarah Cohen affirms in relation with her study of the Jewish communities of Liverpool, "place for many migrant communities is something constructed through music with an intensity not found elsewhere in their social lives" (Stokes 1994a:114 quoted by Cohen 1995:442). For these groups the use of music, not only at social events but also in terms of personal listening, commonly represent a reestablishment of the ties and foundations that form the base of their own existence as a community.

In the case under study here we are not dealing with a pre-established migrant community but as some kind of 'urban migrants' in terms of the large number of places in which many of them have lived. This movement is not community based. In most of the cases it has been an exclusively individual or nuclear familiar project. For this reason, in their everyday lives they are not trying to build a community, but their own personal space within their new physical environment. For most of them communities seem to be something from the past, which can be and commonly are missed. As a consequence of this, the use of sound has nothing to do with the construction (or re-construction) of a community, but the construction of personal space.

This specific character of sound is especially central here. In an environment in which the materials from which the houses are built do not provide sound insulation, sound management becomes a central issue in the establishment of the limits that materiality do not assure. For them "...sound, the ultimately liquid form, is coming to represent the physical presence of home territory" (Arkette 2004:164-165). Along with the lack of isolation, the physical proximity means that noise not only constitutes a way to mark the boundaries of the home but also, and more critically, a way in which the private sphere of other enters into personal private space. This dialectic

between public and private sound and space is always present in the sound conflicts that characterize life on the housing estate under study, as shown in the following extract.

"[The neighbours] listen to loud music and do not care about the rest like my front door neighbour. And I, to avoid having problems with him, don't tell him 'neighbour, turn down the volume' ... for the simple reason that they live in a flat too. He would say to me "do you know neighbour? I'm in my flat and I can listen to what I want'. They don't think that the volume bounces off the walls and you can feel it. Here you can feel it. Here nobody has respect. For example if a person is 'ubicada' he respects the neighbours, but the people who are not 'ubicada' don't care, do you understand? It can be 4 in the morning and the radio can be on outside. My next door neighbour well I can believe that he likes to listen to loud music, but not putting the speakers in the doorway. Can you imagine the sound of a 4.000 watts stereo playing? (Cristobal, 24 years, emphasis added).

What does it mean to be 'ubicado'? A direct translation from Spanish indicates that 'ubicarse' means "to lie, to be located" (Collins 1990), so someone who is 'ubicado' is someone who knows his/her place. In Chilean popular language to be 'ubicado' also has moral considerations in terms of the ability of a certain individual and group to take the correct place in accordance with certain rules in a social structure or sanctioned certain 'correct' or 'decent' behaviour. At stake in Cristobal's criticism of the behaviour of his neighbours is the existence of a distance in terms of their practices in their private space (listening to music) and the practices that someone who is 'ubicado' should take. In this case correct behaviour cannot be forced or imposed easily (and in many cases not even demanded) on someone who does not respect it. This is because, as shown by the neighbour of Cristobal, the location of the practice is the intimate sphere of the household. This tension between the public and private listening to music is at the very centre of the problem with noise.

In our everyday lives, the boundaries between the geographical and the aural space of our houses frequently do not match. This is true for parties and public events held at home where the limits of the aural home largely exceed its material dimensions, but also in the case of the entrance of unwanted sounds from the environment, such as a car backfiring in the street or the sound of children playing in the adjacent neighbours' flat. To look or ask for a perfect match between aural and geographical space is almost impossible and unaffordable for most individuals. To live with others' sounds in the city is part of the costs associated with the 'urban' condition, from the very beginning of modern cities (Garrioch 2003).

Resulting from this, "part of the clamor of modernity is a public sonic brawling, as urban space becomes a site of acoustic conflict" (Cloonan 2002:31). In contemporary societies this acoustic conflict is becoming central due to two interconnected processes already highlighted: the centrality of music in the construction of the self as a reflexive project and the massive distribution of communication technologies. In relation with the first element "because music is now used to mark out private territory that it can also 'invade' it; it is because it has become so deeply implicated in people's personas that it can be 'misused'; and it is because music is now so widely employed as an emotional tool that its misuse is genuinely upsetting" (Frith 2003:46). For increasing numbers of people music does not only represent harmonic sounds or a form of entertainment but also part of their own psychological existence and the image that they want to project to their surrounding social environment.

Alongside with this perception, "the rise of sound recording and amplification technologies has of course provided a major platform from which 'nuisance noise' has been projected" (Cloonan 2002:32). This socialization of the capacity of amplifying sound not only means that there is an increase in the general level of noise, but also "it enabled particular kinds of noise to be projected, and in a way that violated the sense of the acceptable boundaries between private and public spaces" (ibid.). As the movement against 'piped' or 'canned' music shows, noise is a central issue today in the relationship between private and public spaces. Not only in terms of which kind of noises do we listen to, but also when, where and through which medium, is becoming a central aspect in the way we inhabit our urban "localities of practices".

In summary:

> There is a growing schism between the space that physical objects occupy, and the acoustic space that is taken up with a sounding object. The amount of acoustic space taken up by an individual can tell us a great deal about the individual ... Sonic space does not follow the same rules as physical space. Sound cannot be contained within four walls unless the room is highly absorbent; walls only act as filters, filtering out high frequencies. The consequences of living where physical space is at a premium, where terrace houses are carved up into flats or bedsits, where walls become flimsy partitions, are that the only way to extend your home territory is to imagine that you are in a larger space by raising the stereo or TV volume. The lateral flow of sonic material including domestic sounds as well as music is now a condition that we constantly have to adapt to. Depending on amplitude, a neighbour's stereo could function either as another layer of ambient

environment or as sonic intrusion, giving the feeling that your private space is no longer your own (Arkette 2004:166).

In the case under study here, the centrality of noise is highly relevant. Even though statements related to music in relation to the reflexive construction of the self are less frequent (at least in adults), the references to the mediation of music reproduction, and the enhancement in the reach of the sound that this mediation allows, are always present in their account of the relations between noise and space in their current residence together with the frequency, proximity and clear source of sound. Noise invasion is an everyday reality for most of them.

As a large number of the residents of the housing estate spend most of their day there, the problems associated with loud music are frequent and recurrent in time. Noise usually comes from the surrounding flats due to the relative spatial proximity. It should be noted that the closeness means that the source of the noise is always evident. The complaints of the people interviewed are not usually about the 'generality' of the neighbours or any other general entity (such as 'the noisy buses' or 'the authorities'), but towards a clearly identified neighbour, with whom there are recurring problems with noise. This can be seen in the following account of Ruben, as in other extracts offered here.

"We had a problem with one of our neighbours, but it had a drastic solution: her stereo burned [laughs], it's not for being bad, but it burned, it burned, good! [laughs]. It was the only music that we listened to. Sometimes the music was good, but to hear 'andate al cerro, andate al cerro' [go to the hill, go to the hill] and then half an hour later 'andate al cerro, andate al cerro', and then five minutes later 'andate al cerro, andate al cerro' [laughs], the same music everyday day.. You could be in the toilet or in the kitchen and you would hear. It wasn't only me but here to the first floor everyone was annoyed. It was too much noise. It's good to listen, but to listen... we also sometimes put the music loud, but loud for here, not to annoy people outside. It's good loud, but with your door closed. If you turn the music up and open the door everything goes outside ... [the music from the neighbour] was very loud, sometimes at this hour was PA PA PA. If we are in we have to speak loud in order to hear each other. I think it's good that she listens to loud music,. I listen to loud music, but I close the doors, so nobody can hear from outside, but not her. She opened the door and everyone heard. It showed a lack of respect [for the others], 'I don't care, I'm in my house', of course you are in your house, once inside the front door(? Not sure what he is trying to get at), 'I'm in my house and I do what I want' but this is a lack of respect. She said 'I relax listening to music'. That's all right, but relax quietly. It's not necessary to listen, and to the same music so loud. She had one cassette. and one side finishes so she puts on the other side (Ruben, 36 years).

179

Many of the central elements of the conflictive relationship between aural and physical space are present in this statement from Ruben. The intensity of feelings generated by this situation is clear. Ruben, in general a quite reserved even shy, man, was genuinely happy about the misfortune of his neighbour with her stereo. For him the change in quality of life is significant since then and he naturally expresses it through joy and laughter. This situation shows us how noise is not only one problem among many, but a central one that has direct influence over the perceived well being of the family.

Noise also marks the intromission of others' temporal routines and rhythms into the intimate, a situation that forces people to confront it not only as a violation of their private space, but also as a violation of their private times. In this sense, noise is always constituted in time *and* space. Both dimensions cannot be dissociated if the practices related with noise production, and their resistance, are to be fully understood.

Another issue highlighted by Ruben is the argument in relation to noise and mutual respect among neighbours. As he clearly states, the problem is not limited to noise as such but reflects the permeable nature of physical space and the limits of private space. Given the non-material status of sound, sonic boundary construction is an operation much more complicated than that of material space. There is no pre-fixed aural limit of the household. These limits have to be established through the everyday sonic practices that involve living at home. At a time when media technologies are widely available and individual capability to enlarge the sonic limits of the household has been expanded, sonic boundary work becomes an everyday matter. In this context neighbours have to develop certain rules in relation to the 'correct' amount of sonic space available for each one of them.

As with Ruben this boundary setting among neighbours take the form of a normative behaviour in terms of the mutual 'respect' deserved by each neighbour. Echoing implicitly Rawls' first principle of justice[39] (Rawls 1999), the aural space of each neighbour is set, or delineated, ideally against the background of the aural spaces of each one of the close neighbours in such a way that it cannot be enlarged without reducing the aural space of one or some of them. This ideal model does not

[39] That states that "each person has an equal right to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic liberties which is compatible with a similar scheme of liberties for all" (Rawls, 1999).

sit well with the concrete sonic practices of each neighbour, as already demonstrated. This is because:

> "Music is not merely a 'meaningful' or 'communicative' medium. It does much more than convey signification through non-verbal means. At the level of daily life, music has power. It is implicated in every dimension of social agency ... Music may influence how people compose their bodies, how they conduct themselves, how they experience the passage of time, how they feel – in terms of energy and emotion – about themselves, about others, about situations. ... to be in control, then, to the soundtrack of social action is to provide a framework of the organization of social agency, a framework for how people perceive (consciously or unconsciously) potential avenues of conduct. This perception is often converted into conduct *per se*" (DeNora 2000:16-17).

Music has power. Not only in terms of the construction of a personality, but also in relation to society. As DeNora put it, the control over the soundtrack of social action is central to the composition of a framework for social practices. Among other elements, sound symbolizes power. To control sound is a way to enlarge individual and collective agency among a determinate social field.

Noise appears to be one of the ways in which some members of these families can enhance their power, their agency, over their social and physical environments. This is not like any other kind of power. The power implicated in noise in our case study can be seen as a moderated version of what Julian Henriques (2003) calls 'sonic dominance', a specific social situation,

> "When and where the sonic medium displaces the usual or normal dominance of the visual medium. With sonic dominance sound has the near monopoly of attention. The aural sensory modality becomes *the* sensory modality rather than one among the others of seeing, smelling, touching and tasting" (Henriques 2003:452).

In our case of study, the sensation has some similarities and differences with the sonic dominance studied in Henriques' own research[40]. It is similar in the sense that a certain kind of sonic dominance is exerted over physical space through music. Noise is used to appropriate space, to 'mark' out a personalized territory among the

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[40] Henriques developed this concept in his analysis of the social effects of the Jamaican reggae 'sound systems'. Sound system (like the ones that can be seen or, better, heard during Notting Hill's Carnival in London) is "the term given to large, heavily amplified mobile discos and their surrounding reggae culture" (Shuker 1998:282) in which "the sound that they generate has its own characteristics, particularly en emphasis on the reproduction of bass frequencies, its own aesthetics and a unique mode of consumption" (Gilroy 1997:342 quoted by Shuker 1998: 282). As a result of this combination sound "is both near over-load of sound and a super saturation of sound. You're lost inside it, submerged under it" (Henriques, 2003: 452). Through this practice a new kind of space is created, a sonic space, "a kind of space you are inside as well as outside and it is inside you as well as you being inside it" (ibid. 459) and that "helps to generate a specific particular sense of place rather than a general abstract idea of space" (ibid.).

strange spaces of the housing estate. As happened with the sound systems, loud music broadcast from a flat helps to transform space into place, a kind of aural place which is more transient than physical space but much more personal.

