DIY Anthropology: A peripheral discipline

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1. Introduction

The beginning of the decade (2010-2020) was a period of political unrest in Spain. Like many other countries it suffered the harsh effects of the global financial crisis that had started around 2007, after the collapse of the subprime mortgage market in the USA (and whose effects expanded to the rest of the world). The austerity policies imposed by the European Union had devastating effects on the peripheral countries of the continent (especially in the South). Madrid and Barcelona, the cities where we carried out our research projects during this period, suffered the dramatic effects of these policies: Building constructions were stopped, plans for public infrastructures came to a halt, evictions of families multiplied, and the rate of unemployment skyrocketed at peaks of 27%. The cities saw the emergence of new social inequalities, pockets of poverty and exclusion expanded, and the most vulnerable population was hit hard. Despite the crisis (or because of it) cities experienced a moment of political creativity and urban inventiveness. The epitome of this political climate was the 15M / *Indignados* movement, a political sensibility (starting on May 15th 2011 in big cities like Madrid, Barcelona, and many others) that would shape the urban landscape and political institutions in the years to come.

We conducted two ethnographic projects in these two cities among a diverse constituency of hackers, designers, activists, architects, cultural managers, and artists. People involved in collective projects concerned with the city, a variegated diversity of civic initiatives (as they were called) that turned the city into the source of new apprenticeships. The economic scarcity of the crisis had a visible expression in the urban landscape: the city was punctuated by urban voids (*vacíos urbanos*, as they were called), which excited the urban imagination of urban dwellers. In many of these empty and unused plots of vacant land people created all kind of projects that sought to reanimate a different city life: collective occupations of vacant spaces in the middle of the city, initiatives that designed and provided for the needs the State was not meeting, assemblies that met in open air to organize political actions... Drawing on recycling practices, auto-construction traditions, and a DIY ethos, those projects refurnished the city with new imaginations. A hopeful city driven by an impulse to devise new forms of living together emerged in the interstices of an impoverished landscape.

Those urban voids seemed to invite people to do things with others that were previously unimaginable: Anything could happen in these spaces where the norms and forms of the city had been evacuated. It is precisely this aspect that makes them resonate with recent descriptions of urban peripheries, those areas where the formal city fades away and the informality of the city takes its place. Spaces of exception lying outside the realm of Estate's control, where the city is made and remade and things are figured out with others. Territories whose epistemic qualities have been recently recognized: "the periphery is both a space in the making and a form of making theory" (Roy 2011: 232). The periphery we are thus invoking is not just a geographical location but a form of urbanization that may be found anywhere, in any geography, as AbdouMaliq Simone suggests: "The periphery is also a buffer, a space in-between the nation or city and something else that is formally more foreign, more divergent than the city or nation for which it acts as a periphery. In other words, the periphery can exist as a frontier in that it has a border with another city, nation, rural area, or periphery" (Simone 2010: 40).

Indeed, rather than an anthropology in and of Spain we have come to understand our own practice as reproducing the condition of the landscape in which it took place: it was urban and peripheral. Our anthropological contributions have flourished in the ruins left behind by the

economic crisis in the Southern periphery of Europe. Thrown into this exciting urban landscape, we carried out our first postdoctoral research projects in a singular situation: Lacking institutional grounding in our country's discipline, we were peripheral in at least two senses: not only we were working at the disciplinary crossroads with Science and Technology Studies (STS), but also had temporary postdoctoral positions. Under these circumstances, we found in our counterparts in the field the companions we lacked in the local academic context. Turned into collaborators and epistemic partners during our fieldwork, we learned from them how to problematize the contemporary situation of crisis and precariousness. This is an account that describes our apprenticeships during this period and portrays how we incorporated into our own professional activity the vernacular practices we learned from our counterparts in the field. Ours, then, is a peripheral description that narrates an anthropological practice that has been built from scratch, taking this and that from here and there. Like the city we witnessed to emerge in void urban landscapes, our anthropological practice grew in a vacuum of tradition, absent as it was from our own professional trajectory, and in the interstices that had become available to share a life with others.

