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**THE RIGHT TO THE CITY IN ARGENTINA:
BUILDING CAPACITY THROUGH HECHO EN BUENOS AIRES,
A STREET NEWSPAPER**

By

Keira Philipp-Schnurer

B.A., English and Spanish, Ohio Wesleyan University, 2008

THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

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and

Master of Arts in Latin American Studies

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DEDICATION

To the people of *Hecho en Buenos Aires* and beyond who seek the 'possible-impossible,'
a transformative utopian future.

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ABSTRACT

As the new millennium unfolds, many activists and scholars have responded to enduring inequality in urban environments by embracing French philosopher Henri Lefebvre's writings on the "right to the city" as a "rallying cry and demand." In an effort to contribute to this dialogue, this thesis explores the concept of the "right to the city" by operationalizing it as a theoretical framework rooted in Lefebvre's original writings and applying it to a grounded examination of the street newspaper *Hecho en Buenos Aires* to examine the intersection of "right to the city" theory and practice. This investigation finds that the organization seems to advance the "right to the city" in Buenos Aires albeit without embracing its rhetoric. The organization does this, first, by developing the individual capacity of individuals in *situación de calle* through integrated, holistic programs that promote *autogestión* and, second, by creating opportunities for those same individuals to appropriate urban space and participate in urban processes - two actions key to Lefebvre's radical and transformative "right to the city." The investigation finds evidence, moreover, to suggest that the organization as a whole seeks radical, transformative change in alignment with Lefebvre's conceptualization of the "right to the city." These preliminary findings are closely contextualized by the historical specificity of Argentina, but may be used to inform the work of other street newspaper organizations operating in other Latin American countries or even in other developing world regions.

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Nuestra utopía es dejar de existir."ⁱ

—Patricia Merkin, *Hecho en Buenos Aires*

"There is no doubt that a world front is possible, and equally that it is impossible today. This utopia projects as it often does on the horizon a 'possible-impossible.'"

—Henri Lefebvre, *The Right to the City*

"The question of what kind of city we want cannot be divorced from that of what kind of social ties, relationship to nature, lifestyles, technologies and aesthetic values we desire. The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization. The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights."

—David Harvey, *The Right to the City*

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

As the new millennium develops, the world is predominantly urban and the lived experiences of urban residents increasingly at the forefront of scholarly, activist, and policy concerns. The current era has been dubbed the "urban century" (Kourtit et al. 2014, p. 1) or "urban age" (Derickson, 2014) and many have latched on to this notion, from scholars using it to emphasize pessimistic outcomes (Hardoy & Satterthwaite, 2013; Neuwirth, 2005) to international agencies such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) coopting it with more benign, vague language, calling it a "watershed moment" whose outcome remains undetermined (Bloom & Khanna, 2008). Whether the outlook is positive, negative, or neutral, one conclusion seems foregone: urban residents around the world are grappling with the implications of urban structures that have for decades implicitly and explicitly prioritized the rights of the minority at the expense of the majority. Yet even while this conclusion may be taken for granted, efforts to acknowledge, critique, and redress the issue are complicated by the individual specificity of the city in question.

This paper fits within the broader effort to understand and address these implications. It does so with a transparent perspective rooted in critical urban theory. According to the definition proposed by Brenner, Marcuse, and Mayer (2012), critical urban theory "emphasizes the politically and ideologically mediated, socially contested, and therefore malleable character of urban space - that is, its continual (re) construction as a site, medium, and outcome of historically specific relations of social power" (p. 12). Inasmuch as this theoretical approach focuses on social contestation, it is useful, too, for drawing attention to emancipatory practices (Roy, 2015). These four elements (site specific, struggle and contestation; malleability; and emancipatory) undergird this investigation into urban conditions.

With these criteria, critical urban theory provides a means of analyzing how cities around the world, in their various locales, function as zones of extreme inequality as a result of years of rigid emphasis on economic growth at the expense of social development (Fainstein, 2010). The urban environment has, by and large, become defined almost exclusively by its exchange value rather than its use value - a state of being in which

urban decisions prioritize the ability of the city to generate profit for state and private enterprise. Left by the wayside are those who live, work, and play in the space - those for whom the use value of public space is more precious, who stand little to gain and often much to lose from the larger forces' efforts to use the urban environment as a space for generating economic growth. The result has been staggering levels of socioeconomic inequality and spatial injustice, among other unjust outcomes such as environmental degradation. Existing outside of this pursuit of economic growth, many urban inhabitants find their human rights continually eroded as they are physically, socially, economically, and politically marginalized. This is not a new state of affairs for urban areas, but the scale and intensity of the negative outcomes is unprecedented, brought about primarily by the widespread adoption of neoliberal policies during the 1980s and 1990s - policies that were particularly rigid for cities in developing countries, where the implementation of neoliberal policies was enforced and tied to desperately sought international aid packages.

In Latin America, for example, neoliberal economics constituted the dominant paradigm across most of the region during the last decades of the 20th century, and the spatial, economic, and social lived experiences within cities changed significantly as a result. It became relatively common for residents living in the urban core to be pushed to the periphery as private investors and government entities sought to commodify city centers; others lost access to income as unemployment and underemployment increased due to privatization of industries; and many grappled with a lack of social support and services as the so-called "welfare state" of the 1960s and '70s retracted into itself and withdrew from supporting the general populace.

At the same time, there are commonalities between these countries' experiences. As much as shared narratives of oppression and responses, so, too, are there shared patterns of response. Parnell and Robinson (2012) draw attention to emphases in academia, for instance, that "critiques of neoliberalism have come to dominate theoretical and political reflection in contemporary urban studies (p. 594). In a separate analysis, Roy (2015) goes further, noting that academia is not focused solely on the cause. Rather than just addressing the negative outcomes of neoliberal policies, "urban studies today is

overflowing with arguments about urban citizens, residents, occupants, movements, and experiences as the new political subject" (p. 9).

Within the plurality of voices that Roy references, many make outright reference to French philosopher Henri Lefebvre's writings on the "right to the city." First introduced in Lefebvre's 1968 publication, *The Right to the City*, the phrase and notion of a "right to the city" has resurfaced periodically in a range of settings and applications (Plyushteva, 2005-2009) in the decades since. Most recently, it has experienced a widespread renaissance (Attoh, 2011) as a "powerful rallying cry in the struggle against the exclusionary processes of globalization and the commodification of urban space, and in conflicts over who has claim to the city and what kind of city it should be" (Brown, 2013, p. 957).

This paper enters this discussion with an effort to address both theoretical and grounded applications of Lefebvre's "right to the city." To this end, the following investigation separates the conceptual, activist, and legal applications of the term from its theoretical implications. Drawing on Lefebvre's own writings on the topic, this investigation develops the concept of the "right to the city" as a theoretical framework. After developing this theoretical framework, the investigation then applies it as an analytical tool to understand how a specific case study of the street newspaper organization, *Hecho en Buenos Aires*, might further a transformative "right to the city." In the process, this investigation offers one perspective on how community development organizations can contest neoliberal conditions in the urban environment, particularly community development organizations that serve the most marginalized of urban residents -- those who have been economically, socially, and spatially marginalized by neoliberal practices.

Given that the phrase "the right to the city" has become remarkably widespread, this investigation turns to the Henri Lefebvre's original writings on the topic to formulate a relatively clear theoretical understanding of the term. A specific interpretation of his work becomes a necessary part of this investigation's intention to offer a grounded examination of how the theory might look as a particular, lived iteration (from conceptualization to implementation to objective) made visible in the practices of the Argentine street newspaper, *Hecho en Buenos Aires*.

Following the perspective of a critical urban theorist, this investigation contextualizes that grounded examination through a close discussion of the specific conditions surrounding the case study organization. In doing so, investigation follows Peck's (2015) advice to seek "new ways of reading the city, not in the interstices of globalizing rule regimes but as makers of their own fortunes, not from the heady heights of headquarters functions but from street level, and through close-focus explorations of the daily rhythms of emergence and possibility" (p. 165). Moreover, by selecting an organization in Argentina and exploring the particularities of lived experiences in Buenos Aires, this paper goes beyond Peck's advice to also acknowledge the admonition of scholars such as Parnell and Robinson (2012), who advise that urban studies should shift toward more regional analyses in order "to create intellectual space for alternative ideas that may be more relevant to cities where the majority of the world's urban population now resides" (p. 593). While modest, this investigation nonetheless seeks to contribute to urban studies situated outside of a privileged, global north perspective.

As a street newspaper, *Hecho en Buenos Aires* is primarily known for producing and disseminating a publication eponymously named. It also engages in less visible programming, namely providing an integrated support system for the marginalized urban residents, or vendors, whom it employs. Using the "right to the city" as a theoretical framework, this investigation develops a qualitative case study analysis in order to offer a comprehensive overview of the organization's practices. Although the main question guiding this investigation asks *What can be learned from a grounded case study analysis of the right to the city?*, more praxis-focused questions also guide the investigation. These questions seek to understand the intersection of theory and practice, and following those proposes by Peter Marcuse (2012) in his discussion of the "right to the city": *what right? to what city? for whom? by what means?*

The research draws on individual interviews, participant observation, and document analysis to propose grounded answers to these questions. In the process, this investigation reaches the preliminary conclusion that the street newspaper organization, *Hecho en Buenos Aires*, advances the "right to the city" in Buenos Aires. Specifically, the investigation finds that the organization does this, first, by developing the individual capacity of individuals in *situación de calle* through integrated, holistic programs that

promote *autogestión* and, second, by creating opportunities for those same individuals to appropriate urban space and participate in urban processes - two actions that are key to furthering Lefebvre's radical and transformative "right to the city." The investigation finds evidence, moreover, to suggest that the organization as a whole seeks radical, transformative change in alignment with Lefebvre's conceptualization of the "right to the city."

The attention to radical and transformative change is critical in situating *Hecho en Buenos Aires* within the "right to the city." As is discussed further in the section on theory, Lefebvre's "right to the city" is not the right to single, individual access or resource, but rather to a revolutionary agenda. Within *Hecho en Buenos Aires*, this agenda can be glimpsed through the words of the organization's director, who writes that "*nuestra utopía es dejar de existir*," a perspective that suggests the revolutionary future toward which *Hecho en Buenos Aires* strives is one in which their services are no longer needed – in which the urban environment no longer privileges an elite minority, but provides instead for the majority; where those most marginalized by urban policies, such as those whom *Hecho en Buenos Aires* serves, are centralized and central to the urban environment.

These preliminary findings are closely contextualized by the historical specificity of Argentina, but may be used to inform the work of other street newspaper organizations that operate in urban areas in other Latin American countries where urban inhabitants face similar socioeconomic crises and likewise possess a history of social mobilization and collective action.

Outline

Chapter Two introduces the methodology of the case study. Chapter Three considers the relevance of "the right to the city" concept; elaborates on its current popularity among activists, academics, and legislators; and offers a close reading of Lefebvre's writings in order to shape a "right to the city" theoretical framework. Chapter Four contextualizes the case study by providing an overview of relevant historical events in Argentina, with the ultimate goal of drawing attention to the nature of the conditions that prompted the founding, and that influence the work of, the street newspaper organization *Hecho en*

Buenos Aires. Chapter Five introduces the case study, examining the organization's history and providing an overview of its practices. Chapter Six offers findings and discussion as a synthesized whole, elaborating on the outcome of the case study analysis of *Hecho en Buenos Aires* and exploring its significance. Chapter Seven concludes the paper with a discussion of limitations and areas for future research; recommendations for the organization; and final remarks regarding the implications of the investigation overall.

CHAPTER 2 - METHODOLOGY

This section reviews the methodology of this qualitative case study of the street newspaper *Hecho en Buenos Aires*. In the interests of acknowledging the subjectivity of the researcher, the following section will present first-person reflections on the design and implementation of the study. Moreover, in order to emphasize transparency in methodology, the explanation below follows the advice of Chenail (1995), who advocates for "a spirit of openness in the presentation of qualitative research methods...[including] the story of their method construction" (para. 3).

As a whole, the methodology was structured so as to provide a means of understanding the intersection of theory (the "right to the city" concept as elaborated by Lefebvre, which is discussed in the subsequent section on theory) and the practice of *Hecho en Buenos Aires* (discussed in the subsequent section on the case study) so as to reach some measure of understanding for praxis or, in other words, a grounded and meaningful understanding of what the "right to the city" theory looks like in practice. To this end, the analytical approach, data collection, and analytical strategy are all intended to understand the intersection of theory and practice.

Analytical Approach

In brief, this thesis is a theory-informed qualitative case study. As Yin (2009) explains, the case study method is appropriate if a researcher wants to "understand a real-life phenomenon in depth, but such understanding encompassed important contextual conditions-because they were highly pertinent to...[the] phenomenon of study" (p. 18). Given that this investigation seeks to understand the nature of "real-life" enactment of the "right to the city" theory in Argentina through the rationale and practices of the street newspaper organization *Hecho en Buenos Aires*, the case study method seems appropriate. Moreover, this qualitative case study is developed through a grounded theory approach, which indicates, as Strauss & Corbin (1998) assert, that "theory was derived from data, systemically gathered and analyzed through the research process. In this method, data collection, analysis, and eventual theory stand in close relationship to one another" (p. 12).

I selected *Hecho en Buenos Aires* as a case study using purposeful sampling because of its potential for helping to clarify a grounded analysis of the "right to the city." This approach to using a single organization as an illustrative case study fits with Palinkas et al.'s (2015) observation that "purposeful sampling is a technique widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources" (p. 2). I identified the organization using web searches and contacted them via email to obtain consent for the investigation.

Data Acquisition

Qualitative field research. The core of the qualitative case study analysis is the data I gathered while conducting field research in Buenos Aires during the summer of 2010. This research involved multiple data sources and methodologies, including interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. I maintained field notes and, where permitted by Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines, took photos of the organization's office space and surrounding city streets.

From June to August of 2010 I collected data, including individual interviews, field notes documenting participant observation, and organizational documents. This varied data set of secondary and primary sources contributes to what Saldaña, Leavy and Beretvas (2011) call "a broader spectrum of evidence and perspectives to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness" of the analysis (p. 31).

I conducted individual, semi-structured interviews with six staff members of *Hecho en Buenos Aires*. At the advice of my primary contact within the organization, an open invitation was extended to all staff who worked full time within the main office. All of the full time staff consented to be interviewed, representing all of the major units within the organization, including social services, editorial, distribution and sales, and management. This excluded approximately a dozen staff members who worked off-site as freelance journalists, graphic designers, and photographers. No vendors were formally interviewed for this exploratory survey, though information about them was observed firsthand through my participant observation. The interviews were audio-recorded in the field, translated as needed (five of the six were conducted in Spanish), and digitally transcribed.

In addition to individual interviews, I also wrote field notes based on participant observation I conducted while serving as a volunteer with the organization. For two months while I was in the field, I volunteered two days a week for a total of seven hours weekly, during which time I oversee the front office of the organization and interacted regularly with staff, vendors, and other visitors. These periods of participant observation offered the opportunity to observe and witness what Saldaña et al (2011) term "the mundane, the typical, and the occasionally extraordinary events that compose human life." Not only was I afforded the chance to closely observe the office space and those within it, but I also engaged in regular, public, informal conversations with the vendors themselves - conversations that later became integral in shaping my understanding of the broader social mission of the organization.

Lastly, a range of secondary documents contribute to the data set for this investigation. These include documents produced by *Hecho en Buenos Aires* about *Hecho en Buenos Aires*, including institutional histories, press kits, and website contents; documents produced by *Hecho en Buenos Aires*, but not focused on the organization (i.e., copies of the review and the organization's complementary publication, *Empresa Social* or E.S.ⁱⁱ); and outside media coverage discussing *Hecho en Buenos Aires*. This last set includes feature articles and interviews as well as theses and dissertations focused on the organization, all of which were identified through Boolean search queries such as "publicación de calle," "periódico de calle," "revista de la calle," "prensa de asfalto,"ⁱⁱⁱ and "*Hecho en Buenos Aires*."

Theoretical framework. Alongside the qualitative field research I gathered, I also spent considerable time developing close readings of key writings by Henri Lefebvre, and identified relevant scholars' whose analyses of the same either bolstered or contradicted my interpretation of his work.

Above and beyond these documents, this investigation also draws on a review of the broader "right to the city" literature and close readings of key, original writings of Henri Lefebvre. Specifically, I drew on Lefebvre's writings on urban life as found in *The Right to the City* (1968); *The Urban Revolution* (1970); *The Production of Space* (1974) and his

essayist deliberations on *autogestión* as compiled by editors Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden in the volume *State, Space, World* (2009).

Analytical Strategy

With this information in hand, I created a heuristic unit with *Atlas.ti*, a qualitative analysis software that facilitates analytical coding, with analysis understood "as the interplay between researchers and data" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 13). As Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2013) observe, qualitative research is made meaningful through coding, a process that entails identifying "labels that assign symbolic meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study" (p. 71). By using *Atlas.ti*, I was able to develop a fluid coding process that allowed me to draw iterative inferences throughout the investigation.

Given that the coding process is highly subjective, I attempted to ensure the validity of my efforts in part by maintaining a codebook that documented the tags for each code, a description, the rationale for including or excluding it, and a sample of applicable language. This codebook evolved during the course of the study, following the suggestion of Ryan and Bernard (2000). Simultaneously, I wrote analytical memos to reflect on the line of inquiry and to challenge my a priori assumptions regarding the intersection of the theoretical "right to the city" and the practices of *Hecho en Buenos Aires*.

At the same time that qualitative coding can, without a doubt, yield meaningful results, Saldaña (2013) cautions against forgetting to acknowledge the subjectivity of the researcher. He notes, "the act of coding requires that you wear your researcher's analytic lens. But how you perceive and interpret what is happening in the data depends on what type of filter covers that lens" (p. 7). Acknowledging my novice training as a researcher and my distant subject position, I followed a recommended procedure of using analytical memos to acknowledge my own perspective as researcher and then developed First Cycle and Second Cycle Coding process.

Engaging in these multiple coding processes allows for consecutive, complementary encoding. First Cycle coding, for instance, follows a more simplistic structure for coding and permits the researcher to reach preliminary observations about the data set. Second Cycle then encourages more challenging analytical conclusions (Saldaña, 2013). When

involved in First Cycle and Second Cycle coding, researchers may apply a variety of coding options. For this study, I elected to code the data using descriptive coding and hypothesis coding in the First Cycle, before moving to theoretical coding in Second Cycle. The first two encoding processes, descriptive and hypothesis coding, were driven directly by the datum; the Second Cycle coding, theoretical coding, provided theory-driven codes (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2011).

