THE DIALECTICS OF RESILIENCE: EXAMINING THE TRAJECTORIES OF RECOVERY THROUGH THE SPATIAL EXPERIENCES OF THE 2010 CHILEAN EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMI

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Abstract

This research introduces three ethnographies from the Bio Bio region of Chile: the coastal town of Dichato, the central port area of Talcahuano and the residential neighborhood Barrio Cruz of Concepcion and explore the uneven trajectories of recovery deployed in the aftermath of the Chilean's 2010 earthquake and tsunami.

The analytical framework of the research translates the ordinary spatial experiences from the recovery stories into groups of recovery narratives to illuminates the processes of social production within the post-disastrous urban fabric.

The coexistence of affirmative and alternative narratives of recovery leads to the important conclusion about the dialectical nature of resilience and demonstrates the existence of multiple resiliences that correspond to different actors, strategies and tactics. This argument enables to conceptualize patterns that accelerate or constrain the processes of spatial transformation and suggests two important considerations regarding the drivers behind the uneven trajectories of post-disaster recovery.

First of these considerations illuminates the dynamic interaction between recovery and resilience, where the changing power dynamics of different actors determines the set of scenarios that outline the potential directions of post-disaster recovery efforts.

Second consideration embeds the idea of dialectical resilience into a broader debate on the interrelatedness of the concepts of emergency, disaster and catastrophe, and suggests that each recovery case is a continuous and open-ended dialectical process, which is inseparable from the everyday human actions.

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Table of Contents

iii

Introduction

27 February 2015 was a usual Saturday in Concepción – the last days of Southern Hemisphere's summer, when people were returning from vacations back to the city. That night I was at the farewell house party of one of my new friends and the courtyard was full of people who were having a good time, imbibing some drinks and talking. Shortly after the midnight, I felt that the earth was trembling lightly, though the magnitude seemed to be increasing. And while the music was playing relatively loud I also heard the unusually strong and disturbing noise that sounded like a subterranean grinding wheel shredding the underground rocks as if they were coffee beans. The conversations stopped and everyone was looking at each other with an array of unsettled and tense emotions on their faces, as if the reality was really causing them a lot of trouble at that particular moment.

Obviously, it was not the fairly moderate temblor registered 5.1 on the Richter scale that caused such distress among my friends. The country's location on the interface of the Nazca and South American plates, the so-called "Ring of Fire", makes Chile one of the most earthquake-prone places in the world. Even the Chilean Spanish language creates curious linguistic cases such as the verb "terremotear", which in English would literally mean something like "to earthquake" or "to be earthquaked", in order to adjust to this mentality of disaster and the approximately 3500 tremors per year. Undoubtedly, the troublesome reaction

1

to the underground shake that barely lasted a minute that Saturday night was due to the striking memories of what everyone calls the 27/F ("veinte siete efe").

What have come to be known under the "27/F" acronym, still painfully familiar to all the Chileans, were actually two consequent disastrous events: a quake and a tsunami that followed. The first calamity, a country's second (and the world's fifth) strongest earthquake with a magnitude of 8.8 happened before dawn of the 27th February 2010, exactly 5 years and one day before. In just three minutes time it affected two million people and six regions within the country and triggered a massive tsunami that reached the shores of Japan and other countries along the Pacific coastlines. Gran Concepción, the second largest metropolitan area of the country located in the Bío Bío region, became one of the urban epicenters of disaster, where the electricity cuts, shortages of information coverage, collapse of the basic public services and supply systems triggered a state of emergency and a curfew. Yet, in spite of the magnitude strength and the chaos around, the immediate consequences of the catastrophe were very uneven. While some people suffered the loss of a few crystal glasses in their kitchen or even didn't wake up at all, others spent the night on top of the rescue hill in their pajamas watching their houses, or, rather, the remnants, floating away into the open sea.

Five years later, a bunch of high-rise buildings in a short proximity to the historical center of Concepción, the capital of the region, are still left abandoned and unsuitable for a living. On the other hand, some coastline towns and villages, completely destroyed by tsunami, can proudly demonstrate their newly built promenades, houses and tourist amenities. While the region quickly became a testing polygon for the deployment of the new public policies and programs that aim for building the capacity to "improve resilience by developing a

comprehensive and integrated urban planning and management approach, and tools for measuring and profiling city resilience to all types of hazards"[1], the fifth anniversary of the event suggests that the recovery process proves to be as ambiguous and uneven as the event that generated it.

Discourse of resilience has been significantly expanded towards a broad and multi-faceted range of disasters across social, economical, cultural and political domains in the recent decade. Largely influenced by the terrorist attacks of the 9/11 and the aftermaths of the Katrina Hurricane in August 2005, this term spread beyond specificity of a working concept among environmentalists into a steadily growing methodological framework and introduced a more versatile set of scenarios between change, recovery and the adaptation. Subsequently, it became a powerful tool of both governmental and non-governmental actors that attempted to meet the challenges of the rapidly changing world (Cumming 2011). On the other hand, the broad notion resilience is being criticized for its strong political connotation and lack of accountability (Vale and Campanella 2005) that doesn't seem to focus on and provide the answers to the question above – why is the recovery dynamic so unequal in seemingly similar urban settings and what are the factors and variables that enable, facilitate or inhibit the process of the neighborhood's recuperation?

As a consequence, this thesis suggests to shift the focus from the hegemonic framework of resilience and advocate for a site-specific approach in order to examine the interplay of the actors that stand behind a recovery process, a set of specific tools and motivations that are used to enable the actions, and, lastly, an obvious power imbalance between the actors

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[1] http://unhabitat.org/initiatives-programmes/city-resilience-profiling-programme/

involved.

Another important foundation of my research is the principle that space is not a void waiting to be filled, but an explicit political project (Harvey 2007, Soja 1996) that is produced through the social interactions and acquires a particular contemporary relevance. This way of thinking not only pays particular attention to spatial dimension of resilience or recovery (Cumming 2011), but also suggests the redefinition of the space as a form of cultural process in the wake of the spatial turn in anthropology (Hirsch and O'Hanlon 1995) and introduces space as an active player in expansion and reproduction of capitalism (Merryfield 2004:173).

Given the fact that the 27/F earthquake was followed by a major political transition — in less than two-week's time from the event a rightwing conservative leader Sebastián Piñera was taking over the presidency and ending a 20 years of the center-left administration — the search for a distinctive mode of spatial awareness obtains great significance and become much more than "merely the obscure background of social activity" (Certeau 1984:xi).

In the course of this work I will argue that this perspective helps to understand why social processes play out unevenly in different locations through uncovering the multitude of local contexts and civic practices, as well as through understanding the disaster as a social construct that not only legitimizes the existing tools of governance, but also creates an opportunity for the policy-makers to introduce the selective trajectories into the sphere of post-disaster rehabilitation.

Hence, in order to discuss the reasons behind the structural crises and peculiar patterns of the 27/F recovery glide path in Chile, I will first of all provide the theoretical grounding of

4

my arguments and show how the framework of the active social production of space generates a common ground and serves as a visual interface for the study of resilience and post-disaster activities along the different axes of power. I will then employ a technique of narrative imagination to translate the ordinary spatial experiences gathered within the Gran Concepción metropolitan area of my fieldwork, where I spent a couple of months in February-March 2015, and translate them to powerful analytical constructs – affirmative and alternative narratives of recovery. Finally, I will argue that the narrativization of the spatial experiences allows for an analytical deconstruction of the recovery trajectories through the prism of active spatial production that uncovers the dialectical nature of resilience.

CHAPTER ONE: Theoretical Framings

Resilience, disaster, and recovery - an interrelated perspective

The term "resilience" was kept within the field of environmental studies for a long time starting from the early 1970s. In this context it was mainly theorized as a "capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and reorganize while undergoing change so as to still retain essentially the same function, structure, identity, and feedbacks" (Holling et al 2004), or the degree to which a "system can build and increase its capacity for learning and adaptation" (Carpenter et al. 2001). With the focus on natural hazards and climate change issues, resilience theory has largely focused on the key metrics and variables that were capable to decrease the vulnerability and increase the ability of complex mechanisms to get back to normalcy (Cumming 2011).

Yet, in the beginning of the 2000s the narrative of resilience significantly expanded its width towards a broad and multi-faceted range of disasters across social, economical, cultural and political domains. The terrorist attacks of the twin-towers on 11th September 2001 and the aftermaths of the Katrina Hurricane in August 2005 largely influenced this shift.

This new mode of inquiry steadily spread beyond a working concept among environmentalists into a growing methodological framework for interdisciplinary organization and a platform for global engagement. Subsequently, it became a powerful tool of both governmental and non-governmental actors that attempted to meet the challenges of the rapidly changing world. The term appeared in the 2005 UN international strategy for disaster reduction "Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of

6

Nations and Communities to Disasters". The concept of resilience, and urban resilience in particular, became a crosscutting issue in the context of urban development. The shifting emphasis towards the particular importance of resilient urban landscapes was highlighted in 2005 by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment as an area where significant knowledge gaps exist (McGranahan et al. 2005). Few years later in 2007 a multidisciplinary consortium of governmental, academic and industrial players founded a "Resilience Alliance Initiative for Transitioning Urban Systems towards Sustainable Futures" and suggested that many of the urban patterns that we see today – such as buildings, roads and land ownership – are legacies of past urban policy and decision-making gaps (Resilience Alliance 2007). Lastly, the year 2012 gave birth to the UN-Habitat "City Resilience Profiling Programme". All these initiatives aim to help local governments and communities build the capacities to manage and improve resilience by creating a wide-range of policy-related activities, developing the culture of safety and imposing the social safety-net mechanisms of recovery.