The individual character of the estate under study is different from the 'sound systems' studied by Henriques. Central to the 'sound system' is the communal character of the experience. Sound systems work as a kind of meeting place for a community of listeners and through the sonic dominance exerted by the reproduction of music aloud, they recreate their social ties. In some sense the reconfiguration of space allowed by sonic dominance goes in the direction of the temporal disappearance of spatial and also social boundaries among listeners. Under the dominance of sound they are all made equal as listeners and/or dancers.

In Tucapel Jimenez II, it is difficult to perceive anything in the sonic dominance exerted through noise related to community. And when deprived of its communal meanings sound becomes power, commonly exercised by one neighbour over the others. Noise is not the reconfiguration of an original, or communal, space, above all "noise had always been experienced as destruction, disorder, dirt, pollution, and aggression against the code-structuring messages" (Attali 1985:27). In this case noise represents the enlargement of personal space at the expense of the space of others in a process that can be seen as a 'mediatization' of violence. The violence over space is not exerted directly (e.g. occupying the physical space of some neighbour) but indirectly through the use of a mediation technology such as a stereo system.

Through the use of these technologies the idea is not to temporally erase the physical boundaries (in order to recreate the ideal communal space of the neighbourhood), but to create sonic boundaries not created naturally by the physical buildings. But in creating these boundaries, the neighbours do not respect the original, or spatial, boundaries of their flats. As many of them confirmed, they were accustomed to having more space. Then in their current situation, they use sound to try to redefine their space and to enlarge their agency over their new spatial environment.

The exertion of sonic violence is limited by the fact that neighbours will not accept the sonic reconfiguration of space proposed by the noisemaker. For them walls and doors, even though fragile and permeable, represent *the* only real boundary that

establishes the limits between each family's intimate environment. As a result of this, noise will always be seen as a violation of private space, as a problem to be dealt with in their everyday lives.

In this situation they have developed a different range of answers to noise. One of them is to be active and compete with noise, as Victor and Marta did.

> Sometimes they make a party and I don't say anything to them, what for? I also make noise in the morning. They know that when they make noise [at night] in the morning I wake up and I put on music when they are asleep. , There's no drama. With noise or without noise I sleep the same. When they put on music I listen to their music and when they don't have music I put on my music. I don't think that with dramas or going to 'pintar los monos' [complain] because they are listening to music, helps. 'Go ahead' I say. One more hour of music is meaningless. I sleep anyway and the children too, also my wife. I like to mind my own business. If they want to listen to music, if they want to kill themselves, but no, I like to live my own life. They can listen to music alone. I sleep anyway, there's no drama (Victor, 32 years).

Asking for the intervention of third parties with a different, and more concrete, kind of power is another.

> "Where I used to live ... I said 'hello' like any other people but nothing more. There wasn't more contact. This is my way of life to avoid problems, so it has been hard moving here, to this home, because along with the property you have to live with all the noise., It was so intense that I had to call the police, go to the Town Hall to complain because this woman put her stereo on its highest setting. It was on all day. My husband is on shifts [at work]; now he is on the morning shift, but next week he is on the night shift and this woman put her stereo at full blast all day. I do think that you can listen to music but there is a way to listen to it, in order not to affect others. You have to know how to respect your neighbours" (Marta, 31 years, emphasis added).

Both cases involve counter-practices in reaction to noise. In the case of Victor we can see the existence of a reply in the same terms, produce noise when their neighbours are asleep, starting a 'sonic' war against them. In the case of Marta the response is indirect and involved requesting the presence of police officers and going to complain to the Authority at Renca Town Hall.

In most of the cases the response to the noise is much more passive and involves two complementary perceptual processes: the misevaluation of the space of the housing unit and the socialization of the problem, allocating the source of it not in

183

relation to a particular neighbour, but to a general category, usually 'the people from the shantytown'.

> The flats are not ugly; they are beautiful. What is bad here is the people. They are common, from shantytowns. We are not used to that. We have a lot of problems with the people upstairs. Sometimes they put the music on loud. We have quite a big stereo so I can put the music up loud, but this is not the idea. We respect each other and then she put the music on loud and this is not the idea. We sent the police to her many times, but you cannot understand people like that. This is why I say that the flats are ok; the place is not ugly, but the people sometimes ... I don't say all of them, but the majority ... we have no contact with anybody. We have good neighbours, only 'gente bien' [decent people]. Only the one upstairs who's *bad inserted* here [laughs], but everything else is all right (Luis aged 41, emphasis added).

> Here is only people from shantytowns, it's not that I'm a discriminative person, but is people of *bad living*, they put *music very loud* sometimes, they are here and start to call screaming each other, as if they were in a farm and using bad words and things like that (Andrea aged 40, emphasis added).

Both Luis and Andrea see a strong connection between the noise and the kind of social environment in which they are living. Obviously, this perception does not assist in the development of any feeling of belonging to the neighbourhoods and in practical terms contribute, along with other factors, to the fact that the everyday lives of the families becomes increasingly atomized inside the limited space of the flat.

Conclusions

In a paper about the sonic nature of early modern European towns, David Garrioch (2003) developed the concept of 'acoustic communities' that emerge when

> "In an urban environment it created overlapping acoustic communities in the same way that visual landmarks and local interaction helped to define overlapping neighborhood communities. Those who belonged to a particular neighborhood recognized its sounds and responded in ways that outsiders did not. ... At other times, the familiar soundscape helped create a sense of belonging: it was part of the 'feel' of a particular city, town or neighborhood, a key component of people's sense of place" (Garrioch 2003:14).

Can we speak of the existence of such a community in our case of study? The inhabitants of the housing estate certainly recognize certain sounds as characteristic

of their social and urban environment like the music of their neighbours, the small truck selling gas and the dogs barking. It is unclear if this recognition contributes to any sense of belonging. On the contrary, for many of them to recognize these sounds is to acknowledge their presence in an environment to which they feel that they do not belong, at least in the emotional sense of the word.

Through this idea we can see how in contemporary music studies, especially in relation with the urban, "there has been a tendency to represent popular music as a redemptive and emancipatory force which opposes conservative and historically entrenched music discourses, but to deny or ignore its darker side" (Cloonan 2002:28). There is a widely held view that music, and music listening, are "universally a 'good thing'" (Cloonan 2002:28) in the research on music, technology and society being carried out until now, from the walkman users' 're-appropriation' of urban public spaces (Bull 2000) to the studies of the soundscapes of immigrant communities (Cohen 1995).

As seen here, music listening can have negative, or at least contradictory, impacts on the quality of life in a neighbourhood and the degree to which their inhabitants feel that they belong to it. In this sense, we can recognize a double meaning of music in the sense that "Its order simulates the social order, and its dissonances express marginalities" (Attali 1985:29). Music listening for some of the neighbours represents empowerment and a domestication of space. It represents for others an unwanted ingression into their intimate space and a direct contribution to the feeling of strangeness and alienation that pervades their everyday lives. The relation between mediated practices and the practical and emotional construction of 'local' localities such as neighbourhoods have to be analysed from a standpoint that does not start with assumptions about the 'constructive' or 'positive' social effects of any kind of practices.

But mediated practices can also have positive effects in the existence of a community. Even in a socially fragmented context like Tucapel Jimenez II there are exceptions where music can also contribute to the construction of community, or at least as an appropriation of space for some groups of it, as happened with Nicolas and his family.

Nicolas and his family are highly committed Evangelical Christians. He is a born-again Christian and a former alcoholic and drug addict. He believes that if God gave

185

him a second chance in life he has to return the favour by working as much as he can for Him, through involvement in public religious services and the other social activities of their church. During a normal weekend this work involves some use, and appropriation, of public space of the housing estate through the use of sound:

> We have a Christian meeting here in the Community Centre. God blesses us for that, as they lend us the centre. We pray first and then we invite the ressidents [of the housing estate] at 7:30. At around 8:00 p.m., we start our meeting going on until 10:00 or 10:30 at night. ... We bought this equipment for preaching on the street. The technology is important today, because you can cover more space. For example if I stand and preach 'a capela' [without amplification] maybe I will cover a small distance where I can be heard, but with this equipment you can reach 100% or 50% further than you can reach without it. This is important when we have big events, evangelistic events ... then I believe that the people of God, the people who preach the gospels, have taken advantage of technology. It is like a part of the Bible that says: 'the root of all evil is love of money', but this does not mean that you don't want money because if you know how to use it, it is welcome. If we know how to use technology it is always welcome (Nicolas, 39 years).

In this example the use of sound goes in the opposite direction, to the appropriation of space for community practices such as praying and singing. Even taking into consideration that these activities can also be considered annoying for other members of the neighbourhood, a point of view not expressed in the interviews, sonic practices here gives them the opportunity to transform the public space of the housing estate. Through sound they symbolically change the street, a space commonly associated with violence, drug abuse and other social malaises to a space of God, a space in which they can also inhabit as members of a certain community of believers, as Christians.

The connection between mediated practices and the construction of the 'local' places of the housing estate under study is much more complex and bi-directional than analysis centred only in the 'positive' or the 'negative' effects, could lead us to believe. We do need to analyze other spheres of time-space and the role that mediated practices has on them.

Chapter 9

The Immobile Mobile

Introduction

As seen in chapter 4, spatial immobility constitutes one of the main limits to a more extended use of urban space by the families under study. The relevance of this point is demonstrated by the fact that spatial immobility does not only mean that families and individuals do not move frequently. Above this immobility means that they are unable to participate in a social order in which constant mobility constitutes one of the main elements around which the social dynamic is structured. As Zygmunt Bauman-said, "immobility is not a realistic option in a world of permanent change" (Bauman 1998:12). In order to participate a certain degree of motility (Kaufmann 2002) is required, or the capacity to move if necessary. Being immobile is being left behind, and its negative consequences can be seen in the most banal aspects of everyday life to national figures on social exclusion and human development.

In this context is important to note that when we talk about mobility we are not limiting it to physical, or spatial mobility. Taking into consideration that even in the most networked societies a certain degree of physical mobility is always needed due to the existence of a "compulsion of proximity" (Boden 1994). Spatial mobility can be partially replaced by "virtual' or 'digital' mobility particularly today with the all pervasiveness of mobile communications technologies, such as mobiles telephones and laptop computers with wireless access to the Internet. The possibility of being virtually 'on the move' while standing still has been greatly increased to the degree that an growing number of social operations and processes that in the past required physical mobility, can now be done through communication devices without moving physically to another location.

In relation to our case study, the question arises as to what degree these families can alleviate their lack of physical mobility with virtual or communicational ones? As the relevant literature in the field has shown (Brown 2001; Katz 2003; Katz 2002b; Ling

2004) mobile phones are commonly used to overcome problems related to physical distance and the mobility of people engaged in a communicational process. Here mobile telephony appears to be the ideal tool for members of these families to enlarge their area of practices and construct and maintain localities outside the immediate space of their home and the housing estate. Mobile phones facilitate the engagement in practices with non-present others and the management of faraway networks that could potentially improve their levels of participation in society as a whole.

In the first section of this chapter we return to see what was the place occupied by telephones and mobile telephones in the life of these families prior to the move to the housing estate. In the second part of the chapter we study the two main practices related to the use of mobile phones by the families under study: extremely short calls and bleeping. We also see the physical mobility of the device outside the home environment. In the third section we will see how these practices affect the way these families use and perceive urban space. In the conclusion, we return to the main theme of social exclusion and technology use in everyday life.

1. The un-mediated past

All the interviewees could remember when the telephone arrived in their homes. Some of them remembered the arrival as something that happened long ago, being the telephone line bought by their parents or grand parents, Others remembered it as something quite recent, not new when they moved to the housing estate in 2002. The telephone was something that happened to their generation for almost all of them. Their parents and older relatives lived most of their lives without the routine presence of this technology. This was particularly true for families who used to live outside Santiago.

> It was another kind of routine; we almost didn't use the telephone; you visited. As my father worked as a travelling salesman in the eighth region [South Chile] he was continually visiting family, being present, and also frequently the family didn't have a telephone themselves. If someone had a telephone it was ... the same as having a car. Only people with money had telephones so they were different for that. Only rich people had telephones. Today everyone has a little car, everyone has a telephone (Pedro, 36 years)

This lack of access or even the absence of a need to use it, was also usual among families already living in the city. As a comparative analysis between the Chilean Census of 1992 and 2002 shows (Larranaga 2004:78), in 1992 the 20% of the population representing those with the lowest income have practically no access to landline and mobile telephones (0,1% and 0,0% respectively) while in 2002 the access to landline telephones and, especially, mobile phones had increased greatly to 4,9% and 29,8% respectively. As demonstrated in the interviews, the access to home telephony is relatively recent for all the families under study.

