Seeking other urban possibilities.
Community production of space in a Global South city (Rosario, Argentina).

Accumulation by dispossession is one of the driving forces of the flexible economies that emerge in the context of political decentralization and ascent of local governments. These administrations quickly abandoned the previous communitarian ways to adopt strategic planning and corporate governmentality. Urban configurations have been impacted by the modulations of a political economy that places real-estate market as a strategic field for the development of prosperous businesses. Supported by local governments, investors and developers stimulated the processes of both recycling and replacing of the industrial city's infrastructures for those of a post-industrial city. These new configurations show strong urban contrasts, disconnections, and incompatibilities between the fragments affected by renovation and the areas left to abandonment. In part, this tendency in the interplay of forces that organizes what some have called 'neoliberal city' is based on fragmented processes of renewal trough gentrification. It led to neoliberal urbanism as a path with no alternative. However, on a material level, this urban restructuring had to deal with –and eradicate– some alternative ways of life and production of the city. On a symbolic level, it had to erase the traces of these experiences in order to establish the inexorability of its project, which sought to commodify the city by fragments, with full consensus and no dissidences.

This work reconstructs, recovers and reflects on other possible ways of producing space through hybridization of some global urban development trends and some local cultural expressions. Its purpose is to contribute to the conception of models of urbanization that make participation something more than a subordinated inclusion, whose aspiration is not to assimilate and dominate the other's potentialities, but to collectively produce a city as a "meeting place" where its value in use becomes a priority (Lefebvre, 1968). Here, we study the process of occupation, eviction, dispossession and concealment of two experiences of urban space production in a Global South city: Rosario (Argentina). We focus on the urban strip that has undergone the most transformations in the last twenty-five years: the Paraná waterfront. In this riverine space, the trajectories of two collective subjects will be analyzed. The first one looks to the future, leans on cultural production and is inspired by

movements of resistance to the new capitalist governmentality: the *okupas* (squatters from Rosario with an artistic approach). The other one is linked to the traditional universe of both production and relation between man and environment: the artisanal fishermen. Despite their differences, both communities presented alternative ways of producing and imagining urban space and brought up the need to generate differences from the corporate tendencies that commodified the city, its culture and its ways of life. They also collectively came up with new forms of producing, learning and sharing knowledge, in order to strengthen their self-organized communities. Through their practices and everyday resistances, they showed alternative possible paths and futures in a genealogy and cartography of the urban present.

Introduction:

Historically, cities contained multiplicities (Soja, 2008). Diverse collectives and individuals move continuously through urban spaces in trajectories that contemporary governmentality tries to read and codify. According to Foucault's classification (2006), this technology of domination focuses on the possibilities of a dynamic population. While sovereign paradigm legislates and disciplinary normalizes, the security paradigm –now dominant– creates an artificial environment (*milieu*) to rule over populations conceived as moving magnitudes. The core of that technology consists in working with a multiplicity by inducing the production subjectivities though individual practices of freedom.

From the distance, the devices that resonate those multiplicities gather and separates them, put them to work and, if the process is successful, absorb them. The subjectivities are entered in a weft of practices and knowledge that, despite retaining its diverse character, loses its autonomy and remains as an exteriority. In some cases that absorption turns into a *distanced dependence*, where the resonances of the device act in a reticular, remote and intermittent way. In other cases, multiplicities are attracted by those resonances and, after being recoded, they become part of a state, institutionalized or corporative governmentality.

Among all the multiplicities that emerge in the confines of governmental territoriality, sometimes ways of life that operate in a chaotic way in the eyes of power also emerge. These manifestations appear illegible and therefore difficult to codify. The illegibility of certain practices and ways of life exposes the blind spots of governmentality, whose power lies in the ability to observe, build environments, conduct behaviors and predict mobility. The positions of power elaborate strategies based on sight. By contrast, the subjectivities of

edge –a mixture of resistance and alternativity– move in an opaque environment and work from the tactic. The eye of power tends to disarticulate these forms of subjectivity, which considers unable to codify (Deleuze and Parnet, 1980). Every ‘administration is combined with a process of elimination’ but, through the refinement of government technologies, ‘progress allows an increasing number of these waste products’ (De Certeau, 1984: 180).

In the case of Rosario’s central shore, the second most important port city in Argentina, such logic can be traced in the requalification process carried out through urban planning. Its conflicting nodes are tied by the double logic of recomposition and erasure that affects two kinds of waste products in the area. The first one is of a material nature: the remnants of the old railway and port interface of the city, which were mostly subjected to recycling and architectural heritage conservation. The second group of residues is the subjects and their community ways of life and cultural alternative practices that inhabit those infrastructures and their surroundings. In this case study, two communities will be addressed: Rosario’s *okupas* and artisanal fishermen. They both can be thought of as two segments of the multiplicities that urban governmentality tries to (re)encode. On the one hand, the *okupas* (squatters) –a cultural complex of diffuse origin but concentrated in a bounded space– transformed an old railway warehouse into a cultural center animated by performing arts. On the other hand, a group of fishermen –practicing a craft activity that contrasted with the fishery extractivism of the large meatpacker and fish gatherers– made Rosario’s river ravine their place of socio-economic (re)production. The formers were evicted in 1998 and the seconds almost ten years later (2007). Both events framed in a process of deployment of urban strategic planning devices in the central coast.