Yet, the dominant scientific discourse of resilience is still largely built on the grounds of systems theory. It aims to introduce a versatile, but definite set of scenarios between the change, recovery and the adaptation that make some cities vulnerable to shocks and others resistant. The "resilient" structure, therefore, on very basic levels implies a capacity to bounce back towards the pre-existing equilibrium and the balance of powers. And while this kind of analytical framework is "certainly a valuable contribution to the task of explaining post-disaster urban recovery, <…> it masks as much as it reveals. It is not enough to pose general models" (Vale and Campanella 2005:337), so conclude Lawrence Vale and Thomas Campanella in their anthology "The Resilient City".

7

In order to attune the teleological flow of the resilience's adaptive circle paradigm and propose an anthropological contribution to this framework, the authors first of all explicitly indicate that the very term resilience is always contested and its rhetoric is "never free from politics, self-interest, or contention" (Vale and Campanella 2005:341). Secondly, exploring a set of ethnographies related to the post-disaster restoration processes around the world, they propose a "prototheory of urban resilience" (2005:22). These axioms of resilience suggest conceptualizing it as an open-ended concept instead of an universalistic framework, looking beyond the structures into the set of common patterns, dynamics, networks of actors in order to explain "who recovers which aspects of the city and by what mechanisms" (2005:337). The theoretical model of Vale and Campanella consists of several building blocks, where the notions of resilience and post-disaster recovery are often used interchangeably. The resilience is primarily perceived as "a rhetorical device intended to enhance or restore the legitimacy of whatever government was in power at the time the disaster occurred" (2005:339). Recovery, in its turn, entails "real-time physical reconstruction of the build environment, but also the construction of a suitable interpretive framework that enables psychological, motional, and symbolic recoveries" (2005:19).

In a similar manner, for the purposes of my qualitative study I employ the abovementioned concepts and an open-ended axiomatic way of theorizing resilience to interrelate the terms "resilience", "recovery" and "disaster" in a conceptual perspective that allows me to grasp the ambiguity of post-disaster processes and provide contextual and grounded explanations, rather than rigid systemic frameworks.

This research is also grounded in the understanding of "disaster" as intrinsically social phenomenon, which has been developed in the field of social sciences. In the classical definition offered by Charles Fritz, a pioneer in the disaster studies, disaster is "an event, concentrated in time and space, in which a society, or a relatively self-sufficient subdivision of a society, undergoes severe danger and incurs such losses to its members and physical appurtenances that the social structure is disrupted and the fulfillment of all or some of the essential functions of the society is prevented" (Fritz 1961:655) and clearly implies a societal focus. The social nature of disaster allows me to endow it with an agency and embed this term into a set of relations.

The first theoretical pillar of my research suggests the following relationship between the three concepts to inform the design of the further research. First of all, disaster creates the opportunity for the nation-state to employ a range of techniques such as the state of emergency or major legislative revisions. Yet, it is fair to mention, "while urban disaster can bring about an opportunity for changes in the built environment, they do not appear to induce innovation per se" (Vale and Campanella 2005:213). Secondly, the gist of this disruptive moment can only be grasped by seeing this calamity through the framework or resilience, its rhetorical apparatus that makes it possible to justify the direction of the money and power flows. Lastly, being a function of political power, resilience defines and enables the process and the specificity of the post-disaster recovery scenarios of the area.

The neoliberal trajectories of recovery

The set of post-disaster recovery stories that Vale and Campanella examine in their book brings them to an unsettling verdict: "however equitable or unjust, efficient or untenable, that framework serves as the foundation upon which the society builds anew" (2005:353). It seems like in the modern world the impact of disaster is rendered mostly in economic terms.

In the course of their analysis Vale and Campanella hypothesize that the first indicative example of this now-globalized shift was the 9/11 terrorist act in New York and highlight that "in a world city of high rents and global interconnectedness, destruction is measured in dollars (and euros) rather than acres" (2005:11). Few years later, Kevin Fox Gotham and Miriam Greenberg in their comparative study "From 9/11 to 8/29: Post-Disaster Recovery and Rebuilding in New York and New Orleans" (2008), reinforce this argument and make an explicit link between the neoliberal restructuring and post-disaster rehabilitation. According to them, there has been little engagement between these literatures to date, with most of the works focusing on the consequences for and disruptions within the social structures and array of social changes the disaster puts forward (2008:1043). Examining the classical mechanisms of the neoliberal ideology, drawn from the works of Milton Friedman and Friedrich Hayek among others (2008:1041), Gotham and Greenberg choose to focus on the most prominent neoliberal strategies that governments employ in the course of their mitigation activities.

Belief that the market-based solutions can be applicable to any kind of social problems constitutes the core of a neoliberal political ideology. The authors demonstrate how this strategy is influencing a wide range of public policies, and highlight the prominent negative

effects such as "the devolution of responsibility from federal to local authorities, the outsourcing of key jobs to private contractors"(2008:1040). This study makes a significant contribution to my theoretical framework by substantiating my arguments regarding the recent shift towards the market-led disaster responses in case of the 27/F earthquake, and also by providing an empirically grounded comparison of how the "neoliberal frameworks have filtered into major policy debates and constrained the formulation and implementation of post-disaster recovery programs" (2008:1041).

While Gotham and Greenberg are mainly interested in the economic downsides of the market-centered approaches, they sketch the thin line between the neoliberal recovery and uneven spatial development"(2008:1043). This can hardly be a mere coincidence, as most of the financial and power flows are inscribed onto the landscape of cities and their residents. "We see this change most spectacularly in the ways that cities have been transformed during this period. For me, one of the most fascinating things has been to track neoliberalization back to New York City in 1975", David Harvey indicates in the "Neoliberalism and the City" (2007:6). Harvey explores the neoliberal trend in the recovery programs from a different angle, and embeds it into the city's fabric. Examining the story of the 1975 New York City bankruptcy, the author outlines the subsequent financial coup that the big businesses launched against the city and its consequent entanglement into a new kind of neoliberal economic future (2007:8). It was probably at that time, long before 9/11, Katrina and 27/F disasters, when, according to Harvey, one of the most important principles of the neoliberal trajectory of recovery was elaborated: "if there is a conflict between the well being of financial institutions and the well being of the population, the government will choose the

11

well being of the financial institutions; to hell with the well being of the population"(2007:8). Consequently, the key strategies to recover the city from its downfall were to attract global capital into the city, adjust the public policies so that the good business climate is created, and make sure that the city's image is all about consumption and tourism (2007:10). Besides it's clear orientation on the urban space and the insights on how to grasp the market-centered spatial transformations of the city, Harvey's work acquires a particular relevancy for my topic due to his short excursion into the history of the Pinochet's military coup in Chile in 1973 that triggered the neoliberalization processes, on which I will elaborate more in the course of the empirical analysis.

Urban space as a political project and an interface of the post-disaster recovery

Previous theoretical framings linked together the notions of resilience, disaster and recovery, embedded them into an urban fabric and demonstrated why over the course of the last century they have absorbed the "ethos of neoliberalization" (Harvey 2007:10). The final pillar of my conceptual framework explains how the active understanding of space helps to examine the drivers behind these transformational processes. While Gotham, Greenberg and Harvey were offering profound accounts of the economic, political and social prerequisites and consequences of the neoliberalization, the renewed interest in the spatial dimensions of both everyday life and global flows attracts my particular attention and also determines my research focus in the empirical sections to follow.

Recently spatial modes of thinking have acquired a lot of relevancy, and in my theoretical framework I suggest space to be conceptualized as an active component of social production,

an interface to an array of processes, including the post-disaster recovery, that are embedded into the urban landscape. But space has not always been implicated in larger social, cultural and political processes. The increased awareness about the changing role of physical settings started to be illuminated only in the 1960s, in the post-war period that encapsulated the devastating effects of the war on both the built environment and human life. The analytical shift and the growing body of literature stressed the need to break with the conventional attitude towards the landscape as a background or textual framing device of social life and focus on the way it is seen within the broader social and cultural existence.

Back in the 1960s, Kevin Lynch in "The image of the city" highlighted the fact that the physical manifestations of the space are capable of transforming the social relationships among the inhabitants and can contribute to particular social formations. He conceptualized this transformative capacity of a cityscape as "legibility" and "imageability", the clear set of patterns and "the quality in a physical object which gives it a high probability of evoking a strong image in any given observer" and produces "vividly identified, powerfully structured, highly useful mental images of the environment" (Lynch 1960:9).

Still, up till the 1980s the concept of space was still out of focus of anthropological science being, according to Eric Hirsch, "largely unproblematized" in comparison with more conventional and classical concepts of ritual, exchange and history (Hirsch and O'Hanlon 1995:1).