Here, again there is a difference between the people who came from shantytowns and those who came from other housing situations. In the case of people from shantytowns, their access to telephones was limited to the use of public telephones, commonly located outside their local area before the arrival of mobile phones:

> In the shantytown I had to go out and then call. I called my mother-in-law, but it wasn't every day, once a week, twice a week that I use the telephone. It was strange when I used the telephone and you need it ... before I didn't know anything, I was more isolated (Johanna, 45 years)

This shows that the use of telephone was quite low, being mostly limited to a regular weekly contact with some close relatives, such as the mother-in-law of Johanna, or in case of emergencies.

In the case of people who came from overcrowded houses and other housing situations their access to telephones at first was similar to that of the people from the shantytowns, using public telephones located in little shops nearby. But correlating with the general improvement in the livings conditions of the Chilean population in the nineties, they also started to have access to home telephony first in the form of landlines and then mobile telephones.

> Five years ago we put a telephone line into my mother's home and I talked to my mother – in-law, to my sisters, to my aunts. It was important because if someone got sick they could call us and we knew immediately, everything just with one phone call (Ines, 31 years).

> I was 17 when my parents bought a telephone for their house. At the beginning everyone was scared of it [laughs]. It rang and everyone ran to answer it. It was funny to begin with, a novelty, like a new toy. Everyone wanted to answer, but after some time, it was normal and you talked only when you had to talk (Paola, 32 years).

In these cases the use of telephone in their everyday lives becomes something relatively frequent and, as can be seen from Paola's perception, normalized. The device was rapidly domesticated and became part of the set of appliances commonly available in the home. This fast domestication was also related to the perception of the telephone as relatively unnecessary due to the spatial proximity of the members of their social networks.

> We used to have telephone in the house that we rented. I use it more now. When we had telephone in the house we never called anyone. We paid more for the service than for the calls that we made. We were reluctant to telephone because we saw each other regularly. Who were we going to call? We never called. It wasn't important, but now it is important (David, 33 years).

As David said, the perception of the telephone as unimportant changed in their new housing situation. With the distance from their social networks, the telephone appears much more valued. This perception made them acquire mobile phones, as the easiest way to replace their direct access to their social networks, especially taking into consideration the absence of landline services on the estate at the time the fieldwork was carried out.

> My mother-in-law used to have a landline telephone when we were living with her. Then we said 'when we leave the house [to the housing estate] how are we going to communicate?' We bought the mobile, because you can take it wherever you go ... [nowadays] it is the only form of direct communication with the family centre. Being the only way, it is important. Without telephone you feel isolated, as if you were on an island. When you live on an island without communication, the mobile is not a luxury but a necessity (Jonathan, 34 years).

While these families had mobile phones before the moving to the housing estate (especially the ones who came from shanty towns), the move itself radically changed the status of the handsets in their minds, from luxury to necessity. Now they not only represent a way to be in contact when they are, theoretically, 'on the move' but more centrally the mobile telephones seem to be the only reliable way through which they can have permanent access to their now distant localities of practices, especially the homes of their relatives.

2 'Practising' Mobile phones

When studying mobile phone use among low-income populations it is necessary to distinguish between two kinds of practices: talking *about* mobile phones and talking

190

through, or using in general, mobile telephones. They are deeply related to each other to the point that one cannot be understood without the other, but they differ in one central area, the fact that one of them involves the effective use of the device and the other not. This difference is key to really understanding the place that mobile telephones have in the life of the families under study and how they affect the constitution of their "localities of practices".

In the relation to the first practice of talking *about* mobile telephones, one of the most impressive features was how elaborate the discourse about mobile telephones was in the case under study. . Unlike other aspects of their lives, or other technologies, most of the interviewees had very clear ideas and views about mobile telephony and its theoretical usefulness in everyday life, a situation that confirms the perception of Katz and Aakhus (2002).

> "We see that there is a logic, or nascent philosophy about personal communication technology. It is both a logic that inform the judgments people make about the utility or value of the technologies in their environment, and a logic that informs the predictions scientists and technology producers might take about personal technologies" (Katz 2002a:305).

A point to keep in mind here is the fact that this logic is not a neutral one, but implies certain assumptions about the nature and use of mobile communication technologies especially "the idea that communication is the sharing of minds and that technology should make possible 'perpetual contact' that overcome time and space barriers" (Aakhus 2003:27). Katz and Aakhus (2002) labelled this logic as 'Apparatgeist', a socio-logic that is based on the idea of the social need of pure communication, or a state of perfect communication among the members of a society.

> Pure communication is the image deeply embedded in the logic of perpetual contact that underwrites how we judge, invent and use communication technologies. Like the image of perpetual motion that has driven the technological development of machinery over the past two millennia, the development of personal communication technology presupposes perpetual contact. (Katz 2002a:307)

This logic of perpetual contact and pure communication was commonly mentioned when the interviewees were asked to define why mobiles phones are important.

> It is necessary because if you go out, to the city centre, sometimes you don't know what could happen at home or if someone is looking for you, you have no way to know . With

the mobile they call you and tell you 'something happened' or you can call, if there is a need for communication (Valeria, 52 years).

[Q: What would happen if the mobile phone brokes down?]
Then we are damned; we go down; how are we going to communicate? It's impossible. It's like being dead, in the countryside without light nor water and without anything, [to be] without communication. Communication is the best thing, [the mobile phone] is like a computer that gives out information about ourselves, that informs all our relatives and friends. If it broke down we are like with empty hands, cero, nothing (Diego, 39 years).

[When] you are out in the countryside, walking up a hill [and] something happens, an accident, then one can communicate very fast. [One] does not have to descend to communicate. It is a waist of time, [without] the mobile. You take the mobile out of your bag, dial and communicate very fast. In an emergency, if one of the children is ill, or in an accident, it is very fast. (Jonathan, 34 years).

Studying the practices related to the use of mobile telephones shows that there is from the start, a significant distance between the theory and the actual use that the families under study make of their mobile telephones, a distance that is even recognized by them:

[Nowadays] I don't speak on the telephone because we do not have a [prepaid] card, but my mother calls me, sometimes. She's very bad to speak to on the telephone, especially on a mobile because it hurts her to spend her [prepaid] card. For example now she has been calling more often because my daughter is sick. She has called me three times this week, but if there's no reason she won't call me. Sometimes I have 100 pesos and I call her on a public phone, but this is once a week, no more (Paola aged 32)

"[We use mobile telephones] not for what they are, but because the mobile is the one that can be located wherever it is. For us the mobile is here, like a fixed line. It does not move from the house. We would use it otherwise. The mobile is here and if I want to call home, I know it will be always here, even if sometimes we all go out and forget it, and leave it here. One good thing about the mobile phone is that you can call anytime and if I'm out you will still contact me, but we don't use it this way. It is not like a mobile phone for us" (Cristian, 38 years).

As can be seen from these two quotations, there are two reason that go against the fulfilment of the ideal of pure communication in the case under study. In the first quotation the limitations related to the cost of the calls for low-income people. In the second different limitations are caused by the limited spatial mobility of the handsets. Both limitations will be analysed in depth in the next sections.

192

2.1. Short Signals

In relation with the first point, the system of payment used by most of the families is pre-paid cards. Each card cost between 3.000 (£3) and 5.000 (£5) pesos and the families under study tended to use one or two per month. It was not uncommon to find families whose expenditure was even less than this, just the minimum of one card every six months allowing the mobile to keep receiving calls[41]. There was always a quite limited amount of credit to make calls through their devices. With the exception of one family, all the interviewees advised that for them speaking through the mobile was an activity in which they were always constricted by their limited funds to make calls.

Sadly as it's pre-paid, I have to be conscious of the time passing. I have to speak very fast otherwise it would be too expensive. This mobile eats up the minutes too fast. The profits for them [the telephone companies] and the loss for us is like pure business in this sense. I'm always very conscious to just talk about the necessary and I can't take any liberties. ... This affects communication, because it is frivolous, too cold, 'Hello, how are you? That's good, bye!', too fast, too tough and as it's expensive so you are in a hurry. On the landline you can have the luxury of talking longer because it's cheaper. What I talk about on a normal telephone I have to talk for less than a half on the mobile (Rosa, 32 years)

Every time I talk I'm quite conscious of time because of the cost, every minute is expensive. I don't relax, even on the landline, there's always something that makes you hurry, seeing the cost. If I talk for 10 minutes I know that I'm paying 300 pesos per minute, that is 3000 pesos,. This is what I think, with the costs of everything we are in a hurry. As the cost of living is going up, we are in a hurry to speak on the phone. I have some minutes so I speak to my stepfather, 'Hello stepfather, how are you?' and that's it. With a clock, you have all the time here [he points to his head], you're controlling yourself, but it's difficult and then they say to you 'why are you this way? You're mean, you only give me one minute'. No, why we should talk [more]? We see each other every weekend, then knowing that he's all right is enough, that there's no problem (Diego, 39 years).

As can be seen by these two extracts, the first strategy to deal with this shortage of resources is simply to concentrate the information in the least amount of time possible. The consequence of this practice is the fact that, as identified by Diego, time for communication acquires a new meaning for the users of the device. There is

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[41] In Chile operates the system Calling Party Pays (CPP) that means that the mobile subscriber does not pay for incoming calls, just for the ones that he/she made.

an internalization of time as a scarce resource, shown by the gesture of Diego pointing to his head while talking about how he is conscious of time when talking on the mobile. Although this tendency to give a monetary value to time is one of the standpoints of the modern economy (Adam 1990; Nowotny 1994), this monetarization of communicative time is new for the families under study, especially in their relations with their networks of relatives and friends. As shown in chapter 3, these families used to live in close spatial proximity to their social networks, especially relatives. Given additionally their low levels of integration into the labour market and low educational enrolment meant that they spent a high proportion of their time at home, commonly with their relatives around them. In this situation the flow of communication between members of the network was rich and wide. With the move to the housing estate and the increasingly telephonically mediated nature of their relations with their networks, this situation changes radically. Now communication with relatives does not mean a constant interchange of messages among ever-present ones but the making of expensive phone calls to faraway places.

Along with extremely short calls, a second tactic developed by the families under study to keep down the costs related to mobile use, is known as 'beeping' (Donner 2005) or 'flashing' (Slater 2005). It consists of calling a known number, waiting for a few beeps, then hanging up and waiting for the receiver to call back.

> Sometimes [the communication] is just beeping, if he's working I only beep him in order for him to call me and call home on the mobile (Alicia, 40 years)

> With my father we always use [this system]. I call him, wait for two or three beeps and then I hang up and he said to me 'you are shameless, why don't you spend [money on telephone]?' 'No dad, because you're not going to give me back this money' [laughs]. I use it only to receive calls. I only use it in emergencies (Cristina, 42 years)

This practice, as Donner (2005) correctly identifies, is structured by a set of rules that the two people engaged in the communication have to follow. In first term, beeping usually means "call me back" (Donner 2005:6). In both examples, the end of the practice is to make the other party in the communication to return the beeping with a proper call, to establish a verbal communications. For this reason, you cannot beep to anyone. the people that you beep have to be someone of confidence, usually someone from your closest social network, such as your partner, as in the case of Alicia or your father, as in the case of Cristina. Beeping people from institutions or an

immediate superior is unacceptable, because beeping is always an unequal communicative arrangement. Only those who make the proper call spend money on the communication, this means that it involves a pre-arrangement between the two parties. In this sense, beeping has directionality and is not mutual. The differentiating factor between the beeper and the one that calls is the perceived income levels of the parties as Cristina explained.

This proximity of the parties involved in the beeping arrangement is also enforced by the fact that this practice, unlike text-messaging[42], "has no content; it rarely stands on its own without some contextual cues to back it up" (Donner 2005:10). The beep needs a previous common understanding, something that is difficult for people who are not close, in a context as here where regular connections with people outside extended family and friends circles are few. Beeping tends to remain located in the closest networks and seems to reinforce the connection with closest ones rather than the opening up of the network to new connections.

In summary:

> Flashing [or beeping] involves a clear and much discussed economic rationality, designed to win the fierce battle to keep a mobile in permanent operation. But this battle itself indicates the great importance attached to staying connected by mobile, and this importance – we would argue – is tied to the costs of maintaining, managing and expanding already existing social networks (Slater 2005:10).

Thus flashing or beeping, as happened with extremely short conversations, is a way developed by the members of the families to get around their limited access to their now faraway relatives and friends. Both practices allow them to maintain contact over distance with a frequency and speed that would be impossible using any other method of communication. In many cases this way of communication not only complements direct or face-to-face communication, but almost completely replaces it, as happened with relatives who live in other cities or at the other end of Santiago. Mobile telephones frequently constitute not only a tool for managing social networks, but also the vehicle permitting its existence.

