Boldizsár Megyesi

Introduction

The Social meaning of food

The third special issue of *socio.hu* aimed at collecting papers discussing the changing role of food in contemporary European society. This collection is a result of the workshop on the Social meaning of food, held between the 16th and 17th of June in Budapest.[1] Our original aim was to open a space for different approaches of rural studies, economics, cultural studies and ecology and to find a common focus for the different approaches. From a certain point of view, this special issue matches our original ideas: there are papers from different social sciences, and the papers also cover different subjects.

This collection includes nine papers from the field of anthropology, ethnography and sociology, and the topics of the papers range from a theoretical analysis of the role of food in our age (Bruckmeier), through the concept of local food in sociology (Cucco–Fonte), as well as several empirical analyses, using anthropological and historical perspectives (Sampeck), to ethnographic methods (Duvnak–Macan). Most of the papers using empirical data give an insight into Eastern-Central European local food studies, as does the article written by Nistor, Asztalos-Morell, Spiewak and Bielewicz, Šikić-Mićanović and that by Csurgó and Megyesi.

The first paper presents a discussion paper on interdisciplinary theoretical framework to renew the philosophical discourse on food. The paper analyses the appearance of food in the history of Western philosophy, as it is the context from which an interdisciplinary food discourse can be unravelled. The analyses supports one of Bruckmeier's main claims that *"*the changing conditions of food production and consumption in the epoch of the Anthropocene, are lacking in conventional philosophy. Globalization, industrial food production, and genetic modification of food products require knowledge and ideas from different disciplines, connection and synthesis of knowledge." The next chapter of the paper presents case studies showing the necessity of an interdisciplinary synthesis of knowledge on food. Finally the author argues for developing an interdisciplinary perspective for the analysis of the transformation of food processes in modernity in a macroscopic cultural perspective. The theoretical paper closes with presenting the next steps of the discussion on the role of interdisciplinary philosophy of food.

The second paper of the collection, written by Ivan Cucco and Maria Fonte has a narrower focus. It analyses "the value of the *local food* concept" by discussing it as a *real utopia*; and using the framework developed by E. O. Wright. The authors argue that local food systems are a critique of the present, and that it can be a prefiguration of a more sustainable, just and democratic future. In the conclusions they state that "by mobilizing non-ruptural strategies in the service of a real utopian project, local food initiatives are opening up

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1 Organised by socio.hu and Institute for Sociology CSS HAS. See *call for papers* at http://socio.hu/uploads/files/CFP_food.pdf, *programme* at http://www.socio.hu/uploads/files/FOOD/food_programme.pdf, *list of participants* at http://www.socio.hu/uploads/files/FOOD/food_participants.pdf, and *abstracts* at http://www.socio.hu/uploads/files/FOOD/abstracts_food.pdf.

new, enlarged spaces for non-capitalist or post-capitalist economies that constitute the basis for social learning and experimentation of a global more sustainable and just food system." The next step of the research could be to explore the effects of local food movements on the modern food industry – a claim which also appeared in Bruckmeier's paper, and a claim, rural sociology fails to fulfil. After understanding this connection, we can analyse, whether a "reflexive, more democratic, socially empowering system of governance" is able to lead to a more democratic and more just food system, and society.

The further papers are less theoretical, although do not lack theoretical back-ground and address some of the questions raised by the above two papers.

Martin and Sampeck, using anthropological methods give insight into the history of chocolate: how it appeared in Europe in the times of colonialism, how it served then and how it serves now as a symbol of social inequalities. The detailed analysis of the paper shows how an agricultural product became an industrial-product, and describes how these changes reshape the wider socio-economic environment of the product. It also tries to explore the phenomenon, the role of new food movements (namely Fair Trade) in chocolate consumption. The paper connects industrial conventional food and local – special food, and shows their dynamic relationship with each other and also the effects of food production on social processes using the example of chocolate.

The fourth paper of the collection, by Duvnjak and Macan also uses a historical perspective, but the applied approach is close to the approach used in European rural sociology these days. The authors analyse contemporary Dalmatian cuisine to explore the presence of traditional practices and the effects of modernization. According to their analysis modern or postmodern nourishment had few effects on the cuisine of the selected Dalmatian Islands.

There are two papers in the special issue which analyse how poor families deal with the problem of a lack of food and insufficient nourishment. Šikić-Mićanović finds that feeding is laborious and highly gendered in some Roma families, especially those living in food poverty. She argues that the lack "of access to healthy and nutritious food aggravates health, social, educational, economic and gender inequalities that squarely places them at the bottom rung of the social ladder". The paper of Asztalos-Morell analyses a social farming initiative, which exactly aims at moderating poverty, and especially the lack of food. Thanks to contemporary policy making, this topic is highly interesting; the article analyses a civic – local governance initiated movement and finds its result quite positive.

The last three papers focus on local food and new food movements, and shows also the social-cultural background of the initiatives.

Bilewicz and Śpiewak use the term Alternative Food Network (AFN) to show how the social background of the members of a new-type consumption cooperative influences the functioning of such initiatives. They argue that the Western-European examples can serve as a model for the new movements, but exactly this may lead to the fact, that the Western-European concepts can be used in the Polish context only cautiously, because these initiatives remained enclaves within Polish society.

Nistor analysed the meaning of local food and argues that there are two major definitions of local food: 1) a place-centred, geographic definition and 2) a production-centred, 'how it is made' kind of definition. Although the author emphasizes that she worked in Romania using qualitative methods, her results can be generalized, and are quite close to the distinction made by EU-legislation on PDO/PGI and traditional foods. The value of the paper is that it gives evidence that "consumers' involvement with local food occurs along product-based aspects, i.e. the intrinsic characteristics of food (taste, ingredients) and local food consumption seems to be much more motivated by health concerns and status assignment than by ethical and ecological reasons".

Csurgó and Megyesi analyse the interconnectedness of local food production, local identity creation and local image-making. The paper is based on two contemporarily discussed phenomena of rural development: local cultural heritage and local food production, as a part of local cultural heritage. Using the examples of three Hungarian rural micro-regions they analyse how a local community presents itself through local food production, and how local communities can be built by revitalizing a part of the local cultural heritage: a local-food product.

A real strength of the special issue is that it shows food production and consumption as a social phenomenon; places the different practices (consumer-producer relations, local food production) in their social context or explicitly address social problems.

Possible further research directions are numerous, but the papers of the special issue present both theoretical and empirical pathways to connect alternative and mainstream food production, and link between modern and postmodern consumption patterns, and thus will bring new knowledge to the topic of the social meaning of food.

Karl Bruckmeier[1]

"Eating the planet"- seeking a philosophy of food in the anthropocene[2]

Abstract

This paper discusses possibilities of renewing the philosophical discourse on food as part of interdisciplinary approaches to understand the global changes of food systems and the transcultural consequences of these changes. Social and environmental changes in the epoch of the Anthropocene, of globalization, industrial food production, and genetic modification of food products, require interdisciplinary analyses. The philosophy of food did not become influential in the history of philosophy and not in present social and ecological food discourses, except in fragmentary themes as the ethics of food production and consumption. The traditions of interdisciplinary and synthetic thinking in philosophy give reasons to renew the philosophy of food to analyse and reflect the wider social, cultural and ecological problems of food production and consumption. Such critical analyses require, beyond empirical research and its assessment, knowledge syntheses, theoretical reflection and normative judgements. The themes include the paradoxes of modern food and agriculture systems: hunger and abundance of food, unequal distribution of resources and access to food in market systems, commodification and de-commodification of food and natural resources, the limited availability of natural resources for human consumption and the continuing economic "growth mania". The metaphor "eating the planet" describes risks for food production and consumption under conditions of global social and environmental change. Why such a cognitive programme should develop under the name of philosophy is discussed with arguments referring to knowledge synthesis, critical analysis and the practical significance of the philosophy of food for searching solutions to food and resource problems.

Keywords: philosophy of food; sustainable food production; globalization of food; changing cultures of food; food justice

1 National Research University – Higher School of Economics Moscow, Department of Sociology (kbrukm@hse.ru)

KARL BRUCKMEIER

"EATING THE PLANET"- SEEKING A PHILOSOPHY OF FOOD IN THE ANTHROPOCENE

"Dismissal of food as a proper subject for philosophical inquiry is well rooted in the history of thought. Food, food preparation, and the appetite that drives them have been thought to be too mired in the body to be of any philosophical interest"

(Ray Boisvert, Philosophy Regains to its Senses, in: "Philosophy Now", 32, 2015)

INTRODUCTION – CULTURAL HISTORY OF FOOD

Reconnecting knowledge about food from specialized research in the humanities, the social and the natural sciences is necessary to discuss critically the many problems and consequences with food production, processing, distribution and consumption in the globalizing world. Knowledge synthesis and critical reflection are part of a broader interdisciplinary trend in research developing in the second half of the 20th century (Thompson Klein 1990). In this process philosophy is involved through its traditions of synthesis, epistemological, normative and critical reflection. Also in the research on nutritional, social, cultural and environmental aspects of food several philosophical disciplines play a role, beyond traditional forms of practical philosophy, such as the ethics of food. More important are newer forms of epistemology and theory of science, philosophical anthropology, cultural and social philosophy, developing in 20th century in interdisciplinary communication and knowledge use.

What are the social and environmental problems connected with nutrition and food? Why - and in which forms - should they be reflected philosophically? These questions guide the following discussion of a renewal of the philosophy of food, to find answers *to the solution of problems in the epoch of globalization or the Anthropocene.* This new term for the modern society, created in environmental research, refers to the short period of time, less than three hundred years of industrialization, that brought changes in the ecosystems and the environment through human activities as never before in the long history of human civilizations. The man-made global change, including climate change, reduction of biodiversity and land use change through rapid urbanization, generates a series of problems of food that did not exist before in human history. Most of these problems are connected with the role of science in food production, processing and consumption cultures, although this causality does not always appear in the food discourse. Intended and non-intended consequences of food research can be studied better in interdisciplinary approaches than in specialized research in food science.

Two assumptions regarding the consequences of global change in food processes guide the following discussion:

- *The global spreading of food resources is not a new process and not a standardizing development*

towards a universal (Westernized) food culture through modernization. Global trade in food products has been continuous for five centuries in the modern economic world system. Reactions to global exchange and trade of food resources range in many forms from acculturation of food from other cultures and countries to the revitalization and defence of local food production.

- *Food production, preparation and consumption are more than other natural resource use culturally shaped and differentiated processes of complex material and symbolic food cultures.* All processes of refinement from the raw to the cooked (Levi Strauss 1964) mediate between humans and the natural environment, in cultural transformations of food through human labour and the use of energy, knowledge and technology. The global exchange of, and trade in food resources is a politically regulated economic process, but the manifold cultural transformations of food are only partly influenced by it.

A renewed philosophy of food can help to maintain the collective memory of modern food cultures that are rooted in very old processes of social and cultural change in human history. Cultivation of food plants through agriculture is part of the ecological and cultural specificity of humans in the long process of human evolution. The global spreading of food products in modernity is a continuation of older processes of human conquering of the earth, accelerating since the invention of agriculture in the "neolithic revolution", in different parts of the world. This "Promethean revolution" (Georgescu-Roegen 1986) changed the forms of energy transformation and modes of production that helped to feed larger populations. The three significant revolutions of this kind in human history are connected with changes in food production and consumption: the use of fire by humans, the transition from hunting to agriculture and from agriculture to industrial society. The cultural memory of modernity usually covers the time since the European conquest and colonization of the Global South that started more than 500 years ago. Since then food cultures were continually globalized through the import of colonial goods into Europe that included to a large degree food products – fruits, vegetables, spices, sugar, coffee, cocoa, and tea. Some of these products (coffee, alcohol, tobacco) show the cultural change of modern Western culture to a "soft drogue culture" as it was called by Sahlins.

The ancient agricultural civilizations described as historical world systems (Egyptian Empire, Roman Empire, Han China, Amerindian Empires) created the modern food products through domestication and influence food cultures to this day. These civilizations developed through the cultivation of a dominant and characteristic staple food that became the main food for the masses. In the oriental and occidental cultures it is wheat, in the Chinese culture rice, in the Amerindian cultures maize; the three crops are still the most important food crops today. Although the Western food culture could be called a culture of meat, with meat products becoming the dominant food components in industrial society, it is still wheat that marks its identity ever since the early civilisations, biologically (as a plant) and as a product of human culture (bread). The cultural modifications of food processes in human history are investigated in several disciplines and subject areas including, beyond agriculture and food science, anthropology (Suehara 2012), environmental history (McNeill 2003, Crosby 2004), historical ecology (Bilsky 1980, Balée 2006), biogeography (Simmons 1980), human ecology (Bruhn 1972), cultural ecology (Steward 1972) and social ecology (Fischer-Kowalski and Rotmans 2009). Changing production and nutrition practices influenced population growth and human capacities of adaptation, the "Malthusian theme" of ecology. With the development of agriculture humans demonstrated their capacity as the most adaptable

species, as specialists in adaptation to different natural and climatic conditions, a capacity based on the invention of culture as brain- and memory-based system of storing and altering behaviour (Crosby 2004: 13f).

The changes through globalization since early modernity imply the accelerated growth of economies, natural resource use, human population and environmental destruction. Local food cultures in Europe changed continually through imported fruits and plants from the colonies, with the potato becoming the most important when it was cultivated in Europe as a staple food. Fruits like bananas, oriental spices, tea and coffee became part of European "meal cultures" (Hamburger and Teherani-Krönner 2014) only during colonialism. The last 500 years in Europe have been a continuous globalization process based on "*Columbian exchange*" as Crosby called the exchange of products between the ecosystems in different parts of the world that were earlier in history separated territorially and culturally.

This historical process of global exchange of goods, part of modernization, includes many forms of exchange and acculturation of food products, framed by two contrasting global processes:

- the continuing *Columbian exchange* tending towards variation, enrichment and blending of food cultures all over the globe, and

- the *reduction of agrobiodiversity* through modern agriculture tending towards standardization and uniformity of food products – ecologically, economically and culturally.

The global flow of food products was for long time unidirectional, from the colonies or the periphery to the European metropoles or centres. Still today the largest part of natural resources flows from the Global South to the Global North, and the exchange is determined by the economic processes of capitalist production and reproduction. Changes of food cultures are specific in these broader global flows of resources, described, e.g. in the sociology of flows (Mol and Spaargaren 2006). The question to discuss in the philosophy of food is not that of the global flows in monetary and physical dimensions, but of the cultural adaptation and transformation of food processes as specific processes within the economic dynamic: not independent from it, but modifying this dynamic in manifold ways. The changes of agriculture and food production in modernity can be seen as part of the "great transformation" (Polanyi 1944) to modern society, including:

- *acculturation* of food through exchange of food products as a process of enrichment of local food cultures;

- *physical changes of the landscape* through agricultural production (forest clearing, fields, cultural landscapes);

- s*cientific transformation* of food (scientific knowledge for preparing, conserving and consuming food);

- *economic transformation* of food from local subsistence production to market-based production (monetization, commercialization);

- *transformation of food into a scarce good* in power-driven processes of appropriation and commercialization (not as natural scarcity of food products): the same global economy that produces affluence in some countries and for a part of the human population produces malnutrition and hunger for another part.

The brief discussion of food history shows potential themes of a philosophy of food in the sense of an interdisciplinary science:

(1) A renewed philosophy of food can help to understand the *contradictions of food related processes:* the interaction between contradictory social processes of unequal access to food, affluence and poverty, food and hunger. These dilemmas require as part of the solution a transformation of modern agriculture and new normative orders for regulating natural resource use. In human history unequal access to food and malnutrition has not vanished but grown, reaching unprecedented dimensions during modernization. Hunger is today a man-made process of excluding the "absolute poor" from the access to food through markets, no longer a consequence of natural disasters that created hunger throughout human history. The growth of affluence is accompanied by growth of permanent hunger for a larger part of the human population. The attempts to combat hunger and malnutrition through technical modernization, domestication of plants and animals, and the development of high yield varieties- processes controlled by agricultural scientists, economists, engineers and private enterprises- resulted in a development trap. This trap is a consequence of unequal access to, and distribution of food through market-based processes, of commercialization, monetization and transformation of food and natural resources into private property, of overuse of natural resources and environmental disruption. Not technology but redistribution of food products and natural resources more generally is required. Redistribution is on the political agendas through the sustainability discourse, but in the practice of agricultural and environmental policies it is still disputed. In a more limited sense redistribution is discussed as a problem of food safety and security (Hongladarom 2015).

(2) A renewed philosophy of food can help to understand *cultural transformations of food processes and products* through historically specific theoretical analyses and theoretical framing of the analysis of food cultures and their changes. Macro-sociological theories of modernity and globalisation as well as the political-economic theories of modern capitalism seem too broad and general with their universal concepts to catch the cultural constitution of processes of food production, preparation and consumption; these can be understood as specific modes of cultural production within economic modes of production. Eric Wolf (1982) has in an exemplary way shown that the macro-social process of the global spreading of capitalism is not determined by the economic logic, but is throughout modernization constantly integrating manifold locally specific forms of economy, production and consumption, is a process requiring adaptation and integration of local cultures. From empirical research and local case studies in cultural and ecological anthropology the continuing diversity of local cultures is easily confirmed (Sahlins 1999); but without theoretical synthesis, codification and interpretation the knowledge remains in the state of particularism and does not allow the formulation of common properties, interrelations and trends. Furthermore, the empirical knowledge requires reflection in philosophical terms and forms. In the following discussion such an interdisciplinary philosophical perspective is unfolded in four steps of:

- summarizing *philosophical analyses of food in the history of Western philosophy* as context from which to develop an interdisciplinary food discourse;
- illustrating the interdisciplinary analysis with *exemplary empirical studies* that show the present problems

of food and nutrition;

- developing *an interdisciplinary perspective* for the analysis of the transformation of food processes in modernity in a macroscopic cultural perspective;

- concluding reflections about the *development of a new philosophy of food* and its justification as philosophical analysis.

WESTERN PHILOSOPHY OF FOOD IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

In Western philosophy, a knowledge culture of a person- and male-centred individualism, food remained a marginal theme, dealt with in form of examples, illustrations, aphorisms, footnotes. The philosophers did not see food production, processing and consumption as requiring philosophical knowledge. Philosophy of food remained a theme of practical philosophy, in the traditional philosophical discipline of ethics, and in modern forms of practical or applied philosophy (documented less in the Journal "Practical Philosophy", more in the "Journal of Applied Philosophy"). The neglect of food in the philosophical discourse contrasts with the importance of philosophical concepts and knowledge for the analysis of food-related processes. Only a few works with a more systematic analysis of food are found in ancient and modern philosophy. Some of these are world view and religion-based reflections of eating (e.g. Bellows 1867). Many popular books on food philosophy published today are more advisory books for everyday life, not aiming at a philosophical science of food (see the recent example of philosophical reflections on eating by Davey 2013 or Lemke 2014). Important ideas for a modern philosophy of food as synthetic science can be found in the following sources (chosen for their reviewing and summarizing discussion of food):

(1) Shields (2015) describes *Aristotle's* theory of the soul that connects to the systematics of plants, animals and humans, with nutrition as an important component. The theory cannot be judged with modern biological knowledge; it is an early example of analysing nutrition as part of the complex process of life and as a life-supporting process. Aristotle rejects a simple mechanistic view of growth in material terms arguing with the complexity of life and growth processes that require theoretical analysis and reflection. In modern biology and ecology such processes are analysed in specialized research that requires further theoretical and interdisciplinary synthesis. Only some complicated and controversial theories developed integrated and holistic analyses, as the examples of the holistic biology of Uexküll (1920) or the more recent theory of autopoietic systems (Maturana and Varela 1980) show; these transgress the boundaries between biology and philosophy.

(2) In the philosophical anthology of *Althoff and Monroe* (2007) that starts with Epicurus as *the* food philosopher, a reason for the popularity of practical food philosophy today becomes visible: hedonist motives direct the philosophical discourse of food. Philosophical hedonism is not necessarily arguing for luxurious and conspicuous consumption; it can also, as does Epicurus, argue for moderate food cultures. Philosophically relevant themes of food- food values, meat and vegetarian diets, eating disorders, taste, aesthetics and ethics of food, hunting, and meal cultures- are discussed by the authors in a somewhat eclectic fashion. The discussion is philosophical in the sense of reflections of the relations between humans, society and food to show the problems within these complex webs of food processes – beyond the ecological analysis of food webs (Sch-

oender 1989). What is lacking is an integrated and synthetic perspective for the critical reflection of modern food research and the problems of access to and security of food.

(3) In the discussion of *Korthals* (2008) main arguments supporting a new and critical philosophy of food appear. He discusses the alienation of philosophy from food as "*the philosopher's incoherence*", throughout the history of Western philosophy visible in attempts to get rid of the body or reducing bodies and eating to secondary activities, not relevant for philosophical reflection. Kant's ideas for a theory of the social meaning of food production and consumption are mentioned as an exception from which the philosophical discussion of food in modern society can start again, necessary because of the growing social problems with food visible in global hunger and obesity, competing food styles as fast and slow food and their consequences for the environment and human and animal welfare.

(4) Heldke (2013) reflects the relation between philosophy and food, showing some themes of a renewed philosophy of food: applying philosophical categories to new or unaccustomed topics; reconceptualizing an existing philosophical discussion as one of food; recovering the value of previous philosophical work for the study of food; revealing new categories of philosophical understanding through analyses of food. This attempt to systematize the subject area is useful for the thematic description of a new philosophy of food, but limited through a conventional understanding of philosophy. Traditional philosophical ideas and concepts are used, interdisciplinary knowledge synthesis less so.

(5) *Onfray (2015)* shows in exemplary way the end of traditional philosophical reflection of food, less so because of his self-description as a post-anarchist ethical hedonist, or his selection of authors like Diogenes, Rousseau, Kant, Fourier, Nietzsche, Sartre, Marinetti. Onfray's conclusion regarding the connections between eating and thinking in philosophy is: no ideas are really new, all is reactivated and recycled from past ideas, coming with that message close to a postmodernist credo. The results he describes connect to the interdisciplinary food discourse: food cultures are part of a broader ethic or morality, for example, asceticism; food cultures show the advances of civilization, visible in refined techniques of food production, preparation and consumption; diets of people show the values and knowledge of their cultures and societies.

(6) Female philosophers are excluded from Onfray's reflection of food and thinking, as from Western philosophy in general. Nevertheless women contributed to philosophy throughout its history (Rullmann 1998, Villanueva Gardner 2003). The female contributions to Western philosophy are not necessarily concentrating on food or reflecting on the social and genderized division of labour in food production, although they include food and health related reflections. The notion of philosophy becomes rather diffuse with these reflections developing from various disciplines. Critical food analyses are found today in interdisciplinary research, detached from philosophy, for example, in the discourse of cultural ecology with the concepts of meal culture and meal policy (Hamburger and Teherani-Krönner 2014).

The examples above show that the themes discussed here, the changing conditions of food production and consumption in the epoch of the Anthropocene, are lacking in conventional philosophy. Globalization, industrial food production and genetic modification of food products require knowledge and ideas from different disciplines as well as the connection and synthesis of knowledge. The authors in Kaplan (2012) give some ideas

for answering questions of food safety, quality and justice beyond the practices of ethical norm formulation and legal control. Their interdisciplinary and philosophical reflections include themes of aesthetics, hunger, genetic modification of food, animal welfare and animal ethics in agricultural production, agricultural and nature politics as well as nutrition and food safety. These themes from different knowledge fields cannot be integrated into one overarching theory or framework; they require more complex forms of synthesis, discourses, combinations of theories, analyses and cooperation of scientists from different disciplines, approaching similar forms of new knowledge production as transdisciplinarity (Nowotny et al 2001).

Exemplary empirical studies of food problems in modernity

The following examples of empirical studies of food problems do not represent the whole spectrum of specialized empirical research that generates new knowledge about food processes, only some illustrative examples. The heterogeneous themes, views and perspectives in these studies show: food studies require more integrated, holistic and culturally embedded approaches for analysing food problems, some kind of interdisciplinary synthesis of knowledge directing towards a philosophy of food in the form discussed here.

(1) *Health care - the philosophy of preventive nutrition:* Fardet and Rock (2014) discuss a new philosophy of preventive nutrition with a holistic paradigm to support more efficient nutritional recommendations. The reductionist approach dominating in human nutrition research in Western countries has helped to identify some fundamental mechanisms of food nutrients (e.g. those resulting in deficiency diseases) and to increase life expectancy, together with progress in medicine and pharmacology. But after forty years of nutrition research epidemics of obesity and diabetes are continually growing worldwide, in developed and developing countries, with decreases in healthy life years. It has become clear that interactions between nutrition and health relations cannot be modelled as linear cause-effect relations, but as multi-causal, non-linear relations. In spite of the methodological weaknesses of reductionist analyses, they seem necessary, as holistic approaches to show different consequences of philosophical thinking on nutrition, regarding different aspects as public health, environmental sustainability, breeding, biodiversity, food science and processing, and physiology that contribute to nutritional recommendations. It is expected that holistic approaches can show global solutions to the problems encountered "from the field to the plate", coming away from pharmacology and analyses of foods as drugs (Fardet and Rock 2014: 430). Although uncovering the limits of reductionist methodologies in nutrition research, the solution discussed as interactive or holistic thinking is limited as well, simplifying philosophy to world views.

(2) *Environmental problems - the organic food culture:* Schösler et al (2012) study Dutch food consumption and its importance for transition towards more sustainable global consumption of natural resources in a cultural–historical analysis. Focusing on consumer options for organic food from ecologically integrated farming and more carefully produced food, the study takes up part of the questions discussed here in more theoretical perspectives. It is shown that the choice for organic food happens in culturally framed processes where consumers practice individual food philosophies in ethical terms. The organic food culture, dating back to historical social movements as the German "Lebensreform" (reform of life) and the American Natural Foods Movement, implies the wish to return to natural lifestyles, distancing from materialistic lifestyles in modern

industrial society, and finding individually meaningful moral ways of life. These- not new- ideas and values of connectedness to nature, awareness, and purity connect in the choices of lifestyles. Such values are shared by a larger part of Dutch society which seems to enable expansion of organic food consumption as part of transitions to sustainable consumption. The study shows the dilemma of consumers' choices of food products: these cannot be realized simply as individual choices of consumption in the sense of buying other food, but require complicated changes of lifestyles that are part of collective action processes and of complex social processes of transitions to sustainability. The sharing of cultural values alone is not sufficient to realize transitions, although it is a component of larger changes.

(3) Eating the world – food consumption as part of local and global processes of change: Scruton (2003) sees a long chain of connections between the following processes: clearance of the rain forests, the desertification of the grasslands, soil erosion caused by deforestation, the loss of boundaries and intensification of agriculture, the accumulation of landfill sites, the pollution of the landscape by non-biodegradable waste, the destruction of the high street and the town centre by the out-of-town supermarket, the escalation in food miles to the point where food may consume its own weight in fossil fuels before arriving on the supermarket shelf, the spread of fast food and the culture of fast food, the disappearance of the family meal, the pauperization of the small farmer, the growth of genetically-modified organisms and patented crops, the use of World Trade Organisation rules on 'trade-related intellectual property rights' to obliterate local food economies, the increasing obesity of populations in wealthy countries, the aesthetic pollution of historic townscapes by the logos and facades of the fast-food chains, the disappearance of the village shop and the local market. All these phenomena are seen as dis-equilibrating forces of production, processing, distribution and consumption of food. The many interdependent factors and processes in food production and consumption require holistic analyses, but Scruton's observations do not show how a new philosophy of food can be constructed to integrate knowledge more systematically.

(4) *"Eating the planet" – a social-ecological scenario:* Erb et al (2009) develop a global scenario for different food categories for 2050. The metaphoric title symbolizes the connections between human food production and consumption and primary production, consumption and reduction processes of ecosystems; it refers to the new risks in food production and consumption under conditions of global social and environmental change that require social and ecological solutions to food and resource use problems. The scenario uses the medium population forecast of the United Nations (9.16 billion in 2050) to project the demand for infrastructure areas and to calculate total food demand. FAO, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, projects for 2050 crop yields to grow by 54% and crop land area by 9%. This projection is compared with two other crop production scenarios: wholly organic crop production and a mix of farming systems that create a mean yield between the FAO and organic crop systems. Four different diets are assessed, ranging from a 'western high meat' diet (3 171 kcal/cap/day, rich in animal protein) to a nutritionally sufficient 'fair less meat' diet (2 800 kcal/cap/day, sufficient protein and fat, low in animal protein), and three different livestock rearing systems ('intensive', 'humane' with free range, and 'organic'). All three crop production variants seem feasible: (a) feeding the world with organic crops and an organic livestock system, with a nutritionally sufficient diet; this requires a high degree of equality in food distribution to avoid malnutrition; (b) the 'Western high meat'-diet

requires high crop land expansion; (c) the mix of farming systems requires crop land expansion and the development of 'organic' as well as 'humane' livestock rearing systems (Erb et al 2009: 8). This scenario is complementary to the discussion of food cultures above. It shows a wide range of possible futures of agriculture and the different environmental and resource use effects of these. A limiting factor of growing food production is the possibility to expand crop land which is already scarce.

(5) *Feeding the world in 2050 – food security*: The thematic journal issue discussing the future of the global food system edited by Godfray et al (2010) shows in a number of studies different food problems expected in the mid of this century, when global population growth is approaching its peak and global climate change has significant influence on food production. The discussion includes food-related aspects of global population projections, food consumption trends and drivers, urbanization, income distribution trends, arable crop yields, livestock production, marine and inland fisheries, aquaculture, competition for water and land, ecosystem services, energy, globalization, food prices, agricultural research and development, food waste, healthy food, and food scenarios. These can be seen as important factors, trends and processes that influence the future of the global food system. The themes do not give a completely coherent picture, but show the main problems to discuss in integrated perspectives.

Empirical studies of food production and consumption cannot be integrated without further methodologies and theoretical reflection. Global scenarios and projections in food science work with models. Modelling alone does not help to understand the future, potential development and changes; theoretical and epistemological analyses and reflections are required to deal with incompatibilities, contradictions, dilemmas and conflicts that appear with socio-cultural changes and transformations. Only in few approaches as that of Arnason (2003, 2006) develop more differentiated and integrated methodological and theoretical perspectives to analyse food-related processes as part of multiple modernities and as multi-scale phenomena. These perspectives range from micro- to macro-sociological views, from local to global forms of interpreting or constructing the world. Historically varying forms of interaction between nature and society are connected with the material and symbolic cultures of food production and consumption. Theories used to interpret these interrelated processes need to show how competing and conflicting cultural interpretations of collective actors and social groups shape food cultures, but also how these cultures are influenced by structural constraints of societal systems.

INTERDISCIPLINARY ANALYSES OF FOOD PROCESSES IN LATE MODERNITY

In interdisciplinary knowledge production appear new forms of generating and using empirical knowledge for which the scenario "*eating the planet*" (see above, 3) gives an example. Much more data and information need to be used and analysed in global scenario construction that develops rapidly in environmental research. In the environmental discourse preferences for different food cultures - traditional food, local food, slow food, vegetarian food, organic food, and others - are discussed in ethical or moral terms, in traditional forms of practical philosophy. To understand the significance of such alternatives for solving nutrition problems requires comparison, theoretical reflection, and knowledge synthesis.

The paradoxes and dilemmas of modern food and agriculture systems give an example of complicated questions requiring broader analysis and reflection from several perspectives: coexistence of hunger and abundance of food, unequal distribution of resources and access to food in market systems, commodification and de-commodification of food and natural resources, limited availability of natural resources for human consumption and continuing "growth mania" of the market economy, locally specific and transcultural criteria of food quality and security. There is no single methodology, approach or theory to analyse the dilemmas sufficiently. Broadening of analytical perspectives, combination of different theories and methods, and epistemological reflection are attempts to deal with the increasing complexity of resource problems in modern society of which the dilemmas of modern food systems are a part.

Local food, its production and consumption, is part of the complexity of societal development. As counter-trend to the industrialization of food production it is a renewal of non-industrial production forms in modernized and globalized food cultures, in attempts to maintain criteria of food quality and safety that cannot be achieved in industrialized food production (for European countries see Fonte and Papadopoulos 2010). To study the conflicting and contradictory development of such alternative cultures and the dominant food cultures requires analyses of the connections of food production to economic and population growth and multi-scale processes of use and governance of natural resources, especially water and land. *Sustainable food systems* are not just local food systems; they become part of a global transformation of resource use and food production discussed as sustainable development, guided by the ideas of intra- and inter-generational solidarity of resource use, sharing and redistribution. Changing roles of food in agriculture and rural development, the alternatives of food or bioenergy production on agricultural land, changing conditions of food quality and security, and possibilities to maintain cultural, social and ecological diversity, need to be studied in interdisciplinary analyses, as discussed in the social-ecological discourse (e.g. Fischer-Kowalski and Rotmans 2009, Bruckmeier 2013), including the problems and dilemmas mentioned above.