At the end of the twentieth century the new spin of a spatial turn was accentuated within the frameworks of social sciences (Low and Lawrence-Zuñiga 2003) and triggered a variety of theoretical interpretations and created an interface between space and culture in order to

fill the epistemological gaps of space making. This point of view describes the ways space is modified through the set of social exchanges, memories and skills and in a very Bourdieusian manner emphasizes symbolic encryption of space into a framework of related anthropological framings, including the inside and outside; image and representation, gender, class and ethnicity. Primarily, sociocultural accounts suggest focusing on different kinds of bodily experiences as models "for understanding the creation of place through spatial orientation, movement, and language" (Low and Lawrence-Zuñiga 2003:2). The human body is therefore theorized as a template for broader sociospatial relations and largely influences both the "performativity of space" (Low and Lawrence-Zuñiga 2003:4) and the way people structure their lived spaces and generate spatial transformations. An alternative mode to conceive the space is proposed by Michel Foucault. He focuses on the relations between the human body and the spatial arrangements and inscriptions of the built environment in order to investigate an array of relationships people form with the places they occupy and the subsequent meanings attached to them (Low and Lawrence-Zuñiga 2003). Finally, Margaret Rodman in her work gets closer to the socioeconomical perspective emphasizing that spaces are "politicized, culturally relative, historically specific, local and multiple constructions" (Low and Lawrence-Zuñiga 2003:15) and introducing the concept of spatial "multilocality" in order to explain the "considerations of places affected by influences of modernity, imperial history, and contemporary contexts" (Low and Lawrence-Zuñiga 2003:15).

In parallel with the anthropological thought, the neo-Marxists introduced space as an active player in expansion and reproduction of capitalism Searching for the reasons behind the multiple structural crises of the society, they parse the question of transformative capacity

14

of space within the shifting discourse of postmodernity and urban development (Benko and Strohmayer 1997). Andy Merryfield (2004) synthesizes the academic manifesto reflected in the works of the left intellectuals such as David Harvey, Henry Lefebvre, Edward Soja and Manuel Castells. They suggest a radical move towards seeing the city as an incubator of revolutionary ideas, attribute to the urban space a critical role in the process of capital accumulation and recognize that cities have always been centers of conflict, change and transformation, where "there is always some kind of class or other social content, and they are more often than not the focus of intense social struggle" (Harvey 1989:239). Framing the spatiality as an explicit political project (Soja 1996:68) acquires a particular contemporary relevance and allows perceiving the space making as a fluid term, where the localized individual discourses and larger political and economic processes are imposing each other within the contentious historical contexts.

Space, therefore, attains a renewed semantic density, in which the different layers of post-disaster spatial transformations are relationally fused and correspond to different power modalities. In other words, "we can observe who is in power – and who is not – by examining closely what gets built" (Vale and Campanella 2005:8). The patterns of the urban environment are largely suggested and imposed by the physical settings and the governmental strategies, whereas the coherence of the image is only achieved through the eyes of its inhabitant and observer. It means that it is only possible to fully conceive the active power of the landscape when we are looking at the city space in the all-round complexity of its material and symbolic meanings. Consequently, the task of a researcher is to grasp the array of spatial transformations in the aftermath of a disaster and untangle them along the recovery

trajectories, actions and axes of power. In order to do that, and as a final pillar of my theoretical framework, I would like to introduce and juxtapose two spatial frameworks that structure my empirical analysis and demonstrate how to employ the spatial experiences as interfaces of recovery.

Henri Lefebvre in his "Production of space" (1991) intensifies and brings to the fore the relationship between the space and the power. He deciphers the elements that constitute capitalistic strategies of accumulation and integrates the relationships based on the commodities fetishism into the urban framework, introducing a spatial triad − spatial practices, representations of space and representational spaces. In this radical account the author attaches a political component into the previously passive and abstract notion of a cityscape and engages it into a system of active production – or, in the case of this thesis − the post-disaster recovery.

Edward Soja in his work "Thirdspace: journeys to Los Angeles and other real-and-imagined places" (1996) provided practically grounded explanations to these three components of spatiality, which I am going to employ in my framework. The first component of the dialectically linked triad is a physical spatiality, defined by Lefebvre as a "spatial practice" or *perceived* space (Soja 1996:74). It is a material human-built environment, sensible and empirical expression of everyday life that can be directly and grasped and captured in its measurements, particular locations and conventional spatial sets, structuring the reality. The next layer is known as "representations of space" or *conceived* space (1996:78). These are the theorized conceptions of space. This dimension emerges in the opposition to the material objectivity of the physical space, and is produced through

16

representational discourses on space and "imagined urban depictions" (1996:80), deposited in the mental maps, written sources and other narratives. The third pillar is "representational spaces" or *lived* space (1996:81). It is a synthesis, but not a sum of the other two. Rather than seeking to acquire greater practical and political relevance and change the urban settings, it embodies complex spatial imaginaries and "overlays physical space making symbolic use of its objects" (1996:68).

Lefebvre's spatial deconstruction sets up a different angle of thinking about strategic assignment of urban fabric and shows how the perceived and, what is even more important, the lived space, the one that basically guides people through their everyday lives, are suppressed and controlled by the conceived space, which is conceptualized by and tied to a dominating power discourse. This situation produces a spatial void, an abstract space, where people might lose the agential powers and cut their spatial experiences to the illusory writings and "abstraction wielding awesome reductionist force vis-à-vis *lived* experience" (Lefebvre 1991:52).

Another researcher of the active social production of space, Michel de Certeau, also engages the complex process of the production of space and explores the way the dominant spatial strategies are imposed onto the city dwellers and how people reappropriate and resist them. In "The Practice of Everyday Life" (1984) Certeau develops the theoretical framework of everyday practices that acquire significance and become much more than "merely the obscure background of social activity" (Certeau 1984:xi). While Lefebvre in his more political account stresses out the connection between the perceived space and the dominant order, which has to be contested, Certeau's approach is less political and more oriented

towards the practical domains. He proposes building relationships between different spatial categories, establish negotiations with the dominant codes – or the "representations of space" that would enables the citizens to use the city productively, and not only passively. According to Certeau, actions and rituals of everyday life are able to modify the higher level spatial order imposed on the people and "constitute something like a second level interwoven into the first" (Certeau 1984:30). In line with Lefebvre's abstract space notion, Certeau highlights that there is always a gap between the literal code that creates the dominant narrative and the quotidian practices that challenge it.

The combination of Lefebvre's spatial triad and de Certeau's everyday practices adds a lot of methodological value for the research of the spatial experiences of the 27/F post-disaster recovery in Chile. First of all, Lefebvre's theory makes explicit links to other theoretical blocks. The disrupted physical layout of the cities creates the best ground for government officials to introduce significant spatial transformations imposing changes on the layer of the "representations of space". In parallel to that, Certeau's conceptual apparatus of daily practices allows for an individual dweller's inclusion into the cityscape and gives him a tactical power to claim and restructure shared territory by acting behind the dominant narratives of resilience in the "representational spaces" realm. As a result, this theoretical blend confirms the legibility of spatial experiences to act as so-called interfaces of post-disaster recovery that are able to grasp the "conflict-riddled nature of resilience" (Vale and Campanella 2005:19) and decompose the post-disaster recovery into a set of different trajectories, resiliences and layers of power. Lastly, this framework helps to stress the ways

18

people are capable to act politically within and against the governmental-led and market-driven spatial restructurings in order to reclaim their lives and agencies after the catastrophe.

CHAPTER TWO: 27/F – five years after

Methodological Strategies and Field Introduction

Greater Concepción province, the site of my fieldwork, is located in the central-south zone of the country and is the heart of Chile's VIII region. It is comprised of 12 municipalities and is home to approximately one million inhabitants, which makes it the second largest metropolitan area of Chile with more than 90% of the urban population rate (Censo 2012).

I arrived to the site in January 2015, a month before the fifth anniversary of the 27/F disaster, which has heavily affected the wellbeing of the region and wiped out 60 kilometers of the coastline. The backbone of my exploratory research consisted of an array of qualitative methods (Bernard 1995) such as the interviews, participant observations and some archival work that I performed in the local libraries and municipalities.

Participant observation allowed me to immerse myself into the environment and to select the particular locations for my research. As I was travelling around the coastal towns and wandering through the streets of the inner cities I got more familiar with the housing patterns, city grids and other physical characteristic of the region, as well as managed to grasp the different recovery trajectories and their selective nature that later on determined the cases of my research. Since I had no plan to focus extensively on the items related to public policy or more quantitative aspects of post-disaster recovery, my archival work was very general – I

mainly researched aspects associated with the old stories and developments of the neighborhoods, general recovery master plan of the region and also made some inquiries to the reports from the most recent census of 2012.

Already in the pre-planning stage I realized what could be the possible challenge related to the interviews. Asking people about a disaster proved to be a very sensitive topic for various reasons: some of the potential respondents were still grieving for the loss of houses and memorabilia; others were still struggling with the aftermaths of the destruction. Bearing this in mind, I decided to act through my connections and asked to be introduced to my informants before I would continue with the questions. All in all, I performed 25 interviews[2] that vary by their profundity and also by the status of an interviewee in the network of actors involved. To start with, I have made 8 in-depth conversational interviews with no predetermined questions asked. All of these interviews were conducted with the residents of the affected areas, the survivors, who lived and keep on living in the neighborhoods and are daily exposed to and engaged into the disaster recovery processes. The other 6 interviews were performed with experts who either represented the NGOs that were involved into the processes of restoration, or had a professional expertise in local urban planning, social work or architecture. These were mainly semi-structured interviews with an array of open-ended question and the guide that provided the needed focus. The rest of the interviews were conducted in an ad-hoc manner, mainly with the local entrepreneurs I would approach in the corner shops, markets or on the coastline.

