



Special Issue

The Argentine Beach as Workspace: Temporalities, Materialities, and Social Entanglements

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Abstract

In this article, I show that the beach is more than its physical space and the legislation. I argue that the beach is an interrelation between physical space and people's actions while interacting with the space. I discuss the fact that beaches are physical and social and change over the year. Furthermore, the beach has a liminal site within the urban space. In this article, I focus on one of the actors constituting the beach: the street vendors. The view from this group becomes central to understanding the beach as a multiple social space. A look at vendors also allows for the understanding of how open spaces are negotiated and disputed. The article also focuses on the Beach as a collaborative space between actors and materiality and how the legislation is used situationally.

Keywords: Beaches; Ambulant Vendors; Argentina; Ethnography; Temporalities; Workspace

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Introduction

During an afternoon in July of 2024 in Mar del Plata, I crossed the avenue until I reached the trunk that divides the path from the stairs leading to the sand. I saw how the sand and the sea extend for kilometers. On one side, I saw only a man playing with his dog and a woman strolling. Looking the other way, I saw some children in jackets and hats running towards the sea with a handful of sand that they threw into the waves. The parents, holding their *mate* (a traditional Argentine infusion) in their hands, followed them. They asked the boys not to get wet. Later, I met Juliana, a family friend who lives in the city, and she told me something that immediately caught my attention:

“In summer, you cannot go to the beach because everything is privatized; there is no space. Between the tents and umbrellas, the vendors, the noise, the only thing you can do is take a dip and come back home [she lives two blocks from the beach]. Going to the beach is impossible; it’s not a nice experience. We go to the beach in November or December. During January and February, the beach is only to cool off and come back home.

On another July afternoon, I met up with friends who usually spend their summer and winter vacations in a small town called Mar de las Pampas, about 100 kilometers north of Mar del Plata (an Argentine city in the Province of Buenos Aires). They have owned a family home there for over ten years and spend all their holidays “on the coast.” We spent the morning on the beach with only a few people around. It was nearly noon, and the children had gotten hungry. Martín decided to check if the Parador [restaurant] was open. It was closed. Then, with a resigned look, her partner, Macarena, mother of three girls, says smiling,

This is different in summer. You always have something to buy to eat. It’s annoying sometimes because the vendors yell, but they also serve. In summer, you wait a little while for a vendor to show up. Now we must leave the beach and move everything. That’s no good, she laughs.

In winter, there are many clothes and fewer people. The sound of the sea is present. You can hear the waves crashing, the cries of seagulls, and the barking of dogs. In summer, people wear bathing suits and beaches are crowded. Music is loud, boys are shouting, guitars are being played, and street vendors are busy. In winter, the sand is cold; in summer, it burns. In winter—except for a few surfers—the sea is empty; in summer, beaches are full of people. In Argentina, winter is cold, and summer is warm.

The climate makes beaches, especially those in the Province of Buenos Aires, pilgrimage places for thousands of people who visit the seaside cities during the summer, from mid-December to the end of February, in search of rest and relief from the heat.

What is commonly called “the season” disrupts the daily life of beach towns. During this period, everyone lives according to a specific spatial-temporal rhythm. I will call this the “Beach Time.” *Beach Time* is a social-temporal and spatial phase that creates new forms of visibility and work opportunities. It is a time when rules change, and beaches become entirely different. *Beach Time* also helps us see that *beaches* are not the same throughout the year.

For this to happen, cities prepare themselves by transforming their urban infrastructure (Abrantes, 2024). At the same time, the space is reshaped by various infrastructures—some more permanent, like beach resorts, tents, umbrellas, and restaurants, and others more ephemeral, such as

people themselves as infrastructures (Simone, 2004), who help constitute the beach. Among these are street vendors. Many travel from Buenos Aires or other parts of the country, while others are local residents who, during those months, take on the role of beach vendors.