The cultural practices of these groups will be studied in this paper, highlighting its alternative features in relation to hegemonic urban culture. We will reflect conditions that prevented those ways of life from being totally codified by the municipality. Besides the common destination of eviction, other links between these communities will be sought. From this analysis, which aims to highlight differences and similarities, we seek to establish a counterpoint to the logic of heritage enhancement and selective valorization of the local government that focuses on the materiality and value of the real estate market and neglects the types of social existence not easily profitable. The work methodology relies on the triangulation of in-depth interviews with the subjects involved in those experiences,

official documents and journalistic material related to the life of the communities and the conflict with the local administration.

The *okupation*

The once participants of the *Galpón Okupa* refer to it as a spontaneous gathering of people who sought another way to live (in) the city. They bring the experience to 1996 when the area encompassed by the parks *España* and *Colectividades* was frequented by groups of young people between 15 and 20 years old, with different objectives. Some sought recreation and a place to meet their peers and withdraw from everyday concerns. Others, practitioners of the now called 'urban arts' found in the parks the place to rehearse and perfect themselves. Besides these two, others went to the green spaces to watch the practices and inform themselves about any recreational activity that might be interesting to them. Among the multiplicity of its origins, these intentions coexisted and self-reinforced, creating an ever expanding and concentrated concurrence.

> We had no free places to learn art […] nor money or work to afford to attend a workshop or whatever. Then this kind of instinct came: 'let's get together, go to the park, rehearse, go to the square, have some mate and you tell me what your group is about'. It was the only possibility ('Pato' G).

Among the various activities that during that year brought together more and more of urban arts performers, the most striking and popular was the *Fiesta del Fuego* [Celebration of Fire]. It consisted of a weekly gathering that took place on Sundays afternoons, in which the attendees danced, sang and juggled among other artistic performances. When the Sun came down, the round of people could only be found by the sound of the handcrafted drums they were playing and the light of the fire they ignited. From kindled juggling pins to igneous forms made from spitting kerosene, fire was the main element of the ritual. Circus and *murga* –two of the main disciplines displayed there– worked mostly with handcrafted artifacts. The sound of the drums and the luminosity of the pins created a sensory effect indicating the place of the Celebration to the attendees. That space was 'nobody's propriety and therefore it belonged to everyone that used it' (Pablo T., hereinafter PT). In that sense, it had no limitations regarding the disciplines practiced or rules as to what and how to do it. The participants never reflected systematically on the public nature of that space. However,

the idea was put into effect in the autonomous, horizontal and participative ways of the meetings.

This eventful public space seemed to be in good health, perhaps due to being detached of all materiality. But, for that reason, it could not protect the only material it needed. The objects –drums, juggling pins, stilts, kerosene– were at the mercy of the weather or any kind of accident. What made the Celebration spontaneous and dynamic also weakened it at the same time.

Some of the participants of the ritual began to explore the possibility of generating a similar space but sheltered and permanent, that could house objects, people, and practices. To this somewhat tentative search, another one was added, which was carried on by one cultural universe that shared the space of the Celebration: the local punk rock scene. The sociability of the fans of that musical genre also found its place in squares and parks, through a similar circulation of information and crafted objects. The artisanal work consisted in making mixed tapes and fanzines to share with their peers and advertise the upcoming concerts and events. One of the spaces frequently visited by them was *Parque de las Colectividades*, where some abandoned railway facilities were located. One warehouse in particular was appealing to the young participants of the Celebration. Located in the center of the park, it was composed of two contiguous structures. The building offered the possibility of replicating the free space of the Celebration and sheltering it, to which punk rockers added another demand: to have a place to hold concerts. Because of its size, the space lived up to the expectations of the heterogeneous artistic community. On January 2nd, 1997, the building was occupied.

> We had been targeting the warehouse for a while but never broke into it. We used to hang out next to it and we often saw it full of dirt and behind a wall of tall grass, all abandoned. One day we finally made it inside. We began cleaning it and some decided to make it their home ('Chachi', hereinafter C).