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[42] One interesting point to make here is the almost inexistence of text messaging practices in the communicative practices of the individuals under study. Only in two people mentioned text messaging as something that they commonly made and most of the people not even mention the practice when they were asked about how they deal with the costs involved. There are many possible causes for this lack of use (literacy limitations, antiquity of the devices, etc.) but is interesting to note the difference with more developed societies, in which text messaging is by far the most popular option to avoid high expenses in using mobile telephones.

This movement away from face-to-face to 'mobile' mediated communication is not without cost. In practice this change of medium of communication means, as recognized by the interviewees, a loss of frequency and quality to their communication with their social networks. Contrary to the ideal of pure communication based on 'perpetual contact' (Katz 2002a), here the very limited use of the device means that communication becomes more strategically and explicitly goal-oriented. From a phenomenological standpoint, we can say that in the case under study here "the mobile functions to systematize the life world, 'replacing meanings with messages, consensus with instructions and insight with information'" (Myerson 2001:65 quoted in McGuigan 2005:55). Mobile telephones here mean, in comparison with the former situation, less content in the communications and overall a reduction in the frequency and variety of connections between the families under study and their non-present social networks. This has consequences for the way families inhabit their current "localities of practices", as we see in the next section of this chapter.

2.2. Limited mobility

In addition to the limits in terms of time use, analysis of the interviews reveals serious limitations in relation to the spatial mobility of the handsets. This immobility has diverse explanations. At the time of the interviews for a diversity of reasons including financial reasons, the newness of the houses, reluctance on the part of the telephone companies the flats on the housing estate had no access to a landline telephone service. Mobile telephones were the only communication technologies present in the homes and commonly there was only one apparatus in each one of them. For these families, mobile telephones are important and unique devices and so the object of constant care and attention, even strong affection in some cases. Their mobile phones were the only reliable and fast way to communicate with their non-present social networks and with emergency public services like police, ambulance and fire services.

In contrast to developed countries where mobile telephones are the ultimate personal technology (Ito 2005; Ling 2004), for the group of families under study their mobile phone was above all a family device common to all family members. Mobile telephones are central to the current dynamic of these families not only in terms of their connections with social networks and institutions, but also in terms of their own

personal and social recognition as city residents. In contemporary societies to be phone-less is becoming increasingly similar to being homeless. As happened to people without a permanent address (who, for example, do participate in the national census), not having a personal phone number to give out means a certain degree of exclusion in terms of access to public services, such as hospitals, and to the labour market.

Mobiles cannot move if the family, or at least its core, do not move with them. In the cases under study, without exception, the central node was the mother. Mothers were the key figure in family communications, as happened in other places such as South Africa (Skuse 2005:9). They receive and manage at first hand the entering communications from other close and faraway networks, along with the regulation of the communications inside the family between a father absent at work and the children. For this reason, mobile telephones and mothers are intrinsically united. They constitute an extension of the role of the woman outside the home environment, being their only connection to the world beyond the housing estate, at least during the working week. This situation is even acknowledged by their partners:

> For me the mobile phone is just for comfort, to look trendy. I don't know, but if we have a landline here I would cancel mine and just leave the one for my wife. [why?] Because she has all the numbers in it. She can see who is calling her and for any news or information they call her, not me (Leonardo aged 30).

The union between mothers and mobile telephones does not imply necessarily immobility. Considering the ideas of different researchers on mobile telephones and its effect on society (Brown 2001; Green 2002; Ling 2004; Ling 2001a) we conclude that family members, especially mothers in this case, can use the mobile phone to enhance their concrete mobility outside the home environment by using the technology to virtually be 'at home' in any place in the city. This idea can be potentially suggestive, especially in the case of the mothers and their children, or weekend outings involving the entire family.

In fact none of the family members interviewed saw that they had enlarged spatial mobility due to the possession and use of a mobile phone. In practice the family members, and obviously their mobiles, stay at home, as much as they used to:

197

> [Our mobile phone] is here in the house. It didn't move. It's as if it was here, fixed. ...It is
> the telephone of the house. The telephone does not move from here. We never move it
> about anyway, because we do not go out (Diego, 39 years).

This immobility responds to the fact that, on the one hand, the limitations from which spatial mobility depends, as described in chapter 4 including income, location, time, risk, lack of cars and disinterest, are not really affected by the availability of mobile technologies. The structural nature of some of these limitations means that they will hardly be affected by the availability of a technology such as mobile telephones, especially if this device cannot be used freely, as shown in the past section.

If we are looking for some effect of mobiles on mobility, these effects have to be seen on the other side, as mobile telephones pushing towards a replacement of spatial mobility both at micro and macro level. In the case of the micro-movements, the displacements inside the housing estate, the decrease of mobility is based on the fact that the possession of mobile telephones removes the need to go out of the flats to use available public telephones, reducing their contact with an environment that is perceived as potentially dangerous:

> Before [mobile telephones] communication was not so fast, so direct. Then you had to
> take time, for example if you did not have a telephone, the [public] telephone was to 2 or 3
> blocks away and I had to go there. It was a waste of time asgoing to call and coming
> back here takes at least 10 or 15 minutes. Not now, now you use the mobile phone. How
> much does it take? - 2 or 3 seconds to look for the number, to dial [the number] and
> already you are in communication with another person (Jonathan, 34 years).

On the other hand, the use of mobile telephones allows them to save some macro-movements, or moves outside the housing estate, especially in relation to the avoidance of trips that would have been unnecessary, through the communication and coordination with non-present peers:

> "[With mobile telephones] I do not have to go to all the places. For example, this morning
> a friend called me and it saved me a trip! [laughs]. I didn't go and I saved time, because if
> I would go there, I wouldn't have found her. It would have been a problem because going
> there and coming back [takes time], I would have got here late." (Johanna, 50 years).

> "Years ago, people had to mobilize themselves to find out how their loving ones were ...
> not any longer" (Marta, 31 years).

In the cases under study the level of mobility of the individuals appear mainly as dependent on variables that are not related directly to the possession or not of mobile technologies. This does not imply that this relationship cannot evolve in the future, especially if there is effective integration of these groups into an urban life that requires higher degrees of mobility. This situation can be observed in the case of Ramon, a taxi driver (a job that requires obvious constant mobility) whose mobile phone represents an advantage because,

> They can find me. To find me is to have me present the minute I am needed, that is what is important. That is to say my work is to go through many places, [but my family] do 'pum' and there I am, that is to say, if Maru [my wife] solves one problem 'listen, Ramon, you know, that things go well' or when things go wrong 'hear me, you know, you must come back to us (Ramon, 39 years).

At the present moment, being reachable while 'on the move' does not appear important.

> It is not so important [for me]. The people who use them and one who works with it, for them it is important. He has a job and he needs to have a telephone, so they locate him wherever they are. They need toknow where he is, [but] not for me. The telephone we bought is the telephone we leave here, in the house. [For me] it is not important to be on the mobile, to be [always] findable, no (Ruben, 36 years).

Mobility depends on much more complex circumstances and characteristics than the mere disposition of certain mobile technologies like mobile telephones. Then, the influences and effects that the use of devices have on it have to be set in a much bigger context that includes not only the aspects directly related to mobile use, but some of the main elements of the position of individuals in urban societies.

3. Mobile Phones and the Construction of 'Virtual' Localities of Practices

In the context of this thesis, the question that we want to ask after seeing the limitations that these families face in their daily use of mobile telephones is what are the relations between them and the use and perception of space by the same group and whether these practices constitute a certain 'locality of practices'. Unlike the usage of television and radio analyzed in chapters 7 and 8 respectively, the use of the technology is limited, not only in terms of time as they cannot speak freely but also in terms of space as they cannot move the handsets wherever they like).

In a situation like this, it is difficult to imagine that a certain 'locality of practices' is constituted through the practices related to the use of the technology, even in the case of a device such as the mobile phone that, from its very beginning, has been linked with changing perception and use of time and space. In one of the pioneering works on the social analysis of mobile telephones, J.P. Roos affirms in 1993 that:

> "Paradoxically, the most important aspect of the mobile telephone may be the ability to reach others with it and to be reachable anywhere, which implies both absolute mobility and the opposite of mobility! The owner of a mobile telephone may be highly mobile, but is always "at home", always "there", as long as he or she is with his PP [personal phones], thus making simultaneously possible a freely floating, highly mobile society and a very traditional, immobile social and spatial structure" (Roos 1993:2).

Five years later, and in the one of the first books explicitly devoted to the social impact of mobile communications, Timo Kopomaa affirms that:

> "As an instrument for maintaining contacts, the mobile phone can be viewed as a 'place' adjacent to yet outside of home and work place, a 'third place' in the definition of Ray Oldenburg (1989). Oldenburg defined his concept on terms of physical spaces, applying it to coffee-houses, shops and other meeting places. Also the mobile phone is, in its own way, a meeting place, a popular place for spending time, simultaneously a non-place, a centre without physical or geographical boundaries. The mobile phone offers a space where you can withdraw when you feel like it. In addition to small-talk and managing everyday chores, the mobile phone also provides an arena for more serious and intimate discussions which one may not have at home in the presence of the spouse, for example" (Kopomaa 2000:56).

The use of mobile telephones and the development of new kinds of spaces, or 'third places' in terms of Kopomaa are then intimately linked, or, in our terms, mobile telephones practices constitute new "localities of practices". As Nicola Green correctly states:

> "The connection between mobile space and time, as articulated in multiple, heterogeneous places and rhythms, is not constant and does not have equal effects for all. Access to and control of time and mobility are always shaped by the context of situated social practices, as collectively created and maintained by a number of different individuals and social groups" (Green 2002:291).

It should be noted that most of the early research on mobile telephones was based on users in developed countries, people for whom the free and continual use of the device became something almost taken for granted. Here, among low-income populations in developing countries the situation is quite different. When the use of the device is quite limited, the changes that its use introduces into everyday practices and the uses of time/space are also different. This fact shows us how "mediated communication takes place at a specific time and place, imbuing it with all the contingencies that it implies" (Aakhus 2003:40).

In order to understand the way social practices and localities change with the use of mobile phones we have to take into consideration the context that surrounds mobile telephone usage. As shown in Chapter 3, it is not difficult to see the changes in the housing of these families as steps in their progressive integration into a fully urbanized environment. This process commonly started with their arrival (or that of their parents) from rural environments or smaller cities than Santiago. In these situations, the connection between this process and the first uses of telephone is clear, as it has been widely noted (Fischer 1992; Kern 1998; Marvin 1988). We can affirm as Ithiel de Sola Pool said, "of all the telephone's effects, none is more dramatic than its impact on the ecology of the city and countryside" (De Sola Pool 1977:300), something that is clear even for some of the interviewees.

> "[I start using telephone] when I came to Santiago. In the south [of Chile] there was not that much because there was no need. Then there was no much progress., The telephone was limited to big cities, with more population. We were in a little town where we all know each other. If we needed something we ran, talked and returned. Also you were always there. You communicated [with the outside world] more through letters than the telephone, not now" (Jonathan, 34 years).

> "[Either] the mobile or the landline telephone is very important because with them we are all in communication; we are not isolated. It is a way to communicate, in an emergency, with family. Then we are very connected, especially me given that I have almost all my family outside Santiago. We speak constantly to know how we are doing. Even yesterday my mother called me from the south [of Chile] so we connected. It is not like before when we were completely isolated. It is fundamental to have a telephone. (Carlos, 30 years)

Following the statements made by Jonathan and Carlos, the connection between telephones and urban life is quite clear. But moving from the countryside to a city is not the only step in the process of urbanization. You can live in a city but not live an urban life. As we have seen throughout this thesis, the former living conditions of

these families, both in shantytowns and in overcrowded houses, resembled to a great degree the living conditions in communities in traditional societies rather than the kind of life associated with urban environments in contemporary societies. They lived as if on some sort of small and relatively isolated island in the middle of a far bigger urban environment of buildings and houses interconnected by permanent flows of people, objects and communications. In this situation the presence of the telephone in the household is not considered important as shown in the first section of this chapter.

The move to the housing estate represents a radical change to their way of life. For most of the families this is the first time that they are completely on their own, not only in terms of not having their relatives around in the neighbourhood, but also in the basic experience of living in a home only with their nuclear family. For many of them this has been a distressing experience, but for other this experience has been liberating and they see it as positive. Anyway, the management now of the spatial distance with their social networks becomes a central issue. In a situation of close spatial proximity "networks tend to be overlapping, comprehensive, and in that sense closed, whereas in cities they are nonoverlapping and open-ended" (Keller 1977:283), so communication has to be redefined to its new environment.