Whether such an interdisciplinary programme should develop under the name of philosophy, or from the discourse-leading disciplines in environmental research, remains controversial. The controversy cannot be resolved here, but arguments can be drafted for a critical philosophical analysis and reflection of food problems. Some arguments can already be described from the points discussed so far, with interdisciplinary knowledge synthesis as a joint idea.

(1) The heterogeneous forms and results of research, the specialized knowledge, and the heterogeneous theories in the food discourse cannot be reflected upon and integrated within the boundaries of disciplinary discourses. A renewed philosophy of food should help to break through these knowledge boundaries of specialization and support a transdisciplinary discourse through syntheses of knowledge from various sources, scientific and local knowledge forms. The first step is a synthesis of empirical knowledge from different fields, especially sociology, cultural anthropology, economic and political science, agricultural science, biological and ecological food research. Building on such – thematically specific – syntheses the second step is theoretical synthesis, using concepts and criteria from several social scientific and natural scientific theories, as done in an exemplary way in social ecology. This theoretical synthesis is in the third step reinforced through the use of epistemologi-

cal and philosophical reflections about food related knowledge. Finally, the synthesized knowledge needs to be transformed in methodologically controlled ways for use in the practices of environmental research, action and governance. Such progressive syntheses (using a term from ecological research, see Ford and Ishii 2001, but in more complex variants of interdisciplinary syntheses) include sociological knowledge which is relativized, (re-)contextualized, reflected and discursively used in comparison with knowledge from other disciplines and research areas. In this way scientific knowledge practices become similar to practices of knowledge use in policy and resource management, where rarely one single discipline, approach or theory is used.

(2) The practices of food production that require interdisciplinary perspectives and reflection "imitate" interdisciplinarity with the complexity of resource use achieved in modern agriculture. Food processes are no longer separate and autonomous as production, processing, distribution and consumption, or locally limited; with modernization they became part of the globalized industrial system in multi-scale processes of exchange and acculturation of food. In food production many other resources are used: water as a natural resource and food itself, oil and other fossil energy resources, land, synthetic fertilizers, machine technology, and increasingly the technologies of genetic modification of plants and animals. Among these resources water is scarce: about 70% of global freshwater is used for agriculture (irrigation and other production techniques; for further details see the AQUASTAT information system of FAO). To enlarge agricultural water use requires technologies like desalination of ocean water that lack economic and ecological rationality, continuing the vicious circle of production forms that use more energy and material than they produce. The use of many resources and technologies in food production means: humans "eat the planet", they not only consume its biomass in the form of plant and animal products or the "virtual water" that is required to produce food, but also its mineral resources and the land on which food is produced. This complicated networking of food production with other processes of resource use is not sufficiently described as "scientification" that is understood mainly as improving the quantity and quality of food, its hygienic and dietary quality, protecting human health and well-being. The non-intended consequences of scientification and industrializd food production appear with the slogan "we feed the planet", meaning the few hundred multinational firms that today control the commercialized global food production. The contradiction between "we eat the planet" and "we feed the planet" is obvious: the first formulation implies to become aware of and to deal practically with the non-intended and negative consequences of modern food production that uses more and more resources; the second formulation neglects these consequences with the myth that there is no alternative to industrialization and economic globalization of food production to meet the demands of a growing global population.

(3) Transcultural exchange and globalization of food production and consumption are complicated and require analyses from different perspectives. They include continuous recombination of food practices in manifold forms. The local coexistence of different cultural food practices can be seen as a positive form of cultural contact and enrichment of local food cultures. Eating of Chinese, Indian and other food from non-European countries has become part of cultural practices of food consumption in European countries, without national, regional or local food cultures in these countries vanishing. With the exchange of food products between European countries in an integrated European economy some products, for example, olive oil have lost their regional identity without negative cultural or nutritional consequences. However, in food trade the products do

not travel alone between cultures and continents – with them travel negative components, e.g. diseases and ecological risks. Also the commercialization of food consumption through fast food in global restaurant chains is more problematic – economically, ecologically, culturally and in terms of health effects. When living resources, plants and animals, are exchanged or spread globally, negative consequences may be caused through species invasion; this may achieve the degree of ecological catastrophes as the introduction of the Nile Perch in the African Lake Victoria resulting in the extinction of local fish species (documentary film of Sauper, "Darwin's nightmare"). In the broader context of globalization the territorialization of food processes and products, with local food as a marker of quality and cultural identity, appears as part of complex, differentiated and multi-scale changes of food cultures.

(4) The modification of nature through humans, mainly done through food production, shows food cultures as part of broader cultures and of global processes. The melting of nature, culture and society are among the difficult and theoretically controversial themes in the social sciences that require interdisciplinary communication and cooperation. An interdisciplinary theory of society-nature interaction, so far not advanced (for further description see Bruckmeier 2015), can support the analysis of positive and negative effects of modifications of nature. In the history of critical theory in the social sciences such a theory was developing with the analysis of "societal relations with nature" (Biro 2011). Today such integrated and interdisciplinary perspectives are renewed in other forms in ecological and social-ecological research (Bruckmeier 2013), analysing the contradicting processes in coupled social-ecological systems, the development of technonatures (White and Wilbert 2010) and socionatures (Swyngedouw 2010). Whereas food consumption cultures have not become globally standardized, standardization processes are part of food production. The contradicting nature of globalizing food processes requires more differentiated, multi-perspective approaches to analyse the forms of differentiation and blending, technical refinement and simplification of food production and processing, of changing cultural and scientific norms and standards of food quality and security, of changing combinations of local and non-local food in meal cultures.

(5) Socio-cultural analyses of processes mediating between nature culture and society develop towards interdisciplinary, epistemological and philosophical analyses and reflections including food, however, in limited degrees. Food cultures can be analysed with the figurational sociology of Elias (2000) for the study of civilizational processes to show the disciplining power of culture and socialization in food consumption, reading the civilization process as one of cultural refinement and "taming" of the emotions. Broader is the interdisciplinary approach of Braudel for the analysis of civilizations, starting from the material infrastructures to analyse how "space, land and its contours, climate, vegetation, animal species and natural or other advantages" interact and how humans dealt with these basic conditions of life (Braudel, 1993: 9). Such analyses are not advanced in an explanatory capacity, but rather are more descriptive. For a systematic interdisciplinary analysis of civilizations and their development the approach of Arnason (2003), developing from a dialogue between philosophy and the social sciences, gives an example. The complex concepts of civilization and culture are connected in the comparative analysis of civilizations and cultures in their social and historical contexts. With further concepts required in the analysis of cultures and civilizations, especially nature and society, the difficulties of this approach begin where the concept of society remains somewhat diffuse and under-theorized. The interaction

between nature and culture as a potential theme of inter-civilizational comparison of cultures (Arnason 2003: 62f, 304) is methodologically more difficult.

With these arguments and examples the justification of an interdisciplinary philosophy of food can be discussed further in epistemological, methodological and thematic terms:

(1) Epistemologically and methodologically seen integrative frameworks and theories for synthesizing knowledge create difficulties that are hardly discussed or solved today. Syntheses require methodologies (e.g. Mieg et al 2008) and theories (e.g. Jones et al 2011), but these need to be reinforced through meta-theoretical and epistemological reflection of knowledge. A renewed philosophy of food requires concepts, methods and theories for knowledge production, synthesis and reflection, developed and used in an open, inter-disciplinary and inter-theoretical discourse with changing forms and different themes. In approaches and theories from historical, cultural, human and social ecology emerges an interdisciplinary knowledge culture (see Bruckmeier 2015). Concepts and theories can be combined and integrated in flexible forms for different purposes, in broader theoretical perspectives and reflections of food production and processing as an integral part of the human use of natural resources (paradigmatic forms include Arnasons' civilizational analysis and social-ecological theories of societal metabolism).

(2) The themes and questions of interdisciplinary approaches that can be used in further philosophical reflections of food are complementary to specialized sociological and other disciplinary research where questions as the following can hardly be dealt with (for further description see Bruckmeier 2015):

- *Multi-dimensional and multi-scale processes of development and change in modern society* include the relations between human beings, nature, society, culture, civilization; the cultural logic and the culture-specific components of food processes in the overarching processes of modernization and globalization; normative cultural interpretations of food processes; combination of ecological analyses with cultural and social analyses of food processes.

- *Transformation of food cultures under conditions of global social and environmental change* includes analyses of the paradoxes of modern food and agriculture systems, food and hunger, economic growth and limits of natural resources; industrialization of food production and new alternatives as food or bioenergy production; local food production and consumption under conditions of globalization and multi-scale food governance; changing conditions of food quality and security, and possibilities to maintain the cultural, social and ecological diversity of food; possible future forms (global scenarios) of agriculture and food production and resource use; possible ways of transformation of modern society towards sustainability.

What characterizes such analyses of food cultures or natural resource use more broadly is the complexity to deal with that requires the combination of different themes and analytical perspectives, social and natural scientific, empirical and theoretical knowledge. Difficulties appear with the structuring and connecting of different forms of specialized knowledge. The themes described above require further development of a philosophy of food: to clarify social aspects of food processes; the development of an overarching theory of nature-society interaction; to reflect the relations between civilisation and society to deal with the contrast-

ing views of society as territorially limited, local, regional or national societies and a global or world society; to systematize the different forms of structuring of society (cultural, social, political, economic) for a coherent interpretation of the development of food systems.

CONCLUSIONS – NECESSITY OF A NEW PHILOSOPHY OF FOOD?

The philosophy of food to develop is not a closed theoretical or philosophical system in the traditional forms of philosophy. It develops in an open discourse, in multi-dimensional analyses of food processes with cultural, social, political, economic and ecological knowledge components, and in knowledge syntheses to address complex problems and dilemmas of food production in late modernity. The practical solution of such complex problems is not done with knowledge transfer from science to politics. This solution is part of transforming the industrialized food system towards a sustainable one, another "great transformation" of society that comes on the agenda of the sustainability discourse, in response to the deficits and failures of the earlier sustainability process. It seems useful to decompose the broad sustainability process in different parts and more specific analyses to be able to deal with its complexity: beyond synthesized empirical studies this requires normative and theoretical thinking. In transformations of modern food systems a series of normative principles is required regarding environmental sustainability (ecological principles of resource use), environmental justice (including distributional fairness), and ecological citizenship (constituting new normative orders beyond national citizen rights, strengthening human rights). Theoretical analysis is developing with the unfolding debate of an interdisciplinary theory of nature–society interaction as discussed above (see 4).

Philosophy as integrative and synthetic thinking and knowledge use is not an exclusive approach to discuss the complexity and the future of food production, processing and consumption, but it cannot be neglected. Its methodological and epistemological approaches discussed above are even used in knowledge syntheses that are not arguing philosophically; normative reasoning, value-based judgements, epistemological and theoretical reflections are required in all forms of food discourses. Arguments in favour of a philosophical approach include the following:

(1) *Knowledge from the natural and social sciences and the humanities* can be integrated and synthesized in philosophical discourses, supported through ontological, epistemological and methodological reflection. A philosophy of food is a way to connect such reflection with knowledge integration from different disciplines and sources and to add further themes, methods and knowledge to interdisciplinary analyses.

(2) *Normative, positive, scientific and local knowledge* can be used in philosophical discourses in other forms than in their original and disciplinary contexts: for critical discussion, reflection, assessment and synthesis. Normative, especially ethical and aesthetic, knowledge and judgements are disputed and in continuous need of discussion and clarification. Values and norms of food production, processing and consumption are not eternal and unchangeable values or principles, but part of social- scientific, political, life world- processes and practices of action. Food production and the changing food related practices require continuous debate and interpretation in methodologically structured philosophical forms of reasoning.

(3) *The problems and risks of genetic modification of plant and animal organisms* in agriculture require

new ethical reflections of food production, ethics that work in collective decision-making and action processes where food production and processing is negotiated and decided. Also the technical norms and standards for production need to be ethically validated. New ethics of food production require ethically reflective practitioners in food governance and continuous ethical discourses that guide the practices of food production and modification of food products.

(4) *A long-time perspective of thinking about the future*, although not in the trivial sense of eternal truths, is required in sustainability research and policy processes, including the themes of food production and consumption. Ecological research about risks, vulnerability, resilience and sustainability shows possibilities and forms of thinking to reflect temporal dynamics and perspectives that cannot develop from the established practices of planning, management, decision-making and prognostics. Inter-generational perspectives in the sustainability discourse can develop only with growing experience in interdisciplinary knowledge use and syntheses.

Much of that what characterizes the interdisciplinary discourse of philosophy of food in the sense described above is part of larger discourses and wider themes of interdisciplinary civilizational-cultural analysis. The broader interaction of nature and society in the historical process constitutes culture as mediating between social and natural or ecological processes. This interaction cannot be reduced to economic processes of global exchange and technical transformation of natural resources. Multiple criteria analyses, knowledge syntheses, combined theories, and philosophical reflection of the complex interaction in different perspectives should help to avoid short-cut analyses and misleading conclusions found in large parts of food research and production, justified with doubtful epistemological constructions of limits of knowledge and veils of ignorance.

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Ivan Cucco[1] – Maria Fonte[2]

Local food and civic food networks as a real utopias project

Abstract

For scholars and activists alike, local food is linked to visions of a more equitable, ethical and sustainable agro-food system. Notwithstanding an apparent unity, local food is mobilized for very different aims including environmental sustainability, the revitalization of rural economies, the reconnection of consumers to agriculture and nature and the promotion of land entitlements for marginalized populations. At the same time, local food has become a crucial element in protectionist and neo-ruralist ideologies that support bounded, defensive spatial strategies. These contradictions point to the limited heuristic value of the 'local food' concept, particularly when decoupled from an explicit attention to the political and power dimensions of the local.

Building upon these considerations, in this article we explicitly focus on the political and transformative dimensions of different local food projects and propose to read local food as a 'real utopia' project whose aim is the transformation of the food economy in the direction of sustainability, social emancipation and social justice. Utilizing the framework developed by E.O. Wright, we look at local food as a diagnosis and critique of the present; as the prefiguration of a more sustainable, just and democratic future; and as a set of transformative strategies that aim at changing the system in the desired direction.

Our analysis suggests that, differently from the oppositional movements of the Fordist era, the local food movement is characterized by its use of interstitial ("ignore the state") and symbiotic ("use the state") strategies. These strategies either seek to establish new economic and social relations at the margins of the neoliberal food economy, or partner with local institutions to consolidate new experiences with food democracy and food justice.

By mobilizing non-ruptural strategies in the service of a real utopian project, local food initiatives are opening up new, enlarged spaces for non-capitalist or post-capitalist economies that constitute the basis for social learning and experimentation of a global more sustainable and just food system. A further step ahead could be constituted by the promotion of a reflexive, more democratic, socially empowering system of governance, able to lead the innovative potential of the food movement to its full expression.

Keywords: local food, alternative food networks, civic food networks, real utopias project, food governance.

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1 Adjunct Professor, Graduate School, The American University of Rome

2 Associate Professor, Department of Economics, Management, Institutions, University of Naples Federico II

IVAN CUCCO – MARIA FONTE

LOCAL FOOD AND CIVIC FOOD NETWORKS AS A REAL UTOPIAS PROJECT

INTRODUCTION: THE DEBATE ON LOCAL FOOD

The literature on local food, alternative agriculture and civic food networks has grown enormously in recent years. A quick interrogation of Google Scholar for academic articles on 'local food' gives 20,300 results for local food and 3,320 for alternative agriculture[3]. In activist narratives and academic debates, local food is being linked to visions of a more equitable, ethical and sustainable agro-food system. Its alternativeness rests on the connection of food to the territory, i.e. to the natural (agro-ecological) and social context in which food is produced and consumed. As for the agro-ecological conditions, the local food discourse promotes respect for the environment and nature. As for the social context, it emphasizes the inclusion of people who are currently marginalized by the corporate and increasingly financialized food production system. This implies, on the one hand, the protection of small farms and of their knowledge; on the other, a concern for the poor voiced in requests for increased access to a healthy, culturally sound diet.

A variety of practices and movements have gathered under the 'local food' umbrella in both the global North and South. Beyond the widespread diffusion of Farmers' Markets, prominent examples of local food initiatives in the global North include Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), AMAPs (Association pour le Maintien d'une Agriculture Paysanne), Solidarity Purchasing Groups and Food Teams. In Eastern Asia, while a rising awareness of the social and environmental risks associated with major events like the Fukushima nuclear plant accident may lead to a disconnection between the local and the organic, the globalization process brought about by the TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership) agreement may act as a catalyst for otherwise disconnected experiences related to local food, organic agriculture and Alternative Food Networks (AFNs). In the global South, as well as in many Eastern European and Mediterranean countries, local food initiatives not only propose an alternative to the corporate food system, but also aim at valorising local markets, traditional foods, peasant and subsistence agriculture as forms of 'quiet sustainability' (Smith and Jehlička 2013). Especially in Latin America, local food initiatives are contributing to the elaboration and consolidation of new practices linked to a novel model of agro-ecological development, based on the valorisation of farmers' knowledge and experimentation in opposition to the expert-led model of the science- and technology-intensive GMO agriculture (Altieri, Nicholls 2010).

As the debate advances, the transformative practices and academic discourses that deploy the concept of local food appear far from homogeneous. Different initiatives mobilize the concept of the 'local' for various transformative aims: environmental sustainability (Feenstra 1997, Pretty et al. 2005, Pirog et al. 2001 and 2003, Garnett 2007), the revitalization of rural economies and the reconnection of urban consumers to agriculture

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3 Online search performed by the authors on 23 September 2015.

and nature (Renting et al. 2003, Marsden et al. 2000, Fonte 2008, Brunori et al. 2012); the agro-ecological revolution, especially in Latin America (Altieri and Toledo 2011); advancing land entitlements for marginalized groups in the face of encroaching dispossession in the Global South (McMichael 2014). At the same time, local food is also a crucial element in protectionist and neo-ruralist ideologies promoting bounded, defensive spatial strategies (Hinrichs 2000, Born and Purcell 2006).

These contradictions point out to the limited heuristic value of "local food" as an analytical category, particularly when decoupled from an explicit attention to the political and power dimension of the local, considered in its own right as well as in its multi-scalar interactions. The contribution of a 'reflexive localism' (Goodman, DuPuis and Goodman 2012, Fonte 2013b) and the opening up of food studies to insights from other disciplines, e.g. critical human geography, highlight the importance of *politics in places* (Hinrichs 2015). In this perspective the 'local' becomes the space for the enactment of a political agenda and the nexus of a political reflection involving the construction of a more equitable and more sustainable food economy (Harris 2009), an emancipatory project leading the way to a transition toward sustainability (Hinrichs 2014).

Building upon these considerations, in this article we explicitly focus on the political and transformative dimensions of different local food projects. To this end, we propose to read local food initiatives as 'real utopias' projects, whose central aim is transforming the food economy in the direction of environmental sustainability, social emancipation and social justice. Looking at local food discourses and movements through the framework of a transition theory offers the advantage of connecting the local food practices to other proposals for emancipatory responses to the disruptive effects of neoliberal capitalism such as participatory budgeting and empowered participatory governance, the social economy of welfare provision, the experience of transition cities, the sharing economy and open-source software.

In the next section we will locate the real utopias project in the realm of transition theories, highlighting its similarities and differences with the multilevel perspective on the socio-technical regime transition (Geels 2005, Geels and Schott 2007) and the social practice theory (Reckvitz 2002, Schatzki 1996). In the remainder of the article we will analyse local food as a 'real utopia', articulating our reading of the literature on local food and civic food networks with the three core dimensions proposed by Wright (2006, 2010): a critique of the dominant food system; a prefiguration of the desirable future food economy and a proposal of strategies for getting there. A discussion and a conclusion will follow, aimed at pleading how a reflexive, social empowered system of governance could scale up and bring to its full potential the transformative potential of civic food networks in direction of a more just and more sustainable food economy.

Transition theories and the real utopias project

Our interpretation of local food as a heuristic for the transition to sustainability draws upon different theories: the multilevel perspective (MLP), social practice theory, and the 'real utopias' project. Both the MLP and practice theory deal with the problem of how to advance towards more sustainable consumption and production systems; the 'real utopias' perspective is instead fundamentally interested in visions (and practices) that aim at building new institutional architectures that can enhance social emancipation and deepen

democratic participation.

The MLP (Geels 2005; Geels and Schott 2007) has to date offered the most articulated theory of transition towards (environmental) sustainability of the economic system. It relies on the concept of 'strategic niche management' and sees the achievability of the transformation objectives as a progression from interstitial or symbiotic strategies to the reconfiguration of the entire system in the direction of sustainability. Innovative ideas and solutions emerge and are developed in spaces protected from market competition; in these innovation niches, learning processes are set in motion and new forms of economic and social organization are experimented with. The resulting innovations may be scaled up to system-wide proportions or may be co-opted by the dominant system through adequate governance mechanisms, so as to provide a basis for new socio-technical regimes that reconfigure the system as a whole. In some way, interstitial niche innovation may obtain different results as to the degree of system transformation depending on the pressure deriving from landscape (structural, exogenous) variables and the capacity of the new social-technical (niche) solutions to resolve the economic and social contradictions of the dominant regime. Policy recommendations stemming from the MLP literature are primarily related to the *governance* of the socio-technical regime change, through a mix of tools that may go from networks governance in an early phase of niche stimulation, to regulation, standards, tax and subsidies in later phases, aimed at widespread uptake of the innovation.

Practice theory is concerned not so much with how to govern the necessary changes in the socio-technical structure (which may represent the production side of a sustainable economy), but with how to change social practices that have become routine, especially the social practice of consumption, so as to reach sustainability goals (Reckvitz 2002; Schatzki 1996; Shove et al. 2012). It is a 'social theory' in so much as its unity of analysis is not the single firm or the individual, but specific social practices, routine forms of behaviour constituted by a nexus of interrelated elements of different natures, both material (such as objects and things) and immaterial (competences and meanings). In practice theory the transition to an enhanced sustainable food system may be seen as a challenge to the dominant routine food practices and the foreshadowing of a new practice, based on new norms and understandings, a new material infrastructure and a new agency (Warde 2005; Halkier 2009; Crivitis and Paredis 2013; Fonte 2013a). In this case, the transformation theory is directed at devising policy interventions addressing the systemic challenges of changing social practices in their meanings, material structures and ways of understanding.

Neither the MLP nor PT are concerned with a theory of the new possible institutional architecture of the relationships between State, economic and social power, which may guarantee a more just economy and society. Their main interest lies in the modification of social practices or in the transformation of the socio-technical system to enhance sustainability and address environmental problems. In the words of Geels et al. (2015: 6):

"Transformation towards new transport, electricity heat or agro-food system and practices are more radical than the solution in the reformist position, but do not necessarily presume the abandonment of capitalism, economic growth or the embrace of frugality".

In this respect, Geels et al. (2015) differentiate the 'reconfiguration position' of MLP and PT proponents

from the revolutionary 'sustainable consumption and production' position associated with the 'new economics' (Jackson 2009), the 'de-growth approach' (Demaria et al. 2013) or the 'sharing economy' (Rifkin 2014). The reconfiguration position, while accepting that "'green' innovation or practices should not only be environmentally sustainable, but also economically viable and socially acceptable" (Geels et al. 2015: 7), does not aim to simultaneously solve problems of poverty, inequality and democratic accountability. The revolutionary position, on the contrary, suggests that addressing environmental problems requires more fundamental changes in the economic system and a shift to a more egalitarian and equitable society.

In contrast to both the MLP and practice theory, the 'real utopias' project is an explicitly emancipatory social project: 'emancipatory' because it centres on a moral purpose (ending social oppression and the creation of conditions for human flourishing); 'social' because it implies a belief that emancipation depends on the transformation of the social world, not only of the individual or the economy (Wright 2006).

According to Fung and Wright (2003) and Wright (2006; 2010) the 'real utopias project' embraces the tension between dreams and practice. 'Utopia' implies developing visions of alternatives to dominant institutions that embody aspirations for a better world, while 'real' refers to proposing desired alternatives that are viable and achievable. The exploration of 'real utopias' is an integral part of an emancipatory social science with three core tasks:

- Explain *why we want to change* the present system, i.e. elaborate a diagnosis and critique of existing institutions, according to specified moral principles.

- Explain *where we want to go,* i.e. envisage viable alternatives to the present social structure,

- Proposing *how to get where we want to go,* i.e. develop a theory of transformation for realizing the desirable alternatives.

Proposals for transformation need to be desirable, viable and achievable. The achievability of a viable alternative depends "upon the extent to which coherent, compelling strategies can be formulated which both help to create the conditions for implementing alternatives in the future, and have the potential to mobilize the necessary social forces to support that alternative when such conditions occur" (Wright 2006: 99).

In the remainder of this article we will use these three dimensions to articulate our reading of 'local food' as a 'real utopias project' by highlighting how the local food concept is used: (1) as a diagnosis and a critique of the mainstream food system; (2) as the prefiguration of a more sustainable, democratic and just food economy; (3) in order to identify strategies for realizing the desirable alternatives.

Local food as a critique of the present

'Local food' conveys its critique of the dominant food system through the concept of space. Friedman (1992) was among the first to identify the main problems of the industrial food system (or better, in her words, the Fordist food regime) in terms of 'distance' and 'durability'. Distance has to do with *space*, intended as both the space of production and the space of consumption. Also, Kloppenburg et al. (1996: 38) refer to distancing as the main challenge in the food system: "If the mitigation of the deleterious effects of distancing is one of

the central challenges posed by the operation of the global food system, then greater attention to proximity – to that which is relatively near – should be an appropriate response." The pioneering concept of 'foodshed' is conceived exactly as a response able to 'repair and fix' the food system. In a recent paper, Hinrichs (2015: 1) writes: "ideas of 'local' and 'place' have been pressed into service to fix food and link it to a more meaningful somewhere, redressing harms associated with a global neoliberal food and agricultural system".

What then are the harms that the idea of 'proximity' should fix and repair? In the literature on local food, distance has been analysed in a double meaning: geographical and social; these two aspects are different, but interconnected. In its *geographical meaning*, local food means a critique of the long physical distance food travels 'from farm to fork' in industrialized, consolidated global value chains. Attention to food miles links concerns over food to environmental preoccupations with climate change and emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases from transport.

A sharp contrast is drawn between the short chain for local food and the long distance food is required to travel in the conventional, centralized, industrialized food system. In the United States, Pirog and Rasmussen (2008) analysed the transport arrangements for 28 fruits and vegetables to Iowa markets via local and conventional food distribution systems and calculated that produce in the conventional system travelled an average of 1,546 miles (about 2,500 kilometres) while by contrast locally sourced food travelled an average of just 44.6 miles (72 kilometres). In the European Union, food consumption's contribution to GHG emission is calculated to be 31 per cent of total consumption (Tukker et al. 2006).

From an *economic geography perspective*, the relation between urban and rural is also questioned. The rural has always been conceptualized as a provider of labour, goods and services functional to the necessities of the city. From here stems the 'urban bias' (Lipton 1977) of any development vision, which sees agriculture and countryside as subordinated to urban needs. This dichotomized vision of space has now been overcome as food has been legitimated among the 'urban questions', not only through the notion and initiatives of urban agriculture but also through a new awareness of the importance of food for the 'hungry city' (Steel 2013). A new conceptualization of the rural-urban relation through the concepts of foodshed or the food city region aims at overcoming this dichotomy (Morgan et al. 2006, Kloppenburg et al. 1996).

From *a social perspective*, production processes in the agro-industrial food complex are de-territorialized, placeless and centred around the commodification of food (food from nowhere). According to Patel (2007), the organization of the global food value chain is based on unfair exchange relations which favour big intermediaries (above all the retailing industry) against the interests of agricultural producers and final consumers, with the former not earning a living income and the latter paying too much for food. This leads to great social paradoxes, like the simultaneous presence of overproduction, obesity and food shortages: at the global scale, in 2014 750 millions people suffer from hunger (FAO 2015), while 1.9 billion are overweight, of whom 670 million are obese and at risk of illnesses such as diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. According to Kloppenburg et al. (1996: 36) 'distancing disempowers'; because of the physical and social distancing that characterize the global food system, control passes to those who know how to act at a distance: the big corporates and multinationals.

Attempts to transform the mainstream food system were already in place in the 1960s: organic agriculture was certainly the most important and most widely known among such attempts[4]. But in the 1990s a widespread perception that the organic movement had dropped its alternative / environmental ideological baggage grew up. The organic movement was seen as seduced by multinational retailing firms with the prospect of a mass market (Blythman 2005). Furthermore, organic certification was seen as encouraging non-local food consumption, with consequent increases in costs for producers and prices for local consumers. A logic of 'input substitution' leading to 'conventionalisation' was considered to be an increasing trend in the organic movement, and became part of the problems that need to be 'fixed' (Guthman 2003, Buck et al. 1997, Darnhofer et al. 2010). The 'post-organic' (Moore 2006) local food movement shifted therefore its focus to the necessity of bringing consumers back into the food system, re-establishing a connection between the producer and the consumer and addressing the sustainability not only at the point of production, but also in the distribution system of the food chain (Fonte 2010: 6).

LOCAL FOOD AS THE PREFIGURATION OF WHERE WE WANT TO GO: FROM LOCAL AGRICULTURE TO CIVIC FOOD NETWORKS

The transformative horizon of localness is predicated on the re-connection of food to the territory in which it is produced and consumed. Localness articulates different dimensions of proximity: geographical, social, cultural and ecological. It is associated with space and short distance, but also with place, regions and territories as well as with small-scale farms, multifunctional agriculture, quality food, rural livelihoods and sustainable community agriculture. Local food is ultimately about much more than short distance:

The local food movement is about an ethic of food that values reviving small scale, ecological, place-based, and relationship-based food systems... Large corporations peddling junk food are the exact opposite of what this is about. (Severson 2009, in DeLind 2011 D-1)

From a sociological viewpoint local food is place-embedded, the opposite of the placeless food of industrial agriculture. This concept of *embeddedness* imparts social meaning to notions of place, social meaning to be elaborated by the rural communities inhabiting the 'places' in question. The shortness of local food chains makes it possible to trace the food almost personally to the individual farmer who produced it, enabling relations of *trust* to be established in the local society. Food production is re-contextualized within the formal and informal social relationships that constitute the basis for community life. Geographical proximity is, then, important because it implies or favours *social proximity*, i.e. face-to-face interactions between producers and consumers.

Such interactions have a significant impact on rural community life. Local food becomes part of a political project for *keeping rural communities alive* and constructing local economies which respect natural resources, give attention to cultural and biological diversity, defend the economic sustainability for small farmers and promote social justice and food sovereignty. The *place-embeddedness* of food may thus be conceived of as local society's *resistance* strategy against globalisation and neoliberalism (Polanyi 1944) and it comes forward

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4 This is not to say that the organic movement was born in the 1960s. It started earlier and at different times in different countries (Reed 2010).

as a cultural, individual and collective societal response to the commodification-of-everything (Strassen 2003) drive of the neoliberal economy.

Place-embeddedness is, however, not strictly identical with 'localness'. Actually the relation between 'localness' and 'sustainability' has been problematized, both in theory and in practice. The environmental impact of the food economy does not depend only on the distance 'from farm to fork', but also on how food is transported, grown, transformed and prepared. Only a life-cycle analysis of food can yield an accurate assessment of the total volume of gas emissions linked to its production and distribution. The difficulty of establishing well-defined boundaries for the notion of 'locality', taking into account the conditions for the entire life-cycle of production, appears to undermine the usefulness of 'localness' as a category for the analysis of food systems sustainability (Garnet 2007).

Other authors question the relation between localness and 're-embedding'. To use the words of DeLind (2011), we must ask ourselves: 'is local food taking us where we want to go?' Hinrichs (2015) invites us to look at how the distribution of interests and power across different groups of farmers and consumers, as well as across varied organizations and institutions, serves to concentrate or spread the benefits and risks when fastening food to a locality. Hinrichs also suggests to more seriously exploring the effect of fastening food on the flexibility needed to respond to emerging sustainability or health challenges. The concept of 'local trap' (Born and Purcell 2006) wants to highlight the risks implicit in assuming that proximity always results in benefit or repair for environmental impact and social justice.

Finally, localness is a descriptive concept and its limited heuristic value is evident when we want to distinguish a progressive versus a defensive localism or reconcile localism with 'a sense of planet' (Heise 2008) or with a 'global sense of place' (Massey 1994). From these critiques and from the quest for a more reflexive localism the need has emerged to assume more explicitly the concept of 'civic agriculture' (Lyson 2004) and civic values into the conceptualization of local food.