About ten of them entered the building, where they found a middle-aged woman who had been living there for some time. She lived on one side of the warehouse and 'let' them occupy the opposite one. Between both places there was the greater part of the old warehouse, still uninhabited and full of the remains of its previous activity: to load the train engines with water. Within three hours, the first *okupas* were settled. At its peak, the building had several increasingly differentiated areas. In one of the structures, there were a

dance room and a painting room. In the other, there were ‘the bar, the Heaven [a mezzanine where a rehearsal room was set up], the Air [another mezzanine]. And below the Sky, of course, there burns Hell’ (*Rolling Stone*, 08/1998). Some areas were destined for common use, while others were ‘okupied’ as ‘bedrooms’ by the residents. There, a heterogeneous stream of practices of intervention, usufruct and inhabiting fluctuated during the almost two years of occupation. While there was a core of semi-permanent inhabitants that renewed periodically (between the homeless and runaways), not everyone who took part in the occupied warehouse’s life made it their home. Some middle-class youngsters went there to participate in the activities and then returned to their parents’ home and their own homework.

The news of the recent occupation spread and reached a reading group from the local anarchist library ‘Alberto Ghiraldo’, who tried to link that experience to that of the European Squatters. They showed the warehouse inhabitants a VHS tape brought from Europe about the occupation of Madrid’s old printing house Minuesa in 1988. The idea was for the *okupas* to ‘embrace the countercultural nature of the global movement they were a part of’ (‘Faca’, hereinafter F).

However, the local occupied building followed its own path. The majority of the *okupas* acted ‘on instinct and without knowing what was happening elsewhere’ (PT). They lacked clear goals and foresight. Their first activity simply consisted in passing the time, enjoying the leisure and share mates (an Argentinean infusion), beers, cigarettes, bakery products of the previous day, and any element that could be taken with the hands, be partially consumed and passed to on other people’s hands. Also they had to resist the first wave of police threats, ranging from standard warning procedures to violent actions performed by undercover officers. As time went by, the *okupas* gave their home another purpose: ‘they founded a cultural center’ (C). A more thoughtful initiative emerged in the now-named *Galpón Okupa* [Squatter Warehouse] or *Centro Kultural Independiente* [Independent Kultural Center], which consisted in offering open workshops to the community. These instances were either free or in a ‘*a la gorra*’ [‘pay-what-you-wish’]. The artistic project of the *Okupa* was one of the features that separated it from similar cases in Europe, more focused on housing needs and political demands (Cattaneo and Martínez, 2014). Dozens of instructors from all over the country conducted workshops in the *Galpón*. Circus related practices became the main disciplines taught there, given the influence and fresh memories

of the Celebration of Fire. The repertoire of learning spaces also included guitar, tango, handcrafting, painting and chess lessons.

Besides the difference between those who inhabited the warehouse and those who visit it often, there was also a contrast regarding the reasons and ways of intervention. The heterogeneity of the space allowed that multiplicity. From social movements to political groups used the *Okupa* to hold assemblies and give talks to the community. The Solidarity with Chiapas Network –among other collectives– approached the warehouse then the first news of police violence was reported. They 'didn't know anything about urban squatting but reached the place anyway' (Pablo, hereinafter P). Once they met the *okupas* and their activities, Pablo and Amalia (hereinafter, A) began attending a handcraft workshop while organizing assemblies –zapatistas main self-government tool– to put together resistance strategies against future eviction attempts. The *Galpón Okupa* appeared to them as a possible way to put horizontal politics into practice:

> What was attractive about it was its heterogeneity. Even if you didn't live there, you felt it like home. We thought that when things calmed down, we would begin to work on the cultural project we had in mind. It was all about teaching different techniques that you wouldn't learn anywhere else, building a self-organized community, and restoring the building (A).

Among all these activities, live music was the one that made the *Okupa* popular within the local underground circuits. During its second year of existence, the warehouse held 75 concerts featuring hundreds of bands of the most diverse styles. Punk, metal and circus music bands played there 'although renting the sound equipment was expensive and there was always the danger of something falling on you' (Zalo, hereinafter Z). The people in charge of the concerts remember *Okupa* as a milestone in the history of the local 'underground' music scene. By that time, the *Centro Kultural* had been remodeled to fit about 300 people per concert. A 'three-floor stage was built in the main area' (C), by one of the circus bands and a modest light system was set up. Argentinean, Mexican and Spanish bands went to the *Okupa* claiming that it was thrilling to play in a clandestine place. Due to those activities and exchanges, an increasingly diversified and hybridized artistic space thrived under the remains of the railway facilities.

However, while being involved in the activities of the *Galpón* meant a certain commitment, inhabiting it represented 'a new form of existence' (F). The freedom of living on the outskirts of the commodified city had to be underpinned by a continuous work. In order to

endure in a horizontal and marginal place, a repertoire of 'technologies of the self' (Foucault, 2006) that had to be put in place and supported by the body. Each *okupa* had to learn to ask or scavenge for food in bars and bakeries, get used to a lower hygiene than usual, and to live with a totally heterogeneous and unpredictable stream of people and intentions. Above all, the main difficulty laid in mediating between the individual and the collective aspects of the experience. Therefore, in a space without rules that mixed that many different ways of life, conflicts appeared. The increasing tensions forced several members to leave, weakening the critical mass the *Galpón* would have needed to face the attempts against its existence. There were two types of inner problems. On one hand, there were daily frictions around the dynamics of freedom and leisure. 'Rosky', one of the first occupants, stated:

> 'This place exhausts you […] you have to live with nineteen different people who don't think like you and are as selfish as you. The problem is when there are people who occupy the place but don't take care of it or themselves […] Leisure consumes them' (*Rolling Stone*, 08/1998).

