

Precurity as a common foundation for `Networks of Subsistence`

PRECARIEDAD COMO BASE COMÚN DE 'REDES DE SUBSISTENCIA'

RESUMEN

El texto crea un análisis teórico que contrasta la literatura relevante sobre temas de precariedad, reproducción social y *Commoning*, o prácticas sociales de comunización. El propósito del texto es plantear así cómo métodos alternativos de organización creativo social que intentan dar respuesta a la precariedad actual deberían incorporar lo que las economistas feministas Maria Mies y Veronika Benholdt-Thomsen han denominado como 'perspectiva de subsistencia' (1999). Al centrar el estudio en el colectivo de arquitectos españoles Recetas Urbanas y, más concretamente, en su papel en la configuración de la red Arquitecturas Colectivas, el texto propone cómo una 'perspectiva de subsistencia' podría beneficiarse de lo que se ha referido aquí como una 'red de subsistencia'. En conjunto, este texto representa una primera aproximación de futuros análisis teóricos sobre las posibilidades de estructuras organizacionales descentralizadas basadas en los Comunes a través de una perspectiva feminista marxista del trabajo reproductivo y las relaciones cotidianas.

Keywords

Precariedad, reproducción social, Commoning, perspectiva de subsistencia, formas alternativas de organización

ABSTRACT

The paper builds a theoretical analyses contrasting relevant literature around issues of precarity, social reproduction and practices of Commoning. By doing so, the paper raises how alternative methods of creative-social organization responding to precarity should incorporate what feminist economists' Maria Mies and Veronika Benholdt-Thomsen has coined as 'subsistence perspective' (1999). By drawing on Spanish architect collective Recetas Urbanas (Urban Prescriptions) and, more concretely, their role in the network Arquitecturas Colectivas (Collective Architecture), the paper proposes how a 'subsistence perspective' could beneficiate from, what will be addressed as, a 'network of subsistence'. Taken together this text represents a first approximation on future theoretical analyses around the possibilities of decentralized organizational structures based on the Commons through a Marxist Feminist perspective of reproductive work and everyday relations.

Palabras Clave

Precarity, Social Reproduction, Commoning, Subsistence Perspective, Alternative forms of Organization

1 INTRODUCCIÓN

Precarity is an emerging condition of perpetual insecurity and anxiety that has been gaining public awareness in Italy, Greece and Spain since the mortgage crisis of 2007. In other European countries such as France, the stock market crisis of January 2008 also raised awareness around discourses on precarity. However, it was due to the explosion of the financial crisis in 2008 when such debates expanded globally. Specially, and in academic literature in concrete, precarity has acquired multidisciplinary attention since due to its potential as both a theoretical and a political concept (Hardt & Negri, 2009; Lazzarato, 2012; Sennett, 1998; Butler, 2004; Lorey, 2015; Federicci, 2004; Shukaitis, 2006). Few are unaware nowadays of the use of the term precarity to designate social and economical insecurity, forms of exploitative labour or states of vulnerability, injury or violence. Such states correlate with the increase of anxiety, uneasiness, hopelessness, depression and suicide (Fisher, 2011). In political struggles and social movements' discourses, the use of the term precarity can be traced back, for example, to the legacy of Italian Workerist and Autonomist politics from the 1960s and 1970s.

However, what does precarity reference when used in past and current social mobilizations? Forms of labour and exploitation have changed considerably, and though the use of the word post-Fordism to refer to current labour processes finds its origin in Fordism, the truth is that the transition from one process to the other is dominated by significant shifts (Sennett, 1998). Thereafter, it is decisive to reconsider how notions such as security and stability meant in the 1960s when "working in a petrochemical factory or on an automobile assembly line for forty years" (Shukaitis, 2012, p.232), and what do they mean now "in an economy under constant restructuring that is based on the short-term and hates routine" (Sennett, 1998). Moreover, contemporary forms of labour and exploitation has not just changed considerably but does also concur with a significant restructuring of the social welfare state and public services (Bröckling, 2015). Such changes promote, as it will be further argued, concrete states of economic, social, mental and political instability (Sennett, 1998; Garcia Díaz & Gielen, 2018) through the dispossession from basic means of subsistence (Shukaitis, 2006; Federicci, 2004; Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen, 1999).

