SENTIRES: LOOKING TOWARDS THE SOCIAL

PROCESSES IN SPANISH OKUPAS FOR STRATEGIES OF

NEIGHBORHOOD COHESION AND RE-DIRECTION OF

DEVELOPMENT

by

CELIA ALICE EASTON KOEHLER

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Abstract: As a result of the logics of neo-liberal, global capitalism, urban citizens across the world face the regulation, commodification, and enclosure of public space. City governance responds to global financial pressures through "creative city" strategies and cuts to public services. This thesis looks at CSOA's (Centros Sociales Okupados Autogrestionados, or Squatted Social Centers) in Spain and argues that they can be instigators of concrete neighborhood cohesion in a way that not only protests and combats the forces of neo-liberal development, but also proposes new forms of understanding and existing in urbanscapes. I do this through looking at CSOA's as "counterspaces"; taking into account Lefebvre's spatial triad, and using anarchist pedagogy as a lens, where experimental practices and then discourses are formed through and by horizontal "assemblies" and consensus based forms of decision making and look at how these processes incise and influence more formal or mainstream political institutions. Second, I utilize thick description to share an experience of the collectively organized transfeminist festival, Transfemifest, hosted at CSOA La Redonda in Granada Spain May 5-8 2016, as an example of how these spaces open up possibilities for the production of alternative knowledge. I use the Transfemifest to show how these collectively formed knowledges tend to be more affective, relational, physical, and intimate. When individuals' experiences are valued as a legitimate contribution to the construction of a base of knowledge (of a structure of truth, of a discourse) it actualizes them and their

potential, both individually and collectively. This thesis argues that it is through horizontal self-managed processes that CSOA's in Spain are able to maintain a life-giving presence in neighborhoods, and suggests that other cities or neighborhoods that face similar issues should take a cue from the ways in which these spaces structure themselves.

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List of Accompanying Materials

1. Transfemifest Manifesto, attached at the end

2. Transfemifest Program,
   https://transfemifestgranada2016.wordpress.com/

"A mi lo que me interesa no es descubrir la verdad, si no inventarla, o producirla…las practicas filosóficas son practicas de invención de la verdad, como son las practicas sociales en su conjunto. El colegio es una machina de producción de la verdad, el museo es otro, la televisión es otro. Es importante dares cuenta que esas machinas los inventamos nosotros, esas tecnologías de producción de la verdad son nuestras….por lo tanto lo que hay que hacer es que sean tecnologías abiertas que podamos compartir. que podamos tomar decisiones lo mas consensuales, lo mas plurales posibles, que esas machinas de producción de verdad no sean capturadas, por la elite sexual, no sean capturadas por el monolingüismo, que no sean capturadas por el neoliberismo, que estén abierto y múltiples" (Paul Beatriz Preciado).

"I am interested, not in discovering the truth, but in inventing it, or producing it…philosophy and its practices are technologies of truth invention, as are the rest of our social practices… The schooling system is a machine of truth production, the museum is another, the television another. It is important to realize that we invented those machines, those technologies of production of truth belong to us…and because they are ours we must make sure they are open technologies that we can share, that we make the most consensual decisions through the most plural means. That we make sure that those technologies of production of truth are not captured; not captured by the sexual elite, not captured by monolinguism, not captured by neoliberalism. That they stay open and multiple" (Trans. my own).

Introduction / Chapter 1: Objectives and Context

My friend Eva is a true Madrileña. She's from a barrio in downtown Madrid—Carabanchel—and navigates rush hour metros like a pro and knows how to make her monedas stretch. I was impressed when she told me that where she practices Maitai on Wednesdays is in the same space where she participates in a group that compiles and updates a database of unoccupied buildings in Madrid and then networks with corresponding neighborhood associations in attempts to set houseless (or almost houseless) folk up with homes *and* is also the space where one of her favorite bands was playing that weekend. The space is CSOA La Quimera, an occupied social center (Centro Social Okupado Autogestionado, CSOA, or Okupa) in barrio Lavapies. It is one of sixty or so of its kind in Madrid proper, one of hundreds in the rest of Spain.

An occupied, or squatted, social center is a building abandoned by its owners that a group of individuals enter and okkupy with the intent of opening the space for community use. These social centers diverge from typical squats because okkupying, rather then simply protesting private property and actively defending the right to affordable housing, is also tool (means) in broader political and social movements that are interested in and utilize neighborhood networks to re-appropriate public space. An example of this broader community orientation is seen in CSOA La Redonda's (a social center in Granada, Spain which will be a protagonist in later discussion) online manifesto: "We want this space to be a place of encounter, a medium for social and political direct action, a space to generate alternatives, for social-transformation, for the practices/values of self-management and autonomy, collective development, a space for learning and being critical" reads the description of the space on Facebook (Quienes Somos? Trans my own).

Each social center is mediated by its own spatiotemporal specificities but it is typical

for them to host art collectives, community-supported agriculture or community gardens, language lessons, childcare, movie-nights, yoga or other exercise classes, political workshops, community meals, and on and on. In addition to similarities in types of activities housed in social centers, most centers value and function through horizontal, consensus-oriented assemblies. Centers tend to have a general assembly once a week, open to anyone and everyone where people can come and propose activities and projects that they want utilize the space for. Everyone in attendance must come to agreement in order for the activity or project to take place. Maria, a participant in CSOA El Laboratorio expresses the meaning of consensus in these spaces well when she says "yo creo que la mayor acuerdo que hay es que no queremos llegar a algo en común, a una ideologia en común, que queremos escuchar las differencias, y que queremos generar algo en el que eso se pueda dar" *I think the biggest agreement is that we don't want to arrive at something in common, at a common ideology, that we want to listen to differences, and that we want to generate something [a space] where that can occur* (Laboratorio 03: Ocupando el vacío, translation my own).

La Quimera is an anchor for Eva; it makes her busy-city life more manageable, more enjoyable. And, judging by the proliferation of social centers in Spain, and the quantity of people who enter and engage with them (in Christopher Patz's 2010 documentary a woman involved in the CSOA Patio Maravillas cites that in the two years the CSOA existed millions of people passed through, thousands of people had been involved, and hundreds were involved in a sustained way) the social centers are spaces of enjoyment and need-fulfillment for many, not just Eva.

This thesis is an examination of self-management practices of Centro Sociales Autogestionados Okupados in Spain through a review of literature and a case study of the four-day Transfeminist festival hosted at CSOA La Redonda in Granada, Spain. I show how CSOA's

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facilitate neighborhood cohesion and networking with potential to construct alternatives to (and defense against) unwanted development projects and the "gentrification" trajectory so mundanely patterned in cities these days. Furthermore, (and this is the part that interests me the most) the social practices that CSOA's engender—horizontal assemblies, principles of autonomy and self-management—should be seen as an important "tool kit" that unify emotional, embodied, and intimate knowledge with intellectualism and brands of 'expertise' to constitute spaces that offer resilience and strategic resistance to neo-liberal pressure in cities.

One of the key reasons that CSOA's are interesting tools is that they function as laboratories; within them people are constantly creating-converging-constituting-constructing-collaborating and in doing so producing new discourses and ways of understanding the world that diverge from dominant approaches and allows folks to eclipse and/or remix previously constricting day-to-day interactions.

Planning and management brainstorms refer predominantly to the material, built space. Issues are identified and solutions *designed* in response. The questions used to frame an issue, then, are oriented towards physical design; as in, how can we *build* social spaces into cities in a way that facilitates and creates community cohesion? Through focusing on a "blueprint" the articulation of planning and building processes tends to be funneled towards experts and figures involved in city planning, design, and construction. But what sustains a space after the initial construction of walls or addition of soil is the day-to-day living practices of people who interact in the space. People who care for it (or don't) and in doing construct the built environment. So, when envisioning new or different urban spaces, in addition to the question of how to design social spaces, we need to look towards models of social engagement and the *social processes* through which material space is constructed and maintained. CSOA's offer an appealing model for the social-infrastructure of small-scale community-oriented organizations.

CONTEXT: CSOA HISTORICAL GROUNDING AND TRENDS

It is common to ground the beginning of squatting in Spain in "el transición" or the transition, a period marking the end of Francisco Franco's thirty-six year dictatorship (1939 to his death in 1975) (González, Aguilera & Cortina) (Martinez-Angel, 2007). González and his co-authors begin their CSOA timeline in the beginning of the 80's and characterize two main epochs of the movement. First, in the period beginning in 1984 to the mid 1990's the authors identify that the social centers exist within the context of three large events that contribute to a more general capitalist restructuring of urban space: the Olympic games in Barcelona, the World Expo in Seville, and increased social capital in Madrid (Gonzalez, 2). This period is characterized by intimate squats that are focused on participants' immediate housing needs and lives of their immediate companions (Ibid, 3). In this period, González describes squatting as a "direct response to the housing crisis" in Spain. The few social centers that existed tended to be connected to a squatted home; one building would function as both a residence and a social center. Because the reasons for squatting were divergent—one was to fulfill housing needs while the other was community or "front-porch" oriented—tensions typically arose and the functions isolated themselves (Martinez Angel, 2007).

In addition to the tentative beginnings of democracy Martinez-Angel places squatting within a more general European context—In the late 80's and early 90's squatting was appearing in many major European cities (Berlin, in the UK…) as a response to job insecurity, particularly in more youthful populations (Martinez Angel, 2007).

The second epoch is marked by the new Spanish *código penal (*penal code) passed in January of 1996. The penal code criminalizes squatting or occupying buildings. González suggests that the criminalization of okkupying helped consolidate the movement because it united different individuals from different Okupas in fostering a sense of solidarity against the

challenge of criminalization. In the following two years in Cataluña the number of occupied social centers jumped from 40 to 150.

Although the dramatic surge did not occur in either Madrid or Basque country, González makes note that throughout Spain the movement experienced higher tensions with police that lead to increased visibility and activity. Similarly, Martinez describes how *desalojos*, or evictions, especially of the more popular social centers often lead to conflict and protest. Protests provide publicity and visibility that can contribute to the dynamism and energy of the movement (Martinez Angel, 2007).

In response to increased police oppression is it common for a neighborhood association or groups of autonomous neighbors and friends to defend a social center facing an eviction (posters in local bars is a small example of this, people congregated and forming a barricade so that police cannot enter the locale a larger-scale example). "*Un desalojo, otro okupación,*" "An eviction, another occupation" is a motto within the movement. The motto demonstrates how the movement is dedicated to constantly reinventing itself

One of the reasons that evictions after the código penal tend to be protested with more popular support is that these social centers tend to be more oriented to the "front-porch" or to occurrences and dynamics in the neighborhood of the building they decide to okkupy. This is seen and encouraged through using the internet as a strategy for informing the community; social centers through publishing and publicizing upcoming events on Facebook make clear that their activities are for the general community. Because every social center resides on a specific block (with cultural, historical, and political specificities) the strategies and interactions that guide the relationship between the original okkupiers and the residents of the neighborhood differ, but a common thread in the second generation of social centers lies in efforts to blur the borders between "neighbor" and "okkupier" roles.

In the early 2000's people involved in Okupa projects throughout Spain—but especially in Madrid and Barcelona—continued a conversation about what strategies and tactics best fit the shifting goals of these spaces. What could they learn from the autonomous social center model of the 80's and 90's? In an interview with individuals from three social center projects—Ateneu Candela, on the outskirts of Barcelona; CSO El Seco, in the Adelfas Neighborhood of Madridl; and EXIT in the Raval neighborhood of Barcelona—Mick O'broin outlines how the stakes on squatting are high. According to O'broin, discussion was circulating in some social center assemblies that evictions and conflict with police distract and detract from goals of neighborhood transformation. The assumption here is that a certain amount of stability is needed to enact change—both local and global. O'broin notes how individuals within social centers began to pose question like "how to change this relationship into one which works for social movements rather than against them? How can we change this situation into one which opens up the possibility for politics rather than drowning that very possibility under an avalanche of trials and evictions?" (O'broin, 7). One of the main reactions to this question (posed in different constellations of words around the country) was a more general receptiveness towards negotiating with municipalities and—in some cases—assemblies adopting legalization as a central goal of the space (González-Garcia, 165). The processes of negotiation, though each varied and mediated by specificities of the neighborhood, generally include multiple local social and political organizations. An example of this is the negotiations that CSOA Eskalera Karalola began in March of 2003; the CSOA invited the Red de Lavapies (The Lavapiés Network, of which they form a part of) and Mujeres Urbanistas (City-dwelling Women), a city funded group for feminist political projects to join the discussion. Through collaboration with these two projects the Eskalera Karakola was able to get the city to subsidize repairs to the space without raising the question of eviction (González-Garcia, 169). And, after that were able to get the city to expropriate the building to the collective. In the second

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generation of Okupas negotiation is considered a venue for prolonging and proliferating the political projects.

   Social centers that transition between being okkupied and being a social center contend with a critique of contradictory values. One of the main tenants of the social movement has been a lived critique of private property; CSOA's through using squatting to provide social spaces mark that it is possible to live according to rules other then the relationship between landlord/tenant or individual and bank mortgage. Once an assembly makes the decision to negotiate they are invariably signaling willingness to pay rent or exchange finances for more permanent rights to a space. Many people (including people involed in CSOA's) view this concession as counterproductive to the greater projects of the social movement. But as Miguel Martinez Angel points out social movements serve as "specific collective action[s] that activates power relations within their contexts (not only political, but also spatial, social, or economic" (Miguel Angel quotes in Feinberg, 167). Negotiations should be seen as another venue for activating power relations.

CONTEXT— Constituting "Those in the know" and "Those in the dark"

   Moreno-Caballud in his book *Cultures of Anyone* quotes Argentine author Ricardo Piglia (whose novel *Juguete Rabioso* approaches access to knowledge and urban space through the exploration of the book as a commodity): "physical repression alone is not enough to impose order; fictional forces are required as well" (Ricardo Piglia, found in, Moreno-Caballud, 2). Here, Piglia denaturalizes 'order' by making explicit how norms and institutions do not exist innately but rather are built and constructed through narratives. The word "force" in the quote suggests dominations through narrative; relationships of power invented through narrative,

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power invented through narrative. Foucalt, in his discussion on discourse writes: "we are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth" and "Power does not exist without an economy of discourses of truth" (Foucalt, 1980, 93 found in Nichols.). Foucalt posits that power is constituted and relationships of power defined through the establishment of bodies of knowledge and the exchange of truths through them. The stories—or discourses—that are told to explain and justify circumstances are critical components of the concrete conditions themselves.

These thinkers suggest, then, that social oppressions and struggles happen when there are groups that are disproportionately producing and circulating more discourses of truth then other groups—when there is a "truth monopoly."

Moreno-Caballud articulates something near to this when he explains how communities are typically divided into "those in the know" and "those in the dark." Those in the know, he explains, are people and social groups who have cultural authority and/or technical expertise (Moreno-Caballud, 1). Moreno-Caballud in his introduction utilizes the example of political representatives to show how this logic might function; political representatives, parties, and platforms are the individuals and mechanisms that propose and pass policies, plans, and programs. They are "those in the know." These policies impact and shape the day-to-day of citizens "[who] are sometimes called upon to offer an opinion—primarily through the election of political parties every four years. But again, according to this cultural tradition, the opinion of 'just anyone'—of someone who does not belong to the group of 'those in the know'—can never be equal to that of those who bear the titles of established knowledge" (Moreno-Caballud, 2). It is not expertise, per se, that Caballud critiques but rather the mobilization of narratives of expertise that value some kinds of knowledge over others at the expense of the well-being of individuals who do not fit into the "expert" narrative. In addition, Caballud notes that under the

economic system of capitalism cultural authority often comes from the possession of money and the control of flows of material goods, including images and information.

Perceptions of reality, Caballud posits, (in what he designates as "Western societies") are shaped by what is "shown, explained, commented, and made visible with facts, images, and stories" (Moreno-Caballud, 20). Newspaper articles, television reports, and mass media in general are representations of reality that, because of the tangible quality of images (created by words, photographs, or a combination), surpass being representations of reality in many senses to being a version of reality themselves. (Moreno-Caballud, 20)

Caballud cites Michel de Certeau's example of this in his book *The Practice of Everyday Life*: the capability of polls in media to fashion perceptions of reality. De Certeau posits that 'Opinion surveys,' —what he denominates "perpetual self-citation"—"are the fiction through which the country is led to believe *what the country itself is"* (de Certeau, 189 cited in Moreno-Caballud, 22). Polls collect opinions, group them together, and construct a "reality." This "reality" excludes individual contexts within which the original opinions are formed. Most opinion polls are not explicit about who was included or excluded from the survey and in what contexts they were polled (were they in a hurry, were they made to feel comfortable, did they feel pressured into offering an specific answer, did they give an extended answer that did not "fit" into the prescribed answers). Polls or surveys mar how a set of prescribed answers were first constructed and then offered to citizens. By offering a set of prescribed answers this kind of citation of "reality" facilitates the passive consumption ("choosing") of reality rather then the construction of alternative perceptions or readings of reality. This critique is especially pertinent in advanced capitalism. The media (means of production of narratives) is monopolized by large corporations; A PBS study reports that "by 2000, six corporations had ownership of most media, and today five dominate the industry: Time Warner, Disney, Murdoch's News

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Corporation, Bertelsmann of Germany and Viacom…these few companies are responsible for what information is shared around the world" (Who Owns the Media?) What de Certeau and Caballud offer is a critique of relying solely on newspapers, the media, and cultural authority to be informed to the detriment of other practices (such as observation, conversation with peers, trial and error…).

Public, state-funded school systems are an example of institutions that rely, in part, on mechanisms that produce "those in the know" and "those in the dark." Lucy Nichols, an anarchist pedagogue, describes how teachers are individuals endowed by our cultural system with a repository of knowledge considered authoritative—in the public school context they constitute "those in the know." Nichols, in her writing, shows how specific roles—in her example,between students and teachers—are formed by "discursive practices." These practices build or constitute "speakers" and "hearers." In the case of the state practice of education students are the "hearers" and teachers the "speakers" (Nichols, 244). Through the lens of the "hearer" and "speaker" student capacities are measured through their abilities to assimilate and reproduce the material given in these instructive contexts (Standardized testing and federal benchmarks are reflections of this attitude). Students, for the most part, are given things to learn rather then asked to designate what they want to explore or design their own investigations.

The regimentation marked by bell ringing and time accounting; the hierarchy between student/teacher/administrators; systems of punishments and rewards (grades, suspensions, and detentions) are, according to anarchist pedagogy, tools that ensure obedience and the maintenance "speakers" and "hearers" binary. Knowledge, in these structures, is established, stagnant, and limits the possibilities of the individuals within it.

Moreno-Caballud, in his book *Cultures of Anyone*, suggests that the electoral processes of representative democracy, the habits of entertainment and information seeking and forming

produce a citizenship that turn towards "cultural" authority to construct their narratives rather

then constructing their own. He argues that it is these repressive narrative forces that reinforce

and to a certain extent, even, produce, the repressive and difficult economic conditions in Spain

that has been generally denominated as the "crisis" (Moreno-Caballud, 2, 10).

CONTEXT—*"We All Know Something": Anarchist Pedagogy, horizontality, and Cultures of Anyone.*

Anarchist pedagogy approaches knowledge as a collective project that activates

individual autonomies rather then as a static object to be deposited (as Nichols posits that state

schools treat them) or exchanged and regulated (as copy right laws do). Building off of

Foucalt's concept of power as stemming from control of "truth producing discourses": if the

production of knowledge is an ongoing, collective project then power dynamics are never firmly

established, either. Nichols posits that through cultivating sites that encourage and enable the

production of alternative discourses individuals and groups can shift dynamics of power and

through these discourses produce alternative [concrete] existences (Nichols, 244). Constantly

emerging and self-actualized narratives produce a series of equally constantly emerging social

dynamics and existences.

