

# The Multiplicity of Place

Constituting place through food in Galapagos



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## Abstract

This ethnographic account argues that Galapagos is not a static place that is solely bounded in its physical location and fixed in an image of a natural and ‘pristine’ archipelago without people and food. Instead, it argues for an understanding of place that is multiple and endless in its possibilities of enactments by social actors in and beyond place. Living with three farmer families of the rural highlands in San Cristobal, it is described how farmers relate to, produce in and enact place, which correlates to the relationships of which place is constituted of: meanings, materiality and practices. The *feria*, a local farmers’ market in the urban part of San Cristobal, is chosen as the analytical lens through which the constitution of place is made sense of. Within this space, farmers establish their identity of producing food for a market in Galapagos and find strategies to position their farm products against the imported commodities from the Ecuadorian mainland. Consequently, in their daily practices, farmers continuously produce and re-produce temporally and ever-changing relationships through creativity and contingency, while simultaneously an image of ‘fresh, healthy and natural’ island-based farm products is generated. Understanding this image as one of the multiple realities that co-exist, clash and overlap with others, it is argued that place is multiple and endless, and constituted through the interplay of social relationships in space.

**Key words:** Galapagos, place, practices, constitution, meaning, food

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## Setting the scene...

It is 4.30 in the morning and still dark outside. I arrive with Elena, a farmer from the rural highlands of San Cristobal, at the *feria*, the local farmers' market organized on Saturdays in the urban area *Puerto Baquerizo Moreno*. The taxi with which we have arrived stops at the entrance of the street where the market is located and I start unloading the boxes that we brought to sell. The day before, we harvested oranges, mandarins, plantain, papayas, tomatoes, lemons, cassava and coriander. A man approaches us to load boxes on his pushcart to bring them to the table that Elena occupies. On other occasions, I observed that people arrive at 5.30 in the morning to buy farm products from the rural highlands, but today there are no costumers around yet. Instead, I see a saleswoman coming closer to our stand, saying to Elena: 'Give me tomatoes for five dollars.' 'No!' she replies. 'Only for three dollars, not more. Catalina arrives with three boxes of tomatoes in a moment'. The saleswoman takes the amount of tomatoes offered to her and leaves. Elena's daughter, who arrived slightly earlier to the market than us, takes a package of sausages that Elena prepared the night before, two bags of *mote* (boiled corn grains), and *picada* (chopped vegetables). 'I'll pay you later', she says and moves the products from Elena to her side on the table.

Just fifteen minutes later arrives a woman who is about to open a little stand with coffee and breakfast in the same street where the farmers try to sell their farm products from the surrounding highlands. 'Do you have paprika?' asks another woman, referring to the daughter of Elena. 'No, I do not!' she replies, while Elena interrupts the conversation and asks the saleswoman how much she wants, pointing to the paprika somewhere hidden on the table. Another saleswoman arrives to our stand. 'Papaya?' 'I have a whole box for twelve dollars', Elena says. 'I do not want that much'. She takes three huge papayas and selects a few other products from the stand. A man arrives to help her carry her goods. Opposite of our table is a stand of one of the saleswomen. It is a wooden construction, painted blue. Inside against the wall of the store, I see shelves with onions, milk packages, cooking oil, cans of tuna next to shampoo bottles and coffee packages. There are two fridges with soda bottles, cheese and packaged chopped vegetables. Further to the front is a big blue scale, to its right side rice and grounded maize packages, and boxes filled with still fresh, unprocessed vegetables in front. The saleswoman leaves her store and goes to Catalina. 'There she is'. She takes mangold back to her stand and Catalina's husband Fernando carries a box of bananas to her. The saleswoman continues to go to other farmers and carries a little shopping bag in her hands. In the meantime, Elena arranges her stand. I hand her cassava to put onto the table in front of her, but she tells

me: 'It is just a little' and asks me to put it back to the table behind her. Elena sells coriander to a woman. 'A friend', Elena explains to me later. The saleswoman in front of us comes back to her stand. She starts arranging cucumbers and plantain in the boxes that the farmers carried to the front of her store.

Elena sells seven pounds of tomatoes to a woman who arrives at our stand. The woman leaves without handing over money to her. Other salespeople continue buying from the farmers. Then I hear one of the farmer women sitting close to us shouting: 'Not everything because I have to sell as well'. Catalina, a young farmer having a table three meters to the left from us, comes closer to our stand. She carries with her six or seven packages of beans and leaves them with Elena. Elena explains to me that she helps her selling them. When another saleswoman approaches her, Elena says: 'I don't have more' and starts making notes in her little booklet. 'To charge them later', she tells me. More sellers approach her, but she says: 'Now we do not sell anymore. Otherwise, everything stays in the stores'. It is 6.30 in the morning. Angelica and Juan, an older farmer couple, walk through the street to reach their table to the right next to us. Angelica carries ten cheeses with her. They have papayas with them as well. The majority of the farmers in the row of arranged tables under the yellow or blue tents have papayas with them. It is 8 o'clock and now relatively quiet. 'There are still in class', Elena tells me to explain why there are only a few people to buy products on this Saturday morning. She buys jam that is offered to her from another farmer woman at the table to her right. The saleswoman in front of us sits on a chair and cuts onions which she puts in plastic bags. 'The beans are from here', answers Elena when two women asked her, where the products come from. Elena sits in front of her stand on a plastic chair and peels an orange from the box in front of her. I stand behind her and look around what is happening, while she hands an orange over for me to eat.

It is 11.15, when a saleswoman approaches us again. Now, Elena does not tell her to leave anymore, but gives her celery, coriander, oranges and a bag of *picada*. Moreover, one of the men that belongs to the famer families goes to the saleswoman in front of us. He examines a red fruit on her table that he does not seem to know, while she counts the money and hands it over to him. I see him passing our stand, while counting the notes in his hands. Elena shouts for Catalina to come and pays for the beans that she sold for her. The rest of the packages Catalina takes back to her stand. An hour later, we start packing up the rest of the farm products. There are still papayas, a few packages of oranges and lemons, and a package of sausage that Elena carries to her other daughter who has a similar wooden construction like the other salespeople. 'I give it her for free, but she needs to sell them within two days. If not, the products

turn bad'. I see her passing the man next to the saleswoman in front of us. He sees her coming and takes out notes of money to hand them over to her. With her walking stick, Elena moves slowly further to the next wooden construction and enters it. I do not see her for around fifteen minutes before I go there to see whether I can help her with her groceries. A saleswoman packages the goods that Elena bought and I help her carrying three bags filled with salt, garlic, milk, oil, pasta and other things. At 13.30, a car arrives with large boxes full of avocados, tree tomatoes and melons as stated on the front tag of the boxes. The men unloading the truck bring the boxes to the stores of the salespeople and leave them in front of the wooden constructions. Fernando, Catalina's husband, tells me: 'There is a lot of sale when the cargo for the salespeople does not arrive on time on a Saturday morning'.

# Introduction

## **Who eats in Galapagos?**

Despite coming from a European country, studying International Development and Organic Agriculture at Wageningen University in the Netherlands and always enjoying travelling to remote places in the world, living, however briefly, in Galapagos in the middle of the Pacific Ocean lay beyond my wildest dreams. In high school, I had learned about Charles Darwin's evolutionary theory, forming a new way of thinking in science and religion, and the understanding of being human in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Galapagos was recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1978. Not surprisingly, nowadays it attracts over 200.000 tourists each year (GNP, 2014). When I started telling family and friends about my plans to undertake my thesis field research in Galapagos in relation to food studies, I received two reactions: first envy, then confusion. People wished me a great sun and beach vacation. My natural science minded friends became crazy about the opportunity to experience an idealized 'natural laboratory' in person. Questions quickly followed envy by wondering whether people actually lived in Galapagos and why precisely, I wanted to study food there.

During a first visit to Ecuador in 2014, I had the chance to join two Ecuadorians from Quito for a project on food security to San Cristobal, the oldest island and political centre of Galapagos. I was fascinated by the beauty of the island, in particular by its animals, its stunning coast and by the friendliness of its people. But what astonished me most was the interest of San Cristobal's people in ways to improve agricultural production and access to local, fresh and healthy food on the island. We met representatives of the public sector, farmers from the surrounding highlands and residents from the urban area of *Puerto Moreno Baquerizo*. From different sites, I heard that life in Galapagos was believed to be difficult despite its pristine beauty since the majority of food imported from the Ecuadorian mainland often arrives damaged or is sold overpriced. We, as well, prepared ourselves by bringing in processed and canned food in our luggage beforehand, but still we were surprised by the low quality and high prices of food available on the island. I arrived to San Cristobal with a keen interest in investigating the highly contested idea of food sovereignty that I was taught about in my university courses in Rural Sociology and which paved my way to Ecuador in the first place. On site, I experienced highly dynamic nuances around food reflecting a dependency of access to food from the Ecuadorian mainland and a strong interest of people to engage in the topic by one or another way. In order to understand this unique place, I chose food as an interface to show its underlying interactions and relationships that constitute social life on Galapagos.

## Structure of thesis

In the first parts of this thesis, I set the scene by displaying a vignette of the happenings at the *feria* on a Saturday morning in *Puerto Baquerizo Moreno*. Furthermore, I explained my personal background in choosing the topic of studying food on Galapagos. I will proceed with outlining theoretical accounts of Galapagos with regard to how the Galapagos Archipelago is socially constructed as a place of ‘pristine’ nature and what role food practice plays in ‘paradise’. This is followed by the conceptual framework, in which theories on place are explained in more detail, and the objective and the research questions, shedding light on the particular social phenomenon to study. In the methodology, I refer to ethnography as the main research design and describe the methods and strategies that I used to collect data in the field and how I analysed my findings.

The main body of this thesis is comprised of three parts: ‘relating’, ‘producing’ and ‘enacting’ which is in line with the three sub-research questions. In ‘relating’, I describe the feelings and emotions place evokes for the farmers living in San Cristobal, as part of the meanings they generate in place. ‘Producing’ refers to the materiality of place which becomes visible through the farm products produced by farmers in place. Finally, ‘enacting’ outlines the practices constituted through an interplay of meanings and materiality at the *feria*, where farmers organize space. Each of those chapters conclude with key points of the illustrated findings. In the discussion, the findings are brought together under the heading of how place is socially and relationally constituted through meaning, materiality and practice and put into context of the constructed understanding of Galapagos as a place of ‘pristine’ nature. In the conclusion, findings are shortly summarized, I reflect on my role of a researcher and give recommendations for further research.

Before I go into describing the context, I explain two terms that I am using throughout this thesis. Despite of the less common use, I refer to ‘Galapagos’ as the Galapagos Archipelago. By doing so, I hope to clarify the construction of a single understanding of Galapagos, despite of the multiple and very distinctive islands that it is comprised of. Though I might use irregularly the plural form of ‘the islands’, the singular form is the context in which I will explain how place is multiply constituted. Additionally, I speak about ‘farmers’ in San Cristobal, although people who are farming land have increasingly changed from farming for subsistence to producing food for a market. To acknowledge this change, which the following chapters further shed light on, I refer to ‘farmers’ as ‘producing food’. When I speak about farmer families, I equally include women and men as being ‘farmers’.

## Context

The Galapagos Archipelago is located in the Pacific Ocean, around 980 km away from the mainland of Ecuador. It consists of eighteen islands, of which the five largest constitute 93.2% of the total area, and around 215 islets. With a total surface area of 7.995,4 km<sup>2</sup> and a coastline of 1.688 km, the island Isabela is the greatest with more than 50% of the total surface. Besides of Isabela, Santa Cruz, Floreana and San Cristobal are the only inhabited islands. The three maps below were taken as photos from tourist maps that I collected during my field research.



Picture 1: Maps of the Galapagos Archipelago (Ministry of Tourism, 2013)



Picture 2: Map of San Cristobal (Ministry of Tourism, 2013)

## Constructing Galapagos

The image of Galapagos is constructed as the one particular place to study evolution, as a ‘natural laboratory’ (Quiroga, 2009) that is set apart from space and time by its ‘pristine’ and unique qualities of nature. The underlying conservation discourses evident in this image support the maintaining of economic and political relations that separate nature from the social component of people living and eating in Galapagos. In contrast, Hennessy and McCleary argue that “the Galapagos [is] not a pristine realm of untouched nature whose value is self-evident, but that even in such an apparently remote place, nature and culture are inseparable” (2011: 136). They base their argumentation on displaying a non-pristine material history that is shaped by the introduction of domestic animals from the beginning of the seventeenth century and the stimulation of colonization for economic development by the Ecuadorian government in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century (Hennessy & McCleary, 2011). Human settlement is therefore a rather new phenomenon compared to other places, but still it is actively hidden in the present visualizations of a scientifically relevant and attractive tourist destination. The Galapagos Archipelago experiences an increased flow of tourist mobility, accelerating from 68.989 tourists in 2000 to 204.395 in 2013 (Galapagos National Park, 2014). Quiroga refers to these flows as the ‘Galapagos Paradox’, where “the success of tourism [marketing the Galapagos as ‘pristine’ and people-free] is creating unpredictable flows of people and other organisms that undermine the unique terrestrial and coastal environments” (2009: 129).

According to Durham, Galapagos is made of special properties that underline the reasoning of being a place of studying evolution: first, isolation from the continent but also distance between the islands due to significant currents and winds; second, demanding ecological conditions complicating the colonization of the islands; third, the relative absence of competitive and/or predatory species and fourth and consequently, the vulnerability of new challenges entering the islands (2008: 67-8). It is therefore challenging to not perceive Galapagos as a place which is evolutionary significant in its existence compared to other places. Respectively, Durham (2008) sees globalization, understood as the decline of isolation due to human flows, as a threat from which Galapagos suffers because the archipelago constitutes one of the fastest emerging economies in the world. The increased entrance of invasive species like guava, blackberry, vertebrates, fruit flies and fire ants (Galapagos National Park, 2009a), mainly evident in food commodities imported from the Ecuadorian mainland, is an evidence for these perceived risks on biodiversity. As a response, UNESCO and the Ecuadorian President declared Galapagos as being in a state of risk in 2007. According to Hennessy and McCleary

(2011), this is however part of constructing Galapagos in a condition of crisis that deepens the image of men against nature. Consequently, tourist flows despite of its over-proportional growth are still seen as desirable and are further stimulated as it fits the current paradigms of conservation and sustainable development. In contrast, people living on the islands have been interpreted as “introduced predators” (Quiroga, 2009: 134), against which Galapagos needs to be defended.

