

## **Struggles for the right to the city: assembling politics on the streets of Barcelona**

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# Struggles for the right to the city: assembling politics on the streets of Barcelona

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# Declaration

I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own

Signed,

Francesco Salvini

# Abstract

In recent years, the 'right to the city' has emerged as a key concept and practice amongst both academics and social movements around which to organise a response to the crisis of Fordist production and political representation. In Spain this response has taken to the streets, with millions of people coming together and shouting 'They don't represent us!'.

As a key site of both neoliberal urban governance and political insurgency, Barcelona provides a powerful site through which to examine the relationships between urban social movements, urban governance and struggles around the right to the city. In this thesis I build a (partial and provisional) genealogy of the right to the city, examining the relevance of those struggles that have emerged inside and against neoliberal governmentality since the early 1980s in an effort to assemble the right to the city through the material combination of struggles around urban production and citizenship rights.

To do this, I return to the relation between genesis and management as an uneven dialectic in the production of rights; drawing on and building new connections between post-colonial studies, autonomous marxist debates, critical studies of citizenship and urban studies to investigate how strangers, outsiders and the governed challenge European capitalism from inside and assert a different imagination of contemporary urban life.

I also explore my own role in these dynamics. In contrast to an understanding of academic knowledge as analytical and objective representation, my position as both a militant and a researcher provides the ground upon which I analyse social movements as a factory of concepts and practices capable of assembling an instituent politics against neoliberal governmentality.

but look I told him I don't know why but I sounded annoyed but you know I really can't stand any more I really mean it that we're still stuck here with this bullshit still with this bullshit about winning or losing and it seems to me that it's always really been our big misfortune that every time we've thought the thing that mattered was basically just winning or losing when instead the things we've really done have never had anything to do with winning or losing it's clear that here we've already lost everything and not just in the last five minutes but the fact is that I think and a lot like me think so too that deep down we've never had not only have we never had any notion or desire to win but not even any notion that there was anything to be won anywhere and then you know if I really think about it now to me the word winning seems exactly like dying

Nanni Balestrini, *The Unseen* (2012)

For me when there is no connection between life and politics, well, there is no politics. I mean for my experience, and from my point of view, for me voting is not politics. Politics is all the people that make it possible; those who sets up the tables for voting, who are forced to go and vote, who register themselves to vote. And this is what was at stake in the meetings of those years. In the direct action you would organise the process to organise the direct action, something that was not visible. The visible thing was the demo, the action. But what is behind is what is generating an experience of otherness, and therefore politics is not longer a merely personal question. The issue is how to make this last. This is what I don't know. We were not capable of finding a collective space beyond the activist spaces. How to build a collective space in everyday life, how to live collectively everyday. This is what we were not capable of doing.

Interview with Nuria Vila, 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 2011



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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

*'No nos representan'* ('They don't represent us!') has been shouted by hundreds of thousands of people on the streets of Barcelona since the mass demonstrations of the 15th of May 2011 (henceforth referred to as the 15M mobilisations). However, this phrase may be translated as 'Nobody represents us' since it refers to the impossibility of representing the population in the institutional politics of the culture of the democratic transition in Spain. This enunciation has been the core not only of the Spanish movements since 2011, but of the uprisings all over the world in the last few years.

This thesis is immersed in that context. It is an attempt to talk to, and in between, these struggles, understanding them both as a social insurgency for emancipation and as a collective attempt to escape the contemporary global crisis of neoliberalism. This means engaging with social insurgencies not only as affirmative forms of social mobilisation, but also as gestures of transformation that affect the insurgent social body itself.

For this reason, I have tried to build just one of the multiple genealogies that can help us to situate and comprehend a collection of fragmented and diverse pasts in the continuous forging of contemporary struggles. The challenge is that of inhabiting the tension between form and gesture as a concrete point where struggles are generated. The attention moves from the analysis of forms to the incarnated investigation of the modes of production of social practices and concepts, since these mobilisations do not only aim to produce social change in the future, but proliferate by permanently changing themselves.

Everything started by taking the square, repeating this egyptian gesture of Tahrir of which we didn't know so much. (Cuji and Fatimatta, 2011, unpaginated)

This sentence talks about the way in which any repetition is always instituting something new in the very happening of translation towards another body. Every translation from one place

to another enacts a rupture both for the practice and for the social body it invests. By copying and repeating, the insurgent - literally uprising and taking body - social body modifies its own forms of being, but at the same time the events proliferate only by becoming something else, similar but different gestures in permanent metamorphosis. This process of proliferation through metamorphoses affirms the failure of a *full body*, the impossibility of a full emancipation of the *integer* citizen to be achieved. In the crisis of representation, there is not any horizon of universal citizenship, there is not any citizen characterised by a complete fulfilment of his rights; only the continuous production of a fragmented and collective project of emancipation, a complex genesis of disorganic connections among different insurgencies that, by translating from one place to another, from one time to another, are capable of creating new worlds, of producing rights.

Tahrir, Puerta del Sol, Plaça Catalunya, Zuccotti Park. Obviously there are continuities among these recent events; for example, the political memories inscribed in the use of space. But most of all there are gaps, jumps, differences among them. Discontinuities that do not break up the connections between one point and another, but institute complexities, differences and richnesses as a basis to strengthen the potency and the possibilities of this global insurgency. In this sense my aim here is not to produce any comprehensive - full and plain - history of the 15M movements in Spain. I do not want to produce any 'history' capable of 'explaining' the present. My terms are other, unknown to the reader, but meaningful to me after years of work on this project. *Numax*, *Ocaña*, *Ajoblanco*, *insumisos*, *Cine Princesa*, *Tàpies*, *Iglesia del Pi*, *Plaça dels Angels* and many others. Different and diverse streams of social organisation that still contribute to the contemporary becoming of social mobilisations.

There are a number of dynamics which are useful in order to understand the emergence of the 15M mobilisations, and yet left outside of this research. They range from the consequences of the European and North American economic collapse and the crisis of neoliberal governmentality in the Western Countries, to the appraisal of a global digital culture and the social uprisings on the Southern shores of the Mediterranean sea, in the Southern states of the European Union, in Iceland, in the United States. But I focus here on a specific stream of narrative; the discontinuous expansion of urban social movements in the last few decades, as one of the significant elements to engage with the events we are experiencing in the 15M mobilisations. Elements that are meaningful not to explain but to pose questions about the production of politics on the streets of contemporary Barcelona.

In this sense the outcome of this thesis does not aim to be simply one of many genealogies, but to produce a *useful* diagram to engage with grassroots pasts that compose the collective act of 'assembling politics' in Barcelona. How did different experiences constitute both the possible imagination and the material crafting of a different way of *doing* politics on the streets of

Barcelona today? To answer this question, I look for the connections and distances, the trenches and bridges, the elements of continuity and ruptures in the proliferation of urban movements, with the aim of thinking about the possibilities and the limits of a mobilised society that is trying - in the present continuous tense - to assemble a radical democratic experiment in Barcelona.

### Theory

Before defining the conceptual and empirical dimensions of my narrative, I need to introduce a question around the methods that determined my way of researching through out the whole thesis (Chapter 3).

In contrast to an understanding of academic knowledge as objective representation of social conflicts, my situated experience as a militant and a researcher is the double point of departure to analyse the expression of social movements as social factory of alternative subjectivities. Beyond the role of an objective researcher that inhabits the comfortable position of human sciences in order to analyse a sort of ‘natural history’ of society, there is the need to immerse oneself and participate in the complex production of a radical questioning of modernity. It is an urgency of our time. It is an urgency imposed by the most dramatic crisis of modern capitalism. But, most of all, it is an urgency imposed by the consequences of this crisis on the everyday life of the people.

Starting from here, I questioned my role not only in analysing but also in empowering the autonomous expressions of those who are not represented - or, perhaps, *los que no somos representados* - in the modern definition of civil society. Can a militant approach to the production of knowledge enable an emancipating expression of the (un)governed, the (immanent) strangers, the (internal) outsiders? Urban social movements from below, I argue, materially reinvented politics in Barcelona. They did not only contest Barcelona’s model of governance, but also instituted new ways of imagining and practicing rights in urban space. In order to participate to this collective empowering therefore, my aim has been to analyse the crafting of social movements and the assembling of their politics as a process of social production.

Investigating the production of practices and concepts *in* the happening of social struggles, a tension emerges between the political function of representation - the goal of which, I argue, is to instruct and legitimise policies of control - and the emergence of autonomous expressions - that imagine and institute new forms of social emancipation from below - thus calling for a deeper analysis of the wider conflict between governmentality and insurgencies in contemporary society (Chapter 2). This is proposed here as a conflict between the governance of social production and the dynamics of social cooperation. Command versus cooperation, governants versus the



governed, control versus autonomy; these are the grounds to analyse a dis-symmetric dialectic between the production and management of society.

To examine these issues I draw upon and build bridges between different bodies of literature that have examined these debates from different perspectives. I look at the opposition between the subsumption of life and social cooperation in production (as proposed by the autonomous marxist debates); at the institutional dynamics between civil and political society (as proposed by post-colonial studies); and at the dialectic between status and acts both inside and outside the juridical dimension of citizenship (as proposed by critical citizenship studies). From here, I analyse the way in which these conflictive dynamics develop in the particular assemblage of contemporary urban capitalism, confronting the production of space as an engine of social production, and the struggle for the right to the city as a collective practice for the regulation of social production and distribution. In the clash between urban governmentality and urban insurgencies, the right to the city emerges as a collective act of assembling; capable of instituting an immanent and antagonistic organisation of urban cooperation and urban life *in* and *against* the contemporary governance of social production.

### **Empirics**

In the recent transformation of the capitalistic dynamics of urban Europe, Barcelona is proposed as significant both for understanding the reconfiguration of governance in an era of neoliberal inter-urban competition, and for analysing the radical politics emerging in the margins of urban life. My original contribution focuses on those pasts that, since the 1980s, rose up in Barcelona against the ruling understanding of citizenship, and signalled the relevance of urban space to contemporary mobilisations.

In Chapter 4, having examined new forms of control, governance and the abstraction of social cooperation emerging around the 1992 *Olympic Games* in Barcelona, I analyse the appropriation of time and space and the emergence of new bodies and objects in radical autonomous, feminist and counter-cultural politics as social practices that both constituted the framework for, and expressed the limits of, the democratic and neoliberal governance of the 1980s - focusing on the emergence of new fields of political expression, new experiences of political organisation and new experiments of political production in the context of the crisis of representative politics.

In Chapter 5 I turn to the conscientious objection and the squatting movements, the institutional critique of arts and the actions of colonial migrants in the public spaces of the city to focus attention on those practices that moved an insurgent politics from an individual, external and imperceptible political action at the margins, towards a collective, instituent and invasive

experience that re-configured the possibility of affirmative politics beyond the crisis of the early 1990s.

Building on this, in Chapter 6 I focus on two experiments that expressed and articulated in affirmative and institutive terms the double crisis of neoliberal European governance: examining the relationships between civil society and institutions of the state (with a focus on the experience of the *Museum of Contemporary Art of Barcelona* 1999-2001), and between the civil society of the represented, and the governed of political society (with an examination of the occupation of churches by *sin papeles* in 2001). These examples demonstrate a set of practices that determined both the emergence of a different discourse towards the state, and a deep problematisation of the practices of institutional management and of the organisation of political movements; setting out a new understanding of the relationship between state and society, public and private, insiders and outsiders and configuring the production of the city as a collective *oeuvre* based on cooperation, difference and translation.

Finally, in Chapter 7, I examine how the clash between civist governmentality and the insurgencies mobilising around the right to the city over the last decade have served to provide for a new way of doing politics. Here, I analyse the rationale of the civist ordinance introduced in Barcelona in 2005, and opposition to the ordinance that has been capable of building a new politics where performance, prefiguration and autonomy emerge as spatialized enactments of a collective practice of *assembling* politics in urban space.

### **The right to the city and the assembling of politics in the 15M**

The object of my research is therefore the collective assembling of politics outside representation, command and control. That is, affirmatively, to participate as a militant researcher in the social assembling of politics as a collective project of expression, cooperation and autonomy. This involves the questioning of the modes of research in order not to reproduce an objective representation, but to affirm instead a practice of empowering of the governed, strangers and outsiders - as ungovernable, immanent aliens, hidden insiders. Second, this goal calls for a practice of theoretical research capable of bridging between different literatures and of composing different streams of analysis in order to depict the dialectic between command and cooperation.

In the emergence of a new mode of social production, the assembling of the right to the city, I argue, conjugates the struggles for the rights of production - as regulation of urban cooperation - and the mobilisations for the rights of citizenship - as the government of access to rights. In this sense, this thesis aims to analyse the social production of words and deeds, enunciations and spaces, practices and concepts that participate in the proliferation by metamorphoses of the struggles for the right to the city, posing problems to modify and expand these practices.

Developing this, I propose *performative*, *prefigurative* and *autonomous* as attributive adjectives of this social production. *Performative* is the enunciation that appropriates the city by gathering people in assemblies. *Prefigurative* is the space constituted as inhabitable by the practice of assembling differences. Finally this social and spatial assembling of politics is a practice of *autonomy*, since it aims to self-define norms of regulation both for the modes of appropriation and for the practices of inhabitation of urban space. This triple specification of the right to the city allows me an original perspective on one of the most important developments of the 15M mobilisations and to engage with these movements not by analysing the ‘logic of ideas’ (ideology) that sustains them, but helping to assemble the ‘logics of doing’ (techno-logies) that craft contemporary mobilisations.

**Part I**

**Theory**

## Chapter 2

# The city over the void

If you choose to believe me, good. Now I will tell you how Octavia, the spider-web city, is made. There is a precipice between two steep mountains: the city is over the void, bound to the two crests with ropes and chains and catwalks. You walk on the little wooden ties, careful not to set your foot in the open spaces, or you cling to the hempen strands. Below there is nothing for hundreds and hundreds of feet: a few clouds glide past; farther down you can glimpse the chasm's bed. (Calvino, 1997, 61)

### 2.1 A dis-symmetric dialectic

The goal of this thesis is to analyse the practices and concepts produced by social movements in the struggle for the right to the city. My aim in this chapter is to frame this social production of the right to the city in the concrete configuration of a general conflict over the organisation of social production. The conflict investigated here is that between insurgencies (Negri, 1999) and governmentality (Foucault, 2007) as counterpoised forces in the organisation of productive relations in social activity and, more generally, the relations of force in social life.

At the point where social practices are expressions of a set of social relations of power, Foucault defines the relation between society and power as asymmetric (Foucault, 1998). This asymmetry is between, on the one hand, the productive force of society and, on the other the 'managing' role of power. The activity of power is «first of all management and economy there where free men do not manage but produce. Power is in its essence re-productive, since it manages what already exists, while the potency of men has the capacity of producing new things» (Revel, 2011, unpaginated commenting on Foucault, 1998, cf. Revel, 2003)

The genesis [of society] is on the side of freedom. Management is on the side of Power. Never the one without the other, but also dis-symmetry between one and the other. And here all the difficulties lie. (Revel, 2011, unpaginated, my translation)

The dialectical conflict between cooperation in production and command over it, and therefore between labour and capital (Marx, 1980), is a particular one. The latter is defined as a force of abstraction, in terms of both the opportunistic interest of the individual capitalist and the abstract one of the collective capitalist (Harvey, 2010). Cooperation in production, in contrast, is a materialistic force: an embodied pole produced not through the abstract recognition of the consciousness of class, but as the concrete composition of a set of memories, stories, practices and struggles (Negri, 1999).

«Subjective labour opposed to objective labour, living labour opposed to dead labour» (Tronti, 1966, 212 my translation). This is the dialectical and irreducible antagonism between labour, as collective human activity, and capital, as force of abstraction and objectification or, seen the other way around, between capital as abstracting force of human labour and workers as a subject that resists this abstraction - that affirm themselves as non-capital from a collective experience of subalternity, exploitation and alienation (Negri, 1991).

Citizenship is a specific and relevant field in terms of this dialectical tension, since, in the definition and realisation of the rights of citizenship two forces clash: a set of practices of emancipation and a force of discipline, the interaction of which continually reconfigures the rights and duties of those who participate in the social process of production, i.e. in society.

Beyond the sociological definition of citizenship as a relationship between the individual and the state (the 'full and equal membership in a political community' of TH Marshall, 1950, as utopian and teleological end of history; Isin and Turner, 2002, Mezzadra, 2002, Brodie, 2008) it is important to stress this dimension of citizenship as a field of social tensions over the organisation of social production configured through practices of conflict, imposition, subversion and negotiation. To the extent that the state represents a particular class interest as a general interest of the Nation, citizenship is not only an institutionalised meditation between classes but a permanent space of the imposition of power and the emergence of insurgencies (Gramsci, 1996).

In the context of the failure of the project of industrial full citizenship (Marshall, 1950, Turner, 1997, Mezzadra, 2002, Brodie, 2008, Isin and Turner, 2002), citizenship - as a regulator of the social activities of production - needs to be questioned beyond the formal framework of the Constitution, analysing this not only as textual elaboration but as material composition of «the effective relationships of the social forces in the politico-military moment» (Gramsci, 1975*b*, 1666 my translation). The difference between ordinary people and legislators is not about the

possibility of each of these groups to make laws - since everyone establishes rules of living and behaving - but about the legitimacy in their making of laws. A Gramsci puts it:

This second group [legislators] not only formulate directives which will become a norm of conduct for the others, but at the same time creates the instruments by means of which the directives themselves will be 'imposed', and by means of which it will verify their execution. (Gramsci, 1996, 265-266)

This tension between a society of ordinary people and state power is a crucial starting point from which to analyse the governmental function of citizenship and the permanent crisis of this dispositif of governance, a dispositif which is contested and subverted by those subjects on the margins of society (those who are *foreclosed* in the narrative of social production, Spivak, 1999, and excluded from the rights of full citizenship, Boutang, 1998) - those that I will refer to as internal outsiders, immanent strangers or the un/governed inhabitants of society (Isin, 2002, Chatterjee, 2004, Papadopoulos et al., 2008).

In this Chapter, I analyse debates that help us to understand the complexity of this dis-symmetrical relationship. A complex contrast between governmentality and insurgencies emerges, in which the social production of practices and concepts by social movements is situated. On the one hand, governmentality as practice of limitation through control (Negri, 1999, 2) and, on the other, insurgencies as richness of the possible through the production of rights (Gorz, 1997). The tension between these two dimension can be grasped on an objective level:

The relationship that juridical theory (and through it the constituted arrangement) wants to impose on constituent power works in the direction of neutralisation, mystification, or, really, the attribution of senselessness. (Negri, 1999, 10)

However, following Negri, it will also be necessary to conceptualise the subjective dimension of this tension, as a dimension of production not only of formal rights, but of social practices and concepts to think and organise social life:

In contrast, the paradigm of the constituent power is that of a force that bursts apart, breaks, interrupts, unhinges any preexisting equilibrium and any possible continuity. Constituent power is tied to the notion of democracy as absolute power. (Negri, 1999, 11)

Here it is useful to identify three dimensions of the tension between governmentality and insurgencies. First, the negotiation of the rights of citizenship in the context of the tension between cooperation - as source of social production - and command - as abstraction of social production into products for the market (Chakrabarty, 2000, Hardt and Negri, 2009, Nowotny, 2009b).

Second, the institutional dimension of citizenship in the conflict between the political and civil dynamics of society and the tools through which social production is disciplined (Gramsci, 1975*a*, Hardt, 1995, Chatterjee, 2004, Puwar, 2004). Third, the contraposition between acts and status as conflict around the juridical and discursive determination of citizenship and its legitimacy (Isin, 2002, Foucault, 2007, Mezzadra, 2002).

I analyse these dimensions transversally rather than vertically, looking at both the way in which a rationale of governing - in production, institutional organisation and subjectivation - is imposed, and the way in which insurgencies attack the unity of these structural, infrastructural and superstructural dimensions to break apart the privileges they guarantee.

Afterwards I focus on the space of the city as concrete loci of the conflict around the rights of citizenship and the right to the city as the name of a collective practice of insurgency in the productive space of the city.

## 2.2 Governmentality

In order to focus on citizenship as a concrete dimension of this contrast, it is useful here to define the function of citizenship in the governing of production, considering citizenship as a tool for the deployment of governmentality: a *dispositif* (Foucault, 1980).

Governmentality needs to be understood as a «heterogeneous ensemble» (Foucault, 1991, 79) of discourses, institutions, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, and philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions «which serve to found, justify and provide reasons and principles for these ways of doing things» (Foucault, 1991, 79). Governmentality refers to an assemblage of «procedures for representing and intervening» in social space (Miller and Rose, 1990, 7).

Below I look at the way in which contemporary governmentality is assembled. I do so by, first, examining the production of tools to abstract social production in urban space. Second, I discuss the assemblage of a differentiated labour market to discipline social cooperation. And finally, I deal with the emergence of a new understanding of citizenship in the context of the crisis of a homogenous conception of modernity. In this sense, citizenship is the instrumental vertebration of my analysis; looking at its limits in the Fordist exception, at its outsides in the implosion of the colony, and at its collapse in the affirmation of a heterogeneous and uneven modernity.



### 2.2.1 Abstraction or the command of capital over life

After the Second World War, the proposal of social citizenship theoretically underpinned Keynesian policies, as policies for progressive and universal inclusion of the population in social rights against the inequalities produced by the capitalist market (Tronti, 1972, Turner, 2003, Vincent, 2002, Aglietta, 1979). At stake was the emergence of a social system where classes would cooperate within the Fordist mode of production (Mezzadra, 2002). Industrial citizenship constituted therefore the utopian horizon for the political struggle of workers - organised through parties and represented in political institutions (Chatterjee, 2004; cf. Turner, 2003). The mechanism of representation - capable of constituting the Nation state as the homogeneous image of civil society - supposedly entitled the people to a definitive social contract of unconditional and universal rights (Marshall, 1950, Turner, 1997; cf. Negri, 1999), where patriotism guaranteed political stability (Vincent, 2002).

In the Hegelian sense, «civil society is primarily a society of labour», the site of modern economy (Hardt, 1995, 29), in the sense that modern citizenship has always been related to the governance of the relations of production, dealing with «work in general and the capitalist division of labour in particular» (Gilroy, 1991, 319). The exchange between rights and duties formed the basis for social and industrial citizenship, founded on the virtuous cooperation of social classes in production and consumption and the recognition of the Nation state as the only legitimate space for political negotiation (Aglietta, 1998, 1979, Neilson and Rossiter, 2008). The Fordist mode of regulation can be understood as a particular and partial territory: a specific regulation for the provision of social rights achieved by industrial workers in the North Atlantic territory after and thanks to the struggles of industrial unionism (Gambino, 1996).

The fragilities and the ambiguities of this utopian model were brought into relief via the explosion of the social conflict of the 1960s. The alliance between unions, parties and the state constituted a *dispositif* for the marginalization of non-industrial workers from representative politics (Tronti, 1972; cf. De Lorenzis et al., 2008, Simoncini, 2010); and therefore for the foreclosure of those subjects unable to fit in the equation between civil society, Nation and state, from the narrative of society (Guha, 1997, Spivak, 1999).

[The] refusal [by the social movements of the 1970s] is not simply a refusal to work, but a refusal to translate their social struggles into a set of demands addressed towards the redistributive capacities of the welfare state. (Papadopoulos et al., 2008, 60)

As argued by Neilson and Rossiter (2008, 59), the investigation of the alternative political positionalities which existed in, and were submerged under, Fordist Regulation is crucial in order to understand the struggles for social rights today, since Fordism was an exception both spatially

and historically in post-war Europe and only recognised a section of the population (industrial workers) as legitimate citizens.

In the crisis of Fordism, the involvement of internal outsiders in the processes of production marked a contractual shift in labour relations through the legal (re)institution - and social generalisation - of informality and precarity. In the outsourcing of industrial production to non-unionised firms and shadow economies, marginal figures of the labour market returned to prominence: part-time work and home-labour, different forms of apprenticeships in small firms, and temporary jobs for young migrants and student workers (Balestrini, 2012, De Lorenzis et al., 2008, Borio et al., 2002, Bianchi and Caminiti, 2007; cf. Sassen, 1996).

According to Thoburn (2003), at stake was the development of capitalist relations beyond the regulatory framework of the industrial system. Capitalism, in order to maintain its pace of accumulation, needed to expand its base of control to society as a whole, and *production, circulation and reproduction* needed to be expanded and specified in capitalistic governance. Even if the analysis of the individual enterprise or worker indicates the fragmentation of contemporary production, «at the level of social capital we see a continuity of circulation as the expansion and maintenance of value, where social capital operates like a ‘ramified factory system’» (Thoburn, 2003, 78).

It is neither the direct human labour [the worker] performs, nor the time during which he works, but rather the appropriation of his own general productive power, his understanding of nature and his mastery of it by virtue of his presence as a social body - it is, in a word, the development of the social individual which appears as the great foundation-stone of production and of wealth. (Marx, 1973, 705)

According to Negri (1988), at stake here was the affirmation of a social factory where the relationship between the social individual and the production of wealth emerged as the foundation-stone of a new mode of exploitation. In the urban space of Europe, after the crisis of the industrial paradigm of production, the capitalistic organisation of labour developed the ability of commanding not only the cooperation of labour in the factory (Marx, 1980), but of disciplining cooperation in the time and space of social life as a whole (Negri, 1988, 2003, Virno, 2004, Chakrabarty, 2000).

Capital needs to control life in a manner which echoes its disciplining of labour in the factory<sup>1</sup>. In an era when embodied capitalism and precarisation is a tool of governance of labour that

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<sup>1</sup>In this process, the chronological sequence between formal and real subsumption enters into crisis when we consider that the synchronic accumulation of relative and absolute surplus-value defines the functioning of contemporary capitalist exploitation. «At first capital subordinates labour on the basis of the technical conditions within which labour has been carried on up to that point in history. It does not therefore directly change the mode of production. The production of surplus value in the form we have so far considered, by means of the simple extension of the working

affects the living experience of the body, the contemporary paradigms of exploitation and abstraction concretely affect urban life and inhabitants, exploiting the continuum of everyday life in terms of time and space (Neilson and Rossiter, 2008, *Precarias a la deriva*, 2004) and the concrete implications of the «unmediated command [of capital] over subjectivity itself» (Lazzarato, 1996, 134, Negri, 2003).

Following Lazzarato (2004, 2009) I conceptualise the enlargement of capital's command not as inclusion of these emerging spheres of production in the mode of organisation of industrial labour, but as attempts to translate the command of capital into spheres of production organised according to other regimes of power. In the urban model of production, abstraction, as extraction of labour from its concrete forms<sup>2</sup>, no longer deals with the summation of industrial, standardised parcels of labour, but needs to translate (or integrate, following Guattari, 2005) qualitatively different social forms of production - such as attention, care, experience - into the homogeneous language of exchange value.

Operating within this relationship between cooperation in social life and abstraction of exchange value, the accumulation of global capital develops through processes of translation of specific life-worlds into the global language of capital, integrating the internal hierarchies of each social sphere of production and abstracting each specific logic of exploitation into the general logic of profit (Mezzadra, 2006).

As such, a new model for the exploitation of labour beyond the hegemonic industrial social contract emerges. «The mass worker was yielding to the 'socialised worker' as the mechanisms of capitalist valorisation were beginning to extend throughout all of society, preparing the transition to a post-Fordist economic regime characterised by highly flexible systems of production, the end of full employment, and a growing reliance on 'immaterial' (analytic and communicational) labour» (Henninger and Negri, 2005, 159).

Immaterial labor in its various guises (informational, affective, communicative, and cultural) tends toward being spread through out the entire work force and through out all labouring tasks as a component, larger or smaller, of all labouring processes.  
(Hardt, 1999, 97)

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day, appeared therefore independently of any change in the mode of production itself» (Marx, 1980, 425); «we also [in ch. 10, above] saw that, at first, the subjection of labour to capital was only a formal result of the fact that the worker, instead of working for himself, works for, and consequently under, the capitalist. Through [the development of means of increasing productivity], the command of capital develops into a requirement for carrying on the labour process itself, into a real condition of production» (Marx, 1980, 448); «a specifically capitalist mode of production, a mode of production which, along with its methods, means and conditions, arises and develops spontaneously on the basis of the formal subsumption of labour under capital. This formal subsumption is then replaced by a real subsumption» (Marx, 1980, 645).

<sup>2</sup>Following the marxist definition of abstract labour as commodity for exchange disembodied from social relations (Marx, 1980, Lughini, 1996; cf. previous footnote on subsumption as submission of social relations to the authority of capital).

To conclude, the space of production subsumed in the relations of authority of capital is not the factory anymore but the social relations of urban life, and the time subsumed in production is not anymore waged labour but life-time itself where the existential conditions of urban inhabitants beyond labour are the object of a governance that aims to commodify social cooperation in the city (Negri, 2003, Morini and Fumagalli, 2010).

### 2.2.2 The segmented governance of society

Let us now turn to the second dimension of the tension between governmentality and insurgencies I introduced at the outset of this chapter: the institutional dimension of citizenship with regard to the relation between civil and political society. As seen before, Marshall's discourse on citizenship rests upon the position from where he spoke: the Golden Age of Industrial Post-war Europe (Hobsbawm, 1994, Mezzadra, 2002). However, as Gramsci (1975a) proposed, citizenship is a situated relationship between society and the state .

In fact, whilst the Marshallian discourse of citizenship participated in the construction of a social democratic Europe after the Great Depression, a hidden position of citizenship continued to exist: that of non-members. Indeed, national membership as the condition for accessing rights determined citizenship as an 'exclusive and selective' right of one population based on differentiation from and discrimination against another population (Isin, 2002, Mellino, 2009, Balibar, 1998).

According to Anderson (1991), the Nation is an imagined homogenous community, a space constructed upon a spiritual commonality among an anonymous population, in a limited territory, and guaranteed by the Enlightened destruction of «the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm» (1991, 7). The Nation affirmed a novel ontology for sovereignty: the People (Foucault, 2007, Chatterjee, 1998). The homogeneity of members guarantees the loyalty of the population to the national institutions (Anderson, 1991, 1998, Chatterjee, 2005, 1998) and therefore the possibility of governing social conflicts.

However, only by imagining the Nation through the universal categories of modern thought – Nation, citizens, community - is it possible to compose the population as a limited aggregation of integer individuals, in the sense that their identity can be represented as 'one' and whole (Chatterjee, 2005, cf. Anderson, 1991, 1998). The loyal belonging to and the homogeneity of the Nation as imagined community only exist in utopia. «The real time-space of modern life is heterogeneous, unevenly dense» (Chatterjee, 2005, 53). This is the memory of the colonies where the division of labour and rights developed according to race and caste, resulting in a modern translation of the *adagio* 'divide et impera'.

However the crisis of Fordist citizenship also marks a point of transition in which the emergence of forms of governing typically associated with the colony begin to emerge inside Europe, specifically with regard to the proliferation of differentiated statuses of subject-hood:

Colonial expansion resulted in a hierarchical fragmentation of legal systems which established and naturalised the distinction between citizens and subjects. In a similar way, the discontents within the European legal space reflect an inner method of government which reproduces a hierarchical fragmentation of the legal subjectivities of community members. (Rigo, 2005, 5)

To the extent that the crisis of Fordist citizenship affirmed the critical collapse of a historical and spatial exception, the expansion of colonial citizenship is the collapse of the historical teleology of modernity via the heterogeneous fragmentation of the present (Chatterjee, 2005). The proliferation of the colonial model in urban Europe constitutes the implosion of a mode of exploitation imposed by Europe on the colonies turned back on the everyday life of the metropolitan space (Mellino, 2009, Balibar, 2004).

It does not arrive cataclysmically and unannounced from elsewhere, but rather originates from within, and flourishes and proliferates in the very body that has nurtured it through its own degeneracy. [...] a body so irreversibly and irreconcilably moribund that it can no longer accomplish its most elementary vocation, namely, to merely sustain its own vitality. (De Genova, 2010, 414)

Under these conditions, the Fordist conception of modern, national citizenship gives way to the assemblage of heterogeneous dispositifs of control and the provision of privileges that characterise the contemporary metropolitan spaces of Europe, and to the governance of the multiple scalarity of globalisation (Sassen, 1994, 2006). I term this phenomenon as *segmentation*, looking at the implosion of colonial governance not as terminal crisis, but on the contrary as *fragmentation and proliferation* of its rationale in the governance of urban Europe.

In this proliferation of the post-colonial regime of regulation in urban Europe, borders «do not apply according to spatial criteria but according to the ‘qualities of persons’» (Rigo, 2005, 12) and personal status follows the subjects «wherever they happen to be» (Rigo, 2005, 12). «Instead of all citizens enjoying a unified bundle of citizenship rights, we have a shifting political landscape in which heterogeneous populations claim diverse rights and benefits associated with citizenship» (Ong, 2006, 500) and in which growing invisible populations demand rights from outside the borders of institutional representation (Sassen, 2002). Borders emerge as «an ensemble of heterogeneous discursive and non-discursive practices, and regimes of truth and conduct» (Mitchell, 1992, 245) in the re-territorialisation of colonial models within the space of

Keynesian Welfare National System (Legg, 2007, Foucault, 2007), becoming the tool for rendering «legal space discontinuous and allow[ing] for sovereignty to be shared by different public and private actors» (Rigo, 2005, 17).

The fragmentation of the imagined body of the Nation, the overlapping of different legal spatialities over the same territory and the different scales of place have been stressed as major innovations in the scalarity of citizenship as a *dispositif* for governing in Schengen Europe (Ferguson et al., 2002, Rigo, 2007), thus translating the *dispositifs* of segmentation of the colony to the metropolitan space (Petti, 2007; cf Mezzadra, 2004) where legal statuses operate not only macro-politically, but also micro-politically on a heterogeneous population (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2008).

The proliferation of borders emerges as a method for the segmentation of the territory and the population, and for the multiplication of the labour regimes. «While in theory political rights depend on membership in a nation-state, in practice, new entitlements are being realised through situated mobilisations and claims in milieus of globalised contingency» (Ong, 2006, 499).

This contingency of rights produces a graduated or variegated citizenship (Ong, 2006), where different segments of the population are subjected to a different regime of social and political rights: a segmented citizenship capable of governing both population and social production - via the constitution of specific regimes of power that work through status, fear, menace - and managing exploitation and abstraction according to the specific set of forces of each segment of the labour market. Boutang (1998) refers to these as exogenous labour markets: complex and variable spaces characterised by the intertwining of different legal and economic rationales of contracts. A regime of organisation of labour in which deportation (De Genova et al., 2010) and precarisation (Neilson and Rossiter, 2008) constitute the mechanism of a mode of governance that deals with life in itself.

In this context, hierarchies and precarisation are significant not only for organising migrant labour, but in segmenting the labour markets of the post-Fordist and post-colonial metropolis more generally. The proliferation of borders goes hand in hand with the multiplication of labour regimes and the analysis of borders can be used as a method to discover the lines of segmentation acting on the living social body as a tool of governance (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2008). Different labour regimes are indeed internal to the same economic space but organised through diversified legal procedures (Boutang, 2007, 35); allowing for the production of hierarchies of status (Borjas et al., 1991, Chiswick, 1988) and internal oppositions among the governed, in the attempt of breaking apart the possibility of common struggles of homogeneous agencies as unitarian forces.

### 2.2.3 The crisis of the illusionary coherence of modernity

Under the Fordist exception, homogeneity functions as the pillar of the loyalty of the population to the mode of production of the modern Nation. Industrial full citizenship constituted the manifesto of a utopian Nation-system as a coherent and resolved mode of production, within which the role of the state was to guarantee the rational management of those resources inscribed in the Nation: the life of its population and the resources of the territory (Foucault, 2007, Elden, 2007, Crampton and Elden, 2007, Huxley, 2007).

However, the implosion of colonies in the metropolitan space configured heterogeneity and segmentation as generalised modes of governance in the precarisation of urban life in Europe. Non-Fordist and post-colonial labour markets in urban Europe express today a complex collection of different positionalities that break apart any idea of a universal and utopian extension of citizenship.

We can say that the relation between labour and citizenship has ceased to produce in Western countries the materiality of what T.H. Marshall (1950) called the ‘status of citizenship’. [...] Consequently, the subjective positions of both citizens and workers need to be rethought outside the dyadic structure of citizen-worker. (Neilson and Rossiter, 2008, 59)

I use the term ‘internal outsides’, then, in order to refer to the positions from which to analyse the functioning of the contemporary governance of production (and therefore citizenship) in terms of partialities, segregation and exploitation. The crisis of the homogeneity of the Nation and the emergence of a heterogenous, fragmented and non-integer social body composed of multiple and contrasting belongings makes institutional representation an illusion.

Indeed representation via institutional politics, as the attempt to reduce the complexity of social life to a scheme of loyalties, is not a possible mechanism of political participation for those who do not belong to a dominant position. The casual workers not represented by unions, the non-legal inhabitants not represented by parties, as well as the gender minorities excluded from the patriarchal organisation of society, are positions which are intertwined in the singular experience of the precarious inhabitants of the city (Gill and Pratt, 2008, Neilson and Rossiter, 2008, Lorey, 2006). The representation of the citizen as an *integer* (Chatterjee, 1998) is impossible because their expression is multiple and situated. Given the impossibility of representing these positions, their relation with the state is principally built upon the enforcement of a concrete set of relations of power: a relationship in which the state exercises its discursive and coercive power over society not through a civil mediation of representation but through the imposition of a relation of pure force (Gramsci, 1996).

I want to stress here the regimes of truth that sustain the productive dimensions of the post-Fordist and post-colonial mode of governance. *Neoliberal subjectivation* and *dominance* in this sense configure the discourse of governmentality after the end of the Fordist stability and the implosion and proliferation of the colonial model of governance within contemporary urban Europe.

There are two dimensions worth mentioning here in terms of the way in which subjection and dominance operate with regard to contemporary governance. First, the possibility of alienating social life is based on the ability of segmenting statuses and implementing different modes of exploitation according to the rights of a given singular segment. In this sense *neoliberal subjectivation* intervenes on the social body of urban production as a discourse of truth to legitimise the segmentation of the social body and the proliferation of labour regimes.

The end of social solidarity, national homogeneity and institutional representation permits the affirmation of a logic of fragmented competition among individuals through the production of citizens as ‘entrepreneurs of themselves’ in the urban *agon* (Foucault, 2007). The interest of private actors rules over the use of public resources, determining the protection of the logic of profit as the goal of public policy. This is the logic of the Ordo-liberal debate of the 1950s in Germany and Austria, which aimed at the development of social governance based on the competition of unequal *neoliberal citizens* (Foucault, 2008, Mezzadra, 2002, Hayek, 1996), thus moving «from an anthropology of exchange to one of competition» (Read, 2009, 28). The freedom of *homo aeconomicus* - the self-entrepreneur - requires the support of policies that do not compensate the ‘inequalities’ produced by the market, but, instead, forge the material basis for the freedom of the entrepreneur - obeying the principle of ‘equal inequality’ for all (Lemke, 2002). This is «a ‘formal play’ of inequalities that must be instituted and constantly nourished and maintained» (Lazzarato, 2009, 116).

This approach to citizenship therefore proposes a shift: personal rights are linked with individual obligations towards the productive forces regulated by the market, from welfare to workfare (Kymlicka and Norman, 1994, Powell, 2002). Neoliberal citizenship is not oriented towards the reduction of the function of the state but rather towards the continual subjection of the state to the regulatory function of the market (Read, 2009). The goal therefore is not to reinvigorate the logic of *laissez-faire* but to instrumentalise the state for the protection of the market. This is the engine of today’s society: a competitive model among unequals capable of producing stable hierarchies and regulating social production according to the rule of the market. «Sole individuals localised in the power grids of the market» (Papadopoulos, 2011, 442).

Second, the possibility of abstraction rests upon the ability to force cooperation through commodified relationships. Following the collapse of the model of homogeneous coherence under the Nation as persuasive power of social cohesion - hegemony (Gramsci, 1975a) - the colonial



mechanism of 'dominance without hegemony' is generalised within the space of the metropolis (Guha, 1997, Hall et al., 1996, Balibar, 1994). While the normative subjectivation of citizens as entrepreneurs in permanent and unequal competition makes possible the implementation of a dependence on social cooperation in the market, *dominance* subjugates and controls life. Social relations are channeled into commodified dynamics of interaction within which the living labour of social cooperation can be abstracted.

Within such a context, the relationship between the state and society shifts beyond the capacity of discursive persuasion and negotiation, towards the affirmation of a logic of pure power, disguised as rational power of the techniques of governance - *technocracy* (Lemke, 1990); a technocratic efficiency of policies under which citizens might relate to each other only through the state, the market and generally those apparatuses of dominance that manage resources, or violence. A technocratic efficiency that substitutes any instance of representation and finally veils a merely coercive power - the legitimacy of which is not rooted in the *demos*, but in the *technes* - that hierarchises society in the name of *technical* skills and *legal* statuses.

If the relation between the civil and the political can be conceptualised as a mirror of the tension between hegemony and dominance (Gramsci, 1996) - here dominance is the hidden yet exclusive logic of power, where the policy *seems* to resolve social conflict, not through persuasive action over the population (a democratic persuasion), but rather through its technical efficiency in terms of segmentation and hierarchisation (Hall et al., 1996). These technical policies indeed are concretely defined by a set of power relations determined by neoliberalism. In this context, the rationale of governance is to resolve conflicts in specific situations, without questioning the general framework of social inequalities. Hierarchies are strengthened and sustained in order to maintain the stability of the market and to guarantee competition, as well as to ensure the reproduction of situated privileges with regard to certain subjects. There is no possible regulation, in Aglietta's terms (1979), but only localised mediations among forces and the generalised dominance of a normative subjectivation which is capable of disciplining social behaviours with the aim of allowing capital to rule over life.

### 2.3 Insurgencies

Against this attempt to impose power as mechanism for the reproduction of privilege, we need to consider the 'ancient and venerable' question of *constituent power* (Terranova, 2002, Negri, 1999), and to analyse the permanent social antagonism and insurgencies that struggle to produce common rights. Constituent power is in constant tension with constituted power, where the counterposition is between the transference of power from the people to the Nation state - to guarantee the reproduction of this pact - and the concept of the multitude - as heterogeneous

and permanently acting society against the crystallisation of privileges and the state (Negri, 1999, Virno, 2004). Constituent power is articulated on two levels. Objectively, at stake is the *production* of constitutional norms and institutional forms - the texts, the enunciations - but subjectively, there are those *actors* that produce such norms - as agencies, memories, stories and desires that act collectively with the aim of regulating communal living (cf. Negri, 1999 with Gramsci, 1975a, Hall et al., 1996, Guha, 1997).

How to grasp this living force in the tension between constituent and constituted power? My focus will move transversally across a series of subjects and actors in order to read the permanent intertwining between constituted forces and a permanent insurgency of social bodies: an insurgency - in the most literal sense of up-rising and taking body - against constituted power that opens up the established contract of citizenship and affirms a conflict between justice and law (Isin and Nielsen, 2008, 37).

In the first part of this chapter, which dealt with the analysis of neoliberal governmentality, I moved from production to subjectivation, via the analysis of the institutional fragmentation of the urban population as proliferation of the colonial model. Here, I will rather move the other way around starting from the alter-subjectivations of urban inhabitants in the crisis of the illusionary coherence of European modernity, and analysing the possibility of political acts from the internal outsides of the metropolis, to affirm the emergence of an autonomous and alternative organisation of social production in the contemporary life of the city.

Immanent strangers, internal outsiders and the un/governed have been the terms I collected from different streams of literature in order to talk about the appropriation of urban space and the inhabitation of difference, rising up from the margins against the neoliberal mode of dominance and subjectivation. Although in this section these terms are presented separately, in the following chapters I have intertwined them, in recognition of the fact that, in the life of the city, these categories are impossible to untangle and these agents are always constructed as a transversal composition of complex positionalities in which outsider-ness, strangers-ness and un/governability constituted the ground both to contrast neoliberal governmentality, and to affirm a collective project of alter-subjectivation and emancipation.

### **2.3.1 Acts of citizenship**

In a context in which neoliberal governmentality produces a fragmented society of individuals in permanent competition and in a purely relationship of dominance with the state, I look here at the production of transversal alliances among those subjects that cannot be represented. This is my starting point for the analysis of the possibility of politics from the position of the subaltern through acts capable of escaping the normative subjectivation of neoliberalism.

To do this, it is necessary to shift our theoretical attention to the production of power relations and practices of resistance and revolt in those social fields which are typically not understood as political. Here Papadopoulos, Stephenson and Tsianos (2008) propose the notion of ‘imperceptible politics’ as a social and political engagement where agents are situated at the level of everyday life.

Imperceptible politics attempts to address the proliferating emergence of enunciations as ‘rumours’ (Guha, 1994, Yang, 1987, Barthes, 1989) - where «actants without legitimacy can insert themselves into the political field, changing the architecture of the discourses in play» (Stephenson and Papadopoulos, 2006, 438). Imperceptible politics is defined as «the everyday strategy which allows us to move and to act below the over-coding regime of representation» (Papadopoulos et al., 2008, 76). Acting from and within everyday life, the politics of the outside does not demand the recognition of subaltern agencies, but rather aims to act politically for a transversal transformation of social dynamics in everyday life, beyond representational politics.

Such concerns are echoed in the work of Egin Isin. Isin’s concept of ‘acts of citizenship’ unfolds citizenship beyond the scheme of institutional representation, situating it as a «dialogical principle» that always «involves otherness» (Isin and Nielsen, 2008, 19; cf. Balibar and Wallerstein, 1991).

Acts of citizenship should be understood in themselves as unique and distinct from citizenship practices in the sense they are also actively answerable events, where the latter are institutional accumulated processes. (Isin and Nielsen, 2008, 10)

Acts of citizenship are always constitutive of something new, breaking away from the fixed social contract and involving the other in the production of alternative regulative frameworks for social life. Acts of citizenship are ruptures at the level of habits, they are mechanisms that open new possibilities. The demanding of rights and the imposition of obligations is embodied in the act, in the emotions and the expression of the acts, «[They] are the actual moments that shift established practices, status and order» (Isin and Nielsen, 2008, 10).

Reframed as an act, citizenship emerges in the contested territory of negotiation, conflict and cooperation. It can be defined as a form of permanent collective bargaining that involves a ‘becoming-activist’ of those subjects that take part *and take a side* in the existing set of social relations (Isin, 2008), inhabiting social relations of power and acting immanently to change the balance.

The concept of acts of citizenship thus leads to a rather sharp break with current citizenship studies in that it stretches the field well beyond the dominant liberal trajectory that dwells on a linear formal and legal language of status, rights, obligation, justice and order. [...] Acts of citizenship may be cultivated by or may transgress

practices and formal entitlement, as they emerge from the paradox between universal inclusion in the language of right and cosmopolitanism, on the one hand, and the inevitable exclusion in the language of community and particularity on the other. (Isin and Nielsen, 2008, 11)

Theorising acts of citizenship, Isin continues, implies the investigation of those ethical, cultural, embodied and social practices that «institute ways of being political» (Isin and Nielsen, 2008, 2) in the permanent production of cracks in the social order.

At stake is the crisis of the Western conception of citizenship - as an ontological condition of the citizen - where acts of citizenship disrupt the linearity of this concept through a series of disordering acts (Singer in Isin and Nielsen, 2008). Acts of citizenship are brought into being by those subjects that act, «refusing, resisting or subverting the orientations, strategies and technologies in which they find themselves implicated and the solidaristic, agonistic and alienating relationship in which they are caught.» (Isin and Nielsen, 2008, 38).

Building on Isin and Nielsen, here I therefore understand acts of citizenship in terms of 'becoming' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987): the 'becoming actor' of subjects, but also the becoming of acts themselves, i.e. the making and the consequences of acts as events that compose and transform society and its inhabitants.

To act means to set something in motion, to begin not just something new but oneself as the being endowed with the capacity to act. [...] 'to act' always means to enact the unexpected, unpredictable and the unknown. (Isin and Nielsen, 2008, 27)

The space of contemporary democracies appears therefore increasingly empty. Following Arendt, «the most the citizen can hope is to be represented» (Arendt quoted in Bonner, 2008, 205). But, she reminds us, neither acts nor opinions can be delegated and represented. Delegation, rather, operates at the level of representing only interests.

Focusing on deeds and words thus determines an alternative conception of the *polis*, as public realm, and of politics, and a different definition of citizenship emerges: a dynamic collection of those performative acts embodied by a mobilised society. But who is the protagonist of these acts of citizenship? For Isin (2002), the challenge is to construct a genealogy of immanent strangers and the internal outsiders, those that, even if inhabiting the same political space, are reduced to alterity, excluded, or rather foreclosed, from the civil definition of society and left outside the juridical framework of citizenship (cf. Rediker and Linebaugh, 2001). They are immanent and internal since they participate in the same social organisation as do recognised citizens, but they are *outsiders* or *strangers*, since they do not enjoy the same rights as the rest of the population.

In this research, these two categories will permanently intertwine in the analysis of the proliferation of those collective social bodies that enact rupturing events and construct the city as a space of multiplicities, differences, innovative compositions and social change (Isin, 2002).

### 2.3.2 The politics of the un/governed

Developing further the concept of citizenship discussed above, I conceptualise acts of citizenship as disruptive interventions in the public realm which are capable of transforming the parameters of formal citizenship and of instituting new relations in a community. Such acts are rather unpredictable, because they happen where politics is not supposed to arise, with languages that are not supposed to be spoken, embodied by immanent strangers and internal outsiders that are not entitled ontologically to the rights of citizenship. The research practices (cf. Chapter 3) and categories of the thinkers around subaltern studies are useful here in terms of engaging with this social acting. I therefore start here from the politics of the un/governed, a politics developed from outside the *civitas*, outside the equivalence between state, civil society and Nation.

Chatterjee's notion of 'political society' (2004) refers to a political actor outside the representative democratic model but internal to the dynamics of social production, excluded from civil society but governed by the state (Guha, 1997, Chatterjee, 1998, 2004, 2005). In the impossibility of representation, Chatterjee affirms, the excluded populations intervene in the political space from outside citizenship, and the challenge is to consider the temporary and unstable possibilities of speaking for the un/governed, conditioned but not fully determined by the hetero-determination of the native produced by European institutional languages (Chatterjee, 2004).

Given that the native and the subaltern have been considered as unable to speak autonomously - trapped in the impossibility of configuring their own language beyond the euro-centric determination of their subaltern position (Spivak, 1988), Chatterjee proposes a possible escape route in the concrete configuration of experiences of non-civil confrontation and political clashes. For Chatterjee, indeed, both the reduction of the subaltern to a pre-modern positionality, and the imposition of a romantic and euro-centric understanding of the political expression of the subaltern, do not completely constrain the expressive force of political society (Chatterjee, 2004). Precisely because the un/governed is not incorporated within the representative regime of civil society, an excessive dimension emerges which holds forth the possibility of a temporary heterogeneous time-space of expression and acting in which they are capable of affecting the concrete configuration of the political relations of society - before the re-affirmation of a civil (and foreclosing) logic of institutional representation.

This immanent and contingent space of politics is embodied, incarnated in those agencies that redefine in an antagonistic way their relationship to the state. If civil society appears as

(re)presented on a 'neutered' and neutral body - the masculine and white '(no)body' (Puwar, 2004, Grosz, 1999), the invasion of public space is the political intervention of an immanent but different body in the constituted and 'neutered' space of citizenship, a fundamental act that allows the speaking of the un/governed, of the political society.

What Puwar calls 'space invaders' embody belonging as an act that disrupts institutional order. In this sense, Puwar (2004) proposes two positions useful for this research. First is the position of gender. With regard to the industrial and patriarchal production of the dichotomy between the political-public and the intimate-private space (Benjamin, 1997) patriarchal constituted power contained women in an 'internal outside' of society, foreclosing them from enjoying public-political freedom. However, where Arendt (Bonner, 2008, 203) recognises the public realm as the realm of responsibility and freedom - and the private as realm of necessity, Pateman (1988) points out the constitutive and artificial construction of this impossibility of politics in the private space, and the imposed subalternity of gender produced via the foreclosure of women from the *agora*.

In this sense, feminist citizenship configures a critique of citizenship counterpoising a novel and antagonistic conception of the act of citizenship as a rupture of the public-private division, an invasion of the *agora*. Feminist citizenship is the active destruction of the conception of the citizen as individuals participating in a predetermined and ontological social contract (Pateman, 1988). It is the affirmation of an act of citizenship that breaks apart the frontiers of intimacy and politicise the space of everyday life. In this acting, new political space can be found which is capable of contrasting the liberal and individualistic understanding of citizenship as public, where women can participate «as women in a context of civil equality and active citizenship» (Pateman quoted in Mouffe, 1995, 322).

Second, Puwar (2004) analyses and intertwines this gender dimension with the racial production of the social contract, stressing the importance of the body as a signifier for an efficient norm of privation and domination in the configuration of a positivist definition of the *maturity* of European power in opposition to the natural - savage - dimension of the colonised and racialized body, aliens in the belly (Scott et al., 1979) of Europe: immanent strangers (Isin, 2002).

The function of this racial contract is parallel to the one of the gender division of public and private realms. While the latter imposes an artificial separation between private and public space, the racial contract implies and imposes a segmentation of citizenship and a differentiation of rights. The historical linearity from the natural to the historical, and from the savage to the political affirms a teleological convergence of all societies towards industrial full citizenship (Marshall, 1950, Mezzadra, 2002). This teleology is not only utopian - in the literal sense - it is also the artificial construction of a flow of history imposed to guarantee the permanent subordination of, and the possibility of governing, racialized immanent strangers.

In the implosion of the racial contract of the colony (Dubois, 1898, James, 1992, Boutang, 1998) and its proliferation in the metropolis (Gilroy, 1990, 1991, Boutang, 2006, De Genova, 2010), this practice and conception of citizenship makes explicit the link between the formal rights of citizenship and the material conditions of labour. The act of citizenship of immanent strangers, as act of public invasion, explodes the somatic homogeneity of the Nation and denounces the racial segmentation of citizenship as a tool to segment labour rights and govern production.

From these two position we can therefore argued that embodied citizenship, the expression of the un/governed and the possibility of engaging with otherness, are the material conditions for thinking politics in the impossibility of a homogenous and unitarian form of social organisation constructed around fixed articulations.

### 2.3.3 Autonomous cooperation against subsumption

The acting insurgencies of the un/governed against juridical citizenship confront, 'from outside and below' (Arendt, 1944, 2007), the governance of society and of social production. In contrast to the operation of citizenship as a tool for the deployment of a rationale of governance, the 'social acting' of the un/governed configures a conflict which affirms an alternative social organisation of production.

Autonomy - as the independent production of norms - is the ground of antagonism for the definition of alternative modes of production and distribution of social wealth (Negri, 1999). In the expansion of production from labour to life, the struggle for the rights of citizenship therefore becomes a significant space to affirm a different regulation of social relations of production via the transformation of social relations of power (cf. Gramsci, 1975a).

As already noted, the subsumption of life by capitalism operates through dispositifs of differential inclusion (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2008) that reduce human activities to abstract labour. Contemporary capitalism accumulates *both* by extending the spaces for its extraction of value (formal subsumption) *and* intensifying its force of extraction (real subsumption). In this process of complex and intertwined subsumption, the dialectic between labour and capital is determined by the qualitative difference between the abstracting force of capital and the situated position of workers as subjects that resist this abstraction.

Subjective versus objective labour. Workers against capital, or better workers, women, queer, black, latinos, and a long etcetera of internal outsiders, immanent strangers that participate in social production versus the attempt by capital to command production, to dominate cooperation, to govern society, to abstract life (Negri, 1991, Tronti, 1972). Through neoliberal subjectivation, contemporary capitalism recombines and exploits not only the immateriality of cognitive labour

but also the materiality of everyday life: not only the general intellect – linguistic and cognitive skills - but also the «abilities [of workers], [their] social relations, their capacities to affect and relate to other bodies, their potentialities» (Papadopoulos et al., 2008, 224). In the blurring of the separation between the spheres of production and reproduction, capital deals with the commodification of life through the inclusion in the process of production of a continuum of relations, skills and sensibilities (Precarias a la deriva, 2004).

This dis-symmetric dialectic between the objective and subjective dimension of production is the dynamic in which the agencies of the internal outsiders, immanent strangers and the un/governed act to affirm an autonomous organisation in the present time of social (re)production (cf. Negri, 2003). As previously seen, the invasion of politics operated by these situated agencies develops through their permanent becoming: becoming citizens, becoming active, being political (Isin and Nielsen, 2008, Isin, 2008).

In opposition to the politics of the crowds (Canetti, 1978), ‘packs’ is a useful term for understanding the functioning of outside politics. While the crowd crystallises - as small rigid groups that lead and structure the crowd – and reminds us of the functioning of identity politics, packs never appear as a project of uniformity and fixity, but always as projects in which social transformations happen in the immanence of change. For Canetti (1978) packs cannot grow until they engage in a process of metamorphosis, opening themselves to social life, negotiating their own positions in a complex environment, and changing their internal structures, through the inclusion of external (material and symbolic) elements in the institution of a new, open space. Packs, therefore, can survive only by transforming themselves and inventing social commonalities, cooperating for the production of a novel society - a common *oeuvre* - and, eventually, translating their own constitutive mobility as *social movements* into a generalised political mobility of *society* as a whole (Sanchez Cedillo, 2009, Negri, 1980).

This distinction allows us to stress how autonomy is not only antagonistic but also immanent. The destituent-constituent tension at stake in antagonism against the state emerges as a tension that institutes new forms of social organisation. The problem of instituting therefore is a crucial one as the destituent power addresses not only the hegemony of the state, but also its forms of functioning.

Despite the apparent conceptual opposition, destitution as *destituent power* would thus yield the outlines of an instituent activity, which is emancipatorily different from the institutional apparatuses that limit the field of the possible [i.e. the state] and which, incidentally, perhaps cannot be grasped with – here largely omitted – conceptualisations of *constitution*. (Nowotny, 2009b, 215)



The space of instituent practices therefore cannot be read as consequent to the constituent power, but inherent (Nowotny, 2009a). If institution is defined as a collective form of organisation that responds to a social desire - as opposed to instinct as the individual response to a need (Deleuze, 2004) - instituent agencies are the ones that aim to bring into being autonomous modes of social organisation of production that resist the abstraction of use values into commodities (Nowotny, 2009a, Raunig, 2009b, Balibar, 2002).

To analyse the dis-symmetric dialectic between governmentality and insurgencies is therefore to analyse those social practices that forge new institutions. But, in order to make concrete this analysis, it is necessary to situate the analysis in a specific context. For this research, my focus therefore narrows on the dialectic between governmentality and insurgencies in the social production of the city; where the space of instituent practices can be grasped in the assembling of a myriad of struggles for the right to the city.

## 2.4 Why urban space?

As part of the collapse of Fordist governmentality and the reconfiguration of insurgencies beyond the Fordist mode of social regulation, the force of abstraction of capital moved from the time-space of waged labour to the complexity of social life as a whole. In contrast to this expansion and intensification of capitalist abstraction, practices both of resistance and autonomy emerged in urban everyday life.

In the conflict between subsumption and emancipation, I stressed the complexity of the conflict between social genesis and government focusing on three different levels. Firstly, the relevance of regimes of truth in the contrast between neoliberal subjectivation and dominance, and the related emergence of acts of citizenship (sections 2.2.3 and 2.3.1). Secondly, the function of status in segmenting populations and the emergence of politics outside civil representation (sections 2.2.2 and 2.3.2). And, finally, the contrast between command and autonomy in the expansion of production in social life (sections 2.2.1 and 2.3.3). The struggle for the rights of citizenship is crucial for understanding the way in which relations of power are imposed over the relation of production - the relationship between governance and genesis (Foucault, 1998).

In the expansion and specification of capitalist subsumption over the sphere of social life, the space of the city becomes a privileged point of view for the examination of this relationship - in the sense that the rights of citizenship can be re-articulated as the concrete relations of power that organise social relations of production in the city. In the shift beyond the regulatory framework of industrial and Fordist capitalism and in the emergence of the colony in the belly of the metropolis, the space of the Nation, as regulator of production, has been substituted by the global market, i.e. the flexible organisation of urban competition under neoliberal globalisation.

The city, «a work in which all citizens participate» (Mitchell, 2003, 17), has become a crucial field for social production and for the abstraction of values. The urban is here conceptualised as a permanent and participative process of construction, creation and invention, and it is invested by the capitalist attempt to transform the *oeuvre* - the use-value of urban life into a commodity, an exchange value for the market. «[The] city itself [becomes a commodity], in a world where consumerism, tourism, cultural and knowledge-based industries have become major aspects of the urban political economy.» (Harvey, 2007, 27).

Within these dynamics of valorisation, urban regions and global cities increasingly become a pole of attraction for flows of migration, and a machine of difference (Isin, 2002) and segmentation (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2008). The global competition among these poles of production becomes the new principle for affirming belonging and discipline and for modulating rights of citizenship as forms of governance over social production (Soja, 2000, Gordon, 1999, Sassen, 1994).

In order to properly situate this conflict in urban space a triple dynamic of urban life needs to be presented. First, the political dynamic of the city as a public realm of relations of power. Second the dynamic of the urban as a space of human activity - of relations of production - and, third, the specific dialectic between these two.

The first of these dynamics relates to the way in which:

The *polis* [...] is the organisation of people as it arises out of acting and speaking together, and its true space lies between people living together for this purpose [...] the space of appearance where I appear to others and others appear to me (Arendt in Bonner, 2008, 203)

According to Bonner (2008), the space of the city is a space configured as political in that everybody enjoys political freedom - i.e. can participate in and be responsible for the governance of the city. Challenging this approach from the perspective outlined above, I argue that the space of the *polis* as political space is, in fact, configured in the tension between those who are included and enjoy political freedom and the unrecognised who are marginalised but invade the space of the city *being political - acting citizenship* (Isin, 2002, Isin and Nielsen, 2008). The tension is therefore between the rules of convivence that are established - the textual codification of an ontological right of citizenship attached to the free-man - and the constituent force of invasion of immanent strangers, internal outsiders and the un/governed, the aim of which is to re/write the constitution from outside the framework of civil mediation. For the governed, the outsiders and the strangers, the society of the city is determined only by 'political' relations of power (in Gramsci, 1975a, and Chatterjee's, 2004, terms).

The second dynamic refers to the way in which this tension between governor and governed, between constituted and constituent, is maintained on the side of power to guarantee the governability of urban life as a social process of production. As proposed by Benjamin, in marxist terms (Benjamin, 1969), the city is a commodity or, rather, *appears* as ‘an immense collection of commodities’ (Marx, 1980). The struggle for the right *to the city* is a struggle that engages with what is underneath this appearance. Urban space, in its appearance as a public relation among citizens is (almost) always mediated by commodities. But underneath lies a conflictive relationship between social value - in its double form as use and exchange value - and the source of this social value, i.e. socially necessary labour-time (Harvey, 2010, Marx, 1980). In this sense, I conceptualise the city in terms of the urban translation of the complex system of subsumption proposed above. On the one hand, capital includes new spheres of life under its control - reducing human life to the chains of dead labour i.e. to the mechanisms of abstraction of ‘absolute’ surplus-value. On the other hand, capital specifies the mechanisms of abstraction of ‘relative’ surplus-value to the different segments of social production - determining different statuses to abstract each life-world according to a specific mechanism of life-commodification (cf. Lazzarato, 2004).

In the scheme I propose, the first dynamic includes new dimensions of social life in capitalist circulation - *extending* the power of capital; the second intensifies the mechanisms of abstraction - *specifying* the practices of exploitation over singular segments of social cooperation.

The third dynamic I want to stress relates to the way in which this double tension between extension and specification can be read according to another polarity between objective and subjective dimensions; the objective polarity of expansion/inclusion, and the subjective resistance and transgression against specification/intensification. The objective polarity deals with the transformations of the modes of exploitation of social spaces (Section 2.5.1) while the subjective tension addresses the conflict between capital and urban inhabitants (Section 2.5.2). Urban space and urban life appear as new continents both of production and political struggle (Gilroy, 1990, 1991, Gorz, 1997) when urban struggles become «singular historical expressions of a general and complex process: here class struggle and urban problems get strictly intertwined and the new social contradictions develop in everyday life» (Castells and de Solis, 1997, 13, my translation; cf. Castells, 1985).

The dialectic between relations of production and relations of power is articulated around the dis-symmetry between genesis and governance - between the attempt to use the value of the city by its inhabitants for social cooperation, and the attempt by capital to realise the exchange value inscribed in urban life in the global market. Or, the other way around, the complex process of subsumption is in conflict with a collective project of emancipation that aims to resist abstraction and produce autonomy in social production.

## 2.5 The right to the city

### 2.5.1 The city as machine of production

Beyond analysing the logic of the contemporary urban mode of social production and its relevance for this research, it is useful to recollect and summarise here those models that investigate the functioning of the city as a machine of production. Such models, indeed, provide an opportunity to think through the process of the expansion/intensification of production in the field of social life, i.e. *the social factory* (Negri, 1988), in the specific context of the urban space. In this sense, some of the debates around the city as a machine of production are useful in terms of the relevance of 'place as a commodity' (Harvey, 2001), as well as the relations of production inscribed in urban life, beyond the time and space of waged labour and the factory. In this sense, I review the local growth machine of Harvey Molotch (1976), the entrepreneurial city of David Harvey (2001), the revanchist city of Neil Smith (1996), as well as Saskia Sassen's (2001) global city. Finally, the idea of the neoliberal city as a broader analysis of the functioning of the contemporary city will be depicted.

