Title: No Fish, No Mall. Industrial Fish Produce New Subjectivities in Southern Chile

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Abstract: This article draws on recent theories of assemblage to consider the more-than-human geographies involved in the production of new consumer-oriented urban landscapes. Primarily drawing on Bruno Latour (2005), this article develops key conceptual tools through an examination of the Mall Paseo Chiloé in southern Chile and the more-than-human objects and processes that play a role in its inception. While this article is concerned with neoliberal retail capital and its expansion, this article focuses on how the possibilities for this expansion were produced, in part, by the force of techno-industrial salmon aquaculture that had arrived in the region in previous years. Importantly, this salmon-commodity holds together a series of human-environmental relationships that make the arrival of the shopping mall possible in the first place. The mall is then conceptualized as an assemblage, with the salmon working as the linchpin that holds together multiple relations between the physical, built and emotional environments at the Chiloé archipelago. Keywords: Latour, aquaculture, retail, development, lively commodities, urbanization

1.0 Introduction

Researchers wanting to re-think the emerging built environments of urban life and consumption have a wealth of recent conceptual and theoretical-methodological innovations to engage with for inspiration. The wide scope of a broadly defined post-humanism and assemblage theory, in particular, have given researchers new vocabularies and new concepts with which to think about space, subjectivity, embodiment, and what brings them together (Farías 2010; Robbins and Marks 2010; Anderson and McFarlane 2011; Müller and Schurr 2016). For consumption studies, these include a focus on new financial technologies that enroll potential consumers into embodied relationships of data, debt and credit in new ways (Coll 2013; Beckett 2012; Deville 2014); new affective techno-atmospheres created through architectural design (Healy 2014; Lee 2015; Thibaud 2015); and the many ways that affective atmospheres are mediated by embodied subjectivity, emotion and identity (Rose et al. 2010; Degen et al. 2010; Krarup and Blok 2011). The materiality of consumer-oriented space is enlivened in these diverse approaches to the retail landscape as an assemblage of ongoing events, processes, materials, feelings, sensations, interventions, surprises and everyday practices (also see Roberts 2012 and Pyyry 2016). These and other recent works have, from my view, breathed new life into the geographies of consumption and retail, once a contentious area of critical thought and debate in human geography, but is only now being revamped with these recent approaches that elucidate the “more-than-human” and embodied components of the built retail environment today.

This article concurs with the promise of assemblage theory and draws on Bruno Latour’s (2005) Actor-Network Theory (ANT) to offer another way of exploring the components of an emerging urban geography of consumption in southern Chile. The analysis begins with the controversial Mall Paseo Chiloé in Castro (Figure 1), the urban center of the Chiloé archipelago (population around 40,000), but traces its conditions of possibility to another “lively commodity” (Barua 2017), the industrial salmon of aquaculture that have transformed the region in recent decades. While, in addition to the literature on consumption cited above, there are now many compelling and theoretically sophisticated accounts of the role of neoliberal retail capital and architecture in post-dictatorship Chile (Moulian 1997; Draper 2012; Fornazzari 2013; de Simone 2015), this article contributes by taking seriously the possibility that architectural projects such as the Mall Paseo Chiloé may also rely on the coherences afforded by broader environmental geographies and “more-than-human” activity. In focusing on the transformative impact of salmon aquaculture in the region, this article sets out to show how an ANT approach can help identify socio-spatial transformations that go beyond stability and organization, thereby highlighting emergent tendencies in the landscape, something numerous scholars have questioned when considering the relevance and explanatory power of ANT (Degen et al. 2010; Müller and Schurr 2016). This interpretation of ANT claims to highlight the emergent qualities of human-fish interaction, qualities that become apparent in the controversy around the Mall Paseo Chiloé. The trajectory of this architectural project, specifically, and its regional context, is a perfect opportunity to consider the “more-than-human” components of this building as a complex assemblage that includes the materials of the architectural space, but also goes beyond its physical materiality in important ways.

Figure 1. Mall Paseo Chiloé, with twin spires of San Francisco Church to the left (photo taken by author 2015)

This is not the first attempt at deploying assemblage theory to understand the impact of salmon aquaculture in the region. Hidalgo et al. (2015) draw on Tim Ingold’s (2000) idea of “dwelling” to explore the new human – non-human relationships that constitute landscape change across the archipelago of Chiloé, while Blanco et al. (2015) engage with Deleuze and Guattari (1987) in presenting an assemblage approach to regional development in the Aysén region just south of Chiloé, also transformed by industrial aquaculture in the last three decades. For Blanco et al. (2015), assemblage theory is (1) a way of exploring the mutual “becomings” between people and their environments in new techno-scientific and capitalist circumstances and (2) simultaneously a challenge to the hegemonic theories preferred by neoliberal philosophy that refer narrowly to the flows of private capital, entrepreneurial enterprise and institutional actors in explaining landscape transformation.

This article makes similar moves conceptually, but focuses on a series of human – non-human relationships that must be accounted for in the unexpected arrival of the Mall Paseo Chiloé in Castro, specifically. In setting out with Latour (2005) to “trace the associations” (p. 5) of the mall as an assemblage, this article highlights an empirical example of the industrial salmon as an “actant” that mediates the landscape, in terms of catalyzing emergent transformations in socio-spatial relations that lead to the formation of new kinds of built environments, such as the Mall Paseo Chiloé. The fish, in addition to their economic role in new world markets, produce a shift in the way life is organized in terms of social reproduction more broadly.