While many worked to maintain and improve the place, others simply spent their days dirtying and consuming, without contributing to the collective endeavors. It was impossible to force anyone to do anything since the freedom implied in the squatting experience prevented it. This conflict between the two faces (free individuals and a self-organized community) was the tip of the iceberg of a bigger unsolved problem. Ultimately, the weakness of the *Okupa* was ideological and the dilemma was whether some level of organization was necessary. For instance, the assemblies organized by the social movements were not always well received. Some did not want to submit themselves to any rule and associated the collective discussions to the party politics they detested. To make things worse, towards its second year of existence, the *Okupa* received new members who had witnessed the more organized, European squatter experience. This arrival opened the door to deeper discussions and confrontations

> …About what being an *okupa* meant and whether occupying abandoned buildings in Latin America needed an ideological and countercultural component as in Europe or had to have its own characteristics, a different, more artistic approach (P).

The *Galpón* did not have a unified project and there were differences among the old and new *okupas* about what to do in/with the warehouse. Several of the first's collaborators left

due to coexistence problems with those who would not collaborate and those who wanted the place to mirror the European Squatter scene. In the eyes of Chachi, the 'valuable people' that went away did not understand the true nature of squatting/*okupar*. The freedom of being there had a price

> The space in the *Galpón* had to be squatted but also had to be earned. It wasn't as simple as going in there and taking your place for granted. You had to enter with a true intention of making your own space, to maintain your position. You had to be sure you had what it takes to squat, even if you met a dude who didn't feel like sweeping or another one who didn't give a fuck about doing the dishes (C).

Thus, it was not enough to enter, one had to maintain the common space and their own, to appropriate a place and give it life with presence, corporality, and practice. It was an undertaking that required a certain temper and a particular state of mind. Ultimately, due to internal quarrels, the precariousness of the occupation, or the volatility of its population, the *Okupa* did not make the two-year mark. 'Resist' was written on the skin of several of its inhabitants and some of its walls. However, a series of events on a local-international scale meant the twilight of the *Centro Kultural*.

By mid-1998 the general situation changed and the *Okupa* faced its final threat. The building ownership was neither municipal nor provincial, hence the police of Santa Fe province had been intervening without jurisdiction. The warehouse belonged to a Railway Assets Management Entity (ENABIEF in Spanish) that had the rights resigned by the National State in 1995 (Decree 1039/95). Any action against the *okupas* had to be taken by the Federal Justice and, in June 29th, a federal eviction order was issued. Realizing that the Municipality had been intimidating them with a nonexistent property right, the inhabitants of the *Galpón* sought legal sponsorship. A lawyer from Rosario and the Permanent Assembly for Human Rights (APDH in Spanish) took the case and asked for more time to negotiate, since they did not know until then who the real owner of the building was. According to the *okupas* the local government had 'washed its hands'

> 'For a year or so we were negotiating in good faith with second line officials believing that the municipality was the owner of the warehouse. We knew nothing of this until one day a delegation from the federal court came […] in the meantime, they made us wander through dozens of offices' (*Página 12*, 12/08/1998).

Because the appeal, the eviction order of the Federal Judge had to be postponed to July 15th. However, the new date was not feasible due to the mid-year judicial recess. That gained time allowed the *okupas* to try to present their case to society, to make their cultural activities known. They had an unexpected ally. María Soledad Rosas, a young Argentine woman who lived in a squatter space in Italy, took her own life on July 11. The news spread in her homeland and the media turned their eyes and looked for the 'Soledad's Argentinean cousins' (*Clarín*, 08/30/1998). In that research, it was evidenced that Rosario's *okupas* were –probably– the only ones in the country. One day after the death of Rosas and with the eviction a few days ahead, the media attention rained down on Rosario's illegal occupants. Lots of journalists went to the *Galpón* and the image of its inhabitants was shown in newspapers, magazines and on TV screens. Empowered by their new visibility, the *okupas* undertook a series of defensive activities. Open radios, '*ollas populares*' (spontaneous soup kitchens), flyer distributions and concerts flooded the city.

Despite these actions, the eviction finally happened on October 12th at the hands of the national gendarmerie. 'There wasn't physical violence, but they pressured us by the way they came armed and equipped' (*La Capital*, 13/08/1998), explained one of the *okupas*. In a few weeks, the structure previously owned by the ENABIEF was handed over to the Municipality. While the eviction was carried out, the mayor presented a Strategic Plan (*Plan Estratégico Rosario 1998*) that projected, among other things, the enhancement of the central riverside by recycling the old railroad facilities for recreational and cultural uses. The PER aimed to consolidate the city as a 'pole of cultural attraction' (*El Ciudadano*, 10/30/1998) and to promote the 'cultural industry [through] public and private initiatives' (PER 1998: 256). The *Parque España* cultural center (1992) had already set a precedent for the PER's methodology: a succession of focused, phased interventions along the shoreline, combining public and private investments.