Cairns, Sallu, and Goodman (2013) identify three different discourses that surround the topic of conservation on Galapagos, which are conservation as an international / global concern, conservation with sustainable development, and social welfare and equitable development. The latter mentioned discourse includes the participation of local people offering land-based tourism activities with the intention to divide more equally the benefits of the tourism industry among local people. Quiroga (2013) understands this as the construction of a hybrid discourse that internalizes the conservation discourse in a way that questions further extraction of Galapagos, but that simultaneously acknowledges the need for sustainable management of natural resources. Earlier, the colonization of the islands was based primarily on subsistence agriculture, which slowly developed to a greater interest in fishing and in the tourism industry, where more income is earned. However, despite of the attempts to include the local population in tourism, the “non-human nature represents the commodified, easily consumable Galapagos” (Mathis & Rose, 2016: 11), with the stimulation of local ecotourism not being an exception. It is therefore that Galapagos is perceived as a fixed, bounded and essential place which draws its one single identity from a romanticized and idealized past of ‘pristine’ nature. Boundaries are drawn between nature and society that acknowledges the relationships to global science and tourism as a way to defend place. It ignores, however, other relationships from which Galapagos draws its resources to maintain this particular ‘pristine and natural’ construct of place just as tourism infrastructure.

### **Food practice in ‘paradise’**

Hennessy and McCleary argue for a new re-imagination of nature in Galapagos since its current understanding “den[ies] dense histories of material flows and interconnections and work[s] to frame contemporary globalization as a new, modern problem” (2011: 151). Consequently, understanding Galapagos in that particular way ignores the high amounts of demanded goods, including food, needed by tourists and people living on the island. For instance in 2009, 3.014.310 kg of cargo, usually consisting of more than 75% food commodities, was transported by sea from the Ecuadorian mainland to the islands (Zapata & Martinetti, 2009). Moreover, the

local population more than doubled from 9.785 inhabitants in 1990 to 25.124 in 2010 (MAGAP, 2012). In contrast, local agriculture, livestock, forestry and fishery amounts only to 10% of the economic activity in San Cristobal, which accommodated 7.330 inhabitants in 2010 (Municipality of San Cristobal, 2012). In the perspective of low agricultural production and the necessity to import from the Ecuadorian mainland, the majority of food arriving in Galapagos as commodities are not related to place, since its origin or relation to place does not matter for consumption. From a technical perspective, however, the local agricultural sector has the potential to reduce the emergence of invasive species in imported commodities and on currently abandoned agricultural land (Galapagos National Park, 2009b). In particular, the Galapagos National Park promotes a model that “improve[s] the level of self-sufficiency of local communities and meet[s] the growing demand for agricultural products derived from tourism” (2009b). On first sight, this position seems to challenge the perception on nature as being outside from productive activities such as agriculture. However, it stays questionable to what extent it is intended to rather fulfil the needs of the tourism industry than it actually includes the social component of people and food practices in Galapagos.

One concrete example of promoting more local agricultural is the *feria*, a local farmers' market in the urban centre *Puerto Baquerizo Moreno* in San Cristobal. A first insight of the *feria* has been given in ‘setting the scene’, in the beginning of this thesis. The *feria* was implemented in April 2015 by the Ecuadorian Ministry of Agriculture (hereafter: MAGAP), with the objective to balance local production against imported products from the Ecuadorian mainland. A place-based, or more specifically: an island-based farm product is sold by farmers from the rural highlands under the slogan: ‘I commit myself to be a farmer who thinks about the future of the people and the islands by learning about more ecological-friendly production techniques and offering a healthy, fresh and natural product’. This quote is printed on the apron of the farmers at the *feria*. The *feria* as a market is not a new invention. At the moment of conducting research, the salespeople, who normally sell in the market building that was then under construction, are assigned a location within the street *El Colon*, between *Avenida Quito* and *Avenida 12 de Febrero*. In that street, the *feria* is situated next to the stands of the salespeople. The group of farmers at the *feria* consists of people who in the beginning of the project were willing to collaborate with the MAGAP. The common objective is to sell farm products directly to the consumer instead of to a middleman, who would reduce the gain of the farmer's agricultural production. On Saturdays, the *feria* is established by the support of technical assistants of the MAGAP who help arranging tents and tables for the farmers among

the same space where salespeople sell the majority of their food imported as commodities from the Ecuadorian mainland.

In the following part, I introduce theoretical ideas on place as part of the conceptual framework to explain the analytical lens through which this thesis has been undertaken. I will refer to place as being socially and relationally constituted through meanings, materiality and practices, in the attempt to make sense of Galapagos in an alternative way to the idealized and static construction that I have displayed in this section.

## Conceptual framework

To introduce ideas on place, Cresswell (2009) gives a straightforward conceptualization to start with. He distinguishes place as made up of materiality, meaning and practice:

*Materiality, meaning, and practice are all linked. The material topography of place is made by people doing things according to the meanings they might wish a place to evoke. Meanings gain a measure of persistence when they are inscribed into the material landscape but are open to contestation by practices that do not conform to the expectations that come with place. Practices often do conform to some sense of what is appropriate in a particular place and are limited by the affordances particular material structures offer. (Cresswell, 2009: 2)*

Accordingly, Cresswell (2009) understands materiality as the constructions in place and material artefacts passing through, while meanings are created by personal or collective biographies and representations, and practices are undertaken by people enacting places in their daily lives. Following his argumentation, I see food as a starting point for identifying material flows that give further insight into meanings and practices that surround the constitution of place. Food is materialized in particular ways, closely connected to how people make sense of the world by their thoughts and actions. In the case of San Cristobal, people living in Galapagos largely depend on the type of commodities that arrive to the island or the provision of farm products that currently are offered through the *feria*. Respectively, food can be understood as linkages to practice and meaning and as potentially bridging perceived boundaries of society and nature that dominantly construct the understanding of Galapagos. Nonetheless, food is not limited to being an interface of those relations as it, as well as place, is relational. To illustrate, Carolan states that food “is not a thing; its being is constituted through relations” (2011: 25). Being more specific, I understand food in this investigation as the material objects in place like farm products produced by farmers in San Cristobal, though not fixed in their materiality, but equally constituting and being constituted by meanings and practices of place and in relation to other flows such as the commodities imported from the Ecuadorian mainland. By following trajectories of food, I see the *feria* as a meeting place where negotiating and contesting relations of food come together and dismantle the understanding of place as fixed, bounded and essential. The following parts are divided into understanding place as a relational concept, sense of place as an emotional and subjective account and implications of this particular understanding of place.

## Places as social and relational

Before focusing on Massey's conceptualization of place, I would like to introduce Harvey's ideas on space and time as being socially constructed:

*The hour was invented in the thirteenth century, the minute and the second were seventeenth century inventions and it is only recently that we have come to talk about nano-seconds. The same thing has occurred with the metric of space. So those measures of space and time which we now treat as natural conditions of our existence were in fact the historical product of a very specific set of historical social processes achieved within a specific kind of society. (Harvey, 1994: 126-7)*

In particular, Harvey (1994) clarifies that the comprehension of space and time is not subjective or ideal but closely linked to a material world, from which one chosen pattern is believed to be true. Accordingly, the understanding of the material world is selected from multiple possibilities of how nature is presented and space and time are constructed in relation to other individuals within society and are politically embedded in power structures (Harvey, 1994). This is a starting point, on which Massey and Harvey clearly agree with each other. However, Harvey (1994) positions place as contrary to what he perceives as fragmenting processes of time-space compression. In particular, he sees place as fixed and something to invest in against potential changes. Consequently, he states that place is an “entity or ‘permanence’ occurring within and transformative of the construction of space-time compression” (Harvey, 1996 as cited in Cresswell, 2004: 57).

In contrast to Harvey, Massey has a more progressive view on place. In particular, Massey tries to tackle three ways of thinking that underline Harvey's reactionary understanding of place: first, place has one single, essential identity; second, place is constructed out of an introverted, inward-looking history; and third, boundary drawing is required (Cresswell, 2004). For Massey (1994), places are processes, boundless, made of multiple, sometimes conflicting identities and in continuous reproduction. She calls them meeting places where “the specificity [of a place] is not some long internalized history but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus” (154). Consequently, Galapagos does not entirely inherit its identity of being a place to study evolution, but it is one way of perceiving and living place, made up by present social relationships and negotiating with other visible or less visible identities of place. Moreover, one has to understand that power is socially differentiated within place. Massey states:

*Different social groups have distinct relationships to the flows and the movement: some people are more in charge of it than others; some initiate flows and movement, others don't; some are more on the receiving-end of it than others; some are effectively imprisoned by it. (Massey, 1994: 149)*

This is a point that Massey makes in context of flows and mobility within time-space compressions. In the case of Galapagos, I refer to accelerated rates of increased migration and demand for food provision that determine the maintenance or emergence of new relationships to flows and movements. I agree with Hennessy and McCleary (2011) that globalization is not a new phenomenon for Galapagos per se. Rather, it can be argued that the relationships to flows and mobility are shaped differently now than in the past. Moreover, whereas personal mobility seems to be rather limited for people living permanently on the physical bounded space of Galapagos, it is not exclusively the case. As Massey (1994) states, it is specifically about the relationship to these particular flows, including the control and initiation of them.

### **Sense of place**

Within the concept of relational place and a vision on place as being a powerful actor in itself, Massey refers to the 'global sense of place'. This idea illustrates that place does "not merely defend(.) the local against the global, but seek[s] to alter the very mechanisms of the global itself" (Massey, 2004: 11). This needs to be seen as a response to the concept of 'defence of place' worked out by scholars like Escobar (2001) who refers to the attachment of people to place within strategies of social movements to make territorial and cultural claims. It is therefore that he acknowledges Massey's understanding of place, but strengthens cultural aspects within place:

*(...) [P]lace continues to be important in the lives of many people, perhaps most, if we understand by place the experience of a particular location with some measure of groundedness (however, unstable), sense of boundaries (however, permeable), and connection to everyday life, even if its identity is constructed, traversed by power, and never fixed. (Escobar, 2001: 140).*

In line with this argumentation, Cresswell refers to meaning in his theoretical framework of place illustrated in the beginning of this chapter. Meaning correlates with sense of place regarding "the feelings and emotions a place evokes" (Cresswell, 2009: 1) and it is therefore helpful to understand how people experience, use and understand place. Although Massey (2004) argues that such an understanding of place essentializes the uniqueness of place in a reactionary way, I believe it is a significant relation to place in itself. It contributes to grasping

the underlying identities of place perceived and communicated by people and the way they actively shape place in line with their feelings and actions. Respectively, Horlings (2015) understands sense of place as “a valuable source of information (...) [that potentially] can inform multi-stakeholder processes of place-shaping and interactive policy-making” (2015: 267).

In line with Horlings, Cross (2001) summarizes sense of place as consisting of the relationship one has to place and the attachment one feels to community. Accordingly, the former describes “the ways that people relate to places or the types of bonds [they] with places”, while the latter “consists of the depth and types of attachments to one particular place” (2001: 2). Cross presents six different strands of conceptualizing the relationship to place and I would like to stress four of them: ‘spiritual’ as an emotional and intangible bond, ‘narrative’ as a mythical bond based on learning about a place through stories, ‘commodified’ as a cognitive bond based on choice and desirability and ‘dependent’ as a material bond based on being dependent on another person. Moreover, she refers to a biographical bond that is not applicable to the case of Galapagos, where a long residence of more than two generations is limited. The other conceptualizations, however, are useful to understand what people care about in their relation to place and through what lens they consequently define place personally.

Relph (2008) goes one step further and introduces the ‘pragmatic sense of place’ which includes ideas of Cross’ conceptualization, but brings the concept back in line with Massey’s ‘global sense of place’. Accordingly, a pragmatic sense of place “combines an appreciation for a locality’s uniqueness with a grasp of its relationship to regional and global contexts” (318), founded on everyday life:

*Everyday life involves concerns such as health, education, pollution, and new development – all local, practical concerns that are part of place familiarity and affection. At the same time, everyday life involves distant travel and economic and electronic connections around the globe. In short, a firm basis for a pragmatic sense of place is to be found in the experience of place and in the background of contemporary everyday life. (Relph, 2008: 318)*

Accordingly, it is not enough to ask people how they feel in place, but observe how sense of place is lived on a daily basis and linked to other relationships in place. As already explained, I do this through the lens of food at the *feria* to see what role it fulfils in understanding place. It is not self-evident that food plays a particular role in the way people feel about place. However, in the context of investigating farmers I assume that food is a key understanding in how they make a living in Galapagos and how they perceive benefits and constraints of

producing food. Food is therefore a theme within the sense of place, but it is not entirely limited to it.

Furthermore, elements of how Galapagos is constructed as a very unique place can be part of the sense of place. Relph refers to that as the ‘spirit of place’, which distinguishes through its “inherent quality, though [it is] subject to change” (2008: 312) since it can be enhanced and vary over time. Massey (1993) criticizes this perspective of place as static and conceptually not integrated enough within the wider world. It is therefore key to distinguish between the ‘spirit of place’ and the ‘sense of place’ as the former “exists primarily outside us (but is experienced through memory and intention), while sense of place lies primarily inside us (but is aroused by the landscapes we encounter)” (Relph, 2008: 312-3). Looking therefore at place relationally means also to look into experiences, emotions and affections of people living on Galapagos to understand their relationships to flows and mobility of which place constitutes a meeting point.

### **In and beyond place**

To understand place as a meeting point of social relations, I would like to refer to what lies beyond place and shortly introduce the concept of space. Carter, Donald, and Squires see place as “space to which meaning has been ascribed” (1993: xii), constructing space as meaningless and opposite to place. In contrast, Massey interprets “space as the sphere of a multiplicity of trajectories” (2005: 119) and, as already mentioned “imbued with power” (Massey, 2009: 19). She explains:

*It is not that all ‘power’ is concentrated in global cities (...), but rather that the power-relations are focused there. What global cities have are the resources, the economic weight, often backed up by political and cultural influence. Their power is exercised relationally, in interaction with other places. (Massey, 2009: 19)*

Accordingly, Massey (2009) conceptualize place as ‘political entities’ within space, in which negotiation, conflict, competition and agreement takes place. Ideally then, place is “a crucial political stake to challenge and change the hegemonic identity of place and the way in which the denizens of a particular locality imagine it and thereby avail themselves of the imaginative resources to reconstruct it” (Massey, 2004: 7). With regard to Galapagos, Hennessy and McCleary criticize the current politics of that place as closed, in which “[t]here is no space (.), whether for people or for political debate” (2011: 151). Respectivel, a new perspective on place can potentially open the political debate and invite new perspectives to deal with increased

population growth and accelerated food influx. In particular, Massey (2004) argues that a ‘politics of place beyond place’ needs to consider and critically analyse the power relations sustaining a particular identity of place. That would mean in the case of Galapagos to not ignore the people living in San Cristobal, nor the imported products and services related to food, which simultaneously reproduce an identity of people- and food-free Galapagos that welcomes around 200.000 tourists a year to experience its ‘pristine’ nature.