In the spirit of Blanco et al. (2015) and Hidaldo et al. (2015), this article sets out to explain the Mall Paseo Chiloé as the result of a broader set of landscape processes that begins with the region’s physical geographies and from there move outwards through the techno-scientific production of neoliberal environments during and following the Pinochet dictatorship (1973-1990). If the argument is that *fish produce consumer subjectivities*, then the use of Latour (2005) might perhaps seem like the wrong choice, considering the doubt that numerous researchers have expressed regarding the capacity of ANT to attend to human subjectivity as a part of assemblage thinking (Rose et al. 2010; Krarup and Blok 2011; Müller and Schurr 2016). While this article comes out of a larger ethnographic study of the mall itself and the many conflictual geographies and subjectivities therein, much of the focus of this article and its argument can be found in the rich secondary literature. In reading the historical geographies and development literature in this way specifically, and complementing that reading with findings from the original ethnographic research, I aim to illustrate how an ANT approach can do more than simply describe new kinds of human – non-human relations, but actually help explain how certain non-humans gain power in particular ways. As such, this article also borrows from Barua’s (2017) ANT-inspired exploration of “non-human labor” performed by lions in India, animals whose lives would present irresistible temptation for capitalists wishing to capture new kinds of value by pursuing the lion in eco-tourism activities. More than just describing a new set of relationships, this article follows Barua (2017) and traces a set of associations between the fish and the ecological environment, on the one hand, and the fish and the built urban environment, on the other. Through this lens, the mall arrives *trailing* the fish, as the harbinger of socio-spatial transformations in-line with the post-dictatorship consumer society that has been so well documented across Chile, but is only now arriving in places like the Chiloé archipelago.

The next section introduces Chiloé and the controversy around the mall. Then a section details the choice of Latour’s ANT for this exercise and lays out key concepts, such as “actant”. The article then sets out to “re-assemble” the MPC by “tracing the associations” that made it possible. The main empirical section outlines three main conduits that shape the Mall Paseo Chiloé as an assemblage: the physical geographies of the region and the existing built environment; the installation of industrial aquaculture infrastructure; and finally, the spatial technologies of retail capital.A discussion sections follows that elaborates on thinking retail architecture as an assemblage in this way and points to future orientations that incorporate subjectivity and embodiment as foundational for a full understanding of the politics of the mall, a future research program that goes beyond the scope of this article. A conclusion again summarizes the main argument: that the industrial salmon hold together a new set of human – non-human relations that create the conditions of possibility for the development of new consumer subjectivities at Chiloé, thereby signaling not only emergence, but also its potential capture by retail capital.

2.0 The Mall Paseo Chiloé controversy

Chiloé is known for its rural and agrarian livelihoods and architectures, which help shape a proud “Chilote” identity as distinct from the mainland (Daughters 2009). This cultural landscape, along with rich forests, attractive shorelines, lakes and beaches, attracts a growing number of tourists each year. Many stores and restaurants of Castro are still family owned and operate with informal systems of customer trust and store credit. As inhabitants often have to travel to the regional capital Puerto Montt on the mainland for advanced medical care, higher education and other advanced services, they take advantage of two large shopping malls there to access goods that are not accessible on the island, or that might arrive to the island with a marked-up price. The trip to the mainland, moreover, is complicated by geography and infrastructure: there is still no bridge that links the main island to the continent, and all travelers cross the channel by ferry, a process that takes both time and money.

In 2010, the Chilean company that operates the shopping malls in Puerto Montt, Pasmar, began construction of a shopping mall in central Castro. Pasmar is in fact headquartered in Puerto Montt and has invested $150 million in a regional retail development plan (Cárdenas 2017) that includes the shopping mall in Castro and other towns, including Ancud, another urban center of Chiloé. As the building in Castro grew in size and photographs of the structure looming over the much smaller built environment of Castro began circulating on social media and in the press (Figure 1), criticism swelled and prompted a passionate debate around the meaning of identity, heritage, landscape, environment and development, among other meta-concepts of interest in geographic thought. This mall is not only grossly out of proportion to the existing urban landscape, but located in the “historic” center of Castro and less than three blocks from the San Francisco Church, one of sixteen churches of Chiloé considered “World Heritage” by UNESCO. Critics alleged that Pasmar not only violated urban planning codes and other regulatory procedures, but also showed disrespect for the local heritage and culture of Chiloé by building so close to the church, a move that has jeopardized the “World Heritage” status with UNESCO. In turn, others strongly defended the mall, including the then-Mayor of Castro, who cited widespread grassroots support for the mall. Mall defenders are in favor of what they see as a new source of entertainment, employment and better prices in the consumer marketplace. This “right to consume” argument was quickly combined with the allegation that the critics were all “outsiders” interested in preserving Chiloé as an iconic space for their own consumption purposes (consistent with the growing tourism industry). I would learn this rhetoric to be greatly exaggerated and found a much more ambivalent public that this narrative of polarization and division alludes to (Author).