2. In the vacuum of tradition: An interstitial practice

The crisis had devastating effects over Madrid and Barcelona. Spanish Government applied a policy of harsh austerity since 2010 that impoverished many segments of the population[1]. Under these circumstances, the city was covered by empty plots and buildings that drew neighbours into the unlimited possibilities of city vacuum to animate speculations of a different urban life. Illegally, and sometimes extra-legally occupied, the city witness to appear a squatted social centre where a luxury apartment building was under construction, an abandoned hotel (next to the regional government location) was taken by people coming from the 15M movement (Spanish version and precursor of the Occupy movement), and vacant plots of land were liberated (in the vernacular idiom) in illegal or alegal occupations all over the city. People with no previous experience on squatting, or without any activist background, became engaged in many of these initiatives. Composed of makeshift constructions and autoconstructed infrastructures of different types, informal norms and regulations were established by loose forms of organizations. The emergence of these projects coincides with the proliferation of ephemeral artistic/architectural interventions in other geographies of the north during the economic crisis (Zeiger 2011).

Madrid and Barcelona became places where an interstitial urbanism developed (Mubi Brighenti 2013), the outcome of policy of austerity that may be described as “a mode of urban practice that works in the cracks between formal planning, speculative investment and local possibilities” (Tonkiss 2013: 313). Interstices that could be understood as spaces of encounter, as one of the main chroniclers of this time accounted: “the occupied squares of the 15M offered themselves as spaces in constant opening […] an invitation to anyone to meet, think, and organize together in order to make collective questions and searching for answers” (Fernández Savater 2012)[2].

One of the paradigmatic projects that developed during this time in Madrid was *El Campo de Cebada* (The Barley Field), a large plot located in the city centre, self-managed by neighbours between 2011 and 2017. The story of the project is exemplary: After an ephemeral artistic intervention that lasted a few weeks, some neighbours managed to obtain permission from the city council to run the space. Operating without any funding, the initiative was open to anybody interested. Those willing to participate in decision making, intervene in the spatial arrangement, and contribute to the everyday activities just had to drop by the Monday weekly assembly that

[1] Austerity policies were intended to reduce the volume of the public sector 5.5% of the GDP between 2011 and 2016. Social spending was largely affected: Investment on housing and community services was reduced by 42.4% and leisure and culture by 36% in the period 2011-2016 (Romero, Brandis y Melo 2015), public health care and education operated large cuts too. In 2018 (when we write that) the rate of unemployment is still on the 20% (INE).

[2] Our translation.

was celebrated in the site. No formal requirement was needed to get involved, the same organization for similar projects like the many urban community gardens that proliferated during these years. Spaces like this flourished during these years in Madrid and Barcelona–in fact, we could here mention Can Batlló, a gigantic former factory reclaimed by the neighbours and turned into a self-managed social centre in Barcelona as another interesting case in point.

A completely empty plot at the beginning, neighbours invested great efforts into conditioning the space of The Barley Field, refurnishing it with all kind of DIY infrastructures: large structures to provide shades during the summer, benches of imaginative shapes, tables, plots for the community garden that was built inside the space, sport equipment... Modest and precarious infrastructures that were usually produced recycling materials. A series of workshops organized during these years under the original name of 'Handmade urbanismo' taught neighbours how to re-equip the city with different infrastructures and the public space with new capacities. In one of the many workshops of this kind, they built on site a series of pieces of furniture using recycled palets: A planter, a seedbed piece, a compost box, a table, and bench. Modest pieces of furniture that were later finely documented in easy to read manuals of instructions that were published on the Internet. Bare and partial diagrammatic expressions, these sketches bear witness to the apprenticeships efforts invested in these spaces since manuals are produced to inspire and offer resources for others to replicate similar interventions in other geographies.