Renting et al. (2012) propose 'Civic Food Networks' (CFNs) as a complementary category to concepts such as 'short food supply chains' and 'local(ized) food systems'. CFNs may better express the processes of change in the agri-food governance mechanisms, showing the increasingly important role of civil society (and to some extent of local and regional administrations) compared to market forces and to the (national) state; they imply a new conception of food citizenship and food democracy and the regeneration of food governance mechanisms. CFNs refer to the network of all actors involved in the local food system that, as ecological citizens, partake of the responsibility for the sustainability of the food economy and endorse the value of food as a commons and a right. CFNs aim to guarantee access (both physical and economic) to sustainable food to all people, individuals and communities. There is no transition to sustainability if sustainable food is for the elite: as a member of the GAS movement in Rome said, a system that guarantees sustainable food only for an elite is unjust, exactly as the industrial food system is and cannot either lead to sustainability (Fonte 2013a).

Finally, sustainability and food democracy are the double challenge that CFNs will have to face. The 'utopian' food economy towards which the CFNs vision aims is a local-based food system, which can endorse civic values like sustainability, but also food as a right, food as a common and food democracy.

How we get there: transformative strategies

The local food movement is too heterogeneous to express a single, defined political theory for the transformation of the food system. Different stances within the movement could be enrolled into a reformist, a revolutionary or a reconfiguration position (Geels et al. 2015). Furthermore the 'buy local' prescription is, in itself, not sufficient to trigger a transformation in the desired directions of the food system, let alone of the whole society.

In any case the local food movement is not based on an individual consumer strategy of buying local, as much as on collective strategies for the transformation of the food system. According to the real utopias project, the collective strategies that can move a system in the direction of social emancipation can be classified in three broad categories according to their relationship to State institutions: ruptural, interstitial and symbiotic. These categories do not represent heterogeneous positions regarding the ultimate goal of a social emancipatory movement ("where we want to go"), but they rather identify differentiated strategies for achieving these goals ("how to get there"). Different segments of the local food movement can therefore be differentiated according to the nature of the collective strategies they propose and adopt for setting in motion the desired transformation of the food system.

'Ruptural transformations' (or "smash the State strategy", Wright 2006: 122) aim at creating new institution of social empowerment through a complete break with existing forms of social structures, based on the idea that confrontation and political struggle will create a radical disjuncture with existing institutions. Ruptural transformations are not necessarily confined to revolutions. They may be partial, rather than total, as they can involve a subset of institutions rather than the foundations of a social system. "The unifying idea is of sharp discontinuity and rapid change, rather than metamorphosis over an extended period of time" (Wright 2006: 122).

'Interstitial transformations' ("ignore the State strategy") initiatives have in common the idea of building alternative institutions and deliberately fostering new forms of social relations that embody emancipatory ideals through direct action. As also theorized in the MLP, interstitial transformations operate in niches at the margins of capitalist society, where they are often not perceived as an immediate threat to dominant classes and elites. Yet, cumulatively, such initiatives create enlarged spaces for non-commodified, non-capitalist, 'diverse' (Gibson-Graham, 2006) economic and social relations, which "can not only make a real difference in people's lives, but potentially constitute a key component of enlarging the transformative scope for social empowerment in the society as a whole" (Wright 2006:122).

'Symbiotic transformations' ("use the State strategy") "involve strategies in which extending and deepening the institutional forms of popular social empowerment also solves certain practical problems faced by dominant classes and elites" (Wright 2006: 122). Symbiotic transformations have a contradictory character, often taking advantage of a tension between the short- and long-term effects of institutional change. In the short term, symbiotic forms of social empowerment are in the interests of elites and dominant classes; in the long term they can shift the balance of power towards broader social empowerment. It may be also thought that advances in bottom-up social empowerment will be most stable and defensible when social empowerment

helps solve also real problems faced by capitalists and other elites. Positive compromises between different interests may be realized (producers and consumers; rural and urban economies) through collaborative problem-solving processes. Examples of symbiotic transformative processes may range from civic renewal movements to food councils, watershed councils and territorial development pacts.

Local food movements seem to consider interstitial and symbiotic strategies as the most appropriate to their emancipatory project, instead of ruptural or oppositional strategies.[5] It would also appear that the choice of the transformation strategy is processional, i.e. it changes according to the different stages of the movement life-cycle but also according to different contextual contingencies. For example, the Fair Trade and organic movements were considered to operate according to an interstitial strategy in their early stages of development, but the consolidation of their initiatives and the strengthening of their economic realities were accompanied by a switch to a symbiotic strategy (Renard 1999).

Interstitial activities have in common the strategy of building alternative institutions and fostering new forms of social relations through direct action rather than through the support of the State. This approach seems to characterize large portions of the local food movement. Among the Italian alternative food movement (Fonte and Cucco 2015), the most prominent proponent of an interstitial strategy are Solidarity Purchasing Groups, which look with suspicion to State interference in their initiatives. At the same time, other segments of Italian alternative agriculture like Slow Food, the Campagna Amica Farmers' Markets network and the Italian Association of Organic Agriculture seems to opt for a symbiotic strategy.

Food councils and public procurement policies intended to promote local, organic, healthy food also adopt a symbiotic strategy in pursuing the transformation of the food system, although the symbiotic relationship is generally established with the local rather than with the central State. Municipal authorities and representatives of different local interests collaborate with civil society organizations in designing and implementing policies that foster the interests of local agriculture and local communities of food. By working with local institutions, especially at the municipal or regional level, CFNs are implementing initiatives that better consolidate new experiences of food democracy and food justice. In all these initiatives the role of local actors is important also in terms of agency. The contribution of CFNs has been particularly relevant in this regard, since they have stressed the transformative potential of the 'consumer' intended not as the neoliberal agent operating to make markets work better, but as the '*ecological citizen*' ready to assume responsibility for local and global problems and to organize collective democratic action in order to advance toward a solution.

Discussion: the need for new governance models

The capacity of local food to determine a paradigm shift in the global food economy may be undermined by the fragmentation of the local food movement initiatives. The capacity to coordinate actions and to create new spaces of governance and regulation may instead bring to full expression not only their capacity to innovate and radically transform systems of food provision and consumption, but also heighten their potential to create

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5 This does not want to exclude that the objective of the local food movement is 'ruptural', i.e. wants to create a radical disjuncture with existing institutions, but only to indicate that the adopted strategies are not openly oppositional.

spaces for new forms of knowledge creation, sharing and social learning on themes related to sustainability and democracy.

The concept of food-shed or food hub is discussed in the literature as the proper space where to ground the localized food system to overcome the fragmentations of the many local initiatives while maintaining place-embeddedness. But still, a system of multi-scalar governance is needed, in order to bolster a paradigm shift toward sustainability and food security. Two new models seem to emerge in the debate on this topic: one is *reflexive governance*, as described by Marsden (2013), based on the results of research on the sociology of knowledge production in a context of uncertainty and especially on the 'mode-2' of knowledge production postulated by Nowotny et al. (2001) or on the notion of post-normal science (Funtowicz and Ravetz, 1993). It promotes cognitive procedures designed to favour feedbacks on multiple regulatory frameworks, and flexible arrangements of actors from different levels and different epistemic backgrounds, who reflect a plurality of contexts and are ready to scrutinize and reconsider their own assumptions and favour the integration of cognitive and normative beliefs.

The second model is the *Empowered Participative Governance* (EPG) (Fung and Wright 2003), derived from the results of political science studies on deliberative forms of democracies. The EPG relies on the capacities of local people – the only ones to possess local knowledge- to solve local problems through reasoned deliberation procedures. Mobilized forms of power of disadvantaged groups in a decision-making setting are meant to engender collaborative, deliberative problem-solving. The collaborative forms of decision-making are different from adversarial forms: in the last case interest groups seek to maximize their interests, while in the former the central effort is to solve problems, to discover the broader commonalities of interests.

Two points are important in this model: (1) it is a State-centred model: local units are not autonomous, but linked to each other and to superior levels in order to allocate resources, solve common cross-border problems, diffuse innovation and learning. (2) Institutional mechanisms are in action to reduce or neutralize the power advantage of most powerful actors. These institutional mechanisms must be based on what Fung and Wright (2003) call 'the collaborative countervailing power' that, in the case of the food economy, may arise from locally organized groups like GAS or CSA; from policies that open spaces to form participative local governance as in the case of Food Councils; or from local branches of national traditional organizations like unions or environmental organizations. The reorganization of formal state institutions may be a stimulus to democratic engagement in civil society and form a virtuous circle of reciprocal reinforcement between civic engagement and democracy.

The contributions of LFMs and CFNs to a new empowering co-experimentation of food politics may be very important in order to express their full innovative potential and may call for a stricter alliance and coordination between LFMs, the Food Sovereignty movement and other new social movements.

Conclusions

Differently from the oppositional movements of the Fordist era, which relied on ruptural strategies aimed at 'smashing the state', local food initiatives and Civic Food Networks adopt mainly *interstitial* and *symbiotic*

strategies with the aim of building alternative practices and social relations in the food economies. For this reason, local food movements have attracted critiques of being functional to a neoliberal politics of discarding the State (Guthman 2007).

When viewed through the lens of transition theories, the strategies adopted by local movements appear however to have a significant, even if not fully developed, transformative potential. The multi-level perspective and social practice theories indicate that the development of innovative niches and the construction of new consumption practices may lead to the reconfiguration of the system in direction of sustainability. The Real Utopias lens suggests that innovative local food niches are mobilizing non-ruptural strategies in the service of a social emancipatory vision. In so doing, local food initiatives are creating new, enlarged spaces for non-capitalist or post-capitalist economies that not only pre-figure how the global food system could be transformed in the direction of sustainability, empowerment and social justice, but effectively may constitute the basis of learning and experimentation necessary to go in that direction. A new model of governance, based on principles of social empowerment, may help to overcome the fragmentation that inevitably characterize local food initiatives, while at the same time coordinating the transformative efforts for the full expression of their innovative potential toward the construction of a more just and sustainable food economy.

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Carla D. Martin[1] – Kathryn E. Sampeck[2]

The bitter and sweet of chocolate in Europe[3]

Abstract

This paper examines the changing role of chocolate in European society, especially in light of the food movement turn to slow, small batch, craft chocolate, as a way to critically analyze relationships of labor and race, gender, and class inequality. The changing culture of chocolate consumption over centuries, from its pre-Columbian origins to the ways European colonists culturally and economically adopted chocolate shows a trajectory of increasing permeation of European foods (more foods contain chocolate) and regionalization of tastes in chocolate recipes, most recently by small batch chocolate makers whose work crafts local identity through branding of a tropical product. Europe is the world's biggest importer and processor of cacao as well as the largest per capita consumer of chocolate. Industrial chocolate is higher in sugar and less complex in taste compared to the variety of local chocolate makers, so chocolate occupies an uneasy place in European diets, especially in light of growing rates of obesity and recent "junk food taxes" that target sugary foods. The historical context and analysis of labor in cacao farming and chocolate production shows a critical reliance on coerced labor. While the legacy of the past has been the decoupling of horrific coerced labor in cacao production from the consciousness of everyday chocolate consumers, the growing vitality of small batch chocolate makers refocuses attention on the country of origin--the conditions of production--as well as local, European tastes-- the conditions of consumption.

The authors employ interdisciplinary methodologies of close readings of primary sources that include historical recipes, critical analysis of representation in historic and contemporary images and media, and descriptive economic data of export and consumption levels. This systematic study of taste in chocolate and its social, economic, political, and cultural implications is carried out in an analytical framework of the historical contingency of the social construction of realms of value, and that such construction takes place within global and local political economic forces that tend to propagate inequality as a solution to greater economic efficiency. Examining food access and food justice in the light of ways people produce and consume chocolate can challenge assumptions about social inequalities, race, health, and identity and offer insights into long-term sustainability. The critical analysis of these social factors suggests directions for future education, investment, and action by the fine and craft chocolate industry in Europe that can promote mutual benefits for producers and consumers.

Keywords: chocolate, ethics, quality, flavor, anthropology, craft, taste, labor

Carla D. Martin – Kathryn E. Sampeck

The Bitter and Sweet of Chocolate in Europe

Introduction

Food is a "source of tension, dispute, and mutual misunderstanding in contemporary Europe" (Delamont 1995:1) such that social struggles can be expressed in terms of taste, with "prejudices directed toward both individuals and the members of particular ethnic groups...expressed, not as ethnic or racial biases, but rather as opinions based in individual tastes...symbolically associated with certain racial and ethnic identities" (Bonner 1999:120). The cultural history of taste – here taken in its broadest sense – is a journey into the construction of social selves. From this vantage point, however, chocolate presents a dilemma: while Europe might have a culinary dividing line between north and south, chocolate crosses that boundary. Indeed, this has been the case for centuries.

This paper examines the changing role of chocolate in European society, especially in light of the food movement turn to slow, small batch, craft chocolate, as a way to critically analyse relationships of labour and race, gender, and class inequality. The unusual place of chocolate, its ability to cross frontiers and permeate ways of being and experiencing the world, suggests that chocolate can tell us much about not only past lives, but also about how we are right now. The foundations for these transcendent yet contradictory relations lie in the pre-Columbian uses and meanings of cacao, which European colonists then took up in new ways that in fact made tangible and possible fundamental conflicts in class, race, and gender that were intrinsic to colonialism: fantastic wealth built upon extraction and coerced labour; expanding citizenry and consumption, both of which fuelled cravings for social distinctions.

The colonial dilemma was to incorporate new wealth and people, yet maintain social, political, and economic hierarchy; taste and empire were inextricably bound together (Laudan 2013). The confluence of individual consumption, taste, regionalism, and ethnicity is based in making a foreign product "local". Social instability fuelled new uses and meanings of cacao and the widespread adoption of chocolate in the colonial period, developments that have gained even more momentum since. The current state of the chocolate industry has deep roots, yet romantic narratives obscure its understanding, which then makes charting a positive path for a future of chocolate more difficult. Chocolate's ancient and colonial past offers a chance to understand fully the dilemmas and promise of chocolate for today and better plan for a sustainable and palatable future.

Pre-Columbian Cacao: the Place of Chocolate

To understand the history of chocolate, we begin not necessarily at the beginning of the domestication and first uses of cacao in its homeland in tropical America, but in the places, uses, and time that had most to bear on the eventual adoption of chocolate in Europe. For this discussion, the emphasis is on the intersection

of taste and labour and how highly distinctive pre-Columbian antecedents had much to do with the ways that Europeans took up the substance, its production, and its growth in popularity over time. Facets that seem like colonial inventions were instead appropriation – Europeans took up the siren call of chocolate in means that amplified what Mesoamericans had already been doing.

Pre-Columbian Mesoamerican regimes of value for cacao invoked class-based authority and extractive production of a commodity. Cacao itself, the processed bean, as well as the tools for making concoctions defined an experience quite separate from other agricultural, consumable products, largely because Mesoamericans consumed cacao in simultaneously discordant and complementary ways: as a ritual offering, as currency, as a flavouring in foods, and as a beverage. The dissonance of the meanings of cacao and chocolate persist today and in this sense, we experience chocolate as Mesoamericans did hundreds of years ago.

Mesoamerican Tastes for Chocolate: *Terroir*, Meaning, and Wealth

Numerous studies have demonstrated the early and widespread use of cacao in Mesoamerica, even as long as 4,000 years (Henderson et al. 2007; Powis et al. 2002). While the northern Amazonian basin of South America may have been the first place of cacao domestication, cacao truly came into its own once it reached Mesoamerica. Cacao cultivation was widespread in Mesoamerica, but intensive cacao production zones were rare due to the fickle nature of the domesticate (Bergmann 1969). By the Late Postclassic period (1200-1520 ACE), the most prolific zones of cacao production were the Izalcos region of today's western El Salvador, the Gulf Coastal region of Tabasco, and the Pacific Coastal region of Soconusco, which the Aztecs conquered to have direct access (López Mendoza 1987; Ruz Lhuiller 1969). This late pre-Columbian pattern shows that although cacao could be accessed in small quantities in many places, the principal supply came from a few; cacao largely came from somewhere else – an export commodity sent from a few principal places to broad swaths of Central America and Mexico.

The idea of *terroir*, the unique flavours and quality associated with the manner of production and almost ineffable qualities of genetics, climate, soil, and place, also came into play for Mesoamericans. Pre-Columbian inscriptions describe how people prepared, consumed, and invested meaning in cacao. Maya royal scribes painted texts designating the owner and prescribed contents, oftentimes cacao beverages, of bespoke, "monogrammed" drinking vases. These texts are recipes that included different spices, colorants, and kinds of cacao in various stages of ripeness or processing and from particular regions (Stuart 1988). These pre-Columbian examples from across Mesoamerica show that distinct recipes were emblematic of a particular place; taste and place designated each other. Cacao consumption was so important that "the distribution of cacao vessels in the Maya Lowlands reflects political and social patterns as well as purely economic ones" (Houston et al. 1989:720). *Terroir* was alive and well in pre-Columbian Mesoamerica.

For all Meosamericans, cacao was a proper offering in healing rituals, to endorse marriage alliances, and to ensure successful travel. During the Postclassic period, from Yucatan to Oaxaca, celebrants consumed cacao drinks during ceremonies to seal important social contracts and confirm the legitimacy of dynasties (Roys 1972: 106; Smith 1973:3 1; Thompson 1972:6). The ways commoners used cacao just before colonial contact

never exactly matched elite practices, even though cacao was widely available. This creation of social inequality through cacao production and consumption is an enduring legacy of chocolate.

With a potent history of ritual, cosmological, and high-status associations, cacao was a valued good for thousands of years in pre-Columbian Meosamerica. A fundamental change took place, however, not long before European contact: cacao became the small coin in a monetizing economy. Some have argued that cacao as currency was a Spanish innovation (Feldman 1985:86; Landa et al. 1941:95), but Europeans expressed the great wonder of cacao first as money rather than as a comestible (Benzoni 1565; Champlain 1859:29; Echagoyan 1603; Garcia de Palacio 1985; Gerarde 1597; Martyr 1617; Molina 1571:11r). One of the first European accounts of cacao, by Peter Martyr (1617), extols the usefulness of cacao as money not because it was due to the civilizing influence of Europeans, but because people of the New World were using a highly practical form of currency when the Spanish arrived.

Cacao as a means by which to fix price or exchange value particularly as small coin implies much wider access and ideally consistent and abundant supply. Commoners had the potential to accumulate cacao and ascend in status. To paraphrase Mintz (1985:97), cacao as money must have become a "kingly luxury of commoners" and a "spurious leveller of status." To ignore or minimize this contact-period use of cacao is to overly narrow our understanding so that the dilemmas and contradictory nature of cacao become at a minimum, very hard to explain.

Labouring in the Fields of the (Cacao) Lord

The labour for working cacao orchards was mobilized at the level of the household as part of services and obligation to regional dynastic states. Cacao agriculture was not highly gendered. Generally, pre-Columbian scenes of cacao offerings and consumption have both males and females receiving and offering cacao, and cacao is not portrayed as equivalent to maleness or femaleness. Lords administered their dependants and lands, which included peasants who had service and tribute responsibilities in various levels of government and more or less direct access to land as well as tenant farmers who provided goods for individual lords on their private holdings and owed nothing to the larger polity (Evans 1991:64; Lockhart 1992:106). In the pre-Columbian system of labour obligations, lords demanded services and tribute; cacao production was a way to satisfy the obligations of citizenship, and consuming cacao was a way to display lordly power. Spaniards imposed more European forms within this matrix; they usurped the "territory" of chocolate production.

What is "Chocolate?"

It is clear that "chocolate" was one of many pre-Columbian recipes for a cacao beverage (Beliaev et al. 2010, Stuart 2006). "Chocolat" is a Nahua word and has its origin in peripheral Nahua dialects of southern Mesoamerica, including Pipil of the Izalcos colonial Guatemala. Many early accounts identify chocolate as a Guatemalan recipe. Otherwise excellent analyses of the domestication of cacao and its pre-Columbian uses almost always at some point in the narrative make a surprising mistake: they use "cacao" and "chocolate" interchangeably (such as Beliaev et al. 2010, Macri 2005, several chapters in McNeil 2006, Norton 2006).

For example, the description in the *Florentine Codex* of cacao beverage making and selling begins with "Tlaquetzalnamacac" translated as "the seller of fine chocolate." While the English translation of Sahagún's sixteenth-century *Florentine Codex* refers to "chocolate," neither the Spanish nor the Nahuatl original uses the term, but instead refers to a "beverage of cacao" (Sahagún, 1961 [1575–1577]: 93). "Chocolate" was by no means the word or recipe of choice until the sixteenth century at the earliest.

The scene, then, just before Spanish contact is that what may have seemed like a fairly common cultigen – rather like maize – was in reality largely a non-local product, as it was produced in large amounts principally in a few discrete zones. Cacao preparations such as chocolate were iconic of place, designated *terroir*, while consumers were an increasingly broader class of Mesoamericans. Mesoamerican lords managed cacao cultivation as a part of the functioning of the state and duty of common households. The ability to produce cacao, especially for export, reinforced social hierarchies. The consumption of cacao was not just as a comestible, but also as a commodity money. The added value, as it were, reduplicated the associations of cacao with elite, now monied, classes, while its propagation as common currency also narrowed the separation of those very classes. It tied together people in new ways and destabilized social relations even as the monetized economy aided exchanges in other ways. The distinctive tools and preparation of cacao beverages – the *molinillo*, the steep-sided cup, and the spouted pot – created a highly distinctive sensorial experience of cacao beverages in Mesoamerican foodways. Which of these features did Europeans embrace, and which did they reject? The answer reveals much about the process of colonialism and how we know chocolate today.

Introducing Chocolate: Wealth versus Taste

For European sensibilities, cacao as a beverage was at first a hard sell – bitter, thick, in short, distasteful to the point of nausea (Benzoni 1565). Norton, however, argued that "the Spanish did not alter chocolate to fit the predilections of their palate … Europeans in the New World and then the Old World somatized native aesthetic values" (2006:660). In fact, the wholesale European adoption of Mesoamerican chocolate Norton described involved the full complement of Mesoamerican practices and the pace of change in consumption was much faster.

While cacao as a food item was off-putting, the idea of cacao as money had great appeal because sixteenth-century Europe was facing a currency crisis due to a lack of small denominations. Cacao as a commodity money was taken on enthusiastically by Europeans, with the Crown quickly adopting cacao as legal tender for transactions. The use of cacao as a wealth item for Europeans continued well into the eighteenth century, with cacao, solid chocolate, and chocolate-related serving vessels recorded in eighteenth-century colonial British Williamsburg probate records, for example.

How readily did Europeans adopt Mesoamerican tastes? A survey of early colonial cacao beverage recipes shows that early colonial Mesoamerican recipes usually had vanilla and water, and included a variable array of aromatic flavours, such as *orejuela* (custard apple) and piquant spices, such as chile pepper. Sweetness, by adding honey, occurred, as well (Chart 1). These Mesoamerican colonial recipes also show Europeanization, by the adoption of flavourings such as sesame, almond, and sugar.

Chart 1. Frequencies of cacao beverage ingredients in Spanish America.
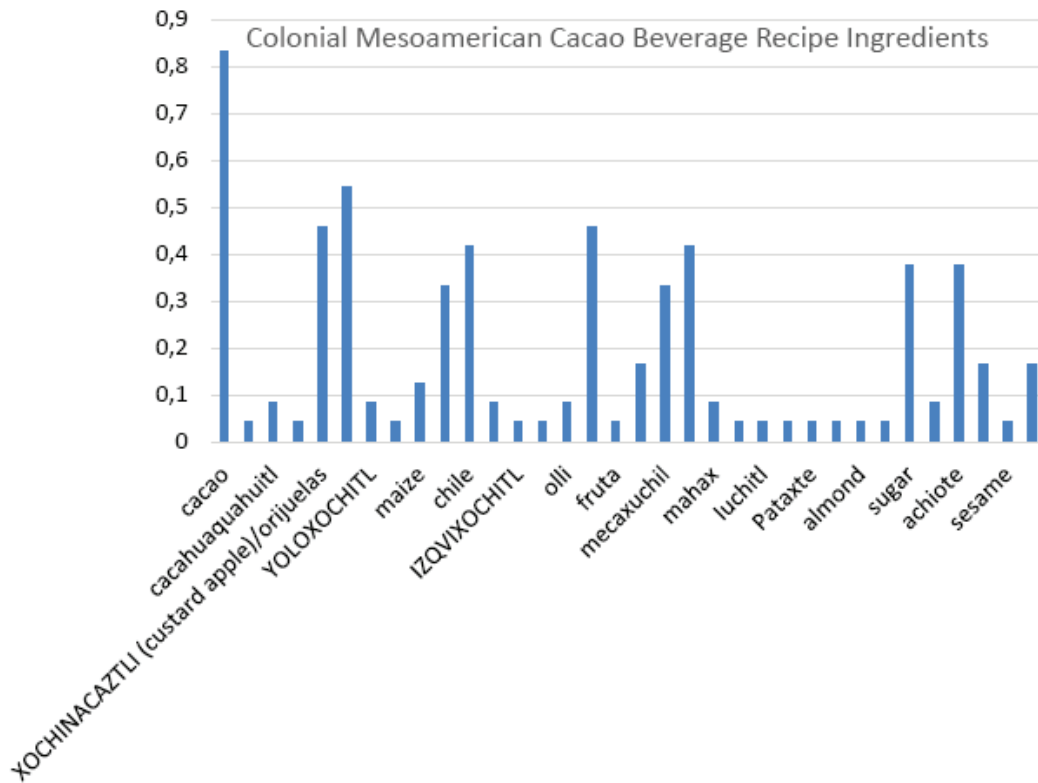
The earliest European recipes in many senses follow the Mesoamerican flavour profile, but by using much more familiar and established flavourants acquired through trade or produced in Europe, such as cinnamon, anise, and pepper (Chart 2). Recipes from American colonies and Europe are all regionally distinct from each other, much as was the case for pre-Columbian Mesoamericans. Europeans truly embraced cacao as a way to define distinct tastes.

Chart 2. Frequencies of colonial European chocolate recipe ingredients.
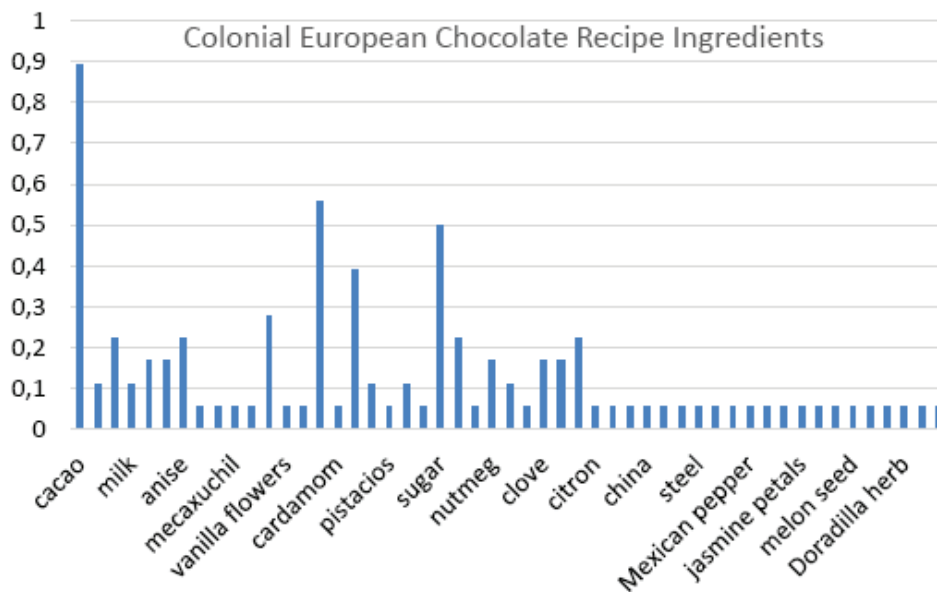
Part and parcel of European embrace of the taste for cacao was the adoption of all the tools of beverage making, but again, translated into different materials. European *molinillos* and spouted pots were made of metal – copper or silver. The steep-sided cups could be of ceramic, but usually tin glazed maiolica or faience, or later, refined white earthenwares or porcelain. While depictions of Indians consuming cacao beverages show locally-made *jícaras* (gourd cups) and coarse earthenware vessels (Figures 1 and 2), cups and pots in drawings and paintings of creoles or Europeans are made of ceramic or metal. All of the elements of the Mesoamerican form are present, but the content is distinctly European.

Figure 1. Girolamo Benzoni's sixteenth-century depiction of cacao processing. Original in the John Carter Brown Library, Brown University.
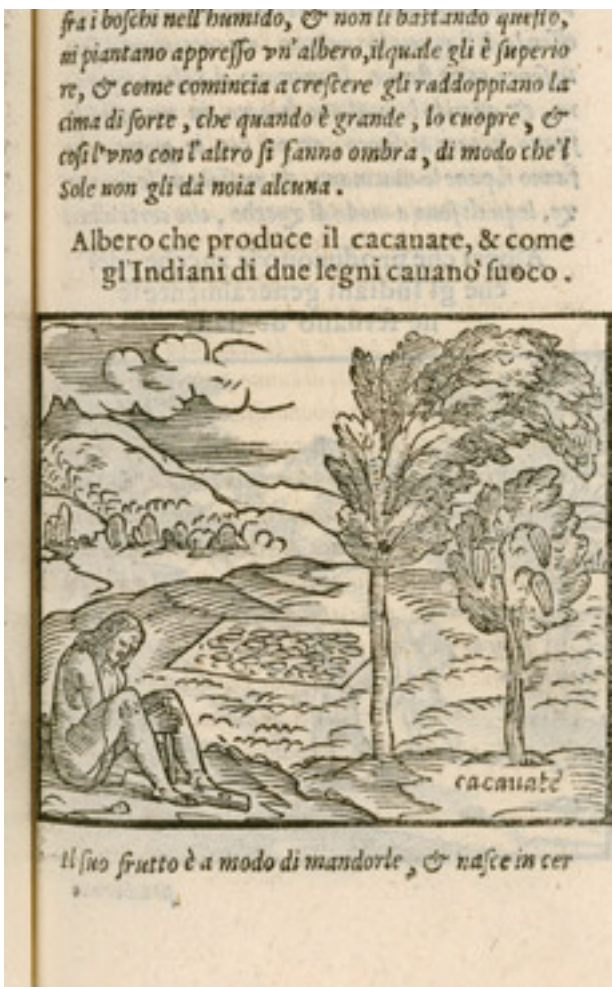
Figure 2. Illustrations of the American, Indian associations of chocolate in Philippe Dufour's treatise on chocolate. Original in the John Carter Brown Library, Brown University.

Europe and Chocolate: Colonial Desire

Where in all of this, is chocolate? A letter written by the Jesuit Pedro de Morales in 1579 describes chocolate as a blend of cacao and *achiote* (Mariscal Haz 2000:57). "*Achiote*" is known in English as "annatto," and gives a red hue to foods. Morales stated explicitly that this drink "was invented in Guatemala." Most early sources link chocolate and Guatemala, including Henry Stubbe, the British King's Royal Physician, who wrote that "chocolate has been eternally drunk in Guatemala (as ale is to England)" (1662:3). Stubbe (1667) endeavoured to "take care, that England know it, and have the benefit thereof" and made clear that all classes, sexes, and temperaments could benefit from chocolate if taken in the correct way, tailored to a person's constitution. He argued that:

> *…this is the most pretious Drink of Drinks; this excells all others in advantages for our health, which either Time by a long succession of years, or encrease of Luxury and Pleasure to this day hath acquainted us with: because neither in the Chocolata itself being made into a Drink, no nor int any Ingredient thereof, is there any thing wanting, that is necessary for the Life, or delight of Man, and so to invite him to use it. (Stubbe 1667:95-100)*

Relative amounts of Spanish tribute quotas leave no doubt where the homeland of the special recipe of chocolate was: the Izalcos region of today's western El Salvador (Ciudad Real 1973; Fowler 1987, 1989, 2006; García de Palacio 1985[1576-1587]). From the mid-sixteenth to the early seventeenth century, about 1.2 billion cacao beans per year were exported from Acajutla, the port of the Izalcos, and tribute levels from this region were at least triple those of other cacao-producing zones (Escalante 1992(1):56). The word "chocolate" first appears in central Mexican and Spanish documents just as the Izalcos region reaches its peak of production and the price of cacao reaches an astronomical all-time high around 1580. The word for a special recipe for a cacao drink from the region of astronomical cacao production started to become the name for the commodity when it became a source of fantastic wealth. As the wealth grew, the word spread. Europeans learned to like chocolate because of their material dependence on Indians, but this was not because it was a curious food or drink, but because it was an engine of commerce.

Colonial Labour: Servitude and Slavery

Another way that Europeans adopted cacao wholesale was in management of production. How was this astronomical amount of cacao produced? Did colonization usher in fundamentally different forms of labour? The Spanish institution of the *encomienda* can be seen as much like pre-Columbian forms of tribute duty. An encomienda is a reward by the Spanish crown of labour and tribute in a region to colonists of merit such as conquistadors. Some of the first major exports of cacao happen at about the time the Izalcos *encomienda* was awarded, and it became one of the richest *encomiendas* in all of the Indies.