In all these processes the telephone has a central role because of what has been called its "centrifugal effect" (Wurtzel 1977:247). "As family and friends are scattered geographically by mobility and change, ready access by telephone is made to compensate for the loss of shared environs even while facilitating the dispersion" (ibid.). Telephone availability is at the same time a cause and a response to spatial mobility and distance among members of social networks; "the telephone, in other words, both gives and takes.away" (Wurtzel 1977:256).

In this situation, with the absence of landline services on the housing estate, communication using mobile telephones becomes central:

> [The mobile] gives us something good. I'm safe with it so what's better? I think that it is way to be closer with the family. I have them there. At last I call them and I know that they are there. I feel closer to them. When I'm talking with them it is as if I'm talking with you. The space is different. Sometimes it is like something you cannot imagine. It is so far from here and I can listen to my brother or sister, their same voices. It must be true and they call me from the south [of Chile]. My brother does not have one and when they call me here, it is like having them here (Diego, 39 years).

202

Maybe if we would have another way to communicate, if we lived closer, the mobile would be like a decoration or something not very useful, but it's useful. It's necessary. Through the mobile you know what is happening. With it you don't worry 'is he all right? Is he having trouble? Is my mother at home? How have things turned out?' With the mobile I have no need to be there in order to know (Ines, 31 years)

Thanks to the mobile I'm in contact with the rest of the world, because my mother now lives in Lo Barnechea [at the other end of Santiago], but thanks to the mobile I can find her and know how she is and if something is happening to her. [The mobile] shortens the spaces, the times, everything (Patricia, 30 years).

This centrality of telephone-mediated communication does not apply only to the case of their already existing social networksbut also in some cases to the reconstitution of a former social network lost due to the almost permanent outer mobility of its members, as happened with Cristina and her father.

"My father gave the mobile to me as a present because we spent years without communicating. I didn't know where he was living and he didn't know where I was living and then one day through television he knew that I suffered a fire, because 'Aquí en Vivo' ['Here Live', a television program] featured us because they were campaigning for burned children with COANIQUEM [a Chilean charity for burn victim children] and on there my father saw what happened to me, that my house burned down and my daughter died. He said to me 'the only thing that we have to do, take, I will give you this, in order for us to be more in touch. I will call you and you can call me later'. Since then we started to be in contact again using the mobile because he's always calling me, almost every day, sometimes every two days, but he's calling me constantly" (Cristina, 42 years).

As showed by these examples, taking into consideration the limited use and mobility of their devices, mobile telephones are central to the constitution of a new kind of locality that can be called "telephone space" (Backhaus 1997):

"In telephone space a modified we-relationship is constituted due to the bi-local nature of the connected primary environments. The telephone as an intersubjective tool of transcendence sets up a structure of environmental space whereby the primary zone of operation for one telephonist is the secondary zone of operation for the other telephonist and vice versa. This aspect of the modified we-relationship is constituted through the telephonic medium which connects the primary environments of the two conversants in this asymmetrical but interlocking fashion" (Backhaus 1997:216).

Telephone space is, above all, a space of connection between two, or more, non-present actors in a process of communication. From a practice perspective, it is a locality that links two or more different localities through communicative practices. As Backhaus noted, the main characteristics of this space is its non-geographically located character. Telephone space allows us to transcend the limits that space typically puts on communication, allowing us to connect two different localities in real time. This feature can be seen as the main spatial attribute of telephone communication, "their sole function is to support social communication at a distance, and their ability to collapse distance has made possible many spatial features of contemporary urban life" (Green 2002:283).

From a perceptual point of view, as seen in the interviews quoted above, telephone space generates a sensation of closeness-over-distance. Relatives and friends are not that faraway if you can reach them using the mobile telephone. They appear in the routine space of the housing estate as a source of potential communication. This characteristic is especially important in case of need or emergency, something that is especially valued by the interviewees with their constant sensation of insecurity in their new environment, as shown in chapter 4.

In addition 'telephone space' is also characterized by its transparency. Unless there is some specific technical problem like white noise or a text messages that don't arrive 'telephone space' remains invisible to the two or more engaged in the communication process. If you want to talk, you can talk, especially now with a mobile telephone, a device that people supposedly carry with them most of the time. With mobile telephones we reach a situation in which "speaking to someone on the telephone is so natural that we almost forget about the intervening medium (Meyrovitz 1985:109 quoted in Cooper 2001:20).

In the case under study this transparency of 'telephone space' is put into question. Telephone space is not a freely reachable space, nor a transparent medium to connect to absent others wherever they are, but a very visible limit to communication. Under conditions of very limited use and spatial immobility of the device, the technicity of the device, as the space in-between two communicants, becomes visible as a barrier to the free flow of information and communication, as a "software-sorted geography" (Graham 2004b) in which these families cannot move freely. Mobile telephone space is not neutral or invisible space, but a space in which these families

and individuals face limitations and exclusions as real as the ones they face in the urban space of Santiago.

Then in the everyday lives of these families "the "always connected" myth stands in sharp contrast here to factual or social inaccessibility (the routine or the standard) of possible communication partners" (De Gournay 2003:34). Mobile phone space is not the space of freedom that the marketing images and advertising would lead us to believe. It is a contested space, a space of inequalities and exclusions, as much as the physical space. Due to the limited practices in which they get involved in the "communicational' localities of mobile phone communication, the character of this space as a space of freedom, mobility or 'wherever-whenever' contact becomes a myth, being replaced by the reality of an unequal space where these families are present, but over which they have little control or autonomy. It is ironic how much of their immobility and exclusion in concrete urban space is replicated in the space of mobile phone communications. They are there, on the housing estate, with their mobile telephone numbers; but their capabilities for action appears very limited, and constrained with always waiting for someone to come (the public services, the weekly market) or call (the wealthy friend or relative, the boss).

Conclusions

We conclude from the analysis of the practices related to mobile phone use and its relations with space, is that their use of the mobile phone space resembles to some extent their use of urban space. As happened with the move to the housing estate, the arrival of the mobile phone handset brings a change in the way these families inhabit the city, in this case the 'communicational' urban space created by the constant flows of communication and information. At the same time the limitations that they face in the use of the device both in terms of time and space (mobility), greatly diminish the theoretically positive effect that this process could have in terms of their social participation and inclusion.

Their current situation in relation to mobile phone use can be described as a limited empowerment. On the one hand, the mobile phone helps them to reconstruct everyday space. The telephone allows them to connect across distance with their networks of friends and relatives. The space is reconstructed; even new networks are created and the urban space shrinks, becoming more manageable. Also the

ownership of a number makes them "appear" in the virtual urban space (as the possession of an address makes them appear in a concrete urban space). In contemporary society, a phone numbers symbolize inclusion just as the handsets symbolize modernity.

But the limited practice of using the handsets, that is commonly just 'receptive' rather than 'active', and the fact that it does not have a perceptible effect on spatial mobility affects the positive impacts of mobile telephone possession. Mobile telephones could enhance greatly the capabilities of people to contact and move; to manage urban space in a more personalized way, but if their use is as limited as seen here, most of these effects become a myth, part of an apparatgeist that is sold by advertising and marketing campaigns. Such images are "powerful forces shaping how new technologies are ultimately shaped and perceived" (Townsend 2001:67) but in our case study, they have little connection with concrete use of the device in everyday life. Mark Aakhus advised:

> Fundamental to contemporary understanding of technology and communication is the idea that technology is a means of "transport" to a "virtual place". This view draws attention to new possibilities, choices and consequences associated with ICTs; however, it draws attention away form the fact that people must work their uses of ICTs in their local, time-bound circumstances, no matter what their purpose may be in using ICT. (Aakhus 2003:38)

When mobile telephones are located within a social context of use, most of the attributes, summarised in the logic of "perpetual contact" (Katz 2002a) appear not to be related to availability and use of the device itself, but with the socio-economic, cultural and personal characteristics of each user. Mobile people and groups were spatially and virtually mobile before having mobile telephones and the same is true for people as those studied here, for whom immobility appears as a consequence of social exclusion, rather than due to availability or use of mobile technologies.

In this sense we can talk here of the existence of a digital immobility, along with the more traditional spatial one. This immobility is shown by the fact that these families are present in the 'digital' space of telecommunications, but the presence is passive, not active. It is passive in two senses: in the sense that the handsets do not move much and in the sense that they usually do not have money to make calls, so they just have to wait to be called and/or to be at home in order to speak. This immobility means that it is difficult for them to manage their participation in social networks at-a-

distance and to access services and institutions via telephone. In this situation they have developed certain strategies to deal with these problems, mainly short calls and beeping, but the relief obtained from them is only partial.

Today it is important to see how to integrate those groups into society in relation to the development of higher degrees or capabilities to move both physically and digitally. Mobility here is the effective ability to know and interact with faraway (or not present) places, peoples and ideas on an everyday basis, the ability to reach the physically unreachable, physically or virtually, if we want or need to. In this sense the integration of these groups have to deal not only with the concrete enhancement of their capacity to move physically and establish networks throughout the city, but also increase their capacity to effectively manage information and communication from not-present settings in order to improve their way of life.

In this context, the mobile phone which theoretically appeared as a central mechanism through which this excluded population could start mobilizing and participating more in a mobile social order, only reply (and in some cases amplifies) the exclusions and inequalities of the social context in which it is introduced. Elizabeth Shove pointed out:

> "It seems that those who are unable to exploit contemporary technologies, systems and infrastructures of mobility are at a greater social disadvantage in such a society than they would be in other more proximate, more collectively scheduled cultures. By implication, the fabric of a mobile, temporally fragmented society engenders inaccessibility, inequality and social exclusion" (Shove 2002:8).

Despite this, mobile communication technologies and their social study, still have much to say in the process of integration but there is a need to change focus in their study. We have to move on from the, very naïve, 'revolutionary' phase of the analysis. We cannot expect that the mere possession of the device will change everything, as Marjorie Ferguson said, "the deterministic assumption that communication technology almost unilaterally possesses the power to render time-space differences insignificant can by denied by an abundance of historical and psycho-social evidence, irrespective of any technology" (Ferguson 1989:153). In the context of new mobile technologies "the simple popular view that in the new media the traditional categories of place and time (...) have no relevance anymore [is erroneous]" (Van Dijk 1999:133).

In order to overcome these limitations, social research on mobility needs to take two further steps. In the first place, the general social research about time, space, and mobility is still extremely theoretical so cannot give a true account of the complexity and richness of the experience of mobility in everyday environments. In these areas, as Willis said, "too much of the knowledge produced has become more or less irrelevant to the nitty-gritty of how social actors experience and attempt to penetrate and shape their conditions of existence" (Willis 2002:29). This is because "the social sciences and humanities have a tendency to become self-referencing discourses, with theories related only to other theories in everlasting chains of the history of ideas rather than of the world" (ibid). This problem arises because "to date, sociologists have treated the transformation of time and space via information and communication technologies as a largely theoretical question (...) [t]hese theories make little or no reference to the empirically specific social practices through which time and space are framed and apprehended on an everyday basis" (Green 2002:123).

Secondly in the field of social theory related to the so-called 'information society' there is a great amount of elitism in almost all the analyses of everyday life (Stein 2001:43). From this point of view all the changes appear as 'revolutionary', but they do not take into consideration the social availability of these new technologies. In the beginning they are only affordable for an elite of wealthy consumers in developed countries for whom the apparatuses appear as 'revolutionary' devices. For the rest of the population, including low-income inhabitants of a developing society like Chile, the changes related to new technologies are lived out in a more evolutionary, rather than revolutionary way. They are mostly slow processes of social possession and domestication of technologies, that in some cases can take decades and include more than one generation. This can be true even for technologies of fast diffusion, such as mobile telephones.

So, in general we agree with the idea that:

> When we bring technologies into everyday life we need to modify our notion of both; perceiving everyday life to be not so stable and technology not so revolutionary. Like everyday life, technology should be understood as a pervasive feature of human societies. The introduction of technologies represent an occasion for change and may provide an input into the breaking of routines, but it may just as well be a force of stability and conservation (Lie 1996:3).

The only way in which we can develop a more accurate idea about the real consequences of mobile communications technologies at an everyday level is to move beyond the limitations of both kinds, and study empirically diverse fields of social practices through which we can understand the real value, meaning and use that people make of their mobile technologies in their everyday lives.

