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Wild Yeast Economies:

Control and spontaneity in alternative forms of organising

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Aviv Jacob Kruglanski

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Dedication

I dedicate Wild Yeast Economies to the wildest thinker I know, Anna Coromina.

Acknowledgements

This thesis is the result of spending a lot of time with two groups of people, in two neighbourhoods, in two cities far apart from each other. Each and every person that participated, formally or informally in the two organisations, *macba* and IPC, was playfully experimenting in some way or another for the purpose of social change. I'd like to thank all of the people I shared time with in these two spaces, the people who talked to me, taught me and humoured me.

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Publications and Conferences

The following papers, related to the thesis, were presented in conferences and workshops during the course of my PhD:

The Radio/Teahouse: From organisation to navigation, at the 10th Critical Management Studies conference, July 2017, Edgehill University, Liverpool, UK

Wild Yeast Economies: control and letting go in alternative organising, at the 11th Critical Management Studies conference, June 2019, Open University, Milton Keynes, UK

Wild Yeast Economies: ecological spontaneity in alternative organising, at From economic to political informality: Exploring the link between shadow practices, policy making and development, September 2019, Lund University, Sweden

Juxtaposition, encounter and drift: Transformative social innovation through culture and the arts, at Unlocking the transformative potential of culture and the arts through SE, November 2019, University of Malta

Spontaneity and control in alternative organising, at Activist organizing and organizing activism, May 2021, Ephemera online conference

Abstract

The *Wild Yeast Economies* research project explored alternative forms of organising through a culinary metaphor. The question I asked is whether there could be recipes for alternative forms of organising, the kinds created by activists in hopeful aspirations to transform society. In asking about recipes, the project posed the issue of control at the centre of its inquiry. Given that control is practically synonymous with management, I was wondering whether there could be alternatives to it. Recipes, in that respect, are a metaphor for planning. Planning methodologies are the way control is projected temporally, and the way it most affects the day-to-day of those engaging with organisations. Do activists challenge the ubiquity of control in the alternatives they create? Are there ways they might do so, and are there examples of such alternative forms of doing things together in the world?

For the purpose of investigating these questions, and inspired by reading a cookbook with a political bend, I set out on a project that has been ongoing for the past 11 years, using art, participatory action research and ethnography as its main ingredients. The project took place in two cities, a coastal city in Spain and a northern city in England. In both I engaged in organisational practices that attempted to challenge control. Through this process I came in contact with diverse practitioners, all of which had a past participating in social movements. The written thesis, based on these actions, data they produced, documents and recorded conversation, makes several contributions both to methodology and to theory regarding alternative organising.

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Introduction: the possibility of recipes

1.1 Can there be recipes for alternative organising?

Chapter 1

The *Wild Yeast Economies* research project explored alternative forms of organising and the possibilities they afford, through the emotions, the hope and the fear that shape them. The creation of alternative forms of organising including alternative economic spaces is an expression of hopeful thinking as response to fear and suffering inflicted by financial crises (Economou et al., 2013), climate emergency (Bendell, 2019) and recently the Covid19 pandemic (Pfefferbaum and North, 2020). Related to this suffering, a conversation both within academic and activist circles, regarding 'precarity', highlights contemporary difficulties in reaching economic, social and psychological stability (Foti, 2004b; Neilson and Rossiter, 2005; Kruglanski, 2006; Neilson and Rossiter, 2008; Waite, 2009; Lorey, 2010; Stein, 2015; Zafra and Durán Rodriguez, 2018). I further discuss the term 'precarity' in Chapter 3. For now, let us simply define it as the condition of not being able to plan, as an instability regarding different aspects of life. This instability involves the lack of control people feel when interfacing macro structures such as the Economy (e.g. Aspern Institute, 2016). According to many accounts (e.g. North, 2014, p.261; Reedy et al., 2016, pp.1563, 1567), alternative projects are precarious themselves, facing what often seems like an uphill battle to take root within a landscape of hegemonic organizational and economic forms and their prevailing values (e.g. North, 2014). As Gibson-Graham (2006) put it "...while possibility exists, it is shadowy and negative, whereas the foreclosures enacted have shape and stability" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.49).

The Wild Yeast Economies research project, like its name implies, took a culinary approach to issues regarding the creation of economic and organizational alternatives. It used metaphors such as 'recipe' and 'culinary fermentation' to respond to dilemmas I encountered both in my activist experience and in my academic reading. The choice of expressing organizational processes through food-preparing terminology was not arbitrary. Food and its preparation were prominent in the case studies I examined. But there was a philosophical aspect to this choice as well: expressing questions and findings through culinary language emphasizes the connection between the pragmatic and the aesthetic/poetic aspects of this research. The craft of preparing food can be as controlled and as improvised, as inspired and as mundane, as the diverse organizational processes I am looking at. Yet be their situation as it may, the end result has to edible and nutritious by some standard. Informed by the suffering and the hopeful aspirations mentioned above, I set out to find whether there could be recipes for the creation of alternative forms of organising.

The question of recipes, my culinary-inspired research question, has to do with the issue of control in alternative organising. To illustrate this, let us consider the implications of recipe: A recipe is a technology that holds a promise. The promise of a recipe works more or less like this: You read the recipe in a book written by, say, a famous chef. The original dish made by the chef is coded into a set of instructions with exact quantities, ingredients, times and tools. This code later translates, back in your own kitchen, to what in principle should be the original dish, as designed by the famous chef. What supports recipe technology and what implication could it have? It is supported, for once, by a belief in meritocracy: the celebrity of the chef acts as our safe assurance that the dish and the recipe will be of quality. But apart from that, it is supported by our belief in the reproducibility of events, based on the exactitude of written protocol, by a belief in our capacity to predict and control. But even if such belief is correct, what are the implications of such exact reproducibility for the possibility for diversity? Specifically, in our case, what are the possibilities for diverse economies (as in Gibson-Graham, 1996) and diverse forms of organising (as in Parker et al., 2007) to exist if we maintain our belief in the capacity of exact protocols to reproduce organisational and economic experiments? And if we question such a capacity, what other ways do we have to generate learning regarding non-hegemonic alternatives and their potential to flourish and transform society? Could there be a different kind of recipe? My purpose here is to explore this different recipe, one that leaves room for elements outside of our control. I am interested in the implications this might have to the practice of alternative organising and economies. Considering the above-mentioned question marks, I phrased my research question in the following manner: *'Can there be recipes for alternative organising? If so, what might they be like?'*

1.2 Motivations

The motivations for the research are threefold: For once, I had a personal urgency, stemming from several years of engaging in activism and socially engaged art practice with little economic stability, to come up with modes organising and of doing economy that, while expressing my lack of conformity with the way things are, still exist within them. Secondly, like others (Chatterton & Pickerill, 2010; Gibson-Graham, 2006; Simplicity Institute, 2016), I felt there is a societal need for alternatives to the way we currently produce, consume and relate. And thirdly, I saw a lack in the way both lay and academic conversations talk about economy and organisation. This lack has to do with the issue of control, with aspects of organisational and economic practice outside of our control and their relation to our ability to create the

alternatives mentioned above. Predictability and control are an issue for the way we organise information, and relatedly, the ways we *do things together in the world*[1]. My focus here is on how tension and complementarities between controlling and letting go of control are important for the creation of alternatives to hegemonic economic and organizational forms.

In terms of my personal experience, this research was propelled by reflections and doubts generated by almost 20 years of socially engaged artistic practice, many times from within the context of grassroots social movements. The experiment I set up, introduced in the following section, was originally fuelled by the practical need to generate economies that are hands on, ones that grow in dialogue with the dynamics, resources and limitations of the every day. While emerging during the so-called economic crisis[2] in Spain, the project went beyond ideas of economic subsistence to deal with the creation of self-reliance, answering, as Crawford (2011) put it, "to a deeper need, [the need] to feel that our world is intelligible, so we can be responsible for it" (Crawford, 2011, p.8).

In 2010 when this project began, unemployment in the region reached around 16.53% (similar to the situation here OECD, 2011) with 37% in the 16-24 year cohort and higher rates among young males. Added to this was the increasing cost of living and the damage to social cohesion happening as the result of a tourist industry deemed unsustainable (similar to Yakob, 2019). I noticed people and groups around me coming up with small-scale economic projects, quasi-businesses, motivated both by a personal curiosity and a need to survive. These formations were each unique in their forms of organization and in their reimagining of what an economy could be. Several of the people I was talking to were involved in local social movements and the way they confronted both economy and organization was informed by that experience, their hopes and their criticisms of it. These projects seemed to hold a promise of how economy, organisation and the relations they entail could be different than what they are commonly perceived to be both in lay conversations and in academic literature regarding organisation and economy.

Yet the projects I was seeing around me were also fragile, often appearing and disappearing within months or failing to materialize. It seemed like they had a hard time surviving the hostile environment of rising costs of living (as in Meltzer, 2016, p.59) and regulation (Shane,

[1] This phrase, "doing things together in the world" appears a lot in this text. I use it at moments when I am wary of using the word 'organising', when I am doubtful about the element of order implicit in the latter
[2] In writing "so-called economic crisis" I am following Spanish social movements in their cry 'No es una crisis! Es una estafa'- Its not a crisis! Its a scam! Thus criticising the naturalization of the events into the idea of inevitable cycles of the economy.

2011). Practitioners of these economies were often 'organisationally/bureaucratically illiterate'. I wondered whether this could be an advantage, whether new original economic and organisational forms might emerge from this 'ignorance'. So rather than reproduce the work of local government agencies that aide sophomore projects in writing business plans and getting bank loans (e.g. https://ad-venture.org.uk/; https://www.Maricelctiva.cat/), I wanted to explore what they already knew, their immediate environment and the ideas and resources that were already there. The lack of stability I observed in these projects was seen as an opening for alternative ways of thinking about organising, ones that navigate the very indeterminacy of life (Ingold, 2006), dialoguing with elements outside of human control. In that respect it connected to the theoretical conversation about the term 'precarity', mentioned above. I will review aspects of this conversation in Chapter 3, where I discuss precarity as both a source of suffering and a potential opening for a kind of thinking rooted in vulnerability. This thesis responds to the conversation about precarity in that it explores dialoguing with the inability to plan as a learning process. It also responds to three other conversations, in the fields of organisation theory (OT), social movement studies, and geography.

In OT, specifically in critical management studies (CMS) a conversation about alternative forms of organising opens creative space for exploring a diversity of organisational forms (Parker et al., 2007; Cheney, 2014). Through activist-scholarship, researchers within this conversation collaborate with social movements to explore the practical and theoretical aspects of their organisational practices (e.g. Sutherland et al., 2014). In that it overlaps with research done in social movement studies that equally explores the dynamics within activist groups and networks (Bisaillon, 2012). In CMS some ethnographers have been doing valuable work at charting activist organisations they themselves form part of (e.g. Langmead, 2017b; Reedy and King, 2019). In social movement studies (and in related work in anthropology) similar work has been done from a position of affinity with activism (e.g. Juris, 2008a). This work places value on the emotional dimension of activism (e.g. Juris, 2008b, p.65) and through it, to a greater understanding of what makes it take one form or another. My interest here is specifically in the extent to which alternative forms of organising do, or do not, offer alternatives to control.

In Chapter 3 I will show that the ubiquity of control is still extended to the work of such movements through their focus on prefiguring the future through "anti-oppression" protocols (Luchies, 2014a). I will discuss how social movement scholars debunk activists' own descriptions of their work as spontaneous (e.g. Flesher Fominaya, 2015). In that, control is further established as ubiquitous to organisational processes, a common sense to which there are no alternatives. I will go into some more detail about this in a section further down about

this thesis' contributions. Altogether the main point is that the reading I did in both these fields left me with some question marks regarding the respective places of control and of spontaneity within alternative organising as it is, and as it could be.

Another academic conversation I will respond to is the one about diverse economies in geography. Like the one about alternative organising, this conversation diversifies the field, showing economy as an open term with multiple iterations. This conversation, initiated by J.K Gibson-Graham (1996) in their book The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It) makes a call for creativity in elaborating its framework. While radically creative in its treatment of the subject, in my readings within this academic conversation I saw a lot of attention being placed on established alternatives such as community supported agriculture (Cameron, 2015; Gritzas and Kavoulakos, 2016, p.928), time banks (Werner, 2015) and alternative currencies (North, 2014, p. 926). I felt that the hybridising, juxtaposing wildness of artistic experimentation could contribute to pushing it further. In this thesis I enlist modes of thinking and doing from art in response to Gibson-Graham's call for creativity (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.xxxii). I also respond to a methodological conversation about arts-based research (Barone and Eisner, 1997; Berthoin Antal and Friedman, 2017) by moving away from an instrumental use of art, and placing the *logics* of art at the centre of research processes. I will show that art is specifically suited for exploring control and its antonyms, indeterminacy being a long-time theme within it (Autonomous Artists Anonymous, 2017, p.888; Berthoin Antal and Friedman, 2017, p.245).

1.3 A culinary metaphor translated into participatory action research

This thesis is about what Gibson-Graham call "a politics of possibility" (Gibson-Graham, 2006). It takes a look at "shadowy" (Gibson-Graham, 2006) economic and organizational forms "below the threshold of sight" (Kruglanski and Ramujkic, 2012). Throughout it, in order to explore the idea of possible recipes, I will use the image of culinary fermentation, a process by which small insignificant particles interact to visibly transform their environment, creating nutrition and economic value (Kruglanski and Ramujkic, 2012). Interestingly, it is also a practice that highlights the importance of the tensions and complementarities between spontaneity and control. Fermentation includes many elements that place it in contradiction with the image of exact reproducibility expressed by the promise of recipe: It is highly local, with microorganisms and general conditions producing different results from one street corner to the next. It is culturally and even personally specific, with highly differing definitions of what is considered to be a successful outcome, of what is considered to be edible or rotten (Katz, 2003, p.32). It involves an element of chance (Katz, 2003, p.13). It involves interacting with unknown temporalities (Katz, 2003, p.95). It values ecologies of microorganisms that are in constant motion (Katz, 2003, p.2). Furthermore, fermentation challenges our ideas of set boundaries

between the insides and the outsides of our bodies and/or food products, by connecting our digestive tracts with diverse microorganisms in our environment (Katz, 2003, p.12). Altogether, I listed five aspects of fermentation that separate it from the promise of recipe: It is highly local, culturally and even personally specific, involves an element of chance, values ecologies of microorganisms that are in constant motion and involves interacting with unknown temporalities. For these reasons, it has an important dialogic and improvisational component to it. It is also currently subject to regulation that tries to restrict the living product from being distributed alive as is, and it is under the threat of other kinds of standardization (Spano and Capozzi, 2011, p.2). Can we learn something about organizing economies differently and about our very learning of it, taking our cues from such a practice?

Inspired by such culinary processes, specifically by reading a cookbook, *Wild Fermentation* by Sandor Ellix Katz (2003), I set up an experiment that has lasted for six years in a Spanish coastal city, which I will here refer to as Maricel, and another one, lasting six years so far, in a northern English coastal city, which I will refer to as Whykham. In Maricel, set in a rented storefront that I renovated and managed (with the help of several collaborators), my research question, 'can there be recipes for alternative organisation?' got translated into a series of operational questions regarding the day-to-day learning taking place: *What would happen if I opened the storefront's door and welcomed its close environment to enter? What kind of economies and organisational forms might emerge from such an encounter? Would they be 'alternative' meaning different to what is perceived to be the norm? Could they take form through 'observing and interacting' (Holmgren, 2002) with the resources, limitations, habits, dynamics, circumstances and chance encounters of those otherwise alienated from what is commonly considered to be 'the Economy'? And if so, what new things can such an experiment teach us about ways of 'doing things together in the world'?* These questions formed a proposal for exploring alternatives to the above-mentioned idea (perhaps a fiction?) of the exact reproducible recipe. From my new vantage point in academia, I would also add an additional question: *How might these new insights relate to ongoing conversations in OT about alternative organising and in social movements studies-about spontaneity?* This thesis tells the story of my attempts to respond to these questions, first in the Maricel storefront and later in Whykham, using arts-based methods, intimately entangled in the case studies and informed by readings from OT, geography, anthropology and art theory.

Chapter 4 will tell the autobiographical/methodological story of how I translated the ideas I read in *Wild Fermentation* (Katz, 2003) to a form of participatory action research (PAR) informed by arts thinking. Using what I call 'what happens if...?' experiments, art practices were a methodological axis throughout the process of inquiry. The storefront from which I

started the process, *Mysteriosos Artefactos Contra Barrios Arraigados (from now on 'macba')*, was itself a socially embedded art-project, lasting six years. The *Wild Yeast Economies* workshops had participants make drawings, which depicted their resources, limitations, habits, relationships and fantasies. In that they were inspired by the practices of artists that use mapping as visual research tools (Cobarrubias and Pickles, 2008). Upon moving to Whykham, the process continued through four successive art projects, in which my collaborator Anna Coromina and myself held daily presence, during several months at a time, in Avenue, the neighbourhood where we chose to work. We did this using embroidery, cooking projects, a weekly online 'radio/teahouse', and finally through the creation of a 'neighbourhood market'. Through this process we got to know members of the community, several of whom were involved with what would become one of my two main case studies, an organisation called Ideal Places Cooperative (from now on 'IPC'). In the chapter I will detail my deep entanglement within IPC and discuss the benefits and the limitations of my partiality towards it.

Locating my methodology in relation to art is challenging, given that it forms part of a tradition of socially engaged art that, according to anthropologist Roger Sansi (2015), hopes to dissolve itself within its social context, disappearing for the purpose of becoming relevant (Sansi, 2015, pp.36–42). In that respect it is art-based, not because it employs the external trappings of art, such as art supplies or processes, but because it looks deeper into art to employ its forms of knowledge building. In that I will show that such approach is useful in challenging control through exploring the vulnerable, dialogic attitude I mentioned above. The 'what happens if...?' experiment is a form of arts-based inquiry that pushes against classic scientific notions of knowledge building. Chapter 4 will show my experiments to be rooted in three modes coming from art: juxtaposition, encounter and assemblage. Adopting them as central to my approach created a research instrument sensitive to the precarity and spontaneity, to the encounters, the porous boundaries and the meandering paths that made the data exemplify organisational processes that challenge the ubiquity of planning and controlling.

Locating the methodology in relation to activism is equally challenging. The succession of participatory art projects, some lasting several years, constituted a participatory research practice, evolving from my own trajectory in social movements. Its overtly political objectives places it within what Budd Hall calls the "liberatory school of PAR" (Hall, 2005). In that it joined the tradition of PAR in questioning the boundaries between research and life, and specifically between research and activism. The boundaries of activism were questioned in another way given that the people I talked to, though having a long history within social movements, were also critical of them. They thus were informed by their experiences, but also took steps outside the confines of the activist social milieu, to a certain extent leaving it behind. In that respect

this is not an examination of social movements per-se, but of something that unfolds after activists' disappointment from them, organisational and economic projects informed by their practices and by their utopian thinking, but taking place with one foot inside and one outside their boundaries, so to speak.

1.4 My standpoint of explicit affinity with social movements

I earlier mentioned that the research question emerged from the environment of activist social movements in which I was immersed. As I mentioned above, the case studies I examined all had some level of involvement in such movements. I found case studies through emotional and intellectual engagement with my own social environment, through observing what the groups and movements I was involved with, how my friends, my companions and myself were organising. The question thus emerged from the emotional investment in such processes, the moments of being inspired by them and the disappointments of them. As I will further discuss in Chapter 4, this positions this research apart from the values of distance and impartiality held by some mainstream sectors of social science (Reedy and King, 2019, p.11). It should be read as a set of experiments and observations internal to the transformative goals of such movements, informed by the intimacy of daily practice within them. In that, it forms part of a larger conversation of social scientists that transparently position themselves politically.

The conversations I am citing, further discussed in Chapter 2, specifically the ones about alternative organising coming from CMS (e.g. Parker et al., 2007; Cheney, 2014) and the one about diverse economies (Gibson-Graham, 1996; Gibson-Graham, 2006), make explicit their affinity with radical social movements that critique capitalism, neoliberalism and strive for the creation of alternatives. The PAR literature, which I cite when discussing my methodology in Chapter 4 is also explicitly aligned with radical social change, through the democratisation of knowledge (Ladaah Openjuru et al., 2015) and its emphasis on giving voice within academia to marginalised communities (Arieli et al., 2009, p.265). Thus, in tune with other researchers demonstrating affinity to social movement there are several assumptions that run through this thesis. One important one is that there is value in transforming the status quo, making society more just, and democratic, that the current dynamics where the Market is deemed the most efficient and beneficial organiser of relationships and resources could be usefully challenged (e.g. Fournier, 2006, p.295). The other, which I discuss in further detail in Chapter 3 is that working towards alternatives within the context of such a Market society involves making visible possibilities that are latent, below the radar, not easily legible within the current context (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.49). Throughout the thesis I will relate these concerns with the tensions and complementarities between control and spontaneity. As I will show in Chapters 2 and 3, control is the ubiquitous assumption of organisation. My focus here will thus

be to place a small crack in this logic, suggesting the importance of certain kinds of spontaneity for the creation of alternatives. While such conversation might seem internal to social movements, the fact of them holding a critique of the current status quo and utopian visions for society at large, give them, at least to my mind, wider relevance.

1.5 Thesis structure and chapters

The thesis is structured in a way where each chapter will explore a different aspect of the work that was done. Chapter 2 will review conversations in CMS pertinent to the issue of control. Specifically of interest is the conversation about alternative organising and its relationship to social movements and their study. Chapter 3 will examine how control is expressed in the practice of social movements and the academic conversation about them. It will do so through two terms, both antonyms of control, both prevalent in the discourse of activists: spontaneity and precarity. Regarding spontaneity, I will propose a contradiction between the way activists represent themselves as spontaneous (Polletta, 1998; Maeckelbergh, 2011; Snow and Moss, 2014, p.1122) and the way they are represented by researchers (Polletta, 1998, p.142; Zamponi and Fernández González, 2017, p.65; e.g. Fox Piven, 2017 minute 12:24). In addition, I will also discuss how social movements are engrossed in an activity I term 'protocolisation', the creation of protocols to combat any future eventuality of oppression (e.g. Cornell, 2011; Luchies, 2014a). Through this, the ubiquity of control is perpetuated. I will propose that the vulnerability of what Tsing (2015a) calls "thinking through precarity" (Tsing, 2015a, p.20), could be an approach that can illuminate organisational processes through a different, less controlled perspective.

In Chapter 4 I will detail how I translated this philosophy into a methodology that included three main ingredients: art, PAR, and ethnography. The chapter will place the three in relation to each other, using the narrative thread of the biography of the research, my own autobiography when engaging with these issues. Given that this is a connected biography (as in Denzin, 1999, p.511), including the organisations and individuals I met on the way, the chapter will also introduce some of the main protagonists of the story. Chapter 5 will go more in depth into the life-narratives of seven of them. Through these stories some themes will begin to emerge. I will dedicate a section in the chapter to one: 'chance encounter'. Chapter 6 will go into the wider data to bring out two other central themes: 'hardships' and 'activism'. Within the many subthemes that there emerge, I familiarise the reader with the dynamics of the two case studies. Specifically, I explain why I refer to them as 'organisational ecologies' (which is completely unrelated to a field of study within OT called 'organisational ecology'). Based on these dynamics, Chapter 7 will provide an analysis, in the form of a recipe. The 'dish' I will there present will be called 'ecological spontaneity', a contribution to how to view

spontaneity differently and how it can be constructive of alternative forms of organising. The ingredients I will chart will be: chance encounter, meandering paths and porous boundaries. In the concluding Chapter 8 I will revisit the wild fermentation metaphor, showing it as pertinent to this recipe. I will also list the different contributions this research makes to the different conversations that nourished it, the opportunity it creates for further explorations and its limitations. In the following section I briefly list these contributions, for the purpose of serving the reader as a compass through the chapters that follow.

1.6 Contributions

Wild Yeast Economies' main contribution is to the very praxis of *doing things together in the world* (organising) and to the everyday practice of sustaining life (economy). The case studies I researched will help me reframe ideas regarding spontaneity and control, tacit elements in the practice of social movements. Through researching I will provide examples of alternatives to the pervasive protocolisation within social movements (e.g. Cornell, 2011; Luchies, 2014a) and their adverse effects on such movements democratising goals (e.g. Appel, 2011b; Appel, 2011a; Leach, 2013). Relatedly, I will also contribute to three academic conversations that show affinity to such movements and their goals: the treatment of spontaneity within social movement studies, the conversation regarding alternative organising in CMS, and the conversation about diverse economies in geography. Apart from these three contributions, it also makes methodological contributions to both as well as to arts-based research and to activist ethnography (Bisaillon, 2012).

1.6.1 Alternative organization

The contributions I make are based on the playful approach I take towards the issue of alternative organising. In Chapter 2 I will show that both the alternative organisation conversation in CMS and the diverse economies conversation in geography open room for creative experimentation (Gibson-Graham, 2006; Parker et al., 2007). I will refer to this creative gesture of the two conversations as their 'diversifying gesture'. This gesture opens up our field of vision regarding what organisation is and what it could be (Cheney, 2014). Using this term, I will chart connections to another diversifying gesture, the one created by PAR in regards to a limited understanding regarding epistemology within academia (Ladaah Openjuru et al., 2015).

Informed by the playfulness of art, but also by the playfulness I observed in my two case studies, I will take the freedoms afforded by the three academic conversations to what I perceive to be the edges of the 'queered' logic they permit (Parker, 2002b; Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.77). My contribution will take the form of a recipe I call 'ecological spontaneity'. It

investigates explicitly two aspects of alternative organising that, in the existing literature, is tacit at best: one is the creation of alternatives to planning methodologies. Given that planning is the way control is projected onto the future (Desideri and Harney, 2013), and the way most people experience control in their day-to-day (Hodgson, 2004), I explored the extent to which alternatives to it are created by social movements and ways in which it could be challenged through practice. Another related issue is the issue of the boundaries, the insides and outsides of alternative forms of organising. Boundaries are important sites where control is enacted (Midgley, 2000), and the boundaries of social movements influence the extent to which they achieve their democratising goals (Leach, 2013, p.184). I will show that 'ecological spontaneity' as an alternative organisational recipe, addresses these issues in a way that opens up further routes for more creative explorations by both practitioners and theoreticians of alternative organisation.

It also presents spontaneity as a constructive element within alternative organising. I will show the contribution of such an ingredient not in terms of a mechanical one that contributes to alternative's efficiency in achieving their goals (Fournier and Grey, 2000, p.17), but as one that contributes to the proliferation of possibilities (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.xxxii). I will show this to be a contribution to a conversation within CMS about critical performativity (Spicer et al., 2009) one that is preoccupied with the relations between academic theories and social realities. Another contribution that will be made is in charting connections between alternative forms of organising and the buildings and neighbourhoods in which they take place. I will show such architectural and geographic elements to embody the alternative organisational dynamics of the ecological spontaneity expressed by the case studies.

1.6.2 Social movement studies

My reframing of spontaneity as ecological will contribute to the treatment of the term within the social movement studies literature. As I will show, such literature presents spontaneity as a linear and directional occurrence (Flesher Fominaya, 2015, p.143), mindless and reactive (Zamponi and Fernández González, 2017). For various reasons I will discuss in Chapter 3, it chooses to banish the possibility of spontaneity taking a central role in the construction of alternatives, away from sight (e.g. Polletta, 1998, p.142; Zamponi and Fernández González, 2017, p.65; Fox Piven, 2017 12m24s). My contribution here will be in showing the spontaneity of the case studies to be ecological, meaning consisting of small-scale daily occurrences that permeate the physical and social environment of the two case studies. In introducing spontaneity as a way to dialogue with elements outside of human control, part and parcel of the creation of alternatives, I am taking a step towards resolving the apparent contradiction between the analysis of social movement scholars, who debunk it, and the words of activists

who describe themselves in such a way (Polletta, 1998; Maeckelbergh, 2011; Snow and Moss, 2014, p.1122).

1.6.3 Methodological contributions

In relation to the diverse economies conversation, I recognize in the writings of Gibson-Graham modes of doing, familiar to me from my experience with art (2006). As a response, this research develops a methodological contribution to diverse economies and alternative organising specifically based on the values, norms, trajectories and lived experience of artists. Ways of doing from art, for example using juxtaposition, encounter, and assemblage, could also contribute to the theorising of alternative organising, given that, like the diverse economies conversation, they are concerned with proliferating possibilities, framing mainstream OT as only one of many possible forms of doing things together in the world (Parker et al., 2007).

Unlike academic texts, which seem to expound on a thesis in a linear fashion with causal relationships relatively intact (Fisher, 2006; Le Ha, 2009; Vassileva, 1998), art uses juxtapositions and hybridizations, taking ideas from one context to another for contrast and originality (Sontag, 1966). Unlike a traditional scientific experiment, an art 'experiment' could consist of simply placing one thing next to another to see what the encounter produces (Tate, no date). The two types of experiments echo the question of recipe outlined above, and the issues regarding planning and control which run through this thesis as a whole. I go into more detail regarding artistic experimentation in Chapter 4.

Unlike many notable cases where art and artists are used as mere illustration (e.g. Gibson-Graham et al., 2013a) or palatable methodology (e.g. Sutherland, 2013) this project considers chance encounter (Girst, 2014; Sansi, 2015) as central to artistic practice and the fact of acting within situations of "not knowing" (Berthoin Antal and Friedman, 2017) as one of the main skills artists possess. On these premises, the project takes an artistic approach to all aspects of the project, from methodology to analysis, rejecting many of the trappings of arts-based research that takes art to be a static category, defined by a finite set of materials and processes. It proposes creative organizational and economic processes that build on sculptural artistic traditions such as social sculpture (Biddle, 2014), found objects (Girst, 2014; Sansi, 2015), assemblage (Watson, 2003) and drift (Bonnett, 2006; Rubin, 2012). Methodologically, I will introduce the idea of a 'what happens if...?' experiment as a useful tool for exploring alternative forms of organising, given its capacity to proliferate possibilities (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.126).

1.6.4 Activist ethnography

In this thesis, I built on past work regarding militant ethnography (Juris, 2008b), recent work regarding activist ethnography (Reedy and King, 2019) and many insights from the PAR tradition (Hall, 2005, p.8). At the same time my ethnographic work here is situated somewhat differently in regards to social movements. While activist ethnographers and alternative organisation ethnographers participate in such groups for the purpose of mapping and theorising their internal dynamics, the case studies I was entangled with were situated on the periphery of social movement, projects that might be considered 'post-activist' or 'more-than-activists', shaped both by the hopeful utopianism and by the disappointments of activist experience. In that respect I am here mapping a section of alternative organisation that challenges its boundaries.

In order to contextualise these contributions within academic conversations, the next two chapters explore how control and spontaneity are treated in OT and in social movement studies. In Chapter 2 I will examine the ubiquity of control in OT and specifically its critique, and this critique's particularities through the alternative organisation conversation in CMS. I am specifically interested in the desire expressed through such conversations for scholarship to be socially transformative, for CMS to be an activist project.

Planning and controlling

2.1 Introduction

The *Wild Yeast Economies* research project grew out of the need to experiment with forms of collaborating and relating that differ both from mainstream organizational forms (e.g. Harlow et al., 2013) and from some of the alternatives proposed by activists (e.g. Cornell, 2011). It was inspired by my experience participating in social movements, which attempt to oppose hegemonic organization while proposing other forms of collaboration. Throughout I asked whether or not there might be underlying principles, recipes that underpin the creation of alternative ways people can get together and do things in the world. I felt that my fellow activists were presupposing the need for certain types of recipes and that such framing might create blind spots that hinder the success of such movements. In this chapter I focus on the research regarding organisation, research that to some extent challenges but also shares such presuppositions. I leave the discussion of activists, their organisation and the premises their actions are based on, to the following chapter. This chapter reviews some of these conversations as they pertain to the questions motivating the research, the question of recipes for alternative organisation and economies. Using the culinary metaphor of recipes is really talking about plans, about projecting ideas onto the future and controlling the way they progress. In that respect the literature I here review pertains to conversations about planning and controlling within CMS. Before talking about alternative organising (in a section called 'Alternatives') and exploring how they might be researched and practiced (in a section called 'Recipes') I start with some background regarding control and how it is critiqued within CMS.

2.2 Background: the critique of control in CMS

The centrality of control in CMS's critique of mainstream OT is a wide topic and could be the subject of several PhD theses. Here I give an overview as it pertains to my main topic – the alternative organisation conversation and the role recipes (or maybe some form of anti-recipe) might play within it. Many CMS scholars critique control in OT, expressed as it is through managerial practices (Klikauer, 2015; Jaros, 2018) and underpinned by underlying philosophical assumptions (Parker, 2002a, p.3; Cox and Hassard, 2005, p.112). Both practice and philosophy inform the issue of alternative recipes given that recipes are guides for practice and that if one considers control to be central to mainstream forms of organising, this fact might frame how one might treat it within alternative conceptualizations. This section gives an overview of such critique, its plurality and its complexity, starting with control's visible manifestations through managerialism, passing through its philosophical foundations, ending with the challenge it poses for critical scholars.

2.2.1 Managerialism

One of the most visible concepts in CMS conversations, exemplifying the critique of control, is its treatment of managerialism, a long-term central theme within it (Jaros, 2018, p.2). Although control might seem like an abstract concept, managerialism is a manifestation of it felt by many office workers in businesses and institutions (e.g. Keenoy, 2005). Given that it is observable as a set of practices (Klikauer, 2015), it's a good concrete place to start exploring CMS's critique of control. The treatment of managerialism has a personal dimension given that scholars often feel the consequences of it within their own institutions, universities (Butler & Spoelstra, 2014, p. 538), but it is also seen as a ubiquitous ideology permeating the private and the public sector (Shepherd, 2018, p.1668). Within these, it is perceived as a meritocracy that imposes conventions and standardizations (Butler & Spoelstra, 2014, p. 536), limiting other qualities such as playfulness and creativity (Keenoy, 2005, p.305). It is experienced in the day-to-day, as "buttress[ing] management control of the workplace at the expense of rank-and-file employees" (Jaros, 2018, p.1), through the creation of a regime of quantifiable excellence, values and procedures that permeate contemporary organisations (Butler & Spoelstra, 2014, pp. 538–536).

Scholars highlight managerialism as a generic system (Klikauer, 2015, pp.1104–1105) with techniques assumed to be "portable to almost any sphere of activity in the public or private sector" (Lawrence and Sharma, 2002, p.662). Perceived as a "'sound'" and "beneficial" collection of techniques (Jaros, 2018, p.1), managerialism is a sophisticated system of control given that, at least visibly, it places power in the hands of an idea, a "script" contentiously described by Keenoy (2005) as a "culturally deeply alien text" (Keenoy, 2005, p.307). In that respect it disembodies power dynamics, representing itself as meritocracy not flavoured by any specific ideology or sector (Fournier and Grey, 2000, p.11). It is the visible expression of a deep underlying logic, exercising control in the name of a displaced abstraction for the benefit of all (Jaros, 2018, p.1). Through such readings an image emerges of an ideologically driven belief in a generic, systemically elegant 'one fits all' recipe favouring the generalizable over the specific (Lawrence and Sharma, 2002, p.662; Jaros, 2018, p.1).

The work of CMS is to show managerial practice to be specific to certain interests, rather than the culmination of a technical meritocracy progressing towards "excellence" (Butler & Spoelstra, 2014). Scholars such as Fournier and Grey (2000) reveal it as a form of "ideological restructuring" disguised as "cost control" (Fournier & Grey, 2000, p. 10), specifically associated with neoliberalism (e.g. Harlow et al., 2013). Klikauer (2015) sees it as an ideology of its own, a system, which is "implicitly accepted as authoritative by the managerial class, in management schools, and by the general public" (Klikauer, 2015, p.1106). While some of the literature

refers to the figure of the manager as the beneficiary, in terms of power, of such an ideology (Fournier & Grey, 2000, p. 10), this figure and even the specific formulation of managerialism as it is expressed in institutions such as universities (Keenoy, 2005, pp.305, 307; Graeber, 2015, p.54) could also be seen as just symptoms of widespread assumptions regarding the centrality of control (Parker, 2002a, p. 3). To use a popular metaphor from the natural world (Ingold, 2006, p.13), it is as if the manager is just the visible mushroom, nurtured by the mycelium (the ubiquitous assumption of control), which permeates its environment. It is this philosophical layer, this attitudinal mycelium, underlying political differences (Fournier & Grey, 2000, p. 11), and coming from a deeper, philosophical and cultural place (Parker, 2002a, p. 3) which I turn to next.

2.2.2 Positivism, elegance and singularity in OT

In his much cited *Against Management*, Parker (2002a), discusses the ubiquity of management as a concept. According to him, the fact that anything that exists needs to be managed, is based on the belief that control is "a precondition for an organized society, for social progress and economic growth" (Parker, 2002a, p. 3), and is founded on the assumption that it is necessary and beneficial. He lists three aspects of control: "control over nature", "control over human beings" and "an increasing control of our organizational abilities". The three are closely related to scientific fields and their respective notions of progress. Control over nature is depicted as a growing mastery we as humans have over adversities that plagued us in the past ("crop failures, floods and diseases") related to our growing understanding of them through natural science. The disorder and wildness of human nature are brought under the umbrella of knowing/controlling through social science and psychology. And then there is the control of control itself. Management as a scientific field akin to natural science, allows us to progressively conquer the chaos and cruelty in the ways humans previously got together to do things in the world (Parker, 2002a, p. 3).

The belief in science's capacity to predict and control is usually labelled by its detractors and adherents with the term "positivism". One detractor puts it like this:

> Positivism is the dominant epistemology of modernity, offering a promise that ultimately, through rigorous and patient endeavour over centuries, humankind would achieve complete comprehension of the world and its inhabitants, would understand its laws and patterns, its risks, dangers and complexities, which could then be predicted, managed, modelled and overcome to create a good future for us all (Coleman, 2015, p.363)

One can use this term as shorthand for the three types of control detailed by Parker and quoted above (Parker, 2002a, p. 3). CMS scholars talk about positivism as widely prevalent, the

norm in mainstream OT (Wicks and Freeman, 1998, p.123; Tadajewski, 2009, p.734). As a result of its prevalence, OT and management studies are represented in the public imaginary as a scientific discipline (Cox and Hassard, 2005, p.112), opaque and complex, replete with controlled experiments (Bitektine et al., 2018) and quantifiable data (Donaldson, 2005; Karami et al., 2006) - the trappings of natural science. Through such data and experiments, the legitimacy of OT and management studies as a field that is capable of predicting, controlling and prescribing, is constructed (Solovey, 2004). In that, it joins the natural science and other social sciences as supporting an epistemology of progress, of the growing knowability of the world, its animals, objects, people and organisations (Coleman, 2015, p.363).

Fournier and Grey (2000) write that, through its alignment with the positivist logic of control, management theory creates a feeling of "reality and rationality", successfully "effacing the process of [it's] construction behind a mask of science and 'naturalness'" (Fournier & Grey, 2000, p. 18). Its claims to "singularity" (the idea that there is one correct version of the way things are) (Durepos et al., 2021, p.5), marginalizes its underlying ethics, values and ideologies (Wicks and Freeman, 1998, p.123; Durepos et al., 2021, p.5). One can see how such philosophical assumptions manifest themselves on a practical level through the abstract generalizability of managerialism, with its claim to meritocratic singularity (Lawrence and Sharma, 2002, p.662). CMS scholars present positivism and managerialism as intertwined in that they both express a deeply rooted belief in progress (Parker, 2002a, p. 3), in singularity (Durepos et al., 2021, p.5) and in meritocracy (Butler & Spoelstra, 2014). They thus promote a feeling of determinism, of OT as a knowledge system, progressing towards its betterment, in a singular process to which there are no alternatives (Parker et al., 2007, p. x). Given that CMS is an activist project that hopes to promote change (e.g. Cabantous et al., 2016, p.207), it also concerns itself with the mechanisms through which such forms perpetuate themselves as hegemonic and ubiquitous, their so called "performativity" (Fournier and Grey, 2000, p.17). The next section details such challenges to CMS's transformative aims.

2.2.3 Ubiquity, performativity and common sense

CMS scholars try to break down and understand what they are up against, what makes mainstream management seem natural (Fournier & Grey, 2000, p. 18) and ubiquitous (Shepherd, 2018, p.1668), something we all seem to be engulfed in (Parker, 2002a, p. 2). As we will see, their answer is twofold. On one hand, management and managerialism are legitimized 'from above' by the authoritative voice of 'experts' coming from business schools (Grey and Willmott, 2002, p.412). On the other, a feeling of management's deeply rooted common sense is established through repetition of daily gestures (Learmonth, 2005, p.618).

Business schools are described by CMS as managerialism's "most fertile breeding ground (Klikauer, 2013; Locke, 2011)" (Klikauer, 2015, p.1103), as "significant nodes for the diffusion and legitimation of managerial practices, the reproduction of managerial elites and the dissemination of managerial ideologies" (Grey and Willmott, 2002, p.412). In their managerial turn to audit measures and exact quantifications, they reflect "the changing […] view of what universities should be" (Fournier & Grey, 2000, p. 15). Despite the existence of currents that contest control, usually ones focusing on minority sectors of the organisational world where creativity is valued (e.g. Ford and Gioia, 1995; Cook, 1998), it is through business schools and the positivist empiricism they engage with (Cox and Hassard, 2005, p.112) that controlled, protocolised forms of causality, expressed through managerialist prognoses, are legitimized as one size fits all recipes for organising (Klikauer, 2015, p.1104). In that, the managerial status quo, and with it the ubiquity of control, are legitimised 'from above' by academic experts.

The other way management gains its feeling of naturalness and ubiquity is through everyday actions that give it a feeling of reality and common sense (Learmonth, 2005, p.618). Parker (2002a) writes that

> It is difficult, perhaps impossible now, for citizens of the first world to imagine a state of affairs in which we could buy bananas from our local supermarket, or visit a hospital, or vote in elections, without some process of *management* having taken place behind the scenes (Parker, 2002a, p. 2 emphasis mine)

The impossibility expressed by Parker is reminiscent of statements about the impossibility of imagining life outside of capitalism (Jameson, 2003a, p.76; Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.53). While the claim that it is impossible to imagine life outside of *capitalism* is a grand philosophical one that might be hard for many to grasp, it trickles down to the everyday through the impossibility to imagine life outside of *management*, as Parker himself seems to suggest in an auto-critique of his own book (Parker, 2021, p.5). It communicates this impossibility to us, if to borrow Parker's examples, through the bananas, the hospitals and the elections of our daily life (Parker, 2002a, p. 2). As I will review further down, CMS scholars discuss this street-level feeling of common sense as constructed through small iterative repetitions. One of the ways CMS scholars engage with managerial assumptions, made common sense within organisations, is through their treatment of the concept of performativity.

2.2.3.1 Performativity and critical performativity

The term performativity most visibly appeared in the CMS conversation with a paper by Fournier and Grey's (2000), where they describe CMS as non-performative. According to it, despite hoping to achieve "a better world or to end exploitation, etc." CMS does not produce new realities (Fournier & Grey, 2000, p. 17). In contrast, the mainstream OT coming out of

business schools is performative, given its "intent to develop and celebrate knowledge which contributes to the production of maximum output for minimum input [...] inscribing knowledge within means-ends calculation" (Fournier & Grey, 2000, p. 17). While Fournier and Grey are following Lyotard's (1984) definition of the term, other scholars respond by citing Austin (2018) (Cabantous et al., 2016, p.200; Gond et al., 2016, p.445), Butler (2015) (Cabantous et al., 2016, p.201; Gond et al., 2016, p.447), Callon (2011) (Cabantous et al., 2016, p.203), and Barad (2003) (Gond et al., 2016, p.448), each of these opening the discussion to new directions, making for a wide-reaching conversation, most of which is beyond the scope of this chapter. Importantly for me here, through such an impassioned response to the question of performativity, scholars show CMS to be an activist project, highly concerned with the consequences of theory and its repercussions to life outside of academic debates (Cabantous et al., 2016, p.207; Fleming and Banerjee, 2016, p.260). While investing effort in denaturalizing the managerial common sense, they wonder whether critique within academic circles is enough, whether it is not important to be propositional rather than just oppositional (Fournier, 2006, p. 295; Land & King, 2014, p. 924). Thus, one aspect of performativity is its definition as the change discourse affects in the world outside academia. In order to understand how this happens, especially how theoretical assumptions become common sense (Parker, 2002a, p. 2), some scholars turn to the writings of Judith Butler and other queer theorists.

Judith Butler (1999), describes performativity not as a singular act but as "a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalization" (Butler, 1999, p. xv), and elsewhere as "a set of relations and practices" that "are constantly renewed" (Butler, 2010, p. 150), producing the "effect" of something being "knowable and unified" (Butler, 2010, p. 147). Inspired by such theories, some CMS scholars describe how the managerial common sense is similarly constructed through iteration and re-iteration of both verbal and non-verbal gestures (Paring et al., 2017, p.845). Butler is cited when discussing how organisational forms and the subjectivities within them are generated through performative iterations (Cabantous et al., 2016, p.201) or how "converging processes and practices [...] performatively constitute the 'effect' of organizations" (Gond et al., 2016, p.447). For example, use of certain words, (e.g. "management") contain "certain normative ideas" which are then naturalized through repetition (Learmonth, 2005, p.618) rendering the world "intelligible and contestable in particular ways" iterating and perpetuating "habitual patterns of thought" (Willmott, 1998, p.89), literally creating the status quo (Learmonth, 2005, p.618). Cabantous et al. (2016) write that "it is through iterability that the appearance of something that appears to precede language is constituted" (Cabantous et al., 2016, p.201). Translated into colloquial parlance

"something that appears to precede language" is synonymous with common sense (Parker, 2002a, p. 2).

Such status quo perpetuates "oppressive social structures" that are embedded within what is considered "technical knowledge" (Spicer et al., 2009, p.536). Queer theory elaborates how, being as they are outside of such perceived common sense, ideas regarding alternatives to control, are delegitimized as error (Egaña Rojas, 2017, p.230) and the experience of experimenting with them, as failure (Halberstam, 2011). People who consider possibilities outside of the managed status quo are treated as children (Halberstam, 2011, p.6). Thinking which does not involve "the favored technique of high modernism for sorting, organizing, and profiting from land and people and for abstracting systems of knowledge from local knowledge practices" (Halberstam, 2011, p.10), similar to the Lyotardian performativity expressed by Fournier and Grey (2000, p.17), are deemed illegible. Legibility, understood in such a context, is a form of control over knowledge that streams ideas into the common sense, circumventing other diverse ways of knowing (Heron and Reason, 1997; Reason and Torbert, 2001), which subsequently lose visibility and credibility. In other words the common sense is exclusionary, creating, through the repetition of small gestures, a situation where alternatives are deemed illegible (Halberstam, 2011, p.10) and unintelligible (Learmonth, 2005, p.618). Such descriptions demonstrate how the challenge to CMS's activist project is deeply rooted, explaining why the status quo seems intuitive, and why the project of contesting it – illegitimate.

One typical way such repetitions translate managerial control into the day-to-day of people interacting with organisation is through planning methodologies. Planning methodologies are where mainstream organisational theories, recipes in a sense, meet iterative daily practice. They are, therefore, prime sites for exploring performativities and their treatment in the CMS literature. While not much critical literature is dedicated to it, the articles I found show planning methodologies, such as strategic planning and project management, as social constructs, presented as "universal, natural and thus inevitable" (Hodgson, 2004, p. 87). Critical researchers show how control is projected onto time and injected into the smallest moments of the day. Project management, for example, involves the developing of "routine predictability and control" (Metcalfe, 1997, p. 309 cited in Hodgson, 2004, p. 87), enhancing the "calculability" of individuals through weekly, daily, hourly or even half-hourly inspections. Combined with "neo-normative control" harnessing passion and a sense of play (Peticca-Harris et al., 2015, p.571), and forms of "identity regulation" that attempt to create identification of workers with managerial values (Alvasson and Wilmott, p. 620), managerial methodologies for

projecting control onto the time of workers attempt to naturalise control through iteration and re-iteration, making it common sense.

But while controlling and managing all aspect of reality is perceived to be natural and desirable (Fournier & Grey, 2000, p. 17), reinforced by the iteration of engagement with structured organization, resistance to it is always there in the undercurrent (Butler, 1999, p. 36). Although repetitive enactment gives mainstream forms a feel of reality (Hodgson, 2005, p. 55), each repetition, each gesture, is also a point of conflation, bringing with it the possibility of alternatives (Hodgson, 2005, p. 56). In Butler's (1999) own words, each such reiteration can "swerve" from its "original purposes and inadvertently mobilize possibilities" not only "exceed[ing] the bounds of cultural intelligibility, but effectively expand[ing] the boundaries of what is, in fact, culturally intelligible" (Butler, 1999, p. 36). The fact of subversion existing in the micro-moments of hegemony opens the possibility of looking at managerial forms as plural rather than monolithic, of CMS scholars looking into such subversive performativity within the mainstream.

This idea is explored in the ongoing conversation about "critical performativity", initiated by Spicer et al. (2009) where they propose that CMS actively intervene "into discourse and practice" (Spicer et al., 2009, p.543) becoming "affirmative, caring, pragmatic, potential focused, and normative" (Spicer et al., 2009, p.537). The term 'critical performativity' has become a central axis of this conversation with researchers exploring diverse configurations and possibilities within normative, managerial settings (Tadajewski, 2010; e.g. Alvesson and Spicer, 2012). Central to much of this debate is the consideration that "there are ample opportunities [...] for actors to carve out spaces of autonomy" within mainstream managerial organizations (Spicer, Alvesson, Karrenman 2009, p. 553), and that CMS can focus on finding "heterotopias (Foucault, 1984/2000)", meaning "spaces of play" that encourage "the exploration and imagination of alternative modes of being and doing (Hjorth, 2005)" (Spicer et al., 2009, p.551), within them. Seeing normality, its legibility and intelligibility as constructed through the repetition of gestures (both spoken and not) CMS presents the spaces where management is enacted as negotiated, as spaces in constitution where, hegemony, resistance but also the unexpected can be enacted.

2.2.4 Concluding remarks about the critique of control in CMS

We saw in this section that an important focus of the work of CMS is the critique of control as it exemplifies the systemic positivist philosophy of mainstream OT (Cox and Hassard, 2005, p.112), its managerialist agenda (Jaros, 2018) and as it manifests itself in the lives of those interacting with organizations through managerial measures and planning methodologies

(Hodgson, 2004). CMS describes managerialism as a neoliberal power grab (Jaros, 2018, p.1), but one that uses the abstract language of meritocracy (Butler & Spoelstra, 2014) to create the sense of its singularity (Durepos et al., 2021, p.5), its objective coherence, an elegant 'one fits all' recipe beyond alternatives or critique. One of CMS's main projects is unmasking such a disembodied abstraction, placing it within its historical and political contexts as expressing specific interests (e.g. Sisto, 2018). Another important concern is considering the mechanisms by which control becomes common sense, legitimized academically and iterated and re-iterated into perpetuation in the everyday. Critical scholars denaturalize control on all of these levels (philosophically, ideologically and methodologically), demonstrating that in practice, prescriptive recipes and the repetition of acts are spaces of negotiation where resistance can also express itself.

Considered by its scholars as an activist project, CMS is concerned with the question of its repercussions outside of academia (Cabantous et al., 2016, p.207; Fleming and Banerjee, 2016, p.260). While critique of the performativity of managerialism has been central to CMS, a call for it to propose its own performativities, termed by Spicer et al. (2009) "critical performativity" (Spicer et al., 2009, p.537), has generated debate within the community (King, 2015; e.g. Cabantous et al., 2016). The conversation echoes the ones taking place in activist communities between opposing and proposing (for example, one of my interviewees talked about the left "*just saying no to stuff*"). While proponents of critical performativity sometimes talk about subduing to some extent the critique of management, in order to see the diversity within existing structure and working in less dogmatic ways within it (Spicer et al., 2009), there are other ways in which critique of mainstream structures can be propositional. A conversation about alternative forms of organizing, predating the one about critical performativity and still ongoing, responds to its challenge in a certain sense. I turn to this literature next.

2.3 Alternatives

2.3.1 Myopia

As a response to the ubiquity of managerial forms both within OT and in mainstream organizational practice (Shepherd, 2018, p.1668), a conversation, within CMS, regarding alternative forms of organizing challenges some of the basic assumptions both within and without academia (Parker et al., 2007). In his online introduction to alternative organizing, Cheney (2014), uses the metaphor of eyesight to express OT's limited range and its political implications:

> the sheer lack of vision--literally, not being able to *see* other ways of doing things--certainly restricts efforts at social transformation—even within many social-movements (Cheney, 2014)

He denounces debates within OT as limited to “well-known players in any of the three major sectors: private, public and non-profit" and the “familiar, traditional, mainstream, predominant, or hegemonic institutional arrangements” to be found within them (Cheney, 2014). According to Parker (2008), this is akin to the creation of “a managerialist encyclopaedia that has had entire categories of organising airbrushed out of it” comparable to “a biology department which only teaches animals with four legs and omits the rest” (Parker, 2008). Reedy (2014) writes that “only rarely does our discipline pay attention to the much broader historical tradition of everyday organising undertaken cooperatively in an almost infinite variety of social settings and places” (Reedy, 2014, p.643), while King and Learmonth (2015) add that business schools only take into account one type of practitioner – managers (King and Learmonth, 2015, p.354). This lack of vision, literally termed myopia in some literature (Dunne et al., 2008), is the impetus to explore other forms, stepping outside of prescribed boundaries. As I will show, this action is, in its way, a contestation of control given that myopia in OT is a tacit form of academic control, placing boundaries around what is considered organization, separating it from what is not (Parker, 2002a, pp.41–42). In terms of the performativities discussed in the previous section, this means that by focusing on the multiplicity found within mainstream forms and the resistances therein (Spicer et al., 2009, p.551), even critical scholars do little to transform the basic assumptions of human collaboration, thus trapped within and perpetuating the status quo (Parker et al., 2007, p.x).

In response to such myopia (Fournier, 2006, p. 295), the conversation about alternative organizing widens the view regarding organizing, by examining the many possibilities excluded from mainstream OT (Parker et al., 2007). As an example of this diversity and also of its political dimension, Parker et al.'s *The Dictionary of Alternatives* (2007) gathers, through a list of 226 items, evidence that "(both geographically and historically) organizing is a highly varied, continually contested and negotiated matter" (Parker et al., 2007, p.x). The items presented in the book demonstrate the intersection between organisational diversity and utopian intention, pointing towards the practically infinite variety of philosophies for human collaboration aimed at social transformation. They include items such as the ancient Greek Agora (2007, p.2), community supported agriculture (2007, p.60), black bloc tactics used in demonstrations (2007, p.27), Mondragon (2007, p.183), the Quakers (2007, p.224), Permaculture (2007, p.221) and Robinson Crusoe (2007, p.236) just to give an idea of the diversity and range of typologies. Apart from the book, alternative organisation researchers have published articles and chapters about subjects such as piracy (Land, 2007), democratization in voluntary sector organization (Land and King, 2014), worker cooperatives (Kokkinidis, 2015) and alternative universities (Del Fa, 2017). I will refer to the move from conceptualizing organization in terms of a meritocratic

singularity (Butler & Spoelstra, 2014; Durepos et al., 2019, p. 5) to a plurality of possibilities as the *diversifying gesture* of the alternative organization conversation.

This gesture is a response not only to the scientific dimension of OT's myopia, the fact of it not representing correctly the organisational landscape (Parker, 2008), but also to its political dimension, meaning its promotion of controlled, hierarchical power structures (Fournier, 2006, p. 295; Klikauer, 2015). Parker et al. (2007) pose diversity in contrast to such controlled myopia, writing that people are told that "the problem of organization is already solved" in an "an attempt to persuade [...them...] that they cannot organize themselves, and that they need to wait for experts to tell them how they should live" (Parker et al., 2007, p. x). With the aim "to broaden the imagination of organizing beyond the narrow confines of 'market managerialism' within which it has been locked by neoliberalism" (Fournier, 2006, p. 295), alternative organisation scholars turn their attention to organisational forms that experiment with less hierarchical forms of collaboration (Land and King, 2014; King and Land, 2018), utopian forms of envisioning the future (Reedy, 2014, p.643), counterhegemonic cultural (Reedy et al., 2016) and economic (Langmead, 2017a) practices, and thinking from social sectors considered to be on the margins (Parker, 2002b). There seems to be a focus on the overtly politicised organizational practices of social movements (Gravante et al., 2016; Polanska et al., 2016; Reedy and King, 2019) and specifically an interest in anarchism (Land & King, 2014; Parker et al., 2014; Reedy, 2014), inverting what CMS researchers consider to be the covertly neoliberal political agenda of mainstream OT (Fournier, 2006, p. 295). As we will now see, form and content, theory and politics intertwine and inform each other in this conversation, where political thinking coming from anarchism and social movements reframe theoretical considerations and organisational analysis.

2.3.2 Disordering the organizational landscape

The term "alternative", used in the phrase "alternative organization" (Parker et al., 2007) could imply a dialectical pairing between it and "hegemonic" forms and could be taken as such (Cheney, 2014). As we saw, this pairing has a political dimension to it, given that the alternatives it presents are oftentimes inspired by the collaborative practices of social movements (Reedy and Learmonth, 2009, p.244) and by anarchism (Land and King, 2014, p.924). One could possibly visualize this conversation as taking part in a typical political conflict between a neoliberal mainstream and an activist, anti-capitalist resistance. But as we will see, within the alternative organisation conversation, such duality is critiqued.

The work on alternative organisation comes from CMS scholars' self-critique, their view that OT's myopia extends to its critical sector (Dunne et al., 2008, p.275). Land and King (2014)

remind us that even most of the critical literature focuses on power relations *within* mainstream capitalist organisations (Land and King, 2014, p.923). “Resistance”, they add, “has mostly been understood in terms of opposition to capitalist, managerialist forms of control rather than on alternative, non-capitalist forms of organisation (Ackroyd and Thompson, 1999; Fleming, 2014; Fleming and Spicer, 2010; King and Learmonth, 2014; cf. Parker et al., 2014)" (King and Land, 2018, pp.923–924). Fournier (2006) adds that “’critics’ of managerialism and corporate capitalism” contribute to “a sense of powerlessness” through their focus on “devastating effects of global capitalism and its continuous patterns of abuse”. She suggests that positioning critique “within a broader reflection of global capitalism’s contingencies, lack of ‘omnipotence’ and ‘historical force’” might put it “in its place, both in terms of its historical ‘development’ and its grip on contemporary economic and social realities”. Such a shift in perspective would open up “a conceptual space in which organizational difference can be taken seriously” (Fournier, 2006, p. 308). Following Butler, Parker (2002b) expresses a similar conceptualization, in saying:

> The point here is surely to dethrone singular assumptions, such as those held by being 'for' or 'against' management. Butler puts this point with characteristic clarity: 'The effort to identify the enemy as singular in form is a reverse discourse that uncritically mimics the strategy of the oppressor instead of offering a different set of terms' (Butler, 1990, p. 13) (Parker, 2002b, p. 160)

In other words, rather than presenting a simple landscape where a critical sector opposes a mainstream, alternative organization scholars present the very oppositional duality between mainstream and critique as a characteristic of myopia.

Where traditional political debate offers us a number of closed options, often presented as a polarisation of two (hegemonic/alternative, left/right, etc.) and especially where one of them is presented as the only option, the diversifying gesture of the alternative organization conversation presents us with an open ended multiplicity, one that is incomplete, not fully knowable, “negotiated” (Parker et al., 2007, p. x) with yet to be discovered partners in the here’s and now’s of different situations. In that sense it is not fully prescribed, planned or controlled, and is open to surprises. Thus, while the critical scholarship presented in the first section looks for multiplicity in the small iterative gestures within managerial organizations (Spicer et al., 2009), within the confines of myopic frameworks, the alternative organisation conversation’s diversifying gesture is expansive, looking for diversity of forms (Parker et al., 2007) rather than merely perceiving existing forms as diverse.

Such a theoretical reformulation of the question of organisation connects to this conversation’s activist dimension, given that valuing a diversity of forms is actually a

characteristic of social movements inspired by anarchism (Juris, 2008a). In the words of Parker et al. (2014a), anarchism is "the first form of 'organization theory' in which 'organization' was assumed to be an open term" (Parker et al., 2014, p. 624). Seeing organisation as an "open term" (Parker et al., 2014, p. 624) and as a "continually contested and negotiated matter" (Parker et al., 2007, p. x) disorders the organisational landscape, reframing the conversation about organisation using "a different set of terms" (Butler 1999, 13 quoted in Parker 2002b, 160), opening it to the circumstances and contingencies of multiple situations not predefined. The advantage of such a queering (Parker, 2002b, p. 160), disordering gesture is that it responds creatively to a crisis of the imagination, to a myopia regarding organisation, that is both perpetuated in academic spaces and sedimented through ubiquitous repetition in the general psyche (Parker, 2002a, p. 2). While a 'for' or 'against' structure creates a closed system where all positions are perceived to be mapable and nameable, a disordered, queered landscape is wrought with possibilities rooted in existing practices (alternatives) which have so far been excluded or marginalized from the conversation (Cheney, 2014). By gesturing through example at an organisational landscape where assumptions about organisation are not taken for granted and where imagination and visualization are cultivated "in terms of the possible (or even the thought to be impossible)" (Cheney, 2014), it conjures up a place where organisational experimentations, even wild and playful ones, are enabled.

2.3.3 Some reflections about the alternative organization conversation and its diversifying gesture

From an academic-activist perspective, the kind that informs this research, the question that arises is how to best make use, both in terms of theory and in terms of action, of this legroom that has been afforded. Given that control is a central value and norm of hegemonic OT (Cox and Hassard, 2005), and that the scientific and also political quest for alternatives is about inhabiting the praxis of human collaboration in ways that challenge it (Parker, 2002a, pp.41–42; Parker et al., 2007, p.x), the question that emerges is whether organisation can be "rewilded" (Cameron, 2018) and how would one, theoretically and practically, go about doing so.

Further down, in a section called 'Recipes', I will explore academic work that tries to develop praxis, new forms of inquiry "in the midst of action" (Reason and Torbert, 2001, p.6) in regards to the creation of alternatives. Such forms might be perceived as alternative recipes or even alternatives *to* the idea of recipe, responding to the singular performativity of mainstream management with a multiplicity of actions and reflections responding to multiple contexts. Especially my interest is in those of the alternative organisation conversation in CMS, engaging in ethnographic work and PAR to explore the 'nuts and bolts', the intricacies and complexities experienced by those who organise differently. Such work responds to the challenge of the

detailed mapping of alternatives as they affect the day to day of practitioners. However, before engaging with this literature, I am going to take a brief detour to a conversation outside of OT. The work around the concepts of diverse economies and community economies emerging in response to the work of geographers J.K. Gibson-Graham (Gibson-Graham, 1996; Gibson-Graham, 2006) parallels in several ways the diversifying gesture of the alternative organization conversation in CMS. I now turn to this body of work to see how it can inform us when looking into the issue of recipes for alternative organisation.

2.4 Recipes

In the previous sections I explored the critique of control within CMS (e.g. Jaros, 2018). I detailed how, in response to the ubiquity of control in the supposed common sense of organising and the theoretical myopia of OT (Cheney, 2014), researchers have called for an exploration of diversity, connecting it to the possibility of social transformation (Parker et al., 2007). I earlier mentioned how control is expressed, through planning methodologies, in the day-to-day of those interacting with organisations, including academics themselves in their institutions (Keenoy, 2005). It is through these daily experiences that the logic of control is sedimented into a feeling of ubiquitous common sense to which there are no alternatives (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.xxxiii). CMS denaturalizes these processes in theory but is critiqued as non-performative, meaning that this theory does not yield power or generate alternative common sense within people's lived experience (Fournier & Grey, 2000). The question I turn to now is how the performativity of control is contested in practice. In other words, what are the possibilities of transformation emerging from small daily gestures contesting control, especially those that form part of the creation of alternatives to it. This section thus explores alternative recipes, both for organisation and for its research. I first look into how diverse economies and community economies are explored through participatory research and academic collaboration in the work inspired by J.K. Gibson-Graham (1996; Gibson-Graham, 2006). I will show how their praxis, networked and diverse, provides a rich and nuanced academic sphere connecting theoreticians and practitioners and providing useful tools for the elaboration of alternatives. I then turn to the alternative organisation ethnographers who, oftentimes informed by this work, set out to map the practice of creating alternatives.