To develop the theory-driven codes used in the Second Cycle coding, I developed a codebook based in key writings by Henri Lefebvre, using his original texts to define the "right to the city" as a theoretical construct that could be mapped alongside the practices of the organization. From the theory-driven codes, the emergence of themes such as "*asistencia*," "*autogestión*," "*trabajo*," "*dignidad*," "*solidaridad*," and "*comunicación*"^{iv} strengthened my a priori assumption that the "right to the city" would offer a meaningful theoretical framework. Consequently, I reflected on the influence of my initial assumptions and decided to follow a pragmatic grounded theory approach as described by Barbour (2001), who contends that, although grounded theory in its purest form "alleges that all explanations or theories are derived from the dataset itself rather than from a researcher's prior theoretical viewpoint," in practice a priori assumptions are more than likely to influence the analysis (p. 118). Instead of espousing a goal which is difficult for a researcher to truly achieve, Barbour (2001) suggests a "pragmatic variant, whereby they [researchers] can achieve added value by identifying new themes from the data alongside those that could have been anticipated from the outset" (p. 118). This approach assumes that there is a creative tension between a priori assumptions and emergent themes, with the two becoming interlaced through the process of analyzing the data.

In the case of this case study, the tension was between an a priori interest in the "right to the city" rhetoric and the themes that emerged from the data - a tension that I attempted to address and engage with through the multiple coding variations and analytical memos documenting my analysis process.

Ultimately, although this investigation may be critiqued for succumbing to what Uitermark et al. (2012) considers a tendency for scholars to apply the term where it doesn't belong, the analytical process substantiates the connection. For, while not

explicitly promoting a "right to the city" in a narrow sense, the organization *Hecho en Buenos Aires* does indeed seem to promote an agenda of a singular, transformative, and radical "right to the city" in the broadest sense of the concept.

CHAPTER 3 - THEORY: THE RIGHT TO THE CITY

This investigation focuses on *Hecho en Buenos Aires* as a grounded, instrumental case study of the "right to the city" in practice. In order to contextualize this case study, the following section offers a glimpse into how the phrase "right to the city" appears in popular usage by scholars, activists, and legislators, before operationalizing the phrase's use here and defining its scope as a theoretical framework.

As Purcell (2013) writes, the phrase "the right to the city" is at once "intuitively compelling and frustratingly vague" (p. 141), and he is not alone in this sentiment. Marcuse (2012) also addresses its vagueness when he raises the pertinent questions of "whose right is it about, what right is it, and to what city" (p. 24). For better or worse, there is no agreed-upon answer to these questions. It is the very elasticity of the phrase and its ability to adapt as needed which explains, in part, its popularity. Mayer (2012) has even termed its usage "viral," noting that its popularity seems to derive in part from the way in which the term "fuses and expresses a variety of issues that have become highly charged over years of neoliberal urban development and even more so through the effects of the financial and economic crisis" (p. 61). One could argue that it is the term's nebulous meaning which has helped it gain traction and become almost commonplace as a "practice and argument for claiming rights" (Gilbert & Dikec, 2008, p. 252).

Responding to the lack of clarity, Lopes de Souza (2010) argues vehemently that the fashionableness of the "right to the city" as a phrase should be discouraged, pointing out that its widespread usage is confusing and noting that many who use the term "behave as if it should be clear to everybody what the 'right to the city' means (more or less like 'sustainability' and other umbrella-expressions and phrases)" (p. 315). This seems a valid complaint, as, in general, academic discussions of the phrase appear to devote disproportionately little time to actually discussing how to apply the phrase. In the same breadth, Lopes de Souza (2010) also suggests that the widespread usage lends itself to a "vulgarisation and domestication" that undermines the concept's potential to effectively guide radical change.

Although acknowledging that his argument has merit, this paper nonetheless rejects Lopes de Souza's extremist perspective and follows instead the moderate approach

suggested by Purcell (2013b), who proposes that, while "[conceptual] bloating is a real danger...it should not push us too far in the other direction, toward a single orthodox interpretation. We need multiple formulations of the right to the city, but each should be specific in its conception and transparent in its political content. Such multiple, specific formulations can engender a sustained debate about the best way to understand the idea" (p. 141-2). Responding to Purcell's exhortation, this paper offers a concrete application of the "right to the city" in practice, understanding it as a theoretical framework that can be used to examine the case study of *Hecho en Buenos Aires*. This is done with the hope of furthering conversation related specifically to how the "right to the city" concept can be rendered in grounded terms and, moreover, in a Latin American context.

Before elaborating on what a "right to the city" theoretical framework might look like, the following section contextualizes the broader usage of the term and illustrates the scope of what Purcell (2013b) termed as the "multiple formulations of the right to the city" by scholars, activists, and legislators (p. 141-2). This contextualization is offered as a means by which to situate and contrast the more grounded discussion that follows subsequently.

Scholarly Concept, Social Justice Movement, and Codified Legislation

First, as a scholarly concept, the "right to the city" has piqued the interest of numerous academics in recent years. It has been addressed by individuals such as Edward Soja (2000, 2015) with reference to spatial justice; Neil Brenner, Peter Marcuse, and Margit Mayer (2012) focusing on critical urban theory and social justice; David Harvey (2003, 2012) in relation to the capitalist city; Don Mitchell (2003) on the struggle over public spaces; Mark Purcell (2002, 2013a, 2013b) in regards to urban citizenship and democracy; Ana Sugranyes and Charlotte Mathivet (2012) considering international diversity and interpretation of the concept; Jordi Borja (2012), Edésio Fernandes (2007), Clara Irazábal (2009), Susan Parnell and Edgar Pieterse (2010), and Lorena Zárate (2014) emphasizing political and institutional aspects; Mustafa Dikeç and Liette Gilbert (2002) focusing, in part, on immigrant access and policies; Tovi Fenster (2005) and Shelley Buckingham (2012) discussing gender dimensions; and Marcelo Lopes de Souza (2010) differentiating between theory and practice. As Attou (2011) asserts, "scholars [who] have drawn on the idea of the right to the city have worked from widely varying

conceptions" and applied the concept with differing approaches (p. 670). As the list above illustrates, the scope of scholarship dedicated to the "right to the city" is impressively multifaceted.

Second, beyond academic spheres, the phrase has been taken up by activists and advocates within social justice movements in settings as ranging from "grassroots activism to massed confrontations with global governance institutions" (Sitrin, 2007, p. 119). In these contexts, Harvey (2008) observes that it has been used simultaneously as "a working slogan and a political idea" (p. 40), serving at once as a tool and objective for achieving change.

Acting on behalf of the Habitat International Coalition (HIC), Sugranyes and Mathivet (2012) compiled an extensive document of vignettes that collectively capture the breadth of activism that has emerged under the banner of the "right to the city" slogan. Though they present a "wide variety of views, discourses, cultures, and experiences," the authors find commonality in how the different cases "converge their differences toward the same goal: the right to the city as a banner of the struggle against neoliberalism" (p. 13).

Uitermark, Nicholls, and Loopman (2012) have likewise affirmed that the defining element linking the wide range of activists using the "right to the city" rhetoric is a shared desire to contest neoliberal conditions in the city, but added that activists' efforts are also universally marked not just by their repudiation of current conditions, but their "struggles for a better and more just city" (p. 2547). That is, the "right to the city" slogan appears to be the mantra for individuals and organizations whose urban grievances lead beyond complaints and toward mobilized efforts. It is at once critical and emancipatory, loosely speaking.

At the same time, many other activists, advocates, and their larger movements repudiate urban conditions linked to neoliberal policies, but do not employ "right to the city" rhetoric. While scholars such as Sugranyes and Mathivet do not find this problematic, others such as Uitermark et al. (2012) elaborate and argue that this loose application results in the "right to the city" concept becoming "part interpretation, part distortion, as analysts import Lefebvre's notions and project them onto people articulating a range of different claims" (p. 2548). This critique aligns with the concern voiced by Lopes de

Souza. However, much as Purcell (2013) rejects the need to be theoretically strict, so Görgens and van Donk (2012) reject the need to be rigid in practice, asserting that "the term's ability to be populated and mobilized by different stakeholders toward different ends creates a window of opportunity to begin to build on the cross-class and cross-institutional collaborations and discussions" (p. 5).

When Soja (2015) considers why the post-millennium era has seen a surge in interest in topics of spatial justice, his rationale seems just as fitting for explaining the renaissance of the "right to the city" concept among activists and advocates: "justice in the contemporary world tends to be seen as more concrete and grounded than its alternatives, more oriented to present day conditions, and imbued with a symbolic force that works effectively across cleavages of class, race, and gender to foster a collective political consciousness and a sense of solidarity based on widely shared experience" (p. 4). This "widely shared experience" is connected to the legacy of the widespread neoliberal policies of the 1980s, '90s, and beyond (Plyushteva, 2005-2009; Purcell, 2009).

Sugranyes & Mathivet (2010) emphasize that this common "struggle against neoliberalism...is not referring to an ideological abstraction, but to the effects felt by inhabitants in their daily life, including, among others: the lack of access to land and services; insecurity of tenure; evictions which occur for numerous reasons, including privatization, property speculation, mega-projects and mega-events; abuse and trafficking of power; the deregulation of public space; and urban planning in the interests of a few" (p. 13). Effectively, the majority of activists who voice the idea of the "right to the city" use it as part of movements for basic normative rights, from increasing access to resources to enhancing political representation.

Third, in addition to scholars and activists, the "right to the city" phrase appears in legislative and policy circles. At the international level, the phrase "the right to the city" has served as the rhetoric behind political and legal actions that promote an urban human rights agenda. In this more concrete and legal arena, the "right to the city" becomes a sharper concept, though still one that varies considerably between local contexts.

Offering one of the more explicit explanations, the international organization Global Platform for the Right to the City (n.d.), which advocates for policies incorporating the "right to the city," identifies three "pillars" to their political agenda:

1. "The right to the city is the right of all inhabitants, present and future, permanent and temporary to use, occupy and produce just, inclusive and sustainable cities, defined as a common good essential to a full and decent life;
2. The right to the city envisions a socially and spatially just distribution and planning of material resources, ensuring good living conditions across the human settlement continuum;
3. The right to the city is realized only when structures, processes, and policies enable all inhabitants as social and political actors to exercise the full content and meaning of citizenship" (p. 3).

In addition to independent organizations like the Global Platform for the Right to the City, larger international agencies such as UNESCO (UNESCO, 2006) and UN-HABITAT (UN-HABITAT, 2010) have promoted the "right to the city" at a global level, leading to such touted documents as the World Charter for the Right to the City and the European Charter for the Safeguarding of Human Rights in the City. Also at the international level, Zárte (2010) notes that "the Right to the City was taken up as the official motto by the Fifth World Urban Forum, organized by the UN Habitat, which took place in Rio de Janeiro at the end of March, 2010, and offered a series of massive and multi-actor activities of promotion, reflection, debate, and training," an event which was then complemented by the equally significant scheduling of the first Social Urban Forum, also in Brazil (p. 38). Depending on the perspective, this international attention may be interpreted either as an indication of the strength of "right to the city" efforts or as an example of institutional cooptation.

In the former sentiment, these international-level efforts are seen as lending support to more local efforts to build the "right to the city" into city charters and legislatures, such as the Montreal Charter of Rights and Responsibilities and the Mexico City Charter for the Right to the City (Evans, 2015), the latter of which Ochoa (2014) calls "a good example of the collective construction of what is known as the Right to the City" (p. 117).

Other examples of codification are evident in the "right to the city" policies that have emerged out of Colombia and Brazil, where Fernandes (2011) notes that "consistent attempts have been made in countries...to materialize that concept not only in socio-political terms, but in legal terms as well so that the 'right to the city' becomes a legal right, and not only a political notion" (p. 204). Explicitly, the idea of the "right to the city" has been codified in these countries through formal, statutory changes, most notably in Brazil, where federal legislation and constitutional provisions were developed, including the internationally renowned City Statute (Fernandes, 2011; Friendly, 2013; Pindell, 2006; Saule Júnior & Uzzo, 2010).

Governments in Ecuador and Bolivia have also integrated the "right to the city" in their constitutions (Mathivet, 2010). In Ecuador the term appears as part of the 2008 Constitution, wherein the "right to a dignified city is recognized in Art. 31, which establishes that «people have the right to fully enjoy the city and its public spaces, according to the principle of sustainability, social justice, respect for different urban cultures, and equilibrium between urban and rural»" (International Alliance of Inhabitants). In Bolivia, following the model of Brazil's City Statute, activists developed a steering committee in Cochabamba and used it to push a spectrum of human rights into the country's constitution, thereby securing the right to potable water, among many other achievements (Mamani, 2009). Looking at the feasibility of institutionalizing similar "right to the city" legislation in South African cities, scholars Görgens and van Donk (2012) surmised that the ability of the "right to the city" concept to act "as a 'master frame' for government officials" (p. 5) has contributed to its formal recognition within international and city arenas. Again, the malleability of the concept of the "right to the city" allows it to be flexed and adapted across settings, even in regards to codified legislation.

Theoretical Framework

In addition to the many and myriad applications listed above, the "right to the city" phrase can allude to a theoretical framework. This is the approach that this thesis undertakes and addresses, and it is best understood through a close reading of Lefebvre's original work on the topic. To this end, this investigation draws specifically on

Lefebvre's writings on urban life as found in *The Right to the City* (1968); *The Urban Revolution* (1970); *The Production of Space* (1974) and his essayist deliberations on *autogestión* as compiled by editors Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden in the volume *State, Space, World* (2009).

By closely reading the original texts, this investigation seeks to extrapolate and propose several elements as key to delineating an interpretation of the "right to the city" for practical and grounded purposes; it does not, however, intend to suggest a singular, definitive understanding of the concept. As several scholars have noted (Purcell, 2002), Lefebvre's writings on the "right to the city" are frequently unclear or incomplete, leaving "the notion...open enough to allow for conflicting interpretations" (Kuymulu, 2014, p. 15).

In addition to Lefebvre's presumably intentional vagueness, the meaning of his writing is further obfuscated by its "dense theoretical argumentation, its many implicit references, its elusive organizational structure and its frequent digressions" (Brenner and Elden, 2001, p. 767). This point is not raised here as a disclaimer for the limitations of this investigation, though these facets of Lefebvre's writing reasonably complicate the depth of this investigation's analysis; but rather to remind that part of the appeal of the "right to the city" is the flexibility of the notion. The flexibility is not a result of contemporary overuse or misuse, but is instead intrinsic to Lefebvre's original theories – a fact that may stem from his self-avowedly philosophical approach which, rather than providing direct answers, invites instead a process of critical inquiry and analysis (Lefebvre, 1996). The theoretical concept of a "right to the city" sidesteps defining the utopian future that it, at the same time, promotes.

What right? In the preface of his book, *The Right to the City*, Lefebvre elaborates on this nebulosity by emphasizing the potential of his theory, writing that "This work wants to break up systems, not to substitute another system, but to open up through thought and action towards possibilities by showing the horizon and the road" (p. 63). With this, Lefebvre calls readers to attention that his "right to the city" does not seek to advance incremental change within existing structures, but instead invokes a transformative process. In the words of Purcell (2002), "his right to the city is not a

suggestion for reform, nor does it envision a fragmented, tactical, or piecemeal resistance. His idea is instead a call for a radical restructuring of social, political, and economic relations, both in the city and beyond" (p. 101). In effect, "the right" within the "right to the city" is a singular, transformative right. In clarifying and adhering to this interpretation, this investigation's operationalization of the phrase diverges from most modern uses of the term, since the bulk of contemporary "right to the city" conversation and application interprets the phrase to allude to individual or collected liberal democratic rights.

Although much of the current "right to the city" discourse references claims to individual rights (as evident from the preceding discussion of grassroots activists and legislation using the term), de Souza (2010) reinforces Purcell (2002) when he writes that "the 'right to the city' for Lefebvre was not reducible to the right to better housing, lower rents, etc. in the framework of the capitalist city (which was in fact in his eyes a 'non-city,' the opposite of a true human and enjoyable city), but the right to a very different life in the context of a very different, just society" (p. 318). This investigation, therefore, clarifies that, when taken as a theoretical framework, the "right to the city" should not be construed as the right to shelter, to water, to better representation. It should not be read as referencing any of these in the singular or collective, nor any corollary rights. Instead, in Lefebvre's (1996) own words, the "right to the city" constitutes a superior form of rights: "right to freedom, to individualization in socialization, to habitat and to inhabit. The right to the oeuvre, to participation and appropriation (clearly distinct from the right to property), are implied in the first to the city" (p. 174). Effectively, a Lefebvrian "right to the city" refers to a protracted struggle for the collective right to radically transform urban society (Lopes de Souza, 2010; Kipfer, 2008; Pinder, 2013; Purcell, 2002).

To what city? While it seems clear that Lefebvre alluded to a singular and transformative right when he discussed the "right to the city," his vision of that desired city is much less apparent. The answer to this question, if one exists at all in Lefebvre's writings, may be best understood by examining Lefebvre's conceptualization of the city as *oeuvre*. In particular, it is his discussion of the city as *oeuvre* that allows for the possibility of transformative change, since the city as *oeuvre* is marked by malleability and continual (re)construction. In English, the French word "oeuvre" becomes

reconstituted to mean either the collected works of an individual artist, writer, or musician, or, alternatively, an example of an individual piece of artistic work. In the context of Lefebvre's musings, "oeuvre" takes on a much more, hard to articulate definition. For the purposes of this investigation, the idea of the city as oeuvre may be understood to mean that the city is a malleable space created through social and artistic processes. The oeuvre of the city is at once the creative process and product of urban inhabitants actively engaging in the processes and movements that constitute lived urban experience.

In writing on "The Specificity of the City," Lefebvre states that "the city is an oeuvre, closer to a work of art than to a simple material product. If there is production of the city, and social relations in the city, it is a production and reproduction of human beings by human beings, rather than a production of objects. The city has a history; it is the work of a history, that is, of clearly defined people and groups who accomplish this oeuvre, in historical conditions" (1996, p. 101). Lefebvre's city as oeuvre is a historically mediated social construction, one which, he posits, exists in dialectical tension with the physical space it inhabits. Lefebvre elaborates on the tension between social and physical form at some length, but also succinctly offers the following overview: "there is no form without content. No content without form" (ibid, p. 135).