Following that plan, a public-private business destined to celebrate tango culture was placed in the recently unoccupied building. Properly named *Casa del Tango*, it had the purpose of generating a cultural and touristic circuit that places value on the central shore of Rosario (*El Ciudadano*, 10/09/1998). Due to budgetary delays, the place opened its doors in December 2004. The new space generated an artistic and gastronomic offer linked to Buenos Aires tango cultural market, which had little to do with the local culture. Its proposal was presented as a contribution to Rosario's urban life, built from scratch.

However, it was a cultural inlay placed over the erased remains of (an)other local culture(s) and practices. Although some of the former *okupas* were hired to perform in these renewed design spaces, the space that made the now successful 'Urban Arts' was never recognized by the local authorities.

Artisanal fishermen and the shore

The fisherman tend to talk about the river as a part of his life, an extension of his body. In his cosmovision, there is a kind of symbiosis between the man who fishes and the environment. The riverside where he moors his canoe and keeps his gear and nets, is his territory, his dwelling. That's where the fisherman lives when he is not on the canoe: in the water. The identity of the fishermen is defined by their profession, the knowledge his role, certain cultural forms and a way of life, but not by any social bond. The fisherman is, at the same time, a man-who-lives-off-the-river and an artisan. His culture rests on a tradition of 'arts of doing' (De Certeau, 1980), passed down by generations. The fishermen weave and make their own nets, arrange and caulk their boats. They know what period of the year and where in the river they can find larger amounts and varieties of fish. They know the average size of the different species and even come to make estimates about their rates of reproduction and growth. They scrutinize the movements of the shoals and establish patterns and relations between displacements and climate, thermal amplitude, rainfall regime and river floods (Castillo, Baigún and Minotti, 2016). Artisanal fishermen keep the source of their knowledge for themselves. For those outside their culture, the logic behind these knowledge remains hidden. The process of cultural transmission is long, tortuous and is articulated around an art of making, a practical sense and a use of specific technologies.

Like rural dwellers, fishermen proudly claim their lifestyle, away from urban social conventions. They conceive their existence as linked to nature and establish a symbiotic relationship with the river. Nelson, a local artisanal fisherman, explains that he prefers being hit by the river with a poor fishing day to being underpaid by an employer. He says he is 'more respectful of the relations among man, river, nature and fishing devices than the ones he could establish in an urban day job' (Nelson, hereinafter N). Due to this artisanal feature that fosters certain individualism, difference, and dispersion; fishermen's associations and unions are a late phenomenon. They appeared alongside the new corporate actors that threaten to take over the river and its resources: the large collectors and fish cold-storage plants of foreign capital. Other less explicit antagonists are the development of

new environmentally invasive infrastructures (Rosario-Victoria Bridge and Waterway dredging), sport fishing, the immoderate expansion of water sports, and new recreational uses of the river.

These transformations had a negative impact in small fishing communities: they saw their maneuver space reduced within the river and its shores. This concatenation of events that cornered the activity and threaten to displace definitively the artisanal fishermen from the riverside of Rosario, boosted an accelerated process of production of a collective identity. Such identity is expressed In terms of social antagonism and thought narrative-political mechanisms. In this construction, dispossession of the territory and resistance to sustain an alternative way of life conformed two strong cardinal forces.

The testimony produced by Nelson addresses the historical development of their identity and their cultural-artisanal practices that still takes place on the shore. The pulse of that history is marked by a long-time occupation and by recent dispossession episodes (N). The mythological narrative goes back to the XIX century and a time before the development of Rosario's port, a story in which empirical verifications are difficult. It is clear that these fishermen want to claim that their occupation of the shore is almost as old as the existence of the city. This kind of *longue durée*, would allow them to dispute sense and territory with the urban mass that has growth behind the bank of the river. Their narrative emphasizes that the north and central shores configure the stage of the historical occupation of the fishermen and thus –they think– legitimates their prerogatives over the territory.

Forty years ago, a history of dispossession started in this landscape. The first method of eviction was subtle and indirect: the installation of sport fishing clubs in the central shore. These new associations surrounded the old piers, developed new infrastructures and limited the areas for the mooring of fishing boats. During the last military dictatorship (1976-1983), urban interventions were added to the existing clubs. Between 1977 and 1978, numerous fishermen's huts were demolished. The dictatorial regime advanced with identical doses of firmness and impunity on land and informal buildings. The regaining of the riverside involved the violent dispossession of the fishermen. The area possessed a strategic value at the time: it was located near the Rosario Central stadium, one of the venues of the XI World Soccer Championship, Argentina 1978. In the 1960s, the government intended to beautify the Riverside Walk. The dictatorship and the 1978 World Cup made those technocratic and authoritarian urban projects possible.

