

Antagonism and possibility

in-against-and-beyond crisis:

organising everyday life

in Mercado Bonpland, Buenos Aires.

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

The 2001 Argentinian ‘Que se vayan todos’ movement was structured through complex relationships of autonomous politics, horizontal organisation, autogestion, neighbourhood assemblies and state rupture. More than ten years after the 2001 economic, social and political crisis, the reclaimed retail market Mercado Bonpland is an example of the legacy of organising in the Palermo Viejo neighbourhood assembly. Mercado Bonpland demonstrates the development of this organising to support autogestive projects.

This thesis explores how Mercado Bonpland organises in-against-and-beyond the economy, the state and territory. To research the antagonisms and possibility present in struggling to create alternatives through everyday life involved speaking with organisers, shopping, attending events and conducting interviews in Mercado Bonpland. I argue that Mercado Bonpland offers profound insights into the difficulties and possibilities that exist for creating alternative economies, strategic more-than-state relationships and relational territories.

I use the ‘in-against-and-beyond’ framework to critically explore three aspects of everyday life in Mercado Bonpland: economy, state and territory. First, constructing economies in-against-and-beyond means going beyond simple recognitions of ‘diverse economies’ to create practices that are antagonistic to exploitative capitalist social relationships. Second, multiple state relationships demonstrate the power of collective organising, as well as integration with and opposition to state practices. Third, territory as power in place is a powerful organising principle for the market, as well as for its neighbours in the Palermo district.

Taken together, these three relationships demonstrate that the diverse groups that sustain the market are not outside the capitalist system, but rather inhabit a position that is simultaneously in-against-and-beyond capital and challenges its functioning through their collective networks. Antagonistic practices demonstrate the complexities of attempts to simultaneously deal with the necessities of everyday life and the drive to search for more-than-capitalist possibilities.

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List of abbreviations

AF Forum: Foro de Agricultura Familiar (Familiar Agricultural Forum - Pedro is the organiser)

AFIP: Administración Federal de Ingresos Públicos, (The federal administration of public revenue)

CECOPAF: Centro de Comercialización de Productos de la Agricultura Familiar por la Soberanía Alimentaria y el Consumo Responsable. (Center for Commercialisation of Family Farming for Food Sovereignty and Responsible Consumption)

CEDEPO: Centro Ecumenico de Educacion Popular (Center for promotion of religious unity and popular education)

CGCP Centros de Gestión y Participación Comunales – (District Centres for Administration and Participation)

Cid: Asamblea Popular Cid Campeador (Campeador Popular Assembly)

FIAB: Ferias Itinerantes de Abastecimiento Barrial (Government price controlled markets).

FoNAF: El Foro Nacional de Agricultura Familiar – (National forum for familiar agriculture)

ICeCOR: (Italian NGO that supported Mercado Bonpland see VHS Dvv international, 2013)

MTD : Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados (Unemployed Workers' movement)

QSVT: Que Se Vayan Todos (All of them must go- popular phrase from the 2001 movement in Argentina)

UBA Universidad de Buenos Aires University Buenos Aires

Chapter 1 In-against-and-beyond everyday life in Mercado Bonpland

1.1 Introducing Mercado Bonpland

Mercado de Economía Solidaria Bonpland (which I will call Mercado Bonpland) was established by neighbourhood assemblies in 2007 in an abandoned municipal market space in Palermo, Buenos Aires, and has seventeen organisations and stalls, selling products including fruit and vegetables, dried foods, drinks, pottery, clothes and artisanal products. These seventeen organisations focus on developing and supporting autogestive production (reclaimed factories, small family farms, co-operative or artisanal production) as well as dignified work, fair trade (i.e. where producers decide the terms) and responsible consumption. Throughout this production process Mercado Bonpland facilitates and is facilitated by networks of autogestion, which operate in-against-and-beyond everyday life in the city. Each organisation in Mercado Bonpland has a different motivation related to production processes, but they all connect through the market project. In summarising the alternative organisational approach of Mercado Bonpland, Claudia from La Asamblearia describes her collective's approach thus:

Cooperativa La Asamblearia's aim is to protect all producers so that they work without slave labour, with good terms, to produce good quality products, to have the possibility to sell independently and to compete with big trademarks. This is another point of view [from which] to understand trade. The price is not the lowest – for example like supermarkets – but we have fair prices, where all win: a fair trade. Hence the term comes from that.

The aim is so that people have the capacity to acquire these natural products, and producers have the capacity of become self-sustaining rather than relying on big companies who determine at what price they buy, and how they do it. Instead, the producer has the power [to] decide – how I want to live, how I want to work, at what price I want to sell – so all that becomes the producer's decision.

So there lies the consumer responsibility to know what to consume, and in which economic circles you want to participate. The main idea is to continue this, and for the future [to] contact and develop more and better producers (Claudia: 16/07/2013).

In this discussion, Claudia explains that the central reasons for founding the market were to improve production conditions and establish fair trade so that producers get a good deal. As a

result, the market prices are not the cheapest, and they need to build networks of consumers who want to consume in such a way as to develop these economies. This summary captures how Mercado Bonpland uses this market as a way to create, develop and support networks of autogestive projects, seeking to create resources that make a transition from capitalist social relations to other forms of organising.

In order to provide a deeper understanding of Mercado Bonpland's organisation and ideology, I highlight the simultaneous dual organisation of Bonpland as a market trying to sell, and as being 'more than a market'. Whilst these approaches initially appear contradictory, stallholders negotiate between them every day. I then introduce the market location and context of Palermo Hollywood. Following this, I discuss my research focus, outlining my aims and questions, after which I set out the structure of the thesis as a whole. As Bonpland market is very small, I use these specificities to highlight the antagonisms that exist between certain elements within it, and the potential wider significance as an example of rethinking the economy.

Mercado Bonpland as both a market and ‘more than a market’

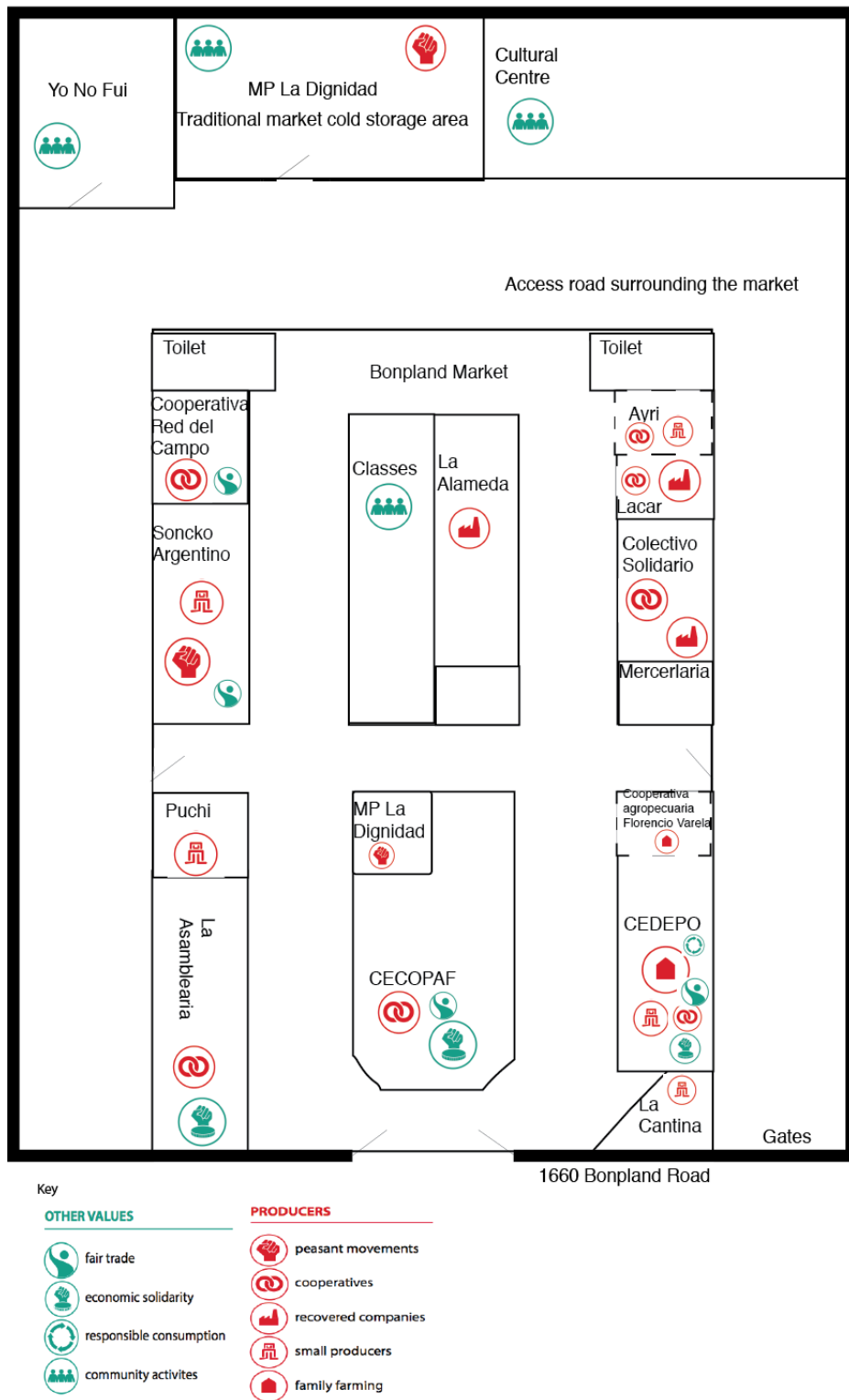


Figure 1-1 organisational focus of market stalls in Mercado Bonpland

| Organisation/ stall | Organisation focus | In Mercado Bonpland |
|---|--|---|
| La Cantina | Small Producers and homemade food | Sells snacks and healthy food to take away. |
| CEDEPO | Organisation that supports the creation, skills share and sale of produce from small family farms in the region Florecio Varela. They also coordinate radical education projects, seed saving initiatives, eco technologies and have connections to the catholic church. | Sells fruits, vegetables, poultry, dairy products and some dried goods. |
| Cooperativa Agropecuaria Florencio Varela | Small family farm, initially part of the CEDEPO group | Sells fruit and vegetable produce from their farm. |
| CECOPAF | Is an organisation focused on the support and marketing of family farming for food sovereignty and responsible consumption. | Sells different products from small, co-operative or independent producers, from cheeses, meat, beer, wine, beauty products. Also products as ready to eat lunches. |
| La Asamblearia | Focus on facilitating economic solidarity and co-operative production. | Sells variety of produce, from dairy, canned goods, wine and liquors to notepads, books and shoes. |
| Puchi | Artisanal handmade knitted clothes. Not a part of the co-operative market project, but connected though the Palermo Viejo Assembly. | Sells hand knitted jumpers particularly for children. |
| MP La Dignidad (Stall and co-operative kitchen) | Focus on making money and supporting movements across the country. Facilitating the popular kitchen, workshop and stall to sell clothes. | Sells clothes in market stall. Use the kitchen to distribute and make food, as well as organising workshops. |
| Mercerlaria | Traditional market stall from the previous neighbourhood municipal market. | Sells commercial sewing and knitting products. |
| Colectivo Solidario | Focus on supporting and creating co-operatives through a network, in particular helping with commercialisation and their development. | Sells products from co-operatives and reclaimed factories, from cleaning products, to dried herbs, pastry, beer and pasta. |
| La Alamdea | Helps to develop worker reclaimed factories and clothes produced under fair | Sells clothes and fabric products. |

| | | |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| | conditions- under the no slave brand. | |
| Lacar | Part of La Alameda, a worker reclaimed coat factory that wishes to improve working conditions. | Sells waterproof coats. |
| Ayri | Part of La Alameda, an artisanal ceramics producer working co-operatively. | Sells ceramic products. |
| Cooperativa Red del Campo | Seeks to develop, support and create co-operatives. | Sells products for people from the local area, such as Mate and products from co-operatives such as clothing, carved wood, bags, jewelery. Also has many informative books and 'Wichi' indigenous weaving. |
| Soncko | Network of co-operatives and artisans. | Sells handmade clothes, jewelery and 'wichi' woven products. |
| Classes | Display area for the market and where some classes are held. | Artisans from the market hold classes in this space, and it is used for talks and workshops. |
| Cultural Center | Community events are coordinated and the space can be used by different groups. | Theater performances and other organisations in the community use the space. |
| Yo No Fui | Organsiation that works with building skills with female prisoners. | Skills share and community activity. |

Figure 1-2 Description of all the Mercado Bonpland stalls and organisations

The map of market stalls and organisations in Mercado Bonpland (Figure 1-1) shows the different organisational focus of its stalls and the table (Figure 1-2) explains their products. The differences in its member's individual and collective experiences, work practises, organisation and history explain these varied focuses. However, with only one exception (that I will discuss later), part of the reason that these stallholders are committed to Mercado Bonpland is so that they can run their market stalls in a way that supports autogestive projects and creates a self-sustaining economy.

Mercado Bonpland demonstrates two different but related ways of engaging in the politics of everyday life. The first is through facilitating a 'healthy' form of consumption, with products being traded fairly in the city. The second is through each of the market stalls operating as a link in networks, assisting the development of autogestive projects with a focus beyond the scope of a 'traditional' market, which makes Mercado Bonpland 'more than a market'. These autogestive projects are highly inter-related, as producers, traders and consumers construct networks through both consuming the products of these endeavours and through changing the conditions under which they are produced. Market organisations are more reliant on projects than production, with co-operatives and collectives organising popular education, alternative farming methods and new green technologies. These two political ways of engaging with everyday life are both crucial to Mercado Bonpland, and demonstrate the connections between the everyday life politics of necessity and the possibilities that arise from constructing these networks.

Whilst Bonpland supports activities through its networks that are 'more than a market', nonetheless, *as* a market, its consumption is an essential aspect of its daily organising, and this may seem contradictory. Consumers buy local, seasonal, producer-led products connected to producer-led movements (occupied factories, artisans and 'alternative production'), yet they need not be involved with these movements to shop in Mercado Bonpland. The producer led products necessitate alternative forms of consumption, as seasonality and producers lead by

production. However, consumers need to be involved in this process for alternative consumption to develop alongside production.

Being led by producers means that the process under which a product is produced is often more important than the product itself – the aim is not to package or display produce to increase the amount it can be sold for. For agriculture, the focus on production methods means following agro-ecological principles rather than organic certification. As official organic certification is expensive, a programme of co-certification has been developed between co-operatives to develop best practice without requiring costly certification. The aim of this process is not to charge the most for the products and make the greatest profit possible, but to produce and share good products with people at a fair price:

Some producers don't produce organic products, or are recuperated [by] factories with industrial products. They have the objective to be organic but are not at the start. We support them anyway, because the people working there, they work as we do. Always the aim is becoming friends. [We ask] "do you need something? can we help you?" It always ends in a friendship (Claudia, 3/07/2013).

Claudia from la Asamblearia highlights the fact that, in being led by producers, the priority is to develop friendships with producers. This means that the 'objective' of the collectives who manage the market is to improve production, but that this doesn't involve starting from ideal production conditions. The process of production is recognised to be a dynamic practice that is being constantly improved. Therefore, the process of developing relationships and practices of production are the focus in Mercado Bonpland even if, as a visitor to the market, the end 'product' might be all that you see.

Several stallholders in Mercado Bonpland used their stalls as platforms for discussing political issues with consumers. The stalls in Bonpland can function like highly effective campaigning spaces, particularly as people visit them for more than political engagement. In my time there, I discussed agricultural practices as well as their political, economic and social situations. It was very easy to move from discussions on the olive harvest to the way in which small scale

production methods were necessary for working against Monsanto (field notes, 05/07/2013). This interconnectivity, engagement with and knowledge of global systems, local products and struggles made the experience of visiting the market informative. In addition, several stalls had selections of texts, from classic Marxist texts and reading suggestions on the la Asamblearia stall to the more practical information on how to build your own solar panel and alternative production methods, in the stall of Red del Campo (field notes 05/07/2013). These more traditional forms of political organising demonstrate how Bonpland operates as 'more than a market'.

Mercado Bonpland was also an important space for social and community interaction within Palermo and between producers. As a new inhabitant of the city, the discussion and engagement made me feel as though I was becoming part of a community: it is a space that fosters the development of social relationships. Mercado Bonpland provides an invaluable asset to community life, rather than simply a space for consumption. On Saturdays, it acts as a meeting place, with musicians playing in front of the market, and plays, community meetings and engagement taking place at the cultural centre behind the market. As Mercado Bonpland is a space that connects so many organisations, it offers a space for the community to meet, and for similar groups in the city to engage with each other.

Whilst these community organised meetings take place in Mercado Bonpland, some local residents of the barrio (neighbourhood) felt excluded from this space. For my investigations on the closure of the 'traditional' market that existed before Mercado Bonpland I spoke to previous stallholders, and one resident noted: 'the market is not for people of the barrio, because it is so expensive' and full of organic produce (field notes 15/07/2013). This reflects broader changes in the neighbourhood, as Palermo barrio has undergone significant recent alterations, and also highlighted the difference between different local communities, as some local people felt that the political engagement, history and products were not for them, even if they had not visited the market (I explore this further in Chapter 7). Therefore, although the market operates as a

community space, some local people still find it exclusionary. Perhaps it only offers a community space to the local people who were involved in the very active Palermo Assembly. For them, it might demonstrate a continuation and embodiment of collective community action, but it is not a community space for all. In order to bring out these tensions more clearly, I will now explain the spatial context of the market in Palermo, Buenos Aires.

Bonpland and Palermo – neighbours and neighbourhood



Figure 1-3 map demonstrating the different barrios in the city of Buenos Aires. (Bariada. N.D.)

Palermo is situated in the northeast of the city of Buenos Aires (Figure 1-3). Mercado Bonpland is situated in Palermo Hollywood – an area of Palermo between Córdoba, Santa Fe, Dorrego and Juan B. Justo avenue (Telam; 2013a). The name *Palermo Hollywood* was born after television studios moved into warehouses there in the early 1990s. Palermo Hollywood is now filled with bars, restaurants and clubs. It borders the area of Palermo Soho, which is extremely exclusive, and consequently further neighbourhood change seems likely to continue.

I argue that these changes in who lives in the barrio, and the contrast between this and who and what the barrio is designed ‘for’, have made it difficult for autogestion movements to maintain Mercado Bonpland. Maintaining Mercado Bonpland despite these changes – particularly given the increasing pressure on land values – has been a success for the local organisation of the market. However, neighbourhood changes also highlight the fact that Mercado Bonpland is (to some degree) compatible with neighbourhood gentrification. This demonstrates how Mercado Bonpland exists in-against-and-beyond the current system, and perhaps the change in the demographics of the barrio has not been a disadvantage to a market, as they can use some of their revenue to support other projects. This demonstrates the interconnection of these alternative values and the development of a neighbourhood, and I explore these tensions in Chapter 7.

Mercado Bonpland, on 1660 Bonpland Street, is a central and accessible location for many in the barrio. The historical necessity of locating markets in central sites for the neighbourhood has meant that traditional markets remain in prime locations today. Mercado Bonpland’s traditional market was closed and empty for a long period of time before the development of the current market. The neighbours from the Palermo Viejo neighbourhood assembly organised in the outskirts of the market for a considerable period before they went inside. As I explore in Chapter 6, this represented an act somewhere between an occupation and a negotiation with the local government. As such, Mercado Bonpland is an example of a ‘gray space’¹ (Yiftachel, 2009a; 2009b) – neither legal nor illegal in a traditional sense – and it therefore has different claims on land and space. In the case of Bonpland, its organisational networks, as well as the negotiation with ‘sympathetic’ state attitudes towards it due to its birth in the 2001 movements, have led to these changes.

¹ ‘Gray space’ follows Yiftachel’s (2009a; 2009b) use and spelling of this term

Bonpland's negotiations with the local state were conducted with the 14th District's Centre for Administration and Participation (Centros de Gestión y Participación Comunales – CGCP 14) (Mauro and Rossi, 2013:7; Bariada, N.D.), but they did not only focus on state organising. The CGCP was the district level in charge of organising and supporting local neighbourhoods and associations in their barrios. In addition to this, the assembly used the tactic of ensuring its building had cultural heritage status before entering the market space (making it harder for other developments on the site). The organising of networks and the establishment of other alternative sites meant that market organisers were involved in a long, collective struggle to retain the market space. Over this period of time, and using several tactics, the Palermo Viejo Assembly thus established itself within the Mercado Bonpland building to create a market for the community and to undertake autogestion. This demonstrates the importance of neighbourhood organising, as well as the need for neighbourhood support to continue this organisation.

As I will explore in the analysis chapters, the organisation that the assembly has conducted since the 2001 crisis has been essential to founding and maintaining Mercado Bonpland. This history of strong local organising at the neighbourhood level and forming connections with nationwide movements has provided its members with the strength, motivation and experience to create this alternative market system, and, in turn, Bonpland enables the development of other similar projects. However, understanding that this neighbourhood is changing, and that not everyone is included in the community, is crucial to addressing the tensions inherent in Mercado Bonpland's status in-against-and-beyond everyday life. .

1.2 Research questions

The overall aim of this thesis is to investigate the practices of daily life in-against-and-beyond crisis in Mercado Bonpland. In particular, I seek to explore the way in which the market's participants navigate necessity and possibility despite a context riven with antagonisms. In order to do so, my thesis is structured around four main research questions:

1. How is the **economy** reproduced in-against-and-beyond everyday life, and what is the potential for reimagining social relationships beyond capital?
2. What insights do social relations in-against-and-beyond the **state** in the daily practices of Mercado Bonpland offer in terms of articulating multiple forms of organisation beyond capital?
3. In what ways do the relational networks of **territories** evident in Mercado Bonpland demonstrate novel spatial practices that build new forms of power embedded in place?
4. How does the **praxis of antagonism and possibility** demonstrate creating change through everyday life politics beyond the capitalist present?

1.3 Thesis outline

This thesis is comprised of eight chapters, grouped into two main sections. The first section (Chapters 2 – 4) comprises the context chapters, with Chapter 2 reviewing the literature relating to in-against-and-beyond everyday life; Chapter 3 exploring the historically embedded context that facilitated the creation of Mercado Bonpland; and Chapter 4 demonstrating how I carried out my research 'in-against-and-beyond: markets as methods'. In the second section (Chapter 5 – 8) I then go on to explore both theoretical and analytical findings through three topic areas. Chapter 5 examines Mercado Bonpland's relationship with the economy; Chapter 6 explores its relationship with the state and beyond it; and Chapter 7 develops the idea of organising through territory as power in place. Chapter 8 concludes by outlining the crisis context, and engaging with the principal arguments for each of the four research questions. Finally, I reflect on future

research agendas. Within the analysis, I did not try to separate ‘theory’ from ‘practice’, as in studying the experiences and theoretical embeddedness of stallholders it made sense for me to understand theory and practice in relation to each other. I will now explain each chapter in a little more depth.

Chapter 2 provides a theoretical overview of ‘in-against-and-beyond’. Being in-against-and-beyond informs both the practice and method of the everyday life politics that I analysed in Mercado Bonpland. In-against-and-beyond highlights the antagonistic and challenging daily realities of the social relationships that exist under capital. This chapter outlines how forms of abstract and concrete social relationships embed the reality of organisation as a dual movement – of empirical and non-empirical reality. To understand the impact of this political organising in the Argentinian context, I provide examples of forms of protest since 2001. In order to develop this in-against-and-beyond approach, I contextualise it within the notion of values rather than describing any one section as more ‘in, against or beyond’ than another. Finally, I argue that understanding the political necessity of everyday life is essential to understanding the approach of in-against-and-beyond in Mercado Bonpland. In particular, I use both everyday life and feminist theory to establish the potential for engaging in forms of practice that have not traditionally been thought of as political – i.e. as a crucial site of struggle – such as social reproduction.

Chapter 3 situates Mercado Bonpland in the historic context of Argentina, and is divided into three main sections. Firstly, I begin by grounding the development of Mercado Bonpland in its historical setting, from colonialism to the period of the Argentine dictatorship. The influence of colonialism can even be seen in the name ‘Bonpland’, which not only contextualises the development of Argentinian agriculture, but also of many academic disciplines. Subsequently, I explore two other crucial factors in the development of Mercado Bonpland – the influence of President Alvear, who built most of the city markets, and the recent period of dictatorship, which has generated much of the solidarity leading to the market’s birth. Secondly, I examine

the implementation of neoliberal policies in Buenos Aires, which specifically impacted on markets, leading to the closure of traditional markets and an increase in the number of supermarkets. Thirdly, I demonstrate how the context of the 2001 crisis led to rebuilding autogestive production networks, organised through and despite the existence of markets.

Chapter 4 critically examines my research process and methodology. I explore the way in which I undertook the research and writing for this thesis, and critically analyse my own practice – how and why I researched ‘in-against-and-beyond markets as methods’. To do so, I engage with theoretical debates surrounding north / south scholarship, arguing that an awareness of the influence of colonial history and reflexivity about the positionality of the researcher is crucial. Developing this theme, I use everyday life to explore the motivations behind my research. Following the discussion of everyday life, I then examine approaches which argue for the necessity of engaged, ‘ordinary’ research that does not reproduce utopian ‘over-researched’ sites. I also highlight the importance of language in these issues. Finally, I summarise the methods I employed for undertaking this research.

Having established the context of my research, I then present my analysis chapters, which are divided into economy, state and territory. Whilst I focus on everyday life understandings, dividing the analysis into the separate chapters of economy, state and territory allowed me to explore the organisation in Bonpland in finer detail. Whilst I understand that these issues are connected, in order to analyse them within the structure of a thesis required some divisions to be made. Similarly, as theory and practice are connected in prefigurative politics, and the Mercado Bonpland stallholders are theoretically and practically engaged with in my analysis chapters, I have included theoretical research as well as fieldwork analysis.

Chapter 5 explores the relationships that constitute the Argentine economy, which are crucial for organising Mercado Bonpland. Three key aspects of how the economy is constructed are addressed. Firstly, the 2001 experience of the economic crisis, as demonstrated by the organisation of Mercado Bonpland, goes far beyond the ‘economic’ sphere, demonstrating the

interconnection of people's daily lives with capital. Secondly, in engaging in economic theories, I argue that diverse and alternative economies do not go far enough in demonstrating the antagonisms inherent in creating alternative solidarity economies. Thirdly, I argue that Mercado Bonpland builds connections between the autogestive movements of the apparently separate areas of self-managed production and dignified work, exchange and consumption. These movements demonstrate an understanding of striving to live everyday life in better conditions within capital – such as through dignified work – as well as collectively reimagining the organisation of production, exchange and consumption beyond capital. Examples such as the production of Quinoa demonstrate that this economy is still in-against-and-beyond the national economy rather than outside of it.

Chapter 6 engages with how neighbourhood assemblies organised in-against-and-beyond the state within (and before) Mercado Bonpland. Firstly, I highlight the importance of the 'Que Se Vayan Todos' movement's creation of a political landscape in which local assemblies fought for recognition which meant that some of the movement's organisers became members of the government (for example in the Ministry for Agriculture). Mercado Bonpland's existence demonstrates the legacy and evolving of the 2001 neighbourhood assemblies, as the Palermo Viejo assembly no longer organises, yet the assembly reclaimed space of Mercado Bonpland and some networks continue. I argue that examples of everyday representations of how power operates in Bonpland (of assemblies or the state) demonstrate the heterogeneous nature of the state. Therefore, the organisation of daily life in Bonpland is characterised by antagonisms, as well as support, from different levels of the state. The organisers continue negotiating in-against-and-beyond these apparent contradictions, yet still run and improve Mercado Bonpland. Moreover, the operation of Bonpland from within a 'permanently precarious' 'gray space' located somewhere between legality and illegality demonstrates its normalised precariousness and the potential jeopardy it faces. In sum, organising in-against-and-beyond the state is challenging and rife with antagonisms, yet despite this: Mercado Bonpland's organisers still manage and thrive.

The final analysis chapter – Chapter 7 – reflects on territory and the construction of autonomous power in a place that is still engaged in-against-and-beyond daily life. Again highlighting the crisis context, Bonpland as a territory was created through networks of autogestive movements that stemmed from neighbourhood organisations. The experience of organising within these neighbourhoods was crucial to the formation of such networks and hence to Mercado Bonpland as it exists today. Theories of territory explore ‘power in place’ relationally, and I emphasise Bonpland’s capacity to organise itself despite hardships and controls. Mercado Bonpland’s territory is formed through networks constituted by neighbourhood organising. Therefore, I use the case of Bonpland to argue that these local neighbourhoods are constituted by national networks of neighbourhoods and communities. I examine the effects that the rapid neighbourhood change have had for Bonpland, and by doing so I expand on the local/national understanding of organising. I argue that Bonpland exists in-against-and-beyond everyday life, as it is not ‘outside’ these global changes because real estate investment has affected the way that the neighbourhood functions. Finally, I argue that daily life processes in Bonpland are facilitated through solidarity and trust, which enable organising across different scales (between local and national networks of producers). This demonstrates the necessity of strong community ties.

Chapter 8 presents my conclusions. I argue that Mercado Bonpland reveals the complexity, intricacy, difficulty and potential for networks of autogestive projects. The continuation and integration of different stalls within the market and the development of projects have, despite all the challenges they have faced, improved people’s daily lives. Mercado Bonpland therefore demonstrates the benefits that collective organising can bring. In particular highlighting the political potential of everyday life approaches grounded in exploring and developing despite antagonism.

Chapter 2 The theory and practice of organising in-against-and-beyond

This chapter argues for using in-against-and-beyond as praxis. It begins by grounding the research in the main theoretical uses of the term, in particular using this theory: I explore the construction of power, labour relation under capital and context of multiple crises. In light of Mercado Bonpland's complex inter relationship with producing the economy, and attempts to move beyond this, I subsequently focus on how abstract and concrete forms of social relation shape organisation. The dual effects of this relation emphasise the need for organising strategies, particularly from crisis contexts, from which I highlight the way that organisational forms have developed in Argentina. I then discuss how value theory highlights moments of antagonism, making it clearer how changes can be made in the economy. Finally, I demonstrate how all of these in-against-and-beyond approaches are anchored in everyday life political understandings of possibilities. Everyday life politics are demonstrated as the ground and working for this political action.

In-against-and-beyond in Mercado Bonpland

Mercado Bonpland provides an example of the creative possibilities that everyday actions can have – of a praxis transforming in-against-and-beyond everyday life. The in-against-and-beyond approach is demonstrated in Mercado Bonpland through its connection and facilitation of different scales of networks; its experiments with creating other forms of labour and exchange through actions of economic solidarity; and forms of alternative consumption. At first glance, it can be understood as a radical crack in capital (Holloway, 2010b) or simply as a place to buy delicious vegetables. The engagement and acknowledgment of antagonisms within the market and between the different groups was inspirational, as they were engaged with step-by-step rather than perceiving them as a problem. Due to the nuanced critique and actions of

stallholders, I explore how their practices functioned as strategies for creating alternative realities; how these antagonisms, which always exist in everyday life practices, complicate theories of outside/inside anti-capitalist narratives; and how such an ‘ordinary’ rebellion, in running a market, has created a remarkable example of what is possible.

Mercado Bonpland demonstrates the possibility for more-than-capitalist organisation due to its continuation despite antagonisms: the conflicts arising between work and leisure, labour and money, or through personal relationships. Working in-against-and-beyond these conflicts demonstrated the fact that, despite problems, change is possible. Theory and practice in-against-and-beyond these binary understandings of resistance allowed me to engage with the complex inter-relations of state and social movements – capital through labour and value, or territory through power in place – which exemplify the potential that we all have to remake the world that we live in every day.

The theory and practice of ‘In-against-and-beyond’ (Holloway, 2010a) moves beyond binary understandings of resistance and provides a framework for analysing and interpreting the struggle of everyday life. This ‘in-against-and-beyond’ emphasises the overlapping struggles, the antagonisms that arise from our animation of capital through labour, and the alienation that then occurs when we are separated from the products of our labour. Everyday struggles begin with the ‘No’ of refusal and continue within and beyond us. Living in-against-and-beyond is a daily challenge in an attempt to ‘struggle towards self determination’ or towards the social power of doing (Holloway, 2010a).

Why in-against-and-beyond?

Using the concept of in-against-and-beyond provides a method for exploring antagonism from where we stand: ‘there is not an outside to capital, but there is certainly an against and beyond’ (Holloway, 2010a:222). The everyday life approach understands that we start ‘from our contradictions or limitations’ (Holloway, 2010a:227). Everyday approaches which maintain

antagonism with capital are therefore important to ensure that projects are not immediately co-opted. Consequently, I am not aiming to highlight ‘pure’ or utopian aspects of alternatives operating ‘outside’ of capital (Carlsson, 2008; Zibechi, 2012), as some critics claim (Schlembach, 2014:54), but rather my aim is to explore attempts to identify and aim *towards* a beyond.

The London Edinburgh Weekend Return Group produced a pamphlet in 1979 entitled ‘In and against the state’ (Mitchell et al., 1979), which highlighted their seemingly contradictory opinions about the state: from their positions as workers in the state to their ideology as socialists with dreams to struggle against or resist the state and to move beyond it. These contradictory positions were made more pronounced by the attack on state facilities at that time by Thatcher’s government. This political context is reminiscent of many crisis contexts, where austerity measures are used as a justification for cutting back on state infrastructure. Acknowledging their position ‘in and against’ the state enabled the Return Group to argue for moving beyond only defending the welfare state, and acknowledges the need to collectively organise. This text is crucial for understanding the interrelated and contradictory positions of everyday life:

New ways of understanding the state, theorising the state, are needed that match our experience. Perhaps a better theory can help us decide how to go about solving problems of everyday practice as state workers or as people who have a routine relationship with the state in our 'private' lives (Mitchell et al., 1979:n.p.).

The Return Group highlighted the complex and multiple positions involved in organising everyday life as workers in the state with dreams beyond it. In the context of Mercado Bonpland, there are direct resonances of such a relationship with the state, as well as the organisation of economy and territory.

The London Edinburgh Weekend Return Group were influential on others (Neary et al., 2012). The concept of ‘in and against’, however, has a deeper history, with its roots in the capitalist

relation and, therefore, in the way that the contradictions of everyday life become a symptom of our lives in and against capitalism.

Class is, for Tronti, a partiality that is formed in the cleavage between labour power and working class and therefore between the being within and being against the capital relation (Roggero, 2011:93).

Consequently, we all live ‘in and against’ capital, and it is this contradiction that makes responses and actions difficult to undertake, as it is not clear how we can break from this relation. I am therefore interested in examples of groups that aim to go ‘beyond’ ‘the cleavage’ (Roggero, 2011:93) of ‘in and against’ in aiming to create greater resilience through addressing their social reproduction. These examples can also live and work with contradiction, as identified in Holloway’s concept of in-against-and-beyond. In this way, the politics of everyday life or ‘*la vie quotidienne*, [is essential as it] has already literally been colonized by capitalism’ (Lefebvre, 1988:80). Engaging with this everyday sphere links the means and the ends in the process, as well as the prefigurative politics in it.

More recently, in-against-and-beyond has been used to explore the multiple positions that each one of us possesses in a number of attempts to move beyond current realities whilst we exist within them. In particular, this has been employed in the critique of the university and academia by academics and movements (Cowden and Singh, 2013; Featherstone et al., 2015; Pusey and Sealey-Huggins, 2013; Neary et al., 2012), particularly in David Harvie’s (2006) *Value production in the classroom*. This led to a number of conferences: *In against and beyond neoliberalism* in Glasgow in March 2012, (Featherstone et al., 2015); and *Uniconflicts in spaces of crisis: Critical approaches in, against and beyond the University* in Thessaloniki in June 2015. At these conferences, movements and academics reconsidered the composition of the university itself. These texts and events demonstrate examples of in-against-and-beyond as theory and practice, whereby the praxis of engagements of those inside the university are not

limited to its current formulation. As a past member of the Really Open University² we focused on using this theory of in-against-and-beyond to rethink the university (Pusey and Sealey-Huggins, 2013). Movements embedded in the in-against-and-beyond approach demonstrate the way that this praxis informs critical engagement, theoretical rigor and active change, in particular that which engages in antagonistic practices.

Antagonism engages in creating everyday life 'beyond' that which previously existed. It highlights the ever-present challenges associated with prefigurative projects and consequently has a different theoretical construction from the idea of contradiction (Harvey, 2015). An example of this is the London Edinburgh Weekend Return Group working 'in and against' the state, where antagonism emphasises the idea that, individually and collectively, they operate from two seemingly contradictory positions. Antagonism highlights the productive potential of organising from these seemingly contradictory positions.

In *Negativity and Revolution* (2009) Holloway, Matamoros, Tischler and others examine Adorno and negative dialectics, important for understanding relationships of antagonism. Negative dialectics is demonstrated to be crucial for political activism, and is discussed throughout the book in connection with the exploration of resistance to capitalist society:

it is a dialectic modality of thought because society is antagonistic; negative because antagonism cannot be overcome through thought; and certainly utopian, because it continues to hope for a reconciled reality (Bonnet, 2009:45).

Antagonism and negative dialectics are therefore intertwined through a recognition of the 'antagonistic character of capitalist society' (ibid). Consequently, the antagonistic practices of everyday life highlighted in this context demonstrate potential to create new relationships that are both hopeful and resistive from within a capitalist society.

² Really Open University was a group focused on reconfiguring how we think of education, organising pedagogical projects both inside and outside the university. (Really Open University, n.d.)

Building on this understanding of antagonism in everyday life is in contrast to the concept of contradiction. Contradiction has a different politically embedded context and, consequently, using in-against-and-beyond follows an approach of antagonistic practice. Antagonism is crucial for understanding the complexities beyond the concept of contradiction, which ‘operates as a straight jacket, forcing the infinite richness of life and struggle into a binary antagonism’ (Holloway et al., 2009:6). In order to explore and negotiate plurality, Holloway et. al. highlight the importance of understanding that the ‘richness of creative doing ... is forcefully reduced to abstract, value-producing labour. That is what capital means. Difference is reduced by capital to contradiction’ (Holloway et al., 2009:6). Therefore, to understand the struggle in-against-and-beyond capital, it is important to understand the process that produces contradiction, and to explore this the concept of antagonism is useful.

Possibility and antagonism are connected, as antagonism recognises difference and the potential to make changes in everyday life. In the final section of this chapter, which focuses on everyday life, I introduce the concepts of hope and possibility, and I will discuss this debate further in that section. Throughout this thesis I use the concepts of necessity and possibility to explain the motivation and potential of the in-against-and-beyond approach within Bonpland market. Both necessity and possibility are highly connected to the theoretical basis of antagonism. Highlighting the antagonistic relationships within everyday life reveals some of the challenges of living under capitalism, as well as the motivation to improve and change these conditions. Therefore, necessity and possibility emphasise the need to change conditions today, as well as being part of the approach for improving them step-by-step, rather than seeking a separate utopian future.

This chapter will now move on to explore the theoretical underpinning of the concept of in-against-and-beyond from which I have built this research project. I begin by discussing the crisis context in Argentina, and the *process* of using in-against-and-beyond. After this, I focus on the abstract and concrete forms of social relationships that must be understood in order to

engage in producing projects challenging capital. Next, examples of organising in Buenos Aires are provided, which highlight the difficulties that the in-against-and-beyond approach faces. I then move on to identify how value can be used to understand antagonism with respect to in-against-and-beyond capital. Finally, I explore everyday life as grounds for prefigurative politics, which is an essential step for the research context and examples.

The 2001 crisis context in Argentina as more than a ‘moment’

The context of this research is the economic crisis in Argentina. The 2001 crisis could be described as a collective moment of refusal of the government’s neoliberal policies. The ‘No’ of the people was voiced as ‘*Que Se Vayan Todos*’ through movement and neighbourhood organising. The ‘economic collapse’ was a social and societal problem of social reproduction. After it, people could not live their daily lives as normal: their workplaces were shut, shops ran out of food and banks were frozen. This crisis therefore was both a collective organisation, a rupture of the continuation of this unequal, unstable, economic and political system (Holloway, 2010b:51) and a coming together to organise daily life. The 19th and 20th December became immortalised as a rupture from the previous normal order (Colectivo Situaciones, 2011), and councils of assemblies and autonomous organising on the street were the collective tools that were turned to.

The experience of collective organising in this crisis period was part of what shaped contemporary possibilities in Argentina. The crisis was inspirational, leading to changes through action and a challenge (living without basic goods is also very difficult). Horizontal practices became the main systems of organisation, and Holloway's (2010a) *Change the World Without Taking Power* together with Hart and Negri's (2001) *Empire* were the handbooks inspiring organising at this time. Consequently using in-against-and-beyond as a guide resonates with how stallholders describe their daily collective practices, theory and action. In-against-and-beyond emphasises theory as praxis, reflecting on ‘what we can do’, and on acting on possibilities.

Understanding revolution as everyday practice challenges the linear narratives of when a crisis ‘begins’, as well as when and from where there is a potential to engage in alternatives. Similarly, the rebellion of 2001 did not suddenly ‘appear’ in 2001, but was rather built from experiences and organisations that occurred before and beyond 2001.

A thorough investigation into the resistance, solidarity and alternative practices that are attributed to 2001 would go back many years. There are a number of instances of repression in Argentinian history: the period of dictatorship and the forced secrecy of many movements, as well as colonial rule, appropriations, and territorial power disputes. These histories all continue to exist within the modern Argentine consciousness (I explore these in more depth in the following chapter). Therefore, the practices of autonomy that were seen after 2001 were in fact part of a broader historical process. Whilst there is much to be learnt from the post 2001 organisations, social movements and alternative practices, these did not appear from nowhere, and therefore a crisis elsewhere or at a different time would not end with the same consequences. Rather the practices that emerge are variegated and specific, embedded in the history and experience of Argentine people.

My engagement with organisers and groups in Mercado Bonpland demonstrated that the foundations of solidarity and autonomous organising had been set before the 2001 crisis. Whilst some market groups formed in 2001 and undoubtedly more people were politically active then, groups such as CEDEPO (a group within the market) have been organising for more than thirty years. In addition to such groups, stallholders each had a different ‘personal’ reason for politically engaging. Again, these were not born out of the 2001 struggles, but were grounded in a longer-term experience of collective endeavour that the 2001 crisis spurred into action in a new way. Moreover, attending, taking part in and studying Bonpland market more than ten years after the 2001 crisis demonstrated how the organising of 2001, whilst no longer seen on the streets, is still active. The experiences, together with some of the organisation and practices that were introduced at this time have continued to be influential, but in a different way.

The experience of the crisis of 2001 heightened the engagement, involvement and experience of organisation, but the processes, decision-making and experiences informing neighbourhood assemblies neither began in 2001 nor ended with the street assemblies. They continue to resonate and influence, to greater and lesser extents, but this complexity of history, time, practice and engagement has led to a different understanding of everyday resistance. This is not to say that a latent ‘energy’ of 2001 operates ‘invisibly’, but rather to refrain from reducing the notion of resistance to crisis to a specific moment. The organisation of Bonpland market directly aims to address these seemingly cyclical experiences of crisis, boom and bust by building foundations for economic solidarity and an alternative economical model.

The struggle of ‘doing’ and ‘the done’

Holloway traces rebellion’s origins to the alienation that comes from the separation of ‘the doing’ from ‘the done’. Within each of us there is a ‘constant tension between labour and the doing which strives against its own alienation’ (Holloway, 2010a:239). This tension means that:

Doing exists in constant revolt against labour. Collectively or individually, we are probably all involved in some sort of struggle against the alien determination of our activity – by refusing work, by arriving late, by sabotage, by trying to shape our lives according to what we want to do and not just according to the dictates of money, by coming together to form alternative projects for the organisation of our doing, by occupying factories or other places of work (Holloway, 2010a:239).

Holloway sees the ever-present potential of collective refusal as inherent in the system of social relationships under capital. In the Argentine context, at a time of rupture where the necessity for cooperation and collective organisations came to the forefront, alternative projects organise doing, examples of which can be seen in Bonpland.

Organising doing through solidarity is a complex process of organisation and engagement, with historical, temporal and spatial dimensions that exist between members of different territories – people and places. Using in-against-and-beyond represents an attempt to focus in on one small

example in order to understand the complexity of networks and antagonistic relationships of daily life in-against-and-beyond.

These practices respond to Holloway's call to focus on attempts at joining 'the doing' with 'the done'. Holloway reflects on movements of factory occupations in Argentina that engage in these calls to move 'towards a social self-determination that is also focused on the flow of doing between these activities' (Holloway, 2010a:2410). This involves 'circulation and production' that questions and challenges its orientation 'towards the state' whilst creating 'networks of links between [the] producers [and consumers]' of social movements, as 'nodes between otherwise isolated projects' (Holloway, 2010a:240). On these three counts, Mercado Bonpland is attempting to move 'beyond' current capitalist realities by reconfiguring production through networks of solidarity.

This process of movement 'in-against-and-beyond' means accepting and challenging politics from where we stand. As Holloway observes, this moving 'against and beyond' is 'always experimental' (2010a:242), I hope to highlight the potential for changing our relations under capital through daily practices. As Holloway observes:

Moving against-and-beyond the state, representation, labour, against-and- beyond all the fetishized forms that stand as obstacles to the drive towards social self-determination: such a moving against-and-beyond is necessarily always experimental, always a question, always unsure, always undogmatic, always restless, always contradictory and incomplete. (2010a:242).

Therefore, using 'in-against-and-beyond' highlights the experimental and questioning methods of the rebellions of daily life. Rather than politics that focuses on a vanguard who 'know' the 'answer', in-against-and-beyond is a process that is in constant movement. The drive of self determination is a process of experimentation.

Power over and power to act: antagonism in process

Engaging with the different forms of social relations enacted through power means recognising the multiple powers that operate at any one time. One way to understand how these relations operate is to investigate the concept of power-to versus power-over. These different animations are key to understanding actions that contribute to the social flow of doing. In the Argentine context, different powers are acknowledged through the different terms for power: power-to (*potencia*) as opposed to power-over (*poder*). This is also a process which both Holloway and the militant research collective *Colectivo Situaciones* in Buenos Aires focus on:

In Spanish there are two words for “power”: “poder” and “potencia”, which derive from the Latin words “potestas” and “potentia”. Colectivo Situaciones’ understanding of power is rooted in this distinction they take from Spinoza. While “potencia” is a dynamic, constituent dimension, “poder” is static, constituted. Potencia defines our power to do, to affect, and be affected, while the mechanism of representation that constitutes “poder” separates “potencia” from the bodies that are being represented (Colectivo Situaciones, 2003:np, n 2)

The distinction between *poder* and *potencia* is made by both literature and movements in Argentina, and it separates multiple powers that shape the way that action can take place within a space. This differentiation of the terms in Spanish highlights the complex histories of engagements and opportunities to effect changes in space. It also emphasises the idea that even conceiving of power as being only a top-down force can change our potential to create new possibilities: i.e. if we understand power only to come from above, we limit our potential power to act. If we understand the potential of the power to act in addition to the potential restrictions on individual actions by controlling power-over, alternative projects can ground themselves and anticipate the potential and necessity of organising. This understanding of the differences between the ‘dynamic’ power of *potencia* and the ‘static’ or ‘constituted’ form of *poder* also emphasises the potential for action and creation in the process of doing.

This creativity from the power-to act, in tension with power-over, is also what animates the capitalist relationship. Within this antagonism is both the ‘articulation’ and ‘dissolution’ of the

capitalist relationship (Tronti, 1965). In this way, the power relation carries hope – as we as workers are ‘at one and the same time, the articulation of capital and its dissolution. Capitalist power seeks to use the worker’s antagonistic will-to-struggle as a motor for its own development’ (Tronti, 1965:29). If we believe that capital is animated by the creation of collective doing – as the ‘motor of capital’ (Tronti, 1965) – then it follows that the dynamic and creative power comes from these workers, from ‘below’. However, this does not mean that the constituted power of *poder* has no direct and specific effects on people’s capacities to act, over their *potencia*. Rather, in contrast to traditional statist discourses, state power is not the only type of power that exists, with *poder* existing as a way to control and maintain the ‘motor’ for the development of capital. Therefore, at moments of collective organisation, it is possible that a co-operative form of *potencia* could organise for the ‘dissolution’ of capital, as it is the ‘articulation’ upon which capital relies.

Holloway thus sees the antagonism between *poder* and *potencia* or power-over (which he refers to as *potestas*) against power-to as the foundation of ‘the struggle of the scream’ (Holloway, 2010a:36). He perceives it as one of the key struggles that affects and speaks to the alienation of *doing* from *the done*. Understanding this power relation is key to understanding the way in which *potencia* can be developed:

is not a symmetrical struggle. The struggle to liberate power-to from power-over is the struggle for the reassertion of the social flow of doing against its fragmentation and denial. On the one side is the struggle to re-braid our lives on the basis of mutual recognition of our participation in the collective flow of doing; on the other side is the attempt to impose and re-impose the fragmentation of that flow, the denial of our doing (Holloway, 2010a:36).

The, struggle of the social flow of doing is a process that is part of an antagonistic practice. Thus, social change must re-embed collective power and social doing for co-operative action. Social struggle cannot replicate the system of capital – but instead becomes about the ‘struggle to liberate power-to’, which is ‘not the struggle to construct a counter-power but rather an anti-power’ (Holloway, 2010a:36). Therefore creation and liberation of power-to cannot be

increased though a focus on the repressive and controlling form of power-over. Yet any attempt to create a counter power-over mirrors the current system, which requires a division between everyday politics today and the future revolution. Consequently, the struggle is to create a different form of power, which is antagonistic with the current form of power-over, in order to reassert ‘the social flow of doing’ (Holloway, 2010a:36). The creation of an anti-power is an antagonistic process – one that will go about constructing different potentials and relationships against and beyond power-over:

the attempt to exercise power-to in a way that does not entail the exercise of power-over others inevitably comes into conflict with power-over. Potencia is not an alternative to potestas that can simply coexist peacefully with it. It may appear that we can simply cultivate our own garden, create our own world of loving relations, refuse to get our hands dirty in the filth of power, but this is an illusion. There is no innocence, and this is true with an increasing intensity. The exercise of power-to in a way that does not focus on value creation can exist only in antagonism to power-over, as struggle. This is due not to the character of power-to (which is not inherently antagonistic) as to the voracious nature, the ‘were-wolf hunger’ (Marx 1965, p. 243) of power-over (Holloway, 2010a:37).

A focus on power-to engages in the process of antagonism with power-over. The ‘were-wolf hunger’ of power-over cannot be separated from daily life, and thus the necessity of the struggle of power-to is a key strategy for resisting power-over. Consequently, to increase power-to requires engaging in antagonisms and struggles towards greater participation in the ‘social flow of doing’ (2010a:36).

Mercado Bonpland provides an interesting example of how to address these seemingly different, inter-related struggles to understand the struggle for power-to, but also the struggle to address the alienation of labour. These struggles manifest in different ways: there are the daily struggles of social reproduction – acquiring food in order to survive and to exchange, and struggles to create a different relation between one’s labour and its products – attempting to address the circulation process of producer, product, commodity, value and exchange, which are altered through the processes of experiment, collectivity, reflection and change. Thus, there are struggles to reform and reclaim the labour relation, and to create a dignified sphere of work that

is connected to wider struggles and projects. There are also struggles to continue the work of political groups, neighbourhood assemblies, ferias (fairs), from pre/post 2001. There is the struggle to maintain and organise a collective space, responding to the diverse needs of different groups, communities and establishments, and the struggle to improve and facilitate change for the most marginalised groups in society through actions, activism, popular fronts and basic supplies or skills. There are the struggles against the many attacks of commercial agriculture, land grabs, gentrification, inflation, state legislation and other attacks of power-over. These struggles continue questioning and moving forward.

To engage in the antagonism of power-to it is therefore necessary to establish the relationship with doing :

It is only through the practice of the emancipation of power-to that power-over can be overcome. Work, then, remains central to any discussion of revolution, but only if it is understood that the starting-point is not labour, not fetishized work, but rather work as doing, as the creativity or power-to that exists as, but also against-and-beyond labour. (Holloway, 2010a:153).

For Holloway, this dual movement focuses on struggles against the fetishised labour relation and power-over, but also towards a power-to – that is, through the struggles for daily life. This is what I hope to analyse and explore through the different struggles and approaches of various different groups within the market. In this way, all of the subsequent focuses on power, alienation and subjectification through the power of the state, capital or territorial engagements are, for Holloway, primarily based upon the separation of the done from the doing:

The done now exists in durable autonomy from the doing which constituted it. Whereas, from the perspective of the social flow of doing, the existence of an object is merely a fleeting moment in the flow of subjective constitution (or doing), capitalism depends on the conversion of that fleeting moment into a durable objectification (Holloway, 2010a:31).

In this way, capitalism converts the doing of a person into an object that is separated from the process that created it. This dual nature of labour gives Holloway hope, as ‘the done depends on the doer, capital depends on labour’ (Holloway, 2010a:31). Therefore, the social relations that

constitute both power-to and power-over through the objectification of the labour relation, are all animated through the labour of doing. In order to break a capitalist relation, we must go back to this initial separation – of done and doing – but bear in mind that it is us that animates and creates, both through various different frameworks and processes of action, power and alienation. Power as power-to and power-over is inextricably linked to the labour relation:

Power-to exists as power-over: power-over is the form of power-to, a form which denies its substance. Power-over can exist only as transformed power-to. Capital can exist only as the product of transformed doing (labour). That is the key to its weakness (Holloway, 2010a:31).

Thus, power-over is reliant on power-to for creating the done. In the same way, the objectified 'done' is created through the alienated social relations of power-over (e.g. money, state, capital, value, territory) that appear as separate things. It is therefore important to focus on identifying how groups within Mercado Bonpland differentially create these social relations. In order to do this, I will be focusing on in-against-and-beyond three connected but different social relations, which provide a framework for establishing points of struggle in this complex set of challenges. I will focus on the state, capital and territory in order to attempt to show the moments in the 'vulnerability of domination' (Holloway, 2010a:31).

2.1 Organising despite abstract and concrete forms of social relations

Holloway highlights that understanding the way that forms function provides a way for thinking through the alienation caused by separating the doing from the done:

The concept of form implies that there is some underlying interconnection between the forms. That interconnection is production and the way in which people relate to it, the relations of production. ... Underlying the fragmentation of so many different processes of production is the movement of value, the thread that binds the world together, that makes apparently quite separate processes of production mutually interdependent. ... However, understanding the interconnection between the fragments of society does not mean that the fragmentation is overcome; it does not 'dissipate the mist through which the social character of labour appears to us as an objective character of the products themselves' (Marx 1967/1971, I, 74), since that mist is the product of capitalist social relations (Holloway, 1992:155).

Forms and production connect the various apparently different organisations of power that we are challenged with in everyday life – the state, capital, value, money, work etc. – which are in fact all forms of social relations. The connection between all of these is their relationship to production, and the ‘movement of value’ (ibid). Mercado Bonpland addresses these challenges in trying to change the production relationship, focusing on different ways of producing value as well as on changing the relationships of the doing of labour. Within these struggles, however, different forms of organisation exist in response to the real demands of the different forms of social-relations-as-things (e.g. the state). Therefore, because of the dual nature of labour, forms of social relations have real effects *as* things as well as being composed of social relations.

In a similar way, the separation of people into categories as doers of certain things is also something that divides and separates people from their potential for action, and this is done for many different ‘sorts of’ doing:

From the perspective of doing, people simultaneously are and are not doctors, Jews, women and so on, simply because doing implies a constant movement against-and-beyond whatever we are (Holloway, 2010a:63).

The identities of historically marginalised peoples are key, and this is certainly not sweeping them aside, as their identities have been used to exploit them. However, to only see people in these categories as doers – as ‘doctors, Jews, women’ (Holloway, 2010a:63) etc – removes the capacity for refusal and the multiple alternative possibilities for organising everyday lives. As Holloway and Sitrin (2014:34) observe, this is a key strategy of ‘Todos Somos’ or ‘we are all’ – which has been employed from movement groups as wide as the Zapatistas to the Disappeared. In this way, by identifying with the marginalised or excluded, we recognise the exclusion, but also organise collectively in resistance and to pursue new possibilities. Sitrin and Asselini provide the following example of this:

Yes. Marcos is gay. Marcos is gay in San Francisco, black in South Africa, an Asian in Europe, a Chicano in San Ysidro, an anarchist in Spain, a Palestinian in Israel... Marcos is all the exploited, marginalised, oppressed minorities resisting and saying 'Enough!' (Klein, 2002:1–14)

Resisting is saying 'enough', is saying 'Todos somos', or 'we are all'. Claiming and highlighting the marginalised identities is a way of collectivising these struggles. It is a way of coming together, yet acknowledging the way that power-over divides and creates inequality, and identifying the real differences between groups' abilities to partake in daily life due to the restrictions of oppression and marginalisation. In organising based on identity, however, we do not magically make the source of the creation of this marginalisation disappear. Organisation only based on categorisation as doers – such as academics, train drivers etc – removes us from the action of our doing, and categorises us as products, objects or forms. Similarly, only seeing the products of these social relationships as things – e.g. the state, capital and territory – ignores the antagonism between power-to and power-over within each interaction.