In this perspective, a Lefebvrian city may be understood as one of process. The emphasis on continual motion and development alludes to and reinforces Lefebvre's related interest in reclaiming the city as a space defined by use value rather than exchange value. The discussion of use versus exchange value is but one of the many ways in which Lefebvre's writings contrast and reject a capitalist approach which would perceive the city as a product and prize it solely for its exchange value (Isin, 2000).

In discussing the city as *oeuvre*, Lefebvre calls attention to two potential cities. The first is the current city: a version dictated by exploitative capitalism wherein inhabitants' needs are subsumed beneath domineering concerns of political elites and government officials, both of whom make urban decisions that will allow them to acquire the greatest exchange value of the urban space. The second is a city that exists only in the future as a possibility. This latter version is defined only to the extent that it exists in contrast to

capitalist practices. In this future city, inhabitants' needs are paramount and supersede the interests of capitalists and government entities. In this future city, urban space is evaluated based on its use value rather than exchange value.

Examining the current city, Lefebvre calls attention to the lived experiences of modern urban inhabitants. He writes that this city is a

"deteriorated and unrenovated city [with] alienated urban life" (p. 158). Persistent capitalist practices have led to a "misery...which mainly affects the proletariat without sparing other social strata and classes: the poverty of the habitat that of the inhabitant submitted to a daily life organized (in and by a bureaucratized society of organized consumption). To those who would still doubt its existence...what identifies the working class on the ground is segregation and the misery of its 'to inhabit.'" (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 178).

In addition to the social alienation created by capitalism, the city's emphasis on organized consumption has led to spatial fragmentation, as the urban inhabitant is "rejected from the centre towards the peripheries, dispossessed of the city, expropriated thus from the best outcomes of its activity" (ibid, p. 179). In other words, the current urban environment at once alienates and displaces those who inhabit it. Kuymulu (2014) emphasizes that this is one area in which Lefebvre's standard ambiguity is dispelled, asserting that he "is crystal clear about this one...urbanism privileges exchange value...[and] this turns the city more and more into a 'product' whereas it should be built and lived as an 'oeuvre'" (p. 17). This pessimistic analysis of the current state of cities is the basis which prompts Lefebvre to craft the "right to the city" as a response and possible resolution.

By whom? Who will enact the "right to the city"? For Lefebvre writing in the late 1960s, the only conceivable agent of change was the working class. Yet as Borja (2012) notes, "in 2010, the scenario is different since the working class has been pushed to the background of the neoliberal globalized world, and no longer holds the political role that it did before. For this reason, social movements, organizations, intellectuals, militants, and diverse activists are all looking for social change, making their demands as a collective movement mobilized by the right to the city and no longer as part of the working class" (p. 18). When writing *The Right to the City*, part of Lefebvre's rationale

for identifying the working class as the agents of change was because of their extreme proximity and their quotidian involvement in the drudgery and alienation of the urban environment. At the turn of the millennium and beyond, such exacerbated negative conditions are not confined to the working class.

Isin (2000) reinforces Borja's assertion, observing that although this focus on the working class was appropriate when Lefebvre first wrote *The Right to the City*, today such a narrow view precludes the wide range of political actors who inhabit the city and use it as a locus for their struggles. In order to accommodate this wider range of actors, Lefebvre's theory of the "right to the city" must be expanded beyond what he initially articulated. Ronneberger (2008) finds the new agent identified in Lefebvre's later work, when Lefebvre introduces "inhabiting (habiter) as a ...new revolutionary subject that would revolt not only against the exploitation of labor-power but against the destruction of its entire living environment" (p. 135). From this perspective, the agent who will put the "right into city" into practice can be read as any urban inhabitant whose life is diminished by the existing capitalist city. It should be noted that the term is "urban inhabitant," a concept distinct from "urban resident" or "urban citizen." The former term is inclusive of all those who exist within the city; the latter omits transients and commuters, and privileges nation-state definitions of citizenship (Purcell, 2002).

This broader understanding of the agent of change allows, also, for a more expansive end goal. For, as Purcell (2002) writes, "If inhabitants are imagined to be essentially equivalent to the working class, then their agenda becomes reduced to anti-capitalist resistance. They must challenge the capitalist city rather than challenge, for example, the racist city, the patriarchal city, or the heteronormative city, all of which confront inhabitants in their daily lives" (p. 106). In one and the same breadth, urban inhabitants are called upon to challenge the existing city (in its many oppressive forms) and invent the city of the future.

By what means? The question of how urban inhabitants will eventually bring about the utopian *oeuvre* is one that Lefebvre addresses periodically and, for the most part, indirectly. It is his seminal text, *The Right to the City*, that yields the beginnings of an answer. He writes, for instance, that the right to the city constitutes... "the right to the

oeuvre, to participation and appropriation (clearly distinct from the right to property)" (1996, p. 174, emphasis in original). These two processes are integral to understanding how Lefebvre conceives of the means by which the "right to the city" will be achieved. As Harvey (2012) explains, appropriation and participation constitute some kind of shaping power over the processes of urbanization, over the ways in which our cities are made and remade "(p. 5). Both processes appear as "persistent themes in the writings of his [Lefebvre's] interlocutors," a fact which underscores their importance in understanding the "right to the city" as a theoretical framework (Kuymulu, 2014, p. 15). Taken together, it would seem that twinned socio-spatial processes of appropriation and participation offer means by which to further the progression of a "right to the city."

Although important to understanding Lefebvre's "right to the city," neither appropriation nor participation may be understood solely through reading the seminal text on the topic. As McCann (2002) observes, reading *The Right to the City* "leaves one with a great deal of frustration" given its open-ended nature, a sentiment also shared by Harvey (2000) (p. 78). A fuller understanding of Lefebvre's conceptualization of appropriation, for instance, requires connecting his thoughts in *The Right to the City* with his work in later publications such as *The Production of Space*.

Appropriation. What is appropriation? In the present context, it may be understood both as a means and an end in itself. It is the spatial component of Lefebvre's revolutionary vision. With this in mind, an examination of appropriation necessitates at least briefly examining Lefebvre's writings on the production of space. To say the least, "space" within Lefebvre's work is a complex and weighty topic, one which he expounds upon at length in multiple publications. Most applicable to the discussion here is the simplified depiction he offers in *The Production of Space*, wherein he discusses space as being politicized:

"space is... the principal stake of goal-directed actions and struggles. It has of course always been the reservoir of resources, and the medium in which strategies are applied, but it has become something more than the theater, the disinterested stage or setting, of action....Is space indeed a medium? A milieu? An intermediary? It is doubtless all of these, but its role is less and less neutral, more

and more active, both as instrument and as goal, a means and an end" (Lefebvre, 1974, p. 410).

More specifically, as Elden (2007) writes in his article, "There is a politics of space because space is political," "Lefebvre suggested that just as everyday life has been colonized by capitalism, so too has its location – social space...today more than ever, the class struggle is inscribed in space" (p. 106). If the class struggle is spatialized, then capitalism is spatialized in the current city. In order to move beyond the current city and to achieve the *oeuvre*, space as much as social practices must be reclaimed and reappropriated from capitalism.

This understanding of spatial appropriation is furthered with Lefebvre's publication *The Production of Space* (1974), in which he clarifies that "It may be said of a...space modified in order to serve the needs and possibilities of a group that it has been appropriated by that group...a site, a square or a street may also be legitimately described as an appropriated space" (1974, p. 165). More than appropriating and claiming urban space as a generality, the "right to the city" emphasizes the appropriation of the public space within the city. While elite buildings and government entities must eventually be addressed, the most immediate means of contesting the capitalist city lies in the potential of urban public areas – the streets.

In an afterward to *The Production of Space*, Harvey discusses the importance of public space in specific by tracing Lefebvre's writing on the topic back to the context of the publication of *The Right to the City* in 1968, writing that "The significance of the outbreak in Nanterre – a suburban university close to the impoverished shanty-towns of the periphery – and the subsequent geography of street action in Paris itself, alerted him to the way in which these kinds of political struggle unfolded in a distinctively urban space" (p. 430). Elden (2004) elaborates on this observation, noting, too, that this time period was influential to Lefebvre's conceptualization of urban space and political contestation. Quoting Lefebvre, Elden (2004) "writes that "the streets have become politicized areas...social space has assumed new meaning...the streets become political areas, political places,'" and notes that Lefebvre's "stress on the location of the struggle is important, because not only are spatial relations – marginalization and centrality, uneven

development, ghettoization and so – political in themselves, politics is played in a spatial field. What is important in the movement being on the streets is that groups who are normally kept apart...are able to meet" (p. 156). The streets are important for allowing that moment of interaction and contestation to take place. In the context of the "right to the city," therefore, appropriation may be read as the act of reclaiming not just urban environments per se, but urban public spaces in particular.

Within that public zone, Lefebvre (1996) explains, the "right to the city" entails a right "to places of encounter and exchange, to life rhythms and time uses, enabling the full and complete usage of these moments and places" (p. 179). Building on this understanding of appropriation, Purcell (2002) and Butler (2012) both contend that the emphasis on "usage" implies that Lefebvre views appropriation as a process of reorienting the urban environment to prioritize use value over exchange value. Purcell (2002) writes, for instance, that "space must be produced in a way that makes full and complete usage possible. The use value aspect of urban space must therefore be the primary consideration in decisions that produce urban space" (p. 103). Butler (2012) affirms this reading, writing that "intrinsic to Lefebvre's notion of the appropriation of space is the struggle to establish the pre-eminence of use value over exchange value in the everyday inhabitation of space" (p. 145). This echoes the findings of other scholars such as Vasuveden (2015) who view Lefebvre's right to appropriation as a right to "reclaim and reconfigure urban space" according to their needs and desires (p. 320).

Participation. Alongside spatial appropriation, social participation is a critical component of the effort to claim a "right to the city." Much like the previous discussion of appropriation, participation also requires an indirect, composite reading of Lefebvre's work on the topic. In his work on *The Survival of Capitalism*, Lefebvre (1973) offers an essential insight into his conceptualization of "participation," writing that "self-management is the only thing that can make participation real" (p. 120). He goes on to write that that self-management "implies a social pedagogy. It presupposes a new social practice at all stages and levels. Real self-management and participation must...be a 'system' of direct democracy – not a formal system, but a perpetual and perpetually renewed movement, finding its own capacity for organization within itself" (ibid, p. 121-2). Participation, which equates here to self-management, may therefore be interpreted as

social actions that emerge from and are driven by grassroots organizations. It is action that contests capitalism and reasserts inhabitants' needs and rights. In other words, as Lefebvre (1996) briefly attests to in *The Right to the City*, "Only the taking in charge...of planning and its political agenda can profoundly modify social life and open another era" (p. 179).

If "taking in charge" or "self-management" is the defining characteristic of participation, and if participation is the social process that will bring about the "right to the city," then the concept needs to be discussed in more depth. To better understand what Lefebvre means by the concept of "self-management," this investigation draws upon the work of Brenner and Elden (2009), who write that the original French term, *autogestión*, may be translated literally into English as "self-management," but should be more intuitively translated as "grassroots control." This more directly connotes the context of its usage and Lefebvre's original "vision of what an alternative to the productivist world of commodification and capital accumulation might entail – development instead of growth; a politics of difference instead of state-imposed abstraction, homogeneity, and consumerism; and radical grassroots democracy, or *autogestión*, instead of technocracy and ruling class hegemony" (p. 14). Participation, also understood as the practice of *autogestión*, therefore, may be understood as the social corollary to appropriation – it is the taking control of social practices and processes by the urban inhabitant.

Gilbert and Dikec (2008) further reinforce the understanding that *autogestión* is integral to understanding participation, writing that "Lefebvre calls this essential participation in society self-management (*autogestión*). In his words, self-management describes a situation where each time a social group refuses passively to accepts its conditions of existence, of life or of survival, each time such a group attempts not only to learn but to master its own conditions of existence'" (p. 260). Further substantiating the importance of *autogestión* within Lefebvres' writings, Perez Gonzalez (2015) asserts that "although highly overlooked by scholars of Lefebvre, his notion on *autogestión* forms 'the basis of his understanding of politics and his hope for the future'" (p. 33).

Summary

To reiterate, for Lefebvre (1996), "the right to the city is like a cry and a demand... a transformed and renewed right to urban life" (1996, p. 159). This "cry and demand... gathers the interests of the whole society and firstly of all those who inhabit" (ibid, p. 158). In emphasizing "those who inhabit," Lefebvre affirms that those with power are "those who inhabit... youth, students and intellectuals, armies of workers with or without white collars, people from the provinces, the colonized and semi-colonized of all sorts, all those who endure a well-organized daily life" (ibid, p. 159). The urban inhabitants will reclaim the city and radically transform it through spatial appropriation and social participation.

The end result of this transformative process remains a defiantly vague utopia. Harvey (2003) responds to the intrinsic ambiguity of the "right to the city" when he suggests that "the question of what kind of city we want cannot be divorced from the question of what kind of people we want to be, what kinds of social relations we seek, what relations to nature we cherish, what style of life we desire, what aesthetic values we hold. The right to the city is, therefore, far more than a right of individual or group access to the resources that the city embodies; it is a right to change and reinvent the city more after our hearts' desire" (p. 4).

With this in mind, it would seem that the "right to the city," when operationalized as a theoretical framework, can be read as a continual process. It is the protracted and never ending struggle to define and shape the city as oeuvre, first and foremost through contesting capitalism's unjust exploitation and marginalization, but also as the continual reinvention of ourselves. While some view Lefebvre's ultimate vision as "frustratingly vague," his theory on the "right to the city" can also be viewed as optimistically open-ended, poised to be shaped and re-shaped in a continual process of improvement. By leaving the specifics of the utopian agenda purposely undefined, Lefebvre ensured that it can only be conceived by those who develop and enact it.

This nebulous prospect is addressed here, subsequently, through this investigation's grounded discussion of how the "right to the city" is being enacted and furthered through the work of the case study organization *Hecho en Buenos Aires* in Argentina.

CHAPTER 4 - CONTEXT: ARGENTINA

The Regional Context

Although Lefebvre wrote *The Right to the City* in the 1960s in Paris, the conditions of that time are not all that dissimilar from the present day. In many respects, contemporary cities offer only more condensed, exacerbated, and complicated experiences of the conditions that first prompted Lefebvre to develop the "right to the city" theory.

If the "right to the city" considers rapidly industrialized and alienated urban conditions, it is an apt framework for considering cities particularly in non-industrialized regions of the world. It is particularly appropriate in Latin America, which endured an unparalleled rate of urbanization during the 20th century (Kemper, 2002). The process was ongoing even in 1990, when, according to Gilbert (1994), "most Latin Americans lived in the countryside and only three cities had more than half a million inhabitants" (p. 25). Today, the region is considered the most urbanized in the world (Rodgers et al., 2012), with over three-quarters of its population in urban centers (World Bank, 2013). Within the continent, the Southern Cone region has even higher rates of urbanization, with over 84% of the population residing in urban centers - a percentage which exceeds that of North America (82%) and Europe (73%) (Inostroza et al., 2012; United Nations, 2014).

The economic, political, and social conditions that led to the rapid urbanization in Latin America are complex, as they would be anywhere else in the world (Isin, 2000), but the outcome between and within different countries is remarkably similar. Many Latin American cities today are characterized by high inequality, spatial fragmentation, and social marginalization. Simultaneously, they share a rich array of social organizations and democratic governments who push their societies toward more inclusive, equal practices. These areas of negative and positive commonalities can perhaps be attributed to the region's shared experiences of consecutive efforts, decade after decade, to devise new means of "developing" the region. Throughout the 20th century, many Latin American countries were influenced by external economists who advocated for so-called development theories as part of attempts to "industrialize" the region. Not surprisingly, each of these so-called development theories led to significant changes in the social and political conditions of each country.

In the 1940s and 1950s, development policy favored theories of "modernization." By the 1960s, it was "import substitution industrialization." In the 1980s, the focus shifted toward what would become an enduring perspective: neoliberal economics, or what has been shortened to "neoliberalism."

By the 1980s, the development paradigm focused on neoliberalism as the mechanism for progress. The approach was also known as the Washington Consensus, so called because its ten defining principles, characterized as "prudent macroeconomic policies, outward orientation, and free-market capitalism" were decided upon by a think-tank consortium in Washington, D.C. (Babb, 2012, p. 269).

Neoliberalism refers to a method of economic regulation, but the term has been broadly appropriated to refer more generally to changes in the capitalist system which developed from the late 1980s onward (Brenner & Theodore, 2005, p. 102). As Christensen (2005) explains, it is also used to reference the interventionist policies that the United States government and international monetary lending agencies developed in regards to Latin America. External capital was key to these policies, with the premise being that "Latin America ought to open itself to the exterior and move past its nationalist positions and its dependency theorists of old" (p. 1) In this sense, the term "neoliberalism" also implies a "hegemonic ideology" (Springer, 2010, p. 1025) and pervasive world development theory.

A defining element of the Washington Consensus was that international aid and debt refinancing would be granted to so-called developing countries in exchange for their implementation of neoliberal policies. Particularly during the 1990s, governments in the Global South implemented structural adjustments which brought them into accordance with the elements of the Washington Consensus. In return, international financial institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), World Bank (WB), and International Monetary Fund (IMF), granted international aid. Essentially all Latin American countries became part of this pact, and began pursuing "neoliberalism and neoliberal approaches to urban governance... promoting deregulation, privatization, and competition...; limiting non-market state-led provision of welfare services...; devolving responsibility for wealth and welfare to the individual; and reorganizing state powers in

pursuit of these policies" (Leitner, Peck, & Sheppard, 2007, p. vi). In comparison to earlier development eras, neoliberal development arguably had the greatest transformative effect in regards to Latin American urban development, and certainly contributed significantly to the present conditions of its cities.

The Washington Consensus was meant to lead to socioeconomic prosperity, but the outcome was the reverse. As the subsequent discussion of Argentina illustrates, neoliberal policies were detrimental across all facets of life. Cities, in particular, experienced the concentrated effects of the policies as they became increasingly defined by high levels of unemployment and underemployment, privatization of formerly public services and goods, and retraction of social and financial support services for the general public.