Such a "site" exists because of material channels—as in where it exists in urban space,

how access is controlled, and who or what has control over its material existence—as well as

through relational mechanisms—as in who has access to its resources, how that access is

negotiated, and how people interact and engage within the space. Lucy Nichols describes

strategies for intentionally constructing these sites of discourse potentiality in her chapter

"Anarchism, Pedagogy, Queer Theory, and Poststructuralism: Toward a Positive Ethical Theory

of Knowledge and the Self." One of the strategies she suggests is through creating infrastructure that does not adhere to the model of "speakers" and "hearers" (Nichols, 244). In a school setting this might mean teachers making curricula a participatory project. Or a re-formatting of the typically regimented school day so that the days' trajectory relies on the interjection and the direct decision making of those designated as "students." With these suggestions, Nichols is making reference to the relational constitution and mechanisms of these alternative spaces.

Howorth, in his introduction to Anarchist Pedagogies, cites Ivan Illich (Austrian thinker known for his idea of *deschooling)* and his insistence that the sites of education remain open to the community rather then rigidly institutionalized in order to avoid monopolization of information and knowledge channels (Howorth, 26). Similarly, Cherrie Moraga—author of *A Xicana Codex of Changing Consciousness*—offers a critique of the US public universities system's efforts to be inclusive: "a culturally equitable program of study for people of color has yet to be achieved because equity as defined by the university means integration into the dominant culture, without altering the culture of Euro-American dominance within or without the university" (Moraga, 169). She cites the "free school and universities" developed by activists—including herself—in the 1970's as efforts to "ensure that 'teaching,' the exchange of skills and knowledge continues to occur outside of public education" because public institutions do not, according to Moraga, account for the "living practices" that are truly connected to the community they approach and dedicated to efforts of equity (Moraga, 171).

In contrast to Nichols, Howorth and Moraga make reference to more material and physical kind of openness—they hint that certain sites or institutions are too stagnant for the construction of alternative relational mechanisms and that new sites must be built in order to host these relational experiments and "living practices."

Although it is important to note that physical and relational spaces cannot be separated from one another and that in order for experimental knowledge production to take place, material and relational mechanisms need function together. Together, Nichols and Howorth describe pedagogical approaches that could be categorized as "cultural democratization"; Moreno-Caballud uses the term cultural democratization to describe access to culture not in the sense of public access to already existing, established bodies of knowledge (say for example, public libraries) but rather "in the sense of opening the construction of knowledge and of values to participation by anyone" (Moreno-Caballud 4). He characterizes okkupied social centers (CSOA's) as "cultures of anyone"; they are spaces that break the traditional boundary between "novice" and "expert" or those "in the know" and those "in the dark" by suggesting that "we all know something" and "nobody knows everything" and what's more, that our individual and collective abilities have more potential when developed in cooperation with on another rather then through hierarchical relationships (Moreno-Caballud, 3).

Okupas insist that "we all know something" through their discursive practices such as general assemblies and practices of self-management. General assemblies are the decision-making structures of social centers. They function through processes of proposal and consensus, anyone can propose an idea or issue and no important decision can be made until the decision has been built and molded in a way that accommodates everyone. Social and physical infrastructure—like Okupas—that insist "we all know something" tend to value more diverse forms of knowing and coming to understand phenomena and stray from solely "authoritarian and discursive structures like rational truth, or essence" (Nichols, 345). A diverse array of communication styles and approaches to issues are bound to arise when everybody's contribution is considered and anybody is considered capable of and responsible for constructing and making a decision.

CONTEXT—*The Production of Space*

The French philosopher Henri Lefebvre in his book *The Production of Space* (1991) describes space as a social product; we can understand space as a result of the social processes and relations that form it. He critiques the idea that space can be read like a text; space cannot be read word-for-word, inch-by-inch. Lefebvre instead proposes we understand space as a social product understood through the 'conceptual triad': spatial practice, representations of space, and representational space (or perceived-lived-conceived). In this triad perceived space is understood as the "official technocratic space dedicated to the production of capital," conceived space is "related to the aesthetics or meaningfulness of the space," and lived space is related to the "performance of individuals within that space" (Lefebvre cited in Feinberg, 157). Through the triad space cannot be thought of a 'thing in itself' but rather as the meeting of "the thing" with the thought processes and the physical experiences that occur in space (Lefebvre, 1991)

It is useful to mobilize Lefebvre's conceptual triad while considering the Okupa phenomena. First, to understand how knowledge of a space, or how a space is understood (by those within and without it) influences (constricts or opens up) what can occur in that space. A physical, historical example of this is how the perception of okupas as sites of radical protest (See, Bresnihan and Byrne, 2015 for an example), communicated through mass media contributes to the polarization and political isolation of the sites, which likely heightens the probability of conflict with police—conflict sets a tone for the social processes occurring on-site**.** Another (opposing, in some respects) example of this is when CSOA's make strategic alliances with the municipalities they reside within and other local social associations. These alliances disseminate a positive image of the social centers through information channels and the resulting image or representation of the space will likely lessen tensions with state actors. Examples of this are found in Miguel Angel Martinez's work on the "legalization and

anomalous institutionalization" of Okupas in Madrid. Martinez cites CSOA El Seco as a squat in Madrid that "adopted a more conventional image by linking themselves to the neighborhood association and to the demands for citizen participation in the urban renewal process" and in doing so garnered "wide social solidarity and impressive media coverage gave them substantial help in conducting the difficult negotiations with the local government" (Angel Martinez, 17). Although it is impossible to draw a 'one-to-one' connection (it is difficult to make the claim that the "impressive media coverage" is what made the negotiations with the government successful, but it is near-impossible to say that the two are unrelated), it is undeniable that perceptions and representations (perceived and conceived) reproduce and have physical and mental repercussions (the lived).

CONTEXT: *Urban Politics and Constructing Social Space as a Site of Contention*

People involved in city planning—local politicians (and citizens when they attend city council meetings), design firms, prospective investment companies—are often in conversation, or debate, about what kind of space should exist in the city and how that space should be managed. For whom are we designing the city? How are people meant to move through this space? At what pace? Who is supposed to interact here? City planners conceive these questions—or questions like them—with conscious intent to construct a certain type of urban space. Amanda Burden, the former mayor of New York speaks to this when she talks about her experience planning for the highline: on one hand she encountered urban planners and citizens desiring to create space for undirected interaction and, on the other hand, she was in communication with commercial interests who wanted to turn the old-railroad into a line of shops (Building Better Cities, 2016). The spaces within which citizens assemble derive from these kinds of interested/invested discourses.

Margit Meyer in her presentation "Whose City; Conflicts and Challenges in Neoliberal Urbanism" (2013) outlines two processes or patterns she's noticed in neoliberal cities: creative city politics and austerity urbanism. Cities, she posits, are 'powered' by capitalism, which is sustained through growth. Cities face pressure of constant growth. In the face of this pressure, city politicians, planners, and developers adopt strategies to attract social capital—strategies to attract people that will invest their time and finances in the city.

Meyer writes how policy-makers engage in 'cultural-branding' strategies in order to mobilize growth in cities: "Creativity has become a key concept signaling urban competitiveness, and a broad array of measures (from attracting knowledge-intensive services to subsidizing cultural and creative economies) has been designed to foster a concentration of firms and activities" (Meyer, 2013). Knowledge, in this context, is objectified as a tradable commodity that is considered profitable (Haworth, 4). To follow-through with these initiatives cities adopt more entrepreneurial forms of governing: they engage in "task- and project-driven initiatives" like targeted neighborhood development projects or hosting mega-events (like the Olympics, or the World Expo). Many of these projects include tearing down or modifying existing structures, or building upon previously un-built-upon land (note, how I do not say un-occupied or unused because this is rarely the case).

Austerity urbanism, also outlined by Meyer, is descriptive of a trend in cities characterized by stricter laws, tougher policing, and criminalization (think, 'the war on drugs'), and public service sector cuts. These political "remedies" tend to have the largest effect on marginalized populations—the homeless, people of color, and people with different abilities (Meyer, 2013). This results in an unpleasant pairing: increased repression on the streets and decreased public services and spaces.

These political projects produce forms for making sense of urban space. Through development projects and state-regulation of public space, space, rather then existing as an

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aggregate of mental, physical, and social processes, is perceived as "a container to be filled" (Fraser, 12). Urban development projects, intended to bring capital in to cities, construct spaces according to an "exchange-value" rather then a "use-value." (Fraser, 12). City space is abstracted and parceled in the form of tax lots and rent prices and access to space depends on the ability to purchase access to the space—to exchange for it. "These trends and practices are related to exclusions; if you do not have money to try the new hip pubs and coffee joints, its difficult to access them" write Bresnihan and Byrne in reference to the commodification of urban life in downtown Dublin (Bresnihan & Byrne, 2015).

CHAPTER TWO: Lit Review—

What people have to say about CSOA's in Spain:

Sophie Gonick in her essay on urban politics in post-crash Madrid notes how "many of these struggles are not only inherently local, but also influence and effect institutional chance, despite their commitment to autonomy" (Gonick, 2). Her argument is locales that in Spain that have historically practiced forms of radical, anti-capitalist and 'utopian' autonomy are more and more entering in "agonistic engagement" with existing democratic structures. These interactions result in "political projects [that, who] engage with mechanisms of state rule while drawing on practices and procedures from autonomous struggles to elaborate frameworks for institutional change" (Gonick, 1). An addendum to Gonick's thesis is that "feminist perspectives" have been pivotal in the political transformations that are occurring (Gonick, 1).

She describes how within these self-managed spaces there is an emphasis on "process and praxis" rather then end-goals or outcomes and claims that it is this emphasis that provides an ambiance of openness for new possibilities. Through this openness social centers and practices "transcend limitations" (Gonick, 2). Sophie, like other authors, describes the trend for self-managed movements to shift from strictly "autonomous" practices and engage with institutions (Ibid, 3).

Her first two examples are the movements "Marea Verde" and "Yo, Si Sanidad" both of which began as issue-based assemblies, or groups of individuals in a consensus-oriented reunion seeking to discuss actions against public education cuts and cuts to healthcare, respectively. "Yo, Si Sanidad" was a small collective that began meeting in CSOA La Morada, an okupa in the Chamberí district of Madrid (CSOA La Morada). These organized assemblies now include members from many unions and from political parties (in the case of Marea Verde) that are working towards changing legislation related to both education and healthcare. These

examples show instances where tools—like the assembly and its accompanied value of operating horizontally—and individuals from the okupas insert themselves in political discourse at the local and national level (Gonick, 3).

Gonick's in-depth study on Madrid's housing movement shows how autonomous assemblies and issue-based platforms (connected to state and private institutions) both work and are often called upon to work together. Her article is supported through thousands hours of active participant observation in PAH (Plataforma Afectados por la Hipoteca, or platform for those affected by mortgages),15M meetings and actions, and 35 interviews with "activists, afectadas, academics, and lawyers" from an "anarchist to two members of PAH who now form part of the Podemos political party (Gonick, 4). 15M assemblies and meetings are intimately related to occupied social squats who, according to Gonick, adhere to principles of radical autonomy whereas PAH Madrid engages with state and private institutions; "here people, often those who are directly under the threat of foreclosure and subsequent eviction, attempt civil negotiations with the bank, file lawsuits, approach local pubic officials, or attend town hall meetings" (Gonick, 4).

Gonick, while praising the openness of the direct-democratic, consensus-based processes of radical social centers and assemblies and showing their ability to create new political possibilities, also offers a critique at their sometimes inability to grasp and incorporate the concrete reality of individuals who could most use their structures. Unwillingness to compromise (with institutions), she notes, is a privilege that not all participants of assemblies have. For example, she observes a 15M neighborhood association meeting where a Senegalese family in danger of being (unfairly) evicted presented their case; Gonick describes the rambunctious brainstorming that went on regarding the familes' case: "blocking the bank, setting up an encampment, putting up fliers everywhere" (Gonick, 7). The family never returned to the assembly and Gonick reasons it is because of the discordance between assembly goals—

the formation of new, non-oppressive political systems—and the reality of the people that most need the social services it provides. "In striving for autonomy and radicalism against capitalism and insisting on the purity of their struggle, these young activists reproduce existing forms of hierarchicial, racialized power while implying their own moral authority" (Gonick, 7). Gonick suggests that people in positions akin to that of the Senegalese family are less preoccupied about large-scale structural change but rather see assemblies and the 15m as a process towards a dignified and self-empowered everyday.

Gonick, in her critique, emphasizes the dominance that the collective takes over the individual, calling out a perceived oppressiveness; through large calls of solidarity (such as the slogan 'we are all affectad@s') many collective spaces mistakenly universalize issues in a way that hides or mars important differences in personal experience. The invisibilization of individuals' experiences is a barrier in effectively (and affectively) addressing many of the issues that collectives form to shift (Gonick, 8).

Gonick's critique fails to address that many Okupas themselves have identified the challenges she poses and are engaging with them in practice. This can be seen through processes of self-critique, where okupas of the 21st century look to learn from the mistakes of 1970's and 1980's: an okuppier involved in CSOA el Patio Maravillas, for example, designates the space as an okupa of the "second generation" because they "think the movement is more important then the building itself" (Okupación, 2007). By failing to mention that this is an issue identified from within, Gonick's critique nears diagnosis and closes opportunity for discussion.

She does however, make note of instances of "convergence"; moments when distanced world-experiences and approaches to activism found common-ground, for example when the squatters at Ofelia Nieto agreed to meet with members of the Izquierda Unida (leftist political party) in order to collaborate during a threat to demolish the building. The collaboration ended in the salvaging of the building (Gonick, 8).

Another, more inter-personal "convergence" she describes is the self-reflection of a young, radical activist. This activist made clear her need to dismiss her assumptions regarding formal education and other forms of social capital: "he is explaining better than I could, and he doesn't even know who Milton Friedman is, nor does he need to" the activist said in reference to a migrant who spoke, eloquently, about advanced capitalism (Gonick, 8).

This expression from the activist articulates one of the most important aspects of assembly-based communities: through horizontal-deliberation, personal experience and emotion are encountered, in-corp-orated, and considered by the group as legitimate forms of knowing. Because of these processes someone experiencing a challenge in their life, such as housing debt or eviction, is seen not as a personal failure but rather as "a subject located within a specific political economy and armed with situated expertise," "in translation, therefore, she goes from failure to expert, retaining her autonomy yet charged with knowledge" (Gonick, 7).

González García (like Gonick) writes that although CSOA's are not oriented toward public politics or "el poder" ("the power," referring to institutionalized political and economic hegemony) they still impact them. He notes that most okupa communities tend to think that "sectorial" or issue-based political movements are easily co-opted, but nevertheless notes a need to look at the ways in which Okupas impact specific issues or platforms in public politics (González García, 151, 152). Their thesis is pronged. First, he claims that the okupa movement has impacted politics or made concrete changes in four main sectors—housing, youth, security, and public order. Second, he posits that there are three main kinds or "spaces" of impact: A. "Alternative Social Capital" or the resources that movements or causes can draw on, including networks of people, discourse and communication channels, organization and structural strategies. B. Concrete political projects and their respective organized movements and causes. (For example "University of Oregon Divestment Movement headed by the Climate Justice

League"). C. Framing/re-framing; a social movement's contribution to public debate can be in shifting a discourse, or discourses, and making new narratives (González García, 153, 154).

The introduction of the paper is a general exploration of how social movements make an impact on public politics. González García notes that the strategies that social movements use are constantly diversifying and changing and that impacts don't necessarily have to be conventional: "la democracia no se expresa solo por medo de los cauces electorales/representativos," *democracy does not solely manifest itself through representative and electoral channels*" (Ibid, 153). González Gárcia points out that Okupa movement gains more public support when the mainstream and conventional political and public services are not offering solutions to specific issues that people are experiencing (Ibid, 160). In this general section he also notes that a social movement—characterized by proposed and directed motions—necessarily has some kind of rupture with a dominant narrative or understanding of the world. But, González-Garciac posits, it must not be too disconnected from the dominant narratives or stories, or it will be difficult for "the public" to grasp the proposed ideas (Ibid, 165).

For the chapter's data, González and his partners make use of reports from municipal governments in Cataluña, Euskadi, and Madrid. They also employ word-query, literature analysis to see the contexts in which Okupas are talked about in the local newspapers.

In a Barcelona-based report from the National Police right after the implementation of the código penal the police question whether or not the okupas were "sleeping urban gangs that decided to become hyper-active in re-claiming urban space after the passing of the Código Penal? Or are they a venue that is utilized and instrumented by anti-system organizations that are more structured and have found a seam that gives them a cause that counts on a certain social and mediating comprehension? (González García, 161). This response, González notes,

shows that the National Police perceive the Barcelona Okupas as a 'threat'; they are structured enough to be an alternative political force (Ibid, 161).

González García points out that, especially in Cataluña and Euskadi (two "autonomias" or autonomous provinces in Northern Spain, both characterized by cultural and linguistic specificities) the Okupa movement is considered a "youth movement." Showing that 60% of the 577 articles that mention Okupas in Cataluña the spaces are synonymous with youth (Ibid, 155). Because of the issue-based perception of the spaces, the impacts in public politics tend to be more specific, concrete, and issue-based as well (Ibid, 156). The examples in the text are the financing of "Gazte lekus" or youth centers by the municipal government in Bilbao (one of the bigger cities in Euskadi or "basque country) that are modeled after the *Gaztetxes,* the squatted social centers driven by youth (Ibid, 156). Similarly, in areas that there is a lot of Okupa action, municipalities tend to open social centers (Ibid, 158). The paper suggests that this cloning of the Okupa model is proof of its success in changing political discourse; self-managed spaces have become projects that municipalities are willing to fund.

The last part of the chapter is dedicated to a short study on the legalizations of specific Okupas, concentrated for the most part in Madrid. Legalizations, they characterize, tend to happen when okupas are well connected to the locality they reside in (be that through a network of individual neighbors, neighborhood associations, or other local activist associations) (González García, 68). They cite the processes of CSOA El laboratorio, CSOA Eskalera Karakola, CSOA el Puntal, CSOA EL Seco, and La Prospe in Madrid as examples.

Although González notes that movements within Okupas tend to be generators themselves of politics, "del fortalecimiento de la esfera local como espacio emergiente del gobierno," *[of the strengthening of the local sphere as an emerging space of governance],* this chapter spends most of its time on direct responses from public government institutions to okupas. It seems as if "response" and "impact" in the scope of the chapter are synonymous. He

describes how Okupas and public institutions interact: one acts and the other acts back in a kind

of call and response that does not necessarily lead to allowing for new forms of management or

governance. By using data from the National Police and news outlets González portrays these

spaces as emerging legitimate actors in governance. But by not including interviews or

publications by the okupas themselves in his data, he does not adequately differentiate or

characterize the social processes that begin a movement like "Yo Si Sanidad" (activists

dedicated to localized self-management) from the networks that help sustain it (political party

affiliations, for example).

Feinberg in his dissertation on the neighborhood of Lavapiés entitled *Lavapiés Madrid

as a Twenty-First Century Urban Spectacle* puts to use Lefebvre's triad of space to articulate

how the physical spaces of Lavapiés are constructed through social tensions between

neighborhood residents, activists, corporate interests, and government actors at multiple scales.

Feinberg demonstrates how Lefebvre puts perceived and conceived space in tension by showing

how "perceived space is not complicit in the dominant mode of production because it relates the

manner in which we move our bodies through space." Through autonomously moving their

bodies through space individuals are able to tease out tensions related to the values assigned to

certain routes (Feinberg, 157).

In the introduction to his dissertation Feinberg situates Lavapiés physically and

historically; A name for Lavapiés is "barrio bajo" *the lower neighborhood*, named because it is

physically below the central Puerta del Sol. Feinberg points out that the name does not refer

purely to physical geography: "it also speaks to the neighborhoods historical situation on the

social margin on the city" (Feinberg, 3). He notes that in the 1990's there was a lot of

immigration to the neighborhood—12.3% of the population was born outside of Spain. The

largest demographic of Spanish-born residents of the neighborhood is elderly folk. Feinberg

claims that these demographics, in part, are what lead to a pattern of general neglect of physical

and social infrastructure in the neighborhood on the part of landlords and by city hall (Feinberg, 11).