For Holloway (2010a), key to this resistance is the collective refusal of an identity and the recognition of collective doing, but not as a way of doing or an identity as a certain type of doer. Holloway breaks from some of the other schools of autonomist thought that formulate revolutionary strategies through the capacity of people as certain types of doers via their relationship with a form of labour and through the abstraction of value from that labour. In this way, autonomist Marxists such as Tronti (1965) recognised that the animation of capital occurs through the workers labour but has a focus of on the identity as a worker.

Tronti's focus on production has led to focus on gaining control of the means of production – of organising in the workplace in an attempt to exert power *as workers* over this relationship. This focus on collectivising and organising around an identity formed in relation to the done (as with Tronti's example) will not solve the antagonism between capital and people. Therefore, movements that focus only on the working class or the organisation of a factory do not address these earlier abstractions, and therefore do not challenge the capitalist relationship.

In Mercado Bonpland, the complex relationships between different projects, strategies of refusal and organisations involve an exploration of these different approaches. Some projects – for example, worker-reclaimed factories – focus a great deal on changing the way that production takes place and on the role of workers. However, these projects are also linked to other examples that go beyond owning the means of production in the factory. The Bonpland market, as a network of different experiments into alternative living, production, work and exchange, goes beyond a focus on people’s identity as workers alone, whilst also fighting for the real effects that reforms of production conditions could have for those who work in factories. Organising beyond an identity as workers is therefore a challenge to go beyond the social relation under capital in order to create new forms of being in common.

2.2 Organising strategies in-against-and-beyond crisis in Buenos

Aires

As the context of this research project is crisis, I explore how it has informed social relations of protest and highlight different forms of abstract and concrete social relations. Crisis is the introductory context for each of the following analysis chapters on economy, state and territory (Chapters 5, 6 and 7). Theoretical histories of crisis have received much scholarly attention in an attempt to establish the origins and meanings of the ‘recent’ financial crisis, as well as those of historical crises (Bonefeld and Tischler, 2002; Harvey, 2001; O’Connor, 1987; Panitch et al., 2011). There has long been reflection on the opportunity to create other forms of social relationships during crises, particularly Marx’s exploration of crisis in the *Grundrisse* (Marx, 1973). However, rather than focusing on the production of crisis, this research focuses on how this context produced the actions and conditions that generated Mercado Bonpland within this crisis context. In a similar vein, this section explores how the ‘2001’ crisis experience produced certain collective possibilities through its organisation.

The organising of ‘horizontal’ political strategies from this crisis context (Sitrin, 2012a) enabled the creation of new possibilities for social movements. The form, resonance and focus of organisation within assemblies develop different possibilities. In Argentina, organisational forms and ideas such as the *Cacerolazo* have been experimented with for a long time, and demonstrate the potential for organising in a horizontal way. However, ‘horizontal’ organisational forms are not inherently radical, although the experience of organising embedded in communities has helped them to produce social change (which I will discuss later with regards to different forms of *Cacerolazo*).

Within these horizontal methods, the way that engagements with the state are managed is crucial for the success of these social movements. As Holloway emphasises, it is important for movements to engage with what is possible in terms of organising outside of the state, but it is also important for them to perform experiments that engage with ‘taking state power to dissolve it from within’, or some method that fuses the two (Holloway, 2010b:61). A prevalent example of one of these attempts to work in and against the state in Latin America is the idea of popular power. Popular power advocate Mazzeo describes this phenomenon as something that is used to ‘harmonise the dynamics of sovereignty and autonomy’ (Mazzeo, 2007). Building popular power is therefore about:

the capacity for the marginalised and oppressed to organise and coordinate structure to govern their own lives, parallel to capitalist or state-run institutions and services such as schools, hospitals and decision making bodies, but in ways that do not reflect the logic of capital (Sitrin and Azzellini, 2014:19).

The popular power approach is common in Argentina as it prioritises marginalised peoples as actors in their lives. However, this approach could be used to justify actions ‘on behalf’ of people and Holloway highlights:

This is an attractive formulation, but the category of ‘the people’ actually conceals that the source of power is doing: it abstracts from the organisation of human activity and its antagonistic existence. It is this antagonism that is skated over in the formulations that look to an easy combination of a movement from above and a movement from below (Holloway, 2010b:62).

As with all movements, there will be antagonisms, but Holloway draws attention to the potential for the state to again become the focus in a movement of popular power. In doing so, the focus could become changes on behalf of workers, rather than changing the material forms and social relations of labour. This, for Holloway, is the danger of popular power narratives. However, popular power influences organisational strategies within Mercado Bonpland.

Another method of organising in Argentina are the movements of autogestion crucial to everyday life politics. These alternative methods focus on working in-against-and-beyond the state and capital, with recuperation being a tactic for resistance and creation. There are now more than 300 worker-recuperated workplaces in Argentina (Sitirin and Azzellini, 2014:25). An example of these tactics is the practice of autogestion, or the movement of self-management and autonomy, which reflect ‘the politics of direct democracy’ (Sitirin and Azzellini, 2014:32).

Autogestion is a crucial concept within my thesis, as it is a key tactic and organisational strategy of Mercado Bonpland. Following Sitirin, I use the term ‘autogestion’ as it has no direct English translation, capturing more than simply ‘self-management’, instead encompassing the development and connection of autonomous, collective movements and networks. In the Argentine context autogestion has played a crucial role in the post-2001 community organising, and has a growing importance in organisations resisting austerity in Europe (such as The Workers’ Economy, and SQUEK Barcelona 2015). Sitirin and Azzellini note that:

Autogestion literally means ‘self administration’, but more broadly refers to collective democratic self-management, especially within local communities, workplaces, cultural projects and many other entities (Sitirin and Azzellini, 2014:30).

To understand autogestion in Mercado Bonpland, I will explore self-managed production as part of a movement working towards connecting the seemingly different aspects of the production process, emphasising the importance of ‘the articulation between those activities, the re-articulation of the social flow of doing (not just production, but production and circulation)’

(Holloway, 2010a:240). Therefore, in the context of Mercado Bonpland, autogestion describes and engages with how the market creates networks beyond simply production, exchange or consumption. It reflects the movement's organisation within communities, and the connecting of work, production and exchange.

However, the organisation of certain practices from this crisis period does not mean that these practices always have the same political meaning. The *Cacerolazo* 'pot banging' protest was important in 2001 (Mauro and Rossi, 2013), as it demonstrated both collective refusal and a collective need (the shops had run out of food), so neighbours had empty pots and wanted to do something about it. This form of protest was highly participatory as it allowed many people to take part in supporting an action, from the balconies of their flats to the streets. The noise created with the protests was also a way of highlighting the struggle across the city, and thus demanding attention, as well as drawing neighbours together for the shared cause – attempting to remedy their lack of food and expressing their collective dissatisfaction. However, whilst this form of resistance was used in radical collective action, it does not mean that *all Cacerolazo* protests will have the same subversive political meaning. Therefore, it is important not to fetishise these tactics.

On Thursday 18th April 2013 I witnessed an anti-government march in Buenos Aires along with an estimated one million people or more (Winter and Otaola, 2013). This march was sparked by a bill to reform the judicial system, which protestors claimed would weaken democracy. Whilst being an anti-government protest, it was predominantly supported by more traditionally conservative groups, marching as an attempt to show power and demand change, specifically with regards to the restrictions placed on them in terms of obtaining foreign currency (the US dollar, in particular). People brought pots and pans to the protest and gathered on the intersections of large central streets where groups of neighbours came together to bang their pots, particularly in the downtown districts. Those who could not complete the march to the main plaza stood and banged pots, sang with neighbours, and supported those on the march. The

form of the *Cacerolazo* was being employed, despite the fact that residents now had food.

During this middle-class protest, I saw many new pans, and friends told me that the pot used at the protest became important because it demonstrated an individual's wealth, with some people in Recoleta district even arranging for their 'home help' to bang new pots for them. This shows that whilst an organisational tactic can be of great use, it is not just the form of organisation that determines its meaning, but how and why a tactic is being used. Therefore, whilst much of the literature about the 2001 crisis period focuses on these 'revolutionary' organisation tactics, it is worth focusing on what is being produced through such engagement – i.e. it is not through organisational tactics alone that solidarity politics are created.

2.3 Value as a moment of antagonism in-against-and-beyond economy

On the one side, a social force called capital pursues endless growth and monetary value. On the other side, other social forces strive to rearrange the web of life in their own terms (De Angelis, 2006, blurb).

De Angelis highlights the potential benefits of organising and creating value that responds to arranging life based on people's 'own terms' rather than on capitalist growth. Within Mercado Bonpland there are a wide range of opinions and actions as the market is made up of seventeen different stalls and organisations, all of which have their own specific views of action in terms of politics, production, work and the economy. However, the market slogan of 'organisations producing values' unites the market in its aim to produce value – both in the context of necessity as well as 'other values' of more-than-capitalist social relations within the market and the production process. Whilst I did not follow a value theory investigation in my thesis, understanding the way in which value is produced is essential in the context of a market that is trying to challenge the social relationships under capital (Clarke, 2011; Endnotes, 2010). I therefore briefly explore the way that value theory exposes the exploitation of capitalist social relationships, and return to reflect on the value context in the conclusion (Chapter 8).

To understand how Mercado Bonpland in the context of challenging the value relationship, let us first reflect on using the following thoughts from Eden (2012) on Marx:

...the commodity-form, and the value-relations of the products of labour within which it appears, have absolutely no connection with the physical nature of the commodity and the material [dijglic] relations arising out of this. It is nothing but the definite social relations between men themselves which assumes here, for them, the antagonistic form of a relation between things (Marx, capital volume 1:140).

Value is a relation between people (levels of productivity in society, social needs, etc.) which functions as a relation between things (Eden, 2012:102).

The value of a commodity is defined through its relation to other commodities, understood by Marx as the ‘relative form of value’ – a ‘relationship between things.’ In this way, the value of a commodity is not only decided through the processes of production, abstract labour, socially necessary labour time and any use-values. Additionally, through the exchange process, value is still operating as a social relation that appears ‘to have no connection with the physical nature of commodity and the material relations’ (Eden, 2012), and thus functions through exchange as a relation between things.

Eden further elaborates on this model, noting that in this commodity relation between things – during the value exchange relation – money is used as ‘the representative of value for all commodities’ (Eden, 2012:102). Money then, further obscures the relation of exchange as a social relation and is a signifier of value, being used in order to facilitate the accumulation of value. In this case, through fetishised value and the form of money, ‘the purpose of production is not simply the generation of more wealth but rather the investment of money to create commodities to sell for an increased amount of value’ (Eden, 2012:102). The way of valuing and using money under capital operates as a social relation linking labour, production and exchange through this fetishised relation, with value creating the movement of this fetishism, or ‘the tortuous value to valorise itself’ (Eden, 2012:103).

Where value circulates as ‘a fetishized form produced through a social relationship, we can understand how value can circulate, how it can move from its money form through production

into a commodity form and then back to money' (Elden, 2012:102). This binds money to material forms of circulation, process and time, before it can again be returned to money, which can be hoarded or used again. Thus, the processes of circulation require its' constant renewal and repetition. In the processes in which capital attempts to accumulate value through the exchange of equivalents, this must occur through the creation of commodities – that is, through labour. Capital 'exploits the labour power of those it employs by paying wages that are of a value smaller than the value of the commodities of their labour. Thus, when the commodity is sold, it realises for the capitalist M' (money) (Eden, 2012:103).

In order to reap the rewards of this exchange pattern, the capitalist must ensure that the labour of the worker is not fully remunerated or given a value that is equal to the value that the commodity will have when exchanged on the market. In this way, the labourer becomes reliant on continually producing things in order to facilitate her daily life under capitalism, so that she can obtain the necessities for her life. This not only ensures that she must continue to take part in the labour process – and so the abstraction of the doing from the done and the creation of money for capital – but also that she will further entrench this relation by using and treating the object of her and others' labours (and money) as a thing in order to obtain these other products of labour. Therefore, the worker's relation to their own and others' production also occurs as a relation between things, mediated by the form of money. The relation of capital is based upon the exploitation of production or, as Holloway (2010a) describes it, the splitting of the doing and the done, and in so doing leads the worker to alienate herself 'from the object and thereby produces herself as a wage labourer, a desubjectified subject' (Holloway, 2010a:148). Therefore, before a person has labour to sell, they must already have split the doing and the done; the abstraction – the doing – and the process that this entails must be bound in a concrete product to be exchanged – the done. Therefore, for Holloway, this form of exploitation occurs before the exploitation of labour. It is the exploitation of production, as labour is a relation under capital that supposes a certain kind of relationship and work:

Exploitation is not just the exploitation of labour but the simultaneous transformation of doing into labour, the simultaneous de-subjectification of the subject, the dehumanisation of humanity. ... The capitalist form (labour) is the mode of existence of doing/creativity/subjectivity/humanity, but that mode of existence is contradictory. To say that doing exists as labour means that it exists also as anti-labour (Holloway, 2010a:148–9).

As a process of the separation of doing and done, the relationship of capitalism to the current form of doing contains within it a form of hope, as capital is reliant on labour for the creation of value and surplus value.

As Holloway argues, to ensure the continuation of these relationships:

the category of value faces both ways. On the one hand, the fact that value is the product of abstract labour points to capital's absolute dependence upon labour and its abstraction. On the other hand, value conceptualises the separation of the commodity from labour, [and] the fact that it acquires an autonomous existence independent of the producer. Value, then, is the process of subordinating the strength of the worker to the domination of her autonomised product (2010a:148).

Holloway highlights the separation of the doing and the done as key to understanding the moment from which the abstract is produced to make value for capital. This process involves the continued abstraction of the alienation of labour and the production of value. Doing, being primary, means that it contains within it the possibility for non-capitalist forms of creation, living and being to be realised. In this way, labour and value already suppose that some activities produce more value for the system, as they are based on the abstraction of doing and the done. As such, doing maintains the power-to that is critical and antagonistic to power-over in capital as reflected on in the previous section on forms. Mercado Bonpland – which is attempting to challenge and create these different value engagements in order to create another economy. It is both involved in making and remaking capitalist and more than capitalist value whilst engaging in changing contradictions of forms of social relations.

2.4 Everyday life as a ground for political action

A revolution cannot just change the political personnel or institutions; it must change la vie quotidienne, which has already literally been colonized by capitalism (Lefebvre, 1988:80).

As Lefebvre identifies, capital functions through the creation and colonisation of culture, and through the repetition of everyday life or *la vie quotidienne*. As the very way that we reproduce our daily needs, it cannot be escaped, as capitalist social relations have colonised the site of everyday life (Lefebvre, 2014). When day-to-day social relationships are mediated through capitalist social relationships appearing as *things* such as money, it becomes very difficult to imagine life outside this capitalist system. Following previous discussions on politics of in-against-and-beyond, it is thus crucial to engage with these everyday processes.

In a similar vein to Holloway's (2006) discussion of forms of social relationships, Lefebvre conceives radical social change to focus on more than identity politics: 'workers do not only have a life in the workplace, they have a social life, family life, political life; they have experiences outside of the domain of labour' (1988:78). Therefore, radical movements must engage in these sites of the everyday in order to create an alternative, rather than just engaging in work-place struggles.

Stavrvides highlights how this everyday life approach to politics focuses not only on social reproduction, but also on collective and spatial practices:

A critique of everyday life, already put forward during the 1960s, has provided us with a new way of dealing with the social experience of space. If everyday life is not only the locus of social reproduction but also contains practices of self-differentiation or personal and collective resistance, molecular spatialities of otherness can be found scattered in the city. (2010: 137).

The critique of everyday life goes beyond recognising the sphere of social reproduction as crucial to political organisation by establishing the 'practices of self-differentiation or personal

and collective resistance' (ibid). These practices of resistance understand everyday life as having a clear political and organisational use – as theory and practice.

Marina Sitrin explores the political potential of everyday life in relation to movements in Argentina, and the key aspects of everyday life politics in her book *Everyday Revolutions* (2012a) are summarised below:

[The] revolution of the everyday is a combination of the following: horizontalidad, autogestión, concrete projects related to sustenance and survival, territory, changing social relationships, politica afectiva, self-reflection, autonomy, challenging 'power over' and creating 'power with' – sometimes using the state, but at the same time, against and beyond the state (Sitrin, 2012a:3).

I will build on Sitrin's context of everyday revolutions in Argentina in using everyday life as a praxis for exploring Mercado Bonpland. These complex interrelations of projects, challenges and contestations connect everyday life and politics with future possibilities. Thus, antagonism is also a part of this everyday life politics. Stavrides identifies that through these antagonisms, understanding everyday life as process means conceiving it to be 'consciously flourishing in a constant negotiation with otherness' (Stavrides, 2010:53). Everyday life politics is theoretically realised through the collective antagonistic potential of engaging with that traditionally not perceived to be political, and practically realised through social movements and experiments.

Whose everyday life and where?

In calling for reflection on everyday life, whose everyday life are we discussing (De Simoni, 2015; Kipfer et al., 2008)? The autonomous feminist critiques proposed by Dalla Costa and James (1975), amongst others (e.g. Federici, 2004, 2012) move beyond the concept of the politics of everyday life that was proposed by Lefebvre (1988), and explored in Vaneigem's *Revolution of Everyday Life* (1994). De Simoni reflects on two ways in which feminist critiques of everyday life move beyond Lefebvre's conception of it – through looking at the 'Domestic sphere and (re)production' and through 'the domestic sphere of the revolution' (De Simoni,

2015:n.p.). She highlights the necessity for this feminist intervention into everyday life, both in terms of its methods and its theory for rejecting subjectification through ‘politicizing the relations of social reproduction’ (De Simoni, 2015:n.p.)

People experience material conditions of labour differently according to their positionality. Dalla Costa and James (1975) highlight this through the relationship between women and the family, labour and capital. Traditionally women have been productive for capital as they facilitate the reproduction of the wage earner through the institutionalised form of the family. Therefore the labour of the wage earner is a productive ‘wage slavery based on unwaged slavery’ for capital (1975:33). In this way, labour in the home allows a wage earner (in this case a man) to carry out their job as a waged worker for capital, as their material needs are facilitated by others, and are essential to the creation of the subject. ‘The woman is the slave of a wage slave and her slavery ensures the slavery of her man. Like the trade union, the family protects the worker, but also ensures that he and she will never be anything but workers.’ (Dalla Costa and James, 1975:41). Dalla Costa and James’ (1975) struggle at this time was to be recognised as workers in the ‘Domestic Sphere and (re)production’ (De Simoni, 2015). It highlights the way in which our social reproduction is necessary and essential for creating capital in the everyday.

This challenge of patriarchal capitalist relations is recognised by De Simoni (2015) as ‘the domestic sphere of the revolution’. She highlights how the ‘wages for housework’ campaign did not just demand women’s wages and recognition as workers, but things that could not be met by the current capitalist system:

Claiming wages for the free labor of reproduction was meant to explode the measurement of wages as such and, with this, bargaining over relations of exploitation. The feminists targeted the myth of the contract, emphasizing the tendency of the real subsumption of labor under capital (De Simoni, 2015, np).

Therefore, feminists attempted to use their position as unwaged workers to highlight the fact that ‘everyday life’ under capital relied on their unrecognised labour, and to break this reliance.

This feminist analysis of everyday life and social reproduction can be used to explore the perspective of Mercado Bonpland. A retail market has not traditionally been conceived of as a 'political' space. However, in producing food, working, exchanging and seeking sustenance, this market crosses many of these 'barriers' between the personal, everyday and the political. The way that politics is organised in Bonpland market is crucially through these everyday approaches, often as a result of necessity and experience. This accords with the understanding of the experience of the everyday approach outlined by Sitrin:

In Argentina the movements prefiguring the change that they desire are revolutionary in this same sense. They are creating horizontal relationships, transforming their ways of being and organizing, with a focus on that relationship deepening and expanding. This conceptualization of revolution as an everyday transformation, not a storming of the Bastille, is an important distinction (2012a:7).

Consequently, this everyday life approach is not focused on a moment of revolution, but on a process of collectively building better conditions. Campaigns such as 'wages for housework' were not just striving to be recognised, but to create antagonisms that would break the system of the social relationships created under capital, 'prefiguring the change that they desire' (Sitrin, 2012a:7).

Enacting prefigurative politics of everyday life

Following on from the feminist intervention in the understanding of everyday life means engaging in prefigurative politics. Dinerstein describes prefigurative autonomy as a threefold process involving intervention 'in the anticipation of a better world in the present' (2014b:18). For Dinerstein, prefiguration is firstly 'a complex collective action that includes the negation of the given; the creation of the alternative; the struggles with, against and beyond the state; the law and capital; and the production of excess' (2014b:18). Therefore, prefiguration must take part in a collective struggle in-against-and-beyond everyday life. Second, prefiguration is 'necessarily a *decolonising* process so the *recognition* and discussion of the differences' is

essential in the way it asserts itself for indigenous and non-indigenous movements (Dinerstein, 2014b:18). This highlights that, through the process of engaging in creating political struggles now, we must respond to the problematic divisions and separations upon which capital is structured. Third, prefiguration is ‘a practice that is deeply rooted in the process of [the] valorisation of capital’ (Dinerstein, 2014b:18). This means that prefiguration must seek to attack value based on exploitation and profit.

Thus, as a process, prefiguration requires multiple avenues of struggle in-against-and-beyond the everyday life that we live. It is ‘criss-crossed by the tensions and contractions that inhabit capitalist/colonial social relations; for autonomous practices are embedded in, and shaped by, their past and contemporary backgrounds’ (Dinerstein, 2014b:18). As such, practising prefigurative politics does not mean shying away from or pretending that antagonisms do not exist, but rather working within and through these tensions from where we stand. Prefigurative practices must attack exploitative capitalist forms whilst we exist within them. For Dinerstein, what prefiguration is ‘ultimately about, is transcending the parameters of legibility imposed or made invisible by capitalist, patriarchal and colonial demarcations of reality’ (2014b:19). Applied to Bonpland, prefiguration means going beyond creating a market by creating a movement that goes beyond work, production and exchange, to creating forms that challenge the very basis of capital. This approach – acknowledging the histories and realities of everyday life – recognises the antagonisms of daily life, and seeks to attack and surpass them.

Hope, prefigurative politics and possibility

Engaging in prefigurative politics demonstrates that the potential to create change can begin from the complex antagonisms of everyday life. Dinerstein (2014b), in particular, highlights the need for having this hope if we are to shape what we believe to be possible, and argues that this, in turn, *creates* possibility. This understanding of possibility is established through an analysis of the material and abstract relations of capital. Understanding this potential derives from the

separation of the doing from the done, which means reflecting on moments in which our labour is abstracted into value or money. However, there is always an ‘overflowing’ – our doing cannot be totally subordinated.

Dinerstein (2014b) and Holloway (2010a) use prefigurative politics in an attempt to understand how hope exists in-against-and-beyond conditions under capital. As part of the same process of antagonism, hope establishes the potential to build alternatives from everyday life approaches, and this concept is built from Bloch’s (1995) conception of hope. Reflecting on Holloway, Dinerstein explores the hope that emerges from the cracks of capital: ‘concrete doing is not, and cannot be, totally subordinated to abstract labour... There is always a surplus, an overflowing. There is always a pushing in different directions’. (Dinerstein, 2014b:202).

Whilst Dinerstein can ‘intuitively accept’ the crack interrupting capital, it ‘is not self-evident’ (2014b:202). Instead, she contrasts this breaking of value with hope as representing ‘anti value in motion’ (2014b:210), understanding hope and value as crucial to the translatability of autonomous prefigurative politics. The ‘antagonism between values and hope is the antagonism between the possibility of constructing a reality of hopelessness or a reality of hope’ (Dinerstein, 2014b:210).

Between the ‘reality of hopelessness’ and the ‘reality of hope’ there are thus differences that are grounded in understanding how to engage with the potential demonstrated in Holloway’s ‘cracks’ of capitalism (2010b). As Dinerstein (2014b) observes, investigating the material conditions of a ‘reality of hopelessness’ is a much more accessible approach for researchers to adopt, as quantifiable results can be provided. For example, when conditions improve, there are increased resources that can be measured. However, Dinerstein (2014b) also introduces the concept of the ‘reality of hope’, which is crucial to the concept of cracks in capital. The reality of hope involves a different way of perceiving, understanding and imagining reality. Embedded in prefigurative politics, these alternative demarcations of reality can be constructed through the process of improving everyday life. However, this more ethereal concept (a reality of hope),

whilst crucial to the concept of cracks in capital, is difficult to study or to establish the existence of. Yet, I see this reality of hope as crucial to undertaking radical political change.

Following Dinerstein's (2014b) construction of the differences in hope – between the reality of hope and the reality of hopelessness – I use the terms *possibility* and *necessity* to explore everyday life in Bonpland. These build on the concepts of the reality of hope and the reality of hopelessness, but both emphasise that these are processes established through everyday life. Both hope and possibility concern future potential, yet rather than focus only on the future, possibility emphasises the temporal nature in-and-beyond present-day organising. Therefore, in using possibility, I highlight the fragility and potential that comes from organising in-against-and-beyond, as well as the antagonisms that are present at all stages. I do this not in order to categorise Mercado Bonpland as either a success or a failure, but to embed it in the contested world of the everyday from which it stems.

Conclusion

In this chapter I argued for the necessity to explore potentials that construct alternatives to capital in-against-and-beyond it. By trying to grapple with the complex and multiple moments that interventions can be made, this research demonstrates how in-against-and-beyond operates as both a theoretical standpoint to analyse creating alternatives as well as a way to ground everyday life politics to create this too. I highlight the challenges involved in attempts to create alternative organisational forms, but also the moments of hope that are demonstrated by the ability to change and shift possibilities. In the case of Argentina, the long history of crises and the necessity that this produced to make change, emphasise these potentials to create examples in-against-and beyond current realities. This context as a heightened example of such possibilities operating from everyday life therefore highlights the potential for such organisation elsewhere.

Chapter 3 Mercado Bonpland: situating the market in centuries of struggle.

In this chapter I introduce the multiple contexts that Mercado Bonpland is situated in. Operating as a lens, Bonpland has contexts drawn from different epochs of Argentine history, which have led to the possibility of its new social and economic organisation and functioning. I will begin by outlining the historical context on which the market has drawn, from the colonial history of Argentina and the example of the explorer Aimé Bonpland from which the market gets its name, the development of the market and President Alvear (between 1922 to 1928), followed by the tumultuous period of dictatorship. Secondly, I focus on the neoliberal roll-out of policies that led to the shift to supermarkets and the closure of small traditional retail markets. This led to attempts to change land-use in the city, as well as a reduction in local control, shops and food production. Thirdly, I argue that in the 2001 crisis, the breakdown of the economic system was demonstrated by the impeded functioning of the industrialised food system. This breakdown showed the necessity for other forms of production that were not reliant on global economic systems. People organised and created their own autogestive networks of production and exchange, which have a long history in Argentina. These different contexts underwrote the development of Bonpland in Argentina, and the market acts as a lens that focuses on specific aspects of their history. This grounds the project in a broader context of organisation and resistance, and acknowledges that Mercado Bonpland is only one moment of a long and complex history.

3.1 Dark shadows: Bonpland, Alvear, dictatorship and crisis

Aimé Bonpland and the ‘discovery’ of the Americas



Figure 3-1 Eduard Ender’s *Alexander von Humboldt und Aime Bonpland im Urwald* (1856) *oil on canvas* from Driver (2001:16). A painting of Humboldt and Bonpland, in the ‘field’ in their exploration of the Americas.

Aimé Bonpland was a colonial explorer who travelled with Humboldt to the ‘Americas’, and his legacy lives on in the city of Buenos Aires in the name of the market and the street on which it sits (Figure 3-1). This colonial legacy of exploration therefore contextualises both academic research histories as well as the establishing of agriculture and markets in Argentina, to which Mercado Bonpland’s history originates. Driver (2001) explores the colonial history of the discipline of geography in his book *Geography Militant*. The term ‘geography militant’ was a categorisation of the discipline which comes from Joseph Conrad’s 1924 essay ‘Geography and

Some Explorers'. The above portrait represents Humboldt and Bonpland during their exploration of the Americas, which was a key moment of the 'geography militant'. In this painting, Bonpland is literally portrayed as being in the shadow of Humboldt, and this remains representative of his legacy (Bell, 2010). The portrait demonstrates the explorer as "'geography militant', as the embodiment of scientific reason, a more or less 'complete walking academy' confronting a riotous natural world, bolstered by the accoutrements of scientific exploration – books instruments, baggage and so on" (Driver, 2001:16).

This history of 'geography militant', understood in terms of exploration, knowledge and then 'mastery', is intimately linked with the colonial project. Geography as well anthropology, biology and history proliferated 'classifying the other' in contrast to European identity' in asserting colonial notions of modernity (Edensor and Jayne, 2012:2). Driver (2001:21) most fully explores the colonial history of geography through analysing the Royal Geographical Society in London, which had a 'monopoly on the business of exploration'. The history of empire situated this Society as a centre for 'information exchange' (Driver, 2001:21). Driver acknowledges three roles for the explorer: as someone who made 'pathways through unknown country' for the scientific community; demonstrated 'a model of enlightened reason'; and served imperial colonial projects in the sense that 'to explore an unknown country was in this sense to subdue it' (2001:22). Therefore, the history of geographic exploration can be understood in relation to the aim of expanding knowledge about geographical space, naturalisation, enlightened reason as 'rational scientific study' and colonial expansion. In this context, the historic basis of geographic fieldwork (as with other academic disciplines) is situated in the idea that 'to know is to conquer'. The context of this history of the geographic discipline in relation to this research is crucial to acknowledge. I will return to this as a theme for my own research reflections in the following chapter on methods.

Whilst Humboldt's role in the exploration and history of the Americas is well known, Bonpland's is less so (Pratt, 1992). However, in Palermo barrio in Buenos Aires there are streets

named after Humboldt, Bonpland and Darwin, which demonstrates the colonial legacy of exploration in the city. This colonial history is written in the very streets that you walk on, and in the name of the market where my research was conducted – Mercado Bonpland. The naming of the streets is a seemingly permanent symbolic reminder to people in the city of this history.

For Mercado Bonpland, the history of Aimé Bonpland is thus invoked through the market name and grounds the history of the market, as with the economic history in this colonial period. As Pratt (1992) highlights, Humboldt and Bonpland set out to explore the Americas. Whilst Humboldt attempted to turn himself into an encyclopaedia of knowledge on his return, which meant that he became a ‘celebrity’, Bonpland did not. Bonpland’s less well known history is explored in *A life in the shadow*, in which Bell (2010) documents Bonpland’s legacy. As Bonpland chose to remain in Argentina for the rest of his life, there is less known about him in Europe than Humboldt.

Reflecting on Pratt’s (1992) *Imperial Eyes*, Bell (2010) highlights the way in which transculturation informed Bonpland’s life as he crossed social boundaries. However, ‘Bonpland’s is a very interesting life in this respect because it mainly concerned transplanting knowledge systems’ (Bell, 2010:223). Whilst Bonpland may not have the same legacy as Humboldt in terms of scientific writing in Europe, manuscripts discovered by Bell demonstrate that he advised in many different spheres of life. In particular, this transplanting of knowledge meant that Bonpland was involved in ‘whatever new developments were present in land use – including estancia development, sheep breeding, forest resource conservation and colonization by minorities drawn from northwest Europe’ (2010:220). This demonstrates the way in which, even without a specific colonial plan, explorers such as Bonpland were crucial for knowledge transfer and the implementation of certain models of development and patterns of land use. These land use plans have since defined the way in which the landscape has been created and understood. In particular, Bonpland’s influence was felt in the development of sheep farming and industrial production of maté tea, which demonstrates how this scientific figure became

instrumental in changing the way that the economy and businesses were run in Argentina, following a 'European' development plan.

These colonial landscapes still persist, and have effects on how people live today. Mitchell (2012) examined how the Bracero era shaped California, and whilst we may often focus on changes in the landscape, a landscape remaining the same is a powerful demonstration of power and control. In Mitchell's study, the long term exploitation of labour conditions and agricultural landscape in California, demonstrate power and control of the elite. Similarly, colonial land distribution patterns, estancias and privileged populations still affect the way that the landscape in Argentina is ordered. It is therefore necessary to be aware of this history, and the ways in which it will continue to shape the context in Argentina today.

Indeed, [in the 1890s] Argentina ... can be seen as an oligarchic society that maintained social and economic power through land ownership; the model of economic growth was based on profit derived from the land, owned by the criolla (colonial) aristocracy (Bianchi et al., 2002:4).

As Bianchi et al. (2002) reflect, control and power was centred around the landed elite, who could maximise the yield from the land and export it abroad. This meant that colonial land divisions created a huge divide between rich and poor. In the particular context of Bonpland and Buenos Aires, this means that it is important to understand the influence of the huge estancia model of farming, and how Mercado Bonpland, in contrast, tries to support small family farming. In addition, networks in the market support some of the few indigenous or 'peasant' movements that still exist in Argentina, such as the selling of 'Wichi' woven products in co-operatives in the North. Whilst this does not change the problem of unequal land ownership, it tries to provide support for smaller-scale initiatives so that they can continue. Acknowledging this history and its continuing legacy is, however, crucial to the day-to-day organising of Mercado Bonpland.

Argentina, the national President Alvear and the founding of markets

One of the recurring names attributed to the history of the market was the powerful Alvear family. Torcuato de Alvear was the first Mayor of Buenos Aires, and his son Marcelo Torcuato de Alvear was President from 1922 to 1928. These founding figures have left their mark on the city, much in the same way as Bonpland and Humboldt have. As will be demonstrated later in the thesis, the way that people describe their experiences in the market varies greatly, for example in relation to this history. Rather than understanding this as a 'problem', it is perhaps simply best to understand it as representing the different understandings, approaches and personal histories of the market stallholders that I interviewed.

Marcelo Torcuato de Alvear founded many of the city markets, including Bonpland (Pedro, 01/11/2013). Marta and Ana recall the importance of Alvear in the market's construction:

This was an old market from Alvear's time, in the 20th Century. He built them everywhere. Some of them were privatised. The market in Caballito and this one were abandoned, [and] they [the city government] had a plan for a real estate project. (Marta, 16/07/2013).

Marta describes the importance of the Alvear in the building of markets in Buenos Aires. Expanding on the reasons for Alvear's importance, Ana described how some markets had previously been connected through a labyrinth of tunnels in order to connect the traditional markets together, share cold supplies, and create passages to squares such as Chacarita and Dorrego. Ana claimed that Bonpland was part of this network; the networks of tunnels and the numerous markets demonstrate that, at one time, the network of markets within the city was very complex and interconnected. Whilst Ana and Marta demonstrated different aspects of the ways in which Alvear created market spaces, their understanding of his importance highlights the need to understand the historic influences of the construction of markets in Bonpland, as well as the numerous ways in which this was replicated throughout the city.

Community organising as necessity: Dictatorship and Perón

Since Alvear's time, there have been many changes in government in Argentina, including the government of the Perón era and the development of understandings of popular power (Mazzeo, 2007). Importantly, Peronism involved fostering a collective sense of popular people power. Whilst Perón built links with trade unions in the cities, improving the lives of the popular classes³, he was initially in danger of sidelining agriculture which, as Bianchi et al. (2002) reflect, was essential:

The post-war period saw a consolidation of this structure, characterised by the rise of Juan Domingo Perón, initially as one of the ministers during the military government and then as President of the Republic. Peronism was deeply rooted in a social context that was urban, syndicalist, labour-oriented, open to immigration, and where the state assumed the role of economic planner in a country characterised by a history of entrepreneurial fragility. The state became, therefore, producer and manager of economic activities, and sought to mobilize "popular sectors as a resource to break that 'status quo' represented by the oligarchic power" (Alberti et al., 1985, p. 10). The agrarian sector was excluded from this innovative social block, and responded with violent opposition to the Peronist project (Bianchi et al., 2002:6).

Perón attempted to 'mobilise popular sectors' through the state, and whilst agrarian reform was initially excluded from this model, it was eventually included. This collective sense of a left wing, popular government is crucial for understanding the context of modern political organisation, as well as being a reaction to the paternalism of Peronism.

In 1955 Perón was overthrown by a military coup, and there followed decades of different governments, including the presidency of the radical Arturo Frondizi, other military interventions, coups and dictatorships. The last dictatorship period was significant for the development and history of Argentine movements and popular uprisings. During 1976, "Argentina entered the most bloody period of its history. Between 1976 to 1983 a series of

³ Popular is often used to refer to the working class in Argentine context. Popular highlights power and agency of this social group, highlighting the capacity to take collective action and organise rather than only an identity as subjugated peoples.

ruthless military dictators – Videla, Viola, Galtieri – embarked upon the dirty war ‘la guerra sucia’ in which 35,000 people were ‘disappeared’” (Gordon and Chatterton, 2004:7). The consequences of these ‘disappeared’ are still being felt today, and many social organisations since this time have tirelessly campaigned for justice and truth regarding these disappearances. An example is the *Mothers of Plaza de Mayo* group, who march for justice for their disappeared sons every Thursday afternoon. The scale of these disappearances meant that ways of organising in Buenos Aires were forced ‘underground’ for considerations of the safety of those involved. Examples of this from Bonpland include some members of the CEDEPO organisation, who started working in Florencia Varela on the outskirts of Buenos Aires as they felt it was too dangerous for them to remain in the city. Thus, people could not trust or rely on the state to support them, which necessitated organising in neighbourhood groups. This suggests that it was not only the economic crisis in Argentina that influenced the creation of the solidarity approach. These multiple historical experiences are connected in terms of relying on organisation and personal networks developed over long periods of time. For example through *escrache* in the 2001 period, community members alerted each other about the existence of military members who had carried out atrocities during the dictatorship (Donovan, 2011). These experiences are thus necessary for understanding that the responses of collectively and neighbourhood organisation in the crisis did not come from nowhere.

3.2 Situating the closure of markets in the neoliberal context

As part of neoliberal expansion, many traditional retail markets have been closed and replaced with supermarkets. I will briefly contextualise Argentinian markets in relation to the history of supermarket development to demonstrate the economic changes that have occurred in the country beyond the market context. This helps to explain the wider economic processes that helped to establish why it became possible to reclaim the ex-municipal market of Bonpland.

This will also help to ground the financial crisis in a context of everyday need – that is, in how people obtain food.

Markets, supermarkets and economic restructuring

Economic restructuring under Menem's government from 1989-99 involved significant changes, such as cutting public sector employment, the privatisation of public services and cutting subsidies (Lewis, 2015:172). Whilst there was a period of relative stability for currency inflation in the early years of this government, these changes had begun to have an impact on unemployment. Such policies also changed the way that retail and shopping took place in the city. Structural adjustment and free trade areas 'led to a surge' in supermarket retailing (Reardon and Berdegue, 2002:322). Along with subsidies for migration in order to run small shops (kiosko,⁴ manager 15/07/2013) and the closure of traditional markets in order to establish the central market of Buenos Aires, food retailing had also begun to change.

As Reardon and Berdegue (2002) emphasised, these changes not only affected retail in the area, but also the way that farmers produced, what they produced, and how and when they produced it. The increase in supermarkets was therefore part of a process of 'modernisation' that took power and control out of the hands of farmers and placed it into the hands of a few big businesses, necessitating large-scale industrial production. Moreover, as smallholder organisations:

incur significant costs to ensure homogeneity, coordinating of harvest, centralised grading, sorting, packaging and delivery, and in administration. ... [W]orking with supermarkets also means having to adopt formal accounting and invoicing practices and thus being unable to avoid paying taxes (Reardon and Berdegue, 2002:328).

⁴ Kioskos is the name for a small shop or kiosk, such as a newspaper stand or small shop. Traditional market stallholders now run a kiosko next to the market, which predominantly provide photocopy and internet services.

These economic changes thus often led to a collapse of previously successful smaller co-ops and producers who could not compete with the new industrialised procedures. The supermarkets produce a 'double bind' for producers, as they 'can't live with them, can't live without them' (Reardon and Berdegue, 2002:329). This necessitated that producers changed their practice to fit in with the growing demand that supermarkets created (ibid:330). Therefore, supermarkets shape the whole process of food production, subsequently making other organisational systems very difficult to run. This emphasises that the economic 'liberalisation' policies of the International Monetary Fund produced substantive benefits for one type of food business: supermarkets and, in-particular multinational supermarkets. In contrast, the 'double bind' of the supermarket and the search for profits led to a worsening in the conditions for producers, sellers and buyers. This influx of supermarkets, whilst not being the focus of my research, establishes broad economic trends in Buenos Aires that contextualise the development of Mercado Bonpland.

The closure of traditional markets

We had two stalls [in Mercado Bonpland] – one with cleaning products and one perfumery – until 1991, then we came here [the kiosk next to the market]. Then the market was closed. It was closed for a long time and it opened again two or three years ago with a co-operative project. I don't know very well how it works now (Kiosko manager, 15/07/2013).

Organisers of the traditional market stalls in Bonpland explained that the closure of the traditional market had occurred because traders had left one by one until the market was untenable to run as a whole. This trend of closing traditional markets is integrated with the shift to supermarket development that was being encouraged. In the case of the stall owner now working at the kiosko, this led to them organising and developing a small shop elsewhere, but many others could not continue at all.

Reardon and Berdegue (2002) identify small independent shops as being substantial losers in the development of supermarkets, with 64,198 small shops shutting in Argentina between 1984–1993. Additionally, although many supermarkets offer discounts in poorer areas of Latin America, Reardon and Berdegue (2002) argue that small shops are still cheaper to buy food from and to run. Therefore, the closure of small shops and markets is unlikely to produce positive improvements in health or access to food for many in the ‘popular classes’. Furthermore, Reardon and Berdegue (2002) observe that there was a rapid consolidation of the supermarket sector with multi-nationalisation during the early 1990s. This meant that by 2001, the top five supermarkets in Argentina held a 76% share of the market, with foreign multinationals holding an 84% share of sales in these top five supermarket chains. The development of supermarkets therefore led to a small number of foreign owned companies taking most of the profit. This was by no means a development seen only in Argentina, with the global shift to multinationals being part of a wider process of global food shifts, and a change based on the concepts of ‘modernity’ and ‘development’.

This change was particularly prevalent in Palermo, which has the most supermarkets (132) of any barrio, most of which are concentrated in the north and the centre of the city (Subsecretaría de Planeamiento, 2009:44). This concentration of supermarkets in Palermo impacted what local people could buy in the area. These changes also demonstrate the strain that the traditional municipal market would have been under. The concentration of supermarkets in the north and the centre of the city also demonstrates that supermarkets focus on locating where the greatest profits can be made – in the wealthier barrios.

The changes to the supermarket sector had a secondary effect of forcing change amongst other retailers ‘in order [for them] to face their supermarket competition’ (Reardon and Berdegue, 2002:326). This shift in what was considered ‘modern’ or ‘desirable’ left several of the traditional markets looking outdated and old-fashioned, which could have been another factor in their closures. The new norms of retail modernity led to a change in perceptions of acceptable

cleanliness, lighting etc. This necessitated further changes, as previous forms seem outdated. When combined with the creation of the central market outside of the city centre in order to control production and distribution to small shops, this led to many of the neighbourhood barrio markets shutting down, including Abasto and Mercado Bonpland in Palermo.

Rather than seeing these market closures as isolated cases, I am interested in examining if they are linked to each other, as well as other development projects. Literature such as Gonzalez and Waley, (2013) is beginning to explore whether traditional markets provide prime sights for accumulation by dispossession (Harvey, 2004; Slater, 2014) in the city core. The Abasto market is a space that has been transformed into a high-end shopping centre. In this case, after the traditional market was shut, it was first occupied by migrants who were later forcibly removed (Carman, 2006) and then redeveloped as a shopping mall for international chain stores – something that is still relatively unusual in Argentina. The old market-style arrangement of the store is therefore suitable as a kind of gated mall building. Children can even play at being mini-workers – as part of a game in the Children’s World at the top of the mall, in which they play at being McDonald’s workers. This transition represents part of a wider city agenda in which not only are forms of work where people have greater autonomy and control over the food system being eradicated – what I refer to as ‘socially organised abandonment’ – but these spaces are also being altered to meet this agenda. In this way, social and spatially-organised abandonments create the need for something to be done to the buildings themselves, which in the case of Abasto, was used to justify the creation of a shopping mall.

Whilst many of these traditional markets were developed into spaces for other leisure activities, this was not the case for Bonpland. Whilst the space of the market was made available through the closure of the traditional market, Bonpland could not be sold, as a Kiosko worker explained:

At some point there was a tendency of closing markets because they wanted to sell the buildings, then they realised they couldn’t be sold because they were donated [to the city] so they had to recycle it somehow and use it socially, because it is specifically stated it can’t be sold or transferred to a company to commercialise it. It belongs to the city government. That is basically what I can tell you (Kiosko manager, 15/07/2013).

Mercado Bonpland was left empty, presumably until another use could be found for it, or a justification made to sell it. This reinforces a narrative common in city development of organised abandonment. However, due to community organising since the crisis, people in the neighbourhood have reclaimed Bonpland as a market for economic solidarity. Ana reflects on the difference that this cultural heritage status provides for the land and the building:

This place can only be a market, nothing else. Nobody can touch a thing. It has cultural heritage status and it is intended for this. It's like the Market Congress in Primera Junta. Despite this [cultural heritage status] this market is different – something else. There are few markets, because other city markets have been sold or closed (Ana, 23/04/2014).

Ana identifies Bonpland as being different, and I will explore these differences, particularly in relation to its cultural heritage status and the idea of ‘gray space’ in the chapter on the state (Chapter 6). The concept of ‘gray space’ (Yiftachel, 2009a; 2009b) highlights the frequently precarious status that city residents inhabit between acting illegally and acting in accordance with the law. This shows how laws can be deliberately ignored on behalf of elites, if profits are involved, or due to necessity in everyday life. In this case, enacting the cultural heritage status of the building provided the neighbours with a means to stay in Mercado Bonpland despite their conflicts with the state, for whom it was difficult to sell the land or the building.

Increases in supermarkets and reductions in community control

A key knowledge-holder in my interviews was Pedro, who had been instrumental in negotiating the future of the Mercado Bonpland. He had also been part of the Ministry of Agriculture, and acted as a key spokesperson for the market in Buenos Aires. When he was analysing why the traditional market on Bonpland had closed, he was therefore quick to contextualise this in relation to the broader trends of the markets and policy change in the city. The traditional market on Bonpland closed:

For the same reason all markets in the city closed. It closed during the 90's when there was a policy in which the new supermarkets were being pushed. This happened not only in the 90's but also before, the power of big supermarkets has generated displacement, bankruptcy, and the closure of neighbourhood stores, and even of this kind of market. Because markets have a dynamism that is harder to sustain (Pedro, 01/11/2013).

Pedro understood that the municipal market building (that is now Mercado Bonpland) had been left empty due to a wider set of political reasons, as Reardon and Berdegue (2002) also established. As supermarkets became more dominant, it was increasingly difficult to maintain traditional markets, and Pedro goes on to explain that there are now many empty markets in the city from this period. The idea that 'markets have a dynamism that is harder to sustain' is also an interesting observation, and one that will be worth returning to later in the reflection about these markets. Why are they more difficult to sustain, and what makes supermarkets easier to organise? One possibility is that traditional markets require co-ordination to ensure that all the separate stalls of a market work together in order to achieve a shared goal. Therefore, acting in the collective interests of all the market's stallholders is hard to achieve, and consensus hard to reach. This was something that was certainly true of the traditional market that had previously occupied the Bonpland building: the shopkeepers had left one by one until it was untenable for anyone to continue working there. As Pedro put it, 'when there are just two stalls working, the market cannot work anymore' (Pedro, 01/11/2013). Markets can fall apart in challenging times because each of the stallholders works independently rather than as part of a collective whole. This is something that is strategically remedied by the Mercado Solidario Bonpland, however, as the collective organisation is now a key part of the way that it is run.

A key difference that Pedro points to between the markets and supermarkets is that, 'for each new small or medium supermarket, 3,500 jobs close. This is the reason why markets don't work anymore' (Pedro, 01/11/2013). The creation of these new supermarkets not only affects the jobs in the local area, it also changes the whole supply process – from communities growing food, to packaging and transport, to the numbers of people working, and the sort of work that people do.

In turn, very few ‘winners’ emerge from the supermarket system, as there are only a few large owners (that are often multinationals) of the space and location.

3.3 The 2001 crisis: organising everyday life in Buenos Aires

The 2001 crisis in Argentina encompassed all aspects of people’s daily lives. This crisis went far beyond a financial one, to one concerning the objectivity and legitimacy of the government, and the organisation of a movement focused on a new ‘social imaginary’ and a new system of organisation and governance – ‘Que Se Vayan Todos’ (QSVT). The crisis, as a break in the objectivity of capital (Dinerstein, 2014b), thus provided a potential rupture point from an old system of governance, or a restructuring for capital. These multiple crises – as the case of Mercado Bonpland shows – increased the need to organise daily life differently. At the same time, this organising of daily life highlighted the possibility of creating new forms of social relationships.

The 2001 crisis had a long set of antecedent historical causes, but the primary ones can be attributed to ‘an overvalued fixed exchange rate ... and an excessive amount of foreign debt’ (Doyran, 2014:n.p). In 1989–99, Menem’s economic policy allowed him to peg the Argentine Peso to the US Dollar, which created an over-valuation of the Peso, but also enabled the international privatisation of public Argentine companies, such as Metrogas and Repsol (Gordon and Chatterton, 2004:12). Therefore, whilst the greatest effects of the crisis emerged in 2001, it had a long causal history:

The roots of the crisis in Argentina can be traced back to cycles of accumulation that exposed the limitations of the strong Kirchner administration. As Azpiazu et al. (1998) argued, the Menem age of reforms and subsequent crisis originated in "structural transformations" introduced by the military regime between 1976 and 1983, which "managed to destroy the old economic model of industrialization [and] to replace it with import substitution (ISI), setting the stage to implement neoliberal economic policies" (Doyran, 2014, np).

The previous periods of crisis cannot be ignored, and the neoliberal and economic expansion are part of the cause. However as Bonnet shows, the political situation in Argentina prior to 2001 was crucial to the way that the crisis developed. In his re-election in 1995, Menem's political consensus (based on the potential of hyperinflation) meant that he could 'unleash the brutal mechanisms of adjustment inherent to the convertibility regime: deflation, decrease in nominal wages, and increased unemployment in order to save the peso' (Bonnet, 2009:123). Consequently, political hegemony, financial plans and prior historical causes are all essential for explaining the crisis context.

Class is also cited as a crucial element in the 2001 Argentine crisis (Luna, 2001; Muir, 2015; Rother, 2002). In particular, the freezing of bank accounts, the devaluation of the peso in comparison to the Dollar, and the Argentine debt default of US \$100 billion caused a deep crisis, felt nationally and individually. This meant that 'millions of Argentines lost three-quarters of their life savings; in a very real sense, their money simply disappeared' (Muir, 2015:n.p.). This collapse of financial markets impacted upon the middle class more as they had most of the savings, (which had previously insulated them from the worst ravages of capital, that had always been experienced by the poorer in Argentine society). The scale of the devastation of this crisis is partly responsible for the mass engagement in horizontal organising practices for survival. Muir reflects on an encounter with a middle-aged psychoanalyst, who described the shift in his perception of the economy due to the crisis and devaluation of the Peso as follows:

We thought we were living in the clouds, but it was a dream. We woke up and realized they were clouds of farts. Our own farts. The IMF had anaesthetized us with our own farts (Muir, 2015:n.p.).

The experience of organising and crisis had profound effects on people's perceptions of the economy, with money being exposed as a signifier of the value. The 'dream' of financial

security, was broken and suddenly a new economic system had to be organised for survival, as part of understanding of the economic system.

By the end of 2003, after the crisis had passed its height, commentators explored how the middleclass presence in protests 'became rare' as the economy recovered to some degree, with people returning to work and having access to money again (Muir, 2015:n.p.). However, Mercado Bonpland demonstrates the often unseen development of horizontal political organisation of these 'rare' middle class protests. This discussion is particularly resonant for the later debates in Chapter 7 on territory and neighbourhood, as Mercado Bonpland is critiqued mostly by other political and neighbourhood groups for being a middleclass space. This raises the question as to the effect of this and how such resources can be used by other movement groups.

Crisis resistance within these mass movements developed around the slogan "Que Se Vayan Todos! Que No Quede Ni Uno Solo!" (They all must go! Not even one should remain!) (Dinerstein, 2014a; Sitrin, 2012b; Colectivo Situaciones, 2011), which demonstrates the altered form of the relationship between the state and capital. The movement's resistance and insistence on change was transformational, with the revolutionary movements of popular power forcing the resignation of four successive governments in two weeks (Sitrin and Azzelini, 2014:184). This coming together, social organising and collective refusal linked people together on the street, enabling them to find each other and connect in ways that they previously had not. Their resistance was directed against the state, and organising due to collective necessity brought about a different understanding of the relations 'in-against-and-beyond' the daily lives that had existed before. The crisis context shifted the narrative from mass support for Menem's 'prospective return to hyperinflation' (Bonnet, 2002:123) to May 2003 in which President Néstor Kirchner declared, "the age of neoliberalism has come to an end" (Doyran, 2014, np). Whilst the truth of this claim could be debated, it nonetheless demonstrates the profound shift in

discussion and policy regarding the proposed future of Argentina. The 2001 movements had successfully shifted the debate on what was possible.

Collective organising was required to meet the needs of the people in Buenos Aires as a result of the crisis (Sitrin, 2012). These innovative and horizontal forms provide examples of organisation, some of which have continued to develop following these horizontal practices or encompassing new state forms within them. Since the crisis moment, elected governments (and particularly that of Kirchner⁵) have had to demonstrate a dedication similar to the previous Peronist government on public work and the public good:

Kirchner's commitment to national industry, job creation, social programs and public works helped win the support of the working class in Argentina and the new poor who feared a return to recession (Doyran, 2014:n.p).

Bonpland, therefore, also exists during a time in which the predominant ruling party must demonstrate a commitment (at least outwardly) to supporting the 'popular classes'. This places the organisation of the market at an interesting point between the 'support' and attack of the state. I will explore these issues further in the analysis chapters.

Food riots and supermarkets

This [Mercado Bonpland] happened because there has been a very bad experience. Ideally, we would not have to live [in] such poverty again, [and] such unemployment, in order to think about these issues (Leonardo, 16/07/2013).

During the 2001 financial crisis, the changes that were made to the food systems and the collapse of the currency led to huge difficulties in accessing the basics for survival. As highlighted earlier, there had long been problems with access to food and basic resources for the

⁵ Nestor Kirchner was president from 2003 until 2007, when he was succeeded by his wife Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, who is currently president at least until the upcoming elections in October 2015.

poorest in Argentina (as documented by the *piqueteros* struggle), but the currency collapse led to the middle class being included into the group that struggled to secure their basic needs. With a collapse in the currency and therefore the economic system, food was very difficult to access, and inflation put it out of the reach of many. The poverty and unemployment that Leonardo describes as the impetus for creating Mercado Bonpland meant that people were no longer able to live their daily lives as they had.

Leonardo attributes the experience of crisis as a crucial driving force for creating networks of alternatives like those demonstrated in Bonpland, whose aim was to ensure this instability was never repeated. However, in the short term, the need for daily life basics in 2001 led to riots and to the ransacking of many supermarkets for food. The riots on the 19th and 20th December 2001 were thus also a consequence of and a direct challenge to the industrial food system that had failed the people of the country, as well as the restructuring by the International Monetary Fund and the economic policies crippling the country (Colectivo Situaciones, 2011):

Small shops were not targeted but rather the large multinational supermarkets, where people refused to leave until food was handed over. Most received it. There were a reported 9,000 lootings in Greater Buenos Aires, affecting 20 per cent of supermarkets, with losses at the big chains amounting to \$US30 million. Things came to a head on the 19th and 20th (Gordon and Chatterton, 2004:15).