Neoliberal Conditions and Contestations in Argentina

Although Argentina was touted as the "poster child" of successful neoliberal policies at the end of the 1990s, the cumulative effects were ultimately devastating, and nowhere more so than in Buenos Aires (Carranza, 2005). In order to more fully understand the outcome, and thus the conditions that prompted the development of the organization *Hecho en Buenos Aires*, this section elaborates on the historical and political framework of the decade preceding the height of neoliberalism (1976-1989), the decade that was characterized as the height of structural adjustment (1989-1999), the subsequent and overlapping period of the late '90s that has been described as a "crisis of neoliberalism" (Teubal, 2004, p. 173), and the post-millennial period that ushered in an era of collective action and protest.

Neoliberal Precedents, 1976-1989. From 1976 to 1983, Argentina's military deposed the existing government run by Isabel Perón, the second wife of the former, populist president Juan Perón, and implemented a dictatorship in its stead. The dictatorship "resulted in a period of state repression, called the 'dirty war' (1976-82), that was probably unmatched (with the exception of the civil wars in El Salvador and Guatemala) in its scale, brutality, and number of casualties," leading the country to be transformed by fear and anxiety (Koonings & Kruijt, 1999, p. 23). Thousands were jailed and tens of thousands were either "disappeared" or outright killed. It was not until the

1970s that Argentine society was able to actively and openly challenge the military elites. Among the public opponents were the well-known *Madres de la Plaza de Mayo*, a group of women whose children and grandchildren were among the victims of the dictatorship. The *Madres* undertook weekly, visible protests in the central Plaza de Mayo, a space immediately in front of the presidential palace. Their vigils would continue until 2006 and arguably even later (though the numbers dwindled substantially), and would serve as a visible form of resistance during the dictatorship and beyond – providing, in the process, an example for those who later took to the streets to contest the economic policies of the post-dictatorship government.

At the end of the dictatorship in 1989, when the country moved into a transitional democracy, outright authoritarianism and blatant violence declined, but there was nonetheless a "continuity of neoliberal economic policies as pursued by the dictatorship" (Cooney, 2007, p. 16). Grandin (2005) notes that this period of democracy was notably different than earlier democracies in the region, particularly in regards to Argentina. Unlike the democracy of the early 20th century which focused on "working-class participation in politics, and social and economic improvements for the poorer sections of the population," the late 20th century democracy aligned with neoliberal economics so closely that it resulted in "abandoning social-democratic principles of development and welfare, opening up...economies to the world market, and narrowing...conceptions...to focus more precisely on political and legal rights rather than on social ones" (p. 47). In this period, an era of neoliberal development, the Argentine democracy was one imposed through elitist, top-down policies and it would become one of the key factors prompting the revolt of frustrated, impoverished Argentine citizens in the late 1990s (Whitson, 2007).

Era of Structural Adjustment, 1989-1999. The years following the transition to democracy were marked by structural adjustments, first in the administration of Alfonsín, who had inherited a country with over 300% inflation when he assumed the presidency, and later Menem, who succeeded Alfonsín after he resigned in 1989 (Treisman, 2004), and who remained in office until 1999.

To address the destabilized economy, Menem fell in line with the international development approach dictated by the Washington Consensus (Cooney, 2007). This involved continuing the economic trends begun by the military dictatorship, including a dismantling of the country's former protectionist policies and a new emphasis on "trade liberalization and a rapidly growing international debt" (Whitson, 2007, p. 122). This was in line with the rest of the world's prescriptive neoliberal principles set out to enable so-called developing countries to forge a path to "modernity" (or, in other words, to become industrialized countries much like the United States and Britain). The administrations of both Menem (1989-1999) and his successor, Fernando de la Rúa (1999-2001), deepened the neoliberal restructuring of the Argentine government and society. Teubal (2004) notes that "it was in this period that whole-sale privatizations, deregulations of all kinds...and an indiscriminate 'opening' to the world economy took place. This was also the period in which the foreign debt continued, increasing substantially until...default became inevitable" (p. 173). These financially conservative policies were implemented at the behest of what Carrera and Cotarelo (2003) term the "financial oligarchy," who continued, albeit in different form, the economic and social repression first defined by the military government. They note that "when the military governments were replaced by civilian ones, physical coercion was replaced by economic coercion, through market laws with unemployment and wage cuts reached unprecedented levels" (Carrera & Cotarelo, 2003, p. 201).

In 1989, "Argentina's economy was on the verge of collapse, inflation had reached an annual level of 500% and the urban economy had become smaller than it was in 1970" (Van Gelder, 2015, p. 9). Menem would address this economic instability and use it to deepen the economic reforms that had been partially implemented during the military dictatorship (Teubal, 2004). Strict adherence to neoliberal policies during the 1990s led to structural reforms throughout the country (Centner, 2010, p. 3). By the end of his term in 2001, Menem had averted outright catastrophes during the 1990s, but, at the same time, had intensified existing structural policies and initiated new reforms which would eventually lead to the economic, political, and social crisis of 2001 (North and Huber, 2004). Regardless of the eventual outcome, however, his administration was viewed initially as a widespread success. As Malamud (2015) observes, Menem's policies led

"most observers to believe that Argentina had finally overcome its 'boom-bust' past and was on its way to joining the ranks of developed countries" (p. 13). It was viewed, in short, as the "poster child" for successful neoliberalization (Carranza, 2005, p. 65).

Levey, Ozarow, and Wylde (2014) observe that Menem's administration "could boast that it had impressively brought hyperinflation (that had reached 4,900 percent in 1989) under control and had secured strong, consistent growth" (p. 3). This economic stability came from Menem's insistence on adhering to the neoliberal policies advocated for by the international monetary lending agencies such as the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), whose accessible loans came with coercive pressure to adhere to the Washington Consensus. For the moment, Argentina appeared to thrive. The social debts that were accruing invisibly behind the "veil of this consumerist paradise" would later "explode with a vengeance, but for now remained hidden in what Galiani, Heymann, and Tommasi (2003) termed the illusion of 'Great Expectations'" (p. 3).

Crisis of Neoliberalism, Arriving at 2000. As the international financing increased, so too did the lending agencies' insistence on additional government restructuring. Menem responded to these demands by deregulating Argentina's industries, privatizing formerly public services such as gas and electric (Schaumberg 2008), retracting welfare services (Auyero, 2007); and undercutting labor policies (Cooney, 2007). In 1991, Menem exacerbated Argentina's vulnerability to external markets when he implemented a one-to-one convertibility plan to peg the Argentine peso to the US dollar, a move which Van Gelder (2015) noted led to a "dismantling of its own industry" as the country could no longer effectively compete with low wage countries (p. 10). By 1998, foreign investments represented 400% of Argentina's annual exports (Van Gelder, Cravino & Ostuni, 2015). In many respects, the international lending agencies not only controlled Argentine's economy, but, through their strict enforcement of neoliberal policies, also de facto controlled the Argentine government and its policy makers.

At the same time that the economic and industrial conditions in the country worsened during the 1990s, so did the social conditions. Vilas (2006) describes the degradation as characterized by "the growth of unemployment and under-employment, the fall of real

salaries, and an increase in the number of households under the poverty line" (p. 164). Just as Argentina had formerly been known as the epitome of successful neoliberalism, so it became known as the epitome of failure when the policies dramatically backfired (Centner, 2007). Auyero (2012) notes that, while exceptional for the extreme degree to which it happened, the negative consequences of neoliberalism are not unique to Argentina. By and large, neoliberal policies prioritize the needs and desires of a minority elite who have access to capital and the means of production, and does so at the expense of the vast majority of the population, who do not have access to the same resources.

While the entire country experienced the negative results of years of structural adjustment policies, those in Buenos Aires were particularly challenged. The outcome was visible throughout the city in myriad ways: economically through the rise in unemployment and poverty (Benwell et al., 2013; Dinardi, 2015; Scolnik, 2014); socially through the segregation, marginalization, inequality, and exclusion of both chronically and newly poor populations (Ozarow, 2014); and spatially through increasing homelessness, the simultaneous growth of informal settlements and gated communities at the peripheries, and the gentrification of central neighborhoods. In short, as Ciccolella, Mignaqui and Szajnberg (2006) describe, it was a time that led to the "deepening of the fragmentation of the metropolitan space and to social exclusion" (p. 1). To understand more concretely the state of Buenos Aires at the time of the crisis, and thus the conditions that prompted the founding of *Hecho en Buenos Aires*, the following sections briefly elaborate on the socioeconomic and spatial degradation ensuing from neoliberal policies.

Socioeconomic degradation. Neoliberal policies during the 1980s and 1990s had led to deteriorating economic conditions by the turn of the millennium (Auyero, 2012; Villalón, 2007). Effectively, they brought about "severe impoverishment, unemployment, income polarization, recession, and finally monetary and financial instability that, combined with the rollback of the state, generated a growing heterogeneous mass of unemployed people without institutional protection from either the state, the unions, or other organizations" (Stahler-Sholk & Kuecker, 2008, p. 254). The class bias expressed in the neoliberal policies undermined the working classes in Argentina in multiple ways. Privatization of formerly national industries led to massive layoffs, as did the declines in manufacturing which were in part a result of the growing trade imbalance caused by the

Plan Convertibilidad (Cooney, 2007), a policy that Menem initiated to peg the Argentine peso to the US dollar as a means of economic stability in the face of hyperinflation. According to Cooney (2007), as a result of successive waves of deindustrialization, "Argentina went from over 1.5 million manufacturing jobs in 1975 down to roughly 763 thousand jobs in 2001, a loss of 50%" (p. 24). Unemployment, underemployment, and informal work skyrocketed dramatically in response (Whitson, 2007).

The combined effect of rising unemployment and expanding informal labor contributed to dramatic urban impoverishment. According to Benwell, Haselip, and Borello (2013), "urban poverty levels increased from 22 percent in 1991 to 38 percent just before the crisis of late 2001 (peaking at 57.5 percent in October 2002)" (p. 148). North (2007) also notes that "one in five of the population were reported as living in severe poverty, which in the provinces meant not being able to get enough to eat, while over half the population, 19 million people, lived in poverty. Twenty percent were unemployed, while 23 percent were underemployed" (n.p.). At the same time, the *Plan Convertibilidad* begun under Menem, was discarded. The peso, no longer tied to international markets, had fallen by June 2002 to a third of its value (Whitson, 2007). All economic classes felt the impact as their savings were reduced significantly; their access to the cash economy became restricted; they were denied employment as factories closed down; and their overall purchasing power decreased, leading to difficulty accessing basic goods and food (Whitson, 2007).

As economic and social conditions plummeted throughout the country, a class of "'new poor' [developed] among lower- and middle-class Argentines" (Whitson, 2007, p. 123), representing a unique form of impoverishment and leading to a significant loss of social cohesion. In a country noted historically for having a substantive and stable middle class, the degradation and disintegration were significant.

The poverty led to distinct social and spatial fragmentation: "the blurred boundaries of class had a physical manifestation, not only in the friends and colleagues who fell out of the networks, but in the proximity of poverty and in encounters with the poor on a daily basis" (Goddard, 2006, p. 276). Social inequality became increasingly pronounced throughout the country as a whole (Vilas, 2006). This profoundly worsening state of

affairs for the lower and middle classes was paralleled by a period of mass consumption and success on the part of a handful of elites.

Spatial degradation. Quoting postmodernist Fredric Jameson, Elden (2007) asks "why should landscape be any less dramatic than the event?" (p. 105). When considering the social and economic repercussions of the 1980s and 1990s in Argentina, the question of landscape becomes particularly pertinent, for the negative repercussions were as evident in the spatial construction of the city as in individuals' economic and social experiences. The city became territorially divided between those in poverty and those whom capitalism privileged, with both the city's urban core and its peripheral neighborhoods split between those living in temporary homes or entirely without shelter, and those living in high-rise condominiums and gated communities. Both the urban center and margins were split between the privileged and the dispossessed, the wealthy and the impoverished. Crot (2005) rightly observes that this was not a new predicament in 2000, but rather an ongoing process of "territorial polarisation" which reflected "at a spatial level the growing dualisation of the Argentine society" (p. 1). Albeit not new, the process was intensified during this era and led to what Guano (2002) terms "a new Buenos Aires" that "materialized to cater to the small upper middle class and, above all, the upper class that were reaping the fruits of neoliberalism" (p. 184).

This spatial polarization was visibly evident in the overall increase in the numbers of those who were *en situación de calle*, a term that translates loosely into English as "homeless," but which connotes much more in the original Spanish -- alluding to anyone living in temporary housing, at risk of being without shelter, or currently without shelter. While the numbers of those in need increased, the existing resources had been inadequate even before the crisis. Insufficient access to housing and impoverished, improvised settlements have historically been an element of Buenos Aires. As Prócupez (2015) notes, "low-income sectors in Buenos have long endured housing deficiencies. As with other Latin American metropolises that underwent rapid urbanization, the city has never been able to completely accommodate its population, constantly increased by rural migration once sparked by incipient industrialization and later by stagnant regional economies" (p. 57). She goes on further to observe that "eventually, the lack of adequate and affordable housing in the city was further affected by long-term unemployment, underemployment,

and income precarization" (ibid). Compounding the problem was a "lack of public investment in low-income housing and social structure" (Prévôt Schapira, 2000), further evidence of the government's adherence to neoliberal policies that had mandated the retraction of social support programs.

In 2001, the census indicated that approximately 500,000 people, or twenty percent of the total population in Buenos Aires, were homeless (Cravino, 2011). Not only were they denied access to land, they were also denied access to basic amenities and services – a result of the Menem and de la Rúa administrations' emphasis on privatization and reduced access to services (Ciccollella, Mignaqui & Szjanberg, 2006). As Auyero (2012) notes, at the same time the numbers of homeless increased, so the resources provided by the city were punitively withdrawn.

Those without recourse to obtain housing in Buenos Aires through legal means have traditionally sought security through the illegal occupation of land (Gelder, Cravino, & Ostuni, 2015, p. 127) – as they have in other cities around the world. In Argentina, these informal settlements began at least as early as the 1930s when waves of immigrants settled from Europe (Blaustein, 2006), and later grew anew during the 1940s and '50s as import substitution reshaped the industrial landscape of the country and drove rural-urban migration patterns (Van Gelder, 2015). Most recently, they have expanded as a result of the economic downturn and lack of public support for accessible housing in the urban center (Cravino, 2006; Cravino, 2011; Auyero, 2010; Cravino, del Río, and Duarte 2008).

While chronic conditions of poverty were deepened by the neoliberal policies, conversely privileged elites became ever more privileged. At the opposite end of the spectrum from those in *situación de calle* were middle- and upper-class residents who were prioritized by neoliberal practices of neighborhood gentrification, urban core redevelopment, and a focus on "urban aesthetics" (Cravino, 2011). With their newly elevated positions, these wealthy few appropriated the urban core primarily through two processes: gentrification of historic neighborhoods (Dinardi, 2015; Herzer, 2008; Herzer et al., 2008, Sternberg, 2013) and the redevelopment of informally-settled neighborhoods such as Puerto Madero (Centner, 2012). They also laid claim to the urban periphery, where they developed gated communities (Svampa, 2001). Their ability to make these spatial claims can be directly

attributed not only to the individual movement of private capital, but also to the city government's broader effort to globally position Buenos Aires as a world-class city during the 1990s (Cicolella, Mignaqui & Szjanberg, 2006).

One of the city's most visible efforts to position Buenos Aires as a competitive urban area was the redevelopment of the Puerto Madero district into retail and high-rise condominiums. Proponents generally hailed this redevelopment as a successful example of globalized urbanism, while critics draw attention to the city's indiscriminate removal of what had formerly been a predominantly poorer, immigrant neighborhood (Centner, 2012).

Sternberg (2013) observes that "despite the steep unemployment and deficient housing conditions and availability, redevelopment actions continued to proceed aggressively ahead to pave the way for the more affluent consumers and increase local governments' revenue" (p. 189). The neoliberal philosophy underlying these processes becomes more readily observable when it's understood that, prior to becoming president, de la Rúa served as the mayor of Buenos Aires during the late 1990s (Ciccolella, Mignaqui, & Szajnberg, 2006), a position that afforded him the opportunity to enact neoliberalism on a micro-scale before bringing it to the country as a whole. In reflecting upon the outcome of these neoliberal policies, Dinardi (2015) observes that the urban core of Buenos Aires has become "'oriented towards globalization' with socio-spatial inequality, social exclusion, and urban fragmentation as its key features" (p. 5).

Overall, the sociospatial divide of the lower-, middle-, and upper-classes in Buenos Aires is nowhere more explicitly evident than through the juxtaposed privatized, gated communities and informal, peripheral settlements which are often located directly beside one another (Benwell et al., 2013).

From Despair to Collective Action, 2000 and Onward . By 1999, near the end of Menem's tenure as president, economic growth had significantly decelerated and capital flight had increased, reaching "in 2001 the proportions of a stampede" (Vilas, 2006, p. 165). Although campaigning on promises of reform, de la Rúa only intensified the policies that Menem had put in place, further reducing public spending, decreasing the government sector, and undercutting workers' rights (Centner, 2010). Although the

policies were intended to stabilize the country, the country's condition continued to degrade. By October 2001, Argentine citizens issued a vote of no confidence in the de la Rúa administration, an action in which over 40 percent of eligible voters purposely abstained or spoiled their vote during parliamentary elections (Schaumberg, 2008).

In mid-December, de la Rúa addressed the increasingly stark conditions and pressure from international lending agencies and the rising capital flight by raiding central bank reserves and pension funds in an effort to meet the debtors' demands, a move which led to public panic and a run on the banks (North and Huber, 2004, p. 963). The government responded to the threat by imposing a *corralito*, or halt on withdrawals. Immediately thereafter, on December 19 and 20, protests erupted in the streets and other venues as Argentine citizens angrily denounced this restriction on their personal finance.

As Webber (2007) points out, "massive mobilizations during these two days - known as the *argentino* - repudiated many years of neoliberal assault on the popular economy" (p. 120). The sentiment that the outcry was a direct repudiation of neoliberalism is shared by many scholars (Carrera and Cotarelo, 2003; Dinerstein, 2001; North & Huber, 2004).

De la Rúa responded to the demonstrations by announcing an *estado de sitio* (state of siege), which further enraged the populace it was intended to calm (Faulk, 2012).