Conclusions

Machines for Living In

Introduction

In attempting to answer the question how people develop a sense of belonging to a place in contemporary society, Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst (Savage 2005) propose the existence of the term 'elective belonging' after studying the everyday lives of a group of 200 residents in an area of Manchester, England. The idea behind this concept is that "places are defined not as historical residues of the local, or simply as sites where one happens to live, but as sites chosen by particular social groups wishing to announce their identity" (p. 207). This is because,

> "Elective belonging involves people moving to a place and putting down roots. It evokes a distinctive form of temporality suspended between the 'glacial time' of long-term history, and the instantaneous time of present through the way that people identify a moment when they commit to a place. People feel they belong when they are able to biographically make sense of their decision to move to a particular place, and their sense of belonging is hence linked to this contingent tie between themselves and their surrounds ... Elective belonging is a way of dealing, at the personal level, with people's relative fixity in local routines of work, household relationships and leisure on the one hand, and the mobility of their cultural imaginations in the other" (p. 207-208).

In other words, 'elective belonging' seems to be a mechanism developed by individuals and families to give a particular sense of place to their local environment incorporating in it the influence of the growing mobility of people, objects and symbolic communications. Here the concepts of place are based, above all, on people's voluntary elections of certain localities above others, and the way they contribute to their development as individuals members of contemporary societies.

This model of belonging functions quite well in a situation, as the one studied by Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst, where people voluntarily choose to move to a

determined location to live. What happens when the election of the location to live is not voluntary, or at least not completely free? How do people belong, or develop a sense of place, in a place where they don't want to live? A negative answer would be that when people don't feel that they are free to live in a fixed location, their chances of developing a strong sense of belonging to it are quite low. On the other hand, a positive answer could be that a sense of attachment based on elective belonging will emerge with the passing of time, even in cases where at the very beginning the choice of place was not completely a matter of free election. Both answers are partially true in the case under study.

On the one hand, the fact that these families are living on this particular housing estate far away from the places where they used to live and from the places where the members of their social networks still live, is an important factor behind the lack of a proper sense of belonging identified during the months of fieldwork. On the other hand, the fact that they are living for the first time in their own homes which they chose to do in a housing estate like 'Villa Tucapel Jimenez II' contributes to the development of a sense of 'elective belonging' based not on the precise location of their homes but in the election of the way of life represented by life as a nuclear family in a self-owned flat located in a properly urbanized area in contrast to their former lives in shantytowns and/or in overcrowded housing.

There is however another possibility that fits our particular case study better. This concept is based on the idea that prior to the development of a certain 'elective belonging' there is a more basic or minimal form of belonging and its related sense of place. This sense of place is the one derived from the fact that we 'live' space through practices, practices that are always located within determinate time-space coordinates creating what we have called a 'locality of practices'. From this point of view localities appear as

"Acquiring their particularity not from some long-internalized history of sedimented character, but from the specific interactions and articulations of contemporary 'social relations, social processes, experiences and understandings' that come together in situations of co-presence" (Smith 2001:107 quoted in Massey 1994:21).

For these localities a sense of belonging is not based on a personal history of relations with a particular place but on the very basic fact that we develop our everyday practices in these specific spaces. For example the identification of a place

211

as a 'home' is not given by a personal history with a certain place; home is not "where the heart is", as the traditional phrase states, but first and foremost it is the place where certain practices are developed in a routine way[43]. This form of minimal belonging can be quite weak and is always "full of internal conflicts" (Massey 1994:155), but it is also the most basic strata from which all other forms of belonging, such as elective belonging, arise.

A concept of space based on the idea of "localities of practices" does not only show in a different way how we belong to a determinate place, but is also related to a whole new way to see how to use and perceive space in everyday life. Throughout this thesis the aim has been to describe and analyse this particular configuration of space and the role that communication technologies has on it through the study of the life of 20 low-income families, inhabitants of the city of Santiago, Chile. In the following sections of this conclusion we offer a summary of the findings and then a general interpretation of them in relation to the place that technology has in relation to them. Finally, we offer some suggestions for applications of the results to government policy and for further research.

1. Summary of the findings

This thesis started with one question: what is the role of communication technologies on people's perception and use of urban space? In order to answer it we divided it into two questions: how do people perceive and use urban space in everyday life? What is the role of the use of communication technologies on it?

In relation to the first question, as we saw in Chapter 1, most of the social theory related to the everyday conception of space has been based around the concept of 'place'. Traditionally place is more or less static in nature and gains its existence and identity through a history of recurrent relationships between a certain group of actors and a well-defined space and time. At the level of urban everyday life these meaningful places commonly take the form of homes located in neighbourhoods, a more or less organic form of socio-spatial organization that resembles a traditional community.

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[43] Here is important to take into consideration that the nature of these practices is quite diverse and they don't only refer to 'functional' aspects such as feeding or sleeping, but also to more psychological and affective areas, closer to the common understanding of home as "where the heart is", like chatting with friends and relatives or making love.

In recent years however an alternative model of place has been proposed based on the concept of mobility. The idea is that in contemporary society we cannot take static places as the main structuring principle of everyday spatial perception. This is because with the increase in the patterns of both spatial and 'virtual' mobility, people no longer live in self-contained places, but in a state of almost constant movement. Places have to be seen as mobile and transient, in a state of continual change to adapt to an always changing environment.

After briefly described the field work and the methods used in chapter 2, in the following two chapters we applied each model of place to our research case in order to see which one fitted better with the reality of everyday life of the families under study. In Chapter 3 we describe first the changes to the idea of home since the move of these families to the housing estate. We then analysed everyday life on the housing estate, especially in relation to the idea of the existence of a community. Finally we described the main urban changes that Chilean society and the city of Santiago have experienced in the last decade, with a special focus at the level of everyday life. The conclusion that we obtained from both analyses was that at both the macro and micro level it is difficult to perceive the existence of place in the traditional sense of the word, especially in terms of the relationships with the local areas when understood as neighbourhoods

We tested the other model in Chapter 4, using mobility and mobile places as the key structuring principle of quotidian space. After analysing the changes that both outer or long term and inner or everyday mobility of these families has suffered in recent years we reached the conclusion that, although their current levels of spatial mobility are higher than in the past, a model based on mobilities also does not allow us to fully understand the way these families perceive and use urban space because they are still very much 'fixed' in a certain limited number of localities.

Then in chapter 5 we proposed the concept of "localities of practices" as an alternative way to understand the way time-space is used in the everyday life of these families. This approach starts with the recognition of practices as the most basic unit of society, the starting point from which all our social construction of space arises. Practices never exist in a void, away from the realms of human existence. On the contrary, practices are always located; they always exist in determinate time and space. We called the meeting point of a practice and time-space a 'locality of practices', identifying it as the most basic unit of our perception and use of urban

space. The advantage of this concept is that it permits us to get around the distinction static/mobile that limits the applicability of the idea of place. Here the focus is not on the degree of mobility/immobility of actors, but on how every social practice constitutes space, and place, within its own existence.

A central point about social practices in contemporary society, discussed in Chapter 6, is how these practices are becoming increasingly mediated through the use of communication technologies. This mediation means not only that new practices have to be included among the set of routine practices that form our everyday life (seeing television, talking on the telephone), but also that, due to the nature of the medium, our relationship with both time and space changes. This last point is the one that we explored in the three following chapters in relation to three of the most common communication technologies: television, radio and mobile telephones.

Chapter 7 showed how the practice of locating the television inside the household changes how house spaces are perceived and used by their inhabitants. Television creates a new sense of space that is to some level incompatible with the traditional use of space in the household. Chapter 8 explored the use of noise generated by hi-fi equipment used at full volume, and how this practice allowed the inhabitants of the housing estate to redefine the spatial limits of their homes. They create using noise an aural territory that resembles little the 'physical' space of their homes, resulting in a reconfiguration of their limits of action and influence over the space of their neighbours.

Finally in Chapter 9 we saw how the practice of using mobile phone created a new perception of urban space, with distance becoming less important and social networks expanding throughout the city. At the same time the immobility of the members of these families in the communicational space created by the practice of talking on the telephone (due to limits of use and mobility) demonstrated and reinforced the limited social inclusion of these families.

2. Machines for living in

The first general conclusion that can be drawn, is that urban space perception is built in and through social practices. These practices increasingly involve the use of a determinate technology so social space is being, in the words of Nigel Thrift and Shaun French, "automatically created". "A whole set of appliances (which 'compute')

214

will, through a process of cultural absorption into practices, sink down from the representational into the non-representational world, so becoming a part of a taken-for-granted set of passions and skills" (Thrift 2002:318). These passions and skills, which form the backbone of our everyday lives, become mediated by technology in such a way that it is impossible to imagine one without the other. In contemporary society awareness of space and place, is increasingly being 'automatically created' when there is engagement in technology-related practices.

In the case of communication technologies this automatic creation of space developed a new character due to the dual nature of these devices as both physical objects (technologies) and media. The practices related to the use of ICTs, unlike the practices related to use of other home technologies, not only add a new practice to the set of practices that constitute our everyday localities (listening to radio, watching television), and in doing so changed the way these spaces are perceived and lived.

Media practices also entail a specific relation with time-space that is given by their capability to transcend both in terms of space (distance) and time (past-future). Along with changing the usage and perception of current localities of practices as demonstrated by television use and home space, media practices change the relationship with faraway locations and events as shown by the use of radio in relation to the housing estate and the use of mobile telephones in connection with urban landscape. In this sense we can say that through the use of media technologies a 'doubling' of space occurs between our current 'localities of practices' in which we are physically present and those that appear thanks to the mediation capabilities of the devices.

This doubling of space does not necessarily mean the establishment of a clear break between the non-mediated localities of everyday life and the localities that open-up with the use of media technologies. Use of media technologies did not necessarily establish a paramount reality over daily life against which current living conditions are compared, confronted and criticized. The role of this media space in everyday life was found to be much more ambiguous than an intuitive approach could lead us to believe. In some cases mediated space could provoke a transformation in the current configuration of space as in the case of hi-fi equipment use as noise. In other cases as in relation to use of mobile telephones the media space constituted through the availability and use of the device only replicated the living conditions of these families in a new socio-spatial environment like the one constituted by telephonic

215

communications. No general effect or operation was found to be always caused by the use of media technologies when introduced into everyday life. Every different technology and different social context will interact differently in concrete practices, and the consequences of such interaction will alter to varying degrees, sometimes greatly, sometimes almost imperceptibly from case to case.

In our specific context of study, and above all the specific interactions of different technologies and localities, there is one central dynamic to note, because it sets the scene for the place that communication technologies occupy in the lives of these 20 families. This dynamic is driven by the complementary nature and the mutual dependence that exists between the possession and use of communications technologies and the life in social housing estates as epitomes of the public understanding of a "modern everyday life" for low-income populations.

The relation between social housing and modern life has been widely noted. From its very beginning the aim of social housing policies was to improve the living conditions of poor families and individuals, to integrate them into a way of life in which residing in a proper home with all modern facilities appeared to be the norm, even something compulsory, for modern, meaning 'human', 'decent' or 'hygienic' life.

> The dwelling space of the modern (bourgeois) individual became constructed not only as
> a line separating the inside from the outside (a house), but also as the epitome, the spatial
> inscription of the idea of individual freedom, a place liberated from fear and anxiety, a
> place supposedly untouched by social, political and natural processes, a place enjoying
> an autonomous and independent existence: a *home* (Kaika 2004:266).

From this point of view social housing estates appear to be the way low income individuals could became full members of a city as owners of a home located in a fully urbanized environment in which the 'modern' nuclear family in contrast to the traditional extended one, can live together.

Media technologies also constitute one of the elements from which contemporary everyday life is made up. In relation to low-income populations with their limited spatial mobility, access to information and communication through the use of these devices appeared to be one of the main if not the only means to access faraway places. This access "provide the technological means by which an intrusion of distant events into everyday consciousness" becomes possible (Moores 2000:109), one of the main characteristics of everyday life in contemporary societies.

Although relations between social housing and media technologies with contemporary urban life have been widely studies, the connections between the three of them have not received much attention. This is particularly true in the field of Urban Studies and for research into the urban living conditions of low-income individuals. This is because, "since their inception, urban studies, policy and planning tended to neglect electronic means of communication due to their relative invisibility as compared with physical communications systems" such as transport or infrastructure (Graham 2004a:16). On the other hand, media and Communication Studies despite its theoretical recognition of the central role that cities and urban life play in the development and use of media technologies, has failed to develop a strong research agenda for the area, especially in relation to disadvantaged groups in/or developing societies.