Recently, he notes, representations of those same demographics have been mobilized to aid urban redevelopment efforts. The Plan for Urban Development for Madrid 1997 and more recent planning endeavors have concentrated their efforts on cultural production in Lavapiés (Feinberg, 15). Feinberg makes reference to the "Bilbao effect" and claims that the concept is being utilized by corporate and government actors in Lavapiés. The "Bilbao effect" is the concept that bringing a large, cultural monument like the Guggenheim in Bilbao (a city in Northern Spain) to an urban space ignites the transformation of that space (Feinberg, 16). Lavapiés houses The Reina Sofia Museum (1992), The Valle Inclan Theatre (2006), and the proposed National Center for Visual Arts (which would be housed in the current self-managed cultural centre the Tabacalera). Feinberg notes that these institutions have been "complemented by an improvement of the housing stock in the neighborhood" (Ibid, 16). In addition to the "Bilbao effect" he posits that the municipal government has taken part in other "creative city" initiatives that Margit Meyer describes. These initiatives, Feinberg posits, are efforts to encourage a sort of "creative class" into the neighborhood, to usher in people "whose economic function is to create new ideas, new technology, and/or new creative content" (Feinberg, 16). Another one of Feinberg main contentions is the relationship between cultural production and national identity: "Urban change, especially as tied to the culture industry, functions as a spectacle (a type of theatrical performance) that often employs a national cultural heritage to reinforce the ideological container of the nation-state" (Feinberg, 15). This link is visible in the museums and theatres—the Reina Sofia is a Spanish national museum, the Valle-Inclán is the home of the Centro Dramático Nacional (The National Drama Center) that operates under the Spanish Ministry of Culture.

Feinberg offers a critique of "creative city" initiatives: "the warm-fuzzy feeling that certain city residents and city planners might get from the rhetoric of urban planning focused on the arts belies the fundamental commodification of the arts taking place in this process" (Feinberg, 19). "The arts" in some of these cases are the very lifestyles of the people residing in Lavapiés; Feinberg describes how cafes and galleries mobilize images of individuals residing in the neighborhood such as the "sidewalk musician" or street vendors to produce an alluring "bohemian" landscape to pass time. Instead of servicing the residents of Lavapiés, the municipality in some ways, is selling them. Manuel Osana, the president of the Asociación de Vecinos La Corrala [Neighborhood Association La Corrala], voices how the *obras* [development work] in Lavapiés have been "en el barrio, pero no para el barrio," *in the neighborhood, but not for the neighborhood* (Osana, quoted in Feinberg, 16).

It is not just state institutions, however, that rely on cultural production to shape space; Feinberg claims that okupas have been important sites of encounters that construct a resistance to the neo-liberal development strategies occurring in Lavapiés. Building off of Lefebvre's concept of perceived space, Feinberg describes the social centers as spaces that encourage bodies to move through the streets of Madrid in ways that re-shape, shift, and call into question social codes; through providing "encounter between the body and social codes" okupas offers opportunities for spatial practice to resist the *conceived space* aligned with capitalist production" (Feinberg, 154). He cites CSOA Laboratorio 03 as a focal point for the resistance against real estate speculation and gentrification in Lavapiés: El Labo 03 "sought to create its own spectacle of Lavapiés that would call into question the program of real-estate speculation and gentrification being carried out by Ayuntamiento [city hall] in collusion with the interests of capital across the city" (Feinberg, 154).

Fienberg extends the concept of performance and spectacle to okupas in order to pinpoint how they are sites of cultural production that counter speculation and gentrification. An example is the 2006 protest against the inauguration of the Teatro Valle Inclan. Feinberg points out that the demonstration was not solely protesting the imposition of a cultural space in the neighborhood but also contesting the erasure—through repression and then eviction—of the kind of social spaces that the neighborhood residents create and desire in their city; signs at the protest of the theatre read "3 años sin el Laboratorio, Centro Social ¡Ya! En la tabacalera," *Three years without the Laboratorio, A social center in the Tabacalera already*!" (Feinberg, 163).

In his discussion on the El Labo 03 pre-eviction Feinberg identifies that the social centers' activities had a tendency to spill out into the neighborhood of Lavapiés. One example is the *Revista Kaminadas* a literature crawl that functioned as a tour of the neighborhood. Each landmark or stop in the tour existed as a "page" in the journal/journey. At each stop there was a poetry reading, a short theatre performance, or informative talk on the history of the neighborhood (Feinberg, 200). Feinberg makes the point that the social centers' efforts and activities on the physical neighborhood street attract people that might otherwise feel intimidated encountering the space. Visibility and spectacle, then, is a key component to inclusivity (Feinberg, 191).

Feinberg refers to simply *being* and existing in a CSOA as spectacle. He points to the ways in which okupas are intentionally graffiti-decorated and collage-d with publicity from previous events or activities hosted there: "the very presence of an *okupado* building is a contrasting spectacle to the gentrified café and art spaces that would begin appearing around the Reina Sofia museum around this time" (Feinberg, 194). The physical rendering of the space is symbolic of greater values and creating new imaginaries through self-management and assembly.

In relation to assemblies and assembly culture Feinberg notes that one of the ways that okupas connect with the neighborhood is through their organizational practice of *auto-gestion,* or self-management. Feinberg, in his work describes *auto-gestion* as the concept that "the collective that is affected by the decision can and should be the author of said decision" (Feinberg, 185). Self-management is mediated through assemblies that function through consensus processes. Feinberg points out that consensus illuminates tensions between the individual and the collective: "the consensus requirement paradoxically asks that the entire collective of individuals act as one body in order to prevent any one individual's autonomy from being compromised by the majority or the minority" and in doing so "self-management and assemblies create a kind of culture [that] alters the modes of production and social reproduction by revising the web of relationships among individuals" (Feinberg, 187). Feinberg notes how through participating in assemblies together, various collectives and associations became familiarized with one another. The processes of self-management illuminates shared interests and goals. Through this realization the Lavapiés Network [Red de Lavapiés] was formed; "The Red de Lavapiés provided a forum where the interests of various groups in Lavapies can interact and respond to the urban processes occurring in the neighborhood" (Feinberg, 8).

Self-managed spaces in other European urban-scapes:

Bresnihan and Byrne use a case-study of "independent spaces" in Dublin and the strategy of militant co-research to "explore the obstacles which commoners are identifying and responding to themselves" (Bresnihan & Byrne, 36). Their work on common-ing practices and independent spaces in Dublin is useful because Dublin's independent spaces are very similar to Spanish CSOAs: they are large, old buildings turned social centers that house a variety of

activities and operate or are run through variegated assembly-like processes. Dublins'

independent spaces, like CSOAs, are spatial projects that operate beyond public (managed by

government at different scales) or private management and have DIY tendencies *but,* unlike

CSOAs, they are rented spaces. Bresnihan and Bryne write to this tension between self-

management and autonomy and paying for property: "These practices take place alongside and

typically in tension with, paying rent to a landlord or state… a set of material practices which

generate alternative ways of producing, relating to and 'governing' urban space" (Bresnihan &

Byrne, 40).

　　　　Echoing Margit Meyers' characterization of neoliberal cities and Miguel Martinez

Angels' analysis of why occupied social centers emerge when they do, Bresnihan and Byrne

contextualize Dublin's independent spaces within the specific historical context of the "rapid

urban development" occurring in Dublin in the past two decades. They refer to this period of

time and the accompanying processes as Dublins' great "urban enclosure" because it is

characterized by "the privatization/financialization of urban space and the commodification of

urban life" (Bresnihan & Byrne, 39). They make reference to city-subsidized construction of

more office spaces to house bigger and more internationally connected businesses. The "urban

enclosure" they describe also includes processes of commodification of the city itself—"local

advantage" understood in terms of cultural attractions created to make the city more appealing

to visitor and residents alike.

　　　　Bresnihan and Byrne delve into the affects of urban restructuring; these trends and

practices, they posit, relate to exclusions "as those who cannot access credit and will not

conform to 'brand Dublin' have felt more and more like outsiders in their own city, leading to

an extraordinary reduction of what is possible in the city and in the richness and wealth of life in

Dublin" (Bresnihan & Byrne, 42). It is within the context of and in response to these constraints

on daily urban life that independent spaces emerge: "All the spaces involve a group of people

coming together to find ways of collectively paying rent—thus overcoming the principle challenge with regard to accessing urban space. Rent is paid, for example, through donations, membership, fundraising, providing food, or renting out studio space" (Ibid, 36).

Bresnihan and Byrne are useful for this project because of how they set out to describe the "alternative forms of sociality" that these horizontal, self-managed social centers generate (Ibid, 36). Bresnihan and Byrne liken the social centers to a kind of "commons" because of how the space is shared, negotiated, and utilized by many different actors and purposes, but articulate the need to distance from the liberal discourse on the allocation of scarce resources (Brenishan & Byrne, 38). They write: "the guiding question [in reference to Elinor Ostrom's and Dietz's literature on the commons] remains the liberal economic one: how to efficiently allocate resources amongst "responsible" resource users. This response can elide more critical questions, effectively normalizing the socio-historical causes of resource scarcity as well as the 'exogenous violence' imposed by the process of capitalist valorization" (Bresnihan & Byrne, 38). Bresnihan and Byrne propose instead to look at the resource common-ing practices that occur in Dublin's independent spaces as practices that "produce and sustain common, non-proprietorial worlds, which are not articulated through existing political terms and references (Ibid, 38).

Bresnihan and Byrne argue that through practices of horizontal and informal self-management the participants in Dublin's independent spaces are producing alternative forms of understanding ownership. Ownership of the physical space, rather then being connected to the landlord or the primary rent payer (since there is not one), is connected to the material and social processes that occur within the space; the spaces "belong to those who those who participate in and make use of them" (Bresnihan & Byrne, 38).

Bresnihan and Byrne highlight that the open, participative, and directly democratic forms of facilitating activities in these spaces provide a "multiplication of potential" or a

facilitation of alternative possibilities, of shifting discourses—not just about ownership. Another example is the development of a "Safer Spaces Policy" within Seomra Spraoi that guides conflict within the space in a restorative, non-punitive way.

Bresnihan and Byrne contest the connection to Occupied Social Centers in Spain because of what they perceive as a hyper and specific politicization of those spaces: "in fact, the spaces we investigate here diverge sharply from those spaces. Autonomous social centres have been characterized by a strong ideological and cultural opposition to capitalism and the state" (Bresnihan & Byrne, 43). In a Provisional Universities interview with a few participants in Dublins' independent spaces, participants cite that they were interested in the ways in which "everyday, practical ways in which people create alternatives for themselves. We thought this was interesting as a contrast to a tendency within activism that focuses on what we're against and on making demands on political institutions" (Provisional University). This description is very similar to both Gonick and Roberto González García's interpretation of Spanish CSOA's as spaces that do not orient themselves towards specific political demands. I want to contend that both the CSOA's and CSA (the same just not Okkupied) and Dublin's independent spaces develop practices (horizontal assemblies, consensus, collectively financing projects) that "facilitate access to, and alternative uses of, urban space" and "give rise to the development of forms of working, playing, and deciding together, and the production of shared knowledge/s and resources" (Bresnihan and Byrne, 48). Bresnihan and Byrne's insistence on distancing Dublin's Independent Spaces from Spanish okupas seems like a messy and an arbitrary division of means and ends.

Coppolo and Vannolo write on Christiania, the autonomous "Free Town" or a large social-squat in downtown Copenhagen that has developed in scope since coming to existence in 1971. In Christiania social activities and community services are coordinated through consensus-based decision making at general community meetings and then area meetings (like

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the comisiones or *commissions* at okupas). At Christiania "businesses can be run collectively and individually, while social activities and community services are managed collectively and follow a non-hierarchical work organization model (Ibid, 1157). In 2001, they explain that Christiania, after years of negotiating a semi-formal existence with the municipality of Copenhagen and the Danish state (multi-scalar) finally settled on an agreement to purchase the space.

The main thesis of authors Coppola and Vanolo in their article on the "normalizing" of this space is that "Christinania has come to represent a peculiar case of hybridization of forces of autonomy and of forces of neoliberalisation, and that the tensions between these two forces could potentially lead to different outcomes that challenge the traditional understanding of both autonomy and neoliberalism in urban context" (Coppola & Vanolo, 1152)

They situate their case study by first discussing the concepts of neo-liberal re-scaling and the concept of autonomy. Re-scaling, they explain, is the concept developed by Erik Swyndegow in the late 80's to describe how state regulatory mechanisms and institutions move from one scale to another ("jump scale") in response to globalization (the authors refer to "expansion of trade, foreign investment and international financial flows"). The authors explain how one aspect of this rescaling is de-scaling through a reframing of individuals as subjects responsible for procuring items and services necessary to their wellbeing (privatizing of healthcare is an apt example of this) (Coppolo & Vannolo, 1154). Another characteristic of re-scaling, they note, is the concept of "territorial competition," a term that describes the state's role in facilitating the developmental capacities of different places (Coppolo & Vannolo, 1154); instead of providing services for citizens, states task themselves with *bringing* services to the city. Like Margit Meyer, they note that municipalities adopt "creative city" strategies in order to attract capital to their spaces (Ibid, 1154).

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In relation to autonomy the author's note that: "As stressed by Pickerill and Chatterton (2006), autonomy is a controversial concept that may oscillate between pushes towards reciprocal collectivism and towards egoistic individualism" (Ibid, 1155). The authors, however, seem to be interested in blurring this dichotomy and instead insist on autonomy as something that is "fractured, partial, open, and ongoing, and thus always in relation to the prevailing social and economic structures in the society at large" (Coppola & Vanolo,1153). They posit autonomy as a "form of resistance" and a "process" adopted to deal with "facing contradictions from living between worlds" (Ibid, 1155-1156).

They, predictably, offer a harsh critique of the normalization of Christiania, warning of gentrification, commodification, and the "disneyfication" of the space. In reference to "disneyfication" an article in Vanity Fair describes how "Christiania is now the second most popular tourist site in Copenhagen" ("You are now leaving the European Union"). Coppola and Vanolo note that because Christiania and its' board now have a mortgage to pay and in order to pay off the mortgage rent will be enforced more strictly. This, they posit, will push out people whose situations most necessitated a form of residing in space unrelated to an exchange value; enforced and raised rent will kick out "the dopes, the addicted people, the weak ones" (Coppolo & Vannolo, 1161).

But the scaling and restricting processes that accompanied the purchase and legalization of Christiania have also allowed for negotiations where the community has restructured itself according to its own processes. The community board and its actions are an example. The board is composed of 11 members – all named through the consensual democratic process of the Free Town – six of which have to be residents of the community while the other five can be 'external' (Ibid, 1160). The Danish Government does not have the right to name a member on the board, although they are "granted the right to express an opinion on members' nomination that could technically amount to a veto power" (Ibid 1160). The decisions taken by the board

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structure the communities economic "system": cafes and restaurants are asked to contribute

more while some activities, like a construction company get more benevolent tax treatment.

This is because the community views the woodshop products places as basic necessities

whereas cafes and restaurants correspond to a more recreational quarter; taxes are decided by

value-assigning through democratic processes (Ibid, 1160). This is in contrast to more

"normalized" structures for taxing that emerge from city governments (for example, in Oregon

measure 97, a tax measure that treats large corporations differently then smaller ones, is having

a hard time getting passed).

In addition, the authors note, Christiania continues to function as a spatial facilitator of

counterculture (in addition to tourism…): during United Nations' 'COP 15' negotiations on

climate change in Copenhagen, activists from all over the world congregated at Christiania in

protest (Coppola & Vanolo, 1158).

The authors end their case-study with an open-ended questions: can the logic of neo-

liberal rescaling allow progressive openings through the empowerment of alternative

communities embodying with their existence and recognition a real alternative to hegemonic

values? (Ibid, 1166)

Comparing the Okupa Movement and the Israeli Kibbutzim Movement

Okupas are not unprecedented or unaccompanied phenomena; they are one of many

examples of people mobilizing concepts of collectivism and direct democracy in order to have

an impact on the day-to-day lives of people in their physical vicinity (neighborhood, household,

etc.). Israeli Kibbutzim, for example, are similar to Okupas in the social strategies that

constitute the spaces—both Kibbutzim and Okupas rely on assemblies, consensus oriented

processes and the value of social equality. They both function through an "everybody does

everything" ethic. The following section provides some conceptual contextualization to Okupas

through looking at what Kibbutzim are, how they function, in what circumstances they came

into being, and some challenges the Kibbutzim movement faced. A comparison between the

Okupa and Kibbutzim movement reveals how similar social strategies and habits can constitute

spaces that diverge in both their symbolic and functional existences.

Melford E. Spiro, in the introduction to his piece on the social and cultural systems of

Israeli Kibbutz, notes the presence of 270 Kibbutzim in 1990 and their 125,000 members and

claims that Kibbutzim "constitute the largest utopian movement in history" (Spiro, 556). The

first Kibbutzim came to be in the early 1900's when Eastern European Jewish folk immigrated

to Israel. Spiro describes the first Kibbutzim as being constituted both through collectivization

emerging out of efforts to navigate difficult conditions of migration and as a manifestation of

Socialist-Zionist movements from Poland and Germany (Spiro, 556). The Kibbutz movement

experienced what people describe as a "crisis" in the 1980's. Kibbutzim across Israel diverged

in their receptions and reactions to the shift in economic and social conditions. These

divergences were indications of overall drifting of ideology and so the Kibbutzim split—

officially—into two "kinds": the "communal Kibbutz" and a "renewed Kibbutz" (Ashkenazi &

Katz, 573).

A traditional, communal Kibbutz is an agrarian or manufacturing commune—a self-

sustaining village. Like Okupas, each Kibbutz has particularities and its own manner of

functioning (dictated by the people who reside within it), but it is possible to outline general

characteristics and operating principles. Spiro notes that the first communes were established

with the following values and characteristics: 1) members live on, and make their living from,

the land; (2) property is collectively owned; (3) goods and services are distributed according to

"need"; (4) luxurious living is eschewed; and (5) equality is the dominant mode of social

relations (Spiro, 557). Kibbutzim promote social equality through economic and socio-political

measures: the collective ownership of property, equal compensation for tasks and rotating labor, and decisions made through processes of consensus at general assemblies.

In the many of the earlier Kibbutzim children slept in "children's houses," they spent their days in age-separated childcare and visited with their parents for a few hours in the evening after the adults had returned from work (Spiro, 558). This organization, Spiro notes, serves to ensure that the values children are being educated with are the same across all families. It also allows for women —who would otherwise, according to cultural norms, need to spend time raising children— to participate in the workforce (Spiro, 558).

The regularized and collective routines in most Kibbutzim formed an atmosphere of dedication to the group-designated values of the space. In one Kibbutz, for example, there was a long trial about whether or not individual teakettles (*koomkooms*) could be allowed in people's rooms. Those concerned argued that with a koomkoom, "members might prefer to spend their evenings in the privacy of their rooms; furthermore, it would violate the prohibition on private property. Hence their rallying cry, 'The koomkoom will destroy the kibbutz!' "(Spiro, 558).

Kibbutzim, although they operated in relative isolation and through different processes then the rest of Israeli municipalities, had impacts on the Israeli economy and in politics. By middle of the 1960's the Kibbutzim were producing 33 percent of Israel's gross national farm product and 12 percent of the total gross national product (Spiro, 559). Spiro notes that the Kibbutzim were socially successful as well as economically productive—there was a "lack of serious conflict" in the communal Kibbutzim: through the 1970's the Kibutzim across Israel had experienced one murder and one serious case of embezzlement, but other then that no real crime (Spiro, 559). Spiro claims that the economic functioning and social cohesion of most Kibbutzim garnered admiration by people outside of the Kibbutzim. High regard for Kibbutzim aided individual members to become political actors in the Israeli state: "in 1969, when the kibbutz movement comprised only three percent of the Israeli (Jewish) population, four of the 24-

member cabinet (16 percent) were members of kibbutzim, and six more were former members. In addition, 15 of the 120-member parliament were kibbutz members, another 30 were former members or closely associated with the kibbutz movement, and four prime ministers had been kibbutz members" (Spiro, 560).