In the pages that follow, a much debated question is addressed as if whether popular responses to precarity have experimented with models of organization that go beyond wage-labour as the main source of human emancipation (Fraser, 2016; Mies & Bennholdt-Thomsen, 1999; Federicci, 2012a). Thereafter, one of the objectives of this paper is to explore how, feminists economists' Maria Mies and Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen propose to approach the increasing precarity of life through a 'subsistence perspective' (Mies & Bennholdt-Thomsen, 1999). What this perspective and Autonomist Marxist feminist's theories primarily bring about is the reconstruction of subsistence by inhabiting the commons. That is, by reclaiming control over our life and experimenting with new social formations based on processes of 'commoning' (Mies & Bennholdt-Thomsen, 1999; Federicci, 2012a; De Angelis, 2007).

Due to the exploratory and interpretative nature of this text, this paper will further take the form of a case study. The purpose is to reflect on the practice of Recetas Urbanas, a Spanish collective that has been working since 1996 to share and produce examples of responsible urbanism. For the purpose of such analyses, data collection has been taking place in several occasions since 2017, consisting of formal and informal discussions with Recetas Urbanas as well as a personal participation during some of their interventions in Barcelona, Seville, Madrid (Spain) and Antwerp (Belgium). During the first months of the fieldwork, it became clear that

the modus operandi of Recetas Urbanas could be sustained thanks to a network composed by other collectives, associations or individuals. To understand how such processes in networks appear, it is however necessary to understand why it got there in the first place. Otherwise, such network processes may miss important needs and clues when analysing its overall functioning in future research. Thereafter, this paper further concentrates on the project *Camiones, Contenedores, Colectivos* (Tracks, Containers, Colectivos) (2007- ongoing) to reflect on how, and why, the network Arquitecturas Colectivas came into being and the effects of such network within the operations of Recetas Urbanas.

The paper finally discusses how micro-struggles against precarious conditions require of a complex macro method and structure to cooperatively and actively bring speed, rationality and legitimacy to concrete processes and actions. Departing, as argued, from a 'subsistence perspective' on issues around precarity and describing how and why concrete actors intentionally tried to connect and create a network among different organizations, it will be raised what this paper has coined as a 'network of subsistence'. By doing so, this paper represents a very first approximation towards a future theoretical and practical opportunity to advance on the understanding of such a cooperative, interactive, relational and decentralized strategic network forms. This paper seeks hence to offer some important insights on the interconnections and genesis that sustained Arquitecturas Colectivas on the first place, providing an important opportunity to advance on the analyses of decentralized networks through a feminist perspective of common principles, reproductive work and everyday relations (Fraser, 2016; Mies & Benholdt-Thomsen, 1999; Federicci, 2012b).

2 PRECARIY, DEPENDENCY AND DOMINATION

Differing from misery, in which the means of subsistence are absent, precarity arises when the necessities for living are available but just not disposable (Weareplanc, 2014). Embedded in an ambient of uncertainty, precarity refers to a specific subjectivity whose survival depends on the availability of the means of subsistence necessary to live a liveable life by something or someone external to it. It is important to make clear from the very beginning how, by means of subsistence, this paper refers not just to immediate means of survival, such as food or water, but also to infrastructural means, such as housing, education or health care, and to affective means, such as care, emotional support or love. Precarity, thereafter, exists currently embedded on a concrete scheme of dependency in which, from one side, the precarious prays to a seemingly protector to diminish its vulnerability but whom, by doing so, becomes, from the other side, extremely dependent to that very same source of protection. In other words, if the counterpart of being precarious is protection and immunization against social and political vulnerability and insecurity, the result of such protection comes with processes of domination (Lorey, 2015) that ensure the marketability of all immediate, infrastructural and affective means of subsistence.

Italian sociologist Maurizio Lazzarato signals in his book *Governing by Debt* (2013) or *The Making of the Indebted Man* (2013) how one clear example of such relationship of dependency could be found nowadays in the debt system. Lazzarato is specially interested on revealing the consequences and the uses of student debt as a form of neo-liberal governance and specific forms of production of subjectivity (Lazzarato, 2013). For him, the creditor-debtor relationship simulates the capitalist form of wage earners and embeds a certain class relation across society from a very earlier age. As a disciplinary mechanism, the form of dependency, and precarity,

that the debt system causes nowadays diverges from that of the proletariat of yesteryear. While the factory encapsulated the space and time of workers' exploitation, debt expands and colonizes every aspect of our lives (Lazzarato, 2014). Dependency and precarity becomes within this scheme a disciplinary mechanism interiorized by the subject (Lorey, 2009).