Baldwin provides an analytical framework to put Massey’s relational sense of place into practice. In particular, he follows the approach to identify commonly relevant and yet still unfamiliar trajectories and relationships that constitute a place since “places are the products of the relationships negotiated with those trajectories by emplaced actors” (Massey, 2006 as cited in Baldwin, 2012: 209). Respectively, Baldwin interprets trajectories as “ideas, practices, and material processes that can affect people in the conduct of their daily lives” (2012: 209). While Massey’s emphasis lies primarily on trajectories of capital, in the attempt to argue for the disempowerment of place in the processes of globalization (2004), Baldwin also refers to actors in place as powerful entities. To specify, he concludes “neither Antigua[, the investigated place,] nor Antiguans[, the investigated people in place,] are powerless in their articulations with neoliberal globalization” (Baldwin, 2012: 218). Massey does not as clearly as Baldwin refer to powerful actors in place. She uses the term ‘spatial identity’, when she refers to “our identity – including those of our places – through which we, and our places, have been constructed” (Massey, 2004: 14). Consequently, Massey’s focus lies on place as a potential agent of identity and change, whereas I will emphasize how farmers in San Cristobal can be powerful actors shaping place by drawing from their relations in and beyond place.

Nevertheless, the actions of farmers have to be understood within their limits of opportunities. Massey states that “the time-space compression of some groups can undermine the power of others” (1993: 62). To illustrate, Massey refers to the following:

*[E]very time someone uses a car, and thereby increases his personal mobility, they reduce both the social rationale and the financial viability of the public transport system – and thereby also potentially reduce the mobility of those who rely on that system. (Massey, 1993: 62-3).*

At the *feria*, the products of farmers need to compete in shape, form and price with the products coming from the Ecuadorian mainland. The more commodities are imported, the more difficult it is for farmers in San Cristobal to position their farm products at the *feria*. In this thesis, I

show in more detail how this takes place and how farmers, as well as consumers and a saleswoman think and feel about it. Moreover, I will refer to the contingency and creativity of people constituting place and follow Sherwood et al. in their approach to show “how social change in food and agriculture is fundamentally experiential, contingent and unpredictable” (in press). Additionally, I draw from the work of Horlings who states

*[T]he key agency involved in places and regions is human intentionality in interaction with the environment (see also Paasi, 2010, p. 2297; Relph, 1976), which can lead to all sorts of unsustainabilities unfolding in places, but also to processes of sustainable place-shaping. (Horlings, 2015: 259)*

I thus argue that farmers in San Cristobal are not disempowered actors threatened by the constructed image of Galapagos which ignores their living on the island, but that they actively engage in relationships in and beyond place and constitute place through meanings, materiality and practices. Despite the fact, that construction is commonly used in putting forward the concept of a socially constructed place (Harvey, 1994; Massey, 1994), I would like to go one step further and emphasize the more contingent, emerging, less determined and pre-planned notion of place which actively or less actively, rationally or less rationally is enacted by people in shaping place. Respectively, I follow Löw (2008) who understands the constitution of space first as a process of spacing or positioning and second as a process of synthesis, in which “goods and people are connected to form spaces through processes of perception, ideation, or recall” (35). While Löw speaks about space and sees place as the site where spacing and synthesis takes place, I align Massey’s conceptualization of place as meeting places of social relationships (1994) to show how farmers constitute place in a contingent, less determined and pre-planned manner. I will therefore use the term ‘constitution’ instead of ‘construction’ of place.

## Objective and research questions

Drawn from the context section, I follow up on Hennessy and McCleary and go deeper into the understandings of re-imagining of nature and island-space. To specify, they concluded:

*[A] re-imagination of nature in the Galapagos simultaneously suggests a re-imagination of islands and island space. (...) In the Galapagos, this myth of island isolation and idealizations of 'pristine' nature are mutually reinforcing. But, as we have explored, an imaginary that holds island nature as distinct from society necessarily positions connections with mainlands and the rest of the world as intrusions or invasions. (Hennessy & McCleary, 2011: 151)*

Accordingly, the objective of this thesis is to make sense of how place is constituted through the continuous, ever-changing and multiple making and re-making of social relations within space. This is done by exploring relationships in and beyond place and the multiple meanings and materiality that are actively enacted by people making a living from agricultural production in San Cristobal. The objective leads to the following research questions:

### **How do farmers in San Cristobal socially and relationally constitute Galapagos as place?**

1. How do farmers relate to place?
2. How do farmers produce in place?
3. How do farmers enact place?

I relate these sub-research questions to Cresswell's (2009) theoretical framework on meaning, materiality and practices which I have introduced in the beginning of the conceptual framework. Consequently, I see the way farmers relate to place as the feelings and emotions it evokes and base them in particular on their personal biography and emotional attachment to place. The second research question emphasizes materiality, which I interpret as the resources farmers draw from through their relationships in and beyond place. Cresswell (2009) understands materiality as the material structure and material objects that pass through place. Consequently, I focus on the farm products which are produced through material structures, prepared for the *feria* and put in relation to the commodities from the Ecuadorian mainland. The last research question zooms into the *feria* as a space which is organized through practices. There, meanings and materiality of place are continuously produced and reproduced through routinized practices of farmers and other actors in and beyond the market space. As stated by Cresswell (2009), all of these elements are closely interlinked, interact with each other and together constitute place. By setting a different focus in each of the questions, I attempt to describe first the meanings of

place generated by people, then how these meanings become objectified in materiality of farm products and finally how they are enacted in everyday life at the *feria* where practices, materiality and meanings of place come together.

In short, I will argue that Galapagos is not a static place, but that it is co-produced and established through different identities and images of which ‘pristine’ nature is just one constructed reality. Farmers constitute place in particular ways through their actions of producing food for the weekly organized *feria* in the urban area of San Cristobal and negotiate meanings, materiality and practices with co-existing, clashing and overlapping constitutions of place in the space of the *feria*. Consequently, the focus is set on the space of the *feria*, in which farmers practice, make sense of and materialize place in particular ways.

## Methodology

The key method and research design is based on ethnography during a field visit of eight weeks in San Cristobal in September and October 2015. Primarily, I started my field visit with the intention to investigate food sovereignty in San Cristobal since I came familiar with the governmental reports of the MAGAP that attempts to stimulate agro-ecological under the heading of food sovereignty during my first visit in 2014 (MAGAP, 2013). Using this as my lens for entering the research setting, I slowly noticed during the process of analysis that the concept of food sovereignty does not entirely cover what I was able to explore in San Cristobal regarding meanings, materiality and practices. This is why the following parts shed light on how I conducted research and will help the reader to understand how my findings were obtained and what choices I made during the field visit and the data analysis. I go in depth regarding gaining access, doing life story interviews and participant observation, and analysing my data. These methods and strategies of conducting research shape the ways in which I, as a researcher and a Western-European Spanish-speaking woman who travelled to San Cristobal by herself, constructed realities which are presented here in a particular way.

### Gaining access and participant observation

Ethnography is a way of engaging in people's lives and studying humans in their context to understand social relations and culture (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Key elements of the design include actively participating in daily activities, using daily conversations as data, observing informally and making use of tacit and explicit information for analysis (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2010). The underlying intention is to provide understanding of social phenomena that are described from different, sometimes contesting perspectives and reveal insights into relationships as they are and not as they should be. In this particular case, the social phenomenon to be studied is the constitution of place by looking into practices, meanings and materiality of it. Experiencing myself that ethnography is far from being a simple research design, I was inspired by Geertz' *Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight* and I came to understand ethnography as

*Doing ethnography is like trying to read (in the sense of "construct a reading of") a manuscript-foreign, faded, full of ellipses, incoherencies, suspicious emendations, and tendentious commentaries, but written not in conventionalized graphs of sound but in transient examples of shaped behaviour. (Geertz, 1994: 4)*

Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) acknowledge that ethnography needs to be understood as a product and a research process, in which ethnography is an open-ended design that is re-defined in the research process itself. It is therefore that my starting point of undertaking research, changed a lot during the process. My initial plan was to focus on food practices and trying to detect a 'good' sense of food by different actors on San Cristobal, including farmers, local families and tourists. As a preparation, I sent requests for volunteer options on *Workaway.info* to gain access to travel agencies and hotels in San Cristobal that would give me the opportunity to be in direct contact with people visiting the island. Moreover, I saw these as spaces to be in contact with local people who as well need to buy food or perhaps cultivate food themselves.

Soon, I realized that this strategy did not work. My requests on *Workaway.info* were not answered and I started relying on contacts that I made during my previous visit in 2014. Key people were for instance a local family I stayed with my first few days and later on again from time to time between the stays at the farmer families. The local family was important in so far that I got insights into the consumption practices of food and with them I made my first contacts to the regular market where the salespeople were selling their products. Also friends of the family came over regularly and I heard discourses about 'people being lazy to work on the land' and the 'soil not being fertile enough'. Hearing this, I thought to myself that the only way to find out would be to go where production does or does not take place. Consequently, I contacted the President of the rural area in San Cristobal. I knew her from my first visit and she was the person who introduced me to my first farmer family that I stayed with. In the introduction of the chapter on 'relating' and as part of the vignettes, I explain in more depth how the snowball technique from the first to the last farmer family worked and what my underlying assumptions were. I do this in this particular way to show the reader how I got to know the families, how our initial contact was established and how it opens up to the overall findings of the chapters. Additionally, I prepared a document of informed consent to inform the farmers about my research (Appendix I: Informed consent) and refer in this thesis to pseudonyms to protect their identities. I do this with their names, as well as with the areas they live in San Cristobal.

I planned to stay one week with three farmer families who I thought differ in their farm products to see whether there are variations in production, sale and consumption of agricultural products. Shortly before the end of my first stay, which finished with selling at the *feria* on Saturday, I felt that I will miss out on underlying meanings and practices if I leave the family directly after the *feria*. It showed that staying around ten days with them, gave more time to reflect back on the *feria* together and to differentiate between unique events versus regular

practices throughout the first days of the week. Furthermore, this additional time was key to do life story interviews which I will explain in the following paragraph. After having stayed with the first and the second family, I wished to get in touch with farmers who do not sell at the *feria* in order to be able to include perspective outside of that particular space. Eventually, my last family was also selling at the *feria* due to practical difficulties of staying with other farmers. As a consequence, I decided to have semi-structured interviews with farmers who either sell on the market throughout days of the week or who make use of intermediaries to sell their products. This was important to bring in other perspectives and triangulate findings with my observations.

### **Life story interviews**

Leaving for the first family, I planned to identify the spaces they make use of for production and selling, the people they connect with and the underlying meanings and assumptions. Two research settings were established by that, the farm household and the space of the *feria*. At first, my focus was set on what food is produced, consumed and bought outside of the farm. Means to investigate that was a focus on the daily routine, food economies and a 24h dietary recall. Although this opened up my lens of food and quickly started filling my field notebook, I came to realize that my core data were based on the participant observations and life story interviews which are represented in this thesis. DeWalt and DeWalt understand participant observation as “a way to collect data in naturalistic settings by ethnographers who observe and/or take part in the common and uncommon activities of the people being studied” (2010: 2). Consequently, I tried to be everywhere, where the farmers were. I helped them on the field, helped preparing meals, went with them to the *feria*, bought food with them and stayed in their homes. Additionally, I spent time with them on the sports field on Sunday’s, played cards with them in the evening and used these spaces to ask questions about place and food in San Cristobal.

I started targeting my observations and questions from what is consumed, produced and bought to how farmers think and feel about agricultural work in Galapagos. During that time, my field notes became more precise and I tried to understand the relationships between farmers and salespeople at the *feria* by observing how products were moved from the farmer to the salesperson’s stand or vice versa and what the underlying reasons were for this. I always carried a little notebook with me in which I put descriptions of what people had been doing or saying. I wrote this down shortly after the moment or summarized it later in more detail by the means of short taken notes. Initially, I felt uncomfortable pulling out something to write in the middle

of work or a conversation with each other, but after a while it started to feel more natural and I came to understand that people did not mind me taking notes.

Secondly, I made use of life story interviews to have another source of data that I could compare my participant observations with. Personally, it was important for me to have something more tangible compared to my field notes that were still fuzzy and not yet analysable at that point. According to Atkinson, “life stories serve as excellent means for understanding how people see their own experiences, their own lives, and their interactions with others” (2002: 137). Therefore, this type of interview helps to identify the relations that people have to places, the ways in which they construct their livelihoods, their values and ways in which their multiple identities as farmers, family members and sellers at the *feria* are relationally constructed. During the time that I stayed with the families, I was able to draw similarities between the oral accounts and the observed practices or chit-chats. This helped me to validate and challenge certain assumptions that I had made. As a guideline, I used the *Life Story Interview* of McAdams. I selected questions that fit into my context and added specific questions to how people produce in San Cristobal. I translated everything into Spanish and took the guideline of the interview with me for the interview (Appendix II: Guidelines for life story interview). Each interview was recorded and transcribed.

### **Ethnographic chit-chats and semi-structured interviews**

During the time that I spent at the *feria*, I had the opportunity to observe salespeople, consumers and other farmers selling at the market. Again, I describe in more detail how I approached consumers and one saleswoman in the following chapters. It is important to mention that costumers and salespeople were primarily a minor part of this thesis and only later developed to more important accounts. This explains why I decided to have two customers at each farmer’s stand which were randomly chosen on one Saturday at the *feria*. I had a topic list in mind that referred to the food products that they have bought, what they believed are the differences between these products and why they prefer or do not prefer to buy farm products from San Cristobal. These chit-chats were kept quite short, about 3-5 minutes the most. Similarly, I prepared a topic list for the saleswoman that allowed me to be interviewed. From her, I found it important to understand how the procedure is to import commodities, what she thinks about farm products, whether she sells them and how she relates to farmers selling at the *feria*. Unfortunately, I noticed quite some distrust of other salespeople against me, so that I did not continue asking more salespeople for an interview. More detail about this, can be found in the chapter ‘enacting’.

In order to gain more insight and to challenge my findings of the farmer families, I talked to other farmers. One woman in particular, I call her Mrs. Portillo, is reflected in this thesis. Other insights of semi-structured interviews with farmers helped me in the analysis phase to identify key ideas that I reflect back on in the stories of the farmers I stayed with. Furthermore, I talked to political representatives like the President of the rural area in San Cristobal, to a community representative who was born in San Cristobal and to representatives of the MAGAP. Their accounts as well helped to develop key ideas in the analysis phase, by either validating or challenging some of my assumptions. Moreover, during the field research, I took pictures of the *feria* which can be found in Appendix III: Photos of the *feria*.