In the 1980's Kibbutzim, along with the rest of Israel, experienced an economic depression, characterized by 400% inflation (Spiro, 559). Authors Ashkenazi & Katz write that in the 1970's it was typical for the Israeli government who, at the time, "dominated the stock market," to "allocate credit to those objectives that suited its own priorities" (Ashkenazi & Katz, 576). Kibbutzim were one of those objectives. Kibbutzim serviced the Israeli state through settlement and the integration of immigrants and they also had a significant amount of control over the economic production of the state. The relationship between Kibbutzim and the state of Israel reassured people in the beginning of the crisis that "the government would not let the kibbutzim fail" (Ashkenazi & Katz, 572). Ashkenazi and Katz note that an idea circulating in some Kibbutzim was that the government would take care of Kibbutzim loans (Ibid, 572). By 1989 the debt of the two national kibbutz organizations— the United Kibbutz Movement (TKM) and the Kibbutz Artzi—reached 12 billions shekels (Ibid, 578). Israeli banks agreed to erase 2 billion shekels from the net debt. The wealthier Kibbutzim, through the national organizations—ended up footing more of the bill then the poorer ones (Ibid, 579).

Something else occurring in the Kibbutzim around this time was the formation and consolidation of what Ashkenazi and Katz denominated as the "second generation" of the Kibbutzim. The "second generation" refers to the children of kibbutz founders who have grown into adults and begin to take part in decision-making assemblies (Ashkenazi & Katz, 575). They characterize this second generation by a focus on individuals' "private spheres" and individuals' desire to augment their standard of living via material possessions (Ibid, 576). Similarly, Spiro describes the tension that the second generation felt between the "collective" and the

"individual": "constraints on personal freedom entailed by the need to subordinate individual desires to the interests of the group" (Spiro, 561/562).

Ashkenazi and Katz present a case study of the Kibbutz Galil in Northern Israel as an example of the transition from "communal kibbutz" to "renewed kibbutz." The transition from communal to renewed kibbutz they relegate, in part, to a lack of "social cohesion" in the Kibbutz. Galil was formed in 1939 by migrants from Poland and Lithuania and Ashekenazi and Katz remark that the cultural differences and different lived experiences caused difficulties: "Most of the Polish group were urban and well educated and most of those from Lithuania came from villages, and were mostly uneducated" and "In actuality, from the beginning, the kibbutz was considered characterless, with an absence of social cohesion and a lack of meaningful leadership" (Ashkenazi & Katz, 575). They claim that the lack of social cohesion trickled into and impacted the second generation. Ashekenazi and Katz describe how members of Galil in the late 1980's insisted on a raise in individual allowances and note how there was insistence of raising the standard of living, in the middle of a fiscal crisis. It is against this backdrop that the State of Israel "appointed a committee of experts with Professor Eliezer Ben Rafael as Chair, to redefine the kibbutz" (Ashkenazi & Katz, 572). The committee came up with the official distinction mentioned earlier. The "communal Kibbutz," was defined as "a settlement association which is a separate settlement, organized on the bases of communal ownership of assets, individual labour and equality and cooperation in production, consumption and education." And a "Renewed Kibbutz" where, in the definition above, the word "communal" is replaced with "cooperative." In contrast to a communal kibbutz, in a "renewed Kibbutz" allowances are distributed based on kind and amount of labor and residences can be owned personally. These were not imposed from anywhere but rather changes that took place as a result of deliberation at general assemblies—every transitioning kibbutz had a distinct approach and timeline to the transition. Kibbutz Galil, in July of 1998 began debating a document that

proposed linking personal and allowance in an effort to encourage "suit[ing] the standard of living and the general level of expenses to the real sources of income available to the kibbutz, as increasing the existing debt would be impossible" (Ashkenazi & Katz, 575). Ashkenazi and Katz describe a year or so of community-based research and continued drafting and discussion at assemblies that ended in a vote. The vote to link kind/amount of labor to compensation and to privatize the collective passed with a great majority: most of the few who opposed the plan were older people for whom privatization was "the shattering of a dream," and those members who did not contribute much to the kibbutz and so, for them, the change would harm their quality of life (Ashkenazi & Katz, 583).

One of the effects of the change in structure of Kibbutz Galil is an increased dynamic relationship between the kibbutz and its neighbors; Ashkenazi and Kaz describe how the assembly "began to discuss the possibility of constructing a community neighborhood of non-kibbutz members, on kibbutz land" and deem the move "a very significant step for the economic and social future of the kibbutz" (Ashkenazi & Katz, 586).

Both the Spanish Okupas and Israeli Kibbutz come into existence to fulfill material needs as well as social desires. It is interesting to look at how, in both the Spanish and Israeli contexts, the assembly-based collectives distance themselves from processes occurring in their immediate vicinity and it is through generating distance and difference that both the Kibbutz and okupas end up influencing the trajectory of the social-political processes outside of the collective. González articulates this phenomenon when he notes that, although okupas do not orient themselves towards sectorial politics, the processes within okupas have perceivable impacts in these spaces. Similarly, the primary goals of Kibbutzim are to serve the community they exist within, but Kibbutz members become involved in Israeli state politics.

The networks formed between collectives—the Red de Lavapiés and online

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databases/forums in the case of Spanish Social Centers and the nation-wide kibbutzim organizations—are venues through which both movements maintain and build their physical presence. Individuals and collectives from CSOA's "show up" for one another's causes; this is exemplified by the Red de Lavapiés' mobilization in support of La Eskalera Karakola that ended in the permanent expropriation a physical space to the social center.[1] During the economic crisis experienced by most Kibbutzim the the United Kibbutz Movement (TKM) and the Kibbutz Artz Kibbutzim that were structures through which Kibbutzim united to negotiate with banks and the state and as a result were able to ease some of the financial stress.

Another similarity is that both okupas and Kibbutzim have dealt with "crisis" moments linked to political and economic processes. These "crisis" moments have caused both movements to make adjustments regarding permeability of the collective. The "crisis" for okupas was catalyzed by the 1996 criminalization of squatting that coincided with the economic "crisis" and state cuts to social services programs. Similarly, in Israel, the moment of crisis for Kibbutzim was sparked by economic stress due to massive debt that many communes accrued paired with the coming-of-age of the first individuals to have grown up within the Kibbutzim and who were critical of the rigidness of traditional Kibbutzim. Literature on both the movements invoke the crises as a divider between the "first" and "second" generation of the movements.

The second generation of okupas is characterized, in part, to renewed enthusiasm on the part of youth in certain neighborhoods by particular projects. As Christopher Patz's documentary articulates: "many young people attended activities at social centers in Lavapiés,

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[1] A more contemporary example of this is CSOA la Quimeras' Facebook campaign in defense of CSOA La Dragona. The posts inform La Quimeras' Facebook "audience" of the details of La Dragona's possible eviction and encourage participants in La Quimera to attend La Dragona's assembly to support in the defense of the space: https://www.facebook.com/174544266044646/photos/a.182622351903504.1073741828.174544266044646/743230792509321/?type=3&theater.

like what they were seeing, and went back to their neighborhoods to replicate what they has

experienced, with other characteristics…" (Okupación, 2007). In contrast, the second

generations of Kibbutzim are characterized by youth who are less willing to buy-in to the

collective.

It is difficult to generalize "all Kibbutzim" or "all Okupa's" but I think it is possible to

distinguish between the consensus-based processes of a Kibbutz and the consensus-based

processes of an Okupas. Generally, the assemblies of Kibbutzim exist to concretize expectations

and norms in order to facilitate community cohesion, whereas the assemblies of okupas serve to

promote the flexibility and permeability of the social centers. When Spiro characterizes the

general assemblies he writes that they "consisted of the norm that the group, not the individual,

was the legitimate locus of decision making" (Spiro, 558). In the film Laboratorio 03:

Ocupando el Vacío, María voices that through assemblies "*we don't want to arrive at something

in common, at a common ideology, that we want to listen to differences, and that we want to

generate something [a space] where that can occur" (Laboratorio 03:* Ocupando el Vacio,

trans my own). CSOAs experience a density of comings and goings— in Patz's documentary a

young woman describes how millions of people have come by Patio Maravillas in the two years

it has existed and that hundreds of people are involved on a regular basis—whether through

activities and workshops or assemblies (Okupación, 2007). A space with so much movement

necessitates political processes that can accept fluctuation in numbers and themes. What makes

this an "intelligent group" says Jose Angel about the assembly processes occurring at el Labo

03 is that "el grupo lo construya la gente que viene, el grupo no esta cerrado, no tiene un sentido

previo sino que cada vez que entras contribuyas al sentido, contribuyas a la dinamica…" *The

group is constructed by the people who come [to the assembly]; the group is not closed, it is not

preconceived, instead every time you arrive you contribute to the meaning of the space, to the

dynamics"* (Laboratorio 03: Ocupando el Vacío). The assembly exists as a tool for supporting

as many heterogeneous projects in one physical space as possible. In order to function, there

needs to be a central node, but that the node exists to support the individual offshoots. There are

enough individuals participating and enough collectives with a stake in the space so that nobody

has to "buy-in" completely.

In contrast, a traditional Kibbutz asks people to devote themselves completely to the

functioning of the space, and if you cannot commit, you cannot participate. Existing in such

close quarters (where work, play, sleep, and intimacy are in the same space) necessitates clear

communication but it also necessitates cohesion. Assemblies existed to find common ground: to

articulate expectations and through articulations ensure that individuals are standing on

common ground. "Common ground," in the case of Ashkenazi and Katz's narrative of Kibbutz

Galil was missing, in part, because of the different nationalities of the founding Kibbutz

members; "social cohesion" is delineated by degrees of homogeneity. The distinction between

"common ground" that Kibbutzim put forth and Maria's assertion that in centro sociales that the

"biggest agreement is that we don't want to arrive at something in common" shows how the

social habits of assemblies are mobilized to suit different goals and outcomes.

CHAPTER THREE: CASE STUDIES

Looking at the "Second Generation" of self-managed social centers and

their facilitation of neighborhood networks: A few examples in Barcelona

and Madrid.

Keeping in mind Lefebvre's spatial triad of perceived, conceived, and lived space, wherein perceived space relates to the official technocratic space, conceived space relates to the aesthetic or symbolic meaning of the place, and the lived space relates to the living performance of individuals within that space—how do Okupas transform urban space? They do not do so through physical design, as most Okupas reside in old abandoned buildings and the precariousness of their illegal status and/or economic precariousness of a lot of individuals within them make it so remodels beyond functional repairs is rare. Okupas transform the urban space through the visible and open interactions that occur within the space. So a more specific question can be posed: How do the "performance of individuals within the space" transform the space? What conceptions of Okupas exist and how do the "performances of individuals within that space" reinforce or contest perceptions or conceptions of that specific Okupa?

In this discussion I refer mainly to the second generation of centros sociales; a term that applies to Okupas but also former-Okupas turned legal self-managed social centers through variegated processes of negotiation with municipalities and building owners. In the Christopher Patz's documentary on CSOA's in Madrid a woman involved in CSOA Patio Maravillas explains that Patio Maravillas belongs to the second generation "because we think the movement is more important then the building itself." This "second generation" consists of diverse spaces all of which are dedicated to uniting local networks in efforts to help people be less reliant on processes removed from their vicinity (more autonomous) (Okupación, 2007).

In this section I examine three social centers of the second generation— Ateneu La Candela, Eskalera Karakola, El Laboratorio 01, 02, and 03. Through an analysis of these social centers it is apparent how the "open proposal" structure and physical presence (the actual building) of an okupa function to create tangibles networks.

Ateneu La Candela is a social center in Terrassa, Barcelona that recently underwent a process of negotiation with the municipality—they moved from a small building to an old

textile factory that is 400 m sq. In order to afford the space they found 30 new participants willing to contribute financially to the project and ran a campaign to pressure the city council to donate money to fund the project. They succeeded and the city now subsidizes the project. Xavi, a participant in La Candela, in an interview with Mick O'Broin (contributing author at the Irish Left Review) describes negotiating with city council as a "way to bring the issues out into the open" (O'Broin, 13).

Terrassa is a satellite city of Barcelona and exists because of migrants: "First were those internal migrants in the 60s and 70s, especially people from Andalucía, and afterwards migration from other countries from the 90s on" (O'broin, 14). Xavi notes how migration shifts dynamics in the city—he observes that there is "very little interaction between different communities" and that the segregation is reinforced by fear or resentment caused through repression both by individuals and municipal forces (O'broin, 14). For example, in 1999, in one of the neighborhoods where many of the newer migrants lived, there were some serious attacks on the Maghreb population and in 2005 the government launched a campaign to locate all undocumented migrants in attempts to "regularize them" (O'broin, 15).

La Candela was—and continues to be—a host site for creating alternative responses to migration (responses other then violence or unfair regulation). An example of that is that some Senegalese migrants in Terrassa, many of whom are undocumented, make their living through "top manta," or selling accessories spread out on big cloth sheets in the streets This is technically an illegal activity because the migrants do not compensate the city for setting up shop. The double illegality—of being undocumented and vending sans permission—puts migrants in a situation of increased vulnerability. The association of Ateneu Candela identified this issue and decided to go talk to the vendors and "invite them to the Social Centre in order to know more about their situation" (O'broin, 18). At that meeting some of the migrants

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expressed a desire to learn Spanish and Catalan but expressed a lack of resources to do so. They wanted to set-up an association of undocumented migrants. La Candela is now home base for the Terrassa Association of Undocumented Migrants and hosts language classes. Xavi notes the effects of interactions: "By forming an association they were able to make visible their situation and to demonstrate to the city council that they weren't alone (18, 19)." The other resources in the space—a bar, a radio station, a free shop, a general art space—are also available to the people who come for the meetings and language classes. "This leads to people participating in different initiatives and ensures that it's not just a case of 'us helping them'" (O'broin, 18). Some of the top manta vendors now attend La Candela's general assemblies; they are involved in the managerial upkeep of the space.

The link that the physical space of La Candela facilitated between the "top manta" sellers and the local activist community has echoes outside of Terrassa: the efforts sparked by the interaction between the assembly and the "top manta" vendors "has led to mobilizations on the streets for the decriminalization of 'top manta' "(O'broin, 20). The association of "top manta" in Terrassa was the first in Spain and since then associations have been formed in Madrid, Seville, and Zaragoza. The associations communicate and coordinate with one another and have formed a sort-of national 'top-manta' network (O'broin, 20). Without a—stable and privileged—physical space to meet it would have been difficult for 'top-manta' vendors to organize. In addition, the multi-purpose-ness of La Candela means that interactions between migrants and other citizens occur at a density and in a context that they would not just in public on the street.

Lavapiés is a working class neighborhood in downtown Madrid that is characterized, like Terressa, by a high degree of migrants. Feinberg notes that throughout the 1990's there was a lot of immigration to the neighborhood—in the beginning of the 90's 12.3% of the population

was born outside of Spain. In addition to migrants the neighborhood demographic is of a relatively older generation. Feinberg posits that the combination of migrants and senior citizens in the 1990's—who, from a fiscal standpoint, do not usher in capital to the city—led to a general neglect by the municipality (Feinberg, 8). In 2000 the only city subsidized cultural center required Spanish Nationality to access it (in a neighborhood with a density of migrants), there is only one health center and it does not attend to emergencies and there are zero parks or green spaces (En Defensa).

In 1997, under the Plan General de Ordenación Urbana de Madrid 1997 (Plan for Urban Development for Madrid 1997) Lavapiés was designated a "preferred area of rehabilitation" (Feinberg, 1). Within this document there is also discussion to present Madrid as a candidate for the future Olympics; the urban rehabilitation plan was about bringing cultural capital into the city, but also about constructing sites of national narratives and conserving national patrimony. As a result, recent planning endeavors have concentrated their efforts on cultural production in Lavapies (Feinberg, 15). Lavapiés houses El Museum Reina Sofia (1992), El Teatro Valle Inclán (2006), and the Centro Nacional de Artes (2012). These institutions, according to Feinberg, have been "complemented by an improvement of the housing stock in the neighborhood" (Feinberg, 16). Feinberg quotes a document by people involved in CSOA el Laboratorio written in critique of the Urban Development plan: "the plan, instead of offering solutions to those who live in Lavapiés, opens the door to speculation and will expel the people from the center, attracting investment and 'new neighbors' with economic power and the latest cars and scooters, changing the nature of the residents that characterize this neighborhood, breaking the popular and multicultural structure that makes Lavapiés a distinct space in Madrid" (En Defensa, Translation by Feinberg).

A visual example of the changes catalyzed by the Urban Development Plan (UDP) is a

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picture of plaza Agustín Lara in 1970 and again in 2005 found on a blog about reclaiming the

public spaces in Lavapiés. In 1970 the plaza is full of park benches, trees, and people milling

about. In 2005 two new large apartment buildings loom on either end of the plaza, the plaza

looks smaller, the trees are gone, as are any structures or landscaping. The photos accompany a

link to another blog entry that cite an incidence where there had been, for three weeks straight,

little booths for activities in the plaza. The booths had been rented from the city and were for

activities planned and managed by entities outside the neighborhood. When an association in

the neighborhood attempted to host a book fair in the plaza they were shut down. The blog

critiques the management of public space: "no me parece mal, si el tejido social del barrio

tuviera igual oportunidad de utilizarlas para sus propios eventos," *"it doesn't seem wrong to

me"* (referring to the cities' use of the plaza), *"if the social fabric of the neighborhood had the

same opportunity to utilize these spaces for their own events"* (El Solar del Olivar 48,

translation my own).

The municipally subsidized museums and restructuring of city plazas, like Bresnihan

and Byrne describe with regards to Dublin, set-up exclusions; cultural attractions are spectacles

that attract people to sites (in this case, Lavapiés) while simultaneously displacing people

through out-pricing. The material consequences of cultural attractions in neighborhoods that

cost more then average incomes of local residents are difficulty accessing the social networks

and sites of cultural production. These material consequences—in many permutations—often

lend to a more general emotional sense of feeling left out.

Lavapiés has historically been a home to the squatter's movement in Madrid—

González García cites that it is the neighborhood with the highest density of squats in Madrid

(González García, 167). The neighborhood is considered a good site because of its more

dilapidated and abandoned buildings, cheaper rent, and how it was characterized as an area

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where—until recently—"the officials" were not interested in going (Ibid, 186). In a Christopher Patz's documentary on Okupas in Madrid an okkupier speaks to the relationship between the neighborhood and the okupa phenomena: "It arises in Lavapiés because Lavapiés is a neighborhood with a large number of empty houses and neither the administration or anyone else had been concerned with the neighborhood. It was a really poor neighborhood where there was not any kind of social help or jobs. So the arrival of a movement like Okkupying, well, it enters easily, because the neighbors, once they see how the city does nothing for them, accepts that younger people come to live in the deteriorated neighborhood to put on activities and make culture…A lot of immigrants come to live in Lavapiés, it is really normalized, because the poor people [in Lavapiés] have an understanding of the conditions of the situation many immigrants are coming from, just like they understand the youth who come to okkupy empty houses" (Okupación, 2007. Translation my own). According to Patz's documentary enduring similar situations and/or degrees of precariousness facilitates understanding between heterogeneous actors in the neighborhoods.