If one looks back to the legacy of Italian Operaist and Autonomist Marxist politics and theory from the 1960s and 1970s, however, it is interesting and revealing to detect their previous use of the term precarity. *Precario bello*, or 'beautiful precarious', was an expression used by Operaist and Autonomist to relate precarity with discourses of freedom and liberty. Quite contrary to the way precarity is conceptualised nowadays, Operaist and Autonomist referred to *Precario bello* to designate a way out to routine and boredom of working life (Bloois, 2011). It offered, for example, to break with the imprisonment of a permanent position in the factory and encouraged for the mobility and transfer of the worker within different enterprises. In that sense, *Precario bello* was a call for flexibility and individual empowerment, which under Fordist labour conditions, advocated for the emancipatory nature of the workers, whom anxiously hoped for an alternative to capitalist alienation and its authoritarian control. The break with the security of the post-war traditionalism of *il posto fisso*, or 'permanent position', and hence the rise of precarious patterns of labour were adopted and understood positively at first by Autonomist Marxist theorists¹ towards breaking the enslavement of chain work. It was encouraged "working for several months to raise funds for a trip, or project, or a period of finding some escape from wage labour" (Shukaitis, 2006, p. 3).

Later, at the end of the 1980s, American sociologist Richard Sennett unfolds in *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism* (1988) how, nonetheless, the incorporation of such flexibility by what he defines as the 'New Economy', which leaves manufacturing-based economy behind and adopts a service-based economy, was sold as an opportunity for workers' liberation when actually represented new forms of oppression and exploitation. For Sennett, such an unregulated form of labour disorients individuals affecting their emotional character and psychological well-being, creating new social and emotional traumas.

Important to highlight here is how, while Sennett almost looks back with certain nostalgia to past epochs when relatively stable social roles allowed to construct more consistent forms of social identity, Autonomist Marxist theory advocates to draw attention to both "the oppressive face of post-Fordist capitalism" and the "potentialities that spring from workers' own refusal of labour" and their subjective demands (Neilson and Rossiter, 2005, p. 1). It is precisely within this double dialogue between labour exploitation from one side, and work refusal from the other, that precarity politics have been constructed after the idea of *Precario bello* by, for example, the EuroMayDay mobilisations initiated in Milan in 2001. Precarity indicates at the same time unstable and insecure forms of living as well as the opportunity for new forms of political struggle and solidarity that go beyond trade union systems or political parties (Virno, 2001; Neilson & Rossiter, 2005; Lorey, 2009; Hardt & Negri 2009; Berardi, 2009; Butler 2004, 2010).

3 THE CRISIS OF SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

Philosopher and gender theorist Silvia Federici, who was one of the cofounders of Wages for Housework² and one of the core members of the New York Committee of Wages for Housework from 1972 to 1977, exposes how one of the major failures of the post-Operaist political activism

and Autonomists' movement discussed above is in not recognizing in their theoretical analyses the importance of the unwaged labour undertaken to ensure social reproduction, or delineate a difference between commodity production and the reproduction of the work-force (Federicci, 2012a; Vischmidt, 2015). Indeed, and with few exceptions, precarity has played an important role for political struggle, yet it has tended to revolt around waged industrial work, eluding the crisis of social reproduction. In other words, precarity, and its struggles, have been centred mainly in the precarisation at work (precarious conditions within waged labour) and have not incorporated in its logics the precarisation of social reproduction. By social reproduction this paper directly refers to the definition given by Feminist sociologists Barbara Laslett and Johanna Brenner in which they define it as, "the activities and attitudes, behaviours and emotions, responsibilities and relationships, directly involved in the maintenance of life on a daily basis." (Laslett & Brenner, 1989, p. 382)

The revolt of Women Against Housework or the previous Welfare Rights Movement³ from the 1960s and 1970s has been rarely incorporated or recognized in leftists' analyses of class struggle and capitalist crisis. With an exploration on how capitalist societies change time and again inventing continuously new forms of subjugation and subordination, critical theorist and feminist Nancy Fraser argues how,

the social-reproduction strand forms an important dimension of this general crisis but is often neglected in current discussions, (...) the 'crisis of care' is best interpreted as a more or less acute expression of the social reproductive contradictions of financialized capitalism. (Fraser, 2016, p. 99).