Accounts of a handcrafted city, manuals of instruction come to epitomise an urban genre that expands the urban fabric of the DIY city into a textual form that resources new city textures. They recall the DIY manuals that were central to the countercultural movement of the 60's and 70's in the USA (Smith 2014). Subverting the conventional genre of commercial manuals, these publications were produced as educational platforms, they were aimed for small projects seeking social transformations. Tracing in bare and neat diagrams the modest components of material infrastructures, manuals produced in spaces like The Barley Field retrace the pedagogical impulse of the counterculture.[3]

They represent a practice that was common of many other urban guerrillas, architectural collectives and cultural institutions: all of them invested considerable efforts in documenting the processes, practices, and methodologies assembled in their interventions in the city. During our fieldwork, we came across instructions for organizing assemblies, pedagogical guides to construct urban community allotments, videos to describe the use of digital technologies, or maps that pinpointed relevant civic initiatives (as they were called) offering a geography of the neighbourly inventiveness that proliferated all over the city. A wide documentary culture materialized in diverse representation formats and aesthetics languages: maps, archives, drawings, public minutes... urban genres that give expression to critical activities of material speculation that evince emergent modes of the political. This was not only the case of Adolfo's ethnographic project in Madrid, but also of the coeval ethnographic project carried out by Tomás in Barcelona, together with the collective *En torno a la silla* (ETS): an initiative that united in many exploratory spatial projects and open design interventions people who could have never met were it not for the emergence of these peripheral urban interstices. That is, wheelchair using activists of the independent-living movement in their fight against spatial and technological exclusion with designers, craftspeople and others concerned with making space in our contemporary cities to bodily diversity. In there, Tomás collaborated documenting and helping others document in a great detail not only tutorials of their artefacts and gadgets but also their experiential accounts of what this newly afforded mode of living and doing together entailed for all of them.

3. Intraventions

As can be seen, in our ethnographic projects we accompanied a series of architects, urban planners, activists, artist, hackers, cultural managers, designers, and even some social scientists. Travelling with them throughout the city we traced a urban geography composed of cultural

[3] Two paragraphs in the section are based on a previous paper.

centres, refurnished urban voids, occupied buildings, and bars, constantly participating in public meetings and more intimate–although always open to participation–gatherings of diverse kinds and formats: ranging from assemblies in the open air, seminar-like encounters, public events and production workshops, to gatherings where common concerns were shared. We discovered in our counterparts in the field an unusual likeness: they used our methodologies, conceptual vocabularies and theoretical preoccupations.

Our participation in their material interventions in the public space and theoretical speculations with other forms of relationship in the city was traversed by an experience of sameness that made our ethnographies adjacent to, when not partaking, the investigations of our counterparts in the field. This is probably one of the reasons that would explain our deep involvement in their design projects and urban interventions, sometimes documenting different endeavours with them (as it was the case of Tomás) and, in other occasions, co-designing pedagogical programs and learning infrastructures (as it was the case of Adolfo). We did not expect to become so much involved, a qualification that comes of comparing with our previous doctoral researches based on more or less conventional participant observation–a fly-on-the-wall ethnographic modality. Our relationships in the field were different and deeper to those of our previous ethnographies.

Years later, we have encountered the same experience in the form of anxiety and disciplinary uncertainty in other colleagues (in the early stages of their careers too) doing fieldwork in these particular ethnographic sites that George Marcus and Douglas Holmes have conceptualized as 'para-sites' (Holmes and Marcus 2008), contexts populated by experts and reflexive subject. Under these situations: "ethnographers need to construct models of fieldwork as collaboration for themselves, models that let them operate with their own research agendas inside the pervasive collaboratories that define social spaces today (Holmes y Marcus 2008: 85). Our reflection over the experimental condition of our fieldwork intervenes in the ample debate over the transformations of fieldwork in the contemporary. A discussion opened by a number of North American anthropologists whose reflections over the ethnographic practice challenge the traditional tropes of field participation and observation (Faubion and Marcus 2009; Rabinow et al. 2008) and contend the need to impinge an experimental reorientation into ethnography (Marcus 2014; Rabinow y Bennett 2012).