### **Analysis and thick descriptions**

The data that I collected consist of field notes and transcriptions of interviews. The field notes were ordered chronologically per day and farmer family and served as an important foundation for writing out vignettes in form of thick descriptions. According to Atkinson and Hammersley (2007), vignettes “derive(.) from segments of interview transcripts, sequences from fieldnotes or transcripts, or similar data-types” (196) and show the interplay between the generic and the specific. Consequently, vignettes constitute an inspiring tool in which the multiplicity of place can be portrayed from diverging perspectives and with respect to interacting meanings, materiality and practices. Referring back to Geertz’ writing about the Balinese cockfight, he states that “it is a Balinese reading of Balinese experience; a story they tell themselves about themselves” (Geertz, 2002). Similarly, I use vignettes as a means of letting people talk and show what I observed them doing and how they and their places look like. In that manner, I refer to the specific of underlying relationships and embed them in understandings of the social phenomena described.

For the analysis, all interviews were held in Spanish and directly summarized into English. Quotes that I identified as significant were translated literally for the use of quotations in this thesis. A Spanish native speaker helped me filling some gaps in Spanish phrases that I was not able to understand. Throughout the field research, I differentiated between meanings, materiality and practices, but without a clear idea of the conceptual framework in mind. I had my difficulties with assigning codes to the category ‘materiality’ and just in the final stage of analysis adjusted the emerging themes of ‘relating’, ‘producing’ and ‘enacting’ back to Creswell’s conceptual framework on place. Besides of the three categories I had a ‘background’ category which referred to the origin of the farmers, their values and desires as part of the life story interviews. Eventually, this category emerged to the first section of

meaning illustrated in the chapter ‘relating’ as it comprises the meanings farmers attach to place through their biography and feelings their place evokes for them. From there, I started to differentiate materiality from practices and meaning by focusing on the resources and the relationships through which agricultural resources are drawn in the sphere of producing food. Codes used were for instance product perception (perceived differences between products, opinions on taste, appearance and production methods), life in rural area (personal goals for production, challenges in rural area, advantages of life in rural area) and agricultural practices (agricultural techniques with regard to seeds and synthetic or organic inputs). As it can be seen, the difficulty lies in presenting materiality as independent from meaning and practices, which I tried to overcome by focusing on the farm household where the production of farm products takes place and where particular meanings and practices circulate in the space farm products are produced. This is summarized in the chapter ‘producing’. The final chapter is on ‘enacting’ and emphasizes practices through which the space of the *feria* is organized. Codes used for this category refer to the *feria* (perceptions and opinions, particular happenings at the *feria*, expectations) and selling strategies (to consumer, to salespeople and general selling strategies). In this sense, the *feria* constitutes the space in which meanings and practices of place are produced and reproduced through the practices at the *feria*.

## Relating

‘Relating’ draws the core of its content from the life story interviews and observations during my stay with the farmer families, which are displayed in three different accounts. It describes how I have met each of them, how I arrive at their place and their personal story of migrating or being born in San Cristobal. Most significant in these descriptions is how the farmers feel at home, what they see, smell and care about. Food is a theme that draws through their lives, either by how they have started working in agriculture or how their interest and passion keeps them doing so. It is through the eyes of producing food and working in the rural highlands of San Cristobal, they make sense of their lives, although they differ in the type of bond they have to place. Moreover, they use a mixture of sense of place and spirit of place to describe the place they are living in. The former mainly refers to spiritual relationships, which describe a “feeling of (...) belonging, simply felt rather than created” (Cross, 2001: 3). In contrast, the spirit of place reflects an understanding of San Cristobal that internalizes how other people think about Galapagos or how it is drawn from the past.

### **Juan & Angelica**

I meet Angelica the first time in the office of Maria Rosa, the President of the rural area in San Cristobal, when she is introduced to me as a potential farmer willing to host me for a week at her farm. Angelica explains to me that they always had someone staying at her farm who was working with her and her husband. Moreover, there are foreign volunteers coming regularly to visit the farm. Before this meeting, Maria Rosa told me that it might be quite challenging to find someone who would be willing to host me. ‘It is due to the conditions the people are living in and because no one has ever done that before’, she explained to me. Maria Rosa said it might be easier to travel back and forth to the farms, instead of staying with the families. I was not sure whether she wanted to protect me, the tourist who came with a crazy idea of studying farmers on Galapagos, or whether it was actually them she wanted to protect from me. I am therefore surprised how enthusiastic Angelica is about having me on her farm. ‘It is good to have company’, she says and outlines that they produce coffee on the farm, that they have all kinds of animals and actually ‘produce everything that can be produced on the island’. We agree to meet the next day at the *feria* to discuss how and when to arrive at her farm and I am curious how my stay is going to be.

It takes me a ride of around an hour from *Puerto Baquerizo Moreno* to arrive at the farm called *Finca De La Cueva*, which is located in an area called *Madera*. Looking out of the taxi

window, I wonder whether I am actually still on Galapagos because the vegetation brings associations of the Ecuadorian Amazon to my mind. Just a few moments though because then we pass different farm gates and I see spots of cleared agricultural land areas. We take a left turn and drive up a little hill. I see a wooden construction with a huge veranda made of concrete on which two pool tables are positioned in the centre inside. Angelica comes outside to welcome me to her home. She wears a pink coloured shirt, jeans and boots that are partly covered by dirt. Her hair is black and short and she wears long golden earrings. She gives me a hug with her strong arms and asks me to sit down on one of the wooden tables on the veranda. Angelica explains to me that it was difficult to grow up in San Cristobal. ‘There was not the necessary that one needed. There was no rice. There was no sugar because there was no access to the mainland’. Angelica is in her early sixties and she was born on the island, on her parents’ farm in another rural area close to *Madera*. She says that she grew up in very poor conditions since her mother abandoned her and her siblings for a period of time when she was six years old. ‘There was nothing to eat and we did not have anything to live well. We were children, playing how to sow pumpkins and beans’, she explains. ‘This is how we learned to live from agriculture’.

Angelica was fourteen years old when she married Juan, who is almost ten years older than her. Juan bought the farm *Finca De La Cueva* from his parents and both of them started cultivating the land for nourishing the family and selling the surplus at the market. Juan shows to me old tools like a big screw, a bowl and a jar of glass that he found on his 135 ha land. He explains that this is left from pirates who visited Galapagos in the past. ‘My grandparents must have been pirates’, he says and tells me that he is from San Cristobal, but his mother gave birth to him on the Ecuadorian mainland because the hygienic conditions were not good enough on the island. He mumbles because the upper row of teeth is missing and I have difficulties understanding him from time to time. He has grey hair and his skin is slightly lighter than Angelica’s. He wears a red sports shirt from a soccer club and his jeans are partly covered by dirt. ‘I was fourteen when I visited the mainland for the first time’, Juan explains. He started working as a fisherman and enjoyed the work because it brought quick money. ‘One gets excited to catch a big fish because it is worth it, but it is also tiring and it hurts your fingers in the first days before you get used to it.’ I see a small red dot in Juan’s face as he just got bitten by a *carmelito*, a fruit fly which is one of the invasive species that easily adapted to the climate in San Cristobal, when they arrived accidentally with the food imports from the Ecuadorian mainland. The *carmelito* is widely spread in the area of *Madera* which is the reason for many

other families to have abandoned their agricultural land and to have moved to *Puerto Baquerizo Moreno*.

One day when Juan and Angelica had shown me the pirate caves, an eroded stone structure in which two humans could place themselves in a flexed position, located further uphill on their land, Angelica shows me the view and asks me whether I do not think it is beautiful. ‘Everyone tells me that we live in such a beautiful place, it is relaxing and everyone envies it. They want to stay here all of their lives. This place is attractive because it is quiet and people see the sea. They want to see the sea’, Angelica stresses and refers once more to the view that we have from uphill. ‘Here are no smells, here you have air that comes from the sea. The breeze of the sea is everything’. Juan tells me that he feels good living in *Madera*: ‘I feel calm and happy because I do not have any problems. The only thing is that it is just the two of us and we have to work to sustain us. But I neither feel bad because it is just us. We are still able to work’. I ask Juan whether he wants to teach me *Cuarenta*, an Ecuadorian card game that I saw him playing with Angelica. ‘Look, with this one I am going to beat you’, he shouts excited when he throws his card in the centre of the table between us.

### **Fernando & Catalina**

Nearly at the end of my stay with Juan and Angelica, I ask Angelica whether she knows a second farmer family which might be willing to host me for my research. She considers her brother’s family who produces jams and coffee liquors and Fernando and Catalina who specialize on products with shorter production cycles like lettuce and tomatoes. Because of having experienced the production and sale of coffee, cheese and sugarcane juice by Juan and Angelica, I think it would be interesting to see another type of agricultural production and I ask Angelica whether she could introduce me to Fernando and Catalina at the *feria*. In *Puerto Baquerizo Moreno*, after having sold most of the farm products that we brought for that day from the rural highlands, Angelica and I pass from her *feria* table to the table furthest away in the row which is occupied by Fernando and Catalina. Fernando stands behind the selling table. He is almost forty years old and he has a sun-burned face and high cheeks, wears shorts and a green soccer shirt. His dark hair is brushed into a side parting and he listens quietly to what Angelica and I have to say. After a moment, he answers that usually he does not have anyone staying over, but: ‘It would perhaps be nice for my wife and our son to have someone there for a longer period’. He calls for Catalina. A young woman in her twenties and of smaller height approaches us. She wears a dark jeans and a coloured shirt. Her hair is pulled back to a bun and she seems wondering what is going on. Eventually, she approves of the idea and tells me that I

could have the room of her five-year old son. She hands over the document of informed consent that I ask her to sign after I explained her the purpose of the research. It states her name and *El Árbol Antiguo* as her address, another part in the rural highlands of San Cristobal, and she adds: 'You will find us there'.

*El Árbol Antiguo* is the most fertile agricultural area in San Cristobal tells me an agronomist of the MAGAP who observed that crops develop the fastest and best over there. At a junction, my taxi driver asks at a restaurant how he can reach the farm and a young joins us to show the way. There is another restaurant and a little kiosk directly next to the building and on the opposite side is an abandoned school, altogether constituting the centre of *El Árbol Antiguo*. Later, I hear that the first restaurant is owned by Fernando's parents and I will see for myself how the whole village meets on Sunday afternoon to play volley, eat and chat with each other, as a common practice for resting from work on the weekends. When we arrive at the farm, I see a house of concrete to the left and a wooden house in front of us. The taxi driver asks me to pay 20 USD for the ride and Fernando makes fun of me later because I did not know that this was the price one pays for both ways. The space between the houses is filled with a few orange and mandarin trees. Two hammocks are tight between them and a bench with an orange peeler is located underneath two of the trees.

Catalina tells me that she likes the smell of a flower that is located close to the house made of concrete where all family members sleep in. 'Fernando and my dad do not like the smell, but I really do. It has something special.' We sit in the kitchen, Catalina prepares lunch and I help her cutting what we need for it, while I ask her how she feels living in San Cristobal. She tells me: 'I am a woman who practically lives with five men at home. I am everything here. I am that person who cooks, who does laundry and who understands everyone in one or the other way. I feel comfortable because my father, my grandfather, my husband and my son are for me my whole family. With them I do not need more.' She adds: 'I feel comfortable in the countryside, on the farm. There is no connection for internet or for mobile phones, but you have the basics. Even if you cannot get it from the supermarket, you find it here. It is an ease of obtaining what you like and above everything it is something healthier.' Catalina came to San Cristobal with her father fourteen years ago, when she was seven years old. Her father wished to pursue a different job, away from construction work on the Ecuadorian continent and her grandfather had bought a farm of 25 ha in the rural part of the island years before. Together with Fernando she has a son who tells me playfully the names of plants and trees on the path back to the restaurant, when we get him an ice-cream in the afternoon.

Fernando came to Galapagos when he was one year old. His father had tried to migrate before, animated by the prospects of being able to take as much land as one wanted for oneself. On Floreana, another island of the Galapagos Archipelago, his father soon realized that life was too difficult to sustain himself and he returned back to the Ecuadorian mainland before giving it a second try of migrating to Santa Cruz, the most populated island of Galapagos, when Fernando was already born. Fernando's family is from an area where a drought forced many people to find work and start life somewhere else. He is therefore not the first, nor the last person who tells me that he originally comes from Loja and migrated around 30-40 years ago. Before dedicating himself to agriculture which he was taught by his parents, Fernando worked as a trader and went to the Ecuadorian mainland to buy commodities and to bring them to Santa Cruz. One evening, when everyone else is resting in their rooms watching television after dinner, he tells me: 'I brought products like legumes and fruits. I left here by plane, arrived at Guayaquil and went to Ambato and to Quito and went back to Guayaquil. I loaded my products at the harbour, I left by plane and waited for the cargo in Santa Cruz.' His products were bought by stores, restaurants and tourist companies. 'The tourist companies bought a lot and I had a good time, but when I moved to San Cristobal the business did not work anymore because people are used to the usual traders and there was not as much cash as on Santa Cruz where is more tourism.' I ask him what he likes about living in San Cristobal and he tells me that it is calm and secure. 'Nothing happens to you', he adds and for the future he wishes that he can continue sowing plants, harvesting and going to the *feria*, 'like you saw it during your stay here', he says, smiling at me.

### **Santiago & Elena**

Santiago and Elena are the last farmer family that I meet and stay with. After having left the farm of Fernando and Catalina, I am first not sure about the next farmer family. My intention was to find a case that differs from the other two. The MAGAP told me about a woman who produces on her own farm, but also buys commodities from the mainland to diversify her offer. She is not part of the *feria*, but sells her products from Fridays till Monday or Tuesday depending on the sale. Mrs. Portillo has her own contacts in Quito from who she requests what she needs: 'I do this to compete because the people search for it. I buy for instance spinach, broccoli or cauliflower from the Ecuadorian mainland.' I find her case interesting, but she tells me that she does not have any space for hosting me. Then, through a technical assistant I get to know Elena, a farmer who is selling at the *feria*. Elena is a sixty year old woman. Her hair is tied together with a brooch and she wears an ochre-coloured blouse with leopard patterns. She

sits on a white chair in front of her table in the middle of the row of *feria* tables between Juan and Angelica on one end and Fernando and Catalina on the other. She invites me to her place, but tells me that it is not beautiful. ‘Better stay at my daughter’s place who has a house made of concrete’, she suggests. Later, Elena tells me that she feels ashamed of her home because the ground is made of dirt. She says: ‘I do not like my friends to come and see it’, but eventually after arrival she asks me whether I feel okay staying in her house and prepares a spot for me to sleep. Again, I find myself in *El Árbol Antiguo*, just 10-15 minutes walking distance from Fernando and Catalina’s house.