Based on fieldwork with beach vendors—supplemented by observations of vacationers’ practices and spatial changes—I aim to demonstrate that beaches are more than just physical spaces or legal classifications. I argue that beaches emerge from the interaction between physical space and the ways people engage with, discuss, and utilize it. In this sense, beaches are not isolated entities. They are both physical and social, and their features change between the high season and the off-season.

This perspective is neither fixed nor does it strictly contrast “beach time” with other timeframes. Instead, beach time is not limited to the official “season”; it spans the entire year. At the same time, the beach itself influences and changes people’s behaviors.

The perspective from street vendors is crucial for understanding Beach Time and how this particular time is not just a simple contrast or addition to the season. As key figures in many people’s vacation experiences—like Macarena—they help explain how open spaces are negotiated and challenged. Even the beach itself changes with the presence of vendors.

Re-thinking beaches. Social and Temporal Transformations of the Argentine Coastal Space

There are specific physical characteristics that define what a beach is. The Royal Spanish Academy, for example, defines the beach as “Riverside of the sea or of a large river, made up of sandbanks on an almost flat surface.”¹ The beach is also a landform, a sedimentation of materials like sand in a coastal area. This material? Perspective allows us to classify a wide range of places. The beach has physical features that can vary: beaches with mountains, dunes, vegetation, waves, and cold or warm waters where you can swim year-round. Local processes also shape these spaces. In advertisements or rankings about the best beaches, it is often hard to distinguish between physical space and qualities like being “virgin,” “exotic,” “empty,” “entertaining,” having “infrastructure,” or whether it is worth visiting at all.

As Low (2025, p. 1) said

Beaches—from seashores to lakesides and riverfronts—are a unique form of public space valued for their environmental, social, cultural, aesthetic, spiritual, and affective resources and meanings. They are places where water and land come together creating shorelines of opportunities for working, playing, relaxing, strolling, socializing, picnicking, and living—in scenic seaside homes that range from self-built shelters to multimillion-dollar mansions.

The point here is *how* all these happen and how to investigate them.

In recent years, beach studies have gained increasing attention. On one hand, as (Bidet and Devienne, 2017) argue, the politicization of beaches lies at the heart of contemporary political and econo-

1 PLAYA. In: REAL ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA. **Diccionario de la lengua española**. [Madrid]: RAE, [2014-]. Disponível em: <https://dle.rae.es/playa>. Acesso em: Agosto 2024.

mic conflicts (also see Salle and Bruno in this issue). These include the impacts of climate change and urbanization, such as rising sea levels; the growing privatization of coastal areas; and the transformation of beaches into leisure zones, which generates tensions with other industries and often leads to the appropriation of these spaces by certain social groups to the detriment of others.

Furthermore, beaches have become sites for generating socioeconomic value through various public uses. This has prompted scholars to examine the consequences of beaches not being public anymore, and to investigate why public access to and control over these valuable common resources are increasingly being lost (Low, 2025). Some studies have also highlighted the need to understand beaches as sites that embody a complex relationship between nature and culture, calling for an approach that takes into account the physical characteristics of the beach as a non-human actor (Machado, 2000).

Following this perspective and the necessity of a multiscalar (Bidet and Devienne, 2017, p. 5-6) and relational analysis, but centered on particular spatialities that create local forms of appropriation and politization (Perelman, 2025), some investigations show that beaches are places where racial relations are reproduced (Farias, 2006; Low, 2025), involving disputes over the legitimate use of space and ways of doing business (Perelman, 2025; Sartore, 2019), which are marked by spatial dynamics (understood as a social production of power relations) and life trajectories that shape beach commerce (Sartore *et al.*, 2023).

As both local and global spaces, beaches vary depending on their history, location, and ability to foster social processes. Beaches are shaped by their physical features, often studied by geographers, but they are also a workspace for beach vendors—informal workers who sell goods and services to beachgoers.

Their presence varies with the seasons. In Aracaju (Sergipe, Brazil), for instance, vendors are active throughout the year, although their numbers—and those of beach bar staff—decline during the low season. As Sartore (2019) notes, beach bar owners rely on summer profits to get through the winter. Nonetheless, they are always present. In the Caribbean, vendor presence remains consistent. In Rio de Janeiro, for example, work related to the beach as a livelihood can be seen as a continuous daily activity that reflects specific and enduring moralities and spatial relationships (Ferreira, 2024; Pires, 2020).