The success of cacao commerce created a nearly unrestrained frenzy for colonial control over every last bean. In this regard, Spanish coercive policies and illegal abuse were a departure from pre-Columbian antecedents. Indigenous cacao producers were held hostage, prevented from buying products freely, nor did they produce basic, everyday items. *Encomenderos* had monopolies on basic foodstuffs, which sold for up to

ten times their typical value (Escalante 1992(1):215). *Encomenderos* were accused of sending slaves to enter into houses as well as orchards and take cacao by force, torturing, and incarcerating people suspected of hiding cacao reserves (Escalante 1992(1):259). Beyond official tribute, the Spaniards stole more, and recaptured even more by selling products at inflated prices.

The Spanish assessed tribute duties of Izalcos-region *encomiendas* by married Indian households and by the amount of land and cacao trees the individual had rights to. The household members decided how and who worked in the cacao orchards, as was done before colonization. Colonial cacao orchard labour was a mix of chattel slavery (in that indigenous residents were held hostage) and wage labour, paid by the native families. From 1542-1580, even after the New Laws prohibiting native enslavement, the conditions for Izalcos cacao labour became worse and worse. Labour shortages due to disease were compensated for by increasing numbers of migrant wage labourers, with only 10-20% of original indigenous families remaining in some towns. So, the Spanish siphoned off the skills, knowledge, and experience of indigenous residents.

African Slavery, Darkness, and Health

After the initial, long sixteenth-century reliance on *encomienda*-coerced labour and rapid shifts to native-controlled wage labour, market dominance in cacao production shifted to new regions free of the entanglements of a long heritage of indigenous production: today's Costa Rica, Venezuela, and Ecuador (McLeod 2008). These regions did not have the same skilled, knowledgeable population; the orchards were on privately-owned land and worked by enslaved Africans. This change was met by clamoring resistance on the part of colonial Guatemalans, who saw their wealth slipping away. They phrased their complaints in terms of health and quality. Residents of Guatemala made repeated legal claims that pleaded for limitations on the export of cacao of Guayaquil and other centres because it was of poor quality (Escalante 1992). Complaints stated that low-grade cacao was flooding the market and driving down prices (which was, in fact, true, at least in terms of price). Many complaints also argued that this low-quality product made people sick or at least did not have the full health benefits of high quality cacao (Escalante 1992). These complaints flesh out colonial dilemmas regarding the benefits of cacao and its connection to morality.

This move towards African slavery was also accompanied by a more consistent association of "chocolate" with a cacao drink that was dark, foamy, and potentially sinful or decadent (León Pinelo 1636, Figure 3). The overall trend during the colonial period is for chocolate to become increasingly, even exclusively, associated with sweet, dark, rich foods and drinks. The number of ingredients in recipes also tends to become fewer over time, such that cacao, divorced from the vanilla that almost always co-occurred with it, becomes a single, highly sweetened flavour. African enslavement, sugar, and tastes for sweetness mutually reinforced each other, creating a new foodways regime that was predicated upon capitalism; chocolate tastes and production were part of this nexus (Mintz 1985). While pre-Columbian evidence demonstrates that sweetened forms of cacao concoctions existed long before Europeans found chocolate (and in fact, perhaps Europeans learned to like the sweetened versions by tasting them first in Mesoamerica), indigenous Mesoamericans did not exclusively associate chocolate with darkness and sweetness. That "chocolate" was rich, dark, bitter, and sweet related

Figure 3. Slavery and chocolate.
Image from "Le More-lack, ou Essai sur les moyens les plus doux & les plus équitables d'abolir la traite & l'esclavage des nègres d'Afrique, …", London, 1789.

Figure 4. From the Lewis Walpole Collection.

directly to its connection to racialized circumstances of labour; that it was wealth, but secured at a moral and social cost. Chocolate could mark distinction in taste, quite literally, yet also keep that colonial, foreign, tropical product relegated to a comprehensible and restrained place.

ENGENDERING CHOCOLATE

One of the most dramatic shifts in the semantics of chocolate, and probably intimately connected with its shift towards sweetness, is its feminization. While pre-Columbian antecedents suggest a gendering that is not exactly male or female, colonial narratives strongly connect chocolate and women (Figure 4). As mentioned above, a 1578 allegorical arch personified Guatemala as a woman holding a cacao branch. In fact, chocolate was seen to particularly affect women, transforming their beauty and fertility, in some cases dangerously so; women would do anything, even murder a Bishop, for chocolate (Stubbe 1662).

ENSLAVED LABOUR, GLOBALIZATION OF CACAO PRODUCTION, SHIFTING TASTES

The historical context and analysis of labour in cacao farming and chocolate production shows a critical reliance on coerced labour in the forms of chattel slavery and indentured servitude, precedents for the complex present-day labour conditions in cacao and chocolate that include the devaluation of labour, forced labour, and the worst forms of child labour. As described above, with the collapse of the *encomienda* system that usurped indigenous labour and land, Europeans sought a new means to meet increasing Old World demand for exotic New World cash crops. From roughly 1500 to 1900, between 10 and 15 million enslaved Africans survived

forced transport across the Atlantic and began working under chattel slavery, treated as property or what Mintz (1985) has called "false commodities." Approximately 60% of enslaved Africans arrived in the Caribbean, 30% in Brazil, and less than 10% in British North America (Gomez 2005).

Mintz writes: "England fought the most, conquered the most colonies, imported the most slaves, and went furthest and fastest in creating a plantation system. The most important product of the system was sugar" (1985: 38). Indeed, lucrative commodities like sugar (and rum), coffee, tobacco, cotton, and cacao required intensive, skilled labour, working under frequently strenuous conditions. The life expectancy of many of the enslaved was very low, especially in sugar production. Upon arrival, enslaved sugar labourers were expected to survive only 7 to 8 years.

The triangular Atlantic trade was the site of enormous wealth generation and botanical, demographic, and cultural change. Cacao, native to South America, was spread throughout the New World, Southeast Asia, and West and Central Africa for cultivation. Imperial powers came to rely on goods produced by enslaved labourers, implicating slavery directly in the development of capitalism (Williams 1994). The crown jewels – goods-producing colonies controlled by European powers (for France, Saint-Domingue, now Haiti; for Spain, Cuba; Great Britain, Jamaica; Portugal, Brazil and eventually São Tomé and Príncipe; and the United States, The South) – became sites for the extraction of wealth. By way of example, in the case of France and Saint-Domingue, by 1789, the colony exported nearly half of the world's coffee and sugar (more than Jamaica, Cuba, and Brazil combined) and provided France with 40% of the value of all French trade. More than 1 million of the 25 million inhabitants of France depended directly on the slave trade for their livelihood (Davis 2007).

While much of the forced exchange of lives and labor took place between Africa and Latin America, both Europe and North America were thoroughly implicated in this trade system. Writing at Oxford in 1839, the prominent British colonial administrator Herman Merivale explains:

We speak of the blood-cemented fabric of the prosperity of New Orleans or the Havanna: let us look at home. What raised Liverpool and Manchester from provincial towns to gigantic cities? What maintains now their ever active industry and their rapid accumulation of wealth? The exchange of their produce with that raised by the American slaves; and their present opulence is as really owing to the toil and suffering of the negro, as if his hands had excavated their docks and fabricated their steam-engines...

Every trader who carries on commerce with those countries, from the great house which lends its name and funds to support the credit of the American Bank, down to the Birmingham merchant who makes a shipment of shackles to Cuba or the coast of Africa, is in his own way an upholder of slavery: and I do not see how any consumer who drinks coffee or wears cotton can escape from the same sweeping charge. (1861:302)

Opposition to Atlantic chattel slavery always existed and, as enslavement became less financially viable and morally tolerated, abolition came gradually and slowly over a period of approximately 100 years.[4] Abolition

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4 The Haitian Revolution (1791-1804) culminated in the end of slavery and formation of the Republic of Haiti, though the French demanded crippling reparations for their financial losses. Then, in 1834, the British Slavery Abolition act abolished slavery throughout most of the British Empire; France and Denmark followed more than a decade later. The United States abolished slavery with the thirteenth amendment to its Constitution in 1865. Cuba and Brazil followed much later, with abolition in 1886 and 1888, respectively.

frequently involved a continued extraction of wealth, with periods of indentured servitude and schemes to compensate former slave owners for their loss of property. Only rarely was abolition accompanied by reparations for the formerly enslaved, and poverty and landlessness remain serious problems among the descendants of enslaved people throughout cash crop producing regions today.

Once the system of slavery came apart at the seams, European powers worked to increase cacao production in other places with suitable climates and inexpensive labour sources, such as São Tomé and Príncipe, West Africa's Gold Coast, and Indonesia. Exploitative labour practices continued in cacao and sugar production post-abolition. In the early 1900s, slavery was uncovered on cacao plantations in Fernando Pó (now known as Bioko) and in Cameroon, both on German and on Duala elite plantations (Clarence-Smith 2000). The use of enslaved people from Angola was common on Portuguese plantations on the islands of São Tomé and Principe from the 1880s and continued there well into the mid-1900s (Satre 2005). Indentured servitude of South and East Asians was also common throughout the colonial world.

Cultural contact through colonial enslavement contributed directly to the shift in culture and taste among Europeans in relation to chocolate. Mintz explains the challenge of understanding the scale of these changes:

The first sweetened cup of hot tea to be drunk by an English worker was a significant historical event, because it prefigured the transformation of an entire society, a total remaking of its economic and social basis. We must struggle to understand fully the consequences of that and kindred events, for upon them was erected an entirely different conception of the relationship between producers and consumers, of the meaning of work, of the definition of self, of the nature of things. What commodities are, and what commodities mean, would thereafter be forever different. And for that same reason, what persons are, and what being a person means, changed accordingly. In understanding the relationship between commodity and person, we unearth anew the history of ourselves. (1985: 214)

These societal shifts in meaning were fundamentally linked to the dislocation of production and consumption in commodity markets, and the transformation of the relationship between producers and consumers.

Gikandi, too, argues in *Slavery and the Culture of Taste* (2011) that slavery was in fact key to white self-fashioning of identity, as evidenced in art, literature, and personal diaries from Europe and the United States. While slavery was treated as a taint to good taste and at times actively kept out of the narrative of high culture, posing in portraits with an enslaved person became part of a popular genre and was seen as representative of excellent taste and access to vast fortunes. Simultaneously, enslaved people were dehumanized to justify their absence from narratives and African-derived cultural elements were appropriated by whites and treated as though they were European-derived. Thus, the power dynamics of race and culture came to be heavily inflected by the history of enslavement.

Robertson similarly considers these and related power dynamics in *Chocolate, Women, and Empire*. She writes: "In the mythology of chocolate, the power relations of production and consumption are subsumed by a more attractive narrative of exotic peoples and their surroundings…chocolate seems to generate a particular type of history writing… one which delves into the realms of fantasy and romance" (2009: 85–86). Chocolate

conquered the tastes of Europeans throughout the colonial period, spread by monks and nuns, among noble families, and indicative of access to the rich resources of the exotic New World, and was simultaneously a key player in the hybridization of genetics, language, culture and flavour. Robertson continues to explain that because chocolate was romantically constructed as "luxurious, hedonistic and sensual" (2009: 3) due to its perceived relationship with affluence, a powerful trope emerged linking chocolate and sex in the European imagination. This trope was also linked to race, as a result of chocolate's so-called "exotic" origins and the reliance upon the labour of people of colour for its cultivation.

Social Inequality and the Popularization of Chocolate

A long-term perspective on the changing culture of chocolate consumption shows a trajectory of increasing permeation of chocolate into European foods and regionalization of tastes in chocolate recipes, such as the Hungarian chocolate pastry tradition of *Rigó Jancsi* (chocolate sponge cake with chocolate cream filling). Over time, this development of local taste has been undermined by industrial manufacture of chocolate. Cacao, a non-European food, an American cultigen, is thus made "local" through processing. The resulting marketing claims all involve choices that set consumers' lives apart from those who produced it. It is a food ideology that makes the strange familiar (chocolate as a common, everyday food), and what should be familiar, or transparent, strange (how chocolate comes to be).

With the industrialization of food, particularly with mechanization, retailing, and transportation changes in the 1800s, chocolate underwent an enormous change. It was no longer an elite, expensive product primarily consumed as a beverage, but instead an inexpensive cocoa powder to be drunk or low-cacao-content chocolate bar to be consumed as a food by elite and non-elite alike. Companies like Lindt, Nestlé, Cadbury, Hershey's, and Mars, relative early arrivals to the chocolate manufacturing game, implemented major changes in industrial chocolate production to support the ability to scale (Coe and Coe 2013). They aimed to create uniform products by blending beans and standardizing formulations that would taste the same each time consumers purchased them. This represented a stark contrast to historical chocolate flavour experiences, which, as shown above, at times allowed consumers to specify the origin of the chocolate of their preference in great detail. Large chocolate manufacturers also sought means to regulate production against adulteration and to promote longer shelf life of products. Additionally, they found it increasingly important to control the supply chain to avoid interruptions in production.[5] Over time, the industry shifted dramatically, and large chocolate manufacturers became the producers of the majority of the world's chocolate.

Cacao cultivation began in the late 1800s on the Gold Coast (what would become Ghana), but expanded in earnest in the 1900s, partly due to divestment from São Tomé and Príncipe by British chocolate firms following the scandals uncovering enslaved labour there (Clarence-Smith 2000, Satre 2005). The intersectional relation of race, gender, and class in chocolate became further complicated when women were put to work in the Quaker owned factories in imagined utopian villages like Bourneville and York, where morality and separation

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5 E.g. Milton Hershey, who already carefully controlled his milk supply, purchased land for sugar production in Cuba in the early 1900s to ascertain access to the commodity even in the event of a world war, going so far as to construct a local railway system to support it.

of the sexes was treated as paramount to the preservation of civilized society. Contemporary cacao farming, too, is highly gendered; most late colonial and contemporary farmers have historically been depicted as men, though it is well documented that women and children contribute a significant amount of labour to cultivation of the crop. Advertisements, both historical and contemporary, regularly gender and racialize chocolate, as described in detail in Robertson (2009) and Leissle (2012).

With these changes in production came massive changes in flavour and nutritional content, as well, such that industrially manufactured chocolate and candy typify what scholars now call "ultraprocessed foods." Seeking economy, manufacturers began to substitute artificial ingredients like vanillin for vanilla and vegetable oil for cocoa butter and to otherwise alter the taste, texture, and experience of eating chocolate. As a result, the processed, the artificial, and the fake came to be commonplace throughout the twentieth century, and even expected as part of chocolate flavour (Kawash 2013). Sugar and fat, both key components of chocolate that at different times were celebrated or vilified through advertising, powerful lobbies, and government policy, became linked with the prevailing social mores.

Today, Europe is the world's biggest processor of cacao (60% of the world total) as well as the largest per capita consumer of chocolate (50% of the world total) (ICCO 2013). Eighteen of the top 20 chocolate consuming nations are in Europe. The average British citizen will consume 7.5 kg (16.5 lbs) of chocolate per year, the average Austrian 7.8 kg (17.25 lbs), and the average Swiss 9 kg (20 lbs) (Nieburg 2014). Industrial chocolate products, such as the popular Hungarian Túró Rudi and Túró Csoki are higher in sugar and less complex in flavour when compared to the fine Hungarian bean to bar craft chocolate made by makers such as Szántó Tibor and Rózsavölgyi Csokoládé and the fine confections of chocolatier chocoMe. Today's largest companies, colloquially known as the "Big Five," are Nestlé, Mars, Cadbury (owned by Kraft), Hershey's, and Ferrero, three of which have European roots, and all of which seek global consumer brand loyalty.

To support increasing demand for chocolate in the 1960s and 1970s, following independence from Britain and France, cacao production increased heavily in the newly formed states of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. While production has at times since suffered due to government instability or civil war in these nations, they remain the top two national producers worldwide, followed by Indonesia. The West and Central African nations of Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, and Cameroon collectively produce approximately 70% of the world's cacao today. The longstanding disjuncture between producers and consumers is highlighted by the consumption of producers: even though Africa is world's biggest producer of cacao, it is also the smallest per capita consumer of chocolate (3% of the world total) (ICCO 2013). Though cacao was less suited to large-scale plantation production than crops like sugar or tea, the long history and ongoing problem of exploitative labour practices have largely been forgotten, except by those consumers who actively seek to avoid them in the present day.

The demographics of cacao production in these African countries are striking. The vast majority of cacao production takes place on 2 million small, independent family farms ranging in size from 2 to 4 hectares and characterized by complex systems of land ownership and landlessness. Depending on the location, each hectare produces only 300 to 400 kilograms of cacao beans annually, considerably less than many Latin American or South-east Asian farms, due to a number of factors including aging trees, disease, lack of funds for fertilizers,

and limited education. The median age of farmers is approximately 50 and, while a typical household head is male, women and children contribute a great deal of labour (World Cocoa Foundation 2014). One 2011 study showed that the average daily income per capita for a Ghanaian cacao farming household is below $0.30 USD. Due to these factors, when surveyed, less than one-quarter of cacao farmers said that they would recommend that their children go into cacao farming (Hainmueller et al. 2011). At present, these farmers collectively produce 2.8 million metric tons of cacao per year.

Farmers in West and Central Africa face many critical challenges; perhaps the most well-known outside of the region is that of eliminating the worst forms of child labour. Multiple studies have been conducted by independent organizations in recent years to track the problem (Berlan 2011).[6] The issue of labour abuses in cacao cultivation has been publicized widely as a result of journalistic and consumer advocacy, with a number of documentaries made and consumer campaigns staged since evidence of child trafficking and slavery on cacao farms was brought to public knowledge in the late 1990s. It is undeniable that some West African children are trafficked and forced to labour in dangerous conditions with no or little pay on cacao farms. These numbers are difficult to track, but abuses are serious. It is equally important not to hyperbolize through reliance on tropes denigrating to West African culture, as is often the case in advocacy efforts. The problematic result of much of this advocacy is a persistent exploiter-exploited binary stereotype in relation to West African cacao and limited practical improvement of farmer livelihoods and access to social services.

THE RISE OF COMPASSIONATE CHOCOLATE CONSUMERISM

Responses to labour problems in the cacao-chocolate supply chain have included the Harkin-Engel Protocol; non-governmental organization investments, program development, and research; Corporate Social Responsibility standards; consumer awareness campaigns and boycotts; legislation in African countries; and legal action abroad (e.g. the 2010 California Transparency in Supply Chains Act and an ongoing lawsuit in California to determine if Nestle, Archer Daniels Midland, and Cargill should be held responsible for child enslavement on farms from which they sourced cacao in 1990s). It remains debatable if the Harkin-Engel Protocol of 2001, a voluntary international agreement aimed at ending some of the worst forms of child labour, has had a significant effect in stemming the problem.

In an attempt to address labour abuses and increase farmer yields to ensure a steady cacao supply chain, a variety of certification schemes (e.g. Fair Trade, Rainforest Alliance, UTZ Certified, IMO Fair For Life) have proliferated in cacao sourcing, attracting significant consumer interest. As McCabe shows, through marketing

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6 Most notable is a series of studies from Tulane University from the project "Oversight of Public and Private Initiatives to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor in the Cocoa Sector in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana," the findings of which demonstrate mixed results at best from cocoa industry attempts to remediate the worst forms of child labour, with numbers of children involved shown to be increasing in 2013/14 survey data (Tulane University 2015). The series also confirms that many children work on cacao farms in Africa not as forced labourers but as parts of family labour pools. It is when their work tasks constitute hazardous labour – such as transporting heavy loads, pesticide and fertilizer application, or the use of sharp tools like machetes – or interferes with physical and educational development that this breaches international agreement. Many children working in these conditions receive no training or protective gear. Hazardous labour can result in injury and sickness, musculoskeletal disorders, sprains, lacerations, fractures, eye injuries, rashes, and respiratory irritation. Long-term negative health effects are likely. In addition, some research shows that hard labour can developmentally delay children (Berlan 2011).

and consumer awareness around labour abuses in cacao cultivation and fair trade certifications, fine chocolate "was transformed from deterritorialized product perceived to come from chocolatiers in West European countries like Belgium and France to reterritorialized product connected to cocoa bean growers in tropical regions of the world" (2015:54). The fine chocolate market exhibits what she calls "resistance" – a form of agency – distributed in a fine chocolate assemblage of connoisseurs, products, producers, and institutional discourse, and characterized by a group force or momentum to link sensual enjoyment with ethical concern.

Yet, dissenting voices on certification are gaining in volume, with contradictions in the movement ever more apparent. The primary argument made by fair trade labeling critics is that the movement does more to make wealthy consumers feel good than to significantly counter poverty in the developing world. For example, according to some calculations, an American consumer's dollar paid for a fair trade product results in only 3 cents more paid to a developing country farmer than a dollar paid for an uncertified product (Sylla 2014). The rhetorical claims of fair trade, therefore, are strikingly different than the results of its practice. In addition, emerging arguments suggest that certification stifles innovation by prioritizing consensus among participating companies and incentivizing only baseline standards adherence, ultimately becoming part of the problem rather than part of the solution (Poynton 2015). Direct trade schemes and transparency based on companies' stated values are increasingly championed as important methods to transform and verify supply chains, though evidence of their superior effectiveness in cacao sourcing has not been thoroughly documented or analysed.

Still more, chocolate occupies an uneasy place in European diets today, especially in light of growing rates of obesity and recent "junk food taxes" that target foods high in salt, sugar, or fat (Daley 2013). While industrially manufactured chocolate usually falls into the category of candy, much of the fine chocolate on the market is sold as high in antioxidants and otherwise of potential benefit to consumer health. This complex link between chocolate and morality is boldly apparent in the attempts by large chocolate manufacturers to corner the Asian market and its potential billions of customers. These attempts are characterized by a pervasive Orientalism that aims to conquer the hearts and minds of innocent Asian consumers by attracting them to Western sin (e.g. Allen 2010).

A Return To Fine Flavour

A serious, regrettable loss of agrobiodiversity linked to flavour also occurred as chocolate manufacturers prioritized sourcing of more inexpensive, bulk cacao over fine cacao.[7] In the industry, bulk cacao is generally understood to produce with higher yield and to be more disease resistant, though this is often coupled with a

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7 The difference between the two, which remains controversial as a result of our still emerging comprehension of cacao genetics, is defined by the International Cocoa Organization as follows:The world cacao market distinguishes between two broad categories of cacao beans: "fine or flavour" cacao beans, and "bulk" or "ordinary" cacao beans. As a general concept, fine or flavour cacao beans are produced from Criollo or Trinitario cacao-tree varieties, while bulk cacao beans come from Forastero trees. There are, however, known exceptions to this generalization. Nacional trees in Ecuador, considered to be Forastero-type trees, produce fine or flavour cacao. On the other hand, Cameroonian cacao beans are produced from Trinitario-type trees and their cacao powder has a distinct and sought-after red colour. However, these beans are classified as bulk cacao beans. (ICCO 2015)

Arguably the most popular strain right now, CCN-51, has been simultaneously heralded by Big Chocolate as a solution to the world's growing needs for more cocoa, and villainized among fine flavour advocates.

greater labour requirement. It is sold at a commodity price per ton and makes up between 93 and 95% of global production today. However, connoisseurs note that bulk cacao most often has inferior flavour and aromatic qualities when compared to fine cacao. Fine cacao, on the other hand, is often believed to produce lower yields and be more susceptible to disease, though emerging research suggests that this is an oversimplification. In general, it is sold at a higher price per ton based on perceived quality of beans, suggesting the potential to improve farmer livelihoods. Its fine flavour status is determined by quality assessment of the beans, especially in relation to genetics, origin, and post-harvest practices (though lack of standardization leaves much to be desired). At present, fine cacao makes up only 5 to 7% of global production, a stark difference from the early 1900s, when it was produced in virtually the same quantity as bulk cacao.

In response to the perceived loss of flavour and quality in industrially manufactured chocolate, beginning in the 1970s and 1980s, an increasing number of bean to bar chocolate makers made a return to small scale manufacturing, often using vintage equipment and single origin fine cacao. Companies like Valrhona, Bonnat, Cluizel (France), Domori (Italy), El Rey (Venezuela), and Scharffen Berger (based in the United States, and now owned by Hershey's) attracted high end consumer interest by marketing their products as *haute cuisine*, crafted by skilled artisans with a focus on fine flavour. This reflected a return to interest in *terroir*, or the sense of a place, in chocolate. This renewed consumer interest in fine flavour, combined with increased desire to avoid the highly publicized problem of child slavery in chocolate (with all the requisite challenges in understanding the issue) proved foundational to the success of the growing interest in the bean to bar, fine chocolate market (Eber and Williams 2012; Rosenblum 2005) .

Such social production of taste has also informed the self-fashioning of European identity in relation to chocolate, as demonstrated by Terrio in her ethnographic account of research among French chocolatiers. She writes that in the mid-1900s: "chocolatiers were a people without a history because of their ambiguous role in a postwar history whose master narrative was constructed around the themes of modernization and professionalization" (2000:11). As French chocolatiers grappled with the formalization of definitions of craft work, associations, and training models, they also engaged in the production of a new notion of good taste focused on vintage, *grand cru* dark chocolates. Together with craft leaders, artisanal families, taste makers, CEOs, advertising executives, government authorities, and consumers, they confronted historical notions of French identity in the late capitalist age and forged a new French chocolate identity based around the perceived superiority of locally produced, artisanal chocolate over seemingly anonymous industrially manufactured chocolate.

Terrio's research carefully tracks issues of gender, familial heritage, and authentic national identity that are complemented by Robertson's (2009) focus on gender, race, class, and the power relations of production. This allows us to consider the conflict between artisanal, craft production that is local and specific in the increasingly generalized, delocalized European Union food system. Chocolate, too, is a part of the broadly defined global food movement, founded on several influential ideologies. As Winson details, general tenets of the food movement include the beliefs that: consumers have rights which must be fought for rather than assumed; human and environmental health go hand in hand; there is no such thing as an average consumer;

what matters is not just "what" is eaten, but "how" it is produced and distributed; and policies can be changed for the better, but this requires imagination, coalitions, and focused effort. Winson explains:

> In the process of [consuming food and drink] we take them inside our very bodies, a fact that gives them special significance denied such 'externally' consumed commodities as refrigerators,

> automobiles, house paint or television sets. Moreover, unlike many other goods that we produce and consume in capitalist society, food is an essential commodity: we literally cannot live without it (although this is not to say that all of the processed food products for sale today are essential). (1992:4)

> The consumption of food is thus fraught with global significance.

Arising from the early interest in single origin, bean to bar chocolate came a turn to slow, small- or micro-batch craft chocolate in the late 1990s, with a heavy focus on batch production, flavour, quality, and perceived ethical sourcing of raw ingredients.[8] Since the mid-2000s, when the number of companies hovered at around half a dozen in North America, a proliferation of craft chocolate makers has occurred, with over 150 companies now operating in North America (Brelinski 2015), and an estimated 70 companies in Europe (Bernardini 2015). Rózsavölgyi Csokoládé, a Budapest-based company, is one example of a local Hungarian craft chocolate maker. Started in 2004 by a husband and wife team, the company now has a retail shop in Budapest's art district, and a small but expanding factory where the chocolate is made. The owners carefully source cacao from respected operations, even going so far as to highlight the post-harvest practices of the growers and to specify which genetic variety comes from which country of origin in their marketing materials. Their single origin dark chocolate bars are made in elaborate moulds designed to look like a traditional Hungarian tile and wrapped in ornate, colourful paper. Over the years, Rózsavölgyi Csokoládé products have won several awards from the UK-based Academy of Chocolate and Guild of Fine Food and have been finalists in the International Chocolate Awards competition. The company is explicit in its mission to meld traditional and modern, craft and fine art:

> Chocolate as a material is particularly inspiring. We at Rózsavölgyi Csokoládé use traditional processes and pure ingredients to achieve the most natural flavours and apply detailed yet contemporary designs to create a memorable experience - a true piece of art…Old Hungarian shapes and patterns blend in with new creations; traditional chocolate making with a modern view. It brings consistency without compromising quality. (Rózsavölgyi Csokoládé 2015)

This chocolate is packaged and sold in ways that indicate its localness, while also indicating knowledge of the foreign conditions of production.

There are a number of potential positive impacts of the craft chocolate movement that emerging research suggests. Often, farmers are paid significant premiums for fine cacao that has been carefully harvested, fermented, and dried and, when carefully sourced, this cacao is often grown without the heavy use of synthetic chemicals and under better labour conditions than most bulk cacao. In some cases, farmers and chocolate makers work together and educate one another on best practices. A small number of companies (such as

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8 While no standard definition of craft chocolate exists, it generally refers to chocolate made from scratch, starting with the unroasted cacao bean in a company's own facilities using traditional methods of chocolate making (roasting, winnowing, tempering, tempering and depositing chocolate). Craft chocolate companies also typically produce at a small scale, processing significantly less than 200 metric tons of cacao beans per year.

Askinosie Chocolate) even go so far as to profit-share in a direct trade relationship with farmers. The consumer base for craft chocolate is also generally educated and interested in quality produced with an eye towards ethics. The chocolate, too, when made well, can be of a higher quality and better tasting (Eber and Williams 2012; Presilla 2009).

However, craft chocolate is far from a catch-all solution to problems in the cacao-chocolate supply chain today. For example, the vast quantities of West and Central African cacao being produced are virtually invisible in craft chocolate due to sourcing challenges (Leissle 2013) and, at times, direct prejudice, with derogatory tropes about African cacao quality and labour expressed commonly in the craft chocolate space. In addition, craft chocolate makers buy only small amounts of cacao each year and produce only small amounts of chocolate, just a drop in the bucket of an enormous industry percentage. Cacao farmers selling directly to craft chocolate makers must often rely on relationships characterized by immature or fragile business structures. This overall economic instability and lack of traditional industrial scaling benefit means that many in the craft chocolate space do not make a sustainable income and, due to the deflation overall of chocolate prices as a result of industrial manufacturing, craft chocolate makers find it nearly impossible to set sustainable price points for their bars. Due to the steep learning curve and costly nature of good equipment, many bars produced are also of a lower quality than their relatively high price suggests. This problem is circular and affects overall sustainability of this segment of the industry – the high price of bars and variable quality limits the consumer base, as does the small level of production and distribution. In addition, many of the claims to ethics made by craft chocolate makers are inflated with the same rhetoric employed by fair trade labellers, which is equally problematic.

Future Directions for Fine and Craft Chocolate

One of the most important critiques of do-gooder consumerism, whether purchasing of fair trade or craft chocolate products, is that of compassionate consumption through double commodity fetishism. The first level of commodity fetishism, in the case of chocolate, relies on the ignorance of consumers as to the social relations of production. Consumers quite regularly purchase and eat chocolate while entirely divorced from any notion of its biography and geography. Moreover, when a second fetish appears in the consumer's world – that of the "touristic quality" of consumption (Lash and Urry 1994:272) or of "compassionate consumption" (Richey and Ponte 2011) – this suggests that food as material culture can be consumed as a way to reflect one's knowledge, worldliness and morality.

It is quite possible that the fine and craft chocolate products described in this essay, linked with sometimes dubious claims of ethics and quality, expand consumption far more than they meet the needs of the people they ostensibly serve throughout the supply chain. Simultaneously, many of these products actively sell a romantic ideal through stereotypical representations of global inequality and injustice – that of the power of the average consumer to figuratively travel through the experience of *terroir* or to contribute to social justice and alleviate the suffering of developing world farmers by voting with their dollars. This can effectively de-link capitalist production and global poverty in consumers' minds, a disconcerting possibility given the clear

relationship between the two. While there is much to recommend fine and craft chocolate, there is also much left to be done. In other words, the problems of the local-global divide and socially unequal state of cacao-chocolate production and consumption described throughout this essay persist in the present day, despite many of our perceived solutions.

In order to address these problems, investment of resources into the following seven areas will be necessary:

- **Education** – At all points in the cacao-chocolate supply chain, education and training are necessary. We can collectively work to improve our own comprehension of the long socio-historical antecedents of the worst forms of child labour, loss of agrobiodiversity in cacao and cacao producing regions, and challenges in cacao cultivation and chocolate production. This will also aid in putting an end to the exploiter-exploited binary that oversimplifies and stereotypifies notions of cacao farmers worldwide, presently hindering much of the work that needs to be done.

- **Research** – Further research is necessary in most areas of the cacao-chocolate supply chain, but especially in relation to labour and social inequality. This research should be varied in design and analytical approach and guided by area and subject matter experts. It should be made available to all stakeholders.

- **Legislation** – Legislation and execution of the law are necessary to improve labour and land rights in primarily cacao producing countries as well as sourcing and consumption practices in primarily chocolate processing and consuming countries.

- **Advocacy** – Grass roots, rather than top-down, approaches to advocacy are increasingly necessary. These approaches should be rooted in local communities and supported financially and technically by collaborative allies.