Elena lives together with her husband and her forty year old son. Santiago lives in a small shed next to Elena’s house. One of Elena’s daughters has 0.5 ha of land directly next to Elena’s farm. I see flowers and medicinal plants growing in front of Santiago’s shed and chickens running around Elena’s house. Elena migrated to San Cristobal with her husband, when Santiago was less than a year old. They came for the same reasons as Fernando’s parents, to escape the drought in Loja. Elena tells me: ‘One brother of mine was here already. He had beautiful land, a lot of land, about 100 ha. He was able to take land but we were not because of the Galapagos National Park. There is still a lot of land which still does not have an owner but which is owned by the Park.’ We sit on the bench in her house, when she tells me her story. The door is open and the chickens start walking in, searching for maize. Elena shouts out and chases the chickens outside. ‘They are like company for me, my chickens. I do not like it when it is too quiet in the house and I feel sorry when they need to be sold’, she says with a sad smile on her face and closes the door behind her. She continues: ‘I have a tree of oranges. I hope that it does not dry or that it is cut because it gives me oranges, so that I can have fruits every year. I feel good living in San Cristobal. We live in happiness, my husband, my children, I see that my life has changed a lot in this place.’

In the morning, Santiago and I go to work on the fields. ‘What do you want to do?’ he asks me and I ask him back: ‘What do we need to do?’ We are at another farm just two minutes downhill from where he and Elena lives. ‘The man who owns this farm has a hotel in *Puerto Baquerizo Moreno* and he is rich. He comes on the weekends with his family and I help him working on the land and with other little things’, he explains to me. ‘It is quite unique’, he continues because he is allowed to grow his own crops on parts of the land which are not used and he can take fruits for his personal consumption. ‘People trust me and it is better than being a worker who has a fixed schedule. By working like this, I can decide when to work and I can leave whenever I want.’ We have started transplanting the watermelon plants that Santiago

prepared on a raised bed a few weeks before. 'I have liked to work in agriculture since I was a child', and he adds that he never got used to living in *Puerto Baquerizo Moreno*, in the urban part. 'I lived there for a year when I was nineteen. In the countryside, you are used to take an orange from your fields, but in the city I remember that people brought boxes of oranges but you cannot take them like this and sometimes I did not have the money to buy any.' When helping Santiago on the fields, we take a lot of time talking. He explains to me why and how he grows certain plants and asks how agricultural production looks like in my country. 'Here, everything can be grown in its particular time', he concludes.

One evening Santiago hands a book to me called *Archipiélago del Llanto* (E.F. Guevara, 1999), translated to the archipelago of crying. It is a story that he had read recently and that he liked because it happened in Galapagos, where he lives. It is about Manuel J. Cobos who arrived to San Cristobal in the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He established a sugarcane plantation for export in *El Progreso* and contributed to the first settlements on the island. Santiago tells me: 'They treated the people really bad, the people who arrived to the island. They were prisoners, they were bad. I got scared because of the way they treated the people. The people arriving thought they would be fine here, that they can make a lot of money and have sufficient food, but everything was for Cobos and not for the people. When the people came, they received the machete, a knife so that they could work. But it was not a present, they had to pay it off.' Now the times are different, Santiago assures me. 'I feel good on the island, with my parents. Each day I continue working, sometimes I am somewhere else to have fun and to spend time. There are not many places to go out. Sundays, to do some sports and to go to *Puerto Baquerizo Moreno*.' He gets up and tells me that he is going to see a soccer match now. 'The Ecuadorian team is playing.'

### **On relating**

'Relating' focuses on experiences, feelings and understandings of farmers about the place they live in. Due to the limited historic population of Galapagos, it is difficult to refer to biographical bonds. Clearly though, the sense of place is evoked through positive emotions of belonging, established by the family members they are living with. The farmers differ in their arrival to the island, ranging from Juan and Angelica being born in San Cristobal, Elena migrating with her husband in her mid-twenties and to Fernando, Santiago and Catalina being taken with by their families when they were children. Despite of different experiences in agricultural work, producing food draws a line through their lives as part of their work, of their interest and identity. For instance, Angelica, Fernando and Santiago learned to work in agriculture from a

young age in order to sustain their own family. In comparison, Juan's parents have started early to produce for the market and Catalina has just learned to do so. Though being a farmer is not the only identity, they establish through their life in San Cristobal. For instance, Fernando tells about his experiences as a trader and Juan about his past as a fisherman. These understandings and features of their biographies interplay with the constructed identities of farmers at the *feria*. Moreover, Santiago draws a boundary between the rural and the urban area by distinguishing between availability of food versus the dependency of supply from outside. This illustrates how he values producing food as a practice in his constitution of place since it facilitates his access to food without extra costs in a place where he thinks that it is not easy to do so.

Angelica, Juan and Santiago refer to the 'spirit of place' by Relph (2008). To illustrate, Angelica makes reference to the view on the sea that she believes everyone envies her for and Santiago and Juan tell me about the past of the island by referring to pirates and the sugarcane plantation. These are sets of stories they make use of through relations to the past or to other people. In the case of Angelica, a reference to tourists like me is made. These understandings are fixed, bounded and essential, which is not surprising since the sense of place is an emotional and subjective concept. Additionally, when comparing the accounts of the farmers with each other, it becomes clear that positive features of place are communicated the strongest. All of them describe an emotion of feeling 'good' in place, but reference is also made to welcoming company to not be alone and to not feeling comfortable with the house, as Elena states. This feeling is backed up with ties to family and friends who live in the closer surroundings, just as those farmer families living in *El Árbol Antiguo*. In this way, farmers position themselves in place, they base their identity and draw their meaning of place through their experiences of living in San Cristobal for varying degrees of time and through the practices of which they make a living: producing food.

Summing up, the practice of producing food is a central theme that is part of constituting place and through which farmers make sense of their lives, although their identities are not limited to being a farmer. The life story of farmers can be seen as a fixed and single story of Galapagos that is established as an alternative story to the image of 'pristine' nature illustrated in the beginning of this thesis. In the following part, I will show how different meanings of place in Galapagos are co-generated by zooming into the material sphere of food production for the *feria*.

## Producing

‘Producing’ is about the materiality that constitutes place. First, I will present a vignette that describes events and impressions of a Friday that I experienced with Fernando and Catalina. It is the day before the *feria*, products are harvested from the fields and they are prepared for leaving the next day early in the morning. This sheds light on the material world they are positioned in through being an farmer. The second part sets the focus on how they sell their farm products to consumers through the market or other networks and how they obtain agricultural inputs for production. In the last part, I refer to consumers who I have met at the *feria*. They reflect a diversity of opinions on food products and are put into context with how farmers position their farm products as ‘natural, healthier and fresher’ against the commodities imported from the Ecuadorian mainland. This chapter concludes by referring to the relations that the agricultural draw resources from for producing food in a way that shows their power towards these flows in and beyond place.

### Preparing for the *feria*

It is around 6.00 in the morning and we prepare rice and coffee for breakfast. ‘It is later than usual’, tells me Catalina. Normally she gets up earlier, but today her son did not have to go to school and she is still in her pyjamas. There is an open space in the house which includes the kitchen area to the right when one enters. Separated by a counter, there is a living area with a television and wooden chairs, either standing in a row in front of the counter or situated around the television in the back. Four rooms are located around this open space, two on each side, for Catalina’s grandfather, her father, her son and for her and Fernando. Besides of the others, Catalina’s father is already out to feed the chickens and to bring eggs and bananas for breakfast. The chickens run around freely, whereas the chicks get separated to be raised in incubators. ‘They beat each other, when they are altogether’, explains Catalina’s father to me, ‘and that is why we separate them.’ They are not exactly certain how many chickens they have, but it could be around 200 he tells me later. Eventually, the grown-up chickens contribute to a profit of 25-30 USD, but it is also a high investment’, says Catalina. ‘More than half of our expenditure is spent on animal feed.’

The plan for the day is to first collect farm products that do not perish easily. I follow Catalina up to the field to harvest tomatoes. We pass through the wooden house and take a little path higher up. I see plantain and banana trees, further at the edge of their area also papaya trees. To the left I see tomato plants, around ten rows guided by wire. ‘We have around 200-

300 tomato plants. They almost do not carry fruits anymore, but soon we start planting new tomato plants', explains Catalina, when we carry the yellow box with us through the rows to collect the mature red tomatoes. 'There is a woman who only sells tomatoes and plantain to intermediaries. She has a lot of plants, around thousand. But this is difficult when you sell on the market because people demand more products. They say bring me tomato, bring me cucumber and lettuce for a salad', she adds. After we are finished, we go further into their plot and collect red beet and carrots. We cut off the green parts and throw them into a blue water barrel, where we leave them for a while. Usually, Catalina and Fernando do these tasks together, but this time I am there to help Catalina and Fernando carries out other tasks. 'We can rest earlier then,' she says.

Around 11 o'clock, we collect broccoli leftovers for the chicks an leave the field. There are two different spots with two cages or smaller chicken houses where the chicks are held, depending on their size. 'Hand the broccoli over because otherwise they will start picking me', shouts Catalina. They get fed five times a day, three times with feed of grounded maize and twice with plants and plant left-overs. Catalina tells me that she usually prepares lunch around that hour to be able to use the time on the field without the sun. From the field, we bring lettuce for lunch. 'From plant to pot', Catalina refers to when she emphasizes that everything is fresh and just being harvested from the field. After lunch, we have an hour for resting before we go up to the maize fields. 'We do not stress ourselves. We do one thing after the other, she says and secretly she adds: 'I like lunch preparation time. It is time I can use for myself to watch my favourite soap opera.' Fernando saddles the donkey and the three of us get ready for the next round of harvesting. Daniel, Catalina's and Fernando's son, joins us. He sits with his father in the saddle, while we walk up a second path which is even higher up then the plot where we have been before. Catalina explains to me that I should collect only the maize cobs which are big and whose hairs are 'well developed black'. She gives me a jute sack and enters the row. Quickly I try to follow her, but she moves fast and soon is metres ahead of me. It sounds like an easy task, but soon I notice that there are almost no black-haired cobs that are big enough. I stay with smaller ones and my sack does not even get half full when I finish the row. Later, I hear that there was not enough rain for the maize to develop properly and soon I will experience that the demand at the *feria* is focused on buying big and not small products. Catalina helps me putting a half-filled sack of maize on my shoulders. She takes one herself as well. Fernando ties three sacks on the donkey and takes a full filled sack on this shoulder. Slowly we start going

down and I remember that I enjoyed walking up much more without the weight on my shoulders.

Expecting that we are about to finish our working day, we go to the plot a second time to collect lettuce, cabbage, alfalfa and other farm products that would have perished faster when harvested in the morning. This time, Catalina's father helps us cutting mangold. They start talking about the taste and Catalina says she does not like it. 'That is the way it is', explains the father to me, 'we produce something that we do not consume ourselves'. Catalina adds: 'we eat it only a little, but on the market there is good demand for it.' We bring all the harvest to the wooden house which is filled with boxes to take with the next day. I see four bags of maize, four banana plants, two boxes of broccoli, one box with carrots and red beet, two boxes of lettuce, one sack filled with ten cabbages and another with five Chinese cabbages. There are also 30-40 lb of tomatoes and less amounts of cucumbers, spinach, alfalfa, cilantro and mangold. For most of the products there are fixed prices like 1 lb of reed beet and carrots for 1 USD or three cucumbers and four bananas for 1 USD. For alfalfa, cilantro and mangold, Catalina determines the price on what people demand. In the wooden house, is a fridge filled with pork that was slaughtered during the last days and on the same morning. In total, it is two pigs of which 1 lb costs 2.75 USD. Fernando hunts wild pigs once or twice a week with Catalina's father. Sometimes they also slaughter pigs that they have raised themselves. It is a mixture of wild pigs and *pig light*, a breed that contains less fat and which is sold for a higher price on the market. Fernando bought this breed two years ago from the Ecuadorian mainland to improve his pig production. 'Perhaps we could still peel the maize for tomorrow', Catalina thinks out aloud, but eventually we do not find the time to do it. We have dinner and everyone goes to bed early because the taxi arrives the next day at 3.30 in the morning to bring us to *Puerto Baquerizo Moreno*.

### **Being a farmer**

The previous section shows the routine that farmers engage in for selling at the *feria*. The process itself is not particularly different to the other two farmer families. It is that slightly different farm products are cultivated and sold, while there are some variations in agricultural management techniques. Regarding Fernando and Catalina, there are two points that I would like to stress: first, cultivating and selling a diversity of products for the market and second, producing something that is not necessarily for household consumption. Catalina mentions that it is difficult to focus just on a few products because she sells to the market, where a diversity of products is demanded. She tells me: 'Those people that sell to intermediaries do not spend

time on the market. If you have a lot of products of one type, you have to find the intermediaries but you need to know how to negotiate'. What Catalina refers to is the margin one pays to the intermediary for selling the product further to the final consumer. She continues explaining to me how difficult her first year in agriculture was. 'I thought I knew the basics of sowing and harvesting and that this would be everything, but Fernand taught me how to really work in agriculture and that it is key to be there every day and take care of the plants.' Consequently, selling at the *feria* was a new practice that she had to adopt. In the beginning, she felt ashamed and found it difficult to smile, greet people and invite them to buy something from her. 'When Angelica does it, it seems so easy, but for me it was difficult to learn'. Nowadays, she assures me, she feels much more relaxed about it.

In contrast to her and Fernando, Angelica and Juan have always used personal contacts to sell products like oranges, coffee, eggs and sugarcane juice to. They go to *Puerto Baquerizo Moreno* several times a week, depending on the amount of orders they have. Presently, they make use of these personal contacts during the *feria* and in case not all farm products are sold after Saturday around midday. Similarly, Elena and Santiago make use of orders by known people to bring for instance sausages, chickens and banana plant leaves to the urban area. However, they always have brought products to the market since they have started cultivating agricultural land in *El Árbol Antiguo*. Santiago explains: 'In the past, everyone had the same. There was nearly no market because everyone planted, also the people living in *Puerto Baquerizo Moreno*. We had five donkeys to carry our harvest. There was nearly no road and there was a lot of rain. It was difficult. Now, there is a market and there is even competition between the products.' Elena adds that they bought what they were missing from the money that earned from the sale. 'Now there is business because of tourism. One can sell a lot and in the same way one can produce a lot. Cucumber for instance we almost did not cultivate because there was no one buying it.' Catalina and Fernando wish to specialize further in their production. She says that it would be much less work to focus on meat production and have a little vegetable garden for household consumption. Also Santiago considers in specializing further in tomato and paprika production. Nonetheless, he perceives the same constraints as Catalina and Fernando: 'One has to produce more. If we bring only two products like tomato or paprika, people will demand coriander.' This is why he produces according to the principle: 'Of everything a little, a little of everything.'