This demonstrates the direct links that were being drawn by ordinary people about these ‘different’ crises of economy, political representation and daily life. Food, as something that we all need and use, provides a focus around which people can collectively organise in such a crisis. Therefore, in rioting and looting, people were both claiming what they needed, whilst also targeting multinational supermarkets, and thereby demonstrating a critique of this system of domination.

Subsequently, people went on to organise aspects of their daily lives collectively, which brought about the creation of many networks, small producers and co-operatives. It is from this legacy that the Mercado Solidario Bonpland stems. It is also upon these support networks of many

people in the community that the market relies: from assemblies to the local community, from occupied cultural centres to small familial bread producers.

Ferias and markets: exchange for necessity and possibility

There are several different sorts of market in Buenos Aires: government-supported Ferias Itinerantes de Abastecimiento Barrial⁶ (FIAB); wholesale markets; traditional markets, which vary with the clients that they sell to local communities or to tourists such as Mercado de San Telmo and Mercado de Progreso; the City of Buenos Aires organised Buenos Aires Market, which sells gourmet and organic food such as el Galpon; and solidarity economy markets, such as Mercado Bonpland. Whilst there are not as many markets in Buenos Aires as in other parts of Latin America, there are still many small individually run shops in local neighbourhoods. The history of markets and informal exchange ferias (such as the ferias del encuentro⁷) provide crucial context to this research.

The radical nature of these ferias, government supported FIAB markets and economic solidarity markets demonstrate how markets function as part of a way of building alternative resources in Buenos Aires. Resistance to economic norms is clearly seen in the resourceful, community-oriented, co-operative and independent qualities of markets such as Mercado Bonpland. This market highlights their radical potential, and expands our understanding of the potential of establishing such alternatives within all markets. As such, in highlighting this collective solidarity approach, we can see one axis of organising that could be developed through further research into traditional markets.

⁶ FIAB are government-supported and regulated fairs in different barrios across the city, that are held approximately once a week per region. Food prices are regulated by the government as a response to inflation, making these markets the cheapest places to get food across the whole city (la nacion, 2013).

⁷ These are fairs where people meet to exchange, and were particularly prevalent during the crisis, although still continue.

Ferias and 'alternative markets' have a long history in Argentina, particularly in the form of 'Ferias Franca' (Golsberg, 2010). These fairs have been part of the process of reclaiming rights to production (particularly in Misiones province) for many years, and are facilitated through exchange. This exchange has provided a way of moving beyond producing cash crops for the international market and supporting small-scale independent production in recent times (Garcia Guerreio, 2014). There are histories of resistance through markets and fairs regarding the exchange of produce without money for the purpose of survival.

The history of resistive markets and exchange influenced the many Ferias or fairs that became common during the crisis. In turn these fairs have influenced the way that Mercado Bonpland is organised, as well as how people within the market have met and established themselves. The exchange of goods on the street at ferias was a key survival strategy in the crisis, as well as a way for people to independently organise their daily lives. Ana explains how she was involved in fairs in public spaces, describing her initial involvement in Mercado Bonpland as follows:

We were always looking because it was a time when there were a lot [of fairs] – every fortnight, with people in San Telmo fair, from San Telmo Assembly, we put them in Diagonal Sur, where the Bank of Boston is and Florida. We would assemble in public space. That was before Macri was in power.

That was a big movement you see. And I always came to assemblies that were made here, and participated (Ana, 23/04/2014).

Ana describes the fairs that she was a part of in various public spaces in Buenos Aires. This movement of fairs also provided a way for people to come together, and the fairs in these prominent public spaces were thus used as a meeting point as well as a means for building connections (as I will discuss later in relation to territory and networks: Chapter 7). The fairs that were held in prominent public spaces therefore went beyond just exchanging goods, to building a movement and contributing to the organising of the neighbourhood.

As Ana highlights, the development of such public spaces for exchange and autogestive practices made these fairs crucial for both daily survival and for building movements of

alternative organisation. However, this sort of fair does not happen in the same way today, as this ‘was before Macri⁸ was in power’ (Ana, 23/04/2014). This again highlights the importance of the state’s governance and control of public spaces. Therefore, whilst these fairs might be linked to resistance and to the crisis, in order to continue them after the period in which they were essential for daily life and survival, their expansion and organisation required negotiations between the state and other forces. In exploring these connections through Mercado Bonpland, I hope to highlight some of the challenges and influences of the historic organising of markets and fairs.

Neighbourhood organising and the community occupation of Bonpland

As Ana’s experience above demonstrates, the organisation of Bonpland was, in part, constructed through fairs in which people met and organised with each other. This experience with the neighbourhood and feria organising was how Ana became involved in Mercado Bonpland. The neighbourhood organising was particularly important for Mercado Bonpland, as it was the organising for the Palermo Viejo assembly that led to the creation of Mercado Bonpland. The Palermo Viejo assembly established projects focused on autogestion through organising the ‘political-cultural festival – La Trama’ in 2002 (Mauro and Rossi, 2013:7). The assembly aimed to expand and connect projects that were developing local, everyday life solutions to unemployment, as well as providing the basic necessities of daily life. In Chapter 5, I explore the complex ways in which the municipal market space was negotiated and occupied by members of the Palermo Viejo assembly, and how this assembly developed into organisations that have since become part of Mercado Bonpland. I argue that the experience and organisation of the Palermo Viejo assembly was essential for the creation of Bonpland. However, this also

⁸ Mauricio Macri is a right-wing businessman and Mayor of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires. Within Buenos Aires, there is often conflict between the national government of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner and Macri, and this affects governance in the city.

demonstrates the changes that have occurred in forms of organising over time, as the Palermo Viejo assembly no longer meets. This shows the development and legacy of these alternative movements and, whilst these connections might not always be clear, they indicate that the movements from 2001 still exist, whilst continuing in a different way.

Conclusion

The context of Mercado Bonpland is grounded in the history that went before it: this demonstrates the multiple histories of organising that have made the Mercado Bonpland project possible. These contexts demonstrate that the organising during and after the 2001 crisis, did not spontaneously emerge, although the crisis heightened participation. The crisis was part of a process that was informed by the direct experiences and cultural histories in Argentina, and led people to organise as they did. The focus on Mercado Bonpland provides a picture frame through which to focus on the specific histories that influenced the development of such an attempt at organising in-against-and-beyond everyday life. This situates the Mercado Bonpland project, as well as more broadly demonstrating the long histories of organising.

Chapter 4 In-against-and-beyond: markets as method

This chapter builds on the histories that have enabled the market to function, but situates my own research experience and methods within this process. In order to reflect in-against-and-beyond as praxis I have engaged in the creation and critique of both the research process and how my research was carried out in-against-and-beyond. In order to do this I first reflect on the same colonial histories that both effected development of markets and agriculture- as in the case of Mercado Bonpland, but also is the historic legacy of much academic research. This is not to questions much of the perceived radical research and how this fits into broader themes of the academy. I then reflect on how I attempted to develop this in-against-and-beyond theory, which was demonstrated in the practice of market stallholders and similarly apply this critique to my own work. This seems crucial, when the focus of the research is the sphere of everyday life, yet the process of researching often places one outside of this. Finally I explain what specifically I did in order to carry out the research in Mercado Bonpland, and how I then reflected on this, in order to produce this thesis.

4.1 Reflecting on the colonial histories of the academy

As I explored in the context chapter of my thesis, it is important to reflect on the context of colonial exploration. The research context of explorers like Bonpland and Humboldt – who adopted ‘rational’ and scientific approaches towards the ‘objects’ of their studies – was pervasive, and separated the researcher from the researched. The colonial history of research is explored in debates surrounding the production of theory from the North or the South. As a response, my investigation uses an everyday life approach in Mercado Bonpland, focusing on an ‘ordinary’ (Robinson, 2006) and everyday space. In this chapter I discuss what it means to research everyday life, applying the critique of neoliberal university expectations to the contexts of Argentina and UK. I hope that these debates explain, as well as question, what it might mean to be a radical academic, and how reflexivity remains key here. Finally, I discuss how I carried

out my fieldwork research and collected interviews and fieldwork diaries that I used to inform the rest of the thesis.

As a scholar from the UK conducting research in Buenos Aires as part of the Contested Cities Research Network⁹, I have reflected on debates of colonial research. It was essential to do this to ensure that the research engaged with rather than imposing itself on others, in accordance with these postcolonial critiques. Within the Contested Cities Research network – particularly at the start of the project – there was a great deal of debate and discussion about colonial research and the structures that still exist. These debates and contexts caused me to reflect even more critically on how I conducted my research and what this meant. In particular, whilst I actively participate in the politics of everyday life in the UK, researching in Argentina necessitated a more in-depth reflection on research in another place.

In this chapter I focus on debates on where a theory is from, and how that affects its application and use, through highlighting the important context of western modernity and its shaping and creation of certain norms and assumptions in academic research. Then I focus on my approach of everyday life research, reflecting on research solidarity and political context, language and relationships and, finally, on how I conducted my research.

Theory from where? Debates surrounding ‘northern’ and ‘southern’ theory

To reflect on the colonial history of academic research I will discuss ‘North/South’ theory, the universalisation of concepts of modernity, and how everyday life exploration attempts to engage in these histories differently. In discussing North/South, I do not want to perpetuate these

⁹ The Contested Cities research network comprises researchers from Latin American and European universities located in Madrid, Leeds, Mexico City, Santiago de Chile, Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro. The research network involves collaboration, investigation and the exchange of researchers, working at international meetings and working on research projects across the different research locations (Contested Cities, n.d.).

divisions, but to use this contrast to highlight the assumptions of ‘modernity’ that maintain them within and outside the academy.

It is important to establish an understanding of what it means to use the terms North and South. Naming global divisions through a simplistic understanding of power structures, Connell identifies many different terminologies for this divide, including ‘North/South’; ‘centre/periphery’; ‘West/East’; ‘first world / third world’; and ‘core/semi-periphery/periphery’ (Connell, 2007:212). All of these terms are problematic, as none of them take context into account and all create a ‘false sense of universality’ (Connell, 2007:212). In general, however, they ‘refer to the long-lasting pattern of inequality in power, wealth and cultural imperialism that grew out of European and North American imperialism’ (Connell, 2007:212). These power dynamics have never been simple, as imperial powers were reliant on their ‘periphery’ and hence creating the ‘other’ (Edensor and Jayne, 2012:2). Within these broad categories, the development of capitalist ‘modernity has always been both one thing and many’ (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2012:6). Consequently, the universality of North/South or Centre/Periphery has never been true, neither:

in Europe, where national imaginings have never been all alike, [nor] within nation-states – a point made repeatedly by the “industrial novel” in British literature North and South (Gaskell, 1855) to Nice Work (Lodge, 1988) – nor between them (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2012:6).

Gaskell’s novel demonstrates that even within a European context, there has always been difference in wealth within a country, demonstrating the absurdity of generalising about ‘the North’. However, these histories of inequality demonstrate more violent processes occurring of industrialisation or colonialism in different spaces. This example highlights the necessity of understanding these differences, as well as how they have been used to produce and under-develop parts of the world.

Whilst notions of North and South are oversimplified, the universalisation of western modernity has effected theory in both 'Northern' and 'Southern' contexts. The universalisation of western understandings of modernity forces theory from the South into either a 'performance of otherness' (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2012:6), or holds that to speak out of the South (in this example 'Africa') 'requires "explanation" a.k.a. conversion into the lexicon of liberal universalism' (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2012:6). Therefore, it is expected that theory and culture will be related to the 'universal' standard of western modernity. Consequently, 'Southern theory' is not only about where you are situated, as Connell argues there is Northern theory written in the South (2007:140). However, the domination and universalisation of concepts of 'Northern' modernity require that any other theories must explain themselves from within these frameworks.

Zibeche reflects on the domination of such 'northern' categorisations through ideas that define 'social movements' as opposed to understanding 'in movement, in the spaces of revolt, in its time, [which] completely dismantles sociology and institutional politics' (2012:320). He continues:

this is not just a problem for intellectuals and activists from the North – it often occurs in the South as well. ... Ultimately there is an epistemological problem, rooted in determining how, when, and where it is possible to learn. I think the moment of revolt is that which illuminates the other society, which returns to going unnoticed when the rebellion dissipates. ... I think that Indian practice challenges important elements of Western revolutionary politics (Zibeche, 2012:320).

Thinking outside of the 'North/South' theory of western modernity is, in part, a process that requires listening and learning in order to create reflections that engage with the process of trying to recognise what it would mean to understand a theory from a place. Therefore, within each space, theory is not just about fitting a place to a universalised concept, but also about understanding the specificities of that place. This requires challenging Western Modernity as the producer of all norms.

Thinking beyond a universalised concept of modernity calls into question who decides what theory, art or culture is. Several recent UK exhibitions have explored this idea of culture, modernity and art by exploring what being ‘within’ and ‘beyond’ these cultural institutions means (Coulson, 2013; Royal Academy of Arts, 2014; Tate Modern, 2013). Meschac Gaba, a Benin artist, questioned this universalism from within the heart of the British Art world when he created the Museum of Contemporary African Art inside Tate Modern:

Gaba has claimed that the Museum of Contemporary African Art is ‘not a model ... it’s only a question.’ It is temporary and mutable, a conceptual space more than a physical one, a provocation to the Western art establishment not only to attend to contemporary African art, but to question why the boundaries existed in the first place (Tate Modern, 2013).

Visiting this exhibition highlighted these antagonisms of questioning and existing within a universalised modernity as, at one and the same time, Gaba was questioning who had the right to decide what art and culture was, whilst existing within the British art world. This exhibition successfully highlighted the difficulties with what is perceived as art, and who decides this. In addition this exhibition highlighted the importance of institutions like Tate in creating understandings of what ‘accepted’ culture is. In a similar way, for knowledge, what is researched and who is researched and how this knowledge is ‘approved’ or published creates a universalised modernity continued within academia today.

Beyond western modernity in urban theory

Robinson’s *Ordinary cities* (2006) builds on and contributes to a growing literature that aims to challenge the continuation of colonial discourses of development and modernity in urban theory (McFarlane and Robinson, 2012; Peck, 2015; Sheppard et al., 2013; Ward 2008). In particular, Robinson aims to ‘dislocate accounts of urban modernity from those few big cities where astute observers elaborated on the broader concept of “modernity” placing it in a privileged relationship to certain forms of life in these places’ (Robinson, 2006:65). This challenges the

idea that modernity was invented in the ‘West’. Secondly, Robinson (2006:66) highlights the potential for challenging the dualism of positing ‘modernity’ against ‘tradition’, instead encouraging ‘autonomy and creativity for all cities’. Despite real differences in poverty and underdevelopment, Robinson highlights the potential for all cities to claim their own versions of modernity:

[U]rban modernity is a truly cosmopolitan phenomenon and can belong to any city and any people that choose to claim it. The importance of this analysis lies ...in developing better or more diverse renderings of what it means to be modern or live in cities (Robinson, 2006:66).

In the urban context, where schemes from around the world are contrasted, debated and exchanged, dislocating the practice of understanding cities from the point of view of hierarchical definitions of modernity is crucial. Robinson therefore calls for a comparative approach to ordinary cities. Whilst Buenos Aires may not fit with Robinson’s focus on the ordinary city, as it is a high-profile global city, my focus on daily-life specifics aims to do just this. Looking at everyday life in just one market aims precisely to understand the complexity of everyday life – of what might be on the surface normal, or even may not fit with a ‘modern urban’ environment. But it is this difference that makes it interesting. In this way, by using this small place as a focus, I hope to draw out the complexities that exist in creating one specific way for organising daily life. The focus of this small space also provides a way of understanding specificities and, through this small space: I can immediately see connections with a much broader set of places beyond Mercado Bonpland. As Robinson says:

Decentring the West in theories of modernity means seeking to understand the sources and sites of social transformation wherever they may be and allowing for newness and innovation, along with their cultural valorisation, to emerge and exist anywhere (2006:18).

Bonpland demonstrates its own process and method for social transformation which, in challenging exploitation, creates a different type of modern living.

Learning from or learning with Latin America?

Used as an example of potential crisis future to *learn from*, the Argentine economic crisis is what Robinson refers to as ‘noir modernity’, a tendency in which the ‘South’ is depicted as the future of Europe and the US, a future of ‘depleted infrastructure and desperate resilience’ (Robinson, 2006:91). This ‘counter-evolutionary trope’ is used by Comaroff and Comaroff (2012:9) to ‘question the epistemic reflex on which reason is founded’. They highlight that the narrative of development is flawed, as ‘many northern innovations emerged directly out of colonial encounter’, such as industrial mass production (2012:9). This ‘future’ in the South demonstrates that the system that produces wealth has also always produced poverty. However, Comaroff and Comaroff argue that in the colonies between ‘North and ‘South’ ‘the expropriation and alienation, the syncretism and archaism suppressed in Europe – hidden from view, like the woman in Rochester’s attic – were often promiscuously visible’ (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2012:6). This demonstrates that the structures and processes of capital have always created inequality, and the notion of ‘modern’ development is relied upon to justify this, although this violence was visible and pronounced in colonial settings.

The prevalence of universalised western modernity has led to understandings of ‘progress’ in cities as following ‘universal stages of urban development’ (Edensor and Jayne, 2012: 3). This notion reduces difference to linear narratives in which ‘problems’ can be eradicated if models are followed. Similarly ‘development studies have also focused on ‘non-Western’ cities by categorising them as ‘problems’ in relation to ‘western’ understandings of urban life’ (Edensor and Jayne, 2012: 3). These processual, normative definitions of urban development highlight the ‘universalist assumptions’ of much writing on cities. These conceptions like development practices underdevelop cities (Escobar, 1997, 2000) through technocratic decision making. As Escobar highlights in his critique of development, ‘underdevelopment became the subject of political technologies that sought to erase it from the face of the earth but that ended up instead multiplying it to infinity’ (1997:91). As such, notions of development are couched in

understanding the world through western modernity, and as such are part of a technocratic development models that in fact ‘underdeveloped’ them. Consequently, both these ‘underdeveloping’ processes and the specific development in each cultural context should be taken into account, instead highlighting difference rather than normative correct development paths.

In the case of the 2001 Argentine economic crisis, neoliberal free market policies, which represent ‘in no sense a southern theory’, had been imposed and pioneered within Latin America since the 1980s and led to the financial crisis there (Connell, 2007:152). This neoliberal agenda was implemented on the basis that ‘the US and Europe... colluded... by seeking to impose their future-vision – infamously, under the sign of structural adjustment – on Africa, Asia and Latin America, inadvertently giving early warning of what would lie in store for themselves’ (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2012:16). Whilst there was a shift towards these more extreme policies of neoliberal finance and a breakdown of the welfare state in Europe, particularly in light of the 2008 financial crisis, the fact that such hardships were experienced in Argentina does not make it an exact replica of a European future. As Robinson notes, identifying Latin America as a ‘future’ does not free the writer from colonial dualities of the modern and the undeveloped, and the practice of:

inverting the problematic of spatialised temporalities associated with ethnocentric views of modernity does little to place diverse cities in relations of temporal equivalence. Instead it continues to rest on the supposition that poor cities do not seem to have achieved the features considered ‘urban’ in the west (Robinson, 2006:91).

Therefore, rather than seeing the Argentine crisis as a model for all neoliberal financial crises, and rather than addressing the consequences and resistance in Argentina as a blueprint for other cities, I wish to understand the specificities of the case of Bonpland. Instead of learning from Latin America, or identifying Latin America as Europe’s future, I wish to understand how it might be possible to learn *alongside and with* Latin America, in particular from within the

context of the new possibilities produced through the experience of living in crisis had on people's attitudes.

Exploring the extraordinary in the 'ordinary' through everyday life activities in Bonpland

In researching Mercado Bonpland I am exploring specific examples of antagonisms that exist in the market rather than trying to identify rules or trends. One expectation of writing in the academic setting is that models, rules or evidence can be used to create exemplars or strategies for other places. However my aim has been to maintain some of the complex antagonisms that are embedded in creating everyday life politics, and which are often not the focus of accounts of alternative possibilities. Rather than positing Bonpland as a model, it is the exploration of these specificities that I find inspirational for changing everyday life.

In using in-against-and-beyond, I seek to highlight these diversities, which emphasise the 'hybrid' nature of daily life. Connell acknowledges that hybridity is a key challenge for universalising modernity in that 'social reality itself subverts these oppositions' (2007:160). Therefore exploring everyday life highlights the complexities that arise as a result of these oppositions. Building on discussion of everyday life in chapter 2 Mercado Bonpland organises through poder and potencia to enact new antagonisms and possibilities.

4.2 Living and researching everyday life

Given my commitment to focus on exploring the ‘ordinary’, complicated and ‘*in movement*’ aspects of daily life, I aim to engage with the prefigurative politics of Mercado Bonpland (Dinerstein, 2014b; Robinson, 2006; Zibechi, 2012:320). The politics of everyday life also connect with feminist standpoint theory, through a focus on ‘everyday life experience as the material of research’ (Roseneil, 1993:178; Stanley and Wise, 1993; agozino, 1995). In greater depth, it can be said that the ‘political is not only personal, it is a commitment to deconstruct the barrier between the academy and the lives of the people that it professes to represent’ (Kobayashi, quoted from Nast, 1994:57). This is of particular importance when researching everyday or grassroots movements, as daily actions attempts to affect social change (Askins, 2009; Brown and Pickerill, 2009; Pickerill and Chatterton, 2006; Puilido, 2003; Routledge, 2003).

Mauro and Rossi (2013) acknowledge that one of the key successes of the Palermo Assembly – which became Mercado Bonpland – was the political activation of community members in their everyday lives. These neighbours were not ‘full-time activists’ – rather, their activism was driven through everyday life, and represents a different method of political action, as Brown and Pickerill note when they ask, ‘who can actually be a full-time activist?’ This means that some self-defined activist groups didn’t identify Mercado Bonpland as being political. However, the everyday life approach of Mercado Bonpland demonstrates a different way of organising. In particular, it breaks down some of the privilege associated with ‘full-time activists’ through organising resistance in a sphere of everyday life and everyday action. As such, it demonstrates the potential for everyone to change the practice of their daily lives (Brown and Pickerill, 2009:27).

Over-research, ‘solidarity’, and for whom are we researching?

Undertaking research as part of the Contested Cities Network in Buenos Aires meant that I was introduced to academic and activist practices in the city. However, in the context of more than ten years of research undertaken predominantly by European and North American students about the effects of the 2001 uprising, I found that there was a degree of lethargy towards the idea of more research expressed by the ‘established’ ‘political’ groups that I contacted. This raised issues for me regarding the question of what constitutes radical and engaged scholarship. In particular, what effects does the cultural context informing the research and the research practice – including participatory and other perceived ‘radical’ practice – have in working towards social change?

Given the effects of this research lethargy combined with the call for a postcolonial turn in Urban Studies (Jazeel and McFarlane, 2007; Lees et al., 2015; Ranghuram et al., 2009; Robinson, 2006), I decided to undertake the research on Mercado Bonpland, which is organised through ‘ordinary’ everyday life. The research fatigue also demonstrates the strain that some poorly managed participatory research relationships can cause, as participatory projects require more input from the participants (Pain, 2003). The impact of research is particularly important in the everyday life context, as the organisers at Mercado Bonpland were already under pressure to organise their everyday lives. Therefore, I wanted to ensure that my presence was as useful and unobtrusive as possible, and that it followed the practices that I wished to support in conducting this research.

In light of these experiences concerning how I was perceived by political groups, as well as honest reflections on what I could offer as a short-term resident of Buenos Aires, I took a more standard qualitative approach. Years of short-term relationships with ‘well meaning’ student researchers who didn’t give anything back to political groups made many of them wary of accepting new members, the result of which was indifference, wariness and sometimes suspicion towards new members. Whilst this was not always the case – particularly when

connections or relationships were developed – this experience occurred frequently and powerfully enough that I felt that it was important to highlight it as a potentially underexplored impact of ‘radical’ or solidarity research.

When researching everyday life it is essential to reflect on feelings of doubt or uncertainty within the research process, although this is not common in academic literature. I aim to reflect on my antagonisms in my research, rather than present the objective ‘scientific explorer’ style of research that Driver (2001) identifies. Consequently, research practice must include time and space for being open to possibilities, for building relationships, and for listening and challenging possibilities and assumptions. This critical reflective practice means being open to such critiques rather than asserting that, as a researcher, I have solved them, which is crucial to developing everyday life approaches that reflect the politics of in-against-and-beyond.

In fact, whilst solidarity practices are important, it would have been extremely problematic for me, as a white university researcher, to claim that there is a universality of positionality from a political perspective. This debate was one that I was particularly exposed to at the Antipode Foundation’s Institute for the Geographies of Justice through a pamphlet ‘New Frank Talk *The white revolutionary as a missionary: contemporary travels and researches in Caffraria*’ (Bohmke, 2010). This searing critique draws parallels between missionaries from 1834 and researchers today, questioning the role of the well-meaning white activist, and highlights the potential issues that may arise if one does not reflect on the positionality and research engagement of the researcher and the researched. In particular, it underscores the fact that, without reflections on power dynamics, even the best-intentioned research can reproduce the power dynamics that the researcher opposes. Whilst I support engaged academic participatory approaches, I also think it is all too easy for these to be swallowed by the academy and spat out for the purpose of producing ‘impact’. In this sense, academia is just as prone to being co-opted as any movement, so it is from this position that I think it remains crucial to reflect on these positionalities.

This research process and in particular different research and cultural contexts between Argentina and the UK have led me to reflect on how I have brought aspects of the UK university with me as a PhD student. At times I felt I was bringing the neoliberal ethics of the university with me, which I had always tried to fight, but which I could now see in my approach within my new research context. One example was the lack of time that one has to finish a PhD in the UK system, which is at odds with an 'Argentine' understanding of time or work. A second was the requirement of my UK University to fill in consent and ethics forms and to act in accordance with health and safety procedures. Whilst these were essential to carry out, formalised processes like this are not common in everyday life contexts – particularly in the context of Mercado Bonpland, which operated in a grey area between having a legal and an illegal status in Argentina. As such, signatures and other formalities made people feel uncomfortable. Therefore, I had to find a way to make this more 'normal', printing sheets of questions in Spanish that explained my research, research questions and giving them my email etc (see appendix one). Following this, I decided to continue to use participants' names, as this was something they were happy with, and to anonymise them would require removing the context, details and information of the place and its history. Without names, the case study could no longer provide the specificity that makes it interesting. In order to do this, however, I had to be extremely careful about what I was researching, and ensure that everything was made clear to the people in the market. As such, I conducted research in the market over the course six months during three trips, reflecting on findings and building relationships over time. I also tried to spend as much time in the market as possible, reinforcing discussions and findings through interviews towards the end of each research trip.

Research developing from the everyday

I began the research by attending as many alternative projects in the city as I could, and speaking with as many people there as possible. At the same time, I tried to become involved

with making conscious decisions about where I was engaging in the city. I also began actively shopping at one of my local markets – the Mercado Solidario Bonpland. At first, I visited Mercado Bonpland to buy food. However, my conversations and engagement quickly increased, and I realised that the market was connected to many alternative projects and had become the subject of my research. In this way, much of my initial research was done in an informal way, as I engaged in everyday life with the people who ran the market and asked them about everything that they did. This culminated in us organising ideas using maps during interviews to show how interconnected the market was. However, as Sitrin (2012a) observes, interviews are conducted in a very informal style in Argentina (like many interactions), and therefore recording interviews was seen as unusual by some of the market stallholders. This meant that many of my interviews were not recorded formally, and the ‘formal’ interviews that I undertook and produced transcripts for were undertaken at the end of two of my substantive research trips. I thus saw these formal interviews as a culmination of research that was shaped by the many previous discussions and field notes.

Language, translation, and relationships – Bonpland’s organisers as experts

I initially visited Mercado Bonpland with a friend (who was also my Spanish teacher). Andrea had originally suggested that I visited the market as she knew how difficult it was being a vegetarian in the city. She had used the market since it had opened, and initially introduced me to many of the stallholders, which helped me to build relationships with them over the months. For this reason, I also carried out some of my more formal interviews with Andrea present – partly for extra help with language, but also as she brought so much to the conversations, with memories of the space and how it had changed. By conducting interviews together, we could also function as a team. Her interests and agendas were different to mine, but she also often asked people about their stalls and their life connected to the market, and from those discussions

she organised several separate events at the market, pooling her skills, such as storytelling, with other people's interests.

Andrea learnt more about the history of the market and how it functioned during these interviews too. This experience also meant that even when I left Palermo, there were opportunities for continued connections in the market, as Andrea and others continued organising. It is through these contacts that I returned to Bonpland in April 2014 in order to give a first draft of the map that we had made, as well as to reflect on the initial research findings and explore what had changed. This experience was useful, and organisers in the market were happy to see me and to tell me what had changed, as well as to engage more deeply in the research I was undertaking. This second trip was particularly informative, as barriers were broken down, and my commitment to the market was demonstrated by my return to it.

'Every translation is a betrayal of a sort' (Touza and Holdren, 2011).

Acknowledging the difficulties of translation, representation and engagement with complex theories, histories and personal stories involves a personal and political challenge. As with the reflections in the translator's foreword of *Colectivo Situaciones* (2011), many theories and discussions either do not have a direct translation or else are embedded in complex histories. For example, theoretical knowledge and political engagement were common in all of the casual conversations that I had in Argentina. As friends informed me, works by Holloway (2010a;2010b) and by Hart and Negri (2001) had been key texts 'for the movement' since 2001, and were fundamental in shaping their basic practices. This means that the contexts of their struggles and personal analysis are embedded in their theoretical engagement and understanding of such texts. On numerous occasions, people engaged with extremely complex theoretical and practical issues during interviews, and discussed how these issues had driven them to change and develop their own projects. Representing this history of personal and theoretical

engagement was therefore extremely difficult, even in the same language. Consequently, I have tried to undertake critical reflexive practice, particularly during writing field diaries, but as with representing any people's ideas, practices and contexts this is always a challenge.

As well as being very theoretically engaged, marketstall organisers all also had their own histories that led them to be involved in the market. Despite their lived experiences of the crisis, organisers did not see themselves as experts, however. Following a prefigurative approach, these lived experiences of the organisation were crucial in its future development. Therefore the experience of organising is crucial for determining and creating opportunities that can expand the potential of what is possible, situating people as experts in this research.

Moreover, as I show throughout this thesis, different words have different connotations, histories and engagements, and thus cannot always be translated directly or comprehensively. The term for 'power' in Spanish – *poder* or *potencia* – refers to a different approach to acknowledging and engaging with the construction of what power is, emphasising people's abilities to shape the struggles that surround them. 'Territory' is another term which, whilst having a direct translation into English, is used in Argentina to highlight the potential to identify and create different spaces – power in place, as an organisational strategy. As such, understanding the different emphases of the meanings of words in these different languages in addition to their direct translations was important for gaining insights into the research I was undertaking.

The transcription and translation of interviews was undertaken by both my teacher Andrea and me. I participated in this in full awareness of the difficulties involved in accurate translation, and in speaking for and on behalf of other people. This was also one reason why it was crucial for me to return to Buenos Aires (which I did in April 2014). The interviews that I conducted at the end of each research trip were recorded and then transcribed to ensure that I understood the emphases and meanings of what was said (Esposito, 2001).

Overall, not having fluent language skills is a barrier to engagement. Whilst I always endeavoured to improve these skills and my ability to discuss different ideas, I was also often on the back foot. This meant that it took me more time and effort to meaningfully engage in what was meant than a fluent or native speaker would, in attempting to understand these interviews. One benefit of this was that, as a result of my outsider status, I could ask what appeared to market stallholders to be obvious questions, and have everything explained to me in detail. Their level of knowledge and expertise on a variety of issues – from production techniques, to recipes and political rallies – meant that the market organisers were a wealth of information. They explained complex ideas and processes as interconnected, which is extremely difficult to represent, not just because of language issues, but also given the confines of a linear PhD. However, I hope to use my position as an outsider to highlight aspects that I found particularly illuminating in this engaged practice, with the aim of outlining some practices that might appear obvious to market stallholders, but that were emblematic or inspirational to me. I also hope to tease out some of the complexities of daily life that may not be visible to those inside the process. Mercado Bonpland organisers expressed interest in my research as a ‘fresh’ take from an outsider, and so I hope that this could represent another valuable aspect of my work.

Whilst I shared much political inspirations with these market organisers, as part of my reflexivity I wanted to be clear that my positionality was not the same as theirs. I did not run a stall at Bonpland, and like Sitrin has discussed (2012a:preface) was uncomfortable in being seen to be over-claiming my involvement or participation when I was not embedded in Argentine social movements. My intention was to explore the way that market stallholders constructed these complex alternatives and engagements, not to claim universality or that I was the same as them. This has meant that, throughout the thesis, I try to use (more than is ‘usually’ done in political writing) the personal pronoun ‘I’. In this way, I acknowledge myself as part of the process in creating this project, doing research and living in Argentina, rather than as an outsider. This contrasts with some academic writing that (entirely) removes the writer from the discussion. On the other hand, some political texts, such as Holloway’s *Change the world*

without taking power, use the powerful pronoun ‘we’ (2012a). This ‘we’ encourages building an idea of a collaborative and strong left-wing movement. In the context of Holloway’s text, this is inspirational as a rallying cry to the possibility of action – there, this collective and collaborative ‘we’ is the perfect political tool. However, with respect to the challenges of carrying out research ‘in-against-and-beyond’ the academy, the use of ‘I’ seems more appropriate in this research. When reflecting on what Mercado Bonpland organisers have achieved, I hope to use this position to engage with the contradictions that are present in their day-to-day lives. However, this thesis was produced through engaging in debates, discussion and reflection with others who shaped my thinking, in particular Mercado Bonpland organisers. In this sense, ‘we’ is appropriate, as this thesis relies on their work. In either case, both are problematic, but are necessary to place people in the discussion in a way that using passive language does not.

4.3 What I did, how I did it, and why I did it

For my research I undertook thirty semi-structured qualitative interviews over three research trips spanning a six-month total time period, as well as many informal discussions and interviews that took place before this (Figure 4-1). For that reason, a substantive part of the research was undertaken during the fieldwork process, for which I was at the market three days a week (four days a week on the second trip) over the entire period I was in Argentina, at the end of each stay I conducted interviews. For this reason, field diaries and reflections have also been key elements in the research process. It was essential that before I undertook any interviews I spent a long time in the market, discussing issues that affected those there, and making observations. In this way I hoped to establish the way that everyday life in the market functioned, as well as to generate questions relevant to their circumstances. On both trips I undertook semi-structured interviews, for which I developed a list of questions and analytical points as they emerged from the research (Flowerdew and Martin, 1997; Hay, 2005; Kindon et al., 2007). During these interviews, I aimed to use these questions as a guide only, so that I

could focus on listening and responding whilst ensuring that I covered all of my key points (Roseneil, 1993:192). This guide would also allow there to be more of an opportunity for the participant's 'own weighting of issues' to become clear (Roseneil, 1993:198), and thus allow them to speak as much as possible. These questions were also useful to show to some of the participants, and to ensure that everyone within the co-operatives who wanted to speak to me had the chance, as often only one member would be in the market each day.

One key participant, Pedro, was not available to speak to me during the time that I was in Argentina as he had to balance his time between the market and a government role. For this reason, Andrea carried out an interview with this participant on my behalf, using my questions. Whilst this was not ideal, the process of securing this interview had taken months, by which time I was no longer in Buenos Aires. Between my visits, if a big change occurred in the market, Andrea would tell me about it to make sure that I was kept up-to-date.

| Name | Organisation | Interview date | Interview exceptions |
|--|---------------------|--|----------------------|
| Research trip April 2013- July 2013 | | | |
| Raul | CEDEPO | 16/07/2013 01/07/2013 | |
| Elsa | CEDEPO | 16/07/2013 | |
| Anibal | La Alameda/ Lacar | 16/07/2013 | |
| Marta | Ayri/ La Alameda | 16/07/2013 | |
| Claudia | La Asamblearia | 16/07/2013 | |
| Julian | La Asamblearia | 20/07/2014 | |
| Gabriella | Red Del Campo | 02/07/2013 05/07/2013 12/07/2013 | |
| Mercedes | Red del campo | 16/07/2013 | |
| Daniel | La Cantina | 16/07/2014 | |
| Leonardo | Colectivo Solidario | 16/07/2013 | |
| Pedro | CECOPAF | 01/11/2013 | Andrea interviewed |
| Lucrecia | CECOPAF | 05/07/2013 | |

| | | | |
|---|--|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| Luis | Florencio Varela Farming co-operative | 05/07/2013 | |
| Sol | Soncko | 07/07/ 2013 | |
| Kiosko managers and locals | Kiosoko | 15/07/2013 | Kiosko next to market |
| Viole and her mum Julia | Shoppers | 16/07/2013 | consumers |
| Hester | Shoppers | 16/07/2013 | consumers |
| Giuliana | Eco-club capital | 06/07/2013 | Recycling day in Mercado Bonpland |
| Research trip April 2014- May 2014 | | | |
| Lucrecia | CECOPAF | 15/04/2014 | |
| Martin | Colectivo Solidario | 22/04/2014 | |
| Leonardo | Colectivo Solidario | 23/04/2014 | |
| Mario | La Asamblearia | 15/04/2014 | |
| Jorge Blanco | University of Buenos Aires | 14/04/2014 | University researcher |
| Maria | La Merceleria | 26/04/2014 | |
| Marta | Ayri/La Alameda | 15/04/2014 | |
| Norma | MP la Dignidad | 22/04/2014 | |
| Ana | Puchi | 23/04/2014 | |
| Mercedes | Red Del Campo | 23/04/2014 | |

Figure 4-1 Table of formal recorded interviews

I saw the development of relationships as crucial to the research process. As a market, there were ample opportunities for me to go along to the space, to shop or attend cultural events. In this way, I began to understand more about the market. Whilst this took time, I felt it was even more important given my role as an ‘outsider’. This meant that I developed my research focus to fit with market organisers, as my initial interest in Bonpland had been with its community reclamation and partial occupation. However, this was not the primary interest of the market stallholders, which thus allowed me to engage with the more complex antagonisms that existed there, and how they were produced in-against-and-beyond the economy, the state and the

territory. Thus, by spending time in the market, and with its organisers, I tried to ensure that I did not just apply theory from elsewhere, as discussed above.

The maps or diagrams that were constructed in interviews facilitated both more creative discussion and the production of more specific details, and provided another medium for interacting and communicating and generating information. Mapping as a tool (Counter-cartography collective, 2009; JRF, 2010; Risler and Ares, 2013) helped to break the boundaries between the researcher and the participants. Whilst I did not create a participatory mapping project – as I felt that this was something that could only occur if participants requested it – I did use mapping as a tool within my research. The aim was not to represent the market cartographically but to demonstrate power and processes taking place in Bonpland market. This creative process allowed the participants to engage differently, as well as creating an entirely new dynamic between the market organisers and myself, and aimed to be reflexive and to address the power dynamic inherent in the research process (Riley, 1974; Hobbs and May, 1993). Even if organisers did not feel like they had anything to say, it opened them up to talking about new things.

Using the map as a tool also required more specific information, which was both a challenge for and a benefit to me. In general in interviews, people spoke in very broad terms, as if things were obvious. To a certain extent, as an outsider, I could still ask them to clarify what they meant, but the idea of mapping required even more specificity. To organisers of the market, the development of economic solidarity and the choices of the products they sold seemed obvious to them. Often, interactions in the market began with broad discussions about causes, and by using maps we could start speaking about all the specific products and different co-ops that were involved, from which other issues then arose. This tool was also particularly useful as it made fewer language demands than spoken communication, thus enabling participants to show me more easily what they meant to communicate, and allowing me to encourage more focus on specific causes.

Analysis and writing

I began the analysis and write up of interviews and field diaries during my fieldwork in order to engage with the research as fully as possible as it was occurring. In particular, I made sure to have a period of reflection between trips to Bonpland, which meant I could identify any questions and information that I needed to clarify. I used grounded theory to refine and test theoretical and research ideas throughout the research process so that the collection of interviews was informed by the research and participation that had already been undertaken (Roseneil, 1993:200). I coded interviews into key themes that ran across the field diaries and interviews I had carried out. I recognised, however, that in this process of research, it would be my analysis that would be written, reflected on and analysed, rather than that of the market organisers.

In the return research trip to Mercado Bonpland, I disseminated information and reflected on the emerging themes with Mercado Bonpland stallholders, and this informed further engagement. In addition, I maintained connections with people in the market, and in particular Andrea. This meant that I would continue to hear about any significant developments, and could also reflect on the initial maps that I had made, to check accuracy or incorporate changes.

I also want to highlight the importance of the dissemination of research findings and the potential impact this could have upon those involved in the research (Askins, 2009:11). This is applicable both in terms of ‘where’ we write as well as ‘how’ we write, and both are important in terms of ‘political strategy and emphasising intersubjectivity’ (Askins, 2009:11; Bondi, 2002). In this context, whilst I acknowledge that a PhD is not the most accessible text, and that I am confined to some expectations in terms of style and content, I have aimed to make aspects of my research accessible. In this respect, making maps and diagrams was an attempt to engage in producing something that would be ‘useful’ to the market organisers. In addition, I am interested in engaging with how this experience could be useful for evolving autogestion

movements in Europe, and so whilst I do not see this thesis as an easily accessible tool in and of itself, I hope that it can demonstrate some of the complexities of living in-against-and-beyond that are useful to both the market and to other projects. I plan on developing these ideas through papers and other publications.

Conclusion

This process of investigating and writing has challenged the concept and praxis of in-against-and-beyond. I had some specific goals and aims that I wanted to achieve from this research that were simply not possible when reflecting on contexts of what I could realistically bring to research groups. This methods review is therefore partially a critical reflection on what it means to do research in-against-and-beyond the academy today, and partly a critical reflection of what I did. In this way, I am not claiming that I have all the answers, but have tried to highlight how through engaging in everyday life practices, I have attempted to challenge norms, or simply highlight their existence. In particular as the thesis was a long process of developing relationships, investigation, trust and information, I see many of the objectives of in-against-and-beyond applying to the everyday life of researchers as part of this struggle to create, sustain and enliven examples of *beyond*, existing in, and against.

Having discussed these important contextual issues in chapter 2-4, I am now going to present the in-depth analysis – an analysis framed, as noted earlier, around the 3 – part focus on economy, state and territory.

Chapter 5 Economy, Market and Everyday life

These analysis chapters explore the main themes that emerged from my fieldwork on how daily life is negotiated during the building of solidarity movements. This chapter will explore the economic system adopted by groups in Mercado Bonpland, before Chapter 6 discusses the relationship between organisation and the state and Chapter 7 looks at the creation of Bonpland as a territory. The market is a focus that allows me to explore the necessity and possibility of creating ‘alternatives’ from daily life engagements.

This chapter argues that capital is crisis (Screamin, 2008), and therefore focuses on attempts by groups in Mercado Bonpland to create an alternative economy that prioritises people over capital. During the crisis of 2001, the potential for people to create alternatives to capital systems was seen, demonstrating how we animate capital. Therefore, the 2001 crisis has here been analysed as a moment of rupture that opened new possibilities in people’s ideas about what is possible in terms of economic and social organisation, as well as presenting very real challenges relating to basic needs. The market at Bonpland creates and organises around a system it calls ‘economic solidarity’, and here I explore the tensions with the capitalist economy that some aim to leave behind, but to which they remain connected. I contextualise this approach within alternative economies literature and demonstrate how it is crucial not just to recognise the alternative economy, but to engage in how antagonisms are produced. I then develop this in order to engage with examples of daily life practices that highlight these antagonisms, acknowledging that these processes are complex and that the market represents many approaches through its seventeen stalls (see Figure 5-1). These stalls have different organisational structures and principles, which are driven by their own understandings of the economy, and which emphasise their different aims (for a diagram of these different aims see Figure 1-1 above).

A retail market is reliant on the economic processes that (re)produce and constitute it – production, exchange and consumption – with the market functioning as the central point for the

connection of these processes. The economic solidarity model of the market alters each stage of this chain from those of traditional markets, moving to self-managed production, fair trade and responsible consumption, and I introduce the ideas behind these changes alongside the literature on diverse and alternative economic practices. These re-imaginings of the capitalist mode of organisation emphasise the broad aim of rethinking social relationships at each stage of the economy. I use the example of quinoa to explain the global economic systems that still exist within the market-facilitated network of economic solidarity. I then explore the practices in-against-and-beyond each stage of the economy (production, exchange and consumption) seen in the struggle to adapt and change contemporary forms of daily life, as well as to reorganise the social relationships of capital. As is demonstrated in Figure 5-4 Diagram showing how global and economic solidarity processes interact within Bonpland Market) these stages of the economy are interdependent on each other, and they work as a process to create their movement in-against-and-beyond the economy. I will begin to highlight the potentials of these organisations, and build on this in Chapter 7 by focusing on how these practices demonstrate potentials beyond daily life.

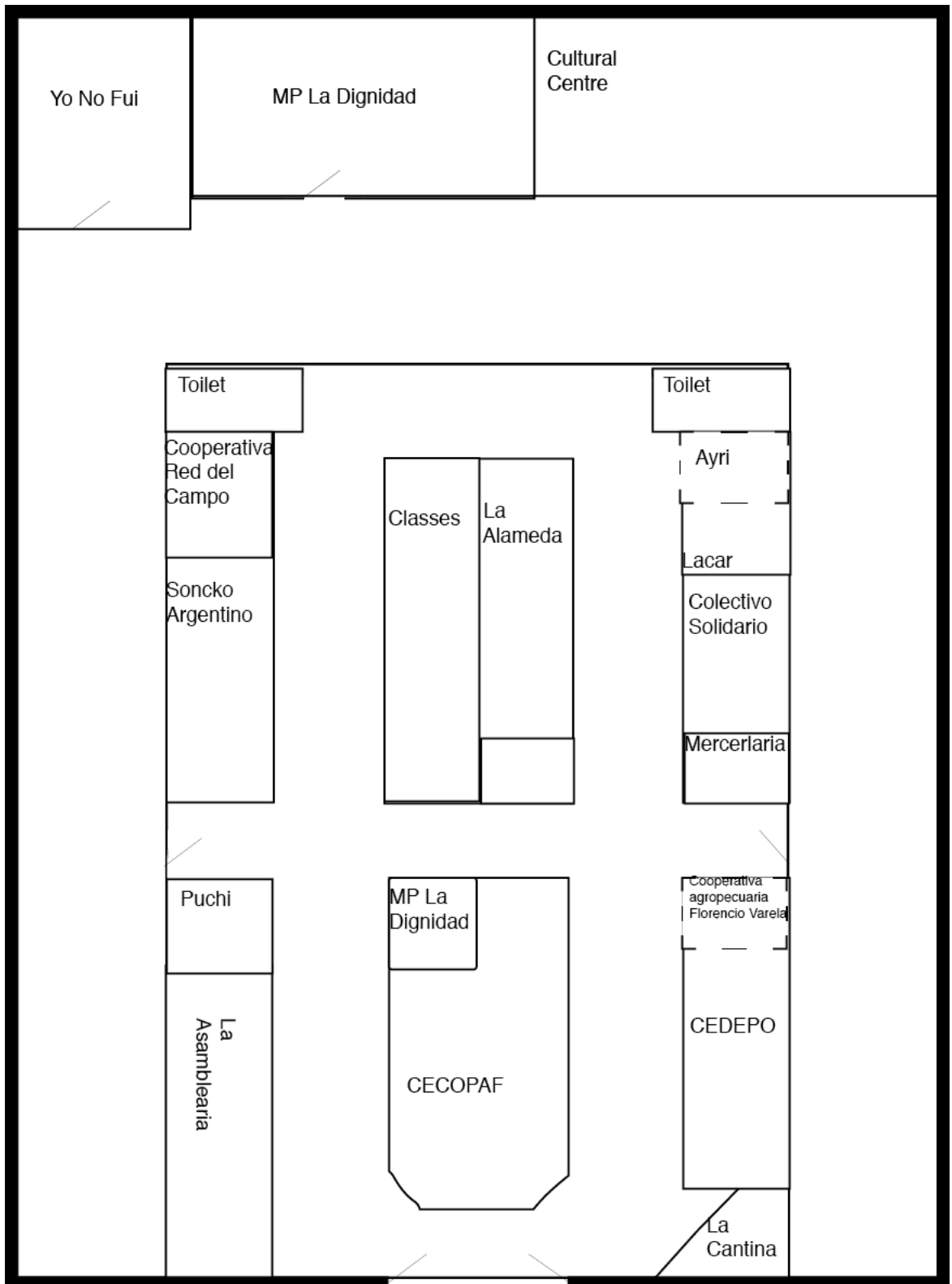


Figure 5-1 Map of the different stalls in the market

5.1 ‘Me or chaos’: capital as a crisis of representation and finance

The 2001 crisis in Argentina was experienced as a financial crisis with political consequences, as a crisis in representation and governance that led to a rupture in the old political order. This emphasises the connections between the old political order and the economic and social crises that affected people’s everyday lives. Dinerstein (2014b) stresses the importance of determining who was perceived as the source of the crisis – the old political order or the emerging forms of social organisation. When Menem’s government was fighting to stay in power, they used the slogan “Me or Chaos” (Dinerstein, 2014b:373), demonstrating that they represented rationality as opposed to the ‘chaos’ of ‘unknown’ organisation. Memem’s government attempted to scare the voting population about the un-feasibility of other emerging and proposed solutions to the crisis. This crisis represented a pivotal moment, at which an alternative could be adopted or the previous ‘order’ could be returned to:

Stability, a form of the violence of money, became a powerful social imaginary constructed on the basis of austerity and repression that drew, among other things, on the previous experience of another form of the violence of money, that is, hyperinflation, and the anxiety and uncertainty that it creates with its threat of social disintegration (Dinerstein, 2014b:373).

Using this account of the ‘real’ instability of everyday life and economics, Dinerstein (2014b) emphasises how crisis moments lay order bare through powerful representations of social imaginaries, which can be used either to reinforce the old order or to emphasise new possibilities: ‘Between crisis-as-rupture and crisis-as-restructuring there is an abyss of possibility’ (Holloway, 1992:169).

Even if things were to return to ‘normal’ after a period of crisis, a new ‘social imaginary’ would need to be constructed in order to continue with the vision of stability that was held previously, as crisis lays bare the foundations that organise the system. Dinerstein highlights this in the case of Argentina in 2001, using the ‘Que Se Vayan Todos’ (QSVT) call to explain the refusal and rupture that the crisis gave rise to:

Capitalist crises are crises of the “objectivity” of capital. They make it difficult to continue masking the violent processes that underpin what it is usually presented as “what it is” in the pre-crisis period. Austerity and crises trigger a multiplicity of invisible resistances that might be enacted together in a process of mobilization such as QSVT (or not). As a moment of negation, QSVT destabilized stability. It erupted from within the crisis of stability and promptly portrayed it as its opposite, that is, as one of the possible forms adopted by the violence of money, as a policy based on the impoverishment of people’s lives. (Dinerstein, 2014b:373).

By collectively refusing the ‘objectivity’ of capital, the ‘Que Se Vayan Todos’ (QSVT) movement highlighted the lack of logic and stability in the ‘normal’ capitalist form. QSVT underlined the instability of the rule of money, emphasising that the ‘normal system’ under Menem was chaotic. The collective refusal to accept the continuing instability of the ‘normal’ system of money demonstrated that the crisis was more than just a financial one – it was also a crisis in the objectivity of this ‘other’ government. Therefore, the ‘objectivity’ of the rule of money was broken in the crisis period, and was revealed for what it truly is – instability and violence. This movement collectively demonstrated that in choosing ‘me’ or ‘Menem’ from ‘me or chaos’, you were choosing the continuation of the crisis, and so something needed to change: ‘Que Se Vayan Todos’ (QSVT) – ‘All of them must go’.

Crisis as possibility: between rupture and restructuring

The 2001 crisis was experienced as a break in the objectivity of the financial system, as well as an opportunity to organise new strategies in the form of QSVT. This moment of crisis presented an opportunity both for these new resistive organisational forms and for capital. The 2001 crisis in Argentina, as a rupture, escalated the necessity and possibility to adopt new alternatives. However, this was also a time of insecurity for the residents of Buenos Aires, as their ‘normal’ daily lives had become impossible to maintain, and they had to organise themselves in a way that ensured their basic survival.

Bonefeld and Holloway's analysis of crisis goes further, arguing that as we animate capital through our abstracted labour, the crisis must therefore have this as its source. Therefore, crises also provide moments of hope, as they highlight the 'insubordination of labour' (Bonefeld and Holloway, 1996):

The crisis of capital is the crisis of capital's dependence on labour. The permanence of the crisis is not only a warning but also a message of hope. The hope is that, if capital, for all the intensity of its struggle has not yet achieved the decomposition of the working class into a profitable labour force, it is because of the enormous power of insubordinate labour. Currency crisis, debt crisis, recession and so forth are false names for the crisis of the capitalist exploitation of labour. 'Capital' cannot be blamed for its crisis. Rather, credit should be given to whom credit is due: the insubordinate existence of labour. Theoretically and practically this power must be made manifest (Bonefeld and Holloway, 1996:225).

For Bonefeld and Holloway, crises thus demonstrate the potential that labour has to resist the will of capital. Crisis demonstrates that labour animates capital and, as such, can show people the power that they have to break the system of domination. This is contrary to understandings of crisis only as an opportunity for capitalist restructuring. Instead, it highlights the consistent and ever-present antagonisms that exist between the social relations that construct and maintain the capital labour relationship:

The breakdown of a pattern of social relations does not imply either its immediate or its successful restructuring. It may be that rupture contains the possibility of restructuring. It may be that that possibility is realised, as it has been in the past. But that is not certain, even now, and if a new pattern of relatively stable capitalist social relations is established, it will not simply emerge but be the result of a long and very bloody struggle. Between crisis-as-rupture and crisis-as-restructuring there is an abyss of possibility, a salto mortale for capital with no guarantee of a safe landing, a whole history of the world in struggle (Holloway, 1992:169).

Highlighting the potential of restructuring from rupture emphasises the opportunities to reformulate the organisation of daily life. The restructuring of capital is not assured in this process, and thus the potential to create alternatives through refusal exists. Crisis demonstrates the insecurity of capital in the everyday. 'Capital as crisis' is not a 'one-off' event, but a possibility in relation to the workers in a social system, and this can be seen as hopeful, in that

people can create other systems of organisation. The hope which is highlighted by insubordinate labour is tempered by the material reality of day-to-day life within these crises, where ‘the dual nature of labour in capitalism results in the simultaneous existence of two realities: empirical and non-empirical reality’ (Dinerstein, 2014b:372).

As I highlighted earlier in the discussion of forms in Chapter two, and as Dinerstein (2014b) also explains, the abstract and concrete nature of the forms of social relations that govern and control our lives under capital mean that, at certain points in a crisis, the mechanisms of things – through reified and alienated social relations – act against the interests of labour or people. These alienated social relations produce control mechanisms through, for example, bureaucratic legal frameworks and financial mechanisms (such as pegging the dollar to the peso, which led to its subsequent devaluation and the intrusion of the International Monetary Fund), the rule and governing of money over people, or states acting for capital against other states. Therefore, because the apparent ‘things’ of state, money, and capital are actually social relations grounded in the dual nature of labour, these social relations can have empirical effects.

Although a time of crisis may be animated by the ‘insubordination of labour’, in the alienated rule of ‘things’, discipline and control are in place to subordinate struggles. In light of the global systems of economic underdevelopment and the control of states by other states in order to maintain the ‘usual’ rule of money, crisis-as-potential will give rise to different possibilities in different places due to the insubordination of labour. The Argentine crisis was also rooted in the insubordination of labour, as well as in the global financial systems that are used to discipline and order states. In relation to everyday life, the effects of the crisis provided an opportunity for rupture, but were also devastating for Argentinian people. In this sense, any movement of rupture is a struggle – a struggle of daily life, as well as a struggle to break free from the system of domination.

Crisis as necessity and possibility

Mercado Bonpland is an example of the potential of crisis as amplification for imaginative reformulations of what is possible. In terms of new possibilities, this rupture was about creating new forms of social relations that went beyond capitalist ones. The crisis also demonstrated people's reliance on the basic provisions provided by the capitalist economic system, and the hardships that occur when this falls apart. For example, when you have no food or money to buy it, barter may become necessary for survival. Using the terms necessity and possibility I do not wish to create a false division between necessities for things and the potential to create alternatives, but rather to highlight the two-fold response to this crisis context: that through focusing on daily life, Mercado Bonpland's re-organisation is based on both necessity and possibility.