2.4.1 Diverse economies and reading for difference

This section focuses on conversations about diverse economies/community economies initiated by geographers J.K. Gibson-Graham and extended by the Community Economies Research Network (CERN) and more recently by the Community Economies Institute (CEI). As I will show, this conversation produced its own diversifying gesture, paralleling the work done by alternative organisation scholars. Given the diversity and the richness of contributions to

this network there is a lot that can be learned from it. I will focus on its use of feminist "weak theory" (Stewart, 2008; Gibson-Graham, 2014), on a theoretical practice Gibson-Graham refer to as "reading for difference rather than dominance" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, pp.xxxi–xxxii) and on its extensive use of PAR (e.g. Cameron & Gibson, 2005).

2.4.1.1 Diverse economies' diversifying gesture

The economy could be seen as the conceptual backbone of society, defining in many ways what we perceive to be possible. Related terminology constitutes some of the basic building blocks (freedom, entrepreneurship, effort, labour, collaboration, mutual aid etc.) of narratives many hold to be profoundly true (e.g. the supply and demand model Ruccio, 2008, p.901). In that respect economics is similar to organisation, delineating as it does the realm of the possible (Parker, 2002a, p. 2). My research and thesis stand on the shoulders of several generations of feminist economists and scholars (e.g. Pérez Orozco, 2014; Federici, 2021) that expanded the term 'economy' beyond the lineage of "counting and measuring everything within the 'economic' sphere" (Cameron & Gibson-Graham, 2003, p. 147). It is inspired, among others, by a movement originated by geographers J.K. Gibson-Graham which, informed by feminism, critiques the positivism of mainstream economics. Such feminist theories add to a larger movement critiquing capitalist economics and neoliberalism (e.g. Clarke, 2004; Max-Neef, 1992) in a way that widens our view of what economy is. Like the diversifying gesture of the alternative organisation conversation (Parker, 2002b), the diverse economy framework "queers" the basic terms that economic theory and common sense seem to take for granted (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.68).

Like the alternative organisation conversation, and similarly motivated by activist aims of transformation, Gibson-Graham (2006) are confronted with a myopia of an economy, presenting itself as a "singular and self-contained totality" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.54) and perceived as a "powerful and pervasive presence" (Gibson-Graham, 1996, p.21). Resisting it, is an anti-capitalism, who's imagination is "stymied" (Gibson-Graham, 1996, p.xviii) by a hegemony that makes "noncapitalist economies […] an unlikelihood" (Gibson-Graham, 1996, p.3). This lack of agency within the current representation of economy is shared by economists themselves, who's

> …subjectivity is constituted by the economy which is their object: they must obey it, yet it is subject to their control; they can fully understand it and, indeed, capture its dynamics in theories and models, yet they may adjust it only in minimal ways (Gibson-Graham, 1996, p.96)

Interestingly, controlling here is akin to lacking agency. Economics is represented as a field which economists "can fully understand", a world of which they are both "the masters and the

captives" (Gibson-Graham, 1996, p.96). Thus, the control and knowability expressed by positivism is a key obstacle for rethinking the economic object and for empowering economists and laypeople to practice economy differently. In that respect Gibson-Graham's critique of the narrowness of economics parallels CMS's critique of OT's managerial myopia (Parker, 2008), with its elegant 'one fits all' recipes demarcating both theoretical and practical possibilities (Klikauer, 2015). In other words, in both cases control is a hindrance to imagining alternative realities.

As a response, they contrast the treatment economists give the economy with how feminist scholars treat the body. Feminism "scrutinized and often dispensed with the understanding of the body as a bounded and hierarchically structured totality". According to Gibson-Graham "it is necessary to rethink the economic object", de-familiarizing it "as feminists have denaturalized the body" (Gibson-Graham, 1996, p.97). These insights are equally relevant to the diversifying, queering gesture of the alternative organization conversation and to CMS's efforts to denaturalize the managerial common sense (Fournier & Grey, 2000) discussed above.

In order to do such a reframing of economy, the diverse economies conversation builds on feminist scholarship regarding phalocentrism to criticize the "capitalocentrism" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.77) of both capitalist and much anti-capitalist thinking. They do so, not antagonistically, but creatively, described thus:

> By speaking a language of the diverse economy, we can begin to unravel the dense knots of meaning that sustain the hegemonic identity of "the capitalist economy." Working against the condensations and displacements that structure the discourse of capitalocentrism, we have produced an unruly economic landscape of particular, nonequivalent meanings. Our objective has been to disorder the capitalist economic landscape, to queer it and thereby dislocate capitalocentrism's hegemony. In the space thus produced, we see opportunities for new economic becomings—sites where ethical decisions can be made, power can be negotiated, and transformations forged (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.77)

This depiction, of a theoretical space as 'unruly landscape' is useful for me for describing, as I did above, an OT after the alternative organising conversation has disordered it. A landscape, such as a field of study (e.g. economy, organisation) but also a geographic one, is unruly when it contains "particular, nonequivalent meanings" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.77), making rules and generalisations hard to apply. Imposing rules onto phenomena is perceived as an imposition of the myopia of mainstream conceptualisations (as discussed above). Showing landscapes to be unruly and simultaneously cultivating them as such, opens them up to possibilities, diversifying them and making them fertile ground for alternatives.

Gibson-Graham famously illustrate the diversifying gesture through the image of an iceberg, where the myopic depiction of economy are above water, and the immense diversity of economies that are not counted within the definition of economy, lies beneath it (Figure 1).

Figure 1: the diverse economies iceberg

The iceberg is an open image, a tool that can be filled with different content depending on the context in which it is produced. In that, it does not produce strong, rigid boundaries around what is and what is not economy. Rather, it is an expression of Gibson-Graham's use of "weak theory" (Gibson-Graham, 2014).

2.4.1.2 Weak theory

Faced with The Economy's ubiquitous coherence and with "the difficulties of resisting the influence of "strong theory"—that is, "powerful discourses that organize events into understandable and seemingly predictable trajectories" (Gibson-Graham, 2014, p.S147), Gibson-Graham apply feminist "weak theory" (Stewart, 2008; Gibson-Graham, 2014), proposing "a language of the diverse economy as an exploratory thinking practice" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.60). Like other feminist economists, they theorize the economic world as "unfinished and evolving" (Nelson, 2003, p.62), and the consequences of such thinking as being blocked by "...those to whom a belief in a static, cold and hierarchical universe is emotionally crucial" (Nelson, 2003, p.62). A "weak theory of economy", they write,

> ...does not presume that relationships between distinct sites of the diverse economy are structured in predictable ways, but observes the ways they are always differently produced according to specific geographies, histories, and ethical practices (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.71)

The use of the term “weak theory” helps us understand how this ‘unruly landscape’ challenges accepted ideas regarding academic rigour (Argyris, 1980, p.3; Cox and Hassard, 2005, p.112), through seeing organisation and economy as negotiated in situ in dialogic processes with others. It is thus useful for alternative organisation scholars advocating for a view of organisation as an “open term” (Parker et al., 2014, p. 624) and as a “continually contested and negotiated matter" (Parker et al., 2007, p. x). Gibson-Graham are cited by alternative organisation scholars specifically on these points, with Fournier (2006) calling for “a conceptual space” for “organizational difference” (Fournier, 2006, p. 308) and Land and King (2014) citing Gibson-Graham in saying:

> Strong theory […] affords the pleasures of recognition, of capture, of intellectually subduing that one last thing. It offers no relief or exit to a place beyond (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.4)

In later chapters, I cite the people I talked to, ones involved in my case studies, as they reframe some of the basic notions of organisation in ways that coincide with Gibson-Graham’s use of weak theory. Such conversations highlighted the cases I examined as idiosyncratic rather than typical, pointing towards diversity rather than coherence and elegance when theorising organisation. Difference, rather than dominance (Gibson-Graham, 2006, pp.xxxi–xxxii), has thus been key to my approach. In that respect it coincided with one of Gibson-Graham’s key techniques, “reading for difference rather than dominance” (Gibson-Graham, 2006, pp.xxxi–xxxii).

2.4.1.3 Reading for difference rather than dominance

An important theoretical technique used by Gibson-Graham for the sake of their reconsideration of economy, is “reading for difference rather than dominance” (Gibson-Graham, 2006, pp.xxxi–xxxii). The technique involves “adopting a stance of curiosity rather than recognition towards claims of truth”. Doing so, “possibilities multiply along with uncertainties, and future possibilities become more viable by virtue of already being seen to exist, albeit only in the light of a differentiating imagination”. Such “radical heterogeneity” queers the economy by bringing “into visibility the great variety of noncapitalist practices that languish on the margins of economic representation” (Gibson-Graham, 2006, pp.xxxi–xxxii). For example, in the context of fieldwork, strong theory would tend towards “enlarging the known by domesticating and incorporating the unknown”. Doing so subordinates thinking “to recognition and identity, rather than freeing it to participate in the always political process of creating the new” (Sharpe, 2002 cited in Gibson-Graham, 2006, p. xxxii). In other words, when encountering a specific situation, rather than trying to present it as a generalizable typology emphasizing its similarity to others, it can be left as expressing a unique element within the

local situation in which it takes part. Such an approach "foregrounds specificity, divergence, incoherence, surplus possibility", which are "the requisite conditions of a less predictable and more productive politics" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, pp.xxxi–xxxiii). It's a theoretical articulation of a technique imagined specifically to accompany the kind of diversifying gesture done by the alternative organisation conversation, specifically thought up as a practical antidote to the coherence and ubiquity of a status quo (so called managerial, so called capitalist) that limits possibility by its pervasive sense of performativity (Parker et al., 2007, p.x). It is in itself an alternative framing to the control that underlies mainstream scholarship (Bechhofer and Paterson, 2012). For these reasons, it is also an adequate approach for researching alternative organisation.

2.4.1.4 The use of PAR

CERN, the research network inspired by the work of Gibson-Graham, uses PAR to bring such theorizing to the flesh, collaborating with non-academic practitioners on a diversity of economic projects rooted in local contexts. The book *Making Other Worlds Possible* (Roelvink et al., 2015), edited by CERN collaborators, provides a glimpse at the diversity of organisational and economic forms. The diverse examples within it include community supported fishing (Snyder and St Jowt, 2015, p.26) Buddhist cafés (Werner, 2015, p.72) and biodiesel produced by ex-felons (Healy, 2015, p.98), just to cite three. The theoretical underpinnings, while all refer back to the work of Gibson-Graham, include post-structuralist aspects (Werner, 2015, p.83), more-than-human relations (Barron, 2015, p.173), and novel interpretations of the term "communism" (Madra and Özselçuk, 2015, p.127) (to give but three examples). The book thus exemplifies the fact that participatory practice, the act of getting involved in the day-to-day of economic practitioners, contributes to the rich diversity of economic and organisational representations, collaborative forms, and theoretical configurations. Later in the text, in Chapter 4, I will add to these my own perspective, regarding how artistic approaches can contribute to such praxis, and why they are relevant. For now, I would like to turn to how the diverse economies conversation can contribute to the one about alternative organising in CMS.

2.4.1.5 Contributions of diverse economies to the alternative organization scholarship

From the descriptions above, the parallelism between the two conversations already emerges. Both take place within fields that delineate our idea of the possible (economics, OT). The two conversations critique mainstream economics and mainstream OT respectively. They both show them to represent possibilities as knowable and quantifiable, supported by a level of technical expertise, a science that makes understanding them inaccessible to most. They thus exclude the sort of reframing that could be done by laypeople, leaving these academic fields poorer, less diverse, and laypeople themselves lacking agency (Callon et al., 2009, p.7).

The networked PAR-based practice of CERN articulates the diverse economies framework in multiple expanding ways, creating a diversity of theoretical-practical constellations (Roelvink et al., 2015). It embodies how economy and potentially organisation can be expressed as an unruly landscape, robustly articulated through differing but connected instances of theorizing in the midst of action, ones in which both academics and practitioners collaborate. Through the diversity of such praxis, theorizing itself becomes richer and more nuanced, moving away from the systemic elegance of 'strong theory' (Gibson-Graham, 2014, p.S147), embodying the theoretical practice of "reading for difference rather than dominance" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, pp.xxxi–xxxii). By being diverse and collaborative, it is an academic practice that contributes to shifting the perception of hegemonic ideas as performative (Fournier & Grey, 2000, p. 17), ubiquitous (Parker, 2002a, p. 2) or omnipotent (Fournier, 2006, p. 380). To use the terms expressed in the alternative organisation conversation, they also embody how previously unquestioned terms can be seen as open (Parker et al., 2014, p. 624) and negotiated (Parker et al., 2007, p. x).

The diverse economies conversation points to a direction where the alternative organisation one could aim for, one that little by little, through its daily collaborative practices, aims to undermine the sedimentation of organisation-as-usual solidified in Western society through the ubiquity of management (Parker, 2002a, p. 2) and backed by ideological managerialism (Fournier & Grey, 2000, p. 10). Such a living thriving network could be seen as a response to the question of performativity preoccupying CMS scholars, a budding response to the pervasive common sense (Mumby, 2016) of hegemonic managerial forms. These intertwined conversations are thus present in the rest of the thesis, and although I see the diverse economies conversation as robust and rich, I can also see several directions to which it could productively evolve. Specifically I am thinking about the role art and artists can play in creatively reframing economy and organisation, roles I will detail in Chapter 4, where I talk about the methodological ingredients of the *Wild Yeast Economies* research. Both the use of PAR and the practice of "reading for difference rather than dominance" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, pp.xxxi–xxxii), exist to some extent in the work of a few alternative organization ethnographers, ones that spend time with practitioners of non-hegemonic forms of organising, to describe the learning processes they go through. In order to locate my work in relation to theirs, I turn to it in the following section.

2.4.2 Ethnographic work in alternative organising

In a paper called "Organizing otherwise: Translating anarchism in a voluntary sector organization", Land and King (2014) echo many of the sentiments found in the Gibson-Graham and the CERN literature, applying them to the critical study of organisation. Similar to the way

Gibson-Graham critique capitalocentrism (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.77), they write that by "theorizing power as monolithic and resistance as futile", CMS "effectively forecloses potential for real change". Given that it evaluates alternative organising "from a safe distance" critical management scholars occupy "a relatively safe and risk free position abstracted from the messy realities of 'doing' organization (King, 2014)". In that, like Gibson-Graham whom they cite, they draw an escape-line from the purity of critique passing through the "messy" action of actual alternative organising (Land and King, 2014, p.924). Similarly, Fournier (2006) writes that while the

> ...long tradition of 'critique' in organization studies [...provides...] numerous studies highlighting the disciplinary and dominating effects of modern organizational practices [...] there are few attempts to radically shift the terms in which organizing is imagined, although there are invitations to do so (e.g. Parker, 2002; Reedy, 2002) (Fournier, 2006, p. 295).

While this is mostly true, there are exceptions within the alternative organisation conversation (e.g. Land and King, 2014; Langmead, 2017a; Reedy and King, 2019). This section looks at the literature responding to the diversifying gesture of the alternative organisation conversation, one that enters into the intimate details, the day-to-day of such proposals. This work joins other, sometimes older ethnographies and participatory research projects, part of other academic conversations, which observe the lived experience of cooperatives and other forms that emphasize workplace democracy and non-capitalist, non corporate organisational proposals (e.g. Clarke, 1984).

As part of this effort, alternative organisation ethnographers explore central themes to the topic within a diversity of settings and through diverse forms of engagement. Langmead (2017a; 2017b), for example, did research within a cooperative she worked for in the past. Reedy et al. (2016) spent time with "a loose confederation of alternative groups" (Reedy et al., 2016, p.1554) in a UK city. Haras-Saizarbitoria (2014) held informal conversations with worker-member-owners of the Mondragon cooperative. Land and King (2014) worked with a voluntary sector organisation in implementing anarchist principles into their organisational processes. Sutherland et al. (2014) explored issues of leadership within social movements with anarchistic leanings. In the process of doing so, such projects recruit methodologies such as ethnography and PAR, creating intimacy, political affinity and even friendship (Reedy and King, 2019, p.23) to break formal barriers between academics and practitioners.

The participatory spaces of co-learning between academics and laypersons (if we are to even accept such simplified divisions), have been known to break binary oppositions, proposing, in their place, multidirectional conversations rather than static debates between fixed positions

(Callon et al., 2009, p.35). Alternative organisation ethnographers do so through diverse methodological explorations. These include Flecha and Ngai's (2014) use of communicative methodology, based on "the intersubjective dialogue between the researchers and the 'researched'" (Flecha and Ngai, 2014, p.670), Heras-Saizarbitoria's (2014) use of informal spaces outside of "Weber's symbolic Iron Cage (Weber, 1968)" for interviews (Heras-Saizarbitoria, 2014, p.651) and Sutherland et al. (2014) ethnographic approach including "flexible 'interview guides'" for the purpose of gaining "an emic understanding of organizational processes" (Sutherland et al., 2014, p.765). Differing from the critical but distant perspective critiqued by Land and King (2014) and Fournier (2006), researchers express affinity with activists, positioning themselves both empathetically and critically vis-à-vis such processes.

Reedy and King (2019) articulate "procedural virtues" (Reedy and King, 2019, p.8) that can contribute to such activist scholarship. They include "reflexivity, emancipatory purpose including giving voice, engaged and accessible writing of use to, and sometimes coproduced by, participants, and relationality-emotionality" (Reedy and King, 2019, p.8). They are embodied by the phrase "friendship as method" enabling activist ethnographers to break down "the distinction between researcher and participant", in order to "build richer understandings of the relational glue of mutual aid which sustains activist communities (see Authors 2016)" (Reedy and King, 2019, p.23). Such approximations to the lived experience of alternative organisation participants provide an alternate route to knowledge building, differing as it does from the detached scientism of mainstream OT (Cox and Hassard, 2005, p.112). While Reedy and King (2019) place the conversation about critical performativity in the context of the academic activist tradition (2019, p.5), alternative organisational ethnographers, them included, differ from other forms of advocacy within academia in the fact of taking a bottom up approach to social change, entangling themselves in the, often contradictory details of lived experience. One of my main concerns in this section is to understand the extent to which such work addresses the temporal aspects of control, in other words, possible alternatives to planning methodologies.

2.4.2.1 Alternative planning and decision making

I noted above that control is most notably felt in people's lived experience through planning methodologies that project it temporally, project it onto the future. In order to consider the day-to-day of alternatives, I read through alternative organisation ethnographies, asking whether they provide alternative ways of advancing through time, alternative forms of future making. Ethnographies bring alternative conceptualizations of organising to the flesh by showing the experience of developing and implementing alternative recipes as wrought with

ethical dilemmas, navigating through and negotiating with uncertain circumstances (e.g. Land and King, 2014; Reedy et al., 2016; Langmead, 2017a). In the paper cited at the beginning of this section, Land and King (2014) describe the narrative of an organisation oscillating between periods of drift and ones of structure and professionalism, ending in the attempt to "translate" anarchism onto its daily functioning (Land and King, 2014, p.1545). They show how the non-hierarchical ideal of anarchism was interpreted through a variety of ideological prisms, rendering it open to interpretation and debate (Land and King, 2014). Similarly addressing the issue of democratisation in work organisations, Langmead (2017a) talks about an instance in a worker cooperative where the relationship between planning and hierarchy is expressed through a debate relating transparency, finances, participation and planning in diverse ways (Langmead, 2017a, pp.90–91). Ashford and Reingen (2014) highlight the duality between pragmatism and idealism in a natural food cooperative, focusing on the way tensions between dual oppositions are managed in the day-to-day. In that they exemplify the multiplicity of perspectives found in such projects, and that ongoing negotiation in itself renders the process of creating alternatives an open process. Bryer (2011) similarly explores tensions around priorities and resource allocation, focusing on how practices of accounting are seen "as a social and subjective practice" (Bryer, 2011, p.481) ultimately as "a human practice through which individuals can perceive and develop their activities and ambitions collectively" (Bryer, 2011, p.490). All of the above show the ethics of democratization as imperfectly translated onto the day-to-day of participants in alternative processes, with a multiplicity of perspectives negotiating the concrete forms they might take. In that respect, they provide us with an idea of how an open term, negotiated in the here's and the now's of evolving situations, might manifest itself in the daily moments of those participating in it.

When using the term 'negotiation', one might get the impression of a debate between rational and fixed positions regarding what is the best procedure to adopt at a given point in time. Nevertheless, the ethnographies here discussed make special note of the emotional and personal dimensions present within such processes. For example, a study by Reedy et al. (2016) cites the frustrations associated with spending long hours in meetings that are open spaces, often involving rehashing the same subjects with newcomers (Reedy et al., 2016, p.1565). Langmead (2017b) talks about how alternative subjectivities are formed, internalizing, through experience, "democratic "way[s]-of-being" and [...] form[s] of tacit knowing" (Langmead, 2017b, p.204). Kokkinidis (2015) similarly elaborates how those engaging with workers' collectives describe it as a hard process in which you "change as a person" (Kokkinidis, 2015, p.431). Thus, through personal engagement within alternative organisations, ethnographers show subjectivities to be undergoing constant change (King and Griffin, 2019). The

negotiations regarding how to apply alternative values to the day-to-day are thus subject to the conversations between people and the unfixed positions they occupy.

Thus, closely examining, through ethnography and participation, the emotional dimension of such learning, plays an essential part in the attempts to “enable more autonomous selves”, ones that contrast the “individualization”, of mainstream organisation (Reedy et al., 2016, p.1554). Considering the multiplicity of perspectives shifting and evolving throughout processes of alternative organising and their emotional and personal dimensions, one can start taking the tentative steps towards an alternative performativity, a form of doing in the day-to-day that contests the prescriptive recipes of managerial planning methodologies. In that respect, one can see the descriptions of such negotiations as responding, to a certain extent, to the question of alternative conceptualizations of future making, alternatives to planning methodologies. All this said, this body of work is not framed in such terms, from the perspectives of alternatives to planning. My thesis here is different, seeing planning methodologies as the most explicit expression of control in the day-to-day, and explicitly addressing the question whether the processes of creating alternatives can provide alternatives to such temporal control. As part of my observation and analysis, I relate this also to the different boundaries that form part of the creation of alternatives and their research.

2.4.2.2 The boundaries of activism and its research

Alternative organization ethnographers challenge the boundaries of academia and the control it traditionally exercises over knowledge production, adopting “procedural virtues” from militant ethnography and PAR (Reedy and King, 2019, p.8). In order to position my research within this context, I’d like to also look at how the boundaries of alternative organisations themselves are treated in this work, asking: to what extent do alternative forms of organising have an inside and an outside? To what extent is the activist milieu a bounded social sphere, with “shape and stability” (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.49), separated from the mainstream? What implications do such boundaries have for the way and the extent control is contested within them?

The question of boundaries is closely connected to the issue of control given that boundaries are sites where control is exercised, where decisions are made as to what is allowed in and what remains outside of a given site, be it academia, organisation, research or social movements (Midgley, 2000, p.468). Permeable, unregulated boundaries are seen as sites of “pollution and endangerment" (Butler, 1999, p. 168). In mainstream conceptions, boundaries are also important to planning and strategizing, given that the way an organisation ‘reads’ the realities outside of its boundaries is important to the way it plans its actions in response to

them (Morgan, 1986, p.45). When it comes to social movements specifically, boundaries have to do with participation, with centralisation and with power given that, while vanguard models imagine a leading nucleus of activists followed by others (Lenin, 1902, p.51), more horizontal models imagine power as distributed with democratic participation permeating society as a whole (Ward, 1988, p.130). Through valuing participation (Polletta and Jasper, 2001) social movements strive towards an ideal of challenging, dare one say almost undoing, their boundaries as a separate social sphere. Thus, treating social movements as a social sphere with an inside and an outside might or might not be true to the reality perceived by a researcher, but is in certain contradiction with such movements' aims and ideals. It is thus an issue worth considering.

For the reasons listed above, I searched for references to insides and outsides of movements within the alternative organisation ethnographies I read. While the literature doesn't tend to focus on this issue, framing organisational stories through different concerns, certain instances can help give an idea to how this is treated. Langmead (2017b), who returned to an organisation she worked in to do research, expresses its boundary as passing through her own person when "the productive moments of re-definition and re-knowing [...] emerged at the meeting point of the research performance and democratic praxis, and of insider-practitioner and outsider-researcher" (Langmead, 2017b, p.199). Reedy and King (2019) also consider such boundaries. They use a team approach of one researcher, a long-term member of the group possessing "a unique insider access and understanding" and the other, taking a more external position, balancing the possible "pitfall of losing sufficient critical distance from our own insider assumptions (Alvesson, 2003) in fully immersed research" (Reedy and King, 2019, p.11). Other researchers (e.g. Kokkinidis, 2015) deal in their research with organisations that either have a specifically delineated social sphere, or have a membership and a somewhat formal definition. While there is still little to go on to make defining statements, these instances can help me expound on the implications of treating activism and projects experimenting with alternative forms of organising as bounded social objects with a clear inside and an outside. One contribution my research can make here, is framing the treatment of alternative organising through this idea of boundaries, of shape and stability. Discussing this here will help me establish why I located my research, as I will show in later chapters, at what could be perceived as the outskirts of activism, at instances where the insides and the outsides of the activist social sphere are blurred and confused.

2.4.3 Some reflections regarding recipes, ethnographies, boundaries and control

As we saw so far, the work of alternative organisation ethnographers challenges boundaries in several senses. Through participation in the movements and organisations they research, the

boundaries of academia are challenged (e.g. Langmead, 2017b; Reedy and King, 2019). This is true for the conceptual boundary of research and the actual social boundary regarding who is considered a researcher. I explore this more in Chapter 4 when I talk about PAR's own diversifying gesture (Eikeland, 2015, p.382). Through exploring organisational experiments outside of OT's managerial myopia, they also challenge the boundary of organisation as it is defined by mainstream scholarship (Parker et al., 2007). The question of the boundaries of social movements themselves is still highly unexplored in this conversation. The examples above seem to suggest that the idea of an inside and an outside of such movement might be present to a certain extent. As we will see in Chapter 3, where I explore social movements through the social movement studies literature, boundaries are related to the democratising goals of activists.

The question that arises regarding the boundaries of alternatives within the alternative organisation conversation is the following: is the aim of such scholarship strictly to explore what alternative organisation is *like* and how it is different from mainstream management, for example what social movements are *like*? Or is the purpose to also explore, combining such observations through reading for difference (Gibson-Graham, 2006, pp.xxxi–xxxii), the multiple ways in which the organisational landscape *could* be, the possibilities it opens up through different instances where the idea of it having a generalizable essence, is challenged. If the objective were to be the first, when encountering a case study, researchers' job would be to explore in which way it is *typical* for such forms of organising, helping us order and systematize a body of knowledge about this entity called 'alternative organising', what falls inside it and what does not. If it were to be the latter, the emphasis might be on the unique qualities, the idiosyncrasies of each case and the organisational and political possibilities such specific stories open up, through the practice of reading for difference.

A related question is whether the aim of the alternative organization ethnographies is to give "shape and stability" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.49) to alternatives, or whether their "shadowy" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.49) nature is an integral part of their alternativeness. If the latter is the case, are there alternative forms of resilience, ones that are not founded on the rigid boundaries of forms visible as having shape and stability? Both of those projects, the project of describing the nature of alternative organising as it is, and the project of reading for difference to point towards possibilities, are useful to our understanding of alternatives. The boundaries between the two are blurry: Giving "shape and stability" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.49) to alternatives challenges the myopia of mainstream OT, while the project of looking for idiosyncrasies is grounded in observations of existing dynamics within them. In "reading for difference rather than dominance" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, pp.xxxi–xxxii), I am choosing an

approach that aims to help social movements “proliferate possibilities” (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.126).

Given that, like others mentioned here (Reedy and King, 2019, p.23), I research from a point of affinity to social movements’ goals, I was compelled to include considerations of boundaries and participation in my approach, central as they are to my motivations in experimenting and to my self-criticism as an activist. As I will demonstrate in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, I located my own praxis at a point where the insides and outsides of social movements are blurred, where activists (myself included) consciously choose to open both our assumptions/terminology and our physical spaces for interruptions from the outside. It is a space where planning and utopian strategising (Desideri and Harney, 2013) welcome uncertainties, including the possible undoing of activism as a bounded sphere with an inside and an outside.

2.5 Conclusions

The question that motivated this research is the question of alternatives and specifically the question of how they might develop and unfold in time, what does the learning of them entails. My question is thus a ‘how to?’ question, a practical one that emerges through the, sometimes frustrating attempts, to bring unlikely possibilities into being and then to nurture them into resilience. This chapter looked at the alternative organisation conversation coming out of CMS, establishing what academic work informs such a question, and the areas that still need exploration and development. In the chapter I described the alternative organisation conversation as opening a theoretical door that was previously shut, leaving room for a social science to playfully explore multiple configurations. Such a gesture contests control in several ways. For once, it contests the control exercised by OT as a field, deciding as it does, what is and what is not acceptable subject matter for research and theorization, what is and what is not considered organisation. Control is shown in the literature as central to the content of such legitimized forms, given that managerialism as an ideology and management as a practice are about controlling what are considered resources, both human and non. Specifically my interest is in how such control is projected onto the future through planning methodologies, and how it is expressed through boundaries, the insides and outsides of a given organisation or social milieu. Both of those are important ingredients in organisational recipe, the ‘how to’ of human collaboration. The question is whether the alternative organisation conversation in CMS explores alternatives to both these aspects of control, and if so, how.

It is important to establish early on in the thesis my affinity with these ideas from CMS reviewed in the chapter, with the perception that control is the underlying assumption of organisation. If that is indeed the case that would mean that control needs no advocacy, that

the burden of proof is upon any argument that challenges it, as I will do through terms such as 'spontaneity' and 'precarity'. For that reason, the focus of this thesis is on making visible such alternative logics. Control is also always present alongside the two, given that I will argue for alternative organisational recipes as embodying a playful tension between control and spontaneity. That said, I give more space in the thesis to these contestations of it (spontaneity, precarity). This is due to the fact of them being under theorised, debunked and shunned as they are in the literature (e.g. Flesher Fominaya, 2015) compared to the ubiquity of control (e.g. Johnson and Gill, 1993). The nature of the ubiquity of control in mainstream OT, in its underlying philosophy, and in its prescriptions generated questions about the nature of alternatives.

The positivism expressed through mainstream OT, the managerialist measures and planning methodologies that translate it to the lived experience of people, create a coherent systemic image, a ubiquitous one-recipe-fits-all approach that excludes alternatives. The chapter asks whether alternatives need to express similar coherence, whether they need to be systemically elegant. I brought in the diverse economies conversation and the community economies research network (CERN) as an example of an alternative form of collective enquiry, one that can contribute to the bringing into being and the nurturing to resilience of diverse alternative forms. Specifically I highlighted the reframing of theory through feminist "weak theory" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.71; Stewart, 2008), the practice of "reading for difference rather than dominance" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.54) and the use of PAR (Cameron & Gibson, 2005) as an antidote of the generalizing systemic elegance of mainstream organizational discourse.

To explore this issues I turned back to alternative organisation scholars, specifically those taking an in-depth look at the practices of creating alternatives. Oftentimes informed by Gibson-Graham (Fournier, 2006; Land & King, 2014) such ethnographic work expresses learning processes as imperfect spaces of negotiations. Researchers' participation in the projects they theorise gives them intimate insights into the emotional dimension of the way alternative organising challenges control through non-hierarchical organising and decentralisation. I noted though, that the question of the boundaries of alternative organising, and the temporal aspect of control, the way planning methodologies are contested, is under theorised.

Given that the focus of such ethnographies tends to be social movements, presents the question of the way social movements themselves go about imagining, developing and learning the practice of creating alternatives. Do the practices of social movements express a deeply rooted critique of control? In order to further explore this, the next chapter looks into

social movement praxis and scholarship through the lens of two terms associated with such movements, two terms that could be seen as antonyms to planning: ‘spontaneity’ and ‘precarity’.

Spontaneity and precarity

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 3

Chapter 2 examined the work of the alternative organisation conversation in CMS. It showed how the gesture of opening up the boundaries of OT comes as a response to myopia in the field, to a set of blinders limiting and controlling what is considered organisation and what is not, as well as a political agenda which it serves. Related to this control in researching organisation is the control of practicing it. Expressed by managerial forms, it is the control of the time, the movements and the actions of the individuals and groups interacting with organisations, either as workers, clients, citizens or others. In the chapter, I talked about how the way the ubiquity of control is most felt by those interacting with organisations is through its temporal manifestation, through planning. In this thesis, I treat the issue of planning through the metaphor of recipe, asking whether there could be recipes for alternative forms of organising and if so, what might they be like. In a way, this is really about the learning processes, which the creation of alternatives, entail.

Alternative organisation researchers often turn to social movements to see what such recipes might look like, and to go in-depth into the processes of their creation (e.g. Langmead, 2017a). Contemporary movements practice alternative organising in their day-to-day, in what they consider to be “anti-oppression” work (Cornell, 2011, p.36; Luchies, 2014b). Such work expresses a rejection of control in the forms of hierarchy, centralisation and bureaucratisation, aiming to create, in their place, more democratic and inclusive forms of collaborating. Through ethnographic work, alternative organisation scholars bring to light the on-going negotiation and the inner contradictions involved in the creation of such processes (Land and King, 2014; Reedy et al., 2016; Langmead, 2017a; e.g. King and Land, 2018). They take a perspective empathetic to activist projects, often participating themselves in them, providing an intimate insider viewpoint expressed by the expressions “friendship as method” (Reedy and King, 2019, p.23) and seeing themselves as militant ethnographers (Reedy and King, 2019, p.2). By exploring the on-going negotiations, the challenges and the imperfections found along the way, this work contributes to the oftentimes hard to predict learning process of activists charting organizational terrains outside the perceived norm. They start illustrating, through the day-to-day events they explore, how organisation could be practiced as an “open term” (Parker et al., 2014, p. 624) and as “a negotiated matter” (Parker et al., 2007, p. x). The *Wild Yeast Economies* thesis builds on such efforts, positioning itself similarly as an empathetic but critical exploration within alternative movements. Alternative organisation ethnographers sketch the contours of such practices, working towards describing their ideals and challenges. I position

my research at the outskirts of such efforts, where such contours become blurry and activists themselves work to undo boundaries.

The previous chapter addressed the blind spots of mainstream OT, revealed though the work on alternative organisation (e.g. Parker et al., 2007). This one addresses contributions and blind spots in the work of social movements themselves and their scholars. Specifically, I am interested in ones that address the issue of planning/controlling and the alternatives to them. The chapter explores these themes by following the trail of two terms often found in the conversation of activists: spontaneity and precarity. I focus on these two terms given that both are ones that contest planning, expressing events emerging unplanned (spontaneity) or the inability to plan (precarity). Spontaneity is associated in the popular parlance with something festive; precarity-with life difficulties and instabilities. Spontaneity-with something irrupting uncontrollably from one's insides, precarity- with something that permeates society at large. In the chapter, they will complement each other, suggesting the need for an approach to organizing and to its research that welcomes indeterminacy, thus departing from the hegemony of control. In terms of the culinary metaphor that accompanies the thesis, the ubiquity of planning and controlling is reminiscent of classic recipe books that connect longevity with the "art of planning ahead" (Mathiot, 2015, p.17). This chapter will point to the benefits of wildness, inspired by less prescriptive recipes, ones that challenge the urge to control, separate and protect (Katz, 2003, p.12). The term spontaneity is one of the main ingredients in such recipes, one that is often mentioned by activists and in the social movement studies research.

3.2 Spontaneity

Definitions of the word spontaneity in the dictionaries slightly vary. The Cambridge dictionary defines it as "the quality of being natural rather than planned in advance". In that respect one can say that spontaneity is an antonym of planning relevant to this discussion, considering the issues regarding planning and control I presented in the previous chapter. It also suggests, as did some of the literature I presented (Keenoy, 2005, p.307) the unnatural character of planning as it is sometimes perceived. Other dictionaries such as Collins and Merriam-Webster stress that spontaneity is "stimulated by internal processes" (Collins) and "voluntary or undetermined" (Merriam-Webster). While my interest here is in the unplanned aspect of spontaneity, which the word "undetermined" could also suggest, we will see further down that some social movement researchers stress the internal or autonomous connotations of the term, maybe interpreting "undetermined" more as 'undetermined from its exterior'. The discussion is an important one given that social movements struggling against the status quo, are often described both by participants (Polletta, 1998; Maeckelbergh, 2011; Snow and Moss,

2014, p.1122) and by scholars (Killian, 1984; e.g. Guillén, 2013; Chaudhuri and Fitzgerald, 2015) as spontaneous. Given that, at least by some definitions, spontaneity is something that challenges planning, the debate about it in social movement studies is pertinent to the question of recipes, the temporal control I've been addressing in the text so far. In this section I will explore how spontaneity is defined and described in the social movement literature, how it is negated or explained by it and what role it plays (or not) within the dynamics of activism. I also look at the role control and spontaneity have within the so called prefigurative practices of activists. The term "prefigurative" refers to methodologies created in the present to embody a future, ideal society (Maeckelbergh, 2011, p.3; van de Sande, 2013, p.230). Specifically I am looking for how scholars and activists treat the idea of things happening outside of human agency, outside of our control, as they relate to the way social movements go about working towards such utopian futures.

3.2.1 Causality and spontaneity in social movement scholarship

One important thing to note regarding the way spontaneity is defined in the social movement scholarship is that scholars tend to describe it by zeroing in on a singular event, a sort of explosive thing that happens unplanned. The Beijing Spring student protests of 1989 (Snow and Moss, 2014, p.1122), the 2011 Egyptian revolution (Snow and Moss, 2014, p.1122), the protests against President Donald Trump (Fox Piven, 2017), the Greenboro sit-ins of 1960 (Polletta, 1998) are all described in the literature in such a manner. Snow and Moss (2014) define it as "events, happenings, and lines of action, both verbal and nonverbal, which were not planned, intended, prearranged, or organized in advance of their occurrence" (Snow and Moss, 2014, p.1123). Flesher Fominaya (2015), while making great efforts to debunk spontaneity, describes singular events such as the Arab Spring as springing out of nowhere, "from the ether" (Flesher Fominaya, 2015, p.143) or at least thus perceived. Polletta (1998) writes about the inexplicability of the 1960 sit ins, the fact that they were described by activists using "metaphors of wildfire, fever, and contagion" (Polletta, 1998, p.137), with them emphasising "the absence of planning" (Polletta, 1998, p.138). Zamponi and Fernández González write that a major bias in social movement research is the fact of protests treated "as isolated events, as spontaneous outbursts born out of immaculate conception" (Zamponi and Fernández González, 2017, p.65).

Later in the section, I will go into more detail regarding how these scholars and others engage with the topic of spontaneity. For now it's just important to establish that most scholars define spontaneity in such a linear, singular way, as an event emerging unplanned from nothing. Once so defined, scholars ask whether such a thing even exists, or whether events described as spontaneous are in fact so or not.

The conversation about spontaneity has a political dimension. In 1984, Killian already described social movements as displaying the "polar tendencies" of "organizational strategy and individual spontaneity" (Killian, 1984, p.770). The debates back then were already laden with value and issues of power, with spontaneity associated with irrationality and lack of agency of social movement. Alternative explanations, described as "rational", viewed social movements as rationally evaluating their possibilities for the purpose of attaining specific goals (Wood & Jackson, 1982 cited in Killian, 1984, p. 770). Placing spontaneity as the opposition of organisation (Killian, 1984, p.770) suggests that it is reactive rather than constructive, associating it more with protest than with the creation of alternatives (Breines, 1980, p.424). We can see traces of this tension in much earlier writings such as Lenin's "What Is To Be Done?" pamphlet (Lenin, 1902). A known proponent of uncompromisingly singular organisation (Parker, 2013, p.166), Lenin asks whether the spontaneity of strikes is a form of mindless desperation, a vengeance, or whether it is consciousness "in an *embryonic form*" (Lenin, 1902, p.17). Interpreting the actions of social movements as spontaneous is thus presented as derogatory and demonstrates a distance from them and their goals. It's as if they are viewed from afar as an angry mob, and not empathetically as intelligent and strategizing.

This implication continues to more recent scholarship. Zamponi and Fernandez Gonzalez (2017) warn us against describing social movements as masses of unorganized and de-politicised individuals posing a threat to order "thanks to their easy access to social media on their mobile phones" (Zamponi and Fernández González, 2017, p.65). Their argument against this has two aspects to it, one scientific and the other political. From a scientific perspective, recurring to such spontaneity for the purpose of explaining activism thwarts "our ability to really understand such complex and long-term processes" (Zamponi and Fernández González, 2017, p.65). Politically speaking, such descriptions create a representation of collective action which is confused and depoliticized, "easy to exploit for those actors interested in doing so" (Zamponi and Fernández González, 2017, p.65). For example, Ahrne and Brunsson (2011) consider activist forms as "merely happen[ing] rather than being decided", connoting a lack of responsibility. In order to be valued as "genuine" organisational forms they would need to adopt the trappings of mainstream organising, "particularly hierarchy" (Reedy, 2014, p. 643). Thus, spontaneity is associated with perceiving activists as lacking agency, responsibility and intent.

Added to this is the fact that some capitalist utopian thinkers celebrate "spontaneous order" (Grey and Garsten, 2002, p.16). In a book chapter called *Organised and Disorganised Utopias: An essay on presumptions*, Grey and Garsten (2002) talk about Hayek's "utopia of disorganised capitalism" (Grey and Garsten, 2002, p.16), the "plan to resist all planning" (Hodgson, 1999

cited in Grey and Garsten, 2002, p.17). It exemplifies the discourse of freedom that legitimises what they refer to as "market utopias" (Grey and Garsten, 2002, p.17). Social movement scholars' rejection of spontaneity seems to posit the alternatives created by activists as organised and responsible, possibly to contrast such legitimations of mainstream capitalist forms.

Thus, spontaneity, the emergence of activism, usually protest (Breines, 1980, p.422), "from the ether" (Flesher Fominaya, 2015, p.143), creates a dilemma for researchers, especially those empathetic to social movements. For once, recurring to spontaneity seems unscientific, not providing an explanation for phenomena and thus not contributing to the learning of and about social movements. Secondly, it poses the danger of presenting such movements as mindless and irrational, thus putting them in negative light. But while this literature equates depicting activism as spontaneous with showing a lack of empathy to it, spontaneity is repeatedly found in activists' own depiction of their actions and values (Polletta, 1998; Maeckelbergh, 2011; Snow and Moss, 2014, p.1122). It is also a value expressed in some of the literature that underpins their activity (e.g. Bookchin, 1977, p.63; Ward, 1988, p.24). At the same time, control, for example in the form of bureaucratisation, is critiqued as a form of oppression (Graeber, 2015). This presents an apparent contradiction between the depiction of spontaneity as mindless, associated with researchers taking a distance from social movements, and its adoption by participants themselves.

Social movement theorists respond to this dilemma regarding spontaneity in several ways. Polletta (1998) makes explicit the narrative of spontaneity in many activist accounts, but focuses on the instrumental uses of such stories. Making beautiful use of literary theory, she elaborates how telling stories with an emphasis on inexplicable spontaneity is useful to social movements "precisely by its failure to supply a logical explanation for action". Celebrating spontaneity in activism generates an ambiguity that challenges causality, telling the story of protest events as inexplicable outbursts of resistance. This creates a situation where "penetrating the mystery of collective action requires more stories, and indeed, requires not only stories, but that we ourselves act" (Polletta, 1998, p.142). Thus, stories of spontaneous outbursts of activism invite passive listeners to break with their passivity, gesturing them towards the act of activism. They seem to say that you have to engage in action yourself to understand it. Flesher Fominaya (2015) agrees that activists deploy a narrative of spontaneity strategically adding that they do so to "help present grievances and claims as the popular will of the people" and to "effectively integrate new members" (Flesher Fominaya, 2015, p.143). The unpredictability of spontaneous action is explained as a narrative device, which activists use to further completely understandable goals. Such accounts, of how the idea of spontaneity

can be functional within the stories told by activists, are fascinating and insightful, but on the way, researchers such as Polletta and Flesher Fominaya do something else: they distance themselves from the idea of spontaneity itself, of something outside the scope of planning, being a real possibility within activist practice.

While Poletta (1998) and Flesher Fominaya (2015) explain the self-described spontaneity within activist circles, Flesher Fominaya herself and others also explain the use of the term by outside observers. Flesher Fominaya (2015) accounts for it by highlighting observers as external to social movements, or to the specific dynamics at play, planning thus being invisible to them (Flesher Fominaya, 2015, p.142). She also explains how social movements "auto-invisibilize" their activism, refusing labels and identities, resulting in outsiders (including researchers) being unable to see the organisation taking place, thus falsely assuming spontaneity (Flesher Fominaya, 2015, p.143). Kucinskas (2015) shows how researchers fail to understand the underlying logics at hand because of "multiple, contradictory forms of data, or incomplete data" (kucinskas, 2015). Exemplifying this, Wagner-Pacifici and Ruggero (2020) describe an Occupy action as feeling spontaneous to some participants, but having been planned by others (Wagner-Pacifici and Ruggero, 2020, pp.15–16). All in all this literature points to a perspective that considers perceptions of spontaneity as based in partial understanding of the situation or its misunderstanding by outsiders.

Another aspect of the way researchers deal with spontaneity is by focusing on its second definition, as autonomous and not ruled from the outside. In the case of Polletta (1998), activists, who talk about spontaneity in the many cases she reviewed, "denoted not a lack of prior coordination but independence from adult leadership, urgency, local initiative, and action by moral imperative rather than bureaucratic planning" (Polletta, 1998, p.137). Polletta thus explains spontaneity not as a break with causality, something that is outside of our control (including our capacity to fully explain and then predict), but as a form of autonomy, rejecting bureaucracy and traditional leadership. Frances Fox Piven (2017) seems to concur, defining spontaneity as a "plan" that "no organisation can claim credit for" (Fox Piven, 2017 12m24s).

While Snow and Moss (2014) do engage with spontaneity as unplanned or unintended events, they bring it into the realm of knowable causality, understanding it "in terms of Mead's (1938) conception of an act, which consists of four elements—impulse, perception, manipulation, and culmination" (Snow and Moss, 2014, p.1123) asserting that

> The difference between prior deliberation and the cognitive process associated with spontaneous action is that the latter is compressed in time [...] with spontaneous decision-making being a case of fast thinking (Snow and Moss, 2014, pp.1123–1124)

Snow and Moss talk about spontaneity as a “mechanism” that is “activated” during the course of mobilisations (Snow and Moss, 2014, p.1123). They thus demystify it, bringing it in from the realm of indeterminacy into the controlled knowability of science.

All the above examples contribute to our understanding of how a singular protest event erupts in a seemingly spontaneous manner or why it might be described as such. What they don’t do is engage with the possibility of indeterminacy itself being central to the processes by which activists go about creating alternatives. Further down in the chapter I will elaborate how and why indeterminacy, expressed through the ideas of spontaneity and precarity, is central to the framework I use. In regards to spontaneity, there are understandable reasons for it being avoided within the social sciences, ones I deal with in the conclusions to this section. But given that it is mentioned by activists so often, it is interesting to see how planning, controlling and spontaneity are treated in the work of social movements themselves. The next sub-section examines this issue.

3.2.2 Protocols for democratisation

In this sub-section, I look at the role spontaneity and control play within activist alternative processes and projects. I give several examples of how activists’ prefigurative projects tend to promote a mode of doing things, which is systemic, organised and planned. I will then discuss why this might be problematic for contesting mainstream management and for creating forms that are more democratic. The main point I’d like to make is that social movements are constantly involved in protocolisation, in the work of thinking up and debating norms, procedures and methods to confront both moral and practical dilemmas.

Activists spend ample amount of time on the creating of protocols for communication and decision-making that would eschew hierarchical, exploitative, colonialist and patriarchal relations as they perceive them in mainstream forms (e.g. Cornell, 2011, p.24; Maeckelbergh, 2011, p.2). Alternative spaces, such as convergence centres during protests against corporate globalization (Maeckelbergh, 2011, p.2), other protest camps (Frenzel et al., 2014; Wagner-Pacifici and Ruggero, 2020) such as climate camps (Frenzel, 2014) and squatting movements (Pruijt, 2013) are “key sites in which a variety of repertoires of contention are developed, tried and tested, diffused or sometimes dismissed” (as McCurdy, Feigenbaum, & Frenzel, 2016, p. 97 wrote about protest camps). Such experimentation is embedded

> ...within a multidimensional analysis of oppression and anti-authoritarian organization [...] attempt[ing] to problem-solve power and privilege within movement organizations while building empowering forms of political community (Luchies, 2014b, p.99)

Through such experimentation, movements come up with creative ways to reframe and reconsider the centralization and hierarchical assumptions of mainstream organisation. Examples of such creative reframing abound. In one example, colour coding is used in mass mobilisations, with each coloured bloc having its own route. Each such bloc expresses its particular ethics and sensibilities, with all of them together taking over a city and blocking entranceways to summits (Chesters and Welsh, 2004, p.324). Another example is the way initiatives such as Peoples' Global Action (PGA), used five simple tenets as a protocol for connecting a diverse global network without centralising decision-making (Cox & Wood, 2017, p. 357). Another is the use of consensus decision-making and the development of procedures for it (Leach, 2016, p.36). Apart from the above, there are many other methodologies and devices expressing their commitment to rethinking the axioms of organisation and to playful problem solving (e.g. Wright, 2012, p.145). Such networked forms of organisation "act[s] as checks on the bureaucratization and centralization of power, yet are capable of large scale creative and cooperative political action" (Luchies, 2014b, pp.115–116). In other words, not only is the organisational work of social movements inventive, it is oftentimes effective in responding to diverse scenarios and achieving goals.

But while creatively playing with the formality of structures and procedures can open up spaces for spontaneity, oftentimes the experience of developing them is a far cry from what one might imagine spontaneous spaces look like. For the purpose of finding out, I will now review prevalent approaches used by activists to create alternatives. I focus on the methodologies used in creating direct democracies and in generating alternatives to mainstream forms of organising. The activities I examine are central to the work of contemporary social movements in that they occupy much of their time and thinking (Leach, 2013, p.184) and are emblematic of their ideals (Juris et al., 2012, p. 268).

3.2.2.1 Consensus, direct democracy, assemblies, committees

One of the most widespread components of the direct democracy proposed by social movement is consensus decision-making (Juris, 2012, p. 268; Wagner-Pacifici & Ruggero, 2020, p. 6). Consensus is "a creative and dynamic way of reaching agreement between all members of a group". While voting creates a situation where the majority gets its way, consensus takes into account the diversity of concerns, aiming to find solutions supported actively by all group members (Seeds for Change, n.d.). Consensus expresses a "a democratic ideal" affording people participation in decision making and the right to block decisions "they see as harmful or immoral" (Leach, 2016, p.36). It is a complex topic with scholars pointing to differences in its uses geographically (Flesher Fominaya, 2010, p. 382), to historical fluctuations in its popularity

(Leach, 2016, p.37) and to debates regarding its efficiency (Juris et al., 2012, p. 438; Leach, 2016).

Consensus widely characterises mobilizations throughout the U.S. (Wagner-Pacifici and Ruggero, 2020, p.6) and in Europe (Juris, 2012, p. 268). Juris (2012b) described it as emblematic, constituting ”powerful expressions of direct democracy in action” (Juris, 2012, p. 268). According to him it

> serve[s] as powerful symbolic yet embodied contrasts between an inclusive, grassroots, and participatory democracy as it ought to be and the current configuration of a representative “democratic” system that serves the interests of the 1% (Juris, 2012, p. 272)

Rather than imposing a centralised model, consensus is perceived to be about seeing things through the perspective of others and organising across difference (Juris, 2014 min. 12:44). It forms an important part of the processes studied by the alternative organisation scholars discussed in Chapter 2 (Land and King, 2014, pp.925, 928; e.g. Reedy et al., 2016, p.1557), specifically since “how decisions are made is as important as the decisions themselves“ (Reedy et al., 2016, p.1557).

Andrew Cornell’s book Oppose and Propose (2011) tells the story of Movement for a New Society (MNS), an organization that was influential in introducing consensus and other methodologies widely adopted by later generations of activists. It is subtitled “Lessons from Movement for a New Society”, indicating that rather than strictly historical, it holds relevance to contemporary anarchism. Cornell states that MNS’s “many new ways of doing radical politics have become central to contemporary antiauthoritarian social movements" (Cornell, 2011, p.14). MNS spent much of their time developing methodologies that “prefigure, or anticipate and model [...the organisation’s] goals in its own work”. However, in Cornell’s book, MNS members talk about how consensus became rigid (Cornell, 2011, p.67) and fetishised (Cornell, 2011, p.24) within it. As part of their work, protocols for decision-making by consensus joined other structured ones that systematised different aspects of members’ lives, for the purpose of creating grassroots radical alternatives to mainstream organisational structures. For example, each person had a “support committee” which they turned to “when they were facing major decisions in their lives like “"Should I take this job?" or "Should I move to Seattle?” (Cornell, 2011, p.95). They also consulted this committee in matters related to members’ “personal lives, in things that were more intimate”. Matters that in the ‘old society’ would be left to an informal group of friends or to family, were thus protocolised (Cornell, 2011, p.95). In MNS, such protocolising, apart from constituting a controlled form of addressing issues, also formed part of an organisational culture, a counterculture that made it

hard to bring in new members and diversifying itself (Cornell, 2011, p.52). It perpetuated the controlled space of a socially homogenous movement, possibly an echo chamber to some extent. Like others (Juris et al., 2012, pp. 437–438; Luchies, 2014, pp. 105, 118; Ostrander, 1999, p. 633), they themselves noted, that consensus tended to exclude working class people. Having realised that they "were just tasting and smelling too much like a white counterculture", it was the failed attempt to "extend [...their] cultural boundaries" (Cornell, 2011, p.82), that caused MNS to disband after seventeen years of existence (Cornell, 2011, p.52).

There are other, more recent examples of such protocolisation and its effects of excluding, of strengthening boundaries. In her paper *Culture and the Structure of Tyrannylessness* (2013), in a section called "Occupy Wall Street-Bureaucracies of Anarchy?", Leach describes how "rituals and regulations" designed by activists "to maximize participation and keep things running smoothly and fairly [...] end up facing unintended and ironically elitist consequences" (Leach, 2013, p.184). In it, she details the complex structure of the Occupy Wall Street camps:

> Included in this system are at least three different kinds of meetings (GAs, SCs, and Working Groups) at which different kinds of business are conducted; several different kinds of participating groups, with different purposes and responsibilities (Working Groups, Operations Groups, Movement Groups, and Caucuses); four formal phases to the meeting (agenda items/proposals, working group report-backs, announcements, and soap box); eight hand signals; five facilitation roles (facilitator, stack-taker, stack-greeter, timekeeper, and minute-keeper); as well as rules about how to make proposals (through a Working Group), how the consensus process works, and how many people it takes to make/block a decision (Leach, 2013, p.184)

Appel (2011b; 2011a) describes a similar state of affairs, connecting the bureaucratization of Occupy to the marginalization of outsiders (Appel, 2011a). In the more recent Extinction Rebellion (X/R) movement, the Citizens' Assemblies Working Groups recently published a "Guide to Citizens' Assemblies" listing elements such as "Coordinating Group", "Advisory Board", "Expert/Stakeholder Panel", "Facilitation Team" etc. (the Extinction Rebellion Citizens' Assemblies Working Groups, 2019). Their elaborate formal structure is reminiscent of the above descriptions of Occupy. Like Occupy (Appel, 2011a), MNS (Cornell, 2011, p.82) and the global justice movement (Conway, 2003, p.512; Juris, 2008b, p.77), X/R has also been critiqued as "shaped by the concerns, priorities and ideas of middle-class white people" (Garavito and Thanki, 2019). These accounts demonstrate how, while serving as a valuable laboratory for alternative forms of organising (Wright, 2012, p.145), such movements in themselves tend to invent alternative bureaucracies, participants often spending most of their times in "endless meetings" and spokes-councils (like the title of Polletta, 2004 and exemplified by this famous fictionalized account: Wu Ming, 2002, p. 113). The literature suggests that such extensive

formalities might cause hindrance to participation of those with little free time to spare (Juris et al., 2012, pp. 437–438).

3.2.3 Spontaneity conclusions

This section showed how, when confronted with the idea of unpredictable, unplanned and out of control elements valued by activists, scholars respond by treating the idea as an error based on incomplete or confusing data (kucinskas, 2015; Flesher Fominaya, 2015), as a narrative strategy used by social movements for instrumental purposes (Polletta, 1998; Flesher Fominaya, 2015), as something describing social movements' autonomy (Polletta, 1998, p.137; Fox Piven, 2017 min. 24), or as a phenomena that can be broken down, clearly mapped and brought back into the realm of causality (Snow and Moss, 2014). While each one of these perspectives illuminates the use of the term 'spontaneity' from a different light, the idea, repeatedly expressed by activists (Polletta, 1998; Maeckelbergh, 2011; Snow and Moss, 2014, p.1122), of things outside of the realm of our control being an important element in activism, is hardly explored. In its stead, scientists systematise our understanding of spontaneity and take the element of surprise out of it.

In terms of practitioners themselves, the section brought forth examples of how contemporary social movements tend to spend much of their time protocolising daily life for the purpose of creating procedures protected from the dynamics of oppression they perceive in mainstream society. My interest in this is a specific one: I brought it here as an example of how social movements respond to the challenge of contesting managerial control, by protocolising daily life, de facto creating alternative bureaucracies. In other words, I use these examples to demonstrate how, despite their aims to offer alternatives to bureaucracy (Graeber, 2015, p.31) and despite their explicit awareness of the values of spontaneity and informality (Maeckelbergh, 2011, pp.2, 16; Frenzel, 2014, pp.901, 906, 907, 909), social movements have a tendency to reproduce the element of control found in mainstream management, with adverse effect to their own democratising goals.

What the examples here suggest is first, that social movements tend to put great emphasis and effort in prefiguring the *formal* aspect of a desired society through the creation of protocols, and secondly, that these protocols, while aiming to allow for greater access, horizontality and equity, might be seen as actually controlling the borders of such movements, maintaining to some extent their lack of diversity.

3.2.3.1 Some reflections about spontaneity

There are good reasons why scientists would shy away from referring to events as spontaneous. The fact of such an idea being treated with much suspicion in scientific discourse

is no surprise. In *Wild Fermentation* (2003) Katz talks about the old "theory of spontaneous generation" which "viewed certain forms of life as phenomena occurring independent of any reproductive process". The example he gives is of one "van Helmont", who claimed to be able to spontaneously generate "mice from wheat and dirty shirts" (Katz, 2003, p.17). Considering such history of the idea of spontaneity, it is understandable that with regards to its role within activism, social scientists rush in to do damage control, fitting spontaneity within the instrumental logic of a useful storytelling (Polletta, 1998) or normalizing it through existing theories of decision making (Snow and Moss, 2014). There are also political reasons for which spontaneity should not be left intact. For once, as discussed above, the image of collective actions taken spontaneously might portray social movements as mindless and reactive rather than thoughtful, possibly influencing the level of empathy with which they are treated (Zamponi and Fernández González, 2017, p.65). Other than that, if one hopes to contribute to the praxis of activism (e.g. Bisaillon, 2012; Reedy and King, 2019, p.8), seeing it as a growing body of knowledge, one that could be bettered with each iterative and reflexive action, it is understandable that one would portray social action as knowable and mapable. Added to that is spontaneity's role within the utopian discourse of freedom that legitimises capitalism (Grey and Garsten, 2002, pp.18–19). But just like the way spontaneity could be represented as a narrative, produced by social movements for the purpose of achieving specific goals, so is its negation a counter-narrative with its own goals, for example the preservation of empiricist scientific forms of explaining reality (Snow and Moss, 2014), the depiction of social movements as rational thus powerful and skilful (Zamponi and Fernández González, 2017), the perpetuation of a hierarchical ordered cosmology that extends to social movements and activism (Ahrne and Brunsson, 2011), etc.

All this is understandable within science, but there are also some good reasons for which one might want to maintain spontaneity, defined as an uncontrolled, unplanned element, central to processes of social change and engaged with by activists. For once, as discussed in the previous chapter, planning is the temporal expression of control, bringing the ubiquity of management to the everyday of people interfacing with organisation through anything from purchasing to voting (Parker, 2002a, p.2). Such mechanisms of control are what makes alternative forms of doing things together in the world, based on alternative premises and expressing alternative values, hard to fathom (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.53). The fact of social movements reproducing such control in their practices (e.g. Leach, 2013, p.184) might attest to this all-encompassing ubiquity. The fact of them mentioning spontaneity, fluidity and process repeatedly in conversation (Polletta, 1998; Maeckelbergh, 2011; Snow and Moss, 2014,

p.1122), suggests their yearnings for alternatives to it, to the logic of control, to the society of "total bureaucratization" as Greaber (2015, p.3) put it.

Furthermore, the idea of something unplanned, something that breaks with existing structures of thought, even challenging causality to a certain extent, the idea of the unfathomable happening, is useful for those trying to imagine and to enact alternatives; even more so in a status quo where mainstream economy and organisation are perceived as solid and as part of the ubiquitous common sense (Parker, 2002a, p.2; Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.xxxiii). If it is indeed the case that it is easier to imagine the end of the world than to imagine the end of capitalism (Jameson, 2003, p. 76), what was at some point termed "a crisis of the imagination" (Haiven, 2010), the idea of something surprising happening is intimately linked with utopian thought. As Gibson-Graham, Cameron and Healy (2013b) remind us, in order to build alternatives one needs to reframe hegemonic ideas deemed common sense, making them into spaces of possibility (Gibson-Graham et al., 2013b, p.189). As a part of such reframing, there might be room for scholars friendly to social movements to consider alternative premises, to see what kinds of articulations could emerge from them.

Going back to the wider discussion regarding alternative organising, one sees that when looking through the prism of formal organisational structures, we get a picture of the creativity and innovation of activist spaces. Such spaces undoubtedly contribute to a growing lexicon of possible alternatives, radically diversifying the myopia of mainstream OT. We see how alternative organisational structures can express egalitarian values, even to the point of suggesting that such values are "hardwired" into them (Juris, 2008a, p. 17). Looking at it experientially as do the ethnographies both from the alternative organisation conversation in CMS (as I discuss in Chapter 2) and others (Juris, 2008a), one observes the vicissitudes and constant negotiations of people in the process of materialising such programmes. My interest here is in a specific aspect of these lived experiences; the planning and controlling involved and their inverse, the possibilities of spontaneity, of moments or even larger processes where the unplanned is allowed to emerge.

There seems to be a tension within social movements between the spontaneity, which is mentioned repeatedly as a value, possibly expressing that the lived experience of the ideal society should be one that *feels* free from coercion and control, one where the unexpected is allowed to happen, and the protocolisation that prefigures the *formal* structures of such a utopian future. While formally decentralising power through protocols, organizational structures and elegant systems, social movements might be neglecting to consider the *feel* of such alternative spaces. By 'feel', I mean the nature of the relationships between the people

inhabiting such projects, the way they relate to each other, to time and to space. By protocolising daily lives, thus bringing control down to the smallest moments, such alternative organisation colonizes the intimacy of its participants with a striving for a perfect alternative system, ready for any eventuality (Luchies, 2014a). While structurally such a system differs radically from mainstream management by being formally democratic and decentralised, the lived experience of it is one of growing control (Cornell, 2011, p.95). The literature I brought here suggests that this might be detrimental, not only to the atmosphere in activist spaces, but also to their ability to be inclusive and democratic (Appel, 2011b; Appel, 2011a). The above reflections regarding the need for an organisational science that reframes the issue of control when it comes to alternatives and regarding the feeling that social movements themselves tend to close the space for possibility, for the unexpected, suggest the need to look at alternative organisational processes through the prism of spontaneity. Considering the critique of this notion within the scholarship, and as a result, of the observations I will bring in the following chapters, I look at the issue somewhat differently, through a wider lens. In doing so, I will contribute to several aspects of how spontaneity is treated in the literature.