Juan and Angelica have already specialized in products as they focus on the processing and sale of coffee as one of their main products. Other products like cheese, oranges and

sugarcane juice are focused on longer development cycles and differ from what the other farmers bring to the *feria*. Besides them, there is only Angelica's brother who produces coffee processed to liquor for the *feria*. Juan and Angelica differ in their approach of working in agriculture. They experienced how people relied on subsistence agriculture in the past. Angelica tells me: 'People use synthetic inputs because of lack of labour. They take herbicides and the weed dies. Quickly, one sows the seeds and if it does not develop, one puts synthetic fertilizer. If there are pests, they take the fumigation sprayer and the problem is solved.' Juan tells me about agricultural production in his past: 'My parents had cattle, more than 300, and if there were people who wanted to work, they worked on our land. But agriculture was just for oneself. My parents, they cultivated maize for sale because there were a lot of people who did not have a farm and when the maize of others was finished, we were able to sell it. Tomatoes though were for personal use because everyone had tomatoes and you could not sell it.' 'We produce 100% organic', Angelica adds. This means not adding any synthetic fertilizer, pesticides or herbicides because it is bad for your health, Juan says. 'I fear the products that come from the continent because they put chemical compounds. I learned from my parents how to do that because before there were no chemical inputs to apply in the past', he continues.

The other two farmer families differ in their agricultural management practices to Juan and Angelica as they apply synthetic inputs against pests. These pests increasingly have entered Galapagos by the inflow of commodities from the Ecuadorian mainland and the farmers apply those inputs to have more and better harvest. They believe that it is very challenging to produce on the island because of the pests. This is a common idea on Galapagos that I have heard from a representative of the MAGAP and other farmers because the conditions are very favourable for all species that enter Galapagos, as for instance the fruit fly mentioned in one of the life stories. Similarly, Santiago and Fernando differ in their practices of using seeds to Angelica and Juan. Whereas, Angelica collects the seeds of a tomato from her field, both of them specialize on hybrid seeds. The representative of the MAGAP explains to me that these types of seeds produce more harvest because they are bred according to the most desired characteristics, but involve a high financial investment. Fernando explains: 'My parents bought their seeds from a store in *Puerto Baquerizo Moreno*, but there is germination of only 40-50%. Hybrid seeds germinate for 99.9%, but hundred tomato seeds cost 100 USD. Sometimes he and Catalina order from a technical engineer on the Ecuadorian mainland. Also Santiago has started to experiment with hybrid seeds. One day at the field, we filled plastic cups with soil in which we dropped one tomato per each cup. With his membership in a farmers' association he receives

discounts on seeds. Instead of 100 USD, he pays 86 USD. ‘Sometimes you lose more than you win’, tells me Santiago and refers to the investments that he makes as a farmer. Catalina uses a similar statement and says that agriculture becomes more difficult. ‘Every time you have to invest more to produce something’, she adds.

### **Consumers and products at the *feria***

I help out Elena at the *feria*, when I approach six different consumers in order to gain insights into their purchasing habits. I planned beforehand to talk to 1-2 different consumers at each farmer stand that I stayed with. I have a topic list in my head related to the products they buy, why they buy and from whom they usually buy. The first person that I approach is an older woman at Elena’s stand who had ordered a chicken from her farm the day before. I have seen her several times before and she stands behind the table of Elena’s stand. When I ask her, she tells me that she buys a bit from everyone. ‘In the season, the products are fresh like the tomatoes, but I also buy at the stores of the salespeople because the plantain is much more expensive here.’ She explains to me that she does not think that this is fair. ‘The farmers are here and the products from outside need to incorporate the transport costs’. I thank her and go around to Catalina’s stand to ask whether she agrees to have me asking her clients about their groceries. I see a man with a baby in his arms buying mangold and other vegetables from her. ‘They are all the same. Quality and price all the same’, he explains to me and continues his groceries. Behind him stands a woman who I approach next. She says: ‘It is cheaper to buy at the farmers, but the quality is not better. It is because the products from here have a bad taste and the products from the continent are better’, she adds once more. ‘I buy from both, but from here only bananas, papayas and oranges because they are fresh and are not imported from the mainland.’

I move towards Angelica and Juan’s stand, where I see a woman buying cheese and sugarcane juice. ‘The juice is not from the mainland,’ she explains to me, ‘and it is of good quality. Potatoes and onions I prefer to buy from the stores because they are bigger. Here the ones are small. Regarding taste, I like more the products from the mainland.’ A moment later, a man approaches the stand and buys sugarcane juice and jam from the stand next to us. ‘The others have to pay the plane, but I like to buy fresh products like bananas and oranges from here.’ It is the first time that I see how Angelica packages her oranges into plastic bags. Before, they counted the ones people wanted from a big box and now they arrange a certain amount of oranges and put them ready for sale on the top of the box. Finally, I go back to Elena’s stand and ask her whether she needs some help. She tells me that she is fine and I approach the last

consumer at the market that I plan to ask today. It is a young woman who just has bought a package of sausages. She explains to me: 'I always buy sausages from Elena when she has them. Other products like coriander are better here from the island and I prefer to buy locally, but I do not like the already packaged products of the farmers. There is one saleswoman where I can choose the products that I want.'

During the time that I stay with the farmer families, I experience how they contrast the farm products that they cultivate in the rural highlands of San Cristobal with the commodities that are imported from the Ecuadorian mainland. Catalina tells me: 'Our product does not have value because it is produced here. This discourages one totally because the products from outside have the better value.' She adds: 'They say you do not do anything, that my actions of weeding and maintenance do not cost anything and that they therefore do not understand why our products are not sold for much cheaper.' This reflects a perception of consumers who believe that the imported products need to incorporate the transport costs. Fernando makes this comparison as well by stating that 'imported products are very expensive and often have double of the price because of arriving by plane'. Despite of the diversity of consumer opinions, Santiago observes that there are people showing more interest in products that are from San Cristobal. He makes an example: 'A salesman told me that he cannot buy from me because he can get the box of cassava for 6 USD from the mainland, whereas with me he has to pay double the price. A week later, I heard that he made a loss because the cassava arrived rotten and he could not sell it.'

When I ask what the differences are from the products that come from outside, Fernando explains that 'they seem to be fresh because they are still frozen from the transport. But what we produce is fresh from the moment because it is from the same day, whereas the other products are harvested around 8-15 days before and are in no good condition.' Fernando tells me by referring this to his experiences as a trader, where he saw how chemical compounds were applied to food products to regulate the ripening process. Also Juan believes that there is an increased amount of chemical compounds used for imported commodities. 'They cause diseases like cancer,' he tells me. 'But the people from the urban area prefer those products because they deteriorate less quickly than the locally harvested products.' Although some of the farmers like Angelica believe that people must recognize the difference between the products arguing for better taste of island-based farm products, appearance is chosen as the main feature for many consumers to buy imported products. Elena describes a situation: 'I saw a woman buying tomato in front of me. We give the pound for 0.80 USD and she goes there to

buy in the stores.' Respectively, Angelica adds: 'they apparently seem beautiful, but you cannot really see what you are eating, you do not know what you are eating'. She refers to the potatoes she had bought from the Ecuadorian mainland because she did not have any in her garden and shows me the parts that are rotten from the inside.

### **On producing**

The chapter 'producing' shows how farmers constitute place through materiality of the farm products that they contrast against food commodities from the Ecuadorian mainland. As explained in the introduction, the campaign of the *feria* promotes island-based food products as 'healthy, fresh and natural' which is taken on by farmers in their communication to potential consumers and to me during my field research. Despite of the fact that the majority of farmers do not wear the apron or the existing shirt of the *feria*, 'to not wear it as a uniform', as Angelica explained to me once, they have internalized the communication of their farm products as clearly linked to place. Consequently, 'fresh, healthy and natural' is based on the agricultural techniques that are defined through the material features of San Cristobal. To illustrate, farm products are transported a much shorter period of time before reaching the *feria* compared to food commodities and despite of the variation in agricultural input application less chemical compounds are applied. This is influenced by the material landscape of San Cristobal that is very vulnerable for the entrance of other species such as the *carmelito*.

Regarding resources for agricultural production, the farmers make and maintain linkages in place to potential consumers outside the space of the *feria* and to the Ecuadorian mainland for seeds and other agricultural inputs to be able to produce more and of better quality. Consequently, what becomes 'healthy, fresh and natural', is also a relational product constituted through the flow of commodities coming from beyond place and in interaction of changing and diverging meanings and practices around food production at the *feria*. Nevertheless, from the consumer perspective, these constructed quality attributes of island-based products are only partly recognized. To illustrate, some consumers buy farm products because they are not imported or when the product is abundantly available in the season. In this case, the farm products are referred to as 'fresh'. While some buyers such as the salesman buying cassava changes his practices because of starting to appreciate the quality of the farm products, others continue buying what is offered by the salespeople in the same space where the *feria* is held. Moreover, what is interesting is the action of buying from several farmers and salespeople to spread benefits among them, 'a bit from everyone'. I have seen this as well as a practice with the local family that I stayed with in *Puerto Baquerizo Moreno*. This practice implies that no

boundary is set between farmer and salesperson, or farm product and imported commodity because place is constituted through the existence of multiple actors, not just farmers, that make a living from selling food.

On the farm level, farmers cultivate products that are diverse to fulfil the needs of the own household and to better supply a variety of different products at the *feria*. Consequently, the choice for products is determined through the meaning of place that farmers generate, in the sense of the desire to be able to nourish one's household. Though, other co-existing meanings play a role like the high investment of working in agriculture and desire to specialize in livestock production to earn more income. In short, farmers constitute place through their material choices of food production that on one hand is determined by the material landscape of the island and on the other by the meanings of place they create through their experiences and desires. In contrast to the previous section, where a rather static image of place was displayed in the life stories of the farmers, the multiplicity of place constituted through the life stories and through the material sphere of food production becomes visible. Themes like the lack of appreciation for agricultural work and differing agricultural techniques ranging from low to high synthetic input application emerge within the image of feeling comfortable in the calm and secure rural highlands of San Cristobal. Similarly, these multiple understandings co-exist, intertwine and overlap with the constitutions of consumers at the *feria*, and are in themselves temporally constructed realities becoming objectified in the farm products and commodity flows in place. The final section on 'enacting' will emphasize the practices through which the *feria* is organized by identifying how meanings and materials are produced and reproduced in dynamically and ever-changing creative ways.

## Enacting

In ‘enacting’, I zoom into the practices at the *feria* described in the beginning of this thesis and reflect on the perspective of a saleswoman who shares the same space with the farmers at the market. Following Massey (1993), one might assume that the relation of the saleswoman to the flow of commodities imported from the Ecuadorian mainland, diminishes the space of farmers to sell their farm products. However, I argue that the boundaries between these two identities of a salesperson and a farmer are blurry and cannot be put into categories of salespeople selling imported commodities and farmers selling farm products from the rural highlands. Moreover, farmers find their own spaces of actions in which they creatively find ways to sell their products and constitute place through meanings, materiality and practices in a contingent way.

### **A saleswoman**

It is a day during the week and I learned from my observations that midday would be a good time to approach the salespeople because there will not be many people around they can potentially sell to. I had left them to last because I could not make out many personal contacts between farmers and salespeople that would help me getting access to them. From other sides, I had heard that they distrusted talking about their business and that it would be difficult to approach them. I first ask the saleswoman who was on the opposite of the *feria* tables because I had observed her several times, but she is not willing to answer any question. I remember that Elena had bought her groceries in one particular store and enter there to ask whether she had time for me. She recognizes me directly. ‘You were living in the rural highlands’, she says. We sit down at chairs in her store and she agrees with the interview but wants to keep her name to herself. I will therefore continue calling her the saleswoman.

‘I prefer to use the plane to request products from the mainland’, she explains to me. For a ship you pay 1.45 USD for 10 lb, but if you need to put it in the fridge it is 0.25 USD per pound. The plane is expensive. It is 1 USD per kg, but it is a lot quicker. ‘When I order at 8.00 in the morning, it arrives here at 14.00 the same day. I usually do my orders on Monday or Tuesday. By ship it takes a week or sometimes even more time so that I have to pay more eventually.’ She shows me the products for which there is a great demand like tomatoes, paprika, plantain, lemons, carrots and cilantro. ‘I sell my cucumber for 0.50 USD. I get it for 0.20 USD from the mainland. It is of good quality, big and very cheap. The products here are often yellowish and people here like it if the products are clean.’ Now, she shows me two tomatoes. One red and proper developed, whereas the other is slightly smaller, has some green

and darker parts surrounding the point where the blossom developed. ‘It is not true that they produce without chemical inputs. There are some that apply a lot because otherwise they would not have any production at all.’ The saleswoman explains to me that she would like to see more local production. ‘We buy from the mainland because there is not enough produced on the island. People do fishing or other types of work. The soil is very fertile, but they do not cultivate.’ She tells me that she draws her experiences from knowing the countryside herself.

‘Some people like the products from the mainland, others prefer local products. There is no competition between farmers and salespeople, it is just that they do not want to sell because they do not supply enough.’ She continues: ‘It would be best to have one million tomato plants and prepare for the next cycle in time before the production stops. They need to sell consistently, but they just say: it finished, it finished.’ ‘You can get everything that you demand from the continent. The farmers sell 1lb of tomatoes for 0.80 USD, I do for 1 USD. For me it does not matter that it is just 0.50 USD from the mainland if there would be more production here. I buy oranges, cassava and tomatoes from here, but I need to do that early because they do not have much and I need to sell as well in time.’ A woman passes by her stand and asks for a product that I do not properly understand. Without further attention to the client, the saleswoman answers: ‘When the ship arrives’ and she continues answering my questions.

## **Farmers**

In contrast to the saleswoman, the farmers believe that their farm products are not valued enough, as stated in the previous chapter. For them, it is not just the constraint of not being able to supply sufficiently, but they see the salespeople as competition at the *feria*. Fernando tells me: ‘They always take the best for their business. Then the people come and they say that the products from the rural area are not good because they are too small, but it is because they take the best. They buy it and they put a higher price.’ He continues: ‘Ideally it would be if salespeople and farmers are set apart or if they buy continuously from farmers instead’. Catalina explains to me that she asks the same price for salespeople as for final consumers. ‘I sell it without discounts. It is the same price for everyone, with commitment to the final consumer.’ In contrast, Elena sometimes gives her products to the salespeople. She prepares *mote* and fills the cooked beans into plastic bags. ‘Ten bags are for the salespeople because they bought them last time and I do not want to take them back because they only stay good for two or three days.’ I ask her whether she leaves some of her leftovers with the salespeople, but despite of the products that she gives to one of her daughters, she tells me that ‘they get annoyed, when we leave it with them’. For Juan and Angelica it is a different situation since selling their processed

coffee or home-made cheese would be visible in the hands of the salespeople in the same market space. Already before the implementation of the *feria*, they decided to sell directly to consumers. Juan explains: 'Since you deliver the products to the consumer, not to the intermediaries, the intermediaries do not make a profit, but it is you who earns from it.'