5.2 Economies and the market

In this section I review the literature on alternative and diverse economies, highlighting approaches beyond those which have been traditionally thought of as 'economic'. I introduce literature which explores the creation of 'alternative' economic systems, though I do not explain all of these economic approaches. Literature that describes 'anti-capitalist commons' and their potential for co-optation highlights the necessity to engage in creating collective and antagonistic practices. These theories acknowledge the potential for alternative practices to be co-opted, and this demonstrates the integration of 'diverse economies' within global systems of capital. Mercado Bonpland is creating an economy through an approach that adopts economic solidarity as the grounds for organising everyday life. Value theory in the economy is a way of putting into context these debates about economic strategies. Finally, in this section, I will

discuss the case of quinoa in the market, as this shows how global and solidarity initiatives intersect.

In-against-and-beyond diverse economies

There are many different theories explaining the way that ‘other’ economies function, in particular in the field of alternative economies (Fuller et al. 2010; Jonas 2014; Lee et al., 2003; Wills, and Lee, 2014; Zadermach and Hillebrand, 2014;) diverse economies (Gibson-Graham, 1996; 2006a; 2006b; 2014), social economies (Poirier, 2014) and solidarity economies (Miller, 2006; Safri, 2015), all of which are focused on creating and engaging with ‘more-than-capitalist’ or ‘post-capitalist’ economies (Albert, 2003). However, I argue that diverse and alternative economies do not go far enough in demonstrating the antagonisms inherent in creating alternative solidarity economies. As such, and using in-against-and-beyond, I show the importance of understanding the potential of alternative economies, but add that acknowledging their existence as ‘alternatives’ is not enough – rather, they must organise with antagonism towards the capitalist social relationship.

Diverse economies

The diverse economies approach differentiates itself from the alternative economies approach on the grounds that ‘alternative suggests that there is a hegemonic capitalism that already exists’ (Zadermach and Hillebrand, 2014:11). The concept of ‘alternative economies’ seeks to challenge capitalist economic relations (Lee et al., 2003; Zadermach and Hillebrand, 2014; Jonas, 2014), yet is now so broad that it has almost lost its meaning. Diverse economic theory critiques hegemonic understandings of capitalism, particularly those that were developed around universalising concepts such as neoliberalism, arguing that they do not offer the potential or the space to explore everyday practices. The diverse economies framework thus ‘challenges

hegemonic visions of normative capitalist development and opens up the possibilities for alternative localised development pathways' (Zadermach and Hillebrand, 2014:18).

The diverse economies approach highlights the potential for people to make changes to their daily lives through a critique of disempowering 'capitalocentric' narratives. A key proponent of diverse economies is Gibson-Graham (1996, 2006, 2014). Gibson-Graham's approach has inspired many to rethink capitalism beyond a framework of 'There Is No Alternative', thus critiquing the dominant discourses surrounding capital. Gibson-Graham's projects 'sought to destabilize and introduce ruptures in the "monster" of capitalist economy' (Gibson-Graham, 2014).

'Community economies' and 'hidden economies' are both projects that have sought to continue the work of Gibson-Graham in highlighting 'under the radar' aspects of the economy on which capital relies. This is demonstrated in the iceberg design of the economy by James Langdon (Figure 5-2). Here, capitalist business is identified as the tip of the iceberg, showing that the majority of the economy is underneath the surface, operating in what Gibson-Graham see as a non-capitalist manner, such as in bartering or gift economies:



Figure 5-2: James Langdon's design from the front page of the Hidden economies newspaper (Gibson-Graham, 2014)

Gibson-Graham's iceberg economy acknowledges the creativity, reliance and animation of capital through multiple and diverse economic approaches. In particular, recognition of these practices as economic reclaims people's collective power in being active creators of the economy.

However, I do not believe that this demonstrates that such economies are operating outside capital. If we make capital through labour, then the capitalist economy has always been reliant on the unpaid and unrecognised labour of those outside the formal economy such as women, or people of lower social class. Recognising the value in the practices of social reproduction has influenced autonomist feminists, for example, on the wages for housework campaign (Dalla Costa and James, 1975). However, understanding that 'we' animate capital, this diverse economies approach is not contesting the foundations of capital, but rather revealing the multiple ways in which it is built. Therefore, the power of capital will not disappear if we simply engage in diverse practices. Consequently, diverse economies must go further, attacking

the causes of subjugation, and empowering and improving resources for alternatives without ignoring their incorporation.

Debates about critiques of capitalist social relations

Debates between David Harvey and Gibson-Graham highlight the differences between a ‘traditional’ Marxist approach focused on “capitalists’ command over commodified space-time” (Sheppard, 2006:139) and diverse economies’ recognitions of possibilities for creating alternative economies. This debate emphasises that, between the two approaches, there is the potential to highlight diverse economic approaches, as well as to take seriously their potential incorporation into capital.

Sheppard contrasts and critiques Gibson-Graham’s and Harvey’s approaches, and in doing so highlights a gap between these two approaches, which I hope to develop in my work. As Sheppard writes, when analysing relational space, it is possible to use the work of Gibson-Graham to push for more ‘room for other aspects of difference than class and space, and for other spatio-temporal registers of value than those of money’. This is something that Harvey does not do. However, Harvey provides a more ‘realistic assessment’ than Gibson-Graham ‘of the difficulties posed by global capital’s command over commodified space-time, in order that local initiatives foster sustainable alternatives that can underwrite optimism’ (Sheppard, 2006:140).

Sheppard’s analysis highlights the potentially vulnerable nature of small autonomous approaches, taking into account the power of capital in fixing space whilst, at the same time, making space for more ‘spatio-temporal registers of value than money’ (Sheppard, 2006:139). Using in-against-and-beyond, I navigate between these practices that challenge capital as a process of inevitability, and highlight the potential for diverse practices. This engages with the ‘necessity and power’ that the production of space through capital has over us, as well as

acknowledging the possibility for us to create our own spaces through other values, or anti-capitalist commons.

If there is no outside to capital, only in-against-and-beyond, then diverse practices must also be engaged with to produce the ‘beyond’ of in-against-and-beyond:

I don't see anything as simply "non-capitalist". Our lives are a constant misfitting, a constant attempt to develop social relations that do not fit into the logic of capital. (Asher et al., 2011:n.p.).

This relationship of in-against-and-beyond does not require utopias, but acknowledges that through the messiness of everyday life, there are potentials within antagonisms that enable change. As such, whilst the diverse economies model highlighted economic engagements in the here and now, rather than only ‘utopian experiments’ (Zademach and Hillebrand, 2014:11), understanding diverse economic models as being outside capitalism is problematic. Such critiques have a long history, as Proudhon’s utopian socialist experiments were also critiqued as bourgeois reform for not addressing the labour-capital relation (Jonas, 2014:25; see also Lincoln, 2003; Ollman, 2005). As such utopian experiments must also engage in the practices of daily life.

As Jonas (2014) emphasises, the rift between Gibson-Graham and Harvey exists because Gibson-Graham is not ‘developing concrete abstractions about the social relationships underpinning alternative economic forms’ (Jonas, 2014:24). Following Jonas therefore, there appears to be scope for exploring diverse economies as well as ‘examining the emergent properties of alternative economic spaces’ (Jonas, 2014:25). It is critical to go beyond simply describing a wealth of diverse economies, to examine the social relations that are formed within these economic processes. This builds a critique engaged with in the commons literature (below), as the intention of a process does not make it impenetrable to capital. As such, rather than being content with simply identifying potential economic practices, I will also engage with the antagonisms produced in the process.

Commons economies, possibilities and antagonistic practices

In focusing on commons literature, I want to highlight the potential to establish collective resources, as well as their potential incorporation into capitalist reproduction: as well as commons that engage in incorporating antagonisms. Commons are the basis for human life – the collective actions of commoning rely on common natural resources, as well as those created by people through labour (Linebaugh, 2010). Commons, rely on collective work and shared resources, as the argument for diverse economies holds. Yet commons scholarship also acknowledges that capitalist development is predicated on the destruction of these collective resources and the accumulation of labour in primitive accumulation, which is only being increased in this era of neoliberalism (Caffentzis and Federici, 2014). In this sense a focus on commons highlights both the diverse nature of the economy and collective reliance on it, as commoners and through capital:

Primitive accumulation is the strategy the capitalist class always returns to in times of crisis when the command over labour has to be reasserted, since expropriating workers and expanding the labour available for exploitation are the most effective methods for re-establishing the proper balance of power and gaining the upper hand in class struggle (Caffentzis and Federici, 2014 n.p.).

This approach highlights the collective potential of these commons, as well as the attacks that are made on them.

Commoning initiatives that create possibilities with values beyond capitalist ones give hope to movements trying to establish alternatives to capitalism (De Angelis, 2006). As Caffentzis and Federici note, the growing number of these commoning projects:

are more than dikes against the neoliberal assault on our livelihood. They are experiments in self-provisioning and the seeds of an alternative mode of production in the making (Caffentzis and Federici, 2014 n.p.).

As with Gibson-Graham, acknowledging the diversity of the economy is crucial, but Caffentzis and Federici go beyond this understanding of capital's reliance on the social relationships of production. According to them, the task for us is to:

understand how we can connect these different realities and above all how to ensure that the commons we create are truly transformative of our social relations, immune to co-optation (Caffentzis and Federici, 2014 n.p.).

Caffentzis and Federici thus identify that projects of 'self-provisioning' must aim to connect with others, whilst also being aware of the potential for them to be co-opted.

An example of the co-optation of these movements is seen in David Cameron's 'Big Society', in which 'unpaid labour is recruited' through the jargon of communalism, focusing on building 'social value' – effectively using common resources to 'accelerate the lay-offs of public employees' (Caffentzis and Federici, 2014 n.p). Therefore, self-provisioning and the collective self-sufficient commons can be used as a resource for reducing public goods or government spending. Caffentzis and Federici observe that commons are not 'immune' to everyday life challenges as they are complex spaces of antagonism and contention, and are thus neither neutral nor inherently radical. In acknowledging this, it is necessary to fight to prevent them from being enclosed or co-opted. In times of austerity, the 'necessity' for commons may increase, but to create an anti-capitalist commons, they must be part of a broader movement. As such, Caffentzis and Federici identify the potential and struggle of anti-capitalist commons as follows:

Anti capitalist commons are best conceived [of] as autonomous spaces from which to reclaim control over our lives and the conditions of our reproduction, and to provide resources on the basis of sharing and equal access. They are also ... bases from which to counter the processes of enclosure and increasingly disentangle our lives from the market and the state (Caffentzis and Federici, 2014 n. p.).

To create anti-capitalist commons following Caffentzis and Federici involves engaging in a process to collectively build power and resources, acknowledging that these commons are not

outside of capital. Antagonistic practices and collective organising are consequently necessary to ensure these anti-capitalist commons build capacity and potential.

The focus on building commons within daily life practices and conflicts highlights many of the contentious issues that are visible in Mercado Bonpland, such as how to build networks of production without excluding people. These commons discussions acknowledge the potential for us to collectively create other ways to produce the economy, whilst acknowledging the potential for this to become another resource for capitalist accumulation. This helps to identify the opportunities that exist through necessity and reliance on a commons that has arisen due to the crisis, as well as their potential as resources for expanding projects ‘beyond’ everyday life. However, this approach goes beyond the diverse economies argument in recognising the potential of a collective reliance upon and a potential co-optation of the commons.

Economic Solidarity as a process for creating economies in Mercado Bonpland



Figure 5-3 Logo for Mercado Bonpland (La Asamblearia, 2013)

Economic solidarity is the ‘official’ form of economic organisation in Mercado Bonpland. It has a long history in Argentina, and was particularly important in the crisis of 2001. In Argentina economic solidarity is now a government-sponsored and supported project, thus going beyond economic theory. Therefore, we can introduce economic solidarity as being a government policy in the context of the market without focusing *only* on economic solidarity as, in some cases, now economic solidarity is a government-sponsored policy it may be used as a tactic to pursue

funding. Therefore, in the Argentine context economic solidarity operates within a system of capital and state relationships. Consequently, I use the debates between alternative, diverse and commons economies to understand the pit-falls that exist in trying to create an economy, as well as the organisation strategies to engage in these antagonisms in Bonpland.

Economic solidarity makes the connections between producer and consumer clear and, as such, changes relationships that are obscured through capitalist processes of exchange. The idea of a solidarity economy is not new within Argentina, and has been practised at different scales and by different groups for over 100 years (Alonso, 2005). However, in recent times, and particularly since the late 1990s, alternative economic approaches have gained in popularity across the world. This has led to a rise in solidarity and in connected social economic approaches, with the genesis of the social economy occurring in France (Poirier, 2014). Solidarity economies question ‘natural’ assumptions about the functioning and practices of the economy being based on competition and inequality, focusing instead on the opportunities for ‘cooperation, human relationships and building both economic and social development’ (Poirier, 2104:9). The solidarity economy is built by developing these different relationships of production, exchange and consumption.

The solidarity approach questions the naturalised language of economic rationality, instead highlighting, as feminist scholars have, the reliance of capital on our mutual aid, care and social reproduction (Dalla Costa and James, 1975; Federici, 2004, 2012; Fraser, 2013; Gibson-Graham, 2006a):

In the face of failures of market and state, we often survive by self-organized relationships of care, cooperation, and community (Miller, 2006 n.p.).

This is made visible in crisis moments, when both the weakness of the economic system and our reliance on it are laid bare. The myriad of economic solidarity initiatives that grew during and after the 2001 crisis in Argentina demonstrated the people’s capacities and creativity in undertaking diverse practices. However, in recognising our reliance on each other – on

community and care – it is also important to keep in mind that these relationships are a part of the way that capital survives:

Capitalism's dominance may, in fact, derive in no small part from its ability to co-opt and colonize these relationships of cooperation and mutual aid (Miller, 2006 n.p.).

Therefore, as with the commons discussion above, it is crucial to continue to highlight the potential for these practices to be co-opted, and for collective resources to be used in a way that maintains antagonism to capitalism.

Mercado Bonpland: creating an economy through process

Economic solidarity approaches engage with the economy as a process:

"[The] solidarity economy is not a sector of the economy, but a transversal approach that includes initiatives in all sectors." This project cuts across traditional lines of formal/informal, market/non-market, and social/economic in search of solidarity-based practices of production, exchange and consumption—ranging from legally-structured worker co-operatives, which engage the capitalist market with co-operative values, to informal affinity-based neighbourhood gift networks (Miller, 2006..p.).

Using the case of Mercado Bonpland, I will explore what a process approach to the economy involves and means. I focus on the organisation of daily life to explore how people searching for ‘solidarity-based practices’ can reform social relations despite challenges of their daily life.

Mercado Bonpland is broadly aligned around an economic solidarity approach, but there are different means used to enact this within the market. One of the key proponents of this approach in Bonpland market is the co-operative la Asamblearia. For them, the focus of the economic solidarity is ‘self-managed production, fair trade and responsible consumption’ (la Asamblearia, n.d.). Their outlook identifies different approaches to the capitalist market at every stage of the production process. As such, in the next sub-section of this chapter, which explores ‘daily life’

in the market, I look at the different approaches that are adopted at each of these stages in the economy (production, exchange and consumption) by the different groups within the market.

The plurality of the processes used for creating economic solidarity in Bonpland was highlighted by la Asamblearia as being crucial to the market (Fontecoba, 2013). But defining the practice of economic solidarity is difficult, as it is something that is ‘in motion’, and ‘a diversity and multiplicity of attempts’ (la Asamblearia, n.d.). The economy in process approach allows experimentation rather than prescriptively demanding one approach: that is, experimentation, learning and the aims of the project take precedence over the attempt to define its practice. Economic solidarity is a broad banner under which the market can organise without the need to exclude approaches or start with ‘the answer’ to capitalist social relations:

Solidarity economy is the intent that is made from different stakeholders to articulate the economic emergency response that the popular sectors are giving to the crisis, making them come together in an integrated subsystem or economic sector (la Asamblearia, n.d.).

As well as being a pluralistic process, the solidarity economy stems from the inequality revealed by the crisis and the necessities of daily life. It thus allows a plurality of groups to organise around addressing their daily life needs as well as experimenting with moving beyond them.

This crisis history has led to the creation of different economic organisations that overlap. As Caracciolo observes, economic solidarity is one of the three connected organisational types of economic market in Buenos Aires:

In [the] capitalist, globalized world economy there are three types of markets: i. capitalist, ii. state and iii. solidarity. But, the capitalist market is dominant, i.e. is what ultimately sets the range of possibilities in relation to the remuneration of work provided for each product. The capitalist markets define prices and constitute a reference for other markets (Caracciolo, 2014: n.p).

In creating an ‘alternative’ economy, the processes and contexts of global economies must therefore be taken into account. The post-2001 organisation of the state in Argentina means

many economic solidarity initiatives are funded by the state. The subsequent chapters thus explore the different challenges and effects that the state and capital produce on the way in which the economic project in Bonpland can and has been created, as well as how these are grounded in space through territories in-against-and-beyond the economy. In this and the following analysis chapters I engage with how these relational moments of the economy, state, territory and everyday life operate in-against-and-beyond rather than attempting to identify economic experiments as exemplars, or as outside of capital.

Value as analysis of social relationships in-against-and-beyond capital

If much of the diverse or alternative economies literature focuses on developing understandings of what is defined as the economy, then the case of Bonpland highlights the multiple practices that constitute the economic system. However, rather than focusing on defining the sort of economy that Bonpland has, I wish to explore what practices make up the process of creating this alternative economy within the market. That is: what moments are producing what values? To answer this, I will incorporate the debate between Harvey and the diverse economies perspective (Jonas, 2014; Sheppard, 2006; Zademach and Hillebrand, 2014) to explore the processes that occur at each stage of production. In so doing, I highlight when more-than-capitalist values are being created – that is, values that are ‘truly transformative of our social relations, [and] immune to co-optation’ (Caffentzis and Federici, 2014 n.p.) in-against-and-beyond capital.

Identifying the value that is produced is a way to navigate these different moments of capitalist engagements. As Henderson observes ‘Value appears in a form other than itself and masks the form that is crucial to its appearance, wage labour’ (2013:6). Value debates highlight the extent and form of capital and get to the heart of how we might create more-than-capitalist social relations. In this sense, value helps to identify what is being produced at each stage of the

economy, as well as the wider effects and implications of moving beyond the necessity of daily reproduction:

Actual capitalist formulations are, as Gibson-Graham insists, infinitely more complex than the sketch implies, thus necessitating study of a wide range of productive activities and logics and the question of whether indeed these all knit together into a seamless landscape of value. Conversely, interpretations can go the other way, too, as when value, reimagined, becomes a way to resolve the tensions that have erupted between different politically radical stances (Henderson, 2013:6).

Therefore, investigations into what is produced and how this happens in Bonpland are crucial. Gibson-Graham emphasises the diverse practices that make up these economies, which provides a context by which to understand the potential implications of broadening out these economic approaches and techniques that represent more than ‘business-as-usual-capital’. However, these processes can be co-opted, and are not outside capital. Value highlights necessary, diverse and everyday practices of the economy that may previously not have been recognised as ‘normal’ economic practices. In addition, I hope to use this as a way of exploring these processes as ‘alternative social relations and values driven by the search for “dignity”’ (Dinerstein, 2003:6). Henderson provides a way to look into how to shape the landscape of production towards dignified social relationships. By looking at economic practise in action in Mercado Bonpland, I will demonstrate the challenges though which some moments of potential can be identified.

‘Quinoa is gold, no quinoa in Mercado Bonpland’: The solidarity economy in a global system of capital

In this section I use the story of quinoa in Mercado Bonpland to explore the way that global and solidarity economies interact and intersect. Through the example of quinoa discussed by Leonardo, it is possible to demonstrate how a local, sustainable and healthy product is no longer affordable because of global food trends and the ‘gourmetisation’ of food culture. This not only makes local foodstuffs unaffordable, but also demonstrates some of the limits of alternative

economies and networks of producers and consumers. As Mercado Bonpland is in-against-and-beyond capital, quinoa demonstrates that the global market affects the local production and consumption of quinoa. This demonstrates the potential, capacity and limitations of economic solidarity when understood as operating within a capitalist system, and highlights the importance of engaging with the idea that these economies, as social relations, are not outside the wider processes of capital or the state, but exist in-against-and-beyond them.

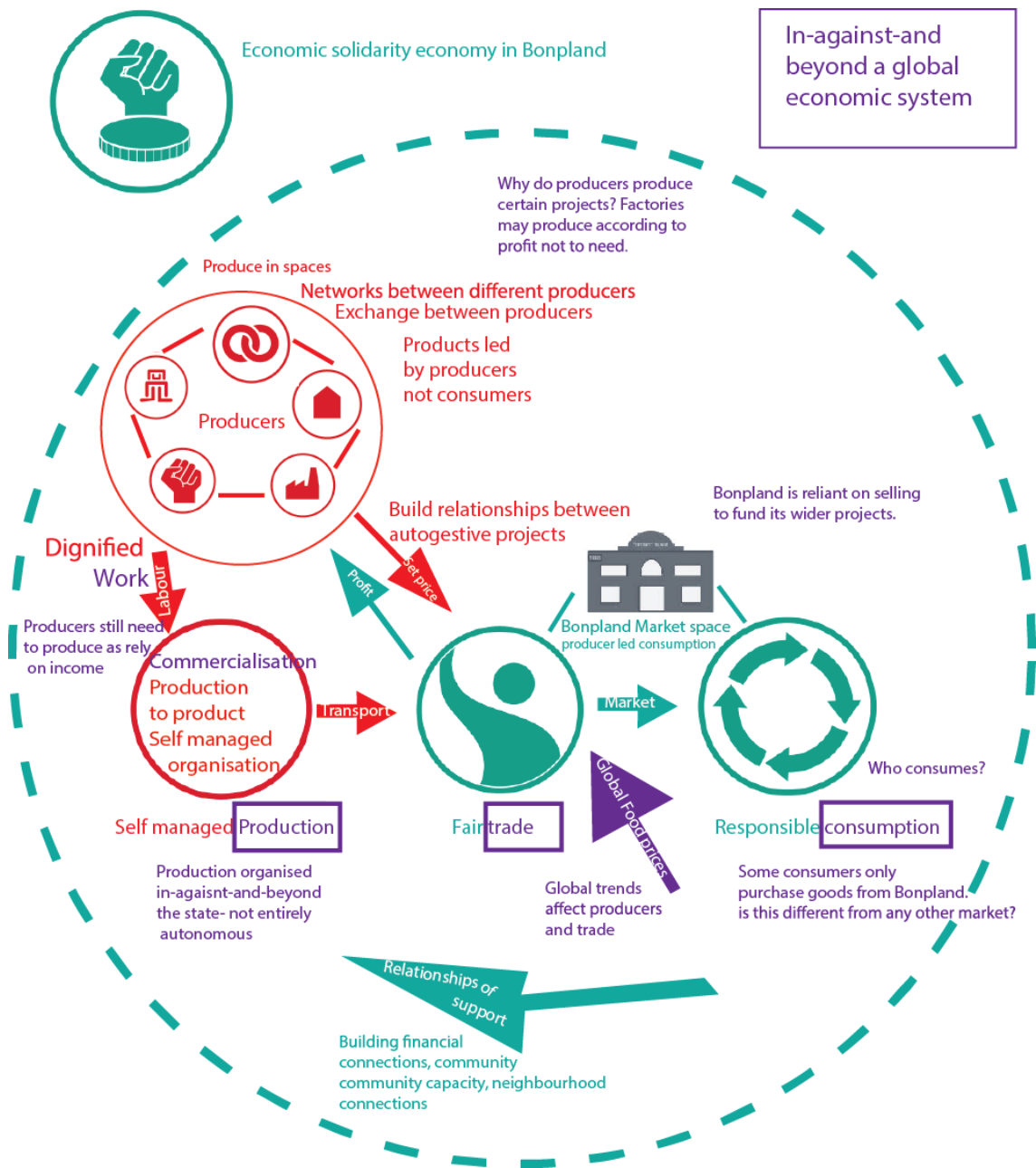


Figure 5-4 Diagram showing how global and economic solidarity processes interact within Bonpland Market

The Figure 5-4 demonstrates the two production circuits above shows how the ‘solidarity economy’ that market stallholders are aiming to create is part of the wider global economy. As such, I use stories about quinoa not being sold in the market to identify moments in this system when the global market affects and shapes the local one:

Quinoa is a millennial food historically eaten by Incas and then inherited by people from Jujuy, Bolivia and also Salta. More recently, quinoa became famous here in Buenos Aires, in the health food stores, and ‘green markets’ which made the price increase, it raised the price a lot, so the price in Jujuy raised too. But it is not only because it raised [the price] in Buenos Aires. To give an example, say 50% of each kilo was sold here [in Buenos Aires]. We compete with the Jujuy market, so the effect was the ‘jujueños¹⁰’ were without quinoa, because they used to consume around 7-8 kilos per year, and by 2012 they consumed 1/2 kilo. So we [in Buenos Aires] reduced their consumption [by] about 80%. Then what happened? France and England became habitual quinoa consumers, and they are also the highest bidders – which is how capitalism works. So, if France pays in Euros, the producer doesn’t distribute to Buenos Aires or, if he does at 130\$ or 150\$ [Argentine pesos]. So why has the price raised again? Because now is it being sold in France at 20-30 euro per kilo. To make it more complicated, there are two kinds of quinoa production – one from Bolivia and the other from Jujuy. We [our collective] bought from Jujuy because their jujeños are associated, but they don’t produce much, (500 ha represent 500 kilos per year). In Bolivia much more quinoa is produced, but in a way we don’t like, by servile and exploitative work relations, with child labour – because quinoa must be hand-collected, there is no machine: the plant is very dispersed. That generates a lot of manual employment for very young children and women with small fingers to do the work, because they have to put their hand inside the plant. So, because of these work conditions, quinoa in Bolivia costs half of the price [that it does] in Jujuy. Years ago [when] we had quinoa and sold it at 60\$ per kilo in Liniers [a Bolivian market in the city], it was sold at 30\$. In Liniers, you find the lowest price because they bring it directly from the Bolivian producers that imported it. So – here is the debate. It is complex because, on one hand, it is a really good product which is extremely nutritional – so when we began with the co-operative, our initial intention, was that poor people could consume quinoa and stop consuming silly food. In that moment it was viable, [but] now it is unimaginable, and [we see] how capitalism takes these different versions out of its logic and catches it – it catches us.

Q: Is it possible to produce more quinoa?

– It is possible. Well, in a way, yes, and partly no. The difference is when I plant quinoa, I can’t plant other products – quinoa is a very strong plant, but it requires some care and certain types of weather. In the last few years, harvests were very bad, [and] some harvests were lost. It is like losing gold powder, and you are flying, because quinoa is gold for the producer. So, frankly, most prefer sowing potatoes. It is a

¹⁰ A person from Jujuy, a province in the North of Argentina.

complex subject, and this is where one might say that the state must play a role. If I was the state, I would realise what happens and go and support it, regulate it. Then comes the anthropological topic – why do we consume rice and not quinoa if the Chinese originally consumed rice? The first country in Latin America to produce rice was Haiti, so even to travel from Haiti and to arrive here something happened. This is the anthropological question, about cultural currents, why do we eat cow if our original settlers ate horsemeat? The horse was original meat in Spain, and it has a long history. It is hard work, but it is good to know why we consume each product. Why do we consume mackerel from Thailand, when we have a sea with so many fish...? (Leonardo, 23/04/2014).

This story about quinoa highlights the actuality of daily life in the market. This might seem like a difficult first glimpse into the way that Mercado Bonpland is run – yet the history of quinoa demonstrates and is shaped by environmental relations, social relations and relations of production, what people choose to eat, and what they can afford. Leonardo highlights many of the decisions, conflicts and contestations that exist in our everyday lives, showing the conflicts between what we want to consume, what we ‘should’ consume, whether we can afford to consume it, and how it might be produced. The challenge for the market is to do this: to connect everyday life necessities with the changes that we want to see and the potential to shift towards these changes.

The ethics of quinoa consumption were first emphasised to me when articles appeared in national newspapers in the UK (Berning, 2014; Blythman, 2013; DePillis, 2013; Friedman-Rudovsky, 2012; Murphy, 2011; Philpott and Network, 2013; Self Newlin, 2014). The controversial article *Can vegans stomach the unpalatable truth about quinoa?* highlights the effects of quinoa consumption on Bolivian farmers and whether it is therefore ethical to eat this food – in particular in contrast to eating meat (Blythman, 2013). This highlights the disconnection in global food markets between producer and consumer, as well as the vast consumer choice that some people have in these global food systems, whilst others have almost none. In particular, this example of quinoa highlights the effects that the marketisation and development of foods as ‘superfood’ commodities creates. This is of particular importance in

the context of ethical food choices (which I explore further in relation to Mercado Bonpland in Chapter 7).

Quinoa is the only vegetable-based complete protein, hence its growing popularity and the left wing media's interest in the 'moral dilemma' of eating it as an ethical choice. This traditional Andean food in the UK context is very much connected with middle-class lifestyles and health movements. A particularly popular twitter meme, #middleclassproblems, often features quinoa – for example, the popular post 'I think I've put too much water in with my quinoa'. In the light of gourmetisation debates (see my discussion below of territory, gentrification and Bonpland) 'who wants to eat quinoa and why?' is a pertinent question. The global context, trends and business interests make economic solidarity very difficult, as small initiatives are competing with a global market. Therefore, as with the discussion about anti-capitalist commons (Caffentzis and Federici, 2014), the example of quinoa demonstrates the effects that the global capitalist market has on the potential functioning of the economic solidarity approach.

The production of quinoa is clearly not just a 'middle-class problem' – at a global scale, production, consumption and globalisation are having very real effects in the regions in which it is grown, both on the landscape and on producers (Ofstehage, 2012). Class membership and the question of who can afford to consume quinoa are also relevant concerns in Mercado Bonpland. The idea of creating a solidarity economy is, in part, concerned with changing the power relations between producers and consumers, improving the control that farmers have in a volatile global market. As Leonardo states:

when we began with the co-operative, our initial intention was that poor people could consume quinoa and stop consuming silly food (Leonardo, 23/04/2014).

Therefore, the class of the consumer as well as the producer is critical for understanding what effects the local and global markets have. The collective had intended to make the market a place that could be used to supply healthy and nutritional food to all, particularly to poor people, and therefore it must make its prices low. However, due to the global increase in the market

value of quinoa, this became impossible to do within Mercado Bonpland. This introduces one of the key tensions in the solidarity economy in Bonpland – the balance between pricing for customers and for producers. Providing a cheap source of quinoa could be beneficial to poorer people in the city, but because of the huge increase in demand, and therefore prices, this is not possible. Global commodity speculation (due to its popularity in France and the UK) raised prices, but even before this, its popularity in Buenos Aires health food shops meant that quinoa was beyond the reach of many in the city. Therefore, it may be the case that producers cannot afford to consume what they produce, and quinoa cannot be sold at a cheap enough price for people in Buenos Aires through the Colectivo Solidario network.

Mercado Bonpland's solidarity-pricing structure is not focused on the cheapest prices. This was something that I reflected on in discussions about class with Leonardo as well as with other students and activists, and in my field-dairy. Frequently, when describing my research, I heard the criticism that Mercado Bonpland is only for the middle class in Buenos Aires. I asked market organisers about how they felt about this. Leonardo's story about quinoa highlighted some of these concerns, and in discussing whom their work was helping he said:

I work a lot with popular sectors and we can't compete on price. There is such inequality that a person understands and says, yes, look ...I cant' pay it, even people who come from the same place as producers: I can't afford it and I have to consume the other thing, which I know is crap because they burn gas, that put agrochemicals, but what can I do? It is a form of impotence, but it is a matter of a process, right? (Leonardo, 23/04/2014)

This same analysis was not given by all of the stallholders, but Leonardo recognises that the food at Mercado Bonpland is by no means the cheapest available. Importantly, he categorises this current inequality as being part of a process that is attempting to incorporate and address this issue moving forward. Currently, he also recognises that in charging more and having a middle-class customer base, they can create economic-solidarity pricing that can then be used to give fair wages to the producers, and to use these resources to fund broader projects, expanding and connecting initiatives. This is an example of the tension between the desire to eventually

change the process under capital, and the current reality, as well as the need to use monetary resources to fund the expansion of a system of alternatives.

Improving production conditions is essential to the way Mercado Bonpland works. As Leonardo highlighted, before the latest boom in quinoa prices, Colectivo Solidario sourced quinoa from the North of Argentina (Jujuy), and this was more expensive than the Bolivian product. The Argentine co-operative in Jujuy ensured fair work conditions in contrast to those in Bolivia, where it is often produced: ‘by servile and exploitative work relations, with child labour; because Quinoa must be hand collected’ (Leonardo, 23/04/2014).

Understanding that in better production conditions yields may be lower and producers have better wages, will mean the sale prices are higher. This highlights the importance of creating strong networks within the economic solidarity movement, so that people connect conditions of production and the product. It also demonstrates the importance of organising at all levels of this production process, as if people work in better conditions and receive better wages, they can also then afford to buy products from other people who have produced things fairly. I will explore this further below in relation to daily-life labour and production.

The building of sustainable relationships is a real challenge when, as the quinoa example demonstrates, even if networks are built and knowledge shared, they still operate from within the global market. Increasingly, food and commodities are being speculated on in global financial markets, and the quinoa example shows that once a ‘global product’ exists, there is no way for it to be ‘reclaimed’ by markets like Bonpland. Thus, examples of how people make and navigate their way through a more sustainable form of economy are essential. ‘When you transform a food into a commodity, there’s [an] inevitable breakdown in social relations and [a] high environmental cost’ (Friedman-Rudovsky, 2012 n.p.). The discussion of quinoa highlights the potential problems that can arise for economic solidarity initiatives when they meet the full force of the global economy, and this emphasises the necessity to analyse both local and global organisation.

Global speculation on quinoa as a commodity has meant that quinoa has become ‘gold for the producer’ (Leonardo, 23/04/2014). Interestingly, however, this did not mean that all of the producers were trying to capitalise on the boom in its popularity. As Leonardo explained, ‘*many now prefer sowing potato*’. This demonstrates that producers are not wholly motivated by money, but are trying to create stable futures there, and avoid the increased risk of growing quinoa – of debt and potential bankruptcy. This demonstrates the benefit for small producers involved in an economic solidarity system, as the system of solidarity pricing is not led by these global financial swings, but decided by the producers in conjunction with the market stall organisations – as I will explain in more detail in the following section on exchange. In creating strong social relationships between producers, and knowing that they have a stable place to sell their products, this also makes the producers less vulnerable.

‘Quinoa is now a free-market phenomenon. This is a boom, and there's definitely going to be a bust’ (Friedman-Rudovsky, 2012 n.p.). This financialisation and commodification of production represents tensions of creating an alternative economy within-and-against a global system of capital. This economic speculation also highlights the same motivations and problems that affected people’s daily lives in 2001 and that inspired solidarity-based organising in Mercado Bonpland. Such influences have thus informed the development of economic solidarity initiatives, and I will discuss this in further detail in the examination of the maté crisis in the section on daily life, later in this chapter.

Scale is key to understanding how global and solidarity economies interact, as we tend to think of diverse economies operating at a small-scale. However, the case of quinoa demonstrates that even when working at a small scale – in Mercado Bonpland and in Argentina more generally – the broader scale of the world economy has effects which impact on the whole construction of the local. I will discuss this in more detail during the debates relating to relational understandings of space in Chapter 7. However, I demonstrate these processes and scales in the following diagram (Figure 5-5) that shows the interconnected scales of the global economy, and

economic solidarity processes in Mercado Bonpland. This diagram shows the separation of the global and economic solidarity processes, yet in so doing, demonstrates that these processes are interconnected- shown by the layers (which for the purposes of printing this thesis have to be shown side by side). The green economic solidarity system works within the purple global economic system. The example of Quinoa sales reinforces these connected economic spheres, and demonstrates how in creating different moments in the production, exchange or consumption process, they are all still interconnected. The red processes demonstrate production in which many of the market's organisations focus their work, demonstrating the tension between work, dignified work and autogestion. Finally the diagram shows that the economic solidarity model attempts to create a more circular economy, moving away from a linear model- yet this is a challenge always faced by the solidarity economy.

Re-organising everyday life through connecting production, exchange and consumption

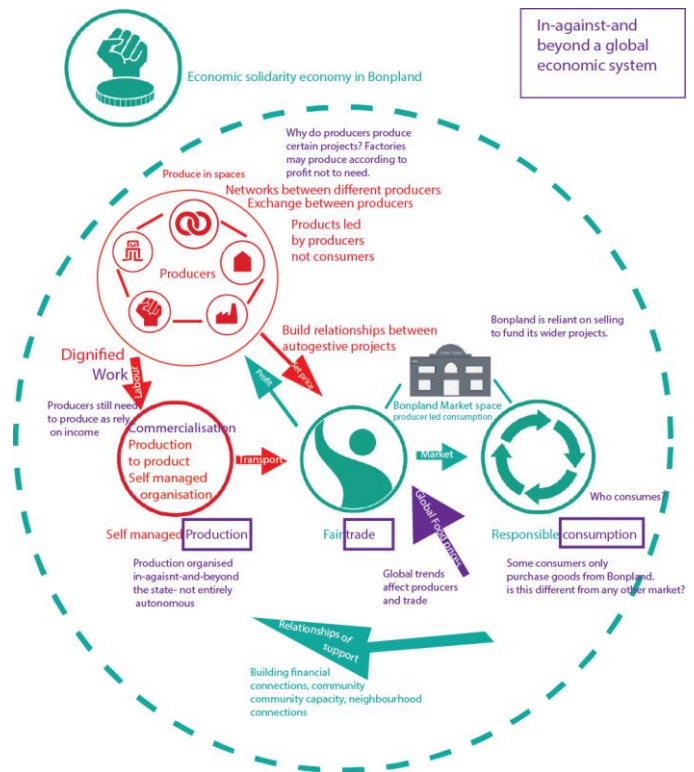
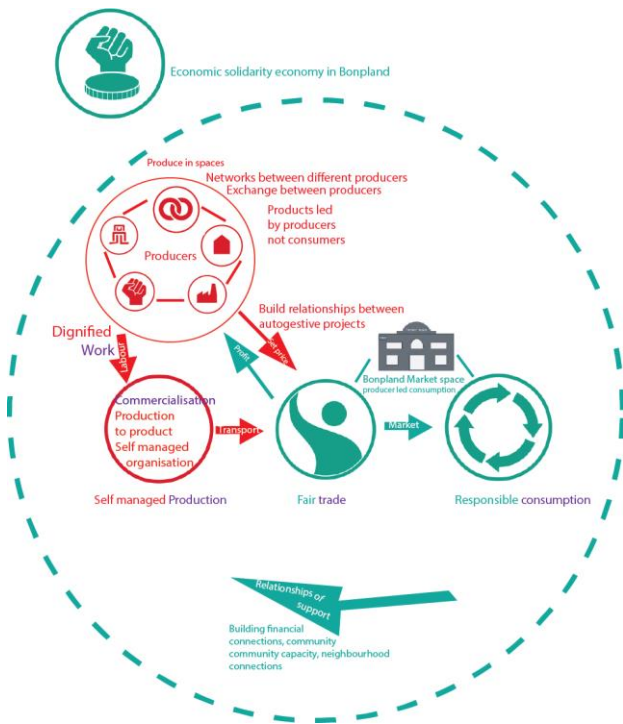


Figure 5-5 Layers in the Diagram showing economic solidarity (left) within the economic production process of the global economy (right)

Daily life and production: labour, work and dignity

Movements of self-organised production – in particular those changing the conditions of production and the relationship of production – are essential for developing economic solidarity initiatives. Post-2001, many people produced out of necessity, whilst projects also focused on new ways of living and producing in-against-and-beyond capitalism. I will therefore now explore the labour relationship, looking at how people try to organise to change this through autogestive projects, specifically through small-scale agriculture, recovered factories and co-operatives. Concurrently, movements within the market seek to develop dignified work, attempting to address auto-exploitation.

Conditions of production in the labour relationship

In the introduction to *The Labour Debate* (2002), Dinerstein and Neary explore the meaning of capitalist work and labour. In the current conditions of capitalism they acknowledge that: ‘*Capitalist work is the organising principle of all aspects of social life*’ (Dinerstein and Neary, 2002:1) as what we ‘*do for a living*’ defines both what we do and how we construct our identities within society. When imagining a world beyond capital, it is difficult to imagine what this labour relationship might look like, but this is what the autogestive movements in Argentina are seeking to create. Dinerstein and Neary go on to define what they mean by work and labour under capitalism:

By capitalist work we mean a particular form of labour that is given social and institutional recognition by the reward of the money-wage. This form of labour is based on a peculiar socio-interdependence in which workers do not consume what they produce, but work to consume what is produced by others in a process enforced and facilitated by the abstract and generalised power of world money (Dinerstein and Neary, 2002:1).

As such, breaking down the idea and relationships of labour and money is essential for resisting capitalist exploitation.

To engage in what it might mean to have an emancipatory and reflective movement of production, we need to understand what it *is* that is exploitative in the labour relation under capitalist social relations. Therefore, an investigation into the dual nature of abstract and concrete labour is necessary. Holloway explains:

The fight against capital is actually the fight against 'abstract labour'. I've been taken by this emphasis on 'abstract labour' (labour which takes place under the alienating conditions of wage-labour under capitalism), and 'concrete labour' (or 'doing', as you prefer which is characterised as free productive human activity). This recognition of the two-fold character of labour gets us back to a position whereby a critique of political economy can be developed, and where we can challenge the traditional image of the labour movement as primarily a movement of abstract labour within capitalism (Holloway, in: Asher et al., 2011 n.p.).

The aim of focusing on the conditions of labour is to break the abstract 'alienating conditions' of wage labour under capitalism. Dinerstein and Neary emphasise that 'Capitalist work is the organising principle of all aspects of social life' (2002:1). One cannot simply ignore this relation, as the daily need to consume and the necessities of production and money tie us to the current system of social relations under capital. This means that in order to rethink these social relations it is necessary to rethink how they are being addressed, not only in regards to work, but also in regards to the alienating conditions experienced under capital. Holloway recognises this when he highlights the importance of collective organising, (which I also highlighted in chapter two):

The creation of co-operatives solves nothing unless the articulation between different groups of doers is tackled at the same time. The move towards self-determination cannot be seen simply in terms of particular activities but must inevitably embrace the articulation between those activities, the re-articulation of the social flow of doing (not just production, but production and circulation) (Holloway, 2010a:240).

This is why it is so critical that the market connects many different forms of experiment in work or production into the re-articulation of the social flow of doing. Whilst this is a process involving many contradictions – for example, Mercado Bonpland must deal with all the

different contradictory moments involved in creating an alternative economy as well as running a market – these contestations make for interesting examples of what is possible.

Whilst the connection of movements of ‘doers’ is organised through networks of autogestion, there are also movements focused on demanding better work conditions. It is important to contextualise the politics of work in relation to the politics of labour:

Work, then, remains central to any discussion of revolution, but only if it is understood that the starting point is not labour, not fetishized work, but rather work as doing, as the creativity of power-to that exists as, but also against-and-beyond labour (Holloway, 2010a:153).

The improvement of these conditions through dignified work improves living standards. However, any campaign which ends with this struggle – such as the Right to Work campaign – ‘locks us firmly into capitalism and closes down all alternatives’ (Asher et al., 2011:n.p.). This necessitates dual movements of work and labour, to begin to address these challenges. Holloway emphasises how, during this crisis moment, calling for the right to work under capital is like pleading ‘come back, capital, please exploit us again!’, and that to avoid this, we must ‘develop other ways of living that are not immediately capitalist, that push against and beyond capitalism’ (Asher et al., 2011:n.p.). Without developing alternative movements that push beyond these capitalist relations, we cannot exist except for within them. These tensions are precisely what organisations in Bonpland are doing in operating a dual agenda to perform dignified work and to create movements for autogestive production such as occupied factories and community gardens. I will now explore how these challenges are navigated in Mercado Bonpland through autogestive production, and dignified work.

Autogestive production movements in Mercado Bonpland



Figure 5-6 different sorts of production movements in Mercado Bonpland.

Figure 5-6 demonstrates the different sort of production movements that make up the autogestive organisations connected to Mercado Bonpland¹¹. Autogestion means more than simply ‘self-management’ – it refers to production *movements*. In the Argentine context, autogestion has been crucial in the post-2001 organising, and has a growing importance in organisations resisting austerity in Europe:

Autogestion literally means ‘self administration’, but more broadly refers to collective democratic self-management, especially within local communities, workplaces, cultural projects and many other entities (Sitrin and Azzelini, 2014:30).

To explore autogestion in Mercado Bonpland, I will examine self-managed production as part of a movement working towards connecting the seemingly different aspects of the production process – that is, ‘the articulation between those activities, the re-articulation of the social flow of doing (not just production, but production and circulation)’ (Holloway, 2010a:240).

¹¹ I developed symbols for the mapping project as part of the research. These symbols are used on the diagrams throughout the thesis

Examples of recovered companies, family farming and co-operatives demonstrate attempts to change work relations, as well as a focus on health, education and other initiatives. Within the co-operative groups in the market, some have only one production focus – such as the recovered company Lacar – whereas others, such as Colectivo Solidario, work with a variety of different producers and themes.

Figure 5-6 shows peasant movements and small producers in addition to recovered companies, family farming and co-operatives. In this analysis I focus on recovered companies, family farms and coops as the predominant organisation of production. Small producers include many of the producers that began out of necessity – for example, a small artisan clothes-maker in the co-operative, such as in Red Del Campo. This highlights one of the tensions in the market – the balance between supporting small-scale producers and artisans and supporting producers that work on an industrial scale, such as reclaimed factories. This politics of scale is something that I will return to in the spatial debate in Chapter 7. Another characteristic in Argentina is that these autogestive networks also support the extremely small-scale ‘peasant movements’. These movements are important for their activism as well as their inspiration. For example, Bonpland and other ‘alternative markets’ have been inspired by *Ferías Francas*’ support of familial agriculture¹² in Argentina for many years (Golsberg, 2010). These peasant movements also symbolically highlight resistance to colonial development, as they suggest that ‘Europe is not the same as Peru. They are farmers there and that is different’ (Mario, 25/04/2014).

Mario explained that in the north of Argentina – in Misiones – there were colonial settlers as well as indigenous peoples, and that indigenous traditions that still exist. The rest of the way that the farming is organised is still linked to colonialism’s distribution of land. As such, the importance of such movements, knowledge, territories and remittances should not be

¹² Familial agriculture is small-scale, comprising family farms that are organised on small pieces of land, often for subsistence.

overlooked in terms of their contributions towards the direct organisation of the market, or their indirect influence on the way that people conceive of themselves in their environment.

Small-scale agricultural production

Small-scale or family agricultural production has a different ethos from industrial agriculture in terms of both cultivation and consumption. There are two main small agricultural producers in Bonpland – Cooperativa Agropecuaria de Productores Familiares Florencio Varela and Centro Ecumenico de Educacion Popular (CEDEPO). These organisations have different networks of small producers, meaning that products from other regions can be sold in combination with local produce. Both stalls have the same genesis: Cooperativa Agropecuaria de Productores Familiares Florencio Varela is a family group, trained in farming techniques by the organisers of Centro Ecumenico de Educacion Popular (CEDEPO), which organises diverse farming, economic and health projects, and sells vegetables from ‘la Parcela’ group. These groups – together with Red del Campo, Fecoagro, and Soncko Argentino – are a part of the Centro de Comercializacion de Productos de la Agricultura Familiar (CECOPAF) (Commercialisation Centre for Family Farming), which also has a stall in Mercado Bonpland. There are overlaps between these ‘different’ stalls, which operate co-operatively rather than competitively, and several times, when I wanted a certain vegetable that one stallholder did not have, he would direct me to another stallholder who did have it.

This small-scale production is directly opposed to the production methods of big business and commercial agriculture. Their approach necessitates a change in the understanding of production, selling and working with the land. This rethinking of the production process is a challenge to the dominant forms of industrial agriculture in which supermarkets dominate and shape the landscape, relations with work and food. Small-scale agriculture represents a form of resistance to the market forces that shaped the expansion of supermarkets discussed in Chapter 3.

Elsa discusses the history of CEDEPO in organising, changing and engaging with the way that small communities produce. The organisation helps to teach people how to farm small plots of land, which is essential, as local people (outside of the central Buenos Aires area) are very poor, but often have access to plots of land, whilst often lacking the skills to produce anything on them:

Once the organisation got their land [more than 30 years ago], neighbours started to come and go in order to interchange information, to be aware about how to produce organically, and also because they [CEDEPO] have organised a primary care centre that they travel to visit (Elsa, 16/07/2013)

Elsa explained that local people were initially encouraged to visit their site in Florencio Varela so that they could use the healthcare centre there, as there were inadequate facilities in there area. When using the healthcare centre, people would see other things being produced which, in turn, built their interest in engaging with CEDEPO in order to implement positive changes in their lives.

The development of the CEDEPO organisation led to a significant improvement in people's basic daily lives. In talking to Raul and Elsa about the project, I asked how people had lived before. Elsa explained that previously, 'they had no orchard, no hens, not even rabbits. All that appeared with CEDEPO' (16/07/2013).

The teaching and engagement of CEDEPO focused on technology, agriculture, education and health, and more broadly the creation of a holistic progression in people's daily lives. As Moreira suggests, the programme created 'appropriate technologies' (2013) for local people through investigating and understanding people's daily lives to ensure that the projects that they implemented were useful and sustainable.

The focus of CEDEPO was thus to create sustainable, self-sufficient lifestyles. Initially, their educational role facilitated practical skills, such as how to produce organically with the land using permaculture techniques (field notes 02/07/2013). The aim of this was to ensure that

people with access to land also had the opportunity to learn skills that would help them produce, as producing their own food meant more self-reliance:

So this project is an educational training kind of work – you teach people how to work, how to valorise what they already have, because they already had some land (Elsa, 16/07/2013).

The project was tailored to the needs of local residents, focusing on different forms of production and on improving local people's day-to-day lives.

These educational and community projects led to many new co-operatives and family agriculture projects, which have eventually become independent co-operatives:

Yes, it changed a lot, but also new co-operatives were born, like for example AFP (Family Producers Association). Neighbours started to get some information, they started to build their own orchards, their own experiences, and so they started to create their own co-operatives (Elsa, 16/07/2013).

This project has therefore created a network of self-organised co-operatives that produce agricultural products. The independence of the groups ensures that people can produce and organise for themselves, and thus can improve their lives, rather than focusing on strengthening the CEDEPO. That is, people can sell or produce for themselves as they wish. This independence was emphasised as being crucial by stallholders in the market (field notes 02/07/2013). Stallholders didn't decide what to sell – selling was decided by what producers wanted to sell or make for themselves.

In addition to local production, these small agricultural groups also focus on sustainability and the environment. In a bid to make their agriculture more self-reliant, the co-operatives have organised a seed-saving initiative, in which a piece of land is devoted to growing seeds to save. In addition, they have a project for collecting and growing indigenous seeds and a dedicated seed store (field notes, 02/07/2013). This ensures project longevity, and is something that everyone from the community can take part in.

Useful community eco-technologies such as solar driers, rotary kilns, ground source heat pumps, collective fridges etc. are crucial to the development of the project. Eco-technologies were developed to improve people's collective skills, as 'the requirement was: if you want to have a technology, then you have to participate in the construction [of it]' (Moreira, 2013: n.p.). Extensive investigations are carried out before any work takes place to ensure that these technologies are required by the community. For example, solar driers have been made to improve the drying and storage of certain vegetables. Moreira highlights the key role that women play in this project in transforming the daily life of members of the local community.

As well as providing educational opportunities to learn about production, CEDEPO organises secondary and adult education through an education centre. This project provides people who have a lack of opportunity for formal education with a chance to learn within their local communities. This changes individuals' futures and engagements as 'appropriate technologies can be a generator of new social inclusion and sustainable development' (Moreira, 2013 n.p.). This community participation, engagement and independent production has impacts that go well beyond agriculture. Mercado Bonpland also provides a space where people can sell without a middle man (field notes, 02/07/2013), which gives local people more control over what and when they sell, as well as an opportunity to sell at a fair price. The market therefore allows local co-operatives and communities to focus on improving their daily lives rather than solely focusing on production.

Recovered Companies

Recuperated factories still work under a capitalist system of production but are also struggling for a different system, similar to Mercado Bonpland. They also have the problem and task of locating production. At the time when they recover a factory, they may not know how it works. When the owner abandons the factory all of the administrative staff leave as well, the only people left are the workers, so they have a very big management problem and an even bigger trading problem. We believe this [market] is a place where they can bring their goods, delegate and leave their produce. So that they can focus on producing, to avoid losing the factory (Leonardo, 16/07/2013).

There is a long history of recuperated workplaces in Argentina (Blach, 2013), and understanding the actions that led to these, their political stances and their production methods is crucial to how these factories integrate in autogestive production movements (Ness and Azzellini, 2011). These factories are founded on movements to develop popular power, yet for production to be successful, there must be opportunities to sell – these factories cannot continue producing without any capital to pay wages, buy materials etc. The cycle between production and consumption is crucial for the factory to continue. Mercado Bonpland is therefore fundamental in the process for creating these owner occupied factories.

La Alameda organising to support recovered factories

La Alameda has several stalls within Mercado Bonpland that are run by different groups in the co-operative. These are collectively run and organised by stallholders, so one person could buy from any of the stalls. These stalls comprise a small co-operative ceramics producer, AYRI; a co-operative coat manufacturer, Lacar; and la Alameda – the ‘no chains’ brand of clothes (La Alameda, 2013). La Alameda is a very active political group, and I attended several of their protests in nearby barrios. They actively support and campaign on different interwoven issues that relate to trafficking, working conditions etc. As the president of la Alameda explained:

La Alameda has four main components: First, the Alameda Foundation is the research branch that looks into slave labour, trafficking, organised crime and mafias, and promotes public policy that works to eradicate this type of activities.

Second, in work, co-operative victims who have escaped clandestine workshops are able to participate and work in a safe environment. We also promote the creation of further co-operatives to widen and strengthen the network.

Third, we have the Union of Seamstress Workers (Union de Trabajadores Costureros, UTC) that supports and defends the rights of seamstresses and workers from the textile industry, which gives them a supportive body that helps to defend labour rights.

Finally, our community attends to the poorest members of the neighbourhood by setting up a communal food hall and facilitating free cultural and education workshops (Olgati, 2013:n.p.).

The focus of the group therefore, goes far beyond simply recovering factories, and works at creating networks and processes that can improve people's daily lives. The la Alameda brand 'no chains' emphasises that their clothes are produced through fair conditions in different countries through co-operatives, without the use of slave labour or clandestine factories.

Not all of the organisations in La Alameda are occupied factories. As AYRI's ceramicist Marta explained, she is an artisanal producer, but works with the support of la Alameda and through co-operative organising. Importantly, community power is built within and between these co-operative organisations in order for them to support each other. Anibal explained how this organisational strategy helped the Lacar factory recuperate its workplace. The process of recuperating the factory and its integration into Mercado Bonpland represents a different way of performing everyday life politics.

Anibal recounted how he had worked at the Lacar factory making jackets for nineteen years, when, on 9 September 2011, the owners had posted a sign saying that they were moving. Over that weekend (between Friday and Monday) the boss secretly emptied the factory of all the stock (under the pretence that they were opening a new shop and moving it there, but actually taking the stock to sell when they filed for bankruptcy):

On Monday we went to work and found this. Then we met the Alameda Foundation, we went to the Labours Ministry to the union, who should have answered to us, we have social welfare, but they cleaned their hands of it, they understood and did nothing. They had already arranged everything (with the owner) (Anibal, 16/07/2013).

Anibal and the people that he worked with were thus left in a difficult situation. The bosses of the factory held all the power and control, which meant that all of the people who worked in the factory were in danger of being left without anywhere to work. Therefore they contacted La Alameda:

We knew Alameda Foundation, and thanks to them and the Recuperated Factories Organisation (from the national government) ... we were given a hand to [find out] where the goods the boss had taken were. In fact, we found about half – the other half he sent to Cordoba. We found out where the goods were deposited and went there, we camped there for fifteen days to stop him doing anything more.