The starting point for Molotch (1976) is the recognition of urban space (especially land) as a commodity the use of which is determined by «an aggregate of land-based interests» (Molotch, 1976, 310). These interests are forged not only by commercial but also by psychological and sentimental terms: a set of social variables that include the morals, the aims and the feelings of the community. «Place is not only a basis for carrying on life but an object from which to derive wealth» (Rodgers, 2009, 8). The fundamental conflict over the commodification of urban places is, for Molotch, around the dialectic between use and exchange value - in the sense that the value of the space for the community is reconfigured as a value in the market. In this dialectic of production between use and exchange, Molotch identifies a crisis of the mechanism of representational politics, because political interests are marked by economic interests and politicians are increasingly «businessmen and, among businessmen, the more parochial sort» (Molotch, 1976, 313).

Since the fiscal crisis of the 1970s, private enterprises have participated in the management of the city with increasingly less institutional mediation (MacLeod, 2002, Peck and Tickell, 2002), defining priorities, planning and policies directly in accordance with private interests. Following the collapse of the redistributive function of the Keynesian Welfare National System, public resources were invested to produce flagship projects to attract foreign investments, giving birth to an entrepreneurial city (Harvey, 2001). This model of city governance was based upon the assumption of capital-risk by the public sector and upon the renovated importance of place - as a commodity to sell - over the complexity of territory, where private investments intervened in the city as they would with any other process of production (Harvey, 2001). Culture, image, civic

public life become therefore a form of social capital for the constitution of an urban commodity in a market of global competition, where the local specificity of urban spaces makes possible the territorialisation of the process of production and the mobilisation of 'local advantage' in the competition between urban regions.

Beyond the affirmation of a new material logic (private interest) and the emergence of a new agency in the governance of the city (the private sector), it is important here to investigate how this logic of governance is discursively legitimised - i.e. the regime of truth that sustains it. In this sense Florida's creative class and the notion of the 'three Ts' (technology, talent, tolerance) can be understood as a discourse on the process of production of the urban commodity (Florida, 2002, 2004). Florida's discourse of the 'creative city' is, moreover, characterised by a depoliticising use of econometrics in a manner which forecloses critical understandings of the political dynamics of the city.

The neoliberal city, then, can be understood as a machine of production, a factory that organises the social cooperation of urban life; a social factory that abstracts the time and the space of life under the global language of capital. This is achieved via a mode of governance, imposed through the material constitution of urban space according to private interests, the affirmation of private agencies as decision makers in institutional politics, and finally the construction of a discourse that aims to guarantee the stability of this model. The linearity of this discourse has been contested and disarticulated by critical thinkers and social movements, putting social conflict back into the depiction of urban dynamics. In this sense, Smith (1996) stressed the revanchist dimension of the urban project of the 1980s against minorities and subalterns, when neoliberal forces imposed a regime of discrimination in the provision of social services and the dismantling of the welfare system.

The neoliberal strategy generalises and globalises the principle of individual interest, and urban space emerges as a hinge in the affirmation of this mode of production on the global scale. This is determined by three intertwining dynamics (Sassen, 1994, 2001). First, the specificity of place as a commodity in the global market. Here urban space emerges as the place where the local economies, the material chains of globalisation, can be abstracted. Second, the global city reshapes the urban labour market, configuring it as a segmented regime and allowing the implementation of tiers and borders on the singular bodies of urban inhabitants. Third, the global city emerges as a place where globalisation can be modulated and where space operates as a *translator* of neoliberal logic in the complex scalarity of globalisation, becoming the material and semiotic hinge of neoliberal governmentality.

In this process of localisation, segmentation and abstraction, the neoliberal city emerges as a space where the political dimension is deconstructed and in which the technocratic legitimacy of policies is affirmed, according to Swyngedouw, through the *annulment of dissensus* (2008). Un-

der the entrepreneurial management of the creative city, minorities and subalterns are rendered invisible through the discursive production of an undefined agency - the creative class - within which the fragmentations and conflicts inside the potency of urban production are foreclosed (De Nicola and Vercellone, 2007).

A relation of force and annulment in which neoliberalism has been capable of affirming the «right to be alone» and the «right of free passage» (Mitchell, 2005, 85) as the two coupled limits in the determination of an individualist and *purely atomic* (Mitchell, 2005, 77) conception of citizenship. Privacy and civic un-politicised engagement have become the poles of social interaction where floating bubbles and buffer zones are the vertebral articulation of urban space (Mitchell, 2005).

In the affirmation of this individualistic and production-related definition of citizenship, the role of civil politics as institutional mediation of conflicts comes to an end and a purely 'political' relation between state and society is imposed, where conflict and negotiations can happen only in specified positions and on the basis of pure relations of force (Guha, 1997, Hall et al., 1996). The attempt is to empty any collective space of politics in the city by the generalisation of the fragmented and precarised individual, while the command of capital expands its ability of control over cooperation across the whole of social life.

In opposition to this project of dominance and subjection, the right to the city emerged since the 1970s as a collective project of emancipation from below, through practices of the appropriation of urban space and the inhabitation of difference.

### **2.5.2 The roots of the right to the city**

The right to the city as political claim has been increasingly present both in recent theoretical debates and in urban movements globally. Contemporary movements for social justice in major American cities, and particularly in the Latino communities, moved from the campaigns against the Patriot Act of 2006 to mixed platforms for organising migrants and the urban poor on social and spatial justice.

David Harvey has opened a dialogue with these movements, on the one hand providing a theoretical and historical background – by linking the right to the city to his works on social justice and urban space (cf. Harvey, 1973, 2003) - but also intertwining different local and (sometimes) hidden histories of urban movements advancing the right to the city from the 1970s to the present day (Harvey, 2007).

During the 1970s, and with the decline of the workers movements, urban social movements appeared as precarious and fragile collectivities in the political field - a collectivity defending a common right of use over urban wealth. This should be understood as the emergence of a

new wave of social movements that would recognise themselves first of all as 'urban' (Castells, 1985).

Focusing here on British examples, the impossibility of being recognised as full citizens has been identified as the trigger of the revolts of black communities in London and in the rest of the country in the latter part of the 1970s and in the beginning of the 1980s. Black movements challenged the spatiality of the city and the segregation and segmentation of citizenship as a means for the refusal of the capitalistic organisation of labour.

Black expressive cultures [...] have articulated a political and philosophical critique of work and productivism [as a] critique of work in general and the capitalist division of labour in particular [aiming to] work less, consume better and reintegrate culture with everyday life. (Gilroy, 1991, 319)

The organisation of anti-racist movements developed around communitarian questions of social access to services: education, social services, cultural recognition and the need to gain a degree of control over the processes which shape day to day experience. This development determined the forms of organisation of anti-racist urban social movements such as Rock against Racism and in the mobilisations of the Grunwick strike, and more generally in the wave of urban social movements of the 1970s and the 1980s in Britain (Wilson, 1997, Hall et al., 1975, Gilroy, 1991).

This has also been the case in Barcelona, where the conflicts around transport, gender and health, as well as subcultural and countercultural expression can be identified as the triggers of new ways of doing politics for rights of social production in the city (cf. Chapter 4).

In this dialogue between theory and practice and between contemporary and older movements, the right to the city emerges as «far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanisation. The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights» (Harvey, 2007, 23).

However, in order to affirm the right to the city, it is necessary to intervene also in the economic dynamics of the city. The right to the city is reduced to a rhetorical and ineffective statement, if urban social movements do not arrest the accumulation of capital by dispossession and the abstraction of urban life into the logic of capital. The right to the city must, as such, achieve democratic control over the economy of the city and «over the production and utilisation of the surplus» emerging from urban life (Harvey, 2007, 37).

### 2.5.3 Appropriation, inhabitation and autonomy

Having analysed the configuration of neoliberal governmentality in contemporary urban space, I want to focus on the processes of resistance and invention that happen in the city today as laboratories in the creation of a political project of emancipation. The right to the city as «a cry and a demand. . . a transformed and renewed right to urban life» (Lefebvre, 1996, 158).

In order to analyse the right to the city as antagonistic process versus the abstraction of urban life by capital, I begin by reviewing two dimensions of this antagonism. The first is the dimension of *appropriation*, conceptualised as acts against the privatisation of the management of urban space. The second dimension is that of *inhabitation*, understood as acts against the alienation of urban space from those who enact it. Afterwards the resistance against subsumption will be addressed in terms of the concrete production of *autonomy*.

For Mitchell (Mitchell, 2003; cf. Lefebvre, 1996), the right to the city is a collective practice that challenges the transformation of social *oeuvre* - the city - into a commodified product. However, claiming the right to the city implies that it is necessary to face the ambiguity of rights as a space of social conflict (Mitchell, 2003). If, on the one hand, Mitchell stresses the skepticism of Marx on rights as organising principle, he affirms that «rights remain efficacious only to the degree they are backed by power. . . rights are at once means of organising power, means of contesting power, and means of adjudicating power» (Mitchell, 2003, 22).

The right to the city is in this sense a constituent power, in that it aims to constitute a social contract for a new community outside and against capitalist relations of production. When capital works by abstracting social labour and abstracting the social dynamics of urban space, «a revolution that does not produce a new space . . . has not changed life itself but has merely changed ideological superstructures, institutions of political apparatuses» (Lefebvre, 1991, 54). The increasing coincidence of the regimes of segmentation and segregation of neoliberal governance has meant the violent enclosure of urban space and the expulsion of urban inhabitants. However it has also triggered the flourishing of radical and antagonistic uses of the city to resist this bordering of urban life.

The three levels of the analysis of governmentality discussed above can be analysed now from the perspective of urban insurgencies for the right to the city. The conflict between *appropriation* and privatisation opposes the open use of the city as *oeuvre* to the exclusive right of domain and disposal of the urban as property of a commodity (Lefebvre, 1991, Mitchell, 2003). Furthermore, the regime of truth of neoliberal subjectivation and dominance is contested through the material *inhabitation* of the city as alter-subjectivation and translation between differences (Lefebvre, 1996, Isin, 2002). Finally the subsumption of life as exchange value in the chains of global capital is contested in the production of spheres of performative and prefigur-



ative *autonomy* in the organisation of social production. Below I elaborate on these elements of urban insurgencies.

### **The appropriation of life-worlds**

Here I want to analyse the antagonistic dimension of the right to the city with regard to the conflict between appropriation and privatisation. I am concerned with the appropriation of urban space from the margins, thus challenging the private management of urban space and citizenship as a dispositif to govern the distribution of wealth.

In this conflict, the production of life-worlds becomes a field of struggle (Chakrabarty, 2000) where an affirmative appropriation of spaces challenges a practice of segmentation and expulsion. Appropriation concerns access to the rights of citizenship. Ethnic and racial divisions in the discursive affirmation of the Nation as well as the invisibilisation of the discriminatory dynamics around gender and racial minorities (Puwar, 2004, Lister, 2003) marked the concrete limits, or rather produced tiers, in the production of the citizen, unveiling the illusion and contesting the homogeneity of the Nation in the metropolitan space.

In the ambiguity and contradictions of a process in which subaltern agents live between being outsiders and becoming insiders (Puwar, 2004), the political appropriation of urban space is determined by the generation of alternative life-worlds that aim to gain legitimacy in the configuration of the city both in institutional and spatial terms - without being sublimated under the universal logic of capital (Chakrabarty, 2000).

My understanding of the practice of appropriation against abstraction can be summarised in three terms: alliance, translation and instituent practice.

First, in the practice of appropriation, alliance cannot be understood in the terms of a political project of fixed articulation. It is not the reduction of the «different experiences of precariousness into a singular form with a unitary cause», like the concept of class served for the social movements of industrial workers (Gill and Pratt, 2008; cf. Lorey, 2006, Raunig, 2010*b*, Mezzadra, 2010). As feminists and post-colonial scholars have argued, one problem with the concept of class is the fact that it homogenised differences. In contrast, alliance is conceptualised here as a practice for a non-ideological interaction among the uneven and scattered positions of the immanent strangers, internal outsiders and the un/governed.

Second, a significant category of analysis comes from translational studies: the concept of 'homolingual address of translation'. Mezzadra transplants the critical vision of Sakai (Sakai, 1997, Sakai and Solomon, 2006, Sakai, 2006) from the political critique of linguistics to the broader analysis of the global dynamics of capital. Mezzadra uses the concept of the homolingual address of translation to refer to the force of integration, assimilation and abstraction

that allows contemporary capitalism to reduce the multiplicity of life-worlds and societies to the global language of value (Sakai, 1997, 71; cf. Mezzadra and Neilson, 2008, Mezzadra, 2010). In opposition to the homolingual address of capital, heterolingual translations bring into being ways of doing and conceptualising politics through contingent alliances, and the ability of translation among themselves and towards the instituted power.

Third, this process should not be understood in terms of an ideological dimension, but as an institutional project or, more accurately, a set of instituent practices (Raunig, 2009b, Sanchez Cedillo, 2009). The political project of appropriation through instituting does not reduce the complexity of social life to an ideological unity for defining a programme. Rather, the instituent practice deals with the configuration of a diagram of cooperation for inventing new practices; a synchronic process of invention, where differences are conjugated in a specific process of the collective production of new forms of organisation (Salvini, 2008).

### **Inhabiting difference, politicising precarity**

The possibility of thinking the right to the city as antagonistic practice of inhabitation against alienation rests upon the presumption that «human beings [that produce the *oeuvre*, human beings in the city] are at the disposal of others, that we are already relational, and that dependency is not a socially variant feature of our lives, but a precondition» (Butler in Grvzinic and Reitsamer, 2008, 139; Butler, 2006a). Inhabitation is a condition of human life both in generating society and in governing it.

Here I propose cooperation as the practice that resist the alienation of life and institute precarity as political inhabitation of an individualised position of subalternity. The capacities of metamorphosis and networking, as elements of cooperation, become political acts to invent new formations in opposition to and in negotiation with, but not inside, the hierarchical spaces of neoliberal governmentality. This political field involves «the production of a different type of politics, where the capacity to connect and disconnect is used productively as a kind of degree zero to which it is important to return and relate to» (Terranova, 2002, 7; cf. Lorey, 2006, 2011).

Precarity therefore emerges as a position from where to act politically: intervening in society, constituting novel rights in the field of citizenship (Isin, 2002, Neilson and Rossiter, 2008). Recombination and cooperation can be seen as mechanisms of translation of vulnerability and relationality, as positions of precarity, into political acts of and by the precarians. At this ‘degree zero’, understood not as a origin but as a degree of full potentiality, the weakness of the individual can become a shared fragility and the ‘incalculable relations’ of human beings in the city (Butler in Grvzinic and Reitsamer, 2008, Butler, 2006a) can become a practice of escaping the social contract in force.

Though precarity itself is not new, there has been a generalisation of the marginal regimes of industrial capitalism as a dominant culture of capitalist exploitation in contemporary production. The exploitation of statuses and vulnerability have been analysed especially from feminist and post-colonial perspectives. Morini (2007), for example, proposes gender as a dispositif of segmentation and analyses a 'becoming-woman' of labour:

It can be maintained that the figure of social precariousness today is woman [and that the emerging] pliable, hyper-flexible [worker] draws on the baggage of the female experience. (Morini, 2007, 43)

In this generalisation of a mode of exploitation typically experienced by women (Fortunati and Fleming, 1995, Federici, 1999, Barbagallo and Federici, 2012), the space of bargaining shifts from the public to the private space and therefore from the political and conflictive context of society to the intimacy and the individuality of every singular life: labour is contracted, bargained over and fixed on a singular basis «fostering the denial of any social corporeality or of any corporeality of 'class'» (Morini, 2007, 44).

If under Regulationist Fordism, terms like mass, stability and regulation were dominant, in our precarious present terms such as «finitude, dependency and vulnerability» (Butler in Grvzinic and Reitsamer, 2008, 135) become the pillars for the regulation of labour. «We can think of this as a new form of bio-power, and also as a way of managing a population by keeping its status permanently precarious» (Butler in Grvzinic and Reitsamer, 2008, 138). In this context, the modes of expression of the un/governed are useful since they are always temporary, fragile and constituted on the basis of a mutual support rather than political representation (Guha, 1994). The legitimacy of these social institutions is temporary and based on the active involvement of social groups in political life, not on their stable representation in fixed institutions. Through invention, the un/governed can take back, although partially and temporarily, the ability of expression and participate as an agency in the governing of society (cf. Spivak, 1988, Chakrabarty, 2002, 1998).

Precarity emerges as a possible, unstable and contradictory heterolingual translation in Europe of the position of the un/governed whose only possibility for demanding rights is outside the game of representation, through cooperation, as inhabitation of difference and alliance through fragility against governmentality.

### **Autonomy as prefigurative performance of space**

Through the appropriation of space as a practice of alliance and composition against abstraction, and the inhabitation of difference as a way of making the composition of fragilities a ground to politicise the continuous experience of precarity, the struggle for the right to the city emerges

as a process of permanent transformation of the social definition of citizenship and of its role in regulating production.

Via the production of practices and discourses to confront new dimensions of capitalist exploitation in urban production, the right to the city emerges as a prefigurative and performative mode of appropriation of the chains of production and consumption - i.e the cycle of social reproduction in the city. What have been the social practices and discourse which have been capable of modifying the social norms of urban space and of introducing new institutional protocols, new social behaviours and new collective entitlements for the social organisation of production and consumption?

The definition of prefigurative space as a dimension of the immanence of the right to the city borrows its meaning from the idea of prefigurative politics - as those practices that «create and sustain within the live practice of the movement, relationships and political forms that ‘pre-figured’ and embodied the desired society» (Breines, 1980, 6). The aim is to re-inscribe politics in the continuous experience of everyday life and understand its relationship to the space of the state, where the latter is conceptualised as part of a complex socio-institutional assemblage (Stephenson and Papadopoulos, 2006).

In this sense, the instituent question emerges as crucial. The institutional formation forged by these social movements has a hybrid dimension since they escape the fixity of instituted structures and it has a monstrous dimension since they invade the space of capital: ‘Monster institutions’ as «politicisation (and metamorphosis) of life», as a «monstrous intrusion of the unsuitable into history» (Universidad Nomada, 2009, 238). Monstrosity refers to the pre-modern or non-political *appearance* of such institutions, as they are perceived in the frame of Modern politics, and to the possibility of accelerating and accumulating «a density and a series of possibilities for intellectual creativity and collective political action that will contribute to inventing another politics» (Sanchez Cedillo, 2009, 227; cf. Carmona et al., 2008, Raunig, 2009b, Raunig and Ray, 2009).

Referring to the contribution of Negri (1980), Cedillo (2009) affirms the need to engage with a collective and political production of institutions, a ‘communist production’ (Negri, 1980) of institutions, by which he means the centrality of producing institutionality from the social in a manner which is capable of constructing an independent and alternative projectuality to affirm the possible autonomy of social cooperation and to escape the individual self-valorisation of neoliberal governance.

Beyond the capacity of co-option and the reduction of difference to norm on the side of power, and the practices of resistance of the un/governed, there is another level of social change we need to consider: invasion and attack from the outside. The space of conflict is never to be considered as a clash from exclusion, but a porous membrane between the dominant and the

subaltern. For this reason it is necessary to link the prefigurativity of spaces to the performativity of enunciations in order to analyse the immanent social change produced by the struggles for the right to the city. The textual and spatial production of the ‘society to come’ lies in the *present continuous*, not in the future.

When protesters in Seattle chanted ‘this is what democracy looks like’, they meant to be taken literally. In the best tradition of direct action, they not only confronted a certain form of power, exposing its mechanisms and attempting literally to stop it in its tracks: they did it in a way which demonstrated why the kind of social relations on which it is based were unnecessary. (Graeber, 2004, 84)

The production of enunciations which characterised the beginning of the 2000s in the form of the global movements against neoliberalism became a wider social process of production during the crisis of the global war, when streets and squares emerged as spaces where collective acts and enunciations were taking place. It was, using the category of Rossi-Landi (1983), the appraisal of a phenomena of common-speaking: a common act of collective speaking where enunciation is defined by the social function it involves, because of how it operates in a social environment (Foucault, 1972a).

Enunciations are always determined in the relation between the social praxis of linguistics and its semiotics (Foucault, 2002), between an expression and the attempt of changing a social configuration of power (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). Enunciations are machinic and social, because their functioning depends on specific aesthetic frameworks, technological contexts, linguistic assets, configurations of power, legitimacy and so on (Marazzi, 2002, Marazzi et al., 2008, Raunig, 2009c). Enunciation functions and operates in a social environment. But what is their operativity? Their performativity? Their ability to change the world? «Within speech act theory, a performative is that discursive practice that enacts or produces that which it names» (Butler, 1993, 13). According to Butler, the linguistic performativity of gender defines the social production of a subaltern positionality of *women* in the configuration of a patriarchal organisation of society.

On the other side of this definition, however, there is the function of language in producing a new world. What are the collective enunciations operated by subaltern agents? What are the linguistic and material expressions coming from political society capable of *give themselves* the right of citizenship? Is it possible to think the right to the city, the right to inhabit urban space, as a collective act capable of defining the norms of urban sociality – by questioning the relation between truth and power – and therefore the legitimacy and the procedures of governing? Is it possible to think about performative enunciations as a political field of emancipation and the production of an alternative world?

Virno (2003) introduces the practice of common speaking in the post-Fordist analytical frame as a productive dimension in the *oeuvre* (Lefebvre, 1991). By producing a language, collectivities produce a new way of organising social life (Foucault, 1972*b,a*). However, this constituent move is problematic, since when life is the engine of social production the ethical demand for a good life becomes immediately a demand relating to the rights of social production, thus rupturing the limit between ethics and politics (Virno, 1995, 2003). At stake here is the connection between words and deeds as the basic elements in the contemporary mode of social production: the performative materiality of words and the prefigurative enunciation of deeds. We can return here to Arendt's formulation, already quoted above,

the *polis* [...] is the organisation of people as it arises out of acting and speaking together, and its true space lies between people living together for this purpose [...] the space of appearance where I appear to others and others appear to me (Arendt in Bonner, 2008, 203)

The city is a space produced in the combination of acts and enunciations, of appearance and relations, of cooperation and governance, and the right to the city is a collective attempt of radical democratisation of urban space and its social functioning in the name and in the practice of a project of social emancipation of the un/governed.

### **Assembling the right to the city**

In this chapter, I have analysed the functioning of the dis-symmetric dialectic between insurgencies and governmentality as a clash between the production of society and its management.

I started from the latter, focusing on the complexity of governmental rationality - stressing the relevance of citizenship as a dispositif for the organisation of production. First, I analysed the crisis of the Fordist mode of regulation and the emergence of a new mode of production where the exploitation of capital moves from waged labour to life and from the space of the factory to society as whole. Second, I looked at the function of status segmentation in governing this mode of production and the implosion of the colonial logic as a general mode of governance for contemporary European urban labour markets. Finally, I focused on the crisis of the discursive legitimacy of modernity and the collapse of the principles of homogeneity and representation in the emergence of a governmentality based on competition and inequality.

On the other hand, I have examined a different range of studies that focused on the constituent power of insurgencies in redefining social equilibriums. First, immanent strangers and internal outsiders have been proposed as a name to reframe citizenship not only as a discourse and a status, but as a practice of rupture and difference. Second the politics of the un/governed

allowed me to translate to the metropolitan space not only the colonial model of governance but also the possibility of political organisation in a pure political relationship with the state. Third, the analysis of insurgencies enabled me to demonstrate social practices as affirmative agent in the dis-symmetric dialectic between production and control.

From here, I proposed urban space as a crucial site of analysis in which it is possible to grasp the complexity of the contemporary conflict between governance and social life, in the expansion of production from labour to life and in the territorialisation of citizenship on the social body of the city. The right to the city, in the dialectic of urban production, has been proposed as both a concept and a set of practices to analyse syncretically a range of insurgencies that oppose the abstraction of urban space by appropriation and inhabitation, prefiguring and performing another urban life based on the autonomous management of urban wealth.

In my analysis I have proposed new bridges between existing bodies of literature, developing between these different perspectives debates and theoretical insights that concern shared questions.

The construction of a multi-layered analysis of urban governmentality and constituent power from below allows me to propose the right to the city as a collective practice of assembling - introducing prefiguration, performance and autonomy as novel and structural elements to think the struggle for the right to the city in immanent and antagonistic terms. The right to the city as immanent and antagonistic acts in the clash between the affirmation of a collective disposal of use-values, as alter-subjectivation in urban life, and the attempt to abstract it as exchange value for the global market.

I propose here *assembling politics* as a term to summarise the complex production of practices and concepts that constitute and institute the struggle for the right to the city. The performative and prefigurative dimensions of the right to the city configure autonomy as a space of assembling, in the double meaning of the verb - putting a machine together and gathering people for an assembly. In this concept of assembling, the dynamics of crafting and speaking mix, becoming an intertwined way of doing and expressing politics. *Performative* is the enunciation that constitutes the appropriation by assembling people. *Prefigurative* is the space that inhabitation institutes by assembling different worlds, codes, objects. Autonomous is the possibility of appropriating a space in which the norms are enunciated from those that inhabit a space.

When we think about what it means to assemble in a crowd, a growing crowd, and what it means to move through public space in a way that contests the distinction between public and private, we see some ways that bodies in their plurality lay claim to the public, find and produce the public through seizing and reconfiguring the matter of material environments; at the same time, those material environments

are part of the action, and they themselves act when they become the support for action. [...] The material environment is actively reconfigured and re-functioned, to use the Brechtian term. And our ideas of action then, need to be rethought. (Butler, 2011, unpaginated)

I move here from the noun to the verb of Deleuze and Guattari's proposal (1987) of assemblage. Social movements emerge indeed as a practice of encounter and composition, of translation and invention. Following Raunig (2010*b*), social movements can be considered as the machinic organisation of composition and movement.

Raising the question of the mode of composition and its connection to movement means to me to focus on the specific *social* composition and recomposition of *social* movements. Contrary to every empirical definition of 'class situation', I want to describe social composition explicitly not as a state, but as a movement. (Raunig, 2010*b*, 92)

This machinic understanding of *social* composition and *social* movements asserts the configuration of the assembling politics as a framework to analyse the conceptual and practical inventions generated by social movements. In this sense a 'becoming-minor' is opposed to the majoritarian address of classical representative politics (cf. *G comme gauche* in Deleuze and Parnet (1997)). There where the *integer citizen* (Chatterjee, 1998) and the neutered body (Grosz, 1999) are the *topos* for citizenship as normalisation and governance, the 'becoming-minor' affirms the revolutionary attempt of a political organisation of the city through the practical composition of differences and invention of translational organisations.

To focus on assembling therefore means to analyse the composition of spaces and voices into a process of autonomy, cooperation and emancipation. How to analyse the effects of those practices and discourses that do not happen inside the representative institutions but in the living entrails of the urban production? In order to answer this question, I start my methodological chapter from the crisis of representation as a goal for research and a critical understanding of militant research as a practice to investigate struggles for the right to the city.



## Chapter 3

# A critical approach to militant research

What is the role of research in investigating a social situation? How can researchers participate in empowering the autonomous expressions of those who are not represented in civil society? Can a militant approach to the production of knowledge permit an emancipatory engagement with the most famous and direct formulation of this question: Can the subaltern speak?

With such questions in mind, this research aims to trace the way in which, over the last thirty years, urban social movements have materially reinvented political practices in Barcelona, and how this reinvention not only contested Barcelona's model of governance but also instituted new ways of imagining and practicing rights in urban space - crafting both modes of organisation and conceptual categories.

In Chapter 2 I analysed this dynamic of social change from two different points of view. First, I examined the dissymmetric dialectic between governmentality and insurgencies - looking at the opposition between the subsumption of life and the autonomy of production, the institutional dynamics between civil and political societies, and the dialectic between status and acts in defining the juridical dimension of citizenship. From there, second, I analysed the way in which this conflictive dynamic develops in the particular assemblage of contemporary capitalism in urban space, confronting the production of space - as economic propeller of social production - and the struggle for the right to the city - as collective practice for the definition of new modes of social production and distribution.

Here I want to stress another tension which emerges in the attempt to investigate the practices and concepts that 'come into being' in the happening of social struggles. Between the political function of representation and the emergence of autonomous expressions, my aim is to analyse the social production of words and deeds, enunciations and spaces. I engage with the recent past of urban social movements in Barcelona to pose problems in and for the contemporary assembling of politics as both a theoretical and practical effort.

To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognise it ‘the way it really was’ (Ranke). It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger. (Benjamin, 1999*b*, 247)

In his 6th Thesis on History, Benjamin engages with a double-edged problem which is relevant to the structure of this chapter. Whilst he underlines the need for a critique of any homogeneous representation of the past, he also reflects upon the political function of the production of knowledge as a situated recognition of the past inscribed in the dynamics of a specific present.

In this double setting of the methodological problem, a range of questions emerge: how to analyse social production as a material doing and not as a fixed image? And, if the image under study is not fixed, what does it mean to research the recent past of a process that is still in-movement? What is the function of the knowledge I am producing in these movements? What is its function in the political imagination and realisation of contemporary struggles?

In order to address these questions, I first review the critique of a representative approach to the analysis of social movements (Thrift, 2007, Lazzarato, 2003) and propose a critical approach to this social functioning of politics exploring the recent debate on critique understood a collective and social practice (Foucault, 1997, Butler, 2006*b*). Second, I engage with problems arising from my own research practice, focusing on composition, situation and translation as structural questions from my research practice. Third, recounting my experience, I seek to reflect upon the potentialities and limits of using a militant ethic in academic research and, vice-versa, of thinking academic research as a contribution to militant practices.

### 3.1 Representation? Expression!

What does it mean to investigate the material functioning of social movements, moving beyond the analysis of discourses and practices, and addressing the social functioning and the public enactment of such discourses and practices? First of all, according to Foucault (1972*a*), this means not just renouncing the possibility of representation, but also engaging in a radical critique of representation and a materialist analysis of the dynamics of expression.

This antagonism between representation and expression is the companion of another crucial antagonism that underpins this work: the antagonism between governmentality and insurgencies. The common cipher that these two antagonisms affirm is the crisis of homogeneity as disciplining force to govern modernity (Chatterjee, 2005). However this tension is not (only) relevant in terms of addressing the crisis of representation as a conceptual category of modernity. It is something that affects the methods of research, calling for a critique of representation as a goal of research, and of the idea of objectivity as an ethical principle of the researcher.

Representation is conversely founded on the subject-work paradigm. In this paradigm the images, the signs and the statements have the function of representing the object, the world, whereas in the paradigm of the event, images, signs and statements contribute to allowing the world to happen. Images, signs and statements do not represent something, but rather create possible worlds. (Lazzarato, 2003, unpaginated)

Moving from the analysis of objective representations to engagement with situated expressions, researching modes of expression as transformative events involves a double assumption. Here I refer to the notion that the function of expression is not that of 'representing' reality. Rather, its function is that of *affecting* society - transforming it and participating in the creation of a space where life is organised differently (Thrift, 2007, Corsani and Lazzarato, 2008). In this direction, my engagement with the new modes of expressions emerging in Barcelona in the late 1970s – such as the countercultural milieu or the autonomous practices of *asociaciones de vecinos* – defines a starting point to build a genealogy, or possibly a diagram, of the material culture of those urban social movements that constituted the right to the city as a territory of struggle in the present historical moment.

From this point of view, the discourses of these movements do not constitute «the majestically unfolding manifestation of a thinking knowing speaking subject [...] It is a space of exteriority in which a network of distinct sites is deployed» (Foucault, 1972a, 60). Exteriority, however, is a porous membrane between enunciations - that circulate in the field of meanings - and reality - as a society underneath this surface -: an indetermination of boundaries and permeability among spaces and speech. This social production of enunciations is not just a linguistic event that abstracts and represents reality on a semiotic level. Language, words and speech affect reality and the circulation of meanings, and this dynamic of circulation affects the production and functioning of enunciations (Austin, 1961, Rossi-Landi, 1983, Virno, 1995, 2003). *Acts* in space and in language are distinct in terms of their characteristics and functioning, but they are part of the same reality and participate together in *assembling* urban social life.

Researching acts of expression involves exploring the indetermination of these boundaries between discourses and practices, between enunciations and acts and eventually between experiments and experiences - and how they are composed in the production of new worlds (Raunig, 2010a). The analysis of acts of expression as the production of worlds engages not only with the emergence of new languages, codes or enunciations, but also with the displacement of such production outside the classical realms of politics (Williams, 1985, Stephenson and Papadopoulos, 2006, 2007).

The challenge is then to approach urban social movements not as abstracted representations of social conflicts - ideological discourses about reality - but as productive social machines that intervene in reality in order to institute new ways of organising urban life (Vercauteren et al., 2007, Raunig, 2010*b*). This productive ability is not only a linguistic production that organises pre-existing social meanings on the level of discourse. It is a process of production that works through the experimental and experiential becoming of a specific way of assembling social life (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004, Papadopoulos et al., 2008).

In this sense, it is important to move beyond the level of representation because urban social movements are crucial actors in the social production of the city as collective *oeuvre* (Lefebvre, 1991). They are collective acts that speak out in order to configure new rules, new relationships, new worlds in urban life. How can one grasp the way in which they transform the world, without falling into a representational approach? I propose to address this question investigating acts as practices of critique. According to Foucault (1997), critique – as a practice that emerges in the crisis of the transcendental authority of pastoral sovereignty – allows political acts to move from the general negation of government to an instituting and constituting assertion.

Critique is the movement by which the subject gives himself the right [...] to question truth on its effects of power and question power on its discourses of truth. (Foucault, 1997, 32).

How not to be governed like that, by that, in the name of those principles, with such and such an objective in mind and by means of such procedures, not like that, not for that, not by them?(Foucault, 1997, 28)

The practice of critique is not an external judgement but a gesture that challenges the procedures of governing from a critical inside (Butler, 2006*b*, Adorno, 1981, Williams, 1985), opening the space for the constitution of norms and institutions for a *new* community and taking back the ability of constituting rights (Raunig, 2009*c*). The practice of critique situates the achievement of liberty as a practical effort, where the protagonists are those who seek their own emancipation.

There is no true word that is not at the same time a praxis; thus, to speak a true word is to transform the world. (Freire, 1970, 45)

Critique produces a new world by constituting an operative analysis of the rules in force and configuring a new way of organising social life (Deleuze, 2004, Raunig, 2009*a*, Sanchez Cedillo, 2009), engaging with institutions in the molecular terms of the assemblage, rather than through the molar conception of the apparatus. The practice of critique of social movements, I propose, is an instituent practice of invention that participates in the mobilisation of society for a radical change of urban life (Sanchez Cedillo, 2009, Delgado, 2007*b*, Negri, 1980).

### 3.2 What the hell is militant research?!

I engaged in this research as a militant researcher and in doing so I analysed two sets of problems: the goal and ethics in the practice of a militant researcher.

In contemporary debates, militant research is understood as a *problem-posing engagement* with the production of knowledge (Freire, 1970, Ultrared, 2009, Vercauteren et al., 2007). Militant research starts from questioning both how capitalist relations affect the way in which we produce knowledge (Borio et al., 2002, Conti et al., 2007, Roggero, 2011) and the way in which our own production of knowledge can affect the political practices we enact against capitalist exploitation (Situaciones, 2006). Militant research is therefore a committed and collective production of *common notions* (common analytical tools and practices) for and by a political collectivity, that allows us to produce knowledge that is useful for struggles in terms not only of analysis, but also of organising (Malo de Molina, 2006, 2007). Militant research is an ethic situated in a set of relations of power.

It is important here to locate the practices and ethics of militant research in a subterranean stream of political understandings of the production of knowledge; if only to escape a possible tendency to reduce militant research to a politicisation of recent methodologies of research such as action and participative research (Malo de Molina, 2007). Although an archeology of these approaches to research is not the goal of this chapter, the identification of a set of possible points of departure in the dawn of modernity can be useful to show the relevance of the production of knowledge in the historical conflict between capital and its discontents.

First, in the Italian 15th century (Salvini and Sanchez Cedillo, 2011), the conflict around the statuses of knowledge, labour and citizenship in the artistic workshops of the Rinascimento produced an investigation of the production of knowledge as a process in relation to accessing privileges and power (around the status of mechanical arts, Rossi, 2002).

Second, trespassing from the world of sciences and techniques to the margins of European history and colonisation, other bodies and other territories emerge to chart the production of knowledge as a force of social change, as political practice. In Mexico, Malinche, Cortes's translator during the Spanish Conquest, expressed the force of a voice capable of inventing and of inhabiting a third space, empowering herself by producing knowledge against the subjugation of gender and race produced by the process of colonisation (Candelaria, 1980, Haraway, 2006, Nevarez, 2004, Harris, 2005). Another possible set of examples here relate to the practices and knowledges of witches as paradigm of a practice of resistance and escape in and against the so-called primitive accumulation of capitalism (Federici, 2004).

Third, the 18th and 19th centuries marked a turning point in the production of knowledge as a radical innovative act in the institution and appropriation of rights. This is the historical moment

in which the production of knowledge is recognised as a space not only for the reproduction of power but also for the constituent convergence of insurgencies. During the Enlightenment in France, the Encyclopaedic movement attempted to break apart the daily hierarchies constituted through the ideological configuration of knowledge as power (Foucault, 1980), engaging in an enquiry of workshops and attacking the separation between the liberal and mechanical arts – therefore affirming the political legitimacy of artisans and workers as producers of the world (d’Alembert and Rex, 1995, Rossi, 2002).

Finally another significant example is the production of inquiries and theories in the 19th century British industrial revolution. In the conjunction of materialism and secularism, socialist thinkers and socialist movements inhabited economic and social knowledges as fields for the political struggle of the proletariat, to affirm the proletariat as an autonomous political agent. The production of knowledge became a practice of social conflict with regard to both the critical analysis of capital as social relationship in scientific socialism, and the militant investigations of the material conditions of the working classes (Engels, 1887, 1987, Marx, 1993). These inquiries into the conditions of the working class explicitly refused the *neutrality* of social researchers. Furthermore they not only had a political aim, they participated in a political process as tools for agitation and organisation (Malo de Molina, 2006, cf. Piskur, 2011).

After depicting a possible and subterranean stream of militant research, some questions need to be addressed to define the frame of my own research and the points of reference I used in order to challenge the problems emerging in my own practice. Given the lack of any official history, I investigated a set of practices of knowledge production to problematise the relation between representation and expression in my own trajectory. First, my attention focuses here on the role of the militant researcher as a producer of categories and knowledge useful for the organisation of struggles. Second, I concentrate on the problems linked to this form of autonomous expression looking at the way in which I not only take side but also take part in the political production of knowledge by social movements.

### **3.3 «Knowledge into production», or the artist as a militant researcher**

The first question I want to analyse is the function of the militant researcher as a producer. In this sense, to analyse the politicisation of knowledge as a process of production, it is worth looking at the function of knowledge in the emergence of the mass movements in the aftermath of the Great War. In the 1920s and the 1930s, at the dawn of the age in which knowledge became an

integral part of industrial production (Benjamin, 2008), the question of a political production of knowledge became intertwined with the question of devices and tools for political research.

For in the immediate world, everything is to be discerned, for him who can discern it, and centrally and simply, without either dissection into science or digestion into art, but with the whole of consciousness, seeking to perceive it as it stands: so that the aspect of a street in sunlight can roar in the heart of itself as a symphony, perhaps as no symphony can: and all of the consciousness is shifted from the imagined, the revisive, to the effort to perceive simply the cruel radiance of what is. That is why the camera seems to me, next to unassisted and weaponless consciousness, the central instrument of our time; and is why in turn I feel such rage at its misuse: which has spread so nearly universal a corruption of sight that I know of less than a dozen alive whose eyes I can trust even so much as my own. (Agee and Evans, 2001, 9)

Agee's words are inserted in a wider and profound debate on the production of knowledge during the Great Depression when in the programmes of the New Deal, the use of knowledge production became a space of political intervention in the crisis, i.e. using cameras and tape-recorders as tools to record the everyday life of the crisis and 'give it back' to the people as a set of usable materials through which think social conflicts and organise social struggles (Kidd, 2004, Mangione, 1972; and my interviews with Ribalta and Exposito).

These practices and devices permitted the production of a multiplicity of narratives and made possible to hear voices never recorded before, grasping the daily life of the cotton plantations and the memories of the last surviving slaves in the Southern states, or the conditions of the working class in the factories of the East coast of the United States of America. A set of knowledges and practices that made it possible to think radical political action in the aftermath of the Second World War, as emerging the recorded voices of the slaves talked to the civil rights movement of black communities, breaking apart the traditional exclusion of the illiterate (Yetman, 1967, Rosenzweig and Melosh, 1990). In another direction, the diaries of these investigations inspired the imagination of the post-war generation both in writing an embodied critique of the everyday life of industrialism, in the Beat Generation, and in producing new forms of political organising within social movements (Botkin, 1948, Agee and Evans, 2001, Hirsch, 2003).

In post-revolutionary Russia, the debate among political artists touched a similar chord. The Productivist practices – engaging with the slogans of 'art to the kolkhoz' and 'art into production' - built a radical pedagogy through art, not to raise class consciousness, but to situate knowledge within the process of production, sharing practices and tools of knowledge production as autonomous modes to create new worlds (Exposito, 2010, Buchloh, 1984, Vilensky,

2010). We can think here, for example, of the *cine-train* that traveled through the union to allow the circulation of practices, involving people in shooting movies, writing newspapers, crafting posters, discussing politics for organising the kolkhoz (Allen et al., 2003, Raunig, 2010a; and my interviews with Marcelo Exposito and Jorge Ribalta).

In the context of Italian fascism, Gramsci outlined the space of culture and everyday life as a political field of autonomy for the subaltern classes (Gramsci, 1975b, Guha, 2011, Smith, 2010). The analysis of the ideologies of ordinary life - *the philosophy of praxis* - made it possible to address new political fields outside the representational space of the authoritarian state and to do politics within and against the Fascist dictatorship.

These practices of research unsettled the position of power of the intellectual as ‘ideological architect of the proletarian revolution’, opening a debate on the function of the author as mechanical part, among others, in the material doing of the revolution (Benjamin, 1971). This is the case of Brechtian epic theatre,<sup>1</sup> the function of which is to break up ‘entertainment’ and think public life as a political space. By cutting and pasting the space of narrative, the author «brings [action] to a stop, and thus obliges the spectator to take a position toward the action, obliges the actor to adopt an attitude toward his role» (Benjamin, 1971, 90).

[Actors] are not brought closer to the spectator, but distanced from him. He perceives them as real situations, not, as with the naturalist theatre, with self-satisfaction, but with astonishment. Thus the epic theatre does not reproduce situations, rather it uncovers them. The discovery of situations is accomplished by means of the interruption of the action. Only here the interruption does not have the character of fear and pity, but has an organising function. (Benjamin, 1971, 90)

During my fieldwork, I encountered these debates as part of the daily practice of urban social movements; in the counter-cultures in the late 1970s or in the global networks of radical artistic critique of the 1980s, as well as in the institutional practices of critique of the 1990s. Engaging with fanzines, performances, relations, projects and objects was not simply a case of analysing the truthful exteriority of these life-worlds, but about touching upon the porous membranes through which I could glimpse the production of life within these movements, in the attempt to engage myself with them in a procedural and productionist sense (Holmes, 2012, Vilensky, 2010). In this sense, the debates of the 1930s are immanent and inherent to the discussion and production of Barcelona’s social movements. They intervene in the construction of life, in the configuration of spaces and enunciations as practices of autonomous expression (Benjamin, 1999b, 2008, Raunig and Ray, 2009).

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<sup>1</sup>Compare the epic theatre of Bertolt Brecht to the experiences of the Theatre Workshop organised by Joan Littlewood – or the Russian experiments of Tretyakov. (Cedric Price, 2007; Exposito 2010)



### 3.4 The ethics of the militant researcher

This politically-committed production of knowledge also needs to be related and compared as a critical practice to the broader movement of Action Research (AR).

AR emerged as a useful method to deal with the concrete functioning of social processes: a «form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out» (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, 162)<sup>2</sup>. AR insists that researchers should take sides in a given political context, intervening and committing to a set of social dynamics and hence participating not only in the analysis but also in the transformation of social practices. McTaggart's definition of AR is useful here, as he defines AR not as «a 'method' or a 'procedure' for research, but a series of *commitments* to observe and problematise through practice a series of principles for conducting social enquiry» (McTaggart, 1996, 248 my emphasis). However, when using AR for investigating social movements, the researcher must be aware that the process of the production of knowledge is embedded in a series of power relations.

Every engagement with the processes of social organisation is necessarily a situated and political practice (Malo de Molina, 2006). An ethic and not only a positionality has to be considered: not only taking a side, but also taking part in the social conflicts and intervening in the intrinsic dynamics of power related to the process of knowledge production. The practice of militant research is part of a social process of autonomous production of knowledge and the participation of the militant researcher needs to be problematised.

Three questions emerged in my research process and three memories of militant debates about the production of knowledge were useful for me in dealing with these problems. First, how to refuse the objective discourse according to which social movements are an ideological *representation* of real social conflicts. Second how to produce research without falling into the romantic trap of an identitarian defence of their practices. Third a question about my own engagement with these spaces: what is the relation of power that knowledge institutes between the researcher and the mobilised society?

In relation to the first question, I return to the contraposition between class consciousness and class composition as proposed by Italian autonomous marxists in the 1960s. Does class conflict depend on an abstracted logic of ideas in order to be political? Can social practices escape from the assumption of (and submission within) a preconfigured ideological framework?

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<sup>2</sup>Lewin (Lewin, 1948) formalised AR as a process of research where different agents are directly involved in the definition of topics and the research design, and for then considering collectively the findings of that research both for evaluation and for defining new steps of research (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988 – though the origin of AR is contested, McKernan, 1991).

In dealing with the second question, I encountered the debate within second wave and Italian feminisms on the role of experience in the production of knowledge. Does knowledge exist outside a situation? What is the role of the self - as situated in a set of relations of force - in determining the production of knowledge as an emancipatory practice? Finally, my engagement with the third question draws on the Subaltern Studies Group and their work on the possibility of autonomous expression, work which helped me to think modes of problematizing my position of power in the production of knowledge. Can heterolingual practices of translation help us in imagining a possible practice of autonomous expression?

### 3.4.1 Class consciousness and class composition

By taking Italian autonomous marxism (*operaismo*) as a starting point, I affirm in my research the partiality of my analysis and of the way in which this research aims to affect reality. For *operaismo*, militant research is about not only taking sides but also taking part in alliance with social movements and against the process of the abstraction of life – against capital. In Quaderni Rossi, following Marx's enquiry, the aim was to use sociological techniques to organise struggles (Wagner, 1987, Alquati, 1975, Panzieri, 1973). Here *knowledge is directly understood as a practice of political organisation* (Conti et al., 2007, Wright, 2002).

This approach to militant research is captured by the term 'collaborative research' [*conricerca*]. Collaborative research was both a form of critical analysis and a programmatic activity of the workers involved in the struggles, contributing to a project of emancipation understood as an autonomous project. Collaborative research operated through enquiry as a process of investigation developed by workers through political practices - like leafleting for surveys, political meetings and pickets for discussion and development - inside the factories. The gathering of information and the development of the enquiry was, in the first instance, a process for sharing experiences and articulating alliances.

Conricerca (collaborative research) transformed scientific and sociological instruments into practices of political struggle. Enquiry and self-education allowed tacit proletarian knowledge to become independent from the capitalist process of production (Bianchi and Caminiti, 2007) affirming an autonomous language for subaltern voices. Out of these practices, anomalous struggles emerged – in relation to, for example, factory contamination, education, housing, wages, and transport. These struggles often operated outside the traditional unions and parties, prefiguring the space of struggle and research inhabited by urban social movements during the 1970s (Negri, 2007, Wright, 2002, Castells, 1985).

In this practice of research, *class composition* – a less well known concept which appears in the *Grundrisse* (Marx, 1973, Negri, 1991) and that resulted extremely productive for the

aim of this research – emerged as a crucial category through which to criticise the ideological determinism of the concept of class consciousness (Tronti, 1972, Borio et al., 2002) and to imagine a different understanding of political construction, materially accomplished by putting together different elements and dealing with the consequences of the encounter.

Class composition called into question the material culture of the factories rather than philosophical references to the position of the individual in the dialectic of History. The concept of class composition was of immediate use with regard to political organisation (Turchetto, 2001, Wright, 2011). The struggles of autonomous collectives opened transversal alliances between different categories of workers and citizens inside and outside the factory (Alquati, 1975, Panzieri, 1973).

However this composition was not only technically determined but politically produced (Tronti, 1972). The analysis of struggles in terms of composition involves not only the recognition of the objective determination of the modes of organisation of labour - in accordance with skills, machines, relationships - but also the political constitution of a specific class - that is the subjective composition of those who inhabit the relationship of exploitation against capital, their experiences, their memories and their will of power (Tronti, 1972, Negri, 1991, 1999).

Beyond the objective analysis of exploitation, *political* composition addressed memories and practices as subjective points of departure from which to organise struggles (Borio et al., 2002). *Operaismo*, in this sense, called for a practice of research – a method – that refused any independency of theory from situation. It is, thus, a political method for the production of concepts in and for political struggles (Mezzadra, 2009).

I tried to respond to this principle both investigating the conceptual tension and the political processes of Barcelona while looking at the same time at the technical configuration of social tensions and at the subjective forces assembling these struggles.

### **3.4.2 Starting from the self as a practice to situate knowledge**

The feminist critique of 1960s and 1970s radically engaged with the conception of knowledge production as a specific, partial and militant practice. According to the feminist critique which emerged inside autonomous social movements, understanding knowledge as situated practice does not only mean to take sides or take part in a molar contraposition of classes, but also to analyse and act *inside* the specific composition of class (Dalla Costa and James, 1972, Malo de Molina, 2006).

Stepping beyond a merely objective and technical understanding of class, in order to engage with the political composition of class, it is not enough for the militant researcher to break the frontier between herself and the object of research and take sides with the subaltern to produce

knowledge from there. Militant research is about being aware of the political composition of the class as a specific setting of power relations both outside and inside the class itself, and an attempt to intervene in this composition. Affirming the autonomy and legitimacy of the gender question inside the power relations of militant groups, feminist movements constituted gender as a conflict within social movements themselves (Dalla Costa and James, 1972).

According to feminist critique, the emancipatory project of the working class movement was reproducing, also in its radical currents, patriarchal relationships of power. It was silencing the specificity of women in the process of exploitation and ignoring any political critique of patriarchy, either by homogenising women under the position of the worker in the industrial conflict against capital (universalising her) or by forgetting the questions of reproduction and excluding women's autonomy from the emancipatory project of the working class (foreclosing her outside capitalism) (Fortunati and Fleming, 1995, cf. Barbagallo, n.d.).

How to translate this refusal of working class homogeneity into a practice of emancipation? The discursive practices of organisation and the production of knowledge resulted in the formation of a crucial territory for analysing and intervening against this reinforcement of women's subalternity (Malo de Molina, 2006).

The militant production of knowledge indeed was itself embedded in a set of practices of discrimination that confined the voice of women to a subaltern position. The effort therefore was to constitute a practice capable of producing surfaces of emergence (Foucault, 1972a) where these silenced relationships of exploitation could appear. Its goal was to find one's own voice to destroy these relationships by constituting another space of autonomy (Wilson, 1997).

Within and through consciousness-raising groups the experiences of everyday life were inscribed back into the space of political conflict and the struggle for emancipation. *The personal became political*, forging a space where the concrete composition of experiences produced a common and autonomous understanding of the relations of power. The production of knowledge became therefore not only a point of departure for questioning categories and producing analysis, but most of all a position from which to become a collective voice and speak out against the patriarchal habits of the working class and from which to organise struggles (Gutierrez Rodriguez, 2006, Malo de Molina, 2006).

Learning from the production of knowledge in the feminist movements, Malo underlines the function of militant research in «dissolv[ing] the asymmetrical relationship between researchers and researched» (2006, unpaginated; cf. Gutierrez Rodriguez, 2006), constituting this empowering practice as the ground for collective organisation. This critique also facilitated my awareness of the dangers of a romantic approach to urban social movements and of the importance of being political (Isin, 2002) towards urban social movements themselves. In this shift of perspective,

militant research needs to engage with social movements as systems of power relations and production, of rules and protocols - inscribed in society.

To problematise these dynamics not only implies dealing with the molecular dimension of organisations, and analysing the informal institutional routines internal to social movements (Carmona et al., 2008), but also *participating* in them as social ecologies (Guattari, 2005, 1984). Social movements are a factory, not a theatre (Vercauteren et al., 2007, Raunig, 2010*b,a*). They do not represent *real* social problems according to an *ideological* script. Social movements are factories immersed in society, they produce spaces, enunciations, dispositifs and norms, discourses and practices, routines and experiments that act in social reality with all their contradictions, their limits, their ability of innovation and their own conservative vices.

### 3.4.3 Can the subaltern translate?

Militant research, as proposed by Colectivo Situaciones (2006), is a practice that aims to establish «a positive connection with subaltern, dispersed, and hidden knowledges, and [to produce] a body of practical knowledges of counter power. . . establishing compositions that endow with potency the quests and elements of alternative sociability» (2006, unpaginated). Similarly, Italian *operaismo* posed the question of the possibility of an autonomous and political expression capable of addressing ideology on a material level, while the feminist approach affirmed the crucial role of experience and situation in this materialist understanding of the production of knowledge.

The post-colonial optic helps us to situate another crucial question: the political materiality of language, or the possibility of speaking as condition for the production of autonomous expressions. This debate calls into question language as a concrete dispositif in the constitution of those power relations that structure the everyday of urban life.

Language is social labour, inscribed in a permanent tension with social life. It affects reality by producing the linguistic dimension of social life, and it is affected by reality, by the semi-otic organisation of meaning and by the pragmatic hierarchisation of the subjects that attempt to speak (Austin, 1975, Mey, 1993 cf. Bazzanella, 2005). The possibility of autonomous practices of expression is always situated on this semiotic and pragmatic edge between subjugation and emancipation, in the permanent conflict between control and autonomy. In this sense, the production of knowledge is first of all a political action (Freire, 1970). Pedagogy and knowledge are practices either of liberation or of domestication, either *by and for* the oppressed, or against her (Shor et al., 1993).

The task of the dialogical teacher in an interdisciplinary team working on the thematic universe revealed by their investigation is to ‘re-present’ [in Spanish: *devolver*,

‘to give back’] that universe to the people from whom she or he first received it -and ‘re-present’ it [‘give it back’] not as a lecture, but as a problem (Freire, 1970, 15).

The practice of radical pedagogy is a ‘problem-posing method’ in a permanent and dialogic production of knowledge (Torres, 1993) where militant research should proceed by constituting spaces of dialogue and making a collection of singular narratives into a collective narrative. The researcher needs to situate singular narrations in a collective field to overcome an individualistic analysis of reality, identifying the problematic nodes of each narration as insights into a common social reality and composing them in a comprehensive framework (Freire, 1970).

Speaking is neither a moment of transfer and transmission, nor of narration and depositing. On the contrary, practices of expression exist when they institute social relations between a collective critical perception of reality and a set of power relations in which expressions intervene (Ultrared, 2009). The possibility of speaking is always related to the positions of those who speak. A position defined through the violent implementation of a linguistic and formal discipline composed of statuses, authority, legitimacy, where knowledge - as linguistic pragmatic of power - either subjugates the subaltern or represents them according to ideology (Spivak, 1988).

In the attempt to find an escape from the trap of discourse as representation, the militant researcher can appear here as a character similar to the heterolingual translator of Sakai and Solomon (2006). This similitude allows us to – at least partially - overcome the sense (and affirmation) of impossibility of Spivak’s analysis (Spivak, 1988). For Sakai (1997, 2006), the dominant univocal notion of translation invokes an understanding of «the addresser adopt[ing] the position representative of a putatively homogeneous language community, and enunciat[ing] to addressees who are also representative of a homogeneous language community» (2006, 74). The subaltern seems unable to speak, in a situation in which the relation of power determined by the process of translation is always considered as univocal, constituted by an absolute dominance of the ideological modern discourse. In contrast, the heterolingual translator can defy this absolute dominance, becoming a living and political agency that participates in a mutual interaction. The heterolingual translator takes active part in a dialogue and in a social conflict, producing a permanent negotiation among memories, practices and discourses that contribute to the assembly of a common space in an uneven modernity (Bhabha, 2004). I tried to inhabit this position.

### **A militant practice**

In sum, social movements can be interpreted as machines orientated towards escape from capitalist capture by instituting alternative autonomous social expressions - in terms of enunciations

and spaces. Here I engage with the functioning of collective practices of expression trying to avoid a representative narrative around them, and aiming to chart the complexity of the autonomous production of both knowledge and action by posing problems in relation to these issues.

My practice aims to investigate modernity as crisis. Renouncing the conception of a crisis that closes the homogeneous time of modernity, I consider modernity as a conflictive and heterogeneous space, in which the possibility of a critical approach does not emerge from a refusal of modernity – and the imagination of something after it. My critical approach is, rather, a practice of inhabitation and appropriation in the fractured space of modernity. A practice that contributes to a collective affirmation of modernity as something uneven, ambiguous, conflictive. A space of crisis, where the configuration of rights and privileges is determined by the assemblage of tensions, conflicts and negotiations.

In this framework, during the research process, the boundaries between research and practice, objects and subjects, production and circulation of knowledge, between militant research and academic valorisation have been eroded, allowing this fenced frontier to become more and more porous. Moth-eaten by permanent doubts about the limits I should not cross, about the elements I could smuggle through the border between the academia and militancy, and about the question as to what extent the social practices I was investigating could become an object of abstraction for academic valorisation, I have tried to investigate these limits as an apprentice.

Borrowing from James Agee, I would inscribe this piece of work in the range of the «curious, obscene, terrifying, and unfathomably mysterious» (Agee and Evans, 2001, 11) attempts of producing knowledge smuggling between these dangerous borders. In order to approach these issues, I will recount my own practice of research contrasting this experience with the ethics of militant research and inscribing it critically in the conditions of the academy.

The position of the militant researcher is always ambiguous: «a character made out of questions, not saturated by ideological meanings and models of the world» (Situaciones, 2006, unpaginated). «The goal [then] is neither to politicise nor intellectualise the social practices» (Situaciones, 2006, unpaginated), but to investigate the alternative sociability that emerges within and through struggles and that immanently modifies the structure of power relations in everyday life. In the context of the academic world, militant research aims to escape the mechanisms of abstraction not by avoiding the responsibility of this ambiguous position but engaging with «funding, supervision, language requirements, bureaucratic red tape, empty conferences and protocol» (Situaciones, 2006, unpaginated) as non-neutral and political elements.

My practice has not only to do with analysing social movements as factories of problems and questions, as producers of critique and expressions. It also seeks to reconfigure those questions and pose them back in the processes of organisation today. This is the escape route I could

imagine in my attempt to not represent the right to the city as a coherent discourse over new emerging rights.

However, this militant approach to the production of knowledge needs to be composed within one's own position in academia. That is, in relation to a territory constituted by a specific set of relations of power that articulate both the way in which knowledge is produced – i.e. how meanings circulate and methods and concepts can be transformed – and the mechanisms of valorisation of the academy – where knowledge participates in the global circuit of cognitive production.

This tension has been for me a permanent element of reflection, characterised by the attempt to compose the possibility of thinking militant practices of research on the edge of the academic production of knowledge. In this regard, I present here some elements through which problematise the process of research and the way in which I fixed this process into a written text – the product. In order to address the issue of the process, I look at the transformation of my own practices throughout the development of my Ph.D. Second, I focus on the writing of the thesis - as a product in a mechanism of valorisation.

I need nonetheless to introduce myself and to situate my practice of militant research in a broader militant experience. I have been active in autonomous social movements since the late 1990s, both in militant organising and researching: first in zapatist support groups, and later in the network of Italian social centres focusing especially on migrants' and precarians' struggles around housing and cultural production. I have been participating in the militant research network of the Italian and Spanish *Nomad Universities*, and in London I have participated in union organising of migrants in 2006-2007.

Over the last few years, my political and academic activities have increasingly overlapped: actively participating in social movements that reinvent the social contract of citizenship outside Fordism, whilst - at the same time - studying the metamorphoses of political practices emerging in European post-colonial urban space. As a political activist, I am participating in networks for housing rights in the Spanish state, and in projects of militant research on the dynamics of subalternity in Barcelona, and in the network of *Universidad Nomada* and *Fundación de los Comunes*. These projects rethink practices for political rights and emancipation from outside the classical terms of citizenship and aim to reinvent radical, collective and pragmatic appropriations and inhabitations of the city. All this means participating, first, in the self-organisation of production through cooperatives, autonomous education, and autonomous enterprises; second, in the constitution of autonomous practices of unionism for defending labour, social and civil rights; and, third, the invention of new places for instituting networks of mutual support and production - understood as new forms of welfare from below with regard to health, culture, housing and so on.



### 3.4.4 Research as a process

At the end of this journey, I would define my experience of doctoral research as an *apprenticeship*. Let's start from the beginning. Indeed, to analyse the evolution in my own process of research I have to return to the first draft of my methodology. Something I wrote before having any precise idea of what a Ph.D. would involve.

The original idea was to organise the research in three cycles. Quoting from my first draft of methods: *first, the gathering of face-to-face interviews with key participants in the movements I recognised as crucial. Second, the idea is to draw cartographies and gather materials for an archive in order to contextualise the collective narration and reconstruct the continuous experience of these social mobilisations. Finally, in the third cycle of the research my aim is to select relevant material on specific problems and to construct specific focus groups for open discussions and collective problematisation of these issues.*

However researching turned out to be a craft rather than an Art: a *mestiere* (Salvini and Sanchez Cedillo, 2011). A space constituted in the material forging of connections, relationships, doubts, distances or proximities. A space of trust where the logic of ideas and plans has to deal with the concrete mood of people, their life, their stories. Furthermore, and unfortunately for my quite florid imagination, the practice of research takes time and one of the important outcomes of this research has been learning the limit of my possibilities, as well as what one can ask from the interlocutor without over-stepping the mark. Finally I realised that the academic practice of abstraction and reflection is not particularly interesting for a lot of people, but that possibilities for opening a common space of discussion and reflection arise if one renounces the codes of presumed authority of academic research and engage in a space of cooperative production of knowledge.

In other words, my original plan fell apart as soon as I started my first cycle of research: the interviews.

Quoting from the first version of my methods, *these singular narratives had been planned to enable me to recover subaltern accounts. The lack of objectivity of personal stories will have to be taken into account not as a scientific limitation but as crucial element of oral history in which narration and expression are constitutive dimension in the signification of present time. These emerging subaltern pasts constitute memories of difference, incompatible with the linearity of History: they will not participate to reaffirm to historical linearity, but participate as constitutive part in contemporary social conflicts.*

However, the ideal constitution of this space as a collection of differences did not consider the 'misleading' force of those desires and questions proposed by the interviewees. My interlocutors were involved in those social movements I was addressing. They did not let me impose

any hypothesis they considered inappropriate without fighting back and putting on the table the contradictions they observed. Since the aim of my research was to investigate the contemporary social movements through their past, I looked for significant people that participated actively in various moments, and that were still active. This allowed me to meet with people that could contribute both to defining the dynamics of this genealogy, and also to analysing the emerging movements and question my own approach to them. Starting from the role of autonomous movements, migrant struggles, and radical artistic practices, I choose a first set of interlocutors which later led me to the rest of the groups and the interviewees. (See Table 3.1)

Table 3.1: List of Interviewees

1. Eva Fernandez	Former President of the <i>Federacion de Asociaciones de Vecinos (FAVB)</i> in Barcelona. She has been participating in the <i>Partido Socialista Unitario de Catalunya</i> since the early 1970s. She has been a protagonist of the collaboration between <i>asociaciones de vecinos</i> and <i>Miles de Viviendas</i>	Analysed the late 1970s and early 1980s. Talked about the relationship between neighbourhood movements and the emerging autonomous movements of the 1990s, focusing especially on the mobilisations of the <i>civismo</i> .
2. Ivan Miro	Activist in the neighbour of Sants. He has been participating in social movements since the early 1990s as a prominent figure of the <i>okupa</i> movement and later the <i>Euromayday</i> mobilisations and the struggles against <i>civismo</i> .	Analysed the autonomous movements of the 1990s, and the relationships between social movements and mobilised society.
3. Tomas Herreros	Activist and sociologist. He has been participating in social movements since the late 1980s as a prominent figure of the <i>okupa</i> movement and later the global movements and the <i>Euromayday</i> mobilisations.	Analysed the crisis of the extreme left and the cycle of <i>okupación</i> , global movements and the <i>Euromayday</i> network.