- **Economics** – Buyers must pay more for cacao, uncertified and certified. Both practically and morally, consistent cacao farmer poverty in an industry replete with wealth is unacceptable. Any cacao purchasing scheme should be characterized by standardization, values, transparency, and verification. Certification schemes should be possible to support farmers or cooperatives with limited economic cost. Critiques of certification should be taken seriously and result in innovative change.

- **Cooperation** – Knowledge and resource sharing among different stakeholders in the cacao-chocolate supply chain should become regular practice. Likewise, industry, governments, certifying bodies, non-governmental organizations, and consumer groups must work together towards shared goals.

- **Prioritization** – At present, flavour and high end consumer audiences are the chief priorities of fine cacao and chocolate advocates, as evidenced by the existing industry organizations, marketing schemes, and award competitions. Increased prioritization of accountability for upholding stated values, especially in relation to social and environmental ethics, is urgently needed to avoid the pitfalls of rhetoric obscuring reality.

SUMMARY

This essay has demonstrated that many of the existing narratives of chocolate are similar to the point of mythologizing, with little critical analysis of the history and culture of chocolate in Europe and among Europeans, especially as it relates to labour and social inequality. Critical analysis of these social factors, tracing from the ancient history of cacao in Mesoamerica to the present-day state of the chocolate industry and consumption in Europe, demonstrates the complexity of the cacao-chocolate supply chain and its impact on the lived experiences of people throughout the world. It also suggests directions for future education, investment, and action by the growing fine and craft chocolate industry that can promote mutual benefits for producers and consumers. Everyone is implicated in our contemporary food system and everyone, from farmers to consumers, will be involved in creating solutions to its problems. Chocolate's capacity to connect at local and global levels tells us not only about past lives and about how we are right now, but also about how we could be.

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Neven Duvnjak[1] – Đeni Macan[2]

Traditional foods in rural villages of the Central Dalmatian islands of Brač, Vis and Hvar (potential for the development of gastro-tourism?)

ABSTRACT

In this paper we research the presence of traditional forms of approach to food in rural villages of Dalmatian islands in the times when some of these forms are forgotten, but others have become gastronomic specialities crucial in offers to tourists. The topic of the research is perceptions which inhabitants of villages have of traditional diet as a cultural phenomenon, and how they experience the influence of processes of modernization and postmodernization on nourishment tradition. The theoretical framework assumes a developmental approach, which implies that the current eating needs are the products of a long lasting historical development that includes the presence of changes and periods of stability. Main eating practices (traditional, modern, and postmodern) we defined using content analysis of Dalmatian cook books. Analysis shows that traditional recipes are dedicated to domestic food, which has been prepared for a number of years in the same manner. Therefore, purchasing fresh food and every day cooking is recommended, including spending much time in preparing food. A key characteristic of modern nourishment is using industrially processed food, and postmodern nourishment is denoted by the openness to new foodstuffs and dishes with a tendency for experimenting. On the basis of notions defined in this way, we will determine the main characteristics of nourishment of rural villages: the look of daily meals, basic daily groceries, and dominant ways of food preparing. The ethnographic part of the paper includes field notes that were recorded during informal conversations with 26 residents of the islands Brač, Hvar and Vis. According to the ethnographic research the cuisine of the rural villages is strongly linked to tradition. The modern approach appears sporadically, and the postmodern approach does not appear at all. The traditional rural diet is characterized by simplicity and is mostly based on products from family production. Methods of food preparation and consumption continue to be sustained through the inherited traditional habits. Good opportunities for the future development of traditional island cuisine lie in maintaining the uniqueness and by means of integral sustainability assisting a postmodern ecological world view, which emphasizes the restoration of local knowledge.

Keywords: Dalmatian islands, rural villages, traditional, modern and postmodern forms of food and diet

1 Ph.D., Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar- Regional Center Split, Senior Research Assistant, and the Academy of Arts, University of Split, Assistant Professor

2 M.S. in Sociology

Neven Duvnjak – Đeni Macan

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Introduction — The Preservation of Cultural Traditions

Is it conservative to advocate the preservation of cultural diversity and cultural traditions? For some it certainly is. However, we should ask what is actually meant by the concepts of tradition and maintaining tradition. Here, we are by no means referring to going back centuries in time, when life was hard and people lacked running water, electricity, sewers, television, electronic communications and so forth, nor are we referring to the static and unchanging nature of the traditional culture. We are referring to the (human) values traditionally retained as progressive, which can contribute to the preservation of cultural diversity. Traditions do not only refer to pre-modern society, but can also be formed in modern society, although the social mechanisms and actors in their selection and symbolism are different. Traditions have historically shown strong vitality and resistance to cultural reduction and one-way development. Therefore, through their authenticity, they can play an important role in current decision-making on the direction of social development, since the preservation of cultural traditions is crucial for the preservation of the diversity of cultures.

Preservation of traditions has no meaning per se but in its significance for the future, which it can have if the progressive aspect assumes normative significance, in the sense that cultural diversity becomes a value because it has specific significance for survival, for example, the survival of island communities. To promote the importance of tradition means to support the affirmation of traditional values, which have importance and significance for modern life. In this regard, the contemporary reinterpretation of tradition is acceptable. Tradition only has value as a past that has reached the historical level. Today, diversity is certainly one of the values that guarantee collective identity. In this sense, such conservatism may prove to be stimulating when considering the future of the diversity of cultures and cultural diversity in general.

However, the traditional culture (in our case the traditional diet of islanders) is under influence, more or less, of the process of modernization. We define modernization as a process where, unlike the situation in traditional societies, the main characteristic is quick change that overtakes all segments of society and all aspects of human activities (Haralambos i Holborn 2002:1075-6). Modernization also overtakes the domains of diet and food preparation, by introduction of electric power, gas, running water and sewage systems in the majority of households. That enabled the use of the number of home appliances considerably facilitating the process of preparing and preserving food (gas and electric stoves, microwave ovens, fridges, freezers, small kitchen appliances like blenders, choppers, etc.).

THE SUBJECT AND AIMS OF THE STUDY

This paper is a contribution to the study of the traditional diet in the rural communities of the central Dalmatian islands, at a time when some of its aspects are facing oblivion and others (for example, specific dishes) are becoming gastronomic specialities in tourism offerings. The study was conducted with the aim of studying traditional[3] island foods and the coexistence of man and nature, in order to be able to plan future development based on positive experiences from the past.

Diet is a complex system of the interwoven natural resources of an area, the social fabric of a human community and its economic potentials, as well as technical know-how, material inventory, value system and entrenched habits. Owing to the specific content of the phenomenon of diet, methodological demands require that it should be observed within the framework of a social group residing in a particular place at a specific time. The social group whose diets are being studied here consists of the farmers living on the central Dalmatian islands. This is a social class for which the source of livelihood has always been based on agriculture, and the production of most of the foodstuffs used in their own households is a decisive and specific factor in the structure of their diets. There is another reason why we have chosen to investigate the diets of this particular social class: "Peasant societies fostered an attitude of respect towards nature, trying harder to adapt to it than to subjugate it, and they knew how to strike a balance between natural resources and human needs, which is a valuable experience for contemporary ecological awareness" (Muraj 1997).

This investigation examines the perceptions and significance that islanders attach to the traditional Dalmatian diet as a cultural phenomenon. The decision to study traditional diets, as an important segment, is based on the assumption that the results of the investigation will also illuminate other features of the former life on the islands and examine possibilities for the development of gastro-tourism based on traditional and ecological foods.

This investigation of the traditional island diets includes two specific goals, as follows:

- To describe the main features of traditional Dalmatian diets;

- To analyse ways of maintaining the traditional diets in rural island communities, despite the process of modernization.

DEVELOPMENTAL THEORETICAL APPROACH TO FOOD AND DIET

Understanding the modern model of the attitude towards food and diet in a particular social context is not possible without comparisons to the model or models that preceded it in the recent or distant past and, consequently, the theoretical framework of this study is a developmental approach to the issue of food and diet. The basis of the developmental theoretical approach is an attempt to resolve the key dispute in the

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3 What we undeniably find today in scientific articles about the islands is emphasis on their specificities, such as insularity, isolation, particular economic structures, specific natural environment, particular way of life and so forth. Everything that contributes to the differences between the life and environment on the islands from that in other areas sharpens the image of its specificities, which in the papers of many scientists has been elevated to the level of a special scientific subject (Šimunović 1993:452).

contemporary sociology of diet, where two extremes are in conflict. According to the first, tastes and habits regarding food are conservative, rooted in tradition and difficult to change. According to the second, modern man easily accepts innovations in many aspects of life, including the area of food and diet, where voluntarism, individualism, and the lack of rules and criteria prevail, and even a type of anomie. One of the solutions to this dispute is offered by Sobal (1999), who emphasizes that social development gradually leads to changes in the area of diet over time, where the traditional forms of attitudes towards food and diet are replaced by modern and postmodern ones. Thus, this is a process that, depending on the historical, regional, economic and other social specificities of a particular area (village, region, state...), lasts for a longer or shorter period and is expressed to a greater or lesser degree.

The most prominent representatives of the developmental approach to food and diet are Mennell, Goody, Mintz, Harris, Fischler and Elias. Mennell's key work, *All Manners of Food* (1985), is a comparative study of the types of diets and differences in tastes in France and England, which is the starting point of the developmental approach. Mennell believes that the cultural tastes and needs of people are products of their social experience. However, the very social forces that form the tastes of a specific generation are the products of long-term processes of social development, which are accumulated over the course of history by many generations. For an explanation of the changes that occur in the area of taste, Mennell used a figurative (sociogenetic) approach with the goal of explaining changes in the social model and determining why one model has a greater potential for change than another, what are the consequences of changes in people's lives, and how people experience changes (Mennell et al. 1996:16). Through an analysis of diets and tastes in France and England, Mennell attempted to demonstrate that the changing structure of social interdependence and the power relations within a society are reflected in the areas of diet and taste. Tastes connected with food, as well as tastes in music or literature, are socially shaped and the main forces that influence their formation are religion, class and nation (Mennell et al. 1996:16–17).

Goody (1982) believes that it is easier to describe changes in cooking methods that come from the outside and are the consequences of the introduction of new foods and culinary techniques. Although the areas of food preparation and consumption are generally conservative and strongly related to tradition, under certain circumstances, such as, for example, those caused by the introduction of potatoes in the diet of the Irish, the massive use of tomatoes in the United States (the ubiquitous ketchup) or corn in Africa, surprising changes occur.

An example of the developmental approach is found in the essay *Time, Sugar and Sweetness* by the anthropologist Mintz (1997). He criticizes structuralism, stating that meanings cannot be merely read or deciphered but should be interpreted with respect to their cultural and historical contexts. When food is analysed as the bearer of a message in symbolic form, it is always necessary to keep in mind that the symbolic structures cannot be viewed out of context, as timeless facts (Goody 1989:37). Therefore, Mintz pleads for taking the historical perspective into account, that is, studying the changes in preferences for certain types of foods and diets that have occurred throughout history (Mintz 1997:367).

Within the framework of social anthropology and sociology, the dietary analyses by the American anthropologist Harris are important. Harris devotes particular attention to the historical fact according to which no known human community eats everything in its surroundings that has nutritional value, but there are group forms of preference and aversion. Harris maintains that the reason for this should be found in the entire system of food production, particularly in the fact that to some food represents a source of wealth and power, while for the majority it serves for (mere) survival. Harris shows that the dietary habits of social groups change with time, which is explained by the developmental arguments. In the background of the existence of dietary prohibitions and taboos, there is always practical logic, which attempts to adapt to the physical environment and effective exploitation of resources within a given natural and ecological context. Thus, Harris is considered a supporter of the developmental approach, which attempts to investigate the specific social conditions and historical processes that have led to the establishment of a given food system (Beardsworth–Keil 2001:66).

A major contribution to the sociology of food was made by the French author Fischler. His key thesis is that the traditional rules, norms and meanings that structure human food and its consumption increasingly fall under the process of the disaggregation or breaking of long-ago created rules, which leads to a state of *gastro-anomie*.[4] The state of the contemporary diet is a consequence of the effects of contradictory and inconsistent pressures on the conscious of the modern food consumer, which are promoted by the powerful food and advertising industries as well as government institutions. Under such intense pressure, there are changes in personal identity, which are determined by belonging to a specific culinary culture, most often closely related to tradition (Fischler 1988:288–90). Fischler's basic explanation of the crisis is as follows: instead of the heteronomic and externally imposed rules that were crucial in the determination of traditional foods, the contemporary situation is increasingly characterized by manifestations of individualism, autonomy and anomie (Warde 1997:30).

The way in which Fischler understands the cultural dimensions of the contemporary food system is quite pessimistic, although he stresses that there are individual and joint efforts to renew the normative order in dietary practices, which would redefine the meaning of food. For example, individuals accept certain specific ways of consuming food (dietetic or vegetarian) in order to restore the normative logic within their food system based on personal choice (Fischler 1988:290–291). The next key concept within the theoretical model is the menu, which is understood more broadly than in its everyday meaning. Namely, the menu includes a set of rules that determine the choice of foods among those available, and within the food system of an individual society there can be a variety of menus. Here we look at a description of a traditional menu, with recommendations and rules for the selection of foods derived from ordinary customary practice. Such practice is formed by generations and its incontestability and legitimacy are justified by its long existence. The recommendations and prohibitions of traditional menus are considered self-evident, natural and immutable. Deviation from such rules and prohibitions causes others in the community to express astonishment and sometimes even scorn and revulsion.[5] Fischler's developmental theoretical orientation comes into play when it is taken into account that

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4 Fischler's concept of *gastro-anomie* is closely related to Durkheim's classic concept of *social anomie.*

5 Fischler also mentions rational menus, for which the selection criteria are created to achieve a specific goal (for example, weight loss, improvement of physical and mental performance, generalized promotion of good health etc.). Such menus are mainly

in traditional societies there is a traditional central menu, which coincides with the limits of the available foods but also changes, albeit slowly and with resistance.

Social influences and forces which, to a greater or lesser extent, form the tastes of modern generations are the products of long-term developmental historical processes, which were created and accumulated by previous generations. Therefore, the intergenerational transfer of habits, preferences, values and models related to food and diet are implied, as well as inevitable changes due to development.

Methodological Aspects of the Study of Traditional Dalmatian Diets on the Islands

In order to gain deeper insight into the traditional island diet, we employed a qualitative research approach. The research methods used were unstructured interviews with islanders and a qualitative analysis of the contents of Dalmatian cookbooks, which were necessary for defining traditional Dalmatian cuisine. We employed the method of unstructured interview with the aim of discovering the deeper significance that islanders ascribe to specific phenomena and processes related to food and diet. The interviews were conducted in March and April 2012 in the villages of Nerežišća on Brač, Gdinj and Zastražišće on Hvar, and Podšpilje and Žena Glava on Vis. During the interviews, we provided the subjects with the topics of conversation and encouraged them to respond as freely as possible. Very often, the interviews were completely free form, like ordinary conversations. After we transcribed the interviews, we categorized the empirical textual data using qualitative analysis of the text. For the research sample, the three aforementioned central Dalmatian islands (Brač, Hvar and Vis) were chosen and the research subsample consisted of the five villages where we conducted our research, which share very important characteristics: they are located in the interiors of the islands and have very small populations.[6] During the field portion of the study, we interviewed a total of 26 subjects, of whom 10 were from the island of Brač, 10 from Hvar and 6 from Vis. Of the total number of subjects, 18 were male and 8 were female. We consider it important to point out that women were under-represented due to the fact that they deferred to the male members of their households, reflecting the presence of patriarchal family relations in the rural island settlements. Half of the subjects were over 70 years of age, which clearly demonstrates the dramatic demographic trend of population ageing among the island villagers.

Regarding analysis of the content, the subject was the texts accompanying recipes from specialized cookbooks devoted to Dalmatian cuisine,[7] more precisely, the introduction, foreword and afterword, and

based on scientific or quasi-scientific principles. Closely related to the rational menu is the convenience menu, which tends to reduce the time and effort invested in the preparation of daily meals, as well the hedonistic menu and the so-called moral menu, where the selection criteria are influenced by norms related to ethical, religious and ecological convictions.

6 On the island of Brač, we randomly selected and interviewed villagers from the village Nerežišća, one of the smallest island munici-palities in terms of population size, with 617 inhabitants. On Hvar, we interviewed villagers living on the eastern part of the is-land, in Gdinj, which has 136 inhabitants, and Zastražišće, with 169. We used the snowball or chain-referral sampling method here, establishing contact with the local people and arranging interviews. In the mountain villages of Podšpilje (with only 11 inhabitants) and Žena glava (47 inhabitants), located on the south-western part of the island of Vis, we chose and interviewed local inhabitants according to the method of random selection.

7 The list of the cookbooks from which publications dedicated to Dalmatian cuisine were singled out was prepared on the basis of data collected through a search of the major online book stores in Croatia. We limited the search to a 20-year period, 1985–2004, in order to gain insight into eventual changes in the approach to Dalmatian cuisine. During the search, eight ex-clusively Dalmatian cookbooks were found. It is important to point out that even today these Dalmatian cookbooks are highly influential, especially Dalmatinska kuhinja by Dika Marjanović Radica.

eventually the text on the back cover. The goal of the content analysis was to identify the key features and specificities of Dalmatian cuisine, as well as to describe how these texts define the traditional Dalmatian diet.

Characteristics of Traditional Dalmatian Foods according to Dalmatian Cookbooks

In the qualitative analysis of the content of Dalmatian cookbooks, due to the specific nature of the subject, aims and selected sample, we analysed only the accompanying texts (not the recipes), which are written in a free form. In these texts, the authors singled out the main characteristics of foods in Dalmatia by citing and describing typical ingredients, types of foods and seasoning, the manner of processing and preparing food, and somewhat less frequently gave advice in connection with the cooking process and serving, composing daily and festive menus, the schedule and structure of daily meals and so on.

Through analysis of the accompanying texts in the cookbooks, we singled out all the attributes that the authors ascribe to Dalmatian cooking, foods and seasoning that they consider autochthonous and traditional.

Table 1. Attributes that the cookbook authors ascribe to Dalmatian cuisine

GROUPS OF ATTRIBUTES	INDIVIDUAL ATTRIBUTES	F	∑
MAIN INFLUENCES	Venetian influence	1	5
	French influence	1	
	Austrian-Hungarian influence	1	
	Italian national cuisine	1	
	Circle of Mediterranean civilization	1	
MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF FOODS	Light	1	3
	Tasty	1	
	Fresh	1	
MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF CUISINE	Healthful	1	16
	Simple	6	
	Simple meal structure	1	
	Moderate	1	
	Easy to prepare	1	
	Variety	1	
	Seasonal	1	
	Economical	1	
	High quality	1	
	Aromatic	1	
	Accepted everywhere	1	
GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS	Amalgam (Combination)	1	7
	Limes (Border)	1	
	Multicultural	1	
	Gastronomic tolerance	1	
	Integration	1	
	Change	1	
	Adaptation	1	
TOTAL ATTRIBUTES:			31

We used the attributes listed and categorized to construct as comprehensive a picture of Dalmatian cuisine as possible. Its specific features are as follows: in the first place is simplicity, both in the choice of seasonal ingredients (whenever possible) and the manner of food preparation, as well as in the structure of daily meals (primarily lunch as the central meal, which frequently consists of only one dish, often soup). Moreover, Dalmatian cuisine is considered to be exceptionally healthful. The food is defined as light, tasty and aromatic, which usually does not require long or demanding preparation. Dishes are constructed from various fresh local ingredients (as the authors point out with pride), and it is important to emphasize that the menu is almost always adapted to the seasons. The home-maker is economical and rational in her attitude towards food, and we assume that this is a consequence of the memory of frequently long and difficult periods when food was scarce, as have historically occurred in Dalmatia, especially inland (Dalmatian hinterland) and on the islands.

The cookbook authors place Dalmatian cuisine within the circle of Mediterranean civilization but emphasize its typical multiculturality and gastronomic tolerance. These characteristics, according to the principle of reciprocity, have led to the constant integration of new elements from various culinary traditions. As a result, there have been some changes in traditional dietary habits, adaptation to foreign influences. In the same way, new ingredients, foods and preparation methods are being adapted to the local cuisine, which is inevitable in the acculturation process. More precisely, Dalmatian cuisine is an amalgamate, a border (limes) cuisine in which there are interaction and intertwining with Venetian, French, Austro-Hungarian (Central European), Italian, Southern Slavic and other cuisines, which have influenced it to a greater or lesser extent.[8]

In the following table are the types of foods, seasoning and techniques for preparing food that the cookbook authors consider typical of Dalmatian cuisine.

Table 2. Indigenous Dalmatian ingredients, foods, seasoning and preparation techniques

Type of Ingredients	Types of Foods	Types of Seasoning
Eggplant	Jota (beans with sauerkraut)	Garlic
Courgette	Fish stew of grouper (2)	Bay leaves (3)
White fish	Crni zec (rabbit hunter style) (2)	Thyme
Seafood (2)	Pašticada (beef in a thick sauce) (4)	Anise
Vegetables (2)	Pasticcio dei maccaroni (pasta with minced meat)	Cedar
Fruits	Arambašići (minced meat wrapped in sauerkraut leaves)	Cloves
Lamb (3)	Fritule (fried sweet pastries) (2)	Nutmeg
Prosciutto (3)	Paprenjaci (gingerbread)	Cinnamon
Fresh tomatoes (2)	Black risotto (2)	Coriander
Canned tomatoes	Bakalar na bijelo (salt cod purée)	Fresh herbs
Salted fish	Tuka (turkey)	Sage (2)
Dried fish	Sautéed or fried fish	Basil
Fresh (salt water) fish (4)	Soup with zanzarelle (soup with special home-made pasta)	Rosemary (2)
Shellfish	Eel with peas	Olive oil (4)

8 As previously stated, we employed words/sentences written by the authors of the accompanying texts in the eight cookbooks analysed. Each attribute or construction is not attributed to a particular author because we compiled words and phrases from all of them for this part of the analysis.

Crabs	Pašta i fažol (pasta and beans)	Mixed oils
Mutton	Kroštule (fried sweets)	Vegetable shortening
Beef	Soup	Lard
Pork	Varivo (stewed vegetables)	Mediterranean herbs
Pancetta	Inexpensive sweets	
Poultry	Brudet (fish stew)	
Game (2)	Poached fish with potatoes	
Swiss chard	Roasted meat	
Spinach	Grilled fish	
Wild greens	Sarma (minced meat in sauerkraut leaves)	
Cabbage		
Peas		
Fava beans		
Capers		
Artichokes		
Bread		
Olives (2)		
Woodcock		

In addition to the general picture of Dalmatian cuisine, its internal structure and key elements are evident from Table 2. For this purpose, we have singled out types of ingredients, foods and seasoning, as well as the main food preparation techniques, which in the accompanying cookbook texts are considered "original Dalmatian and autochthonous."

Regarding ingredients, fresh vegetables are mentioned most frequently, particularly fresh and canned tomatoes (see Table 2). It should be noted that the list includes many characteristic types of local vegetables, which are still commonly used today in family meals, such as Swiss chard, spinach, cabbage, wild greens, peas, fava beans, artichokes, eggplant and courgette, and are usually consumed when they are in season (for example, spring, summer and early autumn).[9] After vegetables, meat is the most frequently mentioned, with particular emphasis on Dalmatian lamb, prosciutto and game.[10] Otherwise, the first two meats (lamb and prosciutto) in various contexts are considered trademarks of Dalmatian cuisine (from lay persons to experts and gastronomes). In the third place, behind vegetables and meat, are terms connected with fish and seafood, which is somewhat surprising because Dalmatia is oriented towards the sea. In this category, the general terms "fresh fish" and "seafood" are used.[11] As autochthonous foods from the sea, the authors mention salted and dried fish. These two ingredients are very important for obtaining an accurate picture of traditional Dalmatian cuisine, where fish preserved with salt (for example, sardines and anchovies) and dried (conger, whiting, ray…) have had exceptional importance in the daily diet of the coastal and island populations. This was particularly true in winter, when fishermen could not go out on sea due to bad weather, so naturally preserved fish was eaten.

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9 In the area studied, the habit of purchasing vegetables at open markets has been maintained. Therefore, the majority of home-makers prefer to buy seasonal vegetables when they appear on the market, although some types of frozen and canned vegetables can be found in self-service grocery stores throughout the year. Also, out-of-season fresh vegetables are either assumed to be imported or grown in greenhouses, and considered to be of doubtful freshness and quality.

10 Among the other types of meat characteristic of Dalmatian cuisine, the authors mention mutton, beef, pork and poultry.

11 Seafood is understood to refer to crab, shellfish, squid, cuttlefish, octopus and the like.

In addition to meat, vegetables and fish/seafood, only bread and fruit are mentioned among other foods and this in a general manner, without specifying the types. Such a finding is somewhat surprising because many types of high quality fruit grow in Dalmatia, which are often processed and preserved (for example, fruit juice) and eaten fresh when in season.

In contrast to the imbalance that exists among typical Dalmatian ingredients (where we have seen that meat dominates), among Dalmatian dishes there is equal mention of those based on meat and those containing fish or seafood.

Analysis of the cookbook texts showed that the most popular Dalmatian meat dish is *pašticada*, followed by *crni zec*, *arambašići* and *sarma.* According to the cookbooks, other authentic dishes from this group include roast turkey and roast meat (likely referring to lamb, baby beef and veal, which are most commonly consumed), which are mentioned once. Favourite traditional Dalmatian fish/seafood dishes are *brudet* (stew) of grouper and black risotto with cuttlefish. Within this group, we also include several popular dishes that are mentioned once each, such as *bakalar na bijelo* (salt cod purée), eels with peas, grilled fish and poached fish (see Table 2). Less frequently other types of favourite foods, including traditional Dalmatian *variva* (vegetable stews) such as *jota* and *pašta-fažol* (see Table 2) are mentioned in recipe form in nearly every cookbook analysed. In addition to vegetable stews, meat and fish soups[12] are mentioned as very important components of the daily diet in Dalmatia. As for seasoning, the most important are olive oil (appears four times), followed by bay leaves (three times), sage and rosemary (two times each). There are also indigenous, wild or cultivated aromatic plants that thrive in the Mediterranean climate.[13]

Although we omitted recipes for sweets in the previous section of the analysis, we shall take them into consideration here because they are particularly singled out in the accompanying texts of the cookbooks. Typical Dalmatian sweets include *fritule* (mentioned two times), *paprenjaci* and *kroštule*,[14] while one of the authors specifically refers to "inexpensive sweets"[15] as being specific to Dalmatia.

Regarding food preparation techniques, the authors do not express preference for any and attach equal importance to boiling, poaching, stewing, braising, frying, sautéing, roasting and grilling. Grilling meat or fish,[16] roasting lamb on a spit and cooking food under a domed lid or bell are singled out as typical food preparation methods.

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12 Soups in Dalmatia, even today, are very often served as one-dish meals. Noodle soup is followed by a second course consisting of the boiled meat and vegetables from the soup, frequently served with tomato sauce (šalša).

13 Although indigenous forms of seasoning are most commonly mentioned, in Dalmatian cuisine a number of imported (Oriental) spices play major roles, such as cloves, nutmeg, cinnamon, coriander and the like. Moreover, it is necessary to mention several domestic kinds of seasoning that are indispensable in this cuisine and mentioned in the cookbooks, such as garlic, basil, thyme and others.

14 Fritule and kroštule are very inexpensive pastries, which are prepared from pieces of dough deep-fried in oil. Although simple, considerable skill and experience are required to prepare them well.

15 The author probably believes that traditional Dalmatian sweets are prepared from affordable basic ingredients (flour, eggs, sugar, almonds and such), without a lot of custard, chocolate, sweet cream and similar ingredients infrequently found in Dalmatian kitchens. The humble ingredients used in kroštule, fritule and cookies do not diminish the quality, flavour or demanding preparation of the finished products.

16 In Dalmatia, it is customary for grilled fish or meat to be prepared by men.

The qualitative analysis of the accompanying texts was aimed at providing a basic picture of Dalmatian cuisine and singling out the essential features that distinguish it from the other regional cuisines in Croatia, as well as those outside the Croatian context.

Production-Related Activities of the Islanders

Given that agriculture has represented one of the fundamental aspects of daily life in the area studied since ancient times, it was also one of the most fruitful topics in conversations with the islanders. Grapes and olives are the most common crops in the villages on the islands of Brač, Hvar and Vis, although the total area of cultivated land has significantly diminished the difference between cultivating olives and grapes was vividly described by a subject from Gdinj on the island of Hvar, and variations of this description can also be heard in other parts of Dalmatia:

"A grapevine is the same as a wife. You always have to run after it, prune it, apply sulphur and spray it, and if you let up even once, then all is lost. An olive tree is like a mother, you just stroke it a little and it rewards you!"

Knowledge used to be systematically passed down from the old to the young and agricultural production was the main source of income for each family. The land was tilled manually, with a hoe, and most products on the islands of Hvar and Vis (wine, figs, lavender, olives, rosemary, carob, wheat...) were sold through so-called agricultural cooperatives, which provided the prerequisites for the reproduction and development of peasant family farms as the principal agricultural producers (Defilippis 2004:43). Village cooperatives represented an organizational type of collective ownership and collective cultivation management, which emerged during the socialist period as the basic unit of collective production in all branches of agriculture and animal husbandry. It was necessary to allow village cooperatives to transition from small-scale to large-scale production with large market surpluses. Members of a cooperative were required to give part of their own land to the cooperative and, at the discretion of the cooperative, also part of their means of production, including agricultural machinery, farm buildings and livestock (Defilippis 2004:50). However, although machinery such as tractors and rotary tillers have made work in the fields much easier today, most of the cooperatives have closed due to the failed socialist system and muddled agricultural policy after the 1990s. Socialism forced agriculture to become industrialized. Commercial agriculture has been increasingly abandoned, while production for a family's own needs has begun to predominate (raising plants, mostly vegetables, in household gardens), which was characteristic of almost all the households we visited.

A subject from the village of Gdinj on the island of Hvar explained the former and current attitudes towards agriculture:

"Agriculture is already gone! I'm the only one who still has figs. The entire coast of the island of Hvar no longer has them! In our coves, everyone used to have fig trees and grapevines. It was wonderful! That was twenty or thirty years ago. Now everything is abandoned, covered with brambles and pines. There is nothing any more. No one is planting anything!"

The main reasons for the neglect of agriculture today, according to the subjects, are the negative

demographic trends (the dying out of the population and young people moving to the mainland and large cities), and the young people's lack of interest in agriculture (who today participate more as helpers than as active labourers). As one subject from the village of Gdinj on the island of Hvar says:

"Farming this meagre land is too difficult and physically strenuous,"

while others from Gdinj note that village life requires versatility and manual dexterity.

"If a person does not know how to weave a basket for his own needs, then life isn't easy. A person has to deal with many things. He has to know how to use a hoe, and a pick-axe, and a hammer."

Some subjects cited the unprofitability and uncertainty of the sale of crops as reasons for the decline in agricultural production. The subjects emphasized that the greatest difference between the cultivation of land then and now is that the hoe has been replaced by the rotary tiller. The following photograph shows one of the subjects in front of an agricultural cooperative:

Photographed on the island of Vis in the village of Podšpilje. Photo by Đeni Macan.

The greatest problem in the island localities studied is depopulation caused by the emigration and dying out of the population. Among the demographic changes, the subjects emphasized two emigration processes. The first process is emigration in search of a means of existence, which the subjects described as "going with the stomach in search of bread," as was the case during the 1930s and 1940s. Today, however, they pointed out that people mostly leave the islands because they offer neither educational nor employment opportunities. The abandonment of island villages is evident in the number of empty houses where no one lives any more, as noted by a female subject from Brač, who was visibly saddened:

"Many houses are empty. Look, there are many of those stone houses. No one lives in this first house. They went to Zagreb, one died and one stayed here. Then there is no one in the house above mine. Upstairs are our son, his wife and two children. There is one man living in the house next to mine and there is no one now in the one below."

An important demographic change characterizing small island villages is the dying off of the population. A subject from the island of Hvar wistfully notes how *"the only future for Gdinj is at the graveyard."* Nevertheless, in cities there is what Defilippis calls an "urban crisis, which indicates the general degradation of the living conditions in cities" (Defilippis 2006:827), and city dwellers are turning to the values offered by the village,

which mean that they are returning to nature. This is evident from the responses of the subjects, particularly those from the island of Hvar, when they speak about emigrants returning for a weekend or an annual vacation, as well as the desire to return after retirement, which occurs among the elderly population.