*Then we discovered the owner and all he had done. On October 4th he filed for bankruptcy. We had denounced publicly him (at an *escrache*) with boards with his name and the name of his family. This is when we started the co-operative, with our fight. We started to work with *compañeros* – we have the textile centre, which is where we have machines now, we recovered half of them, and we begun to work (Anibal, 16/07/2013).*

La Alameda and the workers at Lacar worked together to ensure that the workers' jobs were saved, first establishing the legal perimeters on what they could demand. The quick advice they received ensured that half the machines were reclaimed, meaning they could continue to work. They also publicised the plight with an *escrache*. This form of community organising is commonly used in order to shame an organisation or individual and alert the surrounding community about the actions of someone in the neighbourhood (for footage of the *escrache* and the occupation see Prensa Alameda, 2012). *Escrache* has also been used to name and shame people that committed atrocities under the dictatorship and remained living in their communities. This combination of collective action and support meant that the jobs of Lacar workers were saved through creating a co-operative, working without a boss. Lacar now functions as part of the la Alameda group, so the collective support continues.

As with Mercado Bonpland, the combination of collective action and state action is essential to the way these spaces are reclaimed. I will explore these contradictions and tensions between the state and the movement's organisation in more depth in the following chapter. For now, it is essential to understand the organisation of these reclaimed factories. The government

organisation for recuperated factories provides help that improves standards for co-operatives. If it was not for the support of la Alameda group, and the legal challenges it enabled the workers to make, reclaiming their workplace would have been impossible. The government ownership of the factory helps the workers to secure the right to produce their own garments and create a co-operative:

Q: The textile centre belongs to the government and they let you have the space?

A: Yes, thanks to Alameda, that they fight against slave work (Anibal, 16/07/2013).

The factory now belongs to the government (through bankruptcy law), enabling the workers to run their co-operative there, which Anibal attributes to the help of Alameda. The transition from private ownership to government ownership – like the struggle over the collective organisation of the space of Mercado Bonpland – ensures the space can be collectively owned by workers through the state. However, some factories have been recuperated without government support, which can make the situation more difficult, particularly for selling products. The legal ownership and rights in such ‘gray spaces’ are not always clearly defined, and so can involve complex negotiations. In Lacar’s case, the new bankruptcy laws allowed the use of the Lacar brand, which meant that even though they no longer owned much of the equipment, they could continue production at the factory.

Whilst bankruptcy laws provide some protection for workers, Leonardo from Colectivo Solidario identifies how owners can strategically de-invest, and thus organise the abandoning of the business over a course of years, decreasing its value. This gradual devaluing of a factory means that the workers lose out. In the Lacar factory:

The owner gradually abandoned the factory and then continued selling the coats. If the factory restarts functioning the owner tries to get in to take what they believe belongs to them (Leonardo, 16/07/2013).

Although there are laws to protect workers from such situations, it is very difficult to enforce them. Leonardo observed that at times of slow economic growth in particular, the devaluing of businesses was very common, as it becomes easier for owners to claim that there is not enough money to continue production. After closing a factory, the boss can then move production to a cheaper site, country or place where the conditions for workers are worse.

Leonardo emphasised the tensions that exist between ownership and the reclamation of a factory, concerning whether the goods that are produced are owned by the worker that made them or by the former factory boss. This uneven distribution of power between the worker and the boss is demonstrated when a worker has not been paid, but a factory owner continues to sell products that the worker has made.

Here starts a moral debate – more ideological. In my mind, nothing belongs to the owner because workers make work. But in this capitalist system, he put the initial capital in, so he wins (Leonardo, 16/07/2013).

This ownership debate highlights the motivation for workers to reclaim factories in order to change the relationships of production. For workers to ‘win’ they must reclaim their work and collective power, which they do through creating organisations in the factories and between workers and other organisations. This support is facilitated through co-operatives and through Mercado Bonpland. These moral debates continue in the market. For instance, when buying a t-shirt, you can discuss how t-shirts are made globally.

Mercado Bonpland is a reliable place for recovered companies to sell their produce, as well as a space that provides them with more autonomy for organising their productive output. Selling is a crucial part of the production process, and Mercado Bonpland gives sellers the opportunity to sell through principles of economic solidarity:

“Whichever of the garment workers receives money from the buyers, shares it equally, [and] we can talk while we work without being scolded. People can enter the shop and watch us work – we are not hidden”, said Ms. Cruz (Kaplan, 2011 n.p.).

Reclaiming workplaces changes the conditions of work, as well as the sharing of the profits. The opportunity to sell at Mercado Bonpland for a minimal cost, and through the co-op, is another way that people in the co-operatives can ensure that they have control over their production. Lacar also sells in two other locations in Buenos Aires (Agencia Paco Urondo: *Periodismo Militante*, 2012).

Many products from recuperated factories are sold in Bonpland, and the co-operative Colectivo Solidario sells several products, each with a different history, as part of the autogestion. La Mocita produces pastry wrappers (to make food products like *empanadas*) and is involved in an on-going struggle with the ex-management, as the co-operative organisation and the former boss both produce and sell under the same trademark:

The [previous] owner sells in supermarkets, because he closed the factory and immediately created another one with the same name somewhere else and left all the people in Barracas [where the factory had been] without anything. The owner tried to take a very valuable machine, which makes very delicious pastry, but they [the workers] had [the] resilience and foresight to prevent them taking the machines out. So they do produce, but they are in dispute over the trademark (Leonardo, 16/07/2013).

The previous factory owner now produces under the same name 'la Mocita', is selling in supermarkets, but made under completely different conditions. This is difficult for the workers, as it is hard to distinguish their product from the new product. Leonardo believes that the pastry made by the la Mocita workers is both cheaper and of better quality than that of their competitor (their former boss), but it would be hard to tell by looking at the product in a shop. In addition, their old boss had already established a network to sell to (as he had the sales skills and the contacts), which emphasises the necessity of Mercado Bonpland increasing awareness about these conflicts, as well as providing an outlet and an infrastructure for sales, marketing, store location etc.

Co-operative organisation and production

Most of the production in the market is organised through co-operatives, such as la Alameda, Colectivo Solidario and Red Del Campo. Like Lacar, people organise co-operatively to try to establish non-hierarchical organisations as opposed to a system with a boss. This is a crucial part of Mercado Bonpland's strategy for organisation.

La Asamblearia was created as a co-operative in 2001 in response to the form of social reproduction that emerged during the crisis:

It is a co-operative created by many people in 2001 during the crisis when many people had no work. They started to produce, to create little products and meet other people to generate a market place, so they could work together and sell their products. It was also a consumer co-operative – they made large purchases and consumed as a co-operative. Little-by-little it became a production co-operative, with a focus on producing and then selling the products (Claudia, 12/07/2013).

The 2001 crisis forced people to organise and create collectives, at first to survive, and later to change the means by which they produced, thus generating a change in the relationships of production. The experience of financial insecurity and collective organising led people to want a more permanent change in this relationship, and they sought a form of daily production through a co-operative without bosses and with freedom and control over their own lives.

Co-operatives are not in-and-of themselves radical. In the case of Mercado Bonpland, it is a useful way to organise different groups working towards the same goals. As I will explore in the following section on auto-exploitation, the co-operative can also involve a form of organising that is self-exploitative, whereby organisations without a boss reduce costs and fall into collective self-exploitation in which they increase the profit potential for capital. However, co-operatives have continued to be useful for horizontal organising, across sometimes disparate groups, since the 2001 crisis. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge both that they are not a perfect solution as a way to organise, and that they have allowed successful organisation to

occur between many different groups. Many of the market stalls, then, focus on creating co-operatives, although this does not demonstrate a complete change in the form of the economy.

Creating dignified work

One aim of Mercado Bonpland was to create conditions of dignified work through the solidarity economy. People didn't want to be given hand-outs, and organised around the right to work as, during the economic crisis, many businesses had shut down. However, these businesses (for example factories) may not have had the best working conditions to begin with. Therefore, creating dignified work focuses on how to demand 'more than a job', and producing better conditions for workers. Whilst there are tensions between defending jobs and creating more just systems to work within, the idea of dignity crossed these boundaries.

Dignity provides a way of organising work relations, referring to the creating of different values to motivate and develop new work practices:

We need to dignify work, and it is dignified by working under worthy conditions, which must be obtained by every worker, through each enterprise, and the state must be in support of that (Pedro, 01/11/2013).

Dignified work is associated with the conditions of labour, what the person produces and how this is organised. Therefore, it requires a different relationship between consumption and production, with more integration between the production conditions, what is produced, and how this is sold. The network of the market is one way through which these practices are connected, and whilst people might have different organisational strategies, the principle aim of non-exploitation is the same for each person.

Pedro explained that dignified working conditions increase the power of the workers, breaking their reliance on charity, and changing their conditions by being recognised for the work that they put into their jobs. He reflects that, in the organisation of Mercado Bonpland:

Some say: why don't you organise "Fruit for everyone", "Yerba for everyone". No, that would mean bread for today and hungry for tomorrow. They told us we could sell subsidised yerba – a truck brings it to Mendoza, they sold it for half the price that the co-operatives from Misiones charged, and the public in Mendoza had cheap yerba once. Our people selling yerba in Mendoza were furious because the programme sold yerba cheaper than them... (Pedro, 01/11/2013).

In this example, selling discounted maté made it hard for local producers to compete, potentially forcing them out of business. In addition, such reliance can create problems in the future, as Pedro observes – ‘hungry for tomorrow’. Dignified work conditions, then, are the first stage in improving people’s everyday life conditions, from which they can organise for more than they currently have.

Collective organisation to resist capital exploitation and auto-exploitation

One critique of self-organised movements, as we saw in the discussion about commons earlier, is that they can work for capital under precarious conditions, and involve self-exploitation and even lower wages or worse conditions. As the market was produced from within the capitalist system, this has meant that workers there are aware of the need to prevent auto-exploitation.

One of the core debates focuses on whether workers should be paid salaries for their work in the market:

We are criticised because we have salaries. So [for those of us that do not have fixed hours] we say, 'how much money can a person make working part time?', then we split the pay between ourselves. When the job is more permanent, we agreed between all of us [in the co-op], to pay monthly (Pedro, 01/11/2013).

Pedro acknowledges that they are criticised for paying salaries, but holds that salaries are crucial for preventing exploitation. People need to be able to live and, currently, this means having money to pay rent etc., so those with frequent work have a monthly salary, making it easier for them to organise their lives:

They are all members from the co-operative, they come to work when needed so, reasonably, they must make some money (Pedro, 01/11/2013).

Pedro is clear that, in order to reasonably expect people in the co-operative to work, they must be paid – otherwise how could they make ends meet? However, as Mercado Bonpland is currently only open four days per week, even if people work in the market every day it is open, they may also require another job. Many of the different stallholders spoke to me about hoping to increase their opening times in the future but, as the market is collectively organised and run according to production, this could only occur if more people were involved in all stages of the market, and it takes time to develop such agreements.

Developing the work networks in Mercado Bonpland from the 2001 financial crisis focused on how to create secure jobs, and how to co-operatively manage work without facilitating self-exploitation:

This auto-exploitation is common in all social organisations, but they can't see it, they don't realise it. They believe to make a social 'work' you must be poor, you must go poor, you need a subsidy, crying at Social Development to be supported on this or that. We support each other, so we must have a system where everyone is paid for his work (Pedro, 01/11/2013).

Co-operatives function in the market through support and, in this way, self-sustaining systems are created. Living in a world using money, however, requires some money for survival. Therefore, there is a need to challenge the system that recreates capitalist values (by being part of the market), whilst concurrently paying wages in a similar way to a conventional job. Ensuring people do not 'go poor,' means that people working in the market must be self-reliant. However, not all of the organisations in the market are arranged like this, with some being reliant on wages and exchanges of food with producers, such as la Asambleaaria; and others that run networks of small artisanal producers, such as SONKO, organising so that the different producers will be given the money from their sales. All of these demonstrate different ways of engaging with the question of how to distribute money and how to acknowledge that, even without a 'boss', there can still be financial exploitation.

Exchange: selling, organising and creating a product

In this section I will explore the literature on money and exchange, before looking at the series of organisations that facilitate the creation of a network of alternatives in the market. The market and the organisation of stallholders prioritises the ideas of ‘fair trade’, which go far beyond conventional fair trade practices (as we understand in the UK) in that, through the networks operating in Mercado Bonpland, they reform the production and consumption chains in an attempt to shift power to producers. Seeing the relationship as integrated is essential for understanding the way that people in Bonpland conceive the economy, and how they aim to change the process. Trade is not only about the moment at which a product is sold, but about the relationship with the producer as well. In particular, I will focus on in what ‘products’ are sold in the market, highlighting the importance of the relationship with the producer rather than just with the product, as well as the more complex ways in which these products are transported, organised, marketed, and made sellable.

Economic collapse and money

Understanding money as a social relationship of value does not prevent the necessity of using money for day-to-day life. Therefore, the ways that money, barter and how products are commoditised within Mercado Bonpland are organised, are crucial for understanding the way that Mercado Bonpland functions day-to-day in its attempts to intervene in this economic system. After the collapse of Argentina’s economy and the devaluation of its currency in 2001, money’s status as a signifier of value rather than as a value in-and-of itself was made clear. At this time, production and exchange were reorganised out of necessity, and this collective necessity was a key motivating factor for the creation of the networks in 2001. I intend to focus on how these networks cooperate and in what ways this has opened new possibilities for exchange and for creating other forms of ‘living and being in common’. Henderson writes that:

Money can serve to express value as it is already predicated on value relations. Money is a commodity among other commodities and is merely, if crucially, singled out for her purpose of being the universal equivalent. ... A commodity for sale exists that has the property of generating more value than it has itself. That commodity is labour power and the sight where its peculiar property is evident is in commodity production, not the sphere of circulation (the market). In capitalism, therefore, it is not simply that labour takes the form of value. The labour needs to be wage labour (i.e. Labour must be commoditised and put to the task of creating more value than itself). Capitalism must be a class-based system in which [the] surplus value produced is up for appropriation (Henderson, 2013:5).

Money connects the challenges and daily necessities of exchange and labour through capitalist social relations. The Argentine crisis of 2001 included a crisis of money in people's day-to-day lives, as was discussed in Chapter 2. Therefore, new ways to exchange were created. Barter filled a void created by the crisis, but did not necessarily solve any of the problems identified above by Henderson, such as capitalism being a process of commodified wage labour, or even the problem of the production of surplus value.

Holloway's discussion of cracks questions 'money power' through making clear that it is reliant on labour, contingent on the social flow of doing. By organising only from what 'we consider socially necessary or desirable', we make cracks in or breaks with the domination of 'capital-money-abstract-labour' (Asher et al., 2011 n.p.). These cracks are part of an ongoing process – 'cracks are dynamic, constantly on the move' (Asher et al., 2011 n.p.) – and this movement is crucial to the development of alternatives such as Mercado Bonpland.

Money in crisis, capital in crisis or people in crisis – barter and exchange

The crisis of 2001 provided an opportunity to rupture the capitalist system and restructure it when the middle class experienced an inability to access their daily life necessities, and hence generated the necessity and possibility to create new organisational forms such as alternative currencies (Roos, 2014). However, some critics assert that need was the only driving force, as Pete North highlights that it was the organisational necessity for subsistence that drove the trueque movement¹³, rather than choice, as people returned to their ‘proper jobs [when they] became available’ (North 2008:30). Barter was often difficult and unfulfilling, with interactions based on the need to eat, to sell, and a lack of available options within the semi-collapsed capitalist system. However, alternatives to exploitative capitalist social relationships must maintain an antagonism with these exploitative social relationships if they are to move beyond replicating capitalist production in another form – for example, through barter or work in a co-op (as discussed in the previous section). Barter had started to replace one form of exchange value – money – with another very similar form – barter exchange – but it needed to go further. This would involve new ways of exchanging – through *solidarity* rather than the exploitation of each other’s work.

North continues to critique barter in the solidarity economy for not producing new and alternative connections between people or challenge the capitalist mode of production:

[The] solidarity economy that some hoped would enable a market that worked at different rhythms to capitalism did not emerge. The networks provided an opportunity for petty, kitchen or household-level production of food, clothes and the like, for people to exchange the skills they needed, and for the middle class to recycle unwanted goods to get by. Bankrupt stock could be sold. But there was no significant production of new goods and services beyond some small micro-businesses that, once the economy began to revive, moved into the mainstream economy. No connections were built to the recovered factories, and [the] levels of capital generated by subaltern groups, even if these subalterns described themselves as ‘middle class’, were not large enough to

¹³ ‘Trueque’ or barter clubs were established during the financial crisis in Argentina, with alternative currency.

develop the range of production a modern complex economy needs. Furthermore, the very poor were excluded (North, 2008:35).

Whilst North did not see these ‘different rhythms to capitalism’ emerge within this example of a solidarity economy, he highlighted actions that would have shifted this alternative economy beyond a simple barter economy. Mercado Bonpland is not reliant on barter but, operating as one of many ways of exchanging, it still provides income for some members of the market.

These alternative practices that North highlights, (but does not see developing) are the organisational axis of Mercado Bonpland. Many market organisations had barter economies within them, then moved beyond this exchange network towards a focus on alternative ways of doing, alternative labour relations and, beyond this, to connections of production, circulation and exchange, and the creation of a new form of ‘solidarity economy’. Organisations within Mercado Bonpland have made connections between occupied factories, for example. However, the class critique that North makes is also one I introduced in the discussion about quinoa, and which I continue to develop in the section on gentrification chapter 7. North’s critique of the barter movement emphasises the difficulties that arise in deciding when to call an initiative a ‘success’, as seen in his criticism of networks that have not gone beyond barter. These are challenged by the examples of networks at Mercado Bonpland. When organisation focus on daily life, and on a process, how can they be categorised as successes or failures? North describes some of the organisations that began in the ferias, but the Mercado Bonpland approach to the politics of daily life requires understanding daily life practices rather than seeking a perfect revolutionary moment.

In contrast to North, identifying barter as part of a process of Autogestion, Zibechi discusses the organisation of la Asamblearia barter networks as going beyond simple exchange, identifying the process of the networks:

Although the Argentine movement is in its early stages, it has already invented forms of exchange that go far beyond the early barter arrangements. The purpose of bartering was to create a currency that could facilitate a massive, alternative economic system.

The new efforts, on the other hand, prioritize ethical and political issues in the production and marketing of goods, and seek to close the gap between producers and consumers by promoting direct, face-to-face relationships (Zibechi, 2012:99).

The potential for a barter network being developed as a process is crucial. La Asamblearia, which is now organising within Mercado Bonpland, highlights the radical potential of organising through barter networks and then continuing to organise.

As Zibechi observes, la Asamblearia and others in Mercado Bonpland have gone beyond barter-only arrangements by engaging in efforts to change the economic system. Although barter is still used in the market, it is not its only focus. Mario explained that individuals come to the market from all over the country. For example:

Each year, a guy comes [from La Pampa] with a kilo [of mushrooms] and everything is barter – he takes yerba, honey, because he hasn't any. There are many like him, and what do you tell them? They come here, because they were city residents of Buenos Aires (Mario 25/04/2014).

Mario added that it is important that barter continues in Mercado Bonpland as the people involved were part of the historic movements of barter and organising, and therefore Bonpland is an important site to connect people – acting as a resource and centre for people from all over the country. However, Mario explained that barter was not enough – they have also helped individuals to organise with other producers, and this is la Asamblearia's main work. La Asamblearia forms associations with different producers, and helps them form networks, thus contributing to building the many associations and groups connecting different production projects and co-operatives (I discuss this further in chapter 7). Therefore barter still operates as a strategy of survival, but Bonpland is also a key place of exchange, not just of the products, but of ideas, support, solidarity, and a key meeting point in the city. In this way, barter is not an end in itself, but opens up possibilities to engage in new ways of producing collectively.

Solidarity economy

Solidarity Economy is the attempt that is made from various stakeholders to articulate the economic emergency responses that the popular sectors are giving to the crisis, making them come together in an integrated subsystem or economic sector (la Asamblearia, 2013:n.p.).

La Asamblearia began as a consumption co-operative in 2001 when, in the wake of the financial crisis, people needed products and a system different to capitalism through the solidarity economy. Colectivo Solidario had similar reasons for their collective organisation:

Basically when everything was a mess in Argentina we begun a logic of looking for alternatives, and one of them was what we call "fair trade" [or] "responsible consumption". We then got organised under the co-operative legal figure. Why under this figure? Because we think the capitalist market due its cyclic character creates exclusions, and we don't want to create more exclusions – we want to work in a more organised way (Leonardo, 23/04/2014).

The solidarity economy supports the creation of new engagements and relations of production, which aim to be responsible. Leonardo contrasts this with the capitalist system, which is focused on creating exclusions – in this case, people that would go without. Organisers in Colectivo Solidario want to build an economic system that can be relied on, so that people will not be speculated on for basic goods and services. The solidarity economy thus focuses on making a supportive network for consumers and producers so that both can get a fair price, without market speculation. The economic solidarity model adopted by Mercado Bonpland is focused on creating fair trade.

Fair Trade, in Mercado Bonpland, is a:

recognition and measurement of work, the expectations of producers and consumers, improving life with relationships based on equal partnership and trust, and to obtain fairer conditions for producers – especially for those that are most marginalised (la Asamblearia, n.d.).

Fair trade is a way of recognising current relationships of production in particular, as trade relations have always been inequitable to those from the South. Unlike industrial 'fair trade', this relationship is not focused only on obtaining more money from a transaction, but on changing the way that the transaction can take place, and under what conditions. This focuses on building the power that people in these movements have, and on how it can be used to establish alternative systems of production. The moment of trade is rethought to change the relations of production and develop relationships with producers in order to create 'production, distribution and consumption that are orientated towards sustainable development and solidarity' (la Asamblearia, n.d).



Figure 5-7 Values and organisational processes of the solidarity economy in Mercado Bonpland.

Thus fair trade is part of a process that involves changing all the interactions of production, trade and consumption. These values are part of a process of understanding and recreating the economy. During my research, I developed symbols to use in the mapping project to demonstrate these values in the economy (Figure 5-7).

Challenging speculation



Figure 5-8 Co-operative maté for sale in Bonpland (16/07/2013)

The solidarity economy model of Mercado Bonpland worked differently during the maté crisis of 2012, which was described to me by Claudia from la Asamblearia (Field diary, 25/06/2013). Claudia explained that because of price-fixing by the big maté tea producers (who spread the false information that the rise in their prices was the result of a poor harvest) a scarcity crisis of maté (the national drink of Argentina) was created in 2012. This crisis demonstrates the problems of being reliant on ‘big capital’ that speculates and commodifies basic provisions to improve profits. This ‘crisis’ led to a scarcity of maté throughout the city, except in Mercado Bonpland. Bonpland and, in this case La Asamblearia, had developed relationships with co-operatively run maté producers, and were thus not reliant on the big producers. As Bonpland is not organised around profit, either for the producers or the shops, the market decided not to raise its prices for maté (Field diary, 25/06/2013).

Claudia explained that due to the crisis, some customers started asking for ten packs of maté, but if they did so she refused to sell them anything at all on the basis that ‘this sort of consumption was either to make a profit, or to accumulate the maté for themselves’ (Field diary, 25/06/2013). La Asamblearia only sold maté to people in the community, people who they knew, or those buying a few things in the shop – a different form of purchase from consumers wanting multiple maté packets. Therefore Bonpland continued to sell maté when the rest of the

city had run out. These financial speculations can have disastrous consequences in food markets, leading to starvation, and this example demonstrates how la Asamblearia tries to run counter to the 'normal' logic of capital accumulation.

The personal encounters surrounding speculating individual shoppers and the idea that a stallholder would actively not sell (despite an 'easy' sale) demonstrates a radical departure from what it means to sell under capitalist values. This is one of the tensions in running a stall – of trying to sell, as well as actively trying to create other forms of relationships around trade, buying and producing. It means that market stallholders sometimes appeared to act against their own interests as well as those of the market in order to challenge these profit-driven narratives. Whilst individual action and resistance may have been possible with this example of maté sales, in relation to the global context of the earlier example of quinoa, individual resistance is not always possible. Therefore, anticipating the global market is essential in trying to create these economic solidarity narratives. The logic of the solidarity economy is about supporting and sharing resources rather than competing for them. This can be quite a radical gesture, when we are so often told that people operate only from their own self-interest, and in this way can be seen as creating other values.

Claudia from la Asamblearia was very engaged in creating a solidarity economy in relation to money, which she saw as being able to 'break down a movement' (Field diary, 25/06/2013). Claudia told me that in 2001, many Europeans were offering money to help support the people, but she emphasised her belief that money changes how people sell and interact, so it should only be accepted for small and specific tasks. In this way, government grants are also often used in order to change what movements do, and to direct them in a certain way – something that has been seen in large-scale and 'green' agriculture projects in Argentina (Field diary, 25/06/2013). Therefore, la Asamblearia only accepts financial support from one Italian NGO (ICeCOR), which they have used for one specific project to ensure that their aims weren't compromised. With speculation being a huge day-to-day problem for people in Buenos Aires, from 2001 to the

present day, and having experienced the poverty of the extreme speculation that was undertaken in the past, this attempt to control trade speculation is part of building a system that is organised to facilitate more reliable financial systems.

Product and producer: exchanging a product integrated with production

The focus of Mercado Bonpland is on the process of developing relationships and practices of organisation rather than on the product. This contrasts with the commodity-driven organisation of supermarkets, where the product rather than the way it is made is what is viewed as important. However, products are still important for Bonpland, as it is still a market that people go to in order to shop, but this is not its *main* focus. During my interviews, I always asked the members of the market about what the overall focus of the organisation was, and their answers highlighted the many and varied methods that they used for creating an alternative economy (demonstrated in Figure 1-1). Mario from la Asamblearia emphasised his focus as follows:

It is confidence. Confidence and supporting people. Behind a person you can put products, or create new ones, or see how to integrate products. The product is something strong but secondary (Mario, 25/04/2014).

This emphasises the need for supportive networks of production to collaborate and make more of the products.

However, there are some notable exceptions in Mercado Bonpland in which the product *is* the focus. As the market has many organisational strategies, some stalls have a greater focus on products. For example, Red del Campo, sells thermos flasks, which are popular as they are used for drinking maté. As there aren't any recovered companies making thermos flasks, they sell standard ones, together with replaceable parts to mend old flasks. Thus, for them, the product is what is important. Similarly, some of the stalls outside the co-operative organisation that see the market as a business (such as Puchi and Merceleria) have a greater focus on the products in the market. But interestingly, these 'business-orientated' stalls were often the ones that were not the

most successful in their sales in the context of the co-operative market. For example, Maria from the stall Merceleria – who I will be focusing on in chapter 6– continues to run her stall as she used to in the ‘traditional’ market, and stressed that she has a lack of customers. In a ‘normal’ market, if you were not making any money, it might be logical to change products or to move stalls. But this is not what is being done in Mercado Bonpland, which demonstrates stallholders’ different motivation for being there beyond selling.

Commercialisation

There are still tensions in Mercado Bonpland between selling produce from small-scale producers and supporting the large occupied factories. Martin elaborates on this in comparing some products from occupied factories:

As they are a big co-op they are much more affluent, if you notice the packaging of the products. La Arbolada is much more artisanal – they have RNPA, all the seals, [and] lots of questions for other producers during the process they have not yet reached. Arrufat, as well – they are near here in San Martin (Buenosairean Conurbano) – are a better-known co-op, they have a bigger history. The same happens with Grisinópolis (Martin, 22/04/2014).

Martin demonstrates how producing a product is a process: more established co-ops and recovered factories have much more developed paperwork, packaging and documents than smaller co-ops do. The larger and more famous examples, such as Grisinópolis breadsticks, are also sold throughout the city, in supermarkets and restaurants. This is another issue of contention – the question of whether products that are not only found in the solidarity economy should be sold by Mercado Bonpland. Some smaller producers feel they should be given priority. However, as Martin emphasised, the more famous recovered factories make the products people ask for when they come to the market. These differences highlight the approach that Colectivo Solidario adopts in supporting commercialisation processes for the smaller organisations.

Intermediary organisations for co-ops like those organised by Colectivo Solidario demonstrate the importance that supporting commercialisation has for developing smaller co-operatives using resources and knowledge between production and sales:

The commercialisation is the hardest part, because they have everything – the worker knows how to make grisines, he knows how to pack them, knows everything. But what he doesn't know is how to go and sell it. In Grisinópolis, the workers got help from a lawyer. I don't know how he did it, but he made the commercialization work (Martin, 22/04/2014).

Commercialisation is essential when a factory is reclaimed as the workers are unlikely to have skills in selling products. This is particularly as commercialisation, marketing and legal matters are often separated from manual labour in the factory. Therefore, when bosses leave, the sales, skills and knowledge leave with them. Without support, skills or knowledge on how, where or what to sell, the workers have no reliable source of income from their production, and without income, the factory cannot pay wages. In the example of the Grisinópolis factory, commercialisation support from a lawyer focused on packaging, seals, co-certification and changing the production method. La Alameda also supported recovered factories through providing quick legal advice on how to take back their workplaces, and on the difficult process of gaining a legal right to produce under trademarks. This legal support is connected with state relationships, so I will discuss it further in the following chapter.

Building the necessary skills and networks to create more just commercialisation for new autogestive movements is needed beyond the Argentine national context. In February 2014 I attended a meeting of occupied factories and autogestive movements at the occupied Fralib tea factory in Marseille, which was fighting to regain control from Lipton (which it has subsequently won). As the first meeting of an autogestion movement in Europe, discussions focused on shared struggles to build movements during austerity. The 'workers economy international meeting' had previously been held in Latin America, and in France the focus was on learning from the Argentine examples of autogestive practise and co-research – particularly

with the organisation of Andreas Ruggeri's research team (Ruggeri, 2011; Ruggeri et al., 2012) – on working with reclaimed factories in Argentina.

Workers from different factories – for example, those from the Fralib tea factory – spoke of the genesis of their struggle. The Fralib tea workers had initially fought to defend their jobs in a time of austerity and to stop the factory being moved to Poland but, over time, their struggle became concerned with what their job was, and how they worked within it. By the time of the autogestive meeting, the workers had begun to question the produce that they were making – for example, traditionally the herbal teas at Fralib were made from real fruits and herbs (following the traditional production from the South of France), but Lipton had shifted to a powdered chemical tea, and the workers questioned this. Similarly, VioMe of Greece were discussing what it meant to have taken back their workplace only to produce chemical cleaning products. They questioned whether they needed these products, or whether they were only needed under capitalism. In this sense, help with commercialisation isn't just about selling a product, but also about being engaged in a movement – about questioning and being supported in questioning what is produced and why. Their sharing of experiences about what and how they produced gave rise to the construction of movements and resources based on what those involved in the meeting valued rather than (or in addition to) profit. I will explore this example more in the conclusion, as it introduces how Bonpland could become a useful resource for new projects with similar aims, but where solidarity-based forms of commercialisation are in their infancy.

Organising logistics, transport to the market and the organisation of the network

An awareness of how the networks that transport products across the country (and between producers) are organised is crucial for understanding conditions for exchange in Bonpland. These networks are complex due to the small-scale production for the market, with producers changing seasonally. This complexity demonstrates the capacity for organising beyond a standard capitalist framework. I will discuss the development of these networks in chapter 7, where I engage with the challenges of creating networks and how transport can be used as a way of organising people and strengthening networks.

Everyday attempts to create relationships of consumption

Mercado Bonpland aims to create seasonal engaged consumption. This approach is in tension with their aim of selling, as stallholders encourage consumers to shop at other stalls, or not at all. Mercado Bonpland has developed an economic solidarity pricing structure which connects different moments of exchange. This develops the relationship between producer and consumer, moving beyond alienated consumption, and creating a social connection beyond a merely consumptive one. This relationship is negotiated across tensions of profit, money and commodities that are wrapped up in capitalist social relationships.

Economic solidarity pricing: connecting the producer and the consumer

The creation of a price structure in some organisations within Mercado Bonpland ensures that there is no speculation for the producer or the consumer, as was also explained earlier in relation to maté tea:

Our mission is also this one: to approach the consumer and the producer with a new way of marketing. We apply something called a price structure under values, which is fixed – we don't speculate, don't get out the merchandise. For example, we have tomatoes here that we could increase the price of a lot. Here, in Palermo, they would be bought, but under the price structure we have, we sell them at 12\$ – we can't sell them at a higher price (Leonardo, 23/04/2014).

The price structure ensures there isn't speculation on products – i.e., that a fair price is reached for both producers and consumers. From my experiences of shopping at the market, this meant that not only was the food of a higher quality, it was often cheaper than in surrounding neighbourhood grocery shops (although I am comparing the market to other shops in Palermo and, as I will discuss in chapter 7, this neighbourhood has undergone gentrification). This price structure ensured that producers were receiving a fair wage for their work. Colectivo Solidario also used this structure to create a small surplus, which the group used to support the development of collectives in the co-op. Last year, they used some of the collective resources that were generated from sales surplus to support the group *Quebrada de Humahuaca* from Jujuy in buying tools that enabled them to create dehydrated food using solar ovens (Figure 5-9). This allows them to preserve and transport their produce to other parts of the country and to sell in Buenos Aires.



Figure 5-9 Dried produce from Quebrada de Humahuaca: 'solar dried' soups and herbs (16/07/2013)

In contrast to the use of the price structure, other groups, such as MP la Dignidad, use market sales to directly support the activities of the rest of their network. MP la Dignidad sell handmade woollen clothes, and use the profit generated from these sales and by the cultural centre to resource their national network. Buying from these stalls is a way of actively supporting these causes and social agendas. They therefore create a moral purchasing decision –

choosing to shop in their stall helps to support these initiatives. This shows a different approach to that of the previous example, where the focus was more on produce and enabling producers. I will return to these themes in chapter 7, in relation to funding and ethical shopping. Bonpland's aims contrast with those of organic markets, which have much higher prices, and where people associate themselves with this sort of 'moral capitalism'.

Small artisans working in the market are more motivated by the potential to use the market as a space to sell. In these cases, whilst they are mostly connected with the co-operative and a political history of producing, they sell out of necessity, to support themselves through their skill – as makers of clothes, pottery, etc. This demonstrates complex variety of relationships to production and then consumption that are represented in the market.

Alienated consumption

When you go to a supermarket and you find a product of unknown origin, you just get it because of price, quality and visual perception. This is what we call alienated consumption – it is a type of consumption that doesn't represent a political decision. We want consumption to represent a political decision. When I get a product from the social economy, I don't consume from the capitalist economy. I am reinforcing producers, and the project [of alternative production] (Leonardo, 23/04/2014).

Leonardo views consumption in an alienated system as involving a lack of knowledge about how one's food is produced, under what conditions it is produced and by whom. Consumption, for Leonardo, is a political decision: it involves supporting producers who have better labour conditions, and supporting an alternative system of production beyond just food stuff. In this way, the aims of Colectivo Solidario's motivation to sell are based on different values than those of the capitalist market:

On the role of consumers, Giorgi highlights the power to "choose what to buy for the cheapest price may be the most expensive social and ecologically" – a concept less understood in the world markets, hypermarkets and advertising (Telam, 2013b.n.p.).

Exchange in Mercado Bonpland is about achieving a fair deal for all of the groups involved:

[W]e do not consider the social economy as an act of charity, a good hand that opens and pours, but as an exchange under the best conditions (Telam, 2013b:n.p.).

Therefore, the aim is to generate organisations that are producing in a fair way and then strengthen them through support and consumption. The networks in Mercado Bonpland collectively organise producers through the component organisations which through collaboration means that they have more power, thus facilitating fair trade as well creating a sustainable market for consumption. This is essential, as although the market is driven by producers rather than consumers, if there is nowhere for the producers to sell, they may not have the resources to continue. This produces better conditions for workers, as well as being environmentally sustainable.

Building relationships of consumption

A crucial difference between a supermarket consumption choice and one made in a relational organisation such as Mercado Bonpland is that the latter involves the face-to-face meeting of producers and consumers, and this facilitates the building of relationships between them, as well as consumer knowledge. When visiting the market in the morning, I often saw new producers drive to the market to bring their produce directly to a specific stall. Seeing these producers and being able to discuss the products was different from the experience of shopping in a supermarket.

As with traditional, small shops, stallholders were very knowledgeable about the products, processes, histories, and gave advice on cooking their products. This knowledge started many interesting political discussions – for example, a question about when this year's olive oil would be available could quickly turn into reflections and debates on the state of the harvest, climate and climate change, big agribusiness and Monsanto. This shared knowledge and information

provides a resource for new producers and co-operatives, which could help to expand the potential for more projects to be carried out.

These relationships of knowledge and conviviality are therefore essential for changing or ‘educating’ consumption habits. Changing consumption habits and practices needs to accompany changes in the way that people are producing as, if consumer needs are not driving what is produced, then consumers must be on-board with this. Consumers must be willing to buy seasonally and to take a more active role in thinking about what is produced and when, although this also has limitations (which I will explore in chapter 7 in relation to gourmetisation). People in the market would often discuss what you were buying, which could be strange if you are used to the anonymity of supermarkets. These discussions helped to engage shoppers in understanding what they can buy and at what time of the year. An example of these discussions arose in an interview with Mario. A man had purchased eight bags of sugar, so Mario started asking him what he was buying it for, what he did, and how often he needed sugar? In this discussion, he encouraged the man to buy in bulk. One of the problems that the co-operative had was in dividing products, which depends on when they are delivered. It is better for the co-op to sell undivided products at a cheaper price – i.e. to sell the sugar in this example in 15kilo loads. They discussed the fact that the shopper’s wife made cookies to sell, so next time they would consider taking a 15kg load, rather than 8 small bags. When consumers take an active role in collecting, dividing and engaging with the product, they begin to develop different consumptive/purchasing relationships between the seller and the product:

Our idea is to promote relations with people like this. I don’t know if this example will work or not, but it is encouraging – a pat on the back. When consumers take an active role it is very useful, and they return, as they use a product they come back (Mario, 25/04/2014).

These different consumer relationships are essential as the products that the market receives do not follow an even distribution pattern. The amounts cannot be predicted and depend on the producers. This reciprocal relationship of consumption changes how the produce is divided, and

hopefully reduces the amount of waste produce. On the same occasion, some customers asked Mario for rice, and he told them it would be ready next week. Their rice didn't have the same amount of preservatives as with a standard crop, so they needed to sort and store it fast. The active role of the consumer meant that they were participating in creating a different form of consumption that not only worked with the seasons but with the patterns of the market.

5.3 Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored the effects of the 2001 crisis in demonstrating the integration of people's everyday lives in the capitalist system and the challenges of basic necessity that this presented, as well as the possibility of organising social relations differently. This crisis highlighted the chaos of the economic system, and how the organising of assemblies was necessary to create new social relations. Theories about diverse and alternative economies have highlighted the reliance of the capitalist economy on multiple economic practices. However, using economic solidarity and building on Caffentzis and Federic's (2014) anti-capitalist commons, I have shown that this literature on diverse economies does not go far enough, as understanding the diverse practices that make up the economy also demonstrates that we animate capitalist social relations. As such, capital relies on our labour and our doing to animate it. Therefore, discussing processes that have traditionally been excluded from capital analysis does not mean that they are really outside of them. I demonstrated this by using the example of quinoa to show the connectedness of the global economy, even during the organisation of economic solidarity. As such, it is important to question how we can go *beyond* capitalist relations.

In recognising the importance of daily life approaches in diverse economies, I have explored moments of organisation during three stages of the production process in Mercado Bonpland – in production as autogestion or dignified work; in exchange as fair trade; and in responsible

consumption. I see these processes as interlinked, and as co-constituting the daily-life needs and organising of the economy, as well as emphasising the potential to move beyond these capitalist social relations. I hope that this exploration of such relationships will highlight the resistance and potential of collective organising, as well as the tensions that exist in living in-against-and-beyond everyday life. However, the economy does not operate separately from the other aspects of everyday life, and as such this is just one of the ways in which organisers at Mercado Bonpland are trying to live in-against-and-beyond everyday life. As such viewing the economy is not looking at it in isolation, rather as one aspect of a process of reclaiming organisational possibilities

Chapter 6 Organising in-against-and-beyond the state and social movements

The state is not a neutral terrain, it is an interwoven set of practices that exclude self-determination and channel activity towards compatibility with the reproduction of capital. In certain situations it may make sense to choose to engage on that terrain, to choose to move in-against-and-beyond the state, but it is certainly not a neutral institution or something to be defended (Holloway, in Asher et al., 2011: n.p.)

This chapter focuses on the occupation, negotiation and organisation of the market, in-against-and-beyond the state's influence and power. It builds on the previous chapter's focus on the economy, engaging with the development of the economic system of social relationships in Mercado Bonpland that are, in-part, organised through the state. In order to do this, I first focus on the organisation of the form of the state, and how this was developed in Argentina. Secondly I focus on the specific securing of Mercado Bonpland situating its development in a period of crisis and the ensuing organisation of social movements. Understanding the history of social movements in Argentina provides crucial background context about the market, relating to occupation by and negotiation with the state. Thirdly, this history of movements highlights the need to understand complex relationships of power: the representation of the state in the market, and the organisation of the market in relation to the state. This demonstrates both the 'non-homogenous' nature of the state and the different scales and levels of power that organise it. Fourthly, in expanding on the seemingly contradictory organisations in-against-and-beyond the state, I focus on moments of everyday life in the market. I engage with these daily life practices which operate – despite the state, making demands to the state and organising because of state support – to demonstrate the challenges of living in-against-and-beyond the state every day. Finally, in order to explore the legal ramifications of engagements with the state, I use the concept of 'gray space' (Yiftachel, 2009a; 2009b) to highlight the difficulty the market faces in mediating between legal (i.e. state sanctioned) and illegal (non state sanctioned, or not yet sanctioned) activities and organisation. The long-term precarity of this 'between-legal-and-

illegal' status highlights the difficulties of organising in-against-and-beyond the state. These all demonstrate the complexity of organising in-against-and-beyond the state.

6.1 In-against-and-beyond the state

We no longer have a bourgeois State over a capitalist society, but, rather, the State of capitalist society (Tronti, 1965:32).

The state does not stand on its own: it is one of the forms of capitalist social relations, that is, one of the inter-linking, inter-blending processes of forming social relations, of reproducing power-to in the form of power-over (Holloway, 2010a:97).

The state is a form of social relation that ensures that the capitalist mode continues under a structure of authority. The myth of liberal democracy has been that the legitimacy of the state stems from its ability to be run as a seemingly objective and external force to represent the people who 'vote its representatives in'. In this way, the 'democratic' state is a way to justify the continuation of exercises of power-over under the illusion of democracy and legitimacy. Clarke (2011) describes this battle for legitimacy in his critique of traditional political economy using Marx, where he contrasts the rationale of Smith, as a classical economist, to Hegel in order to explain the justification of the formation of the state.

For both Smith and Hegel the rationality of society could only be imposed on society from outside. While Hegel looked to the idea of universality to provide the rational principle of unity, Smith looked for the roots of reason in nature. Thus while Hegel wanted to show the nation state as the self-realisation of the Idea, classical political economy strove to see the capitalist economy as the self-realisation of Nature (Clarke, 2011:44).

Clarke highlights and critiques the different ideological bases for the state, and the conclusions that these differences led to. Both theoretical frameworks sought to justify the state as a rational solution for maintaining order, either through the idea of unity, or as a 'natural' state of being. Clarke contrasts Smith's and Hegel's divisions between nature/society and idea/individual with

the collective organisation of social relations that function as the basis for society. These divisions are used to justify the state as an ideological project, which creates the idea of a separation between state and society, and also the formation of the ‘logical’ ideas of private property and capitalism. The state functions as a way of controlling and legitimising the conditions for exploitative capital relationships – a way to govern and maintain class interests.

In capitalist society the basis of political power is in truth economic necessity: the necessity of using force to make the working class abandon its proper social role as the dominant class. Looked at from this point of view, the present forms of economic planning are nothing more than an attempt to institute this organic form of political dictatorship within democracy as the modern political form of class dictatorship (Tronti, 1965:32).

As Tronti highlights, the aim of a state in capitalism is to create and legitimise a form of power-over that ensures the subjugation of the class that actively produces the labour. In this way, Tronti acknowledges and emphasises the links between those economic interests and the necessity of a form of power to ensure that capitalist social relations are maintained. This emphasises the links between the state and the economy but, by engaging with them separately, I aim to highlight the different articulations and instruments of power-over that are applied in each case.

Whilst the veneer of democracy is about the representation of people within a territory, in actuality it continues the interests of the ruling classes. Even when attempting to engage with the state as a ‘thing’ rather than a social relationship, the separation between economic interests and the ‘state’ is increasingly unclear with the shift in power to the ‘undemocratic’ institutions and regulatory bodies of the IMF, World Bank etc. (Sitrin and Azzellini, 2014:45).

The state ‘is a rigidified or fetishized form of social relations’ (Holloway, 2010a:92) and, as such, exists to continue to facilitate the capitalist social relation. In *Change the World Without Taking Power*, Holloway provides a detailed analysis that shows why a focus on the state, due to its organisation as a social relation, is not the way to bring about change:

The state is not a thing, it is not a neutral object: it is a form of social relations, a form of organisation, a way of doing things which has been developed over several centuries for the purpose of maintaining or developing the rule of capital. If we focus our struggles on the state, or if we take the state as our principal point of reference, we have to understand that the state pulls us in a certain direction. Above all, it seeks to impose upon us a separation of our struggles from society, to convert our struggle into a struggle on behalf of, in the name of. It separates [the] leaders from the masses, the representatives from the represented; it draws us into a different way of talking, a different way of thinking. It pulls us into a process of reconciliation with reality, and that reality is the reality of capitalism, a form of social organisation that is based on exploitation and injustice, on killing and destruction. It also draws us into a spatial definition of how we do things, a spatial definition which makes a clear distinction between the state's territory and the world outside, and a clear distinction between citizens and foreigners. It draws us into a spatial definition of struggle that has no hope of matching the global movement of capital (Holloway in: Holloway and Callinicos, 2005:n.p.).

Holloway identifies how a focus on the state creates a separation between everyday lives and the people who make decisions for us. Organising through the state gives the power to act on behalf of people rather than organising themselves. These possibilities are thus firmly rooted in what is already possible – the continuation of social relations and power-over through capitalism. There is:

something distinctive about the social antagonism on which capitalism (like any class society) is based. Under capitalism, social antagonism (the relation between classes) is based on a form of exploitation which takes place not openly but through the 'free' sale and purchase of labour power as a commodity on the market. This form of class relation presupposes a separation between the immediate process of exploitation, which is based on the 'freedom' of labour, and the process of maintaining order in an exploitative society, which implies the necessity of coercion (Holloway, 2010a:93).

The state is necessary for maintaining the functioning of the exploitative capitalistic relationship. In order to justify the exploitation of people, there must be relationships of power through the state to 'maintain order in an exploitative society' (Holloway, 2010:93). This order is the basis for enabling exploitation to continue, and does so through the reification and separation of the doing and the done, or the abstraction of the object from the producer. Therefore, as a social relation, it is constantly reformed, and must maintain its image as a 'neutral object' to preserve its legitimacy (Holloway, 2005:n.p.). Understanding the reification

of the state, as well as the form of this social relation, allows people to create alternative ways of doing that don't just refer back to the legitimisation of an already stable state environment.

Argentina's pink tide and the Buenos Aires state

The 'pink tide' arose expectations for the possibility of new collective socialist/popular horizons, to be realised through the state. In fact, these governments' took many of the popular movements' demands on board and expanded the rights of indigenous people to articulate an anti-neoliberal, anti-colonial and anti-imperialist discourse and project (Escobar, 2010:7). With neo-developmentalism (Féiz, 2012; Wylde 2011), a strategy based on national development led by the nation-state in a global competitive economy – like in Argentina – grass-roots movements were encouraged and supported, financially and politically, by the state (Dinerstein, 2014a:5).

Central left 'pink tide' governments are one aspect of relationships between the state and autonomous movements in Argentina. Dinerstein discusses these contradictory and connected relationships in 'Autonomy and the Pink tide: sleeping with the enemy'. Here, she questions whether these centre-left governments have broken with neoliberal policies, and how movements relate and organise with and despite them.

The pink promise of these 'left' governments was quickly tested, and has led to complex relationships between movements and the state. Policies and actions may often appear contradictory – at times supportive of movements, whilst at other moments attacking them. In particular, the links to the global economic system and the 'pink tide' state limit the potential of these 'pink' states:

The pink tide's economic policy frequently contradicts their pro-autonomy, anti-neoliberal and bottom-up political discourse, hence disappointing the aspirations of many of the movements in pursuit of indigenous autonomy, agrarian reform, dignified work, democracy and social justice (Dinerstein, 2014a:6).

Mercado Bonpland demonstrates these tensions as, despite initially being organised through an autonomous neighbourhood assembly, the market now has state support, which brings with it the inevitable conflict between the two. Palermo Viejo neighbourhood assembly has also

developed state ties, and has never been explicitly autonomous. For example, unlike other more ‘anarchist’ assemblies, the Palermo Viejo assembly did not boycott the elections in which Kirchner became president (Mauro and Rossi, 2013). This demonstrates the tensions that exist between political actors as to what is considered political action, and the different ways in which groups align themselves in Buenos Aires. I will discuss these themes later in more depth in chapter 7 focusing on the crisis and its effects in Palermo, in order to understand how Mercado Bonpland is organised between the state and autonomous movements.

The state and those that represent it are not homogenous and, since the ‘pink tide’, autonomous movements and the government have developed some scope for collaboration. In Mercado Bonpland, there are interconnected and overlapping people opposing and supporting the state. When investigating these more-than-state and for-the-state relationships, it is not always clear what scale or version of the state is being discussed. In part, this confusion is due to the overlapping yet contradictory relationships that people within the autonomous movements have with people in the government. In addition, my status as an outsider meant that the names of some officials were not known by me, and so I couldn’t understand what level of government organisations and actors were being described. In general, however, the ‘state’ represents different interests to neighbourhood organisations, which stemmed from the assemblies of 2001.

In Buenos Aires, there are three different levels of state organisation: the national government, the city government and the local municipality governments. The national government is comprised of a broadly centre-left ‘pink tide’ administration of the Justicialist Party – a Peronist Party, with Cristina Fernández de Kirchner as the President (at the time of writing). This national government has incorporated some of the movement’s demands from the 2001 period within it (see, for example, the later discussions of Pedro and his appointment with the *Secretaría de Agricultura Familiar*).

The head of the Government of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires is Mauricio Macri, leader of the *Propuesta Republicana* or PRO party. As mayor, Macri has many powers over the

organising of the city, such as the police force. He is the head of the right-wing government opposition, and therefore there are many conflicts between the autonomous city government's policies and the national government's policies in Buenos Aires, with the two jostling for power. In addition there are local government districts for forty municipalities. These intersecting levels of the state, and the challenges between them, show the complex nature of state organising.

Mercado Bonpland negotiates with the local-level 14th District Centre for Administration and Participation (Centros de Gestión y Participación Comunales – CGCP 14). The 15 CGCP centres were established in 2006 to ensure that law 2075 was carried out, and in particular to:

- 1. Coordinate joint activities with neighbours and associations in the area, aimed at strengthening participatory democracy;*
- 2. Receive, [and] fill in the corresponding areas and resolve cases where there are issues of competence, complaints, grievances and complaints from neighbours;*
- 3. Provide the necessary support for the provision of services by other departments at its headquarters, pursuing its optimization and unified management criteria (Bariada. N.D.)*

The different scales of interaction and organisation with the state demonstrate the complex processes that create daily life. In particular, they demonstrate that autonomous movements and organisations work in-against-and-beyond the state. This goes beyond an understanding of 'autonomy as exodus' or one that ignores state power, highlighting the idea that 'autonomy is above all a creative contradictory practice' (Dinerstein, 2014a:9):

negation, creation, contradiction and excess are all features of autonomous practice. But [the] most existing theories of autonomy have tended to focus on one or two of these dimensions, thus creating a fragmented picture of the autonomous struggle (Dinerstein, 2014a:10).

Therefore, following Dinerstein, I highlight the multiple inter-relations of the state and autonomous organisation's, using Bonpland to show these complementary and contradictory processes in action.

Marcelo Lopes De Souza (2006) focuses on movements that organise beyond a state-centred or anti-state approach, and identifies how some groups mix autonomous and state focus, which involves a:

search [for] a mix of autonomy of civil society ('la mirada horizontal': 'the horizontal look' [Zibechi, 1999]) and very cautious cooperation with genuinely non-conservative parties which eventually come to state power (even if this cooperation is a 'risky business' for social movements) (De Souza, 2006:330).

However this 'cautious cooperation' in-against-and-beyond the state has risks, as movements can be co-opted:

Not only as a result of manipulation by politicians, but also by virtue of the 'subtle' influence of the state machinery on civil society's organisations (for instance, a gradual 'adjustment' of the agendas and dynamics of social movements to the agenda and dynamics of the state) and their militants ('seduction of power'), social movements' critical sense and energy can diminish (De Souza, 2006:334).

As I discuss in the crisis section of this chapter, the Palermo Viejo assembly was disbanded as a result of Kirchner's election, demonstrating the 'subtle influence of state machinery'. The assembly no longer felt it necessary to meet, as the government had taken up the issues that their neighbourhood assembly had worked on. The state incorporation of some of the movement's agendas could be perceived as a triumph for the movement, or as moment of co-optation and diminishing energy. These processes are inter-related, so one clear outcome is not always possible. However, the continuation of Mercado Bonpland after the Palermo Assembly demonstrates a *development* of the neighbourhood assembly. Understanding the potential of co-optation highlights the potential resistance and negotiation strategies of movements.

Struggles to create autonomous movements in everyday life

Inherent in the role of the state is its inability to allow people to organise outside it – just as corporations cannot allow people to run parallel economies and political parties, on the left or the right, over time are rendered obsolete when people organise independently. These groups and institutions fight to destroy the movements, whether through direct repression, co-optation, or some combination of the two. That is what

continues to be attempted in Argentina. Fortunately, there is a growing resistance to this (Sitrin and Azzellini, 2014:190).

Sitrin and Azzellini identify the antagonisms that exist for creating new ways of living in-against-and-beyond the state in Argentina. Following Holloway's analysis of the state as a form of social relation under capital, we see that the state is not only focused on the organisation of people, but on the economy as well. Sitrin and Azzellini emphasise the presence of a number of antagonisms that inhibit new possibilities, such as the likelihood of closure, of being subverted, co-opted, or folded into previous forms of social relationship – for example, state relations.

Engaging with the state but organising with a focus beyond the state:

is not about pretending the state does not exist. It is about understanding the state as a specific form of social relation, which pushes us in certain directions, and trying to think about how we can struggle against those forms of social relations and push in a different direction, so that our relation is in and beyond and against the state. It would be lovely if we could pretend that the state does not exist. Unfortunately we can't. But we certainly don't have to fall into the state as a central reference point in terms of logic or of power or space (Holloway in Holloway and Callinicos, 2005:n.p.).

In conversation with Alex Callinicos, Holloway responds to the critique that action 'without taking power' involves ignoring the state. Callinicos's critique excludes prefigurative politics that focus on everyday revolutions, instead focusing on state power. Holloway emphasises that we should move towards self-determination rather than focusing our struggle on the state, arguing that living 'in-against-and-beyond' the state does not involve pretending that the state doesn't exist, but rather not wholly situating oneself within the current state. Holloway establishes that living in-against-and-beyond the state does not involve ignoring power, but seeks to engage productively with the potential to create alternatives. Through engaging with the complexities of autogestive movements, state sanctioning, reprisals and sponsorship as they apply to Mercado Bonpland, I hope to show the potential of such engagements, as the space of the market is not simply either a state space or an autonomous space. Rather, through different

groups, histories and engagements, it has come to have a much broader set of possibilities and antagonistic engagements in-against-and-beyond.

The in-against-and-beyond approach asks:

how such a movement should be orientated – whether towards the state (in a demand for [the] nationalization of the enterprise for example) or towards the establishment of [a] network of links between producers (and consumers) independent of the state (Holloway, 2010a:241).

Mercado Bonpland focuses on creating networks of alternatives and understanding their dynamic with the state – when they can act and demand, and when they are repressed or co-opted by the state. As Sitrin and Azzellini note, social movement groups are increasingly anticipating potential co-optation, and thus maintain antagonisms:

we understand the need to finance our productive projects, and we can use state funding as initial investment on all our projects – realizing that money has come from workers and the workers can use that money as seed capital to generate our own projects to be autonomous and independent from governments and private employers (2014:209).