Argentine citizens had had enough. Their mobilized response, the *argentino*, openly contradicted the "limitations on their liberties that had just been sanctioned by the nation's president" (Schaumberg, 2008, p. 372) and exclaiming "*Que se vayan todos; ni se quede ni uno solo.*" The phrase, which translates approximately as "They all must go; not one remains," verbalized the general belief that the political and economic authorities were inept and corrupt. Many even believed that the government's crippling international debt "had been contracted by a genocidal military" (North and Huber, 2004, p. 964) and perpetuated by corrupt government officials. Levy, Ozarow and Wylde (2014) note that "the *argentino* constituted a crisis of culture and confidence about national identity: wither then nation and who, or what, constituted the country" (p. xv). The collective moment "envisioned the removal of the entire political, legal, and perhaps even economic establishment and hoped for their replacement with a different, more participatory society" (Levy, Ozarow and Wylde, 2014, p. 6).

The protests forced de la Rúa to flee the country, an outcome that has solidified the perception of the *argentino* as a "watershed moment" for the country and the region (Levy, Ozarow and Wylde, 2014, p. 2). By the time de la Rúa fled, a marked deterioration characterized the entire country, including economic, spatial, social, and political conditions (Sternberg, 2013; Ciccollella and Mignaqui, 2002; Cerruti and Grimson, 2004). A country that "once could claim to be the most socially egalitarian nation in Latin America" (Benwell et al., 2013, p.x) with one of the largest middle classes in the region (Ozarow et al., 2014, p. 181) had succumbed to the debilitating outcome of decades of neoliberal policies. In de la Rúa's stead, two others (Rodríguez Saá and Senator Eduardo Duhalde) were constitutionally elected but quickly ousted by continued public protest (Malamud, 2013, p. 23).

By 2001, years of neoliberal policies had served as a "destructive force on social life in Argentina," leading to many of the same effects as those which had resulted from the former military dictatorship (Faulk, 2012, pg. 125). Faulk (2012) notes that although the "methods and aims were different," both eras resulted in "the atomization of individuals and the dismantling or discrediting of the structures for participation in public life" (p. 125). This does not imply that the cause and effect of the crisis were simple. As Levy, Ozarow and Wylde (2013) state, the preceding conditions and aftermath of the crisis were complex and intertwined, representing a "kaleidoscope that combined elements of change with elements of continuity" (p. 2). The crisis had reached its epitome and the public's response via collective mobilization efforts was undeniable. While some have argued that the protests were largely the outcome of the middle class responding to the pressures of the *corralito* (Faulk, 2002), others suggest that the *estado de sitio* too closely evoked the military repressions of the former dictatorship (North and Huber, 2004). Perhaps more accurate are those scholars such as Webber (2007), who note that the response was too complicated to be attributed to a single cause, and should more reasonably be regarded as a climax of a "building-up of the principal repertoires of collective action, such as road blockages and factory takeovers, throughout the 1990s in the provinces" (p. 122), a perspective shared by Villalón (2007).

Although Argentina became internationally visible during the *argentino*, the protests of 2001 were only the most recent in an extensive line of human rights protestations.

Protests such as *escraches* (graffiti) and the visible walks of *Las Madres de la Plaza del Mayo* took place during the dictatorship, focusing on blatant human rights abuses and the disappearances of thousands. Later, by the early 1990s, the focus of protests shifted to labor rights and socioeconomic concerns, and took the form, among others, of *puebladas* (whole towns striking), *piqueteros* (road blocks and picketing), *cacerolazos* (public street protests involving the banging of pots and pans), and *empresas asambleas populares* (popular assemblies in the neighborhoods). These community-driven protests developed alongside labor-driven organizing efforts such as those related to the *trabajadores de empresas recuperadas* (recovered factory workers' movements), *cooperativas cartoneros* (carton recycling cooperatives), and *publicaciones de calle* (street newspapers such as the one considered in this investigation, *Hecho en Buenos Aires*). Throughout the decades, the mobilization efforts were heterogeneous, organized by diverse actors in response to diverse conditions; but, one could argue, tied together by a shared interest in (i) bringing otherwise private grievances into the public sphere and (ii) holding accountable authorities who had previously operated with impunity (Goddard, 2006).

The commonalities tying together the mobilizing efforts are evident throughout their history, dating from — if not before — the *escraches* or graffiti that emerged in the 1980s after the dictatorship (Villalón, 2007). As Kaiser (2002) explains: "The word '*escrachar*' is an Argentine slang term meaning 'to uncover.' *Escraches* are campaigns of public condemnation through demonstrations" (p. 499). Although the visual *escraches* resistance deal specifically with the human rights abuses perpetrated by the dictatorship, it is their twofold focus on achieving justice through public demonstrations and contradicting authorities' impunity that resonates throughout the subsequent forms of social mobilization. This objective continued with the work of *Las Madres*, the well-known mothers of the thousands of *desaparecidos*, who visibly protested by walking around the *Casa Rosada* to draw attention to the corruption of the government and to seek formal redress - and who continue to do so today, albeit with less frequency.

By the mid-to-late 1990s, the singular focus on human rights had expanded into a broader agenda that addressed new concerns emerging in the country: namely, the devastating socioeconomic impacts of the Menem administration's neoliberal policies, among which were "rising rates of malnourishment, illiteracy, poverty, and unemployment" (Goddard,

2006, p. 273). "The dehumanising and humiliating process that characterize neoliberal social transformations of Argentine society have evoked aspirations to recover dignity and inter-human relations," observes Schaumberg (2008, p. 371). The outcome was complicated and contentious, difficult to distill down into narrow causal forces such as class issues (Goddard, 2006).

Provincial *puebladas* (neighborhood assemblies or town protests, depending on the translation) and *piqueteros* (picketers) led the wave of grassroots activism in oil producing towns such as Neuquén, Cural-Co, and Plaza Huincal in 1996 and later Mosconi in 1997, where the privatization of the oil industry prompted road blocks and other protests against widespread layoffs and inadequate unemployment benefits (Farinetti, 2010; Schaumberg, 2008). As Schaumberg (2008) notes, these movements were led by unemployed workers in the provinces when, "equipped with shared memories of former working-class militancy...[they] began to organize themselves" (p. 371).

These instances of collective action were followed by the more well-known and recent events surrounded the protests of 2001, including the *argentino*. As Goddard (2006) summarizes, these actions were the outcome of a long process involving "not only the gradual erosion of standards of living, the palpable presence of poverty and the clearly inadequate grasp of the situation by the government, but also the repertoire of contentious acts (Tilly, 1981) witnessed or engaged in over the years as the Mothers' unique range of actions in their struggle 'for memory and against forgetting' and the myriad responses to the sharpening effects of neoliberalism" (p. 272). In this light, the 2001 collective action mobilizing was not a singular instance, but rather an outcry developed cumulatively over the years.

While neither new nor unique in the country, the significance of the protests at the turn of the millennium cannot be understated. As Armony and Armony (2005) point out, "in this context, mobilized groups performed a social 'reappropriation' of public spaces, institutions, and even symbols, claiming a legitimacy" that enabled them to effect change locally and institutionally (p. 35). It was in this sphere of protest and mobilization that the street newspaper *Hecho en Buenos Aires* emerged in 1998, during what director Patricia

Merkin calls the latent years when the Argentine community was just beginning to mature in terms of consciousness and collective responsibility (*Hecho en Buenos Aires*, n.d.).

CHAPTER 5 - CASE STUDY: HECHO EN BUENOS AIRES

Overview

Hecho en Buenos Aires is a street newspaper organization operating in the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires (or CABA, for its initials in Spanish), Argentina. Founded in 2000, its core staff consists of approximately ten individuals, though twice as many more may be hired at any given time to provide freelance graphic design, photography, and journalism support.

As its website proclaims, *Hecho en Buenos Aires* focuses on building social solidarity by developing programming that supports the people of Buenos Aires, otherwise known as *porteños*^v, who are in *situación de calle*. In other words, the organization seeks out and works with the most vulnerable and visible among the city's inhabitants in order to offer support for improving their lives (staff member, personal communication, July 2010).

The organization's primary program is the eponymously named review, *Hecho en Buenos Aires*, which the vendors sell to the public, earning an income in the process (*Hecho en Buenos Aires*, 2016a). As this investigation concludes and explains in the subsequent discussion of findings, the review also functions as a tool for conveying the social message and revolutionary agenda of the organization. For the vendors who sell the review, it is as much an opportunity to earn an income through dignified employment as it is a means of validating their interaction with the broader society.

Patricia Merkin, the current director, co-founded the organization in Buenos Aires in 2000 – a time that coincided with the early stages of the collective mobilization efforts that took over the country as a whole shortly thereafter. Merkin and her co-founder, Mark Martinelli (Franco, 2002) began *Hecho en Buenos Aires* after they heard about the success of the British street newspaper, *The Big Issue*, which had been running since the 1990s in London (Braude, 2014). After having become familiar with the British street newspaper model while abroad, Merkin saw its potential for Buenos Aires. In order to better understand the practices of *Hecho en Buenos Aires*, the next section discusses its original prototype, *The Big Issue*, in more depth.

International Model

The Big Issue was developed as a way "to help those with a strong desire to help themselves," and was premised in the understanding that "giving them [people with nonexistent or precarious housing] earning power instead of a handout would enable them to mobilize themselves" (Jacobs, 1990). *The Big Issue* shortened this philosophy to "a hand up, not a hand out" (The Big Issue, 2016). Deemed quite successful around the world, *The Big Issue* has become the definitive prototype for new street paper organizations.

In its own words, *The Big Issue* is "leading a global self-help revolution" (The Big Issue, 2016). This plays out through the adjoined The Big Issue Foundation, which oversaw the creation of the International Network of Street Papers (INSP), a network that "supports and develops over 100 street paper projects in 35 countries in 24 languages, with a combined readership of 6 million per edition" (International Network of Street Papers, 2016). *Hecho en Buenos Aires* identifies as part of the INSP network, as do several other street papers in Latin America (primarily in Argentina and Brazil). As of 2015, the majority of street papers are located in North America (39) and Europe (60), with comparatively few in Latin America (7), Asia (3), Africa (2), and Australia (1).

On a basic level, INSP promotes an operational model. Recognition and affiliation within the INSP network is granted if the street paper organization operates according to the "street paper" model defined by INSP's membership criteria and charter. The INSP street paper charter defines street papers, first and foremost, as employment opportunities, before continuing to list additional qualifications, stating that

"all street papers, which are members of INSP, must adhere to the following street paper charter:

- Aiming to help socially excluded people (in some countries only homeless people apply in this category) help themselves, through providing them with the means of earning an income and facilitating their re-integration into society, through providing social support.
- Using all post-investment profits to finance support for the vendors, the socially excluded or social business. Each paper supplies its annual accounts

to an agreed independent organization for the purpose of financial transparency.

- Aiming to provide vendors with a voice in the media and campaigning on behalf of the socially excluded.
- Aiming towards creating quality street papers, which the vendors are proud to sell and the public are happy to buy. This breaks the cycle of dependency through empowerment.
- Supporting prospective street papers that share a common philosophy and intend to sign the street paper charter.
- That no charter street paper shall enter the establishing selling area of an existing charter member" (International Street Paper Network, 2010).

These criteria are emphasized and met to varying degrees by different street papers. Papers have enough latitude to account for enough differences in implementation that it would be misleading to offer sweeping, homogenous statements about street papers on a global scale. As Parlette (2010) observes, "individual papers can be seen to follow autonomous mandates with unique goals and structures. Consequently, the ownership, content, control, and mission vary strikingly from one street paper to the next" (p. 96). Even accounting for heterogeneity within the network, operational practices stay largely the same. Vendors purchase the publication at a reduced rate (on average fifty percent of the cover price) and then resell it to the public. When the vendor purchases the publication, the proceeds go back into the organization; when the public purchases from the vendor, the money generated goes directly to him or her. As Harter et al. (2004) explain, "rather than considering vendors 'employees' ... vendors are treated as 'independent entrepreneurs working their way toward success'" (p. 413). INSP substantiates this observation, noting that street vendors "become micro entrepreneurs, selling their product on the streets, to earn their own living and support themselves and their families."

Argentine Iteration

Even though *Hecho en Buenos Aires* was modeled on the British *The Big Issue*, the Argentine street newspaper has been, from the moment of its inception, a unique iteration of the model. At a rudimentary level, the Argentine differences are evident even in the name. Rather than a generalized title such as "the big issue," the Argentine newspaper's name alludes specifically and directly to its urban context. As Merkin explains: "*Hecho porque es concreto, directo y eficaz; Bs. As. porque es nuestro, porque lo hacemos acá*" (*Hecho en Buenos Aires*, n.d.).^{vi} The name may be understood, too, as a reference to the condition of Argentina at the start of the new millennium. *Hecho* [made], for instance, can be read as a term referencing labor industries and practices (at a time when exploitative, external privatization was juxtaposed against practices of collective labor and local production). Similarly, *Buenos Aires*, in referencing the location of the organization, can be seen as contesting the impersonal, international policies that had exploited and fractured the country during the preceding decade.

The organization's practices are deeply informed by its local setting far beyond a rhetorical analysis of its name. This can be seen in how the organization has developed programs that acknowledge and respond to both the opportunities and constraints of Argentina at the time of its founding in 2000 and in the years following.

Of particular note is that street newspapers tend to follow a "social enterprise" model of production, a concept that has many definitions whether speaking in English or in the Spanish with *empresa social*. The key distinction as operationalized with *Hecho en Buenos Aires* is that it is a hybrid profit-generating non-profit. This is to say, it is an organization whose revenue (such as that generated by the sale of advertisements or of the review itself) is reinvested back into the organization, and the organization as a whole exists for the betterment of society. As Merkin is quick to point out, this business model exists in many European countries, and even in certain countries within Latin America, but is not yet officially recognized in Argentina. As such, *Hecho en Buenos Aires* struggles somewhat financially - although it does not follow a traditional business for-profit business model, it also cannot claim any of the legal benefits that may be available to nonprofit organizations.

An asset-based analysis of *Hecho en Buenos Aires* offers the opportunity to acknowledge the multiple reasons why the street newspaper model seemed so appropriate for the country at the turn of the millennium, including the existing prevalence of a thriving, informal street economy in Buenos Aires (P. Merkins, personal communication, July 2010), a strong literacy rate of a well-educated population, and a dense, cosmopolitan urban center where vendors could readily attract readers.

At the same time, the country faced several deficits which affirmed, albeit from the opposite end of the spectrum, the viability of a street newspaper organization. The profound poverty, for instance, suggested the need for employment opportunities; the inadequacy of church and state support programs suggested the need for supportive alternatives; and the social fragmentation of Argentine society suggested the need for solidarity-building initiatives.

In 1995, these conditions were striking to Merkin, who had been out of the country since 1978 (when she had gone into exile during the military dictatorship). Especially responding to the need for solidarity, Merkin recalls that "*Yo recordaba algo más solidario, más comunidad, recordaba algo más familiar, 'recuerda y agrega que de lo que más le llamó la atención 'me pareció impactante la falta de sentido comunitario'*" (Braude, 2014)^{vii}. The perceived lack of community was further underscored by the response that Merkin generated in the community when she first began explaining the street newspaper model to her friends and colleagues, many of whom responded that the model was suited only to London, not Argentina, or that there was no need for such an organization in Buenos Aires (their rationale being that *porteños* in *situación de calle* were adequately cared for by the state and church) (*Hecho en Buenos Aires*, n.d.).

Despite the growing and visible poverty signs of poverty in Buenos Aires in 2001, Merkin recounts that in 1998, not only did people not talk about it, but also they seemed not to believe that there were people in *situación de calle* in the city (Rozenwasser, 2013). The willful disregard and outright resistance to acknowledging the people living in the streets reinforces Merkin's observation that the post-dictatorial Argentina was suffering from an erosion of community. Arguably, it was Merkin's response to this

eroded solidarity that proved so formative in the development and evolution of *Hecho en Buenos Aires*, as it is an example of a street newspaper model that goes beyond the standard economic components to include significant social and spatial dimensions.

The organization's growth and increasing visibility have attracted the attention of several scholars (Franco, 2002; Wilkis & Gorbán, 2006; Siganevitch, 2007). In 2001, the organization outgrew its original offices and moved to its permanent location on *Avenida San Juan*. This change in address positioned the organization at the intersection of three distinctly different neighborhoods, which collectively help illustrate the city's economic and sociospatial fragmentation. Specifically, the organization sits between La Boca, San Telmo, and Puerto Madero. La Boca, a port neighborhood which has been traditionally populated by immigrants, has been culturally appropriated and marginalized by city policies (Guano, 2003); San Telmo, an historic neighborhood, has been increasingly, strategically targeted by government officials as an appropriate space for gentrification policies (Herzer et al., 2008); and Puerto Madero is generally known as one of the most quintessential examples of the city's urban neoliberal governance objectives, as characterized by its high rise developments and displacement of previous residents (Sequero & Mateos, 2014). As Braude (2014) describes, "*Las oficinas de Hecho en Buenos Aires ocupan una planta enorme de un edificio viejo sobre avenida San Juan que mira a Puerto Madero de un lado y a San Telmo del otro. Es un área fronteriza, un cruce de historias y realidades, un arrabal.*"^{viii} Right in the urban center, only fifteen minutes from the Casa Rosada (the Argentine equivalent of the White House), the address for *Hecho en Buenos Aires* is situated concretely in the contested urban core of the city. Its location at this critical spatial juncture is illustrated in Figure 1 (see following page) and addressed in more detail in the subsequent discussion of findings.

To deepen an understanding of the organization's successes in the community, the following section narrows the discussion to consider the individual programs that the organization develops and implements.