*How did this urban controversy originate? What accounts for the mall’s disruptive inception?* To answer these questions, this article moves toward Latour’s ANT approach, outlined below. There is more going on here than what critical scholars have said so far about transnational and Chilean retail capital. What if the Mall relied on the productive forces of another non-human now familiar to the region, the industrial Atlantic salmon of aquaculture? Before getting to that empirical case study material, the next section answers another question: why draw on the challenging area of assemblage theory and ANT for this exercise and not some other framework?

3.0 Assemblage Geographies: A Theoretical-Methodological Primer

For thinkers like Blanco et al. (2015) and Jane Bennett (2010), ANT and assemblage theory offer a subversive alternative to the prevailing epistemological paradigms inherited from the Enlightenment. In addition to these philosophical defenses of ANT and assemblage theory, others use it to highlight the transformations of power relations in specific ways. Shaw (2015), for instance, draws on ANT and assemblage theory to help explain the formation of new geopolitical “worlds” through the imperial deployment of drones in global warfare. Rather than authorizing an “anything goes” methodology, ANT and assemblage theory can insist on a radical materiality to emerging sets of power relations in the making.

 However, some have pointed out conceptual differences between ANT and assemblage theory. Müller and Schurr (2016) explain how for some, the assemblage theory of Deleuze and Guattari and their interlocutors opens up to new “virtual” possibilities where more-than-human constituents are constantly producing new potentials and areas of activity. Latour’s ANT, in turn, is often characterized as highlighting more-than-human life as well, but in a way that stresses stability and new kinds of cohering arrangements between humans and their environments. Müller and Schurr (2016) are skeptical of this exaggerated binary reading and identify areas where these approaches complement one another in important ways, while each could use additional development in relating to the fields of affect and desire in socio-spatial life (cf. Pile 2010). A similar conceptual framework is developed by Degen et al. (2010) with specific reference to the built environments of consumption, where bodies and environments are in constant motion and becoming, but also with the transformative impact of embodied subjectivity (cf. Krarup and Blok 2011). This article on the Mall Paseo Chiloé as an assemblage, then, includes subjectivity, evident in the cited secondary literature, as well as in the ethnographic material collected. Before that discussion, though, it helps to begin with the main concepts from Latour (2005) that will be deployed throughout the analysis, and then turn to the critique that ANT struggles in attending to human subjectivity.

One of Latour’s (2005) main worries about contemporary social science researchers is that they too often confuse “what they should explain with the explanation” (p. 8). When an idea of “the social” is relied on to explain the world, we conceptually forego of an opportunity to pin down what informs, coheres and potentially challenges the phenomenon in question. Rather than rely on abstract ideas of “society” to do this work, Latour (2005) insists on a radical specificity that helps us not only describe the world in new ways, but also point to new explanatory potential:

“What a great relief it is to discover that we are not ‘in society’ no more than we are ‘in’ nature. The social is not like a vast impalpable horizon in which every one of our gestures is embedded, society is not omnipresent, omniscient, ubiquitous, watching every one of our moves, sounding every one of our most secret thoughts like the omnipotent God of old catechisms. When we accept to draw the flattened landscape for which I offered a list of props, tricks, grids, and clamps, the social – at least that part that is calibrated, stabilized, and standardized, – is made to circulate inside tiny conduits that can expand only through more instruments, spending and channels” (p. 241).

Here, processes and things commonly described as “social” or “natural” are seen as hybrid figures that emerge only as a result of interactions of various kinds (Ogden 2011; Barua 2017). For Latour (2005), “‘the social’ is not some glue that could fix everything including what the other glues cannot fix; it is what is glued together by many other types of connectors” (p. 5). The methodological effect of this “flattening” is that we move to “trace the associations” (Latour 2005, p. 5) among humans, non-humans and material objects as so many material conduits through which life and politics emerge. As such, we get *closer* to the ways that power operates and what the conditions of possibility are for any political question (Castree 2002; Horowitz 2011; Shaw 2015).

Crucial for Latour are what he calls “actants”. The test to determine if something is an “actant” lies in its capacity to actively mediate the landscape, meaning it causes a shift or change in trajectory. If the object merely stands in for an assumed larger process and does not cause such a disruption or produce any difference, it is considered a mere “intermediary” because it simply reproduces the desired flow of the system. In contrast, something that *mediates* is responsible for producing a jolt, or change, that could not have been anticipated (also see Shaw’s 2014 “geo-event”). This article builds on other recent literature that interprets the impact of aquaculture through the lens of assemblage (Blanco et al. 2015) and specifies how the industrial salmon can be considered a Latourian actant in the way it simultaneously (a) holds together complex new human – non-human relations, and (b) produces the emergent potential for a new urban subjectivity, one that is seized upon by retail capital.

However, Krarup and Blok (2011) take issue with a Latourian ANT that simply replaces a subject-oriented philosophy with an object-oriented one, what they see as an unjustified philosophical move. The continued force of social ideas (about self, other, the collective and the individual, for instance) remains a constitutive force in landscape transformation. Their solution is the “quasi-actant” (Krarup and Blok 2011) that can bridge the gap, thereby making ANT more amendable to subjectivity. Similarly, others like Degen et al. (2010) have fused an assemblage theory of the built environment with the emotional and affective dynamics of embodied subjectivity explicitly (also see Rose et al. 2010). While acknowledging the mediating force of the built environment (especially the built environments of consumption with their manipulative design logics and architectures), the experience is nevertheless always already mediated by the embodied force of the social constructs that we produce and make circulate in networks of relations.