As Holloway observes, if the state is a social relation that maintains the exploitation of the doing and the done through capital, the problem of the forms of this alienation (state, money and values) cannot be solved from the point of view of any one of them. Therefore, using state resources in a strategic way highlights how in-against-and-beyond is organised as a movement.

6.2 Organising everyday life in crisis

Following the section on crisis in Chapter 4, which introduced the economic context in which Mercado Bonpland is situated, this section will explore through the crisis context the tensions that Mercado Bonpland experiences between the state and neighbourhood assembly organising. The neighbourhood assembly and QSVT movement demonstrate the historic challenges that the

assemblies have made to the state, as well as its own transformation. Bonpland has its roots in collective organising, starting from the 2001 crisis, and challenges the idea of crisis as a moment by still demonstrating long-term engagements today. This highlights the daily-life aspects of necessity and possibility that arise in a crisis:

This is crisis: a breakdown in the established patterns of social relations. To the capitalist class, the future may seem uncertain, dangerous (Holloway, 1992:168).

The Argentine state operates within the global system of capital, and this global context had a particular affect on Argentina during the debt crises and the recent debt threats of 'vulture funds' (Goni, 2014). The connections between economy, state and civil society have been made clear by this crisis, as there 'was a breakdown in the established pattern of social relations' (Holloway, 1992:168), the state and the economy were in in crisis. In investigating the state and economic crisis, I aim to uncover the potential for reforming actions that were made more visible due to this crisis period. Analysing the years after the 2001 crisis enables us to see how these neighbourhood organisations developed, and to view the long-term strategies and effects of their actions in-against-and-beyond the state despite some economic recovery in Buenos Aires.

2001: from square to street to market

An important change is taking place in the way that people fight against capital, a change that is often connected with the concept of autonomy. More and more struggles are oriented not towards taking control of the system in order to change it, but towards breaking the dynamic of the system by uncoupling ourselves from it (Holloway, in Asher et al., 2011:n.p.).

The Palermo Viejo assembly has been active in collectively organising since 2001, and this eventually led to the creation of Mercado Bonpland – a space of economic solidarity for the neighbours and the neighbourhood. Mercado Bonpland demonstrates the history of local neighbourhood organising, and its continuation and transformation after the assembly ended. Bonpland reveals the social power of neighbourhood assemblies in their ability to negotiate and maintain the market space between the local community and the state.

Mercado Bonpland is organised by the same horizontal principles of autogestion and autonomy that grew in prominence during 2001 (Sitrin, 2012a). These neighbourhood protests began when neighbours met each other through protesting. During this moment of rupture, people organised on the street, in assemblies and Cacerolazos, both in protest and to manage their daily lives. The power of collective organising was key, and was demonstrated within assemblies at the neighbourhood scale as well as through protests against the state: Que Se Vayan Todos! Que No Quede Ni Uno Solo! (Sitrin, 2012a). This organising was in-against-and-beyond the state: the movement was an attempt to influence state power through a collective refusal of the old political order. As Mauro and Rossi (2013) observe, the roots of the organisation of Mercado Bonpland were the assemblies of 2001 onwards. Mauro and Rossi chart the history of the assembly movement from 2002-2011, situating the market as an achievement of the neighbourhood assembly movement. This movement demonstrated the organisational potential to be found in the refusal of the current system and the potential for the creation of autogestive practices that went well beyond organising on the street.

Since 2001, these assemblies were focused on potential and necessity, and debated the need to save the republic by establishing a ‘different system from capitalism and representative democracy’, as well as organising around local issues (Mauro and Rossi, 2013:6). On 17 January 2002, the first meeting of the Self-Organised Neighbours of Palermo Viejo Assembly (Asamblea de Vecinos Autoconvacados de Palermo Viejo) took place on a street corner, next to the house of a founder, after members organised in *cacerolazos* and the Inter-Neighbourhood assembly (Autoconvacados en el Congreso) on 16 January (Mauro and Rossi, 2013:6). This assembly movement was established in the summer of 2002, but as Mauro and Rossi explain, by later that year the movement had begun seeking to occupy spaces due to the physical necessities produced by winter weather, together with their aim to ‘recover a space for the people’. This led to the occupation of an abandoned bank headquarters, ‘Banco Mayo’, by multiple assemblies – in particular the Cid (Campeador Popular Assembly) (Mauro and Rossi, 2013:6). Therefore, the movement of assemblies on the street and in the protests in the squares began to situate them in interconnected and occupied spaces.

In May 2002, Palermo Viejo Assembly organised a political-cultural festival, ‘La Trama’, which represented a break from the Cid ‘Banco Mayo’ occupation. The festival cemented the objective of the assembly as ‘the articulation of neighbourhood ties to solidarity and social-productive projects’ (Mauro and Rossi, 2013:7). The Palermo Viejo assembly focused, as a neighbourhood, on economic solidarity projects, which are still the focus of Mercado Bonpland today. In this initiative they sought a space, at first in the Palermo Athletics Club, following which they began negotiating with the state, with whom they discussed using the abandoned Mercado Bonpland in Palermo. The tactic of negotiation with the state was different from the occupation strategy of the Cid. As a result of discussing and organising with the local government administration at the ‘14 West Center for Administration and Participation (Centro de Gestión y Participación—CGP)’ (Mauro and Rossi, 2013:7), the assembly gained access to the building behind the market (now the cultural centre) (Figure 5-1– map of the market showing locations) as well as the streets around the market. This was contingent on the

assembly constituting itself as a legal entity, and so the ‘Assembly of Palermo Viejo Civic Association’ was formed (Mauro and Rossi, 2013:7).

Having established itself in the spaces surrounding and behind Mercado Bonpland, the assembly began a fair focused on fair trade under the name la Trama, which they used to organise with other ‘socio-productive projects’ such as the Unemployed Workers’ Movement (Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados, MTD) of La Juanita and the MTD of Solano (Mauro and Rossi, 2013:8). The assembly continued organising through Palermo Viejo’s contact – the local Ministry of Production – with which it signed an agreement to use part of the market for fair trade projects (Mauro and Rossi, 2013:8). Consequently, the neighbourhood assembly was institutionalised to negotiate with the state in the territory of Mercado Bonpland, and was acknowledged as a ‘legitimate actor in the neighbourhood’ (Mauro and Rossi, 2013:8). The establishment of the market focused on grounding a physical space, in contention with the state, yet also in cooperation with it. This tension was demonstrated in the organising around the national election in April 2003: ‘Palermo Viejo assembly [co-]organized the “Q.S.V.T Carnival” (Get Rid of Them All Carnival)’, yet most members also voted whereas, in other projects, like the Cid, voting was boycotted (Mauro and Rossi, 2013:8). With the election of Kirchner, the focus of the QSVT movement changed, leading many of the movement’s demands to be incorporated into official policy. As such, members of the Palermo Viejo Assembly were no longer meeting by 2006, unlike those in other assemblies.

The legacy of the Palermo Viejo assembly was the formation, subsequent defence, maintenance and evolution of Mercado Bonpland, which in 2007 moved inside the main traditional market building. This required the assembly to mobilise a number of times in the neighbourhood to prevent eviction, in particular in 2007 and 2010, when the government tried to shut the market down. This meant that the assembly was reliant upon the ‘political activation of neighbours without previous political experience’ (Mauro and Rossi, 2013:15). In contrast to most examples of groups that had occupied spaces, the neighbours who constituted and organised

Mercado Bonpland were not constituted by established activist networks. Mercado Bonpland is an example of the mobilisation of a neighbourhood around a theme of economic solidarity and the maintenance of a space, which has ensured that the legacy of neighbourhood organisation continues there, albeit in a changing and developing form. It has been reliant on organising, resistance and cooperation with different state actors, local politicians, administrative figures, and the Ministry of Agriculture (family farming). I will explore these contentions further in chapter 7.

Claiming Mercado Bonpland: between occupation and negotiation

Contrasting descriptions of Mercado Bonpland's occupation demonstrate the contested claims that are made and the negotiations that occur in relation to the market space there. These contested claims and negotiations formed the initial focus of the interviews, and chapter 7 will provide a more thorough investigation into the power struggles that occur in securing a territory and what that means. These histories contrast with the coherent, date-specific descriptions of the process between occupation and negotiation of Mercado Bonpland that Mauro and Rossi (2013) describe. Different understandings of politics and power are presented in stories about the market's 'birth' and, as such, interviews situate the 'moment' at which the market started at different times. This shows that the negotiation to establish the market (between the organisation of the assembly, the neighbourhood and the local state) was a long process. The lack of a specific moment at which the market 'started' demonstrates the problem with adopting a date-specific academic understanding of its origins, which runs the risk of reducing a process to a moment.

My interviews focused on how the 'start' of Bonpland demonstrated the non-homogenous nature of action, politics and the possibilities of change, with differing perspectives representing divergent attitudes. For example, Ana was a neighbour from the assembly, but not part of the group officially responsible for organising Bonpland; whereas Maria was from the traditional

market and Norma from Mp La Dignidad was part of the 'other' organisations that initially helped negotiate, occupy and organise from the building behind the market. They recounted their understandings of the origin of Mercado Bonpland as follows:

The neighbourhood wanted the market again, and there was a proposal for producers to enter the market. There was a wave of green producers that wanted to enter. Next, there was a debate with the city council, who did not think that this proposal served them. So eventually, one day, neighbours said "we must take it." This was the time of the furor of Cacerolazos. So we came in with the MTR movement and, at the same time, other people came in with another leader, [and] they said, "well, we will work and we will collaborate" because they were joining several neighbourhood assemblies. So people from the movement came into the market, and the rest of the neighbours made assemblies. Because the culture centre was already established, there were many artists – we are talking about people like Charly García, writers, people from the culture that we met, for example Bayer, very nice people, perfect. Everything was really good and the whole neighbourhood participated. We were organising and convening people, producers were coming from San Juan, Mendoza, the whole province, and even the whole country. People started to think that a co-operative would help, would inform them. Well, we got agreement [from the government to be in the market], and it was presented by Minister Fernandez Rodriguez. He said: it's ok. There was good support. We are even talking about an Adidas shoe factory that had three factories. All documents were agreed and submitted to make them solvent (Ana, 23/04/2014).

Yes, this was abandoned, at the last stage of the [previous historic] market only the front was in use, there was a haberdashery, a fish shop, and here it was full of rats, they come in line during the night. First we took this little door because there are toilets there, in what now is the theatre. But they were men's toilets, all this was dirt floor but craftsmen came and were improving the place as they occupied it, then the Palermo Assembly began to meet and hold the meetings here. We could organise more, and here we had clean toilets. First we made fairs and festivals, in order to collect money and we don't expect anything so we started working – this is our work (Norma, 22/04/2014).

Because the market...it is a political issue, because the co-operatives joined and went to demand for a place. They say if the place is free, as this place had been empty for some years, they took this liberty of speaking...So the half was empty: it was in bad condition, like abandoned from here to there. So the co-operatives with the help of one person, a journalist from Channel 7 – Pedro, I don't remember his surname – he was the one who headed the riot to come in, they broken the gates and the entrance door to come in and take the place. They [the Bonpland organisers] saw that this [market] was abandoned, [and] they made a proposal – I don't know to whom – that they wanted the place. It's like they had a requirement to take up space. But, we [from the traditional market] had presented many projects, we had asked the Municipality to upgrade this place. Nothing was done. At this time, I am going to municipal court because I asked for my original [market stall] space. I asked for it to be renewed, to take the same stall, but I have been ignored (Maria, 26/04/2014).

These three examples – Ana, Norma and Maria – demonstrate the different moments, approaches and understandings that contest the idea that there is a singular ‘story of the market’. Highlighting these contentious understandings of the negotiation or occupation is a way of showing the contested and everyday nature of the occupation. Ana – who considers herself separate from the other organisations in the market, as she is only involved through being a part of the Palermo Viejo assembly (rather than through a co-operative or other organisation) – describes the negotiated process of the occupation. Maria, from the traditional market, understood the occupation of the market as a political decision that was organised by leaders, which culminated in breaking into the market. These ‘leaders’ were separate from the city government leaders that Maria appealed to. In contrast, Norma tells the story of the market occupation by citing an earlier period, when the old cold storage of the traditional market was occupied and the streets surrounding the market used for meetings. These different understandings of the ‘start’ of the market demonstrate how each account is shaped by personal histories and individual political engagements, how each individual understands the construction of power, and when each began to be involved with the market.

Ana and Maria have a different understanding about what represented the start of the market to Norma, who was involved in establishing it during the initial period when fairs were held outside the indoor market hall. Norma focuses on the practical necessity – the first space that was occupied was the toilets, because they were a necessary facility, whereas Ana focuses on the neighbourhood. These internal variations demonstrate the different conflicts over the market organisation. The divergent understandings of action are developed in the following section on representation, and the spatial effects of securing a territory will be discussed in Chapter 7. Developing understandings of these contestations is crucial to understand daily life despite, demanding-from and because-of the state. I later use the concept of ‘gray space’ (Yiftachel, 2009a; 2009b) to explore the creation of the precarious boundaries between the legal and illegal organisation seen in the market’s set-up.

6.3 Representations of the state: between the state and neighbourhood

As Ana, Norma and Maria demonstrated, those within the market hold different understandings of the state and different attitudes towards it. In the following section I explore the way that the state is represented and engaged with. I will contrast how people in the market perceive the state – in particular, the divergence between the view of Maria coming from the traditional market and the attitudes of those responsible for the co-operative autonomous organising of Bonpland. To explore these different approaches, I engage with how power is represented between the state and social movements – in particular, how individuals have to traverse these different relationships between their social movements and the state, and how they negotiate these differences.

Perceptions of the state held by members of the market

Maria's opinions demonstrate that Bonpland stallholders hold diverse understandings of and attitudes towards the state. Maria's relationship to the state is based on her experience as a municipal market retailer, rather than through the collective organising that the co-op's relationship to the state is based on. Therefore, it is useful to reflect on her understanding of her relationship to the state, as it is so different to that of other market stallholders:

They [Bonpland organisers] saw that this [market] was abandoned, [and] they made a proposal – I don't know to whom – that they wanted the place. It's like they had a requirement to take up space. But, we [from the traditional market] had presented many projects – we had asked the Municipality to upgrade this place. Nothing was done. At this time, I am going to municipal court because I asked for my original [market stall] space. I asked for it to be renewed, to take the same stall, but I have been ignored.

Q-Why was the other part unoccupied?

Because there were few of us here [in the market]. One by one they began to leave because they were old people. So they began to vacate their stalls. We were few people.

Q-Did you vacate at that time as well?

I left. But then at first, [the current market Mercado Bonpland] wouldn't let me come in, as I am municipal and I respect municipal regulations. I respect these orders, I don't want to make arrangements that don't correspond [with the municipal regulations]. I have commitments with the Municipality, orders, and I want them to respect my request. I tell you, since 2006 to 2014 many years have passed, I am still waiting for them to return me to my space. Hopefully they can (Maria, 26/04/2014).

As seen in the previous crisis section, different understandings of the state and how the market was founded reveal the different political and social imaginaries of power and control. Maria's experience as a municipal market stallholder demonstrates a distinction between herself and the other stallholders, who are 'political' (Maria, 26/04/2014), as the new market organises through co-operatives. Being from the traditional municipal market, Maria is disgruntled by her new market colleagues, and retains her municipal commitments, respecting the old way that the market was run. In this short section of the interview, she mentioned three times that she had asked for something from the state which they had not provided, and that they have not even responded to her requests. From 2006 to the time of the interview, she had been waiting for the government to respond to her requests, and they hadn't. Maria is reliant on a power that she attributes to the rules of the state, and has sought this through requests, but with no response.

Maria is focused on running her stall as she did in the municipal market, when she had a haberdashery and altered clothes. However, in the time I spent with her, she did not sell anything, and during the time I spent in the market, her stall was hardly ever open. The products she sold were no longer compatible with the type of shopper in the market. For example, she sold industrial and acrylic wool, yet when a potential customer asked her for wool, the provenance and type of wool was their first question. They were not interested in buying her wool, and she directed them to Red del Campo, which sold some artisanal wool. From a profit perspective, it would have been logical for her to change what she was selling:

There is not enough remuneration for me [to] subsist here. I can't – it is not enough – this is not enough for me. Obviously I work in another place, because this is not enough (Maria, 26/04/2014).

Maria does not make money from the stall, or run the stall as she wants to in the market. This suggests that there are further reasons that motivate her to remain there. Even though she distinguishes herself from the co-operatives – as not being ‘political’ – there is something staunchly political driving her motives towards her continued persistence at the stall. These reasons – including the changing barrio and her displacement from her home – are important to understand, and I will explore them in chapter 7.

Mercado Bonpland’s co-operative organisation, in contrast, has negotiated its existence not only through requests, but also through the power and legitimacy of collective neighbourhood organising. Bonpland members’ negotiations on maintaining the space of the market are different from a request for a service or space. The approaches of Maria and the Bonpland co-operative organisation demonstrate different understandings of how the state and power are negotiated (with) and how decisions are made. For Maria, this has resulted in her waiting eight years for the state to renew her previous stall, but they have not done so. Even in this context, Maria still pays rent to the government for her stall: ‘I pay tax, I pay Monotributo, I pay Afip, I pay cannon’ (Maria, 26/04/2014). This further demonstrates her attempts to be completely ‘above board’ rather than negotiating the space despite the state’s wishes, as the others do. Maria’s role and beliefs are in contrast to those of the co-operative organisation of Mercado Bonpland, yet she continues to use and organise her stall in the market.

Representing multiple scales of organisation

Pedro is a representative of the agricultural ministry, and the familial agricultural forum (assembly), as well as of Mercado Bonpland. He personally embodies representing the aims of the state and social movements. The fact that he occupies a role between the state and social movements challenges the homogeneity of both, demonstrating that, since the 2003 election of Kirchner, there has been an integration of advisors, members of the government and representatives from the movements. The presence of representatives of horizontal movements in these hierarchical state spaces changes the dynamic of what the government must appear to be doing and how it acts. Therefore, there are both moments when the Argentine state is sympathetic and active in pursuing the agendas of the assemblies within the state arena, as well as examples when it (at another political moment or scale) attacks these movements, as seen in the attempted closure of the market and the attempted eviction of the historic Hotel Bauen¹⁴. These conflicting agendas demonstrate the non-homogenous nature of the state at different scales. Pedro's case demonstrates efforts to individually and collectively work beyond these apparent contradictions – as he works between collective organising, representing this collective organising at the state scale, and identifying state plans, endeavouring to navigate these different positions to create change.

Pedro's roles as a representative of the family farming forum (AF Forum) in Mercado Bonpland, and now as a member of the Ministry of Agriculture, demonstrate how he adopts different forms of power in-against-and-beyond the state. As such, his role directly challenges homogenous understandings both of what a state and a social movement is. He was encouraged to take this role in the Ministry of Agriculture by members of the movements in order to

¹⁴ Bauen is an occupied hotel, that was previously a 5 star hotel and occupied when it went bankrupt in 2001. It is in a particularly central position in Buenos Aires and now run co-operatively. But in March 2014, was threatened with eviction.

represent them. Officially, however, he cannot represent the Mercado Bonpland group whilst he has a job in the Ministry of Agriculture, as the market tries to organise horizontally. Therefore, he has had to change how he engages in these groups. Pedro explains this complex relationship during my interview with him:

When the market project was approved I was no longer in the Forum, because I was offered a position in the Ministry of Agriculture. Within the AF Forum [familial agriculture forum or family farming] we had made so much pressure on the government that they created an institutional space dedicated to family farming – they created the Department of Family Farming [Secretaría de Agricultura Familiar]. At the Department for Family Farming, I was offered the role of Director of National Design and Politics [Dirección Nacional de Diseños y Políticas]. The AF Forum said: you have to accept it, we struggled for that, and so I accepted. While being the national director of that area, ICHEI approved this [Mercado Bonpland] project, so I said I can't do anything but, if you like, there are the market's organisations (Pedro, 01/11/2013).

During the post-2001 crisis organisation, the 'Foro Nacional de Agricultura Familiar' or AF Forum created pressure through a powerful collaboration of more than 1000 organisations (some of which became a part of Mercado Bonpland). Pedro helped co-ordinate this from 2004–2008, organising all these organisations and creating their capacity to generate alternative economies and production systems. This movement led to the creation of the new government *Department of Family Farming* to incorporate this potentially powerful sector within its control, or in order to represent it. Symbolically, the creation of Pedro's role as a representative of these organisations demonstrated the power and influence of these groups.

The presence of more than 1000 organisations of family farms demonstrates the complexity of the networks that have been established across the country. In chapter 7 I will explore how Mercado Bonpland is facilitated through this huge network of other organisations and, therefore, how the space of the market is co-constituted through these networks. The government's position here was symbolically important for members of the movement, as the AF Forum highlighted to Pedro: 'you have to accept it, we struggled for that'. The recognition of their movement through this new government role was crucial to them as they had struggled for recognition, for legitimacy, and to be heard. These symbolic effects of representation, at the

individual and the collective level are therefore essential for understanding the interconnected organisation in-against-and-beyond the state.

Pedro clarified the symbolic, yet material organisation of his role in representing family agriculture:

Yes, I'm in the Ministry of Agriculture as a consultant for this Forum. I stay in this role as an advisor because I believe it is good to be there and have a presence. From time to time, I make a point about some things, but we do not agree about everything (Pedro, 01/11/2013).

Being both a member of a social movement and a government advisor is fraught with tensions and conflicts as the reality of 'state thinking' is contrasted with the 'alternative' organisation that the forum represents. However, rather than seeing this as a complete contradiction, it is a tension that Pedro manages. In the rest of the interview, he highlighted the importance of representing the movement, and therefore his role in representing rather than gaining personal power. When explaining this relation, he demonstrated that he doesn't have to agree with the government stance, as he reveals when he says: '[from] time-to-time, I make a point about some things'. Therefore, he is not entirely within the state, and his role is not to carry out the state's wishes in the market. As he highlights, it is important to 'have a presence', as it can be useful for making the needs of the organisations known at a state level, whilst also ensuring that these organisations can be warned about potential issues ahead of time, demonstrating a critical understanding of the state and engaging in the need to be aware of state plans, as well as using resources productively for the movement. Pedro demonstrates a complex construction of more-than-state and state power that goes far beyond a simple inside/outside narrative.

6.4 Organising everyday life through antagonism with the state

In this section I highlight the different challenges that arise and potentials that exist in daily life in the market. The aim of this is to engage with the details of everyday life in the market, and to

show how this provides an example of organising in-against-and-beyond the state. This demonstrates the way in which these challenges shape how Mercado Bonpland is formed, and also show how they are perceived as being something to be ‘worked on’ through daily life, and how this is preferable to waiting for a ‘perfect moment’. The continuous challenges and help that the relationships with the state demonstrate also highlight the contradictory nature of the state and its policies.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the concept of in-against-and-beyond was used by the London Edinburgh Weekend Return Group (Mitchell, et al. 1979) to highlight the potential of and the antagonisms involved in working in-against-and-beyond the state. Understanding the multiple yet simultaneous nature of these positions is crucial for understanding the daily-life processes in the market. The Edinburgh return group discuss being at one and the same time against an aspect of the state and working within it. This section will explore how aspects of these interactions between the market and the state are carried out despite the constant tensions that exist between them in three subsections: despite the state; demanding from the state; and because of the state. These will demonstrate the complex processes involved in these contestations through exploring some of the causes of these tensions. However, I recognise that such moments are often not separate, but in fact part of simultaneous and multiple understandings of relationships with the state. They will help to elucidate the complexities of these relationships. In particular, Bonpland is a space that has been founded through negotiations with the state. This relationship is fraught with complex power dynamics, as the market is reliant on maintaining a good relationship with the state, whilst not being confined only to the potential already available in the state, demonstrated in Figure 6-1 below.

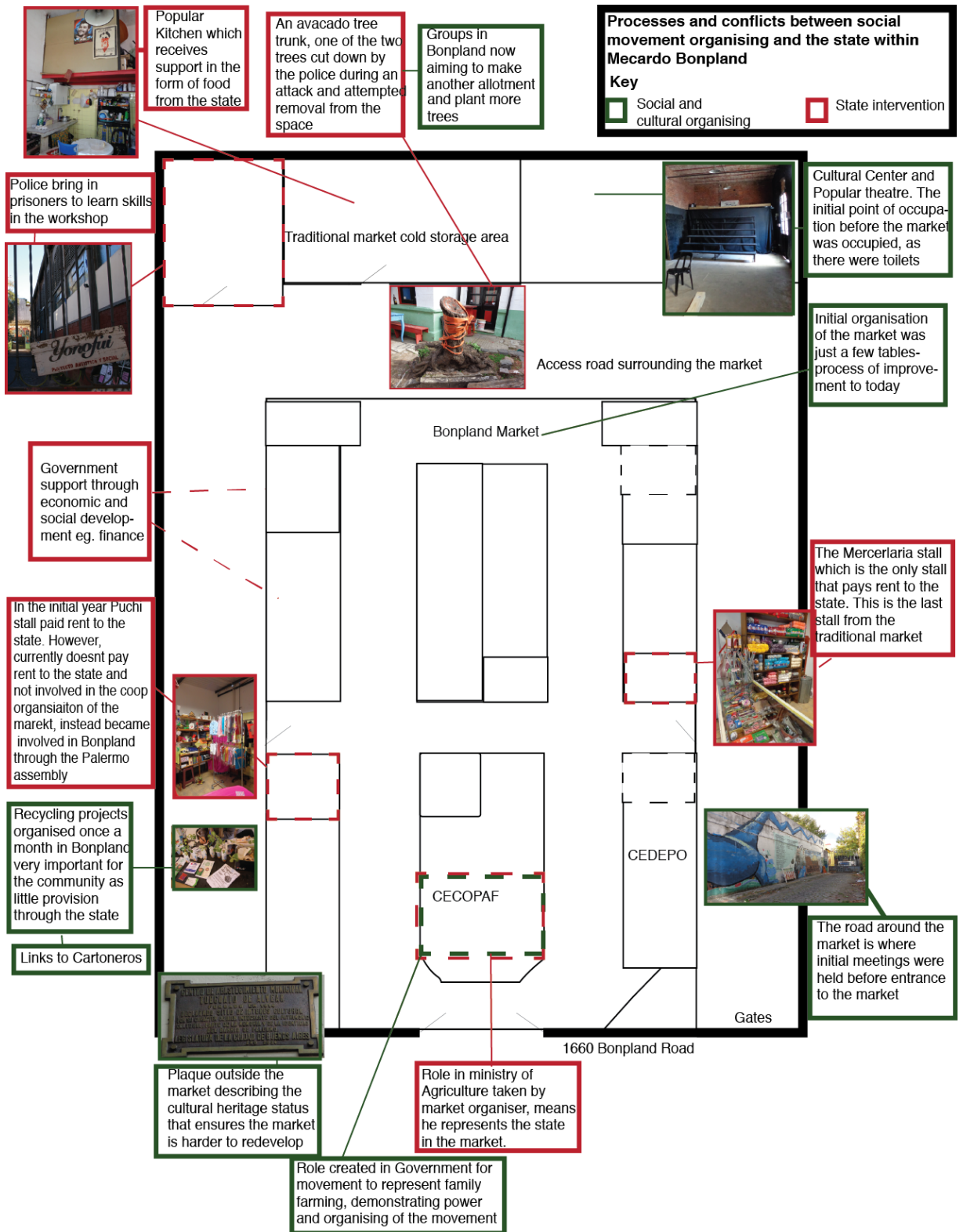


Figure 6-1 Diagram showing contestation between state and social movements Despite the state

In this section I focus on the daily fights that the market organisers have with those at different levels and different areas of state bureaucracy. These range from the normality of ‘always fighting’ to the restrictive lack of basic infrastructure, and attacks on the stallholders’ abilities to run the market day-to-day. The previous diagram also outlines these attacks Figure 6-1. As Norma puts it:

We are always fighting. Today we have a white tent of ‘villa movements’ at Corrientes’s obelisco – we call it Frente because we work in Retiro. We have five communal eateries there as well (22/04/2014).

Norma is part of MP la Dignidad, which was involved in securing the cultural centre behind the market. Her description of the movement is that they are ‘always fighting’ – they organise, understanding their relation with the state, and how to organise themselves, not to avoid these fights, but to keep on fighting.

Despite the state: provisions in the market

For the market to continue, the stallholders must ensure that basic provisions continue, including lighting, heating and cooking facilities. As the market is owned by the state, it is necessary to negotiate this, so simple things like electricity supply become a battleground for fighting for the continuation of the market:

At one time I had a vitrofusion oven here, and the notion was to teach decorative glass fusing (vitrofusion). But the strength of the electricity here is not enough. If you connect four heaters in the market, [the] electricity is gone, so I took it back. But I waited two and a half years because they promised they were going to give us adequate electricity. This is one of the fights, because the government doesn’t complete the basics, because they don’t complete what they don’t have to. I think they would like us to go, but they can’t evict us. Even less after all of this. But we have to comply with some formalities (Marta, 16/07/2013).

Marta describes the limitations of these provisions in the market, as well as how this has shaped what it is possible for her to do there. Many stall organisers spoke about the lack of capacity of the current electrical system. This restricts lighting, heating, refrigeration, as well opportunities

to expand. Different stalls must collectively organise electricity between the whole group: as Marta states, if four heaters are connected, it trips the power. In addition to the collective organising, this also means that the groups in the market continue to ask for more energy provision. This produces collective pressure, yet their insecurity is highlighted by Marta: ‘they don’t complete what they don’t have to’. The state is not always interested in making improvements that might make life easier. Therefore, as Marta observes, market stallholders must press for change, whilst acknowledging that the state would also ‘like us to go’ and, therefore, whilst understanding that they are not always going to be supportive.

Like the struggle for electricity in the market, the gas connection is a point of contention in the cultural centre:

Well, this popular food kitchen is like this because we just arrived and cooked vegetables. ... Women come and cook. We support and solve problems for people. ... In addition we cook to raise money, when there is a theatre performance, we make empanadas. We pay everything, for example the way we use gas, the connection is already installed for a gas pipe but the government won’t connect the gas. There lies the government limit. ... For twelve years we have been asking for it, but no gas has been given. Maybe now the fight is to get a social gas price for a bottle of gas, because this one costs us 60 pesos (Norma, 22/04/2014).

Norma has been struggling over the reconnection of the mains gas for twelve years, and yet it has still not been reconnected. This is a huge problem for the collective, which runs a popular kitchen that cooks and distributes food in the social centre behind the market, as well as using the kitchen to cook for events such as theatre performances. Buying bottled gas is very expensive, and they are cooking to help people in poverty, with food from government schemes for the poor (as discussed later in the section ‘because of the state’). The state’s refusal to connect the gas when the provision is already there seems to be a way in it can continue to maintain power over the way that the building is used.

Despite the state: the attack of market resources

Mothers and children came here [to the square between the cultural centre and the market] as there is a school around the corner. We were making an orchard – there was an avocado tree, in fact there was a big one, [a] historic one, which was more than forty years old. One day we noticed that the government came and cut it down.

Q. They cut down the avocado?

Yes, it was beautiful, and the peach, you have no idea about the flowers and fruits it gave. One day they phoned me and I said no, there was no order given, but they had entered and cut it down (Norma, 22/04/2014).

The cutting down of these avocado and peach trees by the state reveals the tension and conflict that exists between it and the market, and its use of power in relation to the market. The avocado and peach trees were resources that could be used to feed people in the popular kitchen, as well as being part of the neighbourhood resources. As far as Norma knew, there was no reason for them to be felled. Cutting them down thus represented a direct attack on the way that these people could use the market space.

As the market's status is precarious, it is necessary to negotiate and fight to upgrade it step-by-step. Their precarious position also means people must organise despite the state – making demands and challenging its decisions when they are told that they cannot have something. Despite the state's unco-operativeness at certain moments, it also sometimes helps and engages in organisation. This complex approach means that when the state doesn't help, or when it hinders the development of the market, stallholders continue working alongside the state to achieve other goals. Demands to supply electricity and gas have thus been ignored by the state, but the market connects ideas of action despite the state, whilst continuing to make demands, even if they are not met immediately.

Demanding from the state

In this section I explore the different demands that are made on the state by the market, as well as those that the state places on the market. These contested daily life challenges demonstrate complex inter-relationships:

At times we have been in conflict – it looked like we were going to cross weapons – and, at other times, we had an idyl –, it seemed like the government was giving us everything we needed, was repairing the whole market and valued the market, but then nothing ever happened. The fact is here we are (Pedro, 29/09/2013).

Pedro's comments highlight the constantly simmering battle between what the organisers, the neighbours and the state wants to happen in the market. He shows the need that exists for negotiations between the state and the market, but also how difficult this is to work through.

The demands that the market makes of the state are not always responded to.

Demanding from the state: facilitating the market

We thought that the state must facilitate conditions so we can produce, as we must produce. Without making conditions for what we should do, improving the infrastructure, improving land possession, improving water access – that must be made by the state, then they should leave us in peace. The state doesn't [leave us in peace] – they give a project and then focus on telling people what to do, who they must go to congratulate. Even here, some organisations follow this pattern, and it leads to them creating auto-exploitation. Some people are working, selling and, at the end of the month, how much money have they made? Little or nothing (Pedro, 29/09/2013).

Pedro highlights the importance of the state's role in 'facilitating conditions' such as infrastructure, land, water etc. These conditions are required to continue the market, although, as discussed, they are not always provided. Therefore, stallholders demand that the state fulfils its role in providing these resources, which follows the idea that it is the responsibility of social movements to give directives to the government in order to ensure that its resources are used for social initiatives. Pedro observes that when demands for resources from the state are made, it is

difficult to exclude the state's agendas. Building on 'despite the state' means they must continue to demand even if (or when) they are ignored.

Demanding from the state: maintaining independence

A critical issue in the development of demands is how to work independently:

Our idea is to work autonomously, independently. Not with the state, nor with the flag of a ministry. We have to work independently and with our own development, under the principles of fair trade, with transparent business deals, up-to-date payments, without mistreating anybody in trading – that kind of thing. This is the work we have with the producers (Pedro, 29/09/2013).

Pedro emphasises the need for organising 'independently', which means not changing the way they are working, whilst at the same time demanding support, as they believe the state should provide this. This complex and never-ending entanglement cannot simply be 'solved', and emphasises the difficulty of being in-against-and-beyond the state. As such, Mercado Bonpland is not a completely independent space – it is organised through a complex set of groups and affiliations. Such compromises mean that even when work is done independently, the state may try to take the credit for it.

Demanding from the state: taking the credit

The issue of who should take the credit for services or initiatives that the state had provided support for was discussed on a number of occasions:

The government is always a bit over us, you see? It has its power – it's hard to fight against this power. Our work covers what the government should do, but doesn't, and we are resolving it for them. The thing is, we do things and then the government send their group and say: here was the city government, who helped. ... For example, we struggled to get a waste container for garbage – months pressuring, pressuring, pressuring – and when they brought the container, the guy from the city government comes to take pictures of himself. But at least the container is here (Norma, 22/04/2014).

Norma describes MP la Dignidad as being stuck between wanting the state to provide services, and not wanting to do the work that ‘the government should do’. In this way, she acknowledges the potential risks when social organisations take up work that the state should do. MP la Dignidad plays essential roles, such as providing food, whilst at the same time pressuring the government to support them. And the eventual outcome in this situation was that the city government took photographs of themselves providing the garbage container so that it could use this to demonstrate how supportive it has been to social organisations when, in fact, it was the work of the group that facilitated the project in the first place.

Pedro notes that the city government also tries to take photos when they do something in the market – again, in order to try to take credit. The people in the market need the things they are asking for, whilst the government wants the publicity. Pedro highlights that the projects supported tend to be in the state’s interests, and this is why they want to gain publicity from these actions:

I know the ministry well, so you can manage a grant, a contribution and make it last, but that means you have to have the posters of the ministry, [and] you are called to political meetings from the ministry whatever they are about, and I do not share that idea. I believe the ministry should comply to a public function and not command or make patronage with anybody.

Once we agreed to hold an inauguration here in 2011 for Martiniano Molina. The ministry of social action came with huge posters, but I took fuck all from it. I got angry – they were not doing what I said. They had nothing to do here. They just put the posters up and took a picture. In other words, they wanted the picture of the market with their organisation’s flags. It was a crazy, ridiculous, pathetic thing. They should simply help people – that makes sense because there is a programme for that and there is public money for that too.

Q: So does the national government support some groups directly?

Yes, I think Cedepo has support from Social Development, APF, and some members of Asamblearia probably too. We don’t, and most of our producers do not. Some of them have some support in their own provinces from the familiar agriculture sub-secretary or something like that (Pedro, 29/09/2013).

Pedro highlights problems with managing a grant from the Ministry of Agriculture, where the focus becomes the government support, posters, political meetings, and the individuals that they make patrons, whilst political neutrality is not maintained. He was obviously very angry at how

the state has managed these relationships, particularly in the market, which they have used for their own political gain even though the market organisations were the ones that had done the hard work. This highlights the potential pitfalls and challenges of negotiating between the state and the market. In conclusion, when organising with the state, it tries to claim responsibility for any successful initiatives, whilst the actual work is undertaken by organisers in the market. This is the compromise that Pedro identifies as accompanying engaging with the state.

Because of the state

Due to the heterogeneous forms the state takes, as well as the history of QSVT, there are also numerous state-funded programmes that support and help those in social movements (as well as large numbers of people who previously engaged in social movements that now work with or represent these movements in the government –such as in the market). This state support – in the form of remuneration or advice – is therefore crucial, for example, for owner-occupied factory groups and government-supported Ferias.

Because of the state: financial support from social development

As discussed in the last section, ‘taking the credit’, Pedro detailed the different government financial support available for the market. An organisation in the market may not receive direct financial support, yet producers in the various provinces may receive some:

Yes, I think Cedepo has support from Social Development, APF, and some members of Asamblearia probably too. We don't, and most of our producers do not. Some of them have some support in their own provinces from the familial agriculture sub-secretary or something like that (Pedro, 29/09/2013).

Many of the organisations in the market have support that is either freely given or demanded, as I discussed in the previous section. This means that it is difficult to create a definitive boundary between who is and who isn't using state resources.

This relationship with the state is different than that with a private landlord, as is the case with other 'green' markets:

Yes, this is the unique social economy market that Buenos Aires has. This is very significant. The other one is in Chacarita. It is not [a] social market anymore because it is managed by a unique person, who charges taxes, he charges you a rent, he is basically a feudal lord (Leonardo, 23/04/2014).

Therefore, the state's support, or at least tolerance of the market, means it can be run differently from other rented market spaces in the city. This position, and the organisation's state support, differentiates them from 'green' markets in Buenos Aires, which raises the question of how controversial the government thinks that the market is. I will engage with this further in the discussion of gentrification in the chapter on territory.

Because of the state: supporting food and food poverty

As I discussed in the section 'despite the state', MP la Dignidad organises a popular kitchen where vegetables are dropped off once a week by food distributors with state support:

Government support gives us vegetables once a week, from which we supply five communal eateries. Two come from La Carbonilla to get their meat, bread and vegetables each day, every day, once a week – is up to them, because we have two communal eateries in Fraga who also come to get food (Norma, 22/04/2014).

Because the food is supplied from the state, the organisation can facilitate popular kitchens, cooking and meals for people of the area, as well as for some other kitchens. This means that they do not have to raise all the funds for this sort of work, and that they can thus do more with their funds. However, there is a danger, as the interview with Norma in the previous section revealed, that this will mean carrying out tasks that had previously been the role of the state, which is a form of self-exploitation. Similar popular kitchens have opened all over the country, and have been formed through cooperation between social organisations providing basic services to people in need and the state. As such, these projects could be criticised for carrying

out social work for free on behalf of the state. However, these popular kitchens provide a lifeline for poor communities and, organised as part of other activities, provide a basis for broadening organisation.

Because of the State: support for working conditions

Then we met the Alameda Foundation, and we went to the Labour Ministry, to the Syndicate (Anibal, 16/07/2013).

In addition to improving the working conditions for workers (I focused on this theme and Anibal's story of the Lacar factory in the previous chapter on the economy), another key role for the market is changing the way that production takes place. Improving working conditions is essential for the development of the market, which strives for dignified work and self-managed production conditions. This is facilitated through the state, as well as through 'more than state' movements. In Anibal's case, when the Lacar factory was being shut, the workers needed immediate help and support, which was provided by both the la Alameda foundation and the Labour Ministry and Syndicate. The Labour Ministry could provide some advice, but did not always respond quickly, which was necessary at such a fast moving time of change for the factory. Therefore, although state support was essential, Anibal also needed other support. The state was also needed later, in order to legalise the factory so that the workers could continue to produce. This negotiation between workers or community organisations, the state and movement groups is necessary for the continuation of these initiatives. In the following section, I explore how this negotiation between the state and social movements is crucial in relation to precarious legal situations or 'gray spaces'.

6.5 Mercado Bonpland as a ‘gray space’ – between precarity and legality

The negotiation between the legal and the illegal is a key difference between the powers of a social movement and those of the government. Within different approaches, performing ‘illegal’ acts puts individuals in a precarious situation, with the threat of possible significant legal consequences in the future. Bonpland operates somewhere between a legally recognised status and an illegal occupation. This ‘gray space’ (Yiftachel, 2009a; 2009b) demonstrates a precarious tenure, which highlights antagonisms between the state and the organisers of the market. The long-term precarious status of Bonpland therefore forces the market to be organised in certain ways, and this produces difficulties, whilst also having the effect of leading to new and innovative ways of organising.

As was shown earlier in this chapter, Bonpland has been secured between negotiation with the state and occupation, the stallholders’ presence there is located between the officially designated legal framework and the more precarious illegal formation. These negotiations between the official and the unofficial demonstrate the power of organising, and occur despite being known about by the authorities. This precarious tenure is not necessarily a temporary situation, and is a focus of Yiftachel’s (2009a; 2009b) concept of ‘gray space’. As Yiftachel observes, the maintenance of a ‘gray space’ can be profitable to the state as it allows it to maintain a ‘permanent temporariness’ in which the precarity of an organisation or initiative existing between illegality and legality means that its citizens cannot claim their ‘normal’ rights. For Mercado Bonpland, this precarious gray space is demonstrated through its negotiations with the state and its continued existence on the boundary between legality and illegality, even after the state’s failed attempt to close it.

The ‘gray space’ is the increasingly common practice of organisations that officially operate invisibly, but are known to exist, and are spaces of ‘permanent temporariness’ – a phenomenon

Yiftachel describes as a ‘creeping urban apartheid’ (2009a:240). He notes that huge urban informal spaces are expanding, which he ‘conceptualized as “gray spaces”, positioned between the “whiteness” of legality/approval/safety, and the “blackness” of eviction/destruction/death’ (2009b:87). Unless we think of our city landscapes as encompassing these large informal spaces, we cannot begin to understand the socio-spatial relations that shape the city. The increase in these precarious spaces is not therefore based on them being ‘under-the-radar’ of the authorities, but rather on the increasingly common practice of producing never-ending informality. These precarious working and living spaces and relationships in the city are productive for capital accumulation.

The identification of a ‘gray space’ as a ceaseless process of ‘producing’ social relations bypasses the false modernist dichotomy between ‘legal’ and ‘criminal’, ‘oppressed’ and ‘subordinated’, ‘fixed’ and ‘temporary’ (Yiftachel, 2009a:243). As such, the concept of ‘gray spaces’ facilitates an understanding of living in-against-and-beyond the state. The autonomous organising of the assemblies, plus their negotiations with the state for the Bonpland site, emphasise this relationship. The ability to create and decide what is legal and illegal demonstrates power, and challenging this is crucial for Bonpland. Applying the idea of ‘gray space’ to Mercado Bonpland demonstrates a shift to autonomous politics, whilst the state still maintains the power to legitimise certain actions and de-legitimise others:

the disjuncture between actual tolerated reality and its ‘intolerable’ legal, planning and discursive framing, puts in train a process of ‘gray spacing’, during which the boundaries between ‘accepted’ and ‘rejected’ constantly shift, trapping whole populations in a range of unplanned urban zones, lacking certainty, stability and hence development (Yiftachel, 2009a:243).

Whilst the market has different power dynamics, politics and effects than Yiftachel’s Palestinian case does, the organisers in Mercado Bonpland also talk of the unknown and potentially shifting legality and illegality that the market faces. This depends on who is in power (in a non-homogenous understanding of state elites), what their political motivations are, and how well organisers can garner support for the market. Whilst the market is currently tolerated, its

insecure legal status means that it may not be in the future. Using the notion of ‘gray space’, I investigate the negotiation of the permanent temporariness of official discourse surrounding the market, recognising ‘despite illegal’ organisation as a way of existing and challenging the state. ‘Gray space’ goes beyond understandings of inside/outside state discourses, exposing the power-laden production of precarity in both space and social relations.

Government supported legal framework

Due to the history of the QSVT movement, there is a degree of government support for the new autogestive movements growing in Argentina, which makes it possible for workers to take back their workplaces. The legal status of businesses is essential for sales, legal trademarks and ownership. In some cases the government has legalised and supported initiatives that are part of the market, such as the reclaimed factories Lacar and la Mocita. This legal support is essential for a continuing ability to sell products under different production movements.

Whilst Mercado Bonpland is a negotiated space occupying a gray area between legal and illegal statuses, the Yo No Fui group work in the cultural centre behind the market with prisoners. Police bring female prisoners to learn work skills during the day, and despite the police’s contention with and periodic aggression towards the market, its space and its organisations are clearly considered ‘above board’ and legitimate enough to enable such a workshop to exist:

The project is very good; Yo No Fui works with girls who are deprived of freedom. They do extraordinary work. ... They are brought from Ezeiza to work, and they have the workshop. ... Here I think they do bookbinding. I don't know what they do in the other workshop, but they have a radio, they have many things (Ana, 23/04/2014).

Ana’s description of Yo No Fui demonstrates the bypassing of expected boundaries between legal-and-illegal tenures. The police are normally seen as carrying out the state’s understanding of the law, therefore bringing prisoners to this ‘gray space’ for rehabilitation demonstrates the multiple ‘gray spaces’ concerning what is legal. The organisations and spaces are thus simultaneously supported and attacked by the government in a multitude of ways.

Internal antagonisms in the legal form of the market

Whilst the market has some legal support, there is no licence or paperwork that demonstrates its legality. Consequently it engages with these antagonisms, and negotiates in order to maintain progress despite its precarious and insecure tenure. The differences in legal standing are reflected by Maria and Ana, who are both outside the co-operative organisation. Maria rents from the state, paying her taxes and contributions much like any other municipal market stallholder. Ana, from the stall Puchi, also considers herself to be outside of the main co-op organisation of the market, but does not pay taxes or rent. Maria has a completely different legal status and relationship with the state, as her landlord and municipal market manager, whereas the rest of the stallholders on the market do not have such a relationship, payment agreement or establishment. This means that, not only is the situation insecure for some in the market, this precarious status also varies dramatically between individuals.

Pedro describes the legal status for the co-operatively run organisations in Mercado Bonpland as part of a process of the market negotiating its existence.

So this is a public place from the city government which is being occupied by us, in this occupation we finally have a precarious tenancy (comodato¹⁵) for five years tenure, [but a precarious tenancy] means we still have no legal document (Pedro, 01/11/2013).

Pedro explains that the market has established itself by gaining a ‘comodato’ or precarious loan. This means that the market has some legally recognised status. However, it has never been provided with the paperwork to prove this. Therefore, their tenure remains precarious, as they have negotiated this tenure for five years, but have been given no proof of this. In addition, Pedro describes their use of the market space as an ‘occupation’. Politically, this has another

¹⁵ Comodato is a loan for the use, in this case for the use of the Mercado Bonpland building. Mercado Bonpland organisers have an agreement for a comodato, but not the paperwork to prove it.

meaning – that they have established themselves in this space despite any official recognition of their claim on that space. Unlike the bank occupations of the Cid, the Palermo Assembly sought to negotiate with the state in order to secure their place in the market (Mauro and Rossi, 2013). Their between-legal-and-illegal status is the result of the market not waiting to be legitimised: instead it is operating from this between space

Long-term precarious status

The precarious status of the market means that its organisation must be ‘above board’, and that there is the potential for the stallholders to be evicted. Its long-term precarious status has impacted on the way that the market organises itself, shaping decisions in relation to the possibility of the repercussions of a change in support for it. The complexity of its precarious legal status is something which Pedro is very aware of:

So this is a public place from the city government which is being occupied by us. In this occupation, we finally have a precarious tenancy (comodato) for five years tenure, [but a precarious tenancy] means we still have no legal document. For example, we can't work formally here. We can't specify our address here before the Administración Federal de Ingresos Públicos (AFIP – the Federal Administration of Public Revenue). It is a very precarious thing. So we have already specified our address somewhere else, and we expect [that] AFIP accepts and legalises that ... but this precarious situation, it is dangerous in case AFIP takes a firm stand and says, “you are working in a completely illegal way and that can't be.” [pause] They don't do that, but it is a risk we want to avoid (Pedro, 01/11/2013).

The market's legal precarity means there are difficulties involved in organising the actual functioning of the market. The precarious organisation with AFIP means that the market could potentially be shut down with little warning. At the same time, the market has a tenancy – albeit precarious – which means that the government is legitimising the market through this agreement, although they still have ‘no legal document’. Organising and improving under these conditions is difficult as it requires stallholders to make improvements despite knowing that they could be thrown out. Therefore, the relationship with the government and their social

power or ‘power to’ is crucial for preventing eviction, for supporting each other and for continuing to make demands.

The ‘gray space’ that they occupy also means that members of the market are personally liable:

There is already many people trusting in the functioning of this market, so they send their products, they trust you, we have all the little papers [invoices] here. Now there are favourable winds blowing to make this work, but if anyone came and made trouble, it would close everything and we would all go to prison for corruption ... lots of money is being moved, it's ok. In the co-operative everything is under the law, right? Every tax, gross receipts, counter, balance, everything on date – but just a few producers have got this system (Mario, 25/04/2014).

When other workplaces have been reclaimed, the government has made this official which, for Lacar for instance, means they can legally sell their products. In the case of Bonpland, this between-legal-and-illegal status means that Mario legitimately fears the potential repercussions if political support changes. This is particularly pertinent as the market connects so many different groups and individuals. It is hard to manage receipts when other systems – such as occasional barter arrangements – take place. Mario also highlighted the difficulty of organisation produced by money and goods being transported, which could lead to charges of corruption. This is where the antagonisms of working in-against-and-beyond are contrasted with the potentially stringent legal framework, demonstrating the precarious nature of organising despite what is legal.

Are there potential benefits to occupying a ‘gray space’?

Bonpland organisers strategically understand the legal precarity from which they operate. This means that that the legal frameworks that govern selling and buying do not have to be adhered to in the same way. At the same time, understanding the potential implications of this ‘gray’ precarious status to lead to their ejection from the Bonpland site, neighbours sought for a cultural heritage status to be assured before entering the market. The law was thus used strategically to ensure that it would be harder to evict them:

It was named a site of cultural heritage by the city government, so if they don't change the rules, which isn't an easy thing to do, they can't [redevelop the market]. ... But what discourages them is the cultural heritage status, and they can't change that (Pedro, 01/11/2013).

Therefore, cultural heritage status changes the value of the land, making it harder to redevelop. This is a particularly important point for Mercado Bonpland, as it occupies a prime site in Palermo – one of the most gentrified barrios in the city. This puts a greater pressure on the reclamation of this space. This heritage status thus offers marginally more security to the market organisers. The legal cultural heritage status is not an accident, with Marta from la Alameda asserting that these legal covenants were something that the movements fought for. However, with the occupation not receiving official legal backing, the balance of power remains unclear, as the government can also put pressure on the organising of the market. By remaining as a form of occupation, the market can organise through certain legal and self-managed channels, yet by demanding state support it also ensures that the resources of the state are directed back to the social movements. This ensures that they do not need to spend all of their time and energy on basic repairs. The idea of this fight for power in the territory (and how it is legally defined) will be explained in the next chapter.

The market's precarious legal status has meant that, rather than following prescriptive laws for selling, energy can be put into the process of changing things rather than making them official. Energy and funds in Bonpland need not focus on obtaining official seals for organic food, but can instead implement their own forms of co-certification to create new ways of doing things. This was a big part of the discussions surrounding whether to sell organic or non-organic food. For organisers Raul, Claudia and Martin, the focus should not be on whether a product is organic, but on whether the production method is moving towards this – that the production method is 'agro-ecological', as 'organic food is often expensive due to the need to meet requirements of official certification' (Martin, 22/04/2014). Martin discussed this, reflecting on

Colectivo Solidario's focus on commercialisation, as the honey producers that they work with are finally producing honey with an organic label that they have co-produced:

Yes, we have helped them improve, for example some packaging became better, we helped them achieve an "organic honey" label, even [though] they don't have seals [official certificated organic seals] – because that is more expensive – they have an organic produced certificate, a certificate for the whole production (Martin, 22/04/2014).

Thus, they produce their own certificate and ensure that they correctly label it, without paying for official organic certification, as would be necessary in a commercial supermarket. This 'gray space' can offer the potential to create projects based on what makes sense to the producers rather than simply following regulations, giving the market greater flexibility and helping them to achieve their goals using fewer resources. It also allows them to create new organisational strategies and ways of acting beyond the normal capital modes that they are challenging.

6.6 Conclusion

Throughout this chapter I have explored the complex relationships between the state and the organisation of the market. I have demonstrated the complex ways in which powers are contested and created, as well as the many non-homogenous ways in which these groups function. The crisis is a setting for the market that demonstrates not only the long history of other crises, but also the connections between autogestive movements, movements of popular assemblies and organising in Palermo, and the establishing of Mercado Bonpland. Therefore, the market is part of a demonstration of the long trajectories of these movements – of changing what is possible through a process of improving it.

The representation and interactions of these assemblies and autogestive projects with the state demonstrates both the complexity and multi-scalar dimensions of these organisational forms and the need for rethinking what each means. By operating in-against-and-beyond the state, the way

that politics is represented challenges ideas of a pure space containing only one organisational form. However, organising daily life using this status is challenging and contested, as the examples of daily life practices show despite, demanding-from, and because-of the state. These challenges are highlighted by the negotiations that Mercado Bonpland conducts through its insecure legal tenure, or the 'gray space' between the legal and the illegal. Understanding the market as operating from such a 'gray space' emphasises the challenges and potentials of organising in-against-and-beyond current state initiatives. In particular organising in-against-and-beyond the state, Bonpland organisers focus on their own autonomous organisation, means that they both create agendas responding to their everyday lives *beyond* that conceived of by the state and try to use this collective power to force the state to mobilise resources on their behalf.

Chapter 7 In-against-and-beyond territory as praxis of power in place

This chapter argues that territory as space, and as a process of daily-life politics, is crucial to understanding Mercado Bonpland's strategies of resistance. I focus on how the space of the market constitutes a territorial claim that is made through networks. As Zibechi argues in *Territories of Resistance* (2012), everyday life is essential for creating territories and vice versa. Bonpland creates networks of alternatives in-against-and-beyond everyday life in an attempt to build territories that are alternatives to the capitalist accumulation strategies that focus both on power in place and everyday life.

I begin this chapter by situating my argument in theoretical debates about territory. This allows me to engage with multi-territorialities that highlight the multi-scalar, diverse and relational approaches of creating and negotiating territories. The context of the 2001 crisis is crucial to understanding the potential of this territory. The strategy used for creating Bonpland was to occupy it and then negotiate it as a territory, reliant on networks of alternative production, product sharing, knowledge, time and expertise.

The section 'Territory beyond one space in the city' will focus on the place-based importance of these different networks of spaces. The activation of neighbours situates the struggles at a neighbourhood level, whilst their influence goes beyond local neighbourhood organisation. The market acts as a bridge between multiple networks, breaking down city/countryside divisions. Palermo – where the market is situated – is an extremely expensive area. Therefore, I will explore who the territory is for, the role of gentrification, and the market organising against these processes, as well as how it is part of them. This highlights the contentious nature of Mercado Bonpland and its potential for incorporation.

In the section on daily life and social reproduction I will focus on the day-to-day methods by which Bonpland's territory is formed, engaging with how social relationships are negotiated, how networks are organised, and how the scale of these networks impacts on the practice of the

market, in particular the organisation of transport. In particular I focus on how networked territory operates in Mercado Bonpland, demonstrating multiple scales, organisation and neighbourhoods.