Fishing would be expected to represent a very important part of the daily lives of the islanders interviewed but this was not the case in all the places studied. The subjects from Nerežišće on the island of Brač are generally not engaged in fishing due to the distance from the sea, which is not the case among those from Hvar and Vis. Nevertheless, even they are less involved in fishing than during previous years. The attitude towards the sea and fishing is described by a subject from the village of Zastražišće on the island of Hvar:

"To be near the sea and not have a boat and not go fishing would be as if a person had no legs…"

At one time, according to our subjects from Hvar and Vis, fishing used to represent the main source of food, while today it is more of a hobby, a type of recreation during free time. A subject from Gdinj describes the way fishing and farming used to be on the island of Hvar:

"People here had nets and lamps. They went out fishing with lamps in the evening, when the sea was calm. There was also a line for catching octopus, which was fifteen, twenty or so meters in length. At the end, you attached some pancetta, a chicken leg or something else, and a small stone so that it would sink, and then the octopus jumps on it! There were also nets that you cast into the water and then dragged… People also cultivated grapes, olives, lavender, carob and almonds, and planted cabbage, tomatoes, courgettes and potatoes. Everything!"

Animal husbandry was represented on all the islands studied, although there used to be many more livestock (sheep, goats) than today. In correlation with the tradition of raising livestock on of the islands are, naturally, the eating habits of the population, that is to say, the traditional island cuisine.

The traditional forms of economic activity did not undergo significant change until World War II and the postwar expansion of industrialization. Moreover, since the 1960s there has been a growing orientation towards tourism, the consequences, efficiency and expedience of which we shall only be able to assess in the future (Jakšić 2014:127). The subjects on Brač point out that there are not many tourists in their villages, although some of the subjects from each of the islands confirmed that they rented out apartments in their family homes, which is the main form of tourism in those areas.

As the rotary tiller replaced the traditional hoe, tourism squeezed out agriculture. The consequences were vividly described to us by a subject from the village of Zastražišće on the island of Hvar:

"About thirty years ago, tourism began to be taken somewhat more seriously and then the lives of these people changed, because life was easier and they simply forgot some old traditions. Tradition was actually a lifestyle, because people lived from the fields and sea, but since we are talking about fields, the chief sources of income were wine, lavender and olive oil. The land was cultivated in the old traditional manner, which means with a hoe. There were old, narrow rural roads, donkey paths, which could only be used by people, goats and donkeys. People travelled for hours to reach their fields. Then it was no problem to till vineyards with a hoe for a couple of months from morning to night. With two pieces of bread and a litre of bevanda (wine mixed with water), people were able to spend the whole day on the fields. In the

evening they would come home tired, have supper and go to sleep, together with the chickens. Today this has changed, when the first tractor and rotary tiller arrived and people began to realize that they could earn more from one room during the summer than they earned from twenty olive trees. Then they easily switched to tourism. They rented out the beds and then the fields that were far from home … since it was a problem to keep a donkey, because you have to prepare feed for it during the winter, you have to take it to pasture or keep it in a little house. People were not in a position to do so. Then it was easier for them to purchase a small tractor. Since a tractor could not be driven on the narrow paths, the people went to the fields that were near home, and then they abandoned the fields that were farther away. So that… during the past thirty years…, two-thirds of the fields became overgrown with bushes. Those near home, where you could go by car and where you could bring a tractor in the trailer, are maintained."

Some of the subjects from Hvar and Vis note that there is a growing tendency towards the development of rural tourism, the importance of which is reflected in the interaction of agricultural production, the presentation of traditions (in the first place offering home-made specialities from home-grown ingredients), and sustainable development, which means the revitalization of the traditional island heritage.

The photographs show how old objects that were formerly used daily are now exhibited in wine cellars.

Some residents are also engaged in the sale of local products, such as wine, brandy, olive oil, dried figs and medicinal products (mainly from local wild herbs). Several subjects from Hvar and Vis mentioned that household work is shared equally by the male and female members of the family. Despite this, the attitude still prevails that women are required to work in the kitchen and clean, and men are generally only involved when it is necessary to prepare meat or fish on the grill. Nevertheless, the subjects emphasized that work in the kitchen has become much easier today owing to modern household appliances.

Photographed on the island of Vis in the village of Žena Glava. Photo by Đeni Macan.

Photographed on the island of Vis in the village of Žena Glava. Photo by Đeni Macan.

Oil, wine and brandy used to be sold through agricultural cooperatives but today are sold directly to tourists. In the next photograph, there is a roadside advertisement for domestic products.

Subjects on the island of Hvar particularly stressed the need for fishing and cultivating gardens as activities that "ease the household budget." There are few employment opportunities on the islands and the per capita GDP is lower than the general average. Defilippis says that rural areas are less efficient economically (Defilippis 2006:833). A great problem for the island localities, especially Nerežišća on Brač, is the failure of trades and factories that used to employ a large number of locals. This has particularly negative consequences just now because in modernized society, people turn to the tertiary sector and neglect the typical rural activities such as agriculture and fishing, which used to be important sources of income. For the residents of the villages investigated on the island of Hvar, characteristic shortages of water and electricity are cited as particularly aggravating factors that contribute to the negative demographic trends.

4. Photographed on the island of Hvar in the village of Zastražišće. Photo by Đeni Macan.

Foods consumed on the islands of Brač, Hvar and Vis

The manner in which food is produced, prepared and consumed is usually passed down through inherited values and traditions. The majority of households in the island villages produce enough food in their gardens to meet their own needs, which implies fewer shopping trips to purchase food. However, although the subjects on all three islands produce their own food, they stressed that they needed to travel to larger (island) localities in order to purchase food and other necessities more cheaply. They singled out the problem of being forced to shop in local, more expensive stores because they could not go to larger communities, which is again characteristic for the ageing population.

It seems that modernization is slowly eroding tradition, which leads to a type of mixed dietary model, in which domestic food still prevails over purchased food. However, it is difficult to estimate how long this situation will last: we may assume that the tradition will be maintained until the next generation. Furthermore, young people are reluctant to participate in agricultural work and generally perform less demanding tasks. When depopulation and emigration from the islands are factored in, the future of the traditional manner of food production and diet is largely in question. If government-level targeted political and economic measures do not encourage young people to remain on the islands, the long-term negative trend in the loss of traditions and cultural diversity will accelerate.

On the other hand, the modernization is not a unidirectional and unambiguous process, because it can positively influence traditional diet. For example, use of a (gas or electric) stove considerably facilitates and accelerates everyday cooking, and doesn't change the appearance, taste and other important characteristics of traditional dishes (foods). The use of fridge and freezers enables the preservation of traditional foods even out of season, so they can be tasted by tourists which came in the great majority on investigated islands during the summer. The role of modern agricultural machines can be considerably positive in the segment of traditional diet in the case of easier and simpler production of traditional goods (grapes and olive processing, cultivation of fruit and vegetables...).

These are only some examples of "coexistence" of traditional and modern and therefore it could be wrong to conclude that modernization influences tradition exclusively in a negative way. Namely, modernization processes can once more affirm some parts of tradition and therefore we have to reject the standpoints under which these processes destroy everything that existed before them. Consequently, the inhabitants of the investigated Dalmatian islands certainly accepted some aspects of modernization and modern society as well as those aspects which advance their traditional diet and which are useful for it. However, these problems are beyond the scope of this paper and this is the subject of a new investigation.

As for the traditional island diet, it can be described in the following manner. In addition to the frequent consumption of olive oil and wine, the daily menu at all three meals is based on local meat (lamb, goat and poultry...), fresh vegetables, fish and seafood. The ingredients used in everyday traditional foods are listed by a subject from the village of Gdinj on the island of Hvar:

"And there was everything! Pasta, potatoes, fish, cabbage, salted anchovies. We also pastured animals. On Sunday, there was meat."

How meat was eaten at a time when there was no electricity or refrigeration is described by a subject from Gdinj, who still remembers that period well:

"There was no electricity, there was no refrigerator. Every family had from three to ten sheep, from three to four goats. When a buck was slaughtered, the meat would be dried or lent to neighbours, who would return it when they slaughtered one of their animals. In that way, people had meat nearly every Sunday. Either someone would slaughter or someone would lend. And fish was the main food for those who had a house by the sea."

Fish has always had an important role in the daily diet of islanders and is prepared in various ways: poached, grilled, *brudet* (fish stew), and often dried or salted. How dried fish was traditionally prepared is described by a subject from Gdinj on the island of Hvar, using the example of dried conger:

"It was dried in such a manner that it was gutted, the bone was removed and then it was sprinkled with coarse salt, wrapped in paper and kept that way for one day. Then it was lightly rubbed with oil. In the summer, it was hung to dry in a so-called "muškadure," a hanging rack with a diameter of one half to one meter, covered with fine wire to prevent flies from entering. And so fish were dried in the sun."

The traditional everyday diet of the islanders was based on seasonal ingredients. From the following statement by a subject from Hvar, this is evident in the examples of fruits and vegetables:

"The greens were Swiss chard, which glistened when the first rain in nine months fell. Then the garden was tilled. The Swiss chard produced seeds, which had sprouted, as did the kale. The artichokes were also interesting, and would come up in May. Shallots would be preserved in vinegar. The dried figs were left until late winter and were eaten throughout the winter."

Among the island specialities, the people of Brač mention *vitalac,*[17] as well as local lamb grilled on a spit. A subject from Brač said the following:

"And lamb from Brač is the most highly valued, and vitalac is something special. It is made from innards and sausage casings, which are stuffed with freshly sliced liver and baked thoroughly. It should be eaten immediately, while still hot."

People from Vis singled out *viška pogača* (bread dough stuffed with salted anchovies) and marinated fish as local specialities, while those from Hvar spoke of *brujet* (fish stew) with shallots and wild greens. Items that can be found on the traditional menu on the island of Vis were listed by one of the female subjects:

"Dalmatian dishes were usually eaten: fish, Swiss chard, spinach, beans and pasta, brujet (fish stew). This was mainly a tradition. Then there was pašticada (beef stew) with gnocchi for any kind of celebration. Beans were food for labourers. When a labourer comes home from the field around 5 or 6 o'clock, he has lunch and supper. Viška pogača with only fish and onions is a speciality of Vis, and with tomatoes added is a speciality of Komiža. Marinated fish, stewed snails, rock samphire, capers ... we also make

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17 Vitalac is an ancient meat dish peculiar to the island of Brač. In 2007, it was included on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This dish, prepared from the innards of lambs or goats, maintains a living link with the time of the first contacts between the inhabitants of the island of Brač and Greek civilization (Jakšić 2014).

marmalade from grapes, oranges and figs. Among sweets, there are quince cakes, almond nougat, and Vis pršurate (fritters), hroštule (fried noodle dough), rožata (crème caramel), all sorts of things ... and among beverages we have Vugava and Plavac wines, we have plenty of liqueurs and brandies from oranges, lemons, carob, herbs and so forth..."

There is a richer and more festive table on Sundays (when meat is eaten, which is uncommon during the week), especially on holidays and special occasions,[18] with prosciutto, cheese, soup, *pašticada* (beef stew) with gnocchi and roasted meat, primarily lamb, which is particularly emphasized by the subjects from the island of Brač, where "a celebration without lamb is not a celebration."

Among sweets, the most commonly eaten are *hroštule* (fried noodle dough) and *fritule* (fritters), while subjects from Vis mention *cviti* (cookies) and *hib,* which is made from dried figs and only eaten on Christmas Eve.

Dalmatian herbs are used everywhere to season food, most often rosemary, bay leaves, oregano, shallots, sage and basil. How to make a genuine *brujet* (fish stew) with shallots is related by one of the subjects from the village of Zastražišće on the island of Hvar:

"Traditionally, we use shallots, which means not onions but shallots. Brujet made with shallots is actually the genuine brujet which has its own tradition. Shallots are similar to onions but much more piquant. They have a much spicier flavour, so that a few shallots are like a kilo of onions, for example."

The traditional time for the main meal of the day on all the islands is most commonly midday, while supper is served after sunset, following a hard day's work in the fields. The rhythm of meals is vividly described by a subject from the village of Gdinj on the island of Hvar:

"Usually we have supper when the sun sets. People generally eat according to the time, according to the sun. The main meal is at midday, most often from 11:30 to noon."

In addition to the production of cheese, honey, home-made juices (sage, elderberry, sour cherry, sweet cherry, lemon and orange), on the islands of Hvar and Vis the production of domestic brandies and liqueurs has special significance. Brandies are made using many different types of herbs growing in the vicinity. Some of the basic herbs used in liqueurs and brandies are listed by one of the subjects from Vis:

"The basic ingredients we use are sage, fennel and wormwood... Then there are common rue, lemon leaves, orange leaves, summer savoury, winter savoury, and even pine, olive branches, rock samphire ..."

The preparation of brandies is shown in photograph 5 below.

In some places on the islands, the traditional diet has been preserved through gastro-tourism. For example, in the village of Žena Glava, one of the subjects has a restaurant where he offers goat meat. He cares for the goats himself, and all the ingredients are raised, gathered and prepared in the traditional manner:

"I am mainly oriented to goat meat. Even before, most people lived from goats. We roast them on a spit, we have them grilled, boiled, sometimes goulash. And we also have plenty of fish. I picked these wild salad greens myself: milkweed, poppy greens, chicory..."

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18 We are referring here to baptisms, first communions, confirmations and marriages.

5. Photographed on the island of Vis in the village of Žena Glava. Photo by Đeni Macan

In Lieu of a Conclusion: Traditional Foods in the Modern Manner-Potential for the Development of Gastro-Tourism

Within the framework of our research, we have entered the world of the labourers of the central Dalmatian islands in order to capture part of their everyday lives and describe the significance they attach to their traditional diet and other daily activities closely connected with the food process, primarily agriculture, fishing and animal husbandry. The study was conducted with the goals of determining the presence of traditions in the peasant communities on the islands of Brač, Hvar and Vis, and the impact of modernization on the everyday lives of the islanders, according to the assessments of the subjects.

The theoretical framework of this study is the developmental theory. Our field observations largely coincide with those of Sobal (1999). Like Sobal, we consider the process of change and the modernization of the traditional diet to be inevitable but the speed with which they occur depends on the specifics of individual areas, in other words, the geographical, historical, economic and other factors. Actually, the specific nature of Croatian island localities (for example, isolation from the mainland, and distance from the sea) somewhat slow the processes of change and modernization in the daily diet. Many traditional aspects, although less influential than they used to be, continue to be present on all the islands studied, regardless of their uncertain future. We have seen that they are present in everyday cuisine and most clearly evident in the preservation of customs related to holidays, family celebrations and similar occasions.

Furthermore, we have shown how Dalmatian cuisine is defined in the accompanying texts of Dalmatian cookbooks. It turned out that in this segment of the study, there is exceptionally great correspondence between the written attributes of traditional Dalmatian cuisine and that which the islanders eat every day (see Tables 1 and 2). This applies to all food groups and types of foods, including vegetables, meat, fish, indigenous seasoning and sweets. In this case, the specifics of the island localities favour maintaining traditions because nearly all of the locals cultivate vegetables and fruits, and some of them also raise livestock and catch fish, at least to meet their own needs.

Agriculture is closely connected with the island cuisine. Although the locals are less engaged in agriculture than previously, it still represents an important part of daily rural life. Its importance lies in the fact that "villages are the only places where agriculture as an activity is still possible, although, unfortunately, increasingly less as an activity in the sense of achieving a meaningful life" (Šundalić 2011:258).

We have observed that the influences of modernization are most pronounced on the island of Brač, while a more traditional lifestyle still prevails in the villages on Hvar and Vis. The elements of modernization that we have noted primarily include technological changes, which made household work and agriculture considerably easier; the phenomenon of television, which altered interpersonal relationships; and the transformation of the rural infrastructure. What is specific to the modernization of the islands is that, on the one hand, it made life on the isolated islands easier and improved the difficult living conditions, while, on the other hand, it diminished the need to rely on relatives and fellow villagers, and thus reduced the intensity of socializing, which led to a type of alienation among the locals. It would be incorrect to conclude that the processes of modernization[19] are exclusively responsible for the weakening of traditions. Although partially responsible for the abandonment of some traditional practices, the unfavourable demographic trends (most pronounced in the rural communities on the island of Hvar) are the main reason for the uncertain future of these practices. The elderly population is dying out and the young are leaving in search of the educational and employment opportunities available on the mainland but not on the islands. All of this is occurring in the absence of adequate policies aimed at island development and maintenance. Although these communities are still fairly traditional, it is a question whether they will survive or disappear, together with their inhabitants.

On the other hand, we noted a certain type of re-traditionalization in the villages on the island of Vis. This is a process by which a tradition is modified, renewed and appears in a somewhat altered form. Tradition exists as a tourism product, evident in the growing gastro-tourism and agro-tourism, and an increased return to the production of domestic products, such as the aforementioned authentic gastronomic specialities. Gastronomic tourism "refers to travels to destinations where the local foods and beverage are the main incentives for said travels" (Dávid according to Zoltán–Szűcs 2012:6). The high quality, authenticity and ecological production of foods and beverages on the Dalmatian islands correspond to Caffyn's definition of gastro-tourism, which must offer "...a broad range of possible choices, particularly in countries with long traditions and points of interest. For the advancement of culinary tourism, it is necessary to offer food and beverage experiences that are unique and memorable" (Caffyn 2010, according to Zoltán-Szűcs 2012:6). Regarding the island localities studied, we saw that the greatest potential for preserving traditional cuisine may lie in gastro-tourism offered by village households. The growing tendency for the development of gastro-tourism has led to a connection between concern for tradition through touristic and gastronomic offers, which ultimately leads to the preservation of specific and sustainable ecological agriculture. This could be an incentive for the young to remain and even a motive for those who have gone to live in larger island localities or urban areas to return.

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19 In the village of Nerežišće on the island of Brač, the modernization process is evident, which is logical considering that this village has a significantly larger number of inhabitants compared to the villages studied on Hvar and Vis. Other reasons lie in its geographical position and good connections with urban centres on the mainland, and it seems to have a policy focused on development, so that the community appears to be quite self-sufficient in terms of organization and activities.

What kind of future scenario for the development of these island communities would be beneficial to all? Šundalić believes that the only desirable future lies in development that maintains and fosters uniqueness through integral sustainability supported by the postmodern ecological world view, which emphasizes multi-vocality, a return to the values of local expertise and strategies which have arisen in specific contexts, together with the principle of balanced spatial development. Furthermore, he emphasizes that until the guidelines are put into practice, not merely the theological considerations of sociologists and other scientists dealing with the Croatian rural areas, we can only hypothesize about the possibilities for the development of Croatian villages (Šundalić 2011:259).

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Ildikó Asztalos Morell[1]

Social farming as a means of poverty reduction in rural Hungary

Abstract

This paper is to set focus on innovative ways to combat food poverty in rural Hungary. Food poverty is associated with malnutrition which can refer both to the lack of food and its dissatisfying quality. Food poverty in the post-socialist rural context does not emerge as a consequence of natural catastrophes or lacking accessibility to food. Rather, it is the outcome of the unequal distribution of incomes and resources. Methods of overcoming food-poverty emerge primarily in the interplay between post-socialist welfare institutions and civil society initiatives, even if market agents occupy an increasing role in neo-neoliberal regimes as donators of charity and resources or as collaborators in poverty alleviation projects. Municipalities work within the paradigms of the welfare state and its social benefit system as redistributors of state resources, in contrast civil society agents represent partial interests and work from principles independent of the state redistributive logic.

Therefore, it is of interest to explore in which way poverty relief programmes put emphasis on the importance of community development and participation of marginalized groups in the development of individual and group resources necessary for overcoming their exclusion. The paper explores municipality versus civil organization approaches along the dimensions of agency; whether and if so in which way these social food projects worked for the empowerment of marginalized groups. In this pursuit I focus on immaterial aspects of empowerment, where, as argued above, the development of social resources constitutes a central role.

Furthermore, the paper explores the differences and potential synergies between municipality and civil organization based social agriculture projects aiming to combat marginalization welfare dependency.

Keywords: food poverty, community development, workfare, social farming

1 PhD, Senior Research Fellow at Uppsala Centre for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Uppsala University; and Associate Professor at Mälardalen University.

Ildikó Asztalos Morell

Social farming as a means of poverty reduction in rural Hungary

Introduction

This paper is to set focus on innovative ways to combat food poverty in rural Hungary. Food poverty is associated with malnutrition which can refer both to the lack of food and its dissatisfying quality. Food poverty in the post-socialist rural context does not emerge as a consequence of natural catastrophes or lacking accessibility to food. Rather, it is the outcome of the unequal distribution of incomes and resources. Methods of overcoming food-poverty emerge primarily in the interplay between post-socialist welfare institutions and civil society initiatives, even if market agents occupy an increasing role in neoliberal regimes as donators of charity and resources or as collaborators in poverty alleviation projects. Municipalities work within the paradigms of the welfare state and its social benefit system as redistributors of state resources, in contrast civil society agents represent partial interests and work from principles independent of the state redistributive logic.

While promoters of a basic income system argue for the advantages of a system where welfare recipients maintain their autonomy in deciding which way they secure their subsistence from cash welfare transfers, conservative welfare regimes promote models which prioritize in nature benefits. However, neither basic income or in nature benefits are approaches free from passive transfer of benefits. The dilemma between giving a fish or the net prevails, and innovative municipalities as well as civil organizations introduce methods that emphasize the importance of know-how transfer. Another important concern is how efforts can contribute to improvement sustainable in the long-term. Most benefit and relief programmes focus on an individual perspective, despite of research indicating the collective forces contributing to the creation and reproduction of marginalities. Approaches differ depending on their perception of need as caused by individual weaknesses or by structural marginalization. They differ also regarding the degree they emphasize individual and/or group-based empowerment as means of poverty relief.

According to Giddens (1984): "The ultimate goal of development should be human autonomy or agency – the capacity of people to order their world, the capacity to create, reproduce, change, and live according to their own meaning systems, to have the powers to define themselves as opposed to being defined by others". Bhattacharyya (2004) argues further along the lines of Giddens that empowerment and capacity building are not ends in themselves but "means for the higher end of agency" (13). A development agenda without agency treats the poor as "clients" rather than acting with them. "Community development in order to promote agency aims at generating critical consciousness, addressing problems that the affected people "own" and define, and take active measures to solve." (Bhattacharyya, 2004: 13) Agency assumes cognitive participation in "defining the problems, explaining their causes and proposing remedies" (ibid.: 20) which is to be reinvested into the subjects of development.

Therefore, it is of interest to explore in which way poverty relief programmes put emphasis on the importance of community development and participation of marginalized groups in the development of individual and group resources necessary for overcoming their exclusion. The paper explores municipality versus civil organization approaches along the dimensions of agency; whether and if so in which way these social food projects worked for the empowerment of marginalized groups. In this pursuit I focus on immaterial aspects of empowerment, where, as argued above, the development of social resources constitutes a central role. Furthermore, the paper explores the differences and potential synergies between municipality and civil organization based social agriculture projects aiming to combat marginalization welfare dependency.

Food poverty, marginalities and disembedment of rural communities following the post-socialist transition to capitalism?

A key indicator of poor living conditions is the presence of food poverty. Although food poverty can be observed in the whole of the EU, its level differs. The proportion of those who were malnourished[2] due to material need in 2011 showed a gap between EU 15 and EU 10 countries. The proportion of the malnourished was measured to be 6.9% in EU 15 and 20.5% in EU 12. Its level was 29% in Hungary, 21.2% in Romania and 50.8% in Bulgaria (Somai 2013: 187).

Generally, the proportion of household budgets spent on food is a good indicator of social inequalities. In CEE countries the proportion of the household budget spent on food is higher (30%) compared to EU 15 countries (10–15%) (EEA 2005: 17–18). This is not counting that the absolute level of expenditures on food per capita are more than 2.5 times as high in EU 15 countries compared to new member states. Furthermore, there is even a difference in the composition of the "food basket". People in CEE countries eat half the amount of fruit, fish, seafood, cheese and red meat compared to EU 15 citizens (EEA 2005). Declining household expenditure on food has been related to the transition to capitalism (SEI-T 2004).

In the case of Hungary, kg per capita food-consumption declined during the transition. In 2013 the total weight of per capita food consumption was 87.6% of the level in 1989. The decline during the post-socialist period was most sizeable in the cases of meat (to 71%), milk (78%) and egg (61%) consumption, while it increased mildly for potatoes and vegetables (KSH 2014). Food consumption is a measure of social inequalities. The proportion of food expenditure in Hungary was highest among the least educated households (36.7%) with physical worker household-heads (34.2%) and those in the first income quintiles (38.2%) (Simonovits et al. 2012: 72). Food poverty hits families with children harder. The per capita food consumption is negatively related to the number of children in a family, the higher the number of children in a family the lower the level of per capita consumption of eggs, meat, vegetables and milk products. Food poverty is a growing problem for families living below the minimum standard of living.

Poverty also has an ethnic dimension. In Hungary, according to TÁRKI's longitudinal survey studies the proportion of measured poverty rate[3] was 10% among non-Roma heads of households while it was 68% among

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2 Along with Somai (2013: 187) I use the definition of malnourishment as affecting those who could not afford a meal with meat, chicken, fish or its vegetarian equivalent every second day.

3 The TÁRKI measure of poverty rate was those falling below the poverty line of 202 thousand HUF in 2000 and 540 thousand HUF in

Roma in 2000. This figure increased to 12% among non-Roma heads of households while it increased to 76% of Roma heads of households by 2012 (Gábos et al. 2012: 53). The proportion of households falling under the poverty rate were substantially higher in rural villages (23%) than both in the capital (6%) and cities (17%) (Gábos et al. 2012: 53).

According to a comparative UNDP survey from 2002 food poverty among Roma is conspicuously higher in rural settlements. On the question "Were there period during the last year when your family did not have enough to eat?" 51% of urban and 43% of rural households answered no in five CEE countries (Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and Check Republic). Meanwhile, 12% of urban and 19% of rural respondents answered yes on the statement "We are constantly starving". Highest was the proportion of those answering so in Bulgaria (close to 40%) and Romania (over 30%), while in Hungary around 3% answered yes on this question (42). Most alarming is that the degree of deprivation increases with the number of children in the households, which indicates the alarming presence of child malnutrition. In 2002, 50 % of Bulgarian, 40% of Romanian and 10% of Hungarian children in Roma families indicated in the sample that they are constantly starving (48).

Starvation is the second most common strategy after informal money borrowing in most countries for coping with poverty (close to 60 % of households in Bulgaria and 50% in Romania) resort to this. Meanwhile, the UNDP report concludes that: "Moneylenders at times act as criminal organization and are a major factor encouraging criminality in Roma communities" (50). Thus, starvation seems the last resort before turning to moneylenders.[4]

Food poverty is closely related to poverty at large. The UNs Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) aimed to engage governments to work for the diminishing of poverty for marginalized groups. This contained the goal to bring to half the proportion of those living below the standard of PPP$1 ($1 per person per day) for developing and PPP$4 ($4 per person per day) for developed countries. In new EU member countries impoverishment hits especially Roma minorities. A UNDP report from 2002 provides an alarming picture of the living conditions of Roma households residing in areas with larger concentration of Roma. The surveyed Roma populations fall below these MDGs in all CEE countries. Bulgaria and Romania are worse on poverty indicators, 29% in the Bulgarian and 41% in the Romanian sample lived below PPP$1.[5] In Hungary, 1% of the surveyed households fell under this category. The proportion of those living below PPP$4 was 82%, 85% and 88% respectively. In the Czech Republic the situation of Roma is the least impoverished from the 5 CEE countries. Roma populations in the survey indicate high levels of subjective poverty: 32% of the participants in the survey in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Romania declared that "they live in misery", the highest proportion estimating their livelihood in this way was in Bulgaria and Romania.

2012 per capita household incomes. This figure is calculated as 60% of the median value of the yearly household income (nett 792 thousand HUF in 2012 calculated according to the equivalent of the OECD2 scale (Gábos et al. 2012: 38).

4 For the Hungarian conditions see even Béres and Lukács (2008).

5 Based on responses to the questions. "How much money did your household spend last month?" and "How many people live in your household?" Data in local currencies were converted into $ using average annual exchange rate for 2001. UNDP 2002: 47.

Causes of marginalization: De-industrialization, neoliberal welfare state and enhanced ethnic/social marginalization

Ethnified processes of rural marginalization followed the transition to capitalism in the CEEs (Szalai 2007). Emerging neoliberal welfare states in the context of EU integration and restrictive welfare policies enforced by global financial institutions created austerity measures unfavourable for the emergence of sustainable models of rural development in resource poor regions. Processes of post-socialist integration into a global capitalist market unembedded previous ongoing ethnic integration into a planned economic system (Ladányi–Szelényi 2004). State socialist work societies incorporated even low-skilled segments of the labour reserve, since work was not only a right but also a duty, and the demand for work was exacerbated by the resource driven development of soft budgets (Kornai 1980).Towards the end of the eighties this state socialism increasingly tolerated mixed social and economic targets for operation (Szelényi et al. 1988).

In the rural context synergistic relations developed between households, local agricultural production co-operatives and a national/international market channelling products from low resource based integrated producers, maintaining marketing integration and transfer of high-technological know-how (Swain 1985, Kovách 1988). Agricultural co-operatives worked in synergy with local municipal authorities for the social cohesion of communities. Depending on regional preconditions, rural residents served also the reserve army of surrounding industries as commuters, maintaining a strong secondary household based production in their rural residences, rather than moving into urban centres (Szelényi et al. 1988). During state socialism wide-spread household based production became integrated into state socialist marketing institutions. Informal and second economies integrated further marginal labour reserves, including marginalized Roma rural residents (Szuhay 2005).

In the transition process de-industrialization as well as de-collectivization cut off rural settlements from their key channels of integration into the dominant economic system (mode of production) (Asztalos Morell 1999), and integration that also promoted a household based production (form of production). Rather, the un-embedding was followed by the mass decline in household based production practices[6] also exacerbating processes of rural impoverishment. With this decline even the subsistence opportunities for marginalized groups often utilizing share-cropping systems disappeared. With the decline of household based production the commodification of food expanded even in rural communities that hit marginalized groups without their own production resources especially hard. Commodification of food coincided with the loss of work and as a consequence employment based incomes. This led, with the exception of well-integrated regions, to welfare dependent rural idleness.

EU accession was a major facilitator of the transition to capitalism as well as to a neoliberal welfare model. To start with the perception was that mass-unemployment the displacement of labour from the closed down former state socialist primary and secondary sectors and the concomitant increase in unemployment would be temporary. Market mechanisms were expected to inject new impulses and create new working op-

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6 There were 1,4 million households engaged with agricultural production in 1991. The number of these declined to 618 thousand by 2007 (Kovách 2010: 104) and to 482 thousand by 2013 (KSH 2013: 2). Half of the farms *(egyéni gazdaság)* produced only for self-consumption, and an additional 32% sold produce beyond own consumption (Kovách 2010: 105).

portunities. However, the emergent recovery has not been capable of reintegrating the previously displaced low-skilled workforce, creating a permanent underclass of a marginalized population dependent on welfare subsidies. A low economic activity rate and a high proportion of those dependent on welfare subsidies prevailed. In 2011 Hungary's economic activity rate was the second lowest after Greece within the EU: 56.2% compared to the EU average of 64.1% (OECD 2014).

Emergent neoliberal critique of welfare dependency led to the establishment of the public work institution in 1996. Municipalities became obliged to organize public work from 2000 onward. Meanwhile, it became a central tool for counteracting unemployment from 2009 as part of the "Way to work" [Út a munkához] strategy of the Socialist-Liberal coalition. The conservative government renamed this strategy as START, reducing eligibilities attached to it several times between 2011 and 2015. Public work as a strategy to overcome long-term unemployment was subjected to extensive and varied criticism describing public work as a "cul de sac", rather than leading out of exclusion from the labour market, and was accused of being non-voluntary and having punitive features. Studies indicate that the rate of return to the labour market even decreased in villages using extensive public work programmes (Csoba 2010, MSH 2014, Fazekas–Scharle 2012, Köllö–Scharle 2011).

Municipality strategies in small-size settlements adopting "Way to work" programmes showed great variation. Paradoxically, disciplinary potentials in the construction of public work were more likely to be used by prosperous municipalities, which on the other hand had more access to experts allowing more resourceful adaptations of public work compared to the more disadvantaged settlements.