We have come to realize that it would be difficult to account for our engagement using the conventional notion of participant observation, so in the last years we have devoted a large effort to reflect on our fieldwork practice (cf. Estalella & Sánchez Criado 2018), describing it as a form of ethnographic experimentation: a fieldwork practice that occurred through processes of material and social interventions that turned the field into a site for epistemic collaboration. Those previously known as informants turned into companions in the construction of joint anthropological problematizations that mixed, intermingled, and fused with our adjacent investigations. A discussion that may resonate with the efforts that anthropology dedicated since the 1980s to explore the predicaments of doing fieldwork at home, unveiling the effects that the proximity of our institutional academic practice may have over field situations (two locations clearly separated in previous decades and now in proximity). Nevertheless, the proximity of our institutional location and our field not only had effects on the second but it affected the first: our fieldwork penetrated our institutional locations, and we were instrumental in this activity. We can illustrate this point describing our participation in the construction of an STS network in Spain (called RedesCTS, Red de Estudios de Ciencia y Tecnología).

Despite STS has lacked institutional framework in Spain, we have been engaged in it from the early stages of our academic career, led both by personal passion and thematic proximity. Informally trained in this area together with our peers, we got involved in the foundation of RedesCTS whilst we were undertaking the aforementioned fieldwork projects. From 2011 we started to organize annual meetings to bring together people with shared interests in the field.

There are a number of traits revealing the singularity of the network: it lacked a managing committee, and despite its range–having at some meetings around 100 attendants–it could be considered an informal association, always operating without budget (all meetings had no fees). In a context where many people were involved in activist projects, the network operated publishing its method, minutes, certificates and programmes in different open digital platforms. The period of cultural creativity and urban unrest seemed to infiltrate multiple initiatives at that time and many brought the provocative, creative and critical spirit of their research sites into the design of such a novel academic context. We were not alone in this endeavour: other colleague members of the network invoked the spirit of the 15M movement to describe the particular work of a scholarly association that we conceived in experimental terms. It was a prototype, as we described it, that sought to open "spaces of dialogue with other actors and institutions outside of the academic environment; experimenting with our academic modalities of rationality and their spatial organization" (Estalella et al. 2013).

This experimental impulse took diverse expressions both in the particular organization of the network we have mentioned and in the design of its encounters. We tested all kind of open formats (hosting theatrical representations, performances, workshops of diverse kinds) and challenged the traditional peer review process of proposals, substituting it for a care review process that should take care of those precarious proposals in need of improvement.

Great efforts were always dedicated to choose the venue for the encounters. Non-academic locations (and non-commercial ones) were chosen in a gesture that attempted to expand the reach of our scholarly work. The first meeting was organized in 2011 in Medialab-Prado, a public cultural institution that works at the intersection of art, science and technology. It was the site were one of us (Adolfo) had been conducting a ethnography the year before, an activity that helped opened the doors of the centre. This constant preoccupation with the venue reveals the importance of conceiving our undertakings as an interstitial practice. This took an explicit expression in the title of our fifth encounter, held again in Medialab-Prado in 2016: "overflowing the limits of academia", something that we repeatedly performed by bringing our counterparts into our academic context for discussion. The Independent Living Forum (*Foro de Vida Independiente*) that was a key organization in Tomás fieldwork took part in the closing plenary in the third meetings held in Barcelona. In that meeting, Adolfo co-presented his research with one of his companions in the field, Auroda Adalid, architect part of the architectural guerrilla Zuloark (and with his colleague Alberto Corsín Jiménez). But perhaps it was in the fourth meeting held in Salamanca where this became more fertile, when at our suggestion the cultural collective ColaBoraBora–with whom we had collaborated in our fieldwork–took part in the very organisation of several special formats.