El Laboratorio and contemporarily, La Eskalera Karakola and La Quimera are examples of a few self-managed social centers in the neighborhood. All three centers provide insights into how self-managed spaces are sites that prove how "city planners, the Ayuntamiento, and the cultural institutions of the State were [are] not the only actors in the creation of Lavapiés" (Feinberg, 156). These spaces became sites of network construction and tool sharing in a way that gave and gives individuals an ability to play a part in constructing their own urban space (spectacle) in the midst of the city's deliberate restructuring. Instead of—or in addition to—channeling money or efforts into direct services, the social centers are examples of what happens when certain individuals and collectives in a neighborhood leverage their privilege towards benefitting the autonomy of others.

El Laboratorio—*the Laboratory*, in English —was an occupied social center that had

three permutations in three different buildings in Lavapiés—el Labo 01, el Labo 02, and el Labo

03. The first Laboratorio, El Labo 01, came to be as a result of the first ever Assamblea de

Okupas, an assembly of social okkupiers in Madrid, after the eviction of the well-known and

beloved social center La Guindalera (5,000 people took to the streets to protest the eviction

process) (Feinberg, 176). The assembly decided that the appropriate response would be to

"okkupy again in the center of Madrid" and they strategically chose a building in Lavapiés, at

68 Embajadores street—it was the old National Institute of Agricultural Research.

Christopher Patz's documentary cites El Labo 01 as one of the first spaces in Spain

where people established a "hacklab," or an organized but non-institutionalized computer

science hub where people gather to work on sharing content freely via the internet and, rather

then working to produce software to sell, develop applications that can be used widely and

freely. Creating a public technology hub in Lavapiés in the late 90's, when computer ownership

was still relegated to those with degrees of economic privilege, is meaningful. The hacklab at El

Labo was a precursor to many copy-left efforts based from social centers around the country

(the largest example of this is probably Traficantes de Sueños, a collective book store involved

in a "foundation of the commons," a project that includes CS La Candela, CS La Casa Invisible

(Malaga, Spain), and Nomad University). El Labo existed at Embajadores from April 1997-

December 1998 (Feinberg, 190).

El Laboratorio 02 existed from January 6, 1999-August 28, 2001, at Plaza Cabestrero,

about a block away from Embajadores street and the original location. Laboratorio 02, the

documentary cites, was influenced by the alter-globalization movement and the migration rights

movement (Okupación, 2010). El Labo 02 hosted the meetings of various organizations of

undocumented folk. The building itself was an abandoned—but relatively new—apartment

complex. It's rooms were awkwardly quartered off from one another in a way that encouraged activities to trickle out from El Labo into the plaza: the space "condition[ed] people to make interventions in the street . . . theater, concerts, performance art and such are all done in public space" (interview with participant, quoted in Feinberg, 177). An article in the Spanish newspaper El Mundo writes how the assembly of El Labo 02 is a visible component of the Lavapiés, saying that it has converted itself "into an element of the identity of the neighborhood of Lavapiés supported by the great majority of its neighbors" (El Mundo, June 2, 2002, quoted in Feinberg, 203). This popular support is visible and demonstrated during the period of eviction of el Labo 02: on April 4th, 2001, 2,000 people gathered to protest the threatened eviction of el Labo 02. "El Laboratorio se queda en Lavapies," *The Laboratorio stays in Lavapiés* read some of the protest signs (Donde estan las llaves, 112). The assertion that the social center "stays" in Lavapiés demonstrates how the space became an important—and functional—landmark in the neighborhood. It could have read, "no to the eviction of El Laboratorio," or something of the sort, but instead the protest signs made explicit the connection between social center and the rest of the neighborhood. After arresting over 20 participants the municipality was successful in the eviction.

However, that same month—April of 2002—an abandoned printing press was okkupied and became el Labo 03. El Laboratorio 03 was more widely visited and utilized then it's precursors, in part because of the publicity and visibility gifted to it by the okkupation and eviction of el Labo 01 and 02 and partly because the physical space was open and large enough to host large workshops and productions—the physical space was (more) appropriate for larger gatherings. Feinberg, supported through first-person interviews, describes how El Labo 03 was utilized by many local theater troupes as an unofficial rehearsal and performance space. Weekly movie nights were also widely attended. Feinberg highlights how el Labo 03 becomes a contesting counterpart to the city-sponsored and state-sponsored sites of cultural production in

Lavapiés: the Reina-Sofia museum where entrance is 15 euros, the movie theaters, and the prestigious festivals in clubs. At el Labo an individual could be an audience (member) of art without having to pay for it and, if they wanted to, they could participate in workshops to make art, to be art.

In addition to a play space for young-adult city residents, el Labo 03 was an active site for politics—the Laboratorio functioned, like its previous versions, as a meeting space for a multitude neighborhood groups. "Madres Contra La Droga" or "Mothers against drugs" is a group that utilized the center to meet. It is a good example of the diversity of groups hosted by the center. In the documentary "El Laboratorio 03: Okupando el vacio" Sara, an elderly resident of the neighborhood and one of the members of the collective "Madres Contra La Droga" declares that "si coger lo que está allí, que es tuyo, y algo que te está negando, para cuestiones de la vivienda o para hacer lugar para organizar actividades, si eso es ser *okupa*, pues yo soy *okupa*" *If picking up what is there, that is yours, which is something they are negating you, whether it is a question of housing or a space to organize activities, if that's what it means to be an okupa, well I'm an okupa* (El Laboratorio 03: Okupando el Vacio). This scene shows how El Laboratorio 03 does not adhere to the characteristic of insularity that Gonick references in her critique of the activists who have no sense of the reality of the people who reside in the neighborhood of the building they decide to okkupy; Sara is clearly not one of the founding okkupiers of the social center and does not fit the stereotypical demographic (she, in fact, looks like she belongs to the older generation from Feinberg's description of Lavapiés) yet she seems at home in the space, smiling and proudly self-identifying as an "okupa."

As a result of proximity to one another catalyzed by the Laboratorio 03 associations, including "Madres Contra Las Drogas," were able to develop a collective voice in a group called the Red de Lavapiés [Lavapiés Network]. Participants included some twenty-nine

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collectives relating to different interest groups in the neighborhood from la Asociación de Emigrantes Marroquíes en España [the Association of Morrocan Emigrants in Spain], la Asociación de Inmigrantes de Bangladesh [the Bagladeshi Immigrant Association], the Asociaión de Inmigrantes Senegaleses [the Sengalese Immigration Association], to the neighborhood association La Corrala, the feminist group Eskalera Karakola, and Servicio Civil Internacional [Civil Service International] (Feinberg, 198). Feinberg describes the network as "a diverse and tumultuous group" but underscores how the Laboratorio served as a physical place for them to come together and "as a result the disparate voices of Lavapiés had an opportunity to generate one voice to protest the lack of services and disproportionate investment in the cultural facilities of the neighborhood at the expense of more basic needs like a health center" (Feinberg, 198-199). Serrano and Lopez, participants in the collective Eskalera Karakola, describe the network as "a neighborhood network proposing socially inclusive urbanistic alternatives to the 'rehabilitation' currently under way" (Lopez & Serrano, 2003).

The Eskalera Karakola is located at Calle Embajadores 40. The building dates back to the 15th century and because of its age is protected under the "Plan General de Ordenación Urbanística de Madrid" [General Plan for Urban Management Madrid] (González García, 168). The building, after being empty for 20 years, was okkupied by a group of women in 1996. In 2003—after seven years of generating activities and hosting collective initiatives—the assembly of the social center decided it wanted to begin working towards acquiring the legal right to the space; "The Eskalera Karakola has maintained itself as such a space since November 1996, but in a situation of physical insecurity which irremediably limits our inventive capacities. Now we are proposing a project to demand the expropriation, rehabilitation and the cession to the collective Eskalera Karakola" write two members of the Karakola collective—Maria Serrano and Silvia López—in a paper presented at the 5th European Feminist Research Conference in Sweden in August of 2003 (Serrano & Lopez, 2003). During assemblies the collective decided

that they no longer wanted to invest so much labor in the upkeep of the space; "This flow of knowledge and abilities also contributes to the management and maintenance of the house itself. In the six years which we have occupied the Karakola we have made innumerable reforms, big and small, of the roof and the rafters, the plumbing and the electricity" write Serrano and López on the processes of maintaining the space. The labors did not seem worth it if their continued use of the building was contingent on anything but themselves. The Lavapiés Network made it one of their goals to vie for the expropriation of Embajadores 40: "One of the numerous social, political, and cultural projects of the Lavapiés Network is the recuperation of a series of 'sensitive' buildings, the majority of which are okkupied, where the majority of public activities in the neighborhood occur. Among them are CSOA El Laboratorio III, El CSOA La Eskalera Karakola, y el Puntal" (González García, 168, translation my own). The building was expropriated to the collective in 2003. Currently rent is paid and the space maintained through regular pledges by participants, individual donations and donations from associations that utilize the space, and through collective labor at work parties. The building is a container for many projects, including the planning site of international film festival of Lavapiés as well as the collective Bajo el Asfalto esta la Huerta [BAH, Underneath the Asphalt is the Garden], an urban farm initiative (the project originated in Madrid but that has spread exists in other autonomies of Spain) (Eskalera Karakola, Casa Pública de Mujeres).

A similar reorientation process occurred at El Seco, a social center in the Vallekas/Adelfas barrio of Madrid. El Seco began in 1991 as a squatted endeavor but in early 2000's the assembly decided to work towards finding a negotiated legal space. On March 5th of 2005 there was a demonstration of over 3,000 people in the neighborhood (named the Pink March for the social centers' mascot, the pink panther, a character known for creative forms of escape), in support of the center's demand for relocation. In 2006 the municipality granted the association of El Seco the building they had identified; the association collectively pays rent for

it but is subsidized by Citizen Participation (an agency funded by the city council) (O'Broin, 23).

Bea, a participant in El Seco, describes how the original building became a limiting factor in the social center. First, because of the energy spent defending it and because of how run down it was that it might not be attractive to families or people with children. Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, because asking already precarious people, like undocumented migrants, to enter a squatted space, is asking them to take on another precarity (O'broin, 23). The burden of asking people entering the okupas to add to the precariousness of their situation produces the probability of social exclusion. Bea describes that, in addition to feeling passionate about creating a space more kinds of people wanted to reside in, she hoped the negotiation process itself would create concrete alliances in the neighborhood that did not exist before: "we thought the struggle for the Social Centre to be provided with a new building could create more interesting alliances then the struggle against being evicted…" (O'broin, 22). In its new building, El Seco now has free legal aid for migrants, volunteer lawyers whose interest is in conflict resolution and restorative justice, it hosts Spanish language classes, hip hop classes, the neighborhood association of Morrocan migrants meets there, and the center provides resources for the association to print fliers and mobilizes to support their protests. The space has a free shop and its own email network that functions like a Craigslist (for jobs and events and other resources). The assembly has created a "resistance fund" that "people can contribute and draw on when they need it" (O'broin, 30).

Bea, within her extensive list of the kinds of activities hosted at the social center highlights the intent of the space: in its openness and willingness to host so many different actors, the assemblies' intent is to create a space that declares itself as an integral part of the neighborhood. "For us in Seco, calling yourself a 'neighbour' and relating to others in terms of

'neighbours' is more a decision, rather than something objective or a reflection of reality"
(O'broin, 27). El Seco challenges the image of a neighborhood as formed by "people who come
from the same place, with similar jobs, housing or cultural habits," by creating a physical space
for many different people with different projects to unite in and identify with.

The Transfemifest: an example of a self-managed project supported

by the Okupa community.

Introduction —

The Transfemifest was a four-day Transfeminist Festival from May 5th-8th of 2016 in
Granada, Spain hosted at CSOA La Redonda. It was a self-managed and self-financed effort by
a group of individuals who, beginning in October of 2015, met about bi-weekly in a consensus
based assembly to plan the festival. The festival consisted in a series of activities and workshops
on topics ranging from feminist repression in advanced capitalism to a workshop on
emotionally and physically secure approaches to BDSM. The goals of the festival were to create
a network of feminist thinkers in the South of Spain; The manifesto reads that the festival aims
create a space of "group learning and experiential self knowledge" that "aims to create alliances
that stem from care, reflection, encounters, study, and celebration" (Transfemifest Manifesto,
translation my own).

I attended the Transfemifest on grants from the Clark Honors College and the
University of Oregon's UROP (Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program). The following
is a brief background on the location and context of the festival followed by a thick description
of the festival itself. The Transfemifest is an example of a typical project that occupied social

centers host and I hope—through contextualization and the thick description—to utilize the Transfemifest to illuminate the micro-social processes that occur within okupas. My intent is to show how these micro-social processes build knowledge sharing capacities that are open to more affective, emotional, and embodied forms of coming to understandings in addition to rational discursive structures. In my discussion section I make the suggestion that it is these micro-social processes or social habits characteristic of Spain's self-managed spaces that capacitate individuals and collectives to contest and create counter-spaces to the commodification of urban space. These social habits cultivate an ambiance of openness to possibilities that constitute less homogenous and more lively, inclusive spaces in the neighborhoods they reside in.

In the opening ceremony of the Transfemifest people make references to specificities of place. First, to the significance of the festival in the South of Spain: "aquí en Granada, en el sur, porque sentimos la necesidad de decentralizar los centros y hacer política transfeminista trasureña" *Here in Granada, in the south, because we feel it is necessary to decenter the centers and make some transfeminist politics in the South* (recording 5/5/16). And second, to the physical place, CSOA La Redonda.

CSOA La Redonda is a self-managed space that, like other CSOA's in Spain, functions through an assembly process. Anyone can come to the weekly assembly and propose activities and projects they want to carry out in the space. Some events, like garden nights and circus open-house workshops are more permanent and regular (weekly or bi-weekly) institutions. Perhaps the Redonda's most utilized times are its Thursday *Comedors*. Every Thursday there is a three-course meal——*primeros, segundos, y postres,* firsts, seconds and dessert—served at

the center. Each week the lunch is hosted by a different social collectives or organizations in

Granada, announced on Facebook a few days before. [2]

La Redonda's history follows the trend of "second generation" okupas. In my interview

with Lorena, a participant in the planning of the Transfemifest, she explains how the space has

experienced a "revival" after a period of conflict and violence. She ascribes the conflict and

violence to the raucous parties that the people who lived in the center would throw with

frequency; the space was constructed more for the use of the people who lived in it then as a

public space. She describes how, through conflict-resolution assemblies: "They resolved

everything. They decided that the space was going to be drug and alcohol free, and now there is

a new scene" (Lorena, 5/13/16, translation my own). Now, nobody lives in the center and

"neighbors are entering the space, which years ago would have been unthinkable" (Lorena,

5/13/16, Translation, my own). Lorena mentions the centers' urban garden that was started by

residents of one of the apartment complexes nearby as evidence of the renewed participation

and interest that local folk have in the space.

I learn from my interview with Lorena that there are three main caretakers of La

Redonda: Carmen and Juan and Angela. Both Carmen and Juan attend the festival—Carmen is

probably in her mid-fifties while Juan looks like he's in his late twenties. There are not many

other spaces in the city that would host such an intensive festival without compensation (other

then paying for lights and water). During the opening ceremony and the closing ceremony the

Transfemifest facilitators take time to thank Carmen and Juan for the work they have done to

prepare the space for the festival and for the cooperation with one another, Carmen thanks them

right back. In my interview with Lorena she highlights how clear and consistent communication

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[2] [The announcement from June 1st describes cannelloni in a cheesy sauce accompanied by a talk about Czechoslovakia. The Comedor on May 18 is to be put on by "Jovenes Libertarias" a semi-anarchist youth group that works in conjunction with the CNT (Centro Nacional de Trabajo, or National Centre for Work, the labor unions center).]

was necessary between the people of La Redonda and the people of the Transfemifest; the space was "en obras" or under some construction and the Transfemifest assembly helped with what needed to get done, but Lorena notes that they also had to "break a little bit with their [the Redonda's] structures, they had a plan in their heads…and then we arrived and it was like we have to do it all now because the festival is coming…"(Lorena, 5/13/16, translation my own).

La Redonda itself is located on Camino de Ronda, a main drag on the West end of the city center. The street is full of grocery stores, one of the larger gyms in the town, a lot of 10 – story apartments, and has access to the highway; besides La Redonda it does not seem like a hub for alternative activities. Its official address is Camino de Ronda, 190: a building surrounded by a thick, metal railing with a creaky door. The door has the okkupy symbol painted on it —a circle with a lightning bolt/arrow through it—spray-painted in its middle. The door tends to be open if anyone is inside the center, but if it is not there is a bell to ring. It opens up into a concrete patio, covered on the North and East Ends. There are raised beds full of vegetables on the West edge of the patio. Under the cover on the North end there are usually mats and rigging for a rope and fabrics (for yoga and circus workshops), but the mats have been moved and replaced with a makeshift kitchen. There are three long tables set-up in a C-shaped, a big camping stove, and stacks and stacks of plates and bowls. A basin and hose are set-up for quick, easy dish cleaning. The bathrooms are two stalls: an "accessible" one that big and curtained off with fully functioning flushing and a smaller stall with a white, porcelain platform with a hole to squat into. On the South end of the patio there is a mostly concrete room that feels cave-like. This is the main meeting space of the festival—where we gather at the beginning and the end. The ground is covered in a soft, red mat tapped to the ground (a make-shift carpet) and there is a projector up at the front of the room. On the walls there is a photo-exhibit of some of the festival participants (who are also residents of Granada) experience of a self-directed post-porn workshop. In many of the photos the girls are completely naked, in some

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they sit on couches reading books or serving each other coffee, in others they wear masks and are touching their genitals. Tapped up next to the photos are written personal accounts of the experience.

The rest of the space is decorated, too. All over there are hand-made signs and posters. Some are informative and meant to guide activities in the space: a map of the space with names so people can find workshops, the schedule in multiple corners, a sign-up sheet for volunteers, a cork-board for announcements as the festival progresses, friendly reminders, like a sign that reads "This space we share is small, so please be conscientious of the space and the needs of others and yourself." Other signs are meant to add ambiance and speak to the values of the festival: "creer en nosotrxs mismxs" and "conocernos," *believe in ourselves* and *know ourselves*.

Notes on the Process—

Through interviews and data collected via Facebook and Wordpress I will offer some insight into the seven-month planning process of the festival. I hope to convey that this festival was not just an "event" with a precise beginning and end, but rather a set of conversations, of efforts, of organizing, of reuniting at bars to fundraise, socialize, and collaborate.

Assemblies about the Transfemifest began in October and in the beginning they were held about every fifteen days (Lorena, 5/13/16). In our interview, I asked Lorena about what kinds of things came up at the assemblies, what about the festival was difficult to decide or come to agreement. She said they spent a lot of timing talking about whether or not the festival should be open to anyone who wanted to participate or to just female-identified persons (what in Spain, they call "un espacio mixto o no mixto", *a mixed or non-mixed space*). She said they just kept talking through it—they spent two assemblies, about six hours total, talking through it. There was

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a lot of conflict. Lorena at one point said she had doubts about continuing to help organize because it she wanted a non-mixed space and it looked like they were going to end up having a mixed space; she did not know whether she could—or wanted to—set aside her personal values for the sake of group dynamics (Lorena, 5/13/16). To facilitate movement, the group tried to identify values that they had agreed on from previous assemblies to see where those values would fit in the mixed/non-mixed debate.

One distinction they made was that this was a "Transfemifest" and not a "ladyfest." They wanted to work on de-naturalizing the boundaries between a "female" and "male" body. With that value in mind, it seemed really ugly, Lorena said, to put restrictions on who could participate; "no podemos ponernos en la puerta de la redonda para preguntar 'tu que eres' y 'tu puedes pasar, y tu no.' Era un acto de energía muy grande y no queríamos juzgar a nadie, no. Entonces decidimos hacerlo mixto.*" We couldn't put ourselves at the door [of the Redonda] and ask "what are you" and "you can pass, you can't." That would be a lot of energy and we don't want to judge anyways. So we decided to have a mixed festival* (Lorena, 5/13/15, Trans my own).