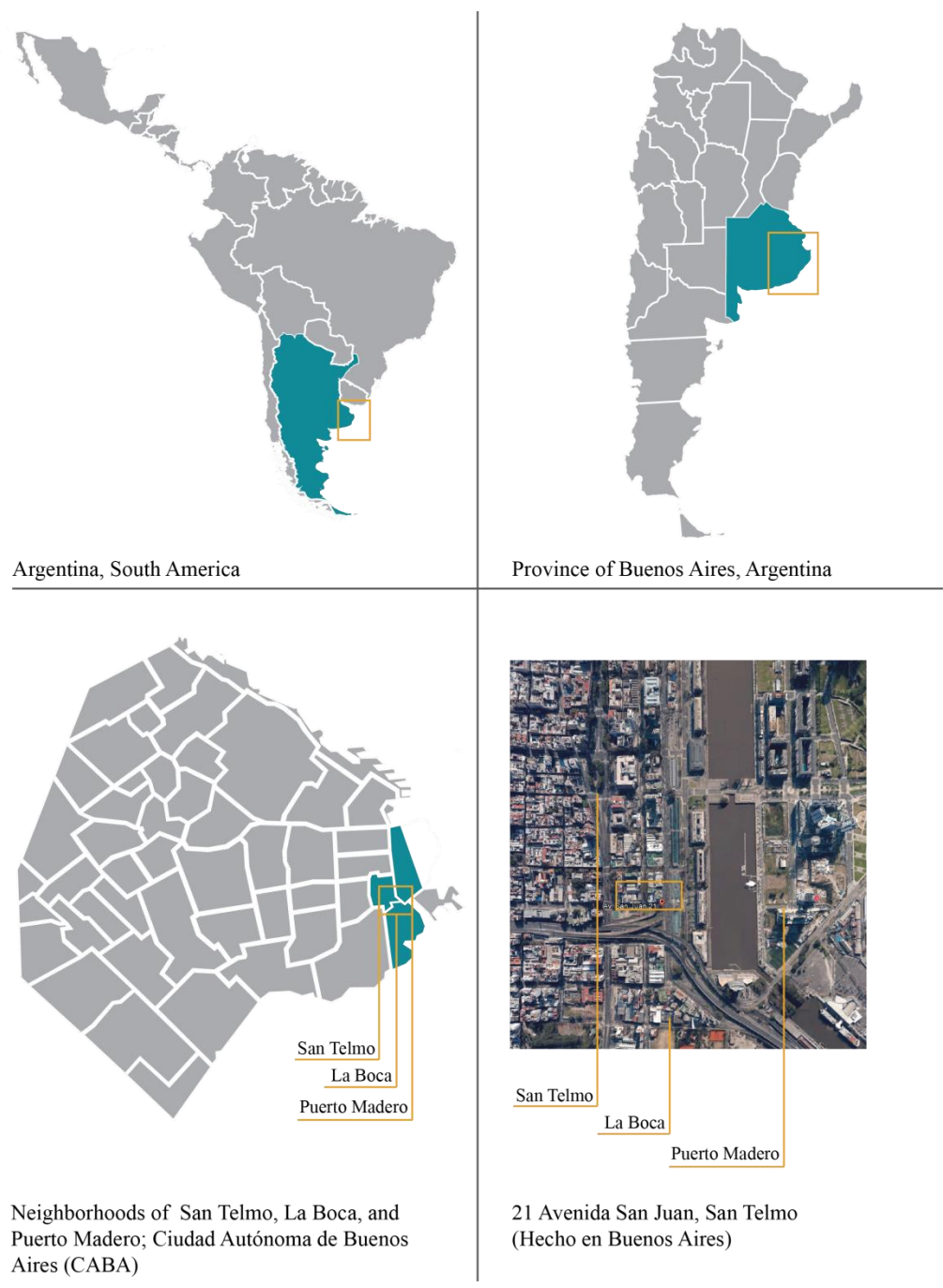


Figure 1. Scaled maps of region, country, province, city, and neighborhoods surrounding Hecho en Buenos Aires at its main office. Source: (1) CC BY-SA 3.0 from Wikimedia user "selfmade"; (2) CC from Media Kitchen; (3) CC BY-SA 2.0 from Wikimedia user "NordNordWest"; (4) Google Earth, 34°37'15.72" 58°21'55.26" on November 11, 2016.



Figure 2. Contextual photography of inside and outside organization. Source: Photographs by author.

Programs. The employment program, or the selling of the review, is a central feature of street newspaper organizations anywhere and is the principal means by which *Hecho en Buenos Aires* serves *porteños* who are in *situación de calle*. It is the most direct and quantifiable service. As of 2016, vendors purchase the review for eight pesos and sell it for twenty five, capturing seventeen pesos per edition as profit. According to the organization, this is "*el primer paso para correrse de la línea de exclusión; pero no es la única necesidad que atraviesan las personas negadas de las oportunidades. Es por eso que ofrecemos a nuestros vendedores/as y sus familias servicios sociales y formativos que les permiten acceder a un circuito integral de inclusión*" (*Hecho en Buenos Aires*, 2016a).^{ix}

The economic value of the review is significant, with more than 77% of the vendors claiming the review as their sole source of income, and more than 50% supporting children or other family members through the income generated by the review (BF Libros y Textos, 2015). According to a survey organized by *Télam* (2014), the majority of the vendors (84%) consider their employment with *Hecho en Buenos Aires* the means to becoming autonomous and socially integrated with society.

Yet, as the *Hecho en Buenos Aires* website notes, the organization views its income generating program as only the first of many programs necessary to support the vendors. Accordingly, in addition to selling the review to the vendors, the organization provides complementary, comprehensive, and integrated support to the vendors that extends beyond the economic program.

The social support programs are offered as "*otros beneficios para sus vendedores y vendedoras, y sus familias. Hecho en Bs. As. ofrece a sus vendedores servicios sociales, terapias de apoyo, talleres creativos, servicios médicos, acceso a internet, consultorio jurídico, a fin de ayudar a los vendedores y sus familias a aspirar a una vida mejor completando un proceso de inserción integral*" (*Hecho en Buenos Aires*, 2016b).^x These programs address the basic needs of the vendors through essential services such as connecting to health providers or providing health safety information such as HIV prevention or contraceptive methods; identifying temporary housing; helping with government paperwork, legal needs, official documents, etc.. They also meet more

ephemeral needs such as cultural development, social expression, artistic expression, and political awareness. As Merkin writes in an article in *Télam* (2014), the programs "permite que personas con talentos latentes puedan explorar sus capacidades."^{xi} The *Télam* article also notes that "en nueve años, han pasado más de 1.200 participantes de los talleres de artes visuales, escritura o hip hop, entre otros."^{xii} In addition to the formal services that the organization provides, vendors are provided access to in-house bathing facilities, computer workstations, a common area, an art studio, and a lending library of more than 100 varied fiction and non-fiction titles.

The Review. Behind and substantiating all of the organization's work is the production of the review itself. Eponymously titled *Hecho en Buenos Aires*, the review is created by a professional staff of journalists, photographers, graphic designers, and editors. Published monthly, it features alternative media topics such as music, performing arts, literature, and film, alongside social commentary on topics ranging from indigenous rights to sustainable agriculture.

In its 15th year in 2015, the review had 180 editions, had been sold by more than 3,700 vendors, and had been printed in more than 3,250,000 copies (ZonaIndie, 2015). At that time, the review sold for 20 pesos to the public, with the vendor retaining 13 (ibid).

Summary

Though *Hecho en Buenos Aires* was born during a time of great crisis in the Argentine society, its importance is still recognized over a decade later. In 2014, for instance, when the street newspaper celebrated fourteen years, *Télam*, a cultural news source, wrote that the organization was "una herramienta de la cultura popular en tiempos de exclusión...la revista que nació para enfrentar la crisis que sucedió a las políticas de exclusión de los años 90, celebrará mañana 14 años de vida, con reflexión, debate y propuestas artísticas" (*Télam*, 2014).^{xiii} The same article quotes Merkin elaborating on how the organization's need and purpose continue even more than a decade after its founding: "trabajamos con la utopía en el horizonte de dejar de existir, aunque seguiremos estando mientras haya gente que necesita de esta oportunidad para salir adelante" (*Télam*, 2014).^{xiv} This notion of ongoing struggle for a distant, imperceptible horizon is one among many indications that

the organization aligns with and furthers Lefebvre's "right to the city" concept, a point on which the subsequent section elaborates.

CHAPTER 6 - FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This investigation finds provisional evidence to suggest that the work of *Hecho en Buenos Aires* aligns with critical elements of Lefebvre's "right to the city" as a theoretical framework. The organization does this, first, by developing the individual capacity of individuals in *situación de calle* through integrated, holistic programs that promote *autogestión* and, second, by creating opportunities for those same individuals to appropriate urban space and participate in urban processes - two actions key to Lefebvre's radical and transformative "right to the city." The investigation finds evidence, moreover, to suggest that the organization as a whole seeks radical, transformative change in alignment with Lefebvre's conceptualization of the "right to the city." This intersection of theory and practice is summarized by the following table:

	Per the theoretical framework of a Lefebvrian “right to the city”	Per the practices of Hecho en Buenos Aires
What right?	Singular, transformative right to create an <i>oeuvre</i>	Singular right to contest the current conditions and, albeit incrementally, to advance a radically different <i>oeuvre</i> .
To what city?	A city in contradistinction to the capitalist cities of today’s world; a city whose parameters and characteristics will be defined by those who enact it.	The city that <i>Hecho en Buenos Aires</i> seeks is not defined outright by any singular statement, but rather can be construed from the practices and messaging put forward by the organization. In other words, it is a city in which people in <i>situación de calle</i> are no longer relegated to the social, spatial, and economic margins; they are central and integral to the city.
By whom?	Urban inhabitants, or those most closely affected by the negative conditions of capitalist cities	People in <i>situación de calle</i> , or, in other words, people who are deeply vulnerable to and embedded within the capitalist institutions of Buenos Aires.

By what means?	Through the joint processes of spatial appropriation and social participation	<p>(i) Through personal and economic development programs focused on <i>autogestión</i>, it builds the capacity of individuals in <i>situación de calle</i> to participate in social processes.</p> <p>(ii) Through its network of <i>paradas</i> and the vendors' associated practices, it creates opportunities for vendors to appropriate urban space.</p>
<p>Table 1. Intersection of theory and practice regarding how <i>Hecho en Buenos Aires</i> furthers the "right to the city" in Buenos Aires.</p>		

What Right?

"What right" is the first critical question to answer when considering whether an organization advances a "right to the city" in accordance with Lefebvre's original concept. Many organizations can rightfully claim to promote and advance a "right to the city," but that may just as readily refer to efforts to promote individual rights. To promote a Lefebvrian "right to the city" is to promote radical, transformative, and collective change. Evidence from this exploratory case study suggests that the question of "what right" may be answered, insofar as regards *Hecho en Buenos Aires*, as a collective right to engage in social participation through *autogestión* and spatial appropriation through *paradas*.

Before discussing these complementary processes of participation and appropriation, however, the meaning of *autogestión* should be addressed. *Autogestión* in the context of this grounded case study diverges somewhat from the theoretical, Lefebvrian understanding of the term, though not in a way that puts it at odds with the Lefebvrian "right to the city." If anything, it would seem that the Argentine connotations of *autogestión* only expand upon and enrich Lefebvre's understanding of it.

Whereas Lefebvre's use of *autogestión* has been taken to mean grassroots collective action, political cognizance, and the taking in charge by the marginalized urban inhabitant, *Hecho en Buenos Aires* uses the term to mean that and more. In terms of the latter, its meaning is expanded by the Argentine rendering of the term. Argentine activist and scholar Marina Sitrin (2006) offers some insight into this when she writes that, in Argentina, "*autogestión* is a word that has no exact English translation. Historically, the anarchist idea of self-management comes closest to its current usage in Argentina's movements...[but] *autogestión* is not based in the *what*, but in the *how*. It is the relationships among people that create a particular project, not simply the project itself. It is a word reflecting an autonomous and collective practice. When people in the movements in Argentina speak of *autogestión* they usually are implying directly democratic decision-making and the creation of new subjectivities along the way" (p. vii).

This understanding fits with the context of how *autogestión* emerges within the data of this investigation, and resonates with how organizational documents reference it and *Hecho en Buenos Aires* staff members speak to it. From the data, the Argentine use of the term *autogestión* seems to suggest not an end goal as it might in English (entrepreneurial employment opportunities), but rather a holistic process - one in which the vendors engage when they participate in the organization's range of programs and practices. As Merkin writes (n.d.), the organization seeks to "*convertir a las personas que por lo general para el sistema son sólo parte del problema, en parte de la solución. Una revista de la calle como es Hecho en Bs As hace que las personas excluidas se sientan parte de la sociedad, de aquella misma sociedad que les generó la alienación de vivir sin esperanza.*"^{xv}

If this is taken to be true, then it would seem that the basic services provided by *Hecho en Buenos Aires* might be construed as more than service provision. All of the organization's efforts (from its employment program to its personal development workshops to its production of the review itself) can be read as a rejection of the status quo and the implementation of a radical agenda that seeks to disrupt and transform traditional practices. In doing so, it rejects historically patronizing forms of assistance for marginalized urban inhabitants; contests the practices of neoliberalism and beyond that

resulted in structural conditions that marginalize in the first place; and proposes an alternative future that would obviate the need for their work entirely, which is to say a world in which marginalization no longer happens and thus there is no longer need for support systems to mitigate or alleviate it.

Historically, people living in the precarious state of *situación de calle* have turned to the church or government in Argentina to ask for assistance. The practice of relying on *asistencialismo*, or what Dinerstein (2014) defines as "state aid and hands outs" paired with "paternalistic policies" was insufficient even at the best of times in Argentina (p. 9). When the countrywide economic crisis reached unprecedented heights at the turn of the millennium, these traditional support systems were further reduced by the neoliberal prescription of a retracted role for state support – making the support programs wholly inadequate to meet the increasing needs of the populace. Moreover, Grassi (2003) asserts that the practice of *asistencialismo* is problematic for more than its inability to meet demand, writing that "*alternativa o simultáneamente, la asistencia social a los pobres puede ser: un gasto inútil, un adormecedor de conciencias, un desestímulo al esfuerzo propio, un medio de control social*" (p. 28).^{xvi} As a result of its inability to meet the basic needs of the populace and its intrinsic social control issues, *asistencialismo* began to be replaced by alternative, grassroots responses – particularly in the wake of the country's crisis.

Enter *Hecho en Buenos Aires* and countless other organizations that sought to respond to the problematic practices of *asistencialismo* by providing alternative options for the many impoverished and disenfranchised inhabitants of Buenos Aires. From the beginning, *Hecho en Buenos Aires* has explicitly countered the idea of *asistencialismo* and proposed in its place practices of *autogestión*. This is not unique to the street paper organization, as many other organizations in Argentina have done the same, particularly networks such as those related to the *trabajadores de las empresas recuperadas*.

Although not unique in touting *autogestión* generally speaking, *Hecho en Buenos Aires* does seem notable for how its emphasis on *autogestión* seems to define the entire structure of the organization. Inverting the traditional perspective of viewing people in *situación de calle* as a problem that must be metaphorically and literally swept aside,

Hecho en Buenos Aires instead considers them a part of the process for achieving a better society.

As a whole the organization ensures that its "right to the city" is a collective right, one defined through solidarity and collective action rather than individualized progress against individual obstacles. The conclusion that the organization seeks broader collective change is evident not only through the organizational philosophy that puts the vendor at the center of its practices, but also by its efforts to reach out to collective networks and participate in local collective forums. *Hecho en Buenos Aires* actively collaborates, for instance, with other social enterprises through the *Red de Empresas Sociales de Argentina (REDESA)* and *Red Habitat Argentina*. Its interest in collaborating with other social enterprises is mirrored and amplified in its four-edition publication of the journal *Empresa Social*, a special print run focused on exploring and promoting "*las ideas, los desafíos y los proyectos de las empresas sociales en la Argentina*"^{xvii} and in Latin America more broadly. This interest in collective action is evident in one particular section within the first edition of the *Empresa Social* publication, where the editors explain that foremost purpose of social enterprises in Argentina is to prioritize "*los procesos autogestivos, las relaciones solidarias y lo común por sobre la individual, con un compromiso de lazos comunitarios que operan sobre y con las capacidades de las personas.*"^{xviii}

Hecho en Buenos Aires' focus on collective action and solidarity is also evident through the content of its review, where a recurring section called *A vuelo del pájaro* [as the bird flies] regularly offers a succinct overview of timely announcements about collective action successes in Argentina and beyond, as well as a brief quotation from an "amigo/a" of *Hecho en Buenos Aires*. In general, the perspectives selected for *As the Bird Flies* come from community partners. The column quotations recurringly begin with the prompt "*HBA es para mí...*" Responses to the prompt include observations such as "*HBA es para mí busca incluir a todos en la visión de una sociedad más sana y justa. Une lo que está separado. No cuenta la historia de malos y buenos; o de ricos y pobres. Y busca que los lectores seamos protagonistas del cambio social. Invita en cada edición a crear hoy una nueva realidad desde la vía positiva, está en el camino del diálogo, no de la discusión*" (Giannotta, 2010).^{xix} The varied responses seem to reiterate the value of

Hecho en Buenos Aires as a member of a broader coalition of organizations and individuals interested in collective, transformative social change, as exemplified by the comment "*une lo que está separado.*"

To What City?

The second question to address is "to what city"? The organization answers this question indirectly in what is almost an excruciatingly Lefebvrian way: "*nuestro utopía es dejar de existir,*" says Merkin. In effect, the city as *oeuvre* per *Hecho en Buenos Aires'* work is one defined by the organization's simultaneous rejection of the current capitalist structure and by its assertion of the agency of urban inhabitants. Yet, by looking at the practices of the organization alongside its philosophy, a clearer answer emerges. The city of the future, that which *Hecho en Buenos Aires* seeks, is a city in which people in *situación de calle* are no longer relegated to the social, spatial, and economic margins; they are central and integral to the city.

This aligns with Lefebvre's (1996) writings on the topic, including his observation that "the right to the city is like a cry and a demand" that "gathers the interests...of the whole society and firstly of all those who inhabit" (p. 159). It can hardly be said that there is anyone who inhabits more immediately the city center than those who eat, speak, and sleep in the public spaces and in the margins of private spaces in the urban core. The data here suggests that all of the program's outreach services serve to centralize the vendor and emphasize the vendors' autonomy, which can then be used to infer that this future city is one that would privilege the currently marginalized urban inhabitants and make them central to urban life.

In addition to the data concerning outreach programming, this future city can be glimpsed through the editorial agenda of the review itself — an agenda that underlies the organization generally speaking, but that becomes apparent and more clear through a content analysis of the covers produced each month. An analysis of the covers suggests that not only is this future city one that privileges the urban inhabitant and makes them central to lived experiences in the city, but moreover this city is one that would contradict neoliberal practices of consumption and marginalization writ large.

The content in the review seems to regularly reject neoliberal practices and affirm values of solidarity and mutual respect. In a content analysis of every cover produced between March 2010 and November 2015 (a span dictated by those covers which were digitally accessible on the *Hecho en Buenos Aires* website at the time of this study), the review espoused opinions on topics such as environmental degradation and contamination, water rights, social economy, femicide, rights for indigenous peoples (Mapuche and others), organic and sustainable agriculture, extractive capitalism, police violence, international monetary policies (such as the involvement of USAID in Cuba), and many more. Alongside these thematic editorials are interviews with musicians, artists, performers, and writers, which tend to emphasize less explicit social justice themes but still offer perspectives alternative to mainstream coverage of the same.