Pires (2020) illustrates this cultural context by showing how Brazilian beach vendors in Rio de Janeiro evaluate their businesses along sidewalks and avenues near the beach, and how their daily work is connected to the space. In Pires's case study, working on the beach becomes a life project, morally valued over time. His findings reveal how daily relationships develop different ways of valuing lifestyles, leading to economic stability based on moral judgments about what constitutes a decent life and how personal respect functions as a social relationship.

Most of the Argentine seaside towns and cities change with the arrival of the beach season. Seasonal tourism transforms city life and creates specific markets (labor, housing, etc.) (De Abrantes, 2024). Even the largest coastal city, Mar del Plata (Argentina's sixth-largest urban area), is experiencing significant changes. According to the 2022 census, the city's population was 667,082 residents. In recent seasons, over one million people have spent their summers there, 400 kilometers from the Argentine capital.

Going to the beach is undoubtedly one of the main activities for summer vacationers. It is also the workplace for thousands of people. On the coast of Buenos Aires, *Beach Time* is a particular

moment when the Beach is transformed from its winter cultural setting. Not only are they city residents, but also many street vendors who travel and reshape the established markets within these cities. The summer season brings a sense of temporality that fosters new relationships in the physical space. Vendors become part of the beach experience.

Figura 1 – Beaches during winter



Source: Image 1 (losviajeros.com); Image 2 (the author, in July 2023)

Figura 2 – Beaches during summer



Source: Image 3 (Infobae Newspaper); Image 4 (Clarín Newspaper)

Beach as a commercial space. The Beach Time

On a Wednesday in July 2023, I was in a small coastal town near Villa Gessell (another Argentine city in the Province of Buenos Aires). It was winter, and the temperature was five degrees Celsius. The sun was slowly warming the sand, and the wind was nearly constant. Few people walked along the beach. It was 11:30 in the morning when Sonia arrived with a modified cart to move easily across the sand. She approached me and asked if I wanted to buy a piece of cake she had made. She told me about all the varieties she had to offer. I thanked her, but I did not want anything. We continued talking. She explained she lives in Mar de las Pampas, a small town on the Buenos Aires coast. “I left everything a few years ago and settled here year-round. For me, this is a privilege. Look at what the sea is: peace.”

That was the first of several conversations we had. Sonia is one of the few beach vendors who sell on the beach year-round. “I am the only one, along with Pedro [corn vendor], who is here all year. Then many come in summer,” she said. Sonia mentions that the beach becomes crowded in sum-

mer with people, police, and municipal officials. The associated restaurants have staff selling food, and she must negotiate schedules and spaces. During summer, the time for sales, the methods of selling, and how she moves around on the beach all change.

The description of De Abrantes (2024) about the coastal resort town of Villa Gesell, one of the most important destinations on the Buenos Aires coast, is worth citing because it highlights how the arrival of Beach Time changes everything.

Before December 14—when the *temporada* [season] officially begins—the city prepares to welcome one and a half million tourists. Between October and December, it is possible to observe how the landscape is set up to meet the needs of those inhabiting the coastal area for days, weeks, fortnights, or months. This snapshot shows the deployment of summer leisure and recreation infrastructure. Beach resorts start setting up tents and preparing their facilities; property owners mow lawns, paint house facades, and carry out interior repairs; freshly washed sheets and towels fill hotel scenes; workers load and unload merchandise from various trucks; store employees clean and decorate shop windows; bars expand their outdoor seating and set up umbrellas; hoteliers update their establishments—mattresses, nightstands, comforters, lighting fixtures, tablecloths; real estate agencies brighten their signs and update property listings on both physical and online platforms; seasonal workers arrive in town. Time also moves faster: the pace of public spaces quickens, leading to shifts in how the landscape is experienced (De Abrantes, 2024, p. 196).