ColaBoraBora is a cultural collective based in the Basque Country, a professional association that has devoted considerable energies to undertaking research on cultural creation and open/free process of creation. Their intervention–or 'intravention', as we discuss below–in Salamanca's meeting was provocative: Txelu and Ricardo, in front of a large audience in a solemn hall showed a video composed of pieces taken from YouTube, an automatic voice-over reclaimed the right of guinea pigs (*cobayas*) to be treated not just as research subject but as co-investigators:

> "Without PhDs, without publications, without patents, without score in the researcher's affiliation card; activists, amateurs, para-scientists, restless agents of (dis)organised civil society collaborating, articulating multi/trans/inter/in-disciplinary networks, generating collective intelligence…
>
> In our extra-academic, un-homologated world there is no diaspora, no brain drain nor return programmes because we aren't even recognised as righteous citizen researchers. We are all (self)care–that's all that's left, the fundamental–, not even in the back-stage

> but in the cages of the experiment room (a cage that looks every day more like the street, the street as laboratory)
> […]
> What do we want? To go way beyond participant observation, radicalising the idea of an activist ethnography. Because it's not just that researchers take part of the situations you do research about, but also that the subjects configuring those situations would be taken as researchers, besides being research subjects".[4]

This was the opening speech to a rather fun dynamic they proposed to the activist researchers and researcher activists in the room: using as a metaphor the film 'See no evil, here no evil'–the 1980s comedy featuring the adventures of a couple of guys, one blind the other deaf, force to collaborate to solve a crime–they had produced a small booklet and a series of lap pins–one with the face of Richard Pryor, the other with the face of Gene Wilder, the main actors in the film–to instigate people to re-enact the couple throughout the whole conference with different people, sitting together and filling in the booklet, which contained questions regarding the research practices and conditions of the two people in conversation.

Whilst other accounts have described the dialogue between STS and Anthropology in analytical or theoretical terms, as an abstract conceptual debate (De la Cadena and Lien 2015; Fischer 2007), our anthropological engagement with STS during this time was indeed ethnographic through and through: as we have shown, it had to do with the very locations and counterparts from our own projects. Working as anthropologists engaged in the mundane construction of an STS space, the encounter between both disciplines could not be described by us as an interface but as something different: An infrastructure that required mundane preoccupations with the materiality of digital infrastructures, the aesthetics of scholarly encounters, the audiences to be addressed... A relational world, as infrastructures may be conceived (Harvey and Knoxx 2015), that unfolded the condition for our epistemic partners to inhabit our academic context. In them STS, rather than as a conceptual corpus, took the form of a hospitable infrastructure of different interstitial knowledges. This allowed us to open our academic contexts to those others who had previously hosted us in theirs, allowing us to reciprocate with the same kind of hospitality we have so often found in our field sites. Considered in the light of our own discipline, STS operated as an infrastructure affording us to intervene in anthropology, reshaping our disciplinary practice in dialogue with our counterparts in the field.

Whilst George Marcus and Paul Rabinow were relevant for us in understanding different accounts about fieldwork conditions in the contemporary, in our engagement we found something different: this was a reverse gesture by which we made space in our academic contexts to those located beyond their boundaries. Not the common intervention that scholars operate in their empirical sites (sometimes driven for political purposes) but a gesture that reverses this traditional movement: an 'intravention,' to use the term architect Alberto Altés (2016) employs to name the learning emerging when taking part 'from within' collective practices. They entailed a reversion bringing the wild research we as anthropologists found in our empirical sites into the interior of academic contexts. This was different from many other activist research projects or engaged anthropological practices that operate outside academia, or in explicit confrontation to it (as is the case of many activist researches). We tried to fabricate a different problematization with this gesture, different from the common question of recent literature–'How should we do fieldwork when our counterparts are so similar to us?–. Ours was a different one: What happens when we turn our field counterparts into companions at the interior of our own discipline? An 'intravening' gesture aimed at problematizing the limits of our disciplinary organization and its epistemic boundaries, posing the crucial issue at stake: Could we problematize who is part of academia now?