List of interviewees	Background	Areas of discussion
4. Jordi Bonet	<p>Activist, sociologist and former president of the <i>Federation of asociaciones de vecinos</i> in Barcelona. He has been participating in social movements since the late 1980s in the <i>insumisión (MiliKK)</i>, the <i>okupa</i> movement and later the <i>Euromayday</i> mobilisations and the struggles against <i>civismo</i>.</p>	<p>Analysed the crisis of the extreme left and the cycle of <i>okupación</i>, global movements and the <i>Euromayday</i> network. Analysed the <i>civismo</i> mobilisations.</p>
5. Jaume Assens	<p>Activist and lawyer. He has been participating in social movements since the late 1980s in the <i>insumisión</i>, the <i>okupa</i> movement and later the <i>Euromayday</i> mobilisations and the struggles against <i>civismo</i>.</p>	<p>Analysed the crisis of the extreme left and the cycle of <i>okupación</i>, global movements and the <i>Euromayday</i> network. Analyzed the <i>civismo</i> mobilisations.</p>
6. Joan Gual	<p>Activist and social researcher. He has been participating in social movements since the <i>Euromayday</i> mobilisations and the struggles against <i>civismo</i>.</p>	<p>Analysed the <i>Euromayday</i> mobilisations and the struggles against <i>civismo</i>.</p>
7. Cristina Bessa	<p>Activist and law researcher. She has been participating in social movements since the <i>encierros</i> of 2003, the <i>Euromayday</i> mobilisations and the struggles against <i>civismo</i>.</p>	<p>Analysed the migrants mobilisations and the struggles against <i>civismo</i>.</p>
8. Clarisa Velocci	<p>Activist on women rights. She has been participating in social movements since the early 2000s, in the struggles against <i>civismo</i> and for the rights of sex-workers.</p>	<p>Analyze the migrants mobilisations and the struggles against <i>civismo</i>.</p>

List of interviewees	Background	Areas of discussion
9. Amarela Varela	Activist and social researcher. She has participated in social movements in Mexico in support to the zapatist movements, and in Barcelona since the <i>encierros</i> of 2001 and the struggles for migrants rights in the 2000s.	Analysed the migrants mobilisations.
10. Yidir Ikabouren	He participated in the mobilisations for transport workers rights in Morocco in the late 1990s, and participated in the <i>encierros</i> of 2001.	Analysed the migrants mobilisations.
11. Raquel Garcia	Activist and film-maker. She has been participating in social movements since the <i>encierros</i> of 2001, the <i>Euromayday</i> mobilisations and the movement for migrants regularisation.	Analysed the migrants mobilisations and the struggles against <i>civismo</i> .
12. Ibrahar Mohad	Activist. He was the spokes person of the Pakistani community and the <i>encierros</i> network in 2003 and spokes person for the <i>Papeles para todos</i> from 2003 until 2010.	Analysed the migrants mobilisations and the struggles against <i>civismo</i> .
13. Marcelo Exposito	Activist, theorist, curator and film-maker. He has been a prominent figure of the <i>insumisión</i> ( <i>Movimiento de Objeción de Conciencia</i> ) and of the artists movements in the 1990s, and a prominent figure in <i>Directa Action as one of the Fine Arts</i> and <i>Las Agencias</i> in the <i>Museum of Contemporary Art of Barcelona</i> from 1999 to 2003.	Analysed the crisis of the extreme left and <i>insumisión</i> , institutional critique, global movements and the <i>Euromayday</i> network.

List of interviewees	Background	Areas of discussion
14. Jorge Ribalta	Photographer and curator. He has been a prominent figure of the artists movements of the 1990s and responsible for the public events of the <i>Museum of Contemporary Art of Barcelona</i> from 1999 to 2006.	Analysed the crisis of the extreme left and the cycle of <i>okupación</i> , global movements and the <i>Euromayday</i> network. Analyzed the <i>civismo</i> mobilisations.
15. Ada Colau	Journalist and activist. She participated in <i>Las Agencias</i> projects, and later in <i>Miles de Vivienda</i> and the <i>Euromayday</i> mobilisations. She has been a prominent figure in the relationship between autonomous movements and the <i>Neighbors Association</i> and one of the promoters of <i>VdeVivienda</i> and <i>Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca</i>	Analysed the crisis of the cycle of institutional critique, global movements and the <i>Euromayday</i> network. Analyzed the <i>civismo</i> mobilisations and the relationships between autonomous and neighbourhood movements.
16. Nuria Vila	Anthropologist, journalist and activist. She participated in the <i>Direct Action as one of the Fine Arts</i> and <i>Las Agencias</i> projects, and later in <i>Miles de Vivienda</i> and the <i>Euromayday</i> mobilisations.	Analysed the crisis of the cycle of institutional critique, global movements and the <i>Euromayday</i> network. Analyzed the <i>civismo</i> mobilisations.
17. Daniel Bombadilla	Media-activist. He participated in the experiences of <i>Indymedia</i> in Mexico and Barcelona, and in the <i>Espai Obert</i> , the <i>Euromayday</i> mobilisations and the project of <i>EnMedio</i> .	Analysed the global movements and the mobilization on <i>civismo</i> .
18. David Batlle	Geographer and film-maker. He has been investigating the evolution of Barcelona city centre and the experiences of countercultures and migration in Barcelona.	Analysed the transformation of the city and the struggles of migrants.

List of interviewees	Background	Areas of discussion
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My intention was not to listen to the narrative in order to extrapolate the meaning. Even if during my field work I learned the importance of silence and of a marginal position for the interviewer, I did not want to deal with the interviewees simply as sources of information. I always proposed my own analyses, interpretations and doubts to spark discussion. In this practice the dichotomy between representation and expression emerged as a clear object of research: both as a political question in terms of my own engagement with social movements, and as a material effort in reconsidering and reorganising my own practice of research.

First, in the terms proposed by the *operaista* approach, looking only at the technical composition of the social movements for the right to the city would have led me to cluster these interviewees in three different groups – one of militant autonomous background (Eva Fernandez, Ivan Miro, Tomas Herreros, Jordi Bonet, Jaume Assens, Joan Gual, Cristina Bessa), one coming from migrant social movements (Clarisa Velocci, Amarela Varela, Yidir Ikabouren, Raquel Garcia, Ibrahim Mohad) and finally a less homogeneous group emerging from the political engagement of arts and media (Marcelo Exposito, Jorge Ribalta, Ada Colau, Nuria Vila, Daniel Bombadilla, David Batlle).

I could have looked at how these three streams composed the emergence of new technical problems for urban policy. ‘Representing’ these problems could have been a useful contribution in terms of informing the social governance of Barcelona. However, his technical analysis would have produced a quite static representation of Barcelona’s social questions. This method could have affected – possibly very marginally – the evolution of urban policies in the city (Marshall, 2004, McNeill, 1999).

However, the functioning of social movements as expressive political forces called for a problem-posing practice of research. Investigating social movements as a factory and participating in this space of production, I had to map the links and the relationships of trust that composed the possibility of thinking specific problems, of configuring the analysis and the critique, and of imagining practices. As a result, my analysis was not producing solutions to the questions I was posing or constituting a ground to integrate the political production of social movements into urban policy. Rather, it permitted me to identify the dynamics of production of this space and to participate in it actively, both producing a piece of work that could contribute to the collective thinking and allowing me to be part of the pre-history of the 15M mobilisations. Social movements and research as a process of production! And here the productionist debates of the 1930s were very useful.

Just to offer some examples - I return to this later - the role of a space like the *Cupula Venus* (an artistic venue in the centre of Barcelona) was crucial for the encounter between the emerging feminist movements and the trans-sexual and trans-gender milieus. This encounter has been very important both to radicalise the feminist practices of critique against the traditional politics of parties and unions (inspiring a radical use of the body as tool for struggle) but also to politicise the provocative practices of the counter-cultural community (in the sexual performances of 1977 Congress of Unions in Barcelona) (Joan Gual, Eva Fernandez). In the 1990s, as well, the link between urban transformation, precarisation of life, and the productive reorganisation of the city did not emerge from theoretical production around cognitive capitalism or the rise of the network society, but from the encounter between djs, ravers and a new generation of post-1989 militants coming from a period of depression and encountering the second generation of acid-flower-power (Tomas Herreros).

Encountering this set of questions and desires, my research abandoned its initial plan: quoting myself, *the idea of the interviews configuring a map to fill in; archiving as a practice to collect evidence; and finally the call for workshops to discuss and interpret the meaning of this history in the contemporary forging of social movements.*

This research design was displaced by the practice of material researching since concrete practice had to deal with the configuration of a concrete political space. The interview came to be a space of analysis and discussion rather than of representational narrative and information. Historical elements were mentioned and I assumed as my duty the task of finding out who a given historical figure was, or what had been the role of a place or a group in a certain moment, or I looked for a novel on these issues that could be suggestive for the interviewee, or I proposed recordings of another interviewee as point of departure for a discussion. Interviews did not provide information but lines of enquiry. (See List of Figures)

Second, conversations about the past occurring in the interviews continually called into question the present both of my research and of social movements in Barcelona. With Eva Fernandez, for example, the discussion about my method and focus of research intertwined with the way in which the feminist movement questioned the production of knowledge in the 1970s, and how the slogan of the 'personal is political' became a structuring principle for political action. In the crisis of late 2010 (just before the Arab Spring and the insurgencies of the Spanish squares) Fernandez and I discussed how this principle could be reinserted in the context of the economic crisis and the silence of the streets.

[Looking the other way around] I ask myself if the political is personal. How is the political dimension incarnated in my own body, no? This is an important reflection to me, because today, when I think of my own life and I look around me [...] we

are in a period of crisis. An economic and political crisis that gets in the flesh and in the bones of all of us. (Eva Fernandez)

If the homogeneity of interviews and interviewees - coming from militant circles - emerged as a limit of my research, I tried to explode the integrity and apparent homogeneity of this space, instead of multiplying the objects of research looking for a non-militant approach to social movements. I focused on the specific ecology of social movements that instituted the right to the city as assemblage of innovative enunciations and non-representational spaces (Guattari, 2005).

Coincidentally – but also due to the research's permanent engagement with the present - this cartography became relevant also to engage with the emergence of an important mobilisation of Spanish society. Two questions structuring my work became increasingly important: on the one hand inhabitation as a concrete affirmation of the right to the city, since the 15M movement used the occupation of public space to reaffirm the practice of citizenship. Secondly the question of the crisis of representation, since this emerging space of politics forged itself around the slogan: 'Nobody represents us!' (cf. Universidad Nomada, 2012).

This political explosion helped me work up the courage to investigate not the ecology of social movements as a separated microcosm, but as one of the ecological systems producing the public explosion of the 15th of May 2011. I started to investigate the separation between social movements and mobilised society (Delgado, 2007*b*, Universidad Nomada, 2012) as a porous membrane, developing a critical approach to the preconceived separation between internal and external spaces in social movements, between analytical and political action of groups and finally between the production of ideology and the production of social change.

This critique constituted the point of departure of an operative problematisation of social movements as social machines and not just as ideological dispositifs. The feminist production of knowledge as experiential practice situated in a specific configuration of power emerged as a practical principle for my research. It allowed me to think social movements as practices of critique and social change without falling into a romantic understanding of struggles as sublime representation of the revolution.

As a result, the structure of interviews became looser, redefining themselves as an analytical investigation of subjective positions. Dealing with personal narratives in terms of ruptures, experiments and encounters rather than of continuities or development. An investigation of the present rather than of the past, or better said, of the metamorphoses and the inventions of the past that participated in instituting the present.

In front of the complex map of intensities that the interviews charted, I renounced the temptation to constrain these lines in a prefixed structure of meaning, an honest and precise history of events. I chose not to collect quotes that would merely serve to fill the gaps and justify the prede-



terminated schema of my own research - the interviewee as native informant (Spivak, 1999) – but I sought to understand the space of discussion as the place that could generate a collective space of research. The interviews started to be analytical rather than descriptive and I thought the most interesting thing could be to organise collective conversations with small groups of people as a way to renounce my position of power and let the discussion flow beyond my control. I grasped elements to reflect upon from these conversations and I came back to these collective spaces to use my work as a contribution to a common production of knowledge. (See Table 3.2)

Table 3.2: List of group-discussions

Participants	Topics
1. Ada Colau, Eva Fernandez	The relationships between the neighbourhood and the autonomous movements in Barcelona
2. Marcelo Exposito, Nuria Vila	The experience of the collaboration between autonomous and artists movements and the <i>Museum of Contemporary Art of Barcelona</i>
3. Tomas Herreros, Joan Gual	The experience of the anti-globalisation movements and the issue of identity politics in urban autonomous movements
4. Clarisa Velocci, Jaume Assens	The critique of the civist ordinance
5. Victoria Sacco, Celeste Venica	The space of the <i>Museum of Contemporary Arts of Barcelona</i> and the <i>Programme of Independent studies</i>

With Eva Fernandez and Ada Colau we discussed the subjective transformation of the urban movements in the late 1990s confronting two generations of locally-focused urban social movements. With Clarissa Velocci and Jaume Assens we discussed the rationality of the civist ordinance. Out of these and other collective conversations (on the experience of the *Museum of Contemporary Arts of Barcelona* with Marcelo Exposito and Nuria Vila, on the space of social centres with Tomas Herreros and Joan Gual), the question became how to think this research as process of problematic intervention in the present, rather than as a resolved narrative of the past.

Researching as a process of production became for me an imperative to think my practice as a productionist experiment. Where the conversation allowed the personal narrative to be broken apart and to explode, organising work-groups and workshops permitted me to collect and propose problems in a collective and material doing. My field-work has not been about codifying memories, but investigating how memories have been and are circulating as ways of doing. Collecting narratives, objects and elements was useful in order to problematise the mode of production in which I participated.

One of these experiments has been a space of collaboration and reflection on the logic of the civist ordinance in the *Centre de Imatge Palau de La Virreina*. I participated in a range of seminars and workshops that involved different groups working on this topic both to reconstruct a genealogy of the rationality of the governance of Barcelona since the 1970s and to build tools of alliance between different actors in the city centre and of intervention – namely a board-game on the functioning of the ordinance in the Raval (a project that finally was abandoned). The presence of a differentiated set of actors, ranging from a museum (*Centre de Imatge Palau de La Virreina*), to the *Federacion de asociaciones de vecinos*, to the sex-workers rights organisation *Genera* and the diasporas of the social centre *Exit*, meant this workshop constituted a moment to inscribe transversality as practice of political composition and to think the role of institutional analysis in a concrete way.

Table 3.3: Working-group on civist governmentality

Participants	Topics
<i>Palau de La Virreina Centre de la Imatge, Asociacion Genera, Observatorio Metropolitano Barcelona, Federaci3n de Asociaciones de Vecinos de Barcelona, Exit Social Centre</i>	The effects of the civist ordinance, the transformations of the city centre, the practices of organisation of those affected by the ordinance and gentrification

Another productive space I constituted for this research has been the laboratory of audiovisual militant research informally termed *postcul* (Salvini, 2012). The laboratory started with the intention of tackling the question of political organisation in the urban transformations affecting everyday life in the inner city of Barcelona. What does it mean to translate the categories of post-colonial thought in the practices of organisation of a subaltern neighbourhood trapped in the hurricane of valorisation and abstraction of space driven by post-colonial capitalism?

By building this space of production, we wanted to talk about the crisis of representation and the silencing of our voices. The post-colonial categories were useful in this attempt, but we

needed to find tools to make this debate a dynamic production of alternative forms of expression. Since language is a space of politics, the investigation and displacement of codes can be a move to affirm a temporary autonomy. Borrowing from audio-visual language, we learned together to use cameras, make interviews, and we discussed the politics of the technical codes we were using as well as the implication of the narratives we were employing and compared them with the genealogy of the concepts we came to discuss. (See Videos V.1 and V.2)

When I speak as ‘we’, I think of the intertwining of different networks and communities that inhabit the neighbourhood of Raval: older or newer migrants, students, researchers, street workers, transgender persons, and paupers. The group that came together in the laboratory proceeded from these different territories but never became a representation of the networks or communities (Salvini, 2012). This uncomfortable position in which everybody expresses collective voices but no one is representative of any collective, shows us something typical of how militancy engages with the complex assemblage of heterogeneous modernity. No one represents anyone because no one is an integer citizen (Chatterjee, 1998) capable of representing the will of an organisation, community or network in the process of doing. However, the space of the laboratory became a living composition among singular expressions that referred, evoked and connected collectives, networks, and communities.

Table 3.4: *Postcul*, workshop on post-coloniality in the city centre of Barcelona

Participants	Topics/Products
David Batlle, Lucia Delgado, Mamadou Diagne, Antonio Felices, Sebastian Herrera, Raquel Muñoz, Miriam Sol, Clarisa Velocci, and myself	The rationality of post-colonial governance in the city centre of Barcelona. Specific focus on the issues of labour and urban space. Interviews, videos, archives at <a href="http://www.postcul.net">www.postcul.net</a>

What we shared in the end was a collective becoming of militancy. A concrete learning process of how to produce organisation in the neighbourhood. It was not about understanding the difference between concepts but about how to put these to work together with memories, practices and the tools of expression of audiovisual language. The interviews and the editing of the film became for me a way of understanding the practice of critique as entangled with political intervention, challenging on a concrete level the conceptual questions around the tensions, in the use of language, between autonomy and control (Guha, 1982, Spivak, 1988). (See Table 3.3)

Concluding on the process of my research, the cycles I had initially conceived were re-configured because militant research needs to address the production of knowledge, spaces and enunciations not as an exercise that represents social reality but in the material production of a collective political expression. Research cannot simply display the composition of the machine of social movements or demonstrate their functioning. It is a matter of acknowledging the production of knowledge as a relation of power, taking sides and taking part. It is about participating in producing new assemblages, intervening in urban relations of power and producing use-value for the social struggles rather than exchange-value for the academy.

### 3.4.5 The thesis as a product

As we have seen, throughout this research I have been concerned with the ethical and political questions that arise in relation to the practice of militant research. However, I am not only a militant researcher but also a Ph.D. student in the system of academic knowledge production. In this sense, discussion of ‘the products’ of my research is for me an opportunity to investigate the gap between the production of use-value and the production of exchange-value in the academy.

This means addressing the role of academic knowledge in the reproduction of hierarchies of knowledge, and the complexity of engaging as a researcher in a social process of knowledge production. The author as producer - or the researcher as a militant - needs both to question how the process of valorisation of the product develops through mechanisms of abstraction and individualisation and to act against the privatisation of a social process of production.

The only way to make this production politically useful is to master the competencies in the process of intellectual production which, according to the bourgeois notion, constitutes their hierarchy [...]. When he experiences his solidarity with the proletariat, the author as producer also experiences directly a solidarity with certain other producers in whom earlier he was not much interested. (Benjamin, 1971, 92)

The challenge is to proceed through a method of ‘problem-posing’ and of a problem that creating ‘did not exist before’ (Vercauteren et al., 2007), rather than resolve existing problems. How do we make concepts usable and not only intelligible for those who are not used to theoretical discussions?

In the laboratory *postcul*, I sought to use distribution as a moment to problematise the role of the product as a commodity by publishing and circulating the materials (see Videos V.1 and V.2 and [www.postcul.net](http://www.postcul.net)), and by opening public discussions. Distribution allowed us to think the product as a process itself- a process of organisation to share techniques, to build alliances, and to experiment with new spaces for politics. In the academy, instead, the chain of abstraction and valorisation is fast and simple. It works by commodifying the product (a film, a paper,

a seminar) and individualising the author. For example, I published an article based on the reflections which emerged from the *postcul* laboratory. In a sense, the writing of this article involved the translation of that experience into the academic code, allowing me to increase my competitive edge in the market composed of my peers (Salvini, 2012).

In the case of the thesis as product, the matter is more complex. The crucial question concerns the transformation of a political process into a written product - one that simplifies reality in order to translate it into an abstract space of knowledge.

First, in my thesis the chronological structure deployed imposed a sort of teleological atmosphere in which the right to the city appears as the ultimate evolution of a political space opened in the 1970s. This 'structural' image is a false representation of a process that is made up of connections and encounters, where the right to the city is composed as a set of practices and as accumulation of material cultures. In the concrete emergence of the struggles for the right to the city, there is no such thing as causal consequences. Instead we find the expressive configuration of codes, the experiential affirmation of ways of doing, the experimental invention of new organisational machines and spaces as moments that allow us to grasp singular elements operative within the broader stream of events, and provide a partial interpretation of the complex production of new ways of doing politics.

The lack of causal connections among the elements that compose the struggles for right to the city is particularly clear when one analyses these social tensions in the recent years (compare Chapter 4 and 5 with Chapter 6 and 7). As the first chapters move from insurgencies to governmentality and back, recent pasts emerge as a ball of wool in which the dialectic between governmentality and insurgencies is permanently knotted and intertwined. Once analysing this bundle of dynamics, abstraction is far from easy and the text itself loses its desirable linearity. Nonetheless, this uncomfortable position, when I was seeking a rational analysis, forced me to look at the process I was analysing as dis-symmetrical dialectics and not as a dialogical evolution.

Second, the right to the city is not the result of the 2003-2007 wave of urban social movements (Chapter 7 and 8). In this sense I propose the assembling of the right to the city as the focus of my thesis as a whole. Each act and concept that I depict and analyse adds layers, facets and shades to the social assemblage named *the right to the city*. Faced with this complexity, I would like this work to be read as a problem-posing effort that participates in a constituent process and in a continuous present starting in the 1970s and that invades my everyday life. I invite therefore the reader to engage with these stories as a living composition of material processes and never as a fixed articulation of discourses.

Third, I want to point out how this practice of research influenced my re-writing of the methods and the literature review, where I tried to make explicit the production of concepts and

acts as something that *happens* in social movements, and not as something abstracted by the researcher to describe and analyse as a sort of “natural history” of social mobilisation. For this I looked at the historical context in which discussions and debates emerged and the function they had in posing problems for the active participation of theory and methods of research in the production of projects of emancipation.

Fourth, I have sought to avoid the crystallisation of the academic product, interpreting my own position, as academic actor, as part of a social production of concepts: embedded in society, and therefore possibly also in the tactics and strategies of social movements. In this sense, both in the text and in the practices of research, I acted considering that the configuration of knowledge as power is not only instituted in the university monopoly of knowledge. It is always a social dis-symmetric dialectic in which, I hope, the social production of knowledge can involve an autonomous empowering of the un/governed. In this sense, two elements need to be stressed by way of concluding. This is neither a complete history of the social movements of Barcelona, nor does it describe the functioning of each of them.

My aim is rather to produce a diagram of the collective practice of *assembling*, looking at how different experiences constitute both the possible conceptual imagination and the material crafting of a different way of doing politics. I look for connections and bridges between theory and practice, elements of continuity and ruptures in the development of social movements producing a problem-posing narrative of the past with the aim of contributing to ways of thinking the possibilities and the limits of contemporary social movements in Barcelona:

This is the foundation of the city: a net which serves as passage and as support. All the rest, instead of rising up, is hung below: rope ladders, hammocks, houses made like sacks, clothes hangers, terraces like gondolas, skins of water, gas jets, spits, baskets on strings, dumb-waiters, showers, trapezes and rings for children’s games, cable cars, chandeliers, pots with trailing plants. (Calvino, 1997, 61)

**Part II**

**Empirics**

## Chapter 4

# Affirming the right *of* the city

In the context of the conflict between labour and capital in the 1970s, urban struggles affirmed an ungovernable conflict, building forms of organisation capable of escaping the regime of control associated with the decadent Francoist regime. In this chapter, I analyse the transformations of society during the democratic transition, focusing on the dialectic between the insurgency of new social dynamics in urban life and the affirmation of a governmentality capable of valorising this social production of urban space.

In order to frame my analysis, I begin by examining the affirmation of Barcelona as a space of autonomy at the end of the Francoist regime, before discussing those social movements which affirmed an alternative possibility of subjectivation in urban life and, finally, addressing the emergence of a neoliberal model of urban governance.

In the context of a decadent regime, autonomy was affirmed as political principle both in the project of Catalan partial independency and from below through the appropriation of the factory - as alienated time - and the occupation of the city - as *oeuvre*. In this explosion of politics, new subjects, bodies and objects emerged and inhabited urban space, an explosion which is also discussed here in relation to the feminist, transgender and counter-cultural movements. In these social mobilisations, experience became the site for experimenting with a new kind of politics by forging words and deeds - enunciations and spaces.

Before they could build further, however, this mode of the social production of life and politics was captured by, on the one hand, a process of institutionalisation of the politics happening in everyday life and, on the other, the commodification of the radical life-worlds emerging in those years. Neoliberal citizenship, with the *Olympic Games* as a paradigmatic instance, emerged here as a dispositif of governmentality based on the production of a 'city brand', managed according to entrepreneurial principles that made possible the translation of urban life into a generic commodity.



## 4.1 The crisis of Fordist citizenship in Barcelona

First of all, it is important to situate the emergence of the social movements examined in this thesis in the broader context of the modern history of Barcelona as an illusionary Nation without a territory; Catalonia. This will also facilitate our understanding of the paradigmatic role of Barcelona in the inter-urban competition that emerged following the crisis of the industrial European national system from the 1980s onwards.

### The illusionary Modernity of Barcelona

In order to analyse the long-term rationality of government in Catalan political culture, the function of territory, identity and economics in defining the identity of Barcelona must first be outlined.

The governance of Paris in the 19th Century offers an interesting mirror for discovering the image and the figuration of Barcelona's identity since the Industrial Revolution (Benjamin, 1969). The urban planning of Barcelona in the 19th Century expressed the desire of the Catalan bourgeoisie (conscious of the temporary impossibility of the national project at the level of the Nation state) to affirm and display its social power *à la Parisienne*. The realisation of nationalist aspirations was transferred from the state to the Capital city. The rational planning of urban space became a political project - where the social conflicts of capitalist society could be resolved by the rationality of governance (Guallar, 2010).

In the mid-19th Century, Barcelona experienced cultural, economic and political growth that linked, more or less permanently, industrial and bourgeois development with the nationalist Catalan ideology. The urban space of Barcelona became at the same time the capital and the territory of the aspirational Nation. Barcelona might thus be understood as a kind of 'illusionary city-state', where the governance of urban space assumed great significance, not only in administrative but in directly political and ideological terms (Villar, 1997, Delgado, 2007a).

The Plan Cerdà and the Universal Expo of 1888 represented the shop-window of this governmental project: the cosmopolitan project of bourgeois urban space. This can be conceptualised in terms of an artificial production of space mirroring the grandeur of Haussmann's Paris and seeking to affirm a rational modern space in which class conflict could be resolved by technical means (Villar, 1997, Guallar, 2010). (See Figure 4.1)

However, this model reproduced a space of subalternity in the internal outsides of the city, especially in the inner city. In this space social movements were not simply subaltern to the development of a new project for governing, to the top-down transformation of governmentality. They generated radical politics - enacted by society, by proletarians - capable not only of escaping the control of authority, modernity and rationality, but also of defining new political fields of

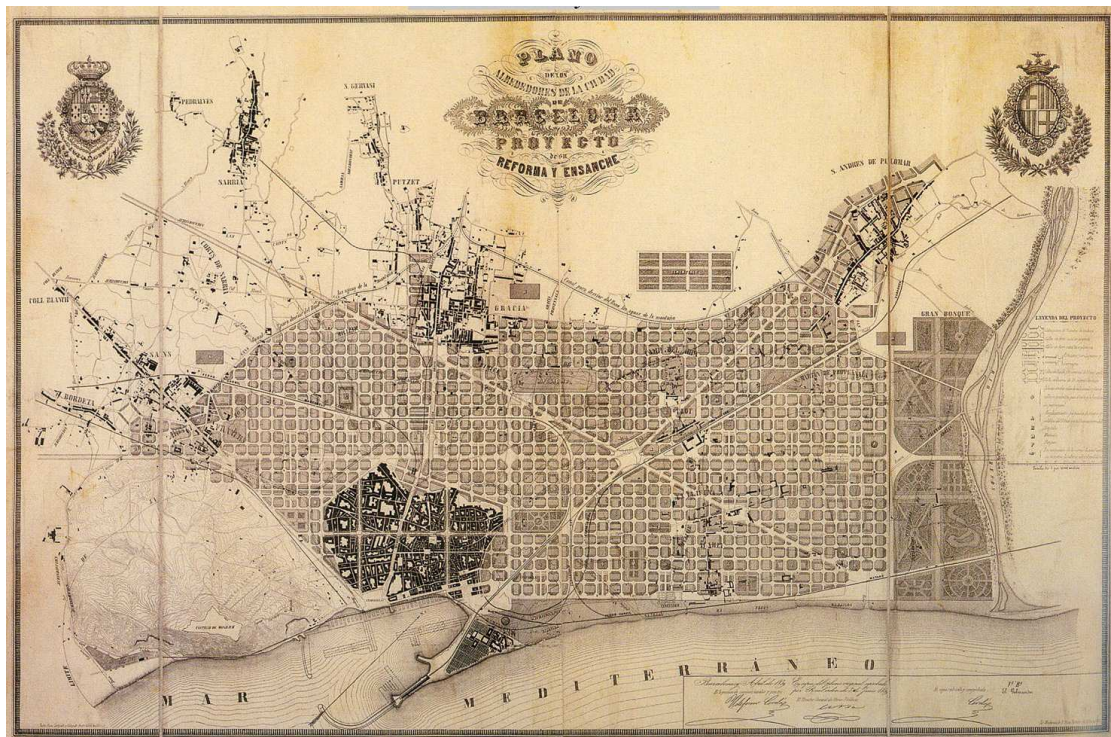


Figure 4.1: Plan Cerdà, 1858 from the archives of the MUHBA (Guallar, 2010)

conflict and negotiation, of transforming the everyday life of workers, and also of modifying the assemblage of the local and Catalan institutions (Montalban, 1992).

After the sabotage and the workers revolts of the 1830s, and the struggles for the right to free association and political assembly of the 1850s, a space for reform was opened, in which trade unions rights were affirmed. Later on, in the *Semana Tragica* (Tragic Week) of 1909, an urban strike took place challenging the reaffirmation of conservative politics, colonial wars and the precarisation of proletarians' lives. The strike met with bloody repression. This was the apotheosis of a secular conflict (Montalban, 1985, Miro, 2007).

In those days the spectres of the Republic began to haunt Spain. The Tragic Week of 1909 can be recognised as the bloody, dramatic and temporary figuration of a dream that was shortly realised during the Second Republic, when the prevailing forms of governmentality were pushed towards a constitutional and institutional relationship with *el poder popular*. A space of political organisation that survived in a clandestine and *minor* way through out 40 years of dictatorship.

### **From Franco's regime to the democratic transition**

The first decades of the Francoist period were in Barcelona and generally in Catalonia extremely repressive. After the Civil War, Francoist governance developed a set of interconnected dispositifs of authoritarian regulation.

First the control over the market dynamics of economic organisation through autarchy and nationalisation, and through a strict control over the development of private enterprises. Second, the deactivation of political organisations, not only by criminalisation, imprisonment and state terror, but also by control and corruption, transforming local administrations into clientele-based dispositifs which mediated access to the resources of the welfare state. Finally the repression of cultural expression and organisation - especially over local languages and the forms of organisation of civil society - meant in Barcelona and Catalonia the repression of locally based projects. This autarchic period imprisoned Spanish society within a strict system of political control over social life that contained and delimited economic and cultural dynamism (Montalban, 1985, Vilaros, 1998, Miro, 2007, Delgado, 2007a).

In the late 1950s the period of autarchic rule came to an end. Between 1954 and 1959 the *National Plan for Economic Stabilisation* was approved and the national bourgeoisie and the military regime developed a form of cooperation in the name of the development of the market economy and the management of the incoming flows of international capital. This marriage of convenience triggered the industrial boom of Barcelona, Bilbao and Madrid and the second wave of internal migrations from Andalusia, Extremadura and the Atlantic coast. (Delgado, 2007a, Miro, 2007)

In this framework, I propose to analyse Francoist citizenship as a deformed mirror of Marshall's post-war industrial citizenship. While the latter is based on duties and rights and the former is constituted around discipline and privilege, they share a rigid understanding of what a citizen is. In both cases the citizen is positioned as a subject whose identity is based on homogeneity and loyalty to the interests of the Nation. However, like in the rest of Europe, this model of representation was unable to sustain the crisis of the Fordist mode of regulation as well as the emancipatory conflict of the working class and of the creative-destructive impetus of capital (Aglietta, 1979, 1998).

### **The democratic transition**

The period of the Spanish democratic transition signals a phase of indeterminacy in the governance of Barcelona. This indeterminacy related not only to the dismantling of the dictatorial management of institutional power, but also to the organisation of a different structure of urban production. Indeed, the political transition was the counterpart of a crisis in the economic governance of the Francoist regime, determined by the inability of regulating both industrial conflict and the emerging post-industrial modes of production.

While this conflictive model was similar to the mechanisms of other European post-fordist and neoliberal forms of restructuring, the democratic transition in Spain was somewhat anomalous. The mechanisms of negotiation for the new productive model involved at the same time the reorganisation of the economic structure, the infrastructure of space and the superstructural legitimacy of the state. The institutional indeterminacy which followed Franco's death, the global economic crisis of the 1970s and the infrastructural backwardness of Spain transformed the democratic transition into an integral social reorganisation. The constitution of the neoliberal model of social organisation developed not through a civil mechanism of regulation at the level of institutions -like in the rest of Europe, where the definition of new rules normed the transition to the new mode of production- but in the simultaneous constitution of the structural, superstructural and infrastructural dimensions of the new mode of production.

Social structures, in the marxian sense, were reformed through policies that intervened in the reorganisation of the labour market - to capture social activity and urban life (via the interaction of union struggles and culminating in the redefinition of the labor laws in the *Pactos de La Moncloa*, 1985)(Montalban, 1985, Delgado, 2007a). The new superstructure of the state was configured through the implementation of new enunciations -laws and rights- that constituted local autonomies (1978), the new constitution (1979) and eventually stabilised their legitimacy following the failure of the 1981 coup (Martinez, 2012). Finally, infrastructure was reorganised; projecting a new urban and regional project for flexible accumulation through urbanisation that

initiated a violent process of dispossession and appropriation over urban life during the bid to host the *Olympic Games* (examined below) (Vilaros, 1998, Miro, 2007, Carmona, 2012).

On the other side of this process of governance, in the following sections I show how enunciations and spaces from below, as insurgent practices, were productive dimensions of new forms of social organisation where the *common constitution* of urban space has been *the engine* of social production - the production of city as a *oeuvre* (Lefebvre, 1996, 1991). Indeed, this has been particularly relevant with regard to the urban life of Barcelona. Since the 1960s -and in step with the regime at a national level- the Catalan bourgeoisie have promoted the industrialisation of the Catalan national economy (Delgado, 2007a) developing a partially autonomous relation with international markets. After the establishment of the autonomous regional administration in 1978, and through the constitution of public private partnerships as a pillar of social organisation on a regional scale, Barcelona attempted to configure itself as a space of autonomous rights where an independent *right of the city* ruled (Isin, 2002) and the city affirmed itself as an urban machine capable of defining its own norms of regulation as distinct from the interests of the Nation. This institutional, legal and productive frame serves as point of departure for the analysis of the emergence of radical political practices in the everyday life of Barcelona at the end of the 1970s.

In the following pages of this chapter I focus on the acts of escape that permitted the contestation of the Francoist regime and the configuration of a form of material autonomy of the city; an autonomy of subjectivation as well as of production, in the realm of culture, symbols and in the production of urban space - as *oeuvre* constructed in the interaction of words and deeds. I analyse the emergence of everyday life as a practice of appropriation of life in terms of time and space, and how this process influenced the productive reconfiguration of the city introducing new subjects and new objects in urban dynamics.

## 4.2 Other subjects

### 4.2.1 *La toma* - the appropriation of time

The starting point of my story is the appropriation of time in Barcelona's factories during the second half of the 1970s (Miro, 2007, Zegri and Peña, 2008). Out of many others, Numax is an emblematic factory with regard to the analysis of autonomous movements.

Numax, on the edge of bankruptcy, was occupied and run by workers organised as an autonomous union. In 1978 and 1979, the workers of Numax – together with the director Joaquin Jordà - produced a collective documentary as a practice of research and critique both of the

capitalist organisation of production and of the problems emerging in the self-management of the factory. (See Figure 4.2 and Video V.3)



Figure 4.2: The declaration of intents of Numax's workers in *Numax Presenta...* (Jorda, 1979)

Through the collective writing of a play, the workers recounted and criticised the crisis of the factory as a farce: the bankruptcy and the subsequent corruption and speculation over the factory permitted the unveiling of the commonality of interests between the Catalan bourgeoisie, the Francoist regime and international investors. This alliance of elite interests were essential in reconfiguring the labour market and the mode of production during the democratic transition.

In the capitalistic restructuring of the 1970s:

Everybody is calling for social peace, to allow Spanish capitalism to survive without ruptures to the traumatic shift from the Francoist regime to the bourgeois democracy. (Jorda, 1979, unpaginated)

In opposition to this mystification, the documentary analysed the questions emerging in the everyday life of Numax, a factory «in which the goal is not to make profits, but to pay salaries» (Jorda, 1979, unpaginated). The documentary should be understood as a form of enquiry which operated via a material attempt to rethink political struggle as collective practice for a better life. Ideals, institutions, capitals and markets are all analysed in the concrete. Radical theoretical questions such as exploitation or responsibility are addressed in the daily self-management of the factory.

The occupation (and the documentary) does not make a claim on behalf of, or demand rights for, any of the given interlocutors. Rather this experience institutes (in the etymological sense of bringing-into-being, from *tithêmi*) an experience of self-management as prefiguration of an autonomous organisation of social production.

A long process in which we passed from controlling to managing the factory and in which we have demonstrated to everybody and to ourselves that workers are something more, much more than a robot chained to a machine. The worker is capable of thinking, coordinate, plan and lead. It has not been easy, we have been forced to break up the mental schemes our heads have ever been filled with: obedience, respect for private property, servilism, ignorance, individualism, mistrust in our power. (Jorda, 1979, unpaginated)

The occupation of factories in the second half of the 1970s marked the affirmation of a scattered network of local experiences, in opposition to the national strategy of the traditional unions which were invested in a politics of compromise with the objective of guaranteeing a smooth transition to democracy.

From the late 1960s, the *Partido Comunista Español* (PCE, Spanish Communist Party) adopted a strategy of isolating Francoism by creating a series of alliances (Montalban, 1985, Martínez, 2012). Meanwhile, another stream of the party, as well as part of *Comisiones Obreras* and other unions, focused on strengthening the local assemblies emerging out of the factories. This *assemblearismo* began to organise struggles on the basis of contingent instances of conflict, resonating with the emergence of similar experiences (called *autonomy*) throughout Europe (Miro, 2007).

Together with the understanding of the assembly as the depositary of collective legitimacy, the urgency of questioning the subjective composition emerged in the movement. Was the working class self-sufficient to lead and act as protagonist in this rupture? Was the factory the right context, was it the necessary and sufficient framework to resolve the social antagonism? Was it necessary to push for the creation of new *nuclei* of self-institution with the aim of juxtaposing a new reading for the emerging political and productive scenario? (Miro, 2007, 54)

In the attempt to construct a space of autonomous decision making, against the verticality of the party and the economicism of union bargaining, the autonomous occupation of factories reinvented the practices of unionism through the constitution of a series of committees to deal with health, pollution, education, the self management of occupied factories and so on. Escaping from the ideological structure of parties and unions, the new social movements avoided codified

political practices and discourses, reconfiguring the political not only as the appropriation of time (waged labour) but also as the appropriation of space. Furthermore, the space of autonomous struggles in Barcelona maintained a scattered structure of singular struggles in permanent dialogue, thus avoiding verticality (cf. Archive of *La Ciutat Invisible*, Barcelona).

There's not *autonomia* as such. It is not like in Italy where the movement played a big role. Here autonomous movement appeared as autonomous struggles, in the Harry-Walker, in Numax, in Scala and so on, but you cannot talk of it as one thing. (Marc Dalmau in a conversation during my visit to the Archive of *La Ciutat Invisible*)

The fragility of these experiences and the permanent experimentation at the level of practice produced an interdependency between factories and urban social movements, bridging different spheres of society and different fields of political struggle, and transforming the way of 'speaking politics'. In the words of Numax workers, it was not about representing a preconceived ideology, but producing a situated expression.

We start to film this documentary, that aims to explain to every worker our experience: our achievements and our mistakes. For the former and latter can be useful for all of us in the long way that lies before us to abolish waged labour, until the constitution of a society without exploiters and exploited, without bureaucracies and bosses, in which everybody receives according to her needs. It's a movie we have made by ourselves [...] of which we know the beginning but we ignore the end. We don't know if they will win, put us in the ocean of unemployed workers needed by the process of capitalist restructuring, but even in that case, the lesson and the experience of this struggle will not die. (Jorda, 1979, unpaginated)

It was in the neighbourhoods where this lesson was to spread out. The *Comisiones de Barrio* enacted practices such as writing public letters, small street protests, traffic cuts, banners on balconies, in order to find a voice for neighbourhood level activism, affirming it as a new form of citizen activism.

Since the very first moment the articulation with the feminist and the trade-union movement is strong: the big mobilisations of Vallés and Valle Llobregat paralyse [not only the factory but also] the neighbourhood because there was a great connection between the neighbourhood, [or] the *lucha popular*, and the workers struggle. I remember, when I was in secondary school, we would stop to support the SEAT workers strike. There was no doubt: if they are on strike, we stop! If the harbour



was on strike, the neighbourhood of Barceloneta was on strike. No shops, nothing: everything was on strike. (Eva Fernandez) (See Figure 4.3)



Figure 4.3: The demonstration to support SEAT strike (Desacuerdos, 2003)

The need to produce alliances and dialogue and material solutions to concrete problems forced social movements to broaden their focus beyond a labour-centred view, to invent new political practices and networks capable of producing new enunciations.

A heterogeneous alliance among neighbours, Christian grassroots movements, extreme left groups, technicians, economists, and it is a space of convergence because of a concrete situation: it is the only space left for legal political action during the Francoist regime. (Jordi Bonet)

I consider this battle over urban space as a conflict around the capitalist organisation of *the production and distribution* of wealth (Lefebvre, 1991, 1996).

This was a struggle between the inhabitation of urban space and the abstraction of that space as a capitalistic practice of subsumption of spheres of social life that were not exploited in the Fordist mode of production. But it can also be understood in terms of a conflict over distribution: over the forms in which common wealth is returned to the city not only through salaries, but also through collective consumption and cultural identity, something crucial for the transformation of social relations as a whole.

The city, as *oeuvre*, affirmed itself as the principal site of this constituent process, allowing new subjects and objects to populate urban space. Forms, bodies, places and languages became at the same time the subjective and material gears of a new process of production and the agents of a process of the appropriation of social production. The conflict between labour and capital did not disappear with the emergence of urban social movements, but displaced itself from the solitude of industrial production to the whole of capitalist social relations of the city: from the factory to the *barrio*.

#### 4.2.2 *El barrio* - the appropriation of space

I want to begin my analysis of radical urban politics in Barcelona by examining the grassroots neighbourhood movements of the 1970s. Here, as will be the case throughout this thesis, I will not be concerned with describing or providing an overview of the movement. Rather, I will examine some elements of the movement in which the questions of appropriation and inhabitation can be interrogated in order to produce a useful diagram in terms of engaging with struggles for the right to the city in the present context.

In 1978, in the neighbourhood of Torre Barò, a kind of slum area composed of informal dwellings, local *asociaciones de vecinos* forcefully seized public buses that did not service the neighbourhood due to the supposed steepness of the mountain upon which the neighbourhood had been built (See Figure 4.4). Once they demonstrated that the bus could in fact reach to the neighbourhood, they demanded a reorganisation of the public transport system. Out of this experience, in Carmel and other slums, public transport was self-organised by the community. (See Figure 4.5)

Neighbourhood movements did not seek mediation by (or a negotiation with) the state. They organised themselves through *de facto* political action that involved self-organisation of education and health, rights for informal housing, social struggles for urban services, supports for elderly people and so on (Eva Fernandez). In this process, the experience of the everyday questioned the categories and concepts of traditional politics.

The gendered division of labour inside the movements, for example, was not addressed only at the level of personal experience. The position of women and the collective questioning of the habits of social movements proposed doubts and contradictions with regard to the ideologies, the forms of organisation, and the chains of enunciations of both the parties and the clandestine groups of the Francoist dictatorship.

For orthodox groups:

The factory workers are the engine [of social struggles]: the classical marxist scheme is based on the struggles in the factories, led by men. Therefore, the *lucha popu-*



Figure 4.4: The seized bus of Torre Barò (Archive of *Ciutat Invisible*)

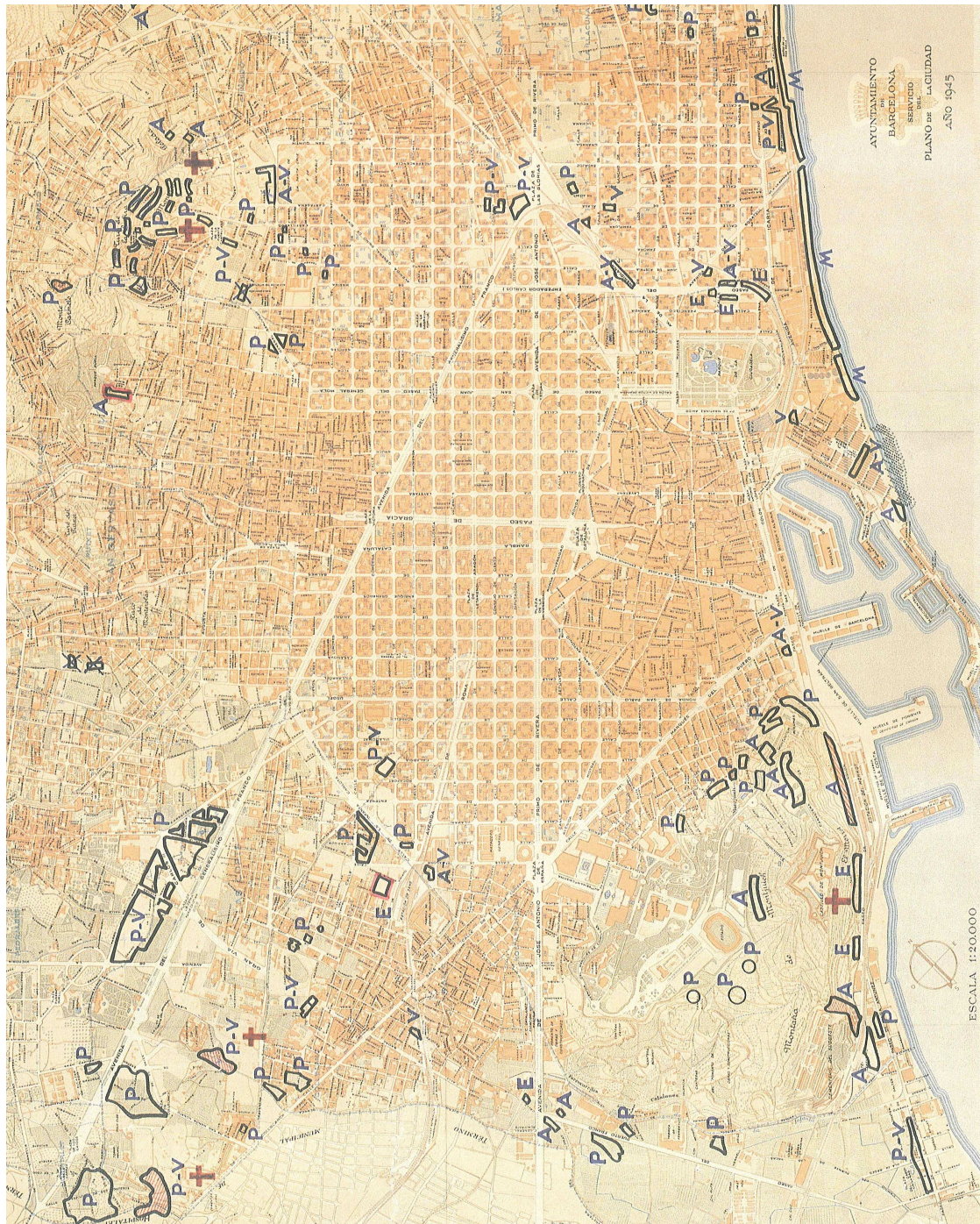


Figure 4.5: The slums of Barcelona in 1945 (MUHBA, 2010)

*lar* is a second line. In a classical analysis, the latter merely focuses on what you would call petty-bourgeois goals, and these are managed by women. This was the typical couple [of militants] in the 1960s: the husband is a leader in the factory, and the wife is in the *barrio*, leading the *asamblea de barrio*, working on this and that, making demands around traffic lights and so on. Because during the dictatorship, you have to protect the union leader – while it is socially and politically acceptable that a woman, because of her gender role, stops the traffic to demand a traffic light, because kids have died there and so on. (Eva Fernandez)

The development of this everyday experience in the *barrio* constituted a different understanding of how things should happen not only within capitalistic power relations, but also in terms of the space of social movements. The appropriation of time and space involved went beyond a struggle against the capitalist exploitation of labour and the precarious condition of life in the slums. At stake was the production of new social subjects and objects affected by this new political experience.

If we are talking about practices [that are emerging], we cannot consider innovation only in a formal way. In my experience, this is the contribution of the feminist perspective. We wanted to be protagonists [as women], and many of the feminist practices and critiques towards parties in that period came from the desire to be protagonists of history, to be in the struggles in the first person, to be on the front line, not feeling represented by somebody else, without anybody representing us. (Eva Fernandez)

The ideologies and ethics of militancy went beyond configuring the practice of the militant in the public domain of representative politics. In the configuration of politics as experience, militancy determined the redefinition of life as such, and therefore the problematisation of political practices and also political analysis thus breaking up the classical division between politics and intimacy, public and private.

We were coming from a period in which the first thing you learned was you could end up being tortured – In clandestinity you couldn't even know the [real] name of your comrades, you couldn't have a drink and talk about intimate problems, about yourself and nobody would ask you about that – it was really hard. The mental approach [you needed to think] about was what to do if tortured. [...] The *watertight* compartments [of the organisation] forced you into loneliness. Our militant agenda meant that - in the university for example – you couldn't have any relation with normal people. (Eva Fernandez)

In the same years, the student mobilisation - described as anti-political by the traditional left to which Eva Fernandez belonged - was, in the first instance an expression of refusal of parliamentary politics and, secondly, a push towards the re-politicisation of the micro-histories and micro-politics of everyday life - recalling much more the experience of the Republican period than the clandestine discipline of the 1950s. By refusing the inscription of their life in the project of *National Development* (1959), students sought to escape the structure of discipline, sanctions and repression that appeared in the university from the late 1950s (Carrillo-Linares, 2006). (See Figure 4.6)



Figure 4.6: Police and students in the university, 1970s (Nazario, 2004)

We were in the Faculty of Law. Eleven in the morning, half past eleven and someone said: «There is gonna be a rumble in Economics and in other buildings» [...] Neither before nor afterwards have I seen such a euphoric and happy atmosphere in the university as on that day [...] The opposition to Francoism was moving out of the ghetto... And we were just simple and innocent students from a catholic and petit bourgeois background. (Felipo, in Nazario, 2004, 21)

At the same time, lifestyles too became sites for struggling against the regime through culture and experience. Sexual and moral habits as well as underground cultural production and environmental concerns began to challenge the morality and the political rigidity not only of the

regime but also of the clandestine opposition. (*Boletín informativo* 1969 in Carrillo-Linares, 2006). Soon enough this generation felt trapped in the university - as much as they would have in clandestine groups - and spread out in the city in search of spaces to experiment on the edges of sexuality, the arts and politics (Nazario, 2004). They moved to the *Barri Xino*, a space of exception in the very centre of the Barcelona's modernist planning.

As a result of its own history<sup>1</sup> the *Barri Xino* was a place where experimental practices would affect and be affected by the concrete relations of power of ordinary people and ordinary culture and where, therefore, countercultures could intervene in and modify in real terms the everyday of public spaces. Countercultures, both symbolically and spatially, emerged as margins in the centre of Barcelona, attacking the rhetoric and the morality that underpinned the Francoist regime. (See Figure 4.7)

The configuration of this porosity between different spheres of social life constituted the trigger for a profound innovation in the forms of political organisation, as well as in the forms of political language, concepts and fields of intervention. The emerging subjects could not be represented within the framework of the traditional politics and they constituted anomalous and autonomous forms of expression (Carmona, 2012).

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<sup>1</sup>The radical history of the *Xino/Raval* has been studied extensively (Villar, 1997, Subirats et al., 2008). It was a crucial site for resistance and organisation against the Franco regime and constituted the core of counter-cultural and sexual freedom movements from the 1960s onwards. It is a place where migrants have congregated, from the rural-urban exodus of the early 19th century to the current global movements of migration. Class struggle, popular and counter-culture, as cultures of opposition, sexuality and migration are the intertwined ciphers of the non-conventional history of this neighbourhood.

Since the 19th century anticlericalism and class struggle in Barcelona have been connected, largely due to the role of the church as the landlord of factories, houses and brothels in the *Xino/Raval* in the 19th Century. At the same time the nuns in the convents – urban legends say – were competing in the labour market of the textile putting out system that employed working class women, providing free labour based on notions of charity and therefore lowering the wages of the latter. It has been argued that this was the reason working class women led the burning of convents during the *Semana Tragica* ['The Tragic Week'] of 1910.

A few decades later, in the early 1940s, waves of migration from rural Spain to Barcelona (as well as Bilbao and Madrid) became a *red migration* escaping the systematic political cleansing in the small centres by the regime: the anonymity of urban space, and the *Xino/Raval* in particular, permitted the *rojos* to survive, and the *Xino/Raval* became a place to organise against the regime. Finally and more importantly, sexuality has always enveloped the *Xino/Raval*.

It is possible to look at the role of sexuality in many little stories that populate the history of this *barrio*: for example, the terrible story of Enriqueta Marti, a sex worker close to the high bourgeoisie, detained in 1912 and condemned for allegedly kidnapping children for witchcraft rituals. A story full of mystery, contradictions and elements that allow us to scratch the surface of Catalan modernity (Pierrot, 2006); or the diaries from the early 1900s of Vallmitjana (2003), a rich journalist who hid in the streets of the *Xino/Raval* to reveal the everyday life of a young girl working the streets of the *barrio*. Most famously, there is the *Thief's Journal* in which Jean Genet (1973) recounts his adventures between brothels, violence and love in the early 1930s.

Furthermore, it is also crucial to recognise the social and political role of sex workers in the Republic and the Civil War, as well as the importance of the 'immorality' of the *Xino/Raval* in guaranteeing a degree of freedom during the forty years of Francoist regime, when this *barrio* became a space of unusual freedom both sexually and politically.



Figure 4.7: The *Café Opera* of Barcelona (Nazario, 2004)



*Sí, claro*, the first thing is the fight for democracy and for the workers movement. Any other thing will come as an addition. This means that when we will be free, we will have freedom as women and so on. But then, in the women's movements, we started to say that it should not be like that. One thing is not inherent to the other. And then the feminist struggles emerged. (Eva Fernandez)

After the end of the regime, the political parties and the unions launched a campaign for the freedom of political prisoners. Women sought support for a campaign for amnesty with regard to gendered offences (such as adultery or abortion), the importance of such a goal was not recognised, however, within the traditional left.

Because during the [democratic] transition they were talking about amnesty for political prisoners, people detained for political reasons, [...] but they were not bearing in mind that there were women in jail for reasons that were not political; but for offences characteristic of women: for adultery [...] for abortion, or for helping somebody to abort - not necessarily for economic reasons, because sometimes they were women that were doing it in solidarity with a neighbour being conscious that they could not have more children, no? (Eva Fernandez)

This politics of experience affirmed the body as a performative and prefigurative practice of social transformation. It was performative in terms of constituting innovative political spaces and languages, capable of breaking the teleological and hierarchical schemes of the workers movement. It was prefigurative in terms of using the body as a political practice that constituted freedom in immanent terms.

Here, where social transformation depends on the struggle against capital, against the church, against the state, the liberation of the body is at the same time an instrument for conflict and a field of self-determination. The tension between experience and territory is a tension between body and space - at the point where difference emerges as a key issue in terms of defining the freedom of the emerging society. The lesson of experience, or the philosophy of praxis (Gramsci, 1975b), becomes a crucial dimension for thinking political organisation in the 1970s.

Beyond Numax, and workers' struggles, or *asociaciones de vecinos*, this is possibly the *fil rouge* that connects autonomous unionism and neighbourhood struggles with another site of radical action in the urban politics of Barcelona: life itself. Everyday life is part of the permanent political questioning of the militant. To start-from-the-self implies to break the separation between the private and the political. The political speak-out of minorities permits experimentation with alternative forms of life, but also the reinvention of militancy itself through the material experiences of the body.

### 4.3 Other bodies

We are in the 1970s, abortion is forbidden and contraceptives as well. So there are groups of women in the neighbourhood who were sharing information on contraception methods and even distributing contraceptives; in Spain in that moment you could not go to the chemist to buy condoms. You had to go to shops called *goma y lavajes* [rubbers and lotions] - something that does not exist anymore, but once here, in the Barri Xino, in the Raval, there were [these] shops – so you were obliged to come to very specific places connected with prostitution. You can understand how radical it was for a group of women in a popular neighbourhood to do all this. [...] [In the Carmelo] one of the women was a gynaecologist, [...] and they discovered that in the local hospital there was an empty room, so they asked the local doctor to have that room once a week for sharing information on methods of contraception. I think that, in such a radical moment, the guy was sensitive to these questions or he thought it was not very important. But that started to be always full, you can imagine! [...] And one day, it occurred to them to explain the practice of self-examination [...]. In a moment of public silence on sexuality, the women of the Carmelo, an absolutely working-class neighbourhood, called a meeting for explaining female anatomy – publicising it with posters in the streets! So the room is full and they have to use the waiting room. And the gynaecologist using the vaginal speculum on herself went one by one explaining to all the women which were the lips, the head of the uterus, how to look at it... And afterwards the local priest wanted to excommunicate all of them... (Eva Fernandez)

This double dimension of performativity and prefiguration of the body made possible the alliance between autonomous and feminist movements and countercultures, in the process affirming a new political agency. The critique of traditional politics is not only about contents, but about the modes of organisation, which these emerging movements affirmed through their own political composition and by inventing new modes of expression that implied a different organisation of struggle.

Everyday was a show! You have to think that we are talking about Ocaña, and Nazario, the Ramblas of the 1980s, the *Cupula Venus*, the *Diana* – a generation of people that lived militancy as fun. When just before militancy had been anguish, heavy. A sacrifice. (Eva Fernandez) (See Figure 4.8)

In this fragment, we can perceive the affirmation of a new political space, but most of all a deep rupture against the traditional political forms of clandestinity and militant discipline, through the



Figure 4.8: The social activities of the *Sala Diana* in the 1970s (Nazario, 2004)

emergence of political action for sexual freedom and countercultural movements that demand the recognition of immanent strangers and internal outsiders as full citizens. In the words of *El Pais*:

Catalan homosexuals state that [the Law of Social Dangerousness] ‘marginalises, refuses and condemns broad social sectors of the population such as homosexuals, women, young people, prostitutes and drugs consumers’. (Quinta, 1977)

The first (illegal) gay pride, which took place in the context of the democratic transition, affirmed this movement as an actor in public space. In the name of ‘sexual freedom and total amnesty’, thousands of people marched for gay rights. The police responded with baton charges against demonstrators. In democratic Barcelona, a debate began to open up transversally around the possibility of political action in public space and the political legitimacy of the excluded.

‘Is this what Spanish democracy looks like?’ The Belgian guy was asking irritated, without any reticence, while the police were shooting rubber bullets at the doors of the Manila Hotel. [...] Public Authorities charged their own anger on homosexuals that were realising one of the most beautiful demonstration that ever happened in the Ramblas. [...] A scene of medieval, pitiful *Inquisición*. All the repressed violence [of Public Authorities] was projected on the homosexuals, now that it cannot be channeled towards other elements protected by law. (From *Interviù magazine*, in Nazario, 2004, 104)

From here, the everyday practices of sexual minorities blossomed in urban public life, acting as an affirmative provocation against the contradictions of mainstream culture. Jose Perez de Ocaña and Nazario, trans-gender artists and activists, organised performances via the occupation of public space situating themselves on the border between art and political action for sexual freedom (Nazario, 2004, Fernandez, 2004).

The interlocution with ‘ordinary culture’, in the sense proposed by Raymond Williams (2011), was not posed in contrast to the modern discourse of the traditional bourgeois left, as exotic or premodern. On the contrary, the margins of citizenship were the position from where these counter-cultural movements sought to break the norms of public space and the canons of artistic expression, thus allowing the subaltern to appear in the centre of the scene.

Since I moved to Barcelona I feel free, much more than when I was in my own town. [...] I love to go out cross-dressed because I like to provoke – the first show, the first striptease was mine at the *Catalan Theatre Workers* meeting – and then they presented me as a member of the union, which I am not. But to be a transvestite, would permit me to talk with people in the street and provoke them. It is something

I liked to do since I was a kid. Society has fucked me over, but now that I have overcome this thing that intellectuals call alienation, and the scale fell from my eyes, I want to tell straight words to people in the street! Provoke them! (Ocaña in Pons, 1978, unpaginated) (See Figure 4.9 and Video V.4)



Figure 4.9: The Ramblas according to Ocaña (Pons, 1978)

Here, provocation does not simply refer to an attack on moralism, but rather to a practice of translation which aims to provoke a reaction in the interlocutor - and therefore to institute a space where a process of contamination and constitution of a shared set of signs can emerge.

Ocaña's character Macarena, a transsexual virgin that walks the streets of the sex-worker's district of Barcelona on the day of the Virgin Mary, translates the elements of traditional catholic culture into the artistic sensibility of the transvestite countercultures, challenging the patriarchal idiosyncrasies of ordinary people. This transposed parade situated itself within ordinary culture while and at the same time challenging it, proposing a genealogy of radical gay aesthetics that drew from the sensuality of flamenco, in the migrant culture of Andalusia, and in the marginality of those urban poor that follow the procession.

The singing of the *cantaora* - as Andalusian archetype - resonates with the social composition of the migrant urban poor, loyal to the traditional rituals of their land. Retaking the canons of ordinary cultural understandings of beauty, trans-gender artists expressed their own difference as an organic part of a political territory from below. Escaping from the moralism of rural Spain to the metropolitan space, the proliferation of radical politics made possible the institution of ways of modifying urban life. The politicisation of embodied experience affects both the habits and the spatial configuration - or rather the ethics and the aesthetics - of urban life. (See Figure 4.10)

The interventions of Ocaña, Nazario and their friends were not judgmental: they were not reducing their interlocutors to a folkloristic audience, nor were they understanding tradition and voyeurism as a pre-modern expression. Rather, Ocaña was part of the immoralities and superstitions of ordinary culture and it was from this position that he acted. Performances constituted



Figure 4.10: The *Macarena* (Ocaña in Pons, 1978)

a space of dialogue starting from ordinary experiences and shared backgrounds. The procession excluded materially and symbolically the power of the church from the religious ritual as a practice of ordinary culture. It instituted, from below, an autonomous political space which was also transversal vis-a-vis the complexity of authoritarian, patriarchal or classist social relations of power.

Like a butterfly, Ocaña moves from one register to another:

I was a child at school and [...] the teacher signed me up for the Falange and I couldn't avoid it, because they would oblige me... and it was very funny because they take you to the beach. But they never took me! And this was the reason for which I got angry. After going there and singing their awful songs, I was waiting for a summer to go to Cadiz beach. And then it was always the son of the Mayor, the son of the Concierge, the ones of the Councillors. The rest of us, since we were the sons of builders, got nothing. (Ocaña in Pons, 1978, unpaginated)

In the film *Retrato Intermitente*, which presents a series of interviews with Ocaña as well as recording of some performances, art, poetry and politics as material dimensions of everyday life made possible the enunciation of political discourse as a matter of experience. Ocaña's recounting of childhood sexual experimentation among the vines, or the dimension of class conflict in rural Spain evident in funerals (in which the ceremonies of the rich involved three priests while those of the poor only involved one), suggested a fresco made of contradictions, a Pasolinian space where beauty is intertwined with subalternity and social conflict.

[In the village] they excluded me; they marginalised me, because I was *fino* [*trans.* delicate and sensitive]. [...] I abandoned the school for going to collect olives, in the mud, to see something different and then on the streets, they threw stones at me... I felt like Mary Magdalen, ah! [...] So what can I tell you? I think workers are divine, but they bugged me a lot too. (Ocaña in Pons, 1978, unpaginated)

The position of Ocaña, following Joan Miquel Gual, «is a radical critique of the seriousness of militancy, organisation and communist discipline. Militancy for Ocaña is about an interaction with everyday life, about subversion of normality, about excitement and diversion. [...] The *carpe diem* as site of political subversion» (Joan Gual). The critique alluded to by Joan Gual in the above quote was once again at work in 1977, when in Parc Guell radical unionism, democratic transition and countercultures met and clashed: «all of a sudden Ocaña jumps on the stage and starts a schizo-striptease» (Joan Gual). The meeting in the Parc Guell is the first radical meeting of unionism after Franco's death. A mix of discussion and concerts, where progressive bands like King Crimson shared the stage with intellectuals like Chomsky and Cohen Bendit. (See Figure 4.11)

Young people were reading *Makoki*, they would meet in *Zeleste*, the *Plateria's* one; in the drugstores of Liceu and Paseo de Gràcia that closed in the early morning; in *La Enagua* or *Pastís*. They were militant groupuscules on the margin of the hegemonic *PSUC* [*Partido Socialista Unitario de Catalunya*], that looked down on them: there were *trostkos*, maoists, leninists, splits of splits. The ones of *Ajoblanco* [a counter-cultural fanzine] against those of *El Viejo Topo* [a communist newspaper]. (El Periodico, 2007, 32)

Within this framework, the countercultural movement opened up a radical critique of militancy beyond content or concepts: a critique of the languages and prejudices of traditional political discourse and ultimately of militancy as lifestyle. This suggests the ways in which experience affects, modifies and permits the reinvention of political practice and theory. «When [the libertarian unions] understood our plan [to squat the stage for a striptease], they got very worried, because they understood that we were the real *libertatarian* [sic]» (Ocaña in Pons, 1978, unpaginated). (See Figure 4.12)

Through these practices, gay activism moved from provocation in the public space to the political affirmation of their specific subjectivity, by challenging both the moral and aesthetic order of unionism and the typical political forms of organisation. Another example is the *encierro*<sup>2</sup> of Sant Miquel church (Nazario, 2004, Canals, 1978) to denounce the lack of rights of expression and political action for the gay community during the democratic transition.

In this context, on the 25th of July of the same year, Ocaña and Nazario were detained for singing while cross-dressed on the Ramblas (*Disco Express*, 1978) and beaten by police during their detention. Subsequently, Ocaña launched a campaign in newspapers such as *El País* and

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<sup>2</sup>An *encierro* is a lock-in. The occupation of churches occurred frequently in the Francoist period when churches represented one of the few spaces for political action (together with embassies and foreign institutes) for the illegal political movements. I will analyse in the following chapter the re-emergence of this practice in the early 2000s.