3.2.3.2 Contributions regarding spontaneity

As we saw, as part of its scientific scrutiny, spontaneity is defined in terms of a singular linear event erupting "from the ether" (Flesher Fominaya, 2015, p.143). However, there are other ways to conceptualize spontaneity, ones I will build on in the proceeding chapters. I take some queues from Snow and Moss (2014), who talk about "ecological/spatial factors" as part of what they consider the preconditions for spontaneous collective action. These factors, combining physical and social conditions which enable certain kinds of communications patterns: people "milling around", rumours spreading, and a level of physical closeness, all create an ecology conducive for the spontaneous event to take place (Snow and Moss, 2014, p.1136). In later chapters, I will build on this idea, to propose an *ecological spontaneity*, not as a precondition for a singular spontaneous event, but as an alternative, or better said a complement, to the linearity "from the ether" (Flesher Fominaya, 2015, p.143) definition of spontaneity, one describing an environment imbued with spontaneity, welcoming indeterminacy, surprise and even uncertainty. Another way I reframe spontaneity has to do with the issue of boundaries.

The focus on spontaneity as meaning autonomy, reproduces order and control in a different way, by stressing a vision of activism where it has a clear inside and a clear outside, with an easily mapable antagonism between them. When thus focusing on spontaneity as the internal agency of social movements resisting prescriptions from the outside (Polletta, 1998, p.137; Fox Piven, 2017 12m24s) it signifies them *controlling* their actions from their interior, resisting

coercion from external forces. In this thesis, and based on the conversations I had with participants, I theorise spontaneity differently, in a way inverting this logic. The fact of spontaneity forming part of alternative organising is directly related to the way the inside and outside of organisation is conceived of. As I will show in chapters 4, 5 and 6, the experiences I examine here establish their boundaries as porous, taking their 'outside' as a source for spontaneously emerging encounters, fertile surprises that can change the course of their practice productively.

In that I will make another contribution to the issue of spontaneity, showing it as constructive rather than just reactive. As I discussed, much of the social movement literature associates spontaneity with protest rather with the creation of alternatives (Breines, 1980, p.422). When seeing it as indicative of mindless behaviour, scholars also maintain its image as reactive rather than constructive (Zamponi and Fernández González, 2017, p.65). As I will show in the following chapters, the case studies I explored were critical of a left that "*just says no to stuff*" (from one of my interviews), making them challenge this reactiveness and simultaneously move towards the outskirts of the activist social milieu. In that I will discuss the role spontaneity can have within the construction of alternatives, adding this issue to the reframing I will do to the linearity of spontaneity and the related boundaries of social movements.

Thus, talking about an ecological spontaneity in relation to alternative forms of organizing will contribute to the way spontaneity is talked about in social movement theory in three senses. For once, I will depict spontaneity not as a singular event erupting "like wildfire" (Polletta, 1998, p.137) "from the ether" (Flesher Fominaya, 2015, p.143), but as a characteristic of social and even of physical space, an ecological spontaneity, where surprises and chance encounters are welcomed as an integral part of creating alternatives. Secondly, rather than spontaneity conceived of as the autonomy of a bounded social sphere such as activism, defending itself from external coercion, here spontaneity will be described as a situation where boundaries are porous, where the inside/outside of activism is challenged, and where the outside is welcomed in, as a source of resilience. Thirdly, through a close look at the case studies, I will elaborate spontaneity's capacity for being propositional, playing an important role in the creation of alternatives that respond to the philosophical (positivism), political (authoritarianism) and practical (lack of access) elements of the hegemonic organisational forms social movements aim to replace.

These insights, which I will explicate in detail in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, emerge from the emphases of the activists I talked to. Social movements themselves are thus a source of theorising, which challenges accepted norms such as planning and controlling. In the next

section I examine the term 'precarity', a term emerging from the grassroots theorising of social movements, and one that pushes against established logics of design, knowability, causality and reproducibility. While spontaneity connotes an active, possibly festive, approach in the work of social movements, seeing life in terms of precarity comes as a contestation of the promise of stability and the view of life as being planned. "Thinking through precarity" (Tsing, 2015a, p. 20) informed my approach in researching *Wild Yeast Economies* and helped me develop a practicable methodology for alternative organisations that welcomes indeterminacy as an integral part of organising and learning.

3.3 Precarity

While spontaneity connotes an internal autonomy and relatedly, something that emerges unexpected from the inside (Polletta, 1998, p.137; Fox Piven, 2017 min. 24), precarity connotes an external indeterminacy, life in an uncertain world (Tsing, 2015a, p. 20), where stability is an unfulfilled promise (Petriglieri et al., 2019). This section will accompany this term through a process it underwent, from a concept denouncing labour conditions, a point of departure for mobilisation, to a philosophical framework rooted in vulnerability. I will do so for the purpose of introducing such a framework as useful for the elaboration of alternative forms of organising. In that respect it is complementary to the spontaneity discussed in the previous section, as an element that contests control. As we will see, the term precarity produces its own unruly landscape, one where reality, rather than stable, is seen through the prism of indeterminacy, through its unplannable nature. In that respect its use becomes a sort of diversifying gesture by its own right, one that reconfigures the political landscape (Neilson and Rossiter, 2008, pp.63–64).

3.3.1 Precarity as a labour condition and as a point of departure for mobilisation

Like spontaneity, precarity is a term that protagonises conversations within social movements. It emerged in their conversations in the early 2000s, responding to changes in labour conditions. Such changes, the so called flexibilisation of the working force, resulted in challenges to mobilisations (Neilson and Rossiter, 2005, p.2). The discourse around precarity contrasts the industrial labour of old with the current condition of temp workers, illegalised workers, subcontractors, short term workers, people who work from home and freelancers (Neilson and Rossiter, 2005, p.2). In contrast to the supposed stability of industrial workers (Stein, 2015, p.1), precarious workers are placed in a deliberately ambiguous relationship with their employment (Peck and Theodore, 2001, p.486), temporal uncertainty (Precarias a la deriva, 2004), disrupted relationships (Foti, 2004a) and individualised identity (Waite, 2009, p.420). It results in a void in terms of how to get together with others in order to change work

conditions. Precarity as phenomena is a challenge for mobilisation. 'Precarity' as a term was created in response to it (Lorey, 2010).

The literature about the term tells the story of temp workers, migrant workers, freelancers and other subcontracted workers, lacking the stability of industrial workplaces, using the concept as a focus for political organising (Mattoni and Doerr, 2007; Waite, 2009, p.413). For this purpose it is seen as a diverse but shared lived experience that connects workers to each other across differences (Neilson and Rossiter, 2005, p.2). From this point of departure, the activist work around precarity involves the creation of groups of self-organised precarious workers such as Milan's Chainworkers Crew (Mattoni and Doerr, 2007, p.131) and Madrid's Precarias a la deriva (Precarias a la deriva, 2004), of spaces of contention such as the Euro Mayday Parade (Mattoni and Doerr, 2007, p.131) and of collective cultural production such as the fictional saint San Precario (van der Linden, 2014) and the fictional fashion designer Serpica Naro (Mattoni, 2008). While spontaneity is a word oftentimes used by activists to describe the nature of their culture, their "rebellions against the bureaucratic mindset" and its "soul-destroying conformity" (Graeber, 2015, p.5), precarity is a term actually coined by activists in response to the above described challenges to organising (Foti, 2004a).

But precarity is not just a term that connotes labour conditions and the responses to them. The conversation about precarity describes a transversal condition with labour-related (Peck and Theodore, 2001), geographic (Waite, 2009; Stein, 2015), psychological (Foti, 2004a; Petriglieri et al., 2019) and relational (Neilson and Rossiter, 2005, p.2) aspects to it. As we will see, such transversality challenges conceptual boundaries of old and opens possibilities for new forms of activism.

3.3.2 Shifting fault-lines

3.3.2.1 Transversality

Through the conversations of practitioners and scholars, the concept of precarity has extended beyond labour conditions to encompass the instability that permeates contemporary life. Through the gentrification of cities, housing is deemed unstable, with people having to move often (Stein, 2015). Through the disruption of the relative stability of workplace (Shukaitis and Figiel, 2020) and the disruption of the relatively stable social fabric of neighbourhoods (Stein, 2015) relationships also become unstable and with them the security of friendships and affection (Foti, 2004b; Neilson & Rossiter, 2005, p. 2). Precarity thus implies an instability in different aspects of life (Standing, 2017) and could be defined as the inability to plan due to life circumstances (Foti, 2004b; Tsing, 2015a, p. 278). Extended in such a way to a condition that

permeates the social sphere in so many aspects of it, precarity also causes a reconfiguration of the way political struggles are envisioned, and, as we will see, of possible alternatives.

3.3.2.2 Shifting fault-lines

In terms of classic conflict lines, such as the dichotomy between 'patron' and 'worker', seeing things in terms of precarity shifts the ground from under some of the old activist assumptions. Take for example the following quote from Chainworkers' Alex Foti's 'Precarious Lexicon' published in a long-lost publication called *Greenpepper Magazine*:

> Nowadays – in clear contrast to the late 1970's sensibility of 'work refusal' – the term 'career' has absolutely no meaning for the flexworking subject. The job biography of the average flex worker tends to look more like a patchwork assembled through the assumption of individual risk, and more closely resembles the figure of the "entrepreneur" than that of the classical "worker" (quoted in Kruglanski, 2006, original source lost)

Precarity is theorised as pervasive, going beyond class divides of old, producing stress even within those not experiencing "objective and material" insecurities (Bourdieu, 1997 cited in Näsström & Kalm, 2015, p. 557). Such a pervasive sense of instability stems from the blurring of the frontiers between leisure and work, both in terms of where and when they happen (Shukaitis and Figiel, 2020, pp.7, 10). The use of precarity for the purpose of mobilisation could be confusing for older notions of class, given that it connects, for example, "cultural workers in a relatively prosperous metropolis" with "migrant workers in Shenzen" and "garbage pickers in Rio" (Shukaitis and Figiel, 2020, p.2). In that respect it could serve as a conceptual hinge for solidarity across divides of old, an activism revolving around translation (Neilson and Rossiter, 2005, pp.63–64), but also poses the danger of freelancers and academics in affluent cities making do with mobilising around their own lack of stability, rather than looking at connecting to their others for wider collaboration (Thorkelson, 2016). The use of the term thus provokes a reframing in activism and politics, undoing perceptions regarding whom is grouped together to struggle against whom, aiming for new forms of regrouping.

3.3.2.3 Sense making and the crafting of life narratives

Precarity is not only a challenge to material survival (Näsström and Kalm, 2015, p.557), social relations (Shukaitis and Figiel, 2020, p.7) or political positioning (Waite, 2009, p.413). The meaninglessness of the term 'career' within such a condition is also a challenge to older ways of sense making. One can draw a line between the current alienation people feel towards their jobs, and the difficulty one has in crafting a coherent life-story (Sennett, 2009, p.265). Here is Richard Sennet (2009) on the possibilities of craftsmanship nowadays:

> In old English a "career" meant a well-laid road, whereas a "job" meant simply a lump of coal or pile of wood that could be moved around at will. The medieval

> goldsmith within a guild exemplified the roadway of "career" in work. His life path was well laid in time, the stages of his progress were clearly marked, even if the work itself was inexact. His was a linear story [...] jobs in the old sense of random movement now prevail; people are meant to deploy a portfolio of skills rather than nurture a single ability in the course of their working histories; this succession of projects or tasks erodes belief that one is meant to do just one thing well. Craftsmanship seems particularly vulnerable to this possibility, since craftsmanship is based on slow learning and on habit (Sennett, 2009, p.265)

Or, as Standing (2017) put it in a video lecture, people suffering precarity "don't have any occupational narrative to give to their lives: a narrative that would say I am becoming something, I am something" (Standing, 2017, 2m45s). From the literature brought so far, one can see precarity as defining a newly emerging condition, which contrasts perceptions of how things were in the past. People are currently on shaky grounds in terms of their labour conditions, the social fabric of their neighbourhoods, the quality of their affective relationships and their capacity to make sense of their life story. In opposition to this is a picture of the past, seen as relatively stable and well-constructed. The emotional dimension of such a social phenomenon is important to note, given that precarity is just as psychological as it is social, economic and organisational. But the painful emotions of those excluded from stability are also an opening towards alternative forms of doing things together in the world.

3.3.3 The pain of being in error

As we saw, in contrast to the purportedly well-crafted life stories of the past, precarity expresses a challenge to the meaning people adhere to their lives. This lack of coherence is in many ways painful where

> ...uncertainty is a chronic experience for most and leads to anxiety, overwork, and frustrated wishes for secure employment (Henson, 1996; Jurik, 1998; Smith, 2002; Barley and Kunda, 2004; Padavic, 2005), as well as social unrest (Standing, 2011) (Petriglieri et al., 2019, p.5)

Neilson and Rossiter (2005) relate this anxiety to “the ‘financialisation of daily life’” (Martin, 2002 cited in Neilson & Rossiter, 2005, p. 2). It causes, according to Foti (2004a), “the incredible rise in the use of psycho-pharmaceuticals and anti-depressants” (2004b). This is understandable, given that the inability to plan (Tsing, 2015a, p. 278) can be disorienting, especially when it is a feature of poverty, as first-hand accounts demonstrate (e.g. Tirado, 2013).

The experience of being excluded is practically equivalent to the experience of being unable to plan (Tirado, 2013). This is exemplified by a blog post gone viral, Linda Tirado’s *This Is Why*

Poor People's Bad Decisions Make Perfect Sense (Tirado, 2013). In it, she couples the inability to plan with its emotional dimension, writing that

> Poverty is bleak and cuts off your long-term brain [...] Whatever happens in a month is probably going to be just about as indifferent as whatever happened today or last week [...] We don't plan long-term because if we do we'll just get our hearts broken (Tirado, 2013)

She thus exemplifies how emotional suffering is thus closely connected with exclusion from the planned, controlled world (Foti, 2004a; Petriglieri et al., 2019, p.5). In contrast to the well-crafted image of stability, experiencing precarity is perceived as being wrong, as a sort of noise within the economic and organizational system (Egaña Rojas, 2017, p.241). In classical conceptions of OT, forms of doing that challenge planning respond to situations defined as "poorly conceptualized" or "unanalysable" where existing protocols are deemed unproductive (Johnson and Gill, 1993, p.23). As discussed in the previous chapter, such conceptualisations of what is best practice and what is error, are iterated and reiterated through academic theorising and daily gestures giving a feel of stability to the very orderliness they express (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.49). While the view from the perspective of management is mostly expressed through the technical terminology of organisation science (e.g. Bitektine et al., 2018), the cry of those excluded from power reverberates with emotion (e.g. Wojnarowicz, 1991, pp.87–88), maybe acknowledging that the language of supposed rationality and the growing knowability of positivism are the master's tools, unavailable to those who want to 'dismantle his house' (Lorde, 1984, p.110). In other words, error, precarity, and their emotional expression are openings towards alternative conceptualisations (Egaña Rojas, 2017, pp.230, 231). Precarity could thus be a point of departure for reframing hegemonic organisation and economy, one around which alternatives could be created. Alternatives thus envisioned would be informed by the sentiments of those excluded from the mainstream. The emotional dimension of being in error, the pain associated with the lived experience of exclusion, provides the urgency to do things differently, to not reproduce hegemonic forms and to dialogue with lived experience when seeking alternatives (similar to Reedy and King, 2019, p.7). As we saw above, the alternative organisation produced by many social movement reproduces the protocolisation of hegemonic forms (Leach, 2013) and often reproduces exclusion (Appel, 2011b; Appel, 2011a). Some scholars turn to the experiences of those excluded as points of departure for the creation of alternatives. The next section explores such "thinking through precarity" (Tsing, 2015a, p. 20).

3.3.4 "Thinking through precarity"

Chapter 2 talked about how OT and economics traditionally present organisational and economic reality as a bounded, controlled and coherent body (Gibson-Graham, 1996, p.96; Thanem, 2006, p.179; O'Doherty et al., 2013, p.1430). While the term precarity emerged as a rallying cry against oppressive conditions (Neilson and Rossiter, 2005, p.2), it has also evolved as a kind of alternative logic, forming a crack in the hegemonic control that expresses itself through mainstream forms of organising (Klikauer, 2015), economy (Smith, 1937, p.111) and science (Coleman, 2015, p.363). The term evolved to mean an instability that permeates society (Bourdieu, 1997 cited in Näsström & Kalm, 2015, p. 557), transversal (Foti, 2004b; Neilson & Rossiter, 2005, p. 2), shifting political fault-lines (Lorey, 2010, p.4) and traditional forms of sense-making (Standing, 2017 min. 2:45). Expressed through painful emotions, it also provides an opening for seeing subaltern forms of doing things together in the world, rooted in the life experience of those excluded from stability (Egaña Rojas, 2017, pp.230, 231). Tsing (2015b; 2015a) points toward the use of precarity as an alternative framework, one informed by such life experience as it is by feminist theory (Tsing, 2015b; Tsing, 2015a).

In *Mushroom at the End of the World* (2015a) she observes that while a person suffering precarisation is unable to plan, precarity "also stimulates noticing, as one works with what is available" (Tsing, 2015, p. 278). According to her, unpredictable encounters, vulnerability to others, lack of control, even of ourselves, throw us "into shifting assemblages, which remake us as well as our others". The feeling that everything is in flux, including our ability to survive, "changes social analysis". "Indeterminacy, the unplanned nature of time, is frightening, but thinking through precarity makes it evident that indeterminacy also makes life possible" (Tsing, 2015, p. 20). In other words, placing indeterminacy (Tsing, 2015, p. 254) and vulnerability (Waite, 2009, p.413) at the centre, might provide alternative forms of knowledge building both for scholars and for practitioners. Implicit to the alternatives she proposes is her critique of what she calls the plantation model of knowledge production (Tsing, 2015 min. 9:35; Tsing, 2015, p. 286). In a recorded lecture she says:

> By plantations I mean ecological simplifications in which living things are transformed into resources, future assets, by removing them from their lifeworlds. Plantations are machines of replication, ecologies devoted to the purification and reproduction of the same [...] To make resources, that is, disentangled things, requires cultural work. Let's call this work alienation...Alienation creates the possibilities of machines of replication, which turn out to be efficient producers of assets, which can be turned again into future assets and indeed help produce this model of the future we call progress (Tsing, 2015b, 9m35s)

Her critique of the plantation model resonates with the critique of positivism, its elegance and supposed coherence discussed in Chapter 2. In other words, when proposing 'thinking through precarity' as an alternative framework to the plantation model, she is proposing alternatives to control.

For the purpose of developing such an approach, Tsing calls for cultivating "arts of noticing" (Tsing, 2015, p. 132) rooted in the incommensurability of lived experience (Tsing, 2015, p. 213). Stories are central to her approach. Unlike positivist models that reduce reality to reproducible, scalable recipes, stories are generative, opening us up to more and more stories, to more and more rich details that build a nuanced understanding of the world (Tsing, 2015a, pp. 37–38). Tsing's conceptualization of precarity coincides with other thinkers that inform my theoretical framework. One such connection is her affinity with Gibson-Graham and their use of weak theory.

3.3.4.1 Relationship to feminist weak theory

In Chapter 2 I talked about how Gibson-Graham's use of feminist weak theory (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.60) is useful to the research of organisational alternatives, contesting as it does the assumption of control central to mainstream approaches. Weak theory's critique of positivism's elegance and coherence (Cox & Hassard, 2005) resonates profoundly with Tsing's "thinking through precarity" (Tsing, 2015, p. 20). Contesting such coherence, Tsing (2015a) talks about the unpredictability of our current condition, rooted in "the heterogeneity of space and time". For her, the assumptions of mainstream science blind us to such a condition, even as it is apparent to lay people (Tsing, 2015a, pp. 4–5). By Gibson-Graham's extensive use of PAR they coincide with valuing lived experience (Cameron and Gibson, 2005). They also connect the arts of noticing of ethnography to alternative performativities (Gibson-Graham, 2014):

> For ethnographers today, no task is more important than to make small facts speak to large concerns, to make the ethical acts ethnography describes into a performative ontology of economy and the threads of hope that emerge into stories of everyday revolution (Gibson-Graham, 2014, p.s147)

In other words, Tsing's suggestion to create alternative forms of knowledge building through precarity and through "arts of noticing" (Tsing, 2015a, pp. 37–38) coincides with the way Gibosn-Graham talk about feminist weak theory's relation to ethnographic thick description (Gibson-Graham, 2014). This thinking, rooted in the experience of those excluded from stability, responds both to the critique of control and to the concern regarding its performativity, given that the details of stories and their idiosyncrasies accumulate to overflow

reductionist assumptions. In that respect it is closely related to the detailed work of alternative organisation ethnographers (e.g. Langmead, 2017b).

3.3.4.2 Relationship to "animic" ontologies

Thinking through precarity is also closely related to ontologies inspired by indigenous cultures that provide alternatives to the scientism and positivism prevalent in the so-called West (Ingold, 2006). Specifically I am thinking about the way anthropologist Tim Ingold (2006) uses the image of a meshwork and of mycelium (Ingold, 2006, p.13). For Ingold (2006), Western thought's conception of rigour involves grasping the world "within a grid of concepts and categories", closing ourselves to it, rather than opening oneself up in what he calls "astonishment" (Ingold, 2006, p.18). According to him, animate cultures do not perceive the world as formed of separate inanimate categories, but as an entangled meshwork formed of "a tangle of interlaced trails, continually ravelling here and unravelling there" (Ingold, 2006, p.14). This is not "a way of believing about the world" but "a condition of being in it", sensitive, responsive and alive to it (Ingold, 2006, p.10). Coinciding with feminist weak theory and with Tsing's precarity, Ingold (2006) says that openness comes with a vulnerability that can be perceived as weakness, "proof of a lack of rigour characteristic of supposedly primitive belief and practice" (Ingold, 2006, p.18). Ingold's imagery of a meshwork provides another vivid image that helps visualise a reality of entangled trajectories in motion (Ingold, 2006, pp.13–14). It is another example of scholars taking their cues from cultures on the margins of the mainstream as a source for alternative logics. As I will show in Chapter 5, the image of such a meshwork was also used by one of my interviewees to describe the unruly landscape of their organisational ecology. This image of the meshwork helps give tangible form to the kinds of ideas feminist scholars such as Gibson-Graham and Tsing discuss. Informed by the three theorists, I use a different image, one related to culinary practices and to recipes for exploring the nuts and bolts of alternatives.

3.3.4.3 Fermentation

I draw from Gibson-Graham's (2006) use of weak theory and their technique of "reading for difference rather than dominance" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.71), from Tsing's (2015a) elaboration of "thinking through precarity" (Tsing, 2015a, p. 20), and from Ingold's (2006) image of the meshwork illustrating what he calls an "animic" ontology (Ingold, 2006, p.18). I see the three (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.71; Ingold, 2006, p.18; Tsing, 2015a, p.20) as overlapping extensively, expressing a similar sentiment, expanding it in different directions. All three are informed by the thinking of those excluded from the mainstream. The words 'weakness' and 'precarity' literally express this. All three are process-oriented approaches, seeing phenomena as being in constant motion, impossible to pin down. Things are in the

midst of becoming (Ingold, 2006, p.18) and paralysing such movement would only form part of the extractivist epistemology of the exploitative status quo (Tsing, 2015b). Phenomena supersede boundaries constantly. Its research dialogues with this movements and is sensitive to it (Ingold, 2016, pp.9–10).

In this thesis, I will refer to organisational ecologies through the image of culinary fermentation. Fermentation as a metaphor embodies the three theoretical strands that make up my framework and the sentiment they share. In the process of fermenting, microscopic elements from the environment float in, as if by chance, creating chemical reactions within the dish (Katz, 2003, p.13). The food thus elaborated is alive. Eating it introduces live elements from our environment into our bodies (Katz, 2003, p.12). Through chance encounter, microscopic elements react to each other, transforming their environment, making it more nutritious, more visible and more resilient (Katz, 2003, p.8).

Fermentation as a metaphor expresses boundaries being porous (Katz, 2003, pp.11–12), processes being dialogic and site specific (Katz, 2003, p.21). It also shows learning curves within local contexts as unknown to the people engaged with them (Katz, 2003, p.95). It expresses the sentiment that things not fully under control, not paralysed and separated into 'dead' categories, are transformative and resilient (Katz, 2003, p.5). In these respects it embodies the three theoretical approaches (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.71; Ingold, 2006, p.18; Tsing, 2015a, p.20), process oriented, precarious, dialogic, marginalized and not fully controlled. In the thesis I will use this image as a sort of artistic shorthand, invoking the three theoretical works that inform it. My use of an image, a metaphor rather than a term is informed by the ethics of these three theories given that rather than just being synonymous with them, it also hopes to resonate with the reader emotionally, visually and sensorially, suggestive as it is exact.

3.3.4.4 Challenges to OT

Connecting back to Chapter 2, it's important to note that such ontologies of movement and vulnerability pose a challenge to OT, including the critical conversation regarding alternative organising (Cheney, 2014). Certain notions of stability are basic for most investigations into organisational forms (Parker et al., 2007, p.ix). It is true that even workers suffering precarity (e.g. Petriglieri et al., 2019) most often strive to "achieve a fairly stable state of affairs" (Parker et al., 2007, p.ix) given the anxiety economic and social instability produce (Foti, 2004a; Petriglieri et al., 2019). Being that such stability is either eschewed by them or eludes them because of societal circumstance (Petriglieri et al., 2019, p.1), the assumption of stability might be a theoretical imposition that doesn't coincide with their lived experience (e.g. Tirado, 2013).

Neilson and Rossiter (2005) express the challenge to organisation in a series of questions, relevant both to organising in its activist sense and to its theoretical, management related one. “How then to organize through movement?” they ask, “what are the prospects for invention under conditions of restlessness at once imposed and embraced?” and lastly, “if precarity is insufficient to furnish a common cause for subjects arrayed across different industries, jurisdictions and digital divides, what sense is there to speak of the common at all?” (Neilson and Rossiter, 2008, p.63). In other words, it is through the experience of instability, of the inability to plan and the condition of vulnerability, of being in error, that alternative organisational learning could be crafted. Exactly how one might go about this remains to be seen, and is the subject of this thesis.

3.3.5 Precarity conclusions

In this section I accompanied the term ‘precarity’ through transformations it underwent. Precarity was defined by social movements as the inability to make plans (Foti, 2004a). The term contrasts industrial work, deemed stable and constant, with newer configurations such as freelance and temp work. It responds to the challenges in workers’ capacity to organise under such conditions (Mattoni and Doerr, 2007; Waite, 2009, p.413). The section showed how, through the theorising of social movements (e.g. Precarias a la deriva, 2004; Foti, 2004a) and scholars in affinity with them (e.g. Neilson and Rossiter, 2005; Lorey, 2010), the term was defined as a transversal condition that permeates contemporary life (Bourdieu, 1997 cited in Näsström & Kalm, 2015, p. 557). It challenges traditional life narratives, the feeling of coherence people have when making sense of their lives (Standing, 2017 2m45s). Expressing the lived experience of those excluded from the fiction of stability (Tirado, 2013), it is associated with emotional pain thus imbued with the urgency for seeking alternatives to the status quo (e.g. Wojnarowicz, 1991, pp.87–88). Putting this concept at the centre of mobilisations, shifted political fault-lines of old, reframing activism (Lorey, 2010, p.4). The openness to reconfiguring the political landscape informed "thinking through precarity" (Tsing, 2015, p. 20), which, informed by feminism, puts openness and vulnerability at the core of reading and analysing the world, rather than excluding it as error (Johnson and Gill, 1993, p.23). In the section I drew similarities between Tsing’s formulation, the feminist weak theory used by Gibson-Graham (2014) and the imagery of a “meshwork” used by anthropologist Tim Ingold (2006, pp.13–14). All three are informed by the lived experience of those excluded from the mainstream. In this thesis I elaborate these ideas through the culinary metaphor of fermentation. By contesting the coherence and elegance of mainstream conceptualisations, putting precarity as the axis of learning and doing challenges planning and controlling. For the above reasons it is a challenge for mainstream OT, and is interesting as a point of departure for

exploring alternative forms of organising. Giving that precarity is seen as a vulnerability that permeates the social sphere it can inform different kinds of spontaneities, ones characteristic of an environment, an organisational ecology, rather than just a singular linear trajectory.

3.4 Conclusions

Chapter 2 showed how control is central to OT and how it is contested by CMS. CMS presents daily moments within mainstream organisations as spaces where both control and its subversion are reproduced (Spicer et al., 2009). The alternative organisation conversation widens the lens through which we see organisation, producing what I called its diversifying gesture (Parker et al., 2007). Turning to social movements for their cues, scholars take a close look at activists' organisational experiments, their ethical dilemmas, internal contradictions (Reedy et al., 2016; Langmead, 2017b) and their emotional dimension (e.g. Kokkinidis, 2015, p.431; Reedy et al., 2016, p.1565; Langmead, 2017b, p.204). Positioning themselves empathetically, but at the same time taking a critical distance from processes, they contribute to their theoretical understanding, and potentially, to the ongoing learning undertaken by movements themselves (Reedy and King, 2019). In doing so, such ethnographers craft alternative performativities to mainstream OT's industrial performativity (e.g. Reedy and King, 2019). They map their ongoing negotiations as they try and create alternative recipes to centralisation and hierarchy (e.g. King and Land, 2018). At the same time, I found two aspects to be under theorised. One is the issue of boundaries of alternative organisations, where control is exercised. The other is the question of to what extent do they explore alternatives to planning, the temporal projection of control.

In this chapter, I turned to the social movement studies literature with these questions. I did this through examining two terms that challenge the ubiquity of planning and controlling, ones that are prevalent in the conversations of social movements and in the scholarship about them: 'spontaneity' and 'precarity'. Both create possibilities for practical and theoretical contributions for the theorising and practice of activism as they do to the alternative organisation conversation. In the chapter I showed that both social movements scholars and activists themselves have a hard time escaping the ubiquity of planning and strategising (e.g. Flesher Fominaya, 2015). The nature of the alternatives thus produced, is systemic (e.g. the Extinction Rebellion Citizens' Assemblies Working Groups, 2019), oftentimes based on the protocolisation of daily life (e.g. Cornell, 2011, p.95), and perpetuate the view of alternatives as bounded social objects with clear insides and outsides to them (Appel, 2011b; Appel, 2011a). I made special emphasis on the formal characteristics of the alternatives worked towards by social movements, suggesting that they express privilege and access (Appel, 2011b; Appel, 2011a; Leach, 2013), and asking whether it might be important to consider not only the *formal*

prefiguration of a new society, but its prefigurative *feel*. In practice, I showed that the formal approach is exclusionary, given that one of the main characteristics of being excluded from privilege is the inability to plan and thus interact with the time consuming protocols of such movements.

The term 'precarity' literally means the inability to plan (Foti, 2004a). Activists developed the term 'precarity' in response to the instability suffered by workers (Mattoni and Doerr, 2007; Waite, 2009, p.413). It came from a pragmatic effort to create a new axis around which to mobilise, through creating new subjectivities for struggle (Lorey, 2010, p.4). Through the theorising of activists and scholars, the term evolved into a form of thinking that can serve as a point of departure for other learning processes (Tsing, 2015, p. 20). This took place through a thinking process that explored precarity as a transversal condition (Neilson and Rossiter, 2005), shifting traditional political fault-lines (Foti cited in Kruglanski, 2006) and challenging the sense-making, the coherence given to life narratives (Standing, 2017 min. 2:45).

Expressed emotionally through the pain of those excluded from the mainstream (Tirado, 2013) this alternative ontology places openness and vulnerability at its centre (Tsing, 2015, p. 132). Contrasting the strong coherence valued by mainstream social science (Solovey, 2004), such thinking proposes that looseness and vulnerability, literally described as "weak theory" (Stewart, 2008; Gibson-Graham, 2014), generate other learning processes, and potentially, alternative realities. Rather than taking the standpoint of privilege and attempting to include the excluded in projects designed from the centrality of control, this framework embraces precarity and indeterminacy as a subaltern logic (Ingold, 2006, p. 18; Tsing, 2015a, p. 20), one that reframes our habitual ways of conceptualising collaboration and learning. It could be captured by the phrase "thinking through precarity" (Tsing, 2015, p. 20). Exemplified by Ingold's (2006) image of an entangled meshwork (Ingold, 2006, p.13), it focuses on phenomena being incomplete, in motion and entangled. Tacitly critiquing the cleaned up coherence expressed by mainstream social science (Latour, 2007, p.49), it loosens up proceedings for the purpose of favouring collaboration. In that respect I am proposing that such looseness be used not only as a way of interpreting the world, but as a way of doing so while being productive within it. In that respect this framework takes some steps in the direction of elaborating alternative performativities.

Incorporating indeterminacy in my own practice of researching through developing "thinking through precarity" (Tsing, 2015a, p. 20) and (as I will later elaborate) 'ecological spontaneity', are contributions to academic conversations that value indeterminacy, precarity and spontaneity (Law, 2004, pp.2–3) by being performative, propositional rather than just

descriptive or analytical. As a possible response to control, 'spontaneity' and "thinking through precarity" (Tsing, 2015a, p. 20) are complementary in introducing an element of wildness to the creation of alternative organisation. While spontaneity connotes the active stepping out of boundaries, precarity suggests relaxing control of them and letting indeterminacy in.

In terms of my culinary metaphor, such ways of conceiving activism respond to the way fermented foods connect the inside and outside of the human body, through eating food that is alive (Katz, 2003, p.12), and how such letting go of boundaries and their policing contributes to resilience (Katz, 2003, p.11). While organisation is depicted as centralised, hierarchical, exclusionary and controlling (Klikauer, 2015), this framework proposes practicing the creation of alternatives otherwise. By traveling to the outskirts of alternative organisation, to where activists step outside of their comfort zone to collaborate with their others, relaxing the policing of time and boundaries to let indeterminacy in, and letting their organisational biographies meander to unexpected directions, I will extend the work of alternative organisation ethnographers in new directions relevant to the democratising ideals of social movement themselves. In Chapters 4, 5 and 6, I will explore, through the case studies, alternative projects that put indeterminacy at the centre of collaboration and learning. In this next one, I show how the story of the *Wild Yeast Economies* methodology, exemplifies spontaneity and "thinking through precarity" (Tsing, 2015a, p. 20), using three ingredients: Art, PAR and ethnography.

Methodological recipes

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 4

A research methodology can itself be presented as a recipe of sorts, describing how the research was conducted, breaking it down to its ingredients (terminology, categories), implying that it could be reproduced. This chapter applies this metaphor to the *Wild Yeast Economy* thesis methodology describing it as a mixture of three ingredients: art, PAR and ethnography. Like any good recipe it is not only the ingredients but also the temporality involved that is relevant. The three sections are not separate; like recipe ingredients, art, PAR and ethnography are gradually put in relation to each other throughout the chapter.

The three elements, art, PAR and ethnography, appear in the chapter chronologically as they did in the story of this research. It started out as a social art project. It then got 'defined' as PAR when formalized as academic research. Finally, ethnography (with an emphasis on biography) was introduced as a set of tools for observation and other forms of data collection, helping me in analysing the process and in communicating its findings to others within the academic community. The story of this research itself is the element that agglutinates the three ingredients throughout the chapter, appearing in the form of a first-person testimony. This use of a first person narrative is reminiscent of the way academics use vignettes to illustrate theory in some journal articles and books (e.g. Reedy et al., 2016; Arthur, 2017). As opposed to vignettes that tend to describe specific moments, details that point to the whole, the autobiographical narrative sections of this chapter not only zoom into details, but also pan out to describe emotional states and other circumstances in broader strokes, talking about larger stretches of time. I consider the methodological story as a case study in itself, being that in order to research this theme I set up an organisation with its own unique economic activity. As I will show later in the chapter, I also had a deep involvement with my second case study. Being thus entangled within the case studies, my own experience forms part of the data. This chapter presents this story as it unfolded through encounter, weaving through it the methodological concerns that informed it and were informed by it.

4.1.1 The methodological story

My background involved about ten years of participation in social movements, including activism within global justice movements and squatting in Maricel. Combined with my reading of the social movement studies literature, this experience generated the doubts I presented in Chapter 3, the concern that protocolisation is related to homogeneity in social movements, hindering its democratising goals. Another hindrance that concerned me was precarity, and relatedly, the feeling that many activist spaces do not place the livelihoods of people at the

centre of their attention. These doubts fuelled my research question, which was a 'how to' question: how to organise differently in a way that responds to these concerns? is there a recipe for it? I went about investigating this by starting my own organisation, renting a storefront in the neighbourhood where I lived, opening its big green doors, and constructing my methods in dialogue with the people who wandered in, and with the social dynamics of the storefront's close environment. In this chapter I will discuss this as an arts-based process using three modalities from art: juxtaposition, encounter and assemblage. After six years of this experiment, I closed the doors and moved to Whykham to join a PhD programme. In parallel, I started exploring a Whykham neighbourhood through a series of collaborative art projects. While juxtaposition, encounter and assemblage were still central to the approach, at this moment I also started engaging with the idea of the research being a form of PAR. Throughout the six years of working through such collaborative art projects in the neighbourhood, I got to know an organisation, which became my main case study. I got deeply entangled within this organisation, collaborating with it on the projects I did, being housed by it and becoming close friends its members. This gave me intimate knowledge of their internal dynamics and their history. I started researching it ethnographically, making interviews and analysing historical documents. I also went back to Spain, conducted interviews with *macba* collaborators and collected secondary data from that experience.

I saw that in many ways the UK case study responded to the concerns I set out to explore at the beginning in Spain. Like my own project in Spain, the UK case study also came out of social movements. Like *macba*, it was both informed and critical of their practices. It became the focus of my investigation, and the bulk of my data. The original experiment in Maricel was reduced in importance and used in the thesis mostly as a form of setting up the methodology, framing the questions and scoping the issues. In the rest of this chapter I go back and forth between the narrative of the research and a methodological discussion, for the purpose of demonstrating how it translated the weak theory expressed by the term "thinking through precarity" (Tsing, 2015a, p.20) into an original methodology that challenged planning and controlling.

4.2 Introducing art

As I wrote above, the research project started as a neighbourhood art project. Informed by my doubts regarding social movements, in December 2009 I signed a lease on 32 Santa Dolors Street, the storefront that was subsequently named *Misteriosos Artefactos Contra Barrios Arraigados* (*macba*). In parallel, I formed the cultural association *Bifidum Pathways*. It was named after the active microorganisms in many fermented foods and inspired by the cycles of

life and death in culinary fermentation as expressed in Sandor Ellix Katz's recipe book *Wild Fermentation* (2003):

> Fermentation is the action of life upon death. Living organisms consume dead food matter, transforming it and in the process freeing nutrients for the future sustenance of life (Katz, 2003, p.33)

Early documents show that I perceived *macba/Bifidum Pathways* to be an economic/curatorial project, a mix between an art gallery and an incubator for non-capitalist, artistic entrepreneurial experiments. The language of one document, from 2009, titled "Bifidum Pathways Business Plan", reads like a hybrid between such a plan and an artistic/political manifesto, giving echo to Katz's words cited above:

> In Bifidum Pathways, we believe that the current economic crisis highlights the fact that the accumulative, speculative logic of capitalism is in decadence. Bifidum Pathways are socio-economic microorganisms that benefit from the decadence of capitalism; being fed by it while generating the new models/forms/modes of production/forms of relating... to replace it. Bifidum Pathways is a Petri dish that contains highly contagious micro-experiments (Bifidum Pathways Business Plan, p.2; *translation mine*)

macba/Bifidum Pathways, thus driven by the metaphor of fermentation was both an organisational experiment and a research project, but at the time, I mostly saw it as an art project in the vein of what has been called social practice art (Bishop, 2006; Miranda, 2014).

The document, for all intents and purposes my first plan for the research, described a series of yearly businesses/art-projects that are to appear for four months a year. *Bifidum Pathways*, it explains, "...is a business that generates businesses that appear and disappear" (Bifidum Pathways Business Plan, p.4). The businesses, according to this document, "will take the form of a cultural centre that applies an artistic and experimental attitude to an issue related to primary necessities (food, clothing, health, housing, education)" (Bifidum Pathways Business Plan, p.3). It can be best understood as an art gallery, presenting projects of socially engaged art (Bishop, 2006), which are also economic projects, servicing the neighbourhood around them. The economy of the organisation is based on membership. The decision regarding what projects should be created would be done through a series of questions: "What basic necessity are people currently concerned about?" "Could it be solved collectively generating a living space for knowledge exchange?" "Are there existing models of people solving this problem through self-management?" "Can we imagine a process based on play and experimentation that can arrive at new, surprising and fun responses to this problem or necessity?" (Bifidum Pathways Business Plan, p.4). One can see this list of questions as operational ones, breaking down the more general research question of 'can there be recipes for alternative organising?'.

Rather than a document detailing a business plan in the traditional sense, the document had an aesthetic element to it. The fact that I was possibly trying to imitate, maybe even parody, what I perceived to be the sales-pitch language of business plans, hints that its intensions were not purely practical but also literary. This literary/practical document, describing an organisation mixing entrepreneurial elements with artistic ones, exemplifies some of the ways of thinking common in the sphere of art. I will now go into a bit of detail regarding this kind of thinking, prevalent in art, and how it connects with the research question.

First, to better understand the relationship between *Wild Yeast Economies* as a research project and *macba* as an art project, it might be worthwhile to talk a bit about art-based research. The use of art in research is still a less than obvious affair (Eisner, 2006). This in undoubtedly due to the difficulties in changing "canonical beliefs about how inquiry should proceed and how one comes to understand the universe in which we live" (Eisner, 2006, p.10). Researchers who do experiment with art describe it as foregrounding **"**the possible, the unimaginable, and 'ways' rather than 'the way'" (Barry, 2008, p.2) given that "instead of reproducing what we already know, it breaks up what we know and materializes what we don't know" (Barry, 2008, p. 6). It is a kind of research that "takes place in the liminal space of the imagination in which contradictions can co-exist" (Stephen K. Levine, 2004, p.18) actually nourishing itself from the tensions with the methodologies prevalent in natural science (Levine, 2004, p. 17). It seeks truth "with our whole being, with our emotions and our imagination, as much as with our cognitive faculties" (Levine, 2004, p. 17).

Barone and Eisman (1997) defined arts-based research as one that is, both "engaged in for a purpose often associated with artistic activity" (Barone & Eisner, 1997, p. 95) and, at the same time, containing "certain aesthetic qualities or *design elements* that infuse the inquiry process and research "text"" (Barone & Eisner, 1997, p. 95). But artistic development in the past few decades made it hard to pin down the boundaries of such artistic activity (Whitehead, 2013; Sansi, 2015). What aesthetic quality can be considered artistic is also questionable since even 'normal' science "in practice and in outcome can have significant aesthetic features" (Eisner, 2006, p.10). The borders between disciplines such as art and anthropology can be quite porous (Ingold, 2013; Sansi, 2015; Ingold, 2016) with anthropologists using research methodologies such as ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1996), bordering on performance art and artists involved in 'social practice' (Miranda, 2014) and relational art (Bourriaud, 2021) which are more interested in interactions than with producing expressive artefacts. Borders are equally porous between art processes and research methodologies such as PAR for similar reasons (Marino, 1997; Fisher, 2006; Seeley, 2011).

The fact of art being such a 'moving target' interested me. It is actually this dynamic process-based understanding of what art is that I am going to use to build similar, process-based knowledge regarding alternative conceptions of economy and organisation. As the reader will see in this section, I base my thinking about art-based research on several modes of doing prevalent in art: juxtaposition, chance encounter, assemblage and on their relation to indeterminacy. In that respect my methodology was not arts-based in the traditional sense of using certain art supplies (e.g. paint, brushes, clay, fabric etc.) or processes (e.g. painting, sculpture, performance etc.). There were stretches of time where such materials and processes were used, for example, when doing embroidery or online radio for the purpose of creating "communicative space" (Wicks and Reason, 2009). However, the relationship to art is more closely related to the research, both when using such supplies and materials as when not, informed by the underlying logics of these three elements: juxtaposition, chance encounter and assemblage.

4.2.1 Juxtaposition, encounter and assemblage

In *A postcapitalist politics* (2006) Gibson-Graham describe creativity as a process of "bringing things together from different domains to spawn something new". Past scholarship has coined several terms for this, including ""cross-structuring" (Smith 1973), "cross-appropriation" (Spinosa, Flores, and Dreyfus 1997), and "extension" (Varela 1992)". And yet, despite constituting "an important means of proliferating possibilities", "seldom are such techniques reflectively marshalled to the task of creating different economies" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.xxxii).

Such an approach for exploring economic possibilities is reminiscent of ones used in art. For example, when talking about art-happenings, Susan Sontag (1966) refers to "the idea of destroying conventional meanings, and creating new meanings or counter-meanings through radical juxtaposition". She cites Lautréamont's famous phrase about the beauty of "the fortuitous encounter of a sewing machine and an umbrella on a dissecting table"" (Sontag, 1966, p.7). Juxtaposition as an artistic mode of doing, thus consists of an experiment where contrasting elements are simply placed next to each other, asking what kind of new situation, new meaning, might emerge. The idea of bringing such tools, usually used for the purpose of wit, terror and comedy (Sontag, 1966, p.7) into the practical realms of economy and organisation is a radical juxtaposition in itself. My plan for how to go about researching alternative organisation, as it was expressed in the business-plan document, is a good example of how using such artistic processes coincided unwittingly with Gibson-Graham's call.

One of the more known art forms visibly embodying juxtaposition is the assemblage (Watson, 2003; Tate, n.d.). In assemblage, found or bought objects are placed next to each other, sometimes even just precariously placed leaning against each other (e.g. artists Antoni Tapies and Sarah Lucas).

Figure 2: Antoni Tapies; Panera de roba (Linen Basket), 1993. Private collection Barcelona © Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona/VEGAP, Bilbao, 2013. Source of the images: VEGAP Image Bank.

As an organisational principle, what is interesting is the way the assemblage breaks with some of the feeling of governing coherence, with the fact that everything could be elegantly explained by 'cause and effect' (as in Kaplan and Norton, 2001; Kaplan and Norton, 2006), or systemically as expressing some elegant set of principles (e.g. Cyert et al., 1959). In the assemblage things are adjacent, and the relationships between them can be diverse: tensions, complementarities, conflict, collaboration and also open to diverse interpretation.

The term assemblage has recently appeared repeatedly in the context of philosophy and social science (most famously in Deleuze and Guattari, 2020). In this study I am using Tsing's (2015a) description of assemblage as "open-ended gatherings" (Tsing, 2015a, p. 23). It coincides with Gibson-Graham's emphasis on possibility (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.xxxii) given that it shows us "potential histories in the making" (Tsing, 2015a, p. 23). I am interested in this "throwntogetherness" (Massey, 2005; Dombroski, 2006) as an organisational principle, as a way of looking at two neighbourhoods and at the attempts to create rooted projects of social transformation within them.

It is important to emphasise that for the purpose of assemblage, artists take materials not originally intended for art and repurpose them (Watson, 2003). In the assemblages of Jean Dubuffet, Picasso and Duchamp (to name but a few early 20th century artists) this is a *sculptural/material* re-contextualisation, but more recent art also re-contextualises *processes* both material and immaterial. Frances Whitehead (2015) talks about how artists "learned to speak the languages of other disciplines, both nomenclature and attitude, reflecting multiple intents and values" adding that this "sometimes disrupts these practices by operating within their sphere differently" (Whitehead, 2015, p.3). The playing around with contexts is thus something artists are adept at, possibly even trained to do. As a practice, macba/Bifidum Pathways drew together and borrowed from the modes of doing and thinking of art, Permaculture, culinary practices and craft, playfully placing them in the context of the fields of economics and organisation (e.g. Bifidum Pathways Business Plan)[3].

If we zoom in a little closer to the mechanisms of assemblage we find the encounter, many times even chance encounter, as a central element. I will propose that encounter, so valued in art (Girst, 2014; Sansi, 2015, pp.24–25), is an interesting element to consider when critiquing control in economy and organisation. It is also relevant to understanding my methodological approach: to what extent was it designed and to what, encountered? Artist Marcel Duchamp encountered found objects (Camfield, 1996; Tate, n.d.), considering them to be "ready made" works of art. He described the meeting with such object as a "randezvous" rather than an active choice (Duchamp 1973; 71 cited in Sansi, 2015, pp.24–25). The ready made is not chosen by the artist, "he chooses you, so to speak" (Duve 1994; 72)". This event, according to Duchamp, "was not motivated, but based on indifference and total lack of responsibility". Choice is thus chance; completely unintentional. This encounter had two conditions: the first – one must choose an object in such an unintentional manner (Duchamp 1973; 71 cited in Sansi, 2015, pp.24–25). I will get to Duchamp's second condition later in the chapter, when I talk about ethnography. When considering this "randezvous" as a productive process, comparing it to the idea of individual authorship, a form of doing things together in the world emerges that is dialogic in the sense that it does not project "power over" (Pansardi, 2012) outwards from an individual towards their environment, but adopts a listening stance waiting for other actors to meet her or him half way, so to speak. Again, this is something that, following Duchamp, contemporary artists are trained to do. If we are looking, like this research does, to explore the limits of organisational control for the purpose of developing alternative approaches to

[3] The research here described focuses on the artistic and culinary aspects of this practice, leaving the issues related to craft and Permaculture for further explorations.

economy and organisation, such a reframing technique can help. Given this fundamental stance of listening rather than imposing, it coincides with the democratising ethics of social movements discussed in Chapters 3. It also provides an alternative framework to the elegant coherence of positivist OT (Cox and Hassard, 2005) and the belief in mechanistic causality managerialism is based on (Klikauer, 2015, p.1104), valuing as it does unstable processes rather than fixed structures and generic recipes (Klikauer, 2015).

In regards to my research methodology, which in itself was an organisational practice, considering encounters in such ways can transform ideas regarding planning and even experimenting. While classic definitions of scientific experimentation involve "an hypothesis that can be demonstrated by reproducible methods, in any laboratory, using established protocols", in art "an experimental action would be that in which the results are unpredictable, a necessarily unique action" (Sansi, 2016, p. 68, *translation mine*). In the thesis, I refer to this mode of experimenting as the 'what happens if...?' experiment. Radical juxtaposition is an embodiment of such an approach, assemblage is how it can be interpreted organisationally from a bird's eye view, and encounter is its most basic unit of functioning. While the classic scientific experiment suggests the positivist project of working towards stability and knowability, the artistic experiment perpetuates indeterminacy and proliferates possibilities, valuing process over outcome (e.g. Barry, 2008, p.8). The artistic experiment, this necessarily unique action, is a methodology crafted exactly for the kind of "reading for difference rather than dominance" Gibson-Graham talk about (2006, pp.xxxi–xxxii). But if we decide to value chance and lack of human control as central to collaborative endeavours, is there anything a human actor can actually *do*? Artists, activists and researchers (Sansi, 2015, p.13) have been experimenting with "setting the conditions for things to happen" (boem and Ramujkic, 2013), oftentimes through creating space (Labensohn, 2011; e.g. Assaf, 2011; Timm-Bottos and Reilly, 2015). The following section introduces the physical space as a central 'kitchen implement' for my methodological recipes.

4.2.2 Physical space enabling things to happen

One important operational element, found in the *Bifidum Pathways Business Plan* document, is the physical space itself, designed to "seduce the public so that it is appropriated by it" (Bifidum Pathways Business Plan, p.3). The idea of setting up a physical space in order to welcome encounters has been explored both by artists and researchers in the past (Labensohn, 2011; e.g. Assaf, 2011; Timm-Bottos and Reilly, 2015; Berthoin Antal and Friedman, 2017, p.225). When describing such spaces, writers have given special attention to the physical aspect of it, its features and dimensions (Berthoin Antal and Friedman, 2017, pp.225–226) connecting such features to the playful encounter the space enables.

Surprise encounter can form part of such methodology from its inception. For example, the *Studio for Social Creativity* at Max Stern Jezreel Valley College (Israel) was set up in a "little-used fine arts studio" discovered on the campus "serendipitously" by Victor Friedman, one of the researchers involved (Berthoin Antal and Friedman, 2017, pp.225–226). Finding the space is seen as a "randezvous" (Sansi, 2015, p.24) in itself. From the perspective of art, a field where originality is highly valued (Crowther, 1991a; Gayford and Cork, 2016; Riley, 2017), finding such a space with its unique characteristics is an original event, an encounter with an original object. In other words the unique properties of the space make it different to any other space, enabling different kinds of encounters and different, original organisational forms to emerge, site specific (Kwon, 1997). I perceived such a found originality to contribute to a 'biodiversity' of organisational practices and ideas, being that each space enables different practices that can add to a growing pool of possibilities. The layout and material characteristics of a physical space crafted or encountered for the purpose of enabling things to happen can thus serve as an important element in art, activism, research, and in their mixed forms, especially ones aiming to create alternatives to controlled hegemonic forms.

My methodology was based on an openness to encounter, including chance encounter, using physical space as one of its main tools. This was most clearly visible in Maricel where I set up a physical space, opened its doors, and proceeded to generate organisational and economic activities in dialogue with the encounters that were generated. As I found it, the *macba* storefront was fortuitously set up as an ideal place for encounters. One of its most prominent features was its large green doors, opening up to a cul-de-sac of a pedestrian street. Blocked by a tall brick wall on one side and a staircase on another, the doors opened up in a way that this car-free, intimate space, and the indoor space of the storefront became connected into one space. My collaborators and myself equipped the space with a kitchen, several sewing machines, a wood burning 'rocket-stove', chairs and tables. This mixture of found and crafted elements was intended to enable the proliferation of encounters and collaborations within the space.

Numerous projects happened during the six years of its existence (listed in the last section of this chapter), fruits of such encounters and their subsequent collaborations. In this thesis, I will be focusing on four of the projects that formed part of the space. One was *Economia de Levadura Madre Silvestre* (the original *Wild Yeast Economies* workshops) my own project for explicitly exploring the idea of dialogic economies through the culinary metaphor of fermentation. The other three were the ones started by three collaborators that I feel most made use of the space for creating their own unique economies: Daniel Stav, Mar Lopez and Sascha Crnobori. In the thesis I will describe the stories of their economies within and outside

the context of *macba*, being that they demonstrated a reframing regarding economic and organisational practices responding to Gibson-Graham's call for developing our economic imaginations (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.54) and the alternative organisation diversifying gesture (Parker et al., 2007). Also, when placed next to each other and seen as elements of a social ecology, an assemblage of sorts, these four experiences will expand current ideas regarding alternative organising building on existing scholarship (Parker et al., 2014b). In this chapter, I mention these participants' methodologies being that I consider this project a collaborative decentralised one where multiple investigations done by various actors collided. This assemblage, a sustained encounter with intentional and unintentional elements mixing through it, exemplified the idea of *ecological spontaneity*, one of the contributions I will define and elaborate in Chapter 7. Apart from economies, the three case studies have another commonality: all three have to do with food, its preparation and its political context; all three were activist cooking projects.

Mar connected food to the social sphere through collaborative graffiti of recipes and the researching of the unique culinary tradition of her own neighbourhood, Marisleta. Daniel, after learning to make tempeh in *macba*, started a small tempeh-making operation based in the communal house where he lived. The people working on it switched around according to need and circumstance, making it a fascinating experiment in human resource management. Sascha was conducting his own 'outsider research' into wild plants and their culinary possibilities, largely at *macba*, organising dinners, workshops and excursions. His culinary practice was a mix of being in tune with the natural cycles of the Maricel area and his own unpredictable life circumstances.

But the three have yet another commonality, one that the *macba* itself, a space that enabled them to act within it, shared as a project. All have created their economic projects in dialogue with their emerging circumstance, which includes an element of economic precarity. As defined in Chapter 3, precarity is the condition of not being able to plan (Tsing, 2015a, p.278) partially synonymous to the term indeterminacy and the experience of not knowing (Tsing, 2015a, p.329). Bethoin Antal and Friedman (2017) hypothesize that creative spaces like their *Studio for Social Creativity*, mentioned above, "provide a context conducive to experiencing *not knowing* as an opening for creating new knowledge" and that people other than artists "tend to experience" not knowing as "uncomfortable" (Berthoin Antal and Friedman, 2017, p.245). The following section describes the place *not knowing* played in the *Wild Yeast Economies* research methodology.

4.2.3 Indeterminacy

Gibson-Graham talk about needing a practice of theorizing

> ...that tolerates "not knowing" and allows for contingent connection and the hiddenness of unfolding; one that at the same time foregrounds specificity, divergence, incoherence, surplus possibility, the requisite conditions of a less predictable and more productive politics (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.xxxi)

My methodology continually dialogued with indeterminacy, responding to the life events that took place throughout it. It is for this reason that I continually go back and forth between methodological discussion and the story of the research in this chapter. Organisationally speaking, the experiment consisted of seeing if collectivity and economies could emerge spontaneously in response to hospitality and openness. As discussed in Chapter 3, this belief in spontaneity has connections to anarchism (e.g. Ward, 1988, pp.23–2) and to related social movement theory (Snow and Moss, 2014). Creating the conditions for encounter and spontaneity (paraphrasing on boem and Ramujkic, 2013) formed an important part of my arts-based (and space-based) methodology. One example is the fact that there was mostly no formal coordination meetings held between collaborators. Instead I organised a monthly dinner at the space where they were all invited. The assumption was that if there were anything important to talk about, it would come up at these dinners spontaneously (ethnographic notes, 11.11.2013; 24.10.2014).

And yet, after several years, for reasons I will now outline, I felt that I was not getting closer to learning 'recipes' for alternative organising. Considering that my initial question was how day-to-day dynamics based on openness and listening could generate spontaneous economies and organisation, the response from the daily life of *macba* seemed unfocused. Albeit exemplifying the wide view of economies presented in the diverse economies literature (Gibson-Graham, 1996; Gibson-Graham et al., 2013a), the experience of spending six years at the space organising activities, lacked the linearity one might associate with a growing learning process. Apart, despite the space being active socially and artistically, economically (at least in the standard understanding of the term), it was not doing so well and I incurred a debt of about 3,000 Euros in unpaid rent. The feeling of economic uncertainty exacerbated the sensation of the experiment as an unfocused learning process, especially since the learning itself was supposed to be about economies (ethnographic notes, 24.10.2014). In Chapter 6 I will define 'hardships' and the dialogue with them as one of the central themes emerging from the data. In *macba*, such dialogue propelled learning. Maybe the most important learning for my case now, is one closely related to artistic practice and its 'what happens if...?' experiments: learning to be present with *not knowing* (Berthoin Antal and Friedman, 2017, p.245).

These uncertainties throughout the process of research are in fact central to a methodology that aims to learn organisational recipes "through precarity" (Tsing, p. 20). The fact that artists are especially adept at talking about not knowing and acting within it, has to do both with the fact of such 'what happens if…?' experiments being valued (Sansi, 2016, p. 68), as it does with the economic precarity present in what is often called "the gig economy" (Petriglieri et al., 2019). *Not knowing* can be useful for research that responds to the call for reframing commonly-given assumptions regarding economy and organisation, ones that put stability as the main point of reference. Such reframing is here informed by the life-trajectory of artists, from "temporary contract-based work", "fluctuating pay, no job security, sick-pay or pension", from the lack of boundaries between one's job and one's life and the "constant anxiety, fear and loss of control" they produce (Autonomous Artists Anonymous, 2017, p.883). The fact that indeterminacy is present both in the values of contemporary art (the 'what happens if...?' experiment) and in the lived circumstances of artists, is further synergized by the ever-growing tendency to blend art with life (Sansi, 2015, pp.28–29, 120–121). As a central ingredient in my methodology, art translated such "thinking through precarity" (Tsing, p. 20) into an organisational/spatial 'what happens if…?' experiment, composed of juxtaposition, encounter and assemblage.

4.2.4 Conclusions regarding Indeterminacy, art and action

As a mode of inquiry, juxtaposition is a 'what happens if…?' form of experimentation; indeterminacy is at its core. In the case of *macba/Bifidum Pathways*, this was done placing disparate concepts together: art and economy, creating a mixed proposal: social art gallery/business incubator (Bifidum Pathways Business Plan document). Such juxtaposition, through its expression as assemblage and rooted in encounter, challenges the coherence and causality which OT and managerialism are based on (Cox and Hassard, 2005; Klikauer, 2015, p.1104). Through an artistic approach, valuing encounter, methodological elements relevant to the investigation can be found, and site-specific original forms (organisational, economic) can emerge. Intentionality and chance intermix in a dialogic craft that corresponds with the goal of creating organisational forms through precarity, rooted in the lived experience of those excluded from stability and from a sense of life-coherence.

The artistic tools of re-contextualising processes, radically juxtaposing disparate elements and assembling them together in a way that "does not collapse what it aggregates into fewer categories, but spreads everything out to the limits of our tolerance for dimensionality and detail" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.xxxi) can be valuable for the kind of reframing that transforms society (Gibson-Graham et al., 2013a, pp.3–4). All this said, it's important to consider that the cross-pollination of ideas coming from different fields also holds within it the danger of

superficiality. The fact of combining ideas from disparate areas of expertise without necessarily being an expert in any of them can create a useful opening up, a reframing, but ideas brought up in such a way then require much elaboration. This might involve unknown learning curves, but could also be overcome through collaborations across disciplines. Keeping this limitation in mind, the artistic approaches described in this section can prove useful for conversations such as the alternative organisation one in CMS (Parker et al., 2007) and the diverse economies one inspired by Gibson-Graham (1996). The site-specificity of such dialogue roots such a diversity of forms in lived experience and in a local setting, the relationships there created in the day-to-day crafting a counter-performativity 'from below'.

Gibson-Graham (2006) emphasise site-specificity when talking about economic weak theory, saying that such theorising *observes* things as specific and incongruent (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.71). Tsing (2015a) talks about *descriptive* science as site-specific and "attuned to indeterminate encounters" (Tsing, 2015a, p. 221). In the *Wild Yeast Economies* project I went beyond observation and description, charting out the tentative processes of *crafting* such site-specific forms in dialogue with found elements. Like others (e.g. Cameron and Gibson, 2005), I did this through the creation of a physical space that embodied openness to chance encounter, the juxtaposing logic of 'what happens if...?' experiments and the site-specific dialogue aiming to proliferate possibilities. If seen through the lens of the metaphor of culinary fermentation it was inspired by the words of Katz (2003) who wrote:

> What you ferment with the organisms around you is a manifestation of your specific environment, and it will always be a little different (Katz, 2003, p.21)

In taking such an active propositive approach to research, the *Wild Yeast Economies* project coincides with the ethics of PAR, with research proposing reflexivity in the midst of action (Reason and Torbert, 2001). While radical juxtaposition, encounter and site-specific dialogue, all coming from the field of art, continued to be central ingredients in the ongoing methodology as it evolved, PAR became an explicit part of this project through the events as they ensued. The next section continues to detail the narrative of the research as PAR was brought into the mix.

4.3 Introducing PAR

As we saw in the previous section, indeterminacy, not knowing, despite the discomfort it creates, could be beneficial for projects of "creating new knowledge" (Berthoin Antal and Friedman, 2017, p.245). But it would be dishonest to celebrate indeterminacy and ignore the suffering precarity generates, as it is expressed by recent social movements (Foti, 2004b; Kruglanski, 2006; Mattoni, 2008). I talked about my own discomforts of not knowing in the

previous section. In response to them, to my own precarity, I did two things: First, for about a year and a half, I ran a series of workshops called *Wild Yeast Economies* at *macba*. The workshops were themselves a juxtaposition, marrying economy and organisation to contemporary art. As opposed to the wider project of *macba*, which I earlier described as "unfocused", they were an explicit attempt to invite participants to talk (and sketch) about economies. But the people who appeared in response to my open call were not necessarily the unlikely entrepreneurs I was hoping for. Some were, as I hoped, people attempting to launch their own personal or group economic projects, but others were people working in institutions, artists and academics that were drawn to the workshops more for the subject matter, as an intellectual or artistic exercise, or for political affinity. I found the experience interesting in terms of developing methods for talking about economies through art, but not fully productive in terms of getting me in touch with like-minded people who were hoping to create social transformation through economic processes based on dialogue and creative response to one's environment. The subsequent thing I did was the following: I moved to the UK and joined a PhD programme researching 'new forms of organisation and social justice', formalising the endeavour as an academic research project. In doing so, *Wild Yeast Economies* came "in from the cold" (Hall, 2005) into academia, and it is at that point that it gets defined retroactively as "practitioner research" (Eikeland, 2015, p.382) in the tradition of PAR.