For Fraser, capitalist society is deeply rooted on what she refers as a social reproductive contradiction of financialized capitalism. Such contradiction is based, on the one hand, on the deep dependency that capitalist economic subsystem has on social reproductive activities that are external to capitalist system itself and yet ensure its well-functioning. On the other hand, however, capitalism's orientation to unlimited accumulation tends to damage the very same activities in which it relies: social reproduction.

Resonating to Sennett's analyses introduced above around new social traumas as the results of a New Economy, Fraser clearly unfolds how corporate and state disinvestment from social welfare sacrifices social protection for the sake of capitalism's endless accumulation. The result is a new organizational form in which social reproduction becomes a privatized commodity for those who can pay for it (Fraser, 2016). Moreover, one must include here how the boundless expansion of the global market is a result of an aggressive process of enclosure (Harvey, 2003). Through a fearful process of land and common resources privatization, our livelihoods have become totally dependent on the disciplinary mechanisms of the market (DeAngelis, 2007, p. 231), which has not only appropriated our lives and bodies but has furthermore destructed forests, oceans, animal species and the existence of entire eco-systems. In other words, there is a conflict between capital and life (Pérez Orozco, 2014), as everything that is connected with the maintenance of life is being commodified by a self-destructive logic of capital that favours the market before the sustainability of life.

It is within this context that Mies and Veronika Benholdt-Thomsen bring forward how the consequence of the expansion of industrial production has been a decline of our subsistence and how the war against subsistence is the real war of capital. As observed above, the

colonisation of subsistence work does not just refer to the re-appropriation of natural resources but also of culture, education, images or practices as well as emotional support, care or love. Thereafter, they advocate for, what they have coined as, 'subsistence perspective' (1999). Such a perspective reorients exchange-value to use-value, empowering ourselves through the cooperation with nature and among each other. In that sense, a 'subsistence perspective' seeks to give the possibility to end up with the maximisation of outcome at the expenses of precarity and social shocks (Klein, 2007), proposing to recreate the commons by re-opening a collective struggle over social reproduction. Such new forms of cooperation need to exist outside the logic of capital and the market, reclaiming material and non-material areas of reality and life in which production is not superimposed on reproduction (Mies & Benholdt-Thomsen, 1999, p. 153).

By incorporating an Autonomist Marxist Feminist perspective to address issues of precarity, it seems possible to move the focus from a solely recuperation of the means of production as a unique condition for human emancipation and open the sphere of social reproduction to struggle and reclaim control over our life. The importance that the commons have acquired in contemporary political economy discourses⁴ bring also forward how such a mode of operation could propose a self-sustaining paradigm in which neoliberal law, economy or politics could be directly and hegemonically challenged. The commons, or what historian Peter Linebaugh has popularized as 'practices of Commoning' (2008), are thought as an antithesis to forms of exploitation and enclosure as it opens the base from which to start practicing social forms others to those defined by capital and the social relations built around it (De Angelis, 2007).

4 SUBSISTENCE RECIPES

The struggle to reclaim control over our life through cooperative practices of Commoning could be illustrated, for example, by the work undertaken by Spanish collective of architects Recetas Urbanas. Producing interventions that rehabilitate abandoned or abused spaces, Recetas Urbanas seek legal loopholes and deal with the bureaucracy to provide support to the community. By experimenting with ephemeral constructions built with minimal resources, Recetas Urbanas' self-constructions provide basic infrastructures for social and collective needs. For Santiago Cirugeda, its founder, self-construction and urban building in the community are linked with the creation of *civil* consciousness (Gielen & Dietachmair, 2017).⁵ Defining himself as a social architect, Cirugeda rethinks architectonic practice, traditionally related to the aesthetics of power, as a source and platform for social and political agitation. During their 11 years of practice and experiences, Recetas Urbanas has developed protocols, or Urban Recipes, to be used by groups of citizens to improve and recuperate their urban spaces. Their recipes not just question the function and aesthetics of architecture, but reconsider law, politics and economics as a social construct. As such, rather than proposing to work on the margins, Recetas Urbanas' recipes engage in the recuperation of our own livelihood and its social mechanisms and organizations, challenging the specific culture of financial capitalists and financial institutions. It does so, not just giving answers to technical or legal questions, but also emphasizing social procedures of participation, assembly instructions or safety conditions for all. For Cirugeda, daily live circumstances, humour, affection, care or discussion, are equally important and inherent parts of architecture (Álvarez Benitez, 2009, p. 25). The re-appropriation of public space and the re-collectivization of architecture bring forward the conviction that the socio-political character of architecture should be understood as common.