 This article includes subjectivity as a component of the mall assemblage in two ways. First, by reading the historical geographies of development with the lens of Latour (2005) and others like Barua (2017), we track the emergence of corporate retail to previous developments in industrial aquaculture and its impact on Chiloé’s subjectivity and identity. The evidence that industrial fish are involved in the production of new consumer subjectivities is already apparent in extent literature on regional development. Second, this exploration of the Mall Paseo Chiloé as an assemblage comes out of a larger ethnographic research project around the mall specifically. As such, some key qualitative findings also inform this re-assembling of the new consumer landscape in Castro. While there is much more to develop with this qualitative material specifically, the scope of this article is to explore the more-than-human conditions of subjectivity, rather than a close examination and analysis of those subjectivities themselves. Nevertheless, we glimpse something of the new kinds of subjectivity that are in formation at Chiloé.

4. Re-Assembling the Mall Paseo Chiloé as an Assemblage

The narrative below uses a mixture of secondary and original ethnographic materials in a way that highlights the “more-than-human” elements that are at play in the Mall Paseo Chiloé, thereby going beyond the designs of retail capital and landscape design, management and architecture, the focus of much recent work in this tradition. The subsections below describe three Latourian “conduits” that together constitute the Mall Paseo Chiloé as an assemblage. First is the force exerted by the material and physical geographies of the region, including the movement of tectonic plates, ocean currents and climate characteristics, as well as the existing built urban environments as experienced during fieldwork in 2013 and 2015. The second conduit is the techno-scientific production of the Atlantic salmon as an industrial commodity that effectively integrates the socio-ecologies of southern Chile into new world markets on a large scale. Third is the arrival of corporate retail formats in the built environment, epitomized by the Mall Paseo Chiloé. The goal is to situate the arrival of the mall amid a series of transformations in socio-spatial practices and subjectivity that were generated by the nature-society relations of industrial salmon aquaculture. As such, the salmon – despite their being a product of extensive techno-science – become “lively” (Barua 2017) insofar as they help produce conditions for other socio-technical systems to expand (retail), thereby exerting a force beyond their own materiality. In this way, the industrial salmon can also be considered a Latourian actant insofar as they “do something” to the landscape, rather than simply act as an intermediary of and for transnational fish capital.

*4.1 Physical geography and the built environment*

Most of Chile is mountainous. The collision of the Nazca and South American tectonic plates (subduction) produces the dramatic mountain landscape from the north to the south of Chile, spanning more than 4,000 kilometers. The islands of the Chiloé archipelago, too, *are* subduction, a massive earth process that has produced one large island (known as the “Isla Grande”, or “Big Island”) and around forty smaller islands located in the calm island created between the Big Island and the continent (Figure two). Upwelling from the Humboldt ocean current brings nutrients to the aquatic environments around the archipelago and have made it inhabitable for centuries, as the human populations have long survived as sea-faring peoples. In the sub-sections below, we will consider the contemporary nature-society relations that have made this a major salmon producing region on a large and industrial scale. This sub-section, though, considers another feature of Chiloé’s physical geography, namely, the climate. In the global precipitation regions outlined by Strahler and Strahler (1996), Chiloé is classified as a “mid latitude west coast” region, meaning that

“In these zones, abundant orographic precipitation occurs as a result of forced uplift of mP air masses. Where the coasts are mountainous, as in Alaska and British Columbia, south Chile, Scotland, Norway, and South Island of New Zealand, the annual precipitation is over 200 cm (79 in)”.

The rainy climate at Chiloé would later become a factor in the argument for the Mall Paseo Chiloé. Mall proponents argued that in addition to better prices through competition, inhabitants of Chiloé deserve to have a place to escape the constant rain, especially during the long winter months. The enclosure factor of the mall – its capacity to close off space and control its atmospheric dynamics, providing shelter – is what makes it a fundamentally biopolitical kind of architecture (Sloterdijk 2013). Indoor malls, of course, have always been “ideal” for regions with such extreme weather. The “right to consume” discourse often included reference to these conditions, as many residents have become familiar with the shopping malls of Puerto Montt, where two large shopping malls are located. Often during the fieldwork, this desire was framed as “something nice for the children” who are confined indoors during the long rainy months and who deserve to have something more, something most of Chile already has access to.

Michelle (age around 50), a resident of Chiloé, offered more specialized insight into the impact of this rainy environment. I met her at one of her two retail jobs and we met again later for an interview. I asked her to elaborate on something she said when we first met, which led her to share insight on her other job as a cashier at Sodimac Homecenter, a big-box hardware and home goods store (similar to Home Depot) located on the edge of Castro.

Author: What were you explaining to me the other day about your fears that the

low-income population in the area will become indebted consumers?