A strategy they used in the planning assemblies is called "sentires" or "feels". She describes it as time set-aside at the end of each assembly for each member to check-in about how they were feeling, about anything. It was a useful communication activity and became a tool for figuring out how to delegate tasks and take care of one another:

"Pero también ha habido assambleas donde eramos muchos y nos nos conociamos entonces…yo no trato igual a alguién que conozco mas a alguien que conozco menos, como puedo hablar a ese persona—no se lo que puede ofender o lo que no le puede ofender" *"But there were also assemblies where there were a lot of us, and we didn't know each other well…I mean—I don't treat someone I know really well the same as I someone I don't know well. How do I talk to someone I don't know— I don't know what will or will not offend them*."

She continued: *"And so the 'feels' were where we checked in, and communicated about how we were feeling, individually, about the process and outside the process. We did it to take care of the group, to know where you are at as an individual so that we can help...if you need help, we are here."*

Another strategy they had as a group was to be open to changing dynamics, to learn to be flexible when someone had to step-out a little bit: *"*We have had to introduce a new term which is 'to be involved peripherally' because in the end there were people that have had to pull away from organizing a bit, and there were people who pulled more weight because they had more energy or time" (Lorena, 5/13/15, Trans my own).

Besides Assemblies, another way to be involved or find out about the Transfemifest was through their Facebook and Wordpress presence and through the periodic fundraisers at bars. The first post on the Facebook page is on January 18, 2016. The post introduces the Tranfemifest, says dates are TBD, and links to the Wordpress, where viewers can see the manifesto/mission statement.[3] Between the end of January and the Transfemifest in the beginning of May there were ten pre-Transfemifest events. The events ranged from Thursday "comedores" at La Redonda to movie projections and concerts at bars and the funds from all donations went towards festival preparations. According to the social media posts the goal of these pre-activities was to raise funds while creating ties between community members who were excited about the festival.

On February 25th the festival page posts a call for help: "We are self-managed, and working towards autonomy, with the goal of creating ties and collective spaces where we can share experiences and join forces. So if you have time and energy to support us and join in the handsome experience, please write us." (Transfemifest Granada 2016, Trans my own). The post

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[3] (https://transfemifestgranada2016.wordpress.com/manifiesto-transfemifest-granada/, Translation found at the end).

has 16 shares on Facebook. The Transfemifest planning commission creates a Facebook group for people to coordinate carpools to and from the festival—the carpool site is utilized by people inquiring about rides from Madrid, Valencia, Cordoba, Murcia, Barcelona, Zaragoza, and even Lisbon (Portugal).

Welcome to the Festival: May 5th-8th—

The next part of this thick description, I plan to go through the four days of the festival. I won't be exhaustive, because I was not able to attend every workshop and the account would get far to long. I will focus on moments I have identified moments where the mechanisms/values of horizontality create possibilities for the creation, exchange, and alternative valuing of knowledge/s. [4]

I arrive early to the opening ceremony—at five minutes until six. About ten people are milling about the patio. I greet them and meet a young Sociology PHD student named Rocío from Granada, an undergraduate student from Switzerland who is on Erasmus exchange in Spain this year, a woman in her late 30's who spends her life travelling from collective to collective. They are some of the only three that have come alone. Most people come trickling through the door in small groups.

By 6:40 there are around 75 people in the patio and someone calls out that we are ready to begin, so we gather in the room with the red mats for an opening ceremony. Most of us sit on the mats while the thirteen organizers kneel on the stage. They thank us for coming and launch into an introduction. There is no microphone and they take turns speaking (there is no designated announcer or master or ceremonies). They start out by talking a little bit about their experience organizing together: "*no somos los que estamos, ni estamos todos los que somos*"

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[4] Here is the link to the full Transfemifest Program, https://transfemifestgranada2016.wordpress.com/programacion/

one of them says, acknowledging people who helped out who for whatever reason could not attend the festival. They refer to one another as family, and talk about how, like any family, they have had their fair share of disagreements, but that the manner of dealing with them has been full of care: "*We come from diverse places…and how we have gone about understanding one another—communicating—has been really, really incredible*" (Recording, 05/06/16, translation my own). It is as if they are setting a precedent: this festival has helped us learn to care for one another, and we hope it will do the same for you. "*We are really nervous, and equally excited,*" they say, highlighting that this is a big deal to them (Recording, 05/06/16, translation my own). And again, *"I am going to say the minimum and I'm going to read it because I am really nervous"* (Recording, 05/06/16).

More people arrive during the introduction and someone up front pauses the presentation to suggest we rearrange ourselves to include the newcomers, "*like here is a gap,*" Lorena says, encouraging people to open up the circle. This is the first time in a series of the next four days that time is dedicated to making sure everyone in the workshop feels comfortable and included. This usually means gathering in a circle formation, everybody at similar levels.

They highlight that this festival is self-managed and horizontal. Because of these values the festival is dependent on the participation of everybody: "*This festival does not consist of the collective and the participants. Instead, what we want is to build the structure together—that this festival is everybody's. The committees are open to volunteers, and we want you all to participate.*" [5] The speaker lists a few ways we can help run the festival: by cooking meals, cleaning, hanging out with the kids, helping corral dogs when necessary, helping with set-up

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[5] Translation note: "everbody's" took the place of "todas, todes, todos." In traditional Spanish the masculine is the default for plural, but more and more people have been experimenting with gender inclusive language both in speech and in writing. It is appropriate, in some academic disciplines in Spain to utilize @/x/e in the place of the traditional gender-marker of a word.

and take-down.[6] Also, she notes, *"there is a commission of cleaning, but the festival is all of ours, right, so even if you haven't volunteered for the commission and you see something that is full, empty it"* (Recording, 05/06/16, translation my own).

There is, they explain, a "comisión de cuidados," a commission of "care" dedicated to being attentive to tasks related to care. Throughout the festival people taking shifts on the caring commission will wear yellow vests and the intention is that they will help ensure that everyone feels at ease in the space; *"Whoever has a need —be it functional, emotional, affective, or whatever else, the people with yellow vests are here for you and you have the 'safe space' "*— someone wearing a yellow vest explains (Recording, 05/06/16, translation my own). [7]

"Or I guess we all have it," she corrects herself after explaining that the participants have access to this 'safe space,' *"because we all need to feel safe."* This is an acknowledgment of leveling, that the 13 facilitators, too, have vulnerabilities even in the space they created. She points to the curtained off area of La Redonda, the physical safe space: *"its got couches and cushions to relax and a little bit of privacy"* (Recording, 05/06/16, translation my own).

The facilitators let us know that they will be available to help facilitate conflict; *"If you feel like you have experienced an aggression and want assistance facilitating an interaction, we can help…we are here to keep one another accountable, so if you witness something that makes you feel uncomfortable say something"* (Recording, 05/06/16, translation my own).

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[6] There is a board to sign-up for shifts on different commissions. And in relation to meals the facilitators highlight that "all the food we make will be vegan, because this is an anti-speciesist festival. If we bring our own food, she asks that we keep in mind the values of the festival: "so maybe don't bring a big sausage….let's do a little bit of consciousness work" (Recording, 05/06/16, translation my own).

[7] Translation note: The term for the "safe space" that they utilized was "espacio de cuidados" whose literal translation would be "the space of cares." "Safe space" although perhaps the best word to describe the space to English speakers because the familiarity of the term divides the space into "Safe" and "unsafe" or "less safe," that is directed towards the questions: what or who is unsafe? What do you need to seek safety from? "The space of cares" is explicit about an emotional need—the need for care—and focuses attention to the direct actions rather then on divisiveness. In addition, because "cuidados" or "caring and emotional labor" is something that occurs within and without the designated space, the space does not seem isolated, or cut-off, or censored the way we might perceive a "safe-space" to be, it just connotes a need to honor the space emotional labor plays in learning experiences.

Friday of the festival there is a night of concerts that will be hosted at a Sambiosis, another cultural center in town. While explaining the logistics of the concert night the conversation turns to the negotiations that the occurred between the Transfemifest assembly and the board of the cultural center. The concerts could not be at the Redonda because it is important for the social center to respect the neighbors' bedtimes. But Sambiosis is charging the Transfemifest for the space and they perceive it is too much—"hemos tenido un poco de conflictillo allí" *we've had a little bit of conflict there*, one of the facilitator comments. The beers that get sold inside, they explain, go towards the cultural center. Not to help fund the festival. The ticket for the concert will be 2 Euros. They call it "una entrada símbolíca," *a symbolic entrance fee*, and note that if anyone is in a situation of financial precariousness that they should not have to pay. They apologize that Sambiosis cannot fit everyone (max capacity is 150); the festival (and CSOA La Redonda) is supposed to be "inclusive" and they feel that the possibility of turning people away is a fault. They note that on Saturday they will publish directions and organizes caravans/carpools of people to go so people don't have to find their way alone.

To close the welcome ceremony they ask if anyone has any questions and then proceed to read the manifesto they drafted to guide the festival.[8]

THURSDAY MAY 5[TH—]

The first workshop titled **"**Chat on health/illness and feminism" occurs in the same room at as the introductions, so most of us stay put. To begin, they show a film of a

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[8] The Transfemifest Manifesto can be found at the end of this document.

performance entitled "Experiencias de la Carne" or "Experiences of the Flesh." The film is a performance-documentary regarding a woman's experience with cancer. [9]

After the film shows one of the facilitators prompts discussion: *"does anyone have anything to say? Any questions?"* Conversation, to me, feels stilted and like everyone is afraid of saying the wrong thing. Someone speaks up and echoes my thoughts: "Todavia estamos cuidando la palabra…yo tambien lo estoy haciendo…como ahh, esto se puede preguntar?" *We are all still taking care of what we say…I'm doing it to…like ahh can I ask this? Is it ok to ask this?* She points out how the conversation has been skirting taboos: we are not supposed to ask about someone's sickness or illness, it is rude or not socially aware to inquire about someone's vulnerabilities and abnormalities.

"I would like to open up the discussion a bit. I know illness is a difficult subject, but I want to talk about it. [10]

"Abrimos el circulo?*" Should we change the way we are sitting? Move into a circle?* And we do. Everyone moves—from an audience formation to team meeting position—and we look at one other for a bit, eyes, smiles, until someone probes—"y ahora hablamos*," and now let's talk.* That prompts a little bit of laughter and people begin to speak. The conversation moves away from the video and towards a general conversation about the why we felt stopped-up while trying to talk about the video.

"What does it meant to 'be healthy'?" someone asks in critique of what they perceive as an over reliance on medical diagnosis and an under reliance on trusting self-knowledge. In response, people begin to speak to experiences with their personal health and the health system.

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[9] I've tried to find the video performance online, but the name of the video is the name of an arts festival in Lima, Peru and so it has been difficult to locate. In the video a woman reads her narrative of the experience of her illness and she begins to undress herself. She does so slowly, removing layers; under her black long sleeve shirt there is another layer, it looks like plastic wrap—tapped tight round her skin. All the sudden three or four other people show up on stage, begin touching her. Some preening, comforting hands, some seem quick, rough, impersonal, like a large hospital.

[10] I did not record during this workshop and so the dialogue is from my notes.

Someone describes being sick as "*feeling so far away from someone sitting right next to you*" because of how your body is mediating the experience differently.

The word "diagnosis" sparks a conversation regarding the power dynamics at work in the patient/doctor or patient/therapist relationship. There is an assumption, within those relationships, that just because someone went to medical school they know better then you what is best for your body; "*But that doesn't always feel like a good kind of authority,*" someone says. Someone else offers a question in response: "*What do we do with our awareness of that power dynamic?* A doctor pipes up and says that she uses strategies like repeatedly asking people how they are feeling about specific parts of themselves. She frames diagnosis as a tool: here is what I perceive is going on, here is what I might call it, and this is how that particular thing usually gets treated.

Performance is another response offered to the "*What do we do*" question: *Would organizing a collective performance of patients, say, at the Hospital Universitario be an effective way of making people think about the medical hierarchy?* There are nods and general sounds of agreement. *Let's organize something!* (Later, I spot a piece of paper up on the board next to the volunteer sign, telling people to write their name up if they are interested in continuing a discussion about actions to empower patients in Granada).

The next workshop I attend is titled " 'Public Order' Vs. 'Foreign Bodies'— Neoliberalism, Repression and Gender." Marta introduces herself as the facilitator of the workshop and gives us a road map of her presentation: first, she will give a theoretical introduction, then she will show a few short videos that we will discuss as a group, and then she will show a map she has been working on showing instances of repression in feminist/transfeminist movements and spaces.

If, during the presentation, "quieres dar palabra, dartela" *if you want to speak do so*, Marta says in her introduction; she is not giving a speech and, although she has prepared to

provide context, she wants to have a conversation.[11] She, just like the organizers, is kneeling—

not standing—on stage, a body posture that, to me, has to do with evening power (diffusing

what power dynamics might exist). The rest of us sit cross-legged on the carpet.

First she asks about neoliberalism: *How would you explain it?* The question is open,

directed at everyone. It does not seem like a pedagogical device, she is not gaging "how much

we know" in order to figure out where to begin her lecture, but rather wanting to start a

conversation about what neoliberalism *means* to the people in the room. People seem shy and

speak out in short spurts:

> *"Capitalism, individualism, and a punitive state."*
>
> *"neurosis."*
>
> *"menacing others."*
>
> *"the regulation of alien bodies."*

Someone brings up the concept of safety in the neoliberal context, how it is erased from

public debate. The same person uses the AIDS crisis in the 80'as their example; they note how

the moment HIV was framed as a crisis of public health, decisions regarding how to approach

the illness were less democratic. Media narratives exaggerated the "crisis" aspect and, because

of it, certain bodies (gay males, especially those of color) were regulated and

stigmatized…neoliberalism, to the person talking, is about this narrative of using safety and

security as a guise for control.

The first video Marta shows is of a protest at Plaza Sol, Madrid in 2012. We see a

policeman push a woman up against a wall and hold her there, his body close to hers. *What kind*

of dynamic is at work here, Marta asks us.

The second video is from Poland, so none of us understand the verbal exchange, but we

witness a similar scene: a woman against a wall who is talking and gesturing with intent while

two policemen surround her, keeping her against the wall. The policemen form a cage around

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[11] Again, I did not record during this workshop, and so the dialogue comes from my notes.

her—block possible exits with their bodies—and are silent. They won't respond to what she's saying. People gather around with cameras; they record, observe, and murmur to one another. No one attempts to alleviate the situation. *What do we see here?* Marta asks again. *And*, she adds, *it's ok if we see different things*. People comment on the fact that they police refuse to respond to her. Someone questions why no one does anything. Someone else comment about the uniform—would two men dressed in sweats warrant a different reaction?

We talk about the role of documentation in the clip— *Is it to denounce the acts? Are there more effective ways of intervening in the situation?*

Throughout the presentation Marta checks in: "voy bien?" "*Am I alright*?" She pauses and looks out at us, questioning. "Vamos atentos," volunteers someone from the audience, *we are attentive*. She utilizes other vocal cues to encourage participation: "Pensamos entre todas." *Let's think this in between us all; let's think this through together.* "Hablamos como queremos," *We can talk about this how we choose*. Hay mas? *Anything else?*

One of the main theses of her presentation has to do with the manner that activists within transfeminist and okupa communities protest differently: "Protestamos, apredemos, conocermos de maneras distinctas." *We protest, learn, and get to know each other and ourselves in different ways. We use our bodies in protest. We protest through celebration and community, too,* she notes.

FRIDAY MAY 6TH

In the opening to the "Privilege awareness" awareness activity, Alba— the facilitator—opens by saying "Quiero un poco evitar el format charla" *I want to avoid the presentation format.* In a presentation the presenter talks first and the audience asks questions at the very end. We are sitting in a circle on a mat under the covered patio. Alba passes around copies of a worksheet. On each sheet is a flower with inner and outer petals. The inner petals all have

words inside them, but one is left blank for us to fill-in. The words on the petals describe categories that relate to a relationship of power, Alba explains. The idea is to identify the privileged position in that category and then write in the category that we think we belong in. Alba instructs us to color the petals where the privileged position and our personal position coincide—*"and we can 'see' our privilege."*

We share our flower charts in small groups and then reconvene with everyone to debrief. "Como queremos compartir?"Alba asks, *How do we want to share?*

*S*omeone notes that the activity was challenging for them because privilege relates to how an individual is received rather then how they perceive themselves—people share the experience of feeling one way but presenting to the world another. Someone who I read as a male speaks up to say that in his life he experiences gender in a non-binary way and doesn't like being called male, but because he presents as male, receives the privileges of male in the rest of the world.

Y ahora que? *And now what*? Someone asks: *where do we go from there? How do we, conscientious of our privileges, interact differently in contexts?* People begin to popcorn ideas: check-in with people who are on the other "side" of a privilege you have; utilize language that levels rather then hierarchizes, for example the terms "ayuda" versus "apoyo", or *help* versus *support*; observe how 'the other' interacts and try to adopt their language (verbal and physical) when appropriate; respect other ways, strategies, and tactics of protest even when they might not be what you perceive as the most 'effective' or 'efficient.'

The woman coordinating the activity asks for closing words: Como fue la experiencia? Se quedaron con cosas de decir? *How was that experience for you? Were you left with things to say?* In closing, people thank one another for the learning experience, for sharing their personal experiences.

Pamela Palenciano performs a monologue about abuse and power dynamics in a relationship that grounds itself in the hetero-patriarchy. Pamela makes clear that the monologue

is theatrical but that it is also her story— a theatrical account of her personal journey. The monologue was an hour long, and I will not relay the whole hour but rather share some observations about the performance.

During the introduction she talks about how, when she performs her monologue at schools, the children sit on the ground but the teachers are always standing. She postures as a supervising teacher and shows how the hover and clump in the corner; this is the first in a series of "postures" that illuminate power dynamics.

She impersonates a male whistling at a female body at night and remarks on the fear that tends to accompany that situation. (Here, she makes a divergence to talk about heels: What is the role of heels? How far or how fast can you run from men in heels? Is this on purpose? Are tight skirts and heels some sorts of sneaky, oppressive tools so women can't run away fast? She is, of course, mostly kidding, but her performance is asking us to think actively about the narratives that surround us, to approach them differently, and to invent new narratives—like she is—even if they are ridiculous). She then acts out the reverse—a woman whistling at a man— "*even if the woman is a 'marimacho', like me,*" she says, *"it's going to be really hard for fear to be the reaction."* [12] She goes on to explain that for someone from "down here" (she gestures with her hand) it takes a lot of work to intimidate someone from "up here" (she gestures higher with her hand) *(*Recording, 05/06/16).

Pamela continues to remark on gender performativity: "*If I am a woman, and I can talk like this*" (she puts on a gravelly voice and really does sound like a man), "*this means that it's not biological, its voice projection.*" At this remark there is a moment of laughter and applause; Pamela is performing to the right crowd *(*Recording, 05/06/16).

She breaks from the monologue every once in a while and speaks directly to the audience. Often, when performers use this technique it is to give the illusion of breaking the

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[12] Marimacho, in Spanish, is a term for a masculine lesbian. A combination of the female name "Mari" and the male-marker "Macho."

barrier between stage-world and public-world; her interruptions are certainly partly about effects, partly to ask the audience to be active, but mostly when she stops it is to say "*I've got to breathe through this so wait for me*" or "*This part is hard for me, give me a second.*" And she does, stop to concentrate on breath, close her eyes briefly, and then continue with her performance (Recording, 05/07/16, trans my own)

After Pamela Palenciano's Monologue I attend the presentation of the zine Fems Aquí or *Femmes Here*.[13] The editors of the zine, Andrea and Laira, have come from Barcelona to Granada to attend the Transfemifest and talk about their experience within assembly contexts and communities in BCN. The zine deals with politics of "femme" in these activist contexts of Barcelona.[14] Like other presenters before them, they note that they are nervous—they have never presented before, Laira says, and *'I am going to read, because I don't want to miss anything, and well, because I am really nervous'* (Recording, 05/06/16, trans my own). For the sake of this project, rather then narrate what they shared I will provide an introduction regarding their zine and proceed to comment on the strategies they adopted during their experience and shared with us during the presentation.