This case is thus different than one where, from the vantage point of academia, a question is decided upon and an adequate methodology is then chosen (e.g. Buckley et al., 1976; Crotty, 2020 as cited in Jamshed, 2014). In the case of *Wild Yeast Economies*, PAR is an adequate methodology precisely because, like Duchamp's object, it was the methodology that chose me; the details of the PAR approach, as I became aware of them upon entering an academic framework, simply coincided with what I was already doing. Thus, when claiming methodological rigour in this case, it is not about choosing adequate methods at a distance, but about the back and forth weaving and translating, the dialogue established between a methodological tradition and a living inquiry as it evolved and transformed. I would like to elaborate a bit about how the ethics of PAR and its take on epistemology coincide with the basic approach I adopt in this research including its very openness to surprise encounter (as in Reason and Torbert, 2001, p.15). My focal point will be what I consider to be an important element of PAR, seemingly a methodological element, but in fact rooted in its political project. I am talking about the need to create "communicative space" (Wicks and Reason, 2009) in order for participatory research to happen. To better understand this point, it would be helpful to present a bit of background about the PAR approach.

If one were to outline PAR in one concise principle it would probably have to be the aspiration to "research with, not on" (Bradbury, 2015). From an academic perspective, the imperative to research “with” not “on” can be seen as its own ‘what happens if...?’ experiment. One can phrase it as: ‘What happens if we research ‘with’ not ‘on’? What would happen to some of our basic assumptions about academic scholarship if we do?’ but also ‘What would happen to academic scholarship if we were to be explicit about our politics, our aims as researchers to engage in social transformation?’. Regarding the first question, a body of reflexive thought, developed by action researchers, shows how PAR made visible the porous boundaries between research and life (Reason and Bradbury, 2008). Working in Tanzania in the early 1970s, Budd Hall (2005), found that he “learned more...by sitting several evenings just listening to stories in the village bar” than “through a more seemingly scientific approach" (Hall, 2005, p.8). Following this experimental vein, action researchers developed the idea that research can be a form of reflexivity taking place in the midst of action (Reason and Torbert, 2001). Regarding the second question, the fact of scholarship being explicit about its engagement with social transformation, PAR translates the democratising ethics of social movements, discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, to what they call “epistemological equity” (Seeley, 2011, p.85) or “knowledge democracy” (Ladaah Openjuru et al., 2015). It implies that social hierarchies and exclusion are related to hierarchies in what are accepted and unaccepted ways of thinking and learning (Ladaah Openjuru et al., 2015). The two questions, about the transformation of epistemology and that of society, are connected in PAR.

PAR seems to be in constant tension between criticism of it leaning more towards activism than academic rigour (Reason, 1996; Berraquero-Díaz et al., 2016, p.54) on the one hand, and alerts of it being co-opted and depoliticised on the other (Jordan, 2003). In the midst of this fertile tension, action researchers have come to acknowledge and even celebrate the fact of a diversity of ontologies and epistemologies. It is the practicalities of researching collaboratively with non-academics which, productively compromised a lot of academia’s pre-conceived notions regarding knowledge and learning. Action researchers thus talk about respecting “ways of knowing” and about “extended epistemology” (Heron and Reason, 1997, p.280). Hall (2013) says:

> We live in a world, it’s an infinitely diverse kind of a world but we don't yet have a set of knowledge structures that recognizes the kind of infinite nature of knowledge systems (Hall, 2013, 2m16s).

In other words, researchers come into situations without necessarily having the coordinates for understanding their knowledge-building processes and the basic assumptions that inform them. Similarly to the artist encountering an ‘other’ (such as a found object), they are thus

forced into a position of attentive listening, expecting to be surprised (Reason and Torbert, 2001, p.15). It is through this opening up of perceptions regarding epistemology that the political drive towards “knowledge democracy” (Ladaah Openjuru et al., 2015) is intertwined with an iterative practice rooted in an encounter with others, reminiscent of Tsing’s “arts of noticing” (Tsing, 2015a, p. 132) discussed in Chapter 3. Hall’s words (2013) show that through such lived experiences of observing and noticing differently, PAR creates an opening in what is and what is not considered legitimate knowledge, an epistemological diversifying gesture in its own right. The question of what is knowledge and what is learning, previously guarded within the watched gates of academia, becomes an unruly landscape to be explored with a beginner’s mind (Gibson-Graham, 2006, pp.xxviii, 130–131).

PAR’s simultaneously political and methodological approach entails a philosophical shift regarding ontology, epistemology and ethics, which hold repercussions for processes such as the ones here described. In PAR, ethics are central and it is the epistemology and ontology that stem from the complex, often contradictory, experience of acting (while reflecting) in the “messy” (Coleman, 2015, p.364) world. The questions we ask are ‘what to do?’ and secondarily ‘what does this (research) do?’. Reason and Torbert (2001) put it as "how to act in a timely fashion now?" (Reason and Torbert, 2001, p.5) and Bradbury (2015) in her handbook as "how can I improve this situation?” (Bradbury, 2015, p.1). These are ethical rather than ontological questions, hence PAR’s close relationship with pragmatism. PAR’s connection to pragmatism, despite popular conceptions connecting pragmatism to goal-achievement (e.g. Pragmatic Agency, 2017), brings it to consider open-ended, process-oriented approaches. As self-proclaimed pragmatist Richard Sennet (2009) puts it:

> Pragmatism wants to emphasize the value of asking ethical questions *during* the work process; it contests after-the-fact ethics, ethical enquiry beginning only after facts on the grounds are fixed (2009, p.296, *italics mine*)

In that respect the pragmatic/poetic, art-based approach of *Wild Yeast Economies* is not a departure, but a deepening of existing relationships between contemporary art, with its interest in process, and PAR (e.g. Seeley, 2011). All this is relevant to the investigation of economic and organisational possibilities being that it is reminiscent of Gibson-Graham’s call for a practice of theorising that tolerates “not knowing” and “unfolding” (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.xxxi). I will now go into the specificities of how such politics and philosophy of PAR are expressed through one seemingly methodological aspect: the creation of “communicative space” (Wicks and Reason, 2009).

4.3.1 Creating communicative space

Looking back at *macba* project described above, through the academic terminology of PAR, one can say that for the purpose of formal research, a lot of what happened during the six years of *macba*'s existence, served the end of creating "communicative space", as it is described in a much cited paper by Wicks and Reason (2009). In it they write that in order to research "with" participants one must "establish relations with an appropriate grouping of people", meaning having access to the communities one is concerned about or developing "legitimacy and the capacity to convene that goes alongside it" (Wicks and Reason, 2009, p.244). At first glance, it seems like they are assuming a situation where a researcher coming from an academic background is entering a space, which is foreign to her or him, a non-academic space. Given that I did not form part of any academic institution at the time and moreover was active in social movements and living in the neighbourhood in which I was acting, this was not the case for the *macba* project as it commenced. At the same time, from the perspective of the research I was doing, creating a space with "legitimacy and capacity to convene" (Wicks and Reason, 2009, p.244), could be seen as one of the main functions of *macba*. The specificity of the way communicative space was here created, is in the fact that instead of verbally "originating discussions" for broaching a topic (Wicks and Reason, 2009, p.244), here, like in the other arts-based examples mentioned above, this was done also through the physical space itself and through the years of staying present in it, of staying present in a (physical) space of indeterminacy.

This seemingly technical element, the creating of trustful relationships with participants, can serve as a prism reflecting back to the philosophical assumptions of PAR, ones that are central to the politics of a project such as *Wild Yeast Economies*. When reading about the necessity for creating communicative space, one might mistakenly conclude that what is needed is artifice, a technical expertise for researchers in need of participants. Such an aim would be contrary to the strive for "knowledge democracy" (Ladaah Openjuru et al., 2015) at the heart of the PAR endeavour, given that it instrumentalises relationships. In doing so, such an attitude would form part of a "'technocratic drift', which reduces participatory action research to the use of techniques, devices or procedures considered participatory" (Berraquero-Díaz, Maya-Rodríguez, Escalera Reyes 2016, p. 50), part of the co-optation of PAR (Jordan, 2003) by business and research as usual. Ideally, communicative spaces are spaces of affinity, where people from different contexts, academics and non-academics, work together towards "epistemological equity" (Seeley, 2011, p.85), towards the possibility that previously unlikely voices (with their under-represented ontologies, epistemologies and ethics) are represented (e.g. Reyes Cruz, 2008). It is this political affinity that creates a common space for

communication. In that respect the political project of PAR connects the seemingly technical need for creating communicative space, with the creation of “transformative space[s]” that use linguistic and sensory ingredients to transform “our selves, those we work with and the systems of which we are an intrinsic part" (Seeley, 2011, p.83). Wicks and Reason (2009) seem to suggest that creating such affinity across institutional divides cannot be taken for granted. I can recall at least two cases in which the fact of forming part of an academic institution made collaborators express doubts about our collaboration (one even gave me a shirt ironically embroidered with the words “dr. aviv” when he heard I was doing a PhD). Being that the process of researching in this case was in fact a process of organising, of creating a space which was itself an alternative organisation (*macba*), one can ask the same question I am asking regarding organisation, about the creation of communicative space: are there recipes for creating communicative space?

Throughout the investigation, my intent was to craft such spaces dialogically with their environment. The temporal, physical and theoretical ingredients necessary for crafting such a space in a given situation were encountered through sustained presence and through welcoming indeterminacy. My observation is that they unfolded following meandering paths. This process is exemplified through the research story as it proceeded, which I will now narrate. In parallel to enrolling at the university, I set out to research the wild yeast economies of a Whykham neighbourhood, through a series of neighbourhood art projects organised in collaboration with my partner Anna Coromina. The story of these projects exemplified the way the juxtapositions and chance encounters of art can combine with PAR’s injunction for creating transformative spaces in an inquiry into the territory of a neighbourhood. Specifically, the fact of letting not only answers but also the very questions emerge locally through presence and dialogue, is something artists (Sansi, 2016) and action researchers (Reason and Torbert, 2001, p.6; Wicks and Reason, 2009, pp.247–248) often share. Another element that was introduced at this stage was an element of drift, an artistic concept invented by Guy Debord (1958), member of an artistic movement known as The Situationists. The drift involves meandering through a city in a way contrary to any predetermined plan for the purpose of fomenting unpredictable encounters and novel ways of seeing the urban geography (Debord, 1958). This practice, which involved excursions to different parts of the city, and as I will discuss below, later focused on artistic drifts within a certain area, provided us with what The Situationists called psycho-geographic information, affinities we built on for the purpose of making decisions regarding our projects.

We decided to focus on the Avenue neighbourhood, which epitomised many of the challenges that were found in the city at large, mostly because we were inspired by potential

collaborators we met there through a series of casual chance encounters. Our first project, *3 Stages of Succession*, proposed the creation of communicative space, using artistic processes. It exemplified juxtaposition and cross-pollination between disciplines in that it used an image from ecology (Drury and Nisbet, 1973) to experiment with the creation of "new social, economic realities, benefitting neighborhoods" (from the *3 Stages of Succession* website):

> The term "stages of succession" comes from ecology and refers to the stages in which natural ecosystems gradually take a foothold in a terrain that is left to it's own devices. The process starts with small unobtrusive plants that slowly transform the terrain, preparing it for the arrival of larger plants to take root. Our process is similar, growing gradually from modest inquiry to more ambitious intervention (from the *3 Stages of Succession* website)

The project consisted of five months of daily presence in the Avenue area. Each day we went to a different social space, where people tended to gather. Our excuse was the making of a large-scale embroidered tapestry in collaboration with neighbours.

Figure 3: 3 Stages of Succession (photo: Anna Coromina)

Each piece of the tapestry was made in collaboration with a different person, representing a different aspect of the neighbourhood or a story. This process followed the logic of a series of projects I previously did with artist Una Ivanovic, a technique we developed for getting to know neighbourhoods and villages, called *Documentary Embroidery*. Through doing this we slowly discovered more spaces and people in the area that coincided with our interest. In that sense the human geography of the Avenue neighbourhood little by little unfolded in front of our eyes. It was, using the tool of embroidery, a drift in itself, through the Avenue area. One place we discovered, while walking around the area, was the Avenue Village Hall, run by a guy

nicknamed Kid, “a friendly guy with a poignant sense of humour, ponytail, gold-loop earring” (ethnographic notes, 25.02.2016). We started doing a weekly radio show from the Avenue Village Hall. We considered it to be a ‘radio/teahouse,’ giving more importance to the way the broadcast, with its microphones and mixing table, created communicative space presentially, than to how many people were listening online at a distance. It was Kid, after several months of this artistic ‘hanging out’ that suggested I go speak to an organisation called Ideal Places Cooperative, IPC, with whom he was involved back in the 1980s. My first meeting there is worth describing as it connects to the case I am making regarding communicative space.

When walking into the George Street Social Enterprise Park, where the IPC offices were then located, it was the physical space that made an impression on me. It contrasted with the rest of the street, a typical nondescript West Whykham Street with its terraced houses stretching side by side. The Social Enterprise Park’s courtyard seemed cosy with doors and windows painted green. Upon the entrance there was a list of small businesses and organisations, among them the Whykham Ethnic Minorities Community Centre and the FYeast Bakery. There was a man leaning over into the bakery, talking to the baker. It ended up being James Newton, the director of IPC, also known by their mainstays as Jowt. The conversation I had with him lasted for about two hours. At no moment did he seem in a rush or nervous about not getting on with his business. At no point did he even hint about me having to leave. When I finally did say “*maybe I should let you get some work done*”, Paul the baker showed up with two large, freshly made pizzas, upon which Jowt said “*are you sure you want to leave right now?*” I stayed for another half an hour, eating pizza and talking about politics (ethnographic notes, 13.04.2016).

The reason I go into this detail is to demonstrate that IPC itself created a sort of communicative space that, similar to the art spaces mentioned above, used a combination of physical and relational elements to invite people in and create trust and conversation. This interesting reversal, where one of my case studies created communicative space for me, rather than the other way around, questions the directionality of research in a way that fulfils PAR’s ideal of researching *with*, not *on*. Once again, it is unclear whether I chose IPC as my found object of study, or whether, like Duchamp’s ready made, it chose me.

The reciprocity (as is described in Campbell and Lassiter, 2010) or rather the correspondence (Ingold, 2016, pp.9–10) demonstrated by this encounter is not one generated by two closely defined entities, with their tight boundaries and set roles. As the reader will see in further chapters, it is not only the boundaries of my research that were porous and its narrative meandering, it was also the boundaries and the narrative of an organization such as IPC that so

behaved. In that sense, both the methodology and the case studies showed a relational multidirectionality. One might even consider that it was the porous boundaries, the meandering narrative of this methodology and its "curiosity about the connected heterogeneities composing an entity, a body, a world" (de la Bellacasa, 2012, p.200) that made it into a sensitive instrument that can relate to similar dynamics taking place in case studies. I will develop this idea a bit more, further down when I talk about entanglement. But theoretical elaborations aside, what grounds all of this into specificity, what made it relevant for daily life as it was experienced both by academic researcher and neighbourhood practitioner, was the encounter, the event in which differences meet and affinities resonate.

4.3.2 PAR conclusions

This section showed, through the *Wild Yeast Economies* methodological story, the indeterminacy, the radical juxtaposition of art combined with a growingly explicit use of PAR as I applied them in the Avenue area. The meandering paths this story took, progressing through encounter, were enabled by several communicative spaces both physical and relational. While as new comers, the spaces we created in Whykham, through embroidery and radio, were tentative and ephemeral, we were also welcomed in by what ended up being my main case study, IPC, into the space they created. One of the main points I made is that such spaces involving open doors a warm drink and availability to talk embody the politics of the PAR project and enable its diversifying gesture through encounter with difference.

While IPC was not an artistic endeavour, my first encounter with them coincided with the place-making modes of doing of many artists. The dialogue with such spaces emerged spontaneously through encounter (e.g. with the Avenue Village Hall, with Kid, with Jowt). While continuing to dialogue with such spontaneous spaces was fruitful, I was also negotiating the more structured spaces I found myself in, as part of academia. This is where other academic traditions, ethnography and biography aided me in maintaining both dialogues, a translation of sorts.

4.4 Introducing ethnography

4.4.1 Ethnography as a tool for communication within a system

The first two sections described how art and PAR created a context for thinking while doing, a space for disordering organisational landscapes and drifting through them in search of alternatives. Ethnography, through the registering of the details of such landscapes, came to help me analyse the data that emerged and communicate what I experienced to others. As I wrote before, Duchamp considered the fact of the encounter, by which an object is chosen, to be the first condition for the ready made. I related this first condition to the way PAR breaks

with the directionality of research and epistemology. As we will now see, his second condition will relate my methodology to ethnographic practices:

> The second condition of this encounter was that it has to be inscribed (Duve 1994; 73), registered, documented. Duchamp wrote down the place and time of encounter. This encounter then becomes an event, a memorable point in the past, and the object would be a document of this encounter (Sansi, 2015, pp.24–25)

So far throughout this text I have insisted on the value of the multidirectional messiness in which inquiry is entangled, unfolding through encounter with an environment or with circumstance. But it would be disingenuous not to recognize that upon coming into academia, I had a desire to register and make visible as events the encounters and circumstances that fed my thought process. Thus, when IPC entered the picture, a somewhat more conventional mode of academic investigation was introduced with the use of ethnographic notes and recorded conversations. This had to do both with the fact that I was an external, a newcomer to this organisation which I was observing, and to the fact of being engaged in a practice of laying down the accumulated experience of the past few years for the purpose of analysing it. Ethnography with an emphasis on biography (as in Carsten et al., 2018) enabled me to examine alternative economies/organisation through people's lived experiences in their own words. While PAR provided me with principles and an ethic for combining academic investigation with activism, ethnographic methods gave me the practices for collecting complex, multi-vocal and rich data that enable me to relate the academic-activist encounters I have experienced and to analyse them through existing alternative organisational/social movement theory.

Interviewing people from and around IPC came at a moment of uncertainty during the research project. The series of collaborative art project Anna and myself set up for the purpose of exploring the Avenue area, through the creation of communicative space, were wrought with indeterminacy. Conversations on the radio programs, even two we specifically defined as dealing with economies, spread to a wide array of topics. As is often the case (Arieli et al., 2009, p.265), doing things with neighbours was an ephemeral affair, with participation at varying levels at different times, while trust and relationships matured. I felt a certain pressure, being that I was enrolled in a PhD and was hoping to say something specific about economy and organisation, to come up with 'data' that would be revealing. IPC resonated with me as embodying some of my hopes I originally had for *macba*; as expressed in the *Bifidum Pathways Business Plan*. The welcoming feeling of informality at their offices, the fact of surviving for over 30 years and putting deep roots in a neighbourhood, the fact of a slow, dialogic form of embodied activism that was not separated from the daily life of people outside social

movements, all seemed to point at the organisation achieving what were my original dreams for my own, now defunct, organisation. These characteristics of IPC also responded to the concerns regarding control and boundaries expressed in Chapter 3.

To clarify a bit what this organisation did, how it responded to what my original aspirations for *macba* were and why I took it on as a case study, it might be a good moment to give a brief overview of its story as it was told to me by various of its protagonists. As I found out in numerous conversations, it was started by a group of young University of Whykham students and dropouts in the 1980s, people with interest in punk music and anarchism. At the time, housing conditions in Whykham were substandard, offered by many absentee landlords, which did not provide services or take care of problems. The young people who were to be IPC members lived in such substandard housing. During an interview, one of them even reproduced for me the slurping sounds of walking on a damp floor. They saw low house prices in Whykham at the time as an opportunity to materialise ambitious political ideas, working towards an anti-capitalist project that goes beyond protest. They imagined creating an expanding ecology of workers' cooperatives, in the vein of Mondragon (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.126). After thirty years of trial and error, learning everything, from putting in a window to getting a bank loan, on the job as they went along, IPC is now a registered charity (having started as a workers' cooperative) with more than 100 properties valued at about 5.8M, mostly in the Avenue area. IPC is a form of grassroots social housing, coordinating rent with current housing benefits, so that even if a tenant loses their job, their housing remains secure. Members themselves were on the dole for years, de-facto volunteering their work time in the organisation (personal communication, Jowt, 02.04.2017; Cecil, 14.01.2018; Alice, 23.06.2017; Max, 26.01.2018).

The recorded conversations drew a multidimensional picture of the IPC story. Just based on the ten IPC interviews I conducted, one could tell it from a variety of different perspectives: through music, through finance, through drugs, sports, human resource management, work ethics, family, gender relations, through the temporalities of building processes and materials, through relations with state apparatus such as welfare, etc. Some of these elements will make an appearance in the story, but my focus here will be to examine the data from the point of view of the encounter, of unfolding circumstance, dialogic processes imbued with indeterminacy. Or, if I was to state it from the 'other direction', through questioning of planning and control, through the question of whether there could be a 'recipe' for creating resilient alternative organisational ecologies.

So, I seemed to have followed Duchamp's advice, and just like he had to register his encounters for them to count as actors in the art-world, I registered mine so they can count as data in academic research. In order to do so, I conducted ten recorded conversations, took ethnographic notes and read documents related to the organisation. This more formal approach was then applied retroactively to *macba*. I went back to Maricel, recorded conversations with participants and looked at documents and old exchanges related to my project there. I detail all this data collection in the following section. For now, I would like to describe several aspects of this ethnographic work through which it departs from the norm, responding specifically to the circumstances of this research and to the questions I outlined in previous chapters. There are three ingredients in this ethnography worthy of note: its biographical emphasis, its deep entanglement and the ways it builds on but also departs from previous activist ethnographies.

4.4.2 Biography, autobiography, emotions and control

One thing that is important to note in the way I went about researching, is the way ethnography was intertwined with biography and with autobiography. This is apparent reading this present chapter, with my own story of researching serving as the agglutinating agent for the three methodological ingredients. In researching IPC and *macba*, I focused on life stories and the way they intermingle with each other to create the collective biography of an organisational ecology. I'd like to emphasize two aspects of my use of biography. One is how life stories allow for the emotional dimension of events to express itself. The other is how biographical methods embody the tacit critique of control that runs through my methodology.

While the human subject, their life stories and their emotional dimension have been long marginalized from research "under the banner of objectivity and generalisability" (Merrill and West, 2009, p.3), it has also been noted that the life stories of ethnographers and the groups they investigate are deeply connected within research processes (Carsten et al., 2018, p.7). In terms of the emotional dimension of stories, we already saw, in Chapter 3, how activist ethnographers emphasise the importance of emotions within the work of social movements (Juris, 2008a, p.31; Reedy and King, 2019, p.7). Biographical methods are explicit in valuing emotion (Waite and Cook, 2011) and their role within research (Carsten et al., 2018, p.6). As I wrote in Chapter 3, I was concerned with the prefigurative feel of alternatives, rather than just their formal structure. This concern provoked an interest in the emotional dimension of life-stories as an alternative ingredient of an organisational recipe. For this purpose, it was important for me to hear life stories as they were woven together into a complex collective narrative.

Given that biographies are temporally structured and sequential (Merrill and West, 2009, p.10), makes them interesting for exploring alternatives to the temporalities of control, expressed through the managerial planning methods of mainstream management. In other words, the project of creating alternatives that are rooted in the lived experiences of those excluded from stability, might benefit from paying attention to the way emotions drive events through time, rather than emphasising static structures or mechanistic processes controlled and planned.

Apart from the above reasons, my use of biographical methods also expressed a critique of control in terms of how interviews were conducted. In the recorded conversations I had, I left space for expressing emotions, relevant as they are to organisational/economic projects that are at the same time personal forms of inquiry (Whiteman, 2010). The way they were conducted expressed the critique of control, the spontaneity and fluidity valued by activists (Frenzel, 2014, p.901; Langmead, 2017a, p.94). Following others using biographical approaches, I let people structure their own stories, expressing their own priorities and perspectives, without imposing the researcher's agenda on the conversation as it occurred (Merrill and West, 2009, p.10). At the same time, as I showed in this chapter, my own biography was anything but absent from these conversations. In it I included the emotional elements that propelled this investigation forward. The biographical narratives expressed the intimacy valued in ethnography (Lofland as cited in Emerson, 1987, p.71), the political affinity valued by activists (Luchies, 2014b, p.114), and the emotional dimension discussed above (Juris, 2008a, p.31; Reedy and King, 2019, p.7). They also embodied a letting go of control, as the stories I heard collide with each other and with mine, expanding but also contradicting each other, creating a multidimensional research object that looks somewhat different from different points of view.

The interviews I held were informed by the looseness and the interest in surprise encounter that ran like a thread throughout my approach. In the aide-memoires for the interviews I expressed this looseness, stating, "useful data" can come through meandering paths" (from an internal document called 'Aviv research plan', 22.07.2016). I thus left these conversations mostly unstructured being that I was interested in the porous boundaries between economies, organisations and biographical life stories (Denzin, 1999) with their emotional dimension (Whiteman, 2010).

While the conversations weren't structured, I did have a loose idea of some themes that might come up in conversation, ones I also hoped to cover during the conversation. These themes are ones that I observed during years of experimenting with organisation and reflecting on the process. I wrote these down as part of the aide-memoires to see if they emerge during these unstructured biographical conversations:

-Dialogic processes embedded within their (social, material, cultural, biological) environment.

-Repetition and variation.

-Temporalities of processes, encounters between different temporalities and how they might be managed or how they might have created difficulties.

-Ways of thinking and behaviours that might seem contrary to neo-liberal values or to societal norms.

-Ecologies: how this project is embedded in its organizational environment

('Aviv research plan', 22.07.2016)

I also wrote an aide-memoire for the radio shows we did. In it I differentiated between ones that were "open spaces where anyone from the community can walk in" ('Aviv research plan', 22.07.2016) and "closed sessions where we invite specific people to have a conversation" ('Aviv research plan', 22.07.2016) such as two sessions titled *Avenue Barefoot Economies Radio*. In these closed sessions I specifically tried to address the topic of the neighbourhood's diverse economic landscape (Gibson-Graham, 1996). Again, I let the conversation meander, encouraging people "to take the microphone and introduce their own set of questions" ('Aviv research plan', 22.07.2016). By approaching data collection in this way, I experimented with a loosening of control, dialoguing with my interlocutors to empathetically see how their theorising is enmeshed in their biographical stories, and how individual stories are entangled with others to create more collective organisational biographies.

In framing my methodological concerns in such a way, I was pushing against the individualistic connotation of the terms biography and autobiography. Like Norman Denzin (1999), I see ethnography as moving "from my biography to the biographies of others" (1999, p.511). In that respect biography and autobiography here are closely related to "friendship as method", telling the stories, not only of individuals, but of relationships in their context (Allen, 2017; Reedy & King, 2019, p. 23). Another way this research expands on biographical and autobiographical approaches is in the fact of not strictly focusing on 'events' such as "epiphany moments" (McGarry and Keating, 2010) to define a narrative, but instead describing the atmospheres and emotional states taking place in daily life. In seeing small repetitive moments and atmospheres as possible ingredients in alternative recipes, I framed collectivity as something not necessarily cohesive or coherent, but rather riddled with complexity and contradictions. One important part of this complexity was how boundaries were challenged

within such ecologies. The next subsection introduces this idea and relates it to a contribution it makes to activist ethnographies.

4.4.3 Porous boundaries and contributions to activist ethnographies

In a paper called 'An Analytic Glossary to Social Inquiry Using Institutional and Political Activist Ethnography', Laura Bisaillon (2012) defines an "activist scholar" as:

> A person who foregrounds the political aims of the research she or he carries out. In addition to participating in the academy, this person is commonly a participant in or member of civil society organizations. This individual aims to produce knowledge about social organization and relations from the perspective of people occupying places of marginality and/or social movements (Campbell, 2006; Kinsman, 2006; Ng, 1988; Pence, 2001; G. Smith, 1990) (Bisaillon, 2012, p.610)

Juris (2008b) talks about "militant ethnography", entailing "both politically engaged research (see Scheper-Hughes, 1995) and an explicit rejection of the divide between observer and practitioner (Juris, 2007)" (Juris, 2008b, p.64). My own embeddedness within the two case studies located my work well within this tradition. Mar, Sascha, Daniel and myself, all participated in social movements having lived in squats and went to protests, direct actions, and many of the spokes councils and assemblies typically at the centre of activists' organisational practices (e.g. Estalella and Corsín Jiménez, 2013). Likewise, IPC as a project was also informed by a history of activism and participation in social movements, organising protests such as ones against the Poll Tax and forming part of a network called Rebellious Pathways. Considering this commonality, I'd like to situate my methodology in relation to some of the writing about ethnographic work done from within the context of social movements. The main issue I here consider is the issue of the boundaries of alternative organisations, one I described as under theorized in Chapter 2. The two organisational ecologies presented in this study undoubtedly come from activist culture, but at the same time, do not squarely fit in it. Were IPC and *macba* activist projects akin to the organising of mass direct action, counter summits or even some of the alternative organisations researched by CMS scholars (e.g. Langmead, 2017a)? What differentiated them? And how would the difference be reflected in the ethnographic aspect of my methodology?

As I will discuss in Chapters 5 and 6, in the interviews, people expressed doubts and criticisms regarding this very activist culture they formed part of. One can even say that the projects themselves came as a response, not only to the inspiring aspects of activism, but also to the criticisms of it and to the disappointments that were part and parcel of the experience. One thing all of the case studies have in common was their questioning of the boundaries of the activist sphere itself, of whether the very definition of an activist milieu might not be in

contradiction to its emancipatory aims. In that respect the literature about the homogeneity and lack of access of activism, presented in Chapter 3 (Appel, 2011b; Appel, 2011a), echoes the sentiments of my collaborators.

The methodological question here would be: once these activists step out into the surrounding world and attempt to act outside of activist frameworks and frames of mind, does the observation and the analysis of this still fit into the definitions of an activist or militant ethnography? Despite building on Juris' emphasis on insider political engagement (Juris, 2008b, p.64) and Reedy and King's thoughts regarding procedural virtues (Reedy and King, 2019, p.8), this ethnography's goal is no longer to describe norms, values and concerns of a social sphere with more or less set boundaries, but of people, informed by such a sphere, acting in many different collaborative constellations with others regardless of whether they share this experience or not. To complicate things even more, these actors haven't stepped completely outside the activist culture, maintaining not only some of its values and modes of doing, but also many friends and collaborations from it. Methodologically, I thus build on this previous activist or militant ethnography, but in a situation where the boundaries of activism were questioned. It might be considered as some sort of 'post-activist ethnography' or maybe a 'more-than-activist ethnography'. By challenging boundaries in such a way, the case studies explored less controlled and thus possibly more diverse, open, spontaneous and democratic forms. This was exemplified by the IPC narrative and the challenges such porous boundaries posed to its research.

Doing an ethnographic study of IPC wasn't as straightforward as I had imagined. I had difficulty in setting the limits of the organisation as a case study. I understood that what happened within its formal boundaries hardly explained its resilience or its nature. I was thus interested in IPC as an organisational ecology. As I will further develop in Chapter 6, during the 30 years of their existence, members and friends started many projects and businesses including a crèche for children that were born during that time, a fashion and accessory store called Punkarama, a corner shop with organic food and community participation (Folks), a press called Loo Prints, a "teenage crèche" for the same people that used the crèche once they grew older, an organic vegetable distributer (George St. Organic), and more. Between friends, relations and people who rent from them (as is the case with the George Street Social Enterprise Park mentioned before), what I considered to be the IPC ecology involved past and present businesses, organisations and projects. Some have by now disappeared while some gave birth to others, transformed or changed their name. They involved varying levels of participation from different people who were living in and around IPC houses. I focused on what seemed to me the core group and was aware that the research could always be

expanded to include more perspectives. The inside and outside of the case study sometimes felt arbitrary. For example, should I have included in this organisational ecology the punk band *Lefterettes*, formed by some of the very children who grew up in the crèche and in the teenage crèche, some of which were living across the street from me in a IPC-owned property? What about IPC members or friends who moved on to form part of the wider governmental or commercial landscape in Whykham, affecting indirectly the context in which the organisation works?

By looking at these processes ethnographically and through biographical and autobiographical narratives, my aim was to contribute to the charting of alternative recipes for social change, and to alternative performativities. It is this challenge to the idea of an activist social sphere with set boundaries that poses these experiments as alternatives to controlled forms. Their transformative potential, their performativities, were equally rooted in it. My methodology, crafted in dialogue with found elements, multidirectional in its relationships created a sensitive instrument for noticing such porous boundaries. It did so by being explicitly open to its own entanglement. I further explain how this term 'entanglement' is helpful to understand such methodological contributions.

4.4.4 An entangled ethnography

Entanglement is a term originally coming from quantum mechanics but one that has recently started making recurrent appearances in social science and philosophy. When originally writing about entanglement in 1935, Erwin Schrödinger wrote:

> When two systems, of which we know the states by their respective representatives, enter into temporary physical interaction due to known forces between them, and when after a time of mutual influence the systems separate again, then they can no longer be described in the same way as before...By the interaction the two representatives [the quantum states] have become entangled. (Schrödinger and Born, 1935, p.555)

I don't claim to even closely understand what this means on the level of particles and their interactions. But what I do grasp is the attractiveness such words might have for social scientists and philosophers trying to explain ways of thinking foreign to the ones westerners are accustomed to (Ingold, 2006). The key point here, in relation to my argument before, is the fact that the encounter transforms (Tsing, 2015a, p. 46). As one can imagine, this has implications for indeterminacy and if brought into play with lived experiences of contemporary society, to precarity. It also has methodological implications being that, in Schrödinger's words,

> the best possible knowledge of a *whole* does not necessarily include the best possible knowledge of all its *parts* (Schrödinger and Born, 1935, p.555)

As a timely idea, this inseparability has recently made its way to scholarly approaches in social sciences, ones that critique the separation of dynamics into their parts. In organisation theory, Orlikowski (2007) defines "constitutive entanglement" between humans and technology as one that rejects one-way interactions such as privileging either humans or technology, and two-way interactions such as mutual reciprocation, to adopt an inextricable inter-relationality (in this case between material and social) (Orlikowski, 2007, p.1437). The conversations I had and the time spent presented me with phenomena in its entangled state. As the story of my research continued, it exemplified more clearly the way ethnographic observations were entangled with my own autobiography, blurring boundaries.

When we were about to come back from my first research leave in Maricel, both Anna and myself wanted to move into the Avenue vicinity, for the explicit purpose of being immersed in our ongoing project. After a brief email exchange with Jowt we finally went to see the house on 48 Westhold. Little did I realize that the street, and the house we were being offered, played an important role in the IPC story and will be mentioned repeatedly in the interviews. Griffith, then the owner and a close friend and collaborator of IPC showed it to us. He told us that the house next door, 46 Westhold was one of the first IPC houses and at some point, its main office. Back in the day they tore down a wall connecting the two houses. 46 housed the crèche and 48 had a punk bar and later a food coop. The story won us over and we took the house. While I was away on my second research leave in Maricel, IPC bought 48 Westhold St. from Griffith thus becoming my landlord while I was in the process of researching them (email exchange, Jowt, 07.02.2017; ethnographic notes, 05.03.2017).

As the narrative demonstrates, I welcomed entanglement as an overt part of my methodology. It compensated in a way for the distance between observer and case study, this alienation if I may. An obvious risk would be that this lack of distance would forfeit any claim I might have to objectivity. In that sense I followed Ingold (2016) who says

> It is a great mistake... to equate the pursuit of objectivity with the pursuit of truth. For if the former prescribes that we cut all ties with the world, the latter demands our full and unqualified participation (Ingold, 2016, p.20)

In other words, entanglement meant not claiming to do what Dona Harraway (1988) calls "the god trick" (Haraway, 1988, p.584) and rather situating oneself within the subject-matter at hand, being as transparent and descriptive about it as possible.

The entanglement I am talking about permeated daily moments and was exemplified in the qualities of ongoing relationships both in the case studies and in the story of the research itself. In our second art project that took place in the area, *Avenue Mad Yard Art*, we partnered with

IPC. They were our sponsor organisation and during the course of it, it was them who would pay us monthly for our work. In the subsequent project *Avenue Neighbourhood Market*, they continued to be involved, finally including our work in a bid they wrote, making us, at least temporarily, IPC subcontractors (CLLD funding bid, 09.02.2019). So, in that respect, I was entangled with my case study even in terms of my livelihood. But the multidirectionality of entanglement affects this research even more profoundly. This is best demonstrated by an anecdote.

I was sitting in the living room of my house on 48 Westhold St. a day after my first recorded interview with Jowt, when I heard a thump from the mail-slot. A brown envelope was thrown in with no postage. It had my name on it. In it I found three items: A pair of lights for a bicycle, a copy of a novel, written by a friend of IPC about Whykham in the 1980s, and a copy of *Anarchy in Action* by Colin Ward (1988). The bike-lights demonstrate further the fact of my economic entanglement with the organisation and the neighbourhood. I benefitted in many ways from my friendship with IPC. Some of the benefits might be ones enjoyed by many other IPC tenants (such as free firewood delivered to our house), possibly forming part of their professional service as landlords. The most interesting part of the package to me was the Colin Ward volume. I realised immediately that my case study was providing me with an important part of my literature review. For me this exemplified the reverse in power structure, the multi-directionality of entangled research, especially in the midst of actors who are themselves theorising throughout their own practice (ethnographic notes, 03.04.2017). This entanglement also had ethical implications that concerned me during the process of researching.

4.4.5 Ethical concerns and other issues emerging from entanglement

Researching through such entangled ethnographic processes raised ethical concerns beyond the standard issues often found in research. Ethnography already inhabits a specific ethical position, challenging a lot of the formal protocols of university-sponsored research. For once, several writers have noted the ethical nature of ethnographic practice (Parker, 2007, pp.2249–2250; Atkinson, 2009, p.25), "predicated" as it is "on a set of commitments and values that arguably render it much more sensitive to the interests of 'participants', and make the personal values of the researcher(s) more central than most other forms of research" (Atkinson, 2009, p.25). Atkinson (2009) noted that creating relationships of friendship and trust, the kinds that often happen through ethnographic practice, "might provide a more anthropologically and sociologically informed basis for proper conduct than the jejune notion of informed consent" (Atkinson, 2009, p.25), and that there is little evidence that any harm was ever produced through this practice (Atkinson, 2009, p.24). The fact of spending "months and years of their lives working

closely with social actors as they go about their daily lives" implies "a commitment to engage with forms of social life that goes beyond virtually any other research strategy" (Atkinson, 2009, p.25). Back in 1980, Dingwall (1980) already stressed the importance of trust, comparing two projects he conducted, one where trust was deeply rooted and the other, which failed as a result of more superficial, formal relationships with the organisation he was researching (Dingwall, 1980, p.885). Parker (2007) suggests that, rooted in such relationships, ethnographic practice can even inform and better other ethical practices (Parker, 2007, pp.2249–2250). In resonance with all of the above, I felt that the ethical basis of my practice resided in the nature of the relationships I created through years of collaboration. My affinity and entanglement with the case studies, sharing the assumptions of activist culture and having spent years together collaborating, gave me confidence in my reading of situations, and thus in my sensitivity towards them when making any decision.

This last point, as does the previous section about entanglement, bring to mind the many fascinating discussions within the ethnographic literature about "going native" and "over-rapport" (O'Reilly, 2009, p.1). It shows my research to clearly fall into what Kanuha (2000) referred to as "native research" (Kanuha, 2000), where a researcher

> chooses not only a project in which she is deeply situated, whether by geography, tradition or simply "inside" experience, but also one in which she is invested in those factors and others as they inform the "act" of research (Kanuha, 2000, p.441)

In such cases, a duality is created where the researcher "is both the subject of her study and the participant object being studied" (Kanuha, 2000, p.441). As is the case in many ethnographies, the fact of observations and conversations carrying personal emotional weight, and the fact of moments where one is engrossed in the words and the events at hand (Lareau, 2018 cited in O'Reilly, 2009, p.4), created tensions for the process of researching and analysing. As in such cases (Lareau, 2018 cited in O'Reilly, 2009, p.4) it was often a challenge to take notes in moments where the stakes, for both my collaborators and myself, were high. Similarly to Kanuha, I found that attempts to distance myself from such internal dynamics were counter productive (Kanuha, 2000, p.442), given that intimacy, often valued in ethnography (Emerson, 1987, p.71), was the source of insight. I had to find alternatives to the distance that is expected from researchers.

Instead, in order to navigate the porous boundaries (Kanuha, 2000, pp.441–442) between insider and outsider, I decided to be transparent, both to myself and to others through my writing, about the cultural assumptions, the debates and the goals found within the social sphere I was exploring. In other words, by making explicit my affinity to social movements and

my entanglement within these particular two context I frame my finding within our shared assumptions. It is as if I am saying: 'these are the concerns I identified within myself and my collaborators, throughout years of working together. These are our shared assumptions, values and goals I identified through observation and through reading of the social movement studies literature. These findings and their analysis are located within this frame, and it is within it that they are valid and valuable'.

I also decided to make explicit the emotions that underlie the conversations within it. This included my own emotions and to the extent to which I perceived them, those of my collaborators. In other words, I applied a reflexivity that aimed, conscious of its limitation, to extend from my own personal story to be relevant to more general concerns of social movements. As a form of inhabiting my role as researcher, such reflexivity helped me distil the words I recorded and the actions I observed into several issues, visibly important to my collaborators and myself (control, spontaneity, precarity). I define the matters I am exploring as ones found within this shared activist culture, and informed by this emotional dimension.

This entanglement also might raise some concerns regarding power dynamics. The fact of being a tenant of IPC, the fact of funding for our projects going through the organisation, could mean that my reading of situations might be biased. This on top of concerns of someone labelled a 'social scientist' representing publicly the stories of others. Again, I resorted to my reflexive writing and analysis to negotiate this unruly social and scientific terrain. My observations of my own positioning within this situation is that the affinity with the organisation, just like my use of my own organisation *macba*, emerged from some deeply shared values and objectives. It would be impossible to disentangle such deeply emotional connection. My only possibility is to argue, as Kanuha (2000) does for the value of such native research and to be open and transparent about my findings and analysis as they are located within such unruly dynamics.

Despite the confidence stated above in the ethical nature of trustful relationships, for the purpose of protecting my collaborators and in line with Hull University Business School policy, I obtained written and signed informed consent from all of the people I interviewed. I also anonymised all names, organisations and places. Anonymisation was an issue I thought about quite a bit at some stage of the writing. I felt that the organisations I was researching had historical importance and that their geographic context formed part of it. Would I be anonymising names of places and organisations if I were to be writing a thesis about these very organisations in fields such as history or geography? Furthermore, practically all of the people I interviewed told me they would be perfectly happy to appear in their real names. On top of

that, the names of the organisations and the nicknames people had for each other expressed the sense of humour and the general feel of both spaces. I felt this cultural aspect to be important part of the data. At the same time I realised that some of the actions discussed, including squatting and shoplifting were illegal, and, given their importance in the narrative, I thought it was important to include them. For that reason, and despite some misgivings, I decided on complete anonymisation of names, organisations and places.

4.4.6 Ethnography conclusions

This section described the role ethnography, biography and autobiography had in the methodology as it unfolded through time. I showed that these methods helped me contain some of the meandering and multidirectional elements of the previous ingredients, without extinguishing what I saw as their living, fermenting qualities. Ethnography served as a form of registering the narratives I observed with their encounters and juxtapositions, helping me make sense of them and communicating them to a wider scientific community. Biography helped me place humans and their emotions at the centre of processes and their research. Through it the idiosyncrasies of the life stories I heard were allowed to show without having to fall in line with a pre-imposed order. In that respect, biography is useful for the kind of "reading for difference rather than dominance" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.xxxii) that nurture alternatives, discussed in Chapter 3. In terms of its ethnographic and biographic ingredients, my methodological recipe has several specificities. The biographies I explore were entangled with one another, creating a collective story that is more than an organisational narrative. Chapters 5 and 6 will show it to be the multi-vocal story of an organisational ecology. This entanglement runs deep within my methodology given that my autobiography as a researcher and the story of the research itself are enmeshed within the collective story, sometimes active within it, sometimes enabled and other times limited by it. So sense-making from within this entanglement is precarious, aware of its own condition of being partial, both in the sense of seeing this ecology from a specific point within it and in the sense of having a liking for it (as in Reedy and King, 2019, p.23). But it also makes another contribution to such work by looking at experiments informed by activism while challenging its boundaries. In other words, most activist ethnographies look to describe the characteristics of social movements, processes typical to them that distinguish them from other groups in society and make them similar to one another (Juris, 2008a). In this thesis I explore reading for difference by looking at stories and processes as unique, fruit of 'what happens if...?' experiments that expand our notion of what is possible. In that respect while based on existing life experiences, it has a speculative component to it, describing what might not be widespread practices, but ones that might be useful to explore and expand in the future.

Describing this process as entangled ethnography means acknowledging explicitly the unfolding of the process, the surprise encounters which permeate its every moment and the beneficial letting go of control that happens throughout. I believe that to all extents and purposes, many existing ethnographies are entangled in their subject matters. In fact, it would be practically impossible for them not to be. Following Tsing (2015a) and others (Law, 2004) I would say that disentangling consists of the hard work that is done to translate what Tsing calls "a rush of stories" (2015a, p.37) into the resources social scientists call 'data'. Considering, like Tsing (2015b) the mainstream 'methodological economy' to be founded on such alienated data (2015b, 10m10s), the ethnographic ingredient of this research explored routes for alternatives to it. It questioned (as do Tsing, Ingold and others) such cutting off (Tsing, 2015, 10m10s), but also started on the meandering path of trial and error which constitutes the crafting of entangled methodologies for economy, organisation and research.

The choice to work through such an entangled ethnography was related to the PAR ideal of 'starting where things are' (Coleman, 2015, p.364) and to Tsing's thoughts about resisting the alienated, plantation model of knowledge building (Tsing, 2015, 10m10s), discussed in Chapter 3. It is for this reason that indeterminacy, chance encounter and precarity play such a central role in this chapter, laying the groundwork for the things to come. The chapter so far told the story of how, despite these misgivings and informed by such thoughts, 'data' was 'gathered' throughout the process. In order to keep true to this mission of rethinking the methodological economy I had to give some attention to how I might process such data in order to respond to the question of the possibility or impossibility of recipes. I turn to this next.

4.5 Data collection and analysis through the three ingredients

4.5.1 Data collection summarised

The methodological concerns outlined in the chapter so far, including the use of juxtaposition in the creation of physical spaces such as *macba*, the embracing of entanglement and not knowing in the art, PAR and in the ethnographic aspects of the project, all informed the methods through which data was generated. *macba* hosted a wide array of activities: lectures, film screenings, workshops (cooking, sewing, textile crafts, art related), a 1x1m art gallery on the wall, video interviews with neighbours, dinners and socially-engaged art projects. The work of running it involved rehabilitating and maintaining the storefront, programming activities, making a monthly program which I drew by hand, photocopied and distributed, maintaining a mailing list and social media, but mostly it involved keeping the doors open and offering a cup of tea to whomever walked in.

Later on, in Avenue, in collaboration with Anna, I organized a series of neighbourhood-based collaborative art projects: *3 Stages of Succession* (2016), *Avenue Mad Yard Art* (2017), *Avenue Neighbourhood Market* (2018) and *Economic Portraits of Unlikely Entrepreneurs* (2019). As part of these projects we held a weekly community radio show, *Bite the Biscuit Avenue Radio* that is still ongoing. We also held two sessions of radio shows especially focused on the neighbourhood's economic landscape. The work involved conceptualizing the projects in dialogue with neighbours, writing funding bids, inviting people to join us through printed and online communications, producing, editing and recording the radio show audios, managing social media, many meetings with IPC and others, embroidering in different social spaces in the neighbourhood, cooking sessions with neighbours, and other arts and crafts sessions such as creating furniture with recycled materials. I also kept a diary with ethnographic notes regarding the market and its ongoing progress.

Other than that, I conducted ten unstructured interviews with people from IPC and from what I consider to be the social 'ecology' it forms part of. I tried to get as many perspectives as I could, hoping to get a complex layered picture of a dynamic organisational ecology. To put some of the diverse versions in conversation with each other, I organised a dinner at my house on 48 Westhold St. (a house that holds memories for all of the old-time IPC members), during which seven people from the IPC social sphere had a conversation, which I recorded. I did this with the hope to make it difficult for myself to "smooth" (Polkinghorne, 1995) the narrative into a coherent, systemic set of principles. I was also lucky to get to interview Cecil, an IPC founder that has been living in Australia for the past fifteen years or so and just happened to be visiting. I was fortunate to get my hands on the original IPC minutes-books from the 1980s, hand written during weekly meetings by one of IPC's co-founders, Max; so I copied excerpts and analysed them.

Apart from gathering data about IPC, I also conducted an interview with Roger Rich, the director of the Wingood Group, an organisation with a story that I thought could be compared to that of IPC, being that it is also one where local neighbours self-organised and now run a large-scale operation owning a lot of property in their neighbourhood. Apart from the ten IPC interviews and the ethnographic notes, I went back to Maricel and conducted seven other interviews. Three were the collaborators I mentioned above: Mar, Daniel and Sascha. Three were of participants from the *Wild Yeast Economies* workshops, and one was of Flora Gutierez, who co-organised with me a month-long workshop specifically around issues of maintenance and repair of economic projects (inspired by Denis & Pontille, 2013; Gerasimova & Chuikina, 2009; Graham & Thrift, 2007; Henke, 1999; Jackson, 2014). I also collected and analysed old

documents, blog posts, and social-media posts that revealed different aspect of the history of *macba*. I placed all these different types of data and data collection methods in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Methods used

Sites	Methods	Data	Quantities	Dates
Spain	Creation and management of an organisation (*macba*)			2010-2016
	Organising *Wild Yeast Economies* workshops		4 workshops of 4 sessions each one	September 2014-April 2015
	Interviews	Recordings, transcripts	7 interviews of 8 collaborators	October 2016-February 2017
	Collection of other data regarding *macba*	Facebook posts blog posts documents ethnographic notes	200 Facebook posts 188 blog posts 21 documents	January 2011-October 2016
UK	Organisation of community art projects: *3 Stages of Succession* (2016), *Avenue Mad Yard Art* (2017), *Avenue Neighbourhood Market* (2018), *Economic Portraits of Unlikely Entrepreneurs* (2019)	Websites, photos, tapestry, ethnographic notes	5 community art projects 5 websites 1 tapestry	2016-2021
	Producing weekly radio shows: *Bite the Biscuit Radio*	Recordings	64 radio show recordings	2016-2021
	Producing two radio shows: *Avenue Barefoot Economies Radio*	Recordings	2 radio show recordings	July 2016
	Interviews	Recordings, transcripts	10 interviews	April 2017-January 2021
	Tour of the neighbourhood (recorded conversation)	Recording, transcript	1 recorded tour	March 2017
	Collective conversation/dinner (recorded)	Recording, transcript	1 recorded conversation	September 2017
	Creation of document detailing history of	document	1 document	January 2021

	IPC organisational ecology (in conversation with IPC members and friends)			
	Collection of other data regarding IPC	ethnographic notes minutes books documents	5 minutes books 4 documents	2016-2021

Once the documentation (interviews, recorded radio shows, minutes books, blog posts, social-media posts, ethnographic notes and documents) was collected, I was expected to 'analyse' it as 'data' for it to become a written thesis.

4.5.2 Analysis through juxtaposition and encounter

When coming to process the data and mould it into a thesis, I needed to analyse it in ways that attempt to eschew the alienation Tsing (2015b) talks about, while at the same time doing the job usually done by academic content analysis (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003, pp.199, 219; Spencer et al., 2004). For this purpose, I devised a process that follows the accepted procedures of familiarising oneself with the data, categorising, identifying themes, sorting and refining, while customising it to address the circumstances and concerns of my research. I will now detail the steps I took and follow by discussing their implications and contributions.

I started with a process of familiarising that involved a low level of processing. For each one of my interviewees I created an analysis document where I pasted all of the quotes that had any relation to control, to spontaneity, to resilience, to alternative organising, or to any practices of management. I was generous in selecting them, placing within these documents anything that could be related, even remotely to the research question. While I did most of this at the beginning of the process, I went back to the general data several times at later stages, making it an iterative back and forth between raw data and more refined processing of it. I labelled the quotes with some brief description of why I selected them at that moment, taking this as merely ad-hoc notes to be reconsidered continuously throughout the process. These labels helped me locate quotes for the next step, in which I experimented with a kind of categorisation that expressed some of the concerns of my research.

I set up a 'what happens if...?' experiment in the vein described at the earlier part of this chapter. At the time I was rereading *Wild Fermentation* by Sandor Ellix Katz (2003), the book that inspired the *macba* experiment back in 2009. Certain passages from the book struck me as expressing aspects of the interviews; ones that have to do with the issues of controlling, planning and improvisation. I pulled out such excerpts with the idea of using them as an

evocative form of categorisation, wondering if indeed I will see resonance between them and the transcribed interviews. I printed out a document in which excerpts from the interviews were placed within categories extrapolated from the Katz quotes. For example, Katz writes "The focus of this book is the basic processes of transformation, which mostly involve creating conditions in which naturally occurring wild organisms thrive and proliferate" (Katz, 2003, p.3), which I extrapolated into the category “Creating conditions for things to happen”. Or when he writes “My daily routine is structured by the rhythms of these transformative life processes" (2003, p.1) I used it as a metaphor for how a dialogic routine could emerge, ones that are in tune with the human and material elements they engages with. In this category I put interview quotes that expressed “dialogic routine”, “dialogic craft” and a “dialogue with temporalities”. To these I added some categories that were present in the interviews, to which I couldn’t find a relevant quote (e.g. the categories “precarity”, “family” and “hacking”). At the time these category-names were crudely expressed, representing intuitions I had at the moment as to where this analysis might be heading. Altogether I ended up with twenty-two categories, which I used as a preliminary index (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003, p.221). I found that the quotes didn’t tend to fit neatly into any one category. Rather, it was usually the case that several of these categories existed in relationship to each other in any interview quote (similar but not identical to Ritchie and Lewis, 2003, pp.224, 225). I copied all the category names onto a piece of paper using coloured pencils and wrote short abbreviations next to them. I started writing these next to the quotes, using coloured pencils. It is only in relation to each other and to the quotes that they began to articulate themselves in a way that could contribute to the understanding of alternative organisational recipes. The process of analysing was the process of jotting down these relationships, turning the printed document into a palimpsest where categories and stories met, related, contradicted and overlapped. The document became one more physical space for ‘things to happen’ for encounters between stories and theories (Fermentation Categories for Analysing Data document, 07.03.2018).

My use of these ‘categories’ is reminiscent of a system called the constant comparison method of analysis (Dye et al., 2000), but also differs from it in some fundamental ways.

> According to Goetz and LeCompte (1981) this method combines inductive category coding with a simultaneous comparison of all social incidents observed (p. 58). As social phenomena are recorded and classified, they are also compared across categories. Thus, hypothesis generation (relationship discovery) begins with the analysis of initial observations. This process undergoes continuous refinement throughout the data collection and analysis process, continuously feeding back into the process of category coding (Dye et al., 2000, p.4)

Unlike this method, my main metaphor was not one of "refining" (Dye et al., 2000, p.4) but what one might call 'fermenting'. While refining reduces phenomena to categories and categories into less, more general ones, fermenting is an additive process where things are placed in relation to each other to see what new life can emerge in interaction between them (Katz, 2003). Far from the elegance of a refining, this method produced a multiplicity of shades and textures, a pallet of materials present in the data, which I shaped and reshaped in different forms for the purpose of becoming intimate with it. So while becoming intimate with the data is a preliminary stage for methods such as the constant comparison, I was adverse to removing uniqueness and specificity at all, considering that elaborating theory from stories should maintain the stories 'contextual messiness' and its continuous generative capacity, the fact that taking a careful look at the interruptions stories produce generates more, not less, stories (Tsing, 2015a, pp.37–38),. The challenge of this is to produce learning that is extendable to other situations, while maintaining the active element of the stories alive.

Thus, at first, rather than refining data into fewer and fewer simple concepts, this method expressed the uniqueness of each of these encounters. Each one is a constellation of stories and concepts that makes a unique contribution to a biodiversity of ideas regarding how to create alternative organisations. Of course, a thesis such as this cannot possibly contain all of these singularities. The challenge was thus to use just some of these instances to point at the multiplicity present in the stories. In order to find the most relevant ones, I went iteratively back and forth between categories, stories and the concerns that motivated my research. This process led me to focus on three themes: 'chance encounters', 'hardships' and 'activism'. While for all practical intent and purpose focusing on these themes functions similarly to the act of refining discussed above, in fact these were more like general containers. My job, which I expand on further in Chapter 7, was to describe the unique organisational dynamics found within these containers in a way that responds to my research questions, providing useful learning for alternative organisation scholars, social movement scholars and activists.

The analysis method I used in many ways followed the standards of rigour detailed in the literature (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003, pp.199, 219; Spencer et al., 2004). This included an iterative process continually going back and forth between different levels of categorisation (Argyris, 1980, p.21), and the converting of many categories or codes into a smaller amount of more general themes (Dye et al., 2000, p.4; Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006, p.82). I addressed the fact of my entanglement within the research subject, its culture and its emotions by provoking the data with the words of a writer that also comes from an activist social milieu (Katz, 2003). The encounters that unfolded on the palimpsest page suggested diverse relationships between themes and their diverse constellations and locations in the

different data. Doing so addressed four concerns particular to this study. One was my own entanglement in the case studies, discussed above, by using a writer coming from an activist background (Katz) to create the 'categories'. A second was my own precarity, the sense of not-knowing that permeated the process. This analytical process emphasized researching from a position of partiality, seeing what vantage point one might get with the precarious tools at one's disposal (a cookbook with a philosophical/political bend). My hope was to create an analysis that would not part from the general disorder and the makeshift qualities inherent in the experience of precarity, for the purpose of being useful for and also reproducible by fellow (precarious) practitioners. Both of those could inform processes of analysis that are in tune with the democratising values of PAR I talked about above. They also form part of developing toolkits for activist research done from within social movements or in close collaboration with them (e.g. Bisaillon, 2012; Reedy and King, 2019). A third concern this expresses is the arts-based orientation the research was rooted in, the 'what happens if...?' experiment extending throughout the process. Lastly, a fourth concern is my relationship to the theorising of Gibson-Graham and their technique of "reading for difference rather than dominance" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.54). This form of analysis is crafted to proliferate possibilities rather than reduce things into closed systems, in that respect it challenges control and contributes something pragmatic to the utopian projects of social movements.

4.6 Conclusions

This chapter demonstrated the relevance of basic attitudes from art: juxtaposition, encounter, assemblage and drift to exploring methodologies for creating knowledge about alternative organisation and economy. As opposed to many attitudes that privilege planning, controlling and organising, the one I took valued not knowing. I used the life story of this research and the lived inquiries of its collaborators to take the reader through how such logics extended through the different ingredients of art, PAR and ethnography; how the experience of acting in the midst of not knowing informed a kind of research that questioned the centrality of control. The ingredients appeared in the story chronologically and blended into each other to form the rich texture of my methodology. Art introduced the 'what happens if...?' experiment. Through it I showed how artists have their own knowledge-building traditions, informed by their valuing originality (Crowther, 1991b) and their lived experience of precarity (Autonomous Artists Anonymous, 2017). PAR added a political flavour to the recipe, making explicit the diversifying gesture of academic endeavours that work towards "knowledge democracy" (Ladaah Openjuru et al., 2015). Through acknowledging the diversity of knowledge systems, breaking the directionality of traditional research-subject relationship, and combining it with the 'what happens if...?' experiments of art, this exploration creates a technique for "reading for

difference rather than dominance" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, pp.xxxi–xxxii) in the midst of action. Finally, I navigated through this unruly landscape with the help of the ethnographic and biographic ingredients of my methodology. The life stories I was told served as a sort of compass within it, respecting the entanglement of trajectories within one another. Again, treating stories through the lens of encounters that transform, was a way of seeing collective processes as assemblages, where elements relate to each other diversely, sometimes contradicting, sometimes complementing, enabling or limiting. My own autobiography, the story of my curiosity regarding the question of recipes for alternatives, is just one of the entangled ingredients thusly transformed. The next chapter goes into more details into some of these biographies. It will give a sense of the stories that make up this unruly landscape, for the purpose of later showing how they collide, react and ferment to create organisational ecologies.

Chapter 5

The biography of a question

5.1 Introduction

The last chapter told the story of how my methodology unfolded through encounter, explicitly favouring openness to control; how an approach based on openness to surprise, based on the setting of an artistic 'what happens if...?' experiment and adopting the collaborative activist ethics of PAR and the descriptive and observational tools of ethnography, created an inquiry that at times was itself an organisational process. The story of this inquiry opened itself up to other stories (Denzin, 1999, p.511). I took it as a point of departure for observing other inquiries it is entangled with. Specifically, this chapter will outline several stories, which constitute what I see as two organisational ecologies: *macba* in Maricel and IPC in Whykham. I do this here using three stories from each one. These stories, representing nine of the interviews I held, serve as the main vantage points from which I will be examining whether it is possible to come up with recipes for projects that propose the creation of alternatives to the ubiquity of control.

As the stories will show, planning and controlling are challenged within them through several elements. One is the repeated mention of encounters and specifically chance encounters as central to the stories. While the stories will exemplify this theme, given that I identify this as a central one to this research, I will dedicate a separate section to it towards the end. In it I will take a brief excursion to the wider data to show that it is just as prevalent there as in the stories highlighted in this chapter. Another related element is the way this chapter's protagonists dialogue with changing circumstances (including encounters), constructing their organisational/economic projects 'on the fly', rather than fully planning and controlling them. Another element that challenges control is the way boundaries are challenged, related to another important recurring issue, the fact of the case studies being organisational ecologies rather than bounded entities with a clear inside and outside.

I start with my own project, *macba.* It was set up after ten years of participation in social movements in Maricel and as a response to doubts I had regarding the way such movements went about creating alternatives. As part of the process of researching *macba*, I held seven interviews and reviewed old documents, blog posts and social media. All of those serve as a pool of information on which I will build the following chapters. In this chapter I will concentrate on three stories of three of my closest collaborators: Daniel, Mar and Sascha. The reason I choose these three is because while reviewing all of the interview transcripts, documents and blog posts from these six years, I realised that, while being very different from each other, it was these three who most used *macba* in line with my research question. This is

mainly because of the original way they experimented with economy and organisation, but interestingly, all three are projects connecting cooking with activism.

I then turn to IPC. In this chapter, I focus on three of the IPC narratives, based on five of the interviews. One is the story of Jowt, currently the director and one of the founding members. The second one is a conversation I had with Tina and Alice, both involved in the organisation and its side projects. When writing this chapter, I decided not to pry apart their two narratives, telling it as it was told to me, as the story of a friendship. The third story I tell here is that of Kid. Kid was a member of IPC briefly in the early 1980s but stayed in touch and involved for the past 36 years. I chose these three stories because they seem to mark three very different vantage points from which to observe the IPC ecology. While not being comprehensive, charting these three coordinates can elude to the unruly landscape of such an ecology, thus challenging the idea that recipes for such organisations are possible. Working against such a challenge might bring out surprising possibilities that can contribute to the praxis of creating alternatives.