In this thesis we found that when social space is analysed from a practice perspective there is a fundamental connection between the construction of the perception of urban space as an inhabitant of a social housing estate and the use of communication technologies. These 20 families create their space through both the practices involved in living in their current homes and the use of media technologies. We cannot separate one from the other easily. They create urban space and media space at the same time through the practices related to the use of media technologies and the practices associated with the current processes of adaptation to their new living environment. Television sets and homes, radio and neighbourhood, mobile telephones and city space, each one of the three examples analysed showed that comprehension of the nature and use of their new localities of practices is impossible without seeing how media space relates to each one of them.

The connection is not only given by the fact that media technologies are used inside the spaces of the housing estate, especially the homes. Above this, a practice perspective showed how both social housing estates and media technologies have a common nature as they are both, using Le Corbusier famous phrase, "machines for living in".

"If we eliminate from our hearts and minds all dead concepts in regard to the houses and look at the questions from a critical and objective point of view, we shall arrive at the "House-Machine," the mass-production house, healthy (and morally so too) and beautiful

217

in the same way that the working tools and instruments which accompany our existence are beautiful " (Le-Corbusier 1975:13).

Leaving aside the modernist assumptions behind this idea, the recognition of modern housing, especially the ones from social housing estates, as a technology, as a 'house machine' from the point of view of Le Corbusier is valuable. These 'house machines' are first and foremost the product of the application of a determinate technical knowledge and materials to a determinate space at a certain moment of time. The result is a machine filled with different technologies from the very simple ones, like the lock on the main door, to very complex ones, whose main purpose is to provide a dwelling in conjunction with other technologies, among them, media technologies. Houses, neighbourhoods and cities and the objects that fill them therefore constitute very specific arrangements of technological systems in which our everyday lives unfold.

Both media technologies and homes are technologies for living in. We "use" or "consume" our homes in the same way as we "dwell" in the space created by our use of radios, televisions and mobile phones handsets. We cannot separate houses from machines, even in the most primitive versions. At the very beginning of its development, as Carolyn Marvin has shown, "some of the most radical social transformations [related to the development and spread of communication technologies] appeared to be brewing not around people at a distance, but around those close to home" (Marvin 1988:67). In contemporary society, social housing is impossible without media technologies, because living on such an estate with all the changes in the way of life that it implies, requires the extensive and intensive use of media technologies, the domestication of the alien space by the construction of an intimate space in front of the screen, the speakerphone and the handset. As John Hartley recognized in the case of the television sets in working class homes in the United Kingdom:

"In 1935, a year before television's inaugural broadcast, the population [of the United Kingdom] was clearly short of decent housing in which to put a TV set. What was needed, before television could be invented as a domestic medium, was 'the home'. TV was a lounge-room medium, but many working people didn't have a lounge ... Mass housing was perfected, in suburbs and high rises, as the necessary precondition for television, which in turn became the advertising medium of choice for promoting the values of domesticity and the products and services by means of which that ideology could mostly be espoused (...). For TV to 'happen', the consumers had to be at home" (Hartley 1999:99)

For Hartley, television and social housing were two deeply related changes in the conditions of the British working class population in the mid-twentieth century, a connection, obviously in association with other socio-spatial changes, without which it is very difficult to understand how everyday life changed in the last century. Television, social housing and the values of domesticity needed each other. They are relatively alike and are mutually dependent because each one gives meaning to certain changes that allow the massive extension of the other.

This idea was confirmed by the research presented here. As we saw, these families were in the process of domesticating both homes and technologies in an interconnected way as a result of which both homes and technologies were reshaped and changed. When this research was conducted, separation of the analysis of the adaptation to the housing estate and that of the use of media technologies, would have significantly reduced the degree to which a description and analysis of the complex way in which these individuals inhabit their new environment, would have been possible.

It is important to see this process of change as one of progressive adaptation rather than revolution, a vision that tend to pervade research into the use of the so-called 'new media' in everyday life. The physical environment of these families is changing, and is changing fast, but the general condition of their everyday life, especially in relation to their still precarious integration into contemporary Chilean society, is changing at a much slower pace than the massive increase in the numbers of new social housing estates and broad access to new media technologies would lead us to believe.

The new localities of practices that we build through our mediated and non- mediated practices are not necessarily liberating, but frequently reflect the conflicts and contradictions of the social order from which they grow. Both media technologies and social housing have to be seen first and foremost as the imposition of certain rationality about how everyday life should be lived in contemporary society[44] rather than an opportunity for participation and social inclusion per se. The 'machines for

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[44] This fact It has been much less noted in the case of ICTs than in the one of social housing (for the later in the Latin American context see Funari 2002:23-45). A good example of the application of this principle to the field of ICTs is the current 'mi primer PC' [my first computer] campaign sponsored by the government of Chile and computers and software companies. See more at: http://www.presidencyofchile.cl/view/viewArticulo.asp?idArticulo=5170 and the counter movement "mi primer PC... pero de verdad" http://mppc.tardis.cl/textos.php?texto=letter_text

living in' produce an unprecedented 'normalization' of the everyday lives of these families as what these mass technologies of homes and media are "able to achieve is a standardization and classification of urban situations in ways that were formerly impossible" (Thrift 2002:326). Social inclusion and, in more general terms, higher human development can be achieved through the use of these machines, but they cannot be guaranteed automatically by the mere disposition of a proper home, more television sets, mobile phone handsets or hi-fi equipment.

3. Policy implications and further steps

The research presented here shows in an empirical way, the radical distinction between different fields of study of the relations between technology and society is misleading. From housing studies, passing through transport and media studies this study shows that a permanent connection exists between different fields of interactions between actors and machines. In reality all technologies communicate, all technologies transport, and above all, we all live in all our technologies. A progressive integration of the research agendas among the different sub-fields related to technology use in society is clearly required. This is especially true in the context of the analysis of social housing and its impact at the level of general urban dynamics and at that of everyday life.

If media technologies and homes are closely related 'machines for living in', there are certain policy implications that arise from the analysis of this particular housing estate showed here. In the first term, and more obviously, architects and urban planners have to find a way to deal with the problems caused by the use of media technologies in housing estates, especially the problem of noise. . As shown in Chapter 8, noise represents one of the main problems for these families in their everyday lives, contributing a great deal to deterioration in the quality of life in their new houses. The solutions could be to build the homes with better sound insulation systems, to find ways to regulate the amount of noise that can be made by each family or to develop educational programs about noise control for residents of housing estates. The development and application of an effective way to control environmental noise must be at the very centre of social housing policies.

Also, public policies applicable to the use of media technologies at home have to take into consideration the specific space in which these technologies will be located. As described in Chapter 7, communication technologies occupy a certain space in

the household, and this location changes the way this space is used and experienced. This is especially relevant to the case of the home computer and the policies related to its introduction on a massive scale into lower income households as a way to reduce the 'digital divide' that affects contemporary societies, particularly in the developing world.

For example, in the case under study, the few families who owned a computer struggled to find a proper place for it due to the limited availability of space in their homes. Some of them put it in the parents' bedroom, creating a new locality of practices that frequently clashed with the traditional uses of this space as happened with television set. But more commonly after being temporarily placed in the living room as a prestigious commodity to be shown to visitors, the computer tended to be relegated to a cupboard or any other storage place, as it can be seen in pictures 18 and 19, so was not used normally.

These examples show us that, for the computer to be really domesticated into the household they have to find a proper spatial location for it. Then it is not enough for policy makers to develop policies for cheap access to personal computers (as the Chilean government is currently doing in the campaign 'mi primer PC' [my first PC]) but also to offer a technology that will fit properly into the current space of the population. A desktop computer (the main option under the government's current policy) is not the solution[45] for residents of a social housing estate as they are permanently short of space.

Third, easy access to telephone services has to be considered as a basic provision like the other traditional house facilities such as electricity, sewage and tap water. Telephone access constitutes a basic feature in contemporary urban life. In the context of housing estates, as seen in Chapter 9, telephone usage is not only about communication, but most importantly about contact with a very diverse mixture of faraway social networks, without whom proper participation in urban life seem to be almost impossible.

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[45] In this sense a policy like Nicholas Negroponte's '$100 laptop' appears to be much more realistic in the context of urban low income housing (more information on http://laptop.media.mit.edu/).

Pictures 21 and 22, location of the computer in two houses
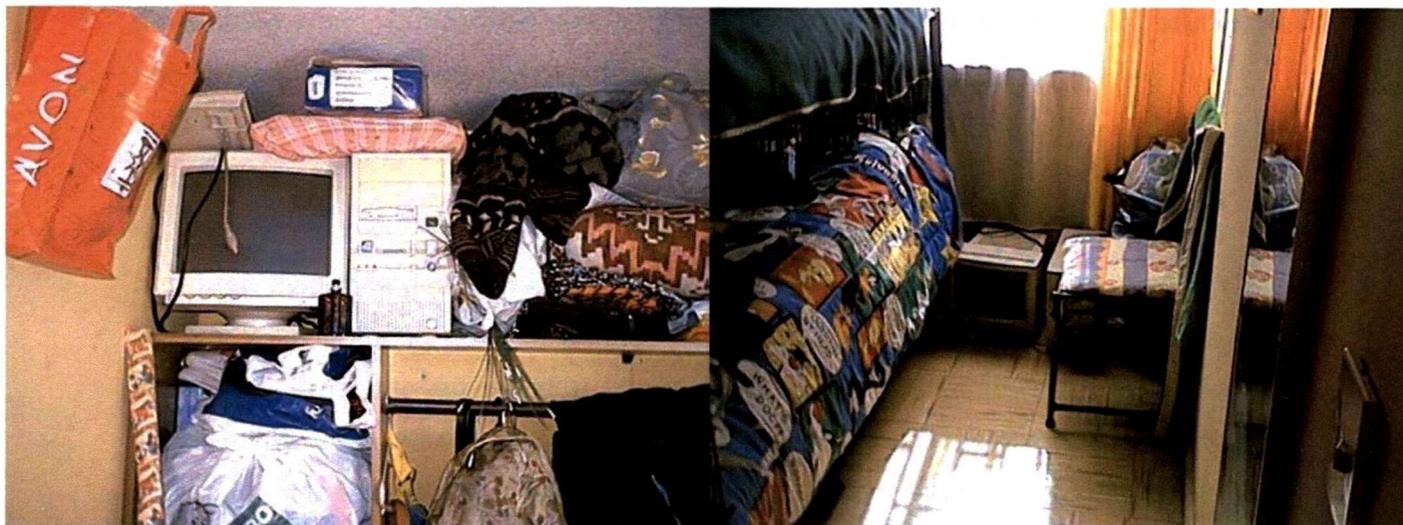
Taking into consideration the financial limits for using mobile telephones by low income individuals due to the high cost of calls, the provision of a landline telephone in each home on a housing estate if desired, is essential. This is the only way to allow low-income groups easy and fast access to the communication networks needed to be a proper member of contemporary society unless the prices of mobile phone calls are slashed or the a subsidy is developed by the government. Also the availability of landline telephone could liberate mobile telephones from their attachment to the home, permitting their use as proper mobile devices.

These three proposals are examples of potential policy applications that could have an approach based on the perception of continuity between the analysis of the relation between life on social housing estates and the use of communication technologies. In other social contexts the potential applications of this approach will be different, but the principle will remain the same: that housing and media technologies are intimately related and that we cannot expect to fully affect one of them without taking into consideration the other.

This last point raises a final question from this thesis. Is the model proposed here applicable to other social realities or is just this particular group of people at this moment of time in their lives? There are obviously some features of our case study that will be difficult to find elsewhere, making the analysis difficult to apply point by point to any other social context. On the other hand, apart from the unique peculiarities, this thesis deals also with universal problems related to a condition of precarious social inclusion, especially in relation to the life on social housing estates

and the use of media technologies. In this sense an important part of the analysis and conclusions are probably applicable to other similar areas, especially in the developing world, but further research and comparison with other similar studies is needed in order to probe this hypothesis.

Final Remarks

From the evidence described here we could have developed the perception that the everyday life of these families is worse now in comparison to five or ten years ago. They now live quite an isolated life in an urban environment that many of them perceive as alien and potentially threatening, commonly distant from their former places of residence and, even more important, from their social networks. They cannot access, in the case of the car, or use freely, in the case of mobile telephones, the key technologies that could permit them to bridge the spatial distance between them with the result that contact has greatly diminished and, in some cases, stopped completely.