**JORNADAS LIBERTARIAS  
INTERNACIONALES**

**BARCELONA C. N. T. 22-25 DE JULIO 1977**  
**POR EL REENCUENTRO DE LA VIEJA ACRACIA**

**DEBATES SOBRE**

- Valoración de la práctica libertaria desde 1936
- Marxismo y anarquismo frente a las cuestiones del Estado y la política
- Enseñanza e instituciones cerradas
- Crítica a la sociedad industrial y alternativas libertarias
- Movimiento libertario y organización
- Ecología y sexología

**DEBATES SOBRE**

- Problemática ecológica y alternativa libertaria
- Alternativas libertarias a la práctica cinematográfica y teatral
- Aspectos libertarios en el cine no libertario
- Análisis de los procesos asamblearios del teatro en Barcelona (A. D. T. E. - A. A. D.)
- Estado-Espectáculo-Autogestión
- Mujeres libres: Mujer y parto

**ASISTIRAN Y PARTICIPARAN**

**MUSICA:** BLAY TRITONO - JOSE JALFONSO - SISA - PAVESOS - PA TORRAT - MICKY SPUMA - ARRIETA - LOS DE SANTA FE - RAMON MUNS - PAU RIBA - G. A. M. - GRUPO CARRAIXET - LUIS PASTOR - GERARD GAUDHE - FUM DE TABAC - ARACELI BANYULS - SUCK ELECTRONIC - M. ALMENT T. N. T. - MICKY MOUSE & BROTHERS - TRIBU - JECKIE ROCK - EUSKERA - THAIS - CHAMAN - BORNE - JOAN DE LA RUBIA - FAUSTO - DOLORS LAFFITTE - DESMADRE 75 - QUICO PALOMAR - CHROMA - SARABANDA - LA PROPIEDAD ES UN ROBO - BOICOT - BASCA - ANDRE VIALET 5 ROCK - C. M. B. - CARLES - FOLLIAGE - PERUCHO'S - LOS QUADRENY - CUIXA - SARDINETA...

**CINE:** LUIS GARCIA BERLANGA - FERNANDO FERNAN BOMEZ - RAFAEL AZCONA - JOSEP M. NUNES - VICENTE ARANDA - JORDI GRAU - ANTONIO ARTERO - EMMA COHEN - ANTONI RIBAS - FRANCESC BELLMUNT - BASILIO M. PATINO - JOSEP M. FORN - CARLES MIRA - HANS MAGNUS ENZENSBERGER - MIQUEL SANZ - M. ESPINDSA - MARCO FERRERI - RAMON FONT - JOSEP LLUIS GUARNER - ...y proyecciones de films.

**TEATRO:** PATITO FED - LA GRAN COMPAÑIA DE ESPECTACULOS IBERICOS - ORFEO DE SANS - JOAN DOMENECH - LA TRAGICA - FANFARRA - ESTAQUIROT - PAN-K (Bruselas) - ZYASOS... con sus espectáculos.

**ECOLOGIA:** Colectivo T. A. R. A. que montará una geodésica, instalará un molino de viento y llevará el debate sobre "Ecología y anarquismo".

**EXPOSICIONES DE:** Carteles de la guerra civil, pintura, tapices, cerámica...

**VIDEO:** Un colectivo grabará los debates del Salón Diana para reproducirlos en pantalla grande en el Parque Güell.

**I TAMBIEN:** NOAM CHOMSKY - ALEJANDRO VIGNATI - GRUP SEBASTIAN FAURE - SAC (Suecia) - DR. COLOMBO - DANIEL GUERIN - IONESCO...

**POR ENCIMA DE TODO SE ESPERA LA APORTACION LIBERTARIA DE TODA LA BASCA DEL MUNDO, ESPECIALMENTE LA GLORIOSA BASCA IBERICA.**

**SALUD I ANARQUIA!**  
**ZONAS LIBERADAS**

**PARC GÜELL-SALO DIANA-ATENEOS**

**PRECIO DE LOS ABONOS:** Solidarios, 500 ptas. Normal, 300 ptas.

**VENTA DE ABONOS:** SALO DIANA (San Pablo, 85) - TENDERETE CNT RAMBLAS - CNT/ESPECTACULOS, Pasaje de la Paz, 8 - PARC GÜELL.

Dep. Leg. B. 28.696 - 1977

Figure 4.11: The poster of the CGT Festival in 1977 (Nazario, 2004)





Figure 4.12: Ocaña's striptease at the *CGT Festival* (Nazario, 2004)

*La Vanguardia* as well as *Disco Express* and *Catalunya Express* in which a photograph of his back, bruised by the police truncheons, was published.

The image of Ocaña's back plays on the edges, using the body at the same time as an expression of an aesthetic experiment, and a political statement: where the photo lives on the limit between a classical sculpture and a journalistic scoop. The perspective on his body resembled the twisted back of Michelangelo's David. But at the same time the injuries became a voyeuristic provocation for tabloid journalism. The body is at once a battleground and a playground. On the one hand it is terrain for seeking new rights and affirming autonomy. On the other it is a canvas for experimenting with the possibilities of aesthetics as political expression. At stake here is the limit between form and content, not as neutral frontier, but as a porous membrane - on the one hand a piece of art, on the other political expression. (See Figure 4.13)

Starting from Ocaña's experience, photography translated this singular experience into an aesthetic expression. However, once inserted in the campaign denouncing the homophobic practices of government, the artistic photo returns as a political experience. No longer the personal experience of the artist, but a collective experience of the gay community. In Ocaña's naïve style, «la peau est ce qu'il y a de plus profond en l'homme» (Valery, 1934, 31). The first gaze at the skin is the deepest one: in times of democracy the police beat people for being homosexual.

Following on from this discussion of the photograph and its circulation, I now turn to the investigation of how the mode of production of objects - photographs, spaces, etc - is relevant to understanding the shift in political practices of the 1970s and how this cycle between experiences and expressions configure a layer for understanding the emergence of a new form of political organisation and conceptualisation.

#### 4.4 Other objects

Dissidence was no longer simply a matter of political consciousness or the organisation of revolutionary programmes, the strength of the emerging forms of dissidence started from the personal point of view. The revolution in everyday life meant to look for a new horizon of passions, desires, and motivations. (Carmona, 2012, 175)

From the late 1970s many groups began to establish bars, small bookshops and publishing houses which served as a way of generating an income, thus making possible spaces of relative autonomy vis-a-vis wage labour. As a refusal of wage labour, these experiences were the 'line of flight' for those that wanted to affirm an autonomous mode of production, constituted at the same time by a new language to contest the capitalistic organisation of labour and by prefigurative practices for inventing another world. The production of this new political space was



# Ocaña La 1

**“Venían con  
porras y con  
criminales”**

Por VICENTE GRACIA  
Fotos: PACO ELVIRA  
y MARTA SENTIS

—A mí no me da miedo el expediente ni la ficha. ¿Quiénes son ellos para garme a mí? ¡Qué tienen? ¡Las le! Bueno, son muertos andantes. Bu muertos. Son grises. Yo tengo la y Nos encerrarán, pero la mente, n estará libre siempre. Y ésa sí que n pueden correr. Ellos, en realidad, los grandes marginados, y viven miedo. Y no pueden tolerar que a nos no lo tengamos y seamos lib vivamos libremente.

En las Ramblas barcelonesas, o de medianoche de la Verbena de Jaime, son detenidos por la Po Municipal el pintor homosexual Ocaña —popularizado recientemente por película “Ocaña, retrat intermitent” Ventura Pons—, junto con dos am suyos, el dibujante Nazario y un chacho llamado José. Violentam son conducidos al cuartelillo de la za del Buen Suceso y allí son viole mente maltratados de palabra y o Especialmente el pintor Ocaña, al se le aporrea y se le dan patadas y ñetazos que dejan su cuerpo visi mente amoratado.

—¿Qué ocurrió aquella noc Ocaña?

—Pues habíamos ido de verbena plaza de San Miguel, pero como el biente era un muermo, entonces Nazario y yo decidimos ir a las Ram Yo iba de vieja jorobá y Nazario reina, iba divina con sus volantes. vaba un vestido...

—Bien, bien, continúa con lo pasó...

—¡Ay, cómo eres! ¡Peor que un cial! ¡Déjame libre, que lo cuente c yo quiera!

—Vale.

—Pues íbamos paseando por

Figure 4.13: Ocaña's back after being arrested (Disco Express, 1978)

configuring a new urban reality which pointed towards the emergence of Barcelona as a city of difference, culture and radical art.

The most radical contribution to the redefinition of practices comes in my opinion from [the link between] feminism [and countercultures] – and for this we take playful elements in demonstrations, where we would participate with colours, creatures, theatricalising the space – our spaces were more playful because through these spaces we could build intimate territories of resistance. And this was going along a lot with the gay movement.

[...]

There was both a formal encounter between organisations, like the *Coordinadora Feminista*, the *FAG (Front Alliberament Gay)*, the *FEGAC*. There were many formal collaborations, but also an informal connection. My feeling is that – maybe it has something to do with age - in that period relations were very open. And the Ramblas were the core of it. You would not make any appointment [for the night], you would just go to the Ramblas – [...] and meet people there. There were [alternative] spaces, like the *Cupula Venus*, like today you can have a place or a bar where a group of people meet. And I would say that, without being a social centre, in that moment those spaces in many ways would act as [current social centres]. (Eva Fernandez)

The spaces referred to by Fernandez in the above quote were spaces of political expression which surpassed the limits of both politics and the radical arts, thus constituting one of the ‘laboratories’ in terms of the configuration of the movements of ‘escape’. Discotheques, cafes, art galleries as well as the street, become spaces for the development of artistic and political practices. Following Spivak’s critique with regard to the impossibility of speaking from the position of the subaltern (1988), it is perhaps possible to recognise here a new material (fragile and permanently vanishing) language of politics outside the framework of classical political organisation.

[Since 1969,] there is an inflection and a radicalisation of a whole range of discursive practices [in the field of arts], along with a radicalisation of the Francoist regime and of its opponents, the workers and the student movements. In this panorama a set of radical - *de facto* democratic or pre-democratic (if not revolutionary) - practices flourish. [Practices] that we cannot consider less relevant simply because they were fragile and apparently ‘defeated’ [in the following years]. (Exposito, in *Desacuerdos*, 2003, 119)

This process reached a turning point in Pamplona in 1972 when radical artists organised a set of seminars, performances and urban interventions to open a new battlefield against the regime. Pamplona also signalled an important expression of this new generation, emerging from the French May and in the global revolution of 1968. A «republic of radicals [...] an ensemble of mutual fecundations between politics and aesthetics» (Exposito in Desacuerdos, 2003, 117). (See Figure 4.14)

Of particular interest for this research is the production of fanzines in Barcelona. In the early 1970s, fanzines emerged as a public space for an open debate around radical politics in terms of gender, sexuality, urbanism and a space of networking among urban social movements in Barcelona. The public space of the fanzines also brought debates taking place in Barcelona into dialogue with those occurring elsewhere in Europe.

The forms of organisation introduced by fanzines, performances and audiovisual practices are interesting not only because of their content, but most importantly in terms of their innovations at the level of format, as a revolution in the organisation of political production. The process of production and distribution in *Ajoblanco*, *El rolo enmascarado*, *Comunicació* or in early documentaries such as *Video-Nou*, *Numax Presenta...*, and so on, resonated with a generalised process of experimentation in the forms of the organisation of labour, moving cultural production beyond the limits of the bourgeois paradigms.

‘Contamination, aggregation, collective and interdisciplinary production’ (Exposito in Desacuerdos, 2003) were the keywords of a mode of working based on cooperation that forged the new space for cultural production in Barcelona.

I don’t like to talk about myself, because everybody could have been in my place on the editorial board of *Ajoblanco*. *Ajoblanco*, since the beginning, had been thought of as a collective project. And collectives tend to be anonymous. [...] We had a way of living. A style partly reproduced in the aesthetics of *Ajoblanco*, because the typeface, the design or the magazine itself is still a rebel material in terms of what we liked to express. (Toni Puig, in Nazario, 2004, 55)

*Ajoblanco*, a countercultural fanzine launched in the stream of the ‘rebel wave of 1968’, was edited collectively in the mid 1970s. Three collectives shared the editing, each one developing one issue or extras for the magazine and generating spin-offs on different themes, using the collective production of the fanzine in order to avoid ‘the devastating nihilism’ of that period (Nazario, 2004). The fanzine and magazine scene was a space of communication in which different groups converged, forging a dialectic of articulation radically different from that which characterised the political line of unions and parties: ‘a living dialogue in permanent evolution’ (Nazario, 2004). (See Figure 4.15)

Página 10 EL PENSAMIENTO NAVARRO Martes, 27 de junio de 1972

# ENCUENTROS 1972 PAMPLONA

## AYER, INAUGURACION OFICIAL



Ayer a las 21.00 horas se celebró en el estadio de fútbol el acto de inauguración oficial de los Encuentros de Arte de Pamplona 1972. Una muestra con carácter de trascendental importancia dentro del arte contemporáneo.

El acto se llevó a cabo en el estadio de fútbol, rodeado por un público numeroso, con presencia de más de 100 artistas y muchos aficionados al arte de Pamplona como de otras ciudades e incluso del extranjero.

Presidió una palabra de bienvenida don Luis de Pablo, miembro activo en la organización de la muestra, quien tras explicar el significado del acto, invitó a los artistas a que participaran en el programa oficial organizado.

A continuación, el Abad de Leizor pronunció las palabras de bienvenida a los artistas y a los asistentes.

Tras esto, se dio un momento de silencio en memoria de los artistas que han fallecido, y se dio un momento de silencio en memoria de los artistas que han fallecido.

### DON JAVIER ROUZAUT, AL HABLA

Don Javier Rouzaut, primer presidente de la Asociación de Artistas de Pamplona, ha sido quien ha dado la bienvenida a todos los que durante estos días han participado en Pamplona, Navarra en los Encuentros que se celebran en Pamplona entre otros.

—Don Javier, ¿qué impresión le produce Pamplona entre otros?

—Yo creo de que ahora un artista que viene a Pamplona a ser un artista más que un artista más.

—¿De qué manera se va a participar en el pueblo de Pamplona?

—Bueno, Pamplona está un gran sentido de captación y atención. Hay además un grupo grande de personas que en preparación cultural y artística espera con gran interés estos acontecimientos. Se da de que han de tener una gran repercusión en el pueblo, aunque indudablemente se ha de haber manifestaciones que no han de ser comprendidas por todo el mundo, pero esto es del orden de una gran importancia. Me da que sean manifestaciones de arte moderno y actual, que sean manifestaciones de arte moderno y actual.

—¿Están pues los Encuentros pensados para el pueblo?

—No es eso. Indudablemente, lo que me da es que en la práctica se va a reducir el concepto de los días y años.

—¿Qué se va a exponer para Pamplona 1972?

—Para Pamplona se han elegido los artistas que han de participar en todos los estadios de Pamplona y en el mundo para ser la zona de estos primeros.

### QUIEN ES QUIEN EN LOS ENCUENTROS

## JOHN CAGE



Compositor norteamericano, nacido en Los Angeles de California, en 1912.

Personalidad referente, actualista, de una originalidad incontestable. Bajo la aparente extravagancia de algunas de sus manifestaciones, preside una seriedad y seriedad indudables. Con Charles Ives, es probablemente el más serio de los compositores.

### Arte al aire libre

El programa de ayer, primero de los Encuentros, se celebró con la manifestación de obras al aire libre en el Paseo de Bizkaita.

Hoy, martes de la noche, se celebrará una gran manifestación de obras al aire libre en el Paseo de Bizkaita.

Miembros participantes, entre los que se encuentran los artistas GARDY ARTIGAS y VIVI CIUDAD.

Se celebrará una gran manifestación de obras al aire libre en el Paseo de Bizkaita.

Pensamiento Navarro, 27 de junio de 1972.

Figure 4.14: Pensamiento Navarro, the presentation of the Pamplona meeting in June, 1972 (Desacuerdos, 2003)

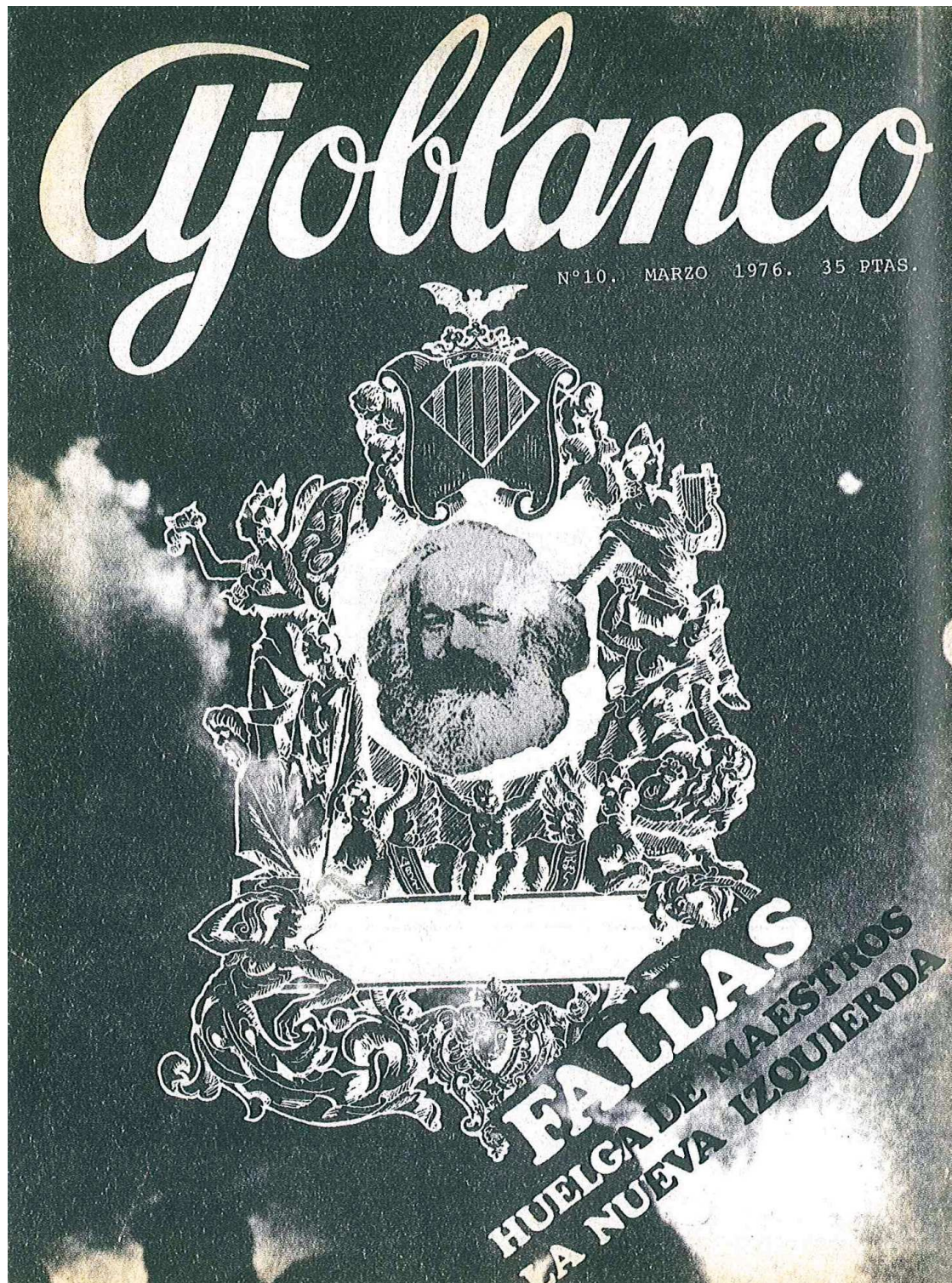


Figure 4.15: Marx and marxisms according to *Ajoblanco*, March 1976

Libertarianism, cooperativism, together with ecologists, collectives for anti-authoritarian education, groups for social health, anti-psychiatric groups, groups for alternative therapies, radical feminists, free women, humanist urbanism, communes, street artists, political prisoners, all together. (Nazario, 2004, 104)

In *Ajoblanco*, for example, local experiments in psychiatric social services were discussed in relation to the proposals of Basaglia from Italy<sup>3</sup>. (See Figure 4.16)

In that period many Italian intellectuals were coming to the Italian Institute [of Culture]. The experience of Basaglia was very important, Basaglia himself and his assistants were coming very often to give conferences. And also many filmmakers, like Marco Ferreri, Cavani, the Taviani brothers, everybody [...] It was a very important cultural milieu. (Eva Fernandez)

The discussions on ‘total institutions’ prompted by Foucault in the early 1970s, the debate between the Italian anti-psychiatric movement and the schizo-analytic approach in France, as well as the feminist practices and the black movements in the United States were translated into Spanish cultural and political spaces not in the political journals of the communist parties, for instance *El Viejo Topo*, but through the alternative fanzines of countercultural movements. (See Figure 4.17 and 4.18)

Crucially, the production of the anti-psychiatric discourse in Italy, as well as the institutional critique associated with the schizo-analytic movement in France, radically challenged the central categories of orthodox marxism, exploding the political field beyond its traditional borders<sup>4</sup>.

The local translation of these international debates (*Ajoblanco*) is visible in terms of the general critique by social movements (not only in Barcelona) of the representative *total institutions* of politics and in the affirmation of the emerging movement dynamics not simply as a novel representation of the ‘core’ question of class in the factory, but rather as happening of production outside the factory, in society. Those at the margins of society, situated ‘outside of representation’ were raising their voice from outside the Fordist factory and as producers of the

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<sup>3</sup>Franco Basaglia is the leader of anti-psychiatric movement in Italy and director of the first open mental health institution in Gorizia. As I discovered in our interview when I asked her about the connection between countercultures and the anti-psychiatric movements, Eva Fernandez translated the articles of Basaglia when he came to the Italian Institute of Culture.

<sup>4</sup>Since the experiments in Gorizia (Italy) in 1961, the relation of exploitation in the asylum is the starting point for the shift from the slogan «labour is therapeutic» to «freedom is therapeutic». In the meantime, the schizo-analytic movement questioned the model of psychoanalytic representation affirming that consciousness is not the representation of the Oedipal fixed scheme, but a factory at work (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, Vercauteren et al., 2007). Oedipus, in this scheme is a mechanism of homogeneous and homogenising repression of multiplicity of singularities.



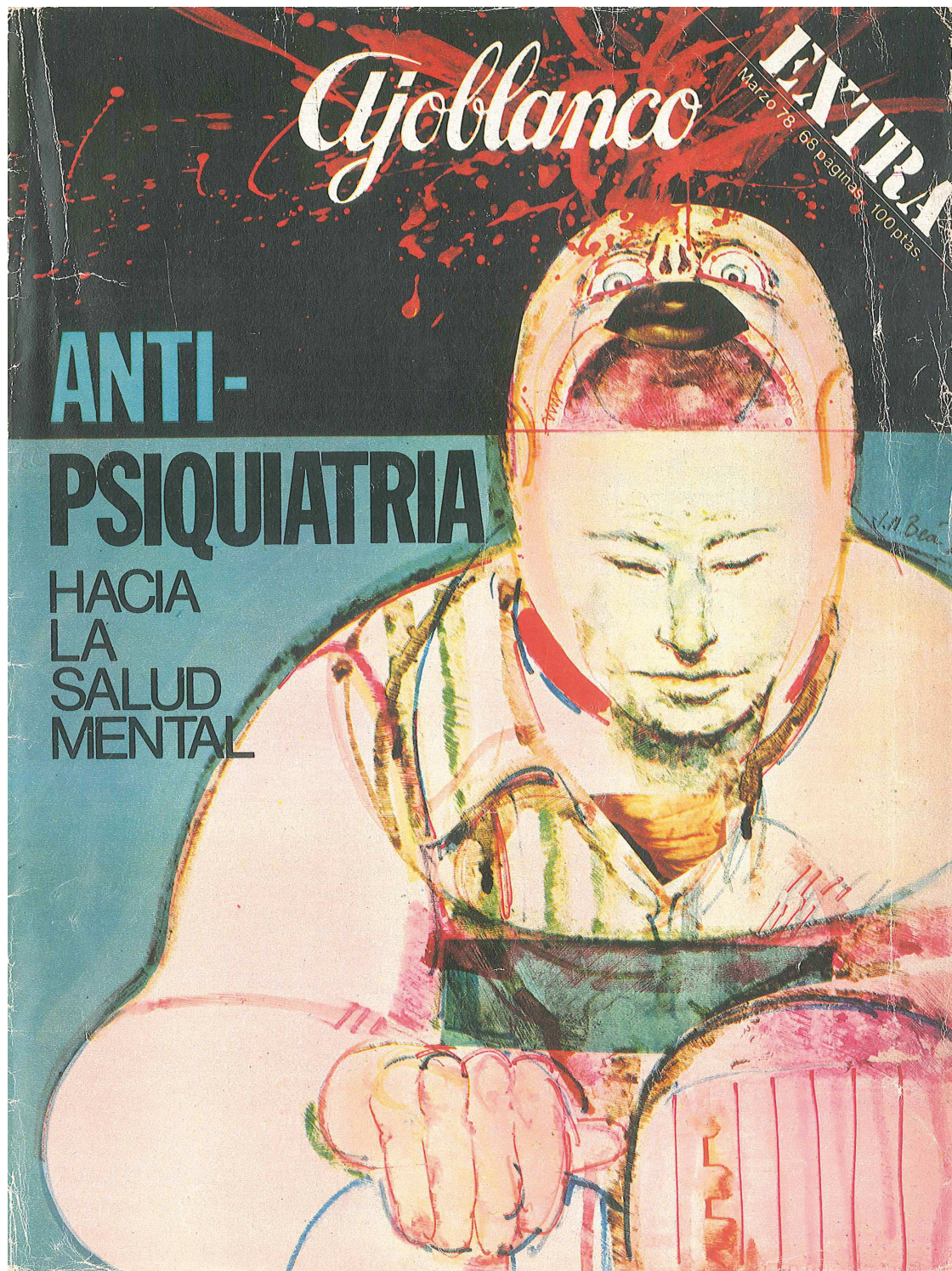
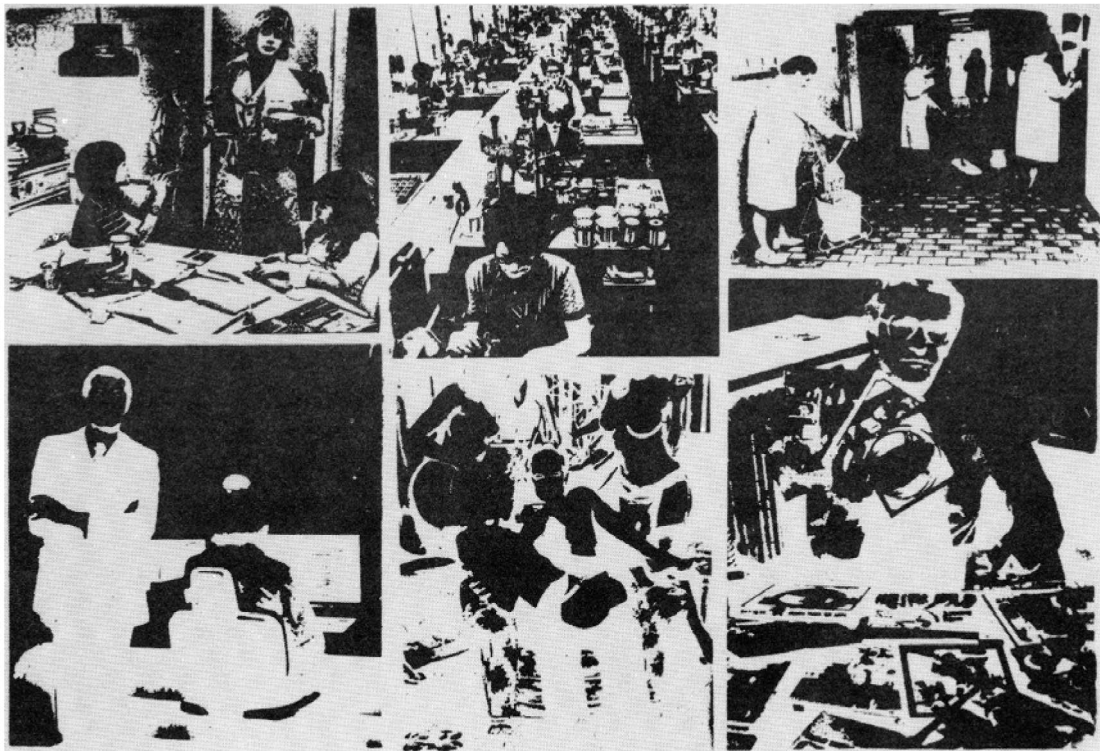


Figure 4.16: *Ajoblanco*'s issue on *Antipsiquiatria*, March 1978



Eulàlia Grau, *Discriminació de la dona*, 1977.

Figure 4.17: Feminist fanzines (Desacuerdos, 2003)

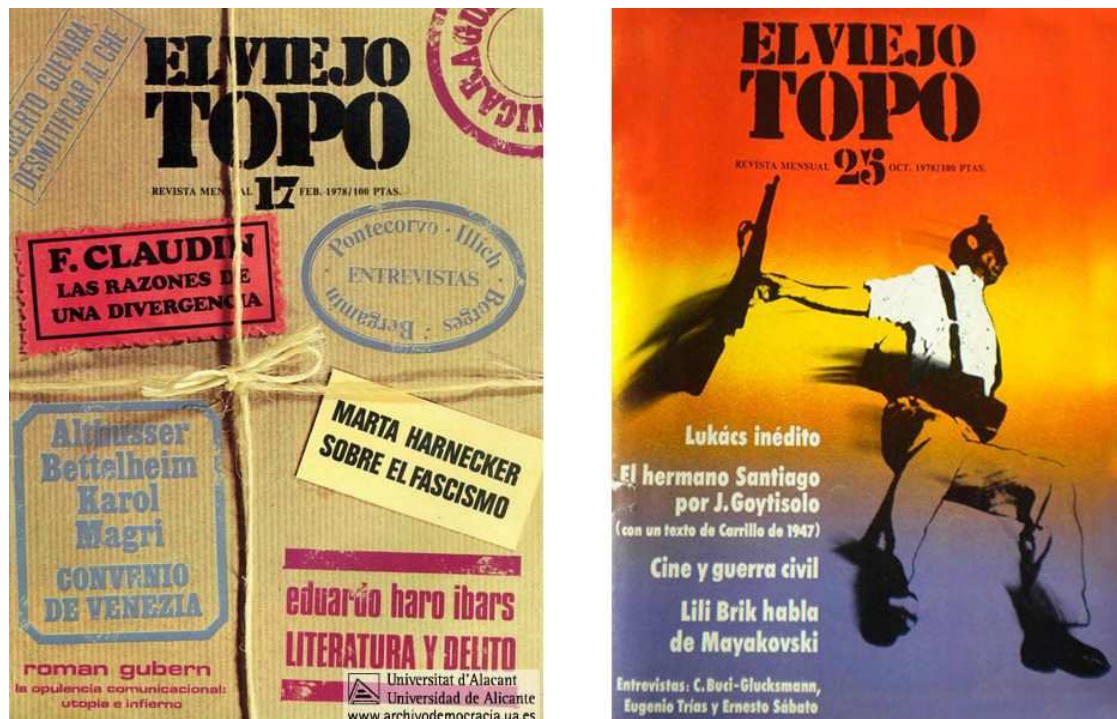


Figure 4.18: The covers of *Viejo topo* in 1978

*oeuvre*. In so doing, they opened spaces of contamination and circulation with regard to this new understanding of politics.

In the circulation of words, objects and experiences, the body of social movements became a trans-dividual territory composed of connections, contaminations and differences that do not operate through pre-codified languages, but configure their own cycles of proliferation and reproduction. Images, music, travelling, drugs became *loci* for forging new languages and practices of political expression. Indeed, the configuration of these networks seems to have proliferated more through the replication of actions and aesthetics than through the development of a common programme.

This is the case of *Video-Nou* (see Figure 4.19 and Video V.5), a project of collective radical pedagogy in which

members [...] came from journalism, sociology, teaching, photography, architecture, arts, design – and later from urbanism, anti-psychiatry, scenic arts. Exploring different fields for applying to video: social, artistic, documentary, education, professional. After a while, the activity of *Video-Nou* focused on bidirectional, participatory and horizontal communication, producing videos together with the

people involved and disseminating it immediately in its own context – what we called *video-intervention*. (Desacuerdos, 2005, 169)



Figure 4.19: *Video-Nou* productions, (Desacuerdos, 2003)

Through the proliferation of new forms of aesthetic expression new themes began to be addressed and the experiential language of drawing, performances and sexuality permeated the space of politics. Countercultural groups, authors and producers were inscribing art pieces as political tools in the material and symbolic assemblage of their own present. As underlined by the research group *Desacuerdos* (Desacuerdos, 2003, 2005; cf. *Museum of Contemporary Arts of Barcelona* in Chapter 6), in this context not only was the product relevant but the modes of ‘production, exhibition or distribution’ as a whole.

A mutual contagion happened between a conception of design framed in the historical vanguards and the utopian project of a social transformation [that would occur in the intertwining of] the revolution of the uses and the forms of everyday life, the epistemological innovation coming from semiotics and mass communication studies and eventually artistic practices. (Exposito, in Desacuerdos, 2003, 119)

However, the chaotic circulation of these aesthetic, ethical and political enunciation was not addressed as important in the debates of social movements during those years.

I don't remember any debate, out of the more connected circuits like *Ajoblanco* or critical psychiatry itself, which discussed these questions. Even if, thinking about it now in terms of aesthetics and of the forms of the Movement, many elements were there as well as a certain critique of psychiatry from the feminist point of view, or in the critique of social control. (Eva Fernandez)

Magazines like *Caladona*, or the ones of the Movement, had a lot of things on the body-poems, drawings. A very strong embodied claim, for example in the lesbian [magazines] with photos of naked women embraced – and then the *Infogay* and all the journals of the gay movement had a much more explicit aesthetic – but afterwards in the feminist movement there has not been any analysis of this aesthetic dimension. (Eva Fernandez)

This last remark of Eva Fernandez proposes a crucial question in investigating the production of those years. An important fracture was taking place, since the attention of social movements focused on the contents of production, while artists started to concentrate principally on the modes of production. The contagion among the two started to slow down due to the institutionalisation of politics and the advent of neoliberalism as a patron of radical art.

In the 1970s, and as discussed throughout the above, urban social movements escaped the constitutive framework of the workers movements - that aimed to obtain institutional representation in the state - affirming new practices and new goals in a new productive context (Castells, 1985): the emergence of the city as a growth machine.

Beyond the affirmation of workers rights tied to wage labour, new fields of struggle were constituted: collective consumption (i.e. renewal of the forms of management of production and distribution of commodities and services against the command of capital); cultural identity (the affirmation of multiple mechanisms of belonging and of the right to difference as a democratic practice of subjectivation from below); and finally autonomous political organisation, that is the refusal of the forms of hierarchical organisation of institutional representation (Castells, 1985).

Here we can draw on Gilroy's analysis of British urban social movements in the 1970s and the 1980s. The autonomy of social movements from the relations of industrial production should not be conceptualised, Gilroy argues, as a renunciation of the task of contesting relations of production *tout-court*. On the contrary, it affirms that «the re-appropriation of production [cannot be] pursued independently of the transformation of capitalist social relations as a whole» (Gilroy, 1991, 320).

Today it can be difficult to think social change as possible future. But for us [in the 1970s], there was a revolution to be done – and radical choices had been done in the name of it: on motherhood for example, or deeply questioning the couple, depending upon the imminence [of revolution]. (Eva Fernandez)

The next section moves from the analysis of the productivity and the innovative nature of social movements in the 1970s and 1980s to a discussion of transformations at the level of governance and forms of production in Barcelona. Below I examine a number of features of this transformation, including; the process of valorisation (the production of the brand, the organisation of production) the entrepreneurial management of the city, and the commodification of urban life itself.

## 4.5 Neoliberal citizen

*Ubi solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant (Tacit)* [They made *loneliness*, and called it peace]

The 1980s represented a shift in the relationship between countercultures, autonomous movements and the governance of Barcelona. At stake in this shift, I argue, was an explosion of freedom which led to a double process of capture and reinvention with regard to both autonomous and artistic practices. In September 1983 Jose Perez de Ocaña died as a consequence of burns inflicted in one of his performances. Nazario and his friends – in the words of Nazario (2004) – were upset with him, because the best of their days were still to come. «Ocaña died, Nazario never came», remembered Marcelo Exposito, talking about the relationship between the radical arts of the 1980s and the countercultural big names of the 1970s.

Two contingent movements defined the limits of this period. First the closure of the political experimentation of the 1970s. Second, the development of a neoliberal project for the city. I investigate this second element through three different levels of transformation. First, the constitution of the market as the main regulator of Barcelona's urban policies; second, and as a consequence, the rise of the 'entrepreneurial city' as the new model for the management of production; and finally the *becoming generic* of the city as process of abstraction of urban life into a commodity.

It is a matter here of recognising how, at the end of the 1970s, a new understanding of urban production emerged in different contexts. In the fiscal crisis of the late 1970s, the regulation of the institutional framework, the dynamics of the market, and the governance of everyday life - according to urban growth machine theory - conjoined to determine the mode of organisation of social production.

At the heart of this, is the way in which urban production in the early 1980s was characterised by a dynamic of conflict and conjugation between two machines: a machine of immanent transformation of the city, where difference proliferated as a new *social capital* of urban life - as proposed in the above pages - and a machine of abstraction, that attempted to translate this flourishing of difference into the global language of capitalist valorisation. Having explored the former above, below I examine the dynamics of the latter in greater detail.

#### 4.5.1 The Neoliberal city and the emergence of the *Barcelona model*.

Who would have imagined that the nightmare of a city prostrated to capitalistic interests in urban space would become a reality but not because of the brutality of a fascist regime, but because of democratic legitimacy? (Delgado, 2007a, 134)

The configuration of the nationalism, rationalism and vanguardism of the 19th Century as crucial dimensions of the governance of the city returned to prominence as the centre piece of the Catalan political project following the collapse of the dictatorship. This involved the promotion of a new cosmopolitanism of Barcelona and a Catalan political identity in the context of the emerging global (and post-state) model of competition between urban regions (Harvey, 2009, Gordon, 1999).

Barcelona became a model for the invention of a neoliberal governmentality for urban space, developing between fiscal crisis and economic globalisation. There are a number of different issues at stake here. First, the renewal of an urban nationalist project for Catalonia affirmed Barcelona as an autonomous entity in the emerging global competition of urban regions (Gordon, 1999). Second, the reinvention of the economic Vanguardism of Barcelona under the post-Fordist mode of production was underpinned by the commodification of culture and life-style. Finally, urban transformation was used as a tool for the command over urban cooperation.

As already mentioned, during the last phase of Francoism, access to political institutions permitted the Catalan bourgeoisie to reaffirm its local power in exchange for supporting the regime (Delgado, 2007a, Montalban, 1992). The urban speculation of the 1960s and the 1970s can be understood as the beginning of a process of flexible accumulation by dispossession and urbanisation, in Harvey's terms, that proceeded by evicting informal housing and speculating on the production of new urban assets for the city (concretely, low quality housing for the working class) (Harvey, 1973, Smith, 1996). Urban planning in the 1960s indeed follows the 19th Century urban strategy, the opening of boulevards in the city centre and the disciplining of urban life.

After the first municipal election in 1978, neighbourhood movements were recognised at an institutional level. A set of 'local plans' (*planes populares*) proposed an alternative to the new

urban development, claiming the right of residents to ‘stay put’, the maintenance of the historical structure of urban space and finally increases in public investment in, and the community management of, local services (Castro, n.d.).

These developments were supported by an advocacy coalition in which local networks and independent professionals allied themselves. This democratic local management was characterised by a professional alliance between the Catalan technocracy, previously involved in the Francoist administration, and the radical professionals of the anti-Francoist movements in the common attempt of producing Barcelona’s renaissance after the Francoist regime<sup>5</sup>. However this system collapsed under the twin pressures of the fiscal crisis of the 1970s and the emerging neoliberalisation of global competition between cities in the 1980s.

### The Branded-city

The tension between institutional representation and the protagonism of social movements (Miro, 2007, Carmona, 2012) is crucial in order to understand both the crisis and the reinvention of radical politics in the 1980s. Urban planning was the theatre of this conflict.

At this time, *asociaciones de vecinos* demanded the reorganisation of spaces, services, urban uses and institutional representation according to participatory plans. The *Ayuntamiento* (City Council) aimed towards the renewal of space, as a productive asset, and the use of urban policies to attract international capital. The *Partido Socialista* (Socialist Party) was in local government during this period and adopted a strategy which sought to develop a new layer of civil servants by integrating social movements’ cadres into public administration. In this sense, the strategy sought to translate the *lucha popular* into the institutions of local government and administration. (See Figure 4.20)

Some of the interviewees consider this as a process of co-option, but Ada Colau reads it differently, stressing a double dimension of this process: «It was not just co-option but the emptying of neighbourhood movements and transferring them [to the local institutions]». As Eva Fernandez observes,

Parties - during the democratic transition and before - are just little groups of activists: *PSOE* [*Partido Socialista Obrero Español*] does not have a social base, nor does *PCC* [*Partido Comunista Catalan*], maybe just the *PSUC* [...] When the

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<sup>5</sup>In this shift, urban space is understood as a laboratory. The praxis of planning takes the place of «the ambitious technological planning, affirming the need for fragmentary interventions, small and medium actions that strategically recompose urban space using architectonic tools» (Montaner, 2003, 207). Public governance acts as a leader of urban development (Borja, 1975, Borja and Muxi, 2004). The response of urban movements to urban plans is not univocal: sometimes local networks reproduce clientele and privileges (in the Barrio Xino for example), sometimes the campaigns are participative and horizontal (Barceloneta, Torre Barò, Carmel) (Busquets, 2004, Castro, n.d.).





Figure 4.20: The Socialist Mayor Maragall and Socialist Prime Minister Gonzales for the Barcelona Model

first elections come, parties need to find leaders, and so they co-opt people from the neighbourhood movement, but this is not the only reason [for integrating the *asociaciones de vecinos*]. This is also due to the theory they [as parties] are producing... For example, the position of Pep Martínez Barceló, leader of *Bandera Roja*, developed after entering the *Ayuntamiento* and that spread out quite quickly. [He was saying] that neighbourhood movements are not necessary. 'We are ruling now, and we know what needs to be done'. (Eva Fernández)

The rationale of the *Partido Socialista* followed a coherent argument: 'We rule urban politics, we can solve the instability of the labour market and reorganise the social capitals of urban production'. Social transformation of everyday life, in terms of urban rights or identity claims, were not treated as a political issue from this perspective. Rather, they were positioned as administrative problems. For Pep Martínez Barceló, ideologist of Barcelona's *Partido Socialista*, the tension between neighbourhood movements and the *Ayuntamiento* had to be solved through local cultural projects, like the Youth centres and the Borough centres, run by the *Ayuntamiento*.

Once we arrived there, we asked ourselves [...] 'How can we articulate representative democracy with grassroots democracy?' [...] *Ayuntamientos* are organisations of citizens, neighbourhoods and cities through elected representatives [...] We need to legitimate *Ayuntamientos*. If urban movements have been the school of democracy, *Ayuntamientos* will be the place in which to make real their demands. (Martínez Barcelo, 1998, 40)

The strategy was to transfer militants from the grassroots to the institutions, emptying the communities of their leaders and dissolving political networks in the neighbourhoods. This forced urban movements to bifurcate, becoming either a part of institutional politics or civil society groups participating in the administrative management of the city at a local level.

The representatives are the ones elected [...] and *asociaciones de vecinos* needed to find a new place for themselves. [...] *Ayuntamientos* were making them marginal: we cannot have any doubt about the importance of *asociaciones de vecinos*, as far as they represent a collective of associated citizens, organised and directed, capable of organising social and cultural activities. (Martínez Barcelo, 1998, 43)

In the meantime, the utopias of the 1970s were forced to confront the impact of neoliberal globalisation and the global fiscal crisis of urban space (Smith, 1996). «When they arrived at the *Ayuntamiento*, they found that there were no resources – in the end, the result is they had no money to do anything» (Eva Fernández).

The lack of public resources was one of the causes that provoked the neoliberal shift in terms of local administration. More importantly for the present investigation, however, it provoked a fracture between the mirage of the democratic city of the 1970s and the reality of the city in the 1980s. «It is really problematic for them to deal with social movements that are permanently asking for schools and for what they are fighting for. That's why this defusing [of neighbourhood movements] happens» (Ivan Miro). In Montalban's words, it is the affirmation of 'possibilism' as an ideology of the new political bureaucrats.

He had been Maoist, then Taoist, and eventually he took the side for himself. He has been one of the last utopians to surrender: from May of 1968, until June of 1985. Precisely on the 12th. He organised a dinner-party in a fish restaurant in the Central Market of Paris to communicate to us his shift to possibilism – and you know that radical possibilism starts with the interests of oneself. (Montalban, 1995, 28-29)

During Maragall's leadership of the city (1982-1997) the goal was to put Barcelona on the international map, allowing the city to compete among European cities independent of national dynamics (Montalban, 1985). Following Gordon's scheme (1999), the production of the city brand was articulated in four fields. Firstly, the hierarchical dimension was addressed by Barcelona's hosting of the *Olympic Games* of 1992 competing directly with Sevilla (Universal Expo 1992), Madrid and other emerging European cities. Secondly, «the pattern of (horizontal) specialisation/differentiation of activities and place products» (Gordon, 1999, 1003) was achieved through the commodification of culture. Thirdly, the functional division of labour was addressed by a system of public-private partnerships and precarisation. Finally, «the role of more particularistic networks among subsets of cities» can be recognised in the development of the alliance between the *Ayuntamiento* and the network of the Catalan bourgeoisie. Even so, as Harvey argues

Barcelona's initial success appears headed deep into the first contradiction. As opportunities to pocket monopoly rents galore present themselves on the basis of the collective symbolic capital of Barcelona as a city (property prices have skyrocketed as the Royal Institute of British Architects awards the whole city its medal for architectural accomplishments), so their irresistible lure draws more and more homogenising multinational commodification in its wake. The later phases of waterfront development look exactly like every other in the western world, the stupefying congestion of the traffic leads to pressures to put boulevards through parts of the old city, multinational stores replace local shops, gentrification removes long-term residential populations and destroys older urban fabric, and Barcelona loses some of

its marks of distinction. There are even unsubtle signs of Disneyfication. (Harvey, 2009, 104)

### **The Entrepreneurial-City**

Having defined the neoliberal project for the city in the context of globalisation as a project reconfiguring the nationalistic project in the new assemblage of public and private actors, it is necessary to analyse which mode of production allowed this new (id)entity to compete globally. As proposed by Harvey, «the rise of Barcelona to prominence within the European system of cities [...] has [...] been based on its steady amassing of symbolic capital and its accumulating marks of distinction» (2009, 104).

Since the late 1970s, and as argued above, the explosion of freedom took place alongside the explosion of difference. The street, the *café cantante*, neighbourhood festivals, fanzines, comics had been the most expressive and powerful moments of a molecular and deep transformation of urban culture as well as in the reorganisation of social services, in the definition of relations of gender in political collectives, in the understanding, experiencing and experimenting on the body, on the politics of intimacy – and so on.

The beginning of the 1980s however marked a rupture in this connection between cultural practices and political commitment. Underground artists, counter-cultural communities and independent galleries were included within the neoliberal process of valorisation which sought to brand Barcelona as a space of culture, difference and freedom. On the other hand, they were expelled from politics via the emergence of the institutional offices which was positioned as the only place for doing politics.

Using the evolution of the Raval neighbourhood as a paradigm, it is possible to recognise how the countercultural, migrant and transgendered milieus of the 1970s got involved in a generalised process of ‘self-entrepreneurialisation’. This made possible the valorisation of cultural production in the emerging global market of culture and art (Deutsche and Ryan, 1984, Blanco et al., 2001, Desacuerdos, 2005, cf. my interviews with Marcelo Exposito and Jorge Ribalta). Cultural practices and arts played a crucial role – as supposedly independent and autonomous processes – in the commodification of life. Not only in the commodification of the individual artist, but also in the commodification of common forms of speech and sets of social behaviours.

In the sense that culture is not an individual language, but a common act of collective speaking, the commodification of urban culture attained a social body, rather than an individual one. At stake in this process of exploitation was the ‘continuous experience’ (Stephenson and Papadopoulos, 2006) of the everyday life of a society, its territory, its aesthetics, its languages: a process of abstraction and expropriation to the detriment of an impoverished community.

Earlier I discussed the politics of Pep Martinez as a paradigmatic ‘citizen’ with regard to developments in public administration and local government. Similarly, the counter cultural artist Mariscal is the paradigmatic ‘citizen’ in this new machine of urban production. The former expresses the abolition of ‘outside politics’ and the permanent regulation of representative democracy. The latter, the embedding of cultural production in the economic process of accumulation: a normalisation that proposed a fruitful commodification of these life worlds, attacking their autonomy by subordinating it to the rule of exchange value.

[if we look at countercultures] I think it is useful to focus on their ambivalent configuration. We can do a retrospective and politicising analysis of the transgender and gay movement and all that – but it is also true that the dominant processes have been of integration [and they have been crucial] in the becoming postmodern or post-Fordist of Barcelona. The other night [in a private view for a retrospective exhibition on countercultures] they told me: ‘In the 1980s we were rich, they paid us loads of money, everything we wanted was published, we were in charge of all the public graphic campaigns. All of us were rich like Mariscal!’.(Marcelo Exposito)

The process of neoliberal democratisation reconfigured the role of those political experiences that refused this double capture. These radical practices in the field of arts and politics were either challenging from a marginal position the aesthetics of representative politics - where participation and political commitment is reduced to the parliament, elections and so on – or engaging critically in the depoliticised space of neoliberal artistic practices – where, in the absence of a society in mobilisation, money becomes the measure of artistic value.

The process of entrepreneurialisation, proposed by Harvey, is a form of flexible accumulation by dispossession that proceeds through the mechanisms of urbanisation. The commodification of urban life activated a series of different machines producing a double line of *alienation* (through the reduction of living labour to the homogeneity of the commodity) and *exploitation* (through the precarisation of the access to the common wealth of the city for its inhabitants). A double movement that allowed the subsumption of life and the abstraction of living labour into a commodity: the city.

### **The Generic-city**

The reinvention of Barcelona as commodity-space is based on the selling of a specific urban experience. Neoliberalism acts by transforming urban space into a generic city, where the identity of the city is translated in to the language of capital, abstracted from social relations, in order to be easily consumable. «Sometimes an old, singular city, like Barcelona, by oversimplifying its identity, turns Generic. It becomes transparent, like a logo» (Koolhaas, 1995, 1301).

In this *becoming*, cultural and social assets are the most important dimensions for the accumulation of symbolic capital for the 'brand'. In the everyday life of the city, the vividness of cultural life, the freedom of sexual behaviours, and the body as experience provided the most valuable objects for valorisation through segmentation, subsumption and abstraction.

Individual 'moments' are spaced far apart to create a trance of almost unnoticeable aesthetic experiences: the colour variations in the fluorescent lighting of an office building just before sunset, the subtleties of the slightly different whites of an illuminated sign at night. Like Japanese food, the sensations can be reconstituted and intensified in the mind, or not – they may simply be ignored. (There's a choice.) This pervasive lack of urgency and insistence acts like a potent drug; it induces a hallucination of the normal. (Koolhaas, 1995, 1301)

Koolhaas's Manifesto of a Generic City serves here as a guideline to read the process in Barcelona, since «the great originality of the Generic City is simply to abandon what doesn't work – what has outlived its use – to break up the blacktop of idealism with the jackhammers of realism and to accept whatever grows in its place» (Koolhaas, 1995, 1299) being at the same time primordial and futuristic. The project of inscribing Barcelona as an autonomous actor in the global market by selling urban experiences called for the configuring of a new place in the very site of the history of the city - a *tabula rasa*. The appraisal of the Raval as a new name for the Xino is the clearest realisation of this process.

In the early 1980s the Xino was re-developed by the *modern* and *civil* socialist administration to *democratise* the Barrio after the dictatorship, dissolving its lustful past and returning to its preindustrial name of Raval: a rationalist and hygienising strategy that followed the principles of Haussmannisation attempting to transform a derelict neighbourhood into a «neighbourhood for everybody» (David Batlle).

Indeed, this could have been the slogan of the urban planner Oriol Buigas (the *Ayuntamiento's* Director of Urban Plans and Projects in Barcelona from 1980 to 1984) in his attempts to reaffirm the bourgeois rationality of city planning in accordance with the modernist vocation of Barcelona (Resina, 2008). This was a process of regeneration whose goal was none other than an *embellissement stratégique* [strategic beautification]:

The real aim of Haussmann's works was the securing of the city against civil war. [...] The breadth of the streets was to make the erection of barricades impossible, and new streets were to provide the shortest route between the barracks and the working-class areas. (Benjamin, 1969, 175)

Just as in Haussmann's time, the inner city is once again paradigmatic of this project of regeneration. The first project to open La Rambla del Raval was presented in the early 1850s, just

after the February Revolution of Paris, when Cerdá proposed his Plan according to Hausmanian principles of urban planning (Magrinya, 2009, Guallar, 2010), but it has been realised only as part of the regeneration for the *Olympic Games* of 1992. «Why not transform Sarriá [the rich neighbourhood on the top of the hills] into a place where everybody can live? Why the Raval?» David Batlle asked, recalling the debate of the 1980s on the *strategic beautification* of the city centre - an inner city of urban poor and informal economies since the 19th Century. (See Figure 4.21)



Figure 4.21: The transformation of the Rambla del Raval and the campaign *Barcelona Posa't Guapa*

The intervention in the inner city (and particularly in the Raval) - accompanied by many others in other sectors of the city - reconfigured the space of the city centre in accordance to the development of the tourist model for the entrepreneurial city: an autonomous machine capable of competing directly on the global market.

In the late 1980s, in the Barrio Gotico streets were reformed, new squares opened and the public-private partnership *Barcelona Posa't Guapa* (*Barcelona, make-up yourself*) renewed the facades of old buildings. The space was gentrified and the urban poor expelled due to increasing prices. In the same period, in the Raval the intervention was intensive but less successful. In the north, the *University*, the *Centre for Contemporary Culture of Barcelona* and the *Museum of Contemporary Art of Barcelona*, signalled the co-option of countercultures and the opening of galleries and private enterprises for the cultural sector, and constituted a successful force of gentrification. In the southern part, the interlocutor of the urban planners were the urban poor, prostitutes, drug addicts and petty criminals. The intervention operated in an hygienising way - opening a boulevard (Rambla del Raval), a few squares and recently the *Filmoteca de Catalunya* (Film Institute) - and through the building of new housing projects, was to attract the middle class to the neighbourhood alongside a new police station and new social services.

But, we must remember that these institutional, productive and infrastructural transformations of Barcelona in the middle of the 1980s were also the result of innovative social mobilisations in the life of the factories and neighbourhoods as well as in the new bodies and objects flowing in the city in the 1970s. Following the crisis of Fordism and industrial production, the frontier of production was displaced in the subsumption of life-styles, culture, and innovation, including social life itself, under the dynamics of capitalistic production (Castells, 1985, Castells and de Solis, 1997, Lefebvre, 1991, 1996).

#### 4.5.2 *Olympic Games 1992*

Following this transformation, the bid and organisation of the *Olympic Games* emerge as paradigmatic for understanding the emerging rationality of governance that reconfigured Barcelona in the early 1980s in order to exploit and abstract a new commodity - urban experience - and to compete as an autonomous entity in the emerging global competition of urban region. Indeed, the affirmation of Barcelona as a commodity was achieved through three processes. First the development of an economic system of production based on culture and creative clusters. Second through a system of management of labour based on precarisation and public-private partnerships. And, third, by the redevelopment of urban space, where the *Olympic Games* meant the restructuring of industrial zones, the implementation of new clusters for creative economies, and the displacement of the poor population from the centre of the city.

In relation to the first, Mariscal's evolution is emblematic (see Figure 4.22). This artist - icon of the counterculture of the 1970s - produced the logo and the graphic design of the campaign to host the Olympics as well as many of the symbols to be introduced in the streets of Barcelona to re-signify the public space for the *Olympic Games*. Culture became a dispositif for the new governance of the city, operating as a vehicle for discourses and practices that redefine citizenship.

Barcelona is like this. No matter how much [from the movements we] try to depict it as a right-wing and reactionary city, it is still a social-democratic one. A city whose transformations depend exactly on the ability of incorporating dynamics like countercultures: while power disarticulates *asociaciones de vecinos*, it ferments the postmodern incorporation of counterculture *stilemas* (stylistic elements). There is no problem in doing all this. That's why design and Mariscal are the apotheosis of Barcelona in the 1980s. (Marcelo Exposito)

Second, the new model of citizenship was based on the participation of the citizen in the valorisation of Barcelona. The city is an urban brand in the global market, and the citizen has to work



# I TELEVIS

## “La parada” recibe la visita de Mariscal

**E**l programa de Josep M. Bachs “La parada” arrancó con buen pie el pasado martes en TV3 y el contenido de su emisión de esta noche posee también, en principio, notables atractivos. Entre los invitados figuran el compositor y pianista Tete Montoliu, el diseñador Javier Mariscal y la periodista Maruja Torres, mientras que la actuación musical corre a cargo de la cantante Maria del Mar Bonet.

No faltarán tampoco los números humorísticos y las sorpresas, que forman parte del estilo que Bachs imprime a todos sus programas y a éste en particular, del que es máximo responsable. “La parada” cuenta igualmente con sus ya habituales colaboradores Perich, con su entrevista, y Tom y Romeu con sus noticias vueltas del revés, así como la incorporación de Carmen Rigalt con su sección de chismes, contados con una buena dosis de sana ironía y distanciamiento.

Mariscal, el diseñador de “Cobi”, la célebre mascota de los Juegos de Barcelona’92 y de la no menos popular “Gamba”, es una de las figuras más destacadas de la Barcelona cosmopolita en la que los diseñadores ofician de sumos sacerdotes de la modernidad. Tete Mon-



MERCÉ TABERNER

**El diseñador Javier Mariscal**

La cantante mallorquina Maria del Mar

Figure 4.22: Mariscal and *Cobi*

to guarantee the success of this brand. Sixty thousand people worked for free in the organisation of the *Olympic Games*, principally organised through third sector associations, representing both the shift from the political to the economic function of citizenship, and the affirmation of precarity as pillars of urban production. The Olympic citizen is not politically but economically committed to the wealth of the city, contributing with her free labour – and not with her political involvement – to the development of the public sphere. This new model of participation rejected every practice of critique, affirming an asymmetry between institutional representation and social participation, where the process of decision making was subordinated to the logic of economic efficiency - and opinions to interests. For Montalban the mobilisation of the city in the production of the event is not only total but also totalitarian and this is the dominant rationality of the new city and over the new citizen. As described by the experience of Montalban's fictional character Carvalho,

Carvalho decided to use a succedaneum of metaphysical suicide [...] He emptied a room, sealed it firmly with himself inside, without any other connection with his past or future than a fridge filled with common, imaginative and perishable food, and a ham as last alimentary eternal resource. (Montalban, 1995, 35)

The goal of Carvalho - as a rebel in the city - is to survive without participating in the *Olympic Games*. Montalban describes the Olympic mega-event as «an extra-sportive binge the final results of which are urban and media businesses» (Montalban, 1995, 35). But the border between labour and citizenship has been splintered and Carvalho is evicted by secret services and obliged to work for free. Blurring the difference between free labour and political participation, the difference between commodity (labour force) and social life blurs as well (Montalban, 1992).

Within this process, citizenship becomes a tool for segmenting public space (who participates and who does not) and for organising the labour market. Precarity is instituted as the hegemonic and normative dispositif for the governance of labour and fragility and vulnerability become the norm, through free internships and outsourcing.

1992 was going to be the apotheosis, the enrolling of our country - but it was clear that the fat cows, the parties of the 1980s had come to an end. What happened in 1992? First there is people that starts to wake up ... In Barcelona for example, this is when the conflict around *civismo* [cf. Chapter 7] starts. Do you know that the *Olympic Games* in Barcelona are installed, built upon the voluntary labour of thousands of people? A lot of people, and this is very interesting, because the mechanism of symbolic consensus is concretely a material artefact to incorporate and regulate flexible labour into the regime of gratuity and precarisation (Marcelo Exposito)

Third, the Barcelona's brand emerging from the Olympics is the shop-window that forecloses the contradictions and inequalities proliferating in the back-rooms of the city. Urban space is reconfigured in the name of *Olympic Games*. It is possible to recognise here the evolution of the same process of accumulation by dispossession which commences in the 1960s. The production of urban space, culture and gentrification recycled Haussmann's 'strategic beautification' of 19th Century Paris.

The *Olympic Games* [...] opened up huge opportunities to garner monopoly rents (Samaranch, President of the International Olympic Committee, just happened to have large real estate interests in Barcelona) (Harvey, 2009, 104)

History repeats itself, but not as a farce. The *artist of demolition* (as Haussmann liked to describe himself according to Benjamin, 1969) still rules urban space. Regeneration and gentrification enable the valorisation of space through the abuse of power.

### **Towards the *right to the city***

The *Olympic Games* put Barcelona on the map. However,

The collective symbolic capital that Barcelona has accumulated depends upon values of authenticity, uniqueness and particular non-replicable qualities. Such marks of local distinction are hard to accumulate without raising the issue of local empowerment, even of popular and oppositional movements. At that point, of course, the guardians of collective symbolic and cultural capital (the museums, the universities, the class of benefactors, and the state apparatus) typically close their doors and insist upon keeping the riffraff out (though in Barcelona the Museum of Modern [*sic*, it should be Contemporary] Art, unlike most institutions of its kind, has remained amazingly and constructively open to popular sensibilities). And if that fails, then the state can step in with anything from something like the 'decency committee' set up by Mayor Giuliani to monitor cultural taste in New York City to outright police repression. (Harvey, 2009, 105)

I propose here to read this period as a turning point in capital's battle to dominate and exploit the forms of life inhabiting Barcelona's streets. The space of the city became the engine of social production and therefore the battlefield for rights.

Since the 1970s, the appropriation of time and space as well as the inhabitation of the city by different bodies constituted the urban space of Barcelona as a machine of difference, where cultural and symbolic production was configured around the living and collective cooperation and

creativity of urban life. However, the overlapping of politics and life went hand in hand with the overlapping of production and life. Heterogeneity and differences as social practices of alternative subjectivation became crucial processes also in the constitution of the urban as machine of production. *The right of the city* - as autonomous affirmation against national governance - was challenged by the emergence of *the right to the city* as right of access to the wealth produced in the city.

In the context of the Olympic city, an apparatus of governance was affirmed in the metropolitan space against these modes of alter-subjectivation. First, a regime of government that segmented and produced hierarchies across the plane of urban life. Second, a mechanism of codification of social practices that disciplined social behaviours in order to valorise social cooperation. The attempt of the neoliberal strategy was to abstract urban life, subsuming the collective processes of life-world production and translating them into the neoliberal competition among urban regions (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2008, Chakrabarty, 2000).

This double implementation - segmentation and hierarchisation - of a typical dispositif of the colonies operated to govern «the constitutive heterogeneity of contemporary global capital» (Mellino, 2009, 88): the life of the city as machine of difference (Isin, 2002).

It is a matter of determining which segments of the population are to benefit most from the collective symbolic capital to which everyone has, in their own distinctive ways, contributed both now and in the past. Why let the monopoly rent attached to that symbolic capital be captured only by the multinationals or by a small powerful segment of the local bourgeoisie? (Harvey, 2009, 105)

At stake at this time in Barcelona was the production of a new mode of subjectivation - the homogeneous and univocal representation of the new Olympic citizen - and the affirmation of a logic of dominance of capital over the social cooperation of the city.

A soft [and new] subject, the citizen. A subject with its own political practices like voluntarism, experienced by tens of thousand of people that work for free [...] for the profit of urban capital; [...]. The *Olympic Games* represented the closing moment of the process of decomposition of classes, which began in the capitalist restructuring and the democratic transition. (Ivan Miro)

The institutional discourse of the Barcelona brand emerges therefore as the mask of a violent silencing of the other pasts of the city: stories, neighbourhoods, faces of the recent past that could not be translated into the new Olympic brand produced to sell the city.

However the dominance over the subaltern was not a political hegemony. The invention of political practices happening in the back-rooms of the city is crucial in terms of understanding

the gathering together of those political forces, immanent strangers, internal outsiders and the un/governed excluded once again from citizenship, but contesting the neoliberal rationality of urban governance since the 1980s, affirming an alternative model of urban production in the name of the right to the city.

This is the focus of the next chapters, in which I analyse the forging of the right to the city as it has been emerging in the last few months in the squares of Barcelona. As a starting point, though, I choose to inhabit the fragmentation and the depression that followed the crisis of radical politics and the affirmation of neoliberal governmentality in the 1980s.

In that moment, you would experience all that as a general betrayal – and this is still true, because the same person that was on your side in the struggles, all of a sudden is in the *Ayuntamiento*, and starts to modify his discourse, and to slam doors in your face. The generalised feeling in that moment was of disillusion, because in that period we were really thinking we would change the world with our struggle [...] there was a revolution to be done – and radical choices had been taken in the name of it [...] and, then, years passed by - and you realise that nothing is imminent, and things are getting harder every day. (Eva Fernandez)

## Chapter 5

# Making a *movement* without organs

This is how it should be done. Lodge yourself on a stratum, experiment with the opportunities it offers find an advantageous place on it, find potential movements of deterritorialisation, possible lines of flight, experience them, produce flow conjunctions here and there, try out continua of intensities segment by segment, have a small plot of new land at all times. It is through a meticulous relation with the strata that one succeeds in freeing lines of flight, causing conjugated flows to pass and escape and bringing forth continuous intensities for a BwO. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, 161)

Following the annihilation of the political spaces which emerged in the late 1970s and the recapturing of social life under the neoliberal city, the space of radical politics in Barcelona was atomised and individualised, captured within the space of the neoliberal market and representative politics.