Besides the abovementioned set of methods, there are two important aspects of my

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[2] All the interviews were performed in Spanish and the translations are done by me.

methodological strategy that are important to consider.

First of all, I was mainly concerned with the lived spatial experiences of people who are the survivors of the disaster, their personal opinions and recovery stories. Yet, I also kept in mind that it has been five years since the disastrous event and these memories might be faint or even forgotten. In order to accommodate this, I offered to my interviewees to perform the in-depth interviews in a walking format. There is a certain tradition in ethnography of researchers to walk alongside participants "in order to observe, experience, and make sense of everyday practices" (Clark and Emmel 2010). I found this technique extremely useful for the study of post-disaster recovery, as many hidden layers appear when you place the events and the stories into the spatial context. Walking also helped my informants to express and articulate the memories and feelings, which one simply cannot recall in more conventional settings. During these walks I was asking my respondents to recall all the memories of the 27/F and what was happening afterwards with their neighborhood and everyday lives. I also asked them to show me the most prominent cityscape patterns of the built environment restoration and make judgments on the changes recovery process brought to their living environment. The method provided a vast amount of empirical data along with the opportunity to build an initial awareness of different kinds of spatial behaviors and uneven trajectories of the reconstruction processes.

Thinking about the possible nature and the drivers behind this selective reconstruction, I decided to translate these spatial experiences into the narratives of recovery. According to Kevin Rozario, who extensively relied on the this technique in his ethnography about Great Chicago Fire, the "stories are always important for orienting us toward the world, but at no

21

time are they more important than in the midst of the crisis and uncertainty" (Rozario 2005:33).

My theoretical framework justifies this choice through the Certeau's model, which indicates that the places are fragmentary and inward-turning histories (Certeau 1984), and helps me to discern the various layers of space and the basic logic of their subordination through the power of narrative. Moreover, it suggests a reciprocal relationship between using urban space in the form of walking, and telling urban stories.

And while the extent, pace and direction of post-disaster recovery are possible to grasp only in very general terms, the narratives of recovery that I have collected in the course of the interviews seem to me the best way to avoid unsubstantiated generalizations and still maintain a spatial focus. Imposed over the people by the dominant power bearers, the trajectories of post-disaster recovery are shaped and accepted by citizens in their daily spatial interactions. Whereas actual physical fabric of the city remains central to all of the stories, the particular ways that my informants assemble the stories, the undertones and the connotations say a lot about the balance – or imbalance – of powers in the society, express support or resistance towards the processes of recovery.

Subsequently, in the upcoming subchapters I will introduce the three ethnographies from the Bio Bio region of Chile: the coastal town of Dichato, the central port area of Talcahuano and the residential neighborhood Barrio Cruz of Concepcion (see fig. 1). These ethnographies will focus on the perceived, physical spaces, demonstrate different types of dealing with disaster and suggest that there are multiple connotations behind the narratives of recovery. In the analytical part I will blend the stories with official accounts such as the recovery plans or rhetoric of the experts, and show how the multitude of narratives "link the physical reconstruction of buildings – as places and as symbols – to the politically charged restoration of devastated social communities" (Vale and Campanella 2005:14).

Figure 1: The map of the Field Research

Recovery Story #1 – Dichato: "The street goes where the living room used to be…"

I had a small house,
I had a small house,
And the sea has carried it away,
And the sea has carried it away…

I had a small bed,
I had a small bed,
And the sea has carried it away,
And the sea has carried it away…

I had my Puruña,
I had my Puruña,
And it escaped to the hill,
So I still have my dog!
Flor, the girl from Villa Rica neighborhood of Dichato

The bus from Concepción to Dichato (see fig.2) stops right at the beginning of the Daniel Vera street next to a bizarre billboard poster of a man sitting on a fish against a chaotic background – beds, sinks and fragments of house décor. Pilar, a nice young lady and a resident of Dichato, a small coastal town on the shores of the Pacific, explains to me that this is a reproduction of a famous mural made by the local

Figure 2: Dichato Map

artist Alejandro Escribano back in the year 2008. The street painter made several graffiti in the village that depict havoc, a disordered pile of scattered objects and creatures as if he knew what this place was going to turn to. "He drew the tsunami!" concludes my informant in excitement as we walk by.

It's hard to imagine a better prophecy when you look at the pictures from the media and personal archives that were taken at dawn of 27 February 2010, when the village was almost completely washed away by a tsunami that followed the night's earthquake. According to the locals, it was the first tsunami of that strength and destruction this spot had ever seen. While most of the temblors of the region and of the Pacific Ocean tend to increase the sea level and cause floods, this time a series of huge waves entered 2 kilometers into the center of Dichato and destroyed almost 80% of built structures of the place (Platt 2012). What was before a popular seaside resort, one of the historical summer destinations and weekend getaways for the residents of Concepción, Chillán and some other big cities of the VIII region, at that time resembled more of a war zone.

Margareta, another Dichato resident, who lost her house the night of the disaster, vividly depicts it in the memories of the morning after:

> In Dichato the sea had flooded in and left, taking with it all the houses, things. And then when the sea returned, everything was already in it. It was like a bomb, if you can imagine it… A boat here, a house there…another house floating in the sea… the trees… The wooded house of a friend was gone entirely, there was only a hole left.

The tremendous scale and the magnitude of the destruction instantly attracted a great share of attention. Shortly after the disaster journalists from all around the world invaded the area images of Dichato were frequently featured on-screen and mentioned in all the media sources and the humanitarian rapidly aid started to flow in. For the first weeks most of the residents who couldn't leave the place were living in the tents up in the surrounding hills, while a significant amount of people stayed here, in one of the largest emergency settlement of Chile, for more than two years till their houses in the center of the village were completed. Yet,

25

despite of the hardships and sufferings that the 27/F caused to the locals, now all my interviewees are pretty unanimous in saying that in the end it was a dedicated and obvious example of an extremely fast recovery from all the sides involved.

Extensive spatial restructuring with a specific attention on resilient design was obviously a primary focus for the recovery effort leaders. Just off the beach, where the old-fashioned pastoral houses once were, is now a wide promenade that is enforced with a new solid retention wall made of concrete. "Modern", "different", and "beautiful" – all these adjectives can apply to the reconstruction process.

Surprisingly, in spite of the fact that for a third of population these were summer houses, Dichato has experienced a significant population increase (Censo 2012): "3600 people lived here before, and now it's around 4800 people who live here currently", Pilar reconfirms it to me in one of our conversations. And while she mentions "the great increase of births given after the disaster in Dichato", there are many other reasons of this growth, mainly related to the major rebuilding and housing policies that benefitted large and extended families that were previously living in more precarious conditions.

The locals still highlight, regret and treasure the nostalgic memories of their old lifestyle, more rural and natural, with a friendly and approachable, picturesque landscape that is most beautifully expressed by Estela, a lady who lives in Dichato for twelve years now:

> This was the street with no pavement, an earth road. But it was…"typical", very beautiful. The beach was visible from…the street was a bit above, you would be walking by the street and you could see the sea, the beautiful beach.

But at the same time they acknowledge and value the opportunities the disaster provided for the local residents in terms of infrastructure, commerce and tourism. It wasn't an easy

transformation – locals were reluctant, for example, to leave their houses over the course of the land expropriation negotiations – but even "they agree that in reality it was for the good", confirms Margarita, whose land was among the taken ones.

The physical changes were just one side of a coin. On the other side, it is a curious and prominent case of positive post-disaster recovery from a business perspective, where the mix of governmental and market-centered efforts not only converted a tragedy into the advantageous happening and accelerated the development of the area, but also gave the opportunity for the people to improve their socio-economic level and prosper. Before the 2010 tsunami and the massive destruction "Dichato was just left to exist", Estela tells me while we are walking along the new promenade. But in the air I can clearly see that the 27/F is gone and now Dichato is moving forward. On my last day in Dichato, Pilar – who is about to obtain her professional degree in tourism and is now busy setting up her small agency, shows me a new banner she has just taken from a print shop and confirms my impressions in just one phrase:

> The recovery process brought a lot of positive things… a lot of opportunities. The place is now well known, and many more people want to invest in here…and it became very pretty in the end.

Recovery Story #2 – Talcahuano: I believe in the beauty after the destruction.

Talcahuano is also a part of the Greater Concepción area and one of the most important industrial zones of Chile (see fig.3). Its central area consists of a biggest industrial port premises in the south of the country, a largest military naval base and a mix of commercial and residential premises in the inner part of the sector. It has very specific characteristics and holds a strategic assignment for the country as the residents say that only one more port along the south Pacific coastline, located in Peru, has a comparable technical ability to receive the oceanic ships and provide similar dockyard facilities. Talcahuano is all about industry; especially forestry and fishing that remained the main sources

Figure 3: Talcahuano

of income and development for the residents for many years. And while the motto of the city proudly claims that "Talcahuano is a primary military, industrial and fishing port of the country", the years of unlucky and inefficient city administration that put down a lot of development opportunities and brought this place at a standstill in a years preceding the 27/F disaster.