On the Beach Time, time speeds up, space changes, and relationships are altered. On the coast, the “temporada” changes the cities. The movement of thousands of people changes the landscape.

Among those thousands of people who mobilize, many street vendors work in the city of Buenos Aires year-round. As I have discussed elsewhere (Perelman, 2025), many street vendors living in Buenos Aires head to the coast to ‘season.’ This involves mobilizing people, resources, and moralities. However, the actions of the vendors on the beach, rather than simply ‘reproducing’ the practices and relationships that occur in the city, cause the vendors to transform their practices on the beach. It is also the working time for many people who live in Mar del Plata. Many of them do season between the end of December and February. During the rest of the year, they engage in other activities, such as plumbing, electrical work, or carpentry. During the Beach Time, they become vendors and even join the Street Vendors Union (Sivara). The beach in winter is not a workplace.

Juana, who lives in Mar del Plata, makes a clear distinction between the rest of the year and the summer season. At first, they use the beach to walk, drink *mate*, or run; the beach is a relaxing space to break the routine. During the Beach Time is a complex place for her and her family. On one hand, they go there to escape the heat, but on the other hand, they try to avoid the beach itself: “The noise is unbearable, the traffic. I live two blocks away from the beach, and in summer, here [she refers to the street where she lives] there is no room to park the car! It’s all a mess,” she says.

During beach time, a process of developing a controversial market takes place. I prefer to use this concept here instead of ‘contested market’ (Steiner and Trespeuch, 2016)—because of its usefulness for other forms of commerce on beaches, such as (Sartore *et al.*, 2019)—or illegalities (Hirata Veloso, 2014; Misse, 2008; Telles, 2009). I am interested in illuminating the production process of a specific market that emerges in a particular tempo-spatial moment (the Beach Time), which transforms spaces, people, and moralities. Even if Beach Time is a commercial moment (especially off-season), it is possible to see that it creates multiple circuits of commerce.

According to Zelizer (2004), a circuit has these elements: a distinctive set of social relations among specific individuals; shared economic activities carried on by means of those social relations; common accounting systems for evaluation of economic exchanges; shared meanings that people attach to their economic activities; a well-defined boundary separating members of the circuit from non-members with some control over transactions crossing the boundary.

What the beach allows you to see is a multiplicity of circuits that interweave tempo-spatially.

“The Beach as a Place-Event: Beach Vendors and their circuits of commerce

A few years ago, a sketch called “Do you want me to make the sound of the beach for you?” went viral. The sketch shows a young couple on a highway and the man saying, “I need vacations, my love. I can’t take it anymore. I need the year to end, I need the beach, to be at sea”. The couple’s response was, “Do you want me to make the sound of the beach?” to which the man said without much enthusiasm, “OK.” Then, the woman began to yell, “We have mineral water, Sprite, Coca-Cola, refreshing drinks, we have Coca-Cola (...) and cinnamon pastries (...) we have churros”²

According to Argentine law, provinces have jurisdiction over up to three miles from the shoreline, which equals twelve miles (Argentina, 1997). However, the management of coastal beaches is delegated to municipalities, which are responsible for overseeing and controlling these areas. Municipalities may require credentials, such as proof of residence, or products to be sold for beach vendors. They are not prohibited from operating, although each municipality can regulate their work or even prohibit it. Although Argentine beaches are legally public, many large concession zones are allocated to private companies, which offer services such as selling food, providing facilities like restrooms, offering sports activities, and renting deckchairs, tents, and umbrellas. Operating only during the summer and in the months leading up to the season, many start making repairs and preparations to reopen. For the rest of the year, they remain closed.

During Beach Time, rules are formed through interactions among different actors. Macarena does not know all the negotiations vendors must go through to sell. For her, they are just there in the summer. The same applies in the sketch. The vendors are on the beach during the summer. They are part of the beach.