Figure 3. Representative sampling of social justice issues of review.

In an aggregate sense, this involved slightly over 50% content (189/319 articles) focused on critical, consciousness-raising content. The remaining content often included elements of cultural and social critique, but did so more indirectly through interviews with artists, writers, musicians, and others. This breadth of content is summarized by the *Hecho en Buenos Aires* website (2016c), where visitors are told that each edition contains a combination of art, culture, performing arts, community, and the environment.

For Whom and By What Means?

Marcuse (2012) considers that the demand for a "right to the city" "comes directly in want, directly oppressed, those for whom even their most immediate needs are not fulfilled: the homeless, the hungry, the imprisoned, the persecuted on gender, religious, racial grounds...the demand is those who are excluded" (p. 31). This emphasis on those for whom even immediate needs are not meant, who are excluded from the larger system, seems to align with the scope of individuals whom *Hecho en Buenos Aires* serves and is served by. Although this paper has repeatedly drawn on the term *situación de calle*, *Hecho en Buenos Aires* director Patricia Merkin views *situación de calle* as a synonym for a larger state of urban precariousness. She writes that their vendors are also people "sin techo, gente de y en la calle, deambulantes, excluidos, marginados, desamparados, indigentes, marginalizados, desempleados de larga data, homeless. Todas palabras que definen una situación personal y social, y económica, y cultural" (*Hecho en Buenos Aires*, n.d.).^{xx} With this definition, it would seem reasonable to presume that the vendors of *Hecho en Buenos Aires* fit Marcuse's definition of those who will express the "right to the city."

And *Hecho en Buenos Aires* builds the capacity of its vendors to do just that through three distinct means: (i) through personal and economic development programs that build the capacity of individuals in *situación de calle* to participate in social practices, or autogestión; (ii) creating opportunities for social participation; and (iii) creating opportunities for spatial appropriation through selling the review via its network of *paradas* and the vendors' associated practices.

Building capacity to engage in social practices, or autogestión. *Hecho en Buenos Aires* asserts an asset-based understanding that people in *situación de calle* have, as do others, inherent capacities to effect change in their own lives and the lives of others. As was discussed earlier, the organization at once rejects the passive practices of *asistencia* and affirms in their place an active perspective that positions the organization's vendors as agents of change.

The organization does this by acknowledging that vendors, or truly anyone in *situación de calle*, face structural conditions that deprive them of the opportunity to use their

abilities or to foster latent talents. Access to income is one component, but there are other social, spatial, and political impediments. The organization strengthens each individual and augments their capacity for greater change by offering integrated programs that address economic, health, legal, and artistic development.

Merkin explains the rationale behind their comprehensive support systems when she notes that "*muchas de las personas que pasaron por nuestra organización, son personas con enormes capacidades, energías desaprovechadas, ocultas, ocultadas por la tenebrosa perspectiva de dependencia.*"^{xxi} With this in mind, it seems appropriate that *Hecho en Buenos Aires* does more than just espouse an objective and belief: "*Es convertir a las personas que por lo general para el sistema son sólo parte del problema, en parte de la solución*" (*Hecho en Buenos Aires*, n.d.)^{xxii} In practice, it follows its espoused belief by helping to build the vendors' capacity to grow as individuals and to contribute to society.

It does this by offering a range of programming, first and foremost among which is the economic program of purchasing and selling the review. Complementary programs include social support services and personal development workshops. All of the programming is developed with the objective of "*fomenta la autogestión y el desarrollo personal*" and "*ayudar a nuestros vendedores/as a completar un circuito de inclusión integral.*"^{xxiii} Specifically, it provides vendors and their families with social and personal development services that include such resources as emergency housing support, legal consultations, workshops on human rights and citizenship, help with official documents, health referrals, sanitation facilities (shower and bath located in the organization's main office), access to donated clothing, and computer workstations.

Alongside these programs that help the vendors address basic needs such as food, shelter, health, and safety, the organization also provides creative workshops and art-based learning opportunities through the "*Arte Hecho en Bs. As.*" program, which "*acerca oportunidades culturales y formativas en el campo de las artes a personas que viven en las márgenes como un camino de desarrollo personal y como mecanismo de inclusión integral*" (*Hecho en Buenos Aires*, 2016f).^{xxiv} The art activities include creative workshops, alternative therapies, writing, singing, digitopuntura, cultural activities, and

theater. These resources reinforce Hecho en Buenos Aires' focus on "*un proceso holístico, integral,*" and reassert the organization's premise that "*la exclusión no es sólo económica, sino que es un compleja combinación de factores: problemas familiares, legales adicciones, falta de autoestima, etc., Y el propósito de estos talleres es ayudar a nuestros vendedores a que aspiren a una vida mejor a través del desarrollo personal*" (Hecho en Buenos Aires, n.d.).^{xxv} Levvitt (2005) reaffirms this process of comprehensive support and the importance of creative capacity building when she observes that community "development is ultimately not a matter of money or physical capital, or foreign exchange, but of the capacity of a society to tap the root of popular creativity, to free up and empower people to exercise their intelligence and collective wisdom" (p. 234) In individual interviews with staff, this notion of an integrated support system was raised repeatedly as a defining element of the organization's effectiveness in helping vendors gain independence and be successful.

From listening and reading various published interviews, it can be inferred that the organization's holistic intention to build the capacity of the vendors to engage in *autogestión* is by and large successful. Though far from a formal sampling, the various individuals who discussed their work with the review spoke in positive terms of how their experiences had strengthened their ability to interact with the broader society. Attesting to the individual impact of the program, the vendors generally spoke with pride and appreciation about being involved with *Hecho en Buenos Aires*, citing, for instance, their newfound ability to provide for their family (INSP News Service, 2016 October 5; INSP News Services 2016 February 24; INSP News Service 2015 January 15). Referring to the collective impact, vendors spoke about how the act of selling the review positively affected the nature of their interactions with the broader public. One vendor specifically described how, prior to working with *Hecho en Buenos Aires*, he had resorted to begging on the street for donations, and that this experience was in stark contrast to the more respectful and dignified interactions he experienced through the act of selling *Hecho en Buenos Aires* (MrZalejo, 2013). Others (see television interview in the offices) described how the act of selling the review and engaging with the public is by and large a positive, resulting ... (Audiovisual Telám, 2012).

Moreover, conversations with individual vendors (held informally during this investigation's participant observation) would suggest that *Hecho en Buenos Aires* fits within a broader political consciousness. Although the vendors did not directly address their own role in furthering political change, it seemed evident that many of them were acutely informed about the political system within their own country and the broader world, citing recent legislation in Argentina or political actions in the United States. Though only inferential, it seems reasonable to surmise that these otherwise politically conscious individuals do not cast aside their political awareness when selling a social justice review to the general public — that selling the review may in fact further solidify or extend their political awareness.

That *Hecho en Buenos Aires* may contribute to vendors' political awareness fits with the perspective offered by Merkin when she explained that the integrated programming helps vendors attain "full citizenship," a concept that may be equated to independence and autonomy (P. Merkin, personal communication, July 2010). In the context of the continued discussion with Merkin, she further discussed that the notion of "full citizenship" also alludes to individuals' capacity to engage with and inform government policies, and their capacity not to be excluded from the decision-making process.

From this definition, the concept of "full citizenship" seems situated in the context of how Argentine society was engaged in the late 1990s and early 2000s in what Faulk (2012) termed "broader discursive struggles over the meanings of elements of social life, including ideas of what constitutes rights of citizenship, human rights, legality, moral obligation, historical memory, and human dignity" (p. 2). Accordingly, *Hecho en Buenos Aires'* conceptualization of "full citizenship" should be read not as a juridical concept, although that may constitute an element within it; but, rather, as a citizenship of rights, of access to the city in every sense. It affirms Lefebvre's emphasis that individuals have the right to appropriate the city and to participate in its processes. The idea of simultaneously promoting individual and collective rights was of particular importance in the wake of the military dictatorship. As Merkin notes in the interview, the dictatorship resulted in an extended, ongoing process of "*eradicating community and character*" - or what might be understood as a process of eroding collective rights and solidarity. Even after the dictatorship was overturned and democracy resumed, many argue that the erosion of

rights continued as a result of the coercive economic policies that the democratic government developed and deepened (P. Merkin, personal communication, July 2010).

Effectively, this notion of "full citizenship" is part of the premise underlying the other two key ways in which *Hecho en Buenos Aires* furthers the "right to the city": by building opportunities for its vendors to become agents of change within society through the key processes of participation in social processes and appropriation of urban space. Both align with the Lefebvrian understanding of how to achieve the "right to the city" and both come about through the selling of the reviews.

Creating opportunities for participation in social processes. After building the capacity of vendors to engage in autogestión and reach toward "full citizenship," the organization then creates direct opportunities for them to practice that autogestión or, in other words, to participate in social processes.

Although it may seem overreaching to view the vendors' selling processes as akin to Lefebvre's revolutionary and transformative process of participation, this investigation finds evidence for this assertion in the perspective of Merkin as the director and the viewpoints of the vendors. According to Merkin, the review functions as "*un instrumento de transformación social*"^{xxvi}. Calling the review an "instrument" suggests that it actively contributes to the organization's efforts to effect broader change. Although not precisely clear, this could indicate that, in selling the review, the vendors are wielding that instrument of social change and effecting social transformation.

Understanding the review as a tool for social transformation calls for understanding the editorial agenda behind it. Self avowedly, the review operates from an editorial point of view "*comprometida con dar una voz en los medios a sus vendedores y con el tratamiento de temas sociales que los afecta, y que otros medios desestiman o directamente no los tratan*" (*Hecho en Buenos Aires*, 2016b).^{xxvii} One vendor elaborated on this broad editorial agenda by writing a short piece for the review, one in which she explains that "*Algunas personas compran la revista para ayudar, pero deberían fijarse que la revista HBA tiene un alto valor creativo y hace que se cambie la forma de ver el mundo, de a poco*" (Susana, 2010).^{xxviii} On the *Hecho en Buenos Aires* website, in addition, the vendor Javier Mouteira writes that "*la revista aparece como un espacio*

alternativo que trata de concientizar a la gente de hechos que esos medios masivos quieren ocultar" (Hecho en Buenos Aires, 2016g).^{xxix}

Although by no means a comprehensive survey of the vendors, these various vendor perspectives suggest that many of the vendors may view the review as more than a basic source of income. They may, conceivably, view the review as Merkin does -- as a mechanism by which they share critical information with the general public (via those who purchase the review).

The idea that the content of the review is at least as important as the income it provides is substantiated by a survey that *Hecho en Buenos Aires* conducted in 2006, where it found that 66% of those who buy the review do so for its content, in contrast to 13% who buy it to help the vendor in solidarity and 21% who purchase it for both purposes (*Hecho en Buenos Aires*, 2016d).

Based on the understanding that both editorial staff and vendors generally conceive of the review as an instrument of social change, then it seems reasonable for this investigation to provisionally suggest that, through the act of selling the review, the vendors engage in more than simple economic transactions. That, in truth, their act of selling the review constitutes a Lefebvrian act of social participation. By disseminating this critical content, they are contributing to the social consciousness of the city. Merkin lends a measure of credence to this idea when she observes that "*no es lo mismo vender media o pañuela que vender cultura.*"^{xxx}

A survey conducted by the organization lends itself to the understanding that the vendors view their involvement with the organization, and thus the selling of the review, as more than just a job. Through an informal study, *Hecho en Buenos Aires* staff asked vendors to summarize "tres cosas hay en la vida"^{xxxi} as an effort to convey to the public a better understanding of the vendors themselves.



Figure 4. Photographs of vendors' "tres cosas hay en la vida" project

Of the nine respondents whom *Hecho en Buenos Aires* included in the public results, almost every respondent offered at least one word that could be construed as signifying an interest in more than economic development (*Hecho en Buenos Aires*, 2016e). If this survey can be taken to mean that vendors are indeed drawn to *Hecho en Buenos Aires* for more than basic economic development, then a tentative conclusion might be reached that the act of selling the review constitutes more than an economic transaction and, instead, constitutes an act of social change.

Mailleux- Béique (2005)'s research on street papers as mechanisms for social change supports this assertion, finding that street papers function as alternative, autonomous media sources and vendors who are involved in their production and or selling gain a "newfound sense of autonomy and power. The realization of possessing the power to instigate change may sound insignificant, but it is in fact everything" (p. 90). With this perspective, the organization's work can be seen as not only empowering the vendors to change their own, individual lives, but also to effect changes in the broader society. Merkin captures this importance succinctly when she finds that *"...en el momento en que un vendedor ofrece al revista y una persona decide comprarla se da una pequeña combustión donde crece la esperanza de cambio social concreto y aplicado directamente a las personas involucradas. El vendedor y el lector son agentes de cambio social positivo."* (Hecho en Buenos Aires, n.d.)^{xxxii}

The supposition that the vendors serve as agents for change is one that needs much further investigation in order to be substantiated, but at least preliminary data lends support to the assertion that the editorial staff and the vendors perceive the selling of the review as signifying something more than a basic economic transaction.

Creating opportunities for appropriation of urban space. This investigation also finds that the act of selling the review constitutes an opportunity for the vendors to spatially appropriate the city - the second process key to furthering Lefebvre's "right to the city."

In order to sell the review to the public, each vendor is assigned a *parada*, a street corner, where he or she is authorized to sell the paper. While occupying their *parada* and selling the review, this investigation suggests, the vendors actively engage in Lefebvrian acts of spatial appropriation. Lindemann (2007) contributes to this assertion, writing that "the selling and buying of the [street newspaper] may frame the interaction as a simple economic transaction, but the politics behind the vending program resist such easy characterization" (p. 45).

Prior to working with the review, it can be assumed that the vendors experienced the unmitigated effects of urban capitalism: formally and informally they would have been

shuttled aside and made invisible; pushed spatially away from the urban center because they did not contribute to the exchange value of the space.

In contradistinction to the spatial marginalization they otherwise face, while selling the review the vendors legitimately appropriate the urban center. In taking their *paradas* each day, they engage in an act of appropriation that moves the vendors closer to being able to achieve an urban life defined by what Butler (2012) terms the "‘full and complete usage of space’ by its inhabitants in their daily routines, work practices and forms of play" (p. 145). Without the mechanism of the review, the vendors would be displaced outright from the urban core. Mitchell (2014) speaks of this displacement in general when he writes that "the condition of being homeless in capitalist societies is most simply the condition of having no place to call one’s own" (p. 17). Although Mitchell was referring to experiences based in cities in the United States, scholars Boy and Perelman (2008) offer a similar depiction of how people in *situación de calle* in Buenos Aires grapple with the same condition and must develop strategies of survival in order to simply inhabit:

"a los pies de los edificios opulentos e inteligentes, cuando éstos quedan vacíos de oficinistas por la noche, aparecen los nuevos actores sociales: quienes buscan entre las grandes cantidades de residuos reciclables, desechados por estos edificios globales, y las personas en situación de calle que encuentran, en las galerías comerciales y en los accesos del metro, espacios en donde pernoctar refugiados del frío y de las luces. De esta forma, la inclusión y la exclusión conviven en un mismo espacio, alternándose en los usos. En un momento del día, predominan en el paisaje las multitudes de trabajadores empleados de los edificios tecnológicos, y por las noches, la calle se transforma en el recurso necesario para sobrevivir de quienes se vende splazados del modelo económico productivo que tiene como emblema a esas torres de oficinas, muchas veces sucursales de grandes corporaciones internacionales" (p. 6).^{xxxiii}

The vendors involved with *Hecho en Buenos Aires* are supported with the means to move beyond such furtive actions when they appropriate their public *parada* and sell the review. This does not mean that the general public and authorities would accept the vendors' occupying the urban space during other times and for other reasons, but at least

for the time that they sell the review the vendors are legitimized and authorized in the urban core. This is a small but significant step toward more comprehensive spatial appropriation. Consequently, although it may seem overreaching to view the vendors' selling as an example of Lefebvre's revolutionary and transformative process of spatial appropriation, this investigation finds evidence to merit such a connection. Parizeau (2015), who developed an extended ethnographic study of *cartoneros* in Buenos Aires, indirectly supports this assertion, noting that in Buenos Aires "the very presence of marginalized and disenfranchised urbanites in the neoliberal city can be understood as an act of defiance and interruption" (p. 287).

Summary

In sum, this investigation suggests that *Hecho en Buenos Aires* develops vendors' individual capacity for "full citizenship" through integrated, holistic programs that promote *autogestión*. This individual *autogestión* parlays into the capacity to effect broader, collective social change (per Lefebvre's emphasis on a radical, transformative right) through additional opportunities for those same individuals to appropriate urban space and participate in urban processes - two actions key to Lefebvre's radical and transformative "right to the city." The utopian agenda of the organization as a whole becomes more explicit when understood through the lens of the review, which serves as the final tool for initiating social change. Overall, this investigation suggests that *Hecho en Buenos Aires* builds capacity to advance and furthers the "right to the city" in Buenos Aires.

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSIONS

Limitations and Areas for Future Research

While these findings suggest a compelling narrative of how *Hecho en Buenos Aires* advances the "right to the city" in Buenos Aires and offers a meaningful, on-the-ground illustration of the "right to the city" in action, they are exploratory and tentative at best; their validity is limited by the methodological constraints outlined below. Furthermore, true to the complicated nature of lived experiences and the clean abstraction of theories, there are gaps and discrepancies between the work of the organization and a more thorough understanding of the "right to the city."

The largest obstacle to this investigation, and the most limiting, is the lack of direct input from the vendors. Their voices are heard only indirectly through the informal conversations from participant observation or complementary studies and interviews handled by other researchers. Given that much of the investigation considers their role within the organization and broader society, their expanded input would be critical to a more complete understanding of how the "right to the city" is enacted within and by *Hecho en Buenos Aires*. Future studies would benefit from more closely involving the vendors in the research process and for an extended ethnographic study to examine their social and spatial interactions within the city.