Both the earthquake and the tsunami heavily affected a densely urbanized city affecting more than 250 000 residents. The central part of Talcahuano, which includes the port area, several residential sectors along the coastline and the large naval base, was severely damaged by the truck-size cargo containers brought from the harbor. Victor, a former marine officer, recalls that the port containers, ships and cranes were thrown by multiple tsunami waves up to the central square, Plaza de Armas. In the days that followed the disaster local municipality demarcated the uninhabitable so-called "ground zero" zone, a central sector of approximately 30 blocks, where the streets and the buildings suffered significant damages, so that any kind of transit through the area was prohibited.

And indeed, the infamous "ground zero" metaphor is not an accidental one that comes on mind of the city dwellers when I ask them about the 27/F. Señora Ana, who lives up on the hill and owns her small shop at the market (still provisional after the 5 years) recalls that the "downtown area was like throwing a bomb into Hiroshima, like a war… devastated". According to various survivors of the disaster, for a long while people were scared to even go down from the hills, from the emergency settlements and routes, it took several months to restore the electricity and basic services in the port area and clean up the wreckage and rubble from the central streets.

Yet, Edmundo, an architect and a city planner who lives in Talcahuano, positively evaluates the aftermaths of the 27/F, as we are walking along a nice coastline Blanco Encalada five years after:

> When the earthquake happens, and all you are left with are the debris, containers and ruins on the street, you have to look back and revise what else you have. And these were the projects – the public transportation, the others… and, hence, we take them off the shelf. And that's how the disaster becomes the opportunity. It is

more of a revival, a process of recuperation – to implement new things on top, on the base of the existing ones but with a better quality and positioning.

As a professional, Edmundo has been involved into a project called "Ventana al Mar", proposed by the Talcahuano's Port Enterprise organization in 1996. This plan implied a development of the port area with the intentions to reconstruct the coastline, which was relatively old, industrial and was basically inaccessible for the public. Even though the forward-looking idea was to make an integral project between the port and the city, it has never become a reality as the port administration had little interest to open up and create the space for the people along the coastline.

Nowadays, though, everyone can come to the port and enjoy the nice outcomes of a newly realized project, "Recuperación Poza Blanco Encalada". They can walk along the Pacific, sit and enjoy the port view from the far-reaching pier, spend some time with the kids on the playground and, in the evening, have a nice seafood dinner in a "Bentoteca", a restaurant with the panoramic view into the ocean. And all this, as Edmundo assumes for a reason, "was made possible only because of the destructions caused by the earthquake and the tsunami". The 27/F not only attracted the new sources of investments into the city that mainly triggered the development of tourist amenities, but also pushed through the long-standing territorial negotiations between the municipality and the port administrations.

At the same time, at the moment of my fieldwork, five years after the 27/F the central market still stays in ruins (the provisional tent is functioning for more than four years across the road), and the inner city, the central square Plaza de Armas or a historic building of the Danto theater, still looks rundown and alienated. And while the bigger city renovation plan branded "Talcahuano 2020" with multiple redevelopments of the city center and the

residential areas has been publicly announced, the recovery process is still far from being completed: "…we are still in the process of reconstruction, the streets are still being repaired", Señora Ana tell me. Yet, if the coastline can count as the early bird and the engine of the reconstruction, it will be fair to conclude that the new administration tends to be much more efficient in commercializing the 27/F disaster recovery of Talcahuano keeping Edmundo and the other residents more or less satisfied with the direction their city evolves into:

> I think now, after the earthquake and the tsunami Talcahuano has attained a different meaning… it's no longer just a fishing industrial port and finally opened up for the people. Now it is not exclusively a territory where the trucks and the transit zone of the seafood products are located, but also a space for the people who live along the coastline.

Recovery Story #3 – Barrio Cruz, Concepción: "don't call me a "survivor", I remain "poor" forever"

The Barrio Cruz is one of the historic neighborhoods of Concepción, the capital of the region. It bears its name from the square Plaza Cruz, the second oldest square in the city, and emerged in the late 18th century as a railway employees' working-class district on the periphery. Nowadays it is a residential sector of some 10-15 residential blocks embedded into the grid street plan, just a 10 minute walk from the center of the city. The neighborhood's borders are not clearly defined and it can be vaguely assumed that Barrio Cruz is diffused along the streets surrounding its antique square from the inside and by the large transit ways (streets Manuel Rodriguez, Arturo Prat, Los Carrera and Colo Colo) that link Concepción with the other cities of the greater metropolitan area (see fig. 4).

Figure 4: Barrio Cruz

In 2008, Barrio Cruz became a part of the governmental urban development program recuperation of the neighborhoods "Quiero mi Barrio" managed by the Ministry of Housing and Urbanism of Chile (MINVU 2007). Among the goals of this gentrification program were

32

infrastructural modernizations (street lightning, pavement, security measures) as well as more advanced targets such as the issues of urban deterioration and social disintegration, recuperation of the public spaces that had to be addressed in order to improve the quality of living and strengthen the communal ties. Slowly but steadily one of the oldest areas of the city, with small individual houses and small-scale industries, was undergoing spatial, although mainly infrastructural, transformations: high-rise houses were built to attract new young residents and also to get more value from the land that lays close to the city center; the square Plaza Cruz underwent a beautification processes; cultural events with a clear dedication to boost the communal identity started to take place over the weekends.

Still, walking around the neighborhood on a busy workday was a kind of escape from the noise of the city – or even a journey in a time machine at least fifty years backwards. The abundance of individual houses constructed in a very remarkable old-fashioned way – in a shape of a long and narrow rectangular with a long passage and a large patio as you step inside and the habit of the locals to engage in the habitual conversation while meeting in the corner store or a service point – all reminded of a very old-fashioned way of urban living. And even in spite of the new people arrival, the neighborhood managed to keep up with its traditional, a bit outdated spirit, as most of its residents were – and still are – senior people, not to mention the big elderly house located on one of the streets.

Due to its location on the flat lands far from the ocean, Barrio Cruz had experienced little damage in the aftermath of the 27/F disaster compared with the devastated coastline. Fortunately, it avoided the tsunami, but since the city geometry has moved approximately 3 meters towards the west (Holland 2010), a lot of old and especially wooden-built houses

received physical damage and cracks in the walls and the roofs.

Maximilliano, a long-term resident of the neighborhood who lives in a relatively old individual house with his family, explains the nature of the majority of destructions in this area, as he invites me to come in:

> The walls are like wobbly tambourines, and they lean on the walls of the neighboring houses. There is basically no way they can stand independently. They were shaking like jelly during the earthquake… Still, the house didn't collapse. There are destructions in various parts, but it stands.

And while the individual house's quake damage doesn't usually affect anyone except for the person who lives there, a peculiar case of destruction that brought a significant disruption into the daily spatial practices of a larger amount of residents and literally paralyzed the life of some blocks is worth mentioning here. Even thought the building codes in Chile are compliant with the seismic engineering standards, the quake managed to cause structural damages to several high-rise buildings within the neighborhood. In particular, the two blocks of the "Edificio Plaza Mayor" condominium and the apartment block "Plaza del Rio" were declared uninhabitable in the course of the disaster's assessment. My other informant, Mario, also a neighborhood resident and an owner of an apartment in the abovementioned "Edificio Plaza Mayor", which is now reconstructed, vividly describes the anxieties these destructions brought to the dwellers:

> Right after the earthquake happened, various streets were closed because the pavement cracked in pieces, and the pipes and sewage systems were broken as well… Still, people were scared to walk by or cross certain streets for almost three years. They had a fear that some of the high-rise buildings, left abandoned but not demolished after the earthquake, could still fall down…

And while the 27/F aftermaths were far less dreadful and extensive as in the towns along the coastline, and a few days after the residents were already trying to move on and live their

lives, these range of emotions significantly contributed to the atmosphere of alienation and oblivion that still can be felt in this calm neighborhood just a few blocks away from the vivid city center. As we walk around the neighborhood and I ask Mario about the gentrification program "Quiero Mi Barrio", it takes some time for him to recall what I am talking about:

> Before the earthquake the image of the neighborhood was the neighborhood of the renovation, at the point of it. It was more of an expectation…

And it might be fair to say that the earthquake brought a lot of things back to the pre-gentrification state. A small-scale magnitude of destruction excluded the neighborhood from the priority list of the regional recovery plans and even though the two local NGOs have headquarters in this area, Barrio Cruz wasn't on their agenda either. According to my informants, they haven't received a lot of attention besides the basic humanitarian aid and mitigation activities government needed to provide during the state of emergency.

Some people didn't receive proper compensations to rebuild the houses since a lot of people with moderate levels of income were renters. The others, who owned the apartments in the damaged high-rise buildings, had to leave them temporarily – the moment which for some people has lasted up till now, since the construction company, owners and the government are still engaged into the long-standing court quarrels. Some corner stores, service shops and small groceries had to close down due to the temporary lack of the visitors or had to take a loan to recuperate their businesses.

An owner of a small grocery store right on the corner of the square Plaza Cruz describes me that he got back to his shop just a few days after the earthquake:

> We came to clean the place, to arrange the things, to sell the goods that could be sold. And then we closed again, because there was no wholesale system functioning in the city. And pretty much everyone did the same. Half of the

35

entrepreneurs in the area have lost everything, since the refrigerators, storages were not working. So a lot of perishables have gone off.