However, if we thought of the political space of Barcelona as completely captured and subjugated to the logic of neoliberal possibilism, this research would not have air to breath. The asphyxia would kill the desire of militant research in the sad passion of defeat and betrayal, in the instinct of death symbolically expressed by the painted premonition of Ocaña's death. (See Figure 5.1)

Militant research is in the first place an act of desire that problematises the past to build the present. It does not aim to solve any problems or to explain history, but to let histories blow up, discover the metamorphoses that happened just when the closing credits appear to be rolling.

Rigour in militant research does not refer to a supposed truth to be discovered, but to the immanent concreteness of social movements, to the actuality of the past as 'as it flashes up at a moment of danger'(Benjamin, 1999*b*). Rigour refers therefore to the analysis of the com-



Figure 5.1: The funeral of Ocaña, drawn by Ocaña's himself a few days before his death (Nazario, 2004)

plexity of events and processes, the lacerations and tragedies at stake in the becoming of social movements. And honesty in assuming the partiality of one's point of view.

This chapter focuses on the social practices emerging in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when, from the margins and from loneliness, a new process of commonality was built. Starting from an ethical and individual unease, social movements moved from the singular to the collective interpellation of the neoliberal organisation of society and social production.

The invasion of public space by immanent strangers, internal outsiders and the unrecognised governed instituted the possibility of a non-organic but 'machinic' movement (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987).

Those movements against the process of [democratic] transition had been crushed. All of them. Nothing was left. Just on the margins [Me: they were lost, but did they come back somehow?] More or less... half of them were junkies, heroine addicts, and the other half were in their own houses, depressed, starving, because at a biographical level they gave everything to the cause and now they were in their thirties without any professional qualifications, with criminal records, it was shit... (Marcelo Exposito)<sup>1</sup>

[The feeling was of] generalised impotence, an impossibility of acting from the left of those who have grown during Francoism and now were unable to challenge the new - supposedly leftist - governing machine, that was destroying the few elements of the Francoist welfare state. [...] We were all around 16 or 18 years old: it was just us, coming from the punk scene, and those survivors of the extreme left of the 1970s that were still pushing for a very classical discourse. They had not found their place in the new context and ... they looked a bit crazy. (Jordi Bonet)

The path through which the veterans of the 1970s returned to social movements has been subterranean, passing through fear and delusion in search of lines of flight within which to institute a living consistency of militant experience.

We, the people of my environment that left political parties, continued to be socially active, and during many years I kept meeting with the people of Nou Barris for example. We would have meetings like the ones of the party, but without the party. [...] And afterwards, everybody started to look for her own space. There were people that started to work in the world of international cooperation and others, like me, who continued working in the feminist movements that were not anymore

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<sup>1</sup>Reviewing this quote, Marcelo Exposito pointed out the importance of considering the presence as well of a significant group of people integrated in the neoliberal management of art and culture.



tightened by strong links, focusing on support groups and discussions [...] I think in this period we experimented with politics starting from the fear of getting lost... What was more worrying for me in that moment was the idea of staying at home. I didn't want to stay at home with my arms crossed, I felt I had to keep acting. And in that moment I started to work with *Dona i Preso* [Women and Prison] for a couple of years. It was the need to stay active and linked to people that moved me even if in a very generic way. (Eva Fernandez)

The process that emerged was characterised by experimentation with new singular trajectories. In Machiavellian terms, we might say that, faced with the realities of the political conjuncture of the 1980s - *fortune*, as the set of elements in relation to which one has no power - the political and personal experimentation of the 1980s expressed the realisation of what is possible - *the virtue*, in Machiavellian terms (Machiavelli, 1961, Negri, 1999). That is the pursuit of a gesture and a practice which is capable of intervening in the existing world and of producing new situations (Deleuze, 2004, Lazzarato, 2003), going beyond the dynamics of social transformation to open up a process of internal critique of the practices of social movements. Small trajectories emerged out of the collective practices of the 1970s. Experiences capable of giving strength to those subjects trapped in the depression of the early 1980s, characterised by a metamorphosis of individual bodies that permitted the invention of new dispositifs of social organisation and the re-construction of a collective body escaping the traditional forms of political movements. A set of metamorphoses that occurred in the space of marginal politics and concretely assumed the question of subalternity affirming the possibility of expression and not the need of any (political or cultural) institutional representation as the constituent horizon of radical politics (cf. Spivak, 1988, Guha, 1982).

It has been possible [to survive the crisis of the 1980s], because you can share complicities, and ways of looking at things [with other people]. And the way [you survive] is by exploring new and different questions. For me it was assistance for unaccompanied minors – where I re-placed a set of abilities and analyses from my previous organisational experience. And analysis came along with the practices of organisation we implemented, somehow. We understood the situation, we mounted a metropolitan platform, we organised Community adoption for the kids in the neighbourhoods: at the end of the day, the instruments of struggle you use are the ones you already knew. Although latently, they were there – and all of a sudden you activate them in order to work on new issues [...]. What keeps you there is coherence – it is coherence that keeps you in contact with the choices you had made in another moment of your life, which is not only a question of militancy, or be-

ing active and looking critically at reality. It is about how you build your everyday life, what life you have chosen for yourself and to what you have renounced. (Eva Fernandez)

My aim here is to investigate those processes that have been capable of building new movements not by analysing the models of organisation of the logic of ideas - *idea-logy* - but the practices capable of composing a collective body through metamorphoses, invention and critique. The aim is to think about social movements as collective bodies without organs (Vercauteren et al., 2007, Sanchez Cedillo, 2009, Deleuze and Guattari, 1987), conceptualised not by a predefined organisation of ideas and hierarchies, but as collective producers of practices and concepts.

It is possible to see here the practice of critique as a crucial force (Foucault, 1997, Raunig, 2009c, Butler, 2006b; cf. Chapter 3), both to contest the mechanism of neoliberal citizenship and to affirm the legitimacy of political action from outside representation. In this field of outside-politics (Stephenson and Papadopoulos, 2006), my narrative will focus on some experiences which emerged in the context of the desegregation of the radical movements I analysed in the previous chapter. These are movements in which the terms internal outsiders, immanent strangers and governed have been embodied in concrete experiences and where the borders between one and the other have blurred. First, I analyse the experience of *insumisión* and of the *movimiento okupa* where political expression outside representation was affirmed through the primacy of direct action as political practice of enunciation. Second, I analyse the practices of flights arising in the radical arts with the aim of escaping the market and instituting spaces of autonomous expression, which were neither captured nor determined by the market. Finally, I focus on the appearance of extra-European migrants as a new political subject that invaded the public space of Barcelona, from outside formal citizenship, affirming new deeds and new words and clashing with the mechanisms of exclusion not only of society, but also of social movements.

## 5.1 *Insumisión and okupa*

The first experience I analyse is the movement against obligatory military service, or *insumisión*. *Insumisión* emerged in the second half of the 1980s and throughout the 1990s to contest obligatory military service. The movement emerged in continuity with anti-NATO movements of the 1980s. However, *insumisión* was the first significant movement of the democratic transition composing autonomous movements, extreme-left militants (*Mili-KK*) and Christian grassroots movements (*Movimiento Objectores de Conciencia, MOC*) into a social mobilisation that involved thousands of people as objectors, tens of thousands as supporters in trials, thousands of trials and more than six hundreds prisoners from 1989 to 1996 throughout Spain. Although the

radical objection movement<sup>2</sup> was not based solely in Barcelona, the significance of this movement is crucial in terms of analysing the experience of the Catalan capital's squatted spaces in the second half of the 1990s and to understand the affirmation of a biopolitical matrix for urban social movements in recent decades, because it determined the affirmation of subjectivity and alternative subjectivation as crucial sites for radical politics. I focus here principally but not only on the experience of the *MOC*.

My aim here is to stress the relevance of *experience* as a dimension of political expression, in order to later translate this political expression from the singular level of the individual refusal of military service, to the collective practice of squatting as experiential critique of the neoliberal governmentality of urban space. If experience had been a relevant dimension of radical politics throughout the 1970s, experience and discourse became entangled in significant ways in the *insumisión*. The movement refused both to stay silent and to speak in terms of representation, affirming the space of life and experience *as* political enunciation. The political strategy of the *insumisión* indeed was not to be recognised as representative of a new political position, but it was to put into crisis the administrative power of the state, by collapsing its judicial and prison system through radical disobedience, in order to affirm the subjective uprising of a new generation against the normative subjectivation imposed by military service.

The *insumisión* is a biopolitical movement, because it positions the body as the crucial political battleground. The struggle crosses your body and your life. It is not just about conscientious-objecting: anyone can be an *insumiso* without being a militant. And here is the strength and the fragility of the movement itself. It is DIY: here you have your recipe, and everybody can do it. It is the same culture as punk: take your guitar and make a band. In this case: go to the Army, fill in this paper, declare yourself a conscientious objector. (Jordi Bonet)

The act of disobedience affirmed experience as a distinctive position for a new understanding of the relation with the state in terms of governance. The aim of radical politics was not linked to the electoral dimension of representational politics, but instead understood as a practice for radical transformation in a specific dispositif of democratic Spanish power. Military service was targeted as it provided an opportunity to highlight the continuing role of the dictatorship-era military elite following the transition and its role a guarantor for affirming a new normative subjectivity in the post-transition era.

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<sup>2</sup>*Radical objection* refers to the practice of conscientious objection to military service and the refusal to undertake any alternative *civil* service. Radical objection was the translation used by the *insumisión* movement in the international meetings of conscientious objectors in the 1990s. *Insumisión* instead emerged as a name in reference to the radical objection of French citizens during the Algerian War, 1954-1962.

As Exposito pointed out, this mode of political action emerged in different contexts and struggles as a practice against the affirmation of a neoliberal governmentality as a rationale of normative subjectivation and dominance:

There is not any explanation for this; that was the atmosphere of the time. It is this intangible idea proposed by Holloway of reverberations [used by Holloway, 1996 in reference to zapatist movements], isn't it? The resonances, how movements resonate one with each other. [...] Curiously, or not so curiously, it occurred that this happened in those movements where politics were not happening in an ideological framework but through the [problematic of] subjectivation. [...] These are movements that emerged in the first crisis opened by neoliberalism, right? A crisis of health, welfare, wealth. Crises that affected the conditions of life itself. (Marcelo Exposito)

Beyond the specificity of anti-militarism and the anarchistic refusal of the state, the attitude that characterised the radical objection movement resonated in the early 1990s with other movements in the field of cultural, urban and health rights (such as ACT UP in Paris, New York and San Francisco Hayduk, 2002, Crimp, 1989, Gould, 2002), as well as in the environmental movement and post-colonial movements (e.g the marches of 1992 across Latin America and *Zapatismo* in Mexico in 1994, Boron, 2001). (See Figure 5.2)



Figure 5.2: Radical marches for the 500th Anniversary of the *Conquista* 1992 in Sevilla and Latin America

Neoliberal governance indeed resolved conflicts in each specific articulation of power (Jessop, 2002, Negri, 2005, Lazzarato, 2002) and *insumisión* addressed a particular articulation: the masculine subjectivation of boys through the army and loyalty to the Nation (interviews with Marcelo Exposito and Jordi Bonet). (See Figure 5.3)



Figure 5.3: *Insumisos* in Carabanchel, Madrid (Desacuerdos, 2005)

The possibility of opening up a political debate around these questions could not be conceived inside the homogeneous consensus of institutional politics. Direct action and disobedience affirmed «an order of legitimacy counterpoised to some elements of legality» (Marcelo Exposito); a social legitimacy outside the legal structure of the state. Radical objection as a space of politicisation was immediately an emotional and political act involving not the ideological defence of an idea, but the affirmation of a different position for the subject in society. A text by Chomsky (1967) on civil disobedience against the Vietnam War became important in internal discussions and in the production of the narrative within the movement. It is useful to emphasise the extent to which *insumisión* itself was embedded in an «archetype of the history of disobedience, an affective archetype. An archetype of transitional affection» (Marcelo Exposito) among participants in the movement (cf. Dowling et al., 2007).

I had no intention of taking part in any act of civil disobedience, until that moment. But when that grotesque organism began slowly advancing – more grotesque because its cells were recognisable human beings – it became obvious that one could not permit that thing to dictate what one was going to do. (Chomsky, 1967, unpaginated)

The space of disobedience was constructed not upon the rationalisation of a strategy, but in the embodied decision of a collective social force that enacted a political act in a specific situation.

[Crossing the line of legality] all of a sudden you find yourself in a place where those certainties and those securities that you had on the other side of the line, are gone. [...] In the very moment in which you trespass the line, you do it because you are appealing to something else. You are appealing to something that has an intangible element that, I don't know... a certain common sense of justice, an appeal to the legitimacy of illegal acts, and the illegitimacy of legal acts committed by the government. (Marcelo Exposito) (See figure 5.4)

Beyond the campaign itself, direct action constituted an alternative process of collective subjectivation (Exposito, 2003). Emotions and behaviours were not an individual or ethical space that a social movement represented in public. Experience was the ground of a collective and political production - the expressive force of the movement. The irreducible difference of personal lives became a constituent principle for organisation – on the one hand to translate them from private to public space, second to compose them as unitary force affirming and prefiguring a new paradigm of social life.

It was a very radical way of understanding the issue of radical objection, because it was not the idea of being against the system - a sort of generic anti-systemic



Figure 5.4: Civil Disobedience against the Vietnam War in the U.S. (*left*) and against military service in Spain (*right*)

idea. It was literally to say: we have to conform all together an order of legitimacy and an idea of what it means to be in common. Something that can occur only by doing something so strong like disobeying a law. Something that can provoke an accusation against you of committing an offence against the security of the state... Me, for example, I was convicted for a serious offence against the security of the state and against the constitution. (Marcelo Exposito)

The practice of refusal forced the subject into a profound decision about one's own life and one's own horizons. These spaces of individual decision however were connected to the collective production of a strategy for the movement. Radical objection involved accepting the reduction of one's personal freedom and to organise support from outside the prisons. (See Figure 5.5)

But it was also an experience of politicising intimacy, explaining one's reasons and practices to relatives, mums, friends, lovers. It was about making political enunciations by organising a collective and radical act, a collective *experience*.

What you would do was either go to the place [where you had to enlist] and face the situation and explain your reasons and take the first pedagogic step, discuss with your superior and with the people there. 'No. Look, I am not going to do this. Why? Well for this and that reason...' And this would be the first pedagogic step, the first interpellation. Or you would send a letter... 'Look I am so-and-so, I am not going to this for this reason...' and you would go with this letter to Court and admit guilt. You would go with a group of people who would admit guilt for inducing you to commit this offence. And this was an element of aggregation. People that could not go to the military service due to their age, or because they were women, had a way to join the practices of disobedience that was: 'I convinced this person'. Or if it was

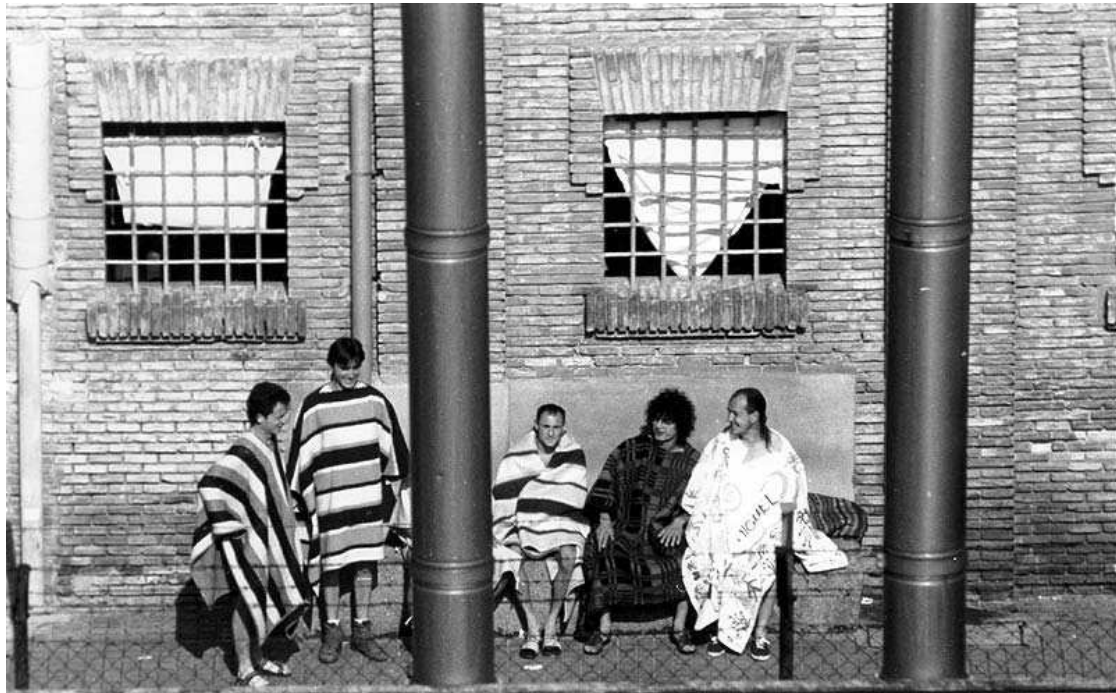


Figure 5.5: *Insumisos* in prison

your mother: 'I educated him in this way and it seems logical to me that he will not do this. If this is an offence, I am responsible for having induced him to commit it' or a friend of yours or a university teacher. (Marcelo Exposito)

This space for the composition of different biographical experiences, of singular emotions and behaviours, generated a novel political space where discussion was not about convincing anybody to join any party or organisation but opening a political debate about the subjectivation that the state imposed through military service, through war, and the effects of governance on the everyday life of society.

We were dying of exhaustion from giving conferences, debates, discussions everywhere... It was really heavy. You would see different reactions, from a reverential silence of people looking to you as a hero or absolute aggression against you. And in-between a range of possibilities and many times all of these were occurring in the same public event. You were not there to discuss an idea. You were there literally embodying - with your body, your position - a radical political act and you were not asking people to do it as well, but you were trying to develop a political pedagogy according to which you would act and the consequences of which you would accept. And this was something that would *commocionar* people a lot [translation:



literally *overcome with emotion*. But this word involves both the sense of moving people emotionally in common and being moved together, *con-motion*]. (Marcelo Exposito)

The practice of alternative subjectivations, the refusal of uniformity, the dimension of experience as political enunciation of singularities constituted a space to reinvent forms of organisation. It made possible the imagination of other ways of constituting a common plan of political action beyond the reduction of individual differences to the coherence of the programme (Papadopoulos et al., 2008, Mezzadra, 2010) - a militant discipline.

[There was] a complex relation between individuality, singularity and collective. Because generally they were not decisions that one would take on his own. They were strategies, tactics, mechanism that were collectively decided. And there, inside this collective strategy, one would then singularise. Because there was a template for the letter of refusal. But the one that was writing it was you. You were writing your own reasons. And it was not the same if those who were admitting guilt themselves where your workmates, your mates of the union, or your mother. Every profile was different and you would define it. But it was not a theatralised profile. It was you, it was your reality. (Marcelo Exposito)

According to interviews and materials, the space of *insumisión* generated the background from which the *movimiento okupa* appeared as a collective identity. Squatted social centres constituted «the spatial and collective translation of the military objection movement» (Ivan Miro) that translated the ethical interpellation of the radical objection to the ground of urban politics, affirming a practice of critique and micro-political refusal of the neoliberal governance of the city. From the middle of the 1990s, hundreds of flats and at least fifty social centres were occupied in the urban region of Barcelona, while the demonstrations organised by the *okupa* movement in the same period gathered between ten and twenty thousand people.

[After the fall of the Berlin wall] time collapsed and space emerged [as a political dimension]. There was a complete refusal of the future, a questioning of the revolution, maybe due to postmodernism, and a deep questioning of grand narratives. People wanted concrete politics: they did not want to struggle for their future. They wanted to get together and do things: transform a bit of their lives. (Ivan Miro)

At the same time, in the late 1980s, the space of the extreme-left was trapped in the identitarian and ideological circle of traditional politics.

I have seen this, I was still very young and these little groups were trying to “catch me”, but then they stopped, they started to fragment themselves more and more.

And then people started to think critically about classical politics, about the vertical forms of organisation, and representative politics, also on the personal level because people were burnt out because of militancy, because of the sacrifice, required by extreme-left parties. (Ivan Miro)

The new expressions of the student movement, in relation to university fees and so on, were considered as anti-political [by the extreme-left]. But, when we organised the supposed 'political' stuff, nobody would show up. The 'anti-political' permitted the emergence of new constellations, and to express political statements, proposing both new issues (for example on fees and urban speculation) and new practices, occupying the university or squatting empty buildings. And we [as extreme-left] were very narrow-minded towards any novelty. (Tomas Herreros)

In this opposition between the ideological 'political' and the experiential 'anti-political', different political movements emerged contrasting the hegemony and the militant style of the extreme-left and affirming the experience of urban life as a battleground in which to claim and demand new rights. Social centres asserted a radical invention capable of redefining urban policies and politics as a realm of political antagonism and of affirming the right to the city in the space of Barcelona as a battleground. Social centres opened a space for a critique of urban politics where the administrative institutionalisation of *asociaciones de vecinos* had left a depoliticised society in which critique was foreclosed.

At the same time, the spaces of squatting and radical objection were constituted as a political space by state repression. The Law Code of 1995 legislates,

against both *insumisión* and squatting as criminal offences. And for me this is the moment in which the state affirms that there is a real conflict at stake in these practices by punishing them with prison. This is what allows, I think, people to start to act as a political movement, the beginning of the cycle: to challenge these events people have to act in public. They have to develop affinity networks with different sectors, get out of the ghetto, think about the neighbourhoods and invent new media for communication. (Ivan Miro)

The spatial translation of the *insumisión* reinforced the collective dimension of the political experience. Social centres became spaces in which to share not only political discussion but a way of living together differently. This allowed feminist questions, queer movements, drug experimentation and leisure to become the spine of autonomous political practices in everyday life.

All of a sudden, you would find yourself in a social centre full of people, and we have to find new ways to verbalise politics, we have to think about new codes, new

languages. Normal people have other interests [to the ones of the extreme left] and we have to tune to those interests in terms of organising the cultural activities of the social centres. [...] The world changed, but through everyday practices. The discussion was never theoretical, like elsewhere, but practical: we started to work in the *Garnacha*, in the *Hamsa*, then I went back to Terrasa to open another social centre. And all of a sudden in the meeting you would not discuss, as in the extreme left, about ideological questions, but about the practical management of the social centre. (Tomas Herreros)

[The extreme left] would not build any place, any alternative and public site for politics. And we, although by instinct, did not want to do politics with words, but to change things, and the [production of] space was the materialisation of change. (Ivan Miro)

In this intertwining of space and collectivity as translating process from *insumisión* to the *okupa* movement, cultural production emerged as a space to think about the collective identity of emerging urban subjectivities and about the social dynamics for the production and consumption of culture (Castells, 1985).

The urban is affirmed here as a space of production, and urban social movements contest its organisation through an embodied critique of the management of this mode of production. Autonomous politics emerged as practices of antagonism and flight against a double exclusion from Fordist citizenship. First, the exclusion of a new generation from the regime of rights of the Fordist mode of production. The space of leisure became a field of organisation not only for the alternative cultural scene. It constituted a space in which to organise labour in a different way both questioning the regime of cultural production imposed by the Olympic regeneration (free and casual labour) and affirming a possible self-management of work.

Our interlocutors were different: not the extreme left militant, but djs that asked about the possibility of playing there. We would discuss, for example, the prices [of drinks and entrance] in the social centre and how this would allow a new generation to come out in the street. A generation that till then was silent and could not use the public spaces of the city [due to the precarisation of their lives]. (Tomas Herreros)

Second, recognising the effects of neoliberal policies on the possibility of accessing wealth for this precarious population, the consumption of culture in the social centres became a spatiality in which to contest the position of consumers as disengaged public. On the one hand, the very affordable nature of access to social centres challenged the economic hierarchisation of access to culture.

Leisure time in the space of Barcelona was over-commodified. It was very difficult, for this generation that had no economic resources, to hit the streets in the night. Because everything was very expensive. And it was not only about the money. Everything was over-regulated. And in this context, many social centres proliferated and focused part of their work on leisure - what we were calling *alternative leisure* - with other prices, other activities and where all this scene started to move... Djs of rave parties started to develop and in a few years this sparked an alternative circuit of consumption in Barcelona. (Tomas Herreros)

On the other hand, this made possible the configuration of an open space of discussion in which to break apart the segmentation between public and producer. The public could be part of the management of cultural production and not only a receptor, for example in the political assemblies of the social centres in which the concrete management of the centre and its cultural and political activities took precedence over the ideological politics of representation (Tomas Herreros).

This shift in social movements happened in the context of an evolution of Barcelona's mainstream cultural scene. Since the early democratic transition of the 1980s, underground artists, counter-cultural communities and independent galleries were incorporated in the neo-liberal valorisation of the city and its brand (Harvey, 2009, 2001). The counter-cultural, migrant and transgendered milieus of the 1970s became involved in a generalised process of self-entrepreneurialisation for the valorisation of this cultural production in a global market of culture and art. This process of normalisation proposed a productive commodification of these life worlds and attacked their autonomy by subordinating it to the rule of exchange value.

In this diffused factory, the new generation inhabiting social centres started to experience the new forms of capitalist exploitation as concrete dimensions of their life. The prototype of the Olympics was being translated in the precarisation of labour, in the self-exploitation of workers, in the permanent commodification of every cultural production and the precarisation of urban inhabitants (cf. Chapter 4.4).

The micro-politics of the body expressed in the *insumisión* as well as in the micro-politics of the groups associated with the *movimiento okupa* mutated into a reflection and a set of practices around the micro-politics of precarisation in *urban* space. In the metamorphosis of urban governance, the relation of power between capital and labour involved lifestyles, bodies: in a word *experiences*. Leisure politics expressed the collective and spatial reconfiguration of the singular act of radical objection, moving from the self-exile of the objector from the normative subjectivation of the army, to a collective exodus that aimed to perform and prefigure an alternative world.

For a few years, social centres constituted an exodus from the commodification of urban life and offered the possibility of affirming alternative ways for organising labour reinforcing the ‘lines of flight’ opened in the late 1970s by the countercultural projects (Carmona, 2012). A place from which to resist and institute new social modes of cultural production.

The occupation of *Cine Princesa* (1994) represented the most important place in this process of exodus. As it was the first social centre in the very centre of the city, the *movimiento okupa* became a public actor in the urban political debate and, around the experience of the *Cine Princesa*, new alliances were forged. (See Figure 5.6 and Video V.6)



Figure 5.6: The eviction of *Cine Princesa* (Royo and Ferre, 2005)

When the *Princesa* is evicted [in 1996], a spontaneous demonstration arose. The same afternoon. First many people started to go there. For us it was most of all for the eviction. It was almost a situation of militarisation, you know? [In that moment] I was outraged by the eviction, by the way in which it was done. The military take over of a whole part of the city, with helicopters and all. We went to the *Princesa* in the early morning, very upset for all the *movida*. And in the night, in the afternoon there was a demonstration where there were many people like me, coming from the neighbourhoods movements and a lot of old people, one would say. And the *FAVB* [*Federacion de asociaciones de vecinos de Barcelona*] organised a party, a very big street party in solidarity to the *Princesa* in the Born. And this was one of the first and most incredible moments in the relationship between the *asociaciones de vecinos* and the *movimiento okupa*. (Eva Fernandez) (See Video V.6)

Since the early 1990s debates within the social centres had centred around the task of reinventing the function of social organisation in the new dynamics of the city. Social centres emerged as a dispositif to open spaces for politics and critique in the *oeuvre*, spaces in which to reconnect and organise as an urban social movement, rather than as a constellation of fragmented identities.

Via their politics of occupation, and the organisation of cultural production and access to leisure, the *movimiento okupa* emerged as a political agency, capable of recomposing the memories of urban struggle within the framework of the neoliberal governance of the city.

## 5.2 From critique to instituent practices in radical arts

Having examined the process of collective subjectivation of autonomous politics in the 1980s and 1990s, I turn now to focus on another process of flight and invention in the field of radical culture, this time focusing on the field of critical artistic and curatorial practices. In both the *insumisión* and the *okupa* movements, discussed above, and the artistic/cultural projects, examined below, I am interested in tracing a process whereby singular moments of escape develop into collective processes of invasion - a process which is of central concern to the question of the right to the city in Barcelona as examined throughout this thesis.

However, while the *insumisión* and *okupa* movements are of interest principally in relation to the dimension of the politicisation of experience, the artistic and cultural projects discussed here deal with the question of institutions and their relationship with society and the public. Moreover, they do so in a manner which directly addresses post-Fordist conditions of labour. In the following chapter, we will see that the *Museum of Contemporary Arts of Barcelona* drew on and brought together both the practices of the autonomous movement and the radical critique of institutions pioneered by the artistic and cultural practices which are the focus of this section.

Once again, it is a matter of inventing a new collective body which is capable of escaping the capture of capital and of inventing new modes of organisation to contest the general process of neoliberalism. In my understanding, the radical artistic practices of the 1980s and the 1990s in Barcelona configured first a fragmented set of singular escapes against the neoliberal capture of 1970s counter-cultures (5.2.1), but would later return to an institutional critique of the cultural institutions, thus affirming invasion as instituent practice of a different relation between art and politics (5.2.2).

In culture, the effects of neoliberalism started to be visible in the Western European democracies from the early 1980s onward, even if the conditions for this effect had been historically consolidated throughout the 1970s, through the weakening and de-mobilisation of unions and the traditional left in the crisis of the 1970s and the failure of the revolutionary *conatus* of 1968. (Ribalta, 2010, 87-88)

Arts was embedded in the global politics of neoliberalism and marginalised from the field of representative institutional politics, finding in the global market the measure of its aesthetic value. In juxtaposition, different kinds of expressive cultural practices contested the mode of

subjectivation and art production imposed by neoliberalism, developing a critique of the political dynamics of culture and thinking the experience of art as a field of biopolitics (Ribalta, 2010, Steyerl, 2009).

The institutional ‘normalisation’ of democratic, and social-democratic, transition deeply discredits the historical – some of them recent – experiences that connected arts and politics, by delegitimising in general the possibility of pushing for social change through cultural practices. [The closure of this process is in 1986], during the referendum for entering NATO. Tensions explode between dissident groups, coming from the previous period, and the politics of democratic institutionalisation. [...] In these tensions and through the long and deserted traverse of the 1980s and 1990s, the possibilities for new forms of dissidence in the instituted democracy are forged. (Exposito, in Desacuerdos, 2003, 120)

In the remainder of this section I analyse the process that moved from the scattered experiences of radical critique in the 1980s to the first experiments of radical instituent practices in the early 1990s in order to understand the genealogy of those artists, critics and curators that participated in the experience of *Museum of Contemporary Art of Barcelona* in conjunction with social movements in the early 2000s (cf. Chapter 6).

### 5.2.1 The gallery system and the *arte correo*

In the early 1980s the radical artistic milieu in Spain and in the rest of the world began to analyse what they were experiencing: the end of dictatorships and the explosion of difference (Spain and Latin America), but also the neoliberal impact on the cultural sector and the closing of the 1970s as a period of progressive experimentation (Europe and North America) (Raunig and Ray, 2009). This led to research around the capture by the market of radical artistic processes, and to the articulation of a practice of critique as a form of transformative analytical intervention against neoliberal cultural production. In order to analyse this critique, a global framework needs to be introduced.

*Shapolsky et al. Manhattan Real Estate Holdings, a Real-Time Social System as of May 1, 1971* by Haacke (2004) constituted the pre-history of artistic production with regard to this process. (See Figure 5.7) The project collected information on real estate speculation in the Lower East side, around the Guggenheim Museum where the exhibition was going to take place. The exhibition was censored, not only because of its controversial content, but also because of the language of its objects. The exhibition had no ‘art pieces’ but just a «series of 142 photographs of the facades of tenement buildings, accompanied by typewritten data sheets [which] added up to a biting indictment of the monopoly of one family of wealthy proprietors over the slums»



Figure 5.7: Shapolsky et al. Manhattan Real Estate Holdings, a Real-Time Social System as of May 1, 1971 by Haacke



(Tate, n.d.) in the area surrounding the museum. The family in question was, moreover, financially linked to the museum. For the first time «Haacke problematise[d] the autonomy and the neutrality of the gallery» (Borja-Villel, 2006, 26), and considered art and the artist as agents in the city demystifying both the role of cultural institutions in urban speculation in the Lower East side, and the modern discourse according to which art is an aesthetic language external to political and economic dynamics.

The debate around the connection between culture and urban regeneration was broad and diffuse. Manuel Castells (1985) analysed the role of identity and diversity in the transformation of the Castro in San Francisco; Asher exhibited in the peripheries of Lyon (in 1991) addressing the post-industrial transformation of the neighbourhood in *Rénovation = Expulsion* (Exposito, 1996). (See Figure 5.8) Rosalyn Deutsche and Cara Ryan's prominent text *The fine art of gentrification* (Deutsche and Ryan, 1984) analysed the role of art in the re-development of New York.

It is of critical importance to understand the gentrification process—and the art world's crucial role within it – if we are to avoid aligning ourselves with the forces behind this destruction. [...] The city's strategy is twofold. The immediate aim is to dislodge a largely redundant working-class community by wresting control of neighbourhood property and housing and turning it over to real-estate developers. The second step is to encourage the full-scale development of appropriate conditions to house and maintain late capitalism's labor force, a professional white middle class groomed to serve the centre of America's 'postindustrial' society. (Deutsche and Ryan, 1984, 94)

In Barcelona, this debate on gentrification not only prefigured the future of the city, but imposed a discussion around the role of cultural institutions and artistic communities in this 'strategy of impoverishment' (Deutsche and Ryan, 1984). Deutsche and Ryan's intervention into the debate around neoliberalism and urban politics unveiled the political transformation of counterculture itself.

There is an «increasing tendency» they argued «in the art world [...] to characterise as authoritarian anyone who raises difficult questions about the oppressive workings of the cultural apparatus» (Deutsche and Ryan, 1984, 97). This critique however was not «the other side of the promotional enthusiasm for East Village art, [...] becoming its censor; rather [it] explores the ways in which the East Village scene participates in the dominant culture even as it poses as 'subcultural'» (Deutsche and Ryan, 1984, 97).

In this context, the experience in Barcelona was different but not exceptional. Many groups addressed «the [...] complex relation [of art with] the concrete conditions of contemporary life» (Deutsche and Ryan, 1984, 101).

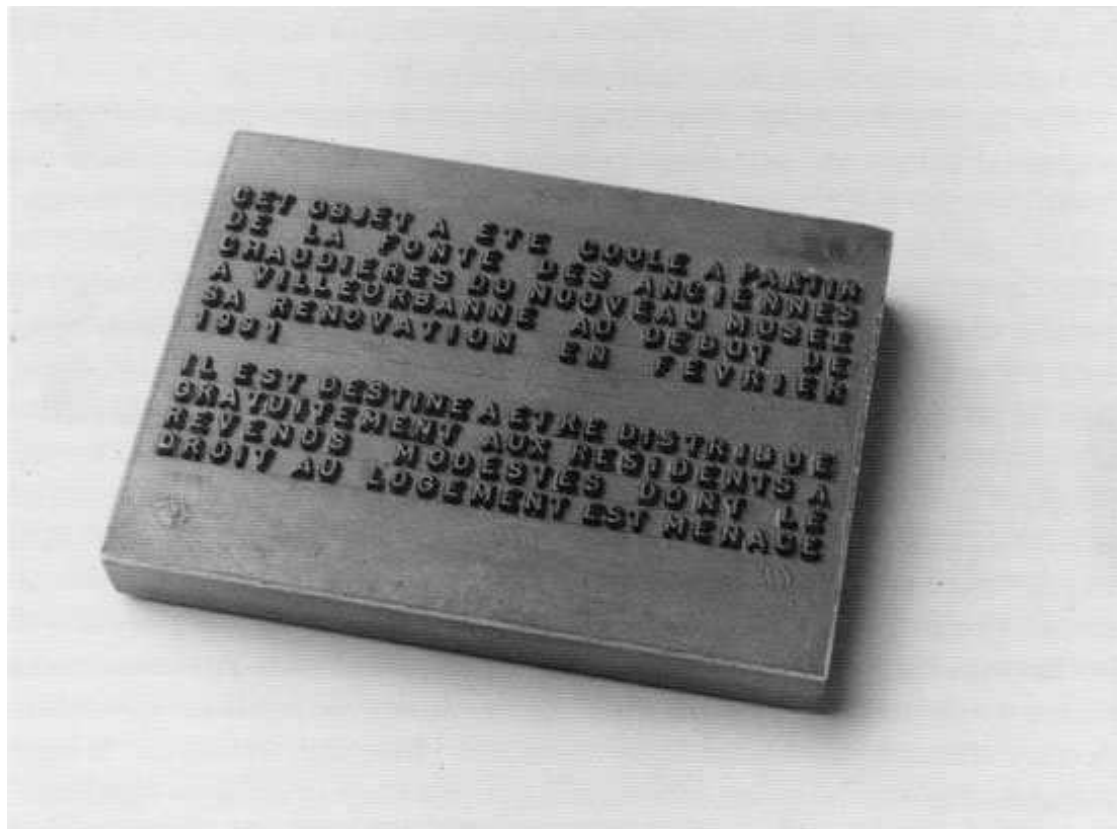


Figure 5.8: Asher's *Rénovation = Expulsion* (1991)

In aesthetics as well as in politics, [radical] tendencies had been clearly contained by the cultural lobbies of the Left, that were committed to defending the status quo (the hegemony of abstract painting) and to investing themselves during the so called democratic transition in obtaining cells of power by all means in the political system emerging after the dictatorship. (Desacuerdos, 2003, 152 my translation)

[Left parties] thought that since socialists and communists were in power [. . .] what they had to do was to demobilise the masses. They demobilised the grassroots movements, from *asociaciones de vecinos*, to cultural movements, to cine-clubs, and so on. Those that really had been the seeds of [social change] (Marti Rom, in Desacuerdos, 2003, 139)

From the middle of the 1980s, *arte correo* (mail-art) began to develop as a practice of critique in and against the process of valorisation embedded in the circuit of artist-exhibition-critique-market, marking the specificity of the Catalan and Spanish debate (cf. Exposito, in Desacuerdos, 2003). (See Figure 5.9) Since the commercial gallery system is limited and corrupt, many artists decided to exhibit through the postal system:

For the production of imagery, they drew often upon xerography (photocopying) and the earlier technology of rubber stamps. They would also announce exhibitions in venues previously devoid of art, such as city halls in remote parts of the world, ideally accepting everything submitted and issuing a catalog with names, usually accompanied by addresses and selected reproductions. While such work had little impact upon commercial galleries (and the «art magazines» dependent upon galleries' ads), one result was a thriving alternative culture, calling itself 'The Eternal Network', as intensely interested in itself as serious artists have always been. (Kostelanetz, 1993, 'mail-art' entry)

Barcelona was playing a major role in the hegemonic process of the valorisation of art, being one of the centres of the Spanish new art scene. *Arte correo* emerged on the margins as a space for creating a network for survival of underground and critical artistic practices; a space of exodus and autonomy not only for the products, but for the politics of production themselves.

You could not contemplate doing anything outside [Barcelona], and critics would not go to any other place [in the country]. So our statement [from outside Barcelona] was: «if what we do here does not transcend our own place, and people only receive what you send them by mail, it is absurd to do exhibitions, let's just send people catalogues. (Vidal, interview with Marcelo Exposito and Montse Roman in Desacuerdos, 2003, 148)



Figure 5.9: Various postcards of Spanish *arte correo* (Desacuerdos, 2003, 2005)

The autonomy of circulation of materials outside the control of the invisible hand of the cultural market reinvigorated the networks of fanzines, alternative music, small publishers and so on. Furthermore, this space of circulation allowed the circulation of concepts, categories and experiences together with materials as spaces of discussion around the functioning of an emerging neoliberal governmentality.

People in the Reaganist United States, the artists and social movements in Latin American dictatorships (principally Brazil, Chile and Argentina), and in eastern Europe - especially in Poland during Solidarity - linked together. Network became the keyword to re-situate transversal organisation, expression and production as well as the practice of critique as political questions; without reducing these specificities to any universal and ideological paradigm of analysis.

Network-organisation was defined by the mechanism of circulation of materials that were constituting the singular expressions of artists, social movements, local issues, not imposing any international and rigid programme of action. Network-production escaped both the abstraction of value of the global market, and the discipline of parties and political organisation, generating practices and affirming an incipient critique of globalisation around the concept of Integrated World Capitalism (Guattari, 2005), beyond the dichotomies of the Cold War.

The network is the result of a collective labour and here the confluence spaces in production, distribution and exhibition (festivals, meetings, publishers, collective publications, and so on) institute nodes, moments of aggregation through practices. The transfers between music, video, action art was permanent for more than a decade. We are not denying that important works or subjects can be identified in these spaces. But we want to stress that these singularities are comprehensible only through an analysis that looks at the internal dynamism of these spaces. (Exposito in Desacuerdos, 2003, 121)

In this process, Exposito argues, hierarchies and specialisation in the artistic practices came to a point of crisis – opening debates on delegation and horizontalism. «Theoretical production, aesthetic practices, management of production, distribution, reception [we]re all strongly interwoven in a collective and collaborative management» (Exposito in Desacuerdos, 2003, 124). In this crisis, radical artistic practices stepped forward assuming the risk and the responsibility of forming new cultural institutions in accordance with the aesthetic and political principles of their critique.

### **5.2.2 *Fundació Tàpies* and institutional critique in Barcelona**

Here I analyse the emergence of institutional critique as a collective translation of the exoduses of *arte correo* from the gallery system. In this sense, the experience of the *Fundació Tàpies*

constitutes the emergence of an invasive and instituent practice that both questioned the role of museums in relation to the society and to the labour of the artist, and interrogated the social status of the art piece as a commodity, proposing new processes of artistic production in cultural institutions.

The critique of institutions in the field of culture addressed a more general debate about the relation between the citizen and the state, questioning the legitimacy of the modern paradigm according to which the state had to educate the citizen in accordance with an enlightened knowledge. In the 1990s,

[museums] had been overtaken by a right-wing form of bourgeois institutional criticism, [and] the claim that the cultural institution ought to be a public sphere was no longer unchallenged. The bourgeoisie had sort of decided that in their view a cultural institution was primarily an economic one and as such had to be subjected to the laws of the market. (Steyerl, 2009, unpaginated)

Institutional critique questioned the position of power of the institution towards society, contesting both the patronising role of the state and the capturing function of the market. In Barcelona, this practice of critique territorialised in a concrete experience, the *Fundació Tàpies* (1990-1998). The *Fundació Tàpies* was the first step in the constitution of a new space for politics, at the very moment in which the Olympics represented the deep crisis of social movements and autonomous politics.

The appointment of Manuel Borja Vilel, a historian of art who studied in New York between City University and the Art Galleries of the Lower East side, as the new director of the *Fundació Tàpies*, an important private cultural institution in Catalonia, made possible the concrete convergence of many different marginal histories of radical cultures in a singular institution underpinned by the personal power of Borja (cf. interviews with Marcelo Exposito and Jorge Ribalta). The resources and the legitimacy of *Fundació Tàpies* allowed artists to elaborate a critique of cultural production and constitute an alternative site of production in which to address the politics of the city and the politics of the museum, assuming the position of the artist as producer of political meanings as well as aesthetic commodities (Marcelo Exposito). Radical milieus instituted an experiment through which the practice of critique configured itself not as a singular enunciation, but as a collective and plural project, programming interventions, constituting a public space, and speaking-out to the city from an institutional position.

Culture and art would accomplish a paradoxical and contradictory role in their relationship with the state, that would be exactly the expression and the guarantee of a plural democratic order. This paradoxical condition is materialised in an exemplary way in the art of the institutional critique, an art stream born in the museum with

the aim of undermining its foundations as an institution. This conflict would be, from this point of view, the guarantee of its liberal pluralism and the symptom of its limits, since it would point out the unequal relationships of power implicit in the institutions of knowledge and high culture, such as the university and the museum, that participate in the reproduction of inequalities and forms of social subordination and in the exclusion of the subaltern - in other words, in reproducing a social space that has no power of representation. (Ribalta, 2010, 85)

Those authors that contributed to the debate on gentrification in the 1980s participated in the programming of the *Fundació Tàpies*. New practices and new content appeared in the public debate as well as a new geopolitical configuration of artistic discourse. In particular three themes seem relevant for framing the political project of *Fundació Tàpies* and its importance for the experiment of the *Museum of Contemporary Art of Barcelona* in the early 2000s. First, *Els limits del museu [The end(s) of the museum]* in 1995 (Keenan, 1995) attempted to critically engage with the neoliberal agenda of culture, posing political questions on the concept of the modern museum and the transformations in the relationship between culture and society – and between institutions, market and politics.

What are the epistemological presuppositions of this institution, which is also to say, what are its social, economic and political stakes? [...] In deconstructing the locus of the museum in Western art and culture, we hope to provide the conceptual tools to redefine and thus enable a new theory of this project called the museum. (Keenan, 1995, 15)

The other side of this new configuration of cultural institutions was, according to Ribalta, the internal reorganisation and the affirmation of a neoliberal rationality of institutional functioning. In the context of the crisis of the welfare state and the collapse of the ideological role of culture after the end of the Cold War, Ribalta argues, museums became producers of commodities for the market and they were restructured in terms of labour (Ribalta, 2010).

In the mid 1990s, I participated in the revitalisation of the associative artists movement. [Out of that] I did a book with different agents of the artistic system called *Servicio Público* (Ribalta, 1998) on the crisis of public funding happening in this period, and on the horizons of that moment. Documenting the end of the period of alternative spaces supported by public money – that is over – and the neoliberal impact of the 1990s. (Jorge Ribalta)

Artistic labour was considered as an accumulation of individuals. No support was guaranteed for artistic communities. Hierarchisation became the form of organisation of the relationship

between artists, allowing the money to converge to the top of the hierarchy and producing a mechanism of dependency and precarity for other artists. This mechanism involved a lack of attention to the cultural reproduction of the artistic milieu and therefore the fragmentation of the communities - not responding to the demand of the Artists Associative movements in 1996 to recognise the artist as a worker and not as a genius. In contrast, in the *Fundació Tàpies*, the proposal was to shift from the individual value of the object to the collective value of social cooperation - and therefore of labour. Precarious artists demanded that public institutions guarantee a basic income for casual workers - an «urban» generalisation of the French model of income for casual workers in cultural events (Marcelo Exposito; cf. Corsani and Lazzarato, 2008). Precarity was emerging as a common experience.

The fundamental problem was the difficulty for artists to obtain some kind of professional conditions and so on. Actually the discourse was about precarity, not only in economic terms, but also institutionally, in their public life... Even if not articulated in these terms, the idea of building a certain kind of public artistic sphere, on the margin of the market was an answer to a situation we were experiencing. We believed during a certain time that the idea that the market was going to be the way to maintain ourselves. But this didn't happen, never really happened. And this is why there is a demand for another kind of cultural politics... you know?... But nobody was talking about precarity as such, nobody was using these terms. (Jorge Ribalta)

Second, since the limits and the goals of the museum were inserted in the political context of neoliberalism, *Fundació Tàpies* addressed the question of urban change. In the displacement of governance into the heterogeneous space of public, social and private partnerships - the market, civil society and public institutions emerged as actors in a complex articulation of politics. The museum could be something more than a cultural radical institution: an autonomous space for political expression in the emergence of urban governance.

Following the debates around the *Olympic Games*, the exhibition *La ciutat de la gent* [The city of the people] (Borja-Villel et al., 1997) acted as a countermelody, or a counter-power, «that responded to another exhibition with the same name, organised in the Maremagnum, one of this classic operations of institutional propaganda on Barcelona's transformations, and all that shit» (Marcelo Exposito). A syncopated rhythm in the symphonic rhetoric of the Barcelona Model.

There is a project that serves as a point of inflection for many of us and it is a photographic project: the City of the People by Horsfield. It is before *Documenta X*, before 1997. It could have been 1994 or 1995. [A project that] creates a counter-history of popular Barcelona in the post-Olympics and breaks the myth of the hyper-



defined social-democratic city and shows the neoliberal city that is catalysed in Barcelona with the Olympics. It produces a counter-imaginary of this advertising dimension of Barcelona. I think it is a really important experience for Manolo [Borja] as well. (Jorge Ribalta)

At stake in the exhibition was the tension between expression, representation and abstraction which can be traced in the political artistic practices of the 1970s and lost through mainstream cultural discourse of Western countries in the neoliberal capture of the 1980s.

Photography, as Ribalta reminds us when talking about this project, plays on the edge between experience and commentary in continuity with the narrative register of other photographic revolutionary movements: the Farm Security Administration of the Great Depression, the Federal Writer Project, and also the Cine-train of the Russian Vanguards (interview with Jorge Ribalta) (cf. Chapter 3). (See Figure 5.10 and 5.11)



Figure 5.10: An image from the *Food Security Administration* photographic enquiries, 1930s



Figure 5.11: Image from the photographic enquiry *La Ciutat de la Gent* (Borja-Villel et al., 1997)

*La ciutat de la gent* and radical artistic practices in general played in a space and in a time beyond the place and the moment: borrowing styles and questions from other practices in other (geographical or historical) contexts and contributing through, situated expression, to the re-territorialisation of such debates and heresies in the present context.

This exhibition affirmed a double possibility of political expression, both referring to the universal language of art, and evoking political questions. The latter were proposed not only through discourse but also through the affection of sensibility, through the sensible interpellation of the singular gaze of the artist.

Through his photographs of the people and places of Barcelona, Horsfield attempts to describe human relations in the city, revealing their basic structure to the viewer. For Horsfield, photography is partly responsible for shaping our perceptions and our awareness of the real world and the changes it is undergoing. [...] Economists, anthropologists and architects have contributed their particular visions of the city, enriching the process that went into creating these photographs. The anonymous inhabitants photographed by Horsfield also played an active part in this process, explaining their personal life experiences and identifying what they feel to be the most significant features of their surroundings. (Jorge Ribalta)

*La ciutat de la gent* (and more generally *Fundació Tàpies*) affirmed expression, difference, encounter, juxtaposition, hybridisation as crucial practices for the production of a common field of social struggle, and refused the hegemony of hierarchy and integration as disciplinary frameworks for the representation of social critique - escaping the ideological rigidity of the marxist debates of the 1970s. The position of thinking about politics in the museum was an uncomfortable position made up of contradictions and negotiations. However, these contradictions were not confronted within an ideological framework but rather via a practice of possible and situated subversion (Bhabha, 2004) affirming the possibility of a critical instituent practice. A space for a complex and mediated, but still unpredictable expression of the internal outsiders, the immanent strangers and the un/governed - affirmed in an unpredictable invasion of public space.

In this contrast between radical arts and neoliberal politics, *Subculturas y homogenización* [Subcultures and homogenisation] (Cohen, 1998), a cycle of seminars on subalternity and representation organised in 1998, expressed the apex and the end of Borja's cycle at the *Fundació Tàpies*. This is my third example here. In *Subculturas y homogenización*, the limits between the museum and the city, between art and politics were challenged opening a debate between cultural critique, anthropology, political theory, urbanism and economics, questioning the dominant, official role of culture. The space was not just an exhibition but also a set of workshops,

seminars and lectures where intellectuals like David Harvey, John Beverly, Phil Cohen and Dick Hebdige, as well as collective projects from Barcelona, Paris, Ghent and Rotterdam participated.

Through a study and review of popular, subaltern, urban culture it aimed to structure new ways of thinking about the interaction between civil society and the state, and thus bring the people closer to the many social demands that are emerging from the global process of homogenisation. (Cohen, 1998, unpaginated)

«Has culture gone beyond the social?» (Cohen, 1998, unpaginated) What is the relationship between neoliberal globalisation and local culture capable of? Can an institution escape «tourist mercantilism»? «What alternative, marginal, critical and ideological discourses are generated culturally and socially by this whirlwind of change?» (Cohen, 1998, unpaginated).

Subaltern studies provide a kind of rupture with the disciplinary structures through a critical, collective analysis, not only of literary texts and written documents but also of oral testimonies. The testimony enables close collaboration between radical intellectuals and professionals with the subaltern social groups, thus becoming a mediator between the local and the global. (Cohen, 1998, unpaginated)

The radical space of *Fundació Tàpies* was part of and inspired by a wider movement of radical institutionality and Borja's group participated in organising *Documenta X*, in 1997 in Kassel (Germany) (David and Chevrier, 1997). The space of the most important German temporary exhibition of modern and contemporary art was reconfigured by David and Chevrier. At stake there was a critique of the political function of art in the neoliberal commodification of culture and the attempt of re-configuring the political significance of Kassel after the Cold War.

In the age of globalisation and of the sometimes violent social, economic, and cultural transformations it entails, contemporary artistic practices, condemned for their supposed meaninglessness or »nullity« by the likes of Jean Baudrillard, are in fact a vital source of imaginary and symbolic representations whose diversity is irreducible to the near total economic domination of the real. The stakes here are no less political than aesthetic - at least if one can avoid reinforcing the mounting spectacularisation and instrumentalisation of »contemporary art« by the culture industry, where art is used for social regulation or indeed control, through the aestheticisation of information or through forms of debate that paralyse any act of judgement in the immediacy of raw seduction or emotion (what might be called »the Benetton effect«). (David and Chevrier, 1997, unpaginated)

In conclusion, from the radical practices of the 1980s to the institutional critique of the 1990s, alternative circuits as processes of *networking* therefore emerged as a novel organisational form,

connecting radical practices without making them organic parts of a coherent political body. The shift from the space of marginality of *arte correo* to the experience of *Fundació Tàpies* showed how these practices had come not only to contest the neoliberal commodification of culture but also to assume the responsibility of reinventing institutions (Raunig, 2010a).

*Documenta X* was the apex of the third wave of institutional critique placing these practices in the centre of the global system of cultural commodification and forging a space of debate and collective work which was capable of producing political and aesthetic initiatives beyond the exhibition itself, in connection with social movements (like the *No One Is Illegal Network*, interview with Exposito). This experience was an important reference for critical artistic movements participating in the wave of institutional critique of the 1990s in Barcelona.

Beyond the recognition of labour and precarity as a fundamental issue in understanding artistic production in neoliberal times, and beyond the assumption of the museum's political role in urban dynamics, *Documenta X* made evident the rigid formats of action that *Fundació Tàpies* itself was reproducing and called institutional critical movements to a radical intervention in the production of new concepts and practices of radical institutions.

At the private viewing [of *La ciutat de la gent*] all these people came and Manolo [Borja] was telling me: «What a disaster! [...] They look like indigenous people jumping around in the Palace of the Catholic Kings [after the *Conquista*]». And he was right. To establish a relationality with these subjects is not to take a photo of them, put it in the Tàpies and wait for them to come and look at them with their families. This is not to produce a counter-image of the city. This is a fetishisation of the hidden city... Good to have done this experiment, but this is not the way. (Marcelo Exposito)

As Borja's quote stresses, the mechanisms of artistic *production* needed to be addressed as modes of production of relations of force, that is as a mode of social governance. In this way, *Documenta X* became the point of rupture in the second wave of the institutional critique, and the point of departure of the experiment of the *Macba* in 1999-2004, analysed in Chapter 6.

### 5.3 The invasion of the un/governed

During the 1980s, radical art critically analysed the material and rhetorical monuments of the new Barcelona: *arte correo* and many other forms of urban art emerged as notes in the margins, unauthorised inscriptions on and against the monumental narrative of the past and the future (cf. Benjamin, 1971) that led to the affirmation of instituent practices to imagine an alternative function of art production and of cultural institutions, like *Fundació Tàpies*, both in relation to

society and to the artist as a producer. The network of autonomous politics (*insumisió/okupa*), on the other hand, survived the corruption of representational politics, reinventing new spaces for militancy and new forms of organisation at the level of experience in order to escape the individualised depression of defeat, and capable of moving towards a collective mobilisation in order to criticise the neoliberal governance of urban space, not through representational politics but through an affirmative production of alternative life-worlds.

Here I investigate another constitutive dimension of the wave of social movements in the 2000s, that recalls both the practice of invasion of radical arts and the emergence of internal outsiders and immanent strangers as protagonists of urban politics. In this sense, I focus here on the invasion of the metropolis by the colonial governed and the role that migration played in composing the political space of contemporary Barcelona. This new subject broke into the inner city, especially the city centre, where different layers and streams of migration had sabotaged the idea of cosmopolitanism since the late 19th Century (Villar, 1997). The Barcelona's modern and cosmopolitan vocation - as an enlightened and uniform articulation of the world in the space of Cerdá's First Metropolis - had collapsed in the affirmation of *convivencia* (the meaning of which oscillates between the coexistence of identities, the cohabitation of population and the living together of differences) as an immanent practice of composition among different streams and layers of migration (Guallar, 2010).

In the inner city, the utopia of an historical linearity from provinciality to cosmopolitanism has been permanently in crisis. A kaleidoscopic composition had emerged instead in the intertwining of different and irreconcilable bodies.

And here there was the Calle Sant Olegario, that is another area of prostitution... I knew all this area, Sant Olegario, Tàpies, actually for the first two or three years of my life I lived in Avignó, where now is the Trip plaza [informal name for George Orwell plaza], [...] until my mother moved to Ronda San Pablo. And then it would depend if I was going to visit my auntie with my mum, my dad or with the both of them. With my mum, we would go through the Calle Hospital, stop in a bakery and she would buy us some *pan dulce*, a roll of bread with some sugar on the top. But with my dad, «oh no, I know a shortcut and this and that». And suddenly we would get into the narrow streets where you could see some whores... Sant Olegario, Santa Maria. Maybe it was a shortcut, but obviously for me it was also another reality. With my mum we would always go in Calle Hospital, while my dad... I suppose this would arouse him and he would be happy to see some bums, or whatever, and [that's why] he would take that way. And I am saying 'I suppose'

because we were all practicing, confessing and communioneing Catholics. . . (Manel Gonzales)

Barcelona had always been a city of immigration from rural Spain with degrees of inequality and segregation with regard to migrants. In this context of marginality, difference among several subaltern identities affirmed composition as the constitutive - although not always peaceful - principle of urban inhabitation (Isin, 2002). As such, analysing this space is a matter of searching for the internal outsides of urban space and the stratification of different layers constituting this space.

The memory of the inner city is in the first place the composition of different cultures, practices and the permanent interplay of conflict and negotiation marked by migration and precarity. In the centre of Barcelona, the past flashed up everyday in the encounter of common experiences of surviving the precarity of urban life and the identitarian clash among counterpoised uses of common spaces. Memories emerged both as bridges between different generations of migrants, between different actors in a complex community, and as trenches in the contraposition of identities and in conflicts for scarce resources (Aramburu, 2008).

In the early 1980s a new layer arrived in the inner city, a post-colonial wave of migration adding complexity and richness to the urban space<sup>3</sup>. I look here at this post-colonial dimension as a *condition* (Mezzadra and Rahola, 2005) and as an *experience*, focusing on how legal statuses, political memories and economic precarity conditioned the experience and the perception of the city for those who were coming from the former colonies.

Intertwined in this post-colonial condition there are two major tensions in the governance of migrants: the first towards a singularization of identity that follows from the segmentation and individualisation embedded in precarity. The second moves towards an abstraction of the migrants as uniform colonial subject in the city; as stranger and outsider. A governed subject, not recognised as active citizen (Sassen, 2006).

Concrete practices of fight and flight corresponded to this apparatus of governance: on the one hand the permanent empowering that emerged from identity and pasts - the singular memories of coloniality and anti-colonial struggles - and, on the other, the practice of translation capable of constructing commonalities among the singular experiences of migration, colonial subjugation and political exclusion. This conflict between governance and social practices in the

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<sup>3</sup>I am using the term 'post-colonial' for different reasons: first in opposition to the profound colonial dimension of the Spanish metropolises. The process of the 1980s on the contrary is the result of European-wide flows that run through the striated but continuous space of Schengen. Second, for the political theoretical configuration of these flows, I am referring to the interconnection between the categories of de-colonial thought - especially in terms of the Latin-American debate - and a specific relevance of the post-colonial debate for understanding these new flows - not only because of the provenience of the flows themselves (South Asian for example), but most of all because of the neoliberal framework of the policies on migration applied in Spain. Finally, the term post-colonial also highlights the 'post-colonial urbanity' that emerges in the inscription of colonial borders on the body of the metropolis.

internal outsides of citizenship have been constitutive elements in the political agencies appearing in Barcelona in the context of the *encierros* (cf. Chapter 6) and the political mobilisations for the right to the city led by migrant communities in the early 2000s.

### 5.3.1 Imperceptible biographies

It was a full moon, Andalusia could be seen lit from the other side. I was walking in short steps and noticed my legs were failing me. While the boat went away, I began thinking about my family, death was stalking me, it smelled salty. I arrived in Barcelona late December 2000. I had spent a year in France, in Montpellier, at my sister Aicha's, who lives there with her husband and children since 1984. I came back [to Barcelona] because I had applied [here] to regularise my status. It had been denied and I came back to appeal. (Yidir Ikabouren in Batlle, 2009, unpaginated)

In the case of Moroccan and Tamazight communities, they typically migrated to Barcelona from the rural communities of the Atlas and from the old cities of Fez and Meekness. The generations of migration involved in Barcelona's social movements of the late 1990s and early 2000s proceeded from the Moroccan struggles of the 1990s - the transport strikes and the student movements which emerged in the crisis of the 1990s as well as the tradition of the Tamazight movements (Silverstein and Crawford, 2004). (See Figure 5.12)

In the movements for transport rights in the lorries drivers movement, I participated [...] I was a driver there, you know? Of a lorry. And there was this new law because of which we could not load over a certain level and something else. But obviously we were demanding that if this law changed, a lot of other laws would have to change as well. It cannot just change this law that is going to kill us. The government has to give us something back, you know? For example fix the prices for transportation, oblige entrepreneurs to give us social security, reform the roads and many other things. We did a list like this, but this was before we started to get organised. Meeting started to happen when we were at the petrol station and we joined and started to talk. (Yidir Ikabouren)

'Why don't we get more organised?' If we were more organised we would have a voice, we could demand what we want, you know? Get something, not everything but something at least. They would know we exist. 'And how can we do that?' 'Look, let's start from the union, we get in a union'. Some of us had this idea. You would find somebody on the road and he would stop and tell you 'hey you, where





Figure 5.12: Flyers of the Moroccan Student's movements in 1997

are you from?' 'I am from Tangier.' 'Well go there in this street. There is a union, join the union and you will see'. (Yidir Ikabouren)

Out of his experience in the transports strike, the political language and the practices of internationalist trotskyism were familiar to Ikabouren. Though partly problematic, such ideas were generally more comprehensible to him than the analyses, practices and aesthetics of the *movimiento okupa*, possibly because of the 'evangelist' style of trotskyist internationalism that worked by integrating differences and articulating them in a common struggle.

The organisation, votes, how to control the votes. It was something I already knew, you know? We go to a meeting to talk about our problems, people speak, and if we need we do another meeting or the same day we can decide, people disagree, we vote, and then we start to organise in committees and people take responsibilities and so on... (Yidir Ikabouren)

Similar dynamics but different networks emerge in the analysis of the Mexican-European experience of Amarela Varela. Coming from the zapatist movement, she encountered in Barcelona the international networks of the autonomous movements that, in the context of the support for Latin American revolutions of the 1980s, had been involved in global solidarity with Chiapas from 1994 onwards. For Varela however, the identification between autonomous movements and the zapatist uprising was problematic. The mirroring between Chiapas and the autonomous movements in Europe allowed the renewal of political practices and the redefinition of the goals of urban social movements in Europe, and also shifted the zapatist movements away from a local approach to the indigenous questions, proposing it as a fractal expression of the global contradictions of neoliberalism (Olesen, 2004). However, the globalisation of struggles posed the danger of flattening differences and complexities between and across contexts. When the rhetoric of brotherhood became a reiterated practice, a social centre in the periphery of a European city could seem the same as the autonomous communities in the middle of the Selva Lacandona. Varela's post-colonial experience, however, posed questions around these similarities. (See Figure 5.13)

I had five different lives, I was a PhD student with a group of posh Latin-American students that were completely different to me. I started to meet with people of the Mexican upper classes that would have been impossible to meet in Mexico City, you know? And then I had an identity as a Mexican among the *okupis* that have been in Mexico and are *super-zapatistas*, and then I had another identity that was my everyday life with the *compis* of the [migrants' rights] movement. And in very visceral terms for me, both the university and the Catalans would not motivate me



Figure 5.13: Hospital *La Guadalupeana*, Oventic, Chiapas and *Casa de La Montaña* social centre, Barcelona

to get involved militantly, because I saw them as *wishy-washy*, *deslactozados*, de-historicised, *light*, mediocre, it was like they didn't stand for anything, you know? I felt it, then obviously the academia is a problem on a global level, isn't it? And among the *okupis*, I was saying - 'These kids are playing at revolution'. This was my feeling, you know? Because I was coming from the *muy heavy* experience of *zapatismo*. (Amarela Varela)

Out of these contradictions Varela found herself in a marginal position, and turned away from militancy in her everyday life. Her re-politicisation – the translation of her Mexican political practice into the Spanish metropolis – was sparked by the encounter with migrants' social movements with whom she could share a specific experience and a common struggle organised by and for the post-colonial agencies in the metropolis.