5.1.1 The nature of the interviews and their use in the chapter

As I mentioned before regarding IPC, I decided purposefully to listen to versions of the two organisational stories that illuminated it from different positions. This could be compared to a triangulation of sorts but my purpose here was somewhat different. Similar to other ethnographic research, my aim here was not to verify facts nor to establish causalities (Goetz and LeCompte, 1981, p.55; Cox and Hassard, 2005, p.112). In that it is similar to other research done within naturalistic settings (Friedman et al., 2018, pp.14–15). I decided to accept the versions I was told of the stories as valid, even when they contradicted each other. Doing so slowly made me start seeing both case studies as multidimensional research objects, seen differently from different perspectives. In Chapter 6 I bring a case where two of the people I talked to disagreed over the nature of IPC's organisational practice. I had several other such incidents. My interest, as an ethnographer entangled in my subject matter through relationships of friendship and trust, was in the general themes, the tensions and complementarities that described to me what was important in the conversations of these two organisations. In that respect I was interested in the fictions, the interpretations and the personal narratives as they collided with each other. This ever-growing, multiple encounter between stories provided me with the emotional and narrative meshwork, rich despite its loose strands "continually ravelling here and unravelling there, [...where...] beings grow or 'issue forth' along the lines of their relationships" (Ingold, 2006, p.14).

The recordings and transcripts I have reflect the nature of my relationships with the people I talked to. In the case of the Maricel case studies, all three are close friends and collaborators. I have trust and friendship with the people from IPC as well. This created a situation where a lot of shared information was eluded to, whether it is shared political assumptions or just biographical facts we all knew. There was a lot of tacit knowledge left unsaid. Another thing that happened in the interviews is that the conversation meandered, jumping from subject to subject. I embraced this meandering, exercising little control over it and letting my interlocutor decide on the priorities of the narrative. Such an approach is both in line with biographical methodologies (Merrill and West, 2009) and with the artistic attitude of being open to surprise encounter (e.g. Girst, 2014). In the case of Daniel and Sascha, who were interviewed in Spanish, which is not their mother tongue, another level of difficulty was added. In the case of the conversation with Tina and Alice, they sometimes completed each other's sentences or otherwise had a back and forth which did not make for complete sentences. All this created a situation where the transcripts contain many sentences that jump from one subject to another, or ideas that are spread out throughout large portions of the interview. For all of the above reasons it is sometimes difficult to bring these narratives strictly using direct quotes. I found that I sometimes had to paraphrase, using information I have from different parts of the conversation or from previous unrecorded ones. I made a commitment to be as exact as I can to the stories as they were told to me in the words of the people I talked to. I took a close look at jumps in the conversation for the purpose of seeing what connections people make in their stories and what priorities they themselves place when telling them. This said, I am aware of the dangers of paraphrasing and of the need to be reflexive when making editing and phrasing decisions in telling the stories of others. I put short direct quotes form interviewees italicised in quotation marks and larger quotes separated and indented. The rest of the text is paraphrased with some occasional addition of information that was tacit in the conversation, shared information from our shared pasts. Throughout the chapter I make my priorities explicit, adding some reflections regarding the stories, ones that hint at the analysis to come in future chapters.

All the interviews from Maricel were held in Spanish. Having lived in Spain for 16 years I possess near-native level of the language. To make sure nothing is missed or misinterpreted, my partner Anna, a native Spanish speaker from a town close to Maricel, checked anonymised excerpts for accuracy. Translation posed a challenge in some of the quotes from Mar, a person with a fine-tuned sense for language and its artistic use. For example, later in the chapter I quote her talking about choosing a name for the school she is creating. Each choice of names is rooted in the cultural context of her neighbourhood and relatedly to the history of Maricel. I

had to navigate such translations carefully, aware as I was of issues related to anonymisation. Some terms are of common use in the activist and artistic scenes in Spain such as 'auto-gestión' also posed a challenge. In Spain, it is a familiar part of activist discourse (e.g. Hudson, 2010; Taibo, 2014; Taibo, 2015a). While I feel that its literal translation to 'self-management' is clear, the expression doesn't carry the same cultural weight as in Spanish.

5.2 *macba*: three stories

Daniel, Mar and Sascha were all involved in *macba*. The three at times used the space as platforms for their own activities. All three were part of local social movements, and their projects of attempting to create economies based on creative activities, were informed both by the "moments of freedom, liberation, and joy" (Calhoun, 2001; Gould, 2001 in Juris, 2008b, p.66) generated by activism and, conversely, by the mental fatigue (Aminzade and McAdam, 2001; Benford and Hunt, 1992 in Juris, 2008b, p.66), the disappointments activism can create. Throughout the chapter I will outline what I found striking and relevant about these narratives. I describe these biographies as they intersect with the story of *macba*. I do so chronologically; starting with the people I met first and working my way through. I thus start with Daniel.

5.2.1 Daniel: fermenting experiments in HRM

I first met Daniel when organising a meeting between Palestinian and Israeli activists at a squat in Maricel in 2003. When meeting him, I remember his sense of humour expressed the contradictions that come from years of working in the politically heterogeneous environments of Israeli neighbourhoods. We became close friends. Daniel later moved to Europe, first to Berlin where he got a master's degree in conflict management and lived in a squatted wagonplatz (a squatted terrain with caravans on it) and then to Maricel where he also was squatting with a collective of local activists. Upon writing these words he is living with the same collective in a large rented mansion on one of Maricel's surrounding hilltops. All this was not talked about during our interview. It was taken for granted as known information. In this recorded conversation with Daniel, we mostly talked about Tempeh.

Tempeh is an Indonesian dish fermented from soybeans. To produce it, the beans are inculcated with a fungus and then left to ferment overnight under controlled temperature. The process requires the construction of an oven of sorts, one that heats the atmosphere, in which the fermentation occurs, ever so slightly. I was present throughout the evolution of Daniel's tempeh making, but was less aware of how he organised the work side of it with his housemates. Upon hearing about it, I realised that there might be something unusual in the way this economic activity responds to constantly shifting circumstances. The story, as he then told it to me in a recorded interview, is driven by need, chance and circumstance but also by

pleasure and curiosity. Telling this story through Daniel's own words as he told it to me in this particular instant is challenging. I have a lot of background information about this story, much of which he didn't mention in the interview. I know things about the price of the tempeh powder, where he used to get it, about Daniel's other work, about his implication in *macba* and about his living situation. All of those are relevant and help fill in the many gaps in this particular recorded conversation. In the following account I do use some of these details to clarify, but mostly maintain the focus he gave the conversation.

Daniel learned to make tempeh when he was working on an art project, which used culinary fermentation as a metaphor for economic and socially transformative processes. Daniel described the project as one where they fermented things that usually don't get fermented "*just to see what happens; how it's going to turn out*" (personal communication, Daniel, 06.02.2017). In that, he expressed the experimental attitude found in art, as I detailed it in the previous chapter (the 'what happens if...?' experiment). They organised four events as part of this project: one in the south of Spain as part of an artist residency, two in Serbia as part of an art project funded through a local cultural centre, and one, organised without any funding at *macba*.

Figure 4: Jars with fermenting passionflowers and roses from the fermentation project

In the interview, Daniel talked about how this activity, which started as a form of playful artistic experimentation, became an economic project called *Tempehsta*. The process was driven by chance encounter. First "*we met a neighbour that lives here close to macba and she*

told us that she used to make tempeh". This neighbour explained how "*one has to create a kind of oven and have a special powder*". The oven was made out of a transformed refrigerator, with a light bulb and a potentiometer to regulate its heat. Daniel bought the powder "*on the Internet, from Belgium, very expensive*" (personal communication, Daniel, 06.02.2017). This coincidence followed by another one:

> A friend started going out with an Indonesian girl, a singer called Nola, a marvellous girl with whom I got along very well [...] I asked her for the powder, which [when I bought it before, was] really expensive... She brought me a kilo, which basically lasts me for more than a year (personal communication, Daniel, 06.02.2017)

In the interview Daniel described how he "*fell in love*" both with the taste of tempeh and with the process of making it. Part of the process' allure was its pace, the fact of it being a meditative one with large periods of waiting. This coincided with the circumstance of needing money while, being that his other work involved a lot of traveling, trying to stay larger periods of time in Maricel. Given the large size of the oven, this transformed refrigerator, space became an issue. Also, since tempeh needs to be checked during the night, the *macba* was a good solution while Daniel still lived close by, in a squat in the centre of town. Once the squat was evicted, it became more complicated. Daniel then moved to another squat, it was also in the centre of town, but nonetheless he created an oven there, so that he could make tempeh from home (personal communication, Daniel, 06.02.2017). This is where he started to collaborate with housemates:

> I lived there with a friend [...] she didn't have work and was pretty lost so I told her 'let's do it together'. We planned to go to an organic fair for which we tried to make a lot [of tempeh]. It was a bit of a failure but we enjoyed working together. Half of it didn't turn out. It was her first time and instead of making a little she made a lot. We tried to sell it and it wasn't easy (personal communication, Daniel, 06.02.2017)

The continuous evictions of the squats Daniel lived in, combined with the fact of living collectively with others and experiencing unstable job situations, shaped the way work was done on the tempeh project:

> We then left this house and went to another one that was a lot farther from the city. It made it even more difficult to do it [make tempeh] at the space [*macba*] so I made a refrigerator there. Maria, the girl I was working with at the beginning thought of doing it but she had other plans, other things she wanted to do [...] Maria left and Carla entered. Carla also lives with me. I live with many people in a community [...] There was another girl in our house, Talia, that lost her job and was making tempeh for a few months until she found another one. Now the person who makes tempeh all the time is Joana. She is a puppeteer. There is a low season [for puppetry] [...] [making tempeh] is once a week and it gives her money.

> I have a lot of other work and so does Carla so we left it to her (personal communication, Daniel, 06.02.2017)

Altogether there were five people involved in making tempeh in Daniel's house, alternating in response to each one's individual life circumstances. Making tempeh was only a part of this group's economy. Altogether it made 250 Euros a month. He said that if they wanted to grow in sales they could "*go back to [selling through] the cooperatives. Cooperatives mean a lot of management. Half of them want us to come to their meetings*" (personal communication, Daniel, 06.02.2017).

The case of consumer cooperative is an interesting one. As we can see from this quote, and as I discussed in Chapter 3, formalisms such as assembly meetings can cause a hindrance for participation by people with chaotic life circumstances (precarity). As we can see from the quote, the fact of making and selling small quantities was related to Daniel and his collaborator's attitude towards formality and informality. For example:

> [Big restaurants] demand, some places demand a certificate, for it to be considered organic or to demonstrate hygiene level. Of course, we don't have those, it's completely artisanal (personal communication, Daniel, 06.02.2017)

Informality is expressed also in Daniel's practice of selling (or not) to individuals:

> Selling to individuals requires a lot of management. They have to order, you have to make it and then give it to them. With friends it's good because we can freeze it and give it to them the following week because they are friends...or just knowing that we are going to meet up with them for dinner at some point so we do it (personal communication, Daniel, 06.02.2017)

What surprised me in Daniel's story is how the instability of his housing situation, plus the labour precarity of several of his housemates, created an always shifting economic and organisational landscape which the tempeh project dialogued with. The kind of fluid HRM that developed was highly human, sensitive to multiple life trajectories and their own unfolding. This sort of fluidity in management was also related to the dialogic ideal that informed the way I coordinated *macba*. Starting the space, with the help of Daniel and others, put me in touch with many new practitioners, but also with old collaborators that found a new space and new ways in which to do things together. One of the most important ones was Mar.

5.2.2 Mar: navigating the neighbourhood in the midst of change

"*A fresh point of view is a fresh point of view and I am not coming from a fresh point of view*" is something Mar says about her own work (personal communication, Mar, 15.10.2016). This is to a certain extent true of my own research when it comes to observing and analysing Mar's

work. We have known each other for over 10 years and have collaborated extensively. The information in this text is based on a two hour-long interview I did with her. Some necessary background information is added based on things that she has mentioned to me in numerous conversations throughout our friendship and collaboration.

5.2.2.1 Neighborhood and family background

A lot of Mar's activities have to do with her neighbourhood, Marisleta.

> I grew up here. My grandparents and my parents are from here. I have always been quite connected to the neighbourhood's history. My mother, my father and my grandparents have always been very much in the habit of talking a lot and having memory present and I have always been attracted to the idea of knowing more, of the conservation of certain things and taking them as a point of departure for creation. I've lived many years abroad. I travelled quite a bit. I studied abroad. I've lived in other countries. A moment has come, that with all that I've learned living abroad, which helped me have a different perspective about the neighbourhood, I decided to establish myself here. Establishing myself here means going in-depth into this sentiment I have always had of conserving memory also for the sake of hacking it, creating new scenarios (personal communication, Mar, 15.10.2016)

Marisleta is Maricel's quintessential fisherman and dockworker neighbourhood. It is currently undergoing gentrification related to Maricel being a destination for mass tourism (a situation remeniscent of the one described in Murillo et al., 2013). Mar herself is the daughter of a dockworker, that like many others participated in the dock-worker struggle during the 1980s (similar to Kasprzak, 2016). This struggle resulted in dock-work becoming a high paying job with many benefits. In many ways Mar having a certain middle-class element to her life, the fact of her going to art school in London for example, is thanks to this struggle. She could thus be considered as "*first generation middle class*", a term Jowt from IPC used, in a later interview, to describe himself and his collaborators when starting their organisation (personal communication, Jowt, 02.04.2017).

The issue of class and privilege is interesting to consider in this case. Mar talks about her father as being privileged despite "*really [coming] from one of the poor families of the neighborhood*":

> My father, economically, has this luck; economically, not in the sense of money, but of family, because my father had a father and a mother that were the best. So they didn't have a lot of money, but in terms of affection, in terms of being very intelligent people emotionally, people that create harmony all the time, people who support all the time. Clearly this is a lot. And his form of growing up has to do with this stability (personal communication, Mar, 15.10.2016)

There is a tension between Mar's rootedness in her neighbourhood, the high level in which she is familiar with the terrain, and her tendency to spend large amounts of time in other countries.

This, according to her, is shifting where she now feels the need to spend more time in Marisleta and less time traveling, what she refers to as "*larger periods of connectedness in the neighbourhood and shorter periods of disconnection*" (personal communication, Mar, 15.10.2016).

A few years ago, she came back from Berlin to the neighbourhood. In Berlin she lived in what she described as a "*very activist house project*." She described her ex-boyfriend as "*very activist*", as well (personal communication, Mar, 15.10.2016). She has always maintained close relations and has participated in social movements in all of the places she lived in and visited. Her own self-analysis regarding her own forms of organising and her own artistic and economic practices are highly informed by her criticism of and her affection for these "*activist*" experiences. An example that is related to diverse and alternative economies:

> I had these ideas of autonomy and self-management, which I learned quite a bit from social movements and from antagonistic movements. This knowledge, I learned it and I lived it. So I know how to live with very little. I know how to be happy with little. I have this thing about the barter. I enjoy that. It's not something that oppresses me (personal communication, Mar, 15.10.2016)

Upon arriving back in Maricel, Mar found herself in a situation of uncertainty both financially and professionally. As an unusual response to such precarity, she spent large amounts of time staying at her parents' houses. She would sleep and eat there. Her father would many times cook for her. At the time her grandmother was dying and she started taking care of her and spending a lot of time both with her and other elderly people in Marisleta. "*She told me I need you and I needed her as well*". This relationship was multidirectional, being that she was both taking care and being taken care of, by them. There was both a formal project of compiling stories related to the historical memory of the neighbourhood and just hanging out with these elderly ladies that would invite her to lunch. She describes this not as a simple exchange but more of a general atmosphere of care and enjoyment, maybe a general synergy or a richness from which there where multiple beneficiaries, and which materialised only occasionally in visibly economic or artistic forms. Mar in the interview describes it as "*a gift for everyone involved*" (personal communication, Mar, 15.10.2016).

5.2.2.2 Projects

One of her many projects was to publish a book of her past work of *Graffiti Recipes*. These graffiti, done through community processes in different parts of the world, were always related to local narratives, representing food, which had some importance to individuals, families or communities in the locations where they were made. She started working towards funding the book by organising dinners at *macba*; dinners over which she would preside,

talking about the context in which the projects were made. Her attention shifted at some point to the project of writing a recipe book that presents Marisleta recipes in a contextualised narrative form accompanied by "storygrammes" which are documentary illustrations of events done by illustrator Marta Braverman. Through the process of researching for this book she started coming up with workshops where she taught people to cook these traditional fisherman recipes.

With Marta, Mar went and visited people in the neighbourhood who taught them their recipes, many of which were fish-based recipes invented on fishing boats, using very simple ingredients. "*We go to houses which I choose, many of them from my family. My father has been helping me, pointing me to the people who have these recipes*" (personal communication, Mar, 15.10.2016).

Growing out of this deep knowledge of Marisleta, the book has a political dimension to it:

> The vision I add to these recipes: There are certain struggles in the neighbourhood that have helped make conditions better. Families that have formed part of the struggles that can tell you about struggles that existed in the neighbourhood. By struggles I mean forms of being present, forms of weaving [the social fabric], of being in solidarity, of helping ourselves, these forms that previously existed here a lot (personal communication, Mar, 15.10.2016)

Adding

> The connection between the recipe and the story is that when one talks of the recipe, when one cooks and when one eats...the creation of an interesting social space that brings people together that is nutritious socially and that feeds the stomachs, this relation becomes clear. When you go to eat at someone's house and they make a recipe for you, they explain things about their family, about people who lived a century ago and had specific customs. It has to do with a social fabric that existed and they explain it all through remembering a recipe, of a family member for example (personal communication, Mar, 15.10.2016)

This was not simply a connection with the past, a compiling of traditions. It was also a generative action of creating new social connections, new realities in the neighbourhood as it is now:

> What I believe I am doing is connecting. I am connecting nodes of tools, skills, connecting them with specific people (personal communication, Mar, 15.10.2016)

The people Mar and Marta visited tended to be people with "*a very deep connection to the sea*" (personal communication, Mar, 15.10.2016). While a project such as this could be focused on conservation and on a conservative enacting of geography and narrative, Mar used the sea as

an element that opens the conception of the neighbourhood as it currently is to the heterogeneity she perceived it to possess.

> My idea is not only to play with the traditions of people who were born in this neighbourhood and people who have their ancestors in this neighbourhood which is my case. Here the sea connects a series of customs and ways of people who come from all over. Currently, for example, there are Senegalese in the neighbourhood that cook fish recipes which they learned because their families are fishermen or because they themselves are fishermen. They now work in 'Top-Manta' [illegal street vending], but that doesn't matter, they have this knowledge as much as the people who are from here. My idea is also to learn from them and to exchange with them and for them to also learn, to exchange recipes (personal communication, Mar, 15.10.2016)

A good example of the layered and rooted connection Mar had with Marisleta was her internal debate about the name of her house/school. One possibility was "*house/workshop SeaSchool*".

> ...an homage to [...] a school in the 30's which had a freer format, more affectionate with the boys and girls (personal communication, Mar, 15.10.2016)

The school she referred to was a progressive (non-religious) school, which existed in Marisleta until the 1930s and was destroyed when bombed by the fascist forces during the Spanish civil war (like similar events such as Llena, 2011; Consorsi d'Educació de Barcelona, n.d.). It symbolized both the history of disappeared social spaces in the neighbourhood and an educational philosophy that emphasised playing outside in the fresh air and children exploring by themselves, a tendency that was then radically reversed during Franco's regime (Saladrinas, 1989).

> It marks a moment from which there was a reversal later... What this model signified for the neighbourhood...recuperating history and memory, recontextualizing it and making it different (personal communication, Mar, 15.10.2016)

"*Another name can be The Hook*"

> ...my grandfather was from a coral group from the neighbourhood's coral groups, which was called The Hook. The hook is a tool that the dockworkers carried on a belt and they could connect many things to it. You could put a rag, a tool. It can be useful for the boat. You could have it hanging in the warehouse. It's also a bit pirate. In the projects I do there is an open source, a pirate element that I like as a symbol. It also has [...another] meaning. Something that hooks you is something cool (personal communication, Mar, 15.10.2016)

This constellation of ideas illustrated how her practices inhabited a conceptual node between diverse narratives, traditional, local, family related, neighbourhood related, and social movement related ethics both past and present, all connected through a highly informed

manner of free association. They tenuously connected a set of social relations and collaborations, a hard to categorise multiplicity, assembled in the act of naming a house/school.

5.2.2.3 Diverse Organisation (in relation to alternative organization)

Facing economic uncertainty, Mar chose what seems to be a counter-intuitive route of accepting her family's and her neighbourhood's generosity, in turn being generous with those around her. Her story demonstrated how she inhabited uncertainty (precarity) and navigated through it using an assemblage of resources, mental, social, material, historical, geographic and microscopic. In that sense she was similar to Daniel. One difference between the two is the fact that Daniel was an immigrant, an outsider and thus did not have this "*deep kind of information*" rooted in personal history and geography (personal communication, Mar, 15.10.2016). In that respect Daniel was closer to my third Maricel case study, another immigrant, also inhabiting the spaces of Maricel social movements with their mix of a-legal and illegal social disobedience, also reacting to bureaucratisation from within and from without these movements. I now turn to Sascha.

5.2.3 Sascha: outsider research in dialogue with the territory

Sascha was very active within *macba*. His project was focused on edible and medicinal wild plants, which he foraged in the Maricel area, using them for organising dinners and workshops. I remember him spending long nights in the space, greeting me, as I would come in, with a "*taste this*" and conversations that impressed me with encyclopaedic knowledge about history and geography.

Sascha lived in squats and had no institutional connections (no connections to universities for example). I considered his work with wild plants as a form of outsider research, akin in its self-drive and curiosity to outsider art, which is made by people not recognised by artistic institutions (Cardinal, 2009). His interest in edible wild plants was sparked during walks he used to take in Maricel's surrounding countryside, accompanied by a friend, Simona, who knew a lot about the subject. Both were from islands with similar climates. Simona was from Italian Sant'Antioco, in the Mediterranean. Sascha was from Rab, in the Croatian Adriatic. Simona also happened to be involved in *macba,* organising dinners and workshops there herself. She introduced him to the space. The conversations they had while walking started his fascination with plants and their properties. As he explained, it was one bordering on obsession: "*once the subject of plants comes up, you get hooked and there's no turning back*" (personal communication, Sascha, 19.02.2019). Interestingly, his next sentence was: "*on the other hand, it [organising the dinners and workshops] was an economic solution for a situation*

[I was in, being] undocumented [in Spain]" (personal communication, Sascha, 19.02.2019). These two motivations, one related to pleasure and curiosity and the other related to basic survival, as the reader will see, were later echoed in the story of IPC. I explore them in this thesis as the relationship between the insecurity of precarity and the driven curiosity that could be found in spontaneity, two sides of the same coin. Throughout the stories I heard, I found this combination translated into attitudes favouring spontaneity and informality over planning and controlling. The conversation I had with Sascha provided some good examples.

According to the recorded conversation I had with him, he saw my attitude regarding personal economy as an opportunity to supersede limitations he was encountering in the activist sphere he formed part of. In our conversation he talked about Marxists and about anarchists. He rejected the Marxists given that

> Marxism is about collective planning, based on assemblies. It's not so much about feeling good with someone and working in groups of five or maximum eight people. It's a lot more structured, more planned (personal communication, Sascha, 19.02.2019)

His problems with what he called the Marxist student sphere, had to do with a sense of morality he perceived them to profess:

> ...there's a morality there regarding what is correct and what is not correct, which I don't like. People try to think which things are good. It's a type of morality. One thing that scares me a bit is the fact of generalised concepts, mass-concepts. They don't end too well (personal communication, Sascha, 19.02.2019)

The combination of planning and morality create a sense of restriction, a sort of mental prison:

> Most people plan. I don't. But I would even say that I feel better this way. If I am presented with this concept that something is good or bad, it seems terrible to me as well. To me it seems like a box, like a cell (personal communication, Sascha, 19.02.2019)

While this created a situation where he didn't feel at home in Marxist environments...

> In the more anarchist sphere, things are based on affinity groups, on developing ideas spontaneously...I feel a lot better in the anarchist ambit, because I find it easier to do things with people when it is for reasons of affect. Because as a person I am more chaotic, I do things out of impulse (personal communication, Sascha, 19.02.2019)

But, despite forming part of this anarchist sphere and despite the affinity he feels towards it, Sascha found himself in a conflicted situation because of the economic precarity he experienced. He perceived that his anarchist friends' aversion to monetary transaction, the

fact of them considering it to be "*capitalism*", thus frowning upon it in squats and social centres, stems from their privileged position, the fact of them not having to worry about where money will come from. The fact of *macba* being a friendly place that expressed a political affinity to Sascha's ideals, while being open to his kind of precarious entrepreneurship, was what attracted him to it (personal communication, Sascha, 19.02.2019).

When talking about it, he expressed the two aspects I mentioned before: pleasure and curiosity on one hand, and basic survival on the other.

> [doing the workshops and dinners] was obligatory for me because I was undocumented. On one hand it was a bit of a burden, but once I started, it was a total liberation. I don't need to work. I get 100 Euros a month and it's good (personal communication, Sascha, 19.02.2019)

Sascha's precarious entrepreneurship involved a combination of his outsider research with several illegal and a-legal practices common within Maricel activism, such as squatting and shoplifting. At the time of the interview he was squatting already for fifteen years in Maricel. Some of the ingredients for the dinners, ones that weren't foraged, were shoplifted from supermarkets. The fact of foraging and shoplifting for each one of these public dinners, plus each presenting new recipes he was exploring at the time, not to mention the publicity work necessary for getting people to come, made for these dinners to be highly work intensive.

> The dinner-making project always involved three courses...I did it once a week and tried for it to be quite different each time. This meant that I had to look for new recipes during the week. Recipes using wild plants aren't easy to find...sometimes it was a bit difficult to organise it because [the plants] are not in the supermarket a hundred meters from here. I have to go to [a natural reserve on the outskirts of Maricel] or [...] four hours away. Besides I tried to make it so that I don't spend hardly any money. During this period, it was my only income. Between eight Euros and the maximum [I made] was a hundred and fifty Euros in one dinner. Besides looking for plants, another part was stealing at the stores. Sometimes it feels good, other times you are super nervous. Sometimes you can buy stuff [to distract the attention from the fact that you are stealing] and other times you only have two Euros. In one supermarket you buy a litre and a half of water and in another, another litre and a half. Sometimes my feet would hurt from so much walking around the neighbourhood (personal communication, Sascha, 19.02.2019)

He mentions that the fact of holding dinners and other events at *macba* was in itself illegal being that it was completely unregulated. In that respect his words echo Daniel's aversion from the work of negotiating with formal structures such as assembly meetings and state bureaucracies and legalities (personal communication, Daniel, 06.02.2017).

Sascha's whole way of organising his project was in dialogue with his economic instability and the informality of his legal situation. At the same time the fact of learning about edible plants helped him reframe his thinking regarding scarcity. It took away the fear for one's survival associated with precarity:

> I like a lot the fact of cooking with wild plants because you end up getting the feeling that you can survive, feed yourself, just by taking a walk a hundred meters outside of your house. You walked passed these plants your whole life and it never occurred to you. You go down to the supermarket and buy some chard and it's [the wild plants] the same thing. In fact, it's a lot better. If you find yourself in the mountains and without money, you could survive. You know this and it gives you a feeling of 'so what? I can eat borages and fruit' (personal communication, Sascha, 19.02.2019)

What I found interesting in his approach towards an economic project is that he has developed it, spontaneously, in dialogue with his physical environment, his precarious circumstance and the activist culture he found in Maricel. I find that his practice inhabited the margins of what one might consider the Economy, and yet it might give us some clues as to how to approach creating alternatives. In our conversation he told me that the fact of the *macba* not existing anymore was the reason he ceased to do most of the activities here described. In that sense, his project was also fruit of him dialoguing with our encounter, with finding a space that opted for informality, a-legality and the self-management (in the Spanish anarchist sense of autogestión e.g. Taibo, 2014; Taibo, 2015b) of economies, including monetary ones.

But despite not organising dinners and workshops anymore, his investigation left a residue, not only in terms of what he learned but also economically. As part of his practice Sascha learned how to make medicinal tinctures, including propolis. He continued to produce this, selling it at an informal market at El Bosquet, a semi-rural suburb of Maricel.

> I go to El Bosquet and set up at 12pm. I don't need anything. I have the little propolis jars. I bring a piece of fabric with a tiger pattern, no, more like a zebra one but golden. I have a box, which I stapled together and it's the only thing I bring. I go there, open the rubbish bin. I find three boxes. From these three boxes I set up the table. I cover it with a bright blue piece of fabric. I write 'propolis' and the people come and buy it [laughing] (personal communication, Sascha, 19.02.2019)

But this economic activity was not just a residue of the other. It was also something that comes into being as result of a new encounter. There was another organisational reality that enabled it:

> El Bosquet is great. El Bosquet is a beautiful place. On Sundays, we are talking about a square where nothing is organised. I don't know when they started to do

> it. There's a bar that does concerts on Sundays. Little concerts. Starting 12pm the square is always full of people, every Sunday [...] people started coming and selling jewellery, clothes. There are people there giving away books. It's a bit of a mess. The hippies, the old 50-year-old punks still doing lines [of drugs], kids, it's great. It's an amazing place. You sit there, let three or four hours pass, drink beer, and they give you money (personal communication, Sascha, 19.02.2019)

Sascha's dinners and workshops depended upon him going out and stumbling upon edible plants and recipe ideas. After he stopped organising them he depended on finding a couple of boxes in the bin to create his stand in El Bosquet. These were small scale, daily encounters, which the ongoing work of creating such an economy depended on. In depending on finding things, Sascha planned on the unplanned happening, knowing that encounter is a characteristic of life, rather than an exception.

5.2.4 A loose organisational ecology

I decided to go in depth into three of the many stories that constituted *macba's* organisational ecology, using them to draw an organisational economic constellation. As I will elaborate in the chapters to come, I found their stories to be interesting in the way that they can help reframe and reorient perceptions regarding organisation, activism and creativity. Specifically, it is the ubiquity of control that was here challenged. Daniel, rather than following a plan, dialogued with the changing needs of people appearing in his field of vision, people who lived with him and experienced precarity. It created an assemblage of different actors, all with difficulties in planning, and a flexible project (Tempehsta) that contained all of these uncertainties. Mar similarly responded to her context. Faced with uncertainty, she engaged her family in a multidirectional generosity the end of which was unclear. The process proved to be fertile and productive in surprising ways, generating the projects and the complex and layered reflection she shared with me. Sascha similarly responded to encounters, as he got obsessed with his outsider research of wild plants and their uses. Informed as he was by anarchism but disappointed by the anarchists he knew, he found a place in *macba*, and later in El Bosquet for spontaneous alternative organisation and economy.

Upon moving to Whykham and getting to know IPC, I was happy to discover a project that resonated with the informality and openness to dialogue that I noticed in these three stories (ethnographic notes, 12.04.2016). As I will describe in the next section the fact of such attitudes existing in a project that has been around for over thirty years, rooted in its neighbourhood was fortuitous. The fact that *macba* lasted for only six years and the economic fragility of the individual trajectories that coincided within it, made me question the possible resilience of projects that reject managerial rigidity. I turned my attention to the stories I heard about IPC to try and respond to these concerns.

5.3 IPC: three stories

My interest in IPC stemmed from the informal atmosphere in their offices, from their large trajectory which indicated resilience, from my impression of them as forming the central axis of a social ecology, multiple, porous and replete with contradictions. Once again the stories I heard felt like they are depicting an "unruly [economic, organisational] landscape" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.77), a constellation where different moving trajectories met. I selected the stories I tell in this section in order to depict the living tensions I found to be at the heart of an organisation that is hard to pin down. The three narratives serve here as three coordinates, pointing at the spaces between them, communicating to the reader the irreducibility of such an organisation to one perspective, to simple causality. This section will survey this landscape, starting at the centre and moving its way to the outskirts.

The conversations I had were not strictly about interviewees' biography. They were about the biography of IPC from their perspective, from the point of view of where their personal biography intersects with the organization's. The question I asked, to start the conversation was "How did you get involved in IPC?" As a response, people told me personal stories, or organisational stories told from a personal perspective. My hope in posing this question was to hear from them what was different about IPC's approach to economy and organisation, without directing the conversation too much. I also asked some of them "what made the organisation survive for so long?". In that I was addressing the issue of precarity, motivated by the hardships experienced in managing *macba*. I start this section with the person who was most associated with IPC, Jowt, practically speaking the director of the organisation (his email stated 'coordinator').

5.3.1 Jowt: chance and determination

As a point of departure, what's important to note is Jowt's centrality in the IPC story, having spent the last 36 years not only working on the project, but also dedicating a lot of reflection to different aspects of it. The account, given here, of our recorded conversations, focuses on the way the IPC story is seen from his perspective, how it intersects with his own life-story. Reading through the transcript of his interviews, I saw him using as many 'we's' as 'I's'. The story he told is the collective story of the organisation from his perspective. I thus describe here not only an individual biography, but also its intersections with several others, as it contributes to understanding an organisation's story. I make brief detours into these other stories to contextualise Jowt's. In the conversations, he himself did so. For example, one of the first things he told me during our conversation was that

> If you had to credit anyone with the idea of IPC, the guy in question was doing a degree in Whykham University that was called operational research (personal communication, Jowt, 02.04.2017)

He said this when he heard I am studying at the business school. Later he added: "*I got the feeling that it was just some massive doss*" (personal communication, Jowt, 02.04.2017). The person he was referring to was IPC co-founder Joshua Jarred, nicknamed Jard. He added:

> Whereas with mates who were doing politics, or psychology or chemistry you kind of had a rough idea what it was, but operational research just sounded like a free holiday to me (personal communication, Jowt, 02.04.2017)

And then:

> I did a biology degree. Well, I didn't do a biology degree. Yeah, I dropped out, but that wasn't going to be a holiday I could see that from the start. That definitely wasn't going to be a holiday. It's a lot of work. Science, it's a lot of work; lots of lectures. I didn't do anything. I was gone by about February (personal communication, Jowt, 02.04.2017)

There were two interesting things in this first bit of our conversation. First, it already established something that came up in several of the conversations I had with IPC members and friends: work, effort and their inverse – slacking off, being lazy (or "*a massive doss*", as Jowt put it). The other was the subject of Jard's studies, operational research. It was a curious coincidence (or was it?), given that operational research is connected to the central issues of this thesis: predictability and control. Operational research, "a scientific method of providing executive departments with a quantitative basis for decisions regarding the operations under their control" (Charles Kittel cited in Kirby, 2003, p.3), also defined as "the ability to formulate management problems, solve them, and implement and maintain their solutions in turbulent environments" (Ackoff, 1979, p.94) is the application of 'science' and exact measurement to organisational control (Kirby, 2003, p.2). Originating from the military and prevalent in industries such as petrol products, aviation and utilities (Kirby, 2003, p.1), operational research exemplifies the performativity of mainstream organisational scholarship and practice.

In contrast to this form of calculating and predicting, when talking about the beginnings of IPC, Jowt himself seemed to emphasise chance:

> I went to university in Whykham in October 1982 and I was living in a student house [...] and I by chance turned up a day early, by mistake, and could've just spent the night on the streets of Whykham but luckily this guy who I mentioned, Joshua Jarred, was at the student house, so me and him spent that Thursday evening talking. He was a third-year student and was a kind of a rebel looking for a cause. He was quite a straight guy in a way. He dressed kind of straight and was

> just kind of quite wholesome but I think he was definitely looking for, looking for trouble really (personal communication, Jowt, 02.04.2017)

The fact of arriving a day early, a mistake, followed by the chance of Jard being there to open the door, lead to a conversation that established ideas and relationships important to the forming of IPC. Several others I talked to also emphasised chance, an issue I will discuss further down in a section dedicated to it.

Apart from recognizing chance as an actor in the story, Jowt's account also pointed at an openness towards an unplanned future, towards letting things unfold. This kind of lack of planning might be typical of a certain age group, but one cannot deny its importance in the story of IPC, given that several of its participants expressed it. From Jowt's story it seems like the student house was a breeding ground for ideas and attitudes that nourished IPC's beginnings. The day after this first conversation with Jard

> ...everyone else turned up and [...they...] were up for doing all the classic things students do, but with [...] because it was the early 80's, quite a lot of angst and quite a lot of political angst and quite a lot of attitude. We were just about the majority in the house. There were a couple of people in the house that, I don't know if its modern parlance or old parlance, were quite square [...] But generally it was quite a rowdy house. And we managed to kind of turn our senior resident, this Joshua Jarred guy, he kind of joined in the dope smoking and music listening and general misdeeds [...] It also attracted other people, because it was quite a good place to hang out, other people came 'round so people like, Alice, who is the mother of my two boys [...] she used to come around our house. Arthur, who now is a very upstanding member of the community, accountant and IPC trustee, he used to hang out at our place. Because often people would live in student houses, where everyone was pretty dull. So, they came around our house because that was where it was ok to stay up and... I mean, don't get me wrong its wasn't like we were lunatics but we took some drugs and we drank some alcohol and probably more drugs than alcohol to be honest with you. And we played lots of music and we stayed up late. That was probably about as exciting as it got [...] And then I suppose, we started, you know, politics was talked about and it was talked about at length and people came there, arrived in that house with different political attitudes and different political beliefs but somehow that kind of critical few weeks of people sort of meeting each other and swapping ideas, and it was a very 1982, it was very, you know, it was Margaret Thatcher in power there was a lot happening. The country was very divided, people felt very divided. People felt, I think people, including myself pretty much felt that probably the world's not going to last much longer anyway. Because nuclear war was seen like a pretty, not a certainty but it seemed like a pretty likely outcome (personal communication, Jowt, 02.04.2017)

Reading this account, of the first few weeks at the student house, reminds me of this idea, discussed in the previous chapter, of artists and activists creating spaces for things to happen. Only here the space was not carefully crafted but just encountered as it was. This encounter, fuelled by the urgency of impending nuclear doom and political crisis, generated ideas and

motivations that, albeit very much transformed, still hold true in today's IPC. If it is to be expressed through the language of recipes, one can say that it corresponded with the agitation at the beginning of fermentation, one that generates an unlikely chemical reaction, which jump-starts a process (Katz, 2003, p.95).

Despite becoming a 'respectable' charity, the ideas that were present at the origins of IPC come and visit its current incarnation repeatedly. In the interviews, Jowt was always jumping back and forth from the past to the present, illustrating this fact. Some of the people who partied at the student house (Alice and Arthur were mentioned) are still around and involved. This is also true when talking about political ideas. Jowt told me about the political conversations they had back in the early days:

> We got drawn to anarchist texts especially anarchist texts of people like Colin Ward who we later met, who came to visit IPC when it got started. Colin Ward he's long dead but he's a kind of, he's a sort of homely anarchist. He's someone who believes in. He writes books about allotments and things like that. About the kind of people who squatted RAF bases after World War 2, people who had no homes [...] it's not all about smashing the state up...It's about organisation and its about self-help and it's that type of stuff (personal communication, Jowt, 02.04.2017)

Jowt was always careful not to claim IPC was fulfilling anarchist ideals as such, but he did trace a line between these old conversations and today's organisation:

> The guy we work with now, Darren, [...] I think he went to Colin Ward's funeral. He's someone who's in the same vein. It's quite an English anarchism. And I wouldn't say that's what IPC is, but IPC was certainly inspired by that. It's quite a soft anarchism. It isn't sticking car bombs under policemen's cars and things. It's more about a mutual aid idea and an ability to self-organise without the need of planners and intervention (personal communication, Jowt, 02.04.2017)

But conversations around politics were not enough. Circumstance, certain personality types and issues coming out of these political debates themselves collided to replace words with action. Jowt noted that IPC was

> ...a bit of the response to the fact that at the time, probably now as well, the left, to give it a kind of broad church title, was seen as something that just protested. All it did was just say no to stuff (personal communication, Jowt, 02.04.2017)

To understand how IPC emerged from this student house, the partying and the conversations about anarchism, he brought into the picture his good friend and IPC co-founder Cecil:

> I left university and quite a lot of other people in that group slowly dropped out one after another. Two people that didn't drop out was a guy called Gavin and a guy called Cecil (personal communication, Jowt, 02.04.2017)

Cecil, described by Jowt as "*quite an impassioned guy*", didn't drink, smoke or do drugs. He trained in karate and kickboxing and lifted weights and was usually referred to by others from the early days of IPC as someone embodying a strict work ethic (personal communication, Kid, 26.06.2017).

> In the second year it was suggested by Joshua Jarred, the senior resident, that rather than renting somewhere, that houses were so cheap in Whykham that Cecil and Gavin look at this idea of buying a house. It's nothing to do with IPC at this stage, nothing to do with housing coops or workers coops or anything. They just thought well fuck it, you could actually buy a house for 3,000 pounds. And because the type of people they were [...] him and Cecil weren't bothered about living close to the university so they bought a house around the corner from where you live [referring to me]. Number 4 Kingsly Villas, on Westhold St. They bought it for 3,250 pounds I think. They just got some bank loans out and that was cheaper than renting [...] so they bought a house and they lived together as two mates. They were both still at university. Both of them got their degrees. They didn't drop out (personal communication, Jowt, 02.04.2017)

And then

> The fact that Cecil and Gavin bought a house so cheaply, the fact that we'd jammed ourselves up on all this self-help anarchist literature. And probably the fact that those of us who had dropped out had left the fairly comfortable student accommodation and ended up in private rented stuff, which is mega-shit now but back then was mega-mega-shit. It was just rubbish. It was damp and it was unheated and it was mouldy. Rented accommodation in the UK at the bottom end is not very good. And also, it is very hard to get if you are unemployed. So, I suppose those three factors were put together (personal communication, Jowt, 02.04.2017)

It is at this moment when he first mentioned a walk he took with Alice and Jard to Kirby Mill, a walk of historical importance for the IPC narrative, one that was also mentioned by Alice when I later interviewed her. As we will see, Alice remembers it just as vividly (Jard unfortunately passed away, "*dropped dead*" as Jowt put it, fifteen years ago).

> So on this walk around Kirby was me, Alice and Jard and I think that's when the idea of buying houses and doing something like a cooperative with this anarchist thinking behind could be something we should try and do. And then we came back to Whykham [...] and we went 'round and we talked to people like Cecil and other people about it and tried to engage people and everyone was up for it (personal communication, Jowt, 02.04.2017)

This beginning moment, this walk during which an idea was sparked, set the whole project in motion. It's interesting that at this late stage, after more than thirty years of existence, Jowt still referred back to this walk, carefully building the story around it.

After exploring the very beginnings of the project, the context, the utopian ideas and the event, that first walk that propelled it forward, I wanted to hear about why it lasted so long. I asked Jowt what he thought lied behind IPC's resilience, why it survived for more than 30 years. In the interview he said:

> There was an attitude that we had and I suppose that it's an attitude that we can probably credit punk rock with really which is a kind of 'get up and do it' attitude. And that was a natural attitude that I think we had because of the kind of, the whole DIY thing behind punk rock and obviously all of this DIY anarchism stuff we'd read (personal communication, Jowt, 02.04.2017)

But in an earlier conversation he proposed something related but slightly different. He said that while at the beginning there were a lot of people sitting around talking about anarchism, when it came down to doing real physical work, stripping woodchip, for example, a lot of those people dropped out. Those who stayed, according to Jowt, were "*a pretty determined bunch*" (ethnographic notes, 13.04.2016). In the rest of the chapter I would like to contrast and compliment this determination with some of the other viewpoints present. One of the accounts that most surprised me is the one that came up in conversation with Tina and Alice.

5.3.2 Tina and Alice: IPC as a layered multi-faceted ecology

I was advised by Jowt to talk to Tina and Alice together. Their close friendship was an important factor in their stories, even though their trajectory in relation to IPC was different and has started at different times and for different reasons. They responded to my questions with a mixture of stories and analysis. Their perspective came from a different angle to Jowt's, adding to my impression of IPC as a multidimensional object, seen differently from different viewpoints.

When reading Alice's account about IPC's beginnings her emotions are apparent. The pace of the story is fast, without leaving much room to breathe. When reading it I could almost feel her exhilaration:

> My involvement started in 1983 when me and Jowt, James were going out with each other and we left university so we didn't have any money, we was on the dole so really really poor and we had a fortnight one time when we had nothing, we spent it all on partying, we had no food at all for a fortnight except a bag of potatoes. And at the end of that fortnight we'd really learned the importance of budgeting. So, one thing led to another and as a result [...] we had an unofficial-food-evening-meals-club-thing where everyone put in a bit and we bought food and cooked [...]...so that we could eat [...] as a friendship group, so that people joined in on that [...] people were putting in their giros, pooling their giros and eating out of that (personal communication, Alice, 23.06.2017)

For example, "*Cecil, who used to live down here was another student, still at university. He used to come around for food*" (personal communication, Alice, 23.06.2017). And then came the Kirby Mill excursion:

> And then one time we've been up all night and I can't remember what we were doing and we went for a walk up Kirby Mill across the fields in the snow, like the snow had just sprinkled down on these fresh ploughed fields it was like walking across a chocolate cake. And me and Jowt and Jard who was another person who was about at the time, went for a walk up this hill and Jard who was in the business school and doing something to do with business studies and Jowt started talking [...] Jard had had this idea about buying houses, they were really cheap in Whykham [...] and we was skint and living in really crap slum housing which was great fun being a young adult and playing, being up all night and all that stuff, but it probably wasn't really healthy housing [...] and the floor was so wet when we walked across the floor in the morning it was kind of like [makes a repetitive slurping sound of walking across and wet floor]. So, they started talking this morning as the sun came up, it was an amazing moment and you can't...I sort of felt that thing where you think 'this is something really, you know, this is really something'. They've got something and we got really excited about it. And it was this idea about buying houses really cheap and then renting to ourselves and people in our same situation. And so, then that morning we came straight down here, where Cecil lived at Kingsly Villas which is now an IPC house and we all sat and talked about it all massively energised because it just felt like they put their finger on something [...] I felt it was a really important moment (personal communication, Alice, 23.06.2017)

There were many interesting things in this account. Like Jowt, Alice seemed to make an effort to transport the listener back to the moment before the formation of IPC. The two walks she describes, the one across the fields to Kirby Mills and the one across the damp floor in Whykham's substandard housing, create a sort of contrast. The damp floor physically (and humorously) expresses the difficulties IPC members were in back then, while the magical description of the walk up the hill, excitedly talking about ideas and ideals, expresses the freedom and enthusiasm felt by these young people at the time. These two elements reinforce Jowt's assertion that anarchist ideals and substandard housing were two important factors in the emergence of the organisation.

They also resonate with two terms I explored in Chapter 3, spontaneity and precarity. On the one hand, there was the spontaneous emergence of a transformative idea. Like other examples of spontaneity I will discuss, this idea emerges through the encounter with an other, in conversation, and possibly inspired by the magical feel of the walk. On the other, the walk across the damp floor exemplifies an encounter with hardships, with the necessity and urgency of coming up with alternatives to a system that generates precarity. At the same time, Alice expresses that even the fact of having such difficulties, had an element of adventure to it, being "*great fun being a young adult and playing*" (personal communication, Alice,

23.06.2017). This might give the uninformed reader an impression that IPC was the fruit of student culture alone, and that hardships were seen as temporary or even part of the adventure. But Tina's story, which I turn to next, asserts that the group engaged with some serious problems.

For brevity's sake, I will paraphrase it based on the notes I took during the conversation: Tina and her partner John moved to Kingsly Villas more or less around the time IPC started acting in the area. It's the same street Cecil and Gavin lived on in the neighbourhood where IPC still operates. Tina was 17 and had a two-year-old girl (she had her when she was 15 with a different partner). Like several other neighbours in the area, they befriended the group. Tina specifically became good friends with Alice. For example, Tina said that they "*taught each other mothering*" to which Alice replied: "*She is being very generous. She basically taught me everything*". Her story exemplifies the housing problems IPC emerged as a response to: Their landlord at the time, who lived in a different town, sent their cheques back to the benefit office during a whole year. The benefits office did not inform Tina and John that in fact they were not paying rent and they ended up getting kicked out. Tina was pregnant at the time. The only option they were given was to move to a house in Stiltham, a housing estate at the edge of town. The house they were given was one previously taken by the drug enforcement agency. They were offered two weeks rent-free in exchange of cleaning the house, which was covered in faeces. Tina, pregnant had to do all this work. She spent all of her maternity pay on furnishing the house, buying beds for the children, being that the house was not furnished. Alice, who at that time recently came back from a few years living in London, went to see Tina and realised she was suffering. When one of the early IPC houses became available, they offered it to Tina and John and they came back to the neighbourhood. They then joined IPC, which gave them the opportunity to both do work as part of the cooperative and have enough time for taking care of their children. Tina said that being housed by IPC meant that they were never under threat of eviction, that even if some months they were tight for money, being that there was trust, IPC knew that they would pay later on. This kind of stability was very important to the ongoing development of the organisation. Regarding such housing security Alice added to Tina's story affirming that "*there's no way, as a single parent, I could have gone to university and gotten trained as a lecturer and done a PhD if I hadn't had safe housing [...] that thing where people can't just turn up and kick you out*" (personal communication, Tina and Alice, 23.06.2017).

When observing how such safe housing was produced in IPC it was hard to draw the line between formal policy and informal relations. During our conversation, Tina and Alice described hard times when they helped each other. Others in IPC were also around to help (at

the collective interview/dinner an incident with a spider was mentioned) (IPC collective conversation, 14.09.2017). From Tina and Alice's story and from the other stories I heard, it seemed like such safety was rooted in personal relationships, in the kind of friendships that benefited tenants, members, friends and neighbours. This sort of safety went beyond the provision of housing. As someone listening and analysing, it made me wonder whether these instances described something more general in IPC, a policy of sorts, or whether they were just instances of 'normal' mutual aid that happens between friends? In Chapter 6 I will bring further examples of the boundaries between the formal and the informal (e.g. friendship) aspects of the organisation being repeatedly blurred throughout the organisation and its environment. It showed me that in IPC friendship became method (to borrow a phrase from a methodological reflection in Reedy & King, 2019, p. 23).

Relationships also provided an alternative focus to the question of IPC's resilience. Alice and Tina responded to this it differently than Jowt (quoted above). When asking them about the longevity or the resilience of IPC, Tina answered that what was important for that was the fact that they all started having kids. As Tina put it: "*In 1989 there was a huge crowd of babies born. IPC had a baby boom*", adding "*we needed the organisation for our kids and that's why it survived*" (personal communication, Tina, 23.06.2017). At a later date many couples in IPC separated and then got involved with other members, having more kids with them. These ties of parenthood, separations and getting with others from the same milieu, although creating many challenges (they said that they were separating and getting with others during 10 years and that it took 10 more years for the group to recuperate from the experience), in the long run rooted the group in place and made it stronger. According to Alice and Tina's analysis, this intimacy and multigenerationality created a complex resilient meshwork (personal communication, Alice and Tina, 23.06.2017):

> I think one of the things that I was thinking like why it's successful is that it's really broad. 'Cause none of us can quite put our finger on where it ends (personal communication, Alice, 23.06.2017)

According to their analysis the resilience of this meshwork had to do with the fact that it was a living, fluctuating organism:

> There's been times where it's all really spread apart and become really tenuous and not been quite such a close-knit group and then times when it's kind of come back together (personal communication, Alice, 23.06.2017)

An important element of this was the crèche.

I knew about the crèche from earlier conversations I had with other IPC members (personal communication, Caswell, 27.04.2017; Kid, 26.06.2017). As a response to this "*baby boom*" IPC started a self-run day-care, which was located at 46 Westhold St, the adjoining house to the one in which I lived. The people who had their kids in the crèche took turns working in it. Some other neighbours, not directly involved in IPC also participated. This freed mothers and fathers to work in IPC and related projects. Tina and Alice consider it important that they were freed to work at that early age and at that early stage of their projects. It was a moment of much learning for them and, as Tina put it, "*when you're quite young you just suck it up, don't you, knowledge*" (personal communication, Tina and Alice, 23.06.2017). One interesting thing about the crèche is that years later, when these same kids became teenagers, they used the same space for what was called the "*teenage crèche*", a space where they experimented with drugs, drinking and started bands together (personal communication, Caswell, 27.04.2017). Alice described how this all contributed to this resilient social meshwork:

> There's lots of connections so where we, at this age, generation whatever, aren't necessarily getting involved, our kids are. See what I mean, they're still involved with each other through the crèche thing [...] And now they're in their mid-twenties and they've got kids, some of them, so there's another mesh underneath, do you see what I mean of it? [...] There's layers to it and loads of different ways in which we're connected. So, I think, when things break there's other networks connecting things. So, when certain people aren't involved, there's still stuff going on (personal communication, Alice, 23.06.2017)

Tina added:

> Think that if IPC had a real problem at any point, that they could get hold of all those people and they'd all be willing to [help out]. And there's a lot. There are a lot of them spread around (personal communication, Tina, 23.06.2017)

I was struck by how their image of IPC as a spread out, multigenerational meshwork, contrasted the set boundaries of organisations, including alternative ones. As I discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, boundaries are important sites of organisational control (Midgley, 2000, p.468) and social movements have been observed as homogeneous in terms of class, age and education (e.g. Conway, 2003, p.512). Tina and Alice's analysis included many actors outside of the formal organogram of IPC in their response to the question of its longevity. Tina herself is an example of a person from outside the typical sphere of middle-class activism that got involved in the organisation. Further down, in the section about Kid and also in Chapter 6, I will give more examples of this heterogeneity. I was also struck by how their analysis seemed to embody Ingold's theories discussed in Chapter 3 (Ingold, 2006), ones that I consider akin to Gibson-Graham's use of weak theory (Gibson-Graham, 2014) and Tsing's "thinking through precarity" (Tsing, 2015a, p.20). In that respect and in contrast to Jowt's view of the centrality

of "*a pretty determined bunch*" within IPC's organisational process (personal communication, Jowt, 02.04.2017), Tina and Alice wove a decentralised image, but one that is informally so, rooted in diverse relationship that accumulated to create a resilient organisational ecology.

Another element of this was, as Alice said, the fact that "*we're still tenants*" (personal communication, Alice, 23.06.2017). While people drifted away, getting involved in other projects or dealing with life circumstances that require attention, connections were not severed, which created a pool of people committed to IPC, at arm's reach. Tina gave her own life story as an example for this:

> All the time I worked with Griffith [she is referring to forming part of Folks and George St. Organic, which were a grocery store and an organic food distributor started by friends of IPC]. It wasn't anything to do with IPC, but any moment I could have just gone back in there. I was still around. We worked at the shop but then we moved to George Street. We did organic veg delivery '98 until 2008 and I stopped doing that to take care of my mom. I did that for eight years. And then I was quite apart from everything because I was literally imprisoned in the house stuck to the back of my mom's wheelchair if I was out. So, I couldn't be involved in anything physically. Apart from, on the day that my mom used to go to a day centre, then I used to go and help at the village hall doing teas (personal communication, Tina, 23.06.2017)

Tina later re-joined IPC as an employee. As I am writing this she runs the IPC Gardening Project, part of what I consider to be their organisational ecology. Thus, her view on the organisation comes from having formed part of it but also having been just outside of it, so to speak, by being involved in businesses that grew out of the same social sphere and by having lived in a IPC house since she was quite young. Alice's position vis-à-vis the organisation is similar. Despite socially forming part of the core group, Alice described herself as "*a bit more on the periphery of the businesses if you'd like. I was in Folks and Loo Prints and the crèche I suppose but I've never been a member of IPC*" (personal communication, Alice, 23.06.2017). I'm interested in having this view of IPC from what could be considered its formal periphery alongside visions from what could be considered its core, such as Jowt's.

I would like to further explore these peripheries and porous boundaries through the story of the Avenue Village Hall. Tina mentioning her involvement in the hall was significant. I already mentioned the hall and Kid who ran it in the previous chapter. Tina told me that it was Kid who showed up at Stiltham to pick her up and bring her back to the Avenue neighbourhood to live in a IPC house. The fact that she remembered this and considered this important is also of note. Both Tina and Alice considered him important, they also mentioned the hall as being an example of the breadth of the IPC project (personal communication, Alice and Tina, 23.06.2017). In the following section I will present Kid's story in his words. It will help me

demonstrate the hard to predict temporalities, which are at work when trying to unravel threads of IPC's meshwork. Through it, I will explore the implications of this regarding the reproducibility of the project, the possibility of reducing it to an exact recipe.

5.3.3 Kid: opening doors for encounter

Kid was a member of the IPC worker cooperative only briefly. "*I just left after a year because there just wasn't enough, in them days, there wasn't much else to do if you weren't building*" (personal communication, Kid, 26.06.2017). And Kid was interested in other things.

> If it had been later on I probably could have switched to some sort of community admin hippy housing officer sort of role, but that didn't really exist then. So that was what I did but I did it informally (personal communication, Kid, 26.06.2017)

Though I obviously asked him about IPC, he preferred talking about it through events and organisations happening just outside of its formal boundaries:

> Well, I first heard about IPC via probably via the Pythia Club and in them days the Pythia Club and IPC was sort of quite linked. Never officially, but they both started about the same week. 1985. Pythia started in 1985, which was a rundown club run by a guy with a vision who wanted to do music and have an open musical policy and let anybody play. It started out as a collective and it soon whittled down to one. It wasn't a cooperative the Pythia but it was always a community place (personal communication, Kid, 26.06.2017)

The fact that he talked about the Pythia when asked about IPC helps in understanding Kid's role in the story. Kid's involvement in the cultural and relational aspects of IPC was significant. From his account, one gets the picture of someone who is in motion, inhabiting different social spaces, acting as an informal representative of the organisation. Like Tina and Alice, his involvement at the time had to do, among other thing, with him living in an IPC house:

> I lived next door at 46 Westhold St. [I held the interview at my house at 48 Westhold St.], which was the main IPC house for a while. It was where the office was downstairs, was where the crèche was. It was the room where the IPC meetings were. And so, for the next five years I was involved, not as a member of IPC but as a sort of, I don't know, person without status [...] I continued doing the benefit gigs. I did all the Rebellious Pathways [a network IPC was involved in at the time] stuff generally because I liked all that. And the other thing that I did was I drove. So, I did a lot of the driving for IPC for the building stuff, for the days out, for all that. No one else could drive really in them days. So, I drove the van. It was only me and Cecil could drive so I did a lot of driving. Sometimes I went back to work and did an actual week's decorating, 'cause I did that quite regularly. And I did bits of fundraising. And also, when they had hosting things, when people arrived from different countries. I'd put them up. And I was involved in all that side really. I guess I ended up being a sort of entertainment officer and political officer (personal communication, Kid, 26.06.2017)

The fact that Kid's emphasis is on moving and socialising is apparent in his further description of his involvement as a "*person without status*" in IPC (personal communication, Kid, 26.06.2017). I asked him whether he attended IPC meetings:

> I went to quite a few, yeah. Not every meeting, no. But I went to quite a few about stuff about a van, about functions, about people visiting, about events, about fundraising, about gigs. So, I still attended quite a lot of meetings. But I didn't go to every one. I didn't need to. And I went with IPC trips to Germany twice. To this German squat and got to know the Germans quite well and I went to all the other visits around the country to Birmingham and whatever and got to know people (personal communication, Kid, 26.06.2017)

So, while if one were to chart a *formal* organizational chart, Kid would be practically invisible, in fact, just through socializing and through his activity in spaces outside the organisation (such as the Pythia Club) his contribution is palpable. One good example from his account:

> I got working in a hostel in East Whykham [...] again, these days you're probably not meant to do these things, mixing your paid working life in a hostel with your personal capacity as someone who lives in IPC and is rooting for that alternative thing, but every time I met somebody that was a bit alternative, a bit sound or I saw something about them in the hostel, which was in East Whykham, I used to bring them down here. And there was, lots of people from my old hostel ended up living around here. There was a bloke called Willy who ended up joining the coop. There was a bloke called Ben, Ben Handler who lived here. There was a woman called Sheila I brought down who lived here for quite a long time and was involved in various ways. There was a bloke called Rich Pine who ended up joining the coop with his then girlfriend Laura. Who ended up joining the co-op. So I probably got about, in that sort of early to mid-1990s period almost, not everybody, but loads of the people that joined were via me because it's all about me and I'm brilliant (personal communication, Kid, 26.06.2017)

Kid's story illustrated how broad the IPC story really is, and, as Alice put, how hard it is to put one's finger on where it ends. In it, Kid, a person "*without status*" acted in diverse contexts, recruiting people for IPC. Formal categories such as co-op member were de-emphasised as Kid attended some meetings, drove people around, recruited for IPC during his formal job and participated in IPC events despite having no formal status (personal communication, Kid, 26.06.2017).

The story of the Avenue Village Hall, which I bring next, demonstrates this broadness and also its unpredictable temporal dimension, how someone can drift apart from IPC (at least formally) and find themselves back in its sphere years later. The story starts dramatically, with a fire:

> Well the first time I ever saw the Avenue Village Hall was in the 90's when I lived here in IPC. And I walked passed the old hall and it was burning down. And a few years later they built the new hall, which is the hall that is there now. After IPC I'd got a few jobs working in hostels and homeless places generally and as a housing

> advisor. And then one day there was a job advertised for running a community centre in West Whykham and I applied and I got the job but when I got there, there was no community centre. The committee had decided not to employ anybody but I had funding to run a community centre for, can't remember exactly, one, two or three years. So, I had funding, I had a job title and I had no job. I had nothing to do (personal communication, Kid, 26.06.2017)

A local organisation was supposed to run a local community centre and got the funding for Kid to do it. The community centre, which had its own committee of local residents, then decided that they didn't want it taken over. So, Kid ended up doing all sorts of other work for this organisation, but he "*also walked around the area looking for something to do*" (personal communication, Kid, 26.06.2017).

> And I walked passed that hall and I literally walked passed it and thought, 'I wonder what goes on in there these days. Not a lot I'd bet'. So, I went and knocked on the door of the nuns [the building belonged to the Catholic church next door] and said to the nuns [...] I said [making a funny nasal voice] 'hello, I'm Kid. What do you do in that hall' and they said 'not a lot'. And so I said 'could I have a look at it? I'd be prepared to rent it off of you to do a community project from it.' And they said 'yes that's fine' (personal communication, Kid, 26.06.2017)

Encounter continued being central in the way Kid told the story:

> Within weeks I opened the door and thought 'will anybody come in?' And then somebody wondered in because they were lost or needed the toilet and I started talking to them and had a few jokes and they stayed and then we started renting it out and advertising and people came and groups came and when it started it was only the bingo group [...] from the church from the old days and that was it; one night a week on a Thursday. Nothing else. And then I started the Thursday morning coffee morning which built up and then rented out all the other spaces and that's how it started strangely enough (personal communication, Kid, 26.06.2017)

In this space, friendships were made and collaborations were formed. Kid recognised its importance:

> There's people that have met each other there in the hall. Who, you go to the coffee mornings now, or go to the groups and you would think that these people all knew each other for ages. But they never did. 'Cause they would be in their house on one end of the Avenue or Whitle Rd. and the other would be at the other house. And now they all know each other and that's quite good (personal communication, Kid, 26.06.2017)

Reading through my journal notes from the first coffee morning we attended, I saw that I noted the good atmosphere and the place-making work that Kid was doing "serving tea and coffee and generally making sure everyone is ok" (ethnographic notes, 25.02.2016). Like the IPC office described in Chapter 4 and the student house described above, it exemplifies the

kind of welcoming place-making, reminiscent of *macba* and other work socially engaged artists do to create welcoming spaces. As I discussed in Chapter 4 such spaces foster encounters. As I will discuss in Chapter 7, I see such spaces as assemblages (Tsing, 2015a, p.23), where encounters foster the meandering paths of personal and organisational narratives. The continuation of the hall's story exemplified the meandering paths taken by much of the narratives within the IPC story and the organisation's relationship with the realities right outside its margins.