Nelson links that first modernization of the northern shore to the current renovation of the central shore. In his evocation, the increasing use of the banks and the river as public and recreational space appears as the force which organizes a cycle of loss of fishermen's territory. This process culminates with the virtual disappearance of free mooring points for their canoes. According to Nelson, fishermen's clubs encourage marinas designed for recreational purposes and respond to purchase power of their owners. Currently, the clubs do not offer any mooring space affordable for the fishermen and have remodeled their settings to associate them with gastronomic activities. These clubs were one of the first steps for privatizing Rosario's riverside space. Formerly, the shore was a common good, intervened by the ports, the railroadsn and the northern clubs. Currently, it configures a privatized space for the sake of real-estate market profit.

> In Rosario the fishermen have less and less space, while receiving more and more demands. The marinas can't be afforded by a fisherman […] In fact, Rosario lacks space for the amount of boats it has, there are too many vessels and no place for mooring them. That's why they abuse and charge unrealistic prices for renting a place (N).

In addition to that, the artisanal fisherman is not welcomed in clubs that encourage sport fishing. Because of their pace of work and their lifestyles, artisanal fishermen became a disruptive element in the social life of riverine clubs. Some of them go to sleep very early while the sun is still on the horizon, and before dawn they are already up and throwing their nets in the water. Others leave at dusk and leave their nets in the river to pick them up at dawn. Each one has a different explanation for his pace of work, involving the river itself, the itinerary of the shoals, the habits of the fish and –to a lesser extent– with their preferences. In any case, they are who ultimately decide the cadences and intensities of their work. There are no entry or exit times, nor regulated work.

> The fishermen can't be in the clubs because they give a bad image. They walk with nets at any time of the night, work according to their culture and they customs. They have no employer, no schedules, and no accountability. They only relate with their tools and the river (N).

The expropriation in behalf of the fishing clubs radicalized with the remodeling of the shore in the 1990s. This process began with *Parque España* and continued north following the waterside, with the interventions of *Parque de las Colectividades*, *Scalabrini Ortiz* park and *Puerto Norte* (Scarpacci, 2014). In the middle, near the place where the *okupas* were

evicted, the design of a Contemporary Art Museum (MACRO in Spanish) was the peak of the renewal. The whole process relied on a waterfront capable of producing a large, real-estate and recreational surplus. This fact limits the conditions of fishermen settlement in the central shore area. The lack of stable and terrain implied a difficulty for the reproduction of the culture of artisanal fishing. The official narrative of urbanization and recovery of the riverside as public space clashes inevitably with the narrative of dispossession of the fishermen.

Until a decade ago, a good number of fishermen settled down in the low ravine of the central riverside. That location established a relationship of full visibility between them and the river that, at the same time, made them invisible to the rest of the city. Nelson lives in this hidden territory. His permanence is rather the result of a legal struggle than a political recognition of the right of occupation of the land and the preservation of the cultural universe associated with artisanal fishing. Until 2007, there was a total of eighteen houses. One of the evidences of this battle over the definition of the uses of the central shore is that, nowadays, in the ravine –a spatially disperse location but existentially related– only four houses remain. The other one is that, like the conflict with the *okupas*, the eviction process coincided in time with the production of an Urban Plan –*Plan Urbano Rosario 2007* (PUR)– in which the recovery of the coast was projected.

The MACRO inauguration meant a new form of cultural exploitation of the coast. The museum was built during 2004 on the structure of the *Silos Davis* of the early 1930s. The conversion of this grain elevator into a museum relates with the patrimonial policies of the railroad and port legacy. Despite its public character, MACRO and its designer bar seek to align with a family of post-industrial devises, whose Argentinean examples are the MACBA, the MALBA, and *Proa* foundation. At another level, it also attempts to express some urban avant-garde artistic forms. In other words, a culture of minimalist registry and linked with architectural design fully divorced from the localized activities and cultures of riverine fishermen (Kokosalakis *et al.*, 2006; Plaza and Haarich, 2009).

After the inauguration of MACRO in February 2005, the newspaper *La Capital* published a note on local fishermen. Its title clarified this cultural and socio-economic confrontation: 'They live hanging from the ravine, with tin roofs and the most expensive view in Rosario'. One of the central topics of the text was the contrasts between fishermen's homes and the renewed shoreline. The comparison was striking: next to the simultaneously architectural,

minimalist, patrimonial and postmodern architecture; there was a small group of hanging, precarious and pre-modern huts –condemned to exile and erasure.

> 'From their tin roof houses they enjoy the same view of the river as the owners of many of the apartments of the area appraised in thousands of dollars the square meter […] They see the Rosario-Victoria bridge and the fireworks shows […] better that the rest of the local population, now that the shoreline is more beautiful than ever' (*La Capital*, 02/06/2005).