Regarding legislation on beach vendors, it is rarely enforced during the off-season months. The freedom to walk along beaches in winter contrasts with the regulations enforced in summer to allow Beach Time, and the Off-Season leads to rules that are continually negotiated. In other words, instead of viewing urban life as solely shaped by legal norms (or their violation) – a focus of many works, as Azuela emphasizes and criticizes (Azuela, 2016) – and by the unexpected effects that legal norms have on the organization and life in the city, it is essential to consider the agency of the actors in utilizing these norms.

² “– Ah, necesito vacaciones, mi amor. No puedo más, a esta altura del año. Necesito playa, estar en el Mar

– ¿Quieres que te haga el sonido de la playa?

– Si, dale

– Hay agua minaral, Sprite, Coca, Hay Coca, bebida Fresca Coca (...) A los pastelitos, Hay churro”

FRICK, Francisco. **¿Querés escuchar el sonido de la playa?** [S. l.]: YouTube, 19 dez. 2016. 51s. Disponível em: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MLn0v4gQM04>. Acesso em: Febrero 2023.

For vendors, *Beach Time* is constituted by managing the legalities that define the beach as a workplace. The beach setting is a prime example of this negotiation of rules. As I mentioned, the presence of vendors is varied. Some of them live in the coastal cities. Others travel from Buenos Aires to “make season.” The following story illustrates the different ways each person negotiates their commercial presence on the beach. Their stories highlight two forms of ‘beach grabbing’ driven by beach vendors trying to “do the season”: one is connected to a shared sense of place that justifies local beach vendors’ presence; the other involves outsiders who use their experience as street vendors to navigate the different rules for selling on the beach.

Esteban, a summer beach vendor, lives in Mar del Plata and has searched for a vendor organization for years. During the year, he is dedicated to other activities, especially plumbing. As De Abrantes states,

The tourism – seasonal and unstable – creates a complex, informal, precarious labor market, essentially geared toward the third sector. The working hours are peculiar, unpredictable, flexible, and tormented because once the season ends, the chances of finding work are scarce or nonexistent (De Abrantes, 2024a, p. 138).

Esteban deals with these different markets:

“When summer comes, it’s a problem. People come from outside and do not respect the beach. We are here all year. We take care of the beach, prevent drug sales, and stop thefts. We not only provide a sales service but also offer a social service.

Esteban was constricting a legitimate justification for his presence and occupation of the beach space. He knows he could be expelled, so he tries to present himself as a legitimate worker. As Pires (2020) describes in the case of Rio de Janeiro, the political act of being on the beach cannot be understood except by what is considered fair and legitimate at a given moment. Therefore, in addition to negotiating with police and the municipality, beach vendors also aim to be friendly and protective of beach visitors. “People here have known me for years. They know that I am a good person,” he says. For Esteban and many vendors living in coastal cities, there is a tension between time spent on the beach and time working in the same city. “Sometimes, on long weekends, I come to sell because I might make a little money, but it’s another beach,” he states.

For many other sellers, the situation is different, and their *Beach Time* is opposed to winter, since they live in the city. Juan is a year-round street vendor, selling products on buses in Buenos Aires. His sales hours start around 10 a.m. when buses are less crowded. He also takes time to chat with the driver, often giving them a small gift from what he sells. After many years, Juan knows where the inspectors are. One of the inspectors’ jobs is to check that no street vendors like him are on buses, as selling there is prohibited. However, he also knows that some turn a blind eye to his presence.

Juan tries to follow a scheduled route, but various setbacks often disrupt his plans, including late buses, road closures, and people’s flow. “You have to know how to choose the buses,” he says as he decides not to board one because — he thinks — it has few passengers. For work, Juan, like most vendors, establishes and maintains relationships with others and builds a specific space.

Raul sells different items on trains. He also works during times when the wagons are not full. “If there are many people, you cannot walk; people are all crowded together, in a bad mood. You cannot work well in those conditions.” Unlike Juan, he negotiates his route with other vendors.

Raúl creates a fixed schedule and route. The constraints of space limit vendors' practices. To organize street vending, different sellers negotiate which products to sell and which ones they can operate.