7.1 Territory as theory and practice

Territory is both a theoretically insightful concept for understanding how space is produced and a practical organisation tool, inspired by research in Argentina and the importance of territory in political meetings, organising and theory. Territory as praxis has been incorporated by movements, and goes far beyond state-based understandings of territory, to rethinking it as a multiple, relational and networked practice.

In-against-and-beyond territory

In Argentina the use of space and concept of territory was also central. This was true for the neighbourhood assembly movement, the unemployed movements, and the recuperated workplaces. People spoke of a new place where they were meeting, one without the forms of institutional powers that previously existed. As one assembly participant described: 'I understand horizontalidad in terms of the metaphor of territories, and a way of practicing politics through the construction of territory, it is grounded there, and direct democracy has to do with this. It is like it needs to occupy a space' (Sitrin, 2012b:n.p.).

As Sitrin observes, the use of territory for action and theory was crucial for the 2001 social movements. Territory became a way of engaging and enacting power in place. Assembly organisation did not see the state as the goal of their organising, instead territory became a form of organisation, engaging in *potencia* as well as highlighting control through state-based power in place. Territory engages with multiple powers and places through networks, explaining resistances and possibilities beyond traditional understandings of power in place.

As a form of organising and of theory, territory is a way of engaging with in-against-and-beyond. It highlights the potential for us to change the spaces around us through the

antagonisms that always exist in everyday life – as method to engage in establishing power in place. The concept of territory highlights the possibilities that spaces hold: the opportunity for autonomy through building the potential for people to create their own territories despite different powers' influences. Consequently, it undermines some of the disempowering narratives under which there is held to be no alternative to capitalism, as it highlights the multiple powers operating at any one time in a territory. Equally, through understanding the complexities of these antagonisms, a territorial approach shows that the 'inside' and 'outside' notions of utopian projects are oversimplified and, in so doing, highlights the prefigurative potential of everyday approaches. As such, I am interested in exploring how territory is used as a theory and tactic in Mercado Bonpland and, particularly, in the relational understandings of territory that show the complex networks of organisations, other spaces and powers. By understanding the relational networked nature of the territory we can see the complexity and organisation that the market has employed in order to function daily. These networked understandings begin to establish the complexity of the way to engage in alternatives and, from that perspective, what is necessary in this process:

Territory, in this discussion, is not just a 'state' question. In Latin America today, I can affirm, getting (re)territorialised is a political strategy of transformation much more than an academic question; it is a lived, practised and practically 'demanding' question. ... We could say, in fact, that these struggles/social practices themselves continually remake the concept of territory (Haesbaert, 2013:148).

Contextualising Bonpland in reference to the radical use of the term 'territory' in Latin America within political groups and academia, I aim to understand the relational networks that constitute different power dynamics in the market space and different social relationships through territory. This understanding of the concept of territory does not just focus on the way that the space is constituted, but also on the powers, relationships, borders and flows that create a space. This highlights the spatial integration of the singular market space with the network of spaces that provide the support, the goods, the relations and the knowledge through which the market can function. An exploration of territories begins to open up a relational understanding of space.

Territory beyond the state

Whilst in British geography territory has traditionally been used to refer to state power in space, with Stuart Eldon (2013) being the key political geographer to use this term, Latin American scholars and organisers use the term differently. Whilst this British / Latin American divide is problematic, oversimplifying the distinction between the two, my experience of studying, attending meetings and engaging in thinking about spaces in Argentina was that territory was used to explain political organisation and practice as well as theory. This different use of the term in Latin America stems from a relational understanding of power, where multiple powers beyond the state affect who controls a space. This recognises that powers other than those wielded by the state have an effect on shaping space – whether an occupied space, popular people’s movements, informal settlements, or the City of London. Understanding multiple powers in territory engages with different understandings of people in places – of what they can produce beyond a state-focused understanding of a territory.

Post-colonial scholarship has been central in re-focusing the debate and discussion away from that of purely state-based territory. From a colonial context, the conquering of ‘empty’ lands by colonial forces (Driver, 2001; Pratt, 1992) was crucial for justifying intervention, including the extraction of labour and natural resources. However, these lands have never been empty, and there have always been other organisational forces within these spaces, creating different sorts of places and relations. Engaging beyond a statist understanding of territory, with ‘other’ productions and relations, acknowledges the different creations of value that exist in the everyday – whether this is based on the politics of the home and the struggles for representation of daily life amongst autonomous feminists (Federici, 2012), or struggles for food, housing, or rights to the city, these all operate at different and overlapping scales, and are part of wider social struggles. Territory – as a multi-centred and engaged conception of space that recognises many powers – provides a way to highlight many forms of power and, in so doing, it

emphasises the potential for us to make different spaces. The possibilities demonstrated by territory highlight the multiple relationships that constitute the way that a space is made:

The original form was where the power was concentrated on the state. We know now that there are many powers that are fighting in the political arena, not only the power of the state. But that was the original understanding and concept of power and the use of power. We know that there is the power of the state, and it may be analysed itself as more than one power with contradiction – it has contradiction inside. There are many levels of territorial power – the local level, provincial level, sub-regional, regional, national, and super-national level that you have to consider, for the relations between them. But there is also the big companies' economic power, and the power of social movements. There are many powers that you have to consider when you analyse the territory (Jorge Blanco, 24/04/ 2014).

Territory is created through relationships between spaces and different forms of power. This allows for understandings of space as relational rather than fixed: as changing, produced and shifting. Territory recognises that 'potencia' or power to act is like the power of capital and statist power, as it shapes what is possible. Territory shifts the emphasis from simply researching or highlighting the potential of the powerful cycles of capital and disempowering personal accounts of accumulation, investment and dispossession, to recognising that these accounts take place alongside power of organised social groups, to recognise the potential for organising.

Relational Territory

Following this 'more-than-state' conception of territory, Zibechi's reflections on territories are focused on the production of movements in process, seen as spaces that are resistive to the hegemonic policies of the time:

when that movement/shift takes root in a territory or when the subjects who undertakes moving-of-themselves are rooted in a physical space, they constitute territories defined by their difference from territories of capital or the state. This implies that land or space are no longer understood as a means of production and become instead, a political cultural creation. Territory becomes the place where counter-hegemonic social relations are deployed and where groups and collectives can practise different ways of living. This is one of the major contributions made by indigenous movements of our continent to the fight for emancipation (Zibechi, 2012:211).

Zibechi demonstrates the potential of movements to go beyond state and capital relationships, developing spaces and powers that are autonomous, and grounds this theory in Latin American understandings of the constructions of these spaces that originate from indigenous movements. It thus represents a political, cultural re-appropriation and construction of the space, as well as a way of expressing the politics of direct democracy (Castro et al. 2013).

Re-understanding territory as process requires a relational understanding of power, meaning that the powers operational in a territory will change. It therefore moves beyond understandings of traditional fixed boundaries of state-based territories:

When you consider the territory with fixed limits or boundaries, there is also a relational power ... the network power. It is very interesting to think of the tension and contradiction between this power in a network and that power with a limit – a very well-defined limit. This is another thing, as you also have the fights inside the territory, and also the power in networks. I think it is very interesting to understand the dynamic of the territory (Jorge Blanco, 24/04/2014).

Understanding relational territory means explaining the way that one territory relates to other territories through networks.

Bounded space as territory does not explain the way that power constitutes space or what happens within it, how transient and permeable those spaces might be, or how this alters depending on social class, wealth and position. The permeability of these territories is crucial. Haesbaert (2013) examines multi-territoriality as an overlapping, multiple and inter-related sets of powers operating at any one time, with networks of actors linking different territories. In this way, territory – emphasising power in place – is also a concept that can help with theories about the multiple and changing relations between powers. Interconnected understandings of how power operates and is affected in these territories are crucial to making change.

Relational multi-territoriality contrasts with the traditional state-based understanding of territory as the only type of power in one fixed territory (Elden, 2013) and the utopian projects that claim

to be outside of a system of capital relations (for example, Zibechi's *Territory of Resistance*, or Chris Carlson's *Nowtopia: Zibechi*, 2012; Carlson, 2008). The relational account of territory emphasises that we live in-against-and-beyond the current system of social relations, pointing to the inherent antagonisms that exist in the day-to-day. The relational account of territory highlights the potential for people to change spaces as these spaces are constituted by the social relations embedded within them. However, the state-based account of territory or the utopian account of 'outsides' each recognise themselves as the only sources of power that constitute territory, and this supposes sovereign control. Neither example accounts for the complex social relations that exist in each space. Yes, state territories exist (as alienated forms of social relations), just as territories of other values exist, but neither of these represent a pure outside, formed only from one source of power – they are all related. This means that a state territory has real effects within a territory, for example in controlling immigration. Therefore, understanding the relational powers between power-over (*poder*) from the state and the power-to act (*potencia*) are crucial for understanding what is happening in a territory.

Production of space and territory

[In Argentina] we use territory as we try to emphasise relationships with powers, but I find it has a lot of similarities with space. For example, Doreen Massey's use of space is talking about the same things. She uses the word space, and we use the word territory (Jorge Blanco, 24/04/2014).

The rich tradition of geographers researching the production and creation of space is critical for establishing how space or territories are produced. In this way, the production of space (Harvey, 1985; Lefebvre, 1991; Massey, 1985; Smith, 1992) and the concept of territory have similarities. In different cultural and theoretical contexts, different terms are used for referencing certain histories. Therefore, in some contexts, the Latin American use of territory has similarities to the ideas of the production of space (Raffestin, 2012; Zibechi, 2012), as Blanco explained.

Raffestin emphasises that his conception of territory and Lefebvre's understanding of the production of space are both based on the 'production of actors' (2012:126). This suggests a relational understanding of territory, and highlights the impact that multiple actors have on how a space is created, as well as how this process is something that is *produced* (as opposed to being a naturally occurring configuration of space). In this case, the political context of producing a space is crucial to both theories, which each attempt to understand how space is created.

However, the way in which 'territory' is used in practice differs from how 'space' is used. Territory as praxis in Latin America emphasises how people can act in the city, and what they have the capacity to do. As Blanco states, it is 'emphasising not only the relation of power, but the relation of power in some places' (Jorge Blanco, 24/04/2014). From the context of political organising, this is essential to how people can live their day-to-day lives and to the capacities they have to change both the spatial and political worlds around them *as* territory. As Sitrin (2012b) observed above, the use of territory became an organisational and political tool in Argentina, allowing people to engage in creating different possibilities. Territory is used as an organisational practice within neighbourhoods, to organise from necessity, and for political organising. This is the key difference between the terms 'territory' and 'space'. I discuss this in greater detail in the section on neighbourhood organising below.

In both theory and practice, territory emphasises the relational and engaged understandings of different powers: *poder* and *potencia* (which I introduced in Chapter 2), highlighting the potential to create territories based on neighbourhood values. This emphasises the organisational potential of territory as a practice. This potential and organisational practice is what proved so useful within the neighbourhood assembly organising in Argentina.

Place and territory

Raffestin (2012) reflects that whilst there are similarities between the theoretical development of space and territory, there are also similarities between place and territory. Raffestin's production of place, which was developed in the 1980s following scholarship by Massey and others, emphasises its resonance with relational understandings of territory, and argues against deterministic understandings of space. In this context, Raffestin identifies the similarities that territory and the development of place have as relational and multi-place conceptions. Massey and others have also used place as a way to critique traditional statist understandings of territory as they:

invest the word 'place' with a social, cultural and political dimension that contains a critique of political territory, its rigid delimitation, and the state control that is coextensive with it (Raffestin, 2012:126).

Similarities between place and territory demonstrate what the relational nature of place shows about interlinked networks constituted by social relationships. Both of these theories reveal the importance of understanding the specificity of actors in a place, as well as their potential to shape it.

Multi-territoriality: an interconnected understanding of power in place

Haesbaert (2013:149) analyses how multi-territoriality has similarities to place. He identifies three similarities between his conception of multi-territoriality and Massey's understandings of place. Firstly, they both have a relational understanding of process – for example through re-territorialisation and de-territorialisation – rather than seeing territory as an object or container. Secondly, both critique simplistic understandings of borders and frontiers as functioning beyond basic narratives of 'out' or 'in'. Thirdly, they both focus on multiple identities that emphasise multiple powers and actors in places, as well as how these can affect each other. Thus, both

relational process-led to understandings of multiple powers and how actors constitute a territory are crucial for analysing the global and the local today.

Using the idea of multiterritoriality (Haesbaert, 2013; Zusman, 2014) is a way of engaging in the creation of these other spheres for understanding the interconnected and complex nature of the organisation and development of a territory like Mercado Bonpland. This is something that I want to adopt to describe the multiple and complex inter-relations of networks of actors and powers. Multi-territoriality, as identified by Haesbaert, is not new, and is not only emancipatory, but also offers a way of analysing how global and local flows interact:

Multiterritoriality is not exactly a novelty, for the simple fact that, if the territorialisation takes off from the level of individuals or small groups, every social relationship implies territorial interaction, an intersection of different territories. In a certain sense, we would have always lived 'multiterritorially' (Haesbaert 2013:150).

Therefore, the way that territories operate is multiple, with interaction having spatial and social connections. However, Haesbaert identifies the fact that bigger global networks do not necessarily have more inter-related territories. Successive global multiterritorialities may be articulated by simply travelling through nodes on a network. In this way, whilst they may be global and linked, they can operate as networks of 'sameness', where individuals do not have to experience any difference whatsoever:

An effective and 'global' multiterritoriality in the successive sense is not necessarily accomplished by one's circulation through more than one territory and its articulation in a network, as this could occur in a merely functional way (Haesbaert, 2013:152).

Consequently, not all multi-territories challenge the homogeneity which is demonstrated by Haesbaert's example of businessmen visiting the same spaces the world over: hotels, airports and conference centres. Thus, just because a network is constituted globally, this does not mean that it is a multiterritorial network. Understanding multiterritoriality does not mean that these differences or unequal power relations disappear, but is rather a way to recognise the relational ways that power and space intersect and can be changed.

While submerged in profoundly unequal power-geometries, the hidden rules are generally controlled by very well-territorialised groups (in network territories with well-defined circuits) and their 'reservations' clearly guaranteed on the world map (Haesbaert, 2013:154).

Multiterritoriality is a challenge to linear narratives about power, as it is also affected by spatial claims and powers that already exist. Acknowledging that both peripheral and dominant territories have power and the capacity to act is crucial for understanding these spaces.

Multiterritoriality in Bonpland

Mercado Bonpland demonstrates complex inter-relations between the state, social movements and capital. To understand this space as a territory requires a multi-layered understanding of space and social relationships. Territory allows me to engage with the way that the space of the market is relational, produced, and also subject to the multiple actors of power, state, social movements and capital. Multiterritorial and relational understandings help to analyse the powers, spaces and connections that are negotiated in creating the network that constitutes Mercado Bonpland.

Multiterritoriality also engages in how resistance is organised. For Mercado Bonpland, these multiterritorial networks are creating an 'alternative economy', which requires understanding the relationships between production, social relationships and values, and money:

The particularities and singularities find their expression, reduced as it is, in the play of monetary values; territories and territorialities are more and more susceptible to being expressed in monetary terms and by systems of prices: the price of land, of housing, of labor, etc. Money is only a system of signs, but an extremely powerful one, since it can provoke very rapid changes by a play of interactions between territories and territorialities. Money is no longer the sign of real wealth, but reality has become the sign of money (Raffestin, 2012:140).

Raffestin emphasises the potential for money to be a signifier of all values of territory and power. Therefore, it is useful to think of the way that the market in Bonpland creates its relational set of territories that aim to resist the logic of the capitalist economy, to understand

the extent to which Bonpland is resistant to this dominant inscription of values that determine territories:

The production of territories by means of territories is an operation of the creation or recreation of values in both senses of the term: economic values and cultural, social, and political values (Raffestin, 2012:131).

Raffestin's emphasis on integrating territory and created values is essential in order to explore how the market functions as a territory. How can we understand the functioning of a territory that is attempting to create 'other values' than capital? How does the creation of this alternative, relational network connect with the functioning of the economic, social and cultural values that have been created (and are shared) in the space of Mercado Bonpland? Relational understandings of autonomous practices acknowledge that the contradictory processes of 'Negation, creation, contradiction and excess are all features of autonomous practice' (Dinerstein, 2014a:10). As such, relational territories are a way of reflecting this theory in practice.

A relational conception of multi-territoriality that is aiming to create different values, such as that adopted in Mercado Bonpland, engages with territories and with the production of power and place on multiple levels and through many networks. Bonpland has many relational levels of organisational complexity, which it has developed through its alternative approach to producers, to creating different spaces through struggle, and to creating networks of alternative consumption and exchange practices.

Investigating the multiterritorial processes and experiments undertaken by Mercado Bonpland enables us to explore the complexities of organising everyday life. We can use the history of assemblies to understand what they have produced and how Bonpland's struggles are linked with those that came before. Complex networks are a way of establishing how alternative territories exist in-against-and-beyond the current system. A multiterritorial analysis emphasises the potential of territories that have been built through the collective power of the struggles of

multiple people and networks, co-constituting and supporting these spaces and the building of alternatives. The territory of Mercado Bonpland is linked to the other projects in the city and beyond, and thus this focus on ‘one’ experiment into alternatives engages with a multiplicity of alternatives related to the organisation of people and struggles.

7.2 After 2001: crisis, networks and the legacy of Que Se Vayan

Todos

Constructing the space of Mercado Bonpland to be used as a solidarity market in the gentrified barrio of Palermo demonstrates the challenges and the capacities of the neighbourhood assemblies and is important for understanding the power of collective organising. The occupation and negotiation of the market challenges a top-down approach and, as I showed in the section on the economic history of crisis, collective organisation was motivated by necessity and through a rupture. The market was occupied negotiated through self-organised assemblies, as well as contesting and building relations with the state. Therefore, networks of autonomous organising are crucial to understanding the territory of Bonpland. In the next sections I will contextualise the market as in-against-and-beyond by analysing descriptions of the start of the market, reflecting on how these show the battle for territory. The organisation of networks is crucial in the contestations of the crisis and the subsequent organisation-as-resistance in the networks of alternatives and these networks are the predominant way I explore organisation in Bonpland.

Occupation and the creation of Bonpland as a territory

Many of the recent challenges to neoliberalism have emerged from the “new” territories, which are uniquely autonomous and independent: El alto Bolivia; the neighbourhoods and settlements of the unemployed in Argentina; the camps and settlements of the landless in Brazil. The popular neighbourhoods in Caracas, and the indigenous regions in Chiapas, Bolivia and Ecuador. ... The crisis of the old territorialities implies an equal crisis in the systems of representation (Zibechi, 2012:67).

Zibechi highlights the potential of territories, as counter-hegemonic spaces for movements against neoliberalism in Latin America. The territorial focus of these movements, such as the *piqueteros* in Argentina, is crucial to the movements' demands for autonomously organised politics and spaces. The concept of territory helps to shed light on the struggle and practice that Mercado Bonpland undertakes with the aim of creating a space and network of economic solidarity through the neighbourhood organisations that will contest the state and capital's visions for this space. Rather than developing as a completely autonomous territory – an approach that was discussed in the previous chapter – the market's organisations have roots in assemblies, but cannot ignore the influence of the state and capital. However, this has not prevented its development of the space.

Mercado Bonpland operates as a contested territory, not as an autonomous outside, with relational practices being organised despite divisions. As Haesbaert contends, the concept of territory as a practice in Latin America is constantly being remade and reaffirmed as the 'struggles / social practices themselves continually remake the concept of territory' (Haesbaert, 2013:148). The struggle to occupy, negotiate and engage in Bonpland is an example of such territorial practices. In order to explore this issue, I return to the stories of how the market began. As I have already shown, these sometimes contradictory stories reveal the production of the territory of Bonpland as part of a multi-centred process, having different focuses depending on the individual recounting the origin story.

Using the idea of relational territory to understand autogestive networks is crucial for the market space. During my interviews, when I asked about space (as is the preoccupation of a geographer) – i.e. about what it meant that Mercado Bonpland was occupied, why the market had been abandoned, and about their views about the gentrification in Palermo and their resistance to it – the stallholders tended to prefer speaking about their current projects. They had secured entrance into the market and fought the closure of the Mercado Bonpland project, so

they weren't interested in discussing the space as 'only' a space. Their discussion of it as a space was always accompanied by a story of what they were working on now, or of the next fight or project. This reflects the process of creating a project rather than focusing on outcomes. Their securing of the market space seemed like a huge achievement to me, but it was no longer an important focus for them. Therefore, producing a territory engages in the active processes of both social relations and a spatial environment. It reflects on our potential to change our environments and use the power embedded in any attempts to effect this.

In interviewing people about the occupation period during which they reclaimed the market from an abandoned space, I had also expected to hear stories that 'spectacularised' the moment of occupation and resistance, having read about the Argentinian crisis as representing a modern-day Paris Commune (Colectivo Situaciones, 2011:15). However, quite the opposite occurred. Instead, as I have already highlighted, people talked about different moments that were important to them in the creation of Bonpland. This 'quiet politics' (Askins, 2014) has led to a different understanding of the creation of the territory of the market: the focus was not only a battle with the police over their rights to occupy it, but on the process of creating networks and developing the space of the market. This everyday approach follows a different understanding of revolution, 'revloution with a small r' (Sitrin, 2012a:6). This everyday approach is quite different to the way that these resistive moments are often described, as it follows an everyday approach. The stallholders' emphasis on everyday struggles demonstrates a quiet approach:

an unassuming praxis of engaging with others, in which new social relations are built in/through everyday places, relationally connected across a range of geographies (Askins, 2014:354).

The contestations and compromises were a part of their normal everyday life and something that they identified throughout the process of creating the market. I highlighted these contested processes of occupation in chapter 6, but these reflections demonstrated that their occupation was only possible due to the networks that were organised and supported in Mercado Bonpland:

This was a common market for many years. Here [in Mercedes' stall] clients tell me there was a butchery. I didn't see it, because when I first came here it was closed. There was a haberdashery in the front [of the stall]. At first we occupied the small streets around the building as a co-operative fair, open just on Saturday – us [co-operative red del campo] and many more. When we spoke with the government of the city, they said it would be probable, maybe [to make some repairs to the market]. We have fought for some repairs to the building. Five years have passed since that moment. We still have some little fights with the government, but we will solve them (Mercedes, 16/07/2013).

As discussed in the chapter on the state, Mercedes' description of occupying the market building makes it clear that it was not in accordance with the government's approval or wishes. The 'occupation' was organised by the neighbourhood assembly in Palermo, where the horizontally organised groups collaborated and used their local knowledge and persistence in order to successfully (or repeatedly) occupy the building.

Mercedes' statement explaining how they engage with the state as a part of the market is telling: "We still have some little fights with the government, but we will solve them" (16/07/2013). This demonstrates the normality of being in conflict with the state. The idea that they "will solve them" demonstrates a faith in their ability to influence the state, as well as the continued power of the people in the market to create the conditions under which the state will have to listen to them. However, this occurs from a relatively precarious position – a 'gray space' in which the government is aware of what stallholders have done and continue to do, but has not provided their approval. This is a relationship that is carefully negotiated in order that the market can maintain its position and place.

Chapter Six focused on the state and how people in the market perceive it and these stories of the occupation also describe the relationship that people had with the state, as well as their understanding of how politics and power work. The occupation stories I was told demonstrate the different individual organising that is conducted through neighbourhood production networks, or between the traditional market and the state. These differences demonstrate that there are multiple powers within the production of this territory. This was seen clearly with

regards to the viewpoints of Ana and Maria, neither of whom is involved in the same process as the rest of the co-operative Bonpland project.

Occupation through networks

Rather than being a unique process, the negotiation and repurposing of the territory of Mercado Bonpland is part of a wider network of alternative projects located in Buenos Aires, as well as in Argentina and beyond. Multiterritoriality (Haesbaert, 2013) highlights the relational understanding of powers and spaces that are constructed through social relationships, and is demonstrated through the networks of alternative production spaces that support Mercado Bonpland's continuation. Moreover, the market also supports the continuation of these spaces, as they provide a place to sell produce.

Haesbaert's understanding of territory is contingent on the idea that social relationships are constituted through territorial interactions. Social and territorial relationships are also crucial to Zibechi's conception of the resistive power of these relationships:

In effect, the indigenous, landless and increasingly urban dweller movements in Latin America are territorialised. The social relations within them and the subjects who form them are what make up the territories. This means returning to Lefebvre's assertion that the production of space is the production of differentiated space: those who produce space embody differentiated social relations rooted in territories (Zibechi, 2012:209).

This statement recognises the power that comes from precarious exclusion from the current capitalist vision of the city, exemplified earlier through the concept of 'gray spaces'. These 'gray spaces' are productive for capital, as well as containing the potential to build the alternatives demonstrated by Mercado Bonpland.

Networks are critical to Bonpland's organising, as Mario reflects:

So you can create things because you already know who you can count on, who you can't, for what, when and where. This is the value you can't buy ... it is the strongest value that supports the whole thing. That's the network.

Yes, we are all inside the network, we are always within it. The network we have made is with people who have the same morals and the same ways of seeing this with nuances, like shades of grey (Mario, 15/04/2014).

Mario's projects progress because you 'already know who you can count on'. This gives them the confidence and trust to act more quickly, building the capacity to continue. It also reflects the importance of the creation of these networks inside the market.

Constituted by networks of the social relationships of autogestion emerging from the 2001 crisis (but also from before it), it is therefore essential to understand the interconnected territories that are created, sustained and related to each other in order to understand the space of Mercado Bonpland. When it is perceived in isolation from these, this does not account for its development and its continuation. Thus, the context of the co-facilitation of networks and projects is crucial: 'Working with networks also helps [us] to think in that way – not as a fixed position, but a related position' (Jorge Blanco, 14/04/2014).

Jorge Blanco thus considers thinking relationally about territories to be essential in understanding the multiple territories that make up these experiments. Social relationships and economic support through the solidarity economy project facilitate the continuation of many of these other autogestive projects. Therefore, Mercado Bonpland not only represents the stallholders that organise day-to-day in the market, but also the hundreds of other spaces and organisations that provide the goods and services that the market relies on. The market acts as a locus for the alternative autogestive, horizontal practices that grew from 2001. An example of this is seen by the fact that there are now more than 270 occupied workplaces in Argentina (Sitrin, 2012a:128), demonstrating the huge network of alternative producers across the country, many of whom are connected to Bonpland. These networks of alternative producers are linked to each other directly through social relationships and histories of organising together, sharing knowledge and other resources (Roar Collective, 2014). The scale of these engagements

increases support, legitimacy and social power by enabling collective organising across these different autogestive spaces.

Networks of resistance in Mercado Bonpland

[Mercado Bonpland is] not intended to be the centre of activity, so that each actor develops in its own way, [the market] is only intended as a knot in that vast network, a bridge between initiatives which now appear as isolated (La Asamblearia, 2013).

La Asamblearia's description of Bonpland demonstrates the importance of connecting seemingly separate projects within the market. Operating through networks as 'knots' or 'bridges' rather than as institutions that seek to improve themselves, highlights the importance of these networks.

As Sitrin (2012a) has established, a result of the experience of the 2001 crisis was the creation of networks of solidarity that were formed due to necessity. This necessary organisation at a time of crisis shaped both what is possible now and in the future. As one collective (Soncko Argentino) identified, they began making clothes out of need:

The enterprise emerges from my mother's profession, she had always been dressmaking, she had the knowhow and we had a complicated economic situation at that time. She was working making clothes and we had the idea. In principle, she is the head of this clothing line, since it was her profession and as my sister and I could learn [from her] (Sol, 07/07/2013).

The complex economic situation thus led to the creation of this family enterprise. However, Soncko is not just a family business, but also a co-operative with the same name and their stall in the market has a large variety of products from other similar producers. Other market participants also spoke of creating family enterprises after the crisis, which involved a complete collapse of all previous forms of organisation, meaning that people had to organise informally to create everyday things. This led to the formation of many small-scale producers who depend on

skills in order to exchange. Thus, need created different interactions that were the starting points for numerous networks at the market:

And all this [different products in the stall] comes from the network which is created by meeting and connecting with each other. By going from one fair to the other, to that organised by [the] Social Development [that] I told you [about], we meet there [at the fairs], and after we have met it means that my products are being sold in Salta, and I am selling her products here. It helps us all to meet, connect and sell together (Sol, 07/07/2013).

The experience of creating a family enterprise and exchanging or selling in order to survive led to many small producers meeting, working at the same fairs and subsequently organising together and thus establishing networks. If an individual family had to personally exchange all of their goods, it would take a long time for them to generate any income, but in the context of economic collapse, such exchanges were necessary. Meeting at fairs and subsequently creating networks means everyone benefits, as goods can be shared across the networks and sold in different places. As the market demonstrates, this has led to some very complex networks of goods and services that travel across the whole country to be sold. For this reason, the market is also a useful spatial resource, as it provides a permanent space to sell the products of the co-operatives, small producers and networks. This is particularly important as the fairs, whilst being essential in order to meet, require a lot of work. These fairs are often held in temporary spaces, so a lot of organisation is required to set them up and then to dismantle them again afterwards

Marta explains that the networks of Palermo Viejo assembly went inside the market ‘for more stability’ (field notes, 13/07/2013). The market as a network already existed, and was already working on ways to create other methods of producing, supporting people and social movements, but the stalls outside the market were not ideal (like the fairs), as the space wasn’t permanent. Marta goes on to explain how the market was occupied (as we reflected on earlier):

This was an old market from Alvear’s time in the 20th Century. He built them everywhere. Some of them were privatised. The market in Caballito and this one were abandoned, [and] they [the city government] had a plan for a real estate project. And

then, in 2007, the people from Palermo's Assembly took the outside. We – who like to fight for these things – came, and we decided to enter the market, and we got in and set up small stands. It started a big fight, but we had managed to achieve Historic Heritage status, so it [the market] couldn't be demolished (Marta, 16/07/2013).

Marta thus describes the occupation as taking place only with the help and support of the local Palermo assembly. The networks of alternative production and consumption were already developing before they existed inside the market, and the 'cultural centre [MP la Dignidad] had also supported the occupation of the market' (field notes, 13/07/2013). Therefore, these groups were already working together, enabling them both to survive.

In Marta's description of the occupation, the way that the building had been left abandoned also played a part in the actions of the group. As she observed, the building had not only been abandoned, but plans had also been made to develop it as real estate. Therefore, the creation and resistance of the market was reliant on actively participating citizens who were involved in the politics of their area. This 'fight' to occupy and stay in the market extended literally and metaphorically: the space literally had to be defended to ensure that another real estate plan was not implemented within the space. This need for organisation was seen as obvious by the Palermo Viejo neighbours. It was clear to people that they needed to think of this cycle of accumulation in the city, and to think about the future. It was seen as being so clear-cut, in fact, that again it was difficult to encourage people to talk about how these fights occurred and how things were organised. When I asked Marta to clarify what it had meant to be engaged in this fight for the market she explained:

Police came, but there were lawyers negotiating the situation, but sometimes there weren't any, sometimes you came and found everything was outside [of the market], but we would put everything back inside. We used to come on Saturdays, but during the week they had taken our stands. We cleaned the market – it was full of pigeon shit. We knew there was a real state project, but we didn't know very well what it was. It came and went, they took us away, but we got inside (Marta, 16/07/2013).

Marta's description here captures the normality and repetitiveness, as well as the insecurity, of the process of occupying the market. The matter-of-fact way it is discussed reveals how she perceived their removal from the market and their reoccupation of it as a normal collective undertaking: "they took us away, but we got inside" (Marta, 16/07/2013). The repetition of this confrontation shows that the process, whilst supported by many, was not necessarily an easy one. It was one that took time, and still does: they are still in a process of upgrading that began with the initial cleaning of the pigeon droppings.

The networks that existed before the market were necessary for the creation of Mercado Bonpland, as well as for its long-term maintenance. Therefore, the occupation of the market as a spatial environment was reliant on the social dimension. Moreover, through this experience of struggle and history of organising, organisers practices have become more informed: 'we were formed by everything [that] we lived in the assemblies' (Sitrin, 2012a:211). The transformational nature of organising and becoming involved in collective activity shaped the market and continues to facilitate new possibilities.

7.3 Mercado Bonpland as a territory, beyond one space in the city

Mercado Bonpland is a territory that is constructed through networks of organisations from across the country. The space of the municipal market has been reclaimed in Palermo, which is one of the most gentrified districts of Buenos Aires. Establishing this economic solidarity market was an attempt to challenge dominant narratives of real estate development, and whilst the market is resistive to potential development, some locals nonetheless feel excluded from it due to neighbourhood changes. The market is therefore constituted through the neighbourhood assemblies, as well as through connections beyond Buenos Aires city, as people travel to it.

This highlights the contentious issue of whom the market is for. Given the process of gentrification in Palermo, we need to ask whether Mercado Bonpland is part of this process or

resistive to it. Palermo has changed, with expensive luxury housing, boutique shops, restaurants, bars and television studios. Therefore, who shops in the market, and how local people are involved in it are crucial issues for establishing if the market really represents a form of resistance to these gentrifying dynamics. I will explore this issue later in the chapter.

The historical organisation of networks in Bonpland

Mercado Bonpland is organised through networks from across the country. These historically organised networks are connected to Palermo due to neighbourhood organising, autogestive organising, or due to the displacement of old neighbours from Palermo. Therefore, Mercado Bonpland is not only a territory of the city, but is also a construct of networks from across the country.

As I discussed in the section on money in Chapter five, barter has an important history in the market, but it also shapes the way that networks are formed:

Each year, a guy comes with a kilo [of mushrooms] and everything is barter – he takes yerba and honey because he hasn't any. There are many like him, and what do you tell them? They come here, because they were city residents of Buenos Aires (Mario, 25/04/2014).

Through this bartering the market organises some networks across the country. People barter in the market, either due to their production networks or because they have a historic connection with it – i.e. they were involved in the assembly and collective organisation during or after the 2001 period. The networks forming the market have historical groundings that cannot always be observed. These historical processes highlight the changes that have occurred and the displacement of people from the city because, as Mario observes, ‘they *were* city residents of Buenos Aires’ (25/04/2014). Thus, producers sometimes have historic connections to Bonpland and the city of Buenos Aires. The organisation of these producers is complex as it must negotiate the historic organising, the seasons, the crops, and the weather.

Displacement from the city necessitated the organisation of autogestive movements, which expanded in the 2001 crisis, and which still influence the organising of producers today. Raul explained the effects of this displacement process in reference to CEDEPO in Florencio Varela, which is located on the peripheries of Buenos Aires. Many residents did not have farming skills as they were former city residents of Buenos Aires, forced to the peripheries. CEDEPO's projects focus on:

'Formacion¹⁶' for families, for self-organised subsistence – [that is] teaching people how to work the land, as people in this part of the country had land but weren't growing food, as well as how to do this sustainably and organically. The aim of this was for people to eat what they had produced on their own plots of land (Field diary, 02/07/2014, from discussion with Raul).

This project goes beyond farming, being motivated by the need to increase people's capacities to improve their own conditions. Teaching farming skills was necessary, as industrial workers were displaced people who were forced out of the central city to the suburbs, particularly during the 2001 crisis period. In addition, before the 2001 crisis – during the dictatorship, and because of politically motivated 'disappearances' – organisers such as Raul were forced to leave the city and move to the peripheries for their own safety. These examples illustrate the histories of networks of necessity and displacement.

Neighbourhood organising

The neighbourhoods are the source of the empowerment, the trust and the communicative capacity that we need to determine our own destiny. Neighbourhoods provide the social conditions to establish attitudes and values that enable people to make society sustainable (P.M., 2014:25).

¹⁶ formacion is a holistic understanding of education, meaning education for the whole life

Mercado Bonpland is located in Palermo, a neighbourhood that has undergone urban transformation, experiencing gentrification and real estate speculation over the last twenty years, now home to many designer label shops, cafés, restaurants, wine bars and even dog boutiques. The continuation of an economic solidarity market in this neighbourhood is seen as an achievement, as other similar traditional markets have been redeveloped into expensive shopping malls, such as Abasto (Carman, 2006). Mauro and Rossi, reflect on Bonpland's presence in this neighbourhood:

In the case of Palermo Viejo, the existence of a fair-trade market in the middle of a neighbourhood that was being dizzily transformed by the speculative real estate boom was a palpable achievement (Mauro and Rossi, 2013:16).

Neighbourhood markets tend to be located in central neighbourhood areas and are often housed in historic buildings. The traditional municipal market, with its variety of stalls and produce, had formerly been a space that had served the community. The neighbourhood change in Palermo led to a different range of shops and restaurants, as well as different residents. However, neighbourhood-scale organising has been crucial for establishing and continuing the market as a space of economic solidarity. Whilst the neighbourhood may have changed, the activation and organisation of the Palermo Viejo assembly neighbours is crucial to its Mercado Bonpland's survival.

Organising at the scale of the neighbourhood level was essential during the 2001 crisis, and was undertaken through assemblies and horizontal practices (Mason-Deese, 2012). Neighbourhoods are not defined just as local spaces, as their 'local' projects are connected to broader initiatives through networks and collective organising. Reflecting on the recent Greek crisis, Stavrides explores the necessity of neighbourhoods and everyday life politics for collective organising, describing the neighbourhood as a scale of manageable proximity:

In the neighborhood, the presence of the other resides in the boundaries of a manageable proximity. The other is not necessarily an acquaintance, but there are many possibilities of him or her becoming one through the intersection of movements which organize everyday life in space. The other is not necessarily a stranger either.

Participation in the world of the neighborhood turns someone into a potential other in a relation that could be transient, accidental or even regular (as in the repeated accidental encounters at the bus stop, the bakery, the park, etc.). So, the neighborhood is not the locus of mimetic “tribalism” (Maffesoli 1996) – as the homogenizing gated communities are but a web of spaces created by the multiform tactics of habitation (Stavrides, 2010:98).

The scale of neighbourhoods leads to connections formed through accidental encounters, meaning that the chance to organise increases. The concept of manageable scales also indicates that, at a neighbourhood level, there is a substantial amount of organising of everyday life. Thus it makes sense that the politics of everyday life are more easily manageable for social reproduction at this scale. As Stavrides observes, these scales need not be homogenising or tribal, as some critiques of local scales suggest (Scharzer, 2012). However, as I will show later in this chapter, the neighbourhood changes in Palermo highlight who the neighbours are, and that this is a contested issue, which questions the assumption of the radical use of neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhoods are also crucial for understanding territorial organisation:

They talk about territorial work; for example, Kirchnerismo – the left parties – talk about territorial work, which means the work in the streets; in the neighbourhoods; in the villas, talking with social movements; related with political authorities; working with neighbours. So I think it is very interesting – that use of the word ‘territory’ – because they are emphasising the relation of power, but the relation of power in particular places... (Jorge Blanco, 14/04/2014).

Territory, at the neighbourhood level, is thus focused on the action and organising of the neighbourhood as the arena in which political work can take place. Territorial neighbourhood organising is therefore a practice of organising from everyday needs. Using neighbourhood territory as the level at which collective organising is undertaken focuses on the particular place and powers that operate within it. It is therefore a way of understanding relational territorial effects at a smaller scale, and attempting to organise in a way that meets people’s needs productively.

To explore the effects of this territorial organising, I will now return to Ana's description of the start of the market. She stressed the importance of neighbourhood organising for occupying the space of Bonpland market as follows:

So people from the movement came into the market, and the rest of the neighbours made assemblies. Because the cultural centre was already established, there were many artists – we are talking about people like Charly García, writers, people from culture that we met, for example Bayer – very nice people, perfect. Everything was really good, and the whole neighbourhood participated. (Ana, 23/04/2014).

Ana's understanding of the organisation of this neighbourhood group is particularly aspirational, focusing on the artists supporting the cause of the neighbourhood and Mercado Bonpland. This demonstrates how different individuals have different perspectives about who is a neighbour, highlighting that whilst it is a useful tool for organisation and pressure, it also has the potential to exclude the 'less desirable' neighbours. However, this also shows that using the category of 'neighbour' was useful for organising, and for putting pressure on the local government to sanction stallholders use of the market space, which I build on in the following section on gentrification.

Mercado Bonpland was therefore reliant on the politicisation of people in the local neighbourhood:

Palermo Viejo's legacy was a neighbourhood space that was recovered for social and political initiatives. However, whereas the Cid assembly was sustained by pre-existing activist networks, part of Palermo Viejo's capital was the political activation of neighbours without previous political experience (Mauro and Rossi, 2013:15).

Bonpland was initiated by neighbours, many of whom became politically active during the process of organising in the neighbourhood assemblies. This emphasises the importance of the organisational scale of the neighbourhood. However, as I will later argue, this neighbourhood is not a homogenous space.

Building relationships with local people also extended to people who were not involved in the initial assembly organising, and to creating links that went beyond a consumptive relationship. This was demonstrated when interviewing shoppers in the market. For instance, Viole and her mother Julia commented:

This market it important because it is like a family [Viole].

It's right – this is like a great neighbourhood family. Because we have been coming for so long, it is true (Viole and Julia, 16/07/2013).

The social relationships that they built with people in the market meant that the market was a significant place in their neighbourhood. It allowed the mother to teach her daughter about the history of the neighbourhood and the crisis, as well as recycling and other initiatives currently organised at the market. The significance of the market for them was highlighted through Julia's description of a dream:

This is funny – one night I had a nightmare, I dreamed I had moved to a bigger, nicer house, and I was very happy and suddenly [in my dream] I realised that I was in another neighbourhood and I didn't have the little market anymore, and I got this nightmare anguish. So, it's true to say this place is very important to the family (Viole and Julia, 16/07/2013).

Julia's dream demonstrates the symbolic importance of the market as the space of the neighbourhood, as well as a resource for it. It also shows a neighbourhood pride and attachment that comes from this history of collective organising.

Who is the market a territory for? Gentrification in Palermo

In this section I reflect on debates about neighbourhood change. The market is organised by neighbours, and is a space of everyday life social and political initiatives, but some groups in Buenos Aires hold that Mercado Bonpland is a middle-class only space, and the neighbourhood changes in Palermo accentuate this tension. Opinions about Mercado Bonpland's role in neighbourhood change differ between neighbourhood organisers, as do their views about

whether poorer historic Palermo residents are excluded, and whether the new market caters for middle-class residents. This raises questions of how collective initiatives can resist structural processes like gentrification when they are backed by state funding and capital investment. Whilst this issue was not the main focus of my research project, it is important to highlight these tensions in order to demonstrate the challenges of creating projects in-against-and-beyond capitalist social relationships. To investigate this, I highlight individual attempts to resist this gentrification and change in Palermo, particularly against long-term Palermo residents being displaced from the *barrio*. This contrasts with the approach of the neighbours who organised in the Palermo assembly to create Mercado Bonpland, who feel that it represents a resistance to speculation. I also discuss its transition from a municipal to a solidarity market as part of my examination of retail gentrification. In light of this process, I question whether Mercado Bonpland's continuation (that involved developing a traditional municipal market into a sustainably producing one) fits with the state's wishes for renovated market places. Finally, I look at the produce that is sold in the market, and the question of whether it represents a form of gourmetisation (Zukin, 2009), as Mercado Bonpland does not sell cheap produce. I argue that the prices of the market are generated by the aim to improve consumption conditions and to support the process of production and new autogestion projects rather than through the pursuit of profit, and that this must be taken into account in discussions of gourmetisation.

Displacement and Gentrification in Palermo Hollywood: which neighbours does the market serve?



Figure 7-1 Neighbourhood development in Palermo Hollywood (22/04/2014)

The photographs Figure 7-1 above show streets in Palermo Hollywood. The first shows traditional buildings that are now corner restaurants and cafés; and the second shows a garage in the foreground, with new high-rise flats behind, which increasingly dominate in this area as many of the garages are redeveloped. Palermo Hollywood got its name in the mid-90s when the media industry grew, with cheaper land prices and its central location near Palermo ‘Soho’. It now has many restaurants, bars, cafés and nightclubs in addition to these TV and radio studios. In order to define this neighbourhood change as gentrification would require more research (micro-level displacements could potentially be occurring, whereby people owning their own houses move further away from the road, yet stay in the same barrio). However, there are changes in the types of retail in Palermo, and there are also large numbers of foreign tourists and wealthy migrants living there. Anecdotally, this was the area that I and many other visiting students found it easiest to rent accommodation in, as there was more provision for foreigners to rent in Palermo. Undoubtedly this increases the prices for local people, particularly with the currency restrictions placed upon local Argentines, which are not the same for foreigners with dollars.

To understand neighbourhood change and displacement, I focus on the story of traditional market stallholder Maria, who describes her experience of displacement that forced her from Palermo:

I lived here in Palermo for many years since 1979. It was a very low neighbourhood, very small – there were not houses taller than three levels, it was beautiful. When the municipality began to allow taller buildings, all this began – a process of fifteen years in which Palermo is growing, and it is increasing even more. And all [the television] channels joined in the periphery of Palermo because they had better satellite antennae for their information. Today they have problems due the amount of buildings. It is a monster...

I moved, I left, I am not here [in Palermo] anymore. I live twelve kilometres from here, in the Buenos Aires province, because I can't live here anymore. From there, I come everyday to work in the capital. It is not possible to live here because you can't rest due the noise, [and] the rent is very high. I want where I live to be a home (Maria, 26/04/2014).

Maria highlights how a series of changes eventually made it impossible for her to continue living in Palermo. These included infrastructural improvements that increased the presence of businesses in the area, such as satellite antennae and changes in planning law, which allowed taller houses to be built and more new developments. The subsequent rent increases made it unaffordable for Maria to continue living there, and the character of the neighbourhood was changed through its new uses and residents, which is further demonstrated through Maria's concern about the noise levels.

The Contested Cities Research Network has explored differences in the concepts and processes of gentrification seen in Latin America and Europe (Janoschka et al., 2014; Lees et al., 2015). Whilst gentrification is not the main focus of the present research, the neighbourhood changes in the area make it important to reflect on the impact that these changes have on the market. I rely on Smith's structural analysis of gentrification, which holds that it 'portends a displacement of working-class residents from urban centers' (2002:440). So gentrification is a structural process that involves 'subsidized private-market transformation of the urban environment' in large spaces within the city (Smith, 2002:440). Maria's discussion of her personal story demonstrates this, in part, as she highlights the legal municipality changes that were made to

allow the height of new-builds to be increased, and satellite infrastructure to be improved, which changed the profitability and prices of land and thus the types of development undertaken in the barrio. An entire research project would be needed to chart the displacement and development of this barrio adequately, but a brief examination of these changes is necessary here for the context of Mercado Bonpland.

The change in the neighbourhood has created a variety of groups of residents who all perceive Mercado Bonpland differently: from the poorer people remaining in the neighbourhood to displaced ex-residents, new middle-class residents and the market organisers (who may no longer live in Palermo themselves). Through examining examples of these different groups' understandings of the market, I demonstrate how contested the impact of Mercado Bonpland on this changing neighbourhood is. As a result of these neighbourhood changes, poorer residents like Maria have been displaced, and/or feel excluded from neighbourhood facilities that no longer serve their needs.

Urban researchers Schlichtman and Patch reflect on their personal gentrifying histories of renting and buying houses in *Interrogating the Gentrifier in the Mirror* (2014). Whilst reflections on the individual's effects of these gentrification processes is important to recognise, I do not think they capture the possibility for intervention. Rather, greater research needs to be done on how to integrate these individual stories with structural challenges in order to resist redevelopment processes. For example, whilst Maria tries to keep ties to the Palermo neighbourhood with her market stall, this cannot reverse the process that has already resulted in increased rents and land values.

In the context of researching displacement, it is particularly difficult to identify actors and processes (for examples of displacement research see anti eviction map (2015)). For example, I only knew of Maria's displacement from the neighbourhood because she had continued to work in her stall in the market. It is crucial to investigate where people in the neighbourhood have been displaced to in order to follow up on this displacement process. As Mercado Bonpland was

organised *by and for* Palermo neighbours and to support other autogestion projects across the country, what does it mean when the local neighbours have changed? Whilst I will not be able to give any definitive answers to this question, through identifying the tensions that arise as a result of different attitudes towards the economy and the state, the effects of gentrification and displacement, and the issue of which neighbours the market caters for, I argue that Mercado Bonpland demonstrates the antagonisms involved in creating everyday alternatives.

In order to understand these residential and neighbourhood changes I interviewed a previous stallholder from the traditional municipal market who now runs a kiosk that provides internet and photocopying services, and is located next to Mercado Bonpland. The former stallholder commented:

That was the only one market in the neighbourhood – there wasn't even a grocery store. That was characteristic of the neighbourhood, as there were less shops and businesses at the time. It was called Alvear market, and its products were excellent. Fruit, vegetables from small producers, and meat was good; everything was good. Now it is very organic, elitist and expensive (Kiosko interview, 15/07/2013).

During my interview in the kiosk, other local people discussed their opinions about the market. The kiosk was used by poorer 'traditional' residents for accessing the internet and computers, whereas those living in the new gated flats had their own computers and internet connections. None of the four people joining in with the conversation had been to the market, even though they visited the kiosk next door to it. Neither did any of them consider it to be for people of the neighbourhood, and all agreed it was 'organic, elitist and expensive'. This was interesting: as none of them had been to the market, their opinion was based on an idea of what the market was like, and what it represented to them.

Stallholder Ana also has a different understanding of the neighbours in the market. Ana did not see herself as part of the co-operative that organised Bonpland, but as independent – being connected to Bonpland from her historic involvement as part of the Palermo neighbourhood assembly. As Ana does not agree with some of the ways in which the co-operative runs the

market, she still sees the neighbourhood as a site for her organising. This background gives her a different impression of who Mercado Bonpland is for, as her understanding of the neighbourhood is different:

Let me be sincere. The neighbourhood doesn't like this market; it doesn't like it, I tell you. People who come here are a very special [section of the] public. I can only count a few who come from the neighbourhood. The rest come from other ones. This market is not what local people want, because they can't find every product they need. In the traditional market, the classic one, they love it. They ask, please can I have..., and they can buy all things (Ana, 23/04/2014).

Firstly, Ana claims that she can judge who is and is not a local neighbour. Since the neighbourhood has undergone a great deal of change over recent years, her definition of who counts as a neighbour thus demonstrates a specific understanding of who she includes in this category. As a definable group of neighbours, the neighbourhood scale has its advantages for organising, but the way in which Ana can define who is in the neighbourhood and how this changes between individuals also highlights the potentially negative aspects of this categorisation. The category of 'neighbour' could be used to reclaim a local identity, as well as to exclude those that are not deemed to be 'from the neighbourhood'. This may have potentially racist or xenophobic connotations, as this is not a neutral category.

Secondly, Ana suggests that Mercado Bonpland does not function as a place for everyday essential items for local residents in the way that a traditional neighbourhood market does. It is not open every day, and produce is not available throughout the year, as products are led by production. Local people thus cannot go to Mercado Bonpland every day and ask stallholders to get them a special bread, vegetable or cleaning product. Mercado Bonpland's organisation, which is deliberately designed to change consumer relationships and improve conditions for producers, depends on consumers *wanting* to change this relationship. As such, Ana identifies those shopping in the market as being a 'special public'. As the market has developed through a process – opening more days, connecting with more producers – these are issues that neighbours may see being addressed over time. In catering to a local population, markets have a local

character, and are reliant on the neighbourhood that they serve. Therefore, in a changing neighbourhood, and with a 'special public', Mercado Bonpland's stock will not reflect the needs of all the long-term residents.

As Mercado Bonpland was organised from the Palermo Neighbourhood assembly, it is logical that it would predominately – at least initially – serve those involved with this community organising. This may not include everyone from the local neighbourhood, as not everyone has participated in the assembly organising. More than ten years since the initial assemblies, these neighbours are also likely to have changed and adapted. As such, neither these markets nor neighbours are a 'pure' category, but are rather shaped by each other and interlinked.

As an old neighbour, being displaced from a neighbourhood that was originally her home explains Maria's motivation to remain as the last municipal market stallholder in the new market. As she observed, there have been considerable changes in the Palermo neighbourhood over the last twenty years, and since Maria could not continue to live in Palermo, it became more important for her to stay in the market:

Do I want a change to go to another market? It is that I have been here in Palermo for thirty-four years. For me, this is my home, and it is important. I think everyone knows me here. I have had three children born in Palermo, I lived in the next block for thirty-three years. No, I do not want to leave; yes, they offered me to go to another place, but I don't want it. I want this place. It is like I am native from here (Maria, 26/04/2014).

Maria has been displaced from her home in Palermo, so she wants to stay and keep her business. This shows her attempts to resist the processes of gentrification. However, remaining in the market is not so simple for her: the changes in the neighbourhood mean that she no longer has customers:

There are many new people in the neighbourhood – people who were from before are not here any more. And today, people don't want to sew (Maria, 26/04/2014).

These ‘new people’ don’t want to buy the products from a traditional market stall. Maria has not changed her products to fit with these new shoppers, or with the market’s focus on responsible consumption, where the quality and provenance of the products are crucial. As an individual, she cannot singlehandedly resist this neighbourhood process, or go back to the traditional market, as there has been a structural change to the neighbourhood that has altered both the residents and the space. Mercado Bonpland is now run through ideas of economic solidarity, and against the speculation that has taken place in the neighbourhood. Through collective organising, stallholders have managed to maintain the space as a solidarity market. Maria’s story, along with those of other ‘traditional’ residents, demonstrates the sometimes invisible processes of displacement – whether these are for their homes (Maria); workplaces (at the kiosk); or are micro-displacements in the neighbourhood, as traditional neighbourhood services are replaced by expensive boutiques and restaurants.

Market and retail gentrification?

The organisation of Mercado Bonpland is focused on creating different relationships of production, fair trade and responsible consumption. However, in light of the neighbourhood gentrification, we must ask: does the market fit with the state’s retail development strategies?

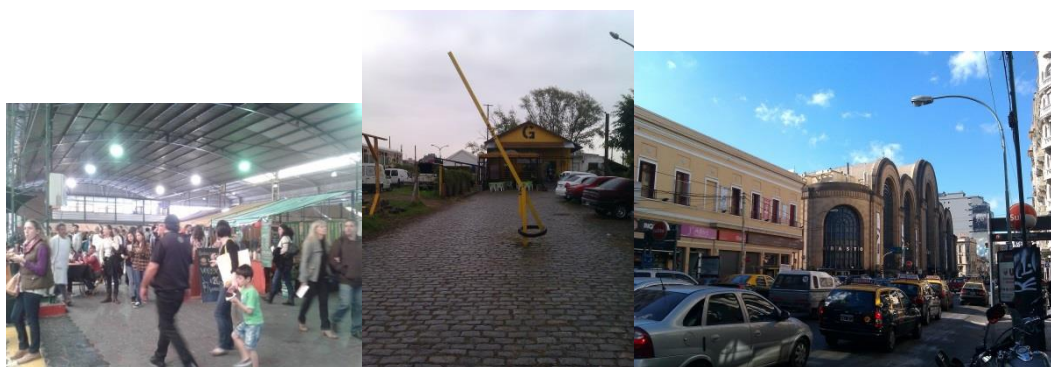


Figure 7-2 Buenos Aires Market (10/04/2014), El Galpon (18/05/2014) and Abasto Market (08/07/2013) (left to right)

I visited a number of markets during my stay in Buenos Aires, all of which had a different focus to that of Mercado Bonpland, all demonstrating different attempts to use markets as retail development projects (Figure 7-2). Other traditional municipal markets have been redeveloped as shopping malls, such as Abasto market. This former traditional market now sells expensive clothes and other luxury goods, as well as having a food hall. This represents a change from the traditional market that was run by the municipality to a luxury mall with private security. Another market phenomenon is the Buenos Aires Market – a collection of different expensive and ‘artisanal’ stalls, organised one weekend a month in different locations – the photograph above shows the market in Palermo Hollywood, in a former industrial warehouse. This demonstrates the construction of a ‘market as an event’, with expensive products, live music and ready to eat food, rather than selling essentials. This market is a provider of leisure activities, and is promoted by the Buenos Aires city government. El Galpon in Chacarita represents another type of market – the organic, ‘green’ market – demonstrating a difference between the agro-ecological focus of Bonpland and that of Galpon. The prices in Galpon were higher than those in Bonpland, and the focus was on organic products. In Bonpland, whilst an ideal might be to work towards organic produce, it must be done through agro-ecological organisation. Mercado Bonpland’s focus is on producers and fair trade (as discussed in chapter 5 ‘fair trade’ has a specific meaning – as direct trade where producers set the price), whereas organic food can be produced through big business.