The condition of possibility of this asymmetrical coexistence was the invisibility of the fishermen huts. By mid-March 2005, a portion of the docks in *Parque España* collapsed, due to the lack of adequate protection of the supporting piles and the erosion of the river. To prevent accidents, a court order closed part of the access to the shore. Inspections were carried out on the support infrastructures and the use of the shore. The visibility regime of the fishing communities was altered, and a discourse about the risk that population was facing emerged. An eviction order affected the families of fishermen (*La Capital*, 03/17/2005).

Against the different attacks, the fishermen demanded to be relocated within a radius near the river. Being moved to a remote area would mean leaving them without their main sustenance and the source that nourished the meaning of their culture. The Public Service of Housing intervened when the relocations became imminent. Subsides were destined to make the relocations possible. Despite the protests and the resulting evictions, negotiations advanced and the land occupation regime varied slightly (*La Capital*, 03/18/2005).

Two years later, a fisherman's hut located near the corner of Moreno and Wheelwright streets collapsed. Three people died (*La Capital*, 03/30/2007). The instability of the ravine was associated with a discourse on risk. On September 25, 2007, Urban Control and Civil Defense employees, policemen and firefighters went to the place. One family and several residents were "carried up" the ravine. The deteriorating state of health of a man with HIV was confirmed. The eviction orders were carried out. In the following months, there were more protest tents and demonstrations, opening new instances of dialogue and negotiation. Only four houses, out of a total of around twenty, were again inhabited by fishermen. The rest were demolished (*La Capital*, 09/26/2007).

When the evictions occurred, it had been about ten years since the area had begun to be 'reclaimed' as public space. Because of the lack of private interest in the shore, there were not major investments. The infrastructure maintenance and repairs were profitable only in

the long term, thus it was not seductive for the real-estate market. The leveling of the terrain was barely enough to prevent hollows and floods. Nelson attributes the collapse of the ravine to a history of public neglect over the liminal territory formed by the city, the railroads, the harbor, the ravine and the river.

> The ravine hasn't been touch since the English reinforced it […] They forgot about the ravine. When the little squares above it were made, the drains made by the English were obstructed, the water began to run in another way, wherever it could. Many large ships started navigating nearby because of the dredging of the river and the soybeans exportation. The ships raise waves in the river that hit the ravine. On the one hand, there are stronger rains and bad drainage: erosion form above. On the other hand, there are many huge ships that raise waves: erosion from below. Sooner than later, the ravine collapses in your face if you don't do anything. And nothing was done here (N).

According to Nelson, one of the factors that precipitated the erosion of the central ravine was the opening of the shore. He affirms that this 'construction of little squares' aims to beautify the city, but does not think of Rosario as a whole. 'The neighborhoods are still being neglected while, in the shore, the buildings seem to want to pierce the sky' (N). In addition, Nelson considers that the restoration of the *Silos Davis* and the implosion, in two phases, of another grain elevator added even more vibrations that destabilized the fragile balance of an abandoned ravine. For him it is a 'so-called public space made for the private investment, the public is what Perón nationalized of the port and the railroads, which he inherited from foreign private capitals'. In short, for the fisherman the only thing truly public is not the space, bur the abandonment and promotion of business.

The permanence of Nelson and his partner Orlando is an exception: its resolution depended on the militancy of both in the APDH and its lawyers, who advised them before the judicial injunctions. The rest of the families were evicted and fifteen houses were demolished. Those who left were given monetary compensation. For those who stayed, the area became more inhospitable. The battle for the possession of the land describes a winding road. Those who remained resisted supported by relational, political and legal capitals. Although Nelson and Orlando managed to stay, the assessment they make of their presence in the shore is neither naive nor optimistic. In addition, they know that their culture of artisanal fishing is far from being an element recognized by the authorities.

> It was a battle half won. Won because we can have this space and lost because my children who grew up here, will no longer have children to be raised in such a place: this is the last remaining bit of it. In twenty years, if not before, they will try to kick us out. We are going to resist, because we already did it once (N).

The story of Nelson and Orlando is circular. The narrative of their lives always returns to the starting point: 'we fishermen are running out of space, we are losing territory'. This is in part consequence of forces and interests that reinvent the river and, in part, due to a certain disorganization of the fishermen as a social group and political actor.

Some officials see the artisanal fishermen as a colorful character, part of a past condemned to disappearance in the name of the development of a design city integrated to the river by an interface of public spaces. But the fishermen are the product of a way of life that was and is founded upon the patient learning of fishing techniques, logics of fish reproduction, location, and diversity of species, carried out within a multiplicity inhabited by oral tradition and practical sense. They express a way of relating to work and the environment from subsistence, primary commercialization, and artisanal technologies. The subjectivity of these fishermen suspends hegemonic socioeconomic relations, questioning the wage relation and the dependency of employers as the only ways of social reproduction. Through relocation proposals and shore rehabilitation plans, the Municipality and the judiciary seem to barely understand –if not completely ignore– these kinds of experiences.