Juan and Raúl, along with dozens of vendors I worked with, actively maintained interpersonal relationships to sell their products. These connections are kept both during the selling process and outside of work hours. For example, they spend time in bars, neighborhoods, and churches. In these spaces, information about products circulates, friendships with security personnel are formed, selling prices are negotiated, and territories are divided among the vendors (Perelman, 2017). The selling time results from a series of relationships that vendors create and maintain.

The vendors I worked with said their freedom to work and not paying the police is part of their values. "We organize ourselves, talk amongst each other, but do not pay anything to the police." Freedom and not paying to with the police (*arreglar*) are key moral values in daily life in Buenos Aires. For these vendors, the beaches during the summer appear as spaces disputed where different actors are seeking to re-adapt their legitimate ways of using public space. The massive exodus of people to the coast and vacations makes the beaches the desired workspace.

The spatial nature of the beach and the various actors present mean they must readjust the practices they deem legitimate to work. This re-adaptation takes place during *Beach Time* and shapes the beach into a *place-event* (Borges, 2003; Daniel, 1996). Like the city streets, working on the beaches involves a series of daily relationships based on negotiations. That trip involves going to a different territory, which is also managed with a different logic than the one governing the city. Therefore, they need to create new *arreglos*. The transition from the city to the beach involves accepting different ways of building space.

And the same space also shapes the sales. In my study of street vendors in Buenos Aires, I showed how urban infrastructure changes vendors' practices. For instance, those working on trains had to organize themselves to share the space, the train cars, and build relationships with conductors and station vendors. In contrast, those selling on buses develop different relationships among themselves because a higher number of buses allows them to move more freely (Perelman, 2013; 2017).

The materiality and spatiality of places allow different freedoms of movement. However, social groups also constrain movements. Like the city streets, working on the beach implies a series of daily relationships founded on negotiations. Paying for participating in the season was seen as part of the rules that managed the beaches. It is part of the dynamics that the beach as a place-event enables. If paying to work could be avoided in the city, the beach was a legitimate place for that. Time and the *space of the beach* are shaped by these ways of relating and creating the circuits of commerce. *Doing season* requires rethinking spatial negotiations for working and living in a broader sense. The beach's time and spatial experience do not end in the sand.

In Mar del Plata, the beaches are contested spaces where different groups try to redefine how they use public space legitimately. During beach season, certain rules are established to transform the beach into a marketplace. These interactions shape the beach as a social environment. "The Beach is another world. It is great. The sand, the heat, and the sun are tiring and hard. But there is the sea, the friends, the party," he replied. The form of the beach includes all the activities that occur during the season and is not solely about sales, although they are connected to socializing on the beach. Vendors use public space, which limits their sales practices, mobility, and social interactions.

To construct beaches as sales spaces during the season, people must generate affinity practices with other vendors, negotiate sales spaces (which implies arrangements), and build legitimate ways of using public space. The way they offer products is also different. As Pedro told me

“You must make yourself seen among many people. You must put your body, walk among the people, you need to be listened to, and you need to let them know what you are selling. You have more time, anyway, not like on trains. You have all day; you must walk and look at people. Get attention and make yourself seen. It is easier on trains. However, here, people are doing other things. Furthermore, many are annoyed when you yell in their ear [laughs]. You must take care of the sun and walk on the sand, but it is worth it.

But at the same time, the materiality of the beach influences the sale. For example, in Copacabana, Rio de Janeiro, the life-guard posts, which are highly visible, serve as boundaries for the vendors. There are also different ‘zones’ of work: the wet sand, the dry sand, and the roadway. As a result, the sand plays a crucial role in distinguishing different types of work (Louro Ferreira, 2024).

The specialty of the beach requires vendors *to adapt* to the beach environment. I mentioned Sonia’s case, who has built a modified cart to move easily across the sand. Those who travel to work seasonally also modify their practices or adapt. The clothing is different, and the way they present themselves and display the products varies. ‘For the beach, I use a large cardboard to be able to display all the products, so they are visible. In the city, on the other hand, it’s more *about the space* that works.’