Michelle: For the low wages, more than anything. You’ll find really expensive stores [at the mall], expensive food, everything. Someone with a minimum wage shouldn’t even think about it! But if you’re bored, because here it rains and rains and rains and rains and rains, the only place to go will be the mall. You’ll be bored but will end up buying something. Actually, that happens at Sodimac. There are people who go to walk around and end up buying something”. (August 8, 2013, interview)

There is a lot contained in this response. These remarks display a kind of foreboding about the mall once it opens. Several other participants shared this foreboding, even if they also were excited about the opening of the mall. Research by Moulian (1997), Van Bavel et al. (2003) and Han (2012) suggests that retail capital knows no boundaries when equipped with the technology of consumer finance. Moreover, Michelle, through her daily observations as a retail worker, is able to put a finger on the trick of this kind of retail experience. Visitors are attracted by the spatial amenities and the plethora of objects on display, sheltered from the elements. In these meandering moments in the mega-store, impulse buys are generated through retail design and other management strategies (Lee 2015; cf. Goss 1993).

Indeed, around central Castro there is little respite from the rainy clouds in terms of built environments like shelters or public arcades (Figure 3). However, despite the “right to consume” narrative I encountered during the fieldwork, I was perplexed to find a variety of retail options in the center of Castro. While there are not yet any national or international fast-food chain restaurants, the bustling streets around the plaza include family owned diners, restaurants, supermarkets (both small and large, including the major national chain store), butcher shops, vegetable stands, two book stores, tourist agencies, bars, hotels, hostels and a variety of retail options ranging from tired looking family owned shops to somewhat more chic national clothing chain stores lining the town square, blasting pop music through loud speakers. In the interviews I began asking participants what they believed the mall would offer that is not already in Castro. The most common answers highlighted either (1) more jobs for the local economy, (2) a respite from the rainy weather, (3) more recreational opportunities and (4) access to more variety and better prices as a result of large department stores. Figures 3 and 4 gives a sense of the aging everyday built environments I encountered in August 2013.

Figure 3. Limited street covering and protection from the rain, Castro (Photo taken by author 2013).

Figure 4. Broken swing set, Castro (Photo taken by author 2013).

What force does the rainy environment have on a society that is now being told that it is in need of large quasi-public indoor spaces like shopping malls? We see this articulation between the physical geography, the built environment and the emerging emotional geography of consumption at Chiloé in the optimistic responses given by some participants. One life-long resident of Castro who lives directly below and in the shadows of the mall, said “I don’t understand why they [critics] are against it. I at least am happy because we are advancing. We don’t have big buildings. In the centro we only have the church. Now we have the casino, but it isn’t as big as this” (Gilda, around 50, July 23, 2013). Another resident explained that “most feel proud to have something like this. This is an island you know - should have something like this. There are some stores here, but they are super small” (Matías, around 50, July 23, 2013, interview). As such, talking about the weather has emotional overtones, as the Mall Paseo Chiloé will bring not only retail justice in terms of prices and entertainment, but a sense of validation in the ability to escape the forces of nature. In later fieldwork, I continued to hear residents complain about the long trip to Puerto Montt, a trip that might take the entire day, include crossing the channel by ferry, and might be expensive for those without personal automobiles who rely on purchasing bus tickets for the entire family. These findings point to an *emotional physical geography* at Chiloé, an area for future research.

The physical geographies of the region are important in another major way. In the turn toward export-oriented neoliberalism, techno-scientific capital would use the local ecologies to craft new engines of production, consumption and ways of life that would have widespread consequences across the archipelago and other regions in southern Chile.

*4.2 Neoliberal fish-human relations*

In describing the physical geographies of southern Chile where Chiloé is located, Schurman (2004) writes that “a propitious combination of geographical features – deep glacial lakes, clean and protected inland seas, and perfect water temperatures – created some of the best salmon farming conditions in the world” (p. 320). Soluri (2011) elaborates on how the physical geographies of the region were advantageous for the introduction of the non-native Atlantic salmon:

“Atlantic salmon aquaculture in southern Chile mimics the life cycle of wild Atlantic salmon insofar as the juvenile fish are raised initially in freshwater before being transferred to sea pens.... Access to southern Chile’s relatively clean, freshwater lakes meant that aquaculture firms did not have to invest in the enclosed recirculation systems commonly used in Norway to nurture juvenile salmonids – a classic comparative advantages” (p. 63)

The rapid growth of aquaculture through the 1990s and early 2000s is, of course, related to longer trajectories of development in the region and the rule of the Pinochet military dictatorship from 1973 to 1990. As the neoliberal plan solidified by the late 1970s under the protection of an authoritarian and violent state apparatus, natural resource extraction across Chile was facilitated by the suppression of the labor movement and by an orientation to export to the world market. Around Chiloé, industrial activities grew around fishing and other sea-food producing activities. By the late 1980s, wild stocks had been depleted, while the aquaculture sector continued to develop (Schurman 2004). At this point in time, capitalists and other state managers began to accelerate the production of a massive aquaculture infrastructure to connect into the physical geographies described above.