Conclusions

When considering the two communities studied here, the first thing that stands out are their differences. On the one hand, the *okupas* are an emergent of a culture originated in an incipient 'peripheral postmodernity'[1] and of the remnant infrastructure of the post-railway-and-port city. Their sociocultural practices constitute a breach in Rosario's cultural fabric. They were a part of similar movements scattered on a global scale, and their location is more incidental than historical. They played a major role in the introduction of the urban arts in the city. While corporality was the center of their work, their product was and is immaterial. On the other hand, the fishing communities are associated with artisanal extraction activities with a long historical bond with the river, the shore, and the ravine. They had a powerful relation with the environment and the territory, while they distrust any

1 This concept is a variation of the one that raised by Beatriz Sarlo (1988) overlapped with the arguments of *Scenes from Postmodern Life* (Sarlo, 2001) and the book about this subject by Kefala (2007).

subjection to an employer and a salary. Their meanings emerge from a past that functions as a figure to legitimize the territorial appropriation of the ravine.

As has been shown here, the *okupas*' proposal works with the idea of reappropriation of the railway facilities, while their culture is dynamic and a dissident daughter of globalization. The fishermen claim a more static tradition, like an open-air museum culture. On this level, it's ironic that the *okupas* were evicted so a traditional dance center such as *La Casa del Tango* could be put into place, while the artisanal fishermen were dispossessed to enable a contemporary minimalistic piece like the MACRO. Paradoxically, it is from these differences that it is possible to picture the conflict of these cultures and, from there, to build their encounter: the hegemonic political-cultural project of the Municipality in favor of rehabilitating the central shore along with the asymmetric relations with the residual subjects of this urban renewal. In turn, this project built two documentary objectifications on the eve of the evictions: PER (1998) and PUR (2007).

Despite the most visible differences, the two studied communities share an individualism in their daily social reproduction and contain a multiplicity. Both have an artisanal mode of production, while they build complex bonds with the city in the form of a *distanced dependence*. It's evidenced that this relation occurs more at the level of exchange than in the one of communal production and reproduction. The territorialization of both identities takes root in the counterhegemonic; their main values are freedom and alternativity. The narrative construction of their identities is based on antagonism, starting from the production of a vital alternative to the hegemonic corporate logics and the categories of segregation-exclusion and colonized inclusion that the local political powers use to categorize them. In both subjects, the leitmotifs of their struggle are anchored in curbing the specific territorial dispossession and the generalized privatization of Rosario's shore. In the same space, they face the Municipality and the corporations. They dispute with the installation of two patrimonial and cultural architectural devices –with different levels of exteriority with the local culture– inaugurated almost simultaneously: one linked to certain 'for export' neighborhood of Buenos Aires (*La Casa del Tango*), and another to the abstract and deterritorialized museological devices from the global cities (MACRO).

The Municipality, through its post-political government (Zizek, 2008), formulates each measure as if it emerged from a participatory agreement –although that participation is usually limited and specifically oriented. The possibilities of converting that controlled

participation into a true and productive political encounter are very narrow. In general, the topics are pre-established and the consultation for their implementation is made by territorial institutions closely linked with the government. This freely conditioned governmentality designs an artificial environment that produces desires, orients behaviors, and controls subjectivities. The disruptive initiatives tend to be normalized and integrated into the designs of controlled innovation. The Municipality's need to create a business environment suitable for the real-estate investments has led to the implementation of series of devices in the central shore. Aside from a public space infrastructure –which puts valorization of the terrains above citizen socialization– this modus operandi generated a set of institutions that promote a culture of tango and *milonga* districts from Buenos Aires and a *coolture*: a zone where coolness, creativity, and gentrification establish what seems to be the only possible relation between culture and city, linking conceptual and abstract art with performances (Peck, 2015). These kinds of actions are the pragmatic effect of a long-term interurban competitiveness syndrome affecting municipal authorities and their post-political decisions (Vainer, 2000).

The local government was unable to process the challenge and difficulties posed by two alternative cultures in terms of self-production, self-education, exchange and consumption. Before the two cases –although with a degree of subtlety and growing procrastination– the Municipality allowed the judiciary to resolve, as a kind of arbiter over the parties, the two occupation situations. Although in the case of the *okupas* the eviction was quite exaggerated as for the deployment of forces, the expulsion of the fishermen and the subsequent demolition of most of their homes were not less violent. Despite the efforts and new experiments of local governmentality, which follows (post)modern and global criteria, in these two cases the difficulties of codification were evident. In 1998 and 2007 the Municipality had problems to transform both subjects, not only into the excluded or the invited ones to the ongoing sociocultural and urban processes, but also into the primordial forces of another kind of urban planning: one capable of empowering an urban culture based on the multiplicity and the alternative (Deleuze and Guattari, 2002).

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