Five years after a walk around the neighborhood shows positive changes in terms of the infrastructure: a lot of the streets are repaved; the destroyed communal sewage systems are upgraded. But an attentive observer can still see the painting of the cross and some numbers below on the walls of a few dilapidated and seemingly abandoned houses. This is the destruction grade mark from the municipality architects that came here to estimate the level of damage. It makes little sense to speculate on whether the governmental subsidy to rebuild was not sufficient, or whether the owner just left these places is a search of a better life, but here and there, as you walk the streets of Barrio Cruz, there is a permanent feeling that a considerable amount of its residents were basically left to struggle and overcome little tragedies on their own. Maximilliano, when I ask for the opinion about the success of the post-disaster recovery in his case, just shrugs his shoulders and responds:

> Let's just say that the scars have already healed…There are no longer complaints heard here and there. The earthquake is over, and we survive and are moving forward as we've always done in this city.

CHAPTER THREE: Seeing through space. The powers of the recovery narratives

Further Contextualization. The Government of Reconstruction

Sebastián Piñera, a businessman from the Forbes list and the first right-wing leader since Augusto Pinochet, took office on 11 March 2010. Putting to an end the 20 year-long administration of the center-left Christian Democratic-Socialist coalition known as Concertación, he had to face not only the infamous legacy of the dictatorship, but also the aftermaths of the 27/F event that happened less than two weeks before.

Even though the newly elected president pledged to keep heading towards greater social equality and justice, Piñera's political campaign clearly represented neoliberal approaches, such as free-market policies, the privatization of state industries and a system of private pensions, which hardly could be identified as a recent trend. The classical characteristics of a neoliberal state have been deployed in Chile through a constitution that was written back in the era of dictatorship and largely sustained thereafter.

In the aftermath of 27/F the criticism of the immediate government's response was widespread. The previous government of Ms. Bachelet was mainly blamed for the failure of the National Emergency Office's tsunami alerting system, delayed call for the military help to restore the order and the initial neglect of the international aid offers that caused social unrest and panic. And while Piñera had to acknowledge the changed priorities for his governmental plans, he nonetheless seized the opportunity and vowed, "Ours will be a government of reconstruction" (Long 2010) shortly after taking control over the cabinet and aligning on the

reconstruction plan with an optimistic title "Chile Unido Constuye Mejor" (MINVU 2010) that in English was presented as "Our Challenge: Turn a Catastrophe into an opportunity... for better cities, better life" (Platt 2012).

Stephen Platt (2012) made a comprehensive overview of the reconstruction policies and urban planning processes in his field trip to Chile in September 2011 and underlined that the recovery master plan defined housing rebuilding as one of the principal targets of action. The individual houses, emergency settlements, social housing – everything had to be taken under the governmental control and set as a priority.

Still, the other aspects of recovery had to be handled differently. According to the official position of the Ministry of Housing and Urbanism, the government was unable to reconstruct everything centrally and was requesting every affected region to develop and come up with a local recovery plan that would be assessed and financed. Hence, the Bío Bío region came up with the "Coastline Reconstruction Plan" (PRBC18 2010), which defined the 18 locations that suffered the worst damage and proposed to concentrate the recovery efforts on these (Platt 2012:11). This master plan indicated key principles of renovation – safety and building resilience, sustainable design and planning, quality of life, and enhanced opportunities for economic growth and development (Platt 2012). While in the standard neoliberal model the reconstruction of the city would be normally left to private sector, the Chilean post-disaster recovery strategy was still a blend of market-centered and governmental-led efforts. While some points of the plan pledged to focus on the heritage, community and the public good, the recovery plan authors explicitly framed disaster as an opportunity, a "process of creative

destruction" (Vale and Campanella 2005:8) that brings progress and change. With a prominent feature – this change was expected to make money.

Most of the recovery plan pillars were expected to be delivered within four years. That is why, in the 27/F fifth anniversary speech, a year after handing over the cabinet back to Ms. Bachelet, Mr. Piñera reconfirmed one of the final statements made during his presidency that 97% of the total reconstruction efforts were reached by March 2014 (Canales and Álvarez 2015). Despite certain public skepticism towards the reasonability of these numbers, the government of the reconstruction has certainly made advancement in post-disaster recovery of the country.

It is pretty evident that the 97% estimate refers to the state of the built environment – the infrastructural and housing projects, which were the essential components of the urban recovery plan. However, "to conclude that a city is resilient by virtue of its complete reconstruction, however rapid, is perhaps too simplistic" (Vale and Campanella 2005:237). Politicization of space in the Lefebvre's framework of "Production of space" highlights that fact that drawing conclusions only from the physical build environment is not enough. Perceived space doesn't exist on its own, even though it "appears as luminous, as intelligible, as giving action free rein"(Lefebvre 1991:29). The dialectical nature of the spatial triad, therefore, suggests that space cannot be understood only as a background that has to be restored in case of a disaster. Quite the opposite: space has its own power and actively engages into the aftermath of the disaster on the conceived and lived layers of the triad, imposing its own dialectical spatial order.

Certeau demonstrated that even the basic activity of walking actualizes some of the possibilities and interdictions of that order (Certeau 1984). Following this line of thought my research shows that the spatial experiences of the 27/F recovery, collected in the course of the fieldwork, are not simple and plain reflections of physical reconstruction, as there are agents that influence and shape the real space. What's more, the records of Dichato, Talcahuano and the Barrio Cruz of Concepcion only prove the fact that the urban recovery is not limited to the building renewals, but implies a great amount of symbolic and intangible implications that are embedded into a spatial fabric and made visible through the framework of the social production of space with the help of the narrative imagination.

The next two subchapters, therefore, substantiate the value of this analytical approach by translating the ordinary spatial experiences from the recovery stories into two groups of narratives that contrast with each other. I will also discuss how these accounts illuminate the production of space and help to legitimize either the conceived or lived space orders. Consequently, looping these narratives back with the direct spatial experiences of people allows exploring how these spatial orders are practiced and accepted in the real life. Finally, the coexistence of these narratives makes it possible to provide some reflections and considerations on the drivers behind the uneven dynamics of post-disaster recovery, which will be done in the conclusion.

"The Romances of Capitalism": Affirmative Narratives of Recovery

As indicated previously, narrativization is a methodological strategy used to conceptualize spatial experiences of recovery collected from my informants within the framework of spatial triad. The first part of my analysis deals with several narratives of recovery that have something in common – the affirmative or progress-oriented character. In this work I use the labels "affirmative" and "progress-oriented" interchangeably, although the latter definition is inspired by the Kevin Rozario's comparative study of Great Chicago Fire and San Francisco earthquake, where he stressed the ability of progress-oriented narratives to "settle those who had experienced the unsettling of their lives" (Rozario 2005:35) and contribute "to this nation's renowned resilience in the face of natural disasters" (Rozario 2005:28).

The analytical value of the affirmative narratives is that they expose the sphere of the conceived space, conceptualize the preferential directions of the post-disaster efforts imposed by its dominant power discourse and show how these strategies, mainly market-centered, are deployed to the destroyed cityscape. As encoded in their name, affirmative narratives conceive of disasters as opportunities and instruments of progress and provide the hope for the betterment, as represented by Edmundo:

> The process of advancement *<implies that>* someone always has to die. Disaster is like the war, but the metamorphosis and the transformations that the earthquake brings to the city generate the change. That's what happened to Talcahuano.

This research and the collected spatial experiences allow me to conceptualize the three groups of narratives – narratives of safety, sustainability and entrepreneurism. I also show how these narratives legitimize the components of dominant political discourse that take advantage of disaster to push through an array of selective spatial transformations.

41

Narrative of safety

Basically every urban planning process impacts, and sometimes challenges, the structure of land use and property relations. But the major events such as disaster "provide the opportunity to lay the foundations for a more substantial reconstruction and renovation" (Vale and Campanella 2005:5). When a quake damages a building and a tsunami wave takes away a house, the discourse of safety creates a perfect opportunity for the authorities to seize the opportunity and push the desired change through the policies, legislation and other tools.

And this is what happened with the housing sector in Chile that constituted one of the priorities of the recovery master plan. The housing program included both the emergency settlements building and the reconstruction of the permanent dwellings. While the Chilean built environment is overall well prepared for the earthquakes due to the efficient building codes (Platt 2012), the subsequent tsunami brought much more destruction to the coastal parts of the region and was treated by the government as an opportunity to alter the existing system of property relations. In particular, residential housing was prohibited within 20 meters of the sea line. Margarita vividly captures this transformation in her recovery story:

> In the beginning I didn't want to leave, to let my land be expropriated. Like everyone else who lived near the coastline. We refused to leave because we have spent our lives in that place. There was a history of this place, of the house… When I lost it, I had a hope that they could rebuild my house right there and I fought for that most of all. But what happened afterwards was a *<2011>* tsunami that came from Japan. And we were there, in the middle of the dispute when the water started to flood in again…and we understood that if we stayed here, it would always be like sitting on a powder keg. We understood the risks, the everyday dangers that they explained us.

The deconstruction of the narrative of safety illustrates two moments. Firstly, while in the beginning the land expropriation process was met by the locals with a campaign and a motto

42

"Dichato is not to be sold", the safety rhetoric converted into a narrative with progress-oriented connotation and gained people's appraisal. According to Estela, "In the past construction in Dichato was very disorganized, in every part the houses were being built, that's why the sea destroyed everything… like a cleanup was made to put the things in order. And now everyone respects it". Secondly, the "20 meters" safety zone amendment also provided the municipality with a long-awaited opportunity to reorganize functional organization of the coastal tow, taking advantage of an expropriated territory and constructing a modern tourist-attractive promenade at the Dichato's coastline.