I went to the buildings of Sant Andreu with my friend Mar to take photos [for a Mexican magazine]. And I met an Ecuadorian, it was my first interview with an economic migrant and we felt absolutely astonished of the difference between his history of migration and ours, we were doing a PhD, we were earning 1000 euros per month, which was a lot, and we had a flat in Eixample because we had not understood how the city works... And he showed us the building of Sant Andreu and there I met the people of *Papeles para todos* [Papers (residency documents) for everybody] and I started to collect histories of lives. And the people of *Papeles para todos* were organising football matches on Sundays, trying to politicise the situation... and when I contacted them back, well, this experience made another history, it made my history to be something else, me to build something new, and I stayed there many years... (Amarela Varela)

### 5.3.2 Memory and community

However migrant struggles were built not only upon the material encounter of singular biographies but also on the accumulation of a set of collective practices in urban space. In other words, imperceptible politics related not just to the unperceived individuals that inhabited the city, but also to the communities that slowly emerged as new agencies in the city.

A significant case is the struggle for the mosques throughout the 1990s and its relevance to the wave of church occupations of the early 2000s - even if this history is profoundly invisible in the narrative of the *encierros* (cf. Chapter 6). Ethnographic research provides a sketch – sometimes unproblematised – of this political history of the Pakistani and Muslim communities in Barcelona, as an expression of 'a collective sociability formulated through religion'

(Moreras Palenzuela, 2005, always my translations). Indeed the Pakistani network appeared as a public and political agent for the first time during the mobilisation for a place to pray. A space of politicisation profoundly distant from the political practices of radical arts, autonomous politics, and antithetical to the secularist practices of the radical left. The social space of the Pakistani community - as analysed by Moreras Palenzuela (2005) and Aubia and Roca (2004) - developed around the mosque and the Islamic centres as places of encounter which were capable of providing access to labour and informal social services.

There are other expressions of sociability that [...], in these religious centres, socially and culturally assume a secular configuration [and], because they are informal, are still unperceived in our social understanding. I usually talk about the groups of a specific nationality that emerge to organise burials and funerals for migrants in their country of origin – or the women’s groups that meet in different homes to pray, and exchange information and services. And this is also part of the social universe of the Pakistani community [in Barcelona]. (Moreras Palenzuela, 2005, 123)

*Tariq ben Zyad Mosque* was the first social space of the Muslim community, located in the former clandestine cell of the *Partido Comunista Español*<sup>4</sup>. Since the 1980s, the incoming flows of migration from North Africa and South Asia reconfigured this community affirming new needs for the Muslim community in Barcelona. In the early 1990s, the composition of the mosque shifted and the Pakistani community gained power in the Muslim community of Barcelona (Aubia and Roca, 2004).

Since 1993, the *Jama-at at Tabligh* movement, supported economically and politically by the *United Kingdom Islamic Mission*, fought for a public space to house the cultural, social and religious activities of the community. Difficult negotiations with the local *Ayuntamiento* took place during the Ramadan of 1996. In this moment, the first occupation of public space took place: the oratorio of the mosque was at the end of a patio, between two old industrial premises, and, during prayers, prayer mats started to occupy the patio and the corridors of the block (Moreras Palenzuela, 2005). However, it would be reductive to consider this process solely as a religious practice. It expressed the first appraisal of a public political space ruled by global migrants in the inner city of Barcelona, or, in other words, the first territorialisation of a transnational process in local politics.

The community representatives bought and restored the two industrial premises next to the patio [they used for praying] doubling the space of the temple. Since then, the

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<sup>4</sup>Used for praying by Moroccan migrants since the 1960s, they participated in the anti-colonial and communist networks and at the same time maintained their Islamic religious identity.

community started a negotiation with Barcelona's *Ayuntamiento* to get the permits, formalise the opening of the prayer hall, and commit to the safety measures defined by local legislation for this kind of public space. (Moreras Palenzuela, 2005, 128)

In 1997, this process of political inhabitation of public space was accelerated by the affirmation of the *Minhaj Ul-Quran Mosque*, a 'contextual and participative traditionalist' (Moreras Palenzuela, 2005) movement<sup>5</sup>. These new mosques constituted a proper public space, where activities ranged from the religious field to broader interventions such as language classes, independent job centres, support networks and legal aid in prisons, and more generally in the building of communitarian networks for Muslim migrants in the Raval and the inner city. This network involved different sectors of the diaspora community - businessmen, social workers and so on – who, in their demand for spaces, developed a line of negotiation with the local *Ayuntamiento* to obtain a new temple for the community. After a provisional concession of a public gymnasium was blocked by protests by the local community, in 2000 the local *Ayuntamiento* withdrew its concessions and the Pakistani community started to occupy the street instead. (See Figure 5.14 and 5.15)

Quite soon, neighbours started to denounce [this behaviour]. The *Guardia Urbana* was obliged to intervene to restrain people from praying – in a short time this conflict became news in the press. (Moreras Palenzuela, 2005, 128)

This is possibly the first political conflict in which the Pakistani community intervenes collectively and publicly in the political life of Barcelona – forcing different institutional actors, from the Catalan government to the local *Ayuntamiento*, to open a conversation with non-citizens, with governed subjects - not represented in any political or administrative institution of the city.

In the end, an alliance emerged between the Muslim Pakistani community and a local church, that allowed the Pakistani community to use its premises for praying and networking among their community. The conflict was resolved by-passing public authorities<sup>6</sup> (see Figure 5.16) and the Raval became

a transformative context in which processes of identitarian reconstruction are taking place . And [the Raval] is not just the container where these processes take place, but it acts as a space, determining the evolution of this process. It emerges as a space

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<sup>5</sup>«A reformist Islam[ic network], implicated in the development of the Muslim tradition and critical of secular ideologies. Particularly dedicated to assistance and education both in Pakistan and in the other countries where it appeared, to the development of schools, universities and hospitals. [...] A *barelvi* inspired movement involving elements of folk-religion, folk-festivals and the cult of spiritual leaders» (Moreras Palenzuela, 2005, 128).

<sup>6</sup>Eventually in May 2004 a space with the required conditions for praying was bought by the community – and is still waiting for the technical approval of the local *Ayuntamiento*.

## el mirador



SALVADOR SANSUÁN

Un grupo de musulmanes aguarda en la puerta de la mezquita de la calle Arc del Teatre en Barcelona

## *Como todos los viernes*

▼ Y an llegando por grupos y también uno a Hay risas. Son las dos y cuarto de la tarde. Los

Figure 5.14: *Every friday, La Vanguardia, 20th of September 2000*

# No habrá rezo musulmán en Sant Jaume

*Prohibida la concentración convocada para reclamar más mezquitas*



**OCASIONES ESPECIALES.** El Ayuntamiento de Barcelona ha permitido la ocupación del espacio público –el parque del Escorxador– en fechas muy señaladas del calendario musulmán, como la fiesta que marca el fin del Ramadán

## El imán de Sabadell pide disculpas

Abdelillah El Arua, imán de la mezquita de Puiggener, de Sabadell, pidió disculpas ayer por sus declaraciones a un diario en las que justificaba el holocausto, después de que la Generalitat remitiera la entrevista a la fiscalía por si constituye delito de apología del racismo. Dalia Levisohn, presidenta de la Comunidad Israelita de Barcelona, quiere conocer bien el texto y, si procede, “interpondremos una querrela; no por represalia, sino por justicia, porque este tipo de declaraciones lastiman al pueblo hebreo”. El presidente de la Generalitat, Jordi Pujol, señaló al respecto que “los inmigrantes tienen también deberes, y nuestra acción con la fiscalía es un recordatorio de que en Cataluña hay cosas que no se pueden hacer ni decir porque no están en nuestro sistema de valores”.

Figure 5.15: The public debate in *La Vanguardia*, September and October, 2000



LAS MEZQUITAS EXISTENTES SON INSUFICIENTES PARA LOS ISLÁMICOS

## Sin sitio para rezar a Alá en Barcelona

BARCELONA. – Las numerosas mezquitas que existen en Cataluña, ubicadas en pequeños y precarios locales, no tienen capacidad suficiente para albergar la oración de todos los fieles musulmanes. Pero la construcción de un gran centro cultural islámico está paralizada por falta de un terreno adecuado y por las disensiones internas de la comunidad islámica. **PÁGINAS 35 Y 36**



SALVADOR SANSUÁN

Un grupo de musulmanes acude a rezar a la mezquita del barrio Gornal de l'Hospitalet

## La Iglesia católica ofrece un local a los musulmanes para rezar a Alá

### CIUDADANOS

■ Los fieles de la mezquita de Arc del Teatre dispondrán, a partir del próximo viernes, de un local parroquial para orar de forma provisional

ISABEL RAMOS RIOJA

BARCELONA. – La Iglesia católica ha facilitado un local a la comunidad musulmana. A partir del próximo viernes, 3 de noviembre, los fieles de la mezquita Camino del Corán, de la calle Arc del Teatre, dispondrán del local parroquial ubicado en el Raval, con capacidad para unas quinientas personas, aforo que ha sido considerado suficiente por los interlocutores musulmanes. Ayer por la tarde se reunieron en Barcelona el secretario para Asuntos Religiosos de la Generalitat, Ignasi García Clavel, la concejal de Derechos Civiles, Roser Veciana, el presidente de la asociación Camino

*La Generalitat y el Ayuntamiento de Barcelona ayudarán a la comunidad musulmana a buscar un local definitivo*

de la Paz, Nawas Keyani, y por parte de la Federación Española de Entidades Religiosas Islámicas (Feeri), Mehdi Flores y Mariam Cabezos. El primer punto del acuerdo se refiere precisamente al uso de un local provisional mientras hallan una "solución satisfactoria" para la comunidad musulmana.

Para evitar el rechazo que la comunidad Camino de la Paz ha percibido en algunos propietarios de locales –ahora tiene alquilada la mezquita de Arc del Teatre–, la Generalitat y el Ayuntamiento se han ofrecido a ayudar en las gestiones de compra. Es el segundo y último punto del acuerdo alcanzado en la re-

unión de ayer, a la que también asistió el secretario para la Inmigración de la Generalitat, Àngel Miret.

Según la Feeri, el plazo que necesitan para comprar y acondicionar otro local para que reúna todas las condiciones para destinarlo a uso público sería de entre ocho y diez semanas. Aunque la comunidad mu-

### INMIGRACIÓN

#### Los africanos de plaza Catalunya

■ El secretario de Estado para Extranjería e Inmigración, Enrique Fernández-Miranda, descargó ayer, antes de un acto organizado por la Fundación Paulino Torras Domènech, la responsabilidad de que las condiciones de vida de los subsaharianos que "malviven" en la plaza Catalunya en el Ayuntamiento y la Generalitat. Según el secretario de Estado, ambas instituciones tienen plenas competencias para afrontar y resolver el problema.

sulmana lleva tiempo buscando un local, han encontrado ciertas dificultades por el hecho de que la finalidad de uso fuera el culto musulmán, según afirmaron sus representantes en la reunión.

"De la misma manera que no tienen derecho a ocupar el espacio público de la ciudad para rezar, tienen derecho a comprar un local, y vamos a ayudarles en los trámites y evitar que se encuentren con problemas de rechazo", declaró a este diario Eduardo Espagnolo, gerente de

Servicios Personales del Ayuntamiento de Barcelona.

Los acuerdos alcanzados en esta reunión hicieron posible que la Federación Española de Entidades Religiosas Islámicas desconvocara ayer la concentración prevista para las dos de la tarde de hoy en plaza Sant Jaume en protesta por la falta de espacios adecuados para el culto musulmán.

La Subdelegación del Gobierno en Barcelona había comunicado a la Feeri la imposibilidad de llevar a cabo la concentración –y el rezo de la oración más importante de la semana musulmana– por coincidir con la visita del presidente argentino, Fernando de la Rúa, al palacio de la Generalitat.

Los musulmanes que de todas formas se acerquen hoy a la plaza Sant Jaume por no haberse enterado de que se ha desconvocado la concentración se encontrarán con un retén de personas que les explicará los acuerdos alcanzados ayer y que des-

*La Federación Española de Entidades Religiosas Islámicas desconvoca la concentración de hoy en la plaza Sant Jaume*

embocaron en la anulación del rezo en la calle. A pesar de todo, no se descarta que los fieles sean desviados a alguna plaza cercana, como habían propuesto algunos miembros de la Feeri. En la Subdelegación del Gobierno no se había recibido, a última hora de ayer, la notificación de una propuesta alternativa para celebrar la reunión.

La sugerencia de realizar la convocatoria en el paseo Lluís Companys, ofrecida por la Subdelegación del Gobierno, no fue aceptada en ningún momento por la Feeri por considerar que se encontraba lejos de la plaza Sant Jaume. ●



SALVADOR SANSUÁN

El viernes es cuando el imán pronuncia su sermón semanal

### Mataró fue pionera

■ "Cuando tuvieron confianza nos dijeron que nunca habrían pedido ayuda en una parroquia porque tenían miedo de que quisiéramos convertirlos al cristianismo. Los marroquíes eran todavía más reticentes que los del África subsahariana, pero acabaron viniendo todos." Ignasi Marqués, actual secretario de pastoral de gitanos del arzobispado de Barcelona, así recuerda los años ochenta y su entonces parroquia: la de Sant Simó i Sant Pau, en Mataró. El primer local en el que los musulmanes de los barrios de La Habana y El Palau de Mataró realizaron sus oraciones fue un salón parroquial cedido por Marqués. Era la época en la que la comunidad musulmana aumentaba a un ritmo mayor que sus estructuras. Cuando llegaba el mes de ramadán, los imanes llegados de París se alojaban en la ermita de Sant Simó, en cuya explanada, al aire libre, rezaban. También pedían los locales de Sant Pau para celebrar el nacimiento de un hijo o la muerte de un amigo, como la de Lamin, en 1993. "Éramos conscientes de que malvivían y nos acercamos a ellos para conocer sus necesidades y recoger sus peticiones", comenta Marqués.

Figure 5.16: The church granted spaces for the Muslim to pray, *La Vanguardia*, October, 2000

of diaspora, in which migrant and local identities express, confront and complement each other. (Moreras Palenzuela, 2005, 131)

This reconfiguration of the cultural and social composition of the city centre - a process which included around ten thousand incoming people from South Asia in less than a decade - intertwined with the process of urban regeneration of the late 1980s and early 1990s. In this framework, the demand for a mosque and Islamic centre in the new urban plan for the inner city can be read as a demand by the Islamic community to be recognised as a social agent in the reconfiguration of the city, affirming the right to the city as spatial configuration of political and social rights.

Migration and struggles configured urban space as a translational (not just transnational) space constituted in the post-colonial experience of the city. A space dense in memories, trenches and bridges and composed in the translation of different fragments in a specific – conflictive and problematic – space.

It was a surprise for me, maybe more than zapatismo or other militancies and political life. To meet with African people that would know Subcomandante Marcos, his discourses, that would know who Che Guevara was, my historical references, Emiliano Zapata, Flores Magón... And I didn't know anything about them, you know? And this was like meeting with otherness, something that you didn't know at all; obviously I knew Africans existed, but I didn't have any knowledge of their particular history, and what trapped me in the *Asamblea por la Regularización* was the connection among these personal stories of the people there, their militancies before, and this is when also I started to talk after a few years about my experience in zapatismo, and them to talk about their experiences in the student movements, or in the Tamazight movements, and I stayed with them, nothing was planned beforehand. It was a nice surprise for everybody. (Amarela Varela)

I met the people, there was this idea of the *encierro*, the movement for regularisation still did not exist. I was on a queue in the *Gobierno Civil* [Home Office] and there was this guy leafletting in different languages about a meeting on a certain day [...] For me, for my cousin and other people it was reading and saying: we go there until the end. It was a surprise, a good surprise! We had no future you know? We were there, walking in the street, what happens if police stop you. And we were so fed up that we would not give a fuck about the police anymore. And so on the 18th we were the first to arrive in Plaza Catalunya [where the first assembly leading to the *encierros* of 2001 happened]. And we sat down, we talked, we listened... (Yidir Ikabouren)

The connection did not depend on the ideological articulation or on the coherence of the narrative, but on the consistency of struggles, experiences. In other words, an alliance among material conditions of existence. This condition - of being addressed and governed as post-colonial subjects - constituted the starting point for the construction of a new autonomous and political space. It is possible to recognise here the emergence of a new social body - the un/governed - in urban space. Imperceptible politics, as radical forms of political engagement happening outside representational politics, constituted a first political space of enunciations for this subject looking for inclusion and rights. The impossibility of such an inclusion - for example in the claiming of cultural and spiritual rights - constituted the positionality of the un/governed provoking invasion as new political practices against both the governance of the city and the culture of urban (and European) social movements.

This was a political space capable of transforming the practices and the enunciations of social movements in Barcelona, introducing new legacies and heritages in a territory accustomed to the stratification and hybridisation of migrating memories. Beyond the elements of continuity among the different experiences in the colonies, the peripheries and generally the internal outsides, there are elements - of commonality this time - that participated in constituting the continuous experience for migrants: first, migration itself as reinvention of political practices in the transition from the colony to the metropolis and in the translation of the margin into the centre. Furthermore, in the process of migration, the city came to be a transcription of the governing principles of the colonies on the social and spatial body of the metropolis. Conditions and experiences are the concrete ground for expressive politics as a challenge to transform urban space as a way of transforming life and being capable of accessing the *oeuvre* as a common use-value. The right to the city appears here against the permanent subaltern condition of the un/governed.

### **From experience to experiment**

After the annihilation of the political spaces of the late 1970s and the recapturing of social life in the functioning of neoliberal citizenship, the space of radical politics was atomised and individualised. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, a new process of commonality from the margins and singularization was built. Starting from an ethical and individual interpellation, social movements moved from imperceptible to outside-politics, constituting a practice of social movements that refused representation as form of organisation and instituting the possibility of a non-organic but machinic movement (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987).

This escape was triggered by personal experiences and constituted a collective political space where experiential politics contested the corruption of representative politics. The affirmation of

urban life as political battleground, the emergence of institutionality as experimental territory for reinventing the relationship between society and institutions, and the invasion of urban politics by new political actors have been the crucial elements for a political invention capable of opening up cracks within neoliberal citizenship and of affirming the right to the city as a complex theoretical and practical space of struggle. From the micro-politics of the body to the micro-politics of the metropolis, radical urban politics engaged with the metamorphoses of the city, affirming the politics of the everyday as politics of antagonism, where life as experience emerged as the foreground for the concrete production of spaces for alternative political enunciations.

In the field of radical art, the shift was from the escape from commodification as singular line of flight to the constitution of network as collective practice capable of producing institutional critique. Institutional experiments emerged as practical engagements with the institutional problem not only as an ideological question, but as a material challenge for the invention of new worlds.

In relation to the migrant experience of the city, a new social body emerged in Barcelona constituting its own language and practices and moving from the imperceptible acting of the denied citizen to the affirmative and loud expression of the immanent stranger. From imperceptible acting to the invasion of the public, an immanent unrecognised social body - already participating in the production of the city - broke into the politics of urban space affirming the emerging experiential politics as a concrete intervention to change the conditions and the experience of urban life. A new political and social acting emerged from these streams, unveiling the illusion at stake in the rigid conception of Fordist citizenship. The emerging neoliberal governmentality exploded, making visible the permanent crisis of modernity - both in the relationship between civil society and institutions, and in the relationship between civil society and political society.

This double explosion is the focus of the next chapter, where I analyse two emblematic cases: the experiment of the *Museum of Contemporary Art of Barcelona (Macba)* where a part of the *movimiento okupa* and the cultural institutional critique converged, and the *encierros*, the occupations of churches for migrants rights, where radical social movements and the unrecognised inhabitants of the city encountered each other for the first time.

## Chapter 6

# Acting in the crisis of citizenship

### 6.1 The double crisis of citizenship

In this chapter I analyse the practices that exploded the configuration of citizenship in Barcelona in the early 2000s.

As argued earlier, neoliberalism has re-articulated citizenship as a dispositif to guarantee private interests, managing social life and public space through the instruments of the market and mechanisms of governance. This neoliberal citizenship however should not be considered as the crisis of modern citizenship, but as its most radical affirmation as a dispositif to legitimate power, fragment populations and govern production (cf. Chapter 2). This is why I do not refer to the crisis *of* modern citizenship, but rather to modern neoliberal citizenship *as* crisis in itself.

I analyse here two dimensions of the explosion of modern citizenship in urban politics. Starting from the citizen, understood as the object represented in civil society, I analyse the two sides of a critical understanding of citizenship created within Barcelona's social movements during the 2000s. This includes, on the one hand, a set of practices of critique capable of reinventing public space and establishing experimental modes of relation between society and institutions. On the other hand, those acts from outside citizenship capable of sabotaging the social contract and inventing new limits for the right to the city.

First I address the crisis of citizenship in the relation between civil society and modern institutions in the experiment of the *Macba* (1999-2003), where the function of the museum in urban politics was challenged and a new conception of *public* was affirmed. In my second case-study, the same elements (public space and public agencies) constitute the foundation of another side of the crisis, in the relationship between civil and political society (cf. Chapter 2). I focus here on a series of lock-ins in churches, *encierros*, led by migrants demanding residence

documents (2001), looking at the acts of appropriation of space and voice from the outsides of citizenship.

These two experiments marked a crucial shift in the performative imagination and prefigurative realisation of the right to the city. These forms of organisation determined a material configuration of the political debate around the production of collective acts and enunciations: words and deeds which are capable of creating new worlds within urban life. These experiments, from being practices of collective engagement with the experience of marginality, move to another dimension becoming collective attempts to bring into being (institute) a new world: instituent practices.

## 6.2 *Macba*

I look here at the encounter between the streams of radical politics proceeding from the *insumisión* and *okupa* movements, and from the radical artistic practices of the 1980s and the institutional critique of the 1990s (*Fundació Tàpies*) in the space of the *Museum of Contemporary Art of Barcelona (Macba)*. In the experience of the *Macba*, the politicisation of experience of autonomous movements and the critique to institutions of radical artistic milieus composed an active critique, inserted in the context of the post-Fordist, neoliberal and post-colonial organisation of urban production.

In 1998, Manuel Borja Vilel was appointed as the director of an emerging institution, *Macba*. Borja's directorship of the *Macba* coincided with a period of change within the museum, consisting primarily of an increasingly politicised and experimental approach which challenged more traditional conceptions of the function of a museum. This new direction was particularly evident in the way in which exhibitions were organised and framed and, in particular, in the *Department of Public Programming (DPP)*. Moreover, these issues take on a specific significance when we consider the important role that cultural institutions have played in the gentrification of the Raval area (where the *Macba* itself is located). Below I elaborate on these issues in order to analyse how the experiment of the *Macba* transformed the the role of the institution in relation to society, focusing on the reconfiguration of the public and production in the museum.

The arrival of Borja marked an important shift in the management of the museum and the *Macba* became a space for the concrete configuration of a new institutionality (Balibrea, 2001, Ribalta, 2004). Situated between the international debate around institutional critique and the emergence of urban social movements for an alternative globalisation, the space of the museum became a place for political experimentation. The institutional critique developed in the *Macba* permitted the reconfiguration of the political struggle against gentrification, in opposition to the

implementation of a neoliberal politics in the city. The museum became a space for inventing political territories and inhabiting public space as a concrete act of citizenship.

In order to analyse this process of institutional invention, I focus on the concrete composition of this experiment looking at two different initiatives. First, the cycle of seminars and workshops to discuss the connection between arts and politics called *Direct action as one of the fine arts* (2000)(6.2.2), and second at the space of *Las Agencias* (2001)(6.2.3) where a radical political territory emerged in the core of the cultural institution. Finally I will analyse the limits and consequences of these experiments, not looking at successes or failures but at how they contributed to the emergence of a new way of doing politics in urban space in the 2000s (*Desacuerdos*)(6.2.4). These projects posed two crucial questions.

First, what is the relationship between a cultural institution and its publics, given the crisis of the modern relationship between museum, art and audience? Second, the invention of political machines: how to think politics and arts as modes of production of subjectivities? What are the assemblages of bodies, identities, memories and practices that can allow the constitution of a radical cultural institution?

In this experiment, the mediated relationship between civil society and institutions (the modern museum) (cf. Chapter 2) - was questioned. The museum renounced its traditional Enlightenment position - as a rational source for representing society - and moved towards a new configuration affirming itself as an institutive space: an immanent actor participating in the social production of urban space.

Today, the museum is a place that generates new forms of sociability. If, rather than a place of control and exclusion, we want it to be a democratic space, its laws must be shared by everyone who visits them. Hence the imperious need to move from a modern archaeology of knowledge to a postmodern praxis - that is, to gain an understanding of the comprehensive scope of the museum as a discursive phenomenon in its own right, its place in today's society and the resistance models it can offer. (Borja-Villel, 2006, 23)

### 6.2.1 A museum in the middle of gentrification

The museum in Barcelona is located in the Raval, a complex neighbourhood in the historical centre of the city, which is currently a site of struggle between two opposing forces. The first is the force towards gentrification. Since the mid-eighties the local power has promoted a social transformation of the neighbourhood, historically constituted by a working class and sub-proletarian population. In this context art and cultural institutions (like universities, theatres, art centres, *Macba* itself...)

have played a crucial role in this social transformation. In the last few years it is clear that some parts of the historical centre of Raval have been conquered for the new urban middle classes (we have seen an increasing number of new fashion stores, restaurants, bars and clubs). [...]. But the struggle continues, since the neighbourhood is also the most culturally complex in Barcelona and the arrival of new immigrants has enormously increased in the last few years. This is the second force in this struggle. Raval has a large Pakistani community, and there's also an important North African community [...] These communities, mostly constituted by poor and undocumented people, are evincing a very strong capacity for growing up and re-conquering areas of the neighbourhood. (Ribalta, 2004, unpaginated)

In the conflict between the neoliberal governmentality of urban space and the emergence of new acts of citizenship, Ribalta situates the museum as a political actor in this specific context (Bonet i Martí, 2011, Subirats et al., 2008). According to Ribalta, thinking the cultural function of the museum outside of its spatial, economic and political role in the city would have been impossible. (see Figure 6.1)



Figure 6.1: The *Museum of Contemporary Arts of Barcelona*, Raval

Urban strategies promoted by the local power in Raval are clearly designed for enforcing the security and cleanness of the area for new middle classes and tourism.



Which of these two forces will win the battle and condition the future development is unclear, although what is most predictable is that capital and urban engineering will win the battle. Unless the economic model of Barcelona, oriented towards tourism, becomes inefficient. (Ribalta, 2004, unpaginated)

Within Borja's critical approach, the museum, as a public cultural institution, has a duty to participate in constituting and defending the right of inhabiting, using and appropriating the city. At the same time, this specific function of the museum was embedded in a general process of urban transformation: the precarisation of labour and the neoliberalisation of urban politics that affected the life of the *Macba* itself (interviews with Jorge Ribalta and Marcelo Exposito).

The problem was not only the political role of the museum in neighbourhood level processes of re-valorisation, but also the function of the institution (and of culture itself) in the reconfiguration of social relationships in the neighbourhood and in the city.

*Macba* is in the middle of a confluence of economic and political interests which shape the current transformation of western cities towards the third [service] sector (in which tourism is a major economic target). The new urban economies in post-Fordist capitalism give a centrality to culture. Many theorists have described this process, from Fredric Jameson in the early eighties to David Harvey or Negri and Hardt more recently, just to mention a few among many others. 'Cognitive capitalism' is what we call this fact that post-Fordism (which is based on immaterial, communicative and affective forms of labor) puts subjectivity to work, as Paolo Virno has analysed in a most paradigmatic way. (Ribalta, 2006, 242)

In this context, museums needed to rethink how society is presented, challenging the Enlightenment homogenous representation of Arts and affirming 'one or more alternative narrative(s)' to modern history. For Borja, museums must produce «new forms of intermediation» between cultural and artistic practice and society, considering «the spectator not as a passive subject or a consumer, but as an agent, a political subject» (Borja-Villel, 2006, 15). In response to these critical discussions, the *Macba* was restructured around two different and independent bodies. On the one hand, a critical approach to the formats of exhibitions was introduced, while, on the other, the *DPP* of the museum opened a space of discussion and public activities (*DPP*).

In the *Macba* for the first time, the public activities have the same importance as the exhibitions, and this allows us to think the relation between the museum and its publics in a totally different way: imagine not only debates, or video projections but also public interventions in the city as part of the public activities of the museum. (Victoria Sacco)

From 2000 to 2002, the *DPP* of the *Macba* became a space for experimenting with new forms of political life in the institution, assembling agencies, dispositifs, categories, practices and institutions, and constituting new fields of political action through a pedagogic construction of alliances. The museum sought to allow such assemblages to be productive for social change and to intervene, beyond the museum, in the politics of the city.

For Ribalta, at stake was the possibility of translating in the contemporary context the Benjaminian debate around the relationship between author and reader (Benjamin, 1971). Transforming the mechanisms of mediation and connection would permit the transformation of the political configuration and the overcoming of the subalternity instituted by the museum with regard to the reader/public and their relationship to the author/institution.

Public is a concept in which several meanings coexist simultaneously and which are defined self-reflectively. The concept of public has to do with that which is common, with the state, with shared interest, that which is accessible. There is a historic mobility in the public-private opposition that lies precisely in the mobility of publics and their forms of self-organisation. The public has a twofold meaning of social totality and specific audience. (Ribalta, 2006, 229)

The *DPP* opened up a space of experimentation which sought to avoid both infantilising the general public, and considering it as a consumer. The conception produced in the exhibitions and seminars of the *Macba* radically contrasted these abstracted and subjected conceptions of public.

The public forms itself in open and unpredictable ways, in the very process of construction of discourses, by circulation. Consequently, the public is not someone there to be reached, who are there passively awaiting cultural merchandise; the public is formed by the actual discursive process and by the act of being convened. [...] The public acquires the active role of producer with the potential for organisation and other forms of sociability. (Ribalta, 2004, unpaginated)

In this conceptual framework, public institutions and artistic practices engaged with a heterogeneity of publics, and the public sphere emerged as an experiential space: a non-linear and conflictive territory in which institutions intervene as political actors.

For Deutsche (1996), an important point of reference for the *Macba*, the public space of the museum was experiencing a crisis as part of a more general crisis of democracy. Public institutions, she argued, needed to challenge their own *agoraphobia*, and inhabit public space as a space in which social transformation takes place. The possibility of transforming how the public sphere *functions* involved an understanding of public space as a political and contested

space - socially produced. It was therefore necessary to challenge the conception for which «the task of democracy is to settle, rather than sustain, conflict. (Deutsche, 1996, 270).

In the production of public art at the *Macba*, antagonism emerged as a constitutive force for transforming the public sphere and reaffirming democracy.

Antagonism affirms and simultaneously prevents the closure of society revealing the partiality and precariousness – the contingency – of every totality. Antagonism is the experience of the limit of the social. The impossibility of society is not an invitation to political despair but the starting point – or *groundless ground* – of a properly democratic politics. (Deutsche, 1996, 284)

### 6.2.2 *Direct Action as one of the fine arts*

The above describes the technical and political context in which the first set of seminars and workshops was organised. *Direct Action as one of the fine arts (DAFA)* (1999) developed on the experiment of *Documenta X* (1997) and constituted the first encounter, collision and hybridisation between social movements and radical artistic critique in the Spanish state. The idea of generating a series of encounters on direct action emerged after the encounter of militants, artists and curators in the exhibition *Non Places Urban Realms* at the South London Gallery August 1999, and the J18 mobilisations in London City organised by *Reclaim the Streets* (Jordan, 1998). (see Figure 6.2)

In particular, during this exhibition, people coming from artistic and curator milieus - like Marcelo Exposito, Brian Holmes and Jesus Carrillo - met with the collective *La fiambreira Obrera* (see Figure 6.3)<sup>1</sup> and the newly formed *DPP*.

We proposed a project involving workshops in which recognised political art groups involved in concrete conflicts (*Reclaim the Streets*, in London; *Ne Pas Plier*, part of the Paris unemployed movement; *Kein Mensch Ist Illegal* and migrants in Germany, *Rtmark* in US, *A.f.r.i.k.a. Gruppe* in Germany...) could be brought together with ‘corresponding’ social movements in Barcelona... The attempt was to deactivate the trick through which artists come into the museum from far away to talk about what they do, so that the museum can produce a positive image for itself without this implying any change at all for the people here. (La Fiambreira Obrera, 2000)

In the context of the artistic and academic debates opened up by *The fine art of gentrification* (Deutsche and Ryan, 1984), this cycle of events aimed to analyse the function of art in the urban

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<sup>1</sup>A group of performative art and collaborative practices committed to social movements.



Figure 6.2: Advertisement on strike, *Reclaim the Streets*, 1998



Figure 6.3: Monument on strike, by *La fiambreira obrera*

and economic development of the city. For this purpose, in *DAFA* political and artistic practices acted as autonomous forces in the becoming of an encounter. The process of gentrification and urban development was the starting point for thinking about the new role of the museum in urban space. The space of the museum was populated with local and transnational social agents criticising the process of enclosure and accumulation embedded in regeneration. (See Figure 6.4)

In the title, however, *direct action* substituted *gentrification*. Artistic networks and urban social movements were not longer considered as simply passive actors in the process of capitalistic expropriation, but as political agencies capable of contesting this process, organising social mobilisation and constituting alternative practices of appropriation and inhabitation in (public) space. The aim was to claim a leading role for the radical art, and to think networks of institutional critique as spaces for imagining fine art as affirmative political practices.

Since any site has the potential to be transformed into a public or for that matter private space, public art can be viewed as an instrument that either helps produce a public space or questions a dominated space that has been officially ordained as public. The function of public art becomes, as Vito Acconci put it 'to make or break a public space'. (*A.f.r.i.k.a. Gruppe* in Blanco et al., 2001, 444)

The fact that the *Macba* was in a decidedly ambiguous position - as sites for progressive and active democracy, but also embedded in the neoliberal appropriation and governance of urban life - threw up an important question: how to avoid *gallery leftism* (Kuspit in Blanco et al., 2001, 328)? How to escape the enclosure of artistic practices in the formalist and 'artistic' flight of radical critique, and question the cultural system itself as a mode of production? Seeking to avoid this dead end, the space of *DAFA* is not structured around the delimitation of artistic practices. The groups participating in the *DAFA* are not interested in a formalistic approach to each group but to discuss, structure and innovate their ability of intervening in a public space breaking apart the linear representation of formal democracy (La Fiambrera Obrera, 2000, Claramonte et al., 2011).

The connection between art and politics needed to be operative and allow the groups involved to share analysis for building alliances. The museum must be a network, not a showroom. The practice of *A.f.r.i.k.a. Gruppe* constituted one of the manifestos for this cycle of events.

'Is this political art? Is this a 'new kind' of public art? Is it just traditional political activism that is exploiting art as a camouflage?' Karin, from group 01, [...] is not interested in definitions, although it is clear to her that *Horror vacui* is not about legitimising Art (with a capital A). The group is much more interested in distributing the biggest amount of leaflets about the privatisation of public spaces:

**MACBA** Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona

**TALLER DEL 23 AL 27 DE OCTUBRE DE 2000**

En los últimos diez años en muchos países hemos asistido a la proliferación de grupos, más que artistas individuales, que han experimentado críticamente toda la herencia del arte: colaborativo, político y judicial, incorporando conceptos como acción directa, intervención o manifiesto para atender a sus peticiones. No obstante, no se han situado en esta "tradición" sin marcar algunas distancias. Unas veces, por ejemplo, respecto al papel decisivo central de la experimentalidad, de la referencial. Ya no se trata de "hablar de" tal o cual conflicto, sino de ser parte de él. Ya no basta con hablar de "identidades" y llevarlas al museo los domingos, se trata de proponer nuevas formas de acción y de hacerlas visibles. Los políticos para estos grupos ya no es un adversario que acudir a la aldea, ni un guía para enseñarles. Tampoco se percibe el arte como un modo de escapar.

Este taller se abrió un lugar de intercambio y de acción, que sirva de espacio de trabajo. Para, fundamentalmente, se constituirán grupos de trabajo que desarrollarán proyectos y campañas a modo piloto. De esta manera, esperamos que todas las diásporas y presentaciones tengan una relación inmediata con la construcción de los proyectos.

**José Claramonte** (Fundación Obrera), coordinador del taller

**PROGRAMA**

**Lunes 23:** Bodegas globales de acción directa  
 Susa Brizuela, Leona Brown y A.T.A.A. a grups: Jani Jantán, de Mariani the Green, y Operación Tumbón.

**Martes 24:** Expediciones  
 Mónica T. Krieger, Patricia Rivera, Jesús Carrillo, Fundadora Obrera y la Colla de Dubtes del Cost Artís.

**Miércoles 25:** Promesas  
 Florian Schöckler, Alon Kishi y Rica Ammonswort, de la campaña Run Menus: el Negari (Nada es gratis), y Papers per Tòrron.

**Jueves 26:** Sembrando  
 Bernd Poin Clavel y Brian Holmes, de No Fox Piles, Cooperativa Negar y Asociación por la Pinta Básica.

**Viernes 27:** Hoy es todo - nuevas impresiones  
 Raymond Thomas y Pásk Cuernik, de Román, Iván Ríos y Bertel Wulz. Maestros del Independent Media Center de Londres, y la campaña del grupo del Movimiento de Inocencia Social.

Todas las sesiones tendrán lugar a las 20:00 h.

**Precio de la matrícula:** 12.000 pes., estudiantes y personas 30.000 pes., Bebras del MACBA 3.000 pes.

**Preinscripción:** una vez de inscripción al 4 de octubre.

**inscripción:** del 5 al 22 de octubre. Horario de inscripción: 17:00-19:00h.

**Información:** 93 432 08 10 (ext. 3471)  
 e: [info@macba.cat](mailto:info@macba.cat), [www.macba.cat](http://www.macba.cat)

**Auditorio:** MACBA, Plaça dels Àngels, 1, 08003 Barcelona  
 Métros: Estación de Sants

Figure 6.4: Direct Action as one of the Fine Arts (Desacuerdos, 2005)

‘people feel attracted by images’. Obviously they empathise that the action is not separable by an artistic consideration in the way of doing things: a care for images, histories, [...]. The agility to let the associations of ideas to circulate and be careful in concluding the work and make the action believable: ‘Whoever has worked with art, knows something: you need an image or a story’. (*A.f.r.i.k.a. Gruppe* in Blanco et al., 2001, 450)

During the cycle, the transversal approach to these topics made it possible to intertwine groups. The space of the museum was reinvented, and the public institution became a social laboratory in which to assemble different agents and produce alternative narratives of social contradictions, forging a public space for discussion and organisation and not just for representation.

Some of us spent the summer speaking with the different participants, explaining here and there the project, so that in October we had connected all the visiting groups [...]: the people from *Reclaim the streets* would be linked with some people from Barcelona who wanted to mount *Indymedia, No One Is illegal* would work with the network involved in the *encierros, Ne pas plier* with unemployed workers in the [neighbourhood of] Besos... this meant changing the dynamic of the workshop.<sup>2</sup>(interview of Claramonte et al., 2011)

Though questioning a *plain approach* of public space, the *Dafa* did not necessarily deal with the problems emerging from inhabiting a new public space. Indeed many of those partnerships that the *Dafa* aimed to constitute did not work out. When I contrasted the affirmation by Claramonte with other interviewees it transpired that just a few people in the *encierros* could remember the visit of *Kein mensch ist illegal* and the collaboration didn't last. The same thing happened between *Ne pas pliers* and the unemployed in Besos. *Dafa* was not capable of escaping the intrinsic discursive dimension of seminars. The workshops did not mark concrete transformations in the functioning of the museum and they did not produce public actions. Nevertheless two elements of innovation did emerge.

First the discursive space of the *Dafa* questioned the *binarism* of cultural production, introducing groups and practices as part of the symbolism and materiality of public art. «The political

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<sup>2</sup>In 1996 *Ne pas pliers* emerged as part of the *APEIS* network, an autonomous organisation of unemployed and precarious workers, *Ne pas pliers* was the communication group of this network, intervening in the streets with panels to appropriate public space and open a public debate about precarity. Through the instalment of devices for exhibition and discussion, *Ne pas pliers* intervened in the core of French republicanism in their banner showing two blazing heads in dialogue (one named Urgent and the other Unemployment) questioning/discussing the principles of freedom, equality and fraternity. *Reclaim the streets* emerged in the early 1990s in the UK and addressed the symbolism of public space to launch a critique of traditional forms of organisation and for the appropriation of public space as an act of the appropriation of politics. *No One Is Illegal* finally was a network formed in *Documenta X* to organise struggles on a European level against the regime of governance of migration imposed by the Schengen agreement.



public sphere is not only a space for discourse, but also *it is discursively constructed*» (Deutsche in Blanco et al., 2001, 311). In *DAFA*, the aim was to break apart the *binarism* of analysis, linked to a division between inside and outside the institution, between theories and practices.

What we have to do is to go beyond division and exclusion - not by words or voluntarism, but by constituting an articulated political action which is capable of drawings links between different wills, different emancipatory practices that never aim to reproduce consensus or social pacification, but contribute to articulate conflict and antagonism – even inside social movements themselves. (Exposito in Blanco et al., 2001, 224)

Second, in this discursive space specific attention was dedicated to the experience of the workshop as everyday life. The possibility of transforming the dynamic of the workshops was determined by the production of an autonomous space (*El cuartelillo*) where people could meet and share not only the spaces of exhibition or political production but everyday life. This allowed strengthened and vitalised networks among people, affections, and alliances.

Everyday we had a communal lunch in the *Quatro pasos*, for everybody coming from outside and whoever could fit in the venue. Obviously somebody would slip in and jump the queue, and somebody else never reached the tables. But this happens in the best families, at least this is what I have read. (interview of Claramonte et al., 2011)

Scratching the surface of the Event, beyond the failure in producing connections between artistic and local groups in the space of Barcelona itself, this specific moment contributed to the reinforcement of a European network among these groups and fed into the global movement that contested the World Trade Organisation, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the G8 in Seattle, Prague, in Nice, Barcelona and Genoa from 1999-2001 (see Figure 6.5). *DAFA* was just a moment in a longer process. While it took place after London J18 and just before Seattle N30 1999, it was not the trigger or source of any particular movement. Rather than an event that produced irremediable consequences, it was the litmus test to interpret the connection between artistic critique and the emergence of a new wave of social movements at a global level.

I was a journalist – well, I am still a journalist – I was working for TV2 [...] I wanted to do documentaries, and in September 2000 I proposed with another girl a documentary on Prague, since in that period Barcelona was very effervescent [...]. We did our report, and when we came back from Prague, this was my way into the

movement [. . .]. And all this was very experiential for me, because the people I was following in the report were really moving, although I was external, I was coming from *media*. And when we came back to Barcelona is when the *DAFA* started.  
(Nuria Vila)

In this singular experience it is possible to recognise the shift in the understanding of publics produced by *DAFA*. For the collectives inhabiting the *Macba* during the workshops, Vila is an interlocutor not in the classical terms of the public - for which the media are the megaphones of a predefined representation - but participates in the common production of a space of discussion, shifting from the *publication* of discourses, documents and projects, to *communication* as practice, where the productive engagement produces spaces.

Given the limitations of the *DAFA*, the emerging problem was not only how to open up public space, but how to populate it, equip it and make it a site of inhabitation and production. The question of production, in this sense, was addressed in the project of *Las Agencias*.

### 6.2.3 *Las Agencias*

As previously explained, in the new configuration of social production, society produces the city as a collective *oeuvre*. The museum participates in this process. The role of the museum is no longer to be the source of a discursive performance, or connection between artists, but to be the site of production of new political and radical machinic assemblages: a factory of practices capable of reinventing urban life and not a theatre of commodities to be sold in the market of lifestyles. The public becomes a common space between the institution and society where the museum intervenes to provide a set of technical and political tools, places, contents and connections for the production of culture.

This was the starting point of *Las Agencias* as a political laboratory in 2001 and 2002. Emerging as an idea in Prague (September 2000) during the demonstrations against the IMF and the WB and when the forthcoming summit of these institutions in Barcelona in June 2000 was announced, the attempt was to «giv[e] publics power and autonomy, [keeping] with the idea of plurality of productive forms of appropriation of the museum» (Ribalta, 2006, 234). *Las Agencias* emerged as a collection of «micro-institutions, [...] to create a molecular organisation of the museum with the aim of multiplying public spaces and processes of self-training by the various collectives involved in these agencies.» (Ribalta, 2004, unpaginated) A social body to mediate 'between the museum and the city' (Borja-Villel, 2006), or in my terms, between the institution and society. According to Exposito, a definition of *Las Agencias* can be composed by juxtaposing this definition by Borja together with Deleuze and Guattari's *assemblage* (*agence-*

ment in French, *agenciamiento* in Spanish, 1987), the latter serving as a point of reference for the activists participating in the project (Claramonte, Marcelo Exposito and more people).

*Las Agencias* were organised as a set of parallel machines working together. The first set was a graphic agency: a photography workshop producing agitation material for counter-summits (as in the case of *Dinero Gratis* - Money for Free - during the World Bank summit in 2001, see Figure 6.6). Second, the magazine *Està Tot Fatal*, a communication and opinion-making instrument for the counter-summit, and a media centre, instrumental in the development of *Indymedia Barcelona* (Ribalta, 2004, unpaginated) as a node in the network of independent media groups on a global scale. Third, a laboratory for intervention in public space: «inspired by the designs of *Ne Pas Plier* and Krzysztof Wodiczko, it developed projects such as *Prêt à révolter*, fashion for safety and visibility during demonstrations in the street, and *Art Mani*, a kind of photo-shield for protection against police baton charges designed to act as a photomontage in the illustrated pages of newspapers when photographed by reporters» (Ribalta, 2004, unpaginated) (see Figure 6.7 and 6.8). Fourth, a *Show Bus*, a double-decker bus with a sound system and video projection screens, used as ‘a mobile exhibition space’ during demonstrations. Finally an agency for the *production of everyday life* and social space managed the bar of the *Macba*, «which became a relational space, a place to eat and drink, but also a social space for events with groups, video programming and Internet access» (Ribalta, 2004, unpaginated).

There were people that were paid to stay there all the time and they were in charge of coordinating an area – one girl working on the dress code for demonstration [*Prêt à révolter*] another on this or that. The rest were voluntary workers. . . . But it was like this in those years, there was that same feeling of counter-summit, very open spaces where people were going in and out all the time – people stay two days, do something. (Nuria Vila)

In the production of the political event, different assemblages converged into a continuing mode of organisation. Discourses, images, spaces, objects and networks were part of a collective and autonomous assembly line that produced forms of inhabitation of public space and *memes* of enunciation for a critical circulation of meaning.

The attempt was to move the museum from being a cathedral for the exhibition of art pieces to being an instituent space for experimenting with alternative modes of production, dealing, in particular, with the factors of production in post-Fordist society (cf. Deutsche, 1996). Spaces, enunciations, symbols, social relations. The agencies were not working by themselves but always in connection with others, as well as with other groups and political spaces in the city, and beyond it.

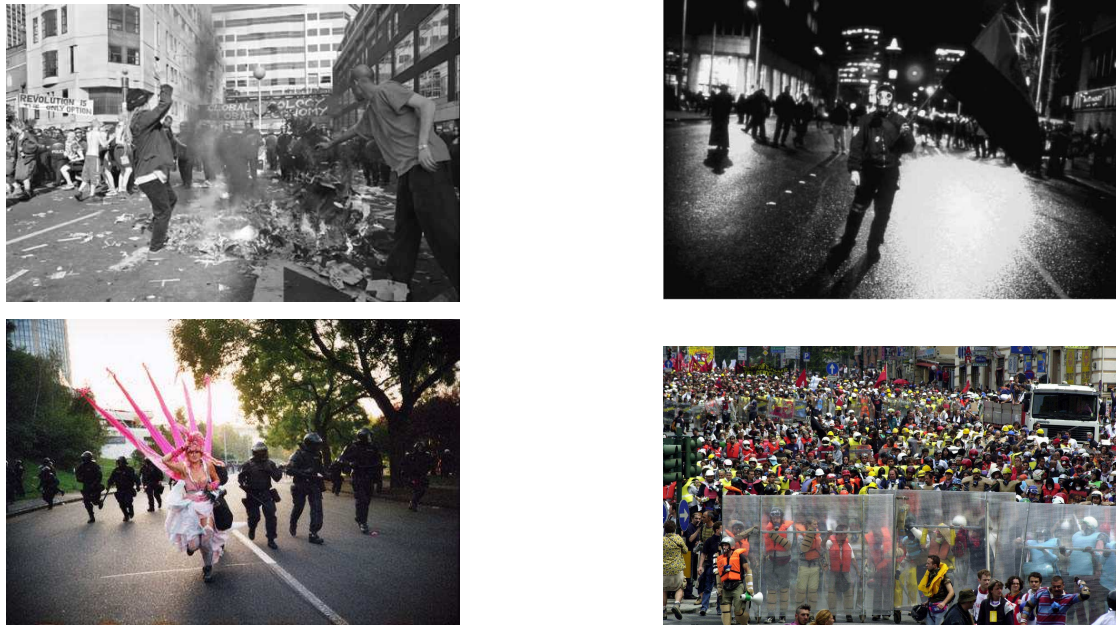


Figure 6.5: London June 1999, Seattle November 1999, Prague September 2000, Genova July 2001.



Figure 6.6: *Dinero gratis* (Desacuerdos, 2005)



Figure 6.7: *Prêt à révolter* (Desacuerdos, 2005)

This machinic assemblage appeared clearly in the function played by *Art Mani* - a pun on Armani and Demonstration-Art - during the World Bank counter-summit in June 2001. The agreement was to intervene in urban space introducing elements of complexity through which to question the simplistic understanding of neoliberal globalisation proposed by the main stream media and global economic institutions. In order to do this, and in the aftermath of Prague 2000, *Art Mani* produced «graph-plotted images and use[d] them as shields. On the one hand they protect[ed] you from the rubber bullets and at the same time [they acted as] a mobile exhibition/demonstration in the city space. They were images of kids and the global south, so that we were trying to produce the image of the police attacking these images» (Nuria Vila). The idea was borrowed from the experience of *Ne pas pliers*, proposing a contemporary translation of the use of collage in Soviet productivism (cf. Exposito, 2010). On the other hand, the practice of social and civil disobedience in the Italian movement *Tute Bianche* served as a point of reference in thinking the relationship between conflict, communication and consensus. Objects, symbols, artistic practices, global networks were introduced in the space of political mobilisation to make loud the silenced dimensions of globalisation and to propose a radical practice of refusal as a social response to the imposition of neoliberal governance at the global level. (See Figures 6.9, 6.10 and 6.11)

In the case of the *Show Bus*, *Las Agencias* took back and re-thought the model of the wall-paper journals used during the Soviet vanguards and translated it into a new context: political agitation during the global movement and later in the antiwar movements. At the same time, they introduced the practice of rave parties in the production of political events borrowing from the experience of *Reclaim the streets* in London and their campaigns against the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994. (See Figures 6.12 and 6.13)

In the aftermath of Genova July 2001 (G8 demonstrations) and of 9-11 in New York, however, the space of radical politics shrank: on the one hand because of the level of repression and the semiotic of practices it imposed, on the other hand because of the importance that the question of violence and non-violence assumed in public discussions of movements. In *New kids on the black blocks*, a fake rock-band of black-blockers, the group of *Las Agencias* started a series of project, each with their own identity, in which the name *Las Agencias* disappeared (See Figure 6.14). *NKBB* served as a dispositif through which to discuss and think the relation between radicalism and media-coverage of demonstrations (interview with Tomas Herreros) as well as to open a discussion around the question of violence and the symbolism and semiotics of repression, in the attempt of «black-ing the pink and pink-ing the black» (Marcelo Exposito). «We are to the movements what the Spice Girls and Bin Laden are to the Twin Towers is their slogan in the aftermath of 9-11» (New Kids on the Black Blocks, 2002). (See Figure 6.15 and Video V.7)



Figure 6.8: *Art Mani* in Barcelona, June 2001 (Desacuerdos, 2005)



Figure 6.9: *Ne Pas Pliers*, Paris, 1995 (Desacuerdos, 2005)





Figure 6.10: Soviet collage (Desacuerdos, 2005)



Figure 6.11: *Tute Bianche*, Prague, September 2000



Figure 6.12: *Show Bus* of *Las Agencias* (Desacuerdos, 2005)



Figure 6.13: *Video-Nou* and *Las Agencias* on their buses (Desacuerdos, 2005)

One example is emblematic here. The bus of the *NKBB* was burnt one night in Barcelona, apparently by the Police. *NKBB* did not want this to become another event in the cycle of repression-sacrifice of identity politics, but at the same time wanted to denounce what had happened. The final outcome was a fake-copy of *El País* in which a supposed interview with the Chief of Barcelona Police reflected upon the cycle of provocation and repression as a practice of containing the anti-globalisation movements within a narrow identitarian politics (Marcelo Exposito).

At the same time, *Las Agencias* continued to intervene in the space of the museum by producing critiques of the modes of cultural production - the management of labour, as well as the formats and the language of exhibition - by instituting a space managed on the basis of cooperation, in terms of time, knowledge and tools.

All of this collaboration came to a crisis in 2002: with a conflict between the *DPP* and the militants of *Las Agencias*. In this rupture, many of the people involved recognised a failure. However, according to Tomas Herreros, the unpredictable connections built in the laboratory of the *Macba* 'invented a monster' and helped to produce a series of metamorphoses and innovations amongst these who participated in it and social movements more generally (cf. Universidad Nomada, 2009, Sanchez Cedillo, 2009, Carmona et al., 2008).

In my view, in these last years, you always watch the rising and the falling of new social movements. But we cannot look at each of them and ask why they failed. I think there are cycles: they go up and down, and each of them is connected to the one before, although sometimes the connection is not explicit. So that we should look at the limits, at the consequences, but it would be unfair to say that this or that movement has failed. . . There has been the squat movements, and then the space of

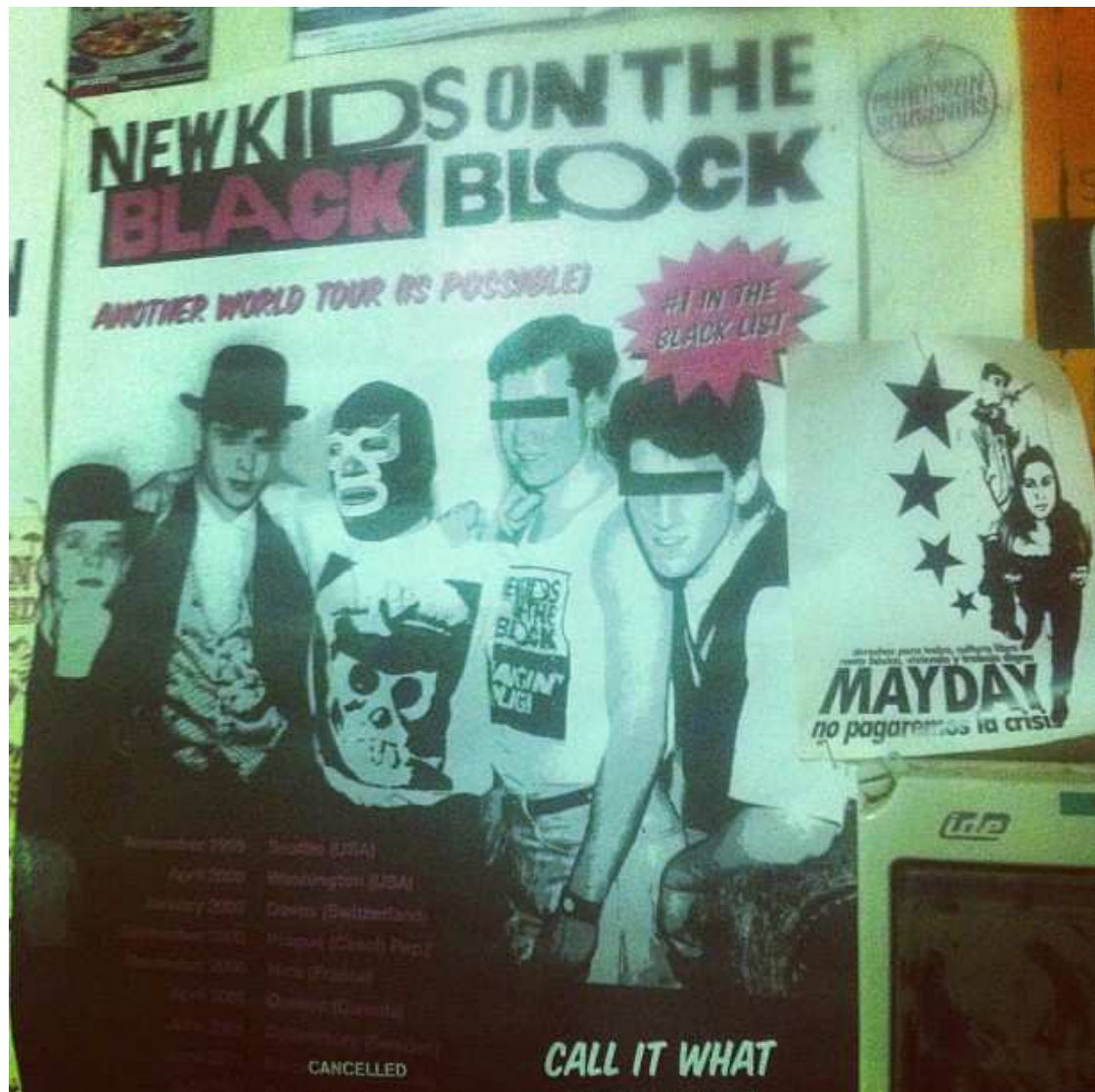


Figure 6.14: *New Kids on the Black Block* (Desacuerdos, 2005)



Figure 6.15: *New Kids on the Black Blocks*, after the burning of their bus (Desacuerdos, 2005)

the *Macba*, and anti-globalisation. Then the antiwar movement, and the question of precarity with *Euromayday*. And now we are here experimenting with the Agency for social rights, with Exit, but another cycle will start soon. . . (Tomas Herreros)

The space of production in the *Las Agencias* projects, and generally in the dynamics of metamorphoses and invention of social movements, worked through a permanent opening. The network involved otherness in the definition and production of the common space.

I think *Las Agencias* was a bit like this, take ideas that were not our own illuminations, but ideas that were working somewhere else in a different way, depending on the context, composing them with the flexibility of being capable of connecting with the *Disobbedienti*, *Indymedia*, *okupas* and so on... I think it was something powerful, wasn't it? And this is what was very rich for Barcelona's movements, to share your space with different people, with artists, I don't know... I think this ability of intervening in communication and the powerful creation of images is something typical in all the anti-globalisation movement... from Seattle onwards, isn't it? Well, I don't know... (Nuria Vila)

In other words, the production of the political was not defined by a civil engagement among different parts - in which participants accept the rules on the basis of which they can be represented. Rather, in the *Las Agencias*, the production of rules and protocols was a matter of expression in itself: moving beyond the ability of representation into the possibility of expression.

In this sense, and for the purpose of this thesis in producing tools of analysis and organisation in contemporary social movements, I look now at the limits of this production of rules and expressions as producing the potential for the collective practices of organisation in the following years.

#### 6.2.4 Disagreements

There has been a permanent tension, between social movements and the museum from the beginning of *DIFA* through out the time. And this tension was what made possible the development of the project we did there (Nuria Vila)

The tension referred to by Nuria Vila, above, was not only ideological, but very material - since it involved the use of tools, resources, the role of the museum as a socially recognised institution and the materiality of the politics in which it was involved. The opportunity seized by the *Macba* was to produce a space of experimentation. For social movements, this permitted access to resources, and legitimacy, and the production of new linguistic and ideological frameworks. At

the same time it constituted an opportunity for the artistic milieus that participated to intervene in the system of cultural production, claiming a different status for the political commitment of the arts.

But at a certain point there was no longer any reflection in political and micro-political terms. It was just taking advantage of resources, taking the money, mounting a big political campaign – and this stopped the possibility of thinking together for the museum and the movements. There are tensions with Jordi [Claramonte] and these dynamics generate tension in the project itself. In everyday life: work hours, access to the spaces, the invasion of strange people in the offices of the institution. All this generates tension in the institution and blocks the ability to think. And we are aware, after the end of the World Bank campaign in 2001 [...], that the collaboration has become impossible. [...] And Jordi and his people decide to leave [physically the space] taking with them computers bought with public money. And they generate a new *Las Agencias*, that lasted just a few months. (Jordi Ribalta)

On the other hand, according to Claramonte and many others, after achieving a certain degree of visibility, the *Macba* stepped back and left social movements alone in the most dangerous moment, that of judicial repression after the conflicts of 2001. This is something confirmed by Ribalta when he recounted the pressure on the board of the museum by political institutions like the Home Office, the Board of Directors and the groups that financed the *Macba*, demanding the end of *Las Agencias*. For Nuria Vila, the confusion between opportunity and opportunism hid and finally destroyed the sense of experimentation that had led the space in the first place.

There were two ways to look at the museum: one was with one foot in the art world, of people thinking that to put pressure on the institution and intervene politically in it, not only to transform it but also to valorise the political artistic and activist works, because this can make possible in the future to have resources [...] and change the way of working of artists themselves. On the other hand, and I think this is where we fell short, people that were not interested at all in this and thought it was useless to intervene in the art world and just thought about the relationship in utilitarian terms, taking advantage of the money... So that you cannot work with an institution that is taking such an interesting step, if you are not interested in understanding the institution itself and you do not analyse what is the role of this institution in relationship to other powers in the city. (Nuria Vila)

According to what emerged in my interviews and research, the experimentation of the *Macba* permitted a redefinition of the radical movement and its subjective composition in two different



directions. First, the *Macba* allowed people with different backgrounds to take part in social movements. For example, the cases of Vila and Colau, coming from journalism and media, who would not have participated in social movements before the *Macba* due to a reciprocal suspicion between activism and media that *Las Agencias* succeeded, at least partially, in overcoming.

I came to be politicised because of the experience in the *Las Agencias*: I was not speaking the movement's language. I could not understand an *okupa* when s/he was speaking. This very hard language that marks what is inside and what is outside, what is good, what is bad. And most people do not divide the world in two parts and nothing else. A problem of communication. (Nuria Vila)

What was interesting was that *Las Agencias* was not a collective, it was another concept: a movement in which sharing a minimum of concepts, like the opposition to capitalism or whatever, to neoliberal politics, a lot of people would participate, coordinate in some things, not in others, clash and discuss, share resources, spaces like *el cuartelillo* [...] and there were old people like *Está tot fatal* [Everything is fucked up] that dedicated themselves to criticising the *Macba* and *Las Agencias* that were financing them [...], people doing Indymedia, vegan cooks recycling food, artists working on photography... then there was the spatial agency, that was managing the bar, and everything was working not according to a structure – not very institutional because something like this cannot last very long... (Nuria Vila)

Second, the experience of collaboration with the institution allowed many people to understand the complexity of the institutional field and to start thinking about it as a (difficult and dangerous) territory for social struggles.

Even if the space of *Las Agencias* was not maintained, *Espais Alliberats contra la Guerra*, *Euromayday* or *Miles de Viviendas* (cf. Chapter 7) would not have existed as such without these experimentations. As proposed by Jordi Bonet in his interview, the space of the *Macba* opened up a debate and a discussion on the role of traditional institutions and on the possibility of intervening in them as spaces for political struggle. Something still crucial in the continuous experimentation of social movements today.

On the institutional side, it would be an error to consider that the *Macba* simply returned to a traditional path and that the laboratory of 2000-2002 did not affect the structure of the institution or the artistic system in Barcelona and beyond. In macroscopic terms it helped to raise a profound debate in the international art system on the role of the museum, affirming a new pedagogic role of artistic practices, and creating a space of (urban) critique within the cultural institutions of Barcelona. However, most of these debates have been neutralised by the lack of connection between the institution and society/publics: museums (not only the *Macba*, but also

*Palau de la Virreina, CCCB, Centro de Arte Santa Monica* - just to mention the cultural institutions in the city centre) returned to being empty and quite elitist spaces where public activities are a marginal side in the enunciation of a mostly aesthetic and fixed discourse (interview with Victoria Sacco and Celeste Venica).

Nonetheless, the experiment of 2000-2002 produced consequences in molecular and structural terms. Starting from singular biographies, the experiment marked many of the institutional staff that participated in the *Las Agencias*. And, through them, some of the methodologies, debates and practices constructed in the laboratory of the *Macba* spread out to other places and in other institutional experiments. Surely the most important, but less relevant here, is the case of *Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia* in Madrid, whose director is Manuel Borja Vilel, and in which many elements of the *Las Agencias* laboratory have been reproduced and experimented with once again. In Barcelona, several pieces of the institutional machine of the *Macba* started to act as local actors in many struggles for the right to the city - as in the case of the *Programme of Independent Studies* in the *Macba*, and the collaborations of the museum in the neighbourhood of Besos.

The experience of *Desacuerdos* (Disagreements) is surely significant in understanding the complexity of this crisis. *Desacuerdos* was the last experimental and public space built in the *Macba*, where a coalition of social movements, cultural institutions and artistic groups opened a debate on the experience of institutional critique and social change, with a specific focus on the forms of governance in the city, the function of the museum in this social dynamics and on the role of different political actors, networks and practices in the struggle for the right to the city. *Desacuerdos* was produced to reflect upon the relationship between antagonism and consensus, assuming the need to produce democracy as a space for the expression of conflicts and not of symbolic reduction of antagonism to a multi-cultural governance of differences (Deutsche, 1996). *Desacuerdos* constituted a group of militant research on the history of social movements, and the materials they gathered and produced constituted a political interrogation of the recent past of artistic practices as conflictive engagement with the role of knowledge in bridging the symbolic and material dimensions of social conflict as the base of a democratic system (Desacuerdos, 2003).

The complex space of the *Macba* was not just the scenario of a theoretical debate but the attempt of shifting from a practice of publication-exhibition to one of production-communication, overlapping appropriation and inhabitation to affirm a fragile, complex and innovative model of political production in the crisis of the legitimacy of the modern institution. The network, emerging in the previous waves of institutional critique, served here as an organisational dispositif based on relationality and difference, on the composition of practices, tools, memories as

specific determination of trans-local problems, as a material assemblage of metamorphoses and inventions.