Laira and Andrea explain that they come from okupa contexts in Barcelona and had begun to notice that even in their assemblies, spaces that were supposedly "*the most open places in the city*," the traits that are related to masculinity were over and over being preferred over traits relating to femininity (For example they note how the most gregarious and most heard out at assemblies were masculine) (Recording, 05/07/16, trans my own). More and more, in these alternative contexts in Barcelona they felt underrepresented. Laira admits that she would catch herself spending an hour getting ready for a party but ending up "dressing down" in all black

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[13] Zine (short for fanzine) is a catchall term for a cheaply produced, self-published magazine. They usually are related to art, music, politics, or counter-culture—but the spectrum is broad.
[14] Femme, they understand "as an expression of gender—not a gender identity and not a biological sex….you are born and your doctor says, 'oh looks like a female' and so your gender identity is that of a woman…but your gender expression could be butch, tomboy, femme…whatever it is." So femme, they explain, is an expression of gender, femmes are people who (sometimes, it does not have to be an all-the-time-expression) present themselves with the accouterments that we connect to femininity: makeup, longer hair, individuals who pay more attention to aesthetics…(Recording, 05/07/16, trans my own).

because she did not want to feel out of place. She and her femme friends made themselves "more butch" in order to go out, even though they felt more themselves dressed like femmes.

Andrea and Laira began talking more openly at assemblies about these feelings of underrepresentation and the subtle power dynamics they were experiencing; "*when you talk with someone about something you have never talked about before, and she, too, shares that experience with you, you begin to realize that you have located something important and its time to bring it to the table*" (Recording, 05/07/16, trans my own).

So they began to have "Kafems": coffee hours to talk about where "femme" fits within activisms in BCN. It was, they explain, a very self-reflective and auto-critical process. They began by asking themselves questions: "*Where are the Trans-fems? Where are the Sexworkers in our contexts? Sexworkers who, because of their jobs have a strategic links to the world of femme…*" (Recording, 05/06/16, trans my own).

It is interesting to note that, rather then getting exasperated and leaving the Okupas they were involved in, they decided to put feelers out and see if anyone shared similar emotions or experiences. They then organized and consolidated that solidarity in meetings (the "Kafems") and began to articulate, together, what they wanted to get out of the experience. Through meeting and talking at the "Kafems" they could "name" and "situate" their individual feelings in a larger context and utilize the contextualization to brainstorm how to move forward: "*This is not about 'victimism.' It is about naming and situating things that happen and it tends to be a difficult process, its not about hanging out here, no, it's a place that you pass through whose intensity comes and goes…it is not a fixed place*" (Fems Aqui, 7. trans my own).

They highlight—more then once—how important self-reflection and critique were to the process: "*sometimes, when something makes you angry, it is because that something is a part of you, too*" (Fems Aqui, 9 trans my own).

They close their presentation by noting how some of the people who had initially ignored their remarks about the devaluing of femme and how contradictory and hurtful it

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seemed, now have the zine (an expression of the whole experience) in their hands and what's more, have thanked them for it and think its "genial," or *brilliant (*Recording, , 05/07/16, trans my own).

SATURDAY MAY 7TH

I attend a self-defense workshop put on by a collective of women that practice and teach self-defense together a few times a week. They begin by warming us up. We split into small groups and do a short circuit work out, people cheer each other on and sing. A woman who is over 50 shows me at what angle to grab and twist a wrist in order to make someone let go of me. The workshop alternates between funny and playful and serious (remember the violence in the monologue? Yea, that is what we are preparing for).

In one of the activities we stand in two lines, facing one another, but a few feet away. Each person facing one other person—their partner for the activity—and we take turns being the aggressor. The aggressor walks towards their partner and the task of the partner is to "set limits." First we are supposed to set limits with a response in body posture. The second time with language: a forceful no. The third time with one of the techniques we have learned during the class.

After the self-defense workshop I attend a chat on the intersection between okkupying and feminisms, facilitated by two women—Alba and Julia— who live on a rural okupa in Catalonia. The activity is the most one-sided I have been to yet, partly I think, because many of us do not share Alba and Julia's experience: most of us are from urban contexts. So they share with us what they have learned and we listen. People ask clarifying questions when they feel the need and encourage longer answers.

We talk about how through okkupying they have learned more about legal processes, they have learned how to be their own plumbers, have learned to farm better. One of the things

that comes up in conversation are differences between rural okkupied spaces and urban okkupied spaces—"Frutales empiezan a dar fruta a los 4 años." *Fruit trees begin to bear fruit after four years,* Julia remarks. Farming is a large part of the rural squat equation because of physical distance to markets, market dumpsters, and bartering/trade hubs. The point Julia wants to make: rural okupas often involve more of a time commitment.

That evening I take the bus to Sambiosis for the concerts. I leave the concerts relatively early because a friend is arriving from Genova, Italy, and I want to meet her in the city. But when I arrive at La Redonda the next morning around nine am, people remark that they got home from Sambiosis at 6 or 7, slept for two hours, and then came to the La Redonda to make coffee for people….they danced and just *hung out, all night.*

CHAPTER FOUR: Discussion

In this following section I will offer a discussion of the Transfemifest with a focus on delineating the four social habits I claim characterize the space. Then I move to an analysis of what the "second generation" of social centers suggest about self-managed, assembly-based spaces in cities. Lastly, I will utilize a local newspaper, the Eugene Weekly, to show how processes occurring within the city of Eugene (where the author of this thesis lives) share characteristics with the contexts in which the social centers have emerged; a density of development projects in recent years combined with citizen demands for more social and inclusive uses of city space. I will suggest that the Whiteaker Community Market—a new "social hub" in a historically poor and active neighborhood—has the potential to create a kind of "Eugene model" of citizen-managed spaces in the city.

Takeaways from the Transfemifest: Four Social Habits Characteristic of

Social Centers:

Moreno Caballud in his book when he characterizes the CSOA's as cultures of anyone does so because they "are spaces of encounter and intermixing of affective, daily, and experiential ways of knowing with specialized technical ones" and because they "prioritize collaboration over competition" (Moreno-Caballud, 12, 197). Okupas facilitate these particular kinds of encounters not incidentally but through a set of social processes connected to the values of horizontality, self-management, and assembly strategies that exist as the ribcage of most CSOA's. Obviously, every okupa exists in a specific and concrete time and space and almost all are characterized by constant "instability, evolution, and strategy" (Angel Martinez, 4); nonetheless, because these spaces are defined through a common values of horizontality and organizing through assemblies, there may also be a common patterns of social habits developed in spaces. I have compiled a set of four social habits that I observed throughout the Transfemifest. Through delineating these habits I hope to show how CSOAs facilitate experimental encounters and lay foundations for the constitution of new forms of approaching issues and concepts. The four social habits are: "sentires" or "*feels,*" the habit of the vulnerable expert, visible processes, and "bodies."

The first social habit "sentires" is named after the mechanism that Lorena describes and claims was instrumental in the planning of the festival. Check-ins related to general sentiments and emotional wellbeing occurred throughout the entire festival—at the end of most activities, facilitators leave "space" to reflect and share. This is usually prompted by a statement like: How was that experience for you? Does anyone want to share anything?

An example of a time when this habit is especially present in guiding a situation is in the activity where we watch the video "Experiences of the flesh." Questions regarding health

and diagnosis are approached, not through scientific concepts like nutrition, but rather through listening to individuals share experiences with their personal health and the health system, like the woman who describes sickness as "feeling so far away from the person sitting right next to you." It is through affective expressions that people delve into more analytical or rational questions, like the question oriented at planning an action in a hospital in Granada. [15]

These check-ins and overall time dedicated to "feeling" demonstrate how, in this space, feeling something is valued and considered as a legitimate and important vehicle for arriving at an issue. "Feels" were not an aside, but rather were incorporated into the more logistical portions of the festival; understanding (having knowledge of) the feelings of participants was considered integral to composing an event together. Moreno-Caballud echoes the centrality of emotional language when he shares an interview with an okkupier in Madrid to illuminate the "mysterious phenomenon of the faithful endurance of very many people in assemblies of endless duration" (Moreno Caballud, 197). The interviewee explains that "so much is said from the heart ... So definitely, something is happening" (198). [16]

The second habit, "vulnerable expert" can be demonstrated by a pattern: many of the presenters began their presentations with a statement that communicated vulnerability and uneasiness about what they were presenting. The Transfemifest facilitators say to all of us in the opening ceremony: *we are really excited, very nervous…we are so ready to share this with you all* at the outset of the festival. They spent months planning, and they are nervous about it! Similarly, Laira says at the beginning of the zine presentation: "*I am going to read, so I don't miss anything, and well, because I'm really nervous.*" Pamela Palenciano stops her monologue,

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[15] It is interesting to note, too, how it is not until people move into a circle and are looking each other in the eye, that conversation begins to flow. Although eye contact and body language is not as direct as a verbal "I feel" statement, it is still orientation towards the affective to influence the material.

[16] Here, Moreno Caballud notes an "emotional expressivity related to the creation and support of a material life not governed by competition" (198).

possibly for the effect of breaking the forth wall, but also because she's affected by her own performance and has decided to *show* us—in an act of vulnerability—her emotions; *"I've got to breathe through this so wait for me"* or *"This part is hard for me, give me a second"* she says.

In most spaces, when you facilitate a workshop, give a talk, or an interview—in a space or on an occasion when an individual is supposed to be a legitimate source of information—the convention is to sound confident. You are supposed to "fake it until you make it," adopt a register that makes you sound like you know what you know, and you know it *well*. *N*ervousness or uncertainty in a lot of spaces is delegitimizing.[17] At the Transfemifest, and I think, in many assembly contexts, vulnerability is seen as a "punta de partida" or a places from where to begin. *Feeling* uncertain is seen as a legitimate and important arrival at the articulation of an issue.

The third social habit, "visible processes" is related to "horizontalidad," the value of horizontal structuring of social space. In an interview with Andrea, a participant in the Transfemifest and in other assemblies in Granada, she describes the "horizontalidad" in assembly as a structure through which individuals "make decisions through protagonist processes…that everybody participates in the construction of a decision" (Andrea, participant, May 7th, 2016). These social centers insist that the decisions that shape a space are not restricted/banished to certain spatiotemporal spaces like elections or meetings but happen through "protagonist processes" in the day-to-day. These protagonist processes are visible at the festival in the insistence of the facilitators that the festival depends on the participation of everybody— facilitated through the cleaning, cooking, caring commissions open to volunteers. The habit is seen in the workshops when facilitators ask for participation in the construction of

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[17] An example of this, rather close to home, is how after presenting my thesis prospectus in front of the class my thesis advisor turned to me and said "that was graduate level work, but if you present like that again, I'll kick your ass. Admittedly, the presentation could have been more linear and easier to take-in, but Shaul, I think, was making reference to the quality of my voice and my register; my voice was shaky and I made serious use of uhh, umms, and maybes…

an activity; both Marta and Andrea ask us to participate in constructing a working understanding of what neoliberalism and capitalism mean to their workshops' participants. Alba asks: *how do we want to share?* She, as a facilitator, rather then providing us with an organizational structure, is asking for help in constructing it. It is also seen, with the *bembebatucada,* the feminist drumming band plays and encourages everyone to not just watch, but to dance with them, to drum with their hands and feet.

The social habit is also present in pre-festival planning. Facebook posts update the cyber-audience where the facilitators are at in conceiving and constructing the festival and ask for input or assistance. It is also visible in fundraising events around the city of Granada.

These interjections during and events leading up to festival have two important outcomes. First, they open up opportunities for participation by more individuals. In addition, by asking everybody to participate in the construction of the festival, it becomes more apparent to more people, *what it takes* for a festival to exist, what kinds of labors and efforts are necessary to make something function.

By making visible the processes that constitute the Transfemifest and opening participation to anyone the festival breaks with the "speaker" and "hearer " dichotomy that Lucy Nichols describes. In doing so the Transfeminist festival facilitates permeability and flexibility in relationships that might otherwise be limited by the strictness of the narrative structures "those in the know" and "those in the dark."

The forth, and final (for this project), social habit that I noticed at the festival was performance and the centrality of *bodies* as facilitators of the space. This is perhaps most obvious in the sheer existence and quantity of the music and performance present at the festival: the "batucada" drummers we dance to, the night of concerts, Pamela's monologue, Laira and Andrea's performance. I want to claim that these are not just instances of entertainment to "mix-up" the other more formal activities that occurred in the space but rather a recognition that we

live in our bodies just like we live in space and so the ways in which we experience our bodies and our bodies are perceived and experience by others constitutes an experience of space. Like Marta notes in her presentation "*We protest, learn, get to know each other and ourselves in different ways; We use our bodies in protest. We protest through celebration, too.*"

In the activity during the self-defense workshop where we take turns acting as the aggressor we give one another a chance to practice the self-defense we just learned. Switching roles—from "aggressor" to "victim"—and embodying the postures associated with each of those experiences allows insight into how the aggressor/victim dichotomy is constructed—it is not innate (the male body is not naturally the aggressor, the female body not naturally the victim), but rather reinforced by *performed patterns* that are then turned into discourse.[18] The workshops at the Transfemifest, like other workshops and activities that occur in CSOAs point that the body and embodied experience is a site for constituting discursive structures such as "those in the know" and "those in the dark." Furthermore, through centering activities on bodily practices they provide venues for alternative, less constricting, constitution of selves.

Social Centers of the "Second Generation": The positive feedback loop

La Candela, Eskalera Karakola, el Seko, and The Laboratorio 01, 02, 03 demonstrate how the urban transformations that social centers encourage is related to Lefevbre's concept of "lived" space; unused buildings in old neighborhoods go from being occupied by radical activists who operate outside the reach of many residents' everyday life, to being okkupied as

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[18] In addition to the case study being a CSOA hosted Transfemifest festival, Many CSOAs self-identify as feminist spaces and I think it is important to note how feminist strategies and okupa strategies overlap. It is in the feminisms tradition to denaturalize the binaries in our day-to-day lives. Moreno-Caballud characterizes CSOA's as spaces where people work to blur the distinction between speaker/listener and producer/consumer that are naturalized in a neoliberal, capitalist quotidian context. Feminist discourse suggests that because of how many pressures exist on bodies (Esp. the ones labeled as productive) all the time, by simply being a body in space doing something slightly different or dissident then the norm, an individual is taking part in the constitution of a new reality. This echoes what Feinberg terms "the spectacle of 'being'" or the idea that a CSOA, simply by existing and being visibly distinctive then its surroundings prompt challenges to the processes that construct and limit the spaces around it.

community centers, to existing as legal community centers that, in some cases, are subsidized by local governments. They do so through the creation of networks between associations and individuals that make use of the centers and through the willingness of those actors to mobilize in defense of the shared space. The openness or flexibility of the social centers' social structures is key in understanding the performance of people within the space. The broad range of activities and meetings within Okupas attract individuals from a variety of demographics. At assemblies they invariably meet and find out about one another's cultural and political activities and causes. People who, without the Okupa as a common physical space, might not encounter one another in their day-to-day but who have common interests (such as maintaining social space in cities).

In addition to the inclusiveness of Okupas, okupas of the second generation are well-connected to other organizations and issues in the neighborhood and municipalities they reside in. This larger network allows social centers to be visible not just from within the physical structure but beyond it as well. The Lavapiés Network, the national informal network of "top manta vendors," BAH Madrid's home base in La Eskalera Karakola, are examples of the expansion of social center's networks. These connections serve as positive feedback loops; the Network of Lavapiés formed as a result of social interactions that occurred within CSOA's in the neighborhood, most concretely in the Laboratorio. The Eskalera Karakola, in turn, became a more sustainable project through support from the Network of Lavapiés. The density of social space within Lavapiés is maintained—and augmented, especially if you count new projects within existing social centers as "added space" —through assemblies that allow for individuals to locate and articulate common interests in order to form collectives like the Network of Lavapiés.

The physical sites of Social Centers are also significant in their shelter function. Self-managed social centers provide people living different degrees of precariousness a space to

organize—inside, within four walls—that is less visible to repressive forces then the street but more open then a private abode. They benefit from the public square and front-porch effect but without the state regulation of the former and the inherent exclusion via private property of the latter. The "top manta" vendors are a good example of this—La Candela functions as an office space for an informal labor union. The Transfemifest is also an example. For female-identified and trans folx both the house and the street (the public and the private) are engulfed in social roles and norms that constitute systems of repression (and often, violence). La Redonda, the Transfemifest assemblies, and the festival itself provided a third (forth, fifth, sixth, and on) space where individuals could re-interpret and re-constitute those constricting social norms.

Self-managed social centers, like el Labo, provide the ability to participate in the consumption of art without having to pay for it. This is significant in neighborhoods experiencing rapid development effecting exclusions and/or displacement. Social centers include more people in the process of cultural production in a time/space where many neighbors have difficulty affording the cultural opportunities offered by urban restructuring. And in addition, through doing so, contribute to a changing understanding of what it means to consume culture. Access to culture is usually related to exchange, but in social centers the roles of producer and consumer blur (think about the "revistas kaminadas," where a subtle shift in route by a walker could be seen as change in the whole book "collection") in a way that allows culture to be accessed using multiple value systems.

Mobilization to defend a social center (whether through direct street protest or through negotiations with municipalities) signifies a desire for the continuity of self-managed space in the neighborhoods they exist in. In the case of the barrio of Lavapiés, mobilization to defend the original Laboratorio and re-constitute el Labo 02 and El Labo 03 in different buildings shows how the social center functioned as a channel for building neighborhood solidarity; people

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needed *a* space to convene, they needed a building, but that could be any building as long as it existed within the same barrio and was accessible to the same network of individuals. The physical proximity between el Labo 01, 02, and 03 demonstrates this commitment to place, as does the motto "el laboratorio se queda en Lavapiés" [The Laboratory Stays in Lavapiés].

The ability for the "same" social center to exist in a new building highlights how the physical space is sustained through social processes within it. A continuity of assemblies, performances, and protest is what sustained el Laboratorio. An actual physical space to organize, to meet your neighbors, to enjoy a show, to ask for and locate a resource; a place to go to an assembly where, by design, your voice will be listened to and considered a decision maker in what happens within the space, these things are what people were desiring when they defended el Labo 01-Labo 03. It is significant that, rather then seeking extra-curricular elsewhere, thousands of people mobilized—on two separate occasions—to constitute a space that functioned similarly. It means that the social processes within the space were transformative enough to merit "starting over" in a new building. The willingness for other local organizations and individuals to participate in the processes of negotiation and re-articulation demonstrate how specific Okupas have become integral spaces to the neighborhoods they reside in.

Something that is repeated in literature, media, and my interviews with individuals about the okupas and horizontal processes is how they are models; they provide representations and structure that can be—and are—repeated and re-utilized in other contexts. Moreno Caballud refers to the "symbolic value" of okupas in "demonstrating that it is possible to live another way, even if only for a while and only within that enclosed space" (Moreno caballud,198). Andrea in our interview remarks, "estas formas son una manera también de generar ejemplo, en la ciudad, o en tus espacios territoriales. Porque cuando realmente te involucras de este manera

en un colectivo que lleva diez años funcionado y que la gente esta contenta, creo que es un referente, diferente a lo que estamos acostumbrado ver…de ver la construcción de un mogollón de supermercados y esas cosas pues te ves a gente reunida a veces se asoma gente en las balcones, o que gente se pasa y se mira, yo creo que eso es muy interesante, el hecho de crear algo visible…" *These forms are mechanisms for generating examples, in the city, or your territorial spaces. Because when you really involve yourself in a collective…where people are content…I think that is a referent, something different than what we are used to seeing…. We see the construction of a whole bunch of super markets and those things, and then you see people reuniting in the streets, sometimes people come to their balconies to look, or people pass by and look in, and I think that's really interesting, the fact that we've created something visible* (Andrea, participant, May 7th, 2016 trans my own).