This perception is very one sided. As we saw in chapter two, the living conditions of low income population in Chile are now far better than previously. This is a result not only of the constant growth of the Chilean economy in the last fifteen years, but also as a reaction to the improved approach of public policies in relation to these groups, especially in terms of access to social housing. Along with this the wage increases and the relative decrease in the price of communication and transport technologies has allowed access to technological commodities like mobile telephones and, increasingly, cars on a massive scale. These were rarely present before among this population. All these improvements coexist with a situation in which the persistent inequality in the distribution of income (Contreras 2003) and the disappearance of traditional ways of being without being already replaced by equivalent alternative models (PNUD 2002) appear as limits to a greater increase in the well-being of these families and individuals. Taking into consideration all these problems, it is difficult to deny that the everyday life for them is now better than it used to be ten or fifteen years ago.

This thesis describes not a situation of crisis, but a still unfinished adaptation to a new, and more complex, kind of urban everyday life. This adaptation is not only to a new urban environment like the one of a social housing estate, but is the adaptation to a new kind of life in which the models, values and ideas that used to guide

behaviour lose some of their validity.. They are contested and have to be discarded or reformulated. All these changes and conflicts are shown in their changing perceptions and use of space. As seen here, the definitions about 'lived' space are not formal or fixed concepts, but the result of active processes of contrast and struggle between different models of behaviour and ways of perceiving and evaluating a material and social environment. Places are not created by architects and urban planners, but by common people engaged in their everyday practices.

Media technologies have a key role in all these processes. Against a background of low capabilities to change material surroundings and limited spatial mobility, the creation of a mediated space appears to be one of the main forms in which the members of these families could appropriate their new surrounding and, in doing so, start to adapt to their new conditions of life. This mediated adaptation is not without problems and conflicts (as seen in chapter 8) but in general appear as one of the main ways in which these families can build their own 'localities of practices'. The final result of all these processes is still uncertain, but it is difficult to imagine any future in which media technologies could be ignored in the construction of our perception and use of space. For better or worse our everyday lives are now intimately united with a set of different technologies - from houses to mobile telephone handsets, from cars to television sets - that have to be seen not only as passive tools, to be used by human actors, but as central and active components in the construction of the social world.

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Annexes

Annex 1. Families under study[46]

Here we describe briefly the main characteristics of each family group under study focussing on:

- Characteristics of the members (number, age, gender, etc.)
- Education[47] and work of the parents
- Religion and other relevant characteristics
- Former place of residence

Family 1

The family group is formed by the parents Pedro (36) and Carla (31) who have three children: Abraham [12], Ruth [11] and Bernabe [10]. In terms of formal education the father completed only basic education (less than 8 years) and the mother had an incomplete secondary education (less than 12 years). The father has a temporary job as a carpenter on a farm near the Housing Estate' and the mother works as an assistant chef in a supermarket in the Borough of La Florida. They are both quite religious being Evangelical Christians and, especially the father, committed to the community organization. They came from a 'campamento' (shanty town) located in Renca, from which they moved in June 2002.

Family 2

The family group is made up of Jonathan (34) and Rosa (34) and their three children: Javier [11], Nayaret [10] and Elias [4]). Both parents finished secondary education (12 years) and the father does makes carpets in a factory in the Borough of Quinta Normal. The mother does not work. They are both religious Evangelical Christians. They used to live with the mother of Rosa in Recoleta, in a situation of 'hacinamiento' (overcrowding) and they moved into the Housing Estate in June 2002.

Family 3

The family is headed by a single mother, Pepa [36] who stated that she was married but her husband does not live with her at the time of the interviews. She has four

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[46] All the names has been change in order to protect the anonymity of the members of the families under study.
[47] I did not include the main activity of the siblings because they were all engaged in full-time education, with the exception of the few over 18.

children, but only three: Carolina [14], Roberto [11] and Alan [2]) lived with her when she was interviewed. She did not finish basic education (8 years) and at the time of the study she had two jobs, one in the daytime in a factory near her home and one in the evening in a clothes repair shop, in the centre of Santiago. She believes in God, but does not practice any religion. She used to rent a room in a house in Gran Avenida, in a situation of extreme 'hacinamiento' (overcrowding) and they moved into the Housing Estate in June 2002Housing Estate.

Family 4

The members of the family are the parents Ramon [39] and Alejandra [36] and their four children: Tebaldo [11], Javiera [10], Angelo [7] and Carla [6]). Both parents finished their secondary education (12 years) and the mother did one year of technical education as an accountant, but she is not working at the moment although she is planning to start looking for a job shortly.. The father works as a taxi driver, but he is planning to look for a different job a soon as his wife finds one. They are both non-practicing Catholics.. They used to rent a small flat in Recoleta, in a situation of some 'hacinamiento' (overcrowding) and they moved into the Housing Estate in June 2002

Family 5

The family is composed of parents Cristian [38] and Andrea [40] and their four children: Marco [20] and Paula [17] from Cristian's first marriage and Mauricio [12] and Sebastian [10] from his marriage with Andrea. Cristian has completed secondary education (12 years) and works as a receptionist on a military housing state in the city centre. Andrea only completed basic education (8 years) and at this moment she works as a seamstress in a factory in Estacion Central. Marco also has a part time job in a supermarket in Estacion Central. They are non-practicing Catholics. They used to rent a small house in Renca, in a situation of some 'hacinamiento' (overcrowding) and they arrive to the 'Housing Estate' in June 2002.

Family 6

The members of the family are the parents Catalina [42] and Diego [39] and their son Juan [8]. Catalina has three more children that didn't live with her when the interviews were done. Catalina has incomplete secondary education. She is a

housewife and an active member of the Executive Committee of the Neighbours' Association. Diego, on the other hand, also has incomplete secondary education and works as a mechanic in a garage in the borough of Estacion Central. They are both very committed Catholics. They came from a 'campamento' (shanty town) located in Renca, from which they moved into the Housing Estate in June 2002.

Family 7

The family is made up of parents Isabel [25] and Carlos [26] and three children: Miguel [8] from Isabel's first relationship and Catalina [3] and Daniel [1] from her present relationship with Carlos. Carlos finished basic schooling (8 years) and he works in a ?warehousing complexstorage park? in Quilicura. Isabel almost has no formal education (just 4 years) and her only activity is being a housewife; specially taking care of their small children. They declare that they are Catholic but do not practice. They came from a 'campamento' (shanty town) located in Renca, from which they moved in June 2002 into the Housing Estate.

Family 8

The family group is headed by Valeria [52] who is divorced and lives with her four grandchildren: Nelson [18], Daisy [16], Robinson [13] and Nayaret [12]), children of her only daughter, who lives downstairs in the same building. In terms of formal education she only finished primary school (8 years). At this moment her main activity is being a house owner, but she also works informally as a hairdresser in her home and has a little cart, which she puts on the street from which she sells fried pastries at the weekend. She believes in God, but does not practice any religion. She, ,her daughter and grandsons came from a 'campamento' (shanty town) located in Renca, from which they moved in June 2002 into the Housing Estate.

Family 9

The family is composed of Johanna [50] and Victor [45], who live with three of the four children of Johanna: (Rosa [22] Jonathan [15] and Catherine [11]). Johanna finished primary school (8 years) and at the moment she is a housewife. She used to have an informal mini-market in her home. Victor did not finish primary school and works as a groom in the stables in the Borough of Recoleta. Johanna declares herself to be an evangelical Christian, but does not practice. They used to live in a

'campamento' (shanty town) in Renca, from which they moved in June 2002 into the Housing Estate.

Family 10

The family is made up of Leonardo [30] and Jessica [30] and their children Janina [12] and William [1]. Both parents finished secondary education and Leonardo works as an book keeper in a plastic factory in the borough of Quilicura while Jessica is devoted to taking care of their children. They declare themselves to be non-practicing evangelical Christians. They used to live in a 'campamento' (shanty town) located in Renca, from which they moved in June 2002 into the Housing Estate.

Family 11

The family is formed by Mariela [45], her partner Ricardo [30] and her children Jeanette [22] and Luis Manuel [17]. In terms of formal education, Mariela finished secondary school and at the time of the interview she works as a nanny in a house in the borough of Ñuñoa. Her partner, Ricardo, also finished secondary school and at the time of the interview he worked as an assistant in a furniture store. Mariela is a very committed Catholic. They used to live in a 'campamento' (shanty town) located in the borough of Pudahuel, from which they moved into the Housing Estate in June 2002.

Family 12

The family is made up of Paola [32], Carlos [30] and their children: Franco [10], Bastian [8] and Isidora [2]. In terms of formal education, both parents finished secondary school and when the interviews were done Carlos was unemployed although he found a job a couple of weeks later and Paola was a housewife. They are both Mormons and participate actively in their local church. Carlos is also the president of the local neighbours association. They used to rent a small flat in the borough Pudahuel, in a situation of some 'hacinamiento' (overcrowding) and they arrive to the Housing Estate in June 2002.

Family 13

The family members are Cristina [42], who is divorced, her daughter Jamilet [26], two of Cristina's grandchildren, Juan [4] and Rosalia [1], and a friend of them, Jaime [26]. Cristina only finished basic school (8 years) and at the time of the interview she was formally unemployed, although she is always doing various odd jobs. She is a Catholic, but not a practising one. They used to live in a 'campamento' (shanty town) located in Renca, from which they moved in June 2002 into the Housing Estate.

Family 14

The family members are Cristobal [24], his partner Paloma [24] and their two daughters Javiera [4] and Cristina [one month]. In terms of formal education, Paloma finished primary school (8 years) and she is primarily a housewife. Cristobal finished secondary school [12] and works in different weekly markets in the Borough of Pudahuel. They are both Catholics, but not practising ones. They used to live in a 'campamento' (shanty town) located in the borough of Pudahuel, from which they moved in June 2002 into the Housing Estate.

Family 15

The family members are Allan [48], his spouse Edith [49] and their son Francisco [12]. Allan is a taxi driver who, like Edith, did not finish secondary school (12 years). They both declare themselves to be non-practising Catholics. They used to live with the mother of Edith in San Bernardo, in a situation of considerable 'hacinamiento' (overcrowding) and they moved into the Housing Estate in August 2002.

Family 16

The family group made up of Alicia [40] and David [33] and their three children: Cay [14], Guillermo [11] and Nathalie [4]. Alicia finished secondary school and now she works as a secretary in the town hall of the borough of Lo Prado. David did not finish secondary education and when interviewed, he was working as an administrator in a bus company in the borough of Estacion Central. They are Christians, but they do not actively participate in their local church. They used to rent a flat in the borough of Lo Prado before they moved into the Housing Estate, in August 2002.

Family 17

The family is formed by Victor [32] and Ines [30] and their three children Juan [14], Marion [11] and Luis [7]. Both Victor and Ines did not finish secondary school. When interviewed Victor was working as a chef in a sandwich bar in the Borough of Estacion Central and Ines is a housewife. They are both Evangelicals and highly committed to their local church. They used to live in a 'campamento' (shanty town) in La Pintana, from which they moved in June 2002 into the Housing Estate.

Family 18

The family members are Nicolas [39], his wife Teresa [36] and their five children: Natalie [16], Emanuel [14], Maria Jose [12], Efrain [6] and Ruth [2]. In terms of formal education, Nicolas finished secondary education while Teresa did not finished primary school. At the time of the interview Nicolas was working as the manager of a ?warehouse in Quilicura and Teresa is a housewife. They are both Evangelicals and highly committed to their local church. They used to live with a relative of Nicolas in La Granja, in a situation of serious 'hacinamiento' (overcrowding) and they moved into the Housing Estate in June 2002.

Family 19

The family is made up of Ruben (36), his wife Patricia (30) and their five children, Jamilette [12], Jean [10], Brenda [9], Mirko [6] y Maruzzella [4 months]. Neither Ruben or Patricia finished secondary schooling (12 years) and when interviewed he worked as an assistant in a supermarket in the neighbouring Borough of Independencia and she is a housewife, although highly committed to the work of community and neighbours' associations. They are practising Catholics. They used to live with the mother of Ruben in the borough of Conchali, in a situation of serious 'hacinamiento' (overcrowding) and they moved to the Housing Estate in August 2002.

Family 20

The family is composed of Marta [31], her husband Luis [41] and their two children: Nicole Catherine [12] and Andres Steven [11]. While Marta finished her secondary Education (12 years), Luis did not. At the time of the interview Marta devoted most of her time to taking care of their son Andres, while Luis worked as a crane operator in

a factory in San Bernardo. They are both committed Catholics. They used to live with the parents of Marta in the same borough, in a situation of some 'hacinamiento' (overcrowding) and they moved into the Housing Estate in November 2002.