Thus it is possible here to recognise a double instituent practice both in the invasion of the institution by social movements, and in the dislocation of the institution from its traditional position. The new public space emerging in the *Macba* cracked the identitarian and rhetorical spaces of radical politics of the 1990s that, by invasion, re-established their own practices in a different field, in a different set of problems (*Direct actions as one of the fine arts*). On the other hand, it permitted a re-situating of many local institutions in a different position, immanent to society, and within the possibilities and contradictions of society itself. During the *Macba* experimentations, a new way of understanding political organisation was affirmed around the mechanism and concepts of assembling, composing, doing. This relational dimension of the political affirmed instituent practices as spaces where the mutual affection among participants and the immanence of the social emerged as common ground to build new political modes of organisation and enunciation in social struggles (*Las Agencias*). In this sense, as I stated in the beginning of this section, it is possible to recognise the space of *DPP*, *DAFA* and *Las Agencias* as experiments that reconfigured the relation between society and institutions, beyond the crisis of the modern conception of the state.

### 6.3 *Encierros*

On the 18th of January 2001, in a side street just off the cathedral, Mamen and Fede walked into a swarm of migrants marching and chanting in the city centre. As spectres of non-citizens becoming visible in the streets, this group struck these experienced militants of the radical left as a surprise, so they decided to follow this spontaneous (to their gaze) mob and got involved in the first wave of lock-in of churches for the regularisation of undocumented migrants in Spain - *los encierros* (interview with Raquel Muñoz) - in the *Iglesia del Pi*.

I didn't know that the assembly existed, I just went to the Office to enquire about my regularisation process, and there they were leafleting in different languages, [...]. And it was saying that on the 18th of January [2001] we will do a general assembly. With my friends we decided to go, and then to stay there till the end [...] it was the first time somebody was aware of our condition, somebody was aware of us [...] When we arrived at the assembly people from *Papeles para Todos* explained that on the 23rd of January the *Ley de Extranjeria* was coming into force: a foreigner could be expelled and this and that [...] There was people from *CGT*, a union, and a Moroccan guy from the union was translating for us [...] And, when

the the discussion was opened to the rest of the assembly, the Pakistanis said they were going to do more. The idea was just to do a demo or something like that, but the idea of occupying came from the immigrants themselves, and especially the Pakistanis. [...] So we walked with the demo, and once passing by the cathedral we went inside and occupied it without saying a word. [...] Then we went to talk with the priest and he said no, we could not occupy, so we moved to the *Iglesia del Pi*, which is very close. A mass was going on, and some one started to enter and the priest stopped the praying to talk with us [...] and then all of us entered, we hugged each other and we said: «here we are going to stay!» (Yidir Ikabouren) (See Figure 6.16)



Figure 6.16: *Iglesia del Pi*, Barcelona, January 2001 (Archive *La ciutat Invisible*)

The contraposition between these two experiences of the same moment - on the one hand, the decision of a political initiative and, on the other, the surprise of an apparently spontaneous mob - is significant in terms of analysing some aspects of the crisis of the relation between civil society and the governed in the late 1990s in Barcelona as it emerges in social movements. If, on the one hand, the experience of the questioning of the museum as a modern institution marked one side of the crisis – i.e. the authority of a public institution in *representing* society – here the

social body of citizenship itself exploded when the spectres of the colony appeared on the streets of the metropolis.

The *encierros* emerged as a material and collective statement, a complex social enunciation speaking out through the collective act of occupying the churches in order to demand rights of production: legal status and labour rights. The demand for regularisation calls for a different access to the labour market, the welfare state and urban space. It is the demand for a different experience of everyday life.

Autonomous social movements - conceived here as the *active* civil society (Mamen and Federico in this example) that proceeded from the squatting and radical movements and considered themselves the *origin* of radical experiential politics in urban space (and in relation to the state and law, cf. 5.1) - are displaced by the experience of the *encierros* to a secondary position. Suddenly a new sector of society speaks out, without any pre-configured formal (or civil) language. For this part of society, as explained in the experience of the mosques and the un/governed invasion of public space (cf. 5.3), there is no mechanism of representation in institutions that can act in their name or through which to advocate for an alternative social governance. The relationship of this social sector with the state and the law is simply a matter of force. It is, in Chatterjee (2004) and Gramsci's terms (1975a), a *political society* dealing with the state without any formalised mediation.

The separation between everyday life as individual experience and civic life, regulated by institutional representation, is broken apart. The material production of political practice is no longer about producing a performance that represents a claim in the political arena through demonstrations in the streets to push politicians into acting differently in the appropriate institution. In this context, acts themselves institute new ways of organising social life: the transformation of the logic of law from an external position (non-citizens) goes hand in hand with the constitution of a different life in the occupation of churches. The space of the *encierros* instituted a life-world (Chakrabarty, 2000) that inscribes itself in the social space of Barcelona as an original political actor.

In order to investigate the fracturing and restructuring of urban political space at stake here, I focus on the everyday life of the *encierros* of *Iglesia del Pi* in the centre of Barcelona and especially on the relationship between political and civil society during the experiment of the lock-in. I do not analyse (where not strictly necessary) the demands or the strategies of the movements, or its relation to broader society (parties, unions, medias, states, etc.) (cf. Varela, 2007). Rather I focus on the relationship between migrant communities and networks of activist groups.

I start by analysing the political composition of this space in material terms to look at the way in which political practices, demands and participation were constructed through experience

in different groups. Focusing in on the encounters of the *encierros*, I emphasise the orientalism of social movements and analyse how and why the *encierros* served as a moment in which this attitude in social movements was - at least partially - confronted. Continuous experience (Papadopoulos et al., 2008) is proposed as the name for the space produced through the active construction of the *encierros*. Finally, I look at occupations and hunger strikes not only as practices articulated towards a public space to obtain a demand, but as the concrete construction of a common political territory where not only the functioning of neoliberal citizenship, but also the conception of modernity in the European left, was contested.

### 6.3.1 Composition

The space in which the *encierros* emerged brought together different streams and memories of struggles for the rights of migrants.

In my analysis the first reference is to the 'French' movement of *Sans Papiers*, as this was my own connection to the *encierros* when I arrived in Barcelona as an Italian activist working on issues of migration (cf. Chapter 3). The experience of the *Sans Papiers* occupation of the church of Saint-Ambroise, Paris, in the March of 1996 had acted as a catalyst for the European social radical movements to start addressing migrants' rights as an issue related to their own rights, as an extreme experience of a generalised status of precarity.

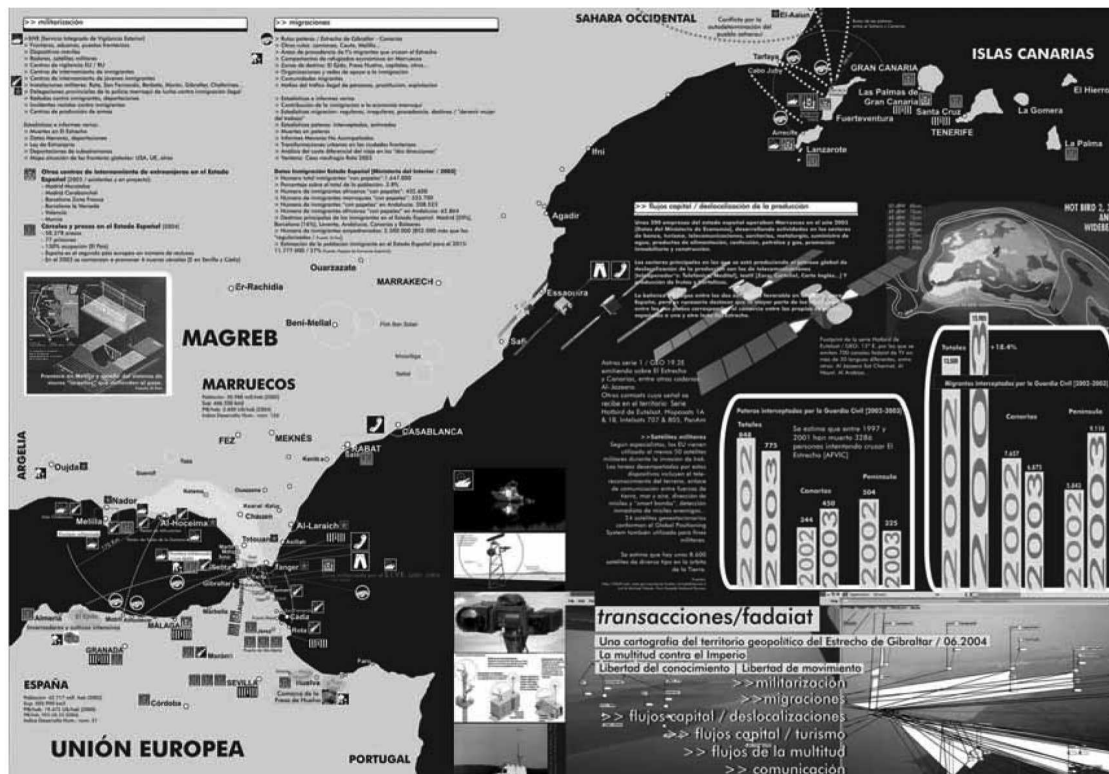
In the mobilisations of Paris, the demand for citizenship was enacted by appropriating public spaces and disobeying the borders inscribed in urban space (Balibar, 2002) (see Figure 6.17). The circulation of this experience (both through narrative and through the bodies moving in Europe) was crucial for the imagination and the call for Barcelona's *encierros* in the first place.

However, the acceleration of this process of politicisation on migration issues in Barcelona was determined also by the development of the antifascist and antiracist movements in Spain during the 1990s. Even if these mobilisations addressed questions of identity and not of social and labour rights, many internationalist groups started to connect with local migrant communities, to monitor their social conditions and to be aware of and sensitive to their problems.

In this context, the trigger for many activists were the racist raids in the Ejidos (Almeria) and in Can Anglada (Barcelona) in 2000, and the implementation of new laws on migration limiting the rights of the existing migrant population and new-comers (Navaz, 2007) (see Figure 6.17). As a result, various enquiries on the living conditions of the migrant population by local groups (in Ejidos, Terrasa, Barcelona as documented by the project *Archivo migrante*) led to the organisation of *No Borders* campaigns in Spain – especially in Andalusia (for example, the project *Indymedia Madiag*, Raquel Muñoz) (see Figure 6.18).



Figure 6.17: Saint Ambroise, Paris, 1996 and El Ejido, Almeria, 2000



Transacciones Fadaiat. Una cartografía del estrecho de Gibraltar, junio de 2004. <http://www.fadaiat.org>.

Figure 6.18: Fadaiat, a map of Indymedia Madiaq

In this period, the constitutional process of the post-Schengen European Union determined a different phase for the social movements for migrant rights. Practices and statements relating to migrants' rights were being translated from place to place, connecting different territories and different movements of Europe and beyond, and structuring social movements as a network of discussion and action (Balibar, 2004, Bojadzijeve and Saint-Saens, 2006). Together with the *Sans Papiers* occupation in France (1996-1997), *Kein mensch ist illegal* emerged in Kassel during *Documenta X* in 1997 (cf. Chapter 5) and in 1999 *No Border* started to coordinate actions across Europe. Italian movements undertook actions against detention centres (1999-2000) and in Belgium the *Universal Embassy* (2001) constituted a translation of the Sanctuary City of the US migrant movements to the European context (Nowotny, 2002).

The enquiries of *Indymedia Madiag* (the Indymedia project in Andalusia) and *Ateneu Candela* (a social centre in the periphery of Barcelona) in 2000 and the *encierros* in 2001 contributed to this collective production. They constituted the contextual translation in the Spanish state of a new dimension in the struggles for citizenship: the recognition of migrants as part of a precarious population excluded from social, civil and political rights in the everyday life of European cities.

At the same time the mobilisations of *encierros* were determined by the self-organisation of migrants. The memories of struggles of different subjects were crossing borders and encountering each other in a new political context.

We were 27 or 30 from Morocco, we were from the same area, we knew each other from family networks: if you didn't know somebody, you would know his brother. [...] And one of the guys could speak English and he had been participating in the student movements of the 1990s in Morocco, and he was the spokesperson for ourselves. [...] In the beginning he didn't want to participate because his family would be worried, but the blood is in the veins and you cannot stop it, you cannot avoid it [...] and he started to talk about the Students movements, and I started to talk about the Lorries strikes I had been participating in 1996 to 1998. (Yidir Ikabouren)

[In the Lorries strikes] some of us wanted to self-organise to have more voice, to make us visible. We started to think about a union, everybody got affiliated in the same branch [...] and then we discovered about the rights we had as workers [...] and we made a manifesto of demands and we went to talk with the Minister of Transport [...] and then we went for a strike because once you are there you have no choice but to go on struggling [...] And this is why I did know how an assembly would work, a meeting, voting, organising. (Yidir Ikabouren)



In the case of the South Asian community, the most evident background was not political but communitarian organisation.

Indians and Pakistani did not have a political background. Ibrahar came from a trade family, another guy in Pakistan was a policeman, Rana was a businessman. As far as I know, nobody had a political background in the way we mean it. I mean obviously if you live in Pakistan you have a political life... but the ones that already had a political background were the people from Morocco, because they had been in the university, in the student movements and everybody had been part of the Tamazight movement.

[...]

If you were going around the Raval with Ibrahar he would stop every two steps to talk with one person, with another, and you could not understand anything, but it was there where things were happening, and other people like Norma or Enrique [who had lots of power in this mobilisation] could not control it either. And nobody was stupid. People did know that through Norma and Enrique they could get something. Nobody was taking advantage of the other, but you know that the other is looking for something through their collaboration with you. (Raquel Muñoz)

The politicisation of the *encierros* composed itself in different ways. First, the composition of a previous experience in the participants' own country confronted the new questions emerging in migration and settling. Second, it was the composition of different cultures of (more or less codified) political ways of organising. Third, in the *encierros* different political bodies concretely encountered each other for struggling, each of them with a different legal status and from a different position.

During my interviews, listening to the historical analysis of activists on the emergence of the collective mobilisation for migrant rights, militants stressed the antiracist and antifascist movement of the 1990s and the contraposition between unions and social movements with regard to the rights of migrant workers. In this view, the history of migrants is not only marginal, but codified according to a Eurocentric and orientalist logic: the memories of migrants they mentioned are positioned as *translatable* to the European tradition of politics and concretely the politics of the colonial other. Communitarianism, anti-coloniality, national struggle are the names for the struggles that European activists recognised in the practices of the migrant people involved in the *encierros*.

For example, Yidir Ikabouren defined himself as a Moroccan in my interview not mentioning his Tamazight identity apart from as a couple of occasions. However European activists tended

to frame his experience - centred around the struggles of students and lorry workers - in the emergence of anti-colonial, pro-democratic and Tamazight nationalist movements.

Likewise, analysing the transnational communitarian strength of the Pakistani networks in the *encierros*, many interviewees recognised the expression and translation of the social organisation of life in Pakistan referring to the role of ghandianism, anti-colonialism and traditional communitarianism, but only a few mentioned the transnational (and post-colonial) dimension of this community (in Great Britain or in Saudi Arabia) and no-one referred to the social mobilisations of the Pakistani community in Barcelona in the 1990s analysed in the previous chapter. In this narrative, the social networks of the Pakistani community are represented as subjugated and non-political. It is the political mobilisation around racism and residency documents of 1999 and 2001 that makes them (unrecognised) citizens and political inhabitants of the city. Radical militants reveal their own *orientalism* (Said, 1978), silencing the contribution of post-colonial actors to the reinvention of political practices.

The orientalist gaze of the European activists reduced the experiences and struggles in the extra-European context to the imagination of an Otherness as pre-modern and pre-political. When the colonial subalterns speak out in a language not inscribed in the European mother tongue of politics, their collective practices seem to become imperceptible even to the active and civil society of the metropolis.

However, the space of political initiative of the un/governed, internal outsiders, and immanent strangers cannot be constituted around a rigid consciousness of a class identity. There is no integer identity from where to define such a political consciousness (Chatterjee, 1998). The Pakistani policemen, the Mexican activist and the Moroccan lorry driver compose themselves in a common struggle without flattening their differences - and concretely building a common strategy.

Focusing the attention on the elements of commonality and the modes of composition in terms of cooperation, negotiation and conflict (cf. consciousness and composition in Chapter 3) is useful in order to understand how the different ways of doing of each singular or collective memory constructed the machine of struggle. This is to situate the practice of research in the crisis of the relationship between the political and the civil, and to understand the political dimension of social movements beyond the civil tradition of European social movements.

In the *encierros*, this emerging political society built a dubious and incomplete system of negotiation, cooperation and conflicts for allowing the unrecognised inhabitants of Barcelona to speak out. They questioned the understanding of civil politics of Barcelona in the 1990s, not only opening new common spaces and new alliances for claiming new rights, but also imposing conflicts, ruptures and discussions inside local social movements. This composition through interaction - that sustains rather than settles social conflicts- is the focus of the next section.

### 6.3.2 *Encierros* as continuous experiment

In the first assembly in Plaça Catalunya, the Pakistani community participated in large numbers. Once again, the reasons for the participation were rooted in the internal interrelations of the Pakistani community. However, the orientalist understanding of communitarianism is insufficient in terms of analysing this massive participation. A complex intertwining of trans-local and trans-identitarian memories composed the space of the first meeting for the *encierros*: produced in the experience of migration through the Gulf and London, and in the struggles for mosques, and social and cultural rights in Barcelona in the 1990s.

In this sense, the space of the *encierros* was not only composed of the discursive overlapping and the reduction of different identities around the question of civil, social and political rights for migrants. It was also composed of the intertwining of memories, practices, bodies, spaces: concrete *acts* that emerged in the encounter (Isin and Nielsen, 2008). This emerges clearly looking at the memories that composed these identities – opening the possibilities of non-identitarian alliances and configuring the space of the *encierros* as a space of multiplicity and commonality.

When I discovered the migrants of Morocco, Pakistan, their discourse and everything I thought: these comrades are the mirror of the indigenous communities in Mexico. They are political actors that are not-recognised either by the society, or by the state but they are political actors, and they are enacting their decisions, they live their everyday starting by recognising themselves as political actors. But this is something I only understood later on. After a few years, because when I met them it was just an adventure, starting from me in a meeting of all men, that I thought were all Muslim, but actually were coming from several different forms of militancy and were not religious at all. (Amarela Varela)

To understand the memories and bodies making this and producing a new way of doing politics, it was necessary to deconstruct the predetermined models of articulation of differences. It was the ability of encountering with the other as irreducible difference – to recognise the difference between one's own imagination of the Other and the concrete other as a companion in struggle - that allowed the production of a set of commonalities.

The recognition of commonalities facilitated the sharing of differences. And differences became the first place for building a common space of struggles. This is the material production of a continuous experience among singular bodies, as a political alliance built not on identification but on the trust and the closeness among different agents (Stephenson and Papadopoulos, 2006, Papadopoulos et al., 2008). In the *encierros*, migration emerged as a continuous *experiment* built on the commonality among a set of singular feelings, decisions, conditions, and situations.

It was to me something as important, as urgent, as crucial as in the movement I had been involved in Mexico. Here [in Mexico] the game was over your life, and there it was over the residency documents, that in the end are your life somehow. (Amarela Varela)

Flight and desire, fragility and possibility were some of the elements that constituted a continuity among different experiences. This fragmented continuity – a contiguity of bodies and experiences – permitted the building of trust among different people. This contiguity, however, was not constructed through the reduction of differences to an over-determinant and dominant identity, but as a permanent dialogue. A translation inscribed in a set of social relations and determined by different experiences: status, culture, money – class, race, gender, language and so on. A complex and uneven encounter proceeding through negotiation, agreements and conflicts.

### 6.3.3 Heterolingual struggles in the post-colonial city

The locals wanted to occupy the church. The Pakistani proposed to start a hunger strike. In the end, we occupied the church and started a hunger strike. (Yidir Ikabouren) (See Figure 6.19 and Figure 6.20)

This apparently easy and linear decision is the surface of a complex encounter happening underneath. Each political history was confronted by the practices of other groups. Both occupying a church and undertaking a hunger strike, were practices charged with symbolic effects. However, the process of translation experienced in this specific context reconfigured the way in which transmission could happen and commonality was built. (See Figure 6.21)

Occupying a church for political reasons, for example, evoked meanings for a secular Catalan (see Figure 6.22), a Muslim Pakistani, or a Moroccan Tamazight.

Why does this political practice work? Because it is a practice that the Catalan society can understand. It is something that had happened in late Francoism. To occupy a church means that you are making a political claim when you are facing the absolute precarity of your political rights. And this is why this practice can be operative, because it is interconnected with the codes of the domestic society. [...] On the other hand, to occupy a church means to enter into the belly of the other, to connect with the spirituality of the other. For them, the connection with the political, with the meaning of political, or of citizenship is very different (Amarela Varela)

In the temporary autonomous space of the *encierros*, a new life-world appeared. Its composition of differences was not conclusive, or reductive, but possible because of the affirmation of a

LUNES, 22 ENERO 2001

SOCIEDAD

LA VANGUARDIA 31

EL RETO DE LA INMIGRACIÓN ► Encierros en iglesias

## Más de trescientos “sin papeles” inician una huelga de hambre en Barcelona

■ Los inmigrantes, que piden permisos de trabajo y de residencia, expresan con esta acción su rechazo a la nueva ley de Extranjería

ÓSCAR MUÑOZ

BARCELONA. – Los encierros y en algunos casos huelgas de hambre de inmigrantes en situación irregular se multiplican. Madrid, Lorca, Jumilla, Melilla... y ahora Barcelona. En todos ellos, los “sin papeles” expresan su rechazo a la nueva ley de Extranjería, que mañana entra en vigor. La acción de Barcelona, que comenzó el sábado por la tarde con el encierro de duración indefinida de un centenar de personas en la iglesia de Santa María del Pi y con el anuncio de que alguno de los participantes haría una huelga de hambre ha crecido en proporciones y anoche registraba 360 personas encerradas, 328 de las cuales ya habían dejado de ingerir alimentos. El número de activistas podría crecer las próximas horas.

Una portavoz de la plataforma ciudadana de apoyo a los inmigrantes sin papeles explicó que, a pesar de contar con tan sólo dos salas para tantas personas, “el encierro se



Algunos de los inmigrantes que secundan la protesta, ayer por la tarde en una sala de la iglesia del Pi

lleva a cabo con toda normalidad”. La ubicación de la iglesia, en pleno Barri Gòtic barcelonés, atrajo la atención de decenas de personas, que entraron a preguntar qué estaba pasando. Varios representantes de la concejalía de Derechos Civiles

del Ayuntamiento de Barcelona y de la secretaría para la Inmigración de la Generalitat de Catalunya se personaron en el lugar del encierro para conocer de cerca la situación de los inmigrantes que secundan la protesta. Según explicaron los porta-

voces de la plataforma ciudadana, “ninguno de ellos se comprometió a nada, tan sólo querían ver lo que sucedía e intercambiar impresiones”. El encierro cuenta con el permiso del rector de Santa María del Pi, Josep Maria Vidal, que ayer reiteró

que seguirá “abriendo las puertas de la parroquia a estas personas, porque necesitan nuestra ayuda y no podemos dejarlas en la calle”.

La plataforma y los representantes de los diversos colectivos de inmigrantes (subsaharianos, indios, paquistaníes, bangladesíes, marroquíes, sudamericanos y europeos del Este) han detallado sus reclamaciones. Piden que, tras la entrada en vigor de la nueva ley, “no sean deportados a sus países de origen y que no se sancione a las organizaciones que apoyan a los inmigrantes

La plataforma de apoyo a los inmigrantes pide una entrevista con la delegada del Gobierno para exponer sus reivindicaciones

Los huelguistas, que ahora sólo toman líquidos, sal y azúcar, amenazan con una huelga total a partir del miércoles

sin papeles”. Asimismo, reclaman “que cese el acoso policial” y que “se regularice la situación de los inmigrantes que viven en España pero que no tienen papeles”. Los organizadores del encierro y de la huelga desean entrevistarse con la delegada del Gobierno en Cataluña, Julia García-Valdecasas, para plantearle estas reivindicaciones, que “deben ser aceptadas”.

Continúa en la página siguiente

Figure 6.19: *La Vanguardia*, on the 22nd of January 2001

◀ **LOS GANADEROS PIDEN ANALIZAR VACAS MÁS JÓVENES** • **PÁGINA 34** ▶

www.lavanguardia.es

# LA VANGUARDIA

MARTES, 23 DE ENERO DE 2001 / N.º 42.820 Fundada en 1881 por don Carlos y don Bartolomé Godó 150 ptas. (con Interiores, 400 ptas.)

**Mueren otros dos esquiadores por un alud en el Pirineo de Girona**

CAMPRODÓN. – Dos montañeros murieron sepultados por un alud el sábado cuando descendían esquiando un pico de la comarca del Ripollès, con lo que se elevan a 11 los fallecidos en el Pirineo de Girona en un mes. Las dos víctimas mortales, de 41 y 44 años, eran montañeros expertos, con ascensiones en los Alpes y los Andes. **PÁG. 31**

Tom Hanks arrebató el Globo de Oro a Javier Bardem **PÁGINAS 39 Y 40**



CHRIS HASTON / AP  
Tom Hanks con el Globo

**“Les tres bessones” gana a Almodóvar en el extranjero** **PÁGINA 47**

# La ley de Extranjería abre la puerta a miles de expulsiones



**HUELGA DE HAMBRE EN EL PI.** Más de 300 inmigrantes sin papeles de diversas nacionalidades siguen encerrados en la parroquia barcelonesa de Santa María del Pi

▶ *La entrada en vigor hoy de la ley atemoriza a los “sin papeles”*

▶ *Encierro de inmigrantes en la iglesia del Pi de Barcelona*

BARCELONA. – La entrada en vigor de la nueva ley de Extranjería abre la puerta a la expulsión, a partir de hoy, de decenas de miles de inmigrantes que no han logrado regularizar su situación en España. El temor y la preocupación se han apoderado de muchos de ellos, como pone de manifiesto el encierro de varios centenares de personas en la parroquia del Pi de Barcelona. Entre tanto, más inmigrantes intentan llegar de manera clandestina a las costas españolas desde el norte de África. **PÁGS. 27 A 29 Y EDITORIAL**

Figure 6.20: *La Vanguardia*, on the 23rd of January 2001



Figure 6.21: The occupation of the church (Archive *La ciutat Invisible*)

permanent dialectic. A dialectic that was not articulated or defined in terms of a static hegemony from which to take decisions, but around heterogeneous and uneven commonalities. This made possible a kind of placing in relation of irreducible differences through dialogue, translation, negotiation, conflict and discussion.

The occupation of the church can be analysed as a material realisation of the concept of negotiation proposed by Bhabha (2004). Looking at the religious practices, Yidir Ikabouren explains how different spaces were organised in the church for the different religious groups to pray, for the local masses to be realised, and for each group to feel comfortable performing their own practices in a shared space. A mosque, a church, and hindu spirituality in the same space. The conversation with the priest, and his support for migrant struggles and the occupation, were very important for the morale and the cohesion of the group to the extent that when after some years he died all the occupiers of the *Iglesia del Pi* attended his funeral (Yidir Ikabouren).

The possibility of such a composition did not depend simply upon the exceptional nature of the situation, but most of all on the commonality of the commitment for which the community of the *encierros* had been formed in the first place, i.e. the struggle for rights. Beyond religion, everyday life in the *encierros* flowed as a space of translation and organisation of a life in common, in conversations around life, in the management of food or in the circulation of music. (See Figure 6.23)

One day the Indians were in charge of the cooking, one day the Pakistanis, the Moroccans, the Senegalese and so on [And which one you liked the most?] Well, all of them, they were very different: Pakistanis would do principally rice, which was good. We would do *tajin*, *harira*. And there is where you met people, some of the migrants from Pakistan had been living in the Gulf so they could speak Arabic and we could speak. Because Spanish was not a common language.

[...]



Figure 6.22: *Encierro* of Sant Andreu de Palomar, 1976 (Archive *La ciutat Invisible*)





Figure 6.23: *Iglesia del Pi* (Archive *La ciutat Invisible*)

And there conversation were going on about everything. Everybody talking about his life, how he arrived here, the wife, the family, what was the route of migration. Everybody had been in England, and then to Spain because there was a need for workers, and there was possibility of regularisation – restaurants, cook – they could speak English. While for us, French was more problematic.

[...]

I felt sorry for some people, especially old people from Pakistan. They had been living all their life in the Gulf, far from their family, without knowing their own children, seeing them maybe once every two years and nonetheless they have to start a new migration, to London and here, undocumented and waiting to be regularised. And you look at them and you think: ‘Fucking hell, how much is left to him to live as a stable life?’ And I was speaking a lot with them because they spoke very good Arabic, since they have been living maybe fifteen years, twenty in the Gulf. And they say there the situation was even worse than here. That if you work there you have maybe a week or two every two years to go and see your family and then you have to go back immediately. And there they have no future; they could not bring their family. [...] And when we talked about Spain, I was saying ‘here there is lots of racists’ [and they responded] ‘oh you don’t know what it’s like in the Gulf!’. And also there were a lot of fun moments. You would listen to music, dance, sing, all in the church, guitars, drums, a Pakistani with a Moroccan – and this was the mood. (Yidir Ikabouren)

It would be dangerous to reduce the analysis of these enunciations to the public statements of the *encierros*. Different ethnicities, communities and groups composed the politically unrecognised inhabitants of Barcelona and constructed alliance as a common enunciation of the un/governed

without any formal legitimacy in the politics of the city. The possibility of the alliance is the result of the the common experience of migration and subalternity, and the shared understanding that the only language left to the unrecognised citizen to speak publicly is her own body. At the same time, translation among different languages - as situated experience of trying to understand each other - became crucial for producing commonality inside the churches.

It is interesting to note how the possibility of using common languages (verbal and non-verbal) determined the space of the occupation. In this space of translation, the experiment of the *encierros* is a collective moment to build an ulterior space and recognise translation as the mother tongue of a possible emerging Europe. (cf. the project of research of [efeipcp.net](http://efeipcp.net), 2012). Ikabouren remembers which *lingua franca* he spoke in each moment and context: in the assemblies; speaking with an old man; in the press conferences and so on.

This translation was never homolingual: it did not move linearly from one code to another. It was marked by gaps and fractures, producing a space where every singularity is connected to the following one but separated from it. In other words, discontinuities among singularities in other terms are not the sign of a segmentation, of absolute differentiations, but express the unpredictable fragmentations in the way in which different practices and memories could interact.

In order to deepen our understanding of this question, it is useful to analyse the complexity of the hunger strike as a political practice in the *encierros* of Barcelona in 2001, since this practice related differently to different political backgrounds in the South Asian anti-colonial context, in the Moroccan context, and in Europe. Here, the body, as the occupation of churches, continues to act as a field of enunciation for the unrecognised political actors of urban space, the violent expression of the striking body exposed and exploding the existing imbalances of power in the relationship between the Europeans and the migrants. The borders and the limits between the inside and the outside of citizenship became not only a public claim for the recognition of social and labour rights, but an internal conflict within the movement itself. Let me explore the imagination and the meanings attached to the practice of the hunger strike in order to elaborate further.

Here, indeed, what is commonly understood as an anti-colonial practice (the hunger strike) emerged in the belly of Europe, concretely affirming the inescapable and material post-colonial condition of urban social movements and urban politics in Barcelona.

In order to understand the impact of this practice/event/act on the forms of doing politics in Barcelona it is useful to dig deeper into the orientalism of social movements, looking at the relationship between an emerging political society (that of the *encierros*) and the previously existing and active civil society. First, the orientalism of social movements was evident in the

homogenisation of others, where, on the contrary, each community, entity and group understood the political practice of hunger-striking depending on their own background.

The hunger strike comes from the legacy of Gandhi and Ibrahar is very clear on this and before Gandhi another generation of radical struggles [...] But while for Ibrahar this experience is useful and productive, for the Moroccan the legacy of this practice has been very negative, because they did many hunger strikes, and lots of people died but they didn't achieve any result [...] There is a negotiation among [different] political cultures but also among [different] memories of struggle. (Amarela Varela)

Moreover, the Europeans considered the practice of hunger strike according to the terms of European political culture - of civil politics. Concretely, as explained by Muñoz, the ethics of the hunger strike was discussed in relation to the 'abusive' or 'legitimate' use of the body in this practice. Legitimacy was anchored to a discursive dimension, raising a problem about the contradiction between a struggle for emancipation and a practice negatively affecting one's own body: the legitimacy of *sacrifice* as a political act for emancipation. In this sense, part of the discussion in the movement was about hunger strikes as sacrifice, and this was rejected as it supposedly inscribed the practices of migrant communities in a typical 'pre-modern' set of political practices, out of the Enlightenment (and European) understanding of politics. The underlying presumption is that the colony is not a part of modernity, and therefore the tactics and strategies emerging from the subaltern are not political. But this mechanism of construction - as both homogeneous and pre-modern - failed to acknowledge the subaltern as a political subject inscribed in a complex modernity. The practice of the hunger strike was not relating to the use of immolation or sacrifice as a moral call to society, but to a political relationship with the state. (See Figure 6.24)



Figure 6.24: Hunger strike in *Iglesia del Pi* (Archive *La ciutat Invisible*)

They [the migrants] would not do a thirst strike because of a culture of immolation but for a strategic reason. If you do a thirst strike you are going to have a shock, and if you do it collectively, massively [the state], that is not listening to you as a migrant, will have to listen to you as a user of health services. And this is something the [European activists in the] Assembly would not acknowledge or understand. . .  
(Amarela Varela)

The hunger strike can be understood in terms of the ‘pagan and thuggish’ (Tronti, 1966) political action of the unrecognised agent that deals with the state outside any rhetorical or contractual logic. The relation of the subaltern is not through a civil representation of the interests of one sector of society, but through a political attack on the administration of the state.

The space of the *encierros* made visible all the complexity of the composition and conjugation - the encounter - between civil and political society as parts of the same struggle. The common engagement in this collective practice of translation constituted a contradictory spatial heterogeneity in which instituted relationships of power could be exposed and confronted (Mezzadra, 2010), resisting the attempt to articulate political struggle by reducing differences to a homogeneous and linear understanding of political consciousness. The role of European activists during the hunger strike was primarily to support the weakest participants, publish medical reports, and to seek strategies through which this form of enunciation could be effective in the media system.

The experiment of the *encierros* somehow made possible for the movements a questioning of the habit of negation (Bhabha, 2004) and to think about politics as a complex mechanism of negotiations, in which different actors with different positions have to play different roles.

I remember being struck by the permanent negotiating attitude of the Pakistani community because I was coming from the zapatist movement and it was very different from the radical positioning of the communities there. But then when it was the Pakistani community’s chance to state a radical statement my understanding of their attitude to negotiation changed [because of its effectiveness and consistency].  
(Amarela Varela)

At stake here was the complexity of different ways to relate with the institutional assemblage of the state as a counterpart of pure power - pure government. This marked a crucial shift, because for the European activist this apparatus has always been the expression of an ideological hegemony over society. For the governed, this hegemony did not exist. Only dominance. From the position of the un/governed, the state was a variegated system of non-representative institutions that tried to manage them as a population useful for social production. Contrary to the approach

of the European activists, the interlocutor of the movement was not the system of law - as hegemonic logic of duties and rights - but the functioning of governance - as administrative apparatus of dominance: the health system, the medias, civil society, the church etc. In this sense, illegal migrants were concrete and not ideological in their collective acting (Balibar, 2002): civil disobedience was not an individual act of outrage but a collective acting «as citizens that in a serious circumstance recreate citizenship through a public initiative of disobedience towards the state» (Balibar, 2002, 21 my translation).

For Balibar, three conditions configure this definition of civil disobedience and all of them are relevant in terms of analysing the heterolingual struggles discussed in this section as struggles for the right to the city. First, disobedience emerges as a practice in the urgency of the situation and the degradation of the legal framework and its legitimacy. Second, disobedience cannot be reduced to an isolated testimony in front of an injustice, but as a collective act for social change. Third, those who embrace civil disobedience have to be aware and accept the consequences of their acts.

In other terms, civil disobedience emerges as a practice in the crisis of the relationship between society and the state. Civil disobedience is not a civil practice of disagreement, but a practice that signals a disagreement with the civil foundations of society. In this sense, the practice of the *encierros* both inside and outside the churches constructed a transversal space of civil disobedience, both affirming a radical rupture against the civil articulation of society and institutions (also in reference to the *instituted* social movements) and themselves instituting a new composition of differences. Moreover, it was this practice of disobedience against the civil contract of politics that was to serve as a key to open and challenge the orientalism of social movements themselves.

## **Beyond citizenship, the right to the city**

The experiments I have analysed in this chapter marked a profound innovation in social movements moving from the ideological experimentations of the 1990s to an experimentation at the level of ways of doing through practices of translation that emerged out of the composition of memories and practices in concrete struggles.

In the *Macba* the experimentation with a new relationship between institution and society permitted a different engagement with social processes of critique and political participation, considering the public not just as the addressee of a process produced by the institution (or the movement), but as part of the process of production itself. In the *encierros*, the complexity of the social and political composition of Barcelona exploded in different directions. Both challenging the segmentation of rights and statuses imposed by the state, and challenging the risk

of orientalism and paternalism in social movements themselves, the *encierros* affirmed a new composition of differences through practices of radical negotiation.

The experiments of the late 1990s and the early 2000s sparked mechanisms of innovation in the forms of organisation, mechanisms which put production (of social rights) in the place of representation (of collective privileges); opinions and acts in place of interests (cf. Chapter 2). Furthermore, it configured the social production of political organisation as a process tangling up the production of space and the production of enunciations. Translation, difference and network emerged as keywords in the place of homogeneity and discipline.

In Chapter 7 I move from the experimental composition of the late 1990s and early 2000s to the socialisation of these experiments in the years between 2003-2007. Against the emergence of a new governmentality constructed in accordance to the new mode of urban production, immanent and antagonist practices were forged affirming enunciations and spaces, words and deeds as acts of insurgency. The shift is from singular experiments as situated practices of inhabitation/invention, to the struggle for the right to the city as a complex network of collective responsibility in the constitution of a possible autonomy in the organisation of social production. The reinvention of politics was constituted in a material crafting of alternative spaces for a communal living, where the enunciation of critique was not a practice for stating one's own otherness, but a moment of institution of new elements for collective living.

## Chapter 7

# Assembling the right to the city

I am not an urbanist, nor an architect and I do not live in the clouds. I live with my neighbours, and this is more bloody for me than to throw down a modernist building. They treat people like this, like they treat my neighbours: as drunk people, as whores. They tag you and from then on you are not worth shit. [They tell you] 'do not say anything because we are gonna fuck you'. (Manel Gonzalez)

The governance of Barcelona in the early 2000s became a battlefield. A struggle took place in the clash between the affirmation of the urban governmentality of *civismo* as a new practice of management of urban production and life, and the emergence of a scattered set of practices, spaces, acts and enunciations for the right to the city as a form of affirming both an antagonism in the face of the alienation and abstraction of urban life and of generating a degree of social autonomy with regard to social cooperation and urban life.

In this chapter I continue to examine the concrete happening of social practices in the urban social movements of this period as material organisation both of spaces that prefigured new worlds, and of enunciations that performed - made real - these worlds linguistically. Moving from the experiments I analysed in the last chapter, I chart how questions and practices spread out in different political networks constituting concrete prototypes of common living.

The experiment of new institutional practices in the *Macba* and the metamorphoses of the collective body in the *encierros*, marked the reinvention of publics and of public space as a ground for the constitution of a new set of political actions.

As argued in Chapter 5 and 6, network and translation emerged throughout the 1990s as practices through which to challenge the identitarianism and orientalism of social movements,

thus constituting the right to the city as collective appropriation and inhabitation of the city and as collective enunciation of new forms of subjectivation.

Here I focus on the right to the city as a way of *doing* the city. In the emergence of politics as a form of collective crafting of possible worlds, I move from these scattered acts of inhabitation and invention to the struggle for the right to the city as a complex network of collective responsibility in the assembling of new possible worlds. Before focusing on the growing struggle of the years between 2003-2007 it is useful to frame these movements in the emergence of *civismo* as a key form of urban governmentality in Barcelona.

## 7.1 The emergence of *civismo*

The civist ordinance (*Ordenanza de medidas para fomentar y garantizar la convivencia ciudadana en el espacio publico de Barcelona*, trans. “Ordinance of measures to develop and guarantee cohesion in the public space of Barcelona”) is a piece of municipal legislation the goal of which is «to preserve public space as a common and civic space for living together where everybody can develop his/her own activity of circulation, leisure, encounter in freedom, respecting the dignity and rights of everybody else, and the plurality of expression and different forms of life that exist in Barcelona» (Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, 2005, unpaginated). Following other municipal laws of 1998 and 1999, the ordinance dealt with principles for social behaviour in urban space: disciplining noise, games, graffiti, objects, aesthetics, informal activities and so on.

The ordinance was not related to the definition of a set of rules to be respected, but it defined moral and ethical principles for urban life: instituting a new level of governance in terms of disciplining the atmosphere of the city, its aesthetics, its usability. The disciplining of atmospheres transcended the traditional function of law, positing the ordinance in the definition of a new role for Municipal Right.

From the point of view of citizenship, this [legislative style] produces a territory of juridical indetermination, because the citizen does not know what to do. Since the norm is ambiguous, the one affected is the citizen that doesn't know if something is forbidden or not. [...] The problems of the ordinance, as Clarisa [Velocci] says, is that the margins are too loose and this gives power [to the police] and takes it away from citizens, and in this way it changes the relation with public space, and makes it possible to use [this law] on the basis of opportunistic political criteria. [...] But this is an aberration in terms of Law, because this means insecurity: one has to know what she can or not do, not depending on [something else]. (Jaume Assens)



The ordinance, which can be seen as part of a social-democratic reading of the ‘broken windows’ approach (Larrauri, 2007), instituted a new dimension for the authority of the *Ayuntamiento* through which the management of the territory could be addressed through coercive mechanisms of policing. The power of the *Ayuntamiento* shifted beyond management (*poder administrativo*). Instead, the ordinance affirms the right of the *Ayuntamiento* to exercise a function of policing over urban behaviours.

The ordinance gives new power to the *Guardia Urbana*, competencies that once were exclusive to the *Policia Nacional* [like the possibility of taking someone without ID to a Police Station]. It was already something quite problematic since this is a hybrid position, since one is neither free nor detained [...] So, according to the ordinance, the resolution of situations depends a lot on the Police: for example two guys non properly sitting on a bench [...] But what means proper or improper? What is the proper use of a bench? Who can determine this? (Jaume Assens)

In this context, the ordinance was proposed to the citizens as a set of norms around the use of urban space, a step further in the definition of a logic of governance for the city, a logic which was referred to as *civismo* within public debate.

To what extent noise, smells, and a lot of things like these – I am wondering, I mean – I don’t really know when the claims for more order and *civismo* started to increase. I don’t know if this is a subject created by the *Ayuntamiento* when they stressed these questions, or if there was a spontaneous development – maybe it is a combination of the two – but it is true that at a certain point all these emerging rights started to appear: calmness, silence and so on. And in neighbourhoods where these questions had never been problematic before, all these demands start to be very frequent. (Jaume Assens)

While collecting information and interviews on the rationale of this municipal law, Cristina Bessa, researcher in Law and Human Rights, discovered how the production of the social need for *civismo* started not in the streets of Barcelona, but in the rooms of the *Ayuntamiento* in 2003.

Even if the ordinance appeared as a law at the end of 2005 - as the sudden and effective reaction [to the problems denounced by the newspaper *La Vanguardia*] - what happened in that moment was the acceleration of a process, thought up and developed quite some time beforehand. From 2003 to 2006 a *Plan de Civismo* existed which sought to sensitise people around a set of problematics related to co-existence and *civismo* in the city. (Cristina Bessa)

A first dispositif in the production of this public opinion was a series of municipal campaigns and events for implementing a different image and imagination for Barcelona after the crisis of the Olympic model. The campaign of 2003 started to sensitise people around the question of rubbish (*Barcelona Neta*), noise, pets, and public spaces. A significant campaign was the *Civismo al Metro* addressing the segment of homeless and urban poor, in terms of begging, playing music, sleeping in the metro, defining as illegal behaviour and uses of public spaces, which had not been considered problematic hitherto.

A second level was the production of social fears, where the local press played a crucial role in defining and affirming a new set of social needs. During the summer of 2005, *La Vanguardia* - Barcelona's most important newspaper - produced 30 front page headlines in the local section on the problems related to *civismo*: tourism, noise, rubbish (cf. newspaper library of *Vivir* and *La Vanguardia* of June, July and August 2005, interviews with Cristina Bessa, Jaume Assens, Clarisa Velocci; Medina-Ariza, 2007).

In the first section of this chapter, below, I look at two different levels of the implementation of this governmentality in the social life of Barcelona. First I look at the function of the law in governing an emergent machine of production - the city. Second I look at how this law implemented a new normative subjectivity in the life of the city - a new citizen.

### 7.1.1 Civismo as constitutional law

The civist ordinance produced a new set of social needs and 'rights' constructed not around the Law as the explicit constitution of the illegal, but as the guarantor of social norms of common living capable of transforming aesthetics and behaviours into matters of law. *Civismo* emerged as a complex rationale to govern urban production (cf. Chapter 2; Foucault, 1991, 79).

This governmental dimension of the ordinance can be conceptualised in terms of the constitutional dimension of the civist ordinance, understood as a *charter* for Barcelona - at the same time as Catalonia was demanding an Autonomous Statute guaranteeing its status as a *Nation within the Nation*.

At stake there is Barcelona's identity [...] something like for the Nation state: there is an historical momentum for building the national identity. [The ordinance] is planned as a Constitution: it is the last of a long list of ordinances that were regulating the same questions, but here the idea was to regulate 10 phenomena [all together]: 10 phenomena of incivism as a catalogue of Rights and Duties of the Citizen. And they are presented as a Constitution, with all the rituals and wrapping of the Constitution, like for example the public debate on these questions. (Jaume Assens)

In this context, the ordinance served to implement a kind of constitutional sovereignty – to fix a constituent process of identity into a constituted manifesto of principles, dealing in the first place with the use of urban space. The *charter* affirmed not only a territory (urban space) but most of all the activities (urban life) under the constitutional regime of the new urban governmentality.

It is possible to recognise in the recent history of Barcelona, and especially in the governmentality of the *civismo*, a conceptual displacement of the notion of sovereignty away from the Fordist model. Beyond a state centred conception of sovereignty, the linchpin of emerging governance was no longer the mediated bargaining between classes guaranteed by the state, but the cohesion of a fragmented society in order to succeed in the neoliberal competition between urban regions (Gordon, 1999, Scott, 2001, Sassen, 1994, Soja, 2005).

The object of governance shifted together with the reorganisation of the mode of production. If the new economic engine of Barcelona was the biopolitical production of territory, governance needed to implement dispositifs to control these new spaces of production. The (Catalan) urban region became the body of the Nation, and the social life of the city, the *oeuvre*, emerged as its engine: the core of this mode of production.

Following Assens's definition of the ordinance as constitutional law, I analyse the concrete function of the formal constitutional law in governing urban life. What are the reservoirs of social production that *civismo* attempted to regulate and control? What forms of social behaviour and aesthetics of urban life are central for the affirmation of Barcelona in the global competition of urban regions? What are the rules and norms that can allow the abstraction of urban space as a commodity in the global market?

The rationale of this emerging mode of governance was connected to the question of how to extract value from social life, or how to abstract difference and make it a universal equivalent in the global market. At stake here was the configuration of the city as a factory (Harvey et al., 2009). The dimension of this factory was measured by the development of the value of territory and by the strategies for increasing such values.

Events like the *Olympic Games* (1992) and later the *Universal Forum of Cultures* (2004, cf. following sections) sought to accumulate social and symbolic capital, including practices of social cooperation, under the logo of the «Public Event». The volunteers of the Olympics, or the practices of the Forum, not only brought together and normalised social cooperation but also let it work in accordance with the command of the event itself. The statistics of the event, the numbers of the event and the economic flows of the event measured and commanded, in classical marxist terms, social cooperation (Marx, 1980, MacKenzie, 1984, Mecchia and Marazzi, 2007). The number of people working, the flows of information, the capitals invested or the people attending the events appeared as ciphers for the chaotic happening of urban life translating it homolingually into data for economic decisions.

The event eventually constructed a database of information for direct investment in the city. A set of urban-life commodities for the tourist economy, a geography of wealth and consumption for real estate investments, a map of economic and social indicators for creative economic development (the TTT logic of Richard Florida 2004, 2002). The event defined places of cooperation, codes, networks, ethics. It regulated the social behaviours of urban production, codifying the modes of production of Barcelona and converting it into a brand and a trademark (U.T.E., 2004, Balibrea, 2005, Harvey, 2009).

The aim of the ordinance was to regulate social activities according to the principles of neoliberalism, in the same way in which Marshallian citizenship related to the management of the factory.

And this is an explicit reason. I don't mean in the press, but it is explicit during the meetings [I had] with political people in charge of the city where people like Ferran Mascarell, before the ordinance was made public, stated that things cannot be sold or bought in public space. You cannot. You cannot sell lighters or decide tomorrow to sell stuff [on the street]. It is funny because this is the principle for regulating prostitution or street-selling as economic activities [...] but eventually what they really want is different. The other way for understanding it is, that you want the public space to be a place for selling and buying but only if this [exchange] is under the institutional monopoly. Really it is not about 'you cannot': 'you can' but only through certain channels, like the outside area of bars, and therefore through the authorisation and the normalisation that these conceal. (Clarissa Velocci)

For Jaume Assens and Clarisa Velocci, not only is it clear that «the discourse is social-democratic and the practice is neoliberal» but also this double logic of power makes possible its translation into a specific and specified control and government of each different social space<sup>1</sup>. At stake was the possibility of harnessing social life, to abstract and commodify urban space specifying the terms of governance according to the fragilities of each regime of labour.

The ordinance regulated social activities forcing them into an economic regime. When dealing with consuming alcohol in the streets, or informal street economies, as well as with street art, the ordinance did not censor or repress these practices themselves, but obliged them to move into the agon of the market – determining the uses of urban places. The terrace of the bar, the art

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<sup>1</sup>In the case of prostitution, «the argument is abolitionist and the practice is prohibitionist» (Clarissa Velocci) - where prostitution was criminalised and sex-workers were precarised. The same mechanism was specified for undocumented workers, in the opposition between the patronising Eurocentric discourse of human rights and the colonial segmentation of the labour market: precarity, detention, expulsion. In the same direction, the bureaucratisation of cultural life worked towards the improvement of economic profits but also towards a permanent normalisation of cultural production.

gallery, the private club, the privatised pedestrian street became the space where these activities could be statistically measured. This permanent state mediation of the social activity of citizens could be also analysed in terms of measuring. Participation in political referenda, attendance at civic centres (cf. Martinez Barcelo, 1998) as well as police statistics on social conflict (fines, emergency calls, interventions, mediations) technified the forms of political participation and made possible the presentation of Barcelona as a democratic city in statistical terms according to «an actuarial logic, like the one of insurances, with risk barometers and so on» (Jaume Assens).

The freedom of the *homo economicus* - the self-entrepreneur - was supported by policies obeying the principle of equal inequalities for all (Lemke, 2002), through practices of normalisation and codification of the forms of social cooperation. The institutional normalisation of the city, speculative urban development, the proliferation of creative, innovative and cultural clusters, the segmentation of the labour market and the precarisation of the urban poor served as Foucauldian dispositifs for the implementation of a new governmentality. The function of the ordinance as a constitutional law was not to guarantee equality but to guarantee competition, in order to transform the social production of space into exchange value. The normalised citizen of the *civismo* emerged as the productive subject for the functioning of this mode of production.

### 7.1.2 The *civist* citizen

The constitution of the new citizen was built around a neoliberal understanding of citizenship as an instrument of command over social behaviours - in the same way that the role of the factory's machines was to command, discipline and organise the cooperation of workers (Marx, 1980, Hardt and Negri, 2009, Negri, 2003, Virno, 2004). I focus here on how this subjectivity was produced through three different layers: individualism and responsibility, the policing of everyday life, and the production of stranger-ness.

In the first place, the ordinance addressed the citizen as an individual in relation with other individuals, reducing problematic social behaviours to a personal responsibility in which unequal social relations has no role.

There is a dissociation, a disconnection between the singular problem of a beggar and her relationship to society. It is [the affirmation of] the neoliberal paradigm, moving from the social democrat to the neoliberal – especially when this is related to exclusion, marginality, where once the attempt was to recuperate [these situations] through the intervention of social services. [Whilst] the ordinance pledged towards a punitive and exemplary direction. It is about expelling them, to erase them, as in the situation of immigrants. (Jaume Assens)

The ordinance set rules and established fines for sex workers, for the homeless, for the young kids, but it never dealt with the social roots of these conditions, configuring society as a set of individuals in permanent competition.

Secondly, policing became the mechanism to guarantee social co-existence. In other words, the production of fears and the decline of communitarian mediations determined control as the only mediation of collective interests both transforming citizens into police and extending the power of the police itself. The ordinance indeed called citizens:

To be themselves the executors of the ordinance: to be the denouncers [...] It is not just something envisaged as an option but as a duty: if you see something that can be sanctioned in the name of the ordinance you have to denounce it, and if you don't, you can be fined. [...] It calls for this idea of the commitment of the citizen towards this Constitution, where the citizen is a community officer. [...] Something that Foucault explains very well analysing bio-power and the way in which people interiorise the rule of law... (Jaume Assens)

This dimension of 'community policing' is accompanied by an increased power for police.

In any conflict you could have with the *Guardia Urbana*, they have a new tool. And this is clear because fines [for *civismo*] are never alone. This is typical of Fridays or Saturdays the one that throws the can, then there is a discussion [with the police] and this triggers a range of possibilities. [...] And we would ask the Police just to stick to the norm, it was the only possibility we could pull from. Apply the ordinance, don't just do whatever you feel like. Because in this absolutely arbitrary power of Police, you just apply whatever you feel like. [...] But what they have been granted is that policing is articulated to [and guaranteed by] political power. (Clarissa Velocci)

This double dimension of dependence of the citizen and the power of the police triggered a mechanism for disempowering the community. Since the citizen always refers to the police as the mediator of social conflict, she accepted a position of permanent subalternity in which the word co-existence loses its meaning. Living together is increasingly regulated by the mediation of the state, the intervention of political power, the dissolution of autonomous social relations and the subjugation of urban life to the control of the police.

There are words that they are taking away from us and *convivencia* [co-existence or 'living together'] is one of them. It is funny, before you could talk about *convivencia* and you would be referring to something else, but now it is a word about intolerance. Before 'convivencia' would talk about solidarity, intertwining, differences, but also

about respect, integration, and now *convivencia* is about... well... at the end of the day it is like saying *Guardia Urbana*... (Clarissa Velocci)

Thirdly, and as a consequence, the ordinance defined as non-citizens those bodies that exceeded this normalisation. The ordinance acquired the moral authority to discipline the limits of citizenship, defining the internal outsiders and the immanent strangers that, in the name of this *charter* of rights, could be 'legitimately' denied the rights of citizenship and 'governed' as productive subjects with only partial access to urban rights and urban resources.

This [ordinance] is about exclusion, the banishment from citizenship! Previously, through the occupation of public space one would have the possibility of a certain form of citizenship. But here, apart from the consequences [in terms of fines, control etc.], there is the construction of a discourse, of an image, of an identity. The identity of the other as uncivic, and therefore as non-citizen. The identity of the other is attached to the fact that she doesn't accomplish a set of obligations, and therefore has to be denied a set of rights. A scruffy man is just a drag on society. [...] The ordinance has never been thought of as a space for the integration of citizenship. This is not about *convivencia* in society, this is to guarantee just the *convivencia* of the few, excluding the others. It is a tool of exclusion. (Clarissa Velocci)

The ordinance aimed to govern the margins, or the internal outsides, of citizenship, implementing in urban space a dispositif of criminalisation and victimisation via the fragmentation of the population into different social statuses with different rights. From here, the differential access to the use of urban space and its permanent policing worked as tools for bordering the smooth space of the city, and channelling every different urban activity in a specific basin of governance (cf. Boutang, 1998, Mezzadra and Neilson, 2008). Belonging to the community, and access to rights, was defined by the way in which each subject used urban space, and *incivico* [the uncivic] came to be a way to reintroduce the segmentation typical of the colony - but also of the class regime - in a social-democratic urban space, through a linguistic and imaginative shift that allowed the Left in power to reintroduce discrimination without naming it as such.

The other part played by this norm is to legitimise what before was a politically incorrect discrimination towards prostitutes, the urban poor, migrants – now one can say *incivico*: there is a construction of a category of people that are uncivic and [...] with an institutional and juridical legitimacy. So those who before would be uneasy criticising them, now can use *incivico* as a democratic, multicultural and progressive category for attacking them and excluding certain kinds of people from the use of the city. (Cristina Bessa)

The civist citizen, in other words, emerged as the illusionary image of a member of the community fully committed to the project of neoliberal production. This image, however, has worked to efficiently govern the internal outsides generated by the ordinance itself, to precarise each of them according to their social positions, and to constrain the social activities of the city into commodified channels.

In the last two decades, urban regulation sought to govern and valorise urban space through the governance of territory. *civismo* represented the expansion of this model of control from urban space to the forms of urban life. However, it would be reductive to understand this process of abstraction as a seamless attack on the wealth of the common, or as an uncontested project of normative subjectivation.

Processes of resistance, negotiation, subjugation and autonomy coexisted with this shift in governmentality, determining the modulation of these policies of governance and generating radical and alternative models of social life. The right to the city is proposed here as a collective name for a set of movements that both materially produced a practice of critique - the experiences of analysis and articulation of this complex understanding of the ordinance - and also invented institutional assemblages, prototypes to confront and step against and beyond the form of control of *civismo*, against the annihilation and alienation of life and against the commodification and abstraction of urban space.

## **7.2 Prefiguration and performance in the struggle for the right to the city**

The above critique of the ordinance was generated by social movements. Moreover, it draws on and is informed by the pervious political experiences analysed in earlier chapters, specifically in relation to the reorganisation of the relation between society and the state in the enlargement of production from work to life and in the generalisation of the colonial model on the precarious population of urban Europe. However, it is crucial here to examine more specifically the movements against the ordinance within which the above critique was collectively produced and advanced.

My analysis starts from very particular places and experiences that constructed the struggle for public space in the city of Barcelona. However, 'public' seems too short a word. What does public mean in a city in which urban space is a battlefield in the process of privatisation and abstraction? In the affirmation of the civist governmentality as alliance between the organisation of public space and the valorisation for private profit, the segmentation between public and private lost its meaning. If abstraction and commodification attacked the very nature of the



urban as open space, limiting both access to and the uses of urban space, social movements occupied urban space to contest the dominant use of public space as space subjected to the logic of the market, and affirmed the use-value of urban space.

Where «the republic form emerged historically as dominant [to] protect and serve [private] property» (Hardt and Negri, 2009, 301), the logic of exchange value - productivity and profit - clashed with the use value of space in terms of coexistence as access and inclusion. Translating Hardt and Negri into spatial terms, the meaning of *res publica* - public thing - reached its own limit in this clash, signalling the foundational alliance between public and private that underpinned the modern conception of space (Hardt and Negri, 2009; cf. Benjamin, 1969, 1999a). If the function of public law was to limit the possibility of acting against private property (Hardt and Negri, 2009), public space constituted the basis for defining what private space and public rules are, and to regulate public use and access according to the interest of private property.

Against these converging interests, the struggles for the right to the city proposed the common use of urban space as an immanent and antagonistic practice that intervenes in and contests both public and private spaces. I conceptualise these practices as antagonistic in the sense of, on the one hand, subverting the abstraction of labour and space through *appropriation* and, on the other, opposing the way in which human activity was extracted, exploited and made into a commodity. Such practices can be understood as immanent in the sense that they are undertaken in the concrete institution of alternative ways of living together - through *inhabitation*.

This conceptualisation, however, has its roots in the 'productive failures' (Marcelo Exposito, Tomas Herreros) of *Las Agencias* and *encierros*, in the sense that appropriation and inhabitation emerged as defining dimensions of the emergence of a radical political practice, in terms of the crisis both of the civil conception of society and of the relationship between society and the state. As proposed in Chapter 6, the appropriation of the institutional space of the museum and of the churches constituted the ground for inhabiting public space through a different mode of expression, where the un/governed, the immanent strangers and the internal outsiders experimented with new languages and new forms of organisation. These practices raised the issues of institutional invention: how to make the experiences and the experiments built up in the margins of the 1990s and the early 2000s into spaces from which to affirm a different and incompatible logic of social life for the entire city? How to make such experiments become a prefiguration of a different world, an expression capable of transforming the world? At stake here was the battle for the right to the city as right to urban life. A battle between the civist logic of normalisation and abstraction, and the grassroots practices of invasion and difference to affirm a new understanding of the rights of the urban inhabitant.

Starting from the places of this concrete instituting, the struggle for the right to the city in Barcelona from 2003 onwards presented an important example with regard to the analysis of

the struggle around the rights of production in the urban machine: the rights of labour in the enlargement of production from the factory to the city, from work to life. Civist citizenship in this sense was a contested dispositif of the governance of production. The reinvention of politics tended to move from an anti-systemic to an instituent critique of urban rights. The enunciation of critique no longer operated as a practice for stating one's own otherness, a separatism of the margins, but as a moment of institution of new elements for collective living, of an alternative understanding of social life for the city in general.

The issue at stake for social movements, according to Virno, was «the polemic link between the issue of a good life (that we have seen in Genova or Porto Alegre) and life at the point of production (as fulcrum of post-Fordist production)» (Virno, 2005, unpaginated). How to move from the symbolic and experiential affirmation of a possible alternative - the prefigurative but isolated space of social movements - towards a materiality of social change - a socialisation of struggles? The polemic link is between the prefiguration of the good life, and the performance of social change; but, 'in the post-Fordist productive order' Virno affirms, this issue of performativity is necessarily linked to linguistic production - to the political production of collective enunciations.

[In the practices of social movements] realisation and result tend to coincide and this is why I speak of performativity. Performative is a movement that speech-acts, that deals with the goal by developing in everyday life a form of social cooperation that clashes with the post-Fordist productive order. It is true that this performative speech-acting is a ritual symbolic one, but symbolic is not a swearword here, because [in this model of the production of symbols] it implies a high degree of productivity. (Virno, 2005, unpaginated)

By producing a language, collectivities were producing a new way of organising social life. A performative production of enunciations that acted in terms of appropriation against the post-Fordist abstraction of language and inhabited the use of symbols as an insurgent act against the dominant regime of production in the neoliberal city. In this sense it is important to stress that these theoretical discussions about the performativity of enunciations were taking place in a widely attended series of meetings in 2004 in Barcelona organised by the *Macba* and social movements, where the space of discussion constituted a prefiguration of the world to come (Marcelo Exposito). How to move from the singular ethical interpellation - of the *citizen* - to a collective performance of the world to come - in the *city*? How to deal with the problem of consistency without reducing difference, singularity and imagination to the codes of the classic forms of organisation?

Here I analyse three elements of this material *assembling* of a new understanding of politics as a project of consistency. First, I look at the experience of the early 2000s, when global governance emerged as an ethical problem to contest and the anti-war movements and the aftermath of the *encierros* constituted a space to territorialise this ethical interpellation in the politics of the city. Second, in 2004 this ethic for a good life needed to be grounded in the responsibility of producing social alternatives against the precarisation of a urban life. I analyse the production of the *Euromayday* network as effort to constitute precarity as a space of coalition *from difference* against the neoliberal governmentality of the city. Finally, I examine the campaign against *civismo* as a space where differences were not reduced to unity. On the contrary the composition of different streams and modes of enunciations in the *Victimes del Civisme* campaign allows us to analyse how alliances emerged from fragility and trust to produce alter-subjectivities in urban space. An immanent and antagonistic right to the city.

### 7.2.1 Globalisation and its local discontents

In the early 2000s, as mentioned in the above discussion of the experience of *Las Agencias*, the organisation of global movements constituted a novel ethical configuration of social movements. Interventions at a local level acted as concrete processes against the effects of neoliberal globalisation. According to Marcelo Exposito, the space of global movements constituted a denunciation of global inequalities as well as the recognition of the affirmation of the culture of debt as the principle of neoliberal governance.

Projects like *Indymedia*, *New kids on the Black Block*, *Yo Mango* - against the background of the experience of *Las Agencias* - together with the global movements of support for zapatist movements (*Col-lectiu Zapatista*) participated in the global networks emerging after the demonstrations in Seattle on November 30, 1999. At the local level, the coalition of these groups in the *Movimiento de Resistencia Global* was connected to *asociaciones de vecinos* and civil society networks and, as a result of the struggles of the *encierros*, to the *Asamblea Para la Regularización sin Condiciones (APRSC)*.

The politics of the network called for the organisation of the movements as a space of encounter and composition and forced «the *okupa* movement – obviously not the whole movement – [to] get in contact with the outsides, with the university, with students that participate in the zapatist movement, or question globalisation, foreign debt...» (Tomas Herreros) allowing the emergence of a common ground not necessarily of analysis but of action on the streets of Barcelona (Marcelo Exposito). It is possible here to recognise a process of de-territorialisation, where everyday urban experience is referred to a global dimension of governance, and the sin-

gular actor situates herself in relation to the common space of the network as a ground from which to resist neoliberalism (cf. Deleuze in *G comme gauche*, in Deleuze and Parnet, 1997).