In Christopher Patz's documentary one of the participants in CSOA Patio Maravillas remarks that the motto "si te gusta este centro social, cree lo tuya propio" *"If you like this social center, create your own"* was painted on the wall of the center. And people did. Patz explains how people visited the social centers in Lavapiés and then went back to their neighborhoods of Madrid and began their own because "la gente joven que conoce un centro social, antes o despues lo va a volver a reproducir" *youth who familiarize themselves with a social center, sooner or later, will reproduce it* (Okupación, 2007).

Bringing it back home: utilizing knowledge of the Spanish Social Center Model to look at efforts for citizen-managed space in Eugene, Oregon

"The Whole Foods and Connor/Woolley/Opus redevelopment proposals will convert downtown from a public space to a corporate shopping mall" and "is a loss of Eugene's soul," writes Alan Pittman in the Eugene Weekly in contestation of the Whole Foods that opened in the city of Eugene, Oregon in the Fall of 2016 (Whole Foods, 2/09/2006).

"Kesey Square is the last public space in Eugene that has no curfew," writes Alex V. Cipolle in defense of keeping the square as is in the face of proposals to build on it (A Sense of Place, 11/19/2015).

Dana Ing Crawford writes into the Eugene Weekly in to remark on the possibilities in remodeling city hall "It is a rare opportunity for a community to create a public space that represents, welcomes and functions for all of us" (A Rare Opportunity, 9/26/2006).

Perform a search query in the Eugene Weekly's online archives (Eugene's local newspaper) of the term "public space" and these articles appear along with 73 others.[19] The 73 pieces—all written between 2006 and 2016—provide insight into the social discourse on shared (and not-so-shared) spaces in the city. Many of the pieces pivot around citizens feeling upset about particular planning and development projects and helpless regarding their political agency in the processes. This pattern is valuable to note because it shows how Eugene fits into and contributes to a broader schema of understanding the challenges that citizens within modern urban spaces face and the creativity that people use to navigate them; the Eugene Weekly places Margit Meyer's theoretical characterization of neoliberal cities into concrete spaces in Eugene. The pieces articulate processes—the commodification, regulation, and enclosure of public space—that are the backdrops from which the Okupas of the second generation emerge. The newspaper narratives show parallels between the desires and demands of citizens in Eugene and the desires that Spanish self-managed social centers exist to fulfill.

Many pieces discuss possible future plans for spaces in Eugene. "Aster's Hole" was an empty lot created when Ed Aster tore down the Woolworth building in 2001. It is now the Broadway Commerce Center that houses three restaurants/bars (The Barnlight, Sizzle Pie, Killer Burger) and "creative office space" (an architecture firm, a graphic design company, software design company). A private company, Beam Development was contracted and constructed the building but the project was funded with the help of the city of Eugene. Through various funds, the city loaned over 8 million dollars to the project in total (City of Eugene

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[19] For a cartography class in winter of 2015 I made a map of social space in Eugene intended to investigate and illuminate the social discourse about shared spaces in the city. The intent was to show that there are discrepancies between the "public space" that typical urban planning or zoning maps of city space make representations of and the "public space" that is utilized, talked about, and resided in by urban citizen. For the map I performed the "public space" query in the Eugene Weekly, read all the articles that mentioned public space, categorized them, and geo-tagged them to visualize them on a map.

Oregon Downtown Projects). Meaning, it could not have happened without them.

In his 2006 Letter to the Editor Peter Alilunas contests the preliminary plans for the Broadway Center by echoing how developing retail and office space is exclusionary: "In other words, a $165 million consumerism monument masquerading as a public space — hardly unique, interesting or groundbreaking, let alone functional for anyone without disposable income" (PR Failure, 2006). Citizens raise questions about the interested allocation of city resources and make suggestions for an alternative and non-commercial use of the space; Alilunas points to how public parks or gardens are not popular with planners because "developers do not tend to make money off of public parks" (PR Failure, 2006). Another citizen directs attention to desires physically manifested in downtown: "already a few activists have cleaned some trash out of Aster's hole in the past and painted a construction fence with flowers and the words 'Imagine the pit ... a flourishing garden.' " (Can Guerrilla Gardening Save Downtown? 2009).

Kesey Square, the city-owned public plaza on the intersection of Broadway and Willamette downtown, is another space where the discussion about access and use of urban space has concentrated. In October of 2015 the City of Eugene proposed selling Kesey Square to a private developer who would construct an apartment complex, the suggestion spurred publicity and even more discussion about the space. Arguments in favor of development cite the square as a hangout spot for people up to no good. For example, Thomas Pettus-Cruz, the owner of the Barn Light, a café bar right across the street from the square, said of the space "I've seen everything under the sun take place there…Everything from people defecating, people just littering and throwing trash, getting in fights, screaming at passersby, vandalizing…It can distract our employees from doing what they're supposed to do because we're helping customers deal with a problematic situation across the street" (Sometimes a Great Plaza, 2015).

In contrast, people cite the square as an important and iconic public space; "It is the last place in Eugene, 24-hours a day, seven days a week, where citizens can be without the expectation of spending money or abiding by the rules of a particular business or property owner," writes Alex V. Cipolle in his November, 2015 article in the Weekly titled "A Sense of Place."

"It's like our living room" says Teesha Baldree, temporarily homeless and working to scrape enough money together to rent an apartment with her partner, "It's the only safe, secure spot to be, out in the open in front of everybody" (Sometimes a great plaza, 2015).

People like Alley Valkyrie, a defender of public space and the rights of the un-housed, see the recent proposals for development downtown as unfairly discriminating against people with few resources. Valkyrie opines that the people who hang out in the square at night do so mostly out of necessity and that restrictive policies like a curfew will cause more conflict, not less—people will continue to congregate in Kesey Square regardless of curfew, the only difference will be punitive (Kesey Square Closure May Unfairly Affect the Unhoused, 2014). Valkyrie's says that she witnesses more problems coming from the college-age crowd than the un-housed and believes that "the police largely ignore the behavior of the college students because they spend money downtown." 'Public space is public,' Valkyrie says. "We should not be excusing the behavior that comes from people who spend money and then scapegoating those who have no money" (Kesey Square Closure May Unfairly Affect the Unhoused, 2014).

"One of our members, held an impromptu reading of Rudyard Kipling's military poetry at 11 pm near a corner of Sizzle Pie. Following policy, the Sizzle Pie employees called the police, " writes Art Bollman with the support of the Occupy Eugene Library Committee (Is this Eugene, 2014). Art is speaking up against the city's participation in the "sidewalk commerce"

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program that allows local businesses to rent sidewalk space from the city in order to expand business to the sidewalk (and not just inside the store). Some businesses, like the Kiva, really do use their permit to sell flowers outside the grocery, however, many downtown businesses throw a sandwich board out on the sidewalk and leverage the permit to move along people they evaluate to be "loitering" or deem as trouble makers (Valkyrie, Alley, Renting Sidewalks, .2014).

In these pieces, citizens make observations and contest the commodification, regulation, and enclosure of public space; sidewalks made sellable, empty lots turned commerce center, the policing of plazas. In addition to observation, citizens express a desire for different kinds of public space; Cipolle does so when he remarks that Kesey Square is "the last space" where people can reside sans fiscal expectations. Valkyrie suggests alternatives to the punitive attitude supported by a curfew on Kesey Square, saying that the city needs more "benches and bathrooms" and inclusive spaces (Kesey Square Closure May Unfairly Affect the Unhoused, 2014).

The discussion regarding Kesey Square and the questions posed regarding in whose interests public space should serve parallel the blog posts regarding the plaza El Solar de Olivar, 48 in Lavapiés. Similar to the Valkyrie's critique of the "sidewalk commerce program" the post (written by a collective that collectivizes plazas in Madrid) critiques the city for reserving the plaza for vending purposes on the weekend but rejecting proposals from neighbors for activities in the space.

The poetry reading outside the Barnlight brings attention to the alternative possibilities of a street corner. In this way it is reminiscent of the *Revista Kaminadas*—a walking tour of Lavapiés where each stop incorporated some kind of literature-related performance—put on by

of el Laboratorio 03. Both mobilize the concept of critique and celebration through what Feinberg calls "encounter between the body and social codes" in resistance to conceived space; they call into question the sidewalk "conceived" as a space to move through.

These instances demonstrate how—in response to a similar set of conditions—similar impulses exist between okkupiers and Eugene citizens; citizens from both contexts have analogous desires for urban social space that do not necessitate consumption, spaces that value and facilitate social equity, spaces that forge networks to locate common interests within differences.

The Whiteaker Community Market is a "social hub in the Whiteaker" aimed at giving social uses to a relatively underutilized space—a parking lot on 5th and Blair—that began Spring of 2016. Four young women began the project: Claire Schechtman, Shelby Meyers, Caitlin Jemma and Jocelyn Lescarbeau. I sat down with Claire in September of 2016 and we did an informal mutual interview—she talked to me about her experience with the first season of market and I talked to her about what I knew of okupas.

The four facilitators of market have, between the four of them, decided to be consensus based in their decisions and horizontal in terms of not designating a "head" between the four of them. The Whiteaker Community Market began because they saw needs in the Whiteaker neighborhood and a space that could fill those needs. Or needs that could fill a space. Claire and I talked about the changes occurring in the Whiteaker in the past few years: more and more popular restaurants and bars opening up, more "tourists" —both from out of the neighborhood and out of town—as clientele of those space. The Whiteaker has a history of anarchism, activism, and dedication to remaining affordable. Icky's Teahouse is an example of the kind of spaces that existed in the neighborhood: "It was a place that homeless people, poor people, anarchists, a wide variety of types of freaks that existed in that area could go and not spent

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money…" (Whistory). Lewis, a long time Whiteaker resident, talks about how Icky's was a reunion space for Cascadia Forest Defenders, Cascadia Alive, and Eugene CopWatch, all activists groups, and it was also the first place for email checking in Eugene (Whistory).

If you walk by the 5th and Blaire on a Thursday afternoon you will see about a dozen tents, a stage, and a few tables and chairs, and two buses full of used wares. About half the tents are food related and half accessory related (clothing, jewelry, lotions and essential oils, a massage tent). It is one of the goals of market "to support vendors that are really small start up vendors, help them create a market for themselves." More then half of the vendors had never sold before coming to market and Claire describes how the new vendors, by the end of the season "were doing really well and their confidence was boosted and they knew what they wanted to do next, and they understood what to do and had made connections with other vendors who do have a store front" (interview with Claire).

The Whiteaker market breaks with the logic of Saturday Market because it's central purpose is not to serve as a "marketplace" for vendors. It wants to serve as an accessible place for smaller vendors (their booth fee is a 'flexible' five dollars and ten percent of sales) but in addition to that Claire explains that they envision it having more a "village" model: "like have a person who can repair bikes at the market, and a tailor, and farmers, and *yes* artisans and jewerlers, but *also* bakers and foods and a variety of different diverse needs that can be met" (Interview with Claire). Another goal of the market is to become SNAP and WIC program certified (the local food stamp program and a food nutrition program from women, infants, and children). Claire emphasizes how the core facilitators have been intentional economically, attempting to utilize monetary resources to unify and strengthen the community; this is seen in the low booth-fee, but also in the up-keep of market itself, most of the 10% of booth fees goes to the Whiteaker Community Council: "so that means that all of the customers who buy

something at the market their money goes directly back into the neighborhood, which is a really cool thing. That's kind of rare to have such a closed, full-circle" (Interview with Claire).

It's a space that Claire hopes will function as a kind of "communal commons." So many spaces in the neighborhood now are mediated by direct and impersonal monetary exchanges (go somewhere to buy a beer) and there is less and less space for people to be and feel welcome without doing that. One of the decisions that the core council made was to make the space an alcohol free space. Claire explains that, since they make all decisions through consensus, this decision was deliberated for a while before settling. Half of the members, she explains were excited about the opportunity and the boost in popularity of market with beer sales. The other half, she notes, "were like wait a minute, lets think about where we are in the world. We are in the Whiteaker, a lot of drinking happening here…a lot of problems around alcohol in the neighborhood, with drunk driving and inundation of breweries and then we were like well do we want TO invite that to the market?" An alcohol free space in the Whiteaker is a pretty rare space these days and, "we want to create a space for everyone" Claire notes. The Whiteaker is home to a lot of houseless folk, many of whom who use alcohol and drugs frequently. Claire talks about how that has been a communication struggle; wanting houseless people to know they are welcome to hang out at market but not so open to using openly or showing up destructively drunk.

The strategy to make market multi-faceted and social seems to be catching already. The stage at market is an informal open mic and is almost always filled with a musician or band. People mill around and chat. They dance together!

Claire, Shelby, Jocelyn and Katelyn have expressed that they do not know how to "stop" gentrification, but have opted for other strategies: "Gentrification can mean whatever you want it to at this point," Schechtman says. "For me, [the market] is more about taking this inevitable transformation into the neighborhood's hands" (Here Comes the Neighborhood). And

they want to use the Whiteaker Community Market as a tool to do that, as a tool for neighborhood cohesion and autonomy.

When I mention to Claire that I think CSOA's are a good comparison tool for the market she nods: both are projects invested in the neighborhood strengthening through the establishment of a physical space with a "front-porch" oriented ethic. The market will most likely not transform into self-managed social center—a phenomena situated particularly within the context of Spanish neighborhood and squatting movements. But there is a continuity of concepts mobilized for converging means: utilizing a previously under-utilized space to facilitate the building and passing of skills and goods in order to localize the need fulfillment of individuals. Obviously, that functions differently at the community market, where the named activity is "shopping," but I want to suggest that the market, in terms of visibility and network forming functions very similarly. Whiteaker Community Market, like CSOAs, is a physical space constituted through the direct-participation of many actors that opens itself to the participation of community members. It is an opportunity for neighbors to get involved in forming—the physical, emotional, ecological aspects of—their community.

Spanish social centers have been successful in gathering people of different economic and cultural demographics, people of different generations—people who might not usually gather together—in one space. These heterogeneous individuals as a result of their interest in the continuity of a particular space interact on a regular basis. These regular interactions strengthen the specific community (they are, for example what allowed for the formation of the Red de Lavapiés which, in turn, utilized their political unity and power to defend the rights of Eskalera Karakola). This is, in many ways, the kind of space that the Whiteaker Communuty Market hopes to be. It is useful, then, even from a context very different then that of the Spanish okkupy and neighborhood movement— to look at the social processes and strategies common

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within CSOA's to see how they remain open to anyone who wants to enter them while still functioning as a cohesive social center.

Echoing Moreno Caballud, Feinberg, and Andrea on Okupas, Claire makes references to the physical presence and visibility of the Whiteaker Community Market, and its influence in the effectiveness of the spaces' goals. She notes that she hopes the physical presence will send a message and communicate the care and tenderness people have for the neighborhood: "because it's a really sweet, welcoming thing to be invited to… and especially the tourists I think it is important to tell them like 'hey look we love our neighborhood, you are so welcome here. But please respect this place, take care of it, because we are taking care of it and we love it.' " (Interview with Claire, September 30th 2016). In addition, she describes how she hopes that the direct, horizontal communication and social processes that she, Shelby, Caitlyn, and Jocelyn have adopted while creating the market are reflected in the space itself: "We want to create a physical space where people can come and connect, and everything is so digital right now, like etsy and facebook, its all so online, we really hope to have the market can be an established physical forum" (Interview with Claire, September 30th 2016). Claire hopes that the market, by setting an example, will facilitate behavior in the rest of the neighborhood. By mobilizing the CSOA movement as a comparison tool it is possible to see how the role of spectacle and a visible social fabric at the market might function in the future to encourage and support more social space/s in the Whiteaker.

The symbol of the okupa movement is of a circle with a lightning bolt traversing from the bottom left to the top right of it. Movement (lightning) opens doors and windows (the circle). Caballud notes how assemblies and the greater 15M movement have 'symbolic value': "It was a matter of demonstrating that it is possible to live another way, even if only for a while and only within that enclosed space" (Moreno-Caballud, 198). In my interview with Andrea she

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highlights something similar: "Estas formas son una manera también de generar ejemplo, en la ciudad, o en tus espacios territoriales" *These forms*, she says in reference to horizontality and assemblies, *are mechanisms for generating examples, in the city, or your territorial spaces.* "Porque cuando realmente te involucras de este manera en un colectivo que lleva diez años funcionado y que la gente esta contenta, creo que es un referente, diferente a lo que estamos acostumbrado ver…de ver la construcción de un mogollón de supermercados y esas cosas pues te ves a gente reunida a veces se asoma gente en las balcones, o que gente se pasa y se mira, yo creo que eso es muy interesante, el hecho de crear algo visible…y además que se reún en en la calle, muy visible. *" Because when you really involve yourself in a collective…where people are content…I think that is a referent, something different then what we are used to seeing.… We see the construction of a whole bunch of super markets and those things, and then you see people reuniting in the streets, sometimes people come to their balconies to look, or people pass by and look in, and I think that's really interesting, the fact that we've created something visible."* This quote puts into tension the supermarket (built through processes removed from the everyday citizen) and the Okupa, a form of social organization made visible through their own processes of social constitution. Feinberg, refers to just *being, or* existing, in a space as spectacle; Through their simple visibility in spaces Okupas remind citizens that alternatives exists and that, as Preciado notes, they are "ours to invent."

The parking lot turned "social hub" at 5th and Blair *looks* really different the expensive restaurants and bars that make up a lot of the space in the neighborhood. It is held in the open, has no walls, and is made-up of many different booths. This physical divergence relates to social processes as well. The Whiteaker Community market is not a simple "store," its existence is mediated not just by people buying objects but rather through individuals who set-up booths, people who sign-up at the open mics, through people who stop-by to just hang-out.

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The inclusivity of the social space/s of CSOAs is supported through processes of assembly and consensus that these spaces are invented by. These processes are embodied in systems of "sentires" which allowed the Transfemifest facilitators to articulate what work needed to be done and identify where that work needed to be. Horizontal assemblies are not the only model for working through and planning social and physical phenomena, but it is an effective structure because it makes explicit and necessitates the local-lization of transformations within the space being transformed. For this reason, assemblies are apt models when thinking about how to redirect rapid neighborhood redevelopment back—to use Claire's words— "into the neighborhoods hands."

1. Transfemifest Manifesto

TRANSFEMIFEST GRANADA 2016

In principle we begin this manifesto— without assumptions or predictions of what will be— from a place of transfeminist political discourse, opening to a process of group learning and of experiential self-knowledge.

We are people with a multitude of ways of feeling and understanding emotions and militancy…who came from distinct and diverse experiences and political trajectories, which motivates us to come up with a presentation text (manifesto) in which we show and join our voices (those of the organizers).

We are not against technicalities and semantics. For us the personal is the political and this means that our pamphlets are our lived experience and our referents our equals.

We think that it is necessary to decentralize the centers; they have distanced themselves from our everyday. We are geolocated here, in the south, in Granada, and it is from here that we build this festival, keeping present its respective privileges and oppressions.

We are those that slide through and cross over theories, terms, and categories. We ground ourselves in affective networks resulting from sexual dissidence, transfeminist and anticapitalist politics, and in the sharing of ideological, social, and artistic expressions.

Fruiting from this Macedonia of inpronunciable words is a festival who aims to create alliances that stem from care, reflection, encounters, study, and celebration.

The Transfemifest Granada 2016 will be a transfeminist, anti-species-ist, self-managed, accessible, and horizontal festival. It will be free of any kind of violence based in gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, nationality, functional and corporal diversity or migratory processes. We want to feel comfortable among ourselves, with ourselves, to be able to unclothe ourselves, be naked without heeding, empower ourselves from our desires and our realities.

These guerrillerxs transuñerxs invite you to participate in this collective delirium— to enjoy openly and fight normativity from the critical-erotic/erotic-critical; from liberty, love, and subversion.

Text from Transfemifest.wordpress.com
Translation by Celia Easton Koehler

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