After about 13 years of existence, the hall went through a crisis. The community organization backing Kid decided to close it:

> After the first year or two, of enthusiasm, they spent the next nine years, having no enthusiasm for the hall and just kept me on as a sort of historical anachronism [laughing] because I wouldn't go (personal communication, Kid, 26.06.2017)

I remember a tense meeting with community members and representatives of the organization. From my very partial perspective, it seemed like there might be no solution, no way of saving the hall (ethnographic notes, 10.03.2016). In our recorded conversation, Kid made light of the crisis saying "*and then they finally shut it down a year or two ago and I just re-opened it up again on a Monday with IPC*" (personal communication, Kid, 26.06.2017). With IPC's backing, the hall was supported by workers and volunteers, who occasionally stopped by during coffee mornings to help out. The hall benefitted from IPC's Computer Project, getting a computer, Internet connection and a printer. But being that the building was not IPC owned, the hall didn't benefit from the kind of "*safe housing*" Alice talked about in her interview (personal communication, Alice, 23.06.2017). In the spring of 2018 the Catholic Church next door said they wanted the building back, effectively shutting the hall. As a result of that Kid lost the job he created for himself by his own initiative. He started working for IPC, under a hard to define job description. He did interviews with people seeking housing, manned the desk and phones, but most importantly he was involved in a new venture, the former St. Paul's Church on Avenue, purchased by IPC in the fall of 2018. He also started organising the Thursday coffee mornings at the former church (ethnographic notes, 23.07.2018; 26.10.2018; 19.11.2018).

Kid's quirky sense of humour, the fact of him changing jobs, travelling a lot and not being officially a member of IPC (when it was still a cooperative) might give the impression of someone eccentric, one that happened onto the organisation by chance. But talking to Kid it became clear that he put humour, informality and anecdotes in the service of a political vision in which IPC was a protagonist. For example, he commented that

> There was signs in the IPC office then that said, from the anti-poll-tax demos that said 'Tory scum die'. And these days there isn't a sign saying that in the IPC office [laughs] It's sad. It's just sad (personal communication, Kid, 26.06.2017)

But his political critique was deeper and more structural than mere opposition to right wing tendencies. In his words, he also showed a commitment to the creation of alternatives, to doing things differently. For example, Kid talked about how IPC is now a respectable organisation which wins awards, but that it would never be what it is now if not for its past. The fact that they found different creative ways to get around problems and that they didn't do things 'normally' is what made them what they are. Kid said that IPC would be "*rubbish*" in trying to be a normal organisation but that it was great at being IPC. That it won awards because it did things in a unique manner (personal communication, Kid, 26.06.2017). In conceiving IPC in such a way, Kid pointed to the fact that one cannot reverse engineer an organisation such as IPC based on a static vision of what it is now. Jowt seemed to coincide with him in this respect:

> The thing with IPC is that it's taken 32 years to get where it is [...] but, if you kind of say, if I actually start again and not make all the mistakes or waste of time we did, it could be something else maybe [...] Other organisations wanting to start [...] come and visit us and say 'right, well this this and this is really good but they pissed around for ages doing this so we'll cut that bit out' but maybe some of the pissing around we did gave us the, it's all part of what we are innit? (personal communication, Jowt, 02.04.2017)

In other words, IPC is the accumulation of its chance encounters, its meandering paths and its many mistakes. From the overview I will give in Chapter 6, the reader will get a better idea of what it is, within this organisational ecology, that challenged boundaries and temporal control. For now, based on the testimonies of Jowt, Tina, Alice and Kid, an image already emerges of a social grouping assembled through such meandering paths with its encounters and the disregard some of its members have towards formality and boundaries. In the next section I will go to the wider data to go deeper into what I identified as one of the central themes of this thesis: chance encounters. While the personal stories I brought so far already demonstrate this to be of importance, I will show that it is just as present, in different guises, throughout the data I gathered.

5.4 Chance encounter

In this section I go to the wider data in order to demonstrate the centrality of chance encounter within the two case studies. I earlier described how Daniel's tempeh making developed in response to a series of chance encounters, with a *macba* neighbour and then with Nola. Similarly, Sascha's process was initiated by meeting Simona, and Mar's practice was

informed by her encounters within activist communities including "*a very activist boyfriend*". Encounter and chance were central to my methodology in *macba*, intentionally set up as it was for the purpose of people drifting in and interacting (personal communication, Daniel, 06.02.2017, Sascha, 19.02.2017, Mar, 15.10.2016). The methodological story of this research itself, described in Chapter 4, featured several moments of chance encounter, such as meeting Kid and then Jowt. Encounters propelled it forward in a way that was impossible to predesign. Chance encounter is thus an element of the *macba* stories and my methodological one, pushing learning processes and diverse economies in unexpected directions.

Some IPC members and friends emphasised encounter and even chance encounter as central to the story of the organisation. I recounted how Jowt talked about chance as central to the way the IPC story unfolded and his trajectory within its beginnings (personal communication, Jowt, 02.04.2017). But Jowt wasn't the only one who mentioned chance. Max, Caswell, Griffith, Cecil and Tina, also made explicit the role of chance encounters with other people in their story within the organisation (personal communication, Max, 26.01.2018; Caswell, 27.04.2017; Griffith, 04.08.2017; Cecil, 14.01.2018; Tina, 23.06.2017). Max told me:

> I got to know Jowt and Cecil by chance really. Because a friend of mine who I knew was coming to Whykham as well happened to live in the same student house they lived in [...] bizarrely I'd taken my stuff back to Manchester. I was going to go back to Manchester. And I had to come back to Whykham for a couple of days for some reason (personal communication, Max, 26.01.2018)

Max went on to tell how through a series of circumstances he ended up living in 1 Charles St., a house IPC was squatting and ended up buying, thus meeting Jowt and Cecil and getting involved in the organisation. He was a cooperative member during many years. When membership dwindled and as a result of another member, Sealy, deciding to re-join the cooperative after an absence, he left, at some point also leaving the city. In other words, both his joining and his leaving the organisation came about as a result of unplanned encounters. He ended up coming around full circle and becoming one of IPC's three trustees (personal communication, Max, 26.01.2018; Jowt, 02.04.2017). Caswell similarly told me a story of encounters with friends and friends of friends that brought him down to Whykham on visits. According to his account he ended up having to bail out of trouble one of IPC's acquaintances who got stuck in France. This caused him to spend a few days with Jowt, Cecil and Alice at the early IPC squat, a visit during which the idea for IPC was discussed in detail, and during which he got involved in it. Griffith told me about encountering Kid in the park. Both were walking their dogs and both recognised that, by their personal aesthetic, they might have some mutual affinity. They became friends and Griffith got to know IPC through Kid (personal

communication, Max, 26.01.2018, Caswell, 27.04.2017, Griffith, 04.08.2017). Cecil also seemed to imply an element of chance within IPC's beginnings:

> It was a student house and Jard was in that house and Jowt was in that house and I was in that house. As students, we just ended up piled in together just completely randomly (personal communication, Cecil, 14.01.2018)

We saw earlier that Tina's involvement also came to be as a result of her moving to the area thus meeting the group and befriending Alice (personal communication, Tina, 18.07.2017). Vex, another central figure in the early IPC, told me her involvement started after she met Cecil at Cobwebs, a local nightclub (personal communication, Vex, 09.01.2021). All in all, when asked about how they came to create or join the organisation several of the people central to its history framed their response in terms of a chance encounter that changed the course of their lives.

Other than these central figures in the story, others who got involved also seemed to stumble upon the organisation by chance. The minutes books talk about many of IPC's new recruits at the time as "friends just drifting in" (IPC minutes book 4th Meeting 02.04.1986). Similarly, Kid met people in other contexts and brought them into the organisation. He also talked about one Samuel, who similarly recruited through chance encounter (personal communication, Kid, 26.06.2017). Thus, when talking about IPC's functioning, chance encounter was described as central to the process of people joining.

But other than *people* encountering each other, there were other kinds of encounters that changed the course of such organisational processes. I am talking about encounters with objects, material processes, physical environments and larger social and political contexts. The diverse ways people talked about encounters with objects, material processes, physical environments and larger contexts, joined the mentions of encounters with people to show that dialoguing with the unexpected was valued throughout the two organisational ecologies. This was especially true for IPC. I will now bring these examples to show that accumulatively they show the value of encounter in IPC's culture.

Jowt talked about the encounter with a new building as if it was an open dialogue, saying: "sometimes a building almost speaks as to what the possible uses of it". He described it like this: "the buildings reveal themselves to us by being put up for sale [...] IPC then identifies a need". He gave the George St. site, where I first met him, as one example and the St. Paul's Church, recently bought by the organization, as another. At a later conversation, Carrol, the IPC architect, concurred and added other examples such as the compound they have on Beverley St. (personal communication, Jowt at the IPC collective conversation, 04.08.2017;

ethnographic notes, 04.09.2018). Cecil talked about “buying a house and then finding out it was much worse than we thought it was” (personal communication, Cecil, 14.01.2018). This was true in terms of its physical state, but also related to its legal status. The story of IPC’s first house (that actually became their fourth) exemplifies this. According to Caswell, upon trying to buy it they discovered it had “a complicated arrangement of ownership”, in the process of being repossessed by “two different lending organisations” (personal communication, Caswell, 27.04.2017). The repossession process made it unclear who, technically speaking, was the owner. This led to an unusual chain of events:

> In those days, they would just give you the keys to look at an empty house. You didn't have an accompanied viewing. Especially houses like that one, who were worth so little that it was hardly worth the agent's time to come down and do the viewing [laughing]. They [the estate agent] gave the keys so they [IPC] went and sensibly got a set cut. They had a spare set of keys for the house and when it became clear how complicated the buying process is going to be [...] they said 'right, let’s just move in'. Because they thought they were going to buy it, they'd all given up their previous tenancies, they knew they were going to have nowhere to live, so they were just 'alright, let’s go and squat the house' [...] And someone has come to the house and identified that there were squatters there and Jowt had answered the door [...] And then Jowt went into the office [the estate agency] and the guy said, [...] ‘we believe there are squatters in it'. And Jowt said 'I'll go talk to them see if we can get them out'. And then he went back and said 'I had a word with them. They said they'll leave.' But that took so long, that that became the fourth house that IPC owned.
>
> Aviv: And while they were buying these other houses they were living in this house?
>
> Caswell: Yeah (personal communication, Caswell, 27.04.2017)

Through these conversations I understood that several IPC members see the very encounter with a derelict house as one with an unknown entity, requiring a capacity to improvise in dialogue with it. In that respect, while there is planning and assessment involved, there is an important ingredient of spontaneity and indeterminacy, one they emphasised and valued. In other words, the act of acquiring a house involved encountering its unique circumstances, materially and legally, and dialoguing with them.

From the data I brought in this section it is apparent that encounter, and specifically chance encounter were valued by the people I talked to and presented as a central element in their organisational narratives. This is important for my case here on two accounts. Firstly, the fact of organisational processes unfolding through chance challenges planning methodologies, adding an uncontrolled element to the creation of alternatives. Secondly, chance encounter

challenges learning, given that the specific events, unique and unplanned, cannot be reproduced.

Celebrated as central by so many actors, suggests that chance encounter was valued by IPC members and friends, that it resonated with their values. This might have something to do with the repeated mention of spontaneity by activists discussed in Chapter 3 (Polletta, 1998; Maeckelbergh, 2011; Snow and Moss, 2014, p.1122). I wondered whether there was some connection between this valuing of chance encounter, this openness towards the unexpected, and IPC's resilience. In other words, whether a dialogue with changing circumstances (with precarity) might be beneficial to the forming of resilient alternatives to managerial control. If that is the case, it is the way such chance encounters are received, this openness towards uncertainty and the dialoguing with it, which could be learned from.

5.5 Conclusions

Coming from experiences with social movements, most of the people I talked to were interested in constructing new realities, proposing new forms of doing things together in the world. Specifically, in light of the perception that the left usually "*just says no to things*" (personal communication, Jowt, 02.04.2017). In that sense they expressed the self-criticism and the reflexivity of social movements to a point of stepping outside of their own perceived boundaries. But boundaries are challenged even in this new post-activist, or more-than-activist realities they create. The stories demonstrate that both IPC and *macba* were not organisations with strict contours and confines. In neither case is it easy to "*put one's finger on where it ends*" (personal communication, Alice, 23.06.2017), on the dividing line between inside and outside. Daniel, Mar and Sascha had a foot in *macba* and another outside of it. The tenuous connections between these three and others that inhabited the space is what made the space the fragile, ephemeral but lively place that it was. The fact of *macba* explicitly rejecting formality and control (as I described in the previous chapter) enabled and invited like-minded projects, ones that dialogued with their environment, geographical, cultural and culinary (even botanical in the case of Sascha and microbiological in the case of Daniel). This dialogic approach, the fact of inventing things "while walking" (Machado, 2003), involved having economic/organisational projects with permeable boundaries. The conversations I had with the three, also left it clear that this improvisational approach comes both from the utopian hope of relating to others differently, as it does from an aversion to formality, bureaucracy and control (as in Graeber, 2015). They demonstrate that a looser attitude towards planning and controlling can still result in life projects that are forms of outsider research. And yet these projects revolve each around an individual, dialogic, collaborative and improvisational as they may be. One might wonder whether they point at possible cracks in hegemonic forms of

organisational control, or might they just be an example of a known form, what organisation theories call “entrepreneurial control” (Johnson and Gill, 1993, p.2). In other words, considering them as case studies, for the purpose of exploring alternative organisational and economic recipes, one is left with the question whether such active microorganisms bear with them the potential of reaching a critical mass, whether their challenging of control and rigidity is just something that is perceived to exist *within* the system in small quantities, or whether it hints at cracks in the ubiquity of control, seeds for wide spread transformation. In practical terms what needs to be asked is whether such attitudes can be expressed in forms that are viable and resilient. The IPC case study provided some responses to this question.

While very different in many respects, the three accounts I bring from IPC, demonstrate some of the same attitudes towards boundaries, formality and control. Jowt, Max, Caswell (whom I mention briefly), Griffith, Tina and Kid, all explicitly emphasize the role chance encounter played in the stories of IPC and the Avenue Village Hall. Tina, Alice and Kid tell stories that show that such permeability of boundaries (similar to the ones expressed by the dialogic attitudes of Daniel, Mar and Sascha) can be nurtured and maintained as people and organisational forms grow. The meandering path IPC took, was valued by the people I talked to as integral to its way of existing today. From the stories I brought here, “friendship as method” (Reedy and King, 2019, p.23) seems to have been extended from a core group of friends to a wider group of tenants and volunteers. In the next chapter I turn to the wider data asking to what extent these ingredients of possible recipes were there prevalent. The themes I will explore have to do with the *hardships* endured by the protagonists of the case study and with their *activism*, and the extent to which it challenged the ubiquity of control. But the first theme I will treat, through an overview of the data, is my general observation of the two case studies being *organisational ecologies*.

Hardships and activism in two organisational ecologies

6.1 Introduction

The *macba* experience lasted six years. It was a small-scale organisation, initiated and managed by myself. Its economy was largely based on the cultural activities organised within it. IPC was a more established organisation. It had a 36-year trajectory, a rich history and many side projects, collaborators, members and friends. In *macba*, three collaborators, Daniel, Mar and Sascha, were central to my investigation. All three created alternative economies and livelihoods from within the project, coinciding with my own vision for it (Bifidum Pathways Business plan). The *macba* data discussed here is drawn from across the interviews with these three collaborators and to a lesser extent from the interviews with participants from the Wild Yeast Economies workshops. I also used the *macba* Facebook page, its blog and internal documents as sources. From IPC I had 10 interviews, minutes books, crèche minutes, ethnographic observations and other documents. For these reasons and for the reasons detailed in Chapter 4, the data from *macba* plays a smaller role in this thesis, helping me to scope the issues and define the questions that motivated my inquiry. IPC's scale and longevity provided a more in-depth look at the organisation from a range of perspectives. The chapter shows this difference, treating *macba* more concisely and going into greater detail with IPC. In doing so, each case study is proportionate to its role within the process. The chapter starts with an overview of the two organisations and their close environments. It draws two organisational landscapes, with each taking its own distinct shape. Through tables and timelines, I compare the two through the patterns created by the collaborations within them. I also look at their boundaries, the activities within them and on their peripheries. I then examine the themes that emerged.

6.2 Overview: organisational ecologies

The first thing that stood out when looking at the data from both my Maricel and my Whykham experiences, is the fact of so many different individual and organisational stories colliding and interacting within them. Both *macba* and IPC did not fit into the format of singular organisations with set boundaries (e.g. Ahmady et al., 2016). In this section I detail the different individuals, organisations and projects that participated in making these two projects into what I have been calling throughout the thesis 'organisational ecologies'.

6.2.1 An organisational/social overview of *macba*

A general overview of the *macba* project could be found in a blog post I published on the 9th of October 2016 to announce its closure. In it I went through its history, detailing all of the activities I could remember and the research questions that motivated the experience. An

excerpt of this text can give a sense of the variety of projects, collaborations and interactions that took place throughout the existence of the centre. It was written as a sort of run-on sentence, with the intention of leaving the reader almost out of breath, inundating them with names and brief descriptions of the actions that were taken throughout the life of the project:

> What was *macba*: [...] *macba* was talks/workshops given by Martin from the 'Flying Project', two workshops by artist Goran Josif, the project Neighbourhood Powers where we ironed plastic to convert ourselves into fictitious characters in collaboration with Casal Palau, with Lidia Juarez and Qadr Naqicha, with Una doing the same thing at the same time in Cairo, dinners with wild plants and workshops with Sascha Crnobori, regional vegetarian Italian cooking workshops using wild plants with Simona, blind dinners, rehearsals of the neighbourhood's activist chorus, a process of intervention/documentation regarding the past, present and future of the street facilitated by the Narrative Play Collective, Itinerant Screen Printing workshops with Miss Natalie, Dressology with Natalie and Marisa Araya, Gleaners of Visual Culture with Lara, a gallery of one square meters called M2 managed and curated by Marisa and myself, Subversive South with reels of U.S. and English propaganda films disseminated in Latin America intervened in by Latinx artists from the neighbourhood with Juan Huerta, Mishaps of Santa Dolors which was a Documentary Embroidery project in the street with Una and myself, Walkonit Project where we made hydraulic tiles with Carlos and Ariadna from Argentina, a radio teahouse with the program Biting Biscuits in Silence with Anna Coromina and myself, Sentimental Mending workshops, crochet, soft sculpture, tempeh workshops with Daniel Stav, tea-salon, film projections, the microscopic farm of Microcultures, contextual cuisine workshops with Asher Ezriel, with Christa Miller, with Really Free Food from Athens, organised by Una, Daniel and myself. It was having snacks with Daniel where we went through the 12 tenets of Permaculture one by one, thinking how we could translate them to the social/neighbourly/economic/organisational aspects of *macba*, workshops about reading the present using the Tarot of the Upcoming Present of Maricel with Nur, it was meetings of Permaculture Maricel, sessions of Wild Yeast Economies some about maintenance and repair with Flora Gutierez and myself, weekly outings to climb trees and collect edible wild plants, a workshop of Indian embroidery with Alicia Catinca, the sessions of 'Outbreaks' with Simona, Sascha and Natalie, exploring the multiple possibilities of wild plants, dinners based on graffiti cooked and explained by Mar Lopez and I am probably forgetting so many other things so you will have to forgive me (Kruglanski, 2016)

The post communicates the breadth and diversity of projects housed by the centre. It shows *macba* to be a point of encounter for many entrepreneurial projects, some economic, some activists and some cultural. Most interestingly, in some of the projects all three elements existed. These expressed the vision of *macba*, where a juxtaposition of different elements could contribute to alternative organisational processes, helping the centre to explore yet inexistent possibilities. In Chapter 4 I discussed how experimenting with juxtaposition challenges the element of control within organisation, proposing alternatives to both mainstream and activist organisational forms. In *macba*, the overlap between cultural, activist and economic concerns expressed both a critique of social movements and an exploratory way

forward. Together with other *macba* blog posts I examined, this one shows my hope that such activist/cultural economies take root through dialogue with their environment, becoming resilient and demonstrating the pragmatic value of such an artistic experiment (from *macba* blog posts Kruglanski, 2012c; Kruglanski, 2012a; Kruglanski, 2012d). In other words, the *macba* experiment proposed to explore the creation of resilient alternative infrastructures through poetic/pragmatic juxtapositions placed in dialogue with their close environment. The critique of social movements implicit in this blog post, as well others I examined, had to do with the precarity, the protocolisation and the homogeneity of such movements. The way forward *macba* explored had to do with creative experimentation through openness to diverse proposals and the juxtaposition of different elements within each project (from macba blog posts Kruglanski, 2012c; Kruglanski, 2012a; Kruglanski, 2012d).

In order to observe whether such resilience was created in *macba*, I turned to the trail it left on social media. I considered that a community of long-term collaborators growing in and around the project would be an indicator of such resilience, given that it would suggest a lively collaborative ecology that could maintain it. A close reading of the many posts on *macba's* Facebook page provided insight into this subject. I created the *macba* Facebook page on the 1st of November 2011. It was active until the 15th of September 2015. The posts cover a period of slightly over four years of *macba's* five-year existence. They totalled 200 posts, almost a post every week on average, giving me a comprehensive view of the centre's activities and the people involved in them. There were 38 collaborators in total. 22 of them were only mentioned once, having organised one-off events. Most of the posts refer to eight constant collaborators: Sascha, Daniel, Mar, the Narrative Play Collective, Una, Lara, Miss Natalie, and Marisa. I placed these collaborators, the span of time in which they were involved and the number of activities they were involved in in table 6.1. I also put the data on a timeline to get a more visual sense of the collaborative landscape of *macba* (Figure 5). Some of the projects, like the M2 gallery, the Radio/Teahouse, Itinerant Screen Printing, the tea salon and the Lletetet milk distribution project, embodied the overlap I talked about above, having a cultural, an activist and an economic aspect to them. In this they exemplified the juxtaposition of different elements and its pragmatic function of creating local economies. I placed them in Table 6.2 and similarly on a timeline (Figure 6).

Table 6.1: *macba* collaborators

Name	First mentioned	Last mentioned	Time in months	Number of posts mentioned
Sascha	03.05.2012	28.03.2014	23	24
Daniel	27.11.2011	01.12.2014	36	12
Mar	17.02.2014	31.10.2014	8.5	4
Narrative Play Collective	07.01.2013	11.05.2015	29	21
Una	03.05.2012	01.05.2014	24	3
Lara	02.03.2012	01.05.2013	14	10
Miss Natalie	25.03.2012	13.02.2014	22.5	7
Marisa	16.04.2012	12.12.2013	20	11

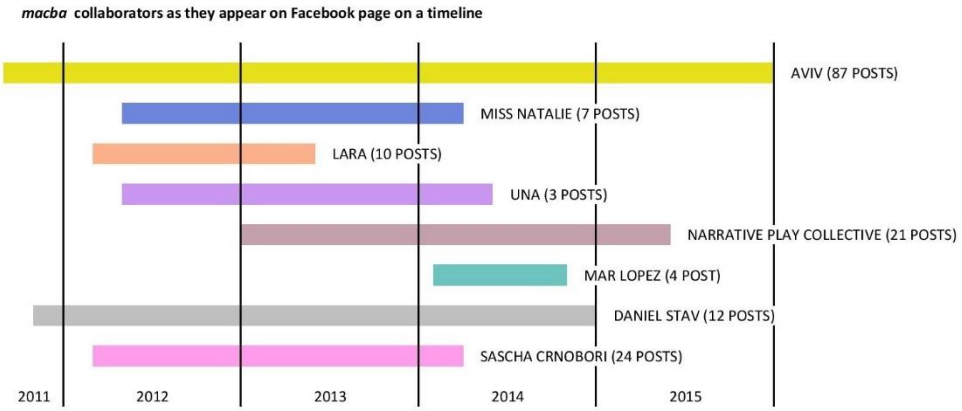

Figure 5: *macba* collaborators as they appear on the Facebook page on a timeline

Table 6.2: *macba* activities

Project	First mentioned	Last mentioned	Time in months	Number of posts mentioned
Itinerant Screen Printing (Miss Natalie)	25.03.2012	27.10.2012	7	3
Gleaners of Visual Culture (Lara)	02.03.2012	01.05.2013	14	9
Dinners with wild plants (Sascha)	25.01.2013	28.03.2014	14	13
Liquors, tinctures workshop (Sascha	06.09.2012	29.01.2014	17	9
Narrative Play Collective activities	07.01.2013	11.05.2015	29	21
Graffiti Recipes (Mar)	17.02.2014	31.10.2014	8.5	2
M2 (Marisa, Aviv)	28.01.2013	12.12.2013	11.5	10
Lletetet	05.02.2013	08.04.2013	2	4
Tea salon (Aviv)	25.02.2012	17.02.2013	11.5	7
Radio/Teahouse (Anna, Aviv)	23.09.2013	27.05.2015	20	6
Sentimental Mending (Aviv)	02.11.2012	21.02.2013	4	5
Wild Yeast Economies (Aviv)	21.09.2013	05.05.2015	19	7

'Outbreaks' Project (Sascha, Simona, Miss Natalie)	03.05.2012	29.06.2012	2	3

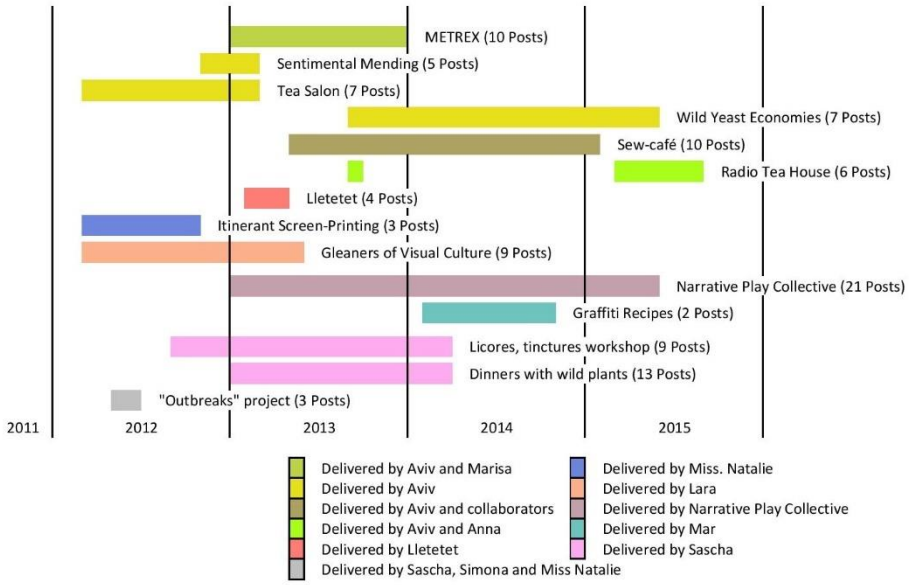

Figure 6: *macba* activities on a timeline

The timelines portray *macba* as an assemblage of different projects coinciding in the space at a given time. From a close look at the tables, the charts and the data they were based on, I noticed three things. One was the patchiness of this collaborative landscape as it unfolded in time. By this I mean that the tables and timelines show collaborators and their projects coming and going within the centre, very few staying for longer than a few months. There are several spaces on the timeline with very few projects taking place (e.g. the latter part of 2014). The second thing I noticed was the fact of the *macba* project disproportionately centred on my own presence and work. The third was the fact that, though my interest lied in projects that experimented with livelihoods, some of the experiments that most coincided with this interest had a small presence in the calendar (e.g. a project called Lletetet). This was in contrast with some projects that coincided less with this vision for the centre, which were prominent (e.g. the Narrative Play collective). In terms of the first observation, the occasional dearth gives an impression of instability, of the centre struggling to take root. The disproportionate activity initiated by myself, show the collective aspect of *macba* to be imbalanced. The fact of so much of it dependent on one person suggests fragility. The fact of the traces *macba* activities left on the Facebook page not representing the extent to which they coincided with its vision, suggest that rather than imposed, this vision was just one of several that acted in the space. Altogether, the data from social media posts and blog posts gives the impression of an organisation

created accumulatively by many different ideas, projects and collaborations, but lacking a sense of stability. The instability and patchiness the data points at, created frustration, which I will discuss further down in a section about hardships. At the same time, the overlap of cultural, activist and economic concerns in some of the projects, showed *macba*'s openness to experiments. As I will show in the section about activism, these were attempts to contribute a poetic/pragmatic approach to the ongoing conversations of social movements.

6.2.2 An organisational/social overview of IPC

The IPC data was full of mentions of different projects and organisations that existed in the organisation's close environment. There were also mentions of different individuals that formed part of this environment in different capacities. As part of a project I was collaborating with, Jowt circulated a document called "IPC Business Empire". It listed the different IPC projects, small businesses and organisations renting from them, and others they have friendship ties and collaborations with. This document depicted this collaborative landscape as it was when writing these words in 2021. I needed a similar document depicting these kinds of collaborations throughout the history of the organisation going back to its inception. He produced a preliminary one, to which I added information from the other interviews I held. I then circulated it to Max and Griffith, and talked about its content with Vex, three central figures of IPC's early days, so that the information is contrasted and completed. The basis of this subsection was these two documents. Through this data I looked at the different individuals and organisations in IPC's close environment, their longevity and the time-span of their involvement, seeing what I might learn from such a bird's-eye-view (IPC business empire document, 10.11.2020; IPC members' and friends' projects and organisations document, 15.01.2021; Personal communication, Vex, 09.01.2021; Personal communication, Jowt, 16.03.2017; Griffith, 15.01.2021; Max 12.01.2021).

The list of the organisations and projects organised by IPC members and friends was large. There were the clothing shops Punkarama and Underworld, the crèche, the teenage crèche, the Loo Prints print shop, the food coop, the Common Folk's Trading Company also known as Folks (from now on – Folks), the George St. Trading Company organic food distributor, running for office with the Green Party, and the organisation of an anti-Poll-Tax demonstration, to list but a few. Besides these historical projects, there were all the activities that IPC organised outside of their core one of providing housing: the IPC Bike Project, the Computer Project, the Gardening Project, the Furniture Project and the Cooking Project. IPC also owns and manages several spaces for promoting social enterprise in the neighbourhood: the George St. Social Enterprise Park, the Beverley St. Yard and the former St. Paul's Church. It extends what Jowt humorously referred to as its "business empire" through its commercial tenants, most of

which work from these three spaces. I placed this extended historical and current "business empire" in table 6.3, which details the various projects and organisations around IPC and in table 6.4, which details their commercial tenants and the three enterprise hubs they occupy. I placed the information in table 6.2 on a timeline, presented in Figure 7, to get a visual sense of the scope of collaboration, at least during part of the organisation's trajectory (IPC business empire document, 10.11.2020; IPC members' and friends' projects and organisations document, 15.01.2021).

Table 6.3: Organisations in the IPC organisational ecology

Organisation	Activity	Dates	People Involved	Location
Punkarama	Shop	1988-1989	Vex, Jowt	Duke's Ave. (not IPC owned)
Underworld	Shop	1989-1990	Vex, Jowt	Duke's Ave. (not IPC owned)
Loo Prints	Printing Press	Nov.1989-May 1991	Griffith, Vex, Carley, Alice, Marla, John, Ives	56 Charley St. (IPC owned)
The crèche	Childcare space	1989-1993	IPC members and friends who had children	46 Westhold St. (IPC owned)
Teenage crèche	Adolescent hang-out	2000-2003	Second generation IPC members and friends	46 Westhold St. (IPC owned)
Common Folk's Trading Company	Workers Co-operative buying club for wholefoods for those involved in and around IPC. Later expanded and bought and renovated the local corner shop	*June 1991-July 1998. *12.11.1990: registered as Common Folk's Trading Company *June-Sept. 1991: Food club in spare bedroom, Victor Ave. *Starting 21.09.1991: moved to 48 Westhold St. *May 1992: Shop on 73 Westhold St. purchased *July 1992: Folks shop opened *28.08.1992: Shop closed for renovations, returning to front room of 48 Westhold St. *17.03.1993: Shop on 73 Westhold St. re-openned. *July 1998: Belinda and	Griffith, Chris, Alice, Jannet, Sandra, Kim, Drew, Kid, Willy, Chuck, Sean Hutt, Vix, "plus too many to mention" (Personal communication, Griffith, 15.01.2021)	12 Victor Ave spare bedroom (IPC owned), then 48 Westhold St. front living room (owned by Chris and Griffith), then the shop at 73 Westhold St. (IPC owned)

		Jessica became directors, "business changed hands to Samz and Jacky a few months after" (Personal communication, Griffith, 15.01.2021)		
Folks	Corner shop	1998-present	Samz, Johnny, Jacky	73 Westhold St. (IPC owned)
George St. Trading	Organic food distributor	01.09.1998-present	Griffith, Tina, Steve, Beki	23 George St. (IPC owned) later Reap (owned by Griffith)
Avenue Village Hall	Neighbourhood hall	2003-2017	Kid	200 Avenue (managed not owned by IPC)
Lefterettes	Punk band	2014-present	Jack, Rudy, Ash	

Table 6.4:IPC commercial spaces and tenants

Name	Dates	Tenants	Location
George St. Social Enterprise Park	1999	FYeast Bakery/Chili Pain Sauce/Heath Walker/Whykham Ethnic Minority Community Centre/Robert Wheatome/Alister Hublar	23 George St.
Beverley St. Yard	2013	Weave&Live/IPC Bike Project/Creativity Media	38-58 Beverley St.
IPC offices	2016	IPC office/IPC Computer Project/IPC Cooking Project/Paul the baker counselling/Anabel psychologist/Anna, Aviv	69 Clotson St.
Folks	1992	Samz	73 Westhold St.
Barrel of Monkeys Cafe		Christopher	80b Newland Ave.
Former St. Paul's Church	2018	Avenue Neighbourhood Market	Allenby Rd./Avenue

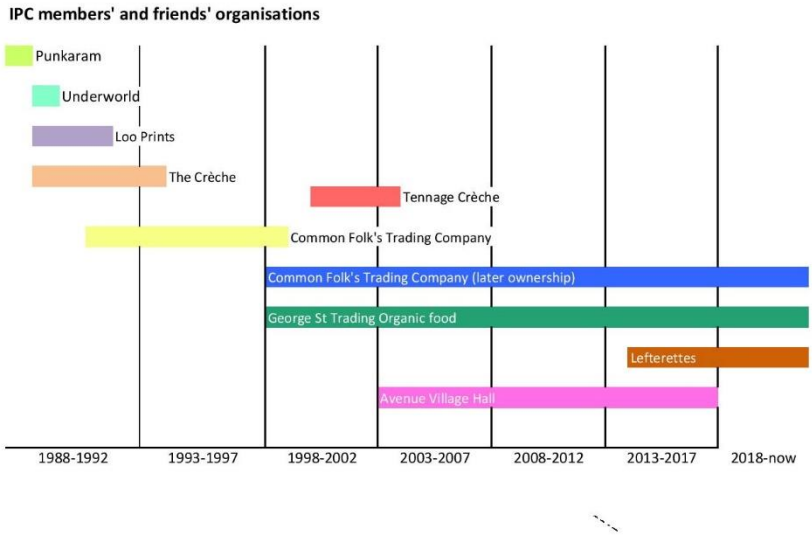

Figure 7: IPC members and friends' organisations

The tables, combined with my ethnographic observation, helped me notice the many changes in the projects within IPC and the many overlaps between them. One type of change was the change in location of several of the projects, with a few of them starting in people's homes. Vex, for example, told me that "*Loo Prints was started in my bathroom*" and Folks inhabited two private homes before relocating to the store on Westhold St. Other than location, legal format sometimes changed throughout the years (as was the case with Folks and with IPC itself), as did the main activity and sometimes the name. Personnel also tended to change and there was a lot of crossover with the same people showing up in different organisations. All the above made putting a boundary on where one project starts and where another begins, difficult. There was an overlap between organisational affiliations and personal relationships such as friendships and family, which made classifying the nature of the different relationships practically impossible. Relatedly, it was hard to put individuals in categories such as 'client' or 'service provider', given that such relationships were multi-directional with different people and organisations providing services to each other, a topic I will expand further in Chapter 7. Such overlapping of initiatives with others, and their overlapping with personal lives, existed in all of the individual and organisational life-stories I heard. These changing trajectories of individuals, projects and organisations, the overlap of people between them and the overlap between personal relationships and organisational affiliations made for what Alice called a meshwork where "*none of us can quite put our finger on where it ends*" (Personal communication, Alice, 18.07.2017).

Relatedly, I noted several members and friends that were gone for a few years, just to reappear later. A given person would have a given role or relationship to the organisation, then this person might move away or stop their active relationship with IPC or its social environment, only to reappear after several years or even decades. Often their original role or relationship would have changed in this new incarnation. This was the case with people whom I saw as peripheral to the organisation, a volunteer called Carl, who was a IPC member in the early days, a man nicknamed Chile Grant who attended our markets and a volunteer called Sean, both part of the IPC social milieu in the early days. It was also the case with some central figures such as Sealy, a founding member, who left the organisation in 1998 to start a brewery at the George St. Social Enterprise Park, later to re-join in 2009. Other examples include long-time IPC members and friends such as Caswell, Max and Kid. Together with my observations above, this showed the IPC ecology to be an environment teaming with both entrepreneurial and interpersonal life, one both nourished by and nourishing the environment around it (ethnographic notes, 14.05.2021; IPC members' and friends' projects and organisations document, 15.01.2021; personal communication, Max, 26.01.2018, Caswell, 27.04.2017; Kid, 26.06.2017).

6.2.3 The social/organisational landscape expressed geographically

The organisational landscape of IPC also had its expression in the geographic landscape of the neighbourhood around it. This was also true, on a smaller scale, about *macba*, where engaging with the close vicinity was part of its vision. Figure 8 shows an example of this with Daniel and myself making a schematic of the street for the purpose of engaging with neighbours. Figure 9 shows a similar drawing made by the Narrative Play Collective, used in interviews they held with residents of the street. Figure 10 shows *macba*'s sidewalk used, as it often was, as an extension of the space. In the case of IPC, I noted both historical and more recent collaborations spread throughout the Avenue area that surrounds it. Maps and images I collected, but couldn't include for reasons of anonymisation, showed this collaborative landscape, including the projects, organisations and businesses from their early days, current collaborations with other organisations and current side projects such as their Bicycle Project and the former St. Paul's Church. They showed the geographical extent of the organisation's ongoing dialogue with the neighbourhood in which it operates. I noted how the residential houses IPC owned and managed, spread throughout this neighbourhood, also included many individuals with ties of collaboration and friendship to the organisation. Looking at the data from this geographical perspective helped me visualise the two organisational ecologies as they literally spilled out of the physical boundaries of the buildings they occupied.

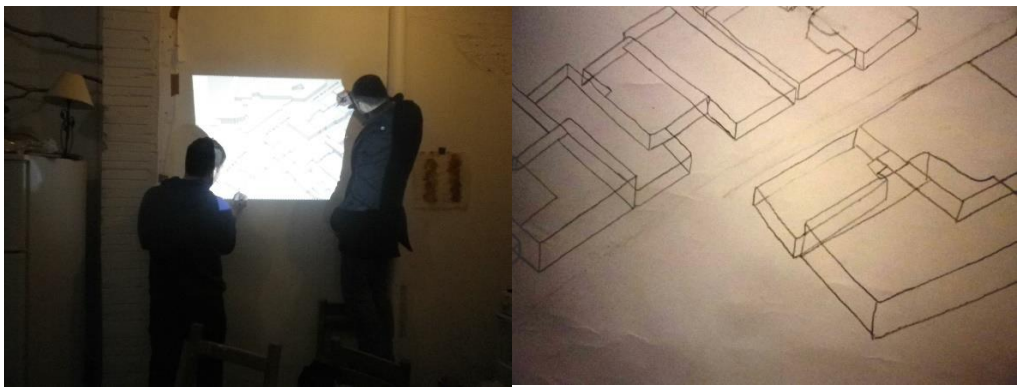

Figure 8: Drawing the street

Figure 9: Narrative Play drawing the street

Figure 10: *macba* spilling out onto the street

6.2.4 Overview conclusions

The geographical overview of the two case studies seems to embody their uncontainable organisational dynamics. Both *macba* and IPC were points of encounter through which different projects were enabled. Especially in IPC, such projects also encountered each other, as a result changing their organisational trajectories, including locations, legal format and personnel. Like organisational trajectories, changing personal trajectories also traversed IPC, with people coming and going, changing their position vis-à-vis the organisation. The fact of the stories of organisations and initiatives overlapping and changing, the overlap between personal lives and organisational project, the multi-directionality of relationships both formal and informal, the coming and going of central actors throughout the years and the fact of activities overspilling geographical boundaries, challenged research and analysis. Overspilling and overlapping, rich with encounters that generated such unruliness, this bubbling environment also reminded me of the image of fermentation that set me off on this inquiry (Katz, 2003).

These overlaps and multi-directional relationships overwhelmed my attempts at drawing boundaries around IPC as an organisation and around its components. But they also created opportunities for rethinking the issue of control within alternative forms of organising. It is this sense of overspilling activity at the outskirts of formal organograms that made me refer to both case studies as organisational ecologies. While the data was hard to control for me as a researcher, it also expresses organisational approaches through which the case studies challenge control as a central principle for organisation. One way they do so is by challenging boundaries. As I discussed in Chapter 2, by defining what lies inside and what outside of an organisation, boundaries are elements of control in organisation, giving them a sense of bounded unity (Midgley, 2000, p.468). Specifically and as discussed in Chapter 3, rigid boundaries of alternative organisations work against their own democratising goals by homogenising social movements and excluding working class people and ethnic minorities (Appel, 2011b; Appel, 2011a). The fact of IPC having diffused boundaries, populated by a myriad of projects and organisations, challenged the rigidity of boundaries and their controlling effect.

Another way control is challenged is by the multi-directionality and diversity of relationships colliding in a physical area. The physical adjacency of this activity, in IPC centred in the Avenue area of Whykham and in *macba* in Santa Dolors St., and the diversity of types of relations, bring to mind a grouping thrown together in a geographic area, an organisational equivalent of the concept of assemblage, discussed in Chapter 4 (Sontag, 1966; Watson, 2003; Tsing, 2015a, p.23). In this organisational assemblage, different activities and relationships took place in

close vicinity to each other transforming each other through encounter. In doing so they challenged the feeling of coherence, causality and control implicit in the planning practices of mainstream organisation (e.g. business plans, project management and strategic plans). While *macba* was short lived and small in scale, IPC's longevity made me examine it closely for the purpose of looking for its possible ingredients. The themes that emerged from the diverse data I collected from both pointed at some directions to explore. In the following two sections I explore the themes of 'hardships' and 'activism', both emerging as central to the stories I heard (personal communication, Vex; 09.01.2021; Griffith, 04.08.2017, 15.01.2021; Kid, 26.06.2017; Caswell, 27.04.2017; Jowt, 02.04.2017; Tina and Alice, 23.06.2017).

6.3 Hardships

6.3.1 Hardships in *macba*

As I will show, hardships played a role in the organisational alternatives created by the case studies, informing processes as they unfolded. Hardships and economic challenges keep appearing in the data from the *macba* experience. Mostly this related to the economic challenges I mentioned in Chapter 4. The economic issues that plagued the project were the very issues it tried to address through its activities and specifically through the *Wild Yeast Economies* Workshops. In an interview, collaborator Flora Gutierez told me how for her, the sessions we organised together "*assume[d] fragility and vulnerability as integral parts of ourselves, of living beings but also of materials, of resources and of spaces*". She read aloud from the description we wrote for the workshops: "*what would happen if we accepted precarity and things breaking down as something natural*", adding "*we all share this suffering that comes from seeing economies as counting, accounts and accounting*" (personal communication, Flora, 27.10.2016). While *macba* included such explicit conversations about economic suffering, the data shows the source of hardships in *macba* as being this monetary dimension of its economy. In my own recollection of the *macba* experience, hardships take protagonism. These memories include the meetings held with collaborators in response to the debt I accumulated in rent and the eviction notices we received for it (ethnographic notes, 24.10.2014). The hardships were underpinned by my many absences from Maricel throughout the years of working on *macba*.

Working with Una on art projects took me away from *macba* often during the years between 2010 and 2014. Besides the opportunity to travel and develop our shared projects, the fact that income from workshops I organised at the centre was scant, made it important for me to take on such paid projects. A reading of the project's webpage shows that in 2010 I visited Belgrade (Serbia), in 2011 - Warsaw (Poland), and in 2012 - Lubljana (Slovania). In 2013 the number and length of these trips intensified, with trips to Holon (Israel), to Stoy (Montenegro),

to Bitola (Macedonia) and later in 2014 to Jerusalem (Israel) and to Mostar (Bosnia). My notes and recollections regarding this time showed that I expected my absences to create an opportunity for other collaborators to take over, making the project their own. They show the reality to be different, with little activity taking place in *macba* during my absences, including a case where the front door was broken and several items stolen (ethnographic notes, 12.10.2013).

Other notes show an intense preoccupation with the financial hardships endured by the centre. While financial hardships in themselves aren't unique to *macba*, they became a central theme of the organisation, and, as I will show further down, influenced organisational processes related to political activism, specifically to the issue of protocolisation I talk about in Chapter 3. Given that this issue was central to my motivation to conduct the *macba* experiment in the first place, such hardships are connected to the project coming to its end, leaving me with the question marks that fuelled the rest of this investigation (ethnographic notes, 11.11.2013).

Other than the hardships of *macba* itself, I noticed indications of precarity within the story of its collaborators and *Wild Yeast Economies* workshop participants. For example, several of the workshop participants I interviewed started their businesses from their homes, similarly to some of the early projects in the IPC organisational ecology (personal communication, Maria, 23.12.2016; Montse, 04.11.2016; Victoria, 02.02.2017). In the case of other *macba* collaborators, such as Lletetet, Sascha, Simona, Lara, Miss Natalie and Daniel, this was done from squatted houses. In these cases the blurring of boundaries between life and work, typical of precarity (Shukaitis and Figiel, 2020, p.7) is coupled with the informality of illegal practices. Apart from squatting, Sascha and Lletetet, shoplifted some of the materials they used. This was combined with other low-cost, precarious practices such as Sascha foraging the main ingredients for the dinners he produced and Lletetet using a machine borrowed from one of their mothers. It is important to note, that while I present squatting and shoplifting here as related to precarity, like many in local Spanish social movements, I mostly perceive them as forms of creative resistance, to be celebrated rather than lamented.

6.3.2 Hardships in IPC

Similarly to the *macba* case study, hardships played a central role in the IPC stories. Practically all of the accounts I heard from the early days included references to the difficulties they confronted. During the first years of its existence, IPC worked on a shoestring budget. Cecil remembers "*at the beginning [...] having meetings on whether we can afford to buy another hammer*" (personal communication, Cecil, 14.01.2018). Their living conditions were quite harsh, as the following anecdote illustrates:

> ...the old cinema, known as The Regmont in town, they used to do the movies for a pound on a Monday night and we used to go there just to get warm. And if they had a double bill on, like two movies one after the other, and it was still a pound, you know we were going to be warm for hours. We'd walk into town and go to the movies and you'd start warming up and you'd start taking these layers of clothes off, and then you'd realised how much you smell [laughing] (personal communication, Cecil, 14.01.2018)

In an email Jamie wrote me:

> I remember [...] seeing that people were pretty poor e.g. they didn't have a dining room table and matching chairs. Nothing matched. All their plates were oddments and their furniture had holes in and their rooms were sparse (email from Jamie, 23.08.2017)

The minutes books from IPC's meetings in the 1980s hold many references to such hardships. In a section called "The Kitty" from 1986-87 it states:

> S. Dorrian [Samuel] pointed out the problems of the kitty running dry before the end of the fortnightly period, and felt that it should only cover the expenses of an evening meal and porridge. J. Jarred [Jard] articulated his grievances with the present system, of one huge evening meal pointing out that he only had a small stomach, and wondered that if the kitty was budgeted better it may stretch to a mid-day snack as well as an evening meal (Minutes Book 1, March 86-Feb 87, 05.03.1986)

In another example of hardships, Chris, who was a member in the 1980s, told me about how "*the council departments were always bullying IPC*", for instance "*withholding housing benefits*" or "*sending a building inspector to completely change the aspect of a house which we've just done up and just spent all this money*" (personal communication, Chris, 29.06.2017). In one case, she remembered

> ...working 'till three in the morning because we had an inspector coming the next day and we'd been given less than 24 hours' notice to go and fit fourteen fire doors on a house and if we didn't they could shut us down (personal communication, Chris, 29.06.2017)

According to her, IPC was "*always backed against the wall but always somehow [...] managed to do it*" (Chris, personal communication, 29.06.2017). As these quotes demonstrate, the story of the organisation's beginning was repeatedly told as one of stubborn persistence in the face of hardships. According to some of the accounts I heard, IPC's resilience was forged in response to such hardships. When asked about it, Jowt referred to "*a grim determination to make it happen and not let it fail*" (personal communication, Jowt, 02.04.2017). Max seems to concur, stating that despite starting out with no money or building skills, "*a fairly strong vision*" and a conviction "*that this vision was good enough to work*" accounts for the organisation's

survival (Max, personal communication, 26.01.2018). The quote from Chris, brought in the previous paragraph, seems to suggest a similar sentiment. These words referring to "*a strong vision*" (Max, personal communication, 26.01.2018) bring me to the next theme, political activism and its centrality in the two case studies. In the following section I will explore the political dimension of the group's "*grim determination*" (personal communication, Jowt, 02.04.2017), related as it was to the challenges of creating grassroots alternatives to capitalism.

6.4 Activism

6.4.1 Activism in *macba*

Chapter 5 brought evidence of participants in *macba* stemming from social movements and informed by their practices. Some of the centre's close collaborators: Sascha, Daniel, Mar, Miss Natalie, Lara and Simona, had, like myself a history of living in squatted houses. Others such as Marisa and Flora, were equally involved in local social movements. Many of the people organising one off events or short-term collaborations were from the activist social milieu, either locally or in other places. Gustav, who constructed *macba*'s window, was a squatter and one of the founders of a carpentry workshop in a squatted social centre. Pol, who constructed the rocket stove was active in an activist network called Permaculture Maricel, as was Victoria, one of the centre's frequent participants. Narrative Play Collective, organised themselves using the habitual practices of such movements: assemblies and consensus-based decision-making. When the centre was in financial trouble, fund-raising events were organised in Mas Divi, a well-known squatted social centre on the outskirts of town and at La Raiz, another activist social centre in the neighbourhood. Out of the 38 collaborators listed in *macba*'s Facebook posts 23 were involved in the kind of assembly-based social movements I myself was previously involved in. In that respect, despite my critique of such movements' homogeneity and protocolisation, *macba* itself was deeply entangled within their culture (ethnographic notes, 09.12.2014; *macba* Facebook page).

6.4.1.1 Activism and livelihoods in *macba*

The stories of Daniel, Sascha and Mar embodied diverse responses to my critique of social movements. In her interview, Mar demonstrated several times how she challenged a certain rigidity in traditional activist thinking. I already quoted her in Chapter 5 challenging her own neighbourhood's activism by including the Senegalese fishing dishes in her book about the neighbourhood. In another example she talked about the fishing practice of trawling:

> There is this issue of trawling, where environmentalists have been struggling many years against it, because it is very aggressive. It damages the seabed. But later you talk to the fishermen and they ask how they can compete with big trawlers. On top of that, here there are very few boats left. How can they do it with an artisanal form of fishing? How would they survive? They tell you that they

> practice trawling but that they use very small boats. They bring in two boxes of fish a day. I didn't do an exhaustive and scientific study of it all so I don't want to position myself without giving it much thought, but I think these are delicate matters (personal communication, Mar, 15.10.2016)

In her position regarding the trawling practices of small fishing companies, Mar created a space for conversation that is inclusive of others, considering the issue from several perspectives, even ones supposedly contrary to environmentalist movements. She demonstrated a way forward from the impasse of rigid boundaries and their negative affects on diversity, issues I discussed in Chapter 3. In doing so she made a contribution to the conversations of activists, challenging the rigidity of positions. In that respect her position was in affinity to the attempts of *macba* to challenge the boundaries of social movements.

While her words express a concern with the livelihoods of fishermen, other parts of the interview showed her extending this concern to her own practice by creating a cooking school in her home and organising dinners at *macba*. This aspect of her work, the fact of creating an economy for herself through cultural/activist experimentation connects her again to the vision of *macba*, to the work of Daniel and Sascha described in Chapter 5, but also to other participants. Simona, Miss Natalie, Lara and Lletetet used *macba* as a space for creative experimentation, which was also a source of income. The *Wild Yeast Economies* workshops focused on creating tools for this overlap between creative experimentation and economy, seeing this as a path towards social change (*macba* blog post, Kruglanski, 2012b). Like Mar's idea for creating a school and Daniel's tempeh making, many of these economic experiments blurred the boundaries between living spaces and business, sometimes uncomfortably. The Wild Yeast Economies workshops proposed dialoguing with this discomfort, starting the process by surveying the terrain. When I asked participants to draw their work environment, several of them drew their homes (Wild Yeast Economies blog, 06.09.2014). In a recorded conversation I held with two workshop participants, one of them, Domi, talked about the discomfort of producing hand-made bicycle hangers and cloth caps from his home. He described it as "*incompatible with my day-to-day*", talking among other things about the time-limitations of combining it with his other work (personal communication, Domi, 02.02.2017). Blog posts I examined showed these conversations as part of an attempt to dialogue with the conditions of precarity, for the purpose of creating diverse economies and organisational forms 'from below'. I saw this as a blind spot of the social movements I participated in and a contribution to their practices (Kruglanski, 2012b). It is for this reason that I placed the data regarding livelihoods within the theme of 'activism' rather than in the one about 'hardships'. The work *macba* and its collaborators did around the issue of livelihoods connected the two themes. By addressing the issue creatively and pragmatically, *macba* collaborators embodied

the idea of social change rooted in the daily negotiations of survival, responding as they did to precarity through a detailed dialogue with it. Thus, the main contribution *macba* was hoping to make to the wider conversation of social movements had to do with the creation of new forms of organising economic projects, based on experimentation and dialogue with precarity, for the purpose of rethinking livelihoods and reconfiguring the economic landscape from the grassroots (from macba blog post Kruglanski, 2012c; Kruglanski, 2012d; Wild Yeast Economies blog post Kruglanski, 2014).

6.4.2 Activism in IPC

Like *macba*, IPC was steeped in activist culture. The fact of IPC emerging from an anarchist background came up in the three stories I presented in Chapter 5. Several of the other people I interviewed mentioned activism explicitly. For example, during the collective conversation at my house, Griffith said: "*to me it was all about the people and having shared ideals of what we are, how we thought about music and politics, taking control of the situations of housing and food*" (personal communication, Griffith, IPC collective conversation, 04.08.2017). Max told me his involvement in IPC came out of his "*ideas about workplace and democracy and about taking responsibility for your life. Having somewhere to live where you have an input in. This shared responsibility of ownership*" (personal communication, Max, 26.01.2018). Caswell told me that IPC's intention was "*to affect social change and to get the money to do that by dealing in property*" (personal communications, Caswell, 27.04.2017) and Cecil related their work to capitalism being "*a bloody disaster on so many levels*" (personal communications, Cecil, 14.01.2018). This explicit relationship to political activism was also expressed by activities such as organising a Poll Tax demonstration, running for office with the Green Party and an involvement in a nation-wide network called Rebellious Pathways (personal communication, Max, 12.01.2021; Jowt, 02.04.2017; Kid, 26.06.2017).

6.4.2.1 DIY ethics as expressing daily activism

Apart from these explicit expressions of activism, the ethics expressed by their daily actions were also informed by their politics. Alice referred to this when she told me that for her "*just living the way we lived [...] is a political act*" (personal communication, Alice, 18.07.2017). This more implicit activism expressed itself through IPC's DIY ethics, a theme that is connected politically to anarchism and culturally to punk rock (Franks, 2003, pp.21, 25; Dodd, 2014, p.167). While punk was repeatedly mentioned in the various conversations I had (personal communication, Jowt, 02.04.2017, Cecil, 14.01.2018, Kid, 26.06.2017), the theme of DIY, with much emphasis on their unprofessional beginnings, was practically ubiquitous in them. Tina, Max, Caswell and Vex talked about how this ethic translated to a trial and error approach to learning:

> No one knew anything when they started. They just had to guess and get it wrong and then through doing that they got it right. (personal communication, Tina, 23.06.2017)

> None of us had any experience at all. We all sort of came to it [...] I don't think any of us had any building skills at all when we first started (personal communication, Max, 26.01.2018)

> Nobody had any idea about running a business. It was very very very haphazard. Nobody knew anything (personal communication, Caswell, 27.04.2017)

> We didn't have any skills but it didn't stop us and everyone just had a go (personal communication, Vex, 09.01. 2021)

Thus, DIY ethics were connected to IPC's unprofessional beginnings, to learning through getting it wrong. Chris referred to it as a form of learning that empowered them, "*the fact that you learn how to renovate property yourself [...] and you don't have to rely on anybody*" (personal communications, Chris, 29.06. 2017). Thus, such empowerment related this learning process to the work of creating grassroots alternatives to housing.

6.4.2.2 DIY and Cecil's strong work ethic

Several of the conversations connected this DIY ethic also to a strong work ethic. Cecil was the most visible proponent of this saying that "*if we are going to have any sort of alternative society, it's going to be fucking hard work*" (personal communication, Cecil, 14.01.2018). The data showed issues related to the importance of work ethic as wrought with conflict and debate. Cecil hinted as much when he told me:

> There was this fundamental problem of having a bunch of dope-smoking hippies, to be fairly blunt about it, trying to work. IPC managed to do that and that was a hell of an achievement (personal communication, Cecil, 14.01.2018)

One point of contention was the issue of getting up early. The old minutes books showed this to be a subject of much debate. For example, in a section called "Getting Up" it said:

> Hayke [Cecil] proposed that everybody should get to Charles St. to start work by 10.00 a.m. Despite being laughed out of the meeting, he strenuously persevered with his argument in the true John Bull spirit. Limited resistance to this argument came from P. Caswell who suggested that sometimes he would like to start late and finish late. However D. Hayke retaliated by pointing out that people work better as a group, and if people cannot regulate their hours then perhaps they shouldn't be in the co-op. J. Newton [Jowt] and G. Mitchell [Vex] said they would make an effort to be at Charles St. by 11.00 a.m. and although no formal agreement was decided upon, the general view of the meeting was that a greater effort to be at work early should be made. (IPC minutes, Book 1, 12th Meeting 24.6.1986)

Relatedly, the early minutes books showed debates regarding manual vs. immaterial labour, with manual labour considered the most important. For example, one entry stated:

> Antagonisms evolved around assumptions by D. Hayke [Cecil] that J. Jarred [Jard] was not prepared to do enough manual labour, and assumptions by J. Jarred that D. Hayke's outlook on the co-op is short-sighted and therefore restrictive. (IPC minutes, book 1, March 86-Feb 87, 05.03.86)

At the same time another one read:

> 4) Research days M. Astbury [Max] proposed that it should be legitimate for people to do research even during periods of renovation work to houses in relation to specific future projects such as a short stay hostel or a women's refuge centre etc. Such research could be done in public libraries etc. for a period of 8 hours per day, and these hours would count towards the working week. This was felt to be a good idea particularly as we hope to iron out our workflow problems in future. The motion was passed (IPC minutes, book 2, 40th Meeting, 15.3.1987)

Max, who did a lot of administrative work, told me about such debates in our interview:

> Office work, when we were busy, was really frowned upon [...] there was a restricted time you could spend doing office work, so many hours a week, two or three, no more than two or three hours a week doing office work when we were renovating a house. The manual work was seen as being virtuous (personal communication, Max, 26.01.2018)

Kid, whose labour was more of a social nature, also mentioned this issue several times. For example, he talked about one Samuel, "*a real funny sociable bloke*", "*a really good PR man*" who "*got a lot of people involved in IPC*", adding that Samuel "*probably wasn't the greatest worker because he always slept in*" (personal communication, Kid, 26.06.2017). Thus, manual labour and getting up early were perceived as connected with having the strong work ethic the organisation, and by extension the alternative society, needed. At the same time, it was in tension with some of the lifestyle tendencies of the young alternative people who formed it. Kid presented this to me as a sort of balance between two elements:

> You get too many hippies and nobody gets out of bed. You get too much of Cecil and it's no fun (personal communication, Kid, 26.06.2017)

The issue is thus related both to the practical challenges of the organisation and its political DIY ethics. It seems to coincide with Jowt's position brought in Chapter 5 about resilience having to do with the group's "*grim determination*" (personal communication, Jowt, 02.04.2017). This was definitely an important 'ingredient' in what made IPC resilient, but, as I will now show, this conviction, that creating a new society is hard work, came coupled with another tendency, one

of openness. This openness, both to people and ideas coming from the outside, was equally connected to their DIY ethics.

6.4.2.3 DIY, openness and democratisation

Some of the people I talked to connected the unprofessionalism of IPC's early days, their DIY ethics, to a certain openness the organisation had. Jamie elaborated how this early unprofessionalism invited people into the organisation and its ongoing learning process. She remembered a famous anecdote that demonstrated this. In it they embarrassingly used brick trowels for plastering, the wrong tools for the job. She commented:

> You hear a story like that, you know I turn up seven years in and I hear a story like that and I'm like 'Ooh, OK, right, so maybe I can do something a bit stupid as well. It would be all right. I can get away with it [...] all this red tape, it's not there. So, you can go 'oh, there's the thing. Let's just try it' (personal communication, Jamie, IPC collective conversation, 14.09.2017)

She then further explained how this DIY ethic created openness and inclusivity within the organisation:

> One of the things that made it so open to me was that I kind of sensed that everybody was learning together. I wasn't coming into something where I thought there were these total experts and I just didn't know anything. I really felt that everybody was learning. You felt really valued straight away. You really felt that openness (personal communication, Jamie, IPC collective conversation, 14.09.2017)

Her words express the connection between IPC's imperfect learning processes, the embodiment of their DIY ethics, and their openness to outsiders entering. Similar to Tina's story, which I recounted in Chapter 5, Chris's story of how she joined also exemplifies such openness:

> I was living in a housing estate in Whykham that was very rough, in Stiltham. I was a young mom. I was 19 and had a one-year-old son and I was being burgled all the time, continuously burgled, really horrific time. And I heard of an organisation called IPC that would help me. So, I rang to somebody called Dave Seal known as Sealy. And he was really sympathetic and helpful and said 'yeah come down tomorrow and we'll sort something out'. [...] They put me immediately into a shared property on Charles St. I didn't mind sharing 'cause I was technically homeless. And from that time I knew then that they were working on a house around the corner on Westhold St. that was going to be my house but I didn't know it was a shell of a house and I was thinking 'I can't, I'm never going to live here' and then obviously started to work, volunteer and then moved into that property, became a director of IPC after maybe a year or so volunteering (personal communication, Chris, 29.06.2017)

Chris's story shows the organisation's permeability towards the outside. Specifically, the fact that someone from a poverty stricken housing estate could get involved, first in the work of reforming houses and then formally to the point of becoming a cooperative member (in Chris's words "*a director*") contests the homogeneity of social movements, one of the critiques that informed the *macba* experiment from its inception. Regarding this homogeneity, I asked Cecil if the people who lived in the early IPC houses were mostly friends, but defining who was a friend and who wasn't was not so straightforward for him:

> A lot of that was all very blurry because there were people that would move into our houses which you didn't know from a bar of soap and then they'd sort of become a friend and get involved and then there were other people who didn't want anything to do with you and just wanted to keep themselves to themselves which was fair enough (personal communication, Cecil, 14.01.2018)

6.4.2.4 Attitudes towards planning

But the openness of IPC was not just a question of allowing *people* into it. It was a more general openness, allowing the unexpected, be it a human, a building or an idea, to happen. Like the openness to new human participation, this openness in the wider sense was also connected to their DIY imperfection. Learning as they go along, "*building the plane while flying*" as they often referred to it, was associated with an approach that valued doing over talking or planning (ethnographic notes, 23.07.2018). In the collective conversation Caswell said:

> What made it and kept it going was, anything was possible, things happened. It was always, 'what are we going to do? Are we going to sit around and talk about it? No. We're just going to get on with it'. And there was a lot of just getting on with it. And if you make mistakes, well you can undo it and do it again (personal communication, Caswell, IPC collective conversation, 14.09.2017)

He then exemplified this, using anecdotes about getting a bank loan and about making a window frame. In so doing, he expressed this ethic as one that applies to the different facets of the organisation's work (personal communication, Caswell, IPC collective conversation, 14.09.2017).