As observed, the colonisation of culture, urban space, natural resources or social and political practices have been a necessary condition for a specific culture determined by the norms of capital to become hegemonic. *Recetas Urbanas* hence proposes through their subversive and revolutionary recipes to take advantage of the regulations already existent, as those that allow the provisional installation of elements in public space, to initiate a regression of such colonisation. By doing so, it can be brought forward social forms and procedures others to those defined by the market. Working from 'alegality', a term coined by Cirugeda, their occupations and actions reveal how law is not currently capable of encompassing the versatility and wealth of the reality of life forms. This process of 'induced legality', as Cirugeda describes it, aims to modify the existent law to protect and demand other possibilities for a collective and common life centred in equity and the sustainability of everyone and everything.

The commons, understood primarily as commonly produced resources that contribute to the sustainability of livelihoods, have thus an important significance in the practice of *Recetas Urbanas*. The use of recycled material, which in many cases have been already used in other struggles elsewhere are a basic source for the sustenance and effectiveness of their practice. It cannot be ignored how the practice of *Recetas Urbanas* is for that very reason sustained by a network of support that materially, but also tactically, affective and emotionally, connect different collectives, activists and citizens. Such an heterogeneous and trans-local community have been involved in the construction of legal, semi-legal or illegal constructions, ultimately appropriating the space, inventing new formulas and tools to subvert established norms, and becoming conscious about the durability and liveliness of what has been created. In that sense, the engagement that self-constructed and self-managed spaces demands brings forward the importance of everyone's daily lives, which, even before environmental or technical issues, come at the forefront.

Interestingly, *Recetas Urbanas* focuses on processes more than on finite objectives, highlighting the importance of the social relations around it. Some of the projects of *Recetas Urbanas* remain in a permanent state of construction; as a footprint of a dynamic cycle of tangible and intangible processes. In that sense, stretching the meaning of the commons as more than a shared-material resource, political economist Massimo De Angelis refers to 'processes of commoning' to indicate pro-active collective acts around the commons: how those are created, produced or maintained through horizontal processes. As observed, and by promoting self-managed architecture, *Recetas Urbanas* potentiates the creation of a network of relationships in which each take care of one another with an understanding that what is being created belong to all of us equally. This *modus operandi* highlights the importance of reproductive labour in the production and recuperation of our own lives, bringing forward a sophisticated notion of emancipation based on interdependence (Pérez Orozco, 2014). One could argue, that *Recetas Urbanas*' proposals are exercises that relies on a very material conception of the commons based on spatial recuperation and occupation but grounded, as De Angelis (2010) would argue, "in a desire for the conditions necessary to promote social justice, sustainability, and happy lives for all" (p.1).

5 NETWORKS OF SUBSISTENCE

From his own experience, Cirugeda points out how the causes of failure or attacks on some emancipatory projects are mainly grounded in material, economic and usage limitations (Cirugeda, 2009, p. 55). The bases to act 'alegal', which refer to strategies that are neither regulated nor prohibited, is its power to press existent political, economical or legal conditions through the

agility of self-organization mainly dependent on the immediate resources available. In order for these direct actions to have continuity, or as Cirugeda would name it 'direct action continuity', it is necessary, as indicated before, to have a network of support in which not just material and resources are shared but also experiences, legal loopholes and organizational methods.