The motivation of the farmers to participate at the *feria* is the opportunity to have a good sale. For Angelica this means selling without intermediaries a product that is 'good and cheap for the consumer'. Furthermore, she explains that 'due to the campaign, the people are more aware and try to eat what is ours. There is more demand and now we have to produce more because before we could not sell and now it is sold.' Catalina also sees it as an opportunity to communicate the value of her farm products. She says: 'There are some who value the work and because of that you can work calmly. What you produce is bought because of the quality of that'. 'The people know me', is another statement made by Elena to refer to the advantages of selling at the *feria*. Fernando sees the *feria* as an incentive to make better use of the products that already exist on the island like plantain and oranges in order to reduce the import taken from the Ecuadorian mainland. He illustrates that the first *feria* was a huge success because everything was sold out very quickly. 'There was a lot of promotion for it, even on the radio and TV', he says. But 'now it is much less', he explains.

Despite of the personal gain they make due to selling to the final consumer and the increasing appreciation of some of them, they need to position their farm products to the existing flows from the Ecuadorian mainland and lower the price accordingly. Within these perceived constraints, however, farmers pursue different strategies in which they construct themselves as farmers cultivating in the rural highlands in San Cristobal. The vignette in the beginning describes how Catalina and Elena exchange beans. Elena explains to me that she helps Catalina selling them because no one bought them from her the week before. She says: 'Catalina receives the money of the sale afterwards and it is easier to sell like this when the product is spread among the farmers'. Similar actions of help are happening with regard to seeds. Elena explains: 'once I exchanged fifty seeds of beans for fifty seeds of mangold with Catalina and before she even gave me seeds for paprika as a gift'. When I ask her whether there is more of such exchanges, she refers to the mother of Fernando who is also a farmer at the *feria*. 'But with the others, it is too far away. It rather stays within *El Árbol Antiguo*', she says. To illustrate, Juan and Angelica are much more isolated from other farms and exchanges like this are limited. Another situation in the vignette describes how Elena puts conditions on selling to the salespeople at the *feria*. As shown, she agrees to sell something that she sees to be

demanded by salespeople, but she puts a condition to take in addition a box of something that she has in abundance like for instance a box of papayas. She illustrates: ‘Once we brought five boxes of tomatoes and I gave one to a saleswoman because they did not have any, but she had to take some oranges as well.’ By using this strategy, Elena makes sure that she can sell her farm products and that she does ‘not upset the salespeople’. However, she argues that ‘for them the sale is still a lot better than for us’.

Catalina controls her sale by not giving everything to the salespeople early in the morning. As mangold is highly demanded, she tells the saleswoman: ‘Only for 1 USD, not for 2 USD’, so that she can sell the product herself as well. Similar to Juan and Angelica, she and Fernando has a group of people that she sells to regularly. I see them bringing a sack of maize one week that is for a woman who has her own restaurant. Another time, I see her running with lettuce to one end of the *feria* and she explains to me later that this is feed for animals. Juan and Angelica leave the market earlier than the other farmers to make sure that they can still sell some of their farm products through their personal contacts. Consequently, they do not relate to the salespeople that much like Catalina and Elena do. Nevertheless, each of them finds niches through which the can offer their products at the *feria*. Whereas, Juan and Angelica have coffee, cheese and sugarcane juice, Catalina processes maize to *humitas* and Elena to *tamales* every few weeks. ‘I want to offer a product of quality’, says Angelica, while Catalina uses processing as ‘another way of preparing the maize’. Elena goes even one step further and chops the vegetables to prepare the *picada* and cuts the cassava. She explains to me: ‘I always sell all of it because the people work and they want everything to be ready for cooking’. She also buys *mote* from the salespeople to process it further. ‘The *mote* from here is too small. The people do not like it and I stay with the product if they do not buy it’, she complains. This is why she and two other farmers process *mote* from the Ecuadorian mainland and sell it among the products that they call ‘healthy, fresh and natural’ produced in San Cristobal.

### **On enacting**

‘Enacting’ draws on the practices of farmers through which they organize the space of the *feria*. Because the majority of commodities that the salespeople sell are obtained cheaper, appear more attractive and can be ordered throughout the seasons from the Ecuadorian mainland, it seems that the saleswoman diminishes the opportunities for farmers to position themselves in the market space. This is underlined by the understanding of farmers ‘not being able to supply enough’ and the material differences that the saleswoman makes between farm products and commodities. It is therefore that this differentiation of products becomes inscribed in price,

resulting in commodities being more expensively sold, although they can be obtained quite cheap in comparison to the farm products that are a high investment of agricultural inputs. Within these meanings and materials circulating in the space of the *feria*, farmers follow the strategies to lower their prices for the final consumer and by doing so, reproduce the perceived boundary made to the commodities from outside place. However, in the interaction of salespeople who the farmers perceive as clashing with their own meanings, materiality and practices of understanding place, they find their own rules of not selling with discounts. For instance, Catalina does so. Juan and Angelica in contrast decide to make use of personal networks outside of the *feria* and Elena interacts directly with them to increase her sale. As a result, a multiplicity of practices becomes visible which is reproduced through a diversity of meanings that come together. To illustrate, Elena puts conditions on her sale to not be left without products to be sold to consumers, but equally she tries to put the salespeople on ease by handing over products at certain times or to certain people.

Looking at the flow of materiality, farm products and commodities exchange owners on both sides and through these exchanges attributes of these products are adjusted. To illustrate, farmers hand over their products to salespeople, which are sold more expensive. This situation becomes even more severe in the described vignette where the cargo does not arrive early on Saturday morning when the market starts. Moreover, Elena and Mrs. Portillo buy products from salespeople to diversify their offer. Elena does so in particular to further process the product and finds a niche for consumers to buy more rady-to-cook food. As I have shown in this part, meanings and materiality are enacted through diverging practices in which farmers try to obtain space at the market place through the communication of ‘fresh, healthy and natural’ island-based products. Within this space, the farmers partly reproduce the relations within place that salespeople constitute because they sell their products to them as part of a routinized practice. This happens although the farmers create a boundary between them and the salespeople by the way of positioning their farm products against commodities from the mainland. Whether the farmers interact with the salespeople, depends on their personal relationship to them and of the way they make sense of place in which salespeople are sometimes seen as competition and other times as people with whom the same place is shared with and from whom they buy food as well.

## Discussion

The intention of this thesis is to make sense of how Galapagos is constituted through the continuous, ever-changing and multiple making and re-making of social relations within space. This is done with respect to the theoretical accounts of Quiroga (2009, 2013) and Hennessy & McCleary (2011) who argue for a new understanding of Galapagos that does not ground itself on an identity of ‘pristine’ nature fixed and bounded in place. By emphasizing how farmers relate to, produce in and how they enact place, I look through the lens of the *feria*, the local farmers’ market in the urban area of San Cristobal, how farmers constitute place through meanings, materiality and practices. By doing so, I attempt to show the multiplicity of place co-generated through farmers and other actors in place in a contingent, emerging, less determined and pre-planned notion of creativity. The following parts discusses the findings of the chapters ‘relating’, ‘producing’ and ‘enacting’ and brings them together in answering the main research question: how do farmers in San Cristobal socially and relationally constitute Galapagos as place?

### **On constituting Galapagos**

As I have illustrated in the previous chapters, farmers living in San Cristobal constitute place through routinized and daily practices that continuously become made and re-made in interplay with other practices, feelings and emotions, and material structures and objects. Within this constitution they construct themselves as farmers who through their experiences of working in agriculture and having access to land, either inherited or bought on arrival to Galapagos, understand San Cristobal as a place where food production takes place. From a time where families were able to produce their own household needs, the economy has diversified to a point of specialized food production, where today’s farmers are confronted with producing for a growing urban-based population. At the same time they need to compete with what seems to be of cheaper price and of higher quality coming from the Ecuadorian mainland, from outside place. In this thesis, I outlined that exactly these flows encourage those people to become farmers because the *feria* opens up opportunities to sell island-based farm products and to stimulate more local production which intends to better supply residents and tourists in San Cristobal. This is officially supported by the Galapagos National Park which acknowledges the advantage of agriculture in conserving the island eco-systems that are vulnerable to pests from the mainland. Nevertheless, Valdivia et al. (2014) argue that the Park is challenged in its role of preserving and protecting Galapagos as a site of conservation and not as a site of production.

Within this context, in which it seems contradictory to produce in the constructed image of ‘paradise’, farmers actively construct an identity in which they shape place through their practices of producing food. The farmers at the *feria* do this through using the image of island-based food from Galapagos that is ‘fresh, healthy and natural’, in comparison to what enters the island by ship or plane from the Ecuadorian mainland. Consequently, within their daily constitution of place they create what Massey has called a fixed, bounded and single understanding of place. More precisely, farmers understand San Cristobal in a particular way that counters the construction of Galapagos as solely based on ‘pristine’ nature for scientists and tourists. Nevertheless, place is constituted through their daily practices and relations that they draw from and beyond place. The identity of San Cristobal offering ‘fresh, healthy and natural’ food by farmers living on the island illustrated is therefore one of the multiple, temporary, and ever-changing constitutions of place.

With regard to the construction of Galapagos as a perceived tourist destination and a place of particular scientific value, an alternative story of place helps to not turn a blind eye to the so interpreted ‘intruders’ like human beings and food. Those are the elements that are ignored in the construction of Galapagos, Quiroga (2009), Hennessy and McCleary (2011) describe, which according to them, makes Galapagos a de-politicized space. However, at the *feria*, I observed that the alternative story in which farmers construct their identity of producing ‘fresh, healthy and natural’ island-based products does not openly reveal the relationships beyond place. Nor, are questions addressed about synthetic agricultural inputs, seeds or the effort farmers make to produce in an environment whose eco-systems are very vulnerable to other species entering the island. From this perspective, this diminishes the opportunity to reflect and discuss Galapagos as a constituted place that draws its resources through relations in and beyond place, as Massey (2004) would argue. However, farmers constitute place in an endlessly and open way through its social relations within space, through which place is always evolving and out of the total grasp of farmers or other actors in San Cristobal.

### **On farmers and the *feria***

I have emphasized constitution as comprised by practices enacted by people in everyday life, in which they make sense of place in creative, less rational and contingent ways. To speak therefore only about the image in which ‘fresh, healthy and natural’ food is produced by farmers in the rural highlands of San Cristobal, does not acknowledge them as social actors taking part in producing and reproducing place constituted in its variety of meanings, materiality and practices in daily routines. This is what I have intended to show in the chapters on ‘relating’,

‘producing’ and ‘enacting’, by zooming into the space of the *feria*. Massey states that places constitute “products of negotiation, conflict, competition, agreement, and so forth between different interests and positions” (Massey, 2009: 23-4). The *feria* is such a space of negotiation, conflict and discussion in which multiple meanings, materiality and practices interact, clash and overlap and constitute place in a continuous, every-changing way. In this sense, the *feria* is in itself a meeting place of those surrounding and constituting elements which in the end made it possible for me to meet and arrange my stay with the farmers. Since the *feria* was implemented only recently and through a window of opportunity at the moment when the usual market building was renovated, each farmer brings along a diverse set of meanings, materiality and practices.

As I have illustrated in the chapter ‘enacted’, producing food draws a line through their lives in various ways. Besides of Catalina, everyone has worked in agriculture before. This is part of the practice of sustaining the household and part of the availability of land, in times when the majority of people were growing food in their gardens. Juan has long-term experience in producing for the market due to his parents who have always done so. The opportunity to participate in the *feria*, correlated with his and Angelica’s practices of not selling to intermediaries. Moreover, Catalina and Fernando did not sell at the market building before and Catalina first had to get used to the practice of selling. When I stayed with the farmer families, they asked me how other families were producing since they were not familiar with agricultural techniques of other farms. Furthermore, I observed how Elena bought jam from a farmer woman of the *feria* the first time to try what others produce. This shows that at the moment of conducting research farmers were not yet knowing each other closely, beyond the ties with family and friends that they already had. An exception are those people who live in the same area of *El Árbol Antiguo*, who are exchanging seeds and farm products to help each other out.

Beyond the space of the *feria*, there are other understandings of place. While some of the farmers have shown concern about the future with regard to the few young farmers that currently work, others are more explicit in wishing to leave agriculture or specialize in particular ways to make a better living. To illustrate, especially Catalina and Fernando have shown such concerns and told me about their plans to focus on livestock production and having a store in the *Puerto Baquerizo Moreno* in the future. Moreover, Mrs. Portillo explained to me that she is thinking about going back to the Ecuadorian mainland after fifty years of living in San Cristobal because ‘the conditions to produce there are easier’. Constituting place is therefore not limited to the space of the *feria* or San Cristobal, nor to the moment or the endless

possibilities inscribed in creative, not pre-planned and contingent practices. Consequently, each farmer constitutes place individually based through the dynamic and ever-changing interplay of meanings, materiality and practices. In short, the multiplicity of place is constituted continuously any moment of time through the making and re-making of social relationships.

### **On place and space**

If places are not made sense of as fixed, bounded and essential, a new perspective to think about the places we live in, romanticize or those which we do not notice along our way starts to emerge. In this thesis, I focused on Galapagos, but this approach is suitable to think about other places in a social and relational manner. Baldwin (2012) states that this analytical lens acknowledges the power of place and people and it has the advantage to “contribute uniquely and critically to geographic knowledge and theory” (207). By adding the sense of place to this theoretical lens, it puts people into focus living in and being affected by place, while shaping place simultaneously through their identities. Respectively, Galapagos despite of its unique features is not different from any other place. Only through its social relationships it becomes place among others which are made and re-made through meanings, materiality and practices in an endless sphere of possibilities.

For Massey (2005), space is the ‘throwntogetherness’ of social relations which comes together to constitute meeting places. Löw (2008) understands this as the process of spacing which she exemplifies as material objects and the relationships one draws to other people, to give an idea. Accordingly, spacing is followed by synthesis, by which “goods and people are connected to form spaces through processes of perception, ideation, or recall” (2008: 35). In this thesis, I specifically refer to meanings, materiality and practices that comprise relations in space. I agree thus with Massey that meaning is not inscribed in place, but that it is part of the synthesis process in which meanings interplay with materiality and practices in place. Consequently, Galapagos and other forms of multiple social ‘throwntogetherness’ become place through social actors in and beyond place who attach meanings, materialize objects and practice place. Places are therefore multiple and endless. In the last part of this thesis, I will conclude my findings, reflect on the role of being a researcher and give recommendations for further research.