This DIY approach that valued doing, bore relevance to one of the central issues of my thesis – planning. Alice saw planning within IPC as something tentative and dialogic, a complement to doing:

> You have to go in with a kind of plan, ready to change depending on what you are going to meet, what you are going to come up against. It's that thing about being flexible, creative and problem solving. If you make a plan in your study, you're only going on part of the information because most of the information is actually out there when you're doing it, so you have to be ready to take your plan out and

> be flexible using what's out there (personal communication, Alice, IPC collective conversation, 14.09.2017)

While planning and controlling are usually perceived as achieving long-term goals (Hodgkinson et al., 2006, p.408; Spee and Jarzabkowski, 2011, p.1218), Caswell connected IPC's certain disregard for planning with the group's longevity and its resilience. He illustrated this through the following anecdote regarding a course IPC participated in during its early days:

> The homework was to come up with a business plan. And everyone else came back with a nicely typed or hand-written sheets and sheets of paper. And we came back with three or four scraps of paper and literally a fag packet with something written on it. And the interesting thing was, of course, 10 years later we were the only ones that were still there and everybody else had collapsed. So they've done all this very very careful planning and presentation and it was all about presentation and for IPC it was all about: 'What can we do? What do we want to do? Let's get on and do it' (personal communication, Caswell, 27.04.2017)

The fact of the organisation's openness towards the unexpected entering is related to the theme of chance encounter I discussed in Chapter 5. As I will now show, the physical spaces they created were a manifestation of such an ethic.

6.4.2.5 Spaces of openness

I mentioned earlier the blurring of boundaries between the formal working projects and the living spaces of several *macba* collaborators, and similarly the fact of some projects from the IPC ecology starting from people's homes. Relatedly, an examination of the physical spaces within this ecology show it to express the openness to encounters from the outside, a physical manifestation of their democratising ethics. One example is the history of the different spaces that housed the IPC office. At the beginning, the organisation didn't have a dedicated office:

> 6) Office facilities J. Newton [Jowt] proposed that his bedroom could contain the co-op office, i.e. central point for bureau and stationary etc. This was agreed. However J. Jarred [Jard] would keep the accounts in his room (IPC minutes, Book 1 March 86-Feb 87, 2nd meeting 12/3/86)

So, in the first IPC house, the office was a decentralised affair with different functions taking place in different bedrooms of their shared house. Once they rehabilitated 46 Westhold St., an office was set up in one of the rooms there. Mentions of 46 and the adjacent 48 Westhold St, kept coming up in the conversations I had. Chris told me about 48 Westhold St., her house with Griffith, her partner at the time. She talked about its connection to 46, the IPC house and office next door:

> We bought a house on Westhold St., which was next to the IPC house, and so we made an agreement that we would knock through downstairs. So, we had a social area and a crèche. [...] We started with the crèche first and the bottom of my

> house is a social area. So, we opened up the crèche part on an evening so there's a bigger social area, with a pool table and we built a bar and things like that in your current living room [referring to me]. And then the crèche had been quite successful because what it was doing was bringing new people into the organisation who had children and wasn't able to be released to go and do work so it allowed them to do that. Obviously, the children were starting to interact and get to know each other. It was really good for them. There is a big group of maybe 20 children in between maybe 15 maybe 20 parents. And then more people maybe tenants then were allowed to come which is a new thing it wasn't just a closed club. Tenants were able to come socialising on an evening and also for the crèche (personal communication, Chris, 29.06.2017)

From the many descriptions of these two connected houses emerges the image of a compound of sorts, with mixed private, social and commercial uses, a point of reference for IPC's social milieu and for the close neighbourhood around it (personal communications, Kid, 26.06.2017; Caswell, 27.04.2017).

In the late 1990s the office moved to 23 George St. after it was bought and renovated by the organisation. I described this building in Chapter 4 where I talked about my first meeting with Jowt. In 2016, it moved again, this time to the newly bought and renovated 69 Clotson St., where they are still located as I write. Spending many hours in this building, I observed it as embodying the kind of welcoming open space the previous office did:

> Oftentimes one might find Jowt, Carrol, the IPC architect, or any other worker, talking to a tenant, a volunteer, an employee or anyone stopping by. Other times there are people eating their lunches or preparing warm drinks (ethnographic notes, 20.02.2020)

The layout of the office created a situation where people walking into the offices are more likely to find themselves talking to the director of the organisation first rather than to a receptionist; a fact they were explicit about, even to the point of mentioning in one of IPC's funding bids (IPC CLLD bid, 09.02.2019).

The creation of open spaces populated IPC's history, as was apparent from the many mentions of 46/48 Westhold St., the way Kid talked about the Avenue Village Hall, and the mentions of the student house where the relationships that gave start to the project first emerged. In that, it resonated with the physical space of *macba*, with its big green open doors connecting its interior with Santa Dolors St. At the same time, IPC's current offices also contain areas that are more controlled, less accessible and less visible (ethnographic notes, 10.04.2019, 12.04.2016, 06.03. 2018; CLLD funding bid, 09.02.2019; IPC business empire document, 10.11.2020). The openness these spaces express is the physical manifestation of the social openness discussed above, the one that welcomed people, building and events from the outside.

The data brought in this subsection suggests connections between IPC's anarchist beginnings and three important subthemes repeatedly emerging in the data: their DIY ethics, their rigorous work ethic and their openness both to people and to ideas coming in from the outside. The imperfection celebrated by the people I talked to, and the openness they felt emerged from it is connected to another theme, central to this investigation – activist protocolisation and its antonym, spontaneity. Both these related subthemes emerged as central to the data regarding IPC. The next subsection explores this relationship as it played out in the organisation's ongoing learning processes.

6.4.3 Protocolisation and spontaneity

In term of *macba's* relationship to protocolisation, I mentioned in Chapter 4 the fact of organising dinners in lieu of having formal meetings. My ethnographic notes show that, towards the end of the project, as a response to the debt, collaborators rejected the idea of meeting over dinner, proposing to have formal meetings, with an agenda and minutes taken instead. As a result of this meeting an online spreadsheet with a monthly budget was produced. In this respect the hardships earlier discussed changed the centre's methodology, opting for traditional planning and organising over informality and spontaneity (ethnographic notes, 24.10.2014). Other than that, planning documents I found in my Google drive show many intents on my part to plan and to organise the monthly activities and to detail the tasks involved in the creation of new projects. Together with the programmes I produced monthly, they suggest the tensions between planning and spontaneity that are found in the organisational practices, the grappling with precarity that was *macba*. I dedicate the rest of this section to detailing the way IPC's organisational practices embodied their own tensions and complementarities between protocolisation and spontaneity, locating them in relation to the conversations about such matters within social movements.

6.4.3.1 Protocolisation in IPC

The IPC data showed tensions between an adherence to the protocolisation typical of activist groups, and a playfulness/spontaneity that seemed to contrast it. The minutes books show IPC to be part of the general activist culture as I elaborated in Chapter 3. They used consensus decision-making, held weekly meetings, took extensive notes and debated endlessly about the format and the specific protocols to be applied. Taking protocols seriously, several people I talked to stressed the importance of weekly meetings (personal communication, Max, 26.01.2018, Vex, 09.01. 2021, Jowt, 02.04.2017). The minutes books show the group to have been reflexive and thoughtful regarding these protocols. For example when Sealy, an early IPC member, came back from a course at a local cooperative development agency with "a list of proposals put forward at the course for improving our meetings" as a response, Jowt

"suggested that each item on the agenda could be where possible written up as a motion and put forward in the form of a proposal" giving "the chairperson a more definite idea of the scope of debate to allow and act as a reference point to draw the debate back to if it is in danger of going off at a tangent" (IPC minutes, book 2, 36th Meeting, 05.03.1987)

6.4.3.2 Tensions between protocols and "*working the system*"

This adherence to protocolisation placed the early IPC well within the norms of its activist milieu. At the same time, a counter-current within it, of playfully disregarding formality, is both striking and significant. Conversations I had with Chris and then with Jowt demonstrated both this adherence to protocol and this counter-current. Chris talked about two different kinds of formalities. There were the groups' own protocols, created internally. For example, in the crèche:

> If I worked one session in the crèche then I was owed one session back so my son would be in for one day and I would work one day with the crèche so it released me one day to go to IPC (personal communications, Chris, 29.06.2017)

And there were the formalities imposed by state and government regulations:

> We had to still go by the guidelines of the crèche. You have a playgroup, you have a nursery and we specifically went for crèche because of the organisational requirements. For example, so many parents, so many children per adult, so many children under a certain age per adult. We still had to adhere to the rules of whatever the state said we had to do. It had to be registered. [...] Every 'i' was dotted and every 't' was crossed (personal communications, Chris, 29.06.2017)

She also mentioned the building work where "*everything had to be up to a certain inspected system*" and the shop where they had to "*get their head around*" rules regarding food hygiene and health and safety (personal communications, Chris, 29.06.2017). Chris connected this adherence to rules with the fragility of the projects in the early days and to the hardships mentioned earlier:

> We couldn't have anything coming back at us, for our children and for the fact that everything was always like a little seed, a little seed just starting. So we had to make sure nothing was going to come along and take that away from us (personal communications, Chris, 29.06.2017)

But not everyone agreed with Chris's recollections. I later talked to Jowt about my conversation with Chris, asking him whether he would emphasise the crèche as following governmental guidelines, going by the book, or whether their approach was more one of "*hacking the system*". He responded "*definitely the last one*". As an example, he told me that the crèche was officially registered as a mom and toddlers' group, which meant officially one of the parents had to always be there, which is not how the crèche actually worked

(ethnographic notes, 14.08.2020). His response reminded me of my conversation with Cecil, where he talked about IPC "*learning how to work the system*". As an example, he mentioned IPC members and friends previously "*getting paid housing benefits which is just going to some shitty landlord who doesn't do repairs on your place and you live in a shithole*". But by setting up their own organisation "*we would get the housing benefits and it was in effect going to us because we had this organisation*" (Personal communication, Cecil, 14.01.2018). He added this anecdote:

> I remember working on something at 11 Argyll St, so I was working on the house I lived in, doing an improvement to that house that I really wanted to do [...] So I would actually be at home working on the house I lived in, getting paid for it and not having to buy the building materials. How fucking good is that? You know what I mean? That really works (personal communication, Cecil, 14.01.2018)

I heard several mentions of practices that "*worked*" the system in such a way. For example, IPC members took advantage of government schemes that gave them extra income for being entrepreneurs starting their own business. By thus presenting themselves as entrepreneurs, investors buying houses, IPC dialogued mischievously, not only with the legalities of 1980s England but also with its prevailing values. Jowt talked about this as them "*playing Thatcher at her own game*" (personal communication, Jowt, 02.04.2017). In this respect both Cecil and Jowt see IPC as playfully responding to "*the system*" and its imposed protocols.

While, as we saw, IPC members took their internal protocols seriously, there was looseness and play there as well. Caswell told me about formal and informal meetings:

> You'd have informal [meetings] where you would be just doing something like sorting out the yard at one of the houses and you'd just have a tea break and whoever was there would sit around, discuss whatever and a decision would be made. And the next time you'd have a formal meeting, well, that decision's already been made (personal communications, Caswell, 27.04.2017)

This attitude towards protocol seems to be related to the valuing of doing over planning discussed earlier, to the openness to events unfolding in the midst of action. This tension between informal playfulness and adherence to protocol ran through much of the data that came out of the IPC case study. While the focus on protocol coincided with what is known about social movements' organisational practices, the data shows informality, looseness, playfulness and openness to be just as present.

6.4.3.3 Protocols, humour and democratisation

Interestingly, this tension between protocolisation and informality has some bearing on the issue of democratisation within the organisation. Max told me about the importance of taking

protocol seriously, and also about the importance of not doing so. In an email exchange, he told me about why he used people's full names in the minutes books:

> I was always careful to name people formally, or exactly, as I felt even at that early time the minutes could be used for historical purposes at a later date. By cross referencing with the companies register then the directors/co-op members of IPC could be accurately identified even many years into the future. On a practical note as we had a consensus decision making process, making an accurate note of people's contributions highlighted areas of differing opinion which I felt would help avoid polarisation of views and the potential forming of clicks. Obviously there's scope for one or two dissenting voices in many of the decisions reached so it was important for group cohesion that no members started to feel like their views were not being listened to or noted. On a number of issues members whose views were in a minority accepted the majority decision, for practical reasons, but there were a couple of occasions when an initial minority view eventually prevailed. Everyone accepted that we couldn't get bogged down with issues for more than a few weeks (email from Max, 17.09.2020)

In line with prevailing sentiment within social movements (e.g. Seeds for Change, n.d.), his words show the use of formal protocols as valuable for the smooth running of a democratic organisation. Reading through the minutes books I saw the detailed documentation of all matters personal and organisational discussed through formal proceedings, similar to the case of MNS discussed in Chapter 3 (Cornell, 2011, p.95). But while protocolisation was ever present in the minutes, I was also struck by how it was treated with irony and humour. In one example of both daily-life being protocolised and treated humorously it said:

> Although this minute is headed "downstairs bedroom" A. Rutgers decided to be awkward and chose the upstairs back bedroom to live in. To make matters worse P. Caswell then interjected in the proceedings demanding to know whether he could move into the downstairs bedroom, he was told he could, he replied "he didn't want to" as he liked the bedroom he is presently in, and then he metamorphasised into a cloud of radioactive illogicality and promptly drifted off to pollute the north-east (IPC minutes, book 1 March 86-Feb 87, 6th Meeting, 30.04.1986)

The quote is one of many showing the groups adherence to orderly meetings that extend to discuss private matters. At the same time the humour in it suggest a playful treatment of formal matters, a valuing of not taking oneself too seriously. This tension between formality and humour is nicely expressed by the following quote from the crèche meeting minutes, written up by Jowt:

> It was suggested that the number of kids per adult should be four. However this does allow for flexibility depending on such factors as how useless you are, whether you have a babe in arms and of course who the kids happen to be (Crèche meeting minutes, 07.09.1993)

The quote not only shows humour as being routinely mixed in with formality, but also the very flexibility of the protocols, adjusted as they were both to the parent and the kids that happened to be involved in any particular case. Max told me about how humour was part of the democratising, anti-authoritarian ethics of IPC:

> Whenever anybody tried to assert their authority it was sort of laughed off to a certain extent and lampooned a little bit. And I think that was another strength of IPC because no one really took themselves too seriously. It was a collective thing, even though a few might have had more influence it didn't mean that you had any more right to determine outcomes of situations or have more input into development or policy or that sort of thing (personal communications, Max, 12.01.2021).

Thus, beside the adherence to protocol, Max presented the humour and playfulness, which pushed against formalities as a cultural tool, which promoted the organisation's democracy.

6.4.3.4 Practice vs. protocols in democratisation

Others I talked to similarly provided me with insights regarding the relation between protocols and power dynamics. For example, Tina and Alice told me how the equal say people formally had needed to be practiced to become meaningful:

> Alice: You go to a meeting and you really feel strongly about something but you don't say anything, but you have the opportunity because everyone has the opportunity to say, but you have to step into your own power by saying the thing. It's not that anyone's stopping you. No one's going to go lets, we all get a turn but 'I don't think you've said everything that you feel about this, say some more'. You know what I mean. You've got to say what it is you think. And I think that's...
> Tina: Learning to stand up for yourself (personal communications, Tina, Alice, 18.07.2017)

Their perspective shows horizontality and equality as crafted through practice rather than just resolved by static protocols. Relatedly, they saw leadership, even informal leadership, in this complex way. In one part of our conversation Alice questioned the very essence of leadership as one-directional. She saw leadership as a practice embedded in collective dynamics and a specific context. "*It's not a passive thing of being led*", she told me, adding:

> 'Cause charismatic leaders go both ways don't they? They're kind of like the hook but you've got to get hooked, you know what I mean? (personal communication, Alice, 18.07.2017)

Breaking the formal dichotomy between horizontal and hierarchical organisational structures she added "*it's not either you have someone in charge, telling everyone what to do or you're all sharing*". The kind of horizontality she describes is thus an organic one rooted in the flexibility of practice, where "*different people will pop up to lead different things so different people*

became dominant" (personal communications, Alice, 18.07.2017). Kid also had a playful take on leadership and hierarchy. As part of one of our art projects, we interviewed him about the Avenue Village Hall. Considering himself as having been the "*mis-manager*" or the "*dictator*" of the hall, he told us that he took on a leadership role so that no one, who actually desired power, would. At the beginning he attempted to run the hall by committees of neighbours, then realising in a seemingly contradictory way, that it would be more democratic if he served as a sort of dictator that facilitates openness and participation (*Economic Portraits of Unlikely Entrepreneurs* project documentation, 20.11.2019). Similarly, Jowt also mentioned at some point that he "*suspended democracy in IPC for ten years*". When a worker in the office responded that the organisation seemed pretty democratic to them, Jowt responded that democracy has been back in place for some time now (ethnographic notes, 01.05.2020). From these two instances we see that the formalities of anti-oppression protocols are abandoned for the purpose of facilitating the actual democratic dynamics that take place in the day-to-day. Thus, when formal definitions and informal dynamics are in tension, oftentimes a pragmatic choice was made, favouring the lived experience over formal definitions. This expresses a valuing of doing over formalising. This sort of pragmatism is based more on reflexivity in the midst of action than on the rigidity of preconceived concepts. It exemplifies an approach where prefigurative protocols are rejected in favour of what I called in Chapter 3 a prefigurative feel (ethnographic notes, 01.05.2021).

The data presented a variety of different perspectives regarding formality, informality, protocolisation and spontaneity within IPC. It paints the picture of a group of reflexive people, looking at protocols and formal definition from the vantage point of experience, pragmatically and sometimes even with a touch of irony. Specifically, it shows that within the organisational 'recipe' of IPC, the tension between formality and informality is significant. It shows their openness as closely connected to their DIY ethic, their emphasis of doing over planning or defining. Importantly for my thesis, the centrality of such an approach to the organisational practices of IPC suggests the possibilities of working outside of the ubiquitous planning and controlling of both mainstream and alternative forms of organising. In that respect it responds to the desire for creating alternatives to protocolisation based on dialogue with the day-to-day, expressed in the blog posts and observations from *macba* (from macba blog posts Kruglanski, 2012c, 2012b, 2012d; ethnographic notes, 24.10.2014).

6.5 Conclusions

I started the chapter with an overview of the two case studies. It showed both organisations as assemblages, made up by multiple collaborations and relationships, uncontainable by simple organograms. It made me refer to both as organisational ecologies. While the data showed

macba as suffering from periods of dearth and as unevenly dependant on myself, IPC was a rich ecology of entangled entrepreneurial projects and diverse relationships. This living, bubbling ecology, that seemed to perpetuate and proliferate possibilities through diverse encounters, resonated with my image of culinary fermentation (Katz, 2003). I used my reading of documents, my recorded conversations and my ethnographic observations to navigate these two ecologies, trying to map their coordinates in hope of understanding what recipes for social transformation they might contain. In doing so, I found three themes to be central: chance encounter (which I discussed in Chapter 5), hardships and activism.

Hardships and activism as themes could be seen as resonating with the two elements I discussed in Chapter 3: precarity and spontaneity. While hardships aren't synonymous with precarity they are related by being unplanned impositions, obstacles to plans. The hardships that appeared in the data regarding the two case studies were imposed obstacles on their way towards the creation of alternative societies (through their attempts at organising differently). In *macba* this included the patchy participation I noted in the overview and the debt incurred (including eviction notices). In IPC this involved the lack of financial resources and the impositions from different state and city institutions. In *macba* the difficulties contributed to the project ending (ethnographic notes 11.11.2013; 24.10.2014) while in IPC it contributed both to a narrative of "*grim determination*" and strongly adhering to a vision (personal communication, Max, 26.01.2018; Jowt, 02.06.2017) on one hand, and to one about openness rooted in imperfection (email from Jamie, 23.08.2017), on the other.

Hardships informed the kind of activism that took place in IPC, this activism I saw as containing a certain ingredient of spontaneity (related to openness). The data showed that IPC members perceived hardships to be part of the challenge of social transformation. Their response to it had to do with developing a strong work ethic, a subject of much debate in the early years (e.g. IPC minutes, book 1, March 86-Feb 87, 05.03.86). On the other hand, they responded to hardship with flexibility and openness. The openness came from their democratising ideals, the fact that having power was connected to doing things oneself (e.g. fixing and providing houses). At the same time, doing things oneself involved doing things imperfectly, which created openness towards people joining from the outside and feeling comfortable in engaging collaboratively in learning processes. Openness was thus connected to the valuing of encounter, including chance encounter discussed in Chapter 5. This openness was also expressed through the physical spaces the organisation and other projects within its ecology inhabited. This contributed to a heterogeneity, to people outside of the activist milieu joining the organisation or some of its activities (e.g. the crèche). Openness thus *emerged* from their democratising ideals (DIY) and in turn *perpetuated* their fulfilment (through heterogeneity).

One way IPC was open to encounter was through its loosening of the rigidity of protocolisation. IPC members expressed, on the one hand, the commitment they had to the weekly meetings. Max even referred to them in an email as the “punk mass” (email from Max, 17.09.2020). The later IPC also contained many of the formal trappings of traditional organisational methodologies (e.g. viability studies, accounting). In that, one sees the early IPC following, to a certain extent, the alternative recipes of social movements, and the later IPC following some of the recipes of mainstream management. At the same time the rigidity of protocols was challenged in multiple ways by the different collaborators, be it through the “informal meetings” at the building site over tea (personal communication, Caswell, 27.04.2017), by seeing democracy as more of a hands-on craft one must practice (personal communications, Tina, Alice, 18.07.2017) or by treating formal structure in a tongue and cheek irony (*Economic Portraits of Unlikely Entrepreneurs* project documentation, 20.11.2019; ethnographic notes, 01.05.2020). Coupled with that was their attitude of “*working the system*” towards the imposed formalities of state and city institutions (personal communication, Cecil, 14.01.2018). This approach extended to later day IPC in the ways they dialogued with the uncertainties contained in projects such as new buildings, discussed in 'chance encounter' section of Chapter 5. In terms of my fermentation metaphor, these tensions between control and spontaneity parallel the way humans mix salt or other deterrents into fermented recipes to limit the range of live microorganisms that act in them, still letting interactions to freely happen within that range (Katz, 2003, p.35)

The loosening of protocolisation within IPC and their openness to encounter suggest elements within their ‘recipe’ that challenge the ubiquity of planning and controlling. As the data showed through the themes of 'hardships' and 'activism', this does not involve an absolute refusal of any form of control, but more of an ongoing negotiation between control and the challenging of it. In the following chapter I will discuss the multiple ways planning and controlling were challenged as a form of spontaneity that permeates the IPC organisational ecology. Based on the themes and the sub-themes that emerged I will show what learning could be done from the case studies, what kind of recipes might emerge, and how they respond to the issues of protocolisation, homogeneity and precarity within social movements.

Ecological spontaneity: a discussion

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 Recipes and control

In this thesis, the image of a recipe is used as a metaphor for planning. A recipe here represents the idea that learning to do something involves reproducing a series of step-by-step instructions. I examined this idea in Chapter 2 through its expression in CMS and specifically through a conversation about alternative organising. I addressed its manifestations in social movements and their study in Chapter 3. In both chapters the underlying logic of recipes is the ubiquity of control, the idea that doing things together in the world inherently means controlling and planning (Desideri and Harney, 2013). In this chapter I discuss how planning and controlling were challenged through the case studies, and what alternative form of recipes might be learned from them. Before I do so, I will briefly revisit the questions I raised in Chapters 2 and 3 for the purpose of focusing the discussion.

7.1.2 The ubiquity of control in OT and in CMS

In Chapter 2 I showed how CMS critiques control in OT on three levels: on a practical one through its treatment of managerialism (e.g. Klikauer, 2015), on a philosophical one through its rejection of positivism (e.g. Grey and Willmott, 2002, p.414) and on a pragmatic one through its activism, expressed through the term 'performativity' (e.g. Fournier and Grey, 2000). Managerialism is one of the most visible expressions of control in the day to day of organisations and those participating in them (Klikauer, 2015, p.1105). Positivism is the underlying assumptions of such control, the idea that knowledge grows exponentially through science, that controlling through knowing is equated with a betterment of society (Parker, 2002a, p.3). OT as a field of study, backed by positivism, disseminates managerial methodologies (Grey and Willmott, 2002, p.412). These then permeate the lives of workers, clients and citizens, where they get repeated through small daily gestures (Learmonth, 2005, p.618). The conversation about performativity takes both of these aspects into account; the philosophical discourse coming from expert positions (positivism in OT) and the daily repetitions of gestures that create an intuitive feeling of common sense (Parker, 2002a, p.2). It shows how the ubiquity of control is constructed through these two ingredients, generating the sentiment that there are no alternatives to control and to planning (Learmonth, 2005, p.618). When CMS scholars aspire to be performative, it means that, as an activist-academic project, they hope for their theories to generate alternative realities in the world (Cabantous et al., 2016, p.202).

Much of the work of the CMS community focuses on internal dynamics of mainstream organisations and on instances of resistance or diversity within them (Spicer et al., 2009, p.553). There is ample debate regarding the extent to which this makes a real difference outside academia (e.g. Fournier and Grey, 2000; Spicer et al., 2009). But some CMS scholars go a different route, focusing their efforts on researching alternative forms of organising (e.g. Parker et al., 2007). While the previously discussed literature looks inwards for multiple possibilities within mainstream forms, this conversation looks outwards, opening up the proverbial myopia to show that the world and its history are replete with diverse organisational practices and experiments (Parker et al., 2007; Cheney, 2014). In Chapter 2 I called this the diversifying gesture of the alternative organisation conversation. But while pointing towards a wide diversity of practices, in reality there is an emphasis within this conversation on social movements and on anarchism (e.g. Reedy, 2002). They are brought as examples of how organisation is an ongoing site-specific negotiation (Reedy, 2014, p.645), and of how organisation is an "open term" (Parker et al., 2014a, p.624). In order to map the dynamics of such practices, several scholars have turned to ethnographic practice within activist organisations, allying with them as activist-scholars (e.g. Langmead, 2017b). In the chapter I located myself within this practice. The question I asked was whether such activist organisations are producing alternatives to control and whether they, speculatively speaking, might do so if going about it differently.

7.1.3 Spontaneity and precarity in social movement studies

In Chapter 3 I explored how the ubiquity of control expresses itself in social movements and their scholarship. I did so through tracing two terms popular in their discourse: spontaneity and precarity. Both terms could be seen as antonyms of planning and controlling. While spontaneity connotes something celebratory, an unplanned expression of creativity, precarity is about the inability to plan, an unsettling instability (Consciousness, 2014). Theoretically speaking, social movement scholars tend to define spontaneity linearly and directionally as something irrupting "from the ether" (Flesher Fominaya, 2015, p. 142-143). It is also presented as something reactive, associated with protest rather than with the creation of alternatives (Breines, 1980, p.422). They then proceed to debunk it, banishing the possibility of the unpredictable away from sight (Polletta, 1998, p.142; kucinskas, 2015; Flesher Fominaya, 2015, pp.142–143; Wagner-Pacifici and Ruggero, 2020, pp.15–16). Activists tend to value spontaneity as an idea (Polletta, 1998; Maeckelbergh, 2011; Snow and Moss, 2014, p.1122), and the notion of something unplanned happening is important to utopian thinking in a society where the mainstream is viewed as managed and planned (Bookchin, 1977, p.63; Ward, 1988, p.24). At the same time the literature shows social movements engaging in what I called

'protocolisation' (Leach, 2013, p.184). In the chapter, I reviewed how protocolisation contributes to the homogeneity of social movements, having adverse impact on their diversity and by extension to their democratising goals (Cornell, 2011; e.g. Appel, 2011b). Protocolisation and homogeneity are two elements, from within the practice of social movements that hinder their objectives. Precarity is another such hindrance, but in this case coming from outside of social movement and their organisational practices.

Precarity complements spontaneity in its response to the ubiquity of control. Informed as it is by destabilising work conditions, a conversation coming from social movements extends the term's meaning (Foti, 2004a). Precarity is discussed as a transversal condition, an instability that extends to different aspects of life, psychological, relational, housing and health related. Taking such life experiences as a starting point, precarity involves vulnerability, a loosening of control that might also be explored as an alternative logic for understanding the world and acting within it (Tsing, 2015a, p. 20). Activists often describe themselves as suffering from precarity (Foti, 2004b). This lack of stability is thus another element, this time exterior to the practice of social movements hindering their success in transforming society (Consciousness, 2014).

In this thesis, I set out to explore the way planning and controlling perpetuate the status quo, hindering the creation of alternatives to it. This involves questioning the debunking of spontaneity done by social movement scholars. An important element in this is questioning spontaneity's definition as linear, directional and reactive. Another one is questioning the protocolisation central to many social movements. To explore this, I enlisted the vulnerability of "thinking through precarity" (Tsing, 2015a, p. 20), this feminist "weak theory" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.60), as an underlying logic. Doing so, my analysis of the data coming from *macba* and IPC provided me with a recipe of sorts. I term the recipe 'ecological spontaneity'. In the next section I outline it and the reasons why it is worth learning.

7.2 Ecological spontaneity

Upon looking at the themes in light of the questions and the literature, I noticed underlying dynamics traversing through all of them. Specifically, I am referring to a spontaneity that permeated many of the relationships, organisational practices and values expressed through the data. Related to spontaneity, in Chapter 3, I discussed Snow and Moss's paper "Protest on the fly: Toward a theory of spontaneity in the dynamics of protest and social movements" (2014). The paper is particularly interesting because it sets out to bring spontaneity back into the embrace of scientific causality. In doing so, like the other literature reviewed, it eschews the idea of indeterminacy, of something outside of planning and controlling playing a part.

While in Chapter 3 I critiqued this aspect of the paper, certain aspects of it are worth noting in relationship to the data. For once, Snow and Moss (2014) use a definition that, unlike other explanations I discussed, presents indeterminacy as inherent within the term:

> Spontaneity may be best understood as a cover term for events, happenings, and lines of action, both verbal and nonverbal, which were not planned, intended, prearranged, or organized in advance of their occurrence (Snow and Moss, 2014, p.1123)

Both in *macba* and in IPC many "events" and "lines of action" were "not planned, intended, prearranged, or organized in advance of their occurrence" (Snow and Moss, 2014, p.1123). For example, rather than planned, Daniel's project came about through what he described as a chain of events that made him fall in love with the process of making tempeh. Sascha similarly got enthusiastic with the use of wild plants through walking around the countryside with his friend Simona. Rather than proactively following a plan, Mar just hung out with the elderly ladies in her neighbourhood letting things unfold organically (personal communication, Daniel, 06.02.2017; Sascha, 19.02.2017; Mar, 15.10.2016). In the IPC case study, Caswell and Alice described a preference of doing over planning that suggested spontaneity is valued. For instance, their business plan was written on "*four scraps of paper and literally a fag packet with something written on it*" (personal communications, IPC collective conversation, Caswell, 27.04.2017). Jowt and Carrol also suggested plans were fluid and tentative when talking about how they dialogued with new buildings that they purchased regarding their future uses (ethnographic notes, 23.07.2018). Jowt also talked about how encounters with new people and their ideas made the organisation depart from its usual course of action to adopt new activities. He gave Sandy, their support worker, and her idea of working with ex-offenders as volunteers, as one example (personal communication, Jowt, IPC collective conversation, 14.09.2017). The fact of the projects within this organisational ecology repeatedly changing locations, personnel, name and legal identity also gave an impression of things not following a set plan (see Table 6.3). While these instances are remarkably diverse, they all express a certain disregard for planning and a valuing of spontaneity. Spontaneity thus appears in different guises, valued by the actors within the two ecologies and enacted through their daily practices.

7.2.1 Spontaneity in the themes of 'activism'

In the data about 'activism' spontaneity demonstrated its role within the alternative organising of the case studies. One way it did so was through the way elements in both organisational ecologies pushed back against the protocolisation prevalent in social movements. In *macba* informality was part of the process through which the project was managed. This manifested

itself through the way sharing food replaced formal meetings as the central organ for collaborating. In IPC there were tensions and complementarities between the rigorous adherence to protocols such as weekly meetings and the informality that permeated processes and relationships. One expression of this informality was the decision making taken 'on the fly' while hanging out, mentioned by Caswell (personal communication, Caswell, 27.04.2017). Another was the ironic treatment of democracy with Kid calling himself "*the dictator of the Avenue Village Hall*", or Jowt talking about having "*cancelled democracy for ten years*" (*Economic Portraits of Unlikely Entrepreneurs* project documentation, Kid, 20.11.2019; ethnographic notes, 01.05.2020). Yet another was Tina and Alice talking about how formal equality was not enough, how people had to inhabit equality through practice, giving expressing oneself at meetings as an example (personal communication, Tina and Alice, 18.07.2017). Thus, the tensions and complementarities between formality and informality made protocolisation an ongoing negotiation, where spontaneity revealed itself as pushing against the rigid structures that were there to ensure control.

Another important aspect of the 'activism' theme was the way spontaneity expressed itself through openness, and the way such openness both challenged control and expressed the DIY ethics of activist movements. *macba*, for example, was an organisation with no formal organogram, an open space for collaborations to fill. Physically manifested through the green open doors, collaborators and their ideas meandered in, taking the project towards new, unplanned directions. This is apparent when comparing the Bifidum Pathways Business Plan document to the actual monthly programmes of the centre. While the document describes a plan, where the space is taken over by a different project each year, the *macba* monthly programme was actually populated by the collaborators that emerged through the ongoing functioning of the centre (see Figure 6.1 and Figure 6.2; *macba* Facebook page). In IPC, a similar openness to unplanned events changed the organisation, taking it into new directions (as in the case of Sandy the support worker, mentioned above). The interviews gave several examples of people who entered the organisation and changed it (e.g. Chris, Tina), people who entered their informal social sphere and influenced the ecology around it (e.g. Griffith, Alice, Samz), and people who left the organisation, but set up related projects within the ecology (e.g. Sealy starting a brewery at the George St. Social Enterprise Hub, Kid starting the Avenue Village Hall, Chris's and Tina's involvement in Folks). Some of those who left, found themselves back in the organisation years later (e.g. Kid, Caswell, Sealy, Chris, Tina, Sean and others) (personal communication, Kid, 26.06.2017; Caswell, 27.04.2017; Chris, 29.06.2017; Alice, 23.06.2017; Tina, 23.06.2017; Jowt, 02.04.2017; IPC organisation collaborators and friends document, 15.01.2021; ethnographic notes, 14.05.2021). This openness contributed to making

an organisational ecology teaming with entrepreneurial life. In that, it demonstrated how the imperfection and openness that came out of their DIY ethics also contributed to the creation of DIY organisational processes that was generative of multiple organisational forms.

Through pushing against protocolisation, and through openness, spontaneity contributed to the generative characteristic of IPC's organisational ecology. In that respect it is a pragmatic response to Gibson-Graham's call for "proliferating possibilities" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.xxxii). Possibilities were proliferated by the fact that people from diverse backgrounds entered the organisational ecology through its porous boundaries (an issue I will discuss further down). This proliferation is thus closely connected to the way IPC's openness challenged the homogeneity of social movements (e.g. Conway, 2003, p.512), an issue I discussed in Chapter 3. This openness also created, in a close geographic environment, the richness of organisational exemplars and the ongoing negotiation between control and spontaneity suggested by much of the writing within the alternative organisation conversation (e.g. Parker et al., 2007). Thus, as part of the theme of 'activism', spontaneity contributed to the theorising of alternative organising, responding to the diversifying gesture of both the diverse economies conversation and the alternative organising one. This rich diversity responded to protocolisation and to homogenisation, adding recipes rooted in spontaneity to the practice of alternative organising. But the challenges to planning, expressed through spontaneity, also had their less celebratory side, through the hardships that plagued the two ecologies and the precarity that characterised them.

7.2.2 Spontaneity's shadow: precarity in the theme of 'hardships'

The theme of 'hardships' presented another way in which the case studies challenged the ubiquity of planning and controlling, through their ongoing dialogue with precarity. Precarity expressed itself in two ways. One was through the inability to predict levels of involvement within these two collaborative projects. The other was through the inability to plan where resources might come from. In terms of involvement, the overview in Chapter 6 showed the patchy participation and imbalance that plagued *macba*. In IPC, the meandering trajectories of individuals meant that people also left the organisation. While, as I mentioned before, some came back years later, others didn't. The way people left was also sometimes unplanned. For example, Cecil told me about how he "*half accidentally left IPC*" going on what was planned as a three-month trip, ending up staying away for a year and realising "*somewhere on that trip [...that...] I no longer lived in Whykham and I'd left IPC*" (personal communications, Cecil, 14.01.2018). Jowt told me that at some point most of the original cooperative members were gone, which brought about two issues: one-the fact that most people working did not really want to be owners and managers of the organisation, and the other, the fact that, given the

rising value of it, they were in danger of people joining for the purpose of personal gain. Jowt called this dearth of cooperative members "*the difficult middle years*", pointing to the suffering associated with such precarity. As a response to this dearth, IPC changed its legal form from a workers' cooperative to a charity (personal communication, Jowt, 02.04.2017; Max, 26.01.2018). From this I observed that patchy participation, added an element of unplanned precarity to the organisation and its ecology, and that the organisation dialogued with such unpredictable circumstances, adjusting elements related to its core values (e.g. being a cooperative) to address new unplanned situations.

Apart from the human aspect of precarity, both case studies expressed a scarcity of resources that made planning hard. In *macba* this was apparent through the debt I incurred, the activities organised to pay it and the eviction letters I was receiving. Such hardships contributed to my decision to move to the UK and, after a year, to end the *macba* project (ethnographic notes, 09.08.2016). In IPC this showed up in the data through the debates about "*whether we can afford to buy another hammer*" (personal communications, Cecil, 14.01.2018), and the descriptions of the sparse living conditions of the early days (personal communications, Cecil, 14.01.2018; Jamie, 23.08.2017). Dialoguing with the precarity that stemmed from hardships forged IPC's insistence, its belief in its vision (personal communication, Max, 26.01.2018; Jowt, 02.04.2017). Relatedly, these hardships informed a general culture of "*getting on with it*" (as Caswell put it), providing alternatives to protocolisation (personal communication, Caswell, 27.04.2017). Thus, hardships and the precarity they produced joined spontaneity in generating a pragmatic dialogue with unplanned events unfolding. Spontaneity connotes the valuing of unplanned events enriching such an ecology with new people, ideas and organisations. Precarity is its dark shadow, fuelling its stubbornness and enforcing flexibility as a response to adverse conditions. Both coincide to show planning to be challenged in numerous diverse ways throughout the data, accumulatively showing an unplanned element to permeate the two ecologies.

7.2.3 Ecological spontaneity and why it's worth learning

The fact of spontaneity (and precarity) permeating the data, manifesting itself not through grand events, but through small daily occurrences, made me see it as ecological rather than linear and directional. This was also inspired to a degree by Snow and Moss (2014). Within their paper there is a section that struck me as an opening towards a different conceptualisation of spontaneity, one that can be expanded to be helpful for better understanding of the *macba* and the IPC case studies. In it they talk about "ecological factors" that affected student mobilisation in Beijing in 1989. Among these factors are physical characteristics such as "the proximity of most of Beijing's 67 universities to each other" the

"separation of most universities from the outside world by large walls", "the dense campus living conditions", and "spatial layouts that channelled students' routines and activities" (2014, p.1136). Other, more social precursors were "the "total institution" character of campus life" (2014, p.1136) and students "milling around" and spreading rumours (2014, p.1137). Thus, according to Snow and Moss, physical and social characteristics, "ecological factors", can permeate space preparing it for a spontaneous occurrence (Snow and Moss, 2014, p.1136). Considering that the anticipation for spontaneity can thus permeate the social and the physical environment, already puts a slight crack in the linearity and directionality of spontaneity as it is conceived by much of the social movement studies scholarship (e.g. Flesher Fominaya, 2015, p.143). In Snow and Moss's paper (2014) it is the *anticipation* for a spontaneous event that permeates the environment through "ecological factors" (Snow and Moss, 2014, p.1136). In the case studies, as I discussed above, it was *actual small-scale spontaneous occurrences* that manifest themselves diversely through the spatial and social dynamics of the two organisational ecologies. The ecological spontaneity I am proposing is different to the way Snow and Moss (2014) and other social movement scholars define spontaneity in three senses. First, in terms of scale, while Snow and Moss (2014) treat occurrence that are spectacularly visible, singular events such as Beijing's historical protests (Snow and Moss, 2014), *macba* and IPC show spontaneous events as small-scale daily events, such as a person walking into the Avenue Village Hall "*to use the toilet*" (personal communications, Kid, 26.06.2017), or "friends just drifting in" to join IPC (Minutes 4th Meeting 02.04.1986). Secondly, rather than spontaneity being an event taking place in a specific moment on a linear narrative, the many spontaneous instances in the case studies were spread out throughout them, showing up in diverse attitudes and anecdotes repeatedly. In that respect, I am talking about small-scale occurrences permeating an environment rather than a large-scale event occurring on a linear narrative, seemingly "from the ether" (Flesher Fominaya, 2015, p.143). Thirdly, as I will discuss further down, rather than directional, spontaneous occurrences are the result of encounter with an other (person, idea), unexpectedly coming within the field of vision of an individual or an organisation; thus, they are not directional but multidirectional.

My observations show ecological spontaneity to respond to both practical and theoretical concerns regarding alternative organising. The rest of the chapter goes into greater details regarding the ingredients of this ecological spontaneity and the observations they are rooted in. Before going into this I'd just like to briefly state the practical and theoretical motivations for learning such a recipe. In terms of practical concerns, the issues of precarity, protocolisation and homogeneity were highlighted in Chapter 3 as hindrances to the functioning of social movements and their democratising goals. In pushing against

protocolisation, cultivating an ecological spontaneity seemed to mitigate the homogenising effect of social movements' focus on protocols. The fact of people from diverse backgrounds joining IPC exemplifies this (personal communication, Chris, 29.06.2017; Tina, 23.06.2017). In IPC, the generative aspect of such an organisational ecology, the proliferation of experiments nourished by openness, generated resources that stemmed from multiple trial and error processes and from the resilient meshwork of local relationships. The longevity of IPC and its capacity to enable further experiments point towards the practical benefits of cultivating ecological spontaneity. Such longevity and such resources, while stemming, among other things from a dialogue with elements outside of control, created a certain stability contrasting with the negative aspects of precarity that cause suffering within the activist community (Consciousness, 2014; Reedy and King, 2019, p.14).

Theoretically speaking, as I will show, IPC and to a lesser extent *macba* demonstrated how spontaneity can be constructive within alternative organising. I will show it to be generative of such alternatives to the point irreducible to lists, schematics or categories. I will contain this generative dynamic with the term 'unruly landscape'. As I will show, specifically IPC provided a response to the diversifying gestures of both the diverse economies framework and the alternative organisation conversation. Interestingly this unruly landscape is not merely theoretical, meaning telling something about economy or organisation as a field of study, but also geographical, happening within a specific neighbourhood. Inspired by the loose, improvisational recipes in *Wild Fermentation* (Katz, 2003) (a metaphor I will further discuss in the concluding Chapter 8), I set about charting the main ingredients of the case studies' 'ecological spontaneity'. Given its responses to the practical and theoretical concerns above, I felt this would be a recipe worth exploring. The three ingredients I detail in the following sections are 'chance encounters', 'meandering paths' and 'porous boundaries'. As I will show, placed in relation to each other, they point towards a recipe of sorts, a learning that could be fed back to both researchers and practitioners.

7.3 Chance encounters

Chapter 5 showed the theme of chance encounters to be a recurring one in the two case studies. Chance encounters, or encounters generally, are the point of inflection when organisational and life-narratives take an unexpected turn. In that respect encounters form a challenge to planning, an expression of spontaneity. I saw encounters appear in different manifestations throughout the data. Interviewees described encounters with people, with processes, with ideas and with objects. In terms of encounters with people, examples within the data abound. Daniel's encounter with a neighbour, and then with an Indonesian friend resulted in him learning how to make tempeh and gaining access to the tempeh starter that's

fundamental in its production. Mar's process was also informed by layered encounters, with an activist boyfriend and his environment, encounters and re-encounters with her own neighbours and with their culture, all contributing to her nuanced practice of art/activism/business. Sascha's encounter with Simona introduced him to edible wild plants, which started him off on an outsider research project that lasted several years (personal communication, Daniel, 06.02.2017; Mar, 15.10.2016; Sascha, 19.02.2017). Chance encounter with people was central to several of the stories of how people joined IPC. This was true for Jowt, Max, Griffith, Chris, Kid and others (personal communication, Jowt, 02.04.2017; Max, 26.01.2018; Griffith, 04.08.2017; Chris, 29.06.2017; Kid, 26.06.2017). The result was an involvement in IPC that in some shape or another is still ongoing. The repeated mention of the importance of chance suggested that IPC members and friends valued spontaneity and dialogued with chance encounter as it occurred.

While encounters with hardships made me close *macba* and forged IPC's "*grim determination*" (personal communication, Jowt, 02.04.2017), in other cases, the encounter with a process fuelled years of enthusiasm, described as 'love' by some of my interviewees. In *macba* Daniel "*fell in love*" with the process of making tempeh (personal communication, Daniel, 06.02.2017). In IPC, Cecil told me:

> I got really into doing building work 'cause I love it, I mean I really do. I love construction. And I love the fact, it doesn't have to be construction, but I love the fact that just about every day of my life, when I finish work I can just look and I can see what I've done (personal communication, Cecil, 14.01.2018)

But even those who didn't explicitly mention love got involved in long-term engagement with processes that emerged from such encounters. This was true for Sascha and his interest in wild plants, as it was for Mar and her neighbourhood's culinary traditions. In IPC, both Max and Jamie told me about how their experiences with building techniques such as repointing and plastering were formative to them. Alice's story about the walk to Kirby Mills, included her magical description of walking

> ...across the fields in the snow, like the snow had just sprinkled down on these fresh ploughed fields it was like walking across that chocolate cake (personal communication, Alice, 23.06.2017)

Resonant with the other expressions of love, it struck me as a memory of a "love event", a vivid image that later fuels lifelong relationships (Badiou and Truong, 2012). The many mentions of this walk and of the student house reinforced the sensation that encounters in the early days nourished enthusiasm for years to come. In all of these cases, life trajectories took an abrupt turn as a result of the encounter, plans were changed and new commitments were

forged. Thus, encounters, including chance encounters, were the smallest unit through which organisational and individual stories unfolded.

In several examples, encounters were shown as central to the daily functioning of these projects. As I discussed above, *macba* counted on encounters for populating its calendar with projects and events. The assumption of bumping into unexpected individuals and ideas was thus built into its ongoing management. Sascha incorporated encounter in his everyday, needing to find wild plants for producing dinners and tinctures and a cardboard box each time he set up a stall for the market (personal communication, Sascha, 19.02.2017). IPC similarly had encounter built into its way of functioning, recruiting new members, collaborators and tenants through encounters (IPC minutes book, book 1, 4th Meeting, 02.04.1986). For example, Kid talked about how he found people at the Pythia Club or at his work at a homeless hostel, similarly talking about Samuel as doing the same. As mentioned above, the Avenue Village Hall similarly depended on chance encounters for its organisational processes to unfold (personal communication, Kid, 26.06.2017). Furthermore, in both organisational ecologies openness towards encounters was built into their physical and social place making, an issue I will further develop in the section about porous boundaries. Thus, the ongoing work of creating alternative economies and organisations depended on small scale, daily encounters. In depending on encounter, *macba*, Sascha, IPC and the Avenue Village Hall planned on the unplanned happening, seeing encounter as a characteristic of life, rather than an exception.

Working on such assumptions contrasts the protocolisation of daily life prevalent in social movements, as discussed in Chapter 3 (e.g. Cornell, 2011; Leach, 2013; Luchies, 2014a). While some literature regarding prefiguration emphasizes its subtle complex aspects, the fact of it "developed through practice" and is "different everywhere" (Maeckelbergh cited in Luchies, 2014a, p.112), other observations tend to point at an approach that sees oppression as pre-emptible through extensive protocolisation (e.g. Leach, 2013, p.184). In that respect the ubiquity of control extends to the creation of alternatives. In planning on the unplanned happening, explicitly welcoming chance encounter, the case studies take first steps towards the crafting of alternatives to control, ones that dialogue with the particularities of the here's and now's of diverse localities and moments. In that they embody the theories that view organisation as an "open term" (Parker et al., 2014a, p.624) and a "negotiated matter" (Parker et al., 2007, p.x).

Encounter was also central for learning in the two case studies, especially in IPC. This included encounters with yet unknown processes such as financing, repointing brickwork, plastering or general management of an organisation. When talking about their unskilled beginnings, IPC

are in fact describing an encounter with processes they did not control, and their imperfect trial and error learning processes. As discussed above, and as I will further develop below, this imperfection and lack of control contributed to the porosity of boundaries, a central element in the ecological spontaneity of IPC. The centrality of encounter to learning was also expressed through chance encounter's central role within my own research methodology. For example, when bumping into the Avenue Village Hall and then IPC, my research took unexpected turns. My observations, mentioned above, show IPC itself, as an organisation, taking on a similar approach to learning. As I will show, dialoguing with encounter in such a way caused individual and organisational paths to meander, contributing to ecological spontaneity and the entangled meshwork that made it both unruly and resilient.

7.4 Meandering paths

The stories I heard, of individual and organisational life-trajectories, seemed to unfold in unplanned ways. Specifically, the data from IPC contained many individual and organisations changing directions through encounter, and entangling with one another within a close geographical area. Organisations changed legal format, location and personnel, some even converting into different projects than when they started. This was true for Folks, George St. Organics, Punkarama/Underworld, as it was for IPC itself (see Table 6.3). The individuals involved often moved from project to project, or left IPC and the city for years, only to come back to both later. This was the case for several people who I met volunteering at the organisation, such as Chile Grant, Carl and Sean (ethnographic notes, 14.05.2021; personal communication, Max, 12.01.2021). It was also true for people who were central to IPC, such as Sealy, Max, Chris, Caswell and Kid (personal communication, Max, 12.01.2021; Kid, 26.06.2017).

The stories of chance encounters mentioned above show that such encounters were the point of inflection where people's life-trajectories took new directions. It is through encounter that such trajectories unfolded rather than following a plan. For example, in Chapter 5 I mentioned the fact that both Max's joining and his leaving the organisation came about as a result of unplanned encounters (personal communication, Max, 26.01.2018; Jowt, 02.04.2017). The stories of individuals like Max, Kid and others, and of organisations such as Folks, the crèche and George St. Organics made me start conceiving of them as taking *meandering paths*.

7.4.1 Meandering paths: vulnerability vs. control

Meandering is defined by the Merrian-Webster online dictionary as "follow[ing] a winding or intricate course" or "wander[ing] aimlessly or casually without urgent destination" and by the Cambridge online dictionary as "moving slowly with no particular direction or with

no clear purpose" (cited in Friedman et al., 2020, p.637). These definitions provide a contrast to the controlled goal-oriented focus of planning and its centrality in mainstream organisation (Johnson and Gill, 1993). A paper by Friedman et al. (2020) talks about meandering also as a learning process. According to it, it is a highly relational one that "shares vulnerabilities, develops enhanced connections, empathy and efforts to understand each other and our shared contexts" (Friedman et al., 2020, p.647). In emphasising vulnerability and relationality, such a learning process is reminiscent of the way Tsing (2015a) defines precarity as "a state of acknowledgment of our vulnerability to others" (Tsing, 2015a, p.29). It also echoes Gibson-Graham's (2014) use of feminist weak theory discussed in Chapter 2 (Gibson-Graham, 2014). In the IPC data, the repeated instances of paths meandering in such a way, suggest such a learning process. What makes it remarkable, an organisational process worth learning, is the fact that, while challenging planning and controlling, IPC ended up achieving something not unlike Jard's original dream for it.

In a conversation we had, Jowt made me realise that IPC itself, taking a meandering path, came to fulfil Jard's dream for it. Jard's original dream, having come up in that first walk to Kirby Mills, was to use the buying and fixing of real estate as a starting point for the creation of a grouping of workers' cooperatives in the vein of Mondragon (personal communication, Jowt, 02.04.2017; Alice, 23.06.2017). This vision consists of an organisational ecology, where all organisations tend to be cooperatives formally speaking adhering to the organisational protocols prevalent within such movements (IPC minutes, book 2, 36th Meeting, 05.03.1987). In that respect it is reminiscent of some experiments emerging in recent years from social movements (Manrique, 2011; de Ormaechea Otalora, 2015). They are thus formally democratic and horizontal, but at the same time express certain homogeneity and control. In other words, it presents a model that is more centralised in concept and more controlled than what the IPC case study ended up producing. The control within Jard's vision was translated into an extractivist view of the neighbourhood in which IPC operated. Jowt had this critique of Jard's vision:

> I think in a way the original dream if I look back, especially Jard's dream was 'buy lots of houses, make loads of money and do other stuff with that money' now looking back I think all that's actually quite an exploitative attitude to people we're housing (personal communication, Jowt, 02.06.2017)

In retrospect, Jowt sees IPC as having arrived at something not unlike Jard's original dream, but through a different route:

> Those kind of early ideas of 'oh, we'll get all these houses and make all this money to do all these other things' well, actually in a strange way that's kind of happened

> in the end anyway, but it happened through a different way. It's not happened through raking loads of money out of the housing but obviously by having houses and having assets and being able to borrow money and do some fund raising and buy buildings we have been able to enable these other things to happen. But its often not us doing it. And I think that's probably the important thing. There's not that, there's no over-arching [...] 'we need to run things and control things.' Just enable them to happen (personal communication, Jowt, 02.06.2017)

His words illustrate how a certain letting go of planning and controlling, allowed organisational paths to meander, and how, by doing so, it achieved a situation reminiscent to the original dream. The loosening of control within the organisation, the fact that relationships within it are enabling rather than exploitative is what allowed an organisational ecology to grow around it. In that respect the spontaneity that permeated the process down to its smallest moments, is related both to its ethics and to the organisational form it ended up producing. In Chapter 5 I talked about Kid's view that IPC is the sum of its transformations and that its changing trajectory is what made it what it is today. I quoted Jowt as expressing a similar sentiment. In another part of the conversation, he similarly told me that what IPC "*is also a long continuum of stuff that happened some of which was good and some of which was bad but it still produced what we are today*" (personal communication, Kid, 26.06.2017; Jowt, 02.04.2017). From the above one sees that the spontaneity through which IPC's history meandered in one direction and then another is an expression of an ethics that was wary of control, equating it with exploitation. This ethics extended through time, bringing with it an understanding of the value of meandering.

7.4.2 An entangled meshwork of meandering paths

But the data points to the fact that the creation of this organisational ecology was not just the result of a single, meandering trajectory, but of many such trajectories entangled with each other, what Alice referred to as a "meshwork" (personal communication, Alice, 23.06.2017). This meshwork becomes apparent when observing the names that appear and reappear in the different projects, combined with the stories of couples separating and getting together and children being born. The fact of people involved in several different projects within this organisation and at the same time involved intimately in the lives of different people within it, made for data that was practically impossible to disentangle. If one would take Alice's image of a meshwork as a guide, one can see how the multiple individual and organisational stories meandered into one another's presence, creating different relationships, organisational and personal. They thus entangled with each other creating this layered, resilient social/organisational fabric Alice referred to.

Zooming in on just one small section of this fabric can give a sense of such entanglement: Vex and Jowt were a couple and had a daughter together. According to Jowt they also ran the store Punkarama when it was around. According to Griffith, he was involved with Punkarama. Both Griffith and Vex were part of the collective that ran Loo Prints, which, was started in Vex's bathroom at her house. Griffith formed part of the Folks cooperative. Also involved in Folks was Alice, Jowt's later partner with whom he has two children (personal communication, Jowt, 02.04.2017; Griffith, 04.08.2017; Vex, 09.01.2021; Alice, 23.06.2017; Tina, 23.06.2017). Considering this small section of the data, Alice's image of the entangled meshwork emerges as accurate. It points to this organisational landscape being 'unruly', a topic I will discuss further down. When looking at each organisation within the IPC ecology one keeps encountering more and more such entanglements of personal and professional relationships. The entanglement consisting of personal intimate relationships, the changes in them, professional relationships and their meandering paths, was such that Alice and Tina proposed to draw me a diagram of them, only to later change their minds (personal communication, Tina and Alice, 23.06.2017). Even without such a diagram, the extent of the entanglement becomes apparent. Within it personal relationships, their emotional dimension, politics and their emotional dimension, entrepreneurial ideas, collaborations and close geographic proximity, each of which's path meandered through encounter, contributed to this living bubbling organisational ecology.

7.4.3 Precarity and stability

One might imagine that such constant change to plans would generate a sense of instability, of precarity associated with suffering. Indeed, some of the data suggests that such emotions were present in relation to such instability. Jowt mentioned "*the difficult middle years*" and talked about the work of fixing up houses as "*a hard slock*" in as much as "*things happen slower than some people maybe dreamed and imagined it would*" adding that this "*knocked the stuffing out of some people*". Kid exemplified this when talking about having a bad back, which made him unable to do building work, and led to him leaving his formal position in the organisation after only a year. Griffith also expressed frustration when talking about Folks selling alcohol and candy rather than whole foods, making him leave it to start George St. Organics (personal communication, Jowt, 02.04.2017; Griffith, 04.08.2017; Kid, 26.06.2017). Surprisingly, in parallel to such moments, my observations show that such an entanglement of meandering trajectories created longevity and resilience. I observed that oftentimes when a challenge came up, resources were found from the general environment of IPC that could respond to it. For example, when a vendor at the market we organised needed access to a wholesale store, Jowt connected me to Samz who provided this through Folks. In another

example I was worried about a vulnerable person who attended activities at the Avenue Village Hall. It was a complicated case, related to his mental health, his physical health and his family situation. I mentioned my worries in the IPC office and promptly a support worker and another IPC employee made contact with this person, gaining information regarding his circumstances that was previously unavailable to most of us involved (ethnographic notes, 02.09.2020). Examples such as this occurred daily within this environment. They showed the diversity of entrepreneurial activity within IPC's ecology to be a source of support that provided a sense of stability and capacity. Alice referred to this when she talked about how the multiple points in the meshwork make it so that "*when things break there's other networks connecting things*" (personal communication, Alice, 23.06.2017).

From the last two sections I charted two important ingredients of the recipe for ecological spontaneity. I showed how, through encounters, paths meander, entangling with each other. In doing so, they nourish an organisational ecology that perpetuates more encounters, and by extension, the proliferation of possibilities. In developing such an ecology, the IPC case study embodied the diversifying gesture of both the diverse economies framework (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.54) and the alternative organisation conversation (Cheney, 2014). Importantly for practitioners, such an environment, through eschewing the rigidity of the over emphasis on planning, generated resilience. In that respect it responds to the suffering of precarity, by embracing the indeterminacy inherent in it. In other words, in this case, "thinking through precarity" (Tsing, 2015a, p.20) created resilience and longevity. By translating the two diversifying gestures into practice, pointing at alternative recipes to control, encounter and meandering paths are ingredients that contribute to the performativity of such alternatives. In that, they extend and deepen the engagement of ethnographers practicing the procedural virtues suggested by Reedy and King (2019, p.8), specifically addressing the issue of control. In the next section I will discuss another ingredient central to this ecology and the unruly landscape it created. The porosity of boundaries between one project and the next, between the inside and outside of organisations, and between the formal and informal aspects of them, was important in generating the ecological spontaneity of IPC.

7.5 Porous boundaries

The overview in Chapter 6 suggested the two case studies to have porous boundaries. When talking about boundaries, I am referring to all of the formalities that separate, define and clarify what is inside and what outside of a given situation. This includes what is inside and outside of organisations such as *macba*, IPC, the Avenue Village Hall or Folks. It includes people being included within or excluded from them (e.g. the organograms I've mentioned several times). It includes boundaries between different types of actions (e.g. IPC's core activity of

housing people vs. other activities). It includes boundaries between types of relationships, such as between professional and personal ones. It even includes boundaries between past organisations and their current incarnations (e.g. Folks as it was in its inception and as it evolved later). Boundaries are expressed socially through values and norms, such as the protocols created by social movements. But they could also be made manifest physically through walls and doors. When talking about boundaries being porous, I am talking about much relational traffic going through them both inwards and outwards. The diversity of this traffic, the many different ways in which boundaries were crossed is an important ingredient of IPC's ecological spontaneity. The data showed this organisational ecology as an unruly landscape, where the entanglement of meandering paths, discussed above, is generative of organisational forms and relationships to the point of overflowing the categories one might try to impose on them.

In this section I will divide the diverse traffic across boundaries into several categories, only to show that the generative abundance of typologies overflows them. I will build the argument in layers starting from simple and fairly mapable, working my way towards unruly. The idea is to communicate to the reader the fact of the IPC organisational landscape as an unruly one, meaning one that pushes against the order of rules and categories, in that challenging control's ubiquity within OT. I will do so by attempting to impose some order on it, looking at the directionality of relationships, things coming into the organisation across boundaries and things coming out. This traffic across its boundaries already shows such boundaries to be porous, but by showing the extent of diversity of types of relationships it communicates the rich fertility of such a landscape, and by that the extent to which it is alternative to the ubiquity of control and the limiting myopia imposed by control's performativity (Gond et al., 2016, p.452). I will start with talking about movement across organisational boundaries as bi-directional. In this modality I will show that there is an aspect of it where the outside is welcomed into the organisation, and another, where the inside spills out. I will then explore the bi-directionality in the daily transactions between IPC and some of its commercial tenants. Only after establishing this bi-directionality, and the diversity within it, will I venture into the emotional and relational overlaps that make boundaries hard to place. I will end the section with a discussion of the attitudes within IPC's organisational ecology that enabled such unruliness, showing it to be an expression of their values, politics and ethics. In doing so I will show the ecological spontaneity of IPC to be generative of multiple organisational forms while also pointing to it as a mindful and pragmatic translation of their ideals (rather than mindless and reactive, as spontaneity is typically portrayed) (Zamponi and Fernández González, 2017, p.65).

7.5.1 The outside welcomed in

One way boundaries were challenged in the two case studies was through the constant act of welcoming the outside in. The fact of the outside of an organisation welcomed in meant that the paths of individuals and of other organisations could meander into this one, their trajectories entangling with each other. Welcoming people in, loosening the control of boundaries, also meant welcoming chance encounters and enabling the projects conceived through them. This happened through the nature of physical spaces and through the loosening of formalities. It involved welcoming people in, as well as ideas. Lastly, welcoming people and ideas in was integral to the day-to-day functioning of the case studies. The encounters they allowed for transformed the two organisations and made their own organisational paths meander.

In Chapter 6 I presented data that presented the physical spaces used by the two case studies as welcoming the outside in. *macba* challenged its physical boundaries using the big green open doors that converted the paved pedestrian Santa Dolors St. into part of the indoor storefront. People were invited to wander in and have a cup of tea, as were collectives and individuals with ideas for projects. Similarly, in IPC, physical spaces were important elements of inviting the outside in. Looking back at its history, the student house where their first encounters took place, described by Jowt as "*a good place to hang out*" where it was "*OK to stay up [...] late*", take drugs, drink alcohol and play music, is where several people who ended up central to the IPC story met (personal communication, Jowt, 02.04.2017; Cecil, 14.01.2018). The different spaces IPC inhabited and generated throughout its history seemed to be inspired by the welcoming atmosphere of that original space of encounter. In Chapter 6 I showed the history of IPC offices to be a series of welcoming spaces that challenged the rigidity of boundaries. One example was 46 Westhold St., where a physical barrier between it and number 48 next door was removed to create such a space. Later office compounds (e.g. 23 George St. and 69 Clotson St.) continued this tradition of welcoming spaces. The Avenue Village Hall was another example of a space that invited the outside in through its open doors (ethnographic notes, 25.02.2016; personal communication, Kid, 26.06.2017; Alice, 23.06.2017; Tina, 23.06.2017; Chris, 29.06.2017, Griffith, 04.08.2017). Throughout all these examples, the creation of welcoming physical spaces emerged as an aspect of IPC and the organisations in its close environment inviting people and ideas to enter across their boundaries.