For Recetas Urbanas, this powerful net was first consolidated with the project *Trucks, Containers, Collectives*. It was in February 2007 when the Municipal Society of Urban Rehabilitation of the Town Hall of Saragossa handed over 45 containers, or pre-fabricated modules, to Recetas Urbanas. These modules served as temporary shelters for a Gipsy population that were re-located in government-subsidized housing. Being now emptied, Recetas Urbanas started taking the necessary steps to distribute the containers among different collectives, associations or cooperatives. The containers were free of charge for the different initiatives, but it was their own responsibility to find a plot of land where the container could be installed, habited and used. In April 2007, almost all the containers were placed on a truck travelling to different regions in Spain. Some of the containers were immediately installed, some others, needed to negotiate with different parties and associations, finding verbal agreements of occupation, processing occupation licenses for cultural activities, or just proceeding without any agreement of occupation. One example can be the one from Alg-a Lab, in Vigo (Spain), which, after receiving the container and seeking to create a research lab for socio-artistic creation and diffusion inside it, placed an ad in the buy-sell section of various local newspapers saying: "Artistic collective is looking for land" (2007). Surprisingly, after a couple of days, one resident of the outskirts of Vigo offered the collective a land of 2500 m² with a transfer contract renewable for ten years. As Cirugeda (2009) argues, "recycling pre-fabricated modules would become an excuse for us to tackle different constructions processes for self-managed projects. [...] It would become a part of a collective enrichment, strengthening our ability to act" (p.49). The 'spiders' constructed in Seville (Spain) are also a clear case on how the containers were used to test and bring together different 'urban prescriptions'. In this case, by incorporating prostheses and elevating the container, the occupation of floor space becomes minimum. After a successful first experiment, constructing the spider on other locations took just a day, which becomes a very quick way to occupy space legally or illegally when necessary.

The constant feedback and dialogue between the different collectives or associations that participated in 2007 in the initiative *Camiones, Contenedores, Colectivos* was moreover the starting point of the further network *Arquitecturas Colectivas*. Organized by Recetas Urbanas in the context of the Festival Eutopía'07, and 7 months after having distributed the 45 containers, the 1st encounter of *Arquitecturas Colectivas* took place in Córdoba (Spain) with the Participation of, for example, Straddle3, La Fundició and 10 other Spanish collectives. During the 6 days and 5 nights that this first encounter lasted, the different collectives were able to share how they dealt with the installation of the container, the context around it, the financialization of the project, the management of the space or the social synergies originated by it. Moreover, during those 6 days, more initiatives flourished, more resources were shared, more strategies or prescriptions were discovered, more communal tools were emphasized and more affective relations among the different integrant of the collective were potentiated. Since then, annual meetings are organized, being now more than 50 different collectives. As Cirugeda (2009) observes, the network has expanded and they "no longer work in a single network, but rather through several networks that are connected to each other by common projects and information" (p. 51). Micro-struggles are fought or solved thanks to a bigger national network(s) of experience and resources that help its members to act and disobey faster, more operatively and commonly. With

the experience and the myriad projects that have been successfully completed, Arquitecturas Colectivas, as Cirugeda (2009) points out, "have employed very creative tools and protocols, and [they] have done so by negotiating with different agencies and sharing the common resources [they] have been able to obtain" (p. 55).

The strategies that the network Arquitecturas Colectivas has been able to collect since its inception present cooperative solutions that talk about re-using material, recycling, self-building and citizen empowerment from below. Self-building, for example, hasn't been legalized in Spain. Using such a myriad, a network of interdependent circuits is highly necessary to explore self-building and other techniques on the edge of the law to keep producing the recuperation of our own lives and spaces. Interestingly, Cirugeda (2009) discusses how, in order to become stronger, such relations "should expand [their] impact range with agencies working in politics or with institutions and make [their] information relationships with other networks more efficient" (p. 53). The interconnectedness between micro and macro levels illustrates how for a 'subsistence perspective' to have real impact, it must be integrated within a larger ecosystem or strategic network(s) able to enforce social cooperation as a strategic mode of resistance. Having exposed the needs, the reasons and the consequences that made the network Arquitecturas Colectivas appear in the first place, it seems plausible to propose how a 'subsistence perspective' would need to be integrated within a larger and decentralized assemblage of different networks. This paper hence proposes to name such an organic and multilayered composition 'network of subsistence'.