 Aquaculture had been a long time in the making in southern Chile. The Atlantic salmon had to be brought to Chile and the historical record shows multiple projects and transnational collaborations that made that possible, linking Chile with Japan, the U.S. and eventually Norway as a major investor (Soluri 2011). Iizuka and Katz (2015) outlines the “endogenous capabilities and institutions” of the region in southern Chile that were crucial in plugging into the new transnational networks of investment, transport, production and consumption, including what they call “social technologies” (p. 141). By the 1990s, major capital investments accelerated the growth of salmon farms, and Chile would soon become the world’s second leading exporter of salmon in the world by 2006 (Schurman 2004), with most of that production coming from southern Chile, including Chiloé. Tens of thousands of jobs were created in the processing factories, on the farms and in related industries, but the results were contradictory (Schurman 2001, 2004). Soluri (2011) writes that the growth of jobs in this sector helped stimulate “a dramatic decline in the percentage of people living in poverty, although income levels in the region remained among the lowest in Chile” (p. 56). Simultaneously, other sectors remain active, such as artisanal fishing and subsistence agriculture in the rural areas of Chiloé (Hidalgo et al. 2015; Daughters 2015), thereby suggesting that the impact of this new industry has been felt unevenly across the region.

 As the lightly regulated industry grew, the environmental impacts became more and more apparent as the run-off from the farms intensified (Barton and Fløysand 2010). Furthermore, salmon are carnivores, so their growth created pressure on other fish populations in order to feed and grow the industrial mass. The growth of the salmon farms was soon out of control, insofar as a sanitary crisis exposed the risks of managing salmon farms in such a way. The industry nearly collapsed with 2007 when the Infectious Salmon Anemia(ISA) virus was found in Chiloé and spread rapidly among the fish, a consequence of such intensive methods that allowed factors like sea-lice to act as a disease vector. Although the industry has since recovered, it remains open to these and other ecological threats, such as toxic algae blooms that can also kill the fish on a massive scale (The Guardian 2016).

 To manage the new industrial ecology of the fish farm, constant attention and maintenance is required, thereby leading to new fish-human interactions that constitute the mundane aspects of the new aquaculture landscape. Hidalgo et al. (2015) draw on Tim Ingold (2000) to understand human-environment relations across the rural spaces of the archipelago and place aquaculture within broader and more diverse economies of subsistence agriculture and livestock; sea-weed collection; and small scale artisanal fishing. For them, Ingold’s “dwelling” perspective accesses the more sensual relations that bring together humans with animals and other non-humans of the environment. Although Hidalgo et al. (2015) situate the salmon industry amid a much broader and more diverse rural economy, they also conclude that the new human-fish relationship in aquaculture had led to “changes in islander livelihood strategies, through the incorporation of notions like salary, pre-established working hours, and hierarchical labour structures, among others” (p. 59). In drawing on Ingold, Latour and others, they conclude that **“**the archipelago is a complex system that features emergent properties (as the cultural landscapes of marine spaces) that are enabled by the interaction of their components (in this case, the archipelago’s inhabitants)” (p. 64). Landscape and dwelling are always emerging together.

 Similarly, Blanco et al. (2015) set out to describe the new sets of relationships between fish, humans and their techno-environments as they mutually shape one another in a process of perpetual growth and emergence. Importantly, the role of affect remains central to their assemblage, which then leads them to emphasize the emerging “inter-subjectivities” among the components of landscape change in Aysén, a region just south of Chiloé where salmon farming has also made strong impact on social reproduction. Drawing on ethnographic work in salmon worker camps and observing the everyday functioning of the farms themselves, Blanco et al. (2015) highlight the emergence of a “salmon-public”, a hybrid figure that encompasses the “quasi-actant” of subjectivity (Krarup and Blok 2011) amid the broader flows of more-than-human agents, including the techno-industrial infrastructure itself (cameras, sea-pens, transportation) and the embodied practices of salmon farming.

 In drawing on Latour’s ANT, this article makes another methodological argument around the vitality of these commodity-fish, their broader ecological environments, and the non-human labor of the industrial salmon in particular. Rather than offer another version of Blanco et al. (2015) assemblage of new human – non-human interactions, this article explores the possibility that these industrial fish are productive of new and emerging subjectivities that are associated with the Mall Paseo Chiloé and a prevailing consumer culture in Chile. Next we turn to this set of relationships between the fish-human assemblage (what Blanco et al. [2015] call the “salmon-public”) and the emergence of a new consumer landscape epitomized by the Mall Paseo Chiloé. This article builds on this previous work on assemblage to make another kind of argument about how the industrial salmon are constantly performing “labor”, insofar as they produce new conditions of possibility for an uncertain and contingent future. In other words, in their coherence they also generate the forces of the “virtual”, or what Deleuze and Guatarri (1987) also called “lines of flight” that attract the attention of Blanco et al. (2015). In tracing the industrial fish to the subjectivities of the new shopping mall, we highlight not only a moment of emergence, but the attempt by retail capital to re-capture it.