Public work, sharing some features with other EU workfare strategies (Junestav 2004, Clasen–Clegg 2011), was stream-lined after 2010 by the national conservative [Fidesz] government. The Fidesz government has further accentuated the "work based society" incorporating the duty to work in the Constitution: "every person shall be obliged to contribute to the enrichment of the community to their best ability and potential", and turn to social benefits to be determined according to "the usefulness of the beneficiaries' activities for the community". Thus, article 19 excludes "idle beneficiaries" from rights (Szikra 2014). A new Labour Code was accepted: unemployment insurance was cut to 3 months (modification of Act IV/1991); social assistance was lowered to 15% of the average wage (modification of Act III/1993); social subsidies were made dependent on at least 30 days work participation; the welfare client claimants had to accept employment opportunities regardless of educational level; in absence of such they had to participate in public work programmes (Act CVI/2011). Claimants became exposed to behavioural codes, necessitating the requirement to keep gardens tidy (Act III/1993), and since 2013, to ensure that their children are not truant from school, otherwise claimants can be excluded. Meanwhile, the amount of labour hours for public work increased to 8 hours per day, while public work is not incorporated under the protection of the Labour Code. Payments are weekly and lowered to 70% of the minimum wage. Thus, the punitive elements of workfare increased. Meanwhile, municipalities are not obliged to provide public work for all unemployed. Exclusionary stipulations open for misuse by local municipalities and examples of misuse have been addressed by civil rights associations, as well as by the Ombudsman of Fundamental Rights (2012: 2). (TASZ 2013, Szikra 2014)

In Hungary, welfare provision is a municipal responsibility, while resource-weak municipalities lack long-term, viable instruments for fighting exclusion in the context of the economic recession (Szalai 2007). The basic form of public work [közfoglalkoztatás] is financed to different degrees (between 70–90%) from the state budget to partially compensate municipalities. Nonetheless, resource poor municipalities might not have the resources to co-finance. Lacking viable enterprises capable of offering market-based employment in rural areas, municipalities become the key agents for realizing state ambitions of a new form of workfare, i.e. preconditioning welfare with work.

The START program was initiated by the Fidesz government to fully finance public work projects to multiple disadvantaged regions [halmozottan hátrányos régiók] with unemployment rates above 14%. These opportunities cannot be simply applied for on the basis of some kind of given normative standard. Municipalities have to actively create viable programmes for the employment of people they ask state funding for. However, not even these regions receive support corresponding to the number of unemployed people. According to Cseres-Gergely and Molnár (2014), only 10% of those on public work find market-based employment after public work. The participants in the most optimistic cases could circulate between short term START work and social security payments [foglalkoztatást helyettesítö támogatás].

In 2014, the public work wage [közfoglalkozási bér] was 77,300 Forints (205 euro) brutto, leaving 50,630 Forints (164 euro) after taxes. Those with higher qualifications are entitled to a higher payment. This wage is higher than social security payments (from 2012 called foglalkoztatást helyettesítő támogatás), which is, as of 2014, 22,800 Ft (74 euro). Public work wages constitute 78% of the minimum wage, which is 101500 forints (328 euro) gross and 66,480 Forints (215 euro) nett. Public work provides highly precarious life conditions, since the provided work is typically short-term (5.1 months on average) (Cseres-Gergely and Molnár 2014). In 2013, 49.5% of public workers were employed within START programmes, 30.6% on long-term public work and 20.2% on national public work programmes. Further restrictions have been implemented since 2015, which have taken away the obligation for municipalities to pay social security benefits.

Welfare states emerged in developed societies to combat the adverse effects of the market leading to social inequalities. From the seventies we witness a conservative and neoliberal turn towards workfare societies (Standing 2011). Those in poverty are made all the more responsible for their marginalization and universal rights to basic needs are replaced by moralizing means tested limitations on eligibility. While centrally distributed resources decline, the agency and responsibility of local welfare states for the provision of welfare increases. In Hungary the institution of public work gained a widening importance as an instrument to mediate eligibility to welfare transfers. Public work projects vary depending on the underlying attitudes of municipal power holders to the long-term unemployed and the institution of public work. The institution of public work is widely criticized (Asztalos Morell 2014, Köllő–Scharle 2011). However, while, conservative, and even racifing narratives have surfaced in relation to public work (see the Érmellék model), innovative and progressive narratives are gaining wider recognition.

Local agents of change: innovative utilizations of public work

Recently, different types of agricultural activities have spread as a form of utilizing public workers. However, the provision of work is only one motivation for municipalities to engage with food projects using public work. Another important motivation to introduce these agricultural projects based on public work for the municipalities is to increase their food sovereignty in the provision of food for their institutions (Asztalos Morell 2015b). Without doubt, municipalities have to act on behalf of different marginalized groups (such as the elderly, children or local entrepreneurs) and guarantee the functioning of their own institutions. These interests are not by necessity in harmony with the municipalities' responsibility to work for the welfare of marginalized groups. Progressive municipality leaders promote agricultural public work projects also in the hope of transferring know-how to public workers that the latter could use for cultivation in their own households and so increase their food-sovereignty (Asztalos Morell 2014). The degree to which public work based social farming projects lead to the transfer of agricultural production technologies and know-how in general still needs to be studied.

In Hungary municipalities have the responsibility to provide welfare. Most welfare transfers are means tested. Since 2015 the authority of municipalities to decide on which kind of social benefits are to be provided has increased. Public work is a construction that associates state support for the long-term unemployed with the responsibility to participate in work judged as societally beneficial. Resources to cover expenses of public work are to be accessed by municipalities through project applications to state funds. With the exception of START programmes, municipalities have to cover a smaller part (5–20%) of the costs of labour. Thus, the active agency of the municipalities is assumed. Therefore, the provision of welfare differs greatly from one municipality to the other (Asztalos Morell 2015a, b). Moral communities of rural elite are seen to obtain power to formulate norms defining deserving and undeserving poor (Thelen et al. 2011, Schwarcz 2012). Municipalities become the institutions of redistributing scarce resources of social benefits, and by which act typically as top down organizations.

Civil society as counterforce of local development

The importance of civil society increased in the functioning of local welfare regimes in the new models of governance. Soviet-type systems aggravated the condition for bottom-up, empowering civil organizing (Rose 1999). The destruction of the foundations of systems of public organization in Soviet-type systems left long-lasting effects, not the least for agrarian development in the region as Svendsen–Svendsen's (2004) comparative study of cooperation in Poland and Denmark indicated.

The so-called NGO-isation thesis for the rise of CEE civil society emphasized the importance of external funding and ideation. However, recently the NGO-isation thesis has been criticized (Jacobsson–Saxonberg 2013, Asztalos Morell 2015c). Jacobsson and Saxonberg (2013) argue that a broader definition of civil society is needed for CEE that includes both formal and informal organizations. Using this broader definition reveals a multitude of civil movements.

State involvement with civil movements larger in CEE compared to the developed world (Fábián 2009). Csongor and Lukács (2003) comprehensive study of labour market projects for Romani indicate that while the overwhelming majority of financing such projects originates from diverse state sources, such as regional development funds, the Ministry of Social Welfare, the Labour Relations Centre, the National Development Fund and civil organizations, as well as the Romani Minority Self-governments (RMS) (Molnár–Schafft 2003), all played an active part in facilitating project applications that allowed for the utilization of these funds.

The most marginalized communities such as the Romani typically lack elites on the local level (Vajda and Dupcsik, 2008), or if there are such elites they might distinguish themselves from the poor, and projects aiming to empower communities do not reach those in need (Molnár–Dupcsik 2008) and are organized in a top down fashion (Asztalos Morell 2015d). Civil society projects focusing on individualized solutions, such as *"Minden gyerek lakjon jól"* [Every child should be fed!] fighting poverty have been criticised. Ladányi and Szelényi (2003) argued that such efforts are doomed to fail since the causes of poverty are partly structural and partly ideational. A culture of poverty combined with long-term multi-generational exclusion create immediate needs which are difficult to brake. In Csetenye social food/land projects failed to create sustainable changes, due to the immediate needs of the participants.

Even if there are also examples of successful development projects with focus on local capacity building and community development (Asztalos Morell 2015e, Szinesgyöngyök), short-term projects seldom result in sustainable improvements. The degree to which civil organizations contribute to local capacity building and bottom up implementation requires further research.

Empowerment, agency and asset based community development

As a critique of the predominant needs based approach to counteract marginalization Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) developed the model of ABCD (Asset Based Community Development). The critique argued that governmental and donor agencies focusing on needs assessments reproduce the image of marginalized groups as needy and reinforce their status as clients, focus on the amount of aid the community have attracted (focus on external institutions) rather than on groups within the communities: "denies the basic community wisdom which regards problems as tightly intertwined, as symptoms in fact of the breakdown of the community's own problem solving capacities" (4) Kretzman and McKnight (1993) promoted as an alternative approach to enhance local people's and their association's capacities to build powerful communities from within. Community members are to identify new perspectives through which they are enabled to "begin to assemble their strengths into new combinations, new structures of opportunity, new sources of income and control, and new possibilities for production" (6). This process led by transforming the relation between municipal agencies and neighbourhoods from perceiving the latter as "consumers" of services to seeing these as "designers" of programmes and finally as "producers" of communities (Moore–Puntenney 1999, Mathie–Cunningham 2003: 476). Thus, ABCD promotes a new type of relation between donor organizations/municipalities and recipients of aid. Rather than viewing these as individuals, it emphasizes the importance of communities/neighbourhoods, while it sets the focus on the capacities of the latter, communities are encouraged at the outset to

"build an inventory of their assets and are encouraged to see value in resources that would otherwise have been ignored, unrealized, or dismissed." Such unrealized resources could be "personal attributes and skills … the relationships among people through social, kinship, or associational networks." (Mathie–Cunningham 2003: 476). Formal institutional resources can be activated by mobilizing these informal resources. These could act as facilitators for the identification of needs and resources that can enable the mobilization of additional support, i.e. the facilitation of positive synergies.

Thus, following the argument above, the goal of community development should be solidarity and agency. Its methods ought to be self-help (making use of agency, mobilizing people's assets), be based on felt needs resisting developmental imposition, and they are to facilitate participation (i.e. taking part in the production of collective meanings opposite to the exclusionary practices of the production collective meanings in modern societies). "The principle of participation means inclusion, not merely in the electoral process or endorsing decisions but in deciding the agenda for debate and decisions; it means inclusion in the processes of defining the problems to be solved and how to solve them." (Bhattacharyya 2004: 23)

Research agenda and methods

As part of my research project supported by the Swedish Research Council [Vetenskapsrådet] Negotiating poverty I studied public work projects with a focus on municipality organization of social agricultural projects in five disadvantaged rural communities in North-Eastern Hungary. In parallel with this I also studied civil society projects to combat poverty. In this paper I focus on municipalities that developed collaboration with a civil society initiated project: PROLECSO.[7] This initiative is unique in its approach to focus on community development as part of its developmental goals. I have studied the efforts of PROLECSO through different data and methods. They have a sizeable media foot-print both in formal and social media. I conducted interviews with the initiator of PROLECSO Melinda Kassai, local leaders of PROLECSO, Zsuzsanna Lengyel and István Bárdos, as well as with municipal facilitators of collaboration with PROLECSO, among these 2 mayors participating in collaboration with PROLECSO. My project assistant and I have participated in three community events where we acquainted ourselves with participants in the project. These occasions allowed for further discussion with additional mayors involved in a developing small regional collaboration involving relations with PROLECSO. My project assistant and I have also analysed the data-collection conducted by PROLECSO prior to launching a Norwegian Foundation project involving 8 municipalities for PROLECSO. These latter data are not included in this analysis. The research data analysed in this paper was collected between 2013 and 2015. The two communities in the focus of the current analysis contain a sizeable Roma minority, which nonetheless is below 20%. Hejőkeresztúr has 1025. Out of its 656 active age citizens there were 40 persons receiving unemployed social benefit tied to a minimum of 30 days' work during the past day [bérpótló támogatás]. Hejőkeresztúr has had a nation-wide renowned progressive leadership working for multicultural society for the past years and has adapted the so called Stanford educational model to the local circumstances.[8] This is not surprising given that the municipality is also engaged with socially integrative programmes on a broader scale. One aspect of this engagement is the collaboration with PROLECSO.

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7 http://www.bffd.hu/pro-rataouille-program/hejo-sajo-village-network

8 http://www.h2oktatas.hu/hu/szuelknek/63-a-hejkereszturi-altalanos-iskola-tanitasi-modellje

Bükkaranyos has 1478 inhabitants with an unemployment rate of 10%. Here the municipality won a social land programme *Szociális Földprogram 2012* project. They bought machines, a foil greenhouse and utilities necessary for the cultivation from the HUF 1,500,000. They are to start with the programme in the school garden utilizing public work projects. The production is to supply the food provision for the school.

TWO APPROACHES TO SOCIAL AGRICULTURE

In the following I compare two models of social farming, both intending to improve the conditions of long-term unemployed people, living under the poverty level using ecological farming. Both municipality driven use of agricultural land and alternative, civil society initiative based projects share the interest to utilize uncultivated land and view that as enriching the community at large. Due to the growing amount of uncultivated land, these become reliability rather than resources. Lajos Nagy, the mayor of Bükkaranyos argues that taking unused land under cultivation releases those, mostly elderly, residents from the responsibility to weed the land, who otherwise have to pay someone to clear the land. Instead, the municipality contracts these units for long-term use, which can provide some income for these elderly:

"Municipality has long-term tenancy with small land-owners of plots; the municipality removes the plot owners' responsibility to clear the land of weeds" (Nagy)

Also, community members spent their incomes outside the community on products they could produce as a local resource. By this they spend resources outside the community that could be used for the benefit of the inhabitants. As Melinda Kassai of Pro-Lecso argues:

"For some two decades people pass their own and the municipality's land daily, and go to the local shop, or to the Spar, or X or Y and they buy that... they even get into a car and drive to a shopping centre. These things become more expensive, compared to what it costs if someone starts to produce on his/her own land, and garden. They do not even need land." (Kassai)

However, beside similarities, municipality utilization with the employment of public workers and civil society approaches differ both in their economic rationality and social dynamics.

MOTIVATIONS FOR MUNICIPALITY DRIVEN SOCIAL AGRICULTURE

One key motivation for the initiation of municipality driven cultivation named by the mayor of Bükkaranyos was the above discussed urgency to turn fallow mark into cultivation. Nagy argues for the benefits of employing public workers for the reconditioning of uncultivated units. In Bükkaranyos the municipality reconditions the mark using public workers:

"Owners can expect rent only after restoring the land's productivity. This was achieved by public workers. The ownership relations, papers of the land had to be cleared, Out of 20 hectares of uncultivated land in the process 8 hectares became ready for cultivation last year. 200 m² is covered by foil greenhouses. Some hectares are utilized for fruit plantation." (Nagy)

The Bükkaranyos municipality utilized the land and cultivates for the use of the municipality institutions, such as the municipality pantry servicing the local school, daycare and elderly home care (18 persons):

"It will result in cost-reduction, and surely, a bio production, vegetables growing under controlled conditions would result in healthy vegetables for the elderly and children"

Thus, the mayor was primarily concerned with the health-promoting effects of bio produced food, where engagement with bio production locally allows the municipality to control the conditions under which production is carried out. An important aspect emphasized is also the reduction of expenditures that the municipality has to spend on food provision in its institutions. Concerning the participants in the programme the mayor is mostly hoping that the public workers would learn from technologies and feel encouraged to produce in their own gardens.

A few alternative strategies were documented to increase the self-motivation of participants in the public work based social land programme. In some municipalities those participating in public work social agriculture programmes can consume the products on the production sites (Asztalos Morell 2015b) and in other cases surplus products are distributed either among the needy in the community or to all inhabitants (Asztalos Morell 2014a). Thus, mayors use the option of distributing products of social agriculture utilizing public work for combating rural food poverty in different forms and degrees.

PUBLIC WORK AS LABOUR RELATION

Those, engaged with the production are in a public work relation to the municipality, and as such are in a dependency relation to the municipality. Due to this dependency relation, this labour force is lacking self-motivation as well as skills. Therefore, supervision is required:

"It is difficult to keep 60–70 people [in the public work programme] in motion, to supervise and monitor their work in a way that their work should produce values is a difficult task. The intention is to choose brigade and group leaders from those working as public workers in return for higher remuneration. But they do not accept leaders chosen from their own ranks. It is not working. I need municipal employees for this task. But to monitor 4–5 areas, to have continuous control, we do not have enough people for that." (Nagy)

Thus, supervision needs to be provided by regular municipal skilled employees. The expenses of such employees are normally not covered by the resources that municipalities receive for public work projects (Asztalos Morell 2015b). Thus, public work is a work relation with built-in problems.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC RATIONALITY BEHIND PUBLIC WORK BASED SOCIAL AGRICULTURE

The mayor in Bükkaranyos municipality finds municipal engagement with public labour based social agriculture ambiguous from its broader societal utility beyond the needs of finding productive employment for the long-term unemployed. He is questioning, whether the engagement with production should be the primary goal of municipalities:

"It should not be the task of the municipality to produce. I mean, this is not a co-operative, not an agricultural company, or other company." (Nagy)

He argues that his municipality is engaged with social agriculture due to the lack of market based alternatives to the employment of public workers, while municipalities need to fulfil their social obligations to long-term unemployed residents. However, it is questionable, whether in purely economic terms, the municipality supported social agriculture is the most effective way to produce:

"The most effective would be, if the local enterprises, and producers [őstermelők] would receive out-localized public workers [to work in their production units]. Since he is a productive company, he has to pay taxes. If he employs that person, it also has consequences for taxes. The value is increasing, that he is generating, and he sells that, than the industrial taxes generated flow into the municipality budget. This would be an expansion for us." (Nagy)

Thus out-localizing public workers to private, market-oriented agents would boost private ventures and indirectly increase tax revenues for the municipality. Another economic concern was that municipalities do not have as a main function to cultivate land. They lack both material resources, such as up-to-date equipment and immaterial resources, such as know-how. In order to be able to engage with production, municipalities need to make major investments into production technologies:

"We have to start everything from zero. I have a higher investment expense to start any kind of programme. On the other side there are five, who already have foil greenhouses, they have the watering pipes. They do have the tractors. They do not have to buy those. One can place 2–3 persons to his side who would help him to produce. That way he could produce much more. The price to produce per unit would be much lower. ....those people are experts, they are competent within the given area." (Nagy)

All an all, he argues that from a societal perspective supporting private producers with out-localization of public workers would be more efficient:

"It is going to cost us a lot to achieve a self-supporting state" "It would be better to help the prevailing enterprises with these opportunities" (Nagy)

The mayor names, among advantages of municipality based social farming compared to out-localization that the latter is difficult to supervise: "Of course it would be more difficult to control." Another argument for municipality driven social agriculture is that this activity is creating socially and economically useful products compared to other commonly performed public work tasks:

"It is definitely an advantage to carry out value producing labour. It is definitely better than the previous practice, when one could practically only utilize public work for communal and settlement maintenance tasks." (Nagy)

Adverse effects on community cohesion of municipality driven cultivation

Looking at the impact of public work based municipal social agriculture projects on community cohesion, the mayor highlights how this institution can create internal contradictions and conflicts of interest. The municipality, by actively supporting the production and utilization of products in its institutions decreases its economic support for small producers *[őstermelő]* who are potential food/suppliers for municipal institutions. The economic interests of these collide with the interests of those long-term unemployed benefiting from the programmes:

The volume [supplied by municipal production] falls below public procurement [közbeszerzés]. There is a requirement for tenders of public institutions. Our real problem is that we have many small scale private producers [őstermelő] in the settlement. Prior to his, we bought a lot of products from them, in order to help them. With this program we created a competition for them, since, what we produce on our own, I am not going to buy from him.

The interest of these private producers' conflicts with the interests of providing meaningful employment for the long-term unemployed: "On the other hand I secure the employment of 30–40 people". Thus, municipalities need to balance the interests of groups with different degrees of vulnerabilities.

I found alternative strategy followed by another mayor to balance similar conflicts. On the one hand, in agreement with those participating in the municipality driven social agriculture, the mayor decided to distribute surplus products equally to all residents in the municipality (Asztalos Morell 2014a). On the other hand this other mayor promoted private producers by alternative project-based support forms. As one example he gave start-up support for commercial cucumber producers. Both strategies counterworked unintended, yet in practice polarizing side-effects of public work based projects.

PROLECSO: An example of community development based social agriculture

PROLECSO Association supports civil society based developmental projects. It realizes a unique co-operation between different agents on a win-win basis. The initiating civil organization, the Pro-Cserehát Egyesület designed the developmental concept. The civil organization is partly supported by private donations from first of all the ERSTE Foundation and state support in 2012 and 2013. Projects are realized in collaboration with local municipalities. It aims to combine the goals of ecological, social and economic sustainability in a complex way. It is to create a bio-diversity based, socially sensible forms of production. Bio-diversity based ecological production provides healthy, chemical free products for both the producers and for potential target groups functioning as markets for the products. Awareness of the importance of such products for health is growing.

PROLECSO addresses social sustainability in a multifaceted way. Its major target group are *marginalized settlements* with long-term unemployment, isolated from major markets and work opportunities. It also aims to challenge prejudices and *ethnicity* based divisions. Thus, beyond individual benefits for participants with economic hardships it targets the development of *communities* both as a goal in itself and as a means for the realization of the project:

"In this impoverished world people live isolated, as in a cocoon. The programme provides the opportunity to develop a community from them, to organize a community" (Lengyelné).

Another central ingredient for achieving social sustainability is the emphasis on individual motivation in an *individual pursuit* of happiness and self-sufficiency. This is juxtaposed by the workings of social benefit systems based on passive transfers, which reward idleness. Participation in the project is part of the reward.

One could interpret the advantages of participation by applying Bourdieu's (1986) theory of immaterial capital assets. Participants obtain valuable human capital (know-how of ecological farming), cultural capital

(internalizing and developing new value and relational patterns), social capital (contacts with fellow-participants, potential marketing contacts, contacts with experts and appreciation of the political leaders of the municipality)[9] as well as enjoy economic benefits (supply of resources, production means as well as the yields of the production).

Criticism of state supported adult training programmes argues that participants in such programmes typically lead to skills that later seldom lead to work opportunities. Although participants obtain monthly payments during the period of training, they are often not motivated, since they are not expecting to find employment afterwards. In contrast, PROLECSO participants *do not receive direct payment*s. Rather, concrete material rewards can first be realized when the cultivated products start to *yield*. The immaterial benefits, as discussed above, that participation yields are difficult to measure in monetary terms. Furthermore, the benefits of participation ought to be counted in a broader context. Meaningful activity, *healthy* food and life style as parts of an improved standard of living contribute indirectly to better health, decrease in social tension and consequently to reduced societal expenses in the long-term.

The concept of economic sustainability is derived from Yunus' (2010) social business concept. While Yunus is not directly against *profit* at large, he argues against profits made at the expense of the most marginalized groups. Those in extreme poverty are extra vulnerable since they have no means to resist forms of extreme exploitation, let it be in terms of *work conditions* or *extra profit on loans*. Social business would be based on the *mobilization of people's capabilities* and *inner motivation*. Such activities can and favourably should lead to economically sustainable production either in the form of subsistence production or market production. However, at the initiation stage, the projects receive subventions originating from diverse resources, including the inputs of the civil organization, which originates both from state support and from private donations and from the municipality. Thus, seen from a strict market rationality principle, the project is not sustainable. However, its sustainability is to be seen from a more complex economic and social rationality principle.

The pedagogical concept of PROLECSO, inspired by Yunus relies on two major principles. Firstly, they are based on continual, *informal education*. Rather than transferring skills in a formal context, they establish an ongoing contact with the participants following the whole process of production to consumption and sales.

Secondly, the programme's goal is to organize communities, to build communities: An important element is participation based empowerment [képessé tevés]. Empowerment is fostered by regular participation, development of responsibility and internal control, instead of constant supervision, happiness and pride related to activity where producers are involved in the decision making process, realization of advantages of collaboration, learning to participate in planning. Finally, this involvement also strengthens the opportunity to work for a future concept[10].

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9 On social capital see even Putnam (2000).

10 Homepage: http://www.bffd.hu/PROLECSO/ismerteto

Launching PROLECSO

PROLECSO has been initiated in Hejőkeresztúr, a municipality with a municipal leadership welcoming their intentions to introduce social farming with community development as part of the goals. The municipality contributed land. The municipality engaged public workers to recondition uncultivated land. The main site of production is this area. PROLECSO is also supplying complex cultivation support, including seeds and equipment.

One of the principles of PROLECSO is that those charged with training have to come from inside the community:

"The person has to come from within, simply need to know the local conditions, know how to relate to the people, how issues need to be settled. Does not have to be a person with university training... but the person have to be agile, prompt." (Kassai)

The leader of the project in Hejőkeresztúr is Zsuzsanna Lengyel. She has agricultural training and is of Roma origin from the vicinity. She has been active in the recruitment of participants. The cultivation was combined with an educational program. Learning by doing is a key pedagogic principle. This method has advantages, since there are some among the participants who are functional illiterates. Meanwhile, there are even some middle-aged participants, who come from economically better established families with their own gardening facilities, who were attracted to the project due to the new know-how of bio farming offered. To establish equity, labour inputs are carefully recorded. Reward from the yield is divided in relation to the work contribution. Beyond cultivation a mutual help scheme has developed. In one case an elderly woman needed help with moving a fridge. At first it was difficult to find someone who would help. But, with the help of the labour exchange scheme participants became more open to assist each other.

Social aspects of community building

Municipality H-K has been welcoming to co-operative with PROLECSO with focus on community building. This municipality has been appreciative to the importance of community building even in its educational model applying a Stanford University based integrative pedagogic approach. The municipality engaged a process facilitator, who is collaborating with PROLECSO in community building aspects of the civil organization based social agricultural initiative. Bárdos, the facilitator of community building efforts started with identifying vulnerable groups within the municipality. The chief principle was to overcome cleavages along age, class and ethnicity lines:

"We try to improve the position of the elderly. One claims that alienation characterizes urban settlements. This has reached even us... We try to reduce their feeling of loneliness. But also we try to help them with things they cannot do." (Bárdos)

Meanwhile, the younger generation, having other forms of vulnerabilities, such as lacking employment, do have resources, that could benefit these older people. In order to initiate bonds in the community they want to mobilize civil engagement:

"We want to activate volunteer work. We would like to couple the elderly with the younger. … and the turning of the younger towards the elderly is starting to work." (Bárdos)

The introduction of bio cultivation in collaboration with PROLECSO is an additional step in this direction. Bio cultivation is both a cheaper way to produce (avoiding high chemical expenditures) and a way of production that creates healthier produce. Creating opportunity to learn about and engage with bio cultivation creates an interest to participate, even among local producers. It can unify the interests of people in a vulnerable situation living in food poverty and with no previous know-how about agriculture and people who have been involved with household based production through their whole life. These linkages might emerge between long-term unemployed youth without material resources on the one hand and elderly with land, yet no physical ability to cultivate it.

PROLECSO also supports cultivation on the household lots of participants. Seeds are provided and equipment can be borrowed. Members of PROLECSO project are encouraged to help each other on the household lots. Such help is also recorded in the labour exchange scheme. Those participating obtain reimbursement in produce or in money after sold produce, in proportion to their labour input into the common lot. Participants cultivate, as well as on this common lot also on their own private lots.

An additional community building method is the initiation of different community celebrations. Such events also contribute to get popularity for the project in the broader settlement and beyond.

Economic model for PROLECSO

PROLECSO is to build on the autonomous agency of its members. One motivation for this originates from the use of produce. The major goal is to produce food for own consumption. In the project participants can consume the products in relation to their work input into the cultivation. The value of the consumed food is estimated to contribute with up to 20,000 Forints a month from a land of 200 m^2, which is to be seen as a substantial contribution to households living from incomes below the poverty level (Kassai).

Beyond own consumption, participants are encouraged to sell on local markets, however, this might be hindered due to tax regulations (see below). The civil organization is engaged with developing a marketing strategy, where local producers would come into direct contact with urban consumers. Thus local and urban synergies could emerge.

Beyond the material benefits (consumed food and income from sales) participation contributes to the improvement of cultural capital (through training received in the form of cultivation and consumption know-how) as well as social capital. The latter is manifested both as an expanded social network cutting across different social segments of the community increasing the "trust capital" of participants. It also provided viable networks of assistance, and organization of production. Participating in joint, civil society projects creates a valuable asset in combating marginalization. At last, producing and consuming healthy food becomes embodied in a better diet and as a consequence better health.

Potential synergies created by municipal collaboration with PROLECSO as a solution to dilemmas

As discussed earlier, the mayor of Bükkaranyos indicated several disadvantages associated with using public work based social land programmes. The concerns were the lacking self-motivation of participants and the social tension resulting from replacing municipal purchasing of food from local producers by public work production. The mayor indicated the presence of a latent conflict between local producers [őstermelők] and the interests of the long-term unemployed. Mayor Lajos Nagy found a solution for these dilemmas by developing a collaboration with PROLECSO. He aimed to increase the conscientiousness of public workers. The municipality contacted the Pro-Cserehát Association, which had started to work in the region, in Hejőkeresztúr, the year before. Pro-Cserehát provided bio-economic education for the participants. In parallel, the association succeeded in obtaining funding for the extension of its activities to Bükkaranyos. With the help of this support they could raise an additional foil greenhouse. They added an additional hectare for open field cultivation. The municipality aimed to primarily help the unemployed to produce for their families. The public work programme could provide work for 10 persons through 9 months. PROLECSO had a more inclusive approach: "Anybody could participate in their programme, called PROLECSO, who wanted to learn bio-cultivation and wanted to produce for their own consumption or for sale." (Nagy) Thanks to the opportunity an additional 12 voluntary participants joined. PROLECSO became a partner providing a joint educational programme and an assistant. According to the mayor the collaboration not only helped to re-cultivate an abandoned area. The greatest achievement for the mayor was "to see people of totally different age, know-how and economic conditions work together voluntarily and in agreement."

PROLECSO could unite the interests of diverse groups, by spreading know-how of bio cultivation and by working for the creation of markets for the locally produced goods that would incorporate all three types of producers (public work based municipality coordinated social agriculture, private farming and PROLECSO project participants):

> "Difficult to create a healthy balance. That was one reason why we also brought the PROLECSO program into this equation. It was to help with the marketing outwards. In order to save their [őstermelő] markets also, and eventually contribute to its expansion. Since even those vegetable and fruit producers could participate in the marketing who otherwise produce as small scale private farmers [őstermelő]." (Nagy)

PROLECSO aims to encourage participants to market their surplus. This, however, is hindered by regulations that give advantages to so called *"őstermelő"*. This tax elimination benefiting the *"őstermelő"* was to ease the possibility to market the surplus produce of those, who cultivate as a side-activity on their households beside employment. However, benefiting from this construction assumes employment status:

> "Marketing is hindered due to contradictory regulations. A small scale private producer [őstermelő] can only be a person who has employment. These producers are exempted from taxes up to 600,000 Ft annual sales. This excludes those who do not have a job, and so the strata that is most in need of it. If one does not have a job, one has to pay tax. But one is impoverished just because one does not have a job. These people cannot go and sell on the open market. People in the programme help each other out. Those who have the "őstermelő" title sell for the others. Some are on public work, and these can sell. But this type of employment is commonly short (3–4 months)." (Lengyel)

Therefore, the fact that PROLECSO is composed of participants from varied backgrounds, that include even people with some form of employment, enhances the opportunities to sell some surplus products. Nonetheless, in the long-run, PROLECSO plans to establish some non-profit and/or fair trade type marketing organization of its own to enhance the possibility of selling their products on markets.

The collaboration between municipalities and PROLECSO also facilitated the joint organization of know-how transfer. The launching of bio production had expanded to eight municipalities by 2015 with the help of a Norwegian Civil Foundation support grant. When these municipalities showed readiness to encounter collaboration with PROLECSO and launch bio production the common platform created openings for potential visibility and impact on a broader regional and hopefully national level. The first PROLECSO market has launched not only the products of PROLECSO units in these eight neighbouring municipalities but also private producers in the area. Community building efforts of PROLECSO aiming to integrate marginalized groups and improve their living conditions becomes a facilitator and collaborator with municipal efforts to combat marginalization in their region. The alliance built between these municipalities serves also as a forum for the dissemination of progressive ideas pointing beyond emphasis of individual responsibility for poverty.

Conclusions

At the beginning of this paper I argued along comparative research on poverty, that food poverty is one of the most central aspects of poverty. People resort to the reduction of food and nutrition when other expenses (such as expenses related to housing and utilities) cannot be kept up. Nutritional deprivation is higher among families with children. Nutrition and health standards are closely related to each-other. Therefore, combating food poverty is of utmost importance. Under conditions of prolonged austerity measures related to conservative and neoliberal welfare/workfare regimes and long-term lack of work opportunities offered to low-skill populations, monetary transfers are unlikely boots of persistent poverty. Within the limitations of the conservative workfare paradigm municipality organized public work based social agriculture projects seem to open a channel of relief for food poverty under the leadership of socially innovative municipalities. Such initiatives so far have primarily been used to improve the supply of food for municipal institutions. However, indirectly, by permitted on site consumption, as well as by the possible dissemination of cultivation know-how and access to seeds and plants, participation in such public work projects opens the possibility for further benefits.