The construction of further research around the processes that sustain a 'network of subsistence' could serve to bring positive attention to the importance of consolidating new methods of creative social organization supported by a healthy and diverse network that does not concentrate on waged labor as the only source for human emancipation, but rather, propose to collectivize reproduction to challenge the current status quo. The creation of tools around the idea of a 'network of subsistence' could challenge precarious labor theory and their revolutionary forms, as it centers the idea of the commons on issues of social reproduction to precisely reconsider the entire world of production. *Recetas Urbanas*, and the consolidation of the network Arquitecturas Colectivas, is a powerful example of a collective struggle that, as Federicci (2012a) would argue, reclaim "control over the material conditions of our reproduction and create new forms of cooperation around this work outside of the logic of capital and the market" (p. 111). The profound analyses of the processes that sustain Arquitecturas Colectivas could serve as an experimental analyses for other projects that start with a civil initiative for which a government has not or not yet designed regulation or subsidies and that is not or not yet of commercial interests to a free market (Dietachmair & Gielen, 2017; Garcia Diaz & Gielen, 2017).

6 DISCUSSION

The reductions on public services, or the austerity measures applied throughout Europe, are just a pre-condition of a system in which life becomes a commodity for those who can pay for it (Fraser, 2016). Precarity, or our current precarious condition, is not a result of a personal failure but rather correlates with forms of power based on exploitation and dependency in an endless process of enclosures and privatization of goods and services. These enclosures are colonizing every mean of material or immaterial production and it is conquering entire areas of our lives. What this scheme consolidates is a total dependency to wage labour and the elimination of any form of non-market oriented form of subsistence.

For that very reason, this paper has built a theoretical body of work and analyses that suggests to place the sustainability of life, or the right to live a better life, in the centre of the discourse around precarity rather than keep concentrating on a scheme in which the market occupies a primary role. In order to do so, Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen's 'subsistence perspective' has been introduced as a way to envision a creative terrain from where to reconsider processes of re-appropriation, re-collectivization and collective empowerment. Moreover, by bringing an Autonomist Marxist feminist perspective when analysing precarity and life conditions, it has been demonstrated the urgency to start experimenting with new creative organizational forms that re-opens a collective struggle over reproduction (Federicci, 2012b). It follows, how this struggle should create a ground outside the logics of capital and the market by inhabiting the commons (Mies & Bennholdt-Thomson, 1999). By doing so, it could be possible to reclaim control over our own sustenance, experimenting with formations based on processes of 'commoning' (Federicci, 2012a; De Angelis, 2007). Differing from a conception of precarity or the commons that forgets the importance of the existence of activities outside the value-producing work, it has been discussed how the elaboration of a feminist approach to the commons could open a way to reframe and reform struggles on precarity. Therefore, a 'subsistence perspective' has helped this text to reorient the idea of exchange-value to use-value, suggesting moreover the necessity to carefully unfold a notion of emancipation based on interdependence (Pérez Orozco, 2014).

A case study approach has been used to moreover gain insides on the practice of the collective *Recetas Urbanas*. Understanding architecture as a discipline that must ensure the improvement of social conditions, *Recetas Urbanas* envisions a model of a self-managed city where citizens can decide on their immediate environment. *Recetas Urbanas'* projects seem to open the possibility to experiment with a model in which social reproduction is taken into account, as it widens the base from which to start practicing social forms based on cooperation, self-organization and collective empowerment.

7 CONCLUSIONS

The evidence of the cooperative processes described has suggested how the impact and effectiveness of *Recetas Urbanas'* initiatives wouldn't be as effective without a network of material and affective support around them. By focusing on the long-term experiment *Camiones*, *Contenedores*, *Colectivos*, this paper was designed to determine the contextual conditions behind the construction of the network *Arquitecturas Colectivas*. This has served to highlight the interconnectedness between micro and macro levels, a crucial relation in the evolution of the formal strategic network. By not concentrating on the specificities of the relations between the members of the network, such an approach has illustrated how the current network *Arquitecturas Colectivas* is mainly a result of previous strategic and cooperative relations beyond a concrete locality. Thereafter, one of the more significant findings to emerge from this text is the necessity to complement a 'subsistence perspective' (Mies & Bennhold-Thomson, 1999) with what has been coined in this paper as a 'network of subsistence'. In other words, it has been highlighted how current methods of creative-social organization responding to precarity are using the network form, integrating many different actors, events and multiple processes. These networks extend constantly in space and time, making difficult to sketch out an exact map of actors and concrete operations. The network *Arquitecturas Colectivas* is nowadays composed by more than 50 Spanish and 11 Latin American collectives each of which work on micro struggles