*4.3 Industrial fish produce new subjectivities*

One major outcome of industrialization of Chiloé is, not surprisingly, urbanization (Barton et al. 2013). Young workers leave the countryside to work in the processing factories in the growing towns and cities, where many live as participants in an urban economy much different from the community-oriented rural areas. In the last census, over 60 percent of the population of Chiloé was now considered urban (Daughters 2015, p. 1). Anthropologist Anton Daughters (2016) summarizes the stakes of this growth for the cultural identity of Chiloé:

“The effect on Chiloé’s rural life was significant. Practical kinship networks withered as the economy shifted from one based on barter and reciprocity to cash and short-term transactions (Mansilla Torres 2004; Saliéres et al. 2005). The sense of mutual obligation between neighbors, long held in place by mingas and medanes, slowly gave way to greater individualistic pursuits by wage-earning households (Daughters 2009, 2014). Work rhythms were uprooted as communities once dependent on cycles of nature (tides, seasons, fish migratory patterns) became subject to the clock and a fixed work schedule. Young families that abandoned their minifundios and moved to urban centers for wage labor gradually found themselves vulnerable to greater economic instability and dependent on a steady cash inflow as renters and urban consumers’ (p. 324).

The industrial fish, then, more than just link together people, environments, fish and consumers into new kinds of techno-environmental systems, have catalyzed a transformation in the human geographies specifically, insofar as the landscape is also a socio-cultural product (Krarup and Blok 2011; Hidalgo et al. 2015). In short, participation in the salmon industry changed where and how people live and dwell, and thereby changed some of the foundational bases of regional identity and subjectivity. Barrette et al. (2002) summarize this connection between work in the salmon industry and an emerging consumer subjectivity specifically:

“More than the income itself, work in the salmon industry allows people to go to the city and purchase on credit. The most common purchasing practice in Chile is a quota payment system. Chileans use this quota plan to buy everything and anything, from a pair of shoes to a vacation. It is this type of credit people strive to obtain. *The workers with their salary, are therefore, converted into potential consumers*” (p. 1957, emphasis added).

During the fieldwork, I often asked participants about the salmon industry. Felipe Montiel is a civic leader involved in various heritage related organizations and is the Director of the Municipal Museum in Castro. He described it as the “salmon effect” (interview July 15, 2015, Museo Municipal de Castro), described as a mostly negative process whereby outside interests intervene in the life of the islanders and impose on them a vapid new consumer culture. “The countryside is being left behind” he said, lamenting that “today’s youth no longer know the trades of the countryside”. In a follow-up interview (October 6, 2015, Museo Municipal de Castro), he described the shopping mall as the “icing on the cake” of a series of large-scale infrastructure projects that have been undemocratically imposed on the archipelago in recent decades, namely, aquaculture, and now the mega-bridge (along with other impending projects). In this way, the fish have an impact and become actants *indirectly*, as their force is felt through its integration with other systems and dynamics. While the lively status of Barua’s (2017) lions unfolds directly through their sensuous materiality, the lively potential of these industrial salmon is more diffuse, insofar as their survival in the ecologies of southern Chile creates the conditions of possibility for other transformations in culture and society, including the dynamics of advanced retail capital.

Here, we also find the sliver of subjectivity argued for by Krarup and Blok (2011). A large scale retail development like the Mall Paseo Chiloé would have been unthinkable in the time preceding the neoliberal boom in aquaculture, a time, according to Daughters (2016), of other kinds of economies that were less focused on money and credit, and more focused on the communal practices of the “*minga* and *medanes*” (*minga* refers to a “reciprocal labor practice” [p. 322] and *medanes* to “gift giving sessions by neighbors” [p. 324], a practice with origins in the indigenous Huilliche tradition). The industrial salmon prepared the population for participation in the prevailing consumer economies of Chile by offering a cash and credit economy on a large scale for the first time. From a relational ontology perspective, we see how the coherence of a new set of nature-society relations produces the potential that another circuit can then feed from in yet another development opportunity, retail in this case. This is consistent with what Manuel De Landa (2006) considers the foundation of (Deleuzian) assemblage theory, which are “relations of exteriority”, according to Müller and Schurr (2016), who suggest: “For him, this notion means that entities in relations are not fully determined by these relations, but always exhibit a surplus, something that is outside relations, and enables them to plug into other assemblages” (Müller and Schurr 2016, p. 220). This passage from salmon worker to urban consumer is one example of such emergent possibilities and is what qualify the fish as Latourian actants in the shopping mall assemblage.

 These transformations of subjectivity, though, are far from uniform or evenly distributed across the archipelago. Notwithstanding these far-reaching consequences of industrialization and urbanization, Daughters (2015) also reports on continuities in cultural identity across generations and even new kinds of “resistance” to these trends for some rural communities committed to longstanding livelihood strategies like fishing (also see Saavedra 2015). Hidalgo et al. (2015), again, detail a diverse economy across the archipelago. There has also been ethnographic work on the gender dimensions of the aquaculture transformation, as women formed part of the industrial aquaculture labor force for the first time. Schurman (1996) writes that the jobs were low paying by international and national standards, but were “still a better income than they could earn working in someone’s home” (p. 1701). Similar to Tinsman’s (2006, 2014) findings on female workers in the fruit industry in the Central Valley of Chile to the north, Schurman (1996) suggest that working in a *pesquera,* or processing facility:

“also gave them more autonomy and economic independence from the husbands, partners and fathers (Délano and Lehmami 1993). In sum, while there were some important drawbacks of the seafood industry’s growth, including the physical problems associated with working in a cold, damp atmosphere for 10-12 hours a day, and low pay for their hard labor, most workers appreciated having this new employment opportunity. For women in particular, factory work offered better incomes, increased status and a sense of power and independence within the family, as well as a chance for more social interaction” (Schurman 1996, p. 1701)