Nonetheless, the pitfalls of public work based social agricultural projects were also highlighted. Such social agricultural programmes can contribute to the re-integration of the long-term unemployed into short-term work projects. However, labour remains subject to disciplinary and supervisory measures. Economic benefits seem to favour the municipality, where produce is channelled into the consumption in the municipal institutions. The production is more viable compared to other activities, since it uses fallow mark and creates local products where the quality of products is under the control of the participants. But due to the necessary investments the mayor estimated that it could be economically more feasible to support already established market producers to employ long-term unemployed people. However, in this form fewer workers would be needed, and those without employment would still need to be integrated into meaningful activity. Further-

more, the active support of the municipality of non-market based social production creates competition with market based producers and reduces their market, which in turn increases social tension between the groups. The distribution of produced food according to different principles (to those working as public workers, other needy in the own municipality, to all residents in the own municipality, or even to needy outside the own municipality) have shown in other municipalities proved either to strengthen support to the needy or to work for diminishing polarization within the municipality.

In comparison, the PROLECSO concept urges win-win situations, where small scale private producers [őstermelő] and unemployed can find joint interest. This is in the dissemination of ecological production, and work for market for these products. PROLECSO aims to enable the participants to work autonomously and of own interest and agency. The motivation of participating PROLECSO members increased due to the applied method of reward, as well as due to the positive impact of the community building effort. Although capacity building is achieved through know-how transfer, part of this know-how is vested in the building of community and own responsibility.

While the two organisations have different motivation, goals and means to implement social farming, they have both some common objectives, such as the utilization of land, transfer of know-how, improvement of the living conditions of long-term unemployed. Furthermore, it appears that collaboration between the two has also synergistic effects. Sharing know-how dissemination, access to required technology and land are those aspects that can offer mutually beneficial exchange. Furthermore, community development is also a viable asset for the municipality, even if the methods differ in the two organisations: the municipality focuses on the group of public workers, thus applies a top-down and segregating model, inherent in public work as a work organization form. Since the products generated in the public work projects replace the products previously purchased from local producers, public work projects create unintentional conflict and competition between producers and the unemployed. In contrast, the PROLECSO project focuses on a community building, integrative and bottom-up model combining the interests of different social groups. Nonetheless, the general status increment that PROLECSO and the municipality achieved for the two different social food projects seems to have a positive impact on the evaluation of public work and public workers engaged with food production. Public workers contributed to the reconditioning of land, learning bio cultivation. The status of their work was raised. This positive impact was manifested in the generation of common actions. Such common action was the organization of a joint food market, where PROLECSO and municipalities participating in the PROLECSO project jointly sold and presented their products inviting other producers from their communities to participate.

Reflecting on the theoretical trust of ABCD approach, some key elements of the community based approach seem to come to the surface in the synergies between the two projects. PROLECSO, and even participating progressive municipalities view long-term unemployment not as a matter of individual behaviour, but rather as a consequence of a lack of alternatives. They see the solution in collective approaches, for which public work appears under the prevailing workfare regime as one potential vehicle. However, community building per se is not the primary goal of public work projects, neither is the content of such projects constructed from below built on the "inventory of assets" of and self-proclaimed goals of community members. Top down elements of

organization are present even in PROLECSO's development methods. Nonetheless, PROLECSO works consciously on a broad agenda of developing the capacities of participants as members of communities. The creation of self-helping, collaborating communities is the first stage in releasing autonomous self-defining powers.

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Lynette Šikić-Mićanović[1]

Feeding Roma families: From hunger to inequalities[2]

Abstract

Feeding work is complex, laborious and highly gendered in some Roma families compared to the majority population. Specifically, Roma families living in poverty are frequently large and live in substandard housing that makes feeding work more complicated. Based on ethnographic fieldwork in five different Roma settlements throughout Croatia, this paper explores how Roma households that experience severe material deprivation feed their families and their everyday experiences of food in/security and hunger. This study relies on self-reported food in/security as a better measure of directly capturing how the Roma feel about their immediate situation. Likewise, it attempts to draw attention to Roma expressions of deprivation, uncertainty, or concern over access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food. Based on in-depth interviews rather than just observations, this analysis provides a different perspective on meaning of feeding in the light of unprecedented financial insecurity that is experienced by many Roma families and the ensuing inequalities are analysed. Some of the ways that feeding Roma families relates to gender and the (in)equalities that surface are also discussed. Findings show that a lack of access to healthy and nutritious food aggravates health, social, educational, economic and gender inequalities that squarely places Roma at the bottom rung of the social ladder and generates social suffering.

Keywords: food poverty, hunger, inequalities

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1 Institute of Social Sciences *Ivo Pilar*

2 Please note that this article does not refer to all Roma in Croatia but some Roma families that experience severe material deprivation that were a part of this study.

Lynette Šikić-Mićanović

Feeding Roma families: from hunger to inequalities

Introduction

Researchers contend that the study of food and eating is important in its own sake since food is utterly essential to human existence and often insufficiently available (Mintz–Du Bois 2002: 99). The study of food and its social significance has a long tradition in the discipline of anthropology. Scholars have identified its importance for the formation of human interrelationships or structure of social groups (Richards 1932); as a means to express social relationships or as a symbol of social structure (Douglas 1975) as a product of conduct codes and the structure of social relationships of the society in which they occur (Murcott 1982). Unquestionably, food is never 'just food' and its significance can never be purely nutritional (Caplan 1997: 3). Hence, food is not simply a matter of sustenance or materiality, it is also rich in its capacity to convey meaning (Douglas and Isherwood, 1979). Packed with social, cultural and symbolic meanings, food is always part of an elaborate symbol system that conveys cultural messages. For instance, where and what we eat, with whom, and at what time of day or night are directly influenced by a variety of factors such as age, gender, social status, ethnicity, religion and income. Succinctly, Bell and Valentine (1997: 3) noted that "every mouthful, every meal, can tell us something about ourselves, and about our place in the world." Thus, foods are not only things in their own right, but convey meanings and mark social relationships of exclusion and inclusion (Valentine 1999).

Like all culturally defined material substances used in the creation and maintenance of social relationships, food serves both to solidify group membership and to set groups apart. (Mintz–DuBois 2002: 109). Beginning with Bourdieu, a vast literature now explores food as a source and marker of social distinction. In his highly influential book *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (1986) Bourdieu suggests that the upper classes use food to differentiate themselves from the lower classes. In other words, preferences for specific food groups are manifestations of taste. Displaying 'good taste' by eating foods considered superior is a source of distinction. Accordingly, different consumption patterns are one of the ways the rich distinguish themselves from the poor (Fitchen 1988). Class, caste and gender hierarchies are maintained in part through differential control over and access to food (Goody 1982). Sociologist, Claude Fischler elaborates: 'the way any given human group eats helps it assert its diversity, hierarchy and organisation, and at the same time, both its oneness and the otherness of whoever eats differently' (1988: 275). Clearly, the food choices made individuals or groups can reveal beliefs, desires, hardships, background knowledge, assumptions and characters. Accordingly, food choices tell stories of families, migrations, assimilation, resistance, changes over times, and personal as well as group identity (Almerico 2014: 1).

Addressing everyday practices associated with food may be central to tackling questions of who we are, as women and men and as members of different social groups. For example, feeding may be only one difficult task

among many that needs broader explication, because as DeVault (1994: 168) notes, the differing material bases of households/family groups- connections to wealth and occupation, the resulting amount and stability of cash resources and redistributions of resources all combine to construct quite different conditions for the conduct of household work. She aptly adds that it is an illusion that all families share a similar experience of purchasing and preparing foods (1994: 202) to feed their families. Class seems to be a particularly salient element, as access to various types of food is highly dependent on earnings. (Little–Ilbery–Watts 2009: 205). Studies have confirmed that the relationship between food consumption and social position is a well-established fact (Warde 1997). Thus, besides shaping the context in which people obtain, prepare, and consume food (DeVault 1994) social class organizes the rules individuals follow to determine what types and amounts of food to eat (Counihan 1992).

It has been noted that in modern industrial societies food flows in divergent streams; a trickle of less nourishing foodstuffs to the poor and unprivileged and huge quantities of highly nourishing foodstuffs to the rich compared to societies based on primitive technologies where hunger is shared (Marshall Sahlin's argument (1972) cited in Douglas 2003: 4). To explain these inequalities, anthropologists study individual experience and the larger social matrix in which it is embedded to see how various large scale forces come to be translated into personal distress and disease (Farmer 1996: 261). Scholars have emphasized the need to study the political-economic structural forces that are at work in different contexts, which operate invisibly and often blame the powerless. First defined by Galtung, structural violence refers to the political-economic organization of society that imposes conditions of physical and emotional distress, from high morbidity and mortality rates to poverty and abusive working conditions (Bourgois 2001: 7). For instance, extreme economic inequalities according to medical anthropologist, Farmer (1996: 263) promote disease and social suffering that is structured by historically given (and often economically driven processes and forces) that conspire whether through ritual or routine to constrain agency. Consequently, dynamic and multifaceted, symbolic violence manifests in both face-to-face interactions that occur in spaces (such as the welfare office) and through representational politics that occur within symbolic spaces (such as policy documents and media reports) (Hodgetts et al. 2012 cited in Hodgetts, Chamberlain, Groot, and Tankel 2014: 2039). It is also worth noting that structural violence "naturalizes" poverty, sickness, hunger, and premature death, erasing their social and political origins so that they are taken for granted and no one is held accountable except the poor themselves (Scheper-Hughes 2004). In her heartbreaking ethnography of hunger in north-east Brazil (1993) Scheper-Hughes lays the blame directly on political-economic inequality rather than blaming people living in poverty.

To reiterate, based on ethnographic fieldwork in five different Roma settlements throughout Croatia, this paper explores how Roma households that experience severe material deprivation feed their families and their everyday experiences of food in/security and hunger. This study relies on self-reported food in/security as a better measure of directly capturing how the Roma feel about their immediate situation. Chronic food insecurity[3] is understood as being associated with problems of continuing or structural poverty as well as low

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3 This differentiation was made in the 1986 World Bank report Poverty and Hunger (FAO 2003) from transitory food insecurity, which involved periods of intensified pressure caused by natural disasters, economic collapse or conflict. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (FAO 2003).

incomes. Likewise, it attempts to draw attention to Roma expressions of deprivation, uncertainty, or concern over access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food. This study recognizes that food is one of the most important items of consumption and has to be consumed regularly, frequently and appropriately for the maintenance of life and health. For this reason, I use the definition of hunger formulated by anthropologist, Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1993: 137) "It is the hunger of those who eat everyday but of insufficient quantity, or of an inferior quality, or an impoverished variety, which leaves them dissatisfied and hungry." Specifically, this paper delves into the common daily occurrence of feeding and eating among Roma families to find deeper meaning in this every day practice. Based around in-depth interviews rather than just observations, this analysis provides a different perspective on the meaning of feeding in light of unprecedented financial insecurity that is experienced by many Roma families and the ensuing inequalities are analysed. Some of the ways that feeding Roma families relates to gender and the (in)equalities that surface are also discussed. Interviews are contextualized within the complex specificities of each particular Roma settlement that has been shaped by a specific history, social/environmental setting and political economy. Further, fieldwork material does not only give insight into food provisioning/cooking and other related experiences in Roma families but are also a source of data on the way gender and other social categories such as ethnicity, age, and class intersect. Prior to discussing the methodology used in this study a brief outline of the socio-economic context and the situation of Roma in Croatia will be outlined.

Growing social inequalities

Many of the advantages (or 'unattainable ideals' in some cases) enjoyed during socialism (e.g. full employment, social security, food/flat subventions, free healthcare, free education, gender equality) were lost or transformed following transition. As observed in all transition countries, there was a rapid and large growth in social inequalities (Bićanić and Franičević, 2005), which increased vulnerabilities. The transition phase from a socialist to a market economy was further complicated by the war in Croatia (1991–1995), which had a devastating impact on Croatia's economic and social fabric and was characterized by hyperinflation and a decline in output, especially industrial output, depreciation of the country's currency, increasing rates of unemployment, higher levels of poverty and the growth of an informal economy (UNDP 1997). This shift to a market economy was also accompanied by a diversification of available foods and dynamic changes in the food sector (introduction of chain supermarkets and hypermarkets, global retail stores, huge shopping centres on the outskirts of metropolitan areas). However, bearing in mind the post-transition crisis, the recent recession has even further decreased the purchasing power of low-income households. In addition, recent welfare reforms[4] have considerably exacerbated the dilemmas faced by families already living stressful lives with insufficient resources. Moreover, the increasingly stigmatising, discriminatory and punitive approaches to welfare provision found in contemporary neoliberal societies (see Bauman 2005, Bourdieu 1998) are also evident. As expected, rigorous measures and substantial cuts to social programmes and services are not named as violent acts, despite their disproportionate and negative impact on those living on the margins. Harsh welfare cuts and new

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4 See the Social Welfare Act in force since 1-1-2014 Official Gazette 157/13 and 152/14.

regulations have undoubtedly intensified the hardships Roma households face, especially if families are large.[5] Effectively, these drastic changes fail to recognize the ordeal of daily life for families in need and the ways in which they hurt and degrade people.

SITUATION OF ROMA IN CROATIA

Studies across Europe have consistently shown that the Roma are over-represented in all categories in need of social protection: the very poor, the long-term unemployed, the unskilled, the uneducated, members of large families, individuals without residence permits/citizenship.[6] Similarly, in Croatia, Roma are poorer than the majority population and the material and financial circumstances of Roma populations are far worse than populations that are defined as living in absolute poverty (Šućur 2005). A lack of access to adequate healthcare, low levels of education resulting from exclusion or segregation in the education system, very poor and sub-standard housing conditions and low employment rates are just some of the factors that, in a cause and effect relationship, contribute to persistent marginalisation and involuntary Roma dependence on social welfare benefits. To illustrate, a representative study of Roma households (969) in 2004 showed that 74.2% of the total sample reported that social welfare benefits were the most important source of income while only 17.6% reported that formal employment was the most important source (Štambuk 2005) More recent figures show that Roma are still over-represented in unemployment where it is evident that the percentage of Roma as a total of the unemployed population is approximately four times greater than the total population.[7] As a result, the socio-economic situation of the Roma population adversely determines their access to different types of services and care, including healthcare, which considerably increases health risks and drastically reduces Roma life expectancy. For example, only 1.4% of Roma adults are aged 65 or above, compared to 16.8% of the majority population (CBS 2013a: 19), which indicates a markedly lower life expectancy among the Roma. Taking into consideration the cumulative effect of all of these factors that contribute to social exclusion and discrimination, feeding work for some Roma families becomes more complicated.

For comparative purposes, some key findings related to expenditure on food and consumption practices among Roma households compared to non-Roma households in Croatia are useful. In a recent study,[8] Roma and non-Roma households spend almost equal amounts on food and other household items (e.g. toiletries, detergent, etc.) but the income of Roma households is 2000 kn less (Zrinščak 2014: 38), which reflects heightened economic hardship. Specifically, this study shows that 92.3% of Roma live in relative poverty compared to 42 % of non-Roma in Croatia (Zrinščak 2014: 35). Correspondingly, data from this same study shows that 39% of

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5 The new Social Welfare Act Official Gazette, 157/13 see Article 30(4) directly affects large families because the guaranteed mini-mum allowance for 2014 was capped at 3,017.64 HRK (395EUR) regardless of family size (see www.mspm.hr). In addition, the guaranteed minimum allowance Article 30(1) for a single person is 800 HRK (105 EUR) or for a household member of working age (single parent 800 HRK; 480 HRK (63 EUR) adult household member). Entitlement to this allowance is for two years Article 39(1) and a new claim cannot be filed for a period of three months following loss of this right Article 39(2) see Social Welfare Act Official Gazette 157/13 and 152/14.

6 See European Roma Rights Center (ERRC) and Ringold–Orenstein–Wilkens (2005).

7 4,499 Roma or 1.42% of the total number of unemployed were registered as unemployed in 2011; Government of Croatia (2012), 51.

8 This UNDP/WB/EC survey was conducted on a random sample of Roma and non-Roma households living in areas with higher densi-ty (or concentration) of Roma populations in Croatia in 2011 (757 and 350 households respectively, see Potočnik. 2014a: 21).

Roma respondents (compared to 5% of non-Roma respondents) reported that household member/s went to bed hungry because they could not afford food (UNDP/WB/EC regional Roma survey 2011 data). Poignantly, this shows how undernourished families live next to fed ones. Almost four times fewer Roma compared to the rest of the population produce their own food, which is probably because only a small number of Roma own land that could be cultivated or used for animal breeding for their own consumption (Potočnik 2014b: 14). In another study on poverty and the well-being of young children,[9] Roma families reported that they could not afford the following: i) 48.2% fresh fruit or vegetables at least once a week; ii) 21.9% three meals a day; iii) 47.4% meat, fish or vegetarian substitute at least once a day; iv) 3.2% at least one hot meal a day; and v) 63.7% at least 20 kn (2.62 EUR) a week for sweets[10] (Kletečki Radović 2015: 67).

Methodology

This paper is based on research findings from a wider research project entitled Roma Early Childhood Inclusion RECI+ Croatia study[11] which was a joint initiative sponsored and supported by the Roma 'Kopaçi' Initiatives at the Early Childhood Program (ECP) of Open Society Foundations (OSF), the Roma Education Fund (REF) and UNICEF. The aim of this study was to collect data on the situation of Roma and the challenges that their families face. Although the main focus of this wider study was on education, the ways in which Roma families feed their families and experiences of food in/security and hunger were also explored.

The core research team in this wider research project consisted of seven members (four postdoctoral researchers and three Ph.D. students) from the Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar in Zagreb, Croatia. In this collaborative ethnography, our personal biographies, education and professional training as well as stages in the life cycle were considerably different. With different lenses, we scrutinized one another's contributions, interpretations and insights and often compared what we saw, heard, and felt in the field. Roma community leaders at each location also joined our team to facilitate entry into Roma settlements and to assist us in all aspects of fieldwork. Their contribution was especially valuable, because they introduced us to willing research participants from their own communities who identified themselves as Roma.

Fieldwork began in September 2013 and ended mid-November 2013 and was carried out at five different locations: Kozari putevi, Capraške poljane, Parag, Darda and Vodnjan/Galižana. Although this study was not representative, these locations were chosen to capture the heterogeneity (in terms of language, religious, cultural, social and historical differences) of Roma populations that live throughout Croatia. Research sites cover areas with significant Roma populations as well as rural and urban locations. All of these differences (e.g. rural/urban, religious, socio-economic, etc.) are important sociological parameters shaping food consumption.

This study uses ethnographic data based on semi-structured interviews that was preceded by a brief

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9 This included 1139 parents of preschool children (945 families on social benefits and 194 with employed parents) that were surveyed in 2013. Out of parents on social benefits, 251 Roma parents of preschool children were included.

10 These percentages are higher in all categories when compared to the responses of other social welfare benefit recipients who are not Roma or have children with disabilities which are as follows: i) 31.7%; ii) 5.8%; iii) 40.9%; iv) 2,2%; and v) 50.6% (Kletečki Radović 2015: 67).

11 The RECI+ Croatia report is accessible at: http://www.romaeducationfund.hu/sites/default/files/publications/reci_croatia_report_eng-final_web.pdf.

survey for demographic details. The interview sample was created by selecting a range of Roma families (i.e. with different material bases as well as single-parent, nuclear and extended households) with kindergarten and school aged children. Since the experience of hardship and suffering is not effectively conveyed by statistics, open-ended interviews were designed to give the participants an opportunity to voice their opinions and experiences in their own terms. This was considered to be crucial as people experiencing hardship of any kind have an accumulation of practical experiential knowledge about their situation that researchers lack. For this reason, this paper mainly draws upon qualitative research that does not transform the rich detail of people's lived experience into quantifiable categories that lose their overall meaning. Although the interviews followed guidelines, they allowed ample opportunity for research participants to elaborate or to introduce issues they considered relevant. To maximize the reliability of findings, all interviews were transcribed word for word preferably by each researcher to preserve authenticity and ensure accuracy. In this way, the context that is so easily lost in team research was also accessible. Field notes specifically referring to each researcher's observations, experiences, interactions and impressions were also collected. Research participants were guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality. All names used in this paper are pseudonyms. Regular as well as unplanned meetings to exchange ideas as well as share experiences and to compare field notes were also held during and after fieldwork with all research team members including our Roma assistants. Thematic categories were produced based on an initial reading of transcripts as well as field observations. Further analysis searched for emergent themes and discourses in the interview transcripts.

Socio-demographic findings

The socio-demographic survey for the RECI+ Croatia study included 135 Roma households and was not representative of all the Roma populations in Croatia. Roma families in this sample are large (on average 4.45 children) and they often live in substandard housing in settlements with poor infrastructure. Almost half (46%) of all Roma households in this study reported that social welfare benefits (child allowance, social assistance and maternity leave) were the main source of income for the household, while almost all households (87.41%) were beneficiaries of some type of social welfare.[12] Linked with social exclusion, only 9% of respondents in the RECI+ Croatia study reported that they were formally employed or self-employed. In relation to education levels, nearly a quarter (24%) of the sample finished primary school while only a small number (8%) reported that they finished secondary school. Such low levels of education and employment adversely affect the ways in which Roma families can feed their families and themselves.

To obtain a wider understanding of social exclusion, the RECI+ Croatia study used one of the Europe 2020 indicators that measures deprivation. This is a 9-item scale that covers issues relating to economic strain, durables, as well as housing and environment of the dwellings.[13] Findings show that half of all households in the sample (50%) are severely materially deprived (cannot afford more than three items). In comparison,

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12 In other studies that are only based in the County of Medjimurje (one of twenty counties in Croatia with the highest Roma population) reports indicate that over three quarters of the Roma population (78%) receive a support allowance (Government of Croatia 2012: 73) or about 90% of households in one Roma settlement (Kuršanec) in the same county, depended on support allowance as the main source of income, between 2000 and 2008 (Šlezak 2010: 83).

13 http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Europe_2020_indicators_-_poverty_and_social_exclusion.

14.8% of Croatian society as a whole faces severe material deprivation at the national level (CBS 2013b: 34). Table 1 shows what Roma households (N= 135) in the RECI+ Croatia study could not afford.

Table 1. The percentage of Roma households that could not afford different items that measure deprivation.

% of HHs	ITEMS
40%	to pay rent, mortgage or utility bills
36%	to keep their home adequately warm
40%	to eat meat, fish or a protein equivalent every second day
83%	to pay unexpected expenses
90%	to go on holiday for one week
53%	a car
27%	a washing machine
8%	a colour TV
23%	a telephone

These data show that people living in poverty[14] not only lack the financial capacity to respond effectively to unexpected events but also do not have adequate resources to pay for indispensable expenses such as sources of protein (40%), public utility bills (40%) and heating (36%). Other items such as a car (essential for grocery shopping especially in large families that live in isolated rural locations) were affordable to just over half of the households (53%). It should be noted here that recent social welfare reforms (in effect since the beginning of 2014) have introduced even more stringent rules concerning car ownership and receipt of social welfare benefits.[15] Further, items such a washing machine were not affordable for over a quarter of the Roma households (27%). Interview data reveals that many Roma families cannot afford this labour-saving appliance because buying food is a priority.

Lived experiences of food in/security and hunger

The qualitative part of this research project involved 35 Roma parents (7 at each location) and their children (35) who participated in interviews at their homes.[16] Data that specifically focus on food and eating from these interviews illustrate how half of these households[17] struggle to feed their families and their everyday experiences of food in/security and hunger. The following themes are explored in this paper: i) consumption levels at home/school and quality of food; ii) difficulties of feeding large families, and iii) gendered aspects. More than half of these households (54%) experience food poverty because they could not afford meat, fish or protein equivalent every second day. Most of the qualitative data presented in the following analysis comes

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14 This term is preferred to 'poor people' to indicate that poverty is a material condition rather than an ontological condition as well as a condition that may vary throughout one's lifetime (see Jeppesen 2009).

15 The only exceptions are now in cases when a car is needed for the transportation of persons with a disability, older or infirm persons or when a car is necessary due to the absence or infrequency of public transport (see Social Welfare Act Official Gazette 157/13 and 152/14). At the time of this fieldwork, families on social benefits with a large number of children could own a car (see Social Welfare Act Official Gazette 33/12, 46/13, 49/13 in force between 24-03-2012 and 31-12-2013).

16 As this study adopts a holistic approach, interviews were also conducted with kindergarten principals and teachers, school principals and teachers, social workers, mayors, and doctors at each field site.

17 In line with Messing (2014: 821) who reminds us that it is very important to be explicit throughout the process of analysing and evaluating data and to avoid speaking about 'the Roma' in general which could reinforce the ethnicization of poverty, the following data presented in this article refers to Roma families who experience severe material deprivation.

from these interviews with families that experience deprivation, uncertainty and concern related to food. Unsurprisingly, most of them (90%) belonged to the group of households that are severely deprived (could not afford more than three items). Social welfare is the main source of income in these households. Their quotes that are presented throughout this paper attest to Hickey and Downey's finding (2003: 7) that food poverty has become an increasingly recognized aspect of living on a low income and of being socially excluded. These are families that experience a sharp and continuous deterioration in their material and social conditions as a result of poverty.[18] As food is absolutely essential for existence, family budgets always prioritize the need for food. This is well summed up in the following quote from a Roma woman who accurately observes that their money is always spent on what is necessary, which is always just food, often to the detriment of other needs such as health, education, housing, social and leisure activities.

> *Among Roma food is very important perhaps because we have nothing else, whatever we earn goes towards food. Everything revolves around food, this is the basic… there's nothing left for anything else!* (Dijana 39, mother of 2 children)

HOME MEALS AND THEIR AFFORDABILITY

Research findings show that the number of home meals in Roma families is variable between three and six times a day. Many families reported that they needed to be flexible to meet the needs of their children who often eat snacks more times a day. As previously mentioned, the focus of this paper is on those families who are living in food poverty (i.e. over half of the families that were interviewed) and their experiences show that they cannot always afford three meals a day. The following excerpts show their everyday struggles around feeding their families which is not well understood by the social services. Even when in acute need of food, research participants at some locations report being denied adequate support. For example, Ratko, father of four children is struggling to feed his family. His youngest child is five months old and is not breastfeeding because the infant's mother is in hospital. With little support from social services and no access to a soup kitchen, he finds it extremely difficult to provide meals, which are frequently uncooked for his children, especially the youngest.

> *Yes, they have breakfast, lunch and dinner, sometimes there is nothing for dinner to be honest… there's not enough money for that milk (formula) my child is bottle-fed, she can't be breastfed… I don't have enough for that milk.* (Ratko 36, father of 4 children)

Evidently, from a young age, his children are susceptible to health inequalities, because they regularly do not have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food. For Lina, the most crucial and worrisome problem is that she frequently does not have food to give to her children. Her quote shows the seriousness and urgency of her family's situation and how her desperation forces them to be involved in illicit activities which reveals their disadvantaged place in the world.

> *Today, my children don't have anything to eat. I'm forced or my husband to go somewhere and earn something or steal something to give them something to eat* (Lina 31, mother of 4 children)

Even with institutional support, this is sometimes not enough for large families that are dependent on

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18 According to the European Anti-Poverty Network, 2013 poverty is associated with material need – lack of food, fuel, healthcare, adequate clothing and housing and lack of resources (usually financial) to meet some or all of these needs.

social welfare. In the next example, Serena's large family relies on a soup kitchen (only available at one location) for lunch (that hopefully is enough to feed her family for dinner). However, this mother of nine admits that she does not have anything to give to her children for breakfast four or five times a month.

When I have bread, I give them marmalade, for example or when I have money, I buy and fry them some eggs, sausages or milk, salami… I always make something when I have something, but when I don't have anything they have to wait till I get home from the soup kitchen (Serena 40, mother of 9 children)

In the same vein, although lunches for this family are available at the soup kitchen, this mother expresses concern because she cannot purchase food items for breakfast.

We get social benefits and child benefits but this is not enough. When this runs out, we have to live on something until then… we need two litres of milk a day, cocoa, tea… (Karmina 25, mother of 6 children)

In other words, the benefits they receive each month are insufficient to cover the cost of other meals for her large family which exacerbates the anxiety and stress that she experiences especially when the family budget is low.

School meals and what they convey

As children move between different social spaces (e.g. home, kindergarten, school, friends' houses), they encounter and negotiate different foods in different spaces and while doing this, discover and claim new identities. Roma children usually first encounter foods and food practices which are new to them in early childhood settings such as kindergartens or primary school. Some children are excluded from these meals because their parents cannot afford to pay monthly fees for food at school. This food is only freely available to some children in this sample. In other words, depending on location and the fiscal capacities of the municipality as well as the welfare status of their parents, some children miss out on food at school.[19] This pertinently demonstrates how food conveys social status, differences in social standing, and exclusion as well as friendship, integration and acceptance (Feichtinger 1996). Children who belong to families living in poverty have first-hand experience of this social inequality at an early age when they have to stay hungry while watching other children eat. Importantly, food is also of practical nutritional value that is vital and irreplaceable in learning environments. Diet for some Roma children is nutritionally deficient and if they are not eating anything at school that has serious implications for unhealthy childhoods and ineffective learning at school as echoed in this father's comment.

For 4 HRK, let's say, my child will get 2 slices of bread, milk and spread and will be calm and level-headed because he knows that his stomach won't hurt, that he won't be hungry. Those children that don't eat can't follow class… they will be nervous. (Stanislav, 32, father of 7 children with 4 children in primary school)

Researchers have found an association between diet quality and academic performance and have argued that broader implementation and investment in effective school nutrition programmes have the potential to improve student access to healthy food choices, diet quality, academic performance, and, over the long

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19 Some municipalities cannot afford to cover the cost of school meals at all while in others this depends on whether parents are recipients of social welfare.

term, health (Florence–Asbridge–Veugelers 2008: 209). In an attempt to emphasize the importance of food for school children and that skipping meals leads to poorer performance at school, a mayor at one of the field locations organized seminars in collaboration with a health clinic for parents at the local primary school. In the following quote, he points out that school children need to have breakfast because they need energy (food) to learn.

> *Do you know what breakfast means even if this is just an apple or a slice of bread? If a child is hungry, he/she can't follow lessons, but if a child is satisfied he/she can concentrate and follow classes.* (Local mayor)

Although these educational seminars are commendable, this particular municipality does not cover any of the costs of school meals. The principal at this school confirms that Roma children who do not eat at school cannot keep up with the other children that do.

> *The biggest barrier is precisely this – they are unable to afford what other children have. Their parents cannot afford it. First, the basics, and that is food. Most children (referring to Roma children) don't eat at school. Parents receive social assistance; they receive child allowances and very skilfully allocate this money to pay for other things, to pay off debts. They cannot seem to understand that they have to set aside some of this money and pay for meals at school for their children. If a child is hungry and tired you can conclude for yourself what the results of their work will be like. So, they lag behind other children, they can't learn how they need to...* (Principal of primary school)

Overtly, she blames Roma parents who do not pay for their children's school meals but does not take into account structural forces (e.g. economic hardship of living on social benefits and meeting the costs of feeding large families) that operate invisibly. The inadequate material bases of some families means that their children have to miss out on school meals which in turn affects their ability to learn and in the long run contributes to educational inequalities.

Far from unified, school meals at each research location were highly variable in terms of costs, amount, content, and overall satisfaction among Roma children and parents. Some parents complained that children also experienced stigmatisation and discrimination in relation to food at schools.[20] The general criticism from low-income households was that school food is too expensive considering that it is not 'proper food' i.e. cooked food, but just fast food.

> *Children can hardly wait to get home! As soon as they come through the door they want to eat – this means that this is a waste of money!* (Franjo 35, father of 3 children)

The price of these meals is not reduced for families with more children. For example, three of Ružica's children are at primary school and in total she pays 270 HRK (35 EUR) each month for their school meals, which she thinks is too pricey considering what they get.[21] She says that they are at school for at least 5–6 hours and that 'one school meal' is 'not enough' for her children. In the past, she recalls that schools provided more sub-

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20 Attesting to discriminatory practices, during fieldwork at one particular location we also learned that Roma children never ate with other children from the majority population but always had to wait in the past.

21 This was the school's menu for the week while we were in the field. Monday: spread, chocolate milk, biscuits; Tuesday: minced meat, pasta and salad; Wednesday: sandwich, drink; Thursday: bean salad and dinosaurs; Friday: croissant, chocolate milk.

stantial meals. She is also annoyed that her children are not getting as much as other children at other schools for almost the same price.

I'm not satisfied at all because children at other schools have two meals. (Ružica 25, mother of 6 children

Sometimes parents are unable to pay the monthly fee for school meals on time which can also be very stigmatising and a source of embarrassment for children. One parent told us how her daughter in grade 1 was singled out in class because her mother was not able to pay for her meals that month on time. Her daughter was warned by her teacher: *"You won't get a meal next week if your parents don't pay by Monday!"*

Some parents voiced discontent because they felt that their children were being discriminated against because they do not eat pork for religious reasons. In particular, they reported that cooks at the school were very insensitive towards their children. In an intimidating way, children were sometimes told that 'they wouldn't know the difference between different types of meat anyway!' so there was no need to give them an alternative meat. When they do get a substitute