but are sustained by a decentralized network that work collectively on a macro level. Instead of grounding a network form sustained by one single moment, collective or actor, what a 'network of subsistence' brings forward to previous studies is the suggestion to focus on why actors select ideas, share protocols, processes of land occupation, legal or technical aspects, as well as how they find the bridges for the exchange of material resources by social constructions.

One of the main obstacles of such a strategic network, once more, is precisely the precarious conditions and few resources from where they operate, which create frictions between the huge range of collectives and their different modes of operation, organization and constitution. Further work needs to be done in order to keep rethinking organizational structures that, as Cirugeda argues, neither follow the form of a business firm or a political party. A natural progression of this work will be henceforth to craft a method based on 'networks of subsistence' that provides strategic and functional tools for networks such as Arquitecturas Coletivas to keep reversing processes of enclosures. This method will have to highlight the dimension of *what* is shared but also, as De Angelis argues, *how* it is shared and *why*.

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NOTAS

1. Authors such as Antonio Negri, Mario Tronti, Paolo Virno, George Caffentzis, Silvia Federicci or Franco "Bifo" Berardi can be traced under this concrete post-Marxist tendency.
2. Influenced by her experience and involvement in Operaist and Autonomist politics, Mariarosa Dalla Costa organized a meeting in June 1971 in Padua (Italy) in which, in front of some of her female companions and British activist Selma Jones, shared her concerns around the necessity to struggle against unpaid housework. This group of women organized and campaigned for the importance of reproductive labour in capitalist economy, demanding a salary for all the unpaid housework. The Movimento di Lotta Femminile (Women's Struggle Movement), and later named Lotta Femminista (Feminist Struggle), soon extended to other parts of Italy and even to other parts of Europe and North America. By mid. 1970s, Lotta Femminista transformed into Movimento dei Gruppi e Comitati per il Salario al Lavoro Domestico (Movement of Groups and Committees for Wages for Housework), which became the first seed for *Wages for Housework*, one of the first transnational movements (Cuninghame, 2008).
3. Born in the United States and composed by single mothers, the Welfare Rights Movement were among the first to clearly position their struggle in the sphere of social reproduction during the working class struggle (Vischmidt, 2011; Katsarova, 2015). Active from 1966 to 1975, these single mothers, who in their majority were raising multiple young children alone, united to demand guidance to actively claim better treatment in welfare bureaucracy. By putting an emphasis on the sphere of reproduction, this movement was one of the first to expose the blind spots of orthodox Marxism in which very much all the working-class struggle was based on. In other words, they struggled for the recognition of the existence of a reproductive form of labour that coexists next to the productive form, being the latter's access depending on aspects of gender, race and identity.
4. Many are the researchers that from many different disciplines are advocating for the recovery of the commons, or more precisely, experiment with processes of commoning, to shape a more sustainable, equitable and ecological future. From an endless list, some of the most influential theorists for this text have been feminist philosopher Silvia Federicci, political economist Massimo de Angelis, political philosopher Michael Hardt, sociologist and political philosopher Antonio Negri, feminist critical theorist Nancy Fraser, sociologist Pascal Gielen or feminist economist Amaia Pérez Orozco among many others.
5. It is important to highlight how the word *civil* is used here following sociologist Pascal Gielen's differentiation between Civil and Civic. In the introduction of the book *The Art of Civil Action, Political Space and Cultural Dissent* (2017), Gielen refers to Civic as "the tasks that are essentially determined by state authorities. (...) [A] set of objectives that are defined by governments of states and carried out by their authorities and public institutions" (Gielen, 2017, p. 15). On the other hand, Gielen argues how Civil space, initiatives or in this case, consciousness, is a dynamic terrain of dissent and unregulated action. In his own words, "whereas the public space is a space for the free exchange of thoughts, opinions, ideas, and people, the civil domain provides the framework for organizing these thoughts, opinions, ideas and people." (Gielen 2017, p. 17).