Sales during *Beach Time* and the circuit of commerce differ from selling outside the season or within the city. As Juan’s case shows, the spatiality (streets of Buenos Aires, beaches of Mar del Plata) limits his willingness to negotiate. *Beach Time* is often framed in relation to other cultural contexts. For tourists, it contrasts with non-vacation periods. For residents of Mar del Plata, life outside the season differs greatly from life during the season. Street vendors are connected to their work in Buenos Aires.

The dynamics of “beach culture,” such as appropriate behavior, space sharing, and commercial activities, are often influenced by informal agreements and social practices rather than strict legal regulations. The people involved, including beachgoers, vendors, and local authorities, navigate and interpret these norms through their interactions and decision-making processes. This highlights the importance of social norms, shared understandings, and agency in shaping the beach experience and broader urban life. It underscores the evolving nature of -making and the continuous negotiation of norms within the city environment.

The *Beach Time* that shapes the Beach even in a large city like Mar del Plata is created in relation to the off-season period. As Low (2016, p. 76) states, “Studies of place-making and the social construction of space frequently draw upon memory and memory-making as a dominant mode of inscribing meaning at various scales from the most intimate to the national and transnational.” Beaches, like all spaces, are places of memory. Places are configured through relationships that “meet and intertwine at a particular point” (Massey, 1994, p. 19) and with other places through a complex network of practices and memories (Gordillo, 2014). Every place is produced in tension with other places. These tensions are made culturally tangible through the spatialization of memory (Gordillo, 2010).

The time of the beach constitutes the beach at a specific moment. It is a specific time-space where street vendors and the commercial network formed through negotiations are physically present

and also remembered. Understanding beaches, therefore, requires a relational and situated perspective. Places can be physically and temporarily far away or close. The relationships, presentations, and memories (and the feelings that emerge) allow for an understanding of the places in relation to their distances. So, for vendors, doing *season* implies (re)building a territory from new relationships marked by work out of season.

Final Words

The beach is the physical material space made of sand and sea. It is also a series of relationships and a *constellation* of places. Beaches occupy a liminal position within urban space: they are public spaces, part of the city, yet operate according to distinct logics and boundaries. Focusing on the beach as a public working space is necessary to understand the social processes that—like the waves—come and go and establish ways of doing and being on the beach. This approach also emphasizes the beach as a collaborative space between actors and materiality (Latour, 2007; Stengers, 2010; Tsing, 2005) and how legislation is used situationally.

My intention in this text, focusing on the work of street vendors, was twofold. On the one hand, it aimed to shed light on the fact that vendors working on the Beach resort to a series of practices that enable them to use the Beach as a working space. This occurs during a specific time, the *beach time*. This leads me to the second issue of a more general nature: to consider the Beach itself. All that happens on the Beach is unseparated. My point in this article was that beaches are not something in themselves, but beaches are all the processes that occur there.

The time at the beach illuminates not only the spatial disputes surrounding the use of beaches but also the very constitution of the beaches themselves. The activity of vendors, negotiations, as well as the relational work they produce to sell. But, in turn, the presence of vendors transforms the beach experience. People on vacation see vendors as part of the summer beach scene. At the same time, the vendors' actions not only depend on the arrangements they can make but also on the physical characteristics of the beach itself, including the weather and the density of the sand.

Vendors activate a series of relationships, making it possible to sell and transform the beach into a negotiated workspace. Rules that shape the beach change throughout the year, as do the spatiality, sounds, and experiences on the beach. In other words, vendors are part of the beach in summer and also reveal multiple social processes that produce the beach.

“The beach” refers to the physical space that borders the sand and the sea, a network of relationships, and a collection of places. Although the sale occurs on the beach, visiting coastal cities involves new relationships and daily routines that differ from urban behaviors: sharing apartments, going out every night, taking more drugs, etc. I do not mean to suggest these practices are absent during the rest of the year, but they tend to intensify during *beach season*.