Narrative of sustainability

If in the case of the 9/11 or Katrina disasters the business initiatives received a carte blanche and a full support of the federal aid (Gotham and Greenberg 2008:1046), the Chilean's coastline recovery plan suggested to rely on the narratives of the common good and public benefit in its strategies and spatial transformations.

The narrative of sustainability illustrates how the increasing desire for building "resilient" translates into the opportunity to challenge the character of land use and property ownership. The long-lasting struggle of Talcahuano, described by Edmundo, represents the idea:

> The fishing industry has always been one of the major driving forces of the city, has always had a clash, a struggle with the public policy and municipality interests. As the fishing industry was always the major provider of employment for the residents, and always had it's way. That was a major impediment for the city development as well, because right in the center the seawater was contaminated, the smell… The effect of the earthquake, therefore, was to mess up the things and create a place for them to be rearranged.

This example illustrates how the progress-oriented narrative of sustainability creates an impulse for the dominant powers to force the new power balance between the state and the

industry. Discourse of sustainability helped the government to challenge the ubiquitous authority of the port administration in the coastal area, push through the project of the coastline renovation and proclaimed it a core element of the 27/F post-disaster recovery success.

Narrative of entrepreneurism

The last pillar of the progress-oriented narratives is tightly linked with what Harvey called "urban entrepreneurialism" (Harvey 1989). The neoliberal direction of Piñera's government of reconstruction was consistently reinforced within the 27/F recovery plan. Tourism and opportunities for the economic growth were clearly indicated as conditions for receiving financial aid. This rhetoric of the entrepreneurial primacy and this almost mandatory obligation to make money are boldly recalled by Pilar:

> Everything was more oriented towards this. The government was inspecting and putting the strong emphasis on money − to invest, to create, to generate…

Extensive deployment of provisional markets in the aftermath of the 27/F in order to improve the overall economic resilience and speed up the recovery is one of the obvious spatial manifestations of this narrative. Estela explains the rationale behind this strategy as we walk by the giant tent erected in the center of Dichato:

> It's a very special mall – "Centro Commercial y Turístico de Dichato" (Commercial and Tourist Center of Dichato). They had their businesses in the inner streets…they were selling bread, small shops, eateries…and the sea has taken it all. That's why they were given space here, an opportunity to start working, to reinstall their businesses.

The other prominent declaration of the entrepreneurial narrative was, probably, the all-penetrating focus on tourism. Harvey in the "Neoliberalism and the city" argues that when New York went bankrupt, the authorities concentrated their rehabilitation efforts on selling it

44

"as a destination for anyone interested in culture <…> as a destination for consumption" (Harvey 2007:10). Likewise, the planners behind the 27/F urban recovery program focused on the maximization of Dichato and Talcahuano coastlines' touristic potential in order to inject the new life in the cities and generate an extra-income through the creation of a new attractions and activities, such as festivals, fairs, food and "catastrophe" kinds of tourism. The positive business effect of the latter ones is observed by Pilar:

> Now the place is much better known and famous, so the amount of visitors who come here increased tremendously. After the earthquake there are people who come in the wintertime to eat and to have lunch over the weekends as well. Seems like people also want to come and see what is happening after the catastrophe, how the place is doing…Amusing…

Lastly, the most visually prominent example of the narrative of entrepreneurship that existed before, but seemed to mushroom in the aftermath of the 27/F, was the active deployment of city branding in order to enhance the competitiveness and business attractiveness of their cities. Similar to the famous "I love New York" campaign, the spirit of creative destruction triggered the

Pic1: "Yo amo Talcahuano" – the logo assembled in 2012 on the roof of the apartment complex "La Torre Prat"

extensive production of logos and catch phrases of the equivalent structure: "Yo Quiero Dichato Comuna", Yo amo Talcahuano", "Talcahuano, el corazón del sur de Chile", "Viva Dichato" and "Talcahuano 2020" (see pic.1).
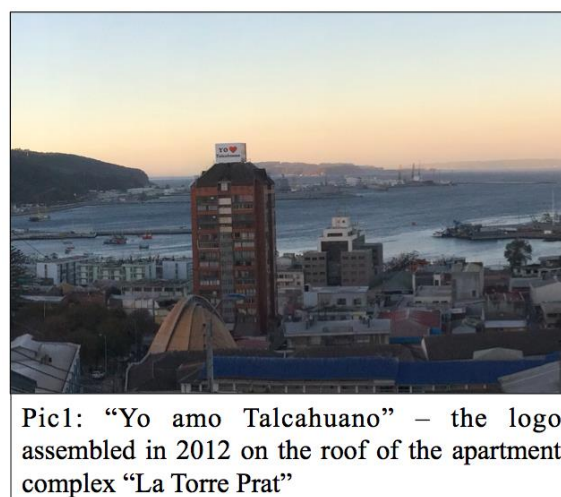
It is pretty remarkable how all of the spatial transformations that were brought forth by the government in the scope of the 27/F recovery efforts seemed to find a great support, or at

45

least neutral compliance in the minds of the residents and get incorporated into their lived spaces even in spite of initial resistance. The similar conclusion is made by Rozario, who underlined the power of these narratives to provide "an outlet for passions that might otherwise have fueled resistance to an ascendant bureaucratic conception of "progress" <…>. Not only did these <…> narratives help to make progress believable, but they also helped to make progress bearable" (Rozario 2005:45). To illustrate, some of the initial spatial experiences of my informants negatively estimated the recovery approaches: the land expropriation implied the uprooting and the involuntary move ("This is the feeling of alienation, of uprooting, losing touch… That is why we didn't want to leave our places, the old streets, and houses"); the sustainable design made in concrete stole the old-fashioned and traditional identity ("it's like the history was erased for me"); the precarious working conditions were way more long-lasting than expected ("this mall was supposed to be a temporal place, but we are here for four years now"). These examples illuminate the great power of the progress-oriented narratives. By providing the settling and calming effect, they subsequently transform not only the physical space, but also the people's minds and make them believe that all the strategies of the conceived space are legitimate, for the common good and, thus, have to be justified ("It was a bit more painful for the people whose land close to the sea was expropriated, but now they agree that in reality it was for the good")[3].

This observation underlines how both the perceived and the lived spaces are restrained and subdued by the dominant, conceived space, but also loops the analysis back into the Lefebvre's triad. As it declares that the production of space can only be grasped dialectically,

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[3] In this paragraph I am referring to the experiences of Margarita, Pilar, Señora Ana and Estela consecutively

then the conceived space of the dominant powers is necessarily balanced by the lived space of the inhabitants (Lefebvre 1991). The implication of this conceptual model for the current research is that the examination of the 27/F recovery trajectories cannot be completed with the frontal, affirmative narratives, but should seek for the existence of the counter scripts that run against the dominant ideologies, which are provided in the following subchapter.

The Quotidian Resilience: Alternative Narratives of Recovery

The affirmative scripts of recovery emerge within the realm of the conceived space and actively support the official recovery trajectories and ideologies, which mostly benefit the state and the market actors, while the civic actors are largely muted in this narrative construction process. Yet, according to Vale and Campanella, "there is never a single, monopolic *vox populi* that uniformly affirms the adopted resilience narrative in the wake of disaster" (2005:341).

In the Lefebvre's spatial triad, therefore, the dominant codes of conceived space ensure the existence of the alternative scripts. Consequently, the model of the everyday practices shows that the dweller can creatively reappropriate the ideological representations of space that are inflicted on him: "he moves them about and he invents others, that <…> privilege, transform, or abandon spatial elements" (Certeau 1984:103). The lived space, therefore, emerges as a result of a dialectical relation between the perceived and conceived space, and reclaims physical environment through the tactical actions. This is the where the alternative, or agency-centered, narratives of recovery are introduced to illustrate the processes of the lived space construction and interpret how the particular spatial experiences of the residents help them coping with the consequences of the 27/F disaster.

These narratives are mostly articulated when the dominant strategies of recovery fail to prove their efficiency. They also aim to show that there are is a layer of quotidian resilience and a set of practices, which helps people to live through the disaster in the course of their everyday life. The array of these tactics and spatial experiences that was shared with me by the survivors, I have conceptualized in four alternative narratives of recovery: narrative of

48

fear, of adaptation, of belonging, and lastly of culture of disaster, which sometimes appear to be more efficient than the selective recovery strategies of the dominant power.

Narrative of fear

The major infrastructural disruptions and the initial delay in the distribution of basic alimentation led to the fact that people began to reorganize their own reality by exercising various tactical powers in order to regain the basics of personal safety and security in the aftermath of the 27/F.

But as the basic communal services didn't function over the first few days after the disaster, bridges between the areas were collapsed and the paved roads were cracked so that cars wouldn't be able to pass, poor governmental communication just added up to the chaos all around. The fear of upcoming shortages of potable water and food supplies provided an overwhelming outlet for the emotions of fear, anxiety and panic and caused a social unrest. It is most powerfully illustrated in the cases of looting from the supermarkets, warehouses and pharmacies, when the people from impoverished areas started to rob the things that were left unsecured.