In terms of clear-cut comparisons between theory and lived experience, several areas of complexity emerge, the first among which is the espoused relationship with state and private enterprise. While *Hecho en Buenos Aires* espouses a distancing from and rejection of state and private enterprise, most notably in the development of content for the review, they acknowledge being a beneficiary of both, whether the initial grant received from the Levi Straus foundation early in the organization's history or to the more recent donation of the office space from the Buenos Aires Ministry of Culture. In addition, although the organization rejects the practice of *asistencialismo*, their social support services rely on a network of service providers (hospitals, community kitchens, etc.) which appear to be embedded within the same structure that promotes the practice of *asistencialismo*. These tensions between contesting the state and operating within the state structure deserve additional research.

While this investigation suggests that the act of selling the review equates to the appropriation of urban space and participation in urban processes, there is little direct analysis of the vending process embedded within the study. A participatory mapping exercise could strengthen the observation regarding appropriation, and participatory action research might help elaborate the idea of participation.

In addition, although this study suggests that the review serves as a cultural filter and positions the vendor as an agent of social change, future studies could specifically address the review as a communicative planning tool and focus on its value for both vendor and broader public.

Lastly, several overarching impediments limit the validity of this study, including its brevity and exploratory nature. In part due to these constraints, this study also falls prey to the potential downfall of not more critically analyzing the role of the urban environment in the work of *Hecho en Buenos Aires*, for, while referencing, the "urban" in this study is more of a landscape and backdrop than active site of examination. Similarly, and also due in part to the brevity of the study, this investigation also falls short of the ability to deeply problematize the institutional constraints and opportunities that people face in *situación de calle* in Buenos Aires and, in reducing the causal discussion to "neoliberal forces," risks turning the analysis into a "cliché...mechanically applied to any given empirical case study" (Parker and Sites, 472, p. 470). In order to be able to respond to scholars such as Parnell and Robinson (2012), who question whether there "may have been a misapplication, or at least an overextension, of critiques of urban neoliberalism," this investigation would require a much expanded scope involved an analysis of the state and non-state forces related to service for and with individuals in *situación de calle* in Buenos Aires.

Recommendations

Insofar as this investigation posits that the work of *Hecho en Buenos Aires* advances a "right to the city" in Buenos Aires, there are several means by which the organization could deepen this effort. Although the organization neither uses the rhetoric of "right to the city" nor conceives of its work according to Lefebvrian theory, visualizing their practices through the theoretical framework of the "right to the city" (as presented here)

may be a useful exercise in considering how to deepen the capacity building and opportunity generating mechanisms the organization provides to its vendors.

This might entail, essentially, more substantively involving the vendors in expounding on the social, spatial, and economic mission of the organization. If the vendors are to serve as agents of change, it would be beneficial to provide the space for them to articulate their role in that process and to encourage the development of their perspective of the future *oeuvre*.

In addition, if the "right to the city" is achieved by urban inhabitants' appropriating urban space and participating in urban processes, both actions could be strengthened. The vendors' appropriation of urban space could be extended, potentially, beyond the moments in which they are engaged in selling the review. If extended, their use of the urban core might move closer toward Lefebvre's understanding of "full and complete usage" of the space. Likewise, the vendors' engagement in social processes could be extended beyond the moment of selling the review by identifying additional opportunities for the vendors' voices to become a more definitive and vocal contribution to shaping urban conversations.

Concluding Thoughts

As David Harvey (2008) writes, "The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the process the urbanization" (p. 23). And the time to claim that right to collectively remake the city has never been more pressing, as at the moment completing this investigation the world has been shaken away by unexpected voting outcomes, from the "Brexit" consensus in the European Union to the election of Donald Trump in the United States — events that suggest, among other things, that an interest in neoliberal practices are far from over and may even be regenerated in the coming decade. In Argentina specifically, neoliberalism seems to be resurgent with the recent election of the rightwing politician Mauricio Macri whose policies bring to mind the era of structural adjustment imposed by Menem in the 1990s.

Although neoliberal practices are not alone in lending to conditions that merit a "right to the city" response, they are significant economic forces whose effects are magnified in urban environments and whose outcomes, generally speaking, prioritize an elite few to the detriment of the broader urban populace. By and large, urban inhabitants are made peripheral and marginal in cities such as Buenos Aires because of decades of neoliberal policies. As the "urban age" continues with no end in the sight, the question of periphery and margin in cities will continue to merit, nay even require, a utopian response that seeks a radically different future of equal rights and access.

It is in this context that this investigation examines the "right to the city" as a slogan and mantra for the many scholars, activists, and legislators seeking a better world. It is also in this context that this investigation specifies the "right to the city" not as a vague concept or rhetorical buzzword, but as a theoretical framework bolstered by the radical, collective action philosophy that first impelled Lefebvre to conceive of the notion in the 1960s. And with this emphasis, the "right to the city" serves here as more than as a simple point of departure for a research inquiry. Instead, it serves as a theoretical tool to that may be used in understanding of how practices on the ground in cities can advance a radical agenda.

In this framework, the language of "right to the city" refers to a collective right of urban inhabitants, those most oppressed by the current state of cities, to radically transform their environment, and suggests that the best, if not the only, means of enacting this transformation is through processes of autogestión, social participation, and spatial appropriation.

Integral to this theoretical understanding of the "right to the city" is Lefebvre's (1996) concept of the city as an *oeuvre* and his understanding that the act of shaping, influencing, and transforming this *oeuvre* will never be complete. The process of enacting the "right to the city" is perpetual, driven by what Lefebvre called a utopian aspiration that "projects as it often does on the horizon a 'possible-impossible'" (p. 132).

As demonstrated through this investigation's analysis of individual interviews, participant observation, and document analysis, the work of *Hecho en Buenos Aires* aligns with critical elements of Lefebvre's "right to the city" as a theoretical framework. The organization significantly builds capacity among marginalized urban inhabitants and

simultaneously creates direct opportunities for them to act as agents of change by participating in social processes and appropriating urban space. Throughout its work, the utopian message of the review is reinforced by the social consciousness and political awareness of the vendors.

At the outset, this grounded case study seemed compelling given that *Hecho en Buenos Aires* serves an example of community development that arose in the face of hostile conditions and continued to serve the populace even as the crises in Argentina subsided and the country returned to a measure of normalcy. In hindsight, its practices have proven even more worthwhile for the nuances in its methods. Although at first glance a street newspaper organization might be focused largely on meeting individual needs through an entrepreneurial employment program ("a hand up, not a hand out"), *Hecho en Buenos Aires* demonstrates the potential for the street newspaper model to achieve much more. In adapting the prototypical street newspaper organization to the particular opportunities and obstacles of community development in Buenos Aires, *Hecho en Buenos Aires* has in itself become something of a model for other street newspaper organizations.

Among *Hecho en Buenos Aires'* many aspects worthy of future study, one of the more particularly compelling aspects is the organizations' focus on developing *autogestión* at an individual level, and then its ability to parlay that individual capacity into broader collective change through the interface of the *paradas*, where the vendors are able to participate in social processes and appropriate urban space. Although it is difficult to separate one piece of this intricate endeavor from another, the element of spatial appropriation is perhaps most unique here and what moves *Hecho en Buenos Aires* beyond the practices of a straightforward economic or social support program.

In depicting the practices of *Hecho en Buenos Aires* alongside a Lefebvrian "right to the city" theory, this investigation contributes to understanding the complexity of the street newspaper's work and its potential for fostering radical, transformative change for the urban inhabitants of Buenos Aires. Although this transformative process is uniquely situated and cannot be removed from the context of Argentina in the late 20th century and turn of the millennium, the street newspaper's struggles and successes may be useful

reference points for other community development organizations, street newspaper or otherwise, who seek to foster the "right to the city" in their respective communities.

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TRANSLATIONS

- ⁱ *"Nuestra utopía es dejar de existir." // Our utopia is to cease to exist.*
- ⁱⁱ *"Empresa social." // Social enterprise.*
- ⁱⁱⁱ *"publicación de calle," "periódico de calle," "revista de la calle," "prensa de asfalto." //*
 All Spanish language equivalents of "street newspaper."
- ^{iv} *"asistencia," "autogestión," "trabajo," "dignidad," "solidaridad," and "comunicación." //*
 // "assistance," "autogestion (self-management)," "work," "dignity," "solidarity," and
 "communication."
- ^v *Porteños / Residents of Buenos Aires*
- ^{vi} *"Hecho porque es concreto, directo y eficaz; Bs. As. porque es nuestro, porque lo*
hacemos acá" // Hecho because it is concrete, direct, and effective; Buenos Aires
because it is ours, because we do it here.
- ^{vii} *"Yo recordaba algo más solidario, más comunidad, recordaba algo más familiar,'*
recuerda y agrega que de lo que más le llamó la atención 'me pareció impactante
la falta de sentido comunitario." // 'I remembered something more about
solidarity, more about community, I remembered something more familiar,' she
recalls and adds what most caught her attention, 'I found most shocking was the
lack of a sense of community.'"
- ^{viii} *"Las oficinas de Hecho en Buenos Aires ocupan una planta enorme de un edificio*
viejo sobre avenida San Juan que mira a Puerto Madero de un lado y a San Telmo
del otro. Es un área fronteriza, un cruce de historias y realidades, un arrabal" //
 The offices of *Hecho en Buenos Aires* occupy an enormous floor in an old
 building on San Juan avenue that looks to Puerto Madero on one side and San
 Telmo on the other. It is a borderland area, an intersection of stories and realities,
 an urban periphery.
- ^{ix} *"el primer paso para correrse de la línea de exclusión; pero no es la única necesidad*
que atraviesan las personas negadas de las oportunidades. Es por eso que
ofrecemos a nuestros vendedores/as y sus familias servicios sociales y formativos
que les permiten acceder a un circuito integral de inclusión." // the first step
 toward moving out of the edge of exclusion; but is not the only need that people

who are denied opportunities must cross. It is for this reason that we offer to our vendors and their families social services and training that permits them to take part in an integrated circuit of inclusion.

- ^x *"otros beneficios para su vendedores y vendedoras, y sus familias. Hecho en Bs. As. ofrece a sus vendedores servicios sociales, terapias de apoyo, talleres creativos, servicios medicos, acceso a internet, consultorio jurídico, a fin de ayudar a los vendedores y sus familias a aspirar a una vida mejor completando un proceso de inserción integral." // other benefits are for the vendors and their families. Hecho en Buenos Aires offers social services to the vendors, therapy support, creative workshops, medical services, access to the internet, legal consultations, with the objective of helping the vendors and their families to aspire to a better life by completing the process of social integration.*
- ^{xi} *"permite que personas con talentos latentes puedan explorar sus capacidades a través de la práctica artística." // It enables people with latent talents to be able to explore their capacities through the medium of artistic practice.*
- ^{xii} *"en nueve años, han pasado más de 1.200 participantes de los talleres de artes visuales, escritura o hip hop, entre otros." // In nine years more than 1,200 participants have passed through the workshops for visual arts, writing, or hip hop, among others.*
- ^{xiii} *"una herramienta de la cultura popular en tiempos de exclusión...la revista que nació para enfrentar la crisis que sucedió a las políticas de exclusión de los años 90, celebrará mañana 14 años de vida, con reflexión, debate y propuestas artísticas." // A tool of popular culture during times of exclusion...the review that was born in confrontation with the crisis that followed the politics of exclusion of the '90s will celebrate 14 years tomorrow, with reflection, debate and artistic proposals.*
- ^{xiv} *"trabajamos con la utopía en el horizonte de dejar de existir, aunque seguiremos estando mientras haya gente que necesita de esta oportunidad para salir adelante" // We work with a utopia of ceasing to exist in the horizon, but we will*

continue as long as there are people who need this opportunity in order to get ahead.

^{xv} *"Es convertir a las personas que por lo general para el sistema son sólo parte del problema, en parte de la solución. Una revista de la calle como es Hecho en Bs As hace que las personas excluidas se sientan parte de la sociedad, de aquella misma sociedad que les generó la alineación de vivir sin esperanza." // It is to convert the people who are generally, for the system, only part of the problem, not the solution. A street publication like Hecho en Buenos Aires makes it so that people who are excluded and feel part of society, that same society that created the alienated life without hope.*

^{xvi} *"alternativa or simultáneamente, la asistencia social a los pobres puede ser: un gasto inútil, un adormecedor de conciencias, un desestímulo al esfuerzo propio, un medio de control social" // alternatively or simultaneously, social assistance for the poor may be: a wasted cost, a numbing of the conscience, a disincentive for self effort, and a means of social control.*

^{xvii} *"las ideas, los desafíos y los proyectos de las empresas sociales en la Argentina." // the ideas, challenges, and initiatives of social enterprises in Argentina."*

^{xviii} *"los procesos autogestivos, las relaciones solidarias y lo común por sobre la individual, con un compromiso de lazos comunitarios que operan sobre y con las capacidades de las personas." // Processes of autogestión, relationships of solidarity, and the common over the individual, with a commitment to community ties that function through and with the capacity of the people."*

^{xix} *"HBA es para mí busca incluir a todos en la visión de una sociedad más sana y justa. Une lo que está separado. No cuenta la historia de malos y buenos; o de ricos y pobres. Y busca que los lectores seamos protagonistas del cambio social. Invita en cada edición a crear hoy una nueva realidad desde la vía positiva, está en el camino del diálogo, no de la discusión" // HBA is for me the search to include everyone in the vision of a healthier and more just society. The one cannot be*

separated from the other. It doesn't tell the stories of the good or the bad, the rich or the poor. It looks for readers to be the protagonists of social change. Each edition offers the invitation to create today a new reality from a positive point of view, in the format of a dialogue, not a discussion.

^{xx} *"personas en situación de calle, sin techo, gente de y en la calle, deambulantes, excluidos, marginados, desamparados, indigentes, marginalizados, desempleados de larga data, homeless. Todas palabras que definen una situación personal y social, y económica, y cultural."* // People in the street, without homes, people of and in the street, "homeless," excluded, marginalized, "homeless," indigents, marginalized, long-term unemployed, homeless. All the words that define a position at once personal and social, and economic, and cultural.

^{xxi} *"muchas de las personas que pasaron por nuestra organización, son personas con enormes capacidades, energías desaprovechadas, ocultas, ocultadas por la tenebrosa perspectiva de dependencia."* // many of the people who pass through our organization are people with enormous capacities, with energies that have been hidden and overlooked, obscured by the murky prospect of dependency."

^{xxii} *"Es convertir a las personas que por lo general para el sistema son sólo parte del problema, en parte de la solución."* // It is to turn people who are generally for the system viewed only as part of the problem, as part of the solution.

^{xxiii} *"fomenta la autogestión y el desarrollo personal" and "ayudar a nuestros vendedores/as a completar un circuito de inclusión integral."* // to foment autogestion and personal development // to help our vendors to complete an comprehensive circuit of inclusion.

^{xxiv} *"acerca oportunidades culturales y formativas en el campo de las artes a personas que viven en las márgenes como un camino de desarrollo personal y como mecanismo de inclusión integral."* // it is about cultural and training in the field of art for people who live in the margins as a path of personal development and a mechanism for integrated inclusion.

- ^{xxv} *"un proceso holístico, integral... la exclusión no es sólo económica, sino que es un compleja combinación de factores: problemas familiares, legales adicciones, falta de autoestima, etc., Y el propósito de estos talleres es ayudar a nuestros vendedores a que aspiren a una vida mejor a través del desarrollo personal." // A holistic, comprehensive process...the exclusion is not only about economics, but rather is a complex combination of factors: personal problems, legal addictions, lack of self-esteem, etc., and the purpose of these workshops is to help our vendors to aspire to a better life through personal development.*
- ^{xxvi} *"un instrumento de transformación social" // an instrument for social transformation*
- ^{xxvii} *comprometida con dar una voz en los medios a sus vendedores y con el tratamiento de temas sociales que los afecta, y que otros medios desestiman o directamente no los tratan." // committed to giving a voice in the media to the vendors and addressing the social issues that affect them, and that other media devalues or directly avoids."*
- ^{xxviii} *"Algunas personas compran la revista para ayudar, pero deberían fijarse que la revista HBA tiene un alto valor creativo y hace que se cambie la forma de ver el mundo, de a poco" // Some people buy the review to help, but they ought to focus on how the review has a higher creative value and that it changes the way of being in the world, little by little.*
- ^{xxix} *"la revista aparece como un espacio alternativo que trata de concientizar a la gente de hechos que esos medios masivos quieren ocultar." // The review appears as an alternative space that tries to raise awareness about facts that mass media want to hide.*
- ^{xxx} *"no es lo mismo vender media o pañuela que vender cultura." // It is not the same to sell media or bandanas as to sell culture.*
- ^{xxxi} *"tres cosas hay en la vida" // There are three things in life.*
- ^{xxxii} *"...en el momento en que un vendedor ofrece al revista y una persona decide comprarla se da una pequeña combustión donde crece la esperanza de cambio*

social concreto y aplicado directamente a las personas involucradas. El vendedor y el lector son agentes de cambio social positivo.” // In the moment in which the vendor offers the review and the person decides to buy it, it gives a small combustion in which grows the hope of social change at once concrete and directly applicable to the people involved. The vendor and the reader are the agents of positive social change.

^{xxxiii} *"a los pies de los edificios opulentos e inteligentes, cuando éstos quedan vacíos de oficinistas por la noche, aparecen los nuevos actores sociales: quienes buscan entre las grandes cantidades de residuos reciclables, desechados por estos edificios globales, y las personas en situación de calle que encuentran, en las galerías comerciales y en los accesos del metro, espacios en donde pernoctar refugiados del frío y de las luces. De esta forma, la inclusión y la exclusión conviven en un mismo espacio, alternándose en los usos. En un momento del día, predominan en el paisaje las multitudes de trabajadores empleados de los edificios tecnológicos, y por las noches, la calle se transforma en el recurso necesario para sobrevivir de quienes se vende splazados del modelo económico productivo que tiene como emblema a esas torres de oficinas, muchas veces sucursales de grandes corporaciones internacionales" // At the base of the wealthy and intelligent buildings, when they are left empty of office workers in the evening, new social actors appear: those looking among the large amounts of recyclable waste discarded by those global buildings, and the people who are in *situación de calle* who find, in the shopping malls and subway entrances, spaces in which they can spend nights away from the cold and the lights. In this way, inclusion and exclusion coexist in the same space, alternating in their uses. In the daytime, crowds of workers employed by the technological buildings dominate the landscape, and at nights the street becomes a source of survival for those who sell informally while displayed by the economic model exemplified by the office towers that are often subsidiaries of large, international corporations.*