In turn, it is the materiality that creates ways of moving, circulating, presenting oneself, and establishing a special relationship between work and leisure (for vendors and those vacationing on the beach). Vendors are not present all year in the same way. This results in different experiences for other actors. In summer, they are configured as central actors and are part of the beach environment. For this to happen, there is an essential role for sellers to be able to sell. Ambulant vendors are a central part of the materiality experience.

The ethnographic perspective allows the understanding that the experience of the Beach is constitutive of the Beach itself. While many studies focus on legislation, geography, or the “environment,” a perspective from space and social relationships allows us to rethink the Beach as a physical, symbolic, imagined, and contested and disputed space. That is why the Beach, I said, has a *form* and a *temporality* that cannot be thought of except to what “everyday life” is. The beach is constructed concerning what happens during the season and outside of it. Beaches are practices that occur on the beach and far away from it. The Beach constitutes multiple imaginary constructions.

An ethnographic approach to social processes enables a critical understanding of the beach, unsettling its naturalization as merely a physical space. Furthermore, it enables us to understand what the Beach is.

The beach is not a single, fixed space, and there is no one way to inhabit or “grab” it to make a living. The coexistence of different circuits of commerce and material arrangements—driven by the relationship between Beach Time and the Off-Season—illustrates how the beach (not just the sale on the beach) is configured in a complex and situational way. We often think of the beach mainly during the high season, when it becomes a space of work and commerce, as Sartore points out³. However, examining the lives of beach vendors shows that Beach Time only makes sense when viewed in relation to the Off-Season, daily life, and especially the moments and practices connecting these two periods. Beaches change not only through coastal erosion or shifting dunes but also through the flows of people and their evolving material and spatial relationships with the city.

The Beach, like any space, is a physical and social construction. The Beach is made of sand, sea, wind, and animals. But it is also made of people, times, and discourses that vary. Like other public places, it implies public ways of being. These are socially constructed ways of behaving, walking, recognizing, and being recognized. This occurs in the daily interactions of flesh and blood, of people who struggle to impose forms of life based on questioning and accepting behaviors. Like all public spaces, beaches are spaces of power. Social groups (and their practices) have different capacities to impose and use the Beach.

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A Praia Argentina como Espaço de Trabalho: Temporalidades, Materialidades e Relações Sociais

Resumo

Neste artigo, pretendo mostrar que a praia é mais do que seu espaço físico e a legislação. Argumento que a praia é uma inter-relação entre o espaço físico e o que as pessoas fazem, de forma ampla, em interação com esse espaço. Defendo que as praias são tanto físicas quanto sociais e mudam ao longo do ano. Além disso, a praia ocupa um lugar liminar dentro do espaço urbano. Vou focar em um dos atores que constituem a praia: os vendedores ambulantes. A perspectiva desse grupo torna-se central para entender a praia como um espaço social múltiplo. Observar os vendedores também permite compreender como os espaços abertos são lugares negociados e disputados. O artigo também se concentra na praia como um espaço colaborativo entre atores e materialidade e em como a legislação é usada de forma situacional.

Palavras-chave: Praias; Vendedores Ambulantes; Argentina; Etnografia; Temporalidades; Espaço de Trabalho.

La Playa Argentina como Espacio de Trabajo: Temporalidades, Materialidades y Relaciones Sociales

Resumen

En este artículo, muestro que la playa es más que su espacio físico y su legislación. Sostengo que la playa es una interrelación entre el espacio físico y lo que las personas hacen al interactuar con ese espacio. Argumento que las playas son tanto físicas como sociales, cambiando a lo largo del año. Además, la playa ocupa un lugar liminal en el espacio urbano. Me centraré en uno de los actores que constituyen la playa: los vendedores ambulantes. La perspectiva de este grupo resulta fundamental para entender la playa como un espacio social múltiple. Observar a los vendedores también permite comprender cómo los espacios abiertos son lugares negociados y disputados. El artículo también se enfoca en la playa como un espacio colaborativo entre actores y materialidad, y en cómo la legislación se utiliza de manera situacional.

Palabras clave: Playas; Vendedores Ambulantes; Argentina; Etnografía; Temporalidades; Espacio de Trabajo.

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