Each of these markets shows different retail gentrification strategies, but all are organised differently from Bonpland. The redevelopment of and implementations made by Abasto and Buenos Aires markets were actively supported by the city government. Galpon has a different history, as several organisations in Bonpland were originally part of el Galpon, such as la Asamblearia and Colectivo Solidario. They left Galpon as a result of conflicts with its

organisers, and because they felt that the aim of the market had changed, with its focus being on profit rather than on solidarity initiatives. Leonardo describes these conflicts:

Yes, this [Mercado Bonpland] is the unique social economy market that Buenos Aires has. This is very significant. The other one is in Chacarita [el Galpon]. It is not a social market any more, because it is managed by one person, who charges taxes, charges you rent – he is basically a feudal lord (Leonardo, 23/04/2014).

Leonardo emphasises the differences between Mercado Bonpland and Galpon. As I discussed in the section on the state, in having a status ‘between occupation and negotiation’, the majority of Bonpland’s stallholders do not pay rent, and this allows them to focus on other forms of organisation. Leonardo contends that this difference is the result of Bonpland being a social economy market, so the market is not [just] about profit.

Does Mercado Bonpland’s status as a social economy enterprise thus mean that it is different to the other examples of retail redevelopment? All of the examples are renewed markets that sell to middle-class consumers. However, the motivation of stallholders is different in Bonpland than in the other markets. Is this enough to claim that Bonpland resists retail gentrification? It is essential that Mercado Bonpland continues to pursue improved production conditions as well as responsible consumer relationships if it is to set itself apart from these other markets.

Upgrading traditional markets can be a part of a process of gentrification. In Zukin’s reflections on farmers’ markets in New York, she highlights how ‘an authentic *experience* of local character becomes a local *brand*’ (Zukin, 2009:121). Therefore, a market based around economic solidarity could be perceived as uncontroversial by the state, or even as being beneficial to it in terms of neighbourhood redevelopment, as it offers an ‘authentic experience’ of local culture – in this case, solidarity economy, local food, and even an opportunity to consume the history of the crisis. Seen only as ‘ethical’ shopping, it is not a radical or controversial space for the state, and can indeed be quite the opposite, as it can be used to demonstrate the liberal, progressive attitudes of the state. For example, Mercado Bonpland could be used to demonstrate that the state supports the continued development of

alternative projects. However, undermining this idea is the fact that the state has made a number of attempts to close down the market, particularly during its early days, although this was resisted with support and concerted organisation of the neighbours. These debates demonstrate in-against-and-beyond development, as Mercado Bonpland could be operating against the state's interest in the gentrification process, although aspects of this project work alongside it.

To definitively answer the question of whether the market is part of the process of gentrification would require further research. However, in understanding Mercado Bonpland as part of a relational territory, I do not believe that it is possible to see such a community project as entirely separate from the structures that surround it. The community resources in Mercado Bonpland are not completely at odds with a process of gentrification, and they could not ensure that they were never co-opted, but their contesting and organising helps to challenge these processes.

Who benefits from Mercado Bonpland?

Mario highlights the aim of the market as being to enable everyone – producers, market workers and consumers – to improve the way that they live:

We all benefit, more or less, depending on which side of the counter or shovel you are on. The producer benefits, because he can sell his products, but also because he gets a bag of sugar at a fantastic cost. Here we have cheese of the best quality, so I will buy no more other, and I myself benefit with the product.

The public participate because there is no public as a separate audience, I tell the people "If you have some time you must do something" and some come and weigh their products – they help us. Because you are also consumers and producers, you produce something. If people say "No, I don't produce anything", I say "Yes, you use Microsoft Windows, you are producing something". Let's see how can you help (Mario, 15/04/2014).

Mario's description of these roles highlights how he sees everyone as part of a process of change. For example, he sees consumers as being both producers and helpers in the market, so working together should lead to improving the environment for everyone. This collective improvement is another effect of Mercado Bonpland. This approach does not prevent gentrification, but focuses on creating better conditions and resources for all in order to generate

resources that allow independence from mainstream options. However, as I have demonstrated this understanding is not shared by all neighbours in Palermo.

The role of markets in gourmetisation – as food-gentrification or increasing food quality for the local neighbourhood?

Zukin's research on 'authentic' places in New York explores how the rise in food markets has led to both place gentrification and improvements in food quality, as these markets:

attracted middle-class visitors and tourists who wanted to consume both "authentic" food, meaning European cheese and freshly picked produce, and the "authentic" city: old brick buildings, cobblestone streets, and lively crowds. This aesthetic attraction to authentic foods and places found an echo with architects and planners who were thinking about how to re-develop the wastelands of the inner city (Zukin, 2009:116).

Authenticity in place and food is thus seen as the key attraction for consumers here. However, Zukin's (2009) examination of the production of these 'authentic' farmers' markets in the centre of New York found that seeing products as being authentic is based on trends (e.g. European cheeses) and the imaginaries of places (e.g. the importance for shoppers of the feeling of community). The technique that Zukin identifies is the redeveloping of places so that they are perceived as authentic by new middle-class residents, tourists and planners. However, Bonpland, which is organised by producers and local neighbours, offers a 'truly authentic' experience rather than one manufactured by architects and planners. This doesn't mean, however, that it couldn't be incorporated into a development plan of the city. In particular, it is important to review the types of food that are sold in Bonpland to see whether it does play a role in the gentrification processes. The crucial difference between the products sold in Bonpland and those sold in gentrified markets is that those chosen in Bonpland are entirely based on what producers think are good products for a reasonable price, rather than being chosen for the sake of creating an 'authentic' experience for consumers.

As a process, gourmetisation reflects the production of gentrification in food and neighbourhoods – for example, food trends that force local people into having to eat different products, or products that are rebranded and sold for higher prices. When products are branded as organic, poorer families cannot afford to buy them. Gourmetisation – as understanding the difference between what people want to buy and what they *can* buy – is important for the Mercado Bonpland case. Shoppers who used the traditional municipal market do not feel like it reflects their (old) neighbourhood whilst, at the same time, the neighbourhood people (through the Palermo Viejo assembly) were active in organising Mercado Bonpland. Therefore, food trends, consumption habits and availability are reflected by neighbourhood changes:

At times, food gentrification and neighbourhood gentrification can be seen to work in tandem, as in cases where community gardens have attracted wealthier residents to working class neighbourhoods. Whether it's the fetishization of hole-in-the-wall restaurants, twerking, or Sriracha, the gentrification cycle has birthed the momentary relevance of countless ideas and materials (Soleil, 2014:n.p.).

As Soleil reflects, traditional food and even community gardens can be seen as symbols of gentrification. In particular, Soleil discusses the way that previously cheap and ‘working-class’ products and cooking are being rebranded. For example, in the U.S., kale and collard greens have been transformed from staples to ‘super foods’, raising their price out of the reach of local low-income people, and thus having exclusionary class and race impacts. These processes can also take place on a global scale that produces local effects, as we saw with quinoa earlier.

Rather than focusing solely on organic food, or developing and selling fashionable food products to maximise profit, Bonpland’s economic solidarity initiative means that it focuses on production conditions and the agro-ecological production of fruits and vegetables. Agro-ecological production has production techniques as its main concern rather than the organic label, and prices are set with producers at assemblies, such as in Colectivo Solidario, rather than being set at the maximum price for the area. The producers’ price has a two per cent addition to support the development of producers – which is decided in the assembly:

They operate the price structure, under values – which is fixed, we don't speculate, don't get out the merchandise. For example we have tomatoes here that we could increase the price of a lot (Leonardo, 16/07/2013).

This means that, whilst the market is not the cheapest source of food, it is also not the most expensive and, as food quality and work relations are both focused on, its prices are based on fair trade and production rather than speculation. In addition, as with quinoa, whilst popular classes 'can't afford it and have to consume the other thing' (Leonardo, 23/04/2014), the money from the market is used to fund the development of autogestive projects with the aim of improving quality of life for all involved. Consequently, the money from selling these foods is based on fair prices for producers and on improving their living standards, as well as producing healthy food for all involved.

The pricing strategy of the market was different to those of the profit-maximising strategies used in other locations in Palermo Hollywood. I reflect on Gabi's observations that for some long-term local residents, the market was a resource for some reasonably priced basic products, as gentrification and tourism meant that basics goods were often only available at expensive prices in many places:

We also spoke about prices and why they [Red Del Campo] sold organic mate tea and honey etc. For them, it was also important that the price was not high for these products, [and that] this market should be a place that people could have some high quality, organic food. Gabi discussed the difficulty for her, living in San Telmo – another gentrified area – to buy maté at a reasonable price, she had seen the same here in Palermo. She therefore discussed the importance of selling these products, emphasising that they were essential as well as a part of changing the way that we engage with the system of production and consumption (Field diary, discussion with Gabi, 02/07/2013).

Therefore, whilst most of the products sold by Gabi in Red Del Campo were crafts, they also sold some basics, which were important to provide in the area. In this case, the aim was to provide the necessary standard of quality in the products for a reasonable cost to people in the

neighbourhood. This means local people do not only have to buy in another area, or at the increasingly common boutique shops, which were often expensive in comparison.

These debates show the difficulty of producing and consuming healthy, natural, fair and low-cost foods from within a capitalist food system that is based on exploitation and profit. Whilst the market does not offer the lowest cost option, this is because they are trying to support projects that do not exploit workers – the idea being that if work is dignified, these workers can also support other similar projects through networks of exchange. The potential for gentrification, just as with the potential for co-optation, should not prevent these projects from occurring, but rather ensure that within these projects there is collective organisation that avoids being just another form of ‘moral capitalism’. As Soleil reflects, if the product rather than the worker is the focus, then gourmetisation is the conclusion:

The setting-aside of food as social capital is logical within the aspirational framework of late capitalism; it makes sense for us to be celebrating the product over the worker and to implicitly shame the ones who cannot afford to shop in the same supermarket aisles as we can (Soleil, 2014:n.p.).

Mercado Bonpland makes a specific effort to resist these processes by forming links between local and national neighbourhood territories, organising producers and consumers to ensure that the worker is celebrated over the product.

One project cannot provide all of the answers to these complex conundrums of gentrification. However, in relational networks of territories – in the sites of production and the space of Mercado Bonpland – we can see a push beyond capitalist profit motives. Taking part in this process also creates structures that producers can rely on in their everyday lives. This is crucial: as Palermo becomes increasingly expensive, neighbours will need this resource. If Bonpland focused solely on consumption habits, this would not provide a solution to gourmetisation, as poorer people often do not have a choice over what they consume. However, in attempting to change consumption practices and in using necessary consumption to help support and build-up networks of alternatives, a different process is taking place. This is part of the idea of a non-

linear narrative of production and consumption within the market. Consumption is not the final end-point of this practice, but rather part of a relational process.

It is no longer possible to go back to the traditional market in Bonpland as the neighbourhood has changed, as have the consumers. In addition, selling food at the cheapest prices would require the exploitation of natural or human resources. Therefore, building up these reciprocal networks between the different moments of a production process ensures that speculation and exclusion are reduced. The processual model of the market is a way of people aiming to create better conditions for all the producers. If we see gentrification as a structural process of social exclusion, then creating new forms of social relations without exploitation, and which can increase the access and quality for everyone, contests these processes. However, this does not place Mercado Bonpland outside of the gentrification process, but rather in-against-and-beyond it, and it is necessary for market organisers to reflect on these processes.

7.4 Organising everyday life in the territory of Mercado Bonpland

To understand how everyday life is organised in Mercado Bonpland focuses on the practices and social relationships involved in creating territories. In order to investigate daily life in territories I engage with the scale of the relationships and how they are managed. These territories are maintained through social relationships via ongoing collective organising and improving personal relationships between people. In the interviews, numerous participants reflected on these daily life practices, but Mario's explanation of the complex specifics of organising networks was particularly useful. Therefore, Mario and la Asamblea's practices are discussed extensively in this section. However, these discussions illuminate the broader debates in this area, particularly on how to organise these networks.

The scale of social relations and networks in creating economies

Building on the arguments from chapter 5 on commodity and money, I argue that movements within the market operate at both the local and national levels simultaneously. Focusing only on the local scale is problematic, as it can ignore wider systemic problems. In order to react to economic challenges, the market needs to engage with multiple scales of development at once. North (2008) identified the importance of moving beyond the local scale in his research on Argentine barter movements as ‘did not support the opposition of the local to the global, believing that the local can be small-minded and xenophobic, while globalization can imply connection, solidarity, communication and support’ (North, 2008:26). Understanding multiple scales and how they interact is crucial for the development of alternative projects, and the complexity of simultaneously organising at the local and national scales is taken on at Mercado Bonpland. Local scale work involves producing in the market, and generating better work conditions and fair trade. This is organised through co-operatives, some of which have a national scale of organisation.

As Mario observes, understood through relational networks of territories, organising to support producers is complex, being related to producers and seasonal and sudden produce changes:

Now the walnuts have only just arrived, they were delayed, because there was a lot of rain, sun-dried tomato just arrived because there was not a cursed sunny day to dry them, just rain, rain, rain. It was terrible. There will be no pears because hail two months ago marked it them all and we will be left without stone fruit (Mario, 15/04/2014).

This constantly changing organisation of produce requires excellent communication between producers to ensure that produce arrives at the market.

Transport to the market requires different forms of organisation, through networks that support and engage with the producers. Mario from la Asamblearia must organise the transport between different nodes, based on different farmers and producers, with the produce varying throughout the year. This means organising across scales and through different local nodes and networks to facilitate the movement of the product, which is logistically complex, as la Asamblearia co-op

must try to organise the networks, facilitating the integration of the new producers as well as paying for and organising the transport. Not all of the co-ops are organised in this way, as some rely on producers coming directly to the market. But understanding the complexity of the network that is formed at la Asamblearia is part of understanding the complexity of these alternatives.

First, the network tries to organise at different nodes where people can collectively organise. This helps to create stronger bonds regionally, as well as facilitating the process of organising all of the network and collections. The main nodes are in the following regions:

The strongest regions from the network are located in Santa Fé, Entre Ríos, Córdoba. the more intensively farmed region are: Mendoza, Formosa, Salta, Jujuy and here Córdoba. Finally some networks are in: Catamarca, La Rioja, San Juan y Mendoza (Mario, 15/04/2014).

This demonstrates the large geographic spread of the different production networks, which then also manage and organise between these nodes:

Q: The organisation of networks is very prominent from the way that you describe the situation to us. I imagine these networks must facilitate the transportation in addition to the work?

A: It helps people bring their products here. Strong networks help, but we pay the transport (Mario, 15/04/2014).

The collective organising of networks is facilitated though the nodes, which are all linked together to transport goods to the market. This demonstrates the interconnected national, regional and local scales of organisation.

The different nodes are organised in diverse ways, as they are located in a variety of regions in the country, and la Asamblearia organises the collection of the products. This means that transport is a large cost for the network. In addition, even if a collection from one node is expensive, in order to facilitate and continue the development of the co-operative they must continue to organise transport from this node. This is different to the set-up seen in a traditional

market, where the expensive node would be cut-out to increase profits, as the relationships in Bonpland are not driven by profit, but by working to support and build relationships with producers:

And that region goes to the Rosario node and barbers. But, from all the nodes coming here, [to the market], the most expensive is from Parque Patricios to here, also Misiones to here. It kills us.

Q: Do they drop off products in Parque Patricios?

A: Yes, because all the transport companies go there. So I have to send 600k sugar. It costs \$600 plus the costs of the transport from there to here. And from there to here it costs me \$520, because it takes three hours or more – \$180 each hour. While they go, take turns to get products, loading and unloading, I am being charged.

It would be good if we could have a backbone transportation from a co-operative or the state – someone. If [it was done] twice a month, it could travel, picking up the goods, and come here as an internal network. But for this... we need more time. At the moment two things happened... people like the idea but generally say, "no, we are not ready for that" (Mario, 15/04/2014).

Mario demonstrates the complexity of the organisation of these networks, as well as the cost. Even if there is only a small amount of produce to bring to the market, it still requires collecting, as different nodes organise their networks differently. This means that transportation is not consistent throughout the network, and thus the costs of transportation from further away, as well as different organisational strategies, must be taken into account. In addition, very little produce might be sent each time by the small producers, making it even more expensive.

Organisation through social relationships in the networks

For la Asamblearia, these transport difficulties highlight the importance for the market to facilitate the construction of relationships for each of the production spaces that it organises with new producers in. This strengthens local organisation, and improves the potential of the network to function better on a larger scale. It also shows the different ways that networks are organised, particularly in comparison to big businesses or, as Mario refers to them, the ‘monsters’. Here, I quote Mario at length describing the organisation of these networks:

And the producers know us. When they come here – to Mercado Bonpland – we want to go, because they know that the co-operative is here. But we also tell them “you must be organisers – organise, because in your town there are other people.”

With the people from Misiones, it took three years to join the producers of one hectare. One hectare is nothing. Because they didn’t send sugar here to begin with, ‘monsters’ used to buy it, but even they didn’t want to buy one hectare, because it was not profitable to come and harvest one hectare. And they couldn’t send [it] to another place, because they said “how do we send it, with what transportation, how do we deliver it?”

So we went there, from the network – we said “let’s go, there are some people there”. In that area, there are Methodist, Adventist groups running the social organisations. So we talked with them... to organise the people and join them. It took three years to make them meet, because there was neighbourhood bickering.

It is like going to your neighbourhood and meeting the five hairdressers of the area. Then trying to unite them to buy products together, you would have to kill them, they would just say “No, not with that one. No, with the other one”. Why? “Because he stole a client from me, went out with my wife.” I don’t know, it is like that.

But we convinced them to organise their produce by the pallet – pallets are cheaper to bring here and they had more benefit – so yes, they were organising, so they found a place to sell at a fair price. This paid them more, and then those people shut down, so now we pay for the transport, and have the produce.

The pallet comes in a cube that is sealed. I wouldn’t send three bags to someone and four to the other one. Therefore, with the pallets they got organised, [and] when they organise themselves, we entail the danger that they start selling at the Chinese market and multinational ones, because what happens? “You do the organising, but when they got [a] better price they will leave you out.” That happened with someone who went away but they came back.

All right, but we must do something, because you can’t expect purity before the [network] is well built, because we are in a society that is not supportive. Someone who does things like this is a fool, because the goal is making money at any cost. It is a part – and a bad part I tell you (Mario, 15/04/2014).

Here Mario highlights the challenges of organising at a large scale and through the community.

It is necessary to work beyond the daily contestations, arguments and competition – to work collectively despite these differences in order for the wider network to function. This demonstrates the importance of organising at both the local and national scales, as well as the hard work that is involved in doing so. Mario’s description highlights the fact that not everyone in the network will get on with each other, but that they still work together despite their differences to ensure that their produce can be arranged together on pallets. This shows the engagement needed in the daily lives of people in the market to ensure that the collective

capacity and production of Mercado Bonpland is maximised. Therefore, it is not only within Mercado Bonpland's space that disagreements need to be negotiated, but also in the production neighbourhoods, as well as between these spaces. This demonstrates the importance of working together despite the differences in opinion that are held.

In particular, Mario's description highlights the long-term nature of the development of these organisational networks. Organising producers takes time – to get to know different producers, to work with them, and to understand their conflicts, their lives and how to help improve conditions. This demonstrates the need for on-the-ground organising to create these networks across the country. As such, networks are nebulous things: demonstrating commitments to organising, meeting and facilitating change for these everyday life problems. This hard work cannot be ignored or avoided, and this attests to the challenges of such an organisational approach.

These examples of la Asamblea's relationships highlight the complexity of organising through a network to support the development of producers, rather than organising to secure a specific product or price. Doing so involves many challenges, including working with the seasons, the variability of a harvest, organising transport through different nodes, and the difficulties involved with payment and barter. It is only made possible through the difficult work of organising on the ground in each of the spaces of production, so that they can support each other in producing and organising collective transport and pallets.

Everyday life, social reproduction and social relationships

Territory is built on social relationships, as demonstrated above in the context of transport organisation, and these social relationships are thus the most important part of organising for the market. Territory is built through collective networks of solidarity, which means that groups within Mercado Bonpland organise in such a way that they support each other rather than competing with each other:

First, to be a producer, not to outsource products, produced in the co-operative without slave labour (which is common), if possible products without additives – natural products. Some producers don't use organic products, such as recuperated factories creating industrial products; they have the objective to be organic but are not organic at the start. We support them anyway, because the people working there, they work as we do. Always the aim is becoming friends. Do you need something? Can we help you? It always ends in a friendship (Claudia, 16/07/2013).

The focus of the market and the network within it is to support the development of social relationships, improving conditions for the producers within these spaces, as we saw in relation to organising transport in the previous section. Claudia's description emphasises this too: the organising aims to end in friendships, so that there is reciprocity in these spaces. This helps to create better conditions for everyone, as well as conditions of solidarity and trust that people can rely on.

Mario also describes the importance of the daily life organisation of the network nodes and that undertaken in the market. He observes that more barter takes place in the Rosario node as it is in a more proximate local neighbourhood, where this sort of organisation functions better, whereas this is not possible at the scale of the whole network, which needs to be organised through trust and collaboration:

Q: Do you swap inside nodes?

A: They do that in the Rosario node, because they are closer, and there must be someone responsible to go between the projects. For example, a volunteer will go to the factory, to see how they are working, because it might be chaotic there. It is not like everything is always working well, and when they send, you have to go. In the market, we have to make our own package of products, through negotiation, as you have no time to come and go all the time. It is a great effort at each step, but inside it is a way of life, which is fantastic. It is normal that someone might make a mistake. I send you extra \$1000, you sent me less. So, now I leave cash here [in the market], [so that] when another comrade comes, he can do the cash balance. If something is left, it is just because someone made a mistake, maybe the consumer, or someone working here. This has no price. It's priceless.

And through this collective, when someone needs help, for example the call comes: we must help build the house of a comrade, then we will all go, from the architect to the engineer, based on collective priorities. Who needs to plant? "Well I can go, because I have no harvest today, so I can go there". This sort of organisation works, but here is the missing point – if we don't have collective organisation it would disassemble immediately. But it works when we are all involved... (Mario, 15/04/2014).

Mario emphasises their reliance on this collectively within the network: ‘if we don’t have inner cohesion it would disassemble immediately’ and highlights the trust that must be developed amongst these networks for them to function. This even extends to the way that cash is used to pay for different activities. The trust and autonomy given to each person in the node to organise themselves also shows that, for the market to function in this way, they must all collaborate effectively through the network. Mario recognises that people can make mistakes, but that they rely on the collective trust because, without this, the whole network would ‘disassemble’.

However, not all of the organisations form their networks in the same way. For example, CEDEPO has connections to the Catholic Church, which makes its networks different as it partially organise through churches. CEDEPO also focuses on autonomy, which means that even when it has supported a family farm to start with, that farm has no obligation to sell its produce through the market. Rather, it is up to individuals to decide how they want to organise their production, and where they sell. This is also why the Florencio Varela fruit and vegetables stall is next to CEDEPO – they originally began through CEDEPO, but decided to have their own family stall to sell the produce. Similarly, Soncko organises its networks differently, as Sol discusses:

The fairs here in Buenos Aires, we have had the support of Social Development of the National Ministry, which supports us – in this case entrepreneurs, like us – [in] creating opportunities to sell and [for] marketing, what is the most difficult part (Sol, 07/07/2013).

The network was made by meeting at government fairs to ensure that products from all the small producers could be sold in different locations at the same time, thus reducing the number of fairs that each individual has to attend and increasing the variety of products sold in each location. This network is similarly about support and developing relationships with others.

Therefore, whether they were initially forged through need or for political organisation, the importance of networks is clear. These relationships are not based on profit, but instead on supporting people and building relationships of trust. They are made by meeting through

organisation, and through the experience of the crisis, which led to the creation of networks for support. They are built upon trust, and the expectations that, despite their differences, people are all aiming to help. All of these building blocks demonstrate the differences from the perceived norms of competitiveness that are highlighted under capitalist outlooks.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that territory can be used to highlight the inter-related way that Mercado Bonpland is constructed through networks of producers and alternative projects from across the country. I have analysed how power is constructed in place, and how this is related to other projects and social power. Understanding the necessity of producing autogestive movements in the post-2001 financial and social reproduction crisis led to embedding the market territory as a neighbourhood expression of neighbourhood power with the aim of changing their neighbourhood environments.

The Mercado Bonpland neighbourhood is evolving and heterogeneous. Therefore, in attempting to establish a territory of other values in Palermo, the neighbours could not reverse or prevent the gentrification of the neighbourhood. In this sense, I wish to dispel idea or critique that the neighbours and organisers in the market have not created a ‘pure commons’ or an un-cooptable space as, following Caffentzis and Federici (2014), capital can be seen to be reliant on these social organisations and spaces. I have shown how their social organisations are, in fact, built through networks that can support organisation beyond these traditional boundaries. As such, they engage in creating a different form of living, eating and working by establishing many territories and networks of alternative projects. Understanding the daily life challenges that take place in order to make the market function: such as the logistics of organising transport to the market – highlights the complexity of these alternative networks, as well as the importance of

developing personal relationships of support despite the differences between the different partners. I argue that these networked territories, which go far beyond the Palermo neighbourhood, demonstrate complex challenges to 'normal' daily life under exploitative capitalist social relations, and that organising in the context of difference and complexity is thus possible. Whilst these networks do not offer all of the answers, the example that they provide challenges us to rethink what is possible. In sum, a networked and relational understanding of territory helps us see the 'power in place' that Mercado Bonpland has built up.

Chapter 8 Conclusion

This thesis has explored in-against-and-beyond as an approach and theory for reimagining everyday life through antagonism, and for creating possibilities beyond those that had previously existed. In Buenos Aires, the economic crisis established a break in previous forms of organising, and I explored how neighbourhood assemblies developed approaches both for surviving the crisis and to create new ways for people to live their everyday lives. There is a disjuncture between theoretical literature about the possibility of organising alternative forms of economy, social organisation and spatial territories and engaging in the difficulties of achieving change. This research embeds itself in the contested world of the everyday, which sits between utopian accounts of possibility and those critiques that highlight neoliberal dominance and reinforce the idea that ‘there is no alternative’. Mercado Bonpland is the focus through which these antagonisms are drawn out, and demonstrates the challenges, limitations and potential of projects embedded in the contested and difficult terrain of everyday life. This study has sought to explore these challenges through answering the following four research questions:

1. How is the **economy** reproduced in-against-and-beyond everyday life, and what is the potential for reimagining social relationships beyond capital?
2. What insights do social relations in-against-and-beyond the **state** in the daily practices of Mercado Bonpland offer in terms of articulating multiple forms of organisation beyond capital?
3. In what ways do the relational networks of **territories** evident in Mercado Bonpland demonstrate novel spatial practices that build new forms of power embedded in place?
4. How does the **praxis of antagonism and possibility** demonstrate creating change through everyday life politics beyond the capitalist present?

Whilst the main empirical and theoretical findings of this research were summarised in the analysis chapters, I will also now address each research question in order to draw out the

conclusions, with a section given over to discussing each question. I will thus separate the conclusion into sections concerning the crisis context, the economy, the state, territory and, finally, antagonism and possibility. Following the summary of the conclusions, I reflect on the potential for further research, the wider implications of the research, and its limitations. Finally, I argue that in-against-and-beyond demonstrates a tactic of engaging in necessary and productive antagonisms, addressing everyday life and creating ‘beyond’ as part of the ‘in-and-against’ today.

8.1 The possibilities and antagonisms that arise through organising everyday politics in-against-and-beyond

The main findings were summarised in the respective analysis chapters: Chapter Five: Economy, market and everyday life; Chapter Six: organising in-against-and-beyond the state and social movements; and Chapter Seven: in-against-and-beyond territory as praxis of power in place. As I have already suggested, practice, experience and research were used, through an iterative process, to produce the thesis findings. Therefore, there are points at which theory and research overlap. In order to establish the main conclusions from each section, I will identify the crucial themes – crisis, economy, state and territory – and address each in turn, responding to the relevant research questions as I do so. Finally, using research question four, I provide the overall conclusions, developing the ideas of antagonism and possibility.

The crisis context’s role in informing practice and long-term possibility

The research context of this thesis focuses on organising from a crisis context as a process between the necessity of everyday life and possibilities moving forward. This context builds on accounts of the crisis as a rupture, whilst taking the difficulties of everyday life organising into account (Colectivo Situaciones, 2011; Holloway, 2010a:238). At the same time, the crisis

context in Buenos Aires necessitated that many individuals cooperated in developing their skills, relationships, ideas and critiques through the process of organising. Organising created connections, relationships and practices that continued past the initial crisis moment. However, the breakdown of normal capital through the collapse of the peso not only necessitated this organisation, but also withdrew the veil of 'logic' and objectivity that many of the middle class in Argentina had associated with the capitalist system (Muir, 2015). Finally, the development and history of Mercado Bonpland demonstrated the long-term processes of organising from crisis and the long-term effects of crisis. Consequently, perceptions of the economy and the embodied experience of this crisis meant that organising in Bonpland continued after the initial necessity for an alternative economy had ended.

The so-called '2001' crisis in Argentina is the context that foregrounds all of the analysis chapters (economy, state and territory). This crisis context introduced the necessity for the creation of Mercado Bonpland, as well as emphasising the complexity and long-term impacts of this crisis. In the economy chapter (Chapter Five), the crisis context shows that the crisis went beyond a merely financial one, affecting daily life itself, and as a break in the objectivity of capitalist social relations. This led to a breakdown of the political system and an organisation of social movements, creating new horizontal political practices. This crisis period was therefore a period of hope – of the possibility that the rupture offered and a refusal of the old system of capitalist social relations, mediated through collective organising.

Chapter Six's crisis context focused on autonomous organising in-against-and-beyond the state. Mercado Bonpland originates from neighbourhood assembly organising, particularly since the 2001 crisis. It demonstrates the long-term history and process of autonomous organising that has been undertaken since the neighbourhood assemblies were formed. The development of the Palermo Assembly was based on the organisers' interests, and was connected to daily life politics. The organisers of Mercado Bonpland recounted different accounts of its origins,

demonstrating different understandings of how power operates, and how the collective gained control in the market.

Chapter Seven focused on territory and how powers are contested and constructed in the specific place of Mercado Bonpland. The crisis contextualises the construction of Mercado Bonpland's territory as a complex and conflict-ridden process stemming from necessity and the possibilities for organising created in 2001. I highlighted their 'successes' in maintaining the market as a relational territory despite neighbourhood change. However, these neighbourhood changes also revealed the potential conflicts surrounding the issue of who the market and neighbourhood aim to provide for, demonstrating the difficulties that arise in organising Mercado Bonpland. The success of neighbourhood organising can be attributed to the collaborative networks of other spaces of alternative production (many of which originate from this crisis context). The territory of Bonpland, created by relational networks, demonstrates the importance of the social relationships that were built during the crisis period in Argentina.

The context of crisis demonstrates the difficulties and possibilities represented in organising prefigurative politics during a time of increasing social pressures. However, the context of crisis necessitated building relationships through organising, which have in turn expanded the market's capacity for action. This highlights the creative capacity for collective organising despite material challenges, and thus for building long-term capabilities.

In-against-and-beyond the economy

Exploring how the economy is produced is essential for understanding the creation of Mercado Bonpland. This was explored in research question one, and is demonstrated by three key research findings:

1. How is the **economy** reproduced in-against-and-beyond everyday life, and what is the potential for reimagining social relationships beyond capital?

- a. The **crisis context demanded organising alternatives**: capital as crisis necessitated the development of everyday life strategies of survival and experimentation. Mercado Bonpland demonstrates the possibilities of organising everyday life.
- b. **Economy in-against-and-beyond capital functions through antagonism**: economic practices in-against-and-beyond capital go beyond highlighting the existence of diverse economies; by establishing and operating through antagonisms they both create greater possibilities and highlight the contested construction of alternatives within capital. In-against-and-beyond the economy therefore connects the construction of the economy with the practice and reality of everyday life.
- c. **Mercado Bonpland's economy constructs and supports autogestive networks**: Mercado Bonpland connects different autogestive 'moments' in the production process, such as: self-managed production; dignified work; exchange and responsible consumption, which demonstrate the potential of movements' networks to support and facilitate each other's development. The development of these networks of autogestion facilitates the continuation of individual projects as well as creating opportunities for more projects to develop.

Like the diverse economies perspective, Mercado Bonpland demonstrates the variety of organisations that make up the economy. Capitalist social relations have always been reliant on these un-acknowledged economic processes that constitute daily life, for example through their reliance on the commons. Therefore, it is necessary to engage with the social relations that are being produced and how these might be antagonistic to capital. Because Mercado Bonpland began through necessity, some of its economic processes are still very much embedded within the current financial system. Rather than dismissing them, I highlight how prefigurative politics necessitates organising from the present conditions. This means creating dignified working conditions that prioritise improving people's work, but also their income and means of survival, which were essential in the crisis context. Moreover, in Bonpland, it was important that

organisations went beyond ‘normal’ work to organising networks of self-management. I have explored these economic theories with an example from Bonpland – the ‘Quinoa is Gold’ example – demonstrating the integration of Mercado Bonpland and the solidarity economy within a global economy. This demonstrates how global and local processes integrate, and therefore why Bonpland isn’t best seen as being outside capital, but as being in-against-and-beyond it.

To explore Mercado Bonpland as in-against-and-beyond the capitalist economy, I looked at different moments in the processes of making daily life in the market: production, exchange and consumption. Stallholders intention was to give producers more control and to support the continuation and expansion of projects, improving people’s lives and reducing their reliance on capital. Production therefore focused on examples of autogestion and self-management, particularly family agriculture, factory self-management and co-operatives. At the same time, the pressure for dignified work meant recognising the need to create better conditions, and therefore production was a dual movement. Exchange demonstrated processes that organisations put in place to try and reduce auto-exploitation and to provide more resources through ‘fair trade’, which meant completely re-conceiving production relationships. The role of market organisations was also to help commercialise in a responsible way (as often, in reclaiming a workplace, technical skills are lost). Different organisations also developed price structures to address food prices and currency speculation. Consumption was another key social relationship in Bonpland. Unlike other markets, Bonpland is not consumer-driven, but rather focused on production. The market organises despite inconsistencies such as seasonality, variability of quantity, and sudden gluts of unsorted produce. This requires that consumers take an active role in the market, with their buying being dependent on what is produced.

These moments all demonstrate the difficulty of organising a market, and of challenging every aspect of the capitalist process whilst also relying on it. Bonpland highlights the potential that group organising has for improving systems that build power by operating in-against-and

beyond capital. As Holloway shows in his example of buying a car, ‘the relation between ourselves and the car workers continues to be mediated through the commodity exchange’ (1992:153). Building networks to survive everyday life requires us to have access to things – at least to the basics of daily life. Understanding that the products of everyday life exist through a process of alienated labour does not make the relations producing these things or our need for them any less real: ‘The fragmentation of society is not only in our mind; it is established and constantly reproduced through the practices of society’ (ibid).

Any attempts to address the economy must not only address the theories but also the practices of daily life. For example, we will always need food, and thus there needs to be a way of producing food that is not exploitative. Additionally, there needs to be a way of exchanging that does not further the production of alienated things. Mercado Bonpland is seeking to address these multiple and related issues by supporting new experiments in production. Production is addressed differently: through creating alternative forms of social relationships, producing good and healthy produce, creating dignified work and networks of exchange, and challenging exchange values through networks of these alternatives. Bonpland has a dual strategy in its approach to how it sells and deals with producers and customers: firstly, it is based on everyday necessity, which means rather than relying on capital, it builds networks for improving conditions; and secondly, it creates completely new forms of social relationships.

The possibility of creating new economies comes from the circulation of all of these ‘different’ moments that produce the economy, which integrate many different projects. This is essential, as without networks, none of these projects could be collectively organised, which would make it difficult to create real change. I witnessed the need for such similar projects in the workers’ economy meeting that I attended in Marseille (discussed in Chapter 5). At this meeting, some of the workers from newly reclaimed factories talked about their experiences of operating alone, having reclaimed their workplaces, but now being isolated from their factories’ old commercial networks (such as supermarkets) and lacking connections to new networks, thus having no

spaces within which to sell. Mercado Bonpland, however, demonstrates how a collectively run organisation can organise through a market space to provide greater control to producers. Consequently, producers have greater powers to decide when and what they want to sell, as well as to organise and provide support to other autogestive projects. Mercado Bonpland demonstrates the challenges involved in collective organising that involves building resources that are beyond capitalist social relations whilst being in-and-against them.

Relationships in-against-and-beyond the state

Chapter Six and research question two addressed the process of negotiating relationships despite, because-of and demanding-from the state:

2. What insights do social relationships in-against-and-beyond the **state** in the daily practices of Mercado Bonpland offer in terms of articulating multiple forms of organisation beyond capital?
 - a. **Mercado Bonpland is a result of the evolution of the Palermo Viejo neighbourhood assembly:** the movement of Que Se Vayan Todos established political interstices that are in-against-and-beyond both state-led solutions and purely autonomous organisation. Bonpland is an example of how these antagonisms can be navigated through constructing politics at a neighbourhood level.
 - b. **Representation is heterogeneous:** the power of the state and that of social movements are navigated and approached differently. Both state power and collective power derived from neighbourhood assemblies are used in order to develop Mercado Bonpland.
 - c. **Mercado Bonpland organises according to autonomous groups as well as using the state to claim resources:** antagonisms and relationships are constructed with different levels of the state, and between different actors. By negotiating in-against-and-beyond these positionalities, Mercado Bonpland continues *despite* and *because* of them.

- d. **Long-term precarious legal ‘gray space’ is increasingly normalised, yet this context creates other potentials:** this ‘gray space’ through which Bonpland both operates and facilitates greater experimentation and organisation is based on everyday life rather than relying on approved behaviour based on legality.

Chapter Six argued that the autonomous organising of Mercado Bonpland is entangled with the state. The history of the QSVT movement meant that the state and social movements embodied different but interlinked roles. I demonstrated that theories about these horizontal movements challenged the legitimacy of the state, creating complex movements in-against-and-beyond it. The history of the market stems from these organisations, and is rooted in neighbourhood assembly organising, as well as appealing-to, demanding-from and organising-through different state organisations, and I argued for the importance of understanding relationships through-and-despite the state. The section on representation argued that the state is not homogenous, and that the market engages in different approaches towards it. In particular, Pedro’s story demonstrated the overlap between these movements and state organisations. In reviewing these relationships between neighbourhood organising and the state, it was important to focus on daily life, despite, demanding-from and because-of the state. The position of despite the state argues that the market successfully facilitates organisation despite state intervention, and in the face of obstruction, such as in supplying services. Demanding-from the state focuses on the way that social power is demonstrated through the demands that are made, and which the state should uphold. Because-of the state focuses on the support that state resources provide in the market. This shows the different conceptions and understandings of the state.

Chapter Six also used the concept of ‘gray space’ (Yiftachel, 2009a; 2009b) to argue that the on-going and precarious legal status of the market is unlikely to change and does not indicate that it is ‘under the radar’. Using ‘gray space’ also demonstrated the everyday antagonisms of having a precarious legal status, however. Importantly, the use of such ‘gray spaces’ is an increasingly common practice in today’s cities. As such, I discussed how this ambiguous legal

status had been a benefit to market organisers as well as when it had been a hindrance. I argued that this status has significant consequences for the organisers as, if political support changes, they could potentially go to jail. However, not being forced to follow the bureaucracy of ‘normal procedure’ has allowed them to collectively develop techniques that suit them better. Acknowledging the existence of these ‘gray spaces’ is a way of engaging with how there are many spaces that are ‘in-against-and-beyond’ the state’s control in everyday life. Therefore, this is an example of both the precariousness of the modern condition and possibilities that exist for creating alternative projects within ‘gray spaces’.

Territory: exploring spatial relational networks of power

Territorial relationships were developed in research question three and Chapter Seven.

3. In what ways do the relational networks of **territories** evident in Mercado Bonpland demonstrate novel spatial practices that build new forms of power embedded in place?
 - a. **The territory of Mercado Bonpland is constituted through networks:** networks of autogestive movements stemmed from neighbourhood organising out of necessity due to the crisis, but also demonstrate the possibility for alternatives to capital to be realised.
 - b. **Territory operates as power in place:** through relational networks Bonpland emphasises people’s potential to organise themselves despite the crisis.
 - c. **Neighbourhoods are constituted through multiple networks:** Bonpland relies on local neighbourhoods, facilitated by national networks of neighbourhoods. The changing neighbourhood of Palermo and these connected neighbourhoods complicate a local or national understanding of organising.
 - d. **Everyday life alternatives are reliant on networks:** daily life processes in Bonpland are facilitated by networks that rely on solidarity and trust to organise across different scales.

In Chapter Seven I focused on the development of theories of territory as power in place. This meant establishing understandings of territory beyond the state, understanding multiterritoriality to be constructed through relational networks of social relationships. This theory allowed me to explore the multiple powers and spaces that are necessary for constructing Mercado Bonpland. Territory, in the Argentine context, is praxis – a way to discuss and organise and to do political organising in the neighbourhood. Therefore, I argued that territory was a practice enacted in Bonpland and a tactic for continuing to organise.

The section on Mercado Bonpland as a territory focused on neighbourhood organising, networks and neighbourhood change, asking whom the market was for. I argued that the practice of organising in networks and through the neighbourhood has been crucial to Bonpland's success. This focus on the neighbourhood level acknowledges neighbourhood assembly organising, and that networks are importantly scaled beyond the local. Whilst an achievement of the market has been securing and maintaining the traditional market space in Palermo, neighbourhood change and gentrification have also led to a change in the neighbours and gentrification in the neighbourhood. Historical neighbours have been displaced, whilst new middle-class neighbours enjoy shopping at the market. This highlights a potential criticism of the market, as well as the difficulty involved in living in-against-and-beyond and creating processes of economic solidarity from within a capitalist system. However, I argue that despite these processes, Bonpland has remained a space that some historical neighbours still use.

In the final section, on daily life and organising the territory of Mercado Bonpland, I argued for the importance of organising multi-scalar networks, facilitating and organising through strong social ties and networks. The complexity of this organising was facilitated by strong social relationships. I argued that the organisations facilitating the networks had to work hard to improve these social relationships in order to get people to meet each other and to organise. Therefore, this value is derived from building and creating networks of personal support, not just in the market, but on the ground in numerous locations as well. As well as working on these

relationships, many of the connections making these networks were formed through organisation and through doing. This meant that the experience of being involved in autonomous politics helped to create networks that still develop based on daily life practices. This emphasises the potential of starting anew from today, and of prefigurative politics.

The use of territory provides a way of understanding the lived contradictions and tensions between spatial politics and different powers. In Bonpland, we can see claims to territory as an action of resistance, demonstrating *potencia* or power-to act in a space, which links together many alternative projects. The understanding of *poder* and *potencia* highlights the possibility for creating territories that better represent the people who function within them, and generating their capacity through collective action to produce spaces that have different values. However, as we also saw in this chapter, territory and the neighbourhood have experienced the effects of *poder* (the power-over) of the state, of capital, of speculation and of neighbourhood change. In this way, there have been spatial changes throughout the territory, and therefore I do not see Bonpland as existing outside of these tensions, but rather in-against-and-beyond them. This complexity demonstrates the potential of establishing multiple territories focused on autogestion projects, despite capital's attempts to enclose these projects. This demonstrates the potential of collective action, and other similar networks, to begin from day-to-day engagements:

[I]n and of themselves these are not answers to the capitalist market, but within the experience, within the creation of alternative ways of producing value, one can begin to see the seeds of an alternative economy that is central to the total transformation of society (Sitrin, 2012:222).

Following Sitrin, I argue that the example of Bonpland demonstrates more than just the seeds of an alternative economy. Organising collectively despite-and-because-of daily life necessity has created networks of hundreds of alternative projects that rely upon each other and are connected through Bonpland. It is this organisation in-against-and-beyond daily life that most clearly demonstrates the possibility of organisations such as Bonpland. In working through

difficulties, they demonstrate the potential to begin to organise everyday life for people, rather than around profit starting from imperfect everyday life.

Antagonism and possibility: yesterday, today and tomorrow

Everyday life despite-and-because-of antagonism and possibility was explored through the final research question, which operates as a conclusion reflecting on the broader implications that Mercado Bonpland highlights for others:

4. How does the **praxis of antagonism and possibility** demonstrate creating change through everyday life politics beyond the capitalist present?

The everyday life approach of this research engages with the antagonisms and possibilities of everyday life approaches. Currently, a large body of research focuses on alternative utopias, such as *Making Other Worlds Possible: Performing Diverse Economies* (Roelvink et al., 2015), which discusses examples of *Making Other Worlds Possible* through exploring economic narratives. This framework and research resonates with my findings on Mercado Bonpland. However, its construction is crucially different, with even the title *Making Other Worlds Possible* highlighting the idea that these alternatives are to be understood as ‘*Other Worlds*’. Whilst I understand that this is used as a device to highlight the many and diverse economies, like the diverse economies debate illuminated in Chapter Five, this does not go far enough. Rather than making other worlds possible, Mercado Bonpland is an example of an experiment grounded in the world that we live in *today*. This does not mean it is only restricted to that which exists right now, but rather that it shows how in-against-and-beyond focuses on creating the beyond through the in-and-against. That is, it creates other possibilities in *this world*.

The approach of in-against-and-beyond in Mercado Bonpland suggests that, at one and the same moment, the antagonisms of daily life can be used productively and despite the difficulties involved in doing so. This outcome has resulted from a context of antagonism – a crisis-laden

context in which there are many conflicts. In addition, the practice of antagonisms involves using knowledge, skills and power strategically in an attempt to ensure that contexts are moved beyond doing-for-capital, and towards more rewarding relationships that respond to broader sets of needs and desires. This practice therefore highlights the everyday learning and expertise produced by organisers.

This everyday life approach therefore represents an intervention between the utopian imaginations of beyond and the disempowering narratives that suggest there is no alternative. Responding to the debates outlined in Chapter Five, understanding that we make capital provided a starting point for this empowerment, as capital is reliant on labour, thus everyday life is an important terrain of struggle to reformulate social relationships.

The challenges and antagonisms that Mercado Bonpland faces demonstrate that political action need not wait for the ‘perfect’ moment. My experience at Mercado Bonpland during this research process demonstrated the possibility of organising despite difficulties to me, as improvements were made, collective relationships built and practices learnt within this process that showed that everyday life was no longer the same for those involved. Highlighting the antagonisms engages in politics in progress – collectively creating the possibility for action.

These possibilities are therefore created through the collective action of organisation by those involved in Mercado Bonpland, and are related to their everyday lives, both in terms of successes and challenges. These antagonisms, even in the context of possibility, demonstrate the process of creating the future that you want to see now. In this sense, the understanding of antagonisms and possibilities also demonstrates that these alternative examples of practices are created within the framework of in-against-and beyond, in which the ‘beyond’ aspect of creating an alternative organisation or ‘other world’ cannot be separated from the in-and-against. As such, even in the beyond, it is still important to be aware of the possible antagonisms with capital in order to prepare against being co-opted by it.

This context demonstrates the potential to act and to make changes from where we stand today, despite the difficulties involved, rather than waiting for a ‘perfect’ political situation to develop. This context is crucial in relation to European austerity and crisis, where greater cuts, attacks, and more privatisation are daily realities. From these imperfect (and in some cases unorganised and isolated) contexts, such everyday examples of politics in progress are particularly inspiring, and I hope that this critical technique is useful to others.

Across Europe (and beyond), the growing autogestion movement has much to learn from Mercado Bonpland. Whilst specifics vary, the example of the possibilities created through collective organising and relational networks in Mercado Bonpland are vast. Without an understanding of the processes used for developing networks from everyday life, the number of groups involved with Mercado Bonpland seems impossibly high (from the UK context). Without an everyday life approach, therefore, there is a tendency for some places, like Argentina, to become ‘cases’ and examples of particular phenomena, which tend to further separate them from other everyday life organisations. This way of ‘utopianising’ political examples, separating them from local histories and contexts, in a sense creates an ‘othering’ which produces certain memes – for example, of Latin America as the place of hope for the left. Whilst these experiences, contexts and examples are inspiring, this ‘othering’ is not necessarily motivational. Rather than an inspiration, this approach could lead to ideas of separation, re-inscribing antagonisms as a problem that others haven’t experienced: ‘if only I was in another place, I would not experience these problems’. Therefore, by engaging in antagonism through a process of in-against-and-beyond, I have established how these networks, histories and examples of political action were created, despite the difficulties involved, as a way of pursuing a process of change.

The burgeoning European autogestion movement (Karyotis, 2014) can, in particular, learn from the resources that were built between the collectives, projects and examples of autogestion in Bonpland. Mercado Bonpland facilitates and is facilitated by these networks of alternative

movements. The in-against-and-beyond approach shows when and how it is possible to engage in creating these alternatives, demonstrating the necessity of engaging in generating support and resources between alternatives in order to continue each project. Developing resources like Mercado Bonpland that can support the development of other alternatives is therefore crucial to their continuing progress.

8.2 Wider implications: learning with Bonpland

I have used Mercado Bonpland to explore the practices of creating alternatives in-against-and-beyond as both a method and a theory. I was inspired by the connected, engaged and varied practices of market organisers to use and demonstrate the antagonisms that they experience and live through in their daily lives. In addition, I found that through this process of collective organisation in Mercado Bonpland more possibilities for future organising exist than did previously. Mercado Bonpland is a very small case study, but it has allowed me to develop an understanding about the challenges of everyday life. Using in-against-and-beyond as a method as well as a theory opened up many possibilities that demonstrated the potential of this approach for other research. Understanding the process of creating alternatives rather than citing an example as a ‘success’ or a ‘failure’ shifts the analysis onto everyday praxis rather than looking for a ‘correct’ approach. In the context of the developing global austerity, this has particular resonance for research going forward.

Thus, looking forward, I would like to build on this approach in further research for the developing autogestion movements in Europe. I think that this process of understanding could release the pressure on having to establish any action as ‘correct’. The terrain of everyday life and the associated embedded struggles are one way to move beyond politics as a means for establishing ‘correct’ practice.

Mercado Bonpland also demonstrates the radical potential of markets, which have to a greater extent hitherto been overlooked. These spaces of encounter and cooperation are community resources that allow people to change the way that they live and engage in everyday life. The example of Bonpland shows these everyday life politics, which are also seen in many traditional markets. I thus feel that there could be more critically engaged scholarship that explores these markets as potential spaces for community organising, through necessity and for the possibilities they represent, as well as for opposing redevelopment strategies¹⁷.

Brief qualifications, expectations and implications of the research

This thesis critically reflects on the construction of everyday life politics, and consequently it is important to briefly situate this PhD process in-against-and-beyond everyday life politics. As with any PhD, the style, timeframe and boundaries of the research project were to some extent restricted to fit the expectations and guidelines of the university studied at. In order to conduct research in Mercado Bonpland in Argentina, these restrictions often reminded me of the difficulties in constructing engaged research from within theoretical and practical restrictions. I reflected on some of these differences in my methods chapter (Chapter Four). Consequently, I decided to focus on everyday life politics, which have not always been recognised as political. In the case of Mercado Bonpland, this meant developing research to fit with organisers to the best of my ability. In particular, this required several research trips, spending time at the market, and developing maps as resources. It was especially important not to overstate the potential impact of my research, as this had been a problem with researchers studying groups in Argentina in the past.

¹⁷ See the Contested Cities Markets working group (Contested Cities, n.d.).

In addition to the time restrictions involved in undertaking a PhD, my university context meant that I had to produce a research output quickly. In this sense, again, the production of a PhD was not something that I felt could be fully participatory. I hope to use aspects of my research, analysis, write-up and maps for market organisers and autogestive movements. This highlighted the importance of producing further publications in academic and open access journals, as well as being clear about the impact of the research with Bonpland market organisers.

Finally, the process of undertaking this PhD research has involved learning and apprenticeship throughout my studies. The challenge of undertaking a long research project like this is to learn from, anticipate, and build from these challenges. As a researcher, I hope that in maintaining a critical, reflexive position, I will do justice to the wonderful people I met, to the stories that were shared, and the theories that I encountered. However, I acknowledge the challenges of undertaking this in-against-and-beyond the university and this, again, can only be developed as a process of learning, listening and sharing.

This research highlights the possibilities and antagonisms of organising from everyday life under autogestive principles, building capacity from where people are already situated. Whilst my aim has not been to provide a model for other autogestive projects to follow, the example of development despite antagonism demonstrates the possibility for creating alternatives that engage with rather than ignore challenges. In particular, I hope that such experiences can feed into broader autogestive movements. In recognising the challenges faced in such everyday life organising, I hope this approach can be useful for breaking a divide between ‘perfect’ political thought and ‘imperfect’ action.

8.3 Beyond Mercado Bonpland

Finally, in striving to go beyond their crisis context, Mercado Bonpland’s organisers revealed the possibilities that are presented through organising in-against-and beyond everyday life. Their

organising has made new relationships, practices, spaces and ideas a reality and, along the way, they have improved their everyday life circumstances and those of many other people. Such developments have not happened without conflict and antagonism, and the future of the market is not assured. However, the process of creating these networks has changed both the everyday life circumstances of the market 'producers' and their ideas about what is possible. These changes, in particular, highlight the sense of possibility that comes from experiencing and collectively organising. This experience of organising together cannot be undone and, as such, the process of everyday life politics continues despite the challenges faced.

This research has examined the potential of the radical and critical politics of everyday life. Collective organising, beginning from the challenges of everyday life, is challenging and rife with antagonisms. Yet, in working through these antagonisms, more possibilities are created that, in turn, enable greater networks of autogestive practices. Mercado Bonpland demonstrates the tensions and possibilities for this form of organising. Within contexts of increasing social and political crisis, building greater capacities to organise is necessary, as is building collective hope about the possibility to create everyday realities that respond more to collective social needs than profit. In-against-and-beyond operates as a praxis for exploring and continuing to question these on-going antagonisms, whilst creating new possibilities.

To move beyond the utopian accounts of political potential, or equally those that disempower through suggesting that there is no alternative to capitalism, I have focused on developing the praxis of in-against-and-beyond. The focus on prefigurative praxis has allowed deeper explorations into the way in which micro- everyday practices and global effects interconnect. Engaging in exploring these antagonisms reveals the potential for politics from where we stand, without silencing or forgetting the challenges in creating these alternatives. This provided me with hope, that whilst these initiatives can be criticised for not providing all of the solutions immediately, in starting now, the process of doing organising in daily life means they meet, expand and connect with new potentials. Thus this thesis is one example that explores these

tensions, in an attempt to try and learn from and move towards new practices of everyday life politics, starting from the messiness of daily life.

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Appendix

Appendix one: Initial questions and information sheet for participants.

Estoy haciendo una investigación en Buenos Aires sobre espacios recuperados en pos de la construcción de una economía solidaria. Este trabajo es parte de mi doctorado en Geografía en Inglaterra. Mi intención es compartir la historia del mercado bonpland, en Inglaterra.

Esta de acuerdo en que utilice la información que me suministra? Este es mi correo electrónico- vhabermehl@gmail.com

Cual es tu correo electrónico?

Mi comprometo a enviarles una copia de mi tesis cuando este lista, posiblemente es un año. Estoy confeccionando, junto a una diseñadora geographica, un mapa de la Argentina, que cuenta de donde provienen los productos y cuales son las redes y cooperativas que abastecen el mercado Bonpland. Se los enviaré en pocos meses.

Entrevista

Organización de la cooperativa

como deciden que vender?

Con que organizaciones trabajan?

Puede explicarse al respecto?

Como se organizan?

Como empezó el proceso que los trajo hasta aqui?

Por que etapas pasaron?

Mercado

Cuando empezó a vender en el mercado?

Como se involucró?

Cual es la historia del mercado?

Como se organizan?

Que vende? De donde proviene?

Como se conectaron estos productores con ustedes?

?? Como se conecto su ubicación

Podemos ubicarlo en el mapa?

Como es la organización entre los productores, los vendedores y los consumidores?

Que ha cambiando?

Quiere cambiar algo para el futuro?

Como comenzó el mercado?

Cual es la historio del edificio?

Por que el otro mercado cerró?

En que estado estaba el edificio cuando fue ocupado?

como ha cambiado desde entonces?

Qué relación tienen con el estado Argentino?

Cual es la importancia de este espacio para el Éxito del mercado- Cuales son sus necesidades, experiencia, movimientos?

En su opinión qué facilita la construcción de una economía alternativa solidaria?

Qué consejos daría a otros?