The global movement has not been an *opinion movement*, but a movement of people organised in new ways. There were meetings with lots of people, maybe 300-400 to plan the activities, the buses to go to Prague for the demonstrations, the next mobilisations or whatever. There were fanzines and journals, there were seminars. What I mean is that it was an organised movement, organised from difference and it was very interesting because you could meet the typical guy that had been in the okupa movement for 10 years, the other that had been 8 years in the *Zapatismo*, or someone that was at the university and was interested in these kind of questions... or the artist that wanted to produce posters and so on... (Tomas Herreros)

Here I have not the space to analyse the global movements against neoliberal governance in Barcelona, but I want to stress the importance of these mobilisations in signalling a different engagement of these movements with the global dimension of neoliberal governance, and therefore in determining different practices of urban space. If, on the one hand, the global movements affirmed a great mobility of militants - what was called, as a joke, *zapa-tourism*, in reference to the international brigades in support of the zapatist movements - the counter-summit, on the other hand, is interesting in terms of understanding the reconfiguration of the practice of urban space. Counter-summits marked a shift in the presence and the practice of urban space, affirming a spatialized engagement with the global evanescent powers of the IMF, WB, G8 and so on. Here where the ethics of the global movements produced a de-territorialisation from the specificity of place, the counter-summit configured the possibility of re-territorialising globalisation as a process affecting the everyday life of Barcelona.

The counter summit is *the* technical invention of the anti-globalisation networks in relation to urban space and power. It instituted a different way of engaging with power in urban space: first calling on civil society as a whole to demonstrate, and not just a marginal sector, second affirming a direct clash with power on the question of legitimacy of decisions and therefore on democracy itself. Hundreds of people were participating in the organisation and proceeding from very different backgrounds - not only from autonomous militancy or radical arts. It was an explosion of difference and redefined the relationship between the social movements and the 'society' of the entire city. (Marcelo Exposito)

Indeed, the space of mobilisation was not anymore the partial experiment of a marginal actor, but the call from the 'internal outsiders' of the urban space, from the internal outsiders, for a general

mobilisation of society. Radical social movements were, in this sense, the first to denounce the crisis of ‘national sovereignty’, the opacity of the decision making process of these global bodies and, in general, the crisis of the alliances between neoliberalism and democratic representation: the advent of *technocracy*.

This inflection towards ‘civil society’ (as it was termed within the global movement, with the significant non-recognition of the problems proposed by Chatterjee), however, produced ruptures inside the movement itself. Some groups considered this openness as a step towards the possibility of re-configuring urban politics and public debate. Others, instead, looked at it as a reformist move. The goal of the first was to translate the experimental prototypes of social movements into a mobilised society: to socialise struggles.

In the anti-war mobilisations in which millions of people participated (2003), this mechanism moved a step further. The enunciation of social movements were no longer limited to a negotiated representation of the identitarian debates of political movements. Instead, a scattered enunciation emerged in the chaotic composition of the banners that took the squares and the streets. It was a point of inflection, where the voice of social movements changed in tones and in force, affirming themselves as the collective voice of a mobilised society. The experience of participating in and organising public space became the immanent expressive force of the movement: an unmediated production of enunciations. ‘Aturem la guerra’, a voice on a banner, became the name of the movement and the composition of differences became the only way to participate in this movement.

[The *okupa* movement] acted reactively. They self-marginalised themselves. In the same way in which [during the 1990s] some people had been disoriented by the *okupación*. . . *pues*, in the global movement, the *okupa* movement themselves became disoriented. . . And I think because they didn’t appreciate the social transformation that was happening in those years, the de-territorialisation and therefore the re-territorialisation that was happening, in the globalisation and so on. . . because if you understand that the frame of your life is different, then you can get new opportunities. . . and the *okupa* movement – well, a part of it, the reactive part of it – they still had a lot of ‘tics’ [engrained habits], very similar to the extreme left [of the 1990s], very ideological. Instead of involving themselves in what was new and being transformed. (Tomas Herreros)

The movement against the War constituted a laboratory for reinventing urban social movements where the experimental practices of the previous years became part of a wider collective culture of direct participation and public debate. (See Figure 7.1)



Figure 7.1: *Stop the War* banner on a balcony of Barcelona (Archive *La ciutat Invisible*)

Starting from this process of generalisation, a sector proceeding both from the experience of the *Agencias* and from the *okupa* movement started a project called *Espais Alliberats contra la Guerra* (Liberated space against the War) which sought to translate the ethic of the anti-war movements into a practice of critique about Barcelona.

[They were saying] ‘What is your War?’ (and now people say ‘What is your crisis?’ – This is interesting: the way in which slogan and elements come back now and then). And for this they started to organise parallel demonstrations, taking advantage of the Iraq War to talk about the wars happening in everyday life – the Iraq War is part of a Global War that is happening at different levels and we want to question society about this War and most of all to denounce the hypocritical position of the Socialist party that is now in the street to mobilise people. (Jaume Assens)

The tension between de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation is here particularly clear. The imagination of a different urban life, the prefiguration of a space in which to institute new rights needed not only to de-territorialise the experience of the city in the global flows of neoliberalism but also to re-territorialise itself in the concrete effects of these flows in the politics of Barcelona’s streets.

Following the failure of the *Aturem la Guerra* movement to stop the war, *Espais Alliberats contra la Guerra* organised a series of public occupations in the spring of 2003 and public debates on the Global War as ideology of governance inscribed on the body of the city, as an ideology of total mobilisation of the social body in the logic of War. The inhabitation of space and the one-to-one interpellation - mobilisation and agitation - became the keys of intervention. Public space was the ground on which to propose an open and autonomous sphere of public debate on the effects of neoliberalism, globalisation and war in the urban space of Barcelona.

‘What should we do?’ There was a natural effervescence of life in Catalonia, and the people on the street... It was something incredible and we wanted to do something more, something else to stress and maintain that collective dimension beyond the demonstrations. Beyond the space-and-time of the demo. So we started to occupy buildings. People was staying there for the night. Someone would come to play music and all of a sudden this would generate a place of exchange, culture, fiesta... it was something that we borrowed from experiences like *Reclaim the Streets*... The possibility of thinking politics as something joyful. (Nuria Vila)

It was a practice of critique of the politics of representation, beyond the ineffectiveness of the anti-war movement as a pacifist movement, but also a prefiguration of a different way of doing politics and inhabiting public space, contesting the homogeneous global culture of the city

centre. The gap was between an ethic of a good life that called the individual to protest against the Iraq War, and a social political action happening here and now to transform urban life as such (Virno, 2004; cf. Chapter 2). The occupation of space was a radical prefiguration, addressing not only the question of war, but also the generalisation of war as a tool for governing everyday life, as a mechanism to translate the logic of war as ‘total mobilisation of society’ (Sanchez Cedillo (2009), Junger (1993)) to the neoliberal governance of the city.

It is worth returning at this point to the analysis of the movement surrounding the *encierros*, and their development in the years following 2001, as a similar transformation of social movement dynamics was also at stake there. A shift from ideological principles to a collective and mutual responsibility can be detected in the struggles for migrants’ rights after the *encierros* of 2001. The movement was no longer limited to dealing simply with the questions of residency documents, but addressed the experience of urban life in general as an effect and a part of neoliberal urban governance. Ikabouren remembers this as the moment in which he recognised migration and illegal status as one specific position in a wider spectrum of urban precarities: «we were not ignorant anymore: you start to know people, to understand that there are a lot of things going on, some of them are positive, some of them are negative» (Yidir Ikabouren).

We would meet in the *Casa de la Soli* every Saturday in the afternoon, and there the experience of the *encierros* was going on. I mean we kept dealing with all the problems that were still open. Finding ways to get papers, and lots of other stuff: courses, *Barcelona Activa* [a public agency for labour insertion]. And from here a different social life started for us. This was a radical change. (Yidir Ikabouren)

After the *encierros*, the space of organisation started to deal with the problems concerning housing, contracts, education. *APRSC* emerged as a space in which not only to maintain a discussion on migrants rights and provide legal assistance for regularisation but also to informally configure a different social life for migrants.

If I had not been in the *encierros* I would have not done my training – I would not even know about its existence. I got a driving license for buses, for free. It was a Local Government thing, with EU support. *Barcelona Activa*.

And in *Papeles para todos* there was people looking for these courses. If someone is interested in it. A lot of Pakistani people got driving licenses. ‘Are you looking for a work in this or that?’, ‘do you need papers?’ or for the building industry, carpenters. Everything. Or flats. For renting the flats of a relative of someone. [...] or if they don’t want to rent a flat to someone for being a foreigner. So some local goes, gets it and then you go and live there with them... (Yidir Ikabouren)



The question being raised here was similar or contiguous to the one emerging from the global movements. Beyond the ethical struggles around residency documents, there was a concrete fight around the common experience of the city<sup>2</sup>.

However these contradictions between the ethics and the pragmatics of urban struggle triggered a space of discussion in which to converge as a common subject against the neoliberal governance of urban life: the ethical interpellation of the global movements, the resistance against the total mobilisation of the War, the affirmation of the space of struggle, as a struggle not only against the law but in terms of everyday life, determined the shift towards a materiality of action in the city. A mobilisation of the strangers, outsiders and un/governed to claim their voice. In this context, the precarisation of urban life was proposed as a field struggle between urban insurgencies and neoliberal governmentality.

### 7.2.2 Common spaces versus neoliberal urban precarity

The space of negotiation and transformative performance created by social movements during and following the global movements, the migrant struggles and the anti-war mobilisations launched the *network* as organisational practice for political action from 2004, as the constitutive element of the configuration of platforms capable of responding to urban politics from the pre-

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<sup>2</sup>However, it can be stated that this was an informal space of passive assistance. According to Muñoz, the position of the European expert continued to reproduce a segmentation between migrants and locals where the structure of power of legal knowledge constituted a space of production of hierarchies. In this sense, the maintenance of such structures of power imposed a reaffirmation of the political discourse as something dominant over the problems of everyday life, relegating the mutual support to a space of informality (Raquel Muñoz). A segmentation that emerged dramatically in the second wave of *encierros* in 2005, where the concrete problem of guaranteeing papers was secondary to the coherence of the demand for 'papers for all'. Some occupations started to call on people to sign (fake) contracts to permit migrants to meet the conditions and apply for regularisation. For the most traditional part of the movement this was considered as a prevarication of the principles of unity and universality of the movement: *Papers for all*. In a conflict between homogeneity and difference, the need to maintain the ideological coherence of the discourse affected the choices available for the occupants.

We presented all of them in the district and we had many contracts in excess. It was the last day, and people were going crazy... We arrived from Gracia with the contracts and it was really pathetic, for me it was terrible. Because people were saying until the last minute 'papers for all or nothing', and then in the last moment they said 'ok, give me the contract' and everybody running to queue in the offices and I thought what a lack of foresight. All of us knew that this was a system to get a lot of people regularised, you know? [...] *Joder* I did want papers for all too... but why not trick the law to obtain them? We need to be more realistic. How do you think we are going to get papers for all? Ok, 'Papers for all' but then now, in this moment, if we can do this other thing, let's do it! (Raquel Muñoz)

What is relevant here is not only the contradiction of the rhetoric and concrete effectiveness of the campaign - on the one hand the affirmation of the principle *papers for all or nothing*, and on the other the concrete functioning of the governance of migration - but also the limitation of the freedom of action of the actors involved. Illegal migrants were not necessarily militants and their questioning was about their everyday life: the possibility of staying, having a contract, achieving family re-unionification. A problematic relation of power emerges between the coherence of the discourse on universal rights and the concrete extension of the access to rights for undocumented migrants.

carity of urban actors. *Euromayday* served as an opportunity to make concrete and active the definition of a new (alter) subjectivity - the precarians - in a specific context of neoliberal governance, understood as a «WAR ECONOMY set in motion by an ongoing act of imperial aggression to establish the world hegemony of a neoliberal model [...] by privatising utilities, housing, health, schooling, the ether, thus reinforcing the neoliberal bias in favour of stronger inequality» (Euromayday, 2004, unpaginated). (See Figure 7.2)

*Euromayday*, as European insurgence of the precarians, was not the universal representation of a social class against a new form of exploitation - i.e. a demand addressed to the coming European state to act as the interlocutor of an international working class struggle around casual labour. On the contrary, *Euromayday* affirmed the translation of the logic of the anti-war movements and the migrant struggles in the lock-ins to the field of labour rights in urban space, defining it as a struggle for rights in urban production. From here, *Euromayday* emerged as a concrete alliance - a trans-metropolitan movement - against the precarisation of life, constituted upon each specific configuration of neoliberal governance in each city, but also upon the ground of the singular expressions of each local composition of different resistances.

In the evening of May 1st, 2004, some ten thousand demonstrators marched from the central square of the university through the city to the beach of Barceloneta: sans-papiers and migrants, autonomous activists, political activists from left-wing and radical leftist unions and parties, art activists, precarious and cognitive workers of all kinds, who were just working on naming themselves precari@s. Like a moving and accelerated version of the practices of *Reclaim the Streets*, a stream of dancing, chanting and painting people flowed through the inner city of Barcelona. (Raunig, 2010b, 86)

The production of this abstract machine connected the different struggles in Europe on the same day and with the same set of demands, but also related in a singular way to the local dimensions of precarity (Raunig, 2010b). It was neither diachronic - it did not define a teleological goal around which everybody had to converge - nor synthetic - reducing difference to a universal programme - and this determined the constituent dimension of *Euromayday* as a continuous experience among differences both at the European and at the local level (Marcelo Exposito).

On a European level, the *Euromayday* network was the result of the encounter of two streams of struggle, one proceeding from the global movements against neoliberalism and the other from grassroots unionism. In Barcelona, *Euromayday* was composed of many of the previous struggles, allowing a novel, temporary and heterogeneous alliance between different collectives and backgrounds. From the radical artistic scene to the global movements, from the *okupas* to the *asociaciones de vecinos*, from the local groups to the *sin papeles*. This heterogeneity was not



Figure 7.2: *Euromayday 2004* (Euromayday, 2004)

composed in the articulation of a static programme but in the configuration of a set of actions for each particular context, constructed around the theme of precarity not only as a struggle for labour rights, but as a complex intertwining of different layers of fragility at stake in urban experience. In Barcelona the possibility of composing this heterogeneity emerged in the critique and boycott of the *Universal Forum of Cultures* in 2004.

In my view, *Mayday* put together a social response against the Forum, something real... there was a wide network, I think even on the side of the museum. The museum was not very visible in all this and I think this has been the last moment in which the movement of opposition to the Forum catalysed a social movement that was already experiencing a deep crisis, you know? But the Forum was creating a real enemy and therefore mobilising [society]. (Jorge Ribalta)

The question of urban speculation and ‘mega-events’ as a dispositif to exploit urban life, the function of policies and discourses of participation in the production of the global Barcelona brand, as well as the proliferation of borders in at the level of urban experience, all defined the common framework of action (U.T.E., 2004). (See Figure 7.3)

Conceived by Barcelona’s former Mayor Pasqual Maragall, and promoted by the *Generalitat de Catalunya*, the *Universal Forum of Cultures* sought to constitute a space of events around peace, sustainable development, human rights and respect for cultural diversity. However, it was widely considered controversial both because of the sponsorship of \$2.3 billion by corporations like Nestle, Coca-cola and Telefonica and because of the relationship of the Forum with the culture of the city. If the *Olympic Games* can be understood as the affirmation of a new kind of citizenship based upon the entrepreneurial participation of the citizen in the production of the wealth of the city, the failure of the *Universal Forum of Cultures* constituted the end of this model. Low levels of volunteer participation, and a broad critique produced by universities, *asociaciones de vecinos*, cultural institutions and social movements, made explicit the incompatibility of a discourse of participation in urban policies and the abstraction of urban life in the interest of neoliberal capital.

The construction of this space of critique and invention rested upon the production of different dispositifs of action in urban space. First of all the parade, as reported by Gerald Raunig:

The streets that the demonstrators passed through were transformed into painted zones. Under the protection of the demo, the city was dipped into an ocean of signs: political slogans, posters, stickers, references to web sites, labeled pedestrian crossings, contextualising wall painting commented on here and there by performative actions. [...] A mixture of ad-busting, cultural jamming and contemporary



Figure 7.3: Boycotting the *Universal Forum of Cultures* (Archive *La ciutat Invisible*)

political propaganda reigned as a generalisation of the street art of sprayers and taggers: an abstract machine concatenating invention and performativity, war machine and theatre machine, the assemblage of signs and the assemblage of bodies. And over all of this was a slogan expressing the continuum between insecurity and fear in precarious living conditions and the threat of the terrifying monster precariat in all its contradictoriness: *La inseguridad vencerá*, insecurity will prevail... (Raunig, 2010b, 87)

Second of all, a set of seminars was organised by the *Macba* to create a public space in which to critique the relation between new forms of labour exploitation and urban transformation in Barcelona. The cycle of seminars started in May and ended in the autumn, addressing a question posed by Foucault on the 'the art of not being governed or, better, the art of not being governed like that and at that cost' (1997).

*Como queremos ser gobernados* was at the end of the Forum while *Mayday* was just at the beginning... [The Forum] started around May and I think we were euphoric because Naomi Klein and Antonio Negri came in that period - right at the opening of the Forum. And we had a lot of resonance, and I don't know how to explain it, but the feeling was of creating for real a public sphere of opposition, in a hegemonic frame, if you want; but this other thing was happening and it was successful. (Jorge Ribalta) (See Figure 7.4)

The space of the museum was challenged and other spaces became the fulcrum of the discussions, like the *Espai Obert* and the University of Barcelona. In order to ensure that this critique was to be a collective practice a «relational model» was composed «favour[ing] interaction among artworks, individuals and their environment, and bringing about new readings and images of the local society in dialogue with the global» (Macba, 2004, unpaginated) through the inclusion of a coalition of movements and institutions in the organisation of the events.

Third of all, the possibility of a critical voice against the hegemonic discourse of the emerging civist governmentality was built not only upon the presence of important intellectual figures but also through a set of workshops and seminars to organise the contents of the demonstration as well as through the practices of the demonstrations themselves.

The spreading out of creativity, the diffusion of the artistic into the society of cognitive capitalism, thus strike back once again; as the logos and displays of corporate capitalism that uniformly distinguish inner cities are indebted to the creativity of a multitude of cognitive workers, the creativity exercised in these jobs now spread out as an opponent to these logos and displays of the urban zone of consumerism. (Raunig, 2010b, 86-87)

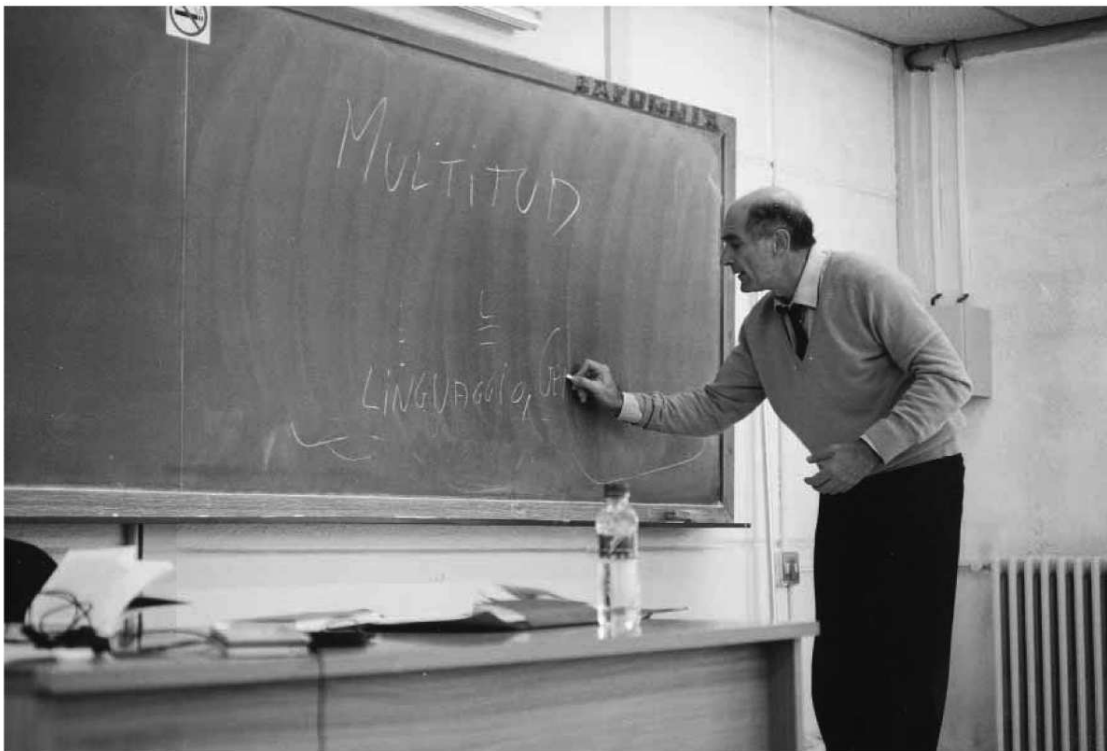


Figure 7.4: Virno during a workshop of *Como queremos ser gobernados* (Desacuerdos, 2005)

Out of this autonomous recomposition of creativity, in the second part of the year, seminars and discussions were organised in different places with specific attention paid to the respective parts of the city transformed by the *Universal Forum of Cultures* (*IES Barri Besos* high school, Palo Alto and *Centre Civic de la Mina*, and in other improvised spots in the Poble Nou-Besos area). Maps were produced to analyse the function of the Forum in the production of urban space in relation to immigration, war economy, ecology and culture. (See Figure 7.5, 7.6)

In sum, three dimensions constituted the *Euromayday* local network as a prefigurative space. First, the dimension of difference for which the political force of *precarians* was built upon fragility and the centrality of alliances, trust and mutual aid - ‘finitude, dependency and vulnerability’ (Butler in Grvzinic and Reitsamer, 2008) - as political practices to contrast individualised exploitation.

I think that trust, as well as personal ‘phobias’ and ‘phobias’ influence the terrain of politics in the space where we are moving in [...] There is a mutual affectation that has to do with affects as well, you know? Where affectation means that you feel modified... everybody... [is] capable of adapting and of negotiating their own positions and I feel this doesn’t mean that you have to renounce something. (Eva Fernandez)

Second, *Euromayday* affirmed the transnational dimension of precarity as a machine of exploitation that intervenes differently in each territory but according to a general logic of the local specification of exploitation and global abstraction of labour into value, calling therefore for a trans-metropolitan organisation of struggles. Third, public space was reinvented and appropriated as a political space of struggle, where occupation was not a ‘manifestación’ (Spanish for *demonstration*) of the un/governed, but a performative and expressive autonomous production against urban governance.

A *philosophy of praxis* emerged in the construction of these campaigns, where the culture of organisation (the network), the relation between civil and political conceptions of space (public space) and the connection between the culture of struggle and the concrete modes of exploitation and abstraction emerged as tangled up with each other. The empowering encounter among differences became the trigger of new dynamics of alliance and organisation.

### 7.2.3 Composition in the network, or speaking as many

In the context of the de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation of social movements throughout the global movements against neoliberal governance, the anti-war movements, migrant struggles and the *Euromayday* network mobilisations, one of the problems that emerged was the relationship between enunciation and its performativity, or the ability to change urban life beyond the



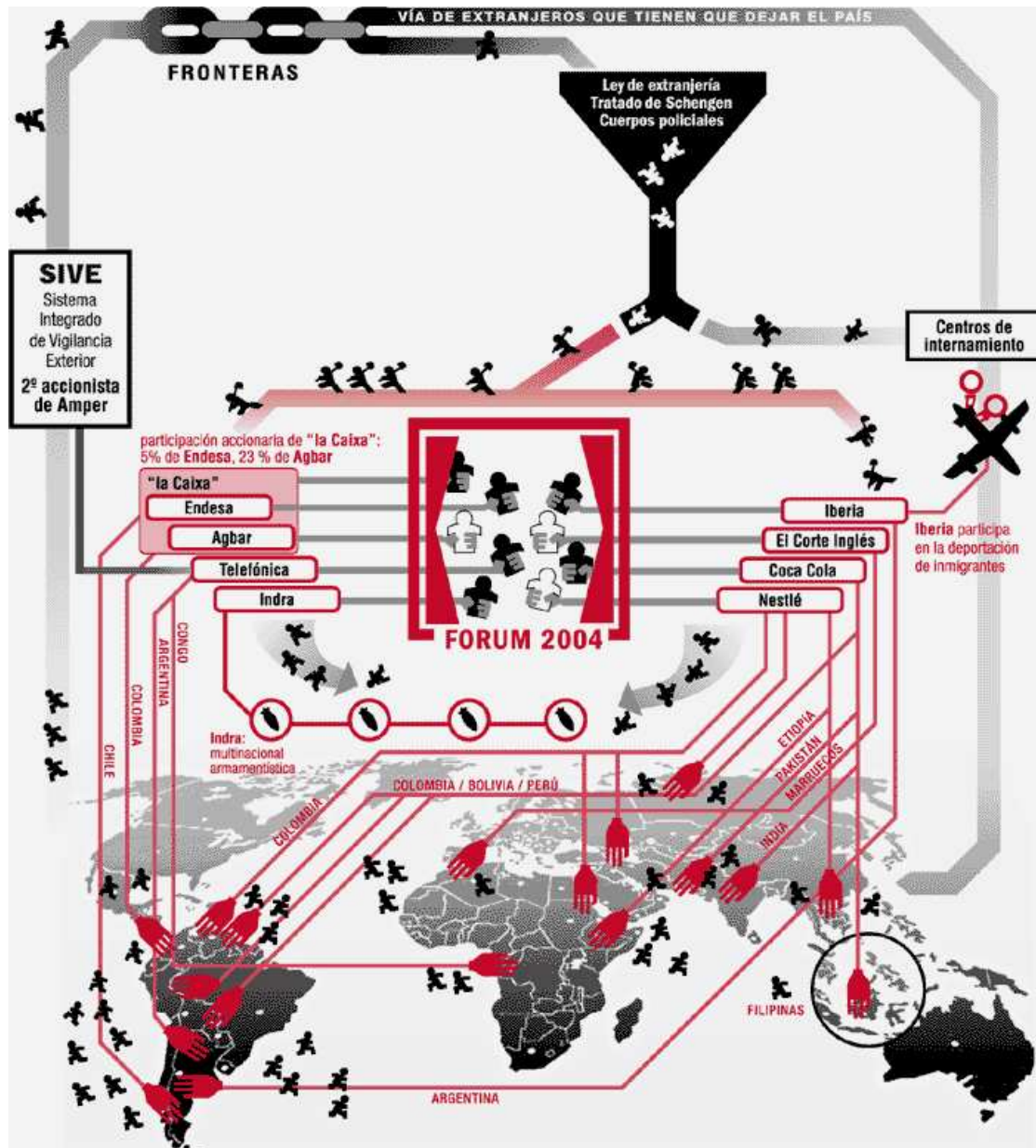


Figure 7.5: Conceptual map on migrant labour involved in the *Universal Forum of Cultures* (Archive *La ciudad Invisible*)

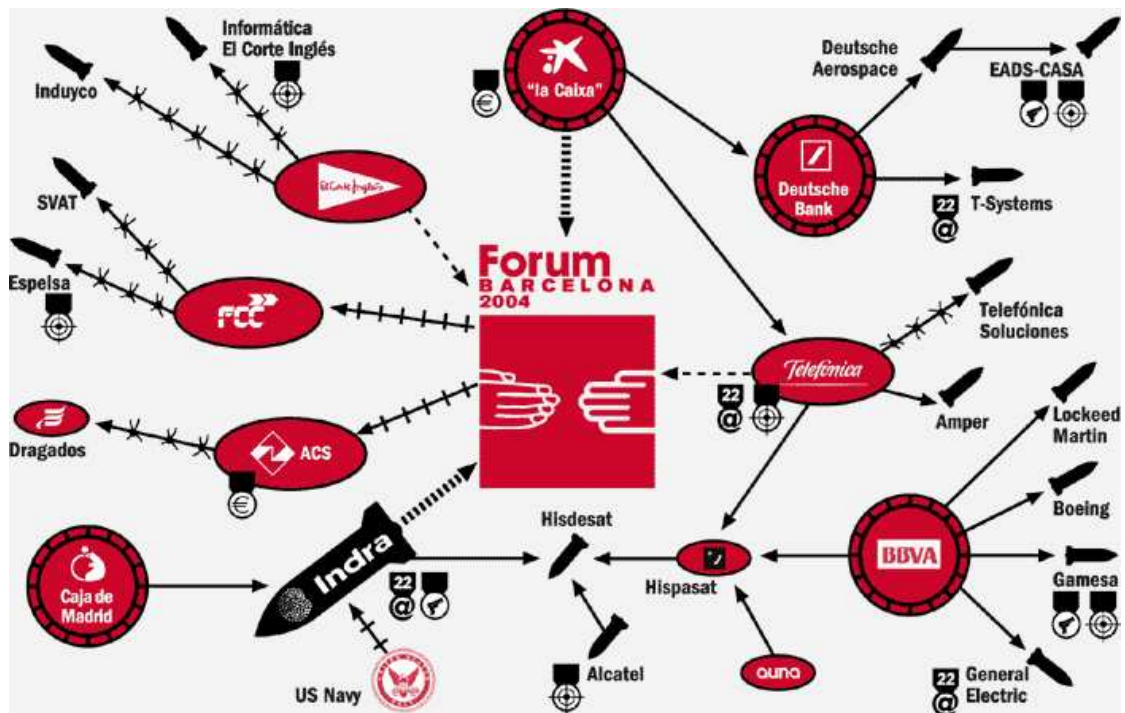


Figure 7.6: Conceptual map on the brands investments involved in the *Universal Forum of Cultures* (Archive *La ciutat Invisible*)

specific happening of the prefigurative experiment. Even if the prefiguration of space instituted the possibility of a post-identitarian open space for radical politics, wherein society could engage in a collective project of alter-subjectivation, these spaces were incapable of making their enunciations the ground for the institution of another reality, they were incapable of producing ‘social change’.

With the emergence of the civist governmentality in 2003-2005, questions around the effectiveness of enunciations and the responsibility of *performing* social change constituted a field of conflict for social movements in need of rethinking the function of struggles and determining a crisis of the neoliberal governance of the city. How to make these prefigured spaces durable in time? How to make struggles not only prefigurative of an exception but also performative of a proliferation of alternative life-worlds? This is the question I address in the last part of this chapter.

The network is under focus here, no longer as a practice through which to produce a space, but as a collective production of performative enunciations *from* difference. Different experiences analysed in this thesis are useful in terms of understanding the importance of not reducing the complexity of difference as a principle in the production of performative enunciations. From the critical production of the public as experimented with in the *Macba*, to the constitution of the *encierros* as a space of translation among internal differences and towards an antagonistic society, the attempt to speak collectively as many is indeed the space where prefigurative spaces and performative enunciations are assembling a new world. To deepen this analysis, I focus here on the space of the *Victimes del Civisme*, a campaign led by *Miles de Viviendas* in 2005. (See Figure 7.6)



Figure 7.7: *Victimes del Civisme* (Archive *La ciutat Invisible*)

Proceeding from the core group that organised *Espais Alliberats contra la Guerra*, *Miles de viviendas* [Thousands of houses] emerged as a space which was capable of developing an open project for the right to the city as a transversal alliance connecting the squatters and the

*asociaciones de vecinos*. In *Miles de Viviendas*, the experimental question of constructing the public – addressed in the *Macba* – was translated as an everyday practice of radical politics. How to make bridges between different parts of society? How to make countercultural practices become social patterns? How to link and transform the old forms of union organisation to deal with the situation of precarious workers and undocumented migrants?



Figure 7.8: *Miles de Viviendas* (Archive *La ciutat Invisible*)

*Miles de viviendas* focused its work on the production of networks as a mode of articulating alliances. The development of campaigns through net-working served as a practice for engaging with, and composing the ideological differences of, groups. The alliance with the *Federación de Asociaciones de Vecinos de Barcelona* was crucial in terms of moving from the empty gesture of radical identitarianism to a performative expression of urban movements capable of intervening in the politics of the city.

I feel this is about flows and the possibility of influencing each other, no? Because reality is very dynamic: things are always changing and keeping always the same

posture for 10 years makes no sense. Strategically it is meaningless. And politically as well, no? I mean, you need to look for ways of articulating yourself with other people who come along, and also for you there are a lot of previous generations, no? (Eva Fernandez)

The basis of negotiation and transformative performance was something «that has to do with sensibility of actors. It is not just about ideology but about situations where you can have a good relationship with some sectors, with some people and this is what makes possible the translation of [this affinity] into common actions» (Eva Fernandez). Differences were embedded, negotiated, assembled in the making of an open political space. Through these campaigns, *Miles de viviendas* participated in producing a practical critique of the abstraction of urban life, analysing the transformation of urban space as a practice of speculation for profit, and the precarisation of life as a dispositive for the governance of urban production<sup>3</sup>.

In this same stream of actions, *Miles de Viviendas*, as well as the *Euromayday* of 2004, configured not only a set of common spaces, but also of common words. The continuous inhabitation of differences produced a common-speech composed in the permanent and incomplete translation of different registers of radical politics in the city. This configuration was still incipient in the *Euromayday 2004* parade, but possibly explicit in the complexity of registers that emerged in the campaign led by *Miles de Viviendas* and the *FAVB* against the civist ordinance.

By analysing the linguistic production of this campaign my aim is to demonstrate the role of enunciations in composing differences in a common urban struggle. Two layers have been fundamental. First the academic production of the critique of the ordinance and the analysis of the legal framework I analysed in the first section of this chapter; second, the networks that produced the campaign and the registers they used. I focus here on this second element.

One of the first networks to oppose the ordinance were street sex-workers, especially migrant ones, and, from the beginning, they constituted one of the most significant actors of the campaign. The campaign *Yo también soy puta (I am a whore too)* emerged against the civist ordinance in late 2004<sup>4</sup>, attempting to produce a public space from which to speak about the

<sup>3</sup>In 2003-2004, after *Espais Alliberats contra la Guerra*, *Miles de viviendas* launched a campaign against the violence of real estate and urban speculation in which different groups participated - *Footing contra el mobbing* (see Figure 7.7). The campaign was structured around workshops, the production of videos and research materials (Workshops Taller contra la Violencia Inmobiliaria y Urbana, 2006b). The outcome was various networks of direct action in the city centre, like the *Plataforma contra la especulació* that organised radical tourist routes to open a public debate over the hegemonic logic of market valorisation with regard to urban regeneration, or the *Plataforma per un habitatge realment public* that organised public lists for housing occupations with the aim of involving different urban populations in the practice of squatting.

<sup>4</sup>The specific campaign emerged in the framework of a campaign against the stigmatisation of HIV on the 1st of December and consisted of a series of t-shirts against discrimination calling people to inhabit the stigmatic position of HIV. After a series of discussions around the opportunity of challenging the stigmatisation of sex-workers, the decision to launch a campaign on this question was not shared in the network, and *Genera* decided to promote

*Perquè cap Ministeri farà efectiu el dret a l'habitatge...*

# Footing contra el Mobbing

Porta els teus patins,  
vambes, bicicleta...  
Nosaltres posem els dorsals

*Marató pels circuits de la Violència Immobiliària*



*Dissabte 29 d'abril a les 11 h*

Punt de sortida: Ronda de Sant Pau, 43 (Metro Paral·lel)

Convoca: *Guerrilla de l'Habitatge*

I durant tot el dia... Jornada de Desobediència a l'Ordenança Cívica  
a la Rambla del Raval (Organitzada per Victimes del Civisme)

[www.footingcontraelmobbing.net](http://www.footingcontraelmobbing.net) | [inscripciones@footingcontraelmobbing.net](mailto:inscripciones@footingcontraelmobbing.net)

Figure 7.9: Footing against mobbing (Archive *La ciutat Invisible*)

material conditions of life and labour of sex-workers, breaking the stigma and challenging the moralising discourse of *civismo* by denouncing the criminalisation of the urban poor promoted by the *Ayuntamiento*.

«There was a whole mobilisation and a debate going on in the city, around *civismo*, around *convivencia*, about the cuts over rights and the model of the city, on the use of public space, around discrimination» (Clarisa Velocci). However, the public speaking in this context - the t-shirt saying 'I am a whore too' - was perceived as problematic by sex-workers, and the militant group *Genera* autonomously decided to embrace the campaign in the attempt of pushing sex-workers in the public agora.

They [the sex-workers] were telling us: 'Why are you wearing this t-shirt. It is not nice'. They knew what is the stigma of sex-work and they didn't want us to experience it as well. Because if you wear the t-shirt you feel the eye of everybody on you, you feel the intensity of the stigma on your own skin! (Clarisa Velocci).

In this direction, for Velocci, one of the crucial forces emerging from working in a network was the empowerment from fragility that the alliance produced. The connection between the campaign against *civismo* and *Yo también soy puta* determined «the emergence of a social recognition that sex-workers themselves did not expect. They always talked about their voices, about the rest of the world as 'normal' and about feeling as a closed group. The campaign opened doors, alliances - and [triggered] the enthusiasm and euphoria of the women in the face of this support, these words and the wide participation [of ordinary people] - it was something really moving: to feel recognised as a political subject» (Clarisa Velocci). The t-shirt was widely distributed: «During the first demonstration [of *Victimes del Civisme*] we didn't even think about distributing or selling it, but everybody was asking us for it». This is not to be intended as a paternalistic engagement of the rest of the demonstrators with the subaltern: beyond expressing support for sex-workers, Velocci remembers, there was a wider collective acting against sexism.

There was a rupturing force itself in the word '*puta*' that was not talking only about prostitution [...] but on the stigma of *putas* for women in general. [...] The social control of women, the rupture of those norms imposed on women and the use of the word as an insult through the stigma and the social construction of a category of *putas*. [...] Something that all women share, a construction that controls us in terms of certain practices, dynamics, and forms of doing, on sexuality, on egoism, initiatives, on our own care in relation to the care towards the others. (Clarisa Velocci)

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it autonomously. The campaign emerged before the *Victimes del Civisme* campaign but become part of a general mobilisation against the ordinance.

The rebellion of a word on a t-shirt referring to sex-workers became the affirmation of a continuous experience of subalternity for every woman that did not fit in the stereotype of the «caring and generous woman» (Clarisa Velocci) and the possibility of denouncing publicly the opposition between the social values successful for the man in the public agora and the one needed by a woman in the private intimacy. «And the women [sex-workers] - that were reluctant at the beginning - felt 'empowered' [by this solidarity]. 'I am a puta. So what?' was our enunciation» (Clarisa Velocci).

In prostitution this is extreme and it is presupposed that a prostitute is nothing else - and the stigma plays to produce the fact that, as prostitutes, they are *others* [...] They are not women, sisters, mothers, daughters, pianist, university students. [...] Why do these categories have to be watertight chambers? [...] Prostitutes are [represented] like mushrooms that appear some hours of the day, and then disappear. (Clarisa Velocci)

Out of this moment of autonomous enunciation, sex-workers started to feel increasingly comfortable with the use of the t-shirt themselves, and decided to use them during some demonstrations against the civist ordinance. The campaign produced a set of 'gadgets' through which to call on people to identify and break the isolation of sex-workers: badges and t-shirts were produced saying *Yo También Soy Puta* as translatable enunciation in the production of a common space between the different subjects affected by the ordinance. This space of translation allowed skaters, sex-workers, street-sellers, and precarians to share the production of direct actions, satirising the meaning of the ordinance (Voluntarios contra el Civismo, 2006a) and criticising the porous frontier between *Cinisme and civisme* (Taller contra la Violencia Inmobiliaria y Urbana, 2006b). Activists, civil society, undocumented migrants, sex-workers and skaters shared public space in different ways, to claim their right to inhabit urban space and enjoy it according to a logic of use-value and not of exchange-value. (See Figures 7.8 and 7.9)

'Yo también soy puta' and 'Everybody is a skater' were the symbolic slogans of this encounter, emerging out of a campaign that prefigured a space of *convivencia* among differences. The recognition of the legitimacy and the right of the other to inhabit public space was in the first place the recognition of the freedom of the other as ones' own freedom. It was the emergence of another city taking voice, *la Ciudad de los Otros* (The city of the others)(Taller contra la Violencia Inmobiliaria y Urbana, 2006b).

I think that this, in the period of the civist ordinance, worked very well and in a peculiar way, because I can remember a meeting in the *FAVB* in which there were around 30 people and on my left there was an old man that was getting closer and closer to me, poor old man, he was from the diocese! And on the other side there were people





Figure 7.10: *Yo También Soy Puta* and skaters demonstrating against the civist ordinance (Archive *La ciutat Invisible*)



Figure 7.11: Demonstrations against the civist ordinance (Archive *La ciutat Invisible*)

from transgender and trans-sexual groups - and in the press conference we organised to present the coalition there where entities working with sex-workers, transgender and trans-sexual groups, *asociaciones de vecinos*, unions, social centres... and in the entities working with sex-workers there where nuns, for example (Eva Fernandez)

And then I remember going to have meetings in squats, and it was the first time for us for being in contact with certain sectors of the movement. And I remember arriving at the meeting - and it was funny also practically - with high heels, miniskirts walking up the derelict stairs of this or that place. And in the face of very different aesthetics of militants. And it was an exercise of mutual tolerance, because also in the movements there are stigma of belonging and identity and this was about breaking up with all this. And this was something very rich and generous, also in the mutual listening in terms of practices, ways of doing, styles and aesthetics. (Clarisa Velocci)

It is important to recognise how the academic and legal critique was constituted strategically in these assemblies, both recognising and exploiting the civic value of institutional spaces like the university and the bureau of lawyers. This permitted not only an unexpected displacement of the subaltern voice from the street to the university, but also a reconfiguration of the function of lawyers and academics not just as representatives of constituted knowledge, but as social agents of critique in the alliance among irreconcilable differences. This was achieved by producing new material languages in which the frontier between academic and common culture could be broken apart.

Indeed, the production of political action around the civist ordinance marked a space of experimentation with regard to languages and practices. In a conversation with Nuria Vila, she explained how the obligation to produce in common forced all these actors to create new worlds

of symbols to share a language. The performative creativity of language produced not only novel enunciations, but most of all - and via the production of enunciations - new alliances, new urban spaces, new modes of social life.

A first example of this creativity is a questionnaire that intervened in the public debate assembling satire, research and common sense as practices through which to constitute a public discussion not only on the ordinance but on the logic of participation prompted by the *Ayuntamiento*. In the claim for a public space in which everybody is respected, the civist ordinance introduced a norm for which playing in the street can be punished with a fine. The answer of radical movements was ironic: «how could the *Macba* building be used from now on?» (Voluntarios contra el Civismo, 2006a, unpaginated). Another question deals with one of the problems presented in the first part of this chapter, «everybody has the duty to collaborate with the municipal authority. [...] Accomplishing his/her duty of collaboration, every person can inform the municipal authority of witnessing acts against *civismo*».

Right off the bat, tell us what crime you would like to report to the police: a) a kid playing with a ball in the square outside your flat b) beggars sleeping in a cash-machine on the corner c) the fact that the Mayor is a pimp d) a French architect with phallic delirium [in reference to the *Torre ACBAR*] e) 30,136 tourists with Mexican hats d) having a car with a windshield while waiting at a red-light e) a girl in a miniskirt, we might as well admit it - they all look like sluts... (Voluntarios contra el Civismo, 2006a, unpaginated) (See Figure 7.10 and Video V.8)

Similarly, the *Taller VIU*, *Video Metropolis* and *Videos X-Taller* produced through workshops and cooperation a set of materials - texts, videos, narratives - of free circulation of meanings and objects, borrowing from the creative-commons and copyleft culture, to link the campaign against the ordinance to a wider critique of the normative subjectivation imposed by these urban policies and affirming a project of emancipation and alter-subjectivation.

These products did not deal with the production of an ideological discourse about the effects of the ordinance but with singular narratives capable of revealing the cracks and the possible escapes from this form of subjectivation. *El botellón* - a sort of musical about tourism and urban riots - showed the paradox of a city-brand based on the culture of freedom and *fiesta* where the use of public space is increasingly disciplined. 'We forbid what we promote' is the apocryphal declaration attributed (by social movements) to the Mayor of Barcelona. *Barcelona posa't guapa* - 'Barcelona, make-up yourself' in reference to the institutional campaign (cf. 4.3.1) - and *Siliconia*, criticised the normative aesthetics of the ordinance and the conflict between street-art, everyday life and the *civismo's* project of normalisation. All these documentaries were emerging from collective workshops, as in the case of *Cus-cus* in which the organisation of a



Figure 7.12: Reading out the questionnaire of *Victimes del Civisme* (Archive *La ciutat Invisible*)

*comida popular* (a street-lunch) became the space for the encounter of Moroccan and Spanish inhabitants of Barceloneta, reclaiming the role of public space in producing the possibilities of an empowering *convivencia* (Nuria Vila). (See Video V.9 and V.10)

In conclusion, in the above section, I examined the campaign against *civismo* to look at how the composition of different streams and modes of enunciations in the *Victimes del Civisme* campaign made possible alliances through which to emerge from fragility and trust to produce alter-subjectivities in urban space. The alliances against the civist governmentality affirmed a performative practice of enunciation capable both of constituting active 'publics' through the practice of networking, and of experimenting with practices and languages to make the outsiders, strangers and governed capable of speaking, or at least of translating among themselves.



Figure 7.13: The performative enunciation of the *incivica* street (Archive *La ciutat Invisible*)

In these processes, the production of an immanent and antagonistic right to the city, as prefigurative space of new worlds, was made possible through its linguistic performance, since it was speaking to each other - as a practice of encounter and common affection - that permitted the proliferation of the singular experiment in the space of the city. (See Figure 7.11)

## The dis-symmetric dialectic of the right to the city

In this chapter the dis-symmetric dialectic between the governance of urban space and the struggles for the right to the city demonstrated the dynamic opposition between the objective management of urban production and the subjective attempt to forge different modes of urban life. The civist ordinance affirmed the realisation of a model of governmentality of the city that disrupted any civil relationship between society and the state and imposed a purely coercive power over the life of the city, both expanding/intensifying the capitalist abstraction of urban life in general and generalising the colonial mode of governance over the urban population. I analysed the constitutive dimension of this ordinance as the production of a law that reconfigured sovereignty around the need for social cohesion in relation to neoliberal competition between urban regions, governing the life of the citizen to directly control social production. This machine of governance is based on the forcing of social activities into the realm of economics, and the increasing power of the private sector in the decision-making of the city. An entrepreneurial city in which the legitimate citizen is the one that participates in the production of the urban commodity for the global market.

The focus of this analysis has been the production of a new subjectivity, recognising a three-fold dimension of the civist citizen. Firstly, the production of the city as a sum of atomic individuals in permanent competition. Secondly, the emergence of the state and the police as the only trustworthy actors to mediate collective interests. Finally, the production of a new population of immanent strangers, internal outsiders and un/governed. The acts for the right to the city emerged in this context as deeds and words, spaces and enunciations which are capable of producing prefigurative and performative politics in order to challenge the crisis of the public and to affirm new possibilities for living in common.

The task of challenging this governmentality posed a number of problems for social movements. The first problem here is the relationship between the de-territorialisation of local politics in the emergence of the global movements against neoliberal governance, and the re-territorialisation of global struggles in the specificity of Barcelona. From the anti-globalisation movements in 2001 to the anti-war movements of 2003, from the struggles of the *encierros* to the practices of the *APRSC*, the smoothness of the neoliberal era was broken apart through the denunciation not only of something happening thousands of miles away, or in the terrain of ethics and principles, but of how neoliberal politics were inscribed in the urban space of Barcelona and in the continuous experience of urban precarity, ranging from the effects of the Global War on the securitisation of the life of the city to the concrete ways in which it was affecting outsiders and strangers. Second, the composition of difference became the element for structuring the political organisation of the un/governed. During the *Euromayday 2004*, networks emerged as a practice

through which to challenge the fragility of precarious lives and affirm a collective inhabiting of urban space as concrete prefiguration of the right to the city. Finally, although the ordinance has remained in force, the campaign against the civist ordinance was a space within which to affirm alliance among differences and fragilities as a practice through which to take voice from the internal outsides of the city, not only to prefigure exceptions in urban space (a problem which confronted the *Euromayday* as well as previous experiences analysed throughout this research), but to perform collectively social change as practice that affects urban life.

In sum, the civist governmentality exposed the role of the public (space) in guaranteeing the interests of private property and the crisis of the relationship between state and society. This crisis made visible the conflict between the governance of urban production, as precarisation and commodification of urban life, and insurgencies, as encounters that affirm the possibility of a different organisation of social life in the city. The encounters, spaces and enunciations I analysed constituted the invasion of public space by immanent strangers, internal outsiders and un/governed in the effort of unveiling the illusion of civil institutions as a solution for the inequalities of urban life, and of affirming difference and cooperation as principles in the organisation of the city.

Where the production of space is disciplined and urban space commodified, the production of autonomous spaces performs a revolutionary liberty of human activity. The affirmative autonomy of appropriation and inhabitation was the practice that allowed social movements to break borders and institute common spaces. Heterogeneity and alliances emerged as practices against the exclusion and segmentation of urban life, and exploding internal borders allowed to let different voices, bodies, questions constantly move, enter and exit, in and out. Interior and exterior became part of the same machine: the city as a factory, life as production.

In this context, struggles for the right to the city construct an instituting practice that resists abstraction and brings a new reality into being. A step beyond the borders imposed by citizenship - in the explosion of the civil society and in the emergence of a political society in the city - social movements do not claim the rights of citizenship as formal belonging to an integer community, as *representation of rights*. Instead, they mobilise society to assemble a common right to the city. A performative and prefigurative practice of autonomy affirmed through the appropriation of life and the inhabitation of difference. The assembling of the right to the city is no longer a merely prefigurative space, but a prefigurative space *of production*: the production of performative enunciations with the capacity to change the world and affirm the right to the city *immanently*.

## Chapter 8

# Conclusions

In this thesis I posed questions as to the material assembling of politics on the streets of Barcelona over the last thirty years as a collective practice that has contested the neoliberal governance of urban life and attempted to institute alternative ways of organising social life. Here, I review the structure of the thesis, signalling my original contributions and connecting this investigation to contemporary social mobilisations in Spain.

As I argued in Chapter 2, an analysis of struggles for the right to the city enables us to examine the dis-symmetric dialectic between governmentality and insurgencies in terms of the organisation of urban production and the distribution of urban wealth.

On the side of governmentality, we have seen a shift from the exception of Fordism and the implosion of the colonial regime to the reconfiguration of a neoliberal regime apparently capable of controlling the dynamics of urban production through dispositifs of dominance and normative subjectivation. On the side of insurgencies, I have argued that immanent strangers, internal outsiders and the un/governed assert an autonomous force for the organisation of urban production based on composition and translation among differences: instituting a new paradigm of politics in the crisis of representation. Examining urban and neoliberal governmentality, my focus has been on the potency of the insurgencies, on their proliferation and on the possibilities that emerge from these social processes in assembling alternative life-worlds.

My contribution here has been to introduce new bridges between existing bodies of literatures, building upon the common ground between autonomous and post-colonial marxisms and inserting the critical studies on urban dynamics and citizenship in the tensions determined by the rise of a post-Fordist and post-colonial paradigm of capitalist accumulation. In this emerging dialectic of governance, I have argued, the urban becomes the fulcrum of the conflict between governmentality and insurgencies. Given the overlap of citizenship and production in the urban



machine, the right to the city emerges as a space of connection and translation capable of producing alliances between struggles over statuses and struggles around production. In this battlefield, I propose, three different, but contiguous, streams of analysis on insurgencies which are useful in relation to each other. Immanent strangers, internal outsiders and the un/governed, I propose, are not distinct subjects, but positions that allow us to engage with transversal layers of alter-subjectivation, emancipation and empowerment against the normative subjectivation and urban dominance of neoliberal capital.

In Chapter 3, I focused on my own practices of research. As a militant, I consider these practices as part of a collective attempt to assemble alternative urban life-worlds. I therefore proposed a set of questions emerging from the subterranean history of militant research to think my own ethics and practices of research focusing on the problems emerging from analysing the composition of social movements, from questioning their internal conflicts and from participating in the political production of practices and concepts.

My contribution here has not only been to insert fragments of a rather different genealogy of militant practices but to use these methodologies not as a rigid discipline for my research, but as a tool-kit for dealing with the problems I encountered. To this end, I proposed three approaches as particularly rewarding for this research. First, from the practice of *operaismo*, the focus on the dynamics of the composition of memories in social struggles, rather than on the ideological consciousness of the subjects, allowed me to escape an ideological approach to the becoming of social movements. Second, the debates and the practices of the feminist movements allowed me to problematise the over-romanticisation of social movements and urged me to analyse the conflicts between control and emancipation inside social movements themselves. Finally, the reflections of subaltern studies led me to look at the politics of expression and the politics of translation as crucial sites in which to analyse the relations of production in the contemporary regime of capitalist governance.

In the empirical part of the thesis (Part II), I moved back and forth from governmentality to insurgencies, in order to contextualise the analysis of Barcelona's social movements in the broader becoming of the relation between society and the state in the crisis of neoliberal governmentality.

More than shifting between the level of governmentality (as rationality of management) and insurgencies (as collective effort of social production), I have, crucially, sought to trace the relationship between the processes of social mobilisations and the transformation and development of the neoliberal modes of governance. As such, I tried to avoid the approach, to some degree characteristic of contemporary debates around neoliberal governmentality, which passifies people - or simply ignores their role in producing escapes both from control and for emancip-

ation. Thus, the right to the city is advanced here neither as a practice of resistance, nor as a programme prescribed from a position of externality, but as an interpellation, from within, of the practices and the concepts produced by these insurgencies which seek to express their destituent, instituent and constituent potentials. This dis-symmetric and partisan dialectic served as a ground from which to examine the struggles for urban rights as composition of insurgent machines, assembling different pieces, practices and conceptual gears.

Throughout Part II, I marked three different ruptures in the logic of governance that both responded to and conditioned the becoming of urban social movements. First, I analysed how the crisis of Francoism, as the deformed mirror of the European crisis of Fordist industrial regulation, determined the reconfiguration not only of the institutional configuration of Spanish society, but also of the productive and infrastructural organisation of urban life (Section 4.1). Second, this integral reconfiguration determined the rise of a new mode of governance to valorise the effervescence of urban life and culture and translate it into the global chains of neoliberal valorisation (Section 5.3.1 and 5.3.5). However, third, the crisis of Fordism and the proliferation of the colonial model as regulatory frameworks of production, gave way to a profound crisis of citizenship itself as dispositif for managing the access to rights (Section 6.1). Under civist governmentality, I argue, a neoliberal model of citizenship arose in order to govern urban production - producing a new citizen, but most of all a series of immanent strangers and internal outsiders in the city (Section 7.1).

In this context, the struggles for the right to the city expressed the refusal both of a model of organisation of urban production and of a normative subjectivation of urban inhabitants, and, eventually, the permanent uprising of the un/governed in the city. My aim in this thesis has been to recover and interpret a subterranean diagram of these urban movements and of the concepts and practices they produced, in order to pose problems to the contemporary becoming of social movements and social mobilisations. To this end, my research has produced a diagram that helps to characterise transversally each of the cases I analysed, and allows to specify the practices of appropriation and inhabitation that compose the struggles for the right to the city: heterogeneity, difference, production, metamorphoses, instituent, invasion, public, identity, network, composition, translation, prefiguration, performance, autonomy.

It would be pointless to look for a linear evolution in the importance of these words for the contemporary movements. Rather, they emerged and proliferated because of a diverse and differentiated accumulation of singular experiences, and because of the situated and partial, as well as tactical and strategic, needs of social movements in their becoming. However, in producing a narrative, I have tried to cluster them but also to focus my attention on partial elements and problems specific to each. This diagram can therefore be understood as a set of

historical-situated prisms to deal with the complexity of these practices and concepts as operative parts of the insurgent machine that I have called 'struggles for the right to the city'.

In Chapter 4, I looked at how the emergence of new political practices affirmed the right to the city as a heterogeneous politics, at a time - the crisis of Franco's regime - when the autonomy of the city as sphere of production overlapped with a reinvention of politics. In the productive regulation of urban society, social movements moved from the factory to the city, affirming the time of life and urban space as key dimensions of production and therefore of organisation. The occupation of the factories and the proliferation of urban movements in the neighbourhoods, in the universities, and in the city, configured a new subjective composition of radical politics. In this explosion, the emergence of new bodies in public space determined a series of internal crises and conflicts in the formerly labour-centred social movements. The political practices of the gay artists and activists and the campaigns of feminist groups allowed me to explain how *experience* became the ground to assert the right to the city not only as space of heterogeneity, but as the right to difference. In the constitution of the productive autonomy of the *oeuvre*, the politics of difference emerged as a politics of life-at-production, where difference is the source of value to be abstracted in the global value chains of neoliberalism. The struggle for the right to the city became therefore a practice of resistance to this abstraction, and to affirm a possible escape from the normative subjectivation of urban inhabitants.

After defining *heterogeneity*, *difference* and *production* as the elements that configured the surface of emergence for the social movements for the right to the city in the 1970s and early 1980s, in Chapter 5, I analysed how the fragmented social movements of the 1980s reacted to the individualisation imposed by neoliberal governmentality. Starting from depression and solitude, a new process of commonality was built: social movements moved from an ethical and individual interpellation of politics, to a collective and invasive practice, instituting a ground for experimenting politics outside of representation.

I analysed three streams in this constituent move of radical politics. First, I examined how, in the shift from the radical objection movement to the squatting movement, the politics of the body gave way to a molecular understanding of the politics of the metropolis, understanding the critical engagement with the metamorphoses of the city as a territory within which to transform the identitarian politics of marginality of radical movements into an urban politics of antagonism against the neoliberal subjectivation of urban life. Second, I focused on those radical artistic practices that, escaping from the gallery system and the commodification of art in neoliberalism, asserted institutional critique not only as radical refusal of the market but as practical engagement with the institutional problem in creative terms: as the invention of new institutions. Finally, I analysed how a set of personal and collective biographies, proceeding

from the colony to the metropolitan space of urban Europe, moved from being imperceptible to affirming a political practice of invasion from beyond European understandings of politics, as in the experience of the mobilisations for a place to pray, capable of configuring a new mode for the political inhabitation of the city. The constituent dimension of these experiences, I argued, affirmed *metamorphoses*, *invention* and *invasion* as crucial elements in the assembling of the struggles for the right to the city.

In the crisis of neoliberal citizenship, as I analysed in Chapter 6, this critical dimension of the movements moved to an experimental ground affirming, in the late 1990s, destituent practices capable of breaking apart the normative relation between society and the state.

Thus, on the one hand, I addressed the crisis of citizenship in the relations between civil society and modern institutions via the experience of the *Museum of Contemporary Arts of Barcelona* (1999-2001) where the modern function of the museum was challenged and a new conception of public space and of the public itself was affirmed, as the museum experimented with the discursive dimensions of critique, and with the material production of public and networks in the space of the museum itself. On the other hand, examining the critique of the modern citizen in the second part of Chapter 6, I focused on the analysis of the *encierros* (the lock-in of churches in Barcelona in 2001). In the crisis of the relationship between civil and the political society, analysed in the *encierros*, the appropriation of space and voice by the un/governed affirmed the encounter among differences as a political force not longer built on the fixed reduction of outsiders to an internal position of subalternity, but on the affirmation of translation and composition as practices for organising struggles.

Here, I argued that this challenged to the concept of *public* and *identity* defined the ground for experimenting with the creation of alternative ways of organising social life via *networking*, *composition* and *translation*.

Taking these themes forward, in Chapter 7, I examined the practices of appropriation and inhabitation against civist governmentality, analysing the right to the city as a collective practice striving to produce a new world in common via the assembling of practices, concepts and agents.

Moving beyond the experiments of the late 1990s, in the 2000s the politics of life against *civismo* generated an instituent assembling of alternative modes of social subjectivation, via the appropriation and the inhabitation of urban life. In this sense, in Chapter 7 I examined first, how social movements in 2003-2004 emerged as a space to territorialise the ethical interpellation of global movements in the concrete politics of the city. Second I focused on how, in 2004, the appeal for a good life was addressed through the responsibility of producing alternatives of social organisation within the precarisation of urban life. Finally, I examined the campaign against the civist governmentality to look at how the composition of different streams and modes

of enunciations allowed alliances to emerge from difference, fragility and trust to produce alter-subjectivities in urban space.

Thus, I argued that the *prefigurative* and *performative* dimensions of the struggles for the right to the city composed an instituent expression for a radical assemblage of politics on the streets of Barcelona, the aim of which was to produce life-worlds of *autonomous democracy* in the productive organisation of urban life.

The empirical part of the thesis has sought to *adjectivise* the right to the city according to a set of practices and concepts that constituted these struggles over the last thirty years. I have looked therefore for attributes, specifications and problems that allowed me to deal with the definition of ‘the right to the city’ in innovative terms. And I have proposed destituent, constituent and instituent as possible prisms to cluster the transversal *tags* emerging through my analysis; with these three dimensions allowing me to think and interpret the struggles for the right to the city not as an ideological framework to explain social movements, but as a diffused factory in permanent production: a social factory that by producing concepts and practices continually strives towards the destitution of the normative subjectivation and the dominance of urban neoliberalism and to institute and constitute the right to the city as ‘renewed right to urban life’.

In summary then, the thesis has made three key contributions. First I have aimed to locate the struggle for the right to the city in a broader analytical debate about the dis-symmetric dynamics of social production. In the dialectic between the production and the management of society, between cooperation and control, between insurgencies and governmentalities, urban space emerges as a significant place to look at the material assembling of the biopolitics of urban production as politics of emancipation against abstraction in the organisation of urban life.

Second, by adopting a problem-posing and militant approach to research, I have investigated and questioned the production of concepts and practices by social movements; recomposing a genealogy of the militant understanding of research and the production of knowledge that have allowed me to pose questions about the practices of research and the relationship between the production of knowledge and the becoming of social movements. This is, I think, a particularly relevant issue in the contemporary crisis of modern institutions, such as universities, museums, institutional politics or political parties.

Third, my analysis has depicted a set of pieces that assembled the machine for the struggle for the right to the city over the last thirty years. I clustered these pieces into different prisms, each of them referring to a different dimension: constituent, destituent, instituent. I used each case to propose a diagram of the right to the city not as a linear evolution but as a complex machine of production. This diagrammatic approach has allowed me to stress the problems in the emergence of expressive politics, that lies beyond the crisis of representative politics. Hetero-

geneity, difference, production, metamorphoses, instituent, invasion, public, identity, network, composition, translation, prefiguration, performance, autonomy are the transversal tags I have proposed to engage with the struggles for the right to the city. However, the distinction between these terms and these dynamics has to be considered as dictated by the need to exemplify and discern processes that are in reality permanently tangled-up. Indeed, at the end of this exercise of separation, it is crucial to affirm here the ‘consubstantial’ interaction of these acts - of constituting, destituting and instituting - in crafting the political happening of social life, and in assembling the becoming of politics on the streets.

In order to respond to the research question I posed at the beginning of this thesis, it is useful to look at this syncretism among the constituent, destituent and instituent dimensions, as well as among practices and concepts in the struggles for the right to the city, as the ground from which to analyse the social practice of urban space in the 15M mobilisations. In the *plazas tomadas*, in the occupied squares, the singular and transversal composition of urban memories that produces social mobilisation in Barcelona today can help us to engage and participate in the discontinuous and powerful production of insurgencies that link Tahrir, Puerta del Sol, Plaça Catalunya, Zuccotti Park.

This is possible, I argue, if we recognise the primacy of the ‘ways of doing’ rather than of the ‘logic of ideas’. This is the point of departure to understand the right to the city not as an independent issue but as a material and conceptual bridging between the struggles for the right of labour and citizenship in urban production. The right to the city links the struggles around statuses with the struggles on production, proposing practices and concepts to access the social wealth of urban life as concrete alliance between these two fields. This primacy of *the ways of doing* of struggles however should not be understood as the dominance of the ‘power of technologies’ - a *technocracy* - over the ‘logic of ideas’ - *ideology* - but as the need to problematise the relation between ideas and ways of doing when analysing social struggles. Indeed, it is necessary to integrate the analysis of the production of concepts with the material assembling of politics; since the struggles for the right to the city *produced* (and *are producing*) concepts and practices against exploitation in the urban *oeuvre*. The struggles for the right to the city in other words affirm a technological approach to contemporary politics, ‘beyond’ the ideological rigidity of traditional revolutionary politics, and ‘against’ the technocratic governance of contemporary austerity. A politics of tension, conflict and rupture.

I hope my attempt in this thesis has been fruitful in affirming a practice of empowering for *us*, the un/governed, the immanent strangers and the internal outsiders. And I hope that, by composing streams of analysis and material experiences in the analysis of the dialectic between governmentality and insurgencies, I have contributed to the struggles for *assembling politics on the streets* as autonomous forms of social organisation and alter-subjectivation in urban life. To

conclude, a Pierre-Menardian stroll (Borges, 1964) through the invisible city of Octavia can give us an embodied and less intellectualised imagination for a possible end to this story.

Suspended over the abyss, the life of Octavia's inhabitants is less uncertain than in other cities. They know the net will not last forever. (Calvino, 1997, 61)

# Appendix - List of Videos

- V.1 *Som un barri digne*, Battle et al. (2012)
- V.2 *Sombras Xinas*, Garcia et al. (2012)
- V.3 *Numax Presenta...*, Jorda (1979)
- V.4 *Ocaña's Retrat Intermitent*, Pons (1978)
- V.5 *Huelga General in Barcelona's petrol stations - CNT AIT 1977*, Video-Nou (1977)
- V.6 *Okupa, cronica de una lucha social*, Royo and Ferre (2005)
- V.7 *New Kids On the Black Blocks, The Video*, New Kids on the Black Blocks (2002)
- V.8 *Cuestionario sobre la nueva ordenanza civica*, Voluntarios contra el Civismo (2006b)
- V.9 *El botellón, Taller contra la Violencia Inmobiliaria y Urbana* (2006a)
- V.10 *Cus cus*, Video Metropolis (2006)



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