To close this sub-section on the emerging consumer subjectivities of Chiloé, it is important to recognize the role of embodiment and gender specifically. That is, the production of new consumer subjectivities might contain more than simply new forms of capture and control that assume a kind of universalist subject (Tolia-Kelly 2006). In pulling from Tinsman (2014) and Schurman (1996) on the lives of women, we even get a sense of how these changes are multiple, complex and mediated by embodied difference and gendered subjectivities. The ethnographic fieldwork pointed to additional ways that the controversy around the mall is also complex, as a significant number of participants defended their “right to consume” via the new mall, but added that desiring the mall does not make them “less Chilote” (Miller 2016). In light of these general findings around subjectivity, we might consider another theorist associated in the post-human turn to assemblage thinking, Donna Haraway. The famous “cyborg” fuses the new techno-infrastructure with the content of radical consciousness, perhaps a useful alternative to theories of assemblage that emphasize a new techno-affective capture through the environments of consumption today (Gandy 2005).

5.0 Summarizing the Mall Paseo Chiloé as Assemblage

In staging a reading of the development literature along with select ethnographic findings through the lens of Latour (2005), Barua (2017) and other scholars working with similar frameworks in southern Chile, this article explores the urban architecture of the Mall Paseo Chiloé as a “more-than-human” assemblage that includes both emergence and subjectivity. As such, this selective reading and narrating of the archive shows the promise of these conceptual frameworks to be mutually constructive and far from oppositional (Müller and Schurr 2016). More specifically, this approach with ANT was conducted with the intention of avoiding the tendency identified by Anderson et al. (2012) that “assemblage” is used “simply to designate a new form of socio-spatial organization in a way that drains this terminology of its dynamic potential” (2012, p. 173)” (quoted in Müller and Schurr 2016, p. 220). The rich qualitative material already available, as well as the rich debate and controversy around the Mall Paseo Chiloé, offer up a wealth of material on the status of a new consumer subjectivity at Chiloé as an emergent process that derives from the salmon-human relationship that has flourished in recent decades.

This article, then, presents an empirical illustration of how the industrial fish of southern Chile become Latourian *actants* insofar as other socio-technical projects can now be built on/with the new materialities co-produced by people, fish and their environments. In exploring the “encounter value” produced for the tourist industry by the wild lions of “postcolonial India”, Barua (2017, p. 275) draws on assemblage theory to suggest that their theoretically-informed narrative “indexes the important fact that nothing in nonhuman labour is automatically aligned to logics of capital: encounter value generated at a particular juncture retains the potential for being use values for other socio-ecological projects” (Barua 2017, p. 286). As such, “lively commodities” produce additional and unexpected outlets and opportunities to produce value – in their case, ecotourism. With the industrial fish of southern Chile, there is less of a direct line of impact made by the fish themselves, but rather the productive and emergent potential that is generated by their laboring as bio-physical and socio-technical agents. Moreover, the productive life of these industrial fish is perhaps even more astounding when considering the extent to which they are historical products of scientific and technological intervention and maintenance. Despite this fact, the fish catalyze a series of transformations that qualify them as Latourian actants, such that they cause a shift in environment-society relations that is manifest in the emerging built environments far beyond the salmon farms and processing facilities.

6.0 Conclusion

Rather than offer another version of how things come together in new and unexpected ways, this article proposes that an ANT approach can attend to emergence and the formation of new socio-spatial subjectivities. These are exposed in the controversy around the Mall Paseo Chiloé, as some residents argued forcefully for and against the new mall. This article conceptualizes the industrial fish as both the linchpin of a complex new socio-ecological system, and as productive of new potentialities in the socio-cultural domain, seen through the changing built environment epitomized not only by the shopping mall, but also the casino, Sodimac Home Center store and the commercial airport that just began service to the island in recent years.

This is not the only way to conduct an analysis of urban architecture from an assemblage or ANT perspective. A critical urban theory of retail might focus on the “engineering” (Thrift 2004) of new consumer subjects through the distributions of new kinds of affective and emotional atmospheres (Allen 2006; Miller 2015), a theoretical perspective in human geography that is well suited for understanding bio- and geo-politics of retail and consumption in Chile today (Draper 2012). With an assemblage approach that seeks the more-than-human components of our world, though, we can be sure to avoid the same epistemological and political maneuver of retail capital and its biopolitical engineers. In denying this self-certainty of retail capital, this assemblage approach to the Mall Paseo Chiloé is meant to highlight its conditions of possibility, leading to other conduits of human-environment interaction. In short – no fish, no mall.

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Figure Captions

Figure 1. Mall Paseo Chiloé, with twin spires of the San Francisco church to the left (photo taken by author 2015).

Figure 2. X Los Lagos Region (map by Manuel Prieto).

Figure 3. Limited street covering and protection from the rain, Castro (Photo taken by author 2013).

Figure 4. Broken swing set, Castro (Photo taken by author 2013).

Figure 5: Salmon sea pen and “casa flotante” or “floating house” (photo taken by author, 2015).