The robbers or "los saqueos", as they are called locally, proclaimed themselves "the owners of the supermarkets" told me Ronald, a resident from Concepción. And while initially it was desperation and basic fears that drove people to steal alimentation, a lot of my informants mentioned the other cases, when people started to steal from the debris, or robbed the shops with electrical appliances and other expensive goods. And probably the robbery case is not the most constructive example from the socially approved perspective, but it underlines a very important point and a feature of alternative narratives. Having the same

psychological connotation to address the anxieties of an unpredictable future, they "provided a language for fear and anxieties that progress narratives barely acknowledged" (Vale and Campanella 2005:39). This mode of spatial reappropriation, while not necessarily compliant with the conventional perception of recovery action, is nevertheless exclusively centered on and benefits to the personal everyday well being. These spatial experiences are, above all, the single acts of resistance to the neoliberal approach to recovery, which as it is made clear by Harvey, in case of a "conflict between the well being of financial institutions and the well being of the population, <…> will choose the well being of the financial institutions" (Harvey 2007:8).

Narrative of adaptation

The transformations of built environment five years after the 27/F disaster reveals the fact that in a longer-term the fear factor is not enough to make people move and suggests for the title of the second narrative of the subchapter. None of my respondents have left the places where they lived before, and most of the people have started to rebuild their homes and businesses in the same locations as they were regardless of the amount of help received from the authorities.

While the process of coastline reconstruction was broadly commercialized and recognized in the progress-oriented narratives of sustainability and safety, the agency-centered narratives illuminate the less visible cases of rebuilding and renovation tactics, which people had to embed into their lived space in the process of their own recovery. Barrio Cruz provides a great deal of the spatial manifestations of the quotidian resilience of its residents.

There are some really inventive cases of recovery one can observe while walking in the neighborhood. While it sometimes seems that the outer walls carcass is everything that's left from the house, the sticker "Censo 2012" on the door proves that, probably, ever since the 2010 this dwelling was permanently habitable. It is made possible by the particular characteristic of the spatial forms of the old district: the inner yard of the old land lots was usually very stretch and wide, providing enough room for a construction inside. And even when the old house suffered a significant damage, it was often possible to embed a new house, or at least a hut, within the old wall frames. Maximilliano explains one of the possible logic behind this decision:

> According to the law if I am the owner of the house and it was destroyed, I have to pay for the recycling of the rubbish on my land before I can build something new, but no one helps in that.

Obviously, there are many reasons behind this eccentric rebuilding decision, but it most of the cases this tactics is tightly linked to the material aspect. When the progress-oriented recovery plan leaves some people behind, they have to act creatively and appropriate the lived space the way it helps them to deal with the consequences of disaster.

Narrative of belonging

Yet, the fact that people come back to the damaged houses and devastated coastlines in order to live and rebuild the houses despite the frequent natural disasters and warnings cannot be justified only by the fact that these people live off the sea and obviously need to stay as close as possible to their main source of income. There are also more profound layers of meaning that are embedded into the spatial fabric, such as the memories and heritage, and that normally constitute people everyday lives. These symbols were first of all destroyed by

51

the quakes and the tsunami waves, and then largely disregarded by the authorities in the course of the market-centered reconstruction endorsed by the progress-oriented discourse, explains Pilar in her story:

> The concrete-based design was seen as something beneficial, progressive, and modern. There was no preoccupation of who had to rescue our identity. Everyone accepted that the process of recovery that was deployed should bring security. And now we have this boulevard, which is attractive indeed, but it doesn't bring along the memories, I don't have a high degree of self-association with it. For me it's just a place I walk by, it's like the history of the place was erased.

Affirmative narratives provide a relief and support in the immediate aftermath of the disaster, but, detached from the context and the character of the place, they offer universalized strategies of reconstruction and create a spatial void in the lives of people. The sentiments and reflections on the space that was lost in the aftermath of the 27/F provided people with a power to recreate and commemorate the patrimony in the lived spaces in order to overlay the imposed transformations of the built environment and fulfill the symbolic level of urban recovery, that occurs not just building by building; but implies "reconstruction of the myriad of social relations" (Vale and Campanella 2005:347).

Narrative of the Culture of Disaster

The importance of the heritage within the spatial experiences of everyday recovery, conceptualized within the narratives of belonging, can be significantly expanded into, probably, the most important narrative that in the case of 27/F became a crucial factor of recovery and a rational behind the low casualty rates. In my research I define it as the narrative of the culture of disaster. In the course of my interviews and observations, I realized that the spatial experiences of my informants are infused with the idea and perception of the 27/F disaster as an intrinsic part of Chilean's patrimony. Earthquakes, tsunamis, volcano

eruptions were always the integral part of the people reality, identity and plain physical characteristic of the country. So when the 27/F earthquake happened people knew how to react and keep calm and also were able to foresee the danger of tsunami, despite the opposite statement from the government. Pilar summarizes this common thread of a culture of disaster in a beautiful and illustrative account:

> We live on the coastline, and from the childhood we were told the stories that if there was an earthquake, it would be followed by a tsunami. And we were always told that in any case we had to escape towards the hill, with parents or without them. The hill and its height were the places that could protect you. And once you were on the hill, start yelling the names to find your family. For the local people it is like a chip inside that tells you how to survive the tsunami: you know your street, how to get to the hill from your street.

As a result, this concept penetrates all the layers of spatial triad: the landscape, the conceived space and, lastly, found its best reflection in the lived space of people. As the everyday, representational space is lived by people directly "through its associated images and symbols" (Lefebvre 1991:39), this level of spatial production highlights the most basic level of human resilience that enables locals with the intrinsic spatial knowledge that ensures the physical recovery. These lived spatial experiences represent specific cultural mode of coping with disasters and increase their quotidian resilience. The fact that "although buildings disappear easily, lifestyles have changed only gradually" (Vale and Campanella 2005:330) stress the importance of the lived, everyday recovery practices even most prominently, when the dominant authorities fail to quickly and efficiently respond to a disaster.

53

Conclusions and Final Considerations

My intention to delve into the multitude of spatial experiences and stories to conceptualize the patterns that enable or constrain the processes of the post-disaster recovery emerged long before the moment that it was encoded in the title of this research. Consequently, the idea to translate these scripts into the groups of different narratives and to use them as the analytical toolkit elaborated on a later stage as a blended framework of Lefebvre and de Certeau's theories of the social production of space.

The conceptualized groups of narratives were contrasted with each other in order to show that the driving forces of recovery cannot rely only on the affirmative narratives that are tied to the official power discourse of the conceived space that, supposedly, "views the devastation and rebuilding of cities as no more than an extreme version of capitalism's usual process of creative destruction" (Vale and Campanella 2005:15). Neither the process of recovery can exist only in representational spaces that are visible through the alternative narratives, where people reclaim the post-disaster urban fabric and invent the everyday recovery tactics that resonate with their emotional, cultural and spatial experiences.

The coincidence of these narratives leads to the important conclusion about the dialectical nature of resilience. If the progress-oriented recovery trajectories are not the exclusive ones, there should be different kinds of resilience, which would belong not only to the official political discourse, but also to the everyday agential domains and balance the dominant power. Hence, the agency-centered scripts of recovery prove the existence of multiple resiliences that correspond to different actors, strategies and tactics.

Subsequently, this dialectical understanding of resilience opens the room for the two considerations developed in the course of this research work.

First of these considerations loops back to the main research question and reflects on the possible rationale behind the uneven trajectories of recovery. Dialectics of resilience implies the interplay among citizens, authorities and market agencies, each resilient in its own manner and fashion that do not unilinearly contribute to the established process of recovery. This mode of understanding resilience helps to contextualize the grounded recovery trajectories instead of the universal strategies and ideal pathways. Consequently, resiliences and recoveries engage in a dynamic interaction, where "the form of destruction and its scale appear to be less important than the time and the context in which these occur" (Vale and Campanella 2005:16), while the changing power dynamics of different actors determines the set of scenarios that can outline the potential direction of post-disaster recovery efforts.

Second consideration of my research deals with the interrelated framework of the terms "resilience", "recovery" and "disaster" that are put in a conceptual perspective in my theoretical chapter. While the affirmative narratives of recovery need disaster as a prerequisite, an opportunity to employ the rhetoric of progress-oriented resilience and create a change, the alternative narratives suggest that the quotidian kinds of resilience don't need a disruptive event, like an earthquake, to destroy the city, because people have to routinely reclaim their powers over the lived space in the shifting realities of contemporary urban life. It also means that the agential tactics of recovery, exemplified in the empirical chapter, engage into the active spatial production on an everyday basis. These observations propose to embed the idea of dialectical resilience into a broader debate on the interrelatedness of the

55

concepts of emergency, disaster and catastrophe that develops within the social sciences (Adey, Anderson and Graham 2015).

Due to its peculiar geophysical characteristics Chile is a country that is constantly in the process of reconstruction. Understanding this specific context within the framework of emergency, which is not equivalent to the term disaster in the abovementioned discourse according to Peter Adey, Ben Anderson and Stephen Graham, allows altering the narrative of recovery. While in the situation of emergency "the outcome remains uncertain and action still promises to make a difference"(2015:5), each recovery case is seen not a simple and plain story with positive or negative connotation, but a continuous and open-ended dialectical process, which is inseparable from the everyday human actions.

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58

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