## Conclusions

Through the lens of the *feria* in San Cristobal, I tried to grasp relating to, producing in and enacting Galapagos from a perspective of the multiplicity of places and to dismantle the image of the commonly perceived Galapagos as one static place situated in the Pacific Ocean. Farmers have shown to be creative and powerful actors in co-generating meanings, materiality and practices in a space in which they are argued to be left out from place. Through their practices an alternative story of ‘pristine’ and people- and food-free Galapagos is established, that contributes to the constructed identity of farmers in San Cristobal who produce ‘fresh, healthy and natural’ food. In the space of the *feria*, meanings, materiality and practices co-exist, overlap and clash against each other through the continuous and ever-changing processes of constituting a multiplicity of place. Within these constitutions, farmers establish boundaries between ‘them’ and the ‘other’, to the salespeople sharing the same market space and to the commodities from the Ecuadorian mainland, while simultaneously relations between the two are produced and reproduced through the interplay of meanings, materiality and practices within space. Place is therefore not only multiple but also endless through its many creative and contingent possibilities of enactment by actors in and beyond place.

## Reflections on being a researcher

In this thesis, I portrayed a particular reality which is shaped through the way I constructed my identity as a researcher before and during my field research in San Cristobal. Clearly, ethnography does not deny that the researcher needs to be understood as a tool him- or herself that shapes the research process (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). This is why I would like to quickly reflect on some points that significantly have influenced the research. First, I like to stress my personal interests in organic agriculture. Despite of other initial strategies, I felt very enthusiastic about living with farmers to learn about general farming techniques. This decision might have led myself into one particular direction, but my former knowledge on organic agriculture also helped to show interest in agricultural work and opened opportunities for chit-chats which developed into longer conversations. Furthermore, it needs to be understood that I, as a Western-European woman was received, as a guest that made other people curious about foreign culture and food habits. I was asked many questions about myself, but also served as an informative about life of other farmers that I had talked to or stayed with. Only throughout the analysis phase, I learned that my constructed identity of a researcher was mingled with being a tourist as well. Angelica once told me: ‘I know what tourists like to eat’, which made me aware

that they have as well adapted their meanings, materials and practices to the new person who was staying at their house.

My Spanish was on a good level to communicate with people, ask questions and follow instructions. There were also moments of less clarity and misunderstandings, but the lack of understanding sometimes opened up opportunities to ask what people have meant by certain sayings or doings in later moments. One of my difficulties in my role of being a researcher was to keep being sensitive to my surroundings all the time. I adopted to a totally new environment in which I physically felt exhausted of the agricultural work and in which I had to learn how to fit into the famer family, in which I wanted to give back my help for the hospitality that I experienced from them. I remember carrying the maize sacks, being bitten by *carmelitos*, but also the moments when the farmers took their time to sit down with me and to have conversations. In the beginning, though, it was very challenging to stay awake late in the evenings and to use the rich moments of eating and spending time together for further questions.

I believe that I went to the field with a too open mind-set in which it was not yet clear what exactly I would like to focus on. Just throughout the process of staying with the first family and before going to the second, I got a better insight into which method worked and which not. I enjoyed a lot to do the life story interviews since people were so willingly opening up to me and giving me the chance to understand the story behind the person who happily received me in his or her home. During that time, the focus on place slowly evolved by exploring theories around food and going back and forth through my field notes. Just in the last stages of the process, however, I was able to bring forward the conceptual framework on meaning, materiality and practice which from then on helped me to operationalize my data and answer my main research question. Looking back at this process, I wished I had a clearer idea in mind before I left for field research, but I also see that as part of the learning experience of being a researcher.

### **Recommendations for further research**

During the research process, I came across ideas and directions that I was not able to tackle in this thesis. Observing people producing for the *feria* had its advantages of focusing on people that meet in the same space and share some common practices. However, despite of the few interviews that I had with other farmers, I was limited to give better insight into the social lives of other farmers in San Cristobal who differently will constitute place through meanings, materiality and practices outside of the space of the *feria*. Moreover, I have not investigated

how other actors at the *feria* make sense of place. I only touched upon the perspectives of consumers and one saleswoman. Respectively, tourists could be of interest for further investigation. The relationality of 'fresh, healthy and natural' island-based products emerged from my data and could be a central theme for grasping food cultures in place. To make a suggestion, a document analysis on images of Galapagos in brochures, photos taken by tourists and comments in online travel blogs might be complementary method to participant observation and ethnographic chit-chats or interviews. Finally, I would like to emphasise that I conducted my research in San Cristobal at a time, when the market building was under construction and the *feria* was located outside in the streets. In the meantime, I have heard about economic and structural constraints that complicate the work of the MAGAP to pursue the stimulation and technical support of local agriculture in Galapagos. I believe therefore that it would be interesting to explore these dynamics further and to understand the *feria* within the context of wider relationships beyond place with actors like the MAGAP, the Galapagos National Park and farmers producing food on the Ecuadorian mainland to mention a few.

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## Appendix

### Appendix I: Informed consent



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#### Documento de Consentimiento Informado para la población de la Isla San Cristóbal.

Yo soy Christine Franke, estudiante de la Universidad de Wageningen, Departamento de Sociología Rural, escribo mi tesis como parte obligatoria del programa de maestría Estudios de Desarrollo Internacional. Estoy investigando sobre **soberanía alimentaria en la Isla de San Cristóbal**, le voy a dar información e invitarle a participar de esta investigación. No es necesario que decida hoy, si participar o no de la misma. Antes de decidirse, puede hablar con alguien que se sienta cómodo sobre la investigación. Posiblemente haya cosas que no entienda. Por favor, usted puede preguntar en cualquier momento para yo explicarle mejor. Y si tiene preguntas más tarde también.

Esta investigación tiene como objetivo investigar las dinámicas de alimentos como espacios potenciales para la soberanía alimentaria en la isla San Cristóbal. Eso significa investigar espacios de producción agrícola, su venta y el consumo de productos locales e importados. Esta investigación estudiara las prácticas de las familias locales, mientras vivir con ellas por un tiempo determinado de 1 a 2 semanas. En este tiempo me gustaría trabajar junto con la familia en la producción y venta de los productos y áreas en cuales pueda ayudar como voluntaria y a cambio de recibir hospedaje en la familia. Deseamos contar con su valioso aporte por ser un(a) productor(a) en San Cristóbal. Durante ese tiempo me gustaría tomar notas y fotos de las experiencias para la documentación sin invadir su espacio privado.

Los resultados de la tesis tienen intenciones académicas y será propiedad de la Universidad de Wageningen, en Holanda. Este proyecto es financiado por recursos propios de la estudiante. No es obligatorio estar en este estudio. No hay ninguna indemnización y no hay riesgos previsibles o beneficios. Si usted está de acuerdo ahora, y luego desea retirarse, no hay problema. Si quiere participar en este estudio, por favor firme abajo. Si usted prefiere que su nombre permanezca anónimo, por favor escriba un seudónimo. Usted recibirá una copia de este formulario.

Si tiene alguna pregunta, comuníquese con Christine Franke (-----) o por correo electrónico a (-----).

Yo, \_\_\_\_\_, quiero estar en este estudio de investigación.  
(Escriba su nombre o seudónimo aquí.)

(Firme aquí.)

(Fecha)

Datos de contacto (para contactarse si es necesario):

Correo electrónico: \_\_\_\_\_ Teléfono: \_\_\_\_\_

Dirección: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix II: Guidelines for the life story interview**

Esta es una entrevista sobre la historia de tu vida. La entrevista comienza con cosas generales y se mueve a lo particular que trata sobre temas de producción agrícola local en San Cristóbal. Quiero recordarte que esta es una investigación para la universidad, entonces solamente para intenciones académicas. Si hay preguntas si no quieres contestar, no hay problema. Si quieres que uso un seudónimo de tu nombre en la tesis, por favor avísame. ¿Hay preguntas hasta ahora? Entonces, empezamos con tu nombre, la edad y en donde naciste para informaciones organizacionales. Si es en otro lugar, por favor dígame con cual edad te mudaste a San Cristóbal.

### **I. Etapas / Capítulos de la vida**

Ahora me gustaría que puedas comenzar por pensar en tu vida como una historia. Piensa en tu historia de vida por tener al menos un par de etapas diferentes. Me gustaría que describes cada uno de las principales etapas. Decimos por lo menos 2 o 3 etapas y como máximo aproximadamente 7.

### **II. Eventos críticos**

Por favor, concéntrate unos pocos eventos claves. Por ejemplo, momentos especiales establecidos en un determinado momento y lugar, con personajes particulares, acciones, pensamientos y sentimientos.

#### Evento 1: Experiencia pica

Una experiencia pica sería un punto alto en su historia de vida. Pueden ser momentos de la alegría, el entusiasmo, una gran felicidad, o incluso una profunda paz interior. Por favor describe en detalle una experiencia pica, o algo parecido, que experimentaste alguna vez en tu pasado. Dime exactamente lo que sucedió, dónde sucedió, que estuvo involucrado, lo que has hecho, lo que estabas pensando y sintiendo, qué impacto de esta experiencia puede haber tenido sobre ti, y lo que esta experiencia dice acerca de quién eras o lo que eres.

#### Evento 2: Experiencia nadir

Ahora pensamos en un punto bajo, como tu punto más bajo en la vida. Recuérdate de una experiencia específica en la que te sentiste emociones muy negativas, como la desesperación, desilusión, el terror, la culpa, etc.

#### Evento 3: Punto de Inflexión

Al mirar hacia atrás en la vida de uno, a menudo es posible identificar ciertos "puntos de inflexión". Puntos de inflexión pueden ocurrir en las relaciones con otras personas, en el trabajo y la escuela, en los intereses externos, etc. Estoy especialmente interesado en un punto de inflexión en tu comprensión de tí mismo. Puedes pensar en uno?

### **III. Desafío de la vida**

Mirando hacia atrás en las distintas etapas de tu historia de vida, por favor describe el mayor desafío que enfrentaste en tu vida. ¿Cómo te enfrentaste este desafío? Te ayudaron otras personas? Cuál es el impacto de este desafío en la historia de tu vida?

### **IV. Influencias en la historia de la vida**

Identifica a una persona, grupo de personas u organización / institución que tiene o tuvo la mayor influencia positiva en tu vida. En quién piensas?

Y ahora en una persona, grupo de personas u organización / institución que tiene o tuvo la mayor influencia negativa en tu vida. Quién sería?

## **V.      Futuros alternativos para la historia de la vida**

Ahora que usted me ha dicho un poco acerca de su pasado, me gustaría que usted considere el futuro. Me gustaría que tú imaginas dos futuros diferentes para su historia de vida.

### Futuro positivo

En primer lugar, por favor, describe un futuro positivo, sobre lo que te gustaría a pasar en el futuro para su historia de vida, incluyendo lo que las metas y sueños es posible lograr o realizar en el futuro. Por favor trate de ser realista en hacer esto y descríbelo con lo más detalle posible.

### Futuro negativo

Como sería tu futuro negativo? Como un futuro que esperas que no sucede.

## **VI.      Las historias**

Me gustaría saber sobre tus cuentos favoritos. En cada caso, trata de identificar una historia que escuchaste en tu vida, describe la historia muy brevemente, y dime si y cómo esa historia tuvo un efecto en ti. Estos cuentos pueden ser en relación con algo en la televisión, en libros o pueden ser historias familiares. Te recuerdas de una de estas historias?

## **VII.      Sentimientos propios**

### Sentido del lugar

Hablamos sobre los sentidos del lugar. Imaginarte que cuentas a otra persona que no conoce tu casa y que quiere saber en detalle en donde vives, que ves cada día, que haces, con quien estas, como es el olor del lugar y cómo te sientes en este lugar.

Me contaste sobre la vida en tu casa. Puedes pensar en San Cristóbal o las Islas de Galápagos en general y explicarme como tu ves tu vida en las Islas?

### Sentido de alimentación

Vamos a hablar sobre alimentación. Si puedes desear tu plato favorito para estar delante de nosotros en este momento, qué plato con que bebida sería? Describa por favor, cómo se ve y cómo es el sabor. Dime cual es el origen de la comida y quien lo preparó. Porque es importante para ti?

## **VIII.      Otras preguntas**

Que significa para ti producir alimentos en tu tierra? (relación personal con alimentos, objetivo final)

Como ves a los alimentos del continente? Cuales productos te gustan, cuales piensas son muy necesarios y cuáles son las diferencias entre los productos del continente y de San Cristóbal?

Que significa para ti producción orgánica y porque sería importante para ti?

Como piensas reaccionan la gente del Puerto a productos locales? Cuál es su motivación de comprar productos del continente o productos locales?

Cual papel tiene la feria? Como ves tu papel en la feria y crees que la feria ayuda a promover productos locales? Cuales serían problemas potenciales?

Como crees debe ser el sistema alimentario ideal? Cuáles son los actores que tienen responsabilidad en este sistema?

Como ves a San Cristóbal en el futuro? Como crees seria la situación agrícola en 3-5 años?

Que pudiera ser un producto de San Cristóbal, con que la isla es independiente del continente? Cual producto piensas seria? (Consumo local o venta)

#### **IX. Producto personal**

Cual producto es lo más importante que producen ustedes? Puede ser un producto con los beneficios mayores o con la producción más grande?

Cómo funciona el proceso (de semilla) hasta el producto final?

Como describes al producto que es de San Cristóbal en la diferencia en sabor y textura?

Para resumir: Porque piensas que este producto es tan importante para la producción de aquí?

#### **Conclusiones finales**

Muchas gracias, eso era la última pregunta. Gracias para compartir tus pensamientos en este tema. ¿Hay algo que te gustaría añadir o preguntar?

### Appendix III: Photos of the feria



Pictures 3: The logo of the feria and the apron of the farmers (Franke, 2015)



Picture 4: Preparing for the feria the next day - Fernando & Catalina (Franke, 2015)



*Pictures 5: Arranging the stand in the morning (Franke, 2015)*



*Picture 6: The market street filled with stands of salespeople (Franke, 2015)*



Picture 7: Stand of a saleswoman in front of the feria (Franke, 2015)



Picture 8: Stand of Fernando and Catalina (Franke, 2015)



Picture 9: Stand of Elena and her daughter (Franke, 2015)



Picture 10: Stand of Angelica and Jaime (Franke, 2015)



Picture 11: Cargo arriving from the Ecuadorian continent (Franke, 2015)