In the two organisations, this welcoming extended from physical spaces to the social sphere they created and to formal participation within them. In *macba* people coming in converted into the eight constant collaborators I wrote about in Chapter 6, the closest to a formal organogram the organisation had (see Table 6.1). In IPC, people who were not originally

friends, coming in as tenants or just neighbours, were welcomed in to the point of becoming central actors within the organisation. These were the cases of Tina and Chris being welcomed into the organisation, and of neighbours like Samz who ended up owning and running Folks (personal communication, Tina, 23.06.2017; Chris, 29.06.2017; Kid, 26.06.2017; see also Table 6.3). The people who walked through the welcoming doors of physical spaces also brought ideas with them. These ideas were equally welcomed. In *macba*, this welcoming filled its calendar of activities with dinners, workshops, film screenings and community art projects (macba Facebook page). In IPC, examples include Sandy, the support worker who proposed working with ex-offenders as volunteers, Chris who extended the volunteer project and Tina who created the Gardening project, which works with these volunteers (ethnographic notes, 20.05.2021; personal communication, Jowt, IPC collective conversation, 14.09.2017). The openness IPC showed to our own idea of creating a market and a radio is another example of them welcoming ideas from the outside and integrating them into their range of activities (CLLD funding bid, 09.02.2019). Other organisations in this ecology also counted on the outsides coming in for their basic functioning. Folks, for example, had neighbours doing most of the shifts at the store. For example, Jowt does a Monday night shift which mostly involves him and Samz drinking wine and watching University Challenge together (ethnographic notes, 02.09.2019). The Avenue Village Hall, similarly to *macba*, had its calendar populated by proposals coming from the outside (personal communications, Kid, 26.06.2017). Through all this data it became apparent that welcoming the outside in formed part of the basic functioning of the two organisational ecologies, that people and ideas were welcomed into it, sustaining its daily activities and transforming them. As a recurring characteristic of the IPC ecology, this welcoming has been continually generative of new projects and relationships. In the next section I will examine the phenomena of how such generative dynamics spilled outwards across boundaries.

7.5.2 The inside spilling out

In Chapter 6 I showed the two organisations as expanding outside of their physical and formal boundaries. *macba* visibly spilled out by using the space outside its big green doors for many events, dinners and workshops. It was also highly involved in the squatting of an empty lot down the street, where much related activity took place. There was a certain level of collaborations with other organisations in the neighbourhood, and daily neighbourly relations with others on the street. But all together these activities didn't sum up to the kind of rich ecology that could proliferate more and more projects and possibilities. As I mentioned before, in this respect *macba* demonstrated my intentions in creating an organisation in dialogue with

its environment. Given that IPC provided richer data regarding how this could be fulfilled, I dedicate the rest of this sub-section to discussing this data.

In IPC, besides boundaries being challenged through the outside welcomed in, the inverse dynamic was also true, where the organisation and its vision seemed to spill out into its exterior. While Jard's idea of expansion was a controlled growth of IPC as an organisation, the diversity of projects and their meandering paths point to a process unrulier, which I came to see as 'spilling out'. As I mentioned above, at least according to Jowt, IPC's role in this 'spilling out' was one of enabling rather than controlling. In the minutes book, I found an interesting discussion that foreshadows these two possibilities:

> Expansion J. Newton [Jowt] discussed the possibilities for starting a short-stay hostel and felt it would be better if this was run by a separate co-op. The debate confirmed this as a good idea. Two methods of how this could happen were discussed. (a) the co-op could develop out of IPC, or (b) IPC could set up the other co-op gathering together a group of people who are interested in setting up and running a short stay hostel. The discussion seemed to be split fifty/fifty between the two options (IPC minutes books, 36th Meeting IPC Co-operative 5/3/87)

The excerpt displays two possibilities, one (a) where IPC itself starts new projects and the other (b), where it enables other people to do so. The diversity of projects and entrepreneurial stories, in conjunction with the quote from Jowt in the section 'meandering paths' show that the second, less controlling, approach was the one that evolved.

The fact of welcoming and nurturing people and ideas from the outside oftentimes resulted in projects within IPC or right outside its edges. Many of the projects presented in Chapter 6 originated from outside its formal organogram (see Table 6.3 and Table 6.4). This was the case with Loo Prints, Folks, George St. Organics, Punkarama, Underworld, FYeast Bakery, Barrel of Monkeys Cafe just to give a few examples. The ideas that emerged in IPC's close vicinity were often enabled through IPC creating physical space for it, as was the case with Loo Prints, with Folks and with our market (table 6.3; ethnographic notes 19.07.2018). Added to these are all of IPC's commercial tenants and the organisation's side projects that were all personal initiatives that found their place within the organisation, its funding and its resources. There has been talk of them becoming independent enterprises, thus moving somewhat towards the edges of IPC's formal boundaries (ethnographic notes, 28.06.2018). All of these examples show the close relationship between the welcoming in, the nurturing of ideas and individuals from the outside, and the spilling out, the fact of organisations forming right outside IPC's formal boundaries. In the following section I will explore examples of how this bi-directionality within the relationships was expressed in the day-to-day. I will then show that while aspects of their

porous boundaries are more easily mapped, the personal dimension of these relationships and the way they proliferate, make them ingredients of an unruly landscape.

7.5.3 From bi-directionality to unruliness

As I discussed, the challenging of the boundaries in IPC expressed itself through the bi-directionality of the outside welcomed in and the inside spilling out. The data I collected showed this occurring through many small daily bi-directionalities. One example has to do with the formal economic relationships between IPC and its commercial tenants. When using the term bi-directionality here, I am specifically aiming to show how boundaries are challenged. I am mapping the traffic crossing these boundaries with the intent of seeing whether the porosity of boundaries is a simple matter of reciprocity between IPC and its tenants. Even such bi-directionality, meaning the fact that tenants and IPC have a two-way commercial relationship already challenges boundaries. My intent here is to show that this is just one indication of a general openness, generating a diversity of types of relationships to the point of creating an unruly organisational landscape. I start with the directionality of the relationships given that it is the most 'orderly' manifestation of this phenomenon.

I observed several cases where commercial tenants were providing services to the organisation and to members within it. This bi-directional traffic was sometimes multiple, with tenants renting several spaces for different purposes and providing several services. Paul, for example, was a IPC tenant in three ways, renting his apartment, his bakery and his counselling office from the organisation. IPC office employees ordered baked goods from him weekly and he sometimes catered official IPC events. Barrel of Monkeys Cafe, another commercial tenant, similarly catered such events. Lilly, a psychologist renting a room in 69 Clotson St. both treated people from the social environment of IPC and was hired directly by IPC to treat several tenants and volunteers. Another example was the fact of IPC volunteers receiving Folks vouchers for their lunches. IPC also bought food products through Folks, which it distributed to its tenants for free. Anna and myself, housed by IPC also made use of an office and of the former St. Paul's Church, making us (like Paul) both housing and commercial tenants (ethnographic notes, 02.10.2020). As I mentioned in Chapter 4, IPC sponsored us in one of our funding bids; and our activities were included in one of their bids, making us collaborators and service providers for the organisation (CLLD funding bid, 09.02.2019). In all of these examples bi-directional commercial relationships occurred. In some of them there were multiple types of transaction going in either direction between IPC and tenants. All of this relational traffic across the boundary of the organisation challenged an order where IPC provide housing and commercial space and the others are tenants and clients. Coupled with the welcoming atmosphere discussed above, the multiple relationships point to a sense of opening where,

once one such transaction was established, communication was there for more proposals to be considered. This in itself contributed to the generative aspect of the ecology (ethnographic notes, 02.10.2020).

One can find the roots of this bi-directionality of formal transactions in IPC's early days, where formal boundaries were disregarded in ways that seemed natural to a group of friends. In these early days, one way boundaries between individuals and organisations were challenged was through members and friends buying houses for IPC, using personal credit cards or taking mortgages or loans on their names (personal communication, Jowt, 02.04.2017; Caswell, 27.04.2017). Alice, in such an example of bi-directionality, is currently a IPC tenant, living in a house she herself bought in the early 1980s (personal communication, Jowt, 02.04.2017). Similarly, in Chapter 6 I cited Cecil as talking about how he was getting paid to do structural work on the house he was living in (personal communication, Cecil, 14.01.2018). Another example of bi-directionality was the first IPC office, located in a decentralized way in several bedrooms. It demonstrates bi-directionality given that people were simultaneously tenants, cooperative members and providing commercial space for the organisation. IPC members often lived together and there were little spaces available, contributing to such bi-directionality occurring organically, as a result of physical and social closeness and the scarcity of resources (the hardships I referred to in Chapter 6) (personal communication, Cecil, 14.01.2018; IPC minutes, book 1, March 86-Feb 87, 05.03.1986). In that respect the bi-directionality of later IPC, discussed in the previous paragraph might have grown from the foundations laid in these early days; hard to separate as it was from the friendships and intimacy that generated it.

My observations show friendship and intimacy to be present in later relationships as well. For example, Samz and Jowt were close friends and met socially often. This was also the case with Paul who went on bicycle rides with Jowt on weekends, as it was with IPC trustees Max and Arthur. Tom, who ran Triton Boxing, with which IPC has several collaborations, is also close friends with Jowt. Steve, from Greensboro Community Centre, was mentioned in conversations as forming part of IPC's social environment in the early days (ethnographic notes, 4.08.2020). The stories discussed in the section about meandering paths, such as Kid's, Carl, Chile Grant's and Sean, also point to friendships entangled in the formal relationships of work, tenancy and volunteering (ethnographic notes, 14.05.2021). In addition, several IPC tenants were connected through friendships and family ties to the organisation. This was true for the young people at 51 Westhold St., who attended the crèche and the teenage crèche. It was also true for Alice, who was involved in several IPC projects in the early days, had two children with Jowt, and was intimate friends with Tina. This was also true for Tina herself and several

members of her family who lived in IPC houses. Jowt himself was still an IPC tenant (personal communication, Jowt, 02.04.2017; Tina and Alice, 23.06.2017, ethnographic observations, 12.09.2018). The fact of many commercial transactions overlapping with friendship and family ties pointed me further towards the unruliness of the organisational landscape. Combined with the bi-directionality of many of the commercial relationships, it made each instance of collaboration hard to classify or to reduce to schematics.

The accumulation of boundaries being challenged in IPC and in other instances of collaboration within its ecology overflows the relative simplicity of the bi-directionality I started out with. Folks can exemplify the multiple blurring of boundaries within the organisational ecology. For once, Samz is an example of neighbours becoming friends, exemplifying the porosity of IPC's boundaries. Jowt's Monday-night shifts at Folks, in themselves blurring the boundary between professional and friendship-related activities, demonstrated this porosity as ongoing and extending through time (ethnographic notes, 02.09.2019). It also exemplified the way shifts were conceived of in Folks, where most people working were neighbours from the street, their family and friends (personal communication, Kid, 26.06.2017). This in itself challenged boundaries between the business and its immediate geographic surroundings. It demonstrated the bi-directionality of resources blurring the boundary between economic formal resources (neighbours getting paid for doing shifts) and affective relationships that could, in themselves, be read as resources, beneficial to the business (a personal connection between the shop and its neighbours). It also expressed a blurring of the boundary between Folks' past as a cooperative with a social purpose and its present as an individually owned business, given that the practice of people from the community doing shifts originated as part of that earlier phase. All of this in addition to the bi-directionality of Folks as a commercial tenant that also provided services to IPC, mentioned above, shows the blurring of boundaries within Folks as multi-dimensional, one small detail of IPC's unruly landscape.

I gave the example of Folks as a detail that points to the whole. Zooming into any one of the collaborative instances in the history or present of IPC's organisational ecology similarly demonstrates a multi-dimensional blurring of boundaries. As I demonstrated above when talking about the personal relationships within Punkarama, Underworld, Loo Prints and Folks, any time I would try to disentangle a thread from this meshwork, I would be confronted with this kind of unruly blurring of boundaries. This was the case with projects such as the crèche and the teenage crèche discussed above, and of the commercial tenants and the compounds that housed them (the George St. Social Enterprise Hub, the Beverley St. Compound, the IPC offices at 69 Clotson St. and the former St. Paul's Church), just to name a few examples. Contrasting to a situation where everything has its place, this unruliness communicated to me

the case study's irreducibility to a list of categories. This irreducibility is just another expression of the generative characteristics of such an ecology. The unruliness the IPC data presented emerged from its ecological spontaneity involving chance encounters, meandering paths and porous boundaries. Given the way spontaneity is presented in the social movement studies literature, this challenge to control might make IPC seem mindless and reactive (Zamponi and Fernández González, 2017). But as I will now discuss, it expressed their political ideas and their pragmatic creativity.

7.5.4 IPC's unruly landscape as pragmatic, intentional and political

As I discussed in Chapter 6, accounts from the early days show IPC's adherence to the typical protocols of social movements (e.g. consensus-based decision-making) (email from Max, 12.01.2021). My current observations likewise show elements of planning (e.g. feasibility studies, accounting etc.) in current day IPC (ethnographic notes, 26.10.2018; personal communication, Jowt, 02.06.2017). In that sense it would be false to say that the organisation represents a polar opposite of the control within both alternative and mainstream organisation. My recorded conversations show the people involved to value both the formalities of protocolisation and the spontaneity that pushed against them. The ongoing informality placed protocols in check, allowing for the porosity of the boundaries they created, ensuring that that movement is allowed in and out of the different organisational and conceptual boundaries that made up IPC's landscape. The fact of tensions and complementarities between formality and informality ever present in the data, points to the dialogic and pragmatic element in IPC's organisational dynamics. When talking to IPC members about formality and informality within the organisation, I was presented with a contradiction. Were IPC a highly formalised organisation, adhering to both the internal protocolisation of social movement and to external, state bureaucracies? Or were they informal in their treatment of protocolisation and just "*working the system*", when it came to state bureaucracies (personal communication, Cecil, 14.01.2018; ethnographic notes, 14.08.2020)? My conversation with Chris about adherence to state bureaucracies in the crèche and the following conversation with Jowt presented such a contradiction. The many mentions of the importance of the weekly meetings also contrasted with the way Tina, Alice, Jowt, Kid and Caswell stressed the importance of other less formal dynamics (personal communication, Tina, 23.06.2017; Alice, 23.06.2017; Jowt, 02.04.2017; Kid, 26.06.2017; Caswell, 27.04.2017). It was apparent from the data that both formality and informality, both control and spontaneity, were present in the data and valued by the people I talked to. Looking at the meandering paths the different projects took, for example IPC's change from cooperative to charity, one

sees that what characterised the organisation and to some extent its environment was an ongoing dialogue with changing circumstances.

The porosity of boundaries that made the IPC organisational ecology an unruly landscape and, in contrast, their adherence to internal protocols and, according to some accounts, state bureaucracies, has one thing in common. Both exemplify an ongoing dialogue the organisation had with changing circumstances. The members expressed to me the strength of their vision and their insistence for the project to succeed (personal communication, Max, 26.01.2018; Jowt, 02.04.2017; Tina, 23.06.2017; Alice, 23.06.2017). This translated to an attitude of *"getting on with it*" that valued doing over planning (personal communication, Caswell, 27.04.2017). In many cases this involved living with the imperfection of learning processes that were not yet complete. In other cases, this involved the discipline of weekly meetings and protocols. In others, this meant responding to the challenges of state bureaucracies, either by adhering to them, or by "*working the system*" (personal communication, Cecil, 14.01.2018; Alice, 23.06.2017; Tina, 23.06.2017; email from Jamie, 23.08.2017; ethnographic notes, 14.08.2020). Altogether this ongoing dialogue with changing circumstances points to a pragmatic approach that values the ongoing achieving of the organisation's vision over adherence to a set plan of how this might happen. This pragmatism contrasts with the idea of spontaneity as mindless despite the fact that dialogue and openness might be confused with the idea of spontaneity being reactive (e.g. Zamponi and Fernández González, 2017, p.65).

A dialogic approach does have an element of reaction within it. Jowt's words regarding Jard's dream, brought above, chart a debate between the idea of having a plan, or a dream and then imposing it on one's environment through control, and having an ethical compass that is used while responding to changing circumstances (personal communication, Jowt, 02.06.2017). The fact of so many people involved in IPC repeatedly mentioning the openness of their imperfect learning process, and also something about the way they talked about it, pointed to them being proud of this imperfection, of the meandering path the organisation took, and of the organisational ecology, not unlike Jard's dream, that it generated through it (personal communication, Tina, 23.06.2017; Max, 26.01.2018; Caswell, 27.04.2017; Vex, 09.01.2021; email from Jamie, 23.08.2017). These repeated mentions showed openness and dialogue to be intentional and valued rather than mindless and reactive. Another element that points toward this intentionality is the fact of such spontaneity coincided with political ideas they engaged with.

One of the ways spontaneity expressed the political ideal present in the IPC ecology is through the literature they were reading at the time. Reading through the writings of Colin Ward, one

finds repeated references to Kropotkin's theory of spontaneous order (Ward, 1966, p.3; Ward, 1988, p.23). As I cited in Chapter 2, Ward also talks about planning as an expression of power and control that banishes the idea of anarchy outside of the common sense (Ward, 1988, p.61). IPC members and friends' repeated emphasis on spontaneity in its different expressions is likely to be a form of translating this literature into the day-to-day of their practice in the Avenue neighbourhood. Specifically, their emphasis on openness and creativity echoed Ward's words:

> Creativity is for the gifted few: the rest of us are compelled to live in the environments constructed by the gifted few, listen to the gifted few's music, use the gifted few's inventions and art and read the poems, fantasies and plays by the gifted few […] this is a culturally induced and perpetuated lie (Ward, 1988, p.44)

In addition to the pragmatism and intentionality their words portray, this literature they were reading shows spontaneity as purposeful work towards the kind of alternative organising that expressed their values, including the creative and open feel of what they saw as an ideal society. The idea of constructing one's own environment was ever present in IPC members and friends' DIY ethics. In IPC, DIY ethics were connected to the democratising ideals of social movements by the fact of favouring imperfect learning processes over the hierarchies of experts and expertise. The fact of IPC and other organisations in its ecology having a welcoming approach towards the outside was closely connected to the pragmatic approach they take to activism and politics, informed, as it was, by DIY. Their repeated mention of their imperfect learning process is an expression of these ethics, translated to the day-to-day of their actions.

As I discussed so far, the IPC ecology was an unruly organisational landscape where boundaries of different types were continually challenged. I showed one important element of this to be the fact of the outside welcomed in and another - the insides spilling out. I discussed the unruliness of the organisational landscape, building it up in layers from the simple bi-directionality of economic relationships to the multi-dimensional blurring of boundaries taking place in many instances of collaboration within this ecology. All in all, I showed this to be a fertile, generative landscape where more and more experiments were continuously enabled through the porosity of boundaries, the meandering paths that challenged planning and the encounters that were thus perpetuated. All this amounted to a challenge to planning and strategising, an organisational ecology that counts on the spontaneity of encounter for its basic functioning. But while spontaneity is associated in the literature with a reactive mindless state (e.g. Zamponi and Fernández González, 2017, p.65), here it expresses the values and the politics of those who started IPC, their DIY ethics and its democratic implications, as they were

recounted to me during my many conversations and as I observed them through years of fieldwork.

7.6 Conclusions

This Chapter presented a recipe of sorts. I called this recipe 'ecological spontaneity' and found its main ingredients to be 'encounter', 'meandering paths' and 'porous boundaries'. To conclude I would like to detail the diverse ways this recipe responds to the questions that motivated my research, questions from the OT literature, from the social movement studies literature, and first and foremost from the actual practice of activism. Apart from the contribution 'ecological spontaneity' makes to such conversation, this thesis makes several other contributions, which I will detail in the following, concluding chapter.

7.6.1 Contribution to the practice of activism

Starting with the practical aspect, I was looking to see whether practitioners (activists) might be able to learn something from the two case studies and from my experience researching from within them. In Chapter 3 I discussed the three related challenges of protocolisation, precarity and homogeneity. Protocolisation (e.g. Cornell, 2011) fortifies the boundaries of social movements, reproducing the ubiquity of control found in mainstream management (e.g. Johnson and Gill, 1993). Such rigidity of boundaries contributes to homogeneity, working against activists' democratising goals by maintaining it as a middle class 'bubble' and by guarding its organisational proposals within its limited social sphere (Appel, 2011b; Appel, 2011a). In this chapter I showed 'ecological spontaneity' to respond to these three challenges by proposing alternatives to planning and controlling. The case studies show porous boundaries, meandering paths and chance encounters as actionable ways forward that social movements can adopt in response to the three challenges. By negotiating with elements outside of control I showed that cultivating such spontaneity could mitigate some of the protocolisation that contributes to social movements' homogeneity, the lack of diversity that blocks some of their democratising goals. I explored the possibility that such openness, informed by their DIY ethics, might have contributed to longevity and resilience. In that respect, their embracing indeterminacy, "thinking through precarity" (Tsing, 2015a, p.20), brought about certain stability in the long run. By crafting such organisational ecologies dialogically through these 'ingredients', activists could create alternatives to the ubiquity of control, placing spontaneity at the centre of organisational processes. Such loosening of control proliferates possibilities, providing not one recipe but multiple organisational forms entangled with each other, nourishing each other through encounters, through the unfastening of formalities and the related porosity of boundaries. In that respect 'ecological spontaneity' is not a strict recipe replacing another (protocolisation) but rather a sensibility

that permeates the diverse attitudes and relationships within an organisational ecology. This analysis of the data does not propose rejecting the innovative organisational practices of social movements (including their specific protocols), but rather it suggests taking a step back to observe them in light of the pragmatics of any given situation, adding to them the consideration of what I called a prefigurative feel. In that I mean that rather than prefiguring the formalities that might combat oppression through protocolisation (Luchies, 2014a), the case studies prefigured the feel of their ideal society. In that they don't strictly envision the details of its formal organisation, but rather focus on projecting the openness, humour and welcoming atmosphere that is generative of multiple organisational forms in any given moment. As I discussed above, this generative aspect of the IPC organisational ecology provided resilience and contributed, through grassroots collaboration, to a flexible, creative atmosphere. In that, it translated anarchist ideas into daily practices.

7.6.2 Contributions to OT

The issues that came up in Chapter 2 focused on the ubiquity of control and its expression through planning within mainstream OT. I am specifically interested in its treatment by critical scholars that hope to use their position within business schools to affect social change by challenging the supposed common sense of management. The case studies and their analysis made specific contributions to the conversations about alternative organising and about performativity.

7.6.2.1 Contribution to alternative organising scholarship

The 'ecological spontaneity' exemplified by the case studies provides a unique contribution to the study of alternative forms of organising and their diversifying gesture. For once the identifying of organisational ecologies which are unruly landscapes give concrete examples of how organisation is an "open term" (Parker et al., 2014a, p.624) and how it is "a continually contested and negotiated matter" (Parker et al., 2007, p.x). While the alternative organisation conversation seems to point to this being the case from a wide theoretical perspective of scholars debating what organisation is, IPC's unruly landscape exemplifies how this can also materialise within a specific geographical location and within a specific social milieu. In that the practice of the case studies, especially IPC, produced its own diversifying gesture. This gesture is not done in the realm of concepts and theories, but through actual diverse relationships and organisational experiments taking place in a specific geographic territory. The negotiations of organisation are made concrete through the meandering paths projects took, changing format, location and personnel in dialogue with changing circumstances. The fact of it being an open term is exemplified by the diversity of forms found within the organisational ecology, contrasting with the more homogeneous dream of a grouping of

connected workers' cooperatives (Jard's dream). Another contribution to alternative organisation has to do with the case studies' challenging of planning and controlling within social movements, an issue I address in the following section. Given that social movements are often the focus of alternative organisation ethnographies, specifically considering their in-depth exploration of the dynamics within them, this aspect, here addressed as a contribution to social movement studies, is also of importance to this conversation.

7.6.2.2 Contribution to performativity

In translating this view of organisation to a concrete geographical space, the case studies exemplify an alternative performativity, a way that concrete realities could emerge from ideas. In this case the practitioners within IPC themselves were engaged both in the ideas (e.g. Ward, 1988) and in their ongoing negotiation and materialisation in the territory of the Avenue neighbourhood. Speculatively speaking, imagining such processes, imbued by an ecological spontaneity, replicated in many neighbourhoods would multiply diversity exponentially. Such an accumulation of diverse organisational forms that challenge the control inherent in mainstream organising would overflow myopic boundaries, contributing to an alternative common sense. In that respect the coupling of practices such as the ones within the IPC organisational ecology and their research responds to the coupling of mainstream management theories and the repetitive gestures that make control ubiquitous and alternatives hard to fathom (Learmonth, 2005, p.618). Unlike mainstream performativity that is imposed unilaterally through managerial measures (Keenoy, 2005; Graeber, 2015), the porosity of boundaries generates a performativity that is crafted in dialogue with its environment, though daily iterations of welcoming spontaneous encounter.

7.6.3 Contribution to social movement studies

As I discussed in Chapter 3, social movement scholars traditionally associated spontaneity with activists being reactive rather than mindful and conscious (e.g. Zamponi and Fernández González, 2017, p.65). In IPC, spontaneity formed part of a constructive effort to create alternatives. Furthermore, it expressed the values and politics of the people involved. Spontaneity is mostly defined as a linear directional event, happening out of the blue. Thus defined, it tends to be debunked or explained away through giving a wider context to the events described (e.g. Flesher Fominaya, 2015). In doing so, scholars are aligning themselves with social movements and their positive representation given that spontaneity is seen as reactive and mindless (Zamponi and Fernández González, 2017). At the same time, while aiming to support social movements, such scholars find themselves in contradiction with activists themselves who tend to represent their actions as spontaneous (Polletta, 1998; Maeckelbergh, 2011; Snow and Moss, 2014, p.1122). Ecological spontaneity shows that

spontaneity could be framed differently, as an ingredient that permeates the environment and happens through encounter. Rather than connoting large scale events erupting "from the ether" (Flesher Fominaya, 2015, p.143), it is shown as consisting of daily small-scale occurrences, central to the creation of alternatives. In exploring the recipe for such spontaneity, cues are taken from activists themselves, their valuing of spontaneity and their theorising of precarity, coming from their own observation and from their own reflexivity. Rather than just reactive (Breines, 1980, p.422), the case studies show that spontaneity could be constructive of alternative forms of organising. Rather than producing alternative protocols that engage with the formalities of mainstream organisation and its hierarchies, the case studies, through their ecological spontaneity engage with the informal dynamics that underpin such protocols, taking a playful attitude towards formalities through creative pragmatism.

7.6.4 Elements yet to be discussed

The recipe for ecological spontaneity mixing the ingredients of encounter, meandering paths and porous boundaries, points to the possibility of creating organisational ecologies that are unruly landscapes. It is thus not a focused or exact recipe aiming to reproduce, but a loosely described one, emphasising dialogue and improvisation with local circumstances. In entangling myself in such a landscape, my approach was informed by art and by "thinking through precarity" (Tsing, 2015a, p.20). My culinary metaphor was inspired by the same book that inspired the action I took when setting up *macba*. In the following, concluding chapter, I summarise the theoretical and methodological contribution made through taking such steps and explicate the resonance between the metaphor of 'wild fermentation' and the ecological spontaneity of the case studies. I will also explore areas left to explore opened up by the research, and some of its related limitations.

Concluding thoughts

Chapter 8

8.1 Introduction: contributions of the ecological spontaneity recipe

In Chapter 1 I presented the doubts that lead to an ongoing investigation that had lasted 11 years. Personal circumstances and related theoretical questions prompted an inquiry, through action, through art, into the day-to-day details of organising that challenged control. The question 'can there be recipes for alternative organising?' came from a need to understand the 'how to's' of alternative organisation and alternative economies, processes of social change that exist within the world as it is now, pragmatic just as much as utopian. I framed this project using culinary language, talking about recipes and fermentation, inspired as I was by a cookbook that is both political and philosophical (Katz, 2003). In Chapter 7 I presented the culmination of this process, a tentative recipe, presenting an approach that dialogues with the here's and now's of specific situations. I there discussed how ecological spontaneity contributes to the practice of activism, to theoretical conversations in CMS and to ones in social movement studies.

In terms of its contribution to activism, ecological spontaneity provides an example of ways of doing things together in the world that don't perpetuate the ubiquity of control. By cultivating encounters, meandering paths and porous boundaries, IPC and, to a lesser extent, *macba* kept in mind the prefigurative feel of their organisational experiments. In that they mitigated some of the negative effects of protocolisation. In the case of IPC, it ended up crafting an organisational ecology where people from diverse social classes formed part. By allowing paths to meander and possibilities to proliferate, they enabled rather than controlled. The result was a lively organisational ecology teaming with life, with resources, with resilience. In that respect it also successfully responded to the precarity that makes the lives of activists and their projects difficult.

In terms of its contribution to CMS, ecological spontaneity made contributions both to the alternative organisation conversation and to the conversation about performativity. Related to the alternative organisation conversation it addressed two issues that are implicit at best in the conversation about alternative organising: alternatives to planning (to control) and the boundaries of alternative organising. There were several elements in my findings that made explicit the creation of alternatives to planning methodologies. For once, the data showed an emphasis on chance encounter in the two organisational ecologies. It also showed IPC's imperfect learning processes, related to their DIY ethics and connected to their porous boundaries. Finally, it presented both ecologies as enabling of other projects rather than controlling. These three elements translated into the meandering paths, which I presented as

one of the three ingredients of the ecological spontaneity recipe. In allowing paths to meander, remaining open to dialogue with unpredictable circumstances and open to encounter, the recipe provides an approach that challenges the planning inherent in mainstream organisation. It also provides an alternative to the extensive protocolisation that perpetuates the ubiquity of control within alternative organising. It is important to note that when I talk about an alternative here I am not talking about an absolute replacement of planning by encounters, meandering paths and porous boundaries, just about a shift in focus, a counterweight to the ubiquity of control. The data showed the ecological spontaneity of the case studies to be central, a significant counterweight to the protocolisation and the mainstream planning methodologies that were also present.

The ingredient 'porous boundaries' distils within it diverse forms in which boundaries were challenged. Some of these exist in the focus of the thesis throughout. For example, the fact of the thesis focusing on two 'organisational ecologies' rather than simple organisations already challenges boundaries. The fact of it focusing on what I called post-activist or more-than-activist practices challenges the assumptions of social movements having a clear inside and outside. But when talking about 'porous boundaries' as an ingredient in the ecological spontaneity recipe, I am referring to the diverse ways boundaries were challenged within the dynamics I observed in the IPC ecology, and to a lesser extent in *macba*. In IPC, I showed the boundaries to be continuously blurred to the point of the organisational landscape being unruly. I see this as providing two contributions, one to the conversation about alternative organising, and another to the conversation regarding performativity. To alternative organising it presents the focus on boundaries, their importance and their relation to the issue of control as explicit issues to be looked at. As I discussed in Chapter 2, this is rarely made explicit in the alternative organisation ethnographies.

Related to the discussion about performativity, porous boundaries are central to an alternative performativity, diverse, dialogic and emerging 'from below'. I connected this to the unruliness of IPC's organisational landscape. This unruliness allowed paths to meander into the organisation, from one project to another and between typologies of relationships (formal/informal/friendship, neighbour/collaborator/friend). I showed this to be related to the generative nature of such an ecology. The fact of activist researchers, be they formally connected to academic institutions or not, theorising in the midst of proliferating organisational possibilities in such a way, generates an unruly multidirectional conversation about what organisation is and what it could be. The fact that this conversation is had in situ, in the geographical neighbourhood where the realities it creates (the realities that create it) are felt on a daily basis, provides a terrain to explore in terms of performativity. The

alternative organisation ethnographers (e.g. Langmead, 2017b; Reedy and King, 2019) already point towards such possibilities. The recipe's contribution is in showing ecological spontaneity, through its ingredients of encounter, meandering paths and porous boundaries, as performative, while at the same time not reinforcing a specific "shape and stability" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.49). In other words, as discussed in Chapter 2, the performativity of alternatives could happen through strengthening their boundaries, making them compete with mainstream forms, or it could consider spontaneity as part of what makes it alternative. Here I am making a case for the latter, by showing one instance, IPC, where this takes place.

The recipe's contribution to social movement studies has to do with the term 'spontaneity' itself. In Chapter 3 I showed social movement scholars to eschew the idea of spontaneity and of the indeterminacy inherent in it, as constructive within social movements. I related this to the way the term is conceptualised, as linear, directional, reactive and related to large-scale historical events. Ecological spontaneity provides a different perspective on the term by re-framing it as multiple small spontaneities permeating physical spaces, the social practices and the daily moments of the two organisational ecologies. By happening in diverse ways throughout these ecologies, it shows that spontaneity can be ecological rather than just linear. By happening through encounter, it questions its directionality. By consciously forming part of organisational practices of activists, it shows spontaneity to be constructive rather than merely reactive.

Chapter 7 thus charted the contributions ecological spontaneity makes to these three ambits of thought and action, to activist practice, to CMS and to social movement studies. In the rest of this chapter I will show that besides the contribution of this recipe, directly responding to my research questions, the process I described throughout the chapters provided several other secondary contributions to theory and a methodological contribution. I will discuss them in the following two sections. Following them, I will talk about the limitation of this research and of potentials for further explorations. I will finalise the chapter and the thesis by revisiting its central metaphor, culinary fermentation.

8.2 Secondary contributions the Wild Yeast Economies thesis makes to theory

8.2.1 Organisational ecologies

Before charting the more specific recipe for ecological spontaneity, I already laid the groundwork for it by showing the two case studies as organisational ecologies. This term already suggests their porous boundaries, a sense where *"you can't put your finger on where it ends"* (personal communication, Alice, 23.06.2017). As an observable 'unit', an organisational

ecology suggests something more loose than an organisation with its inside and outside, but it doesn't reach the systemic abstraction of a network (Juris, 2008a, p.2) or even the reproducibility of a rhizome (Deleuze and Guattari, 2020 cited in Ingold, 2006). I observed the challenging of organisational boundaries to be closely related to its physical and geographical expressions, in the building and neighbourhoods in which the case studies operated. I can envision an in-depth discussion examining the place such a phenomenon, organisational ecology, takes in relation to networks, rhizomes and other images and metaphors used to discuss ways of doing things together in the world. Such a discussion was not my focus in this current thesis and I leave it for future explorations.

8.2.2 The role of physical space in alternative organising

Another contribution this research does is in considering the role physical space and geography might have when organising differently. I observed how ecological spontaneity expressed itself through the rooms, buildings and neighbourhoods in which my two case studies worked. It was especially the porosity of boundaries that was expressed spatially through doors remaining open and a welcoming attitude cultivated within them. Addressing organisational dynamics through physical manifestations of them helped me bring theory down to the day-to-day dynamics and interactions of the two case studies. In doing so, rooms, buildings and neighbourhoods contributed to the way I responded to the issue of performativity, of the way discourse dialogues with reality, in that it embodied the words of Cabantous et al. (2016)

> CPT [critical performativity theory] has a very strong emphasis on discourse, and while actively intervening in managerial discourses is a worthwhile thing to do, organizations cannot be understood without cognizance of materiality, and materiality is as important within performativity theory as discourse (Cabantous et al., 2016, p.202)

The issue of how buildings rooms and neighbourhoods expressed the organisational dynamics of ecological spontaneity and enabled them was woven throughout the thesis. It connects to the fact that scholarship from the field of geography is presented here as useful for theorising organisation. At the same time, this was secondary to the main subject of the thesis, being organisational practices and dynamics, and is left open for future explorations and elaborations.

8.2.3 Diversifying gestures

Another contribution to theory this thesis does is the coining of the phrase 'diversifying gesture'. I talked about the alternative organisation conversation as presenting such a theoretical gesture, widening our vision from the myopia of mainstream OT (Cheney, 2014) to

the open-ended possibilities of the human capacity of doing things together in the world (Parker et al., 2007). I found this expression useful in that it helped me connect the alternative organising conversation with other conversations that provide similar theoretical gestures: the diverse economies conversation in geography (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.54) and PAR with the way it opens up perceptions regarding diverse epistemologies (Hall, 2013 2m16s). In doing so I identify a general spirit of loosening of academic control, in line with the democratising goals of social movements and, by extension, of research done in affinity with them. I find that such theoretical diversification parallel's the diversifying work done in the Avenue neighbourhood by IPC members and friends.

8.2.4 Prefigurative feel

Another phrase I coined, that I found useful to making my theoretical argument is 'prefigurative feel'. Rather than emphasising the formalities of protocols I stressed that projecting openness, humour and welcoming atmosphere onto a utopian future, can be useful for generating multiple organisational forms. In pointing to this other kind of prefiguration, I shifted the focus from social movements trying to project static organisational forms onto the future, to their work prefiguring "the nature of the relationships between the people inhabiting such projects, the way they relate to each other, to time and to space" (from Chapter 3). By making prefigurative feel explicit, I put a name on values that I observed as permeating organisational ecologies such as IPC, values that pushed against the ubiquity of control. In the case studies, prefigurative feel translated the valuing of emotional states and atmospheres into a compass of sorts, occasionally pointing organisational dynamics away from protocolisation.

8.3 Methodological contribution

In Chapters 2 and 3 I discussed three frameworks that challenge control in scholarship: Gibson-Graham's use of weak theory (2014), Tsing's "thinking through precarity" (2015a, p.20) and Ingold's "animic ontology" (2006). I talked about them as overlapping in several senses and useful for scholarship that aims to "proliferate possibilities" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.xxxii) furthering and deepening diversifying gestures such as the ones discussed. Methodologically, Gibson-Graham describe the action taken by scholars as "reading for difference not dominance" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.54). In Chapter 4 I described how thinking, informed by art, can contribute to this project. The encounter between art and activism was the starting point of this process, which was later also informed by PAR and by ethnography (with an emphasis on biography). The three main ideas I took from art were 'juxtaposition', 'encounter' and 'assemblage'. By examining them here, I contributed to the research of alternative forms of organising through alternative methods that in themselves challenged control.

8.3.1 The relationship between juxtaposition, encounter and assemblage

The three elements, juxtaposition, encounter and assemblage, could be seen as three elements of a 'what happens if...?' experiment informed by art. Juxtaposition is the propositional stage of such an experiment, asking 'what happens if we place element A next to element B, two elements from different worlds?'. The starting point of the 'what happens if...?' experiment thus involves juxtaposing differing elements, allowing for an encounter between them, and observing the new situation that arises from it.

Encounters are the smallest units through which this methodology unfolded. The encounters in all the arts-based methods I employed were both the conceptual encounters between the different elements juxtaposed (e.g. documentary encountering embroidery, radio encountering teahouse), and the diverse human encounters created through the open spaces I employed. Thus, juxtaposing elements with each other and creating spaces for more such juxtapositions, generated encounters. The spaces (loosely) containing such encounters are polyphonic "open-ended gatherings" (Tsing, 2015a, p.23), where "everything is relatively specific, relatively 'local', enacted at particular places on particular occasions" (Law, 2004, p.138), in other words, assemblages. Assemblages challenge planning and controlling given that positions within them are "unpredictable" and "cannot be figured in advance" (Butler, 1999, p. 20). *macba*, the Documentary Embroidery sessions and the radio/teahouse all fall into this category being that they created daily spaces for local encounters, flavoured by specific technologies (e.g. embroidery, radio). Doing so, they took on unpredictable shapes daily with different people's life stories represented through stitches on fabric, through the online audio stream, or just in casual conversations. All of this constituted both the organisational activity of the projects and the data they produced. These were all the result, not of detailed planning, but of a certain "throwntogetherness" (Massey, 2005; Dombroski, 2006).

Reflexive observation of my own methodology showed *juxtaposition* as proposing an *encounter*, which then results in some sort of hard to predict *assemblage*. An initial juxtaposition of elements from different fields asked what would happen through their encounter. It generated a general openness to encounters, which in turn created assemblages, which took the investigation in unplanned directions. In other words, *assemblages*, in their turns, generated more *juxtapositions* and *encounters*. In doing so, it challenged the control inherent in research design (Bechhofer and Paterson, 2012), challenging planning, and replacing it with the openness of 'what happens if...?' experiments.

Informed by theorising that values vulnerability (Ingold, 2006; Gibson-Graham, 2014; Tsing, 2015a, p.20) I produced an arts-based methodology sensitive to the elements within the case

studies that in themselves challenged control. In tapping into the vulnerable indeterminate element in art, it also contributed an art-based methodology that goes into the deep underlying knowledge-building processes that take place within art, rather than just the superficial trappings of art (art supplies and processes) as is more often the case when using it methodologically (e.g. Sutherland, 2013).

8.4 Limitations and future explorations

In charting two recipes, one of ecological spontaneity based on my observations of IPC and one for an arts-based methodology rooted in juxtaposition, encounter and assemblage, I am exploring cracks in the ubiquity of control within organisation and its research. In order to do so I had to spend 11 years entangled within the case studies, acting and reflecting, observing and interacting. This said, the fact of my focus being two case studies, and especially considering the great emphasis on IPC as providing the main recipe in response to my question, is limiting. The methodological approach combining the ingredients of art, PAR and ethnography needs to be further explored in new contexts. The combination of juxtaposition, encounter and the assemblages they create, need to be applied in other situations where people do things together in the world.

The *Wild Yeast Economies* thesis showed that spontaneity can be ecological, permeating physical and social space, and that valuing such spontaneity can contribute to resilience of alternative organisations and to the creation of alternatives that contest control. In doing so I looked at the daily dynamics of an organisational ecology based on the words of people participating within it. But other factors that could influence such an endeavour were beyond the scope of this investigation. The difference in context between Maricel and Whykham points towards the possible influence of larger city policies and wider geographies to the success and resilience of such projects. There are cultural differences between Spain and the UK that undoubtedly contributed to how projects such as these are conceptualised and received. The extent to which larger urban and cultural contexts (Spain vs. UK, Maricel vs. Whykham) enabled and limited such projects is important to consider and needs further exploration. The two cities are different in other ways as well. Maricel is a large cosmopolitan city, a tourist attraction, considered expensive and celebrated as a success. Whykham is more of a marginalised place, and the Avenue neighbourhood is on national lists of high deprivation. How do such conceptions of ‘success’ vs. ‘failure’ of cities influence the kind of projects people imagine within them, and their resilience? Important as they may be, these issues were outside the scope of this investigation but remain interesting to explore. The difference in activity between the two projects also need further investigation given that IPC was first and foremost a housing organisation while *macba* - a cultural one. The extent to which economies

of different nature (housing vs. cultural activities) influence elements such as openness and resilience, is also important and worth further exploration.

There is a lot more that could be researched in terms of people stepping outside of the sphere of activism, inspired by it but also disappointed with it. Could there be more examples of post-activist or more-than-activist projects that engage in socially transformative work outside of such social circles? How might such work relate to the so called “second thoughters” (Collier and Horowitz, 2006), disappointed activists that turned towards right wing ideas as a response to their disappointments? Could the challenging of the boundaries of social movements proliferate more possibilities for social transformation rooted in critique of activists’ organisational practices? Given that I am basing this thesis on two case studies only introduces this issue, opening a wide field for consideration. Again, the small scope here was limiting.

To these possible future explorations I would add the ones mentioned above in the section about secondary contributions. For once, the way physical spaces and geographical areas can express alternative organisational practices that challenge the ubiquity of control requires further investigation. This is the type of work that could be done in collaboration with others, for example architects, urban planners or geographers. Secondly, observing organisational phenomena as ecologies could be further elaborated in relation to other images (e.g. networks, rhizomes) used to portray organisational dynamics, specifically ones that provide alternatives to mainstream conceptualisations. There is also room for further explorations of my own culinary metaphor, that of fermentation. I’d like to conclude this thesis by going back to this metaphor to examine the extent to which it served me as a guide throughout.

8.5 Wild Fermentation as a metaphor for ecological spontaneity

The book that inspired this whole line of thinking, this juxtaposition between culinary processes and organisational ones, resonated with my experiments throughout. Like the two case studies, the critique of control is central to Wild Fermentation (2003). Katz sees control as a prevalent feature of our culture, closely related to fear (Katz, 2003, p.9). He views control as “colonial”, expressed by microbiology that sees microorganisms as elements that “must be dominated and exploited” (Katz, 2003, p.19). In other words, the living microorganisms are managed and planned. In the book, he relates such domination and exploitation to the homogenisation of culture. In that respect it echoes, on a microscopic scale the one-fits-all recipes of managerialism. He proposes wild fermentation as an alternative. Repeatedly, I found his reflections regarding these microscopic processes to echo the data coming from the two case studies. This, of course, is understandable, considering that Katz comes from a similar,

activist background and shares some of the values and norms of *macba* and IPC. For example, he talks about fermentation as a DIY alternative,

> a small antidote you can undertake in your home, using the extremely localized populations of microbial cultures present there to produce your own unique fermented foods (Katz, 2003, p.21)

But the connection is deepened as he describes fermentation's unruly ubiquitous performativity:

> Fermentation is everywhere, always. It is an everyday miracle, the path of least resistance. Microscopic bacteria and fungi (encompassing yeasts and molds) are in every bite we eat. Try-as many do-to eradicate them with antibacterial soaps, antifungal creams, and antibiotic drugs, there is no escaping them. They are ubiquitous agents of transformation, feasting upon decaying matter, constantly shifting dynamic life forces from one miraculous and horrible creation to the next (Katz, 2003, p.2)

Wild fermentation is the product of dialoguing with this unruliness, "a manifestation of your specific environment". Control and homogenisation are impossible to impose; the food produced "will always be a little different" (Katz, 2003, p.21). In that respect this dialogue with unruliness proliferates possibilities, just as it did in the IPC case study.

Meandering trajectories, and the role encounter plays within them, form part of his recipes for live fermented foods. For example, in a recipe for mead he writes:

> When by chance or intention honey is mixed with water, fermentation happens. Yeasts surfing through the air aboard particles of dust find their way to that sweet, nutritive honey-water (Katz, 2003, p.13)

It is reading sentences such as these that provoked in me the question 'can such a recipe be extrapolated to the way we organise?'

In the book, Katz expresses something that coincided with my findings, that preserving something does not mean maintaining it in static form with static boundaries, but the opposite. He locates one's immune function in "in the context of an ecology, an ecosystem of different microbial cultures" (Katz, 2003, p.8). This is important given that preservation could be otherwise associated with rigid and controlled boundaries and meticulous planning (Mathiot, 2015, p.17). In this case, it is accepting unruliness, dialoguing with it, that contributes to resilience. This treatment of resilience resonates with Alice's image of a meshwork, her response to my question about IPC's longevity. As I discussed in Chapter 7, the entangled diversity of the meshwork had to do with the spontaneity that permeated this organisational

ecology, the fact that encounters were fostered, that paths were let to meander and that boundaries were maintained porous.

I decided to end the thesis with this culinary image for the purpose of communicating an aspect of it that otherwise might get lost. By exploring organisational alternatives through artistic sensibilities, through metaphors, images, even objects and through the underlying 'what happens if...?' experiments that inform them, something beyond manageable, alienated data is produced. Like the two organisational ecologies I examined, the thesis itself, through use of such a culinary image, occasionally escaped the control of strict scientific communication, where there is an emitter, a channel and a receiver. Katz (2003) talks about his recipe book as process-based and encourages the reader/user to dialogue with their close environment, departing from the recipes and using their own judgement and sensibilities. The recipe presented in this thesis is similarly open-ended. The fact of communicating it through an image, through the metaphor of culinary fermentation, is done with the intent of including the emotional dimension of alternative organising, the exhilaration of spontaneity, and the vulnerability of precarity. This includes the emotions that permeated the processes I examined, but also has the intent of provoking an emotional response in the reader, like art tends to do.

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Appendix 1

Aviv research plan

The Wild Yeast Economies research has two methodological components. An ethnographic one and a Participatory Action Research one.

Ethnographic component: IPC, Graffiti Recipes and Tempehsta as organizational ecologies

On one hand it takes an ethnographic approach to examining and describing three alternative organizational/economic ecologies. One of those is in West Whykham in the Avenue area and the other two are in Maricel. In Whykham I will describe the complex interactions present and historical within IPC and related organizations, businesses and people. In Maricel I will look at the practices of Mar Lopez (Graffiti Recipes) and Daniel Stav (Tempehsta), which combine artistic and culinary practices in a connected and embedded way (Mar in her native Marisleta neighborhood and Daniel as part of an intentional community in the Balia neighborhood). I consider the three to be examples of non-normative organizational practices and and non-capitalist economies. I do not treat them as ideal models, but more as hints towards the possibility of diversity and multiplicity in organizational and economic practices. At the same time I will be looking for some meta-methodological elements, attitudes and postures that can inform the other methodological component, which is the PAR based practice of the Wild Yeast Economies study group (described later in this text). Specifically my aims are to find out whether there are dialogic processes, embeddedness, connectedness, elements that describe playful trial and error, more-than-human relationality, and chance encounter, that can be useful in the process of crafting other non-normative organizational practices and non-capitalist economies, ones that are still in their inception. In other words I consider these three examples (the IPC ecology, the Graffiti Recipe one and the Tempehsta one) to be further developed than most of the ones I am engaging with during the study group and hoping for these more "advanced" narratives to resonate with projects that are just beginning. This list of elements (dialogic processes, embeddedness, connectedness, playful trial and error, more-than-human relationality and chance encounter) could be partial. One of the core values of this research and its approach is a letting go of recipes, predictability and control and I will maintain myself open during the conversation to see what relevant elements and dynamics arise from the narratives that are described.

My methodology in this component mixes ethnographic practices with an arts-based approach, the latter informed by the recent relational and interventionist art of the past 15 years and by Joseph Beuyse's ideas regarding social sculpture. Specifically I will use note-taking and contextual descriptions, combining them with biographical interviews that focus on organizational and personal life-stories. I will also use the tool of an online radio/teahouse, which generates a comfortable communications space for dialogues between several local actors. These relaxed conversations over tea or over a meal, catalyzed by the fact of the live internet audio stream, will create an intersubjective space that can provide surprising insights and reflections that could be further developed in more intimate personal interviews if need be.

I have written a draft aide-mèmoire for the personal conversations and a somewhat different one for these more collective radio conversations.

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Draft aide-mèmoire for personal life-story interviews

These conversations take place after months of "hanging out" and the relationships with the people interviewed are ones of friendship and trust. The tone of the conversation is thus informal and I don't want them to feel like formal interviews. Being that there is an ongoing relationship there is always room for more sessions if questions arise later on or if things remain unanswered. The idea is for every stage of the research process to be useful and interesting for the person I am working with, to avoid the act of research being an "extractive economy". I will, therefore maintain a tension between the topics at hand and the possibility of the other person expressing themselves and their interests freely. I value conversational "drifts" and realize that "useful data" can come through meandering paths. The fact of organisational, economic and entrepreneurial stories taking meandering paths is a core interest of this research, as is the diversity of temporalities present in such processes.

The conversation might start with a question such as:

-How did you start doing what you do?

During the conversation I will be looking out for certain elements or topics. I will ask questions that aim at clarifying and elaborating on the following:

-Dialogic processes embedded within their (social, material, cultural, biological)

environment.

-Repetition and variation.

-Temporalities of processes, encounters between different temporalities and how they might be managed or how they might have created difficulties.

-Ways of thinking and behaviors that might seem contrary to neo-liberal values or to societal norms.

-Ecologies: how this project is embedded in its organizational environment

-During the process I will be keeping in mind several theoretical constructs such as ones coming from research on the Anthropocene, from feminist economists, from Action Network Theory and from art theory. While trying to not put data into theoretical molds, these theoretical frameworks might be acknowledged as useful tools, so if it seems like a useful thing to do I will be doing some real-time bridging between so-called theory and so-called practice.

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Draft aide-mèmoire for radio/teahouse conversations

These conversations happen in a leisurely setting around tea and biscuits or around a meal. Some of them are open spaces where anyone from the community can walk in. Others are closed sessions where we invite specific people to have a conversation. These are organized in collaboration with my collaborator Anna Coromina. Many times we send out an email, which tries to loosely set the boundaries of the conversation. We title the event appropriately (e.g. Avenue Barefoot Economies Radio). Even though the conversation is many times started and facilitated by us, we encourage people to take the microphone and introduce their own set of questions. All this said, in many ways the question used to open the conversation is the same as above:

-How did you start doing what you do?

The elements, patterns and dynamics I am hoping to identify during these conversations are also the same ones as in the personal interviews:

-Dialogic processes embedded within their (social, material, cultural, biological)

environment.

-Repetition and variation.

-Temporalities of processes, encounters between different temporalities and how they might be managed or how they might have created difficulties.

-Ways of thinking and behaviors that might seem contrary to neo-liberal values or to societal norms.

-Ecologies: how this project is embedded in its organisational environment

-During the process I will be keeping in mind several theoretical constructs such as ones coming from research on the Anthropocene, from feminist economists, from Action Network Theory and from art theory. While trying to not put data into theoretical molds, these theoretical frameworks might be acknowledged as useful tools, so if it seems like a useful thing to do I will be doing some real-time bridging between so-called theory and so-called practice.

It is important to stress that the fact of streaming live gives the broadcast the air of an important, even a historical event. The presence of the amplified microphone transforms the conversation. The exact nature of this is still not clear to me, but understanding this a little better as a research tool could be one of the interesting side effects of this research.

Another thing to consider is that these conversations not only document the narratives of the organisations being examined and the ecologies they are embedded in. They also contribute to the creation of new connections and the forming of collaborations. In this section I am describing the radio show as an ethnographic tool, a complement to notes, descriptions and interviews, but it is in fact also a contributing part of the process of organizing and therefor has a foot in the PAR tradition.

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PAR Component: The Wild Yeast Economies study group

The Wild Yeast Economies study group is a Participatory Action Research project where a group of us explore our economic projects using tools paraphrased or inspired by Permaculture Design and contemporary art.

It can be seen in two overlapping ways:

-As a process by which we custom-craft tools adequate for economic and organisational projects that don't neatly fit into what we would normally perceive to be economy or organization.

-As a process by which we help economic and organizational projects *become* non-normative organizational and economic structures.

Depending on how the process is represented, one can focus on the idea of describing existing diversity or on promoting such diversity. I believe the boundary between the two conceptions is textual, and that the multidimensionality of the process allows for "flattening" it in both ways. Choosing between one of these options would not do the process justice.

It is in that sense that PAR is an adequate approach for this process, being that it allows the simultaneity of enacting and describing.

I have held a year of such workshops in Maricel in 2014-2015 and I intend to hold more sessions during my stay in Maricel this Fall/Winter and in the following spring in Whykham.

I will also contact past participants in Maricel and hold interviews with them about the experience. The interviews will have a similar focus to the ones described above, looking for similar elements. Apart from those, I will also ask past participants about the consequence and the residues of participating in the study group. I will offer the possibility of repeating some of the exercises either individually as part of the conversation or in a group. Depending on what they might tell me I may suggest other exercises, either new ones that I am currently using, or ones customised to their experience and current challenges.

Most of the participants in the study group are just taking some of their first steps in forming their project. The study group itself could be perceived as taking its first baby steps. The temporalities of such processes are hard to predict. All the elements described above (dialogic processes, embeddedness, connectedness, playful trial and error, more-than-human relationality and chance encounter) make for a site-specific learning curve. We do not necessarily know where on this curve we are and in fact the kind of meandering processes we are describing might not be best visualized as a curve at all. This fact may impact the kind of "data" regarding the study group I will obtain. This data would have to be framed taking into account this uncertain temporality. There is also the possibility that this process will only produce useful data several years down the line. I am committed to the Wild Yeast Economies project and trust that something interesting could be written about it currently in the light of the ethnographic material produced about IPC and about Graffiti Recipes. In case this turns out

not to be the case, I am open to the possibility of the PhD thesis focusing on these above mentioned ethnographies and leaving writing about the study group for another opportunity.

Timeline

Fall/Winter 2016-2017

Maricel.

-Interviews with Mar Lopez, relevant people in the Marisleta, family and collaborators.

-Interviews with Daniel Stav and other collaborators of Tempehesta.

-Interviews with past participants of the Wild Yeast Economies study group.

-New sessions of the Wild Yeast Economies study group with new interested participants.

-Sessions of the radio/teahouse with participants (past and present), as well as with Mar, Daniel and their collaborators.

Spring/Summer 2017

-Interviews with past and present members of IPC, related organisations, businesses and neighbors (FYeast Bakery, Avenue Village Hall, IPC, Whykham Ethnic Minorities Community Centre, IPC Gardening Project)

-Sessions of the radio/teahouse with people from the IPC organisational ecology and other active neighbors

-Wild Yeast Economies study group session with people active in the Avenue area

Appendix 2

Fermentation categories for analysing data

(I used these categories as a preliminary coding framework placing interview quotes within each one. I then wrote the abbreviations below next to any of the quotes that touched on the subject. I then looked at the constellations of abbreviations next to the quotes. Where there were repetitions of large groupings that seemed both insightful and important to the people in the case studies, I took note. I grouped these themes under the three main themes I discuss in the thesis)

1. Dialogue with the temporalities of fermentation (dialogic craft) (but also a dialogic routine?)

"My daily routine is structured by the rhythms of these transformative life processes" (Katz, 2003, p.1)

2. DIY ethic. From below. No necessity for experts. Hands-on craft.

"Fermentation does not require vast expertise or laboratory conditions. You do not need to be a scientist able to distinguish specific microbial agents and their enzymatic transformations, nor a technician maintaining sterile environments and exact temperatures. You can do it in your kitchen" (Katz, 2003, p.2)

3. Creating conditions for things to happen

The focus of this book is the basic processes of transformation, which mostly involve creating conditions in which naturally occurring wild organisms thrive and proliferate." (p. 3)

4. About resilience: Preserving something does not mean maintaining it in static form with static boundaries, but the opposite.

"Fermentation organisms produce alcohol, lactic acid, and acetic acid, all "bio-preservatives" that retain nutrients and prevent spoilage" (Katz, 2003, p.5) Preserving something does not mean maintaining it in static form with static boundaries, but the opposite.

"Fermentation also removes toxins from foods" (Katz, 2003, p.7)

5. Inside outside and organizational 'immune systems'

"As eighteen-letter words go, I like the word ecoimmunonutrition. It recognizes that an organism's immune function occurs in the context of an ecology, an ecosystem of differen

microbial cultures, and that it is possible to build and develop that cultural ecology in oneself through diet" (Katz, 2003, p.8)

6. Creativity (e.g. Florida, 2019 and the way creativity is addressed in business and organisation literature) with the ‘bite’ taken out of it.

"Read labels and be aware: Many commercially available fermented foods are pasteurized, which means heated to the point at which microorganisms die. Though yogurt is well known for its live cultures, many yogurt brand are pasteurized after culturing, killing the prized bacteria" (Katz, 2003, p.8)

"Sauerkraut too is usually heat processed and canned to extend shelf life, at the cost of its healthful live bacteria" (Katz, 2003, p.8)

7. Reaching a critical mass

8. Fear as a motor for control (and hence planning and managerialism)

"Our culture is terrified of germs and obsessed with hygiene. The more we glean about disease-causing viruses, bacteria and other microorganisms, the more we fear exposure to all forms of microscopic life. Every new sensationalized killer microbe gives us more reason to defend ourselves with vigilance. Nothing illustrates this more vividly than the sudden appearance, everywhere in the United Stages, of anti-bacterial soap. " "Antibacterial soap is just another exploitative and potentially dangerous product being sold by preying on people's fears" (Katz, 2003, p.9)

10. Wild biodiversity as opposed to planned and controlled diversity, wildness, re-wilding (related to neighbourliness)

To be healthy, diversity can't be planned or controlled. It has to be wild. Also the emphasis of connecting to your close environment is related to neighbourliness.

"Biodiversity is just as important at the micro level. Call it microbiodiversity. Your body is an ecosystem that can function most effectively when populated by diverse species of microorganisms. Sure you can buy "probiotic" nutritional supplements containing specific selected bacteria that promote healthy digestion. But by fermenting foods and drinks with wild microorganisms present in your home environment, you become more interconnected with the life forces of the world around you. Your environment becomes you, as you invite the microbial populations you share the Earth with to enter your diet and your intestinal ecology" (Katz, 2003, pp.11–12)

11. Chance encounter

"When by chance or intention honey is mixed with water, fermentation happens. Yeasts surfing through the air aboard particles of dust find their way to that sweet, nutritive honey-water" (Katz, 2003, p.13) Chance is an element of a diverse ecology

12. Diversity, anti-homogenisation

"This is the homogenization of culture, a sad, ugly process by which languages, oral traditions, beliefs, and practices are becoming extinct every year, while ever-greater wealth and power is concentrated in fewer hands. Wild fermentation is the opposite of homogenization and uniformity, a small antidote you can undertake in your home, using the extremely localized populations of microbial cultures present there to produce you own unique fermented foods. What you ferment with the organisms around you is a manifestation of your specific environment, and it will always be a little different" (Katz, 2003, p.21)

13. Neighbourliness

From one of the drafts of my first chapter: “a room where things ferment is hospitable for more fermentation (as is the case with koji, the fungus that creates miso)” and the quote above from the wild biodiversity section

14. Scalability

“All of that now seems increasingly strange. Yet experts in the business world seem unable to do without this apparatus for making knowledge. The economic system is presented to us as a set of abstractions requiring assumptions about participants (investors, workers, raw materials) that take us right into twentieth-century notions of scalability and expansion as progress. Seduced by the elegance of these abstractions, few think it important to take a closer look at the world the economic system supposedly organizes. Ethnographers and journalists give us reports of survival, flourishing, and distress, here and there. Yet there is a rift between what experts tell us about economic growth, on the one hand, and stories about life and livelihood, on the other. This is not helpful. It is time to reimbue our understanding of the economy with arts of noticing" (Tsing, 2015a, p.132)

"Events can lead to relatively stable situations, but they cannot be counted on in the way self-replicating units can; they are always framed by contingency and time. History plays havoc with scalability. The only way to create scalability is to repress change and encounter" (Tsing, 2015a, p.142) and other quotes from Tsing about plantation-like knowledge systems

"The advent of microbiology gave rise to a sort of colonial outlook towards microorganisms, that they, like other elements of nature and other human cultures, must be dominated and exploited" (Katz, 2003, p.19) The relationship of science to data is similar.

15. Rigour, agitate and wait

16. Spontaneity, improvisation, impossibility of recipe

"This is a process-oriented cookbook. That is, the techniques i describe are what is important. The specific ingredients are in a way arbitrary and meant to be varied. Many of the recipes for fermented delicacies from faraway places are re-created from written descriptions [...] The problem with written information is that it is often vague, and once you start to consult more than a single source, often it is conflicting. I cannot guarantee the authenticity of many of these culinary reconfigurations, only that they work and taste delicious. Deviate from the recipes; incorporates your own favorite ingredients, or those most abundantly available to you, whether from your garden, an irresistible sale, or dumpster-diving resource recovery missions" (Katz, 2003, pp.36–37)

17. Humour and horizontality

18. Activism

"Fermentation is the action of life upon death. Living organisms consume dead food matter, transforming it and in the process freeing nutrients for the future sustenance of life" (Katz, 2003, p.33) A model for activism.

19. Hacking

20. Family

21. Precarity

Colour codes abbreviated for palimpsest document (written in coloured pencil next to the quotes that were placed in the categories above):

-Dialogic Craft (DC)

-Dialogic routine (DR)

-Dialogue with temporalities/navigation (DT)

-DIY ethics, hands on craft (DIY)

-Movement is everywhere (M)

-Formal/informal (F/I)

-Creating conditions for things to happen (C)

-Resilience and porous boundaries (R/P)

- Inside/outside of organisation (I/O)

-Creativity + bite (C+) (Socially transformative creativity that reframes ideas regarding organisation and economy)

-Creativity-bite (C-) (A co-opted creativity reminiscent of the one Richard Florida discusses in his work)

-Reaching a critical mass (CM)

-Fear as a motor for control/management (F)

-Wild (not controlled biodiversity) (W)

-Chance encounter (CE)

-Neighbourliness (N)

-Scalability (S)

-Rigour (hardships) (R)

-Spontaneity, improvisation, impossibility of recipe (S)

-Humour + horizontality (h)

-Activism (A) (written in a circle like the popular 'anarchy' sign)

-Hacking (H)

-Family (f)

-Precarity/not knowing (P)

-Error (E)