

To us, the Straits of Gibraltar is a mirror-territory of the transformations taking place in the world today: globalisation, migrations, borders, citizenship, network-society, communication, technologies (...). The border is a crossed place, an extensive territory of life and mobile confinements where multiple social practices put pressure on established limits. New spaces and relationships emerge from and through the border between Southern Europe and Northern Africa.

1. Context

1.1 Madiaq Territory: New Geographies

Geographically, we are in a space of transition: between Africa and Europe, the Mediterranean and the Atlantic; a space that separates and connects and that has always been permeable to the continuous flows of life. Today this place fulfils a specific role as a barrier, both physical and mental, separating the legal from the illegal, like a folding line that splits our world in two.

But borders are habitable territories that can't be reduced to lines on a map. They are environments that favour mixing and exchange, highly dynamic territories that generate a gradation of shared spaces, where the nature of *passing through* prevails over that of the *barrier*. To cross their thresholds means to physically move from one place to another, but, even more so, it implies the start of a transformation, to becoming-others.

Spaces for movement and mobile spaces; capitalist modernity accelerates this quality as it expands itself bounding over mobile borders. Like the Far West, destruction and colonisation, but also a horizon for the creative exodus. There is a single substance, that of capitalism and of those who escape from its chains to create (and create themselves) a free territory; even if those who want to stake it out and privatise it follow close behind. Our modernity has its own mobile borders, which, as always, are in search of the other: the external other that we call nature, and the internal other-subjectivity, ourselves, in plural.

Against the sterile, immutable, linear abstraction stand ideas that spread like contagious viruses; from here springs Madiaq territory. There, just at that dense crux where seas, lands... and multitudes converge; over that moat that they have made deadly, we are building a multiple territory, both geographic and infographic, social and technological, that extends infinitely in four directions: to the South and to the North; towards the depths of carnal bodies and to the immaterial nosphere that grows in the fertile land of words without owners.

Maps report existing territories, but they also construct them; thus territory lives in the mind and is constructed as knowledge. But there this can be done in many ways. One way prefers to plant its seeds on the soil of ignorance, reaping fatuous knowledge, expert in locks, efficiently feeding citizen-customers, passing sentence once and for all with no possibility of appeal. We oppose this endlessly

⁷⁶ Translated by Nuria Rodríguez. Accessed from <http://straddle3.net/media/print/0609_fadaiat_book_txt.pdf> on August 24, 2009. This essay introduces the text, *Fadaiat: Freedom of Movement - Freedom of knowledge* (2006).

⁷⁷ The editorial team *Fadaiat: Freedom of Movement - Freedom of knowledge* includes: pilar monsell prado, pablo de soto suárez, joan escofet planas, josé perez de lama, marta paz naveiro, mónica lama Jiménez, helena garcía rodríguez, sergio moreno páez.

represented copy that they call *reality*, and instead propose a living cartography that continuously remakes itself, always different. Attempts, explorations and works that concern all of us, because we recognise that those same lines and borders also cross within ourselves.

1.2 The Factory Border:

Migration and Work

The Straits of Gibraltar is a laboratory-territory of the contemporary world. Multiple processes coexist and combine in such a way that Migrations and Work become key words for reading the transformations taking place. This enclave, a natural point of entry from Africa to Europe, underlines an abyss, a paradox of the global geo-economic order. Minimum geographic distance, maximum distance between the different levels of wealth and life options. We are witnessing an experiment in terms of managing migratory movements and the emergence of an underground battleground raised by the autonomy of the migrations.

On one hand, the escalation of control systems (SIVE, investments in the development of technologies for surveillance, militarization, supranational coordination), the externalisation of borders to third countries (the new strategic role of transit countries, new investments in their good management, the construction of new detention centres for migrants from outside the Schengen area); and the development of a border economy, that is, the becoming-productive of the border area. In this sense, the arrival of Spanish and European companies in the Maghrib (textiles, telecommunications, services, agriculture, etc.) and the consolidation of production industries that exist due to their proximity to the border area and the use of migrant labour (the care industry in Ceuta and Melilla, intensive agriculture in Huelva and Almeria, etc) are some of the elements that reveal the interests that cross through this factory border.

On the other hand, a complex and changing inexact geometry stands against this rigid control system, marked by the leave of the migratory movements. Migrations as social movements are expressions of unique paths redesigned around individual life projects that escape the limitations of control, turning mobility into an affirmative element to dignify the conditions of life. This can be seen in migrants in transit through Morocco, temporary campgrounds and self-organised spaces, sit-ins and mobilisations demanding the right to rights, union organisations in Huelva and Almeria. Migrants are no longer just a consequence of structural imbalances in the world-system, now they rise up (among space-time jumps and cuts) as political subjects able to organise themselves and articulate specific demands that question the model of European citizenship in the 21st century.

For the last few years, we have been trying to bring attention to and explain the fact that the border system cannot just be reduced to its functions of control of migratory movements. The Fortress Europe metaphor gives way to an image of a porous, selective border that tries to insert migratory movements into specific productive circuits. The central position that migratory movements have come to occupy gives us keys to understanding the major transformations that are affecting the labour market, and the very notion of citizenship, within the European area. The characteristics that define migrant labour (intense mobility, temporality, informal contracting, low wages, lack of union protection, invisibility, etc.) are starting to extend to the overall population. We find ourselves before a situation in which labour is *becoming-migrant*.

1.3 Becoming Cyborg: Technologies and Communication

Information Society and Network Society are offered as definitions of the contemporary world. These labels underline the central importance of communications and information technologies in the

culture, society and economy of the last decades of the 20th century. Network technologies have led to radical changes in all aspects of our lives: space and time, social relationships, our very way of being in the world.

However, the current state of the information society isn't the result of inexorable fate, but a product of the ingenuity of a multitude of creators and also of the conflicts between the different agents that participate in building these new worlds. This condition of continuous selfmaking is what we call becoming.

Information and communication technologies are not a specific and isolated area. Rather, as the term *information society* suggests, they cross and permeate almost all contemporary processes: from a body connected to a mobile phone, through to village markets supplied by global logistical networks and the fleets of satellites that broadcast television to the most remote rural or jungle areas. We use the term *cyborg* to refer to this new ecological multiplicity in which bodies, both individual and social, are continually connected to networks of machines that function as mental or physical extensions, and actively relate them to the world.

Familiar threats appear in this new territory, in the form of the society of control and capitalist globalisation, but so do new opportunities for freedom and emancipation, which are found in the fabric of the contemporary condition. To explore and build these potentials for social cooperation, immaterial goods and new forms of beauty, within ourselves and in our territories, is what we call becoming cyborg.

Freedom -to communicate, to access and to distribute knowledge- is one of the ways we define the spirit that underlies the many investigation, creation and education projects we have been developing in the Fadaiat networks. These projects have been based in the fields of open source software, copyleft, multimedia communication and the democratisation of access to internet resources, digital spaces for collaborative work and community wireless networks, among others. We imagine these projects, all together, as the base for building the connected multitude.

2. The Constituent Process

Many meetings and workshops organised over the last few years led to a process of discussion and experimentation that eventually produced the idea of the Technological Observatory of the Straits. Some of the main issues that intersect with the transformations now in process, as discussed above, are beginning to overlap and cross each other, and so common hypotheses are being raised in different collective spaces for theoretical discussion and practice. It is difficult to name and locate all the spaces and times that have shaped the steps of this nomadic path. Conferences, workshops, meetings in person or through chat, celebrations, conversations in different contexts, mobilisations, compilations of material shared on the tiki-wiki, online publications and comments, telephones. Collective paths and also individual paths that converge in Fadaiat and the Observatory, and that we can synthesise for the purposes of this text, without forgetting that the experiences go much further than the text. For us, all these moments of intersection have affective dimensions and intensities that cannot be reversed.

2.1 The Hypothesis of A Transborder Indymedia

One of the catalysing moments/nodes in the constitutive process was the founding of Indymedia Estrecho. In the heat of the Global Campaign against the Iraq War, around March 2003, after several earlier initiatives, a media activist group in Seville put out a call on the networks to set up an indymedia in our area. Networks from Jerez, Málaga and Granada joined immediately. The fact that we

had previously collaborated with and experienced other nodes of the global indymedia network, and the knowledge that we had reached the necessary critical mass, helped the process to progress quickly, and the new Indymedia was operating in June 2003. The starting hypothesis would later connect with the Fadaiat/Observatory project. The result of the rich and complex constitutive debate, within the framework of the first major crisis of the Indymedia model,⁷⁸ was a project with innovative aspirations. Firstly, the idea of building a new territory with the help of Indymedia Estrecho, an *other* territory that would connect the two shores of the Straits of Gibraltar -known as Madiq in Morocco- through a hybridisation of atoms and bits. This idea of crossing the border and producing spaces for communicative miscegenation against the production of fear later took shape in Indymedia Estrecho meetings and workshops organised in Tangiers, Larache and Alhucemas, where we shared discussions about the development of this project that are still alive today. A second hypothesis, which was later consolidated around the world, was to conceive of Indymedia not just as an alternative information or counterinformation tool, but a space of biopolitical production. Finally, the project of transforming a predominantly textual medium into a multimedia one. It is only now, over three years later, that GISS/Al-jwarizmi,⁷⁹ is allowing us to really see this project take shape.

2.2 Intertwined / Recombinant Crossings

Among the founding groups of Indymedia Estrecho, Hackitectura.net contributes some of the pioneering experiences in building autonomous cyborg territories/events. Some time around 1999, Hackitectura.net, then an urban activist group known as Wewearbuildings, began to incorporate communication, particularly video streaming, in urban spaces as a way of participatory transformation and appropriation of the city (Media-tank, an autonomous image projection device, in actions against the La Alameda parking lot in Seville), and participated in various global interconnectivity events (Borderhack 2002, Tijuana). In 2003, they set up a series of embodiments of urban spaces / rooms for the connected multitude: Dissident okupa future city in Corvera, Asturias, and the abandoned high-speed train station in La Cartuja, Seville, where the first experiments with open wifi networks and open source software took place. Many of the collectives that would later come together for Fadaiat participated in these projects. In September 2003, Hackitectura.net organised La Multitud Conectada in La Rábida (Huelva), as part of Reunión03, a meeting of artists and activists from Andalucía and guests from other areas, that was the start of a fruitful collaboration. This became the kernel of the current network: Seville, Malaga, Barcelona, Madrid... The following year, Fadaiat: Transacciones was held, with the subheading: Freedom of knowledge/ Freedom of Movement. And in 2005 Fadaiat: Borderline Academy. During these years, Hackitectura.net actively participated in many global events: Evian03, WSIS We Seize? (Geneva03), Neuro, the London European Social Forum... and strengthened contacts with European groups that work in the same fields, coming together in increasingly ambitious projects with a larger social scope.

⁷⁸ Indymedia was born in Seattle in 1999 during the mobilizations against WTO, as an independent media center and open publishing website to allow civil society to distribute its own media. In the following years the model extended itself throughout the planet, currently forming a global network of over 150 nodes. The discussion about the crisis of the Indymedia model (beginning around 2002 in different nodes) questions the viability of the model beyond the so called anti-summit cycle and the problem of the production of information without achieving communication; that is, a larger quantity of information and a wider distribution network don't necessarily determine more efficient communication among different subjectivities. It might occur, as in the case of certain occasions in indymedia, as well as in other information spaces in the Web, that messages become disembodied, loose their connection to the bodies and lives producing them, to the material and daily conflicts. However, during this first crisis of Indymedia, new Indymedia nodes were created, such as Argentina and Estrecho/ Madiq, that were able to show that the model wasn't exhausted; but that it could rather grow, be deepened and enriched in multiple ways.

⁷⁹ Al-jwarizmi is a tactical project that creates video streaming software for social networks.

The Centro Social-Casa de Iniciativas, the Entránsito collective and Rizome (all from Malaga) are other collective experiences that contributed their ways of doing and thinking to the process. The way Casa de Iniciativas has accompanied the struggles for migrant rights over the last few years -by participating in public assemblies, creating support groups and providing information, communication and advice- has implied a migrants-to-locals relationship that is nurtured by day to day contact and the sharing of knowledge and experiences, to produce spaces that favour hybridisation and contagion of the different identities. Some of the journeys begun over the years include gaining an understanding of the shared spaces of articulation of the social networks that demand new citizenship rights and connecting local processes to European networks (noborder network, border camps -Tarifa 2001, Strasburg 2002...- struggles against detention centres in Italy and the Spanish state, social forums, the European network Frassanito). In late 2004, the collective Entránsito appeared out of this context, taking on militant action-research as a key tool for thought and action in contemporary social movements, identifying itself with the *walking and asking* proposed by the Zapatistas. Entránsito will try to re-look, survey, map and find ways of thinking collectively from practices to reflect on practices, and map out new paths from those lived experiences.

On its side, the Rizoma collective, which took part in the Reunión03 event in La Rábida (Huelva), is a group that works, thinks and investigates around issues relating to various aspects of cities and territories (technicalurban, social, cultural). Working mostly from the university (the Escuela de Arquitectura in Granada), the group has organised various situationist *dérives* with large groups of students to explore and study the urban phenomena that characterise ZoMeCS (Zona Metropolitana de la Costa del Sol). Rizoma has worked on the development of collaborative ways of writing and presence in public debate, while continuing its ongoing collaboration in collective construction of citizenship processes.

Lastly, Barcelona's Straddle3, a space dedicated to exploring new social practices of labour at the intersection of two professions -architecture and new media. Linked to this collective is the project Context, an observatory of emergent culture that takes the form of a blog of our times to overcome old confrontations between traditional cultural dimensions. Context filters and provides context, monitors emerging culture and summarises relevant news. Linking to the original sources, it adopts a global focus that takes on contradictory paradigms as a platform for experimenting with the idea of a *semantic web*, the peer-to-peer network and the new generation of ubiquitous technology.

2.3 Heterotopy In The Straits Territory

In October 2004, various groups in the network formed a team to present a project for the Ideas Competition and subsequent award of the Castillo de Santa Catalina in Tarifa. The castle, built in the 1920's on the beach facing the African coast, had been a meteorological observation centre for the navy and was in a neglected state. The proposal was to use the castle as a Technological Observatory of the Straits, an infrastructure that would allow Fadaiat to develop within a stable context. It was to be an educational, cultural and technology laboratory, including a wi-fi beach.

In spite of receiving support from many bodies, including Leonardo/ISASTS, we came second in the competition. In collaboration with the City Council's department of Culture, who were interested in our proposal, we unsuccessfully tried to negotiate with the adjudicating team, whose proposal was predominantly tourism-based.

Then it became necessary to reconceptualise the project. As part of Fadaiat 2005, a participatory workshop was organised to design a Strategic Plan for the Technological Observatory of the Straits, and the conclusions of this workshop are the source, in part, of this book. The need to look with new eyes

at possible locations for the Observatory led us to rethink our own relationship with space over the last few years. That's how we saw came to see the Observatory as a nomadic device, which temporary relocates in different places, to function as catalyst and transmitter of events, that can work in Tarifa but also in Tangier, Barcelona and anywhere where collective desires, knowledge and movement take us. We don't want, through this decision, to renounce the future possibility of setting up a laboratory and a stable infrastructure on the border; to continue to insist on its potential is the (bio)motor that moves us to continue on this path.

3. Redefining The Proposal

3.1 Decentralization And Multipresence

At the moment, connectivity at any distance is probably the most important factor for producing spaces where people can come together and discuss issues; remember that we live, and will increasingly live, in an augmented reality, the product of geospace-meets-cyberspace. The subject that produced this book is a multiple, non-centralised cyborg, in which processes lack spatial location and organised temporal patterns; a continuous activity that is occasionally recorded, at any particular moment, as a kind of shared mirror accessible to all. Transversality is produced on the horizontal plane of productive network space, and in each terminal -connecting cyberspaces with geospaces- where social relationships also occur through more conventional means, including the extremely important space of direct personal contact.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) add an extra dimension and allow the generation of a new kind of public space by creatively hybridising traditional spaces with new virtual spaces. As an enormously powerful prosthesis, these technologies are put at the service of a social technology that in turn leads to important transformations.

3.2 New Technical Resources, Devices and Tools

To support us in carrying out our activities and develop projects, we use various technical resources and tools.

We have a multimedia server with a web content management system operated by tiki-wiki software (observatorio.fadaiat.net). Coordination is carried out through the web and mailing lists (Media-lab, tansik, tarjama, cartac) used for internal coordination of the association, general coordination of the annual Fadaiat event, coordination of translations and general coordination of the site. Two chat channels have also been used, indymedia madiac and fadaiat-lab in freenode. The fadaiat.net web site, online since spring 2004, is the public interface of the project. There is also the open mailing list fadaiat-akhbar, with news relating to the annual event. These web publishing tools have allowed editors, translators and proofreaders to work from multiple locations: Malaga, Seville, Tangier, Barcelona, Madrid, Gijón, México DF, Stockholm, Valencia, Bologna, Beirut, Damascus, Oviedo, Vienna...

3.3. A Distributed-Creativity Public Space

Although the effects aren't immediately obvious from the outside, all the processes, from making the book to the overall dynamic of the collective cyborg, are transparent and therefore open to subsequent modification by its agents. It's here that the idea of open source spreads and deepens in a case of what could be called inverse social engineering, affecting social technologies that are usually hidden.

From the start, immersion in the information society located the activities of the Technological Observatory of the Straits within the flows of global knowledge, with the resulting benefits for the geographical areas where it is planned. Now this productive community is deliberately inserting itself in a larger multitude, not just the conventional one made up of readers of the book and those who participate in creating and publishing it, but the global multitude.

There is something else to be added that is rarely taken into account: many fragments of the text have been subject to negotiations. In the process they were transformed, excluded, extended and enriched, or they may have become the trigger for conceptual findings that were immediately offered to all participants. This continuous interrelation encourages all sorts of inter-subjective relationships, and while some are conflictive, they more frequently translate into extremely efficient operating compositions; and beyond that, to affective relationships leading to stable links. An ideas machine, a rhizome without hierarchies or stable organizations, where information is propagated by contagion, by mimesis, both in its interior and far from its diffuse borders, overflowing and making obsolete the traditional, rigid channels of organised devices.

The book and all it entails plays an important and irreplaceable role, but it is just a fragment of a process that goes far beyond it in terms of both time and subject matter. Here it opens new possible *becomings* that were mere conjectures until it was written; it is a line with relative autonomy running parallel to the other relatively autonomous part-projects and establishing fruitful exchanges among them, which in turn become an opportunity for new projects.

Through this process, and specially the publishing of this book, we want to contribute to the existence of new spaces of social and technological hybridisations that, by forging new paths, continually (re)invent world(s).