[4] Translated from https://www.colaborabora.org/2014/05/21/nosotras-las-cobayas/

4. Ambiences of care

Months later we would re-enact our collaboration with ColaBoraBora when organizing a workshop dedicated to our sustained reflection about forms of ethnographic experimentation in the field. Half a dozen young scholars from different disciplines–singularly, none of them anthropologists–attended the event. They were working beyond the boundaries of their own disciplines and methods: such an architect doing a ethnography of The Barley Field (the aforementioned urban void) or an art historian doing an ethnographic an inspiring research of visual representations in Equatorial Guinea. All of them bringing ethnographic methods and diverse theoretical traditions to their own disciplines, they acknowledged their methodological anxieties and disciplinary troubles during a series of presentations that echoed the title of the meeting: 'Investigations to the limit: A curatorship of experimental collaborations'.

In the title we were making an explicit invocation to the fertile exchanges between art and social sciences, since the venue for our meeting was indeed a particular cultural institution: Intermediae, an art centre (connected to Medialab-Prado) devoted to an experimentation with visual aesthetics and participatory art[5]. However, our curatorial gesture–both dealing with the curing and curating meanings of the term– had another key goal: We were pointing to those forms of investigations in precarious conditions–e.g. crossing conventional disciplinary boundaries, or being peripheral to a certain discipline's orthodoxy–that were in need of care. ColaBoraBora followed the line of the argument and proposed a format taking seriously the care invoked in the workshop. In fact, they organized a clinic for those researchers in need. The *Klinika*, as they called it, was "an accompaniment service for the diagnosis and shared care, aimed at developing healthy collaborative research projects. It is especially appropriate for experimental projects that leaving the orthodoxy and transgressing the canons provoke in researchers tensions, anxieties, dizziness, and great doses of vulnerability and uncertainty". As in previous occasions, they proposed a rigid methodological device, organized around a file card mimicking a medical report. The file invited participants to elicit their symptoms, provide a diagnosis, and propose an appropriate treatment for those troubled researchers and their processes.

The careful gesture of the workshop was extended to the documentation practice, produced by Carla Boserman, artist and researcher (and common friend) that we invited. In previous years she had been exploring forms of graphic documentation, called *relatogramas*: "non-linear narratives that invoke a granulated and more peripheral gaze, a kind of graphic report, a device for listening, affection, and action". Her work embodied another instantiation of the diverse experiments with languages, aesthetics and formats for documentation that we many times found during our fieldwork.

Care was an extended discourse at that time. The assemblies in the open air turned the trope of what they called "active listening" (*escucha activa*) into a careful listening practice; workshops at places like Medialab-Prado always invoked the figure of hospitality as fundamental for these production events full of strangers; and while many of the interstitial projects thriving in urban voids (like the Barley Field) described their engagement as forms of civic curatorship (of the city) or modes of urban stewardship. This resonates with Maria Puig de la Bellacasa's (2017) discussion around an ethics of care speculating with forms of living together, paying attention to the obligation not to just be concerned but "to take care of the fragile gathering things constitute" (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017: 45).

These forms of care certainly required a constant concern with regards to spaces, materialities, and techniques aimed at conditioning spaces in order to be together. They unfolded as a

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[5] The workshop was closely connected to the process of editing the book 'Experimental Collaborations: Ethnography through Fieldwork Devices" (Estalella and Sánchez Criado 2018), precisely for the EASA series. A few months later we would meet with all the authors again in Intermediae, thanks to the funding the institution provided.

particular method in the many occasions in which our counterparts in the field came together to explore what was possible to do with others in the city–this was indeed the motive behind ColaBoraBora's very name, an exploration around forms of collaboration. In many of those urban spaces, people operating under precarious conditions experimented with all kind of forms of collaboration. We discovered in these meetings the epistemic qualities of care: A precise method that designed ambiences of care in need of a constant worry to take care of them, spaces where our counterparts in the field problematized the precarious conditions of living during the crisis, driven by a collective effort at 'joint problem-making' (Sánchez Criado and Rodríguez-Giralt 2017).

Only a year later we brought these peripheral methods learnt from ColaBoraBora to the very core of our own discipline at the 2016 EASA Conference, held in Milano. We organized there another version of the Klinika, this time called CLEENIK: A clinic offered for anthropologists doing ethnographic experimentation in their fieldwork. We were not alone in this move: Carla also attended the event and made her beautiful *relatogramas* of some of the keynote lectures (albeit this time not at our invitation). The CLEENIK reproduced the therapeutic practice of care so common in self-help groups. It was an attempt at bringing the sensibility we had learned in our fieldwork into our own discipline. The invocation of the therapeutic rhetoric of a clinic was a playful parodic gesture, which implicitly highlighted the relevance of caring for the spaces of our encounters (something we had learnt from our counterparts) as well as certain research projects. Months later, our colleague Eeva Berglund exported the format to Finland, and we re-enacted it again in the first workshop we organized as part of the Colleex EASA network (Collaboratory for Ethnographic Experimentation) in Lisbon[6].

5. Meeting methods (for apprenticeship)

We could describe our fieldworks as an endless meeting: We moved from assemblies to workshops to seminars, informal collective encounters in the open air or formal gatherings in cultural centres: travelling throughout the city we met methods to meet everywhere. These meetings were a key piece of the forms of urban dwelling we encountered; not just an organizational instrument or a bureaucratic tool but essential parts of the forms of relationality unfolding in the many spaces attempting to make the city liveable again. There was always a method for every meeting; a technique that distributed competencies and attributions (e.g. moderating, taking minutes, controlling time); a method that strained to create the appropriate conditions to think and do together. We met meetings everywhere and we learnt the value of those meetings that strain to create appropriate venues for apprenticeship.

Meetings have traditionally received little attention in anthropology, despite they are quintessential forms of relationality in all kind of collective and organizational contexts. Happening in a define space and time, located meetings refer always to a larger context, this is the argument made by Hannah Brown, Adam Reed and Thomas Yarrow (2017) in a special issue devoted to the topic. It is not only that meetings are understood when located in a larger situation, but their relevance has to do with the effects they produced over larger context since meetings "contain and animate social worlds outside the spatially and temporally demarcated arenas through which they take place" (Brown et al. 2017: 12). There is always something at stake beyond the proper event in which a meeting takes place: interests, contexts and agendas that shape a meeting and will be affected by it. We could even say, following Marilyn Strathern's contribution to the special issue, that these organizational events miniaturize the collectives they are embedded in: "meetings mimic larger apprehensions of a scaled-up object" (Strathern 2017: 197).

The CLEENIK certainly mimics our fieldwork encounters, and remediate them, bringing into our own discipline the apprenticeships we have made in our fieldwork: the therapeutic practices of care needed to think and make together. It is a meeting method we found in our field and

[6] http://xcol.org/interventions/cleenik/

imported (in another intravetion gesture) into our own discipline. The CLEENIK emerged out of the particular encounters deriving from our ethnographic research and the tensions we faced around the norms and forms of fieldwork we had previously learnt. This is a singular situation since our field was paradoxically challenging our ethnographic methods and at the same time providing us with the methodological resources to remediate the situation. Emerging in a context where we experienced a disparity between the canonical method and our fieldwork experience, the CLEENIK has been devises to tame the anxieties, difficulties and uncertainties of anthropologists that overflow their methodological boundaries, it is a modest attempt at devising the appropriate venues to learn from these particular ethnographic conditions happening in certain sites of the contemporary.

However fruitful the intense debates over the contemporary form of ethnography and the transformation of fieldwork have been for us, we do not know whether "fieldwork is not what it used to be" (XREF)–a historical claim beyond our reach–, and yet there is something that we can ascertain: the need to devise new venues to learn different forms of practicing fieldwork. Certainly, this is not a grand topic for anthropology, much to the contrary: It has been unattended and ignored by a discipline that has very often bragged about the mythical properties of the field encounter, as if the only situation in which the practice of fieldwork may be learnt was the field situation itself. Nevertheless, we can start to understand the relevance of those learning venues when we get rid of their conventional separation from fieldwork and recognize the singular entanglements they have (or could have, as it is the case with the CLEENIK).

Adjacent to our ethnographic projects, the CLEENIK offers an alternative way to intervene into current controversies about how to do ethnography, not by addressing the norm and form of fieldwork (XEFX) but exploring and intervening in the way a certain form and norm is shaped in advanced in those venues where anthropologists are trained. The tensions and anxieties that the CLEENIK seek to treat are very often the effect of our own disciplinary learnings. This is the case, for instance, of Isaac Marrero description of his methodological anxiety working with artists in London: 'I had wanted to follow some artists' work, but I was invited to become a *collaborator*; I had imagined that fieldwork would be based on some kind of *distance* with the objects and subjects of study, but I instead *participated* in the production of the very things I was studying' (Marrero-Guillamón 2018: 183).

Like any others form of meetings, those modest encounters where anthropologists learn how to practice ethnography are always pointing out to further away situations in which they will be doing their fieldwork. Contextualized in this larger context, beyond their precise temporal and spatial location, apprenticeship venues anticipate the field and so they could be understood as part of them, mimicking the later field, in Strathern's terms. A meeting method like the CLEENIK draws in past fieldworks and at the same time seeks to prototype future empirical encounters. Bracketed between one and the other it aims at prefiguring the epistemic sensibility we will unfold on them.

We met methods and discovered the pedagogical impulse that pervaded these meetings: Not only they strained to generate apprenticeship ambiences but sought to make those learnings to travel, including the particular technicalities that brought them into life. Methods were conventionally made explicit and very often they were documented. We came across guides to organize assemblies, instructions to construct pieces of furniture, manuals teaching how to use digital technologies, etc. The documentary culture we have described not only produced records that accounted for the substantive events of meetings (says and doings) but the methods mobilized in them. Drawing on empirical encounters the norms, rules and techniques were codified: methods were extracted and abstracted out of the messy life in which they were brought into existence. An effort to inscribe methods and make them explicit that was driven by the expectation that they could travel and be learned elsewhere. Meeting methods were documented to meet again, two activities folding into each other in a relationship that sought to liberate not only the apprenticeships taking place but the methods necessary for them to occur.

Drawing on our learnings in the field, we are not just exploring formats to devise apprenticeship meetings but ways to document the many methods, techniques, formats, and venues that may provide the resources to develop the appropriate sensibility for particular forms of fieldwork. Once again we intravene in our own discipline by bringing into it the practices we have learnt in our ethnographies. Our attempt is to gather an inventory of apprenticeship formats: all kind of methods to devise workshops, seminars, interventions (and intraventions), all kind of techniques used to device the appropriate ambiences to learn how to practice ethnography. This is the outcome of the ethnographies we carried out during the crisis in the periphery of Europe, ambulating in the peripheral spaces of a city while we built our anthropological practice in the margins of our own discipline. The result of this peripheral itinerary is an anthropology inquiring on DIY practices that learns from its companions how to design and take care of our epistemic ambiences and how to document these methods for learning. This is not an anthropology attached to any national tradition but engaged with an urban landscape, accompanying people who strive to make the city liveable again.

This is a peripheral account of an anthropological practice thriving in a period of crisis, an account that despite the extended situation of precarization of academic conditions attempts to be as hopeful as those projects of reinvention of the city we have learnt from. It is, thus, an anthropological practice made from scratch, figuring out its own contemporary shape together with our companions in the field in the most DIY tradition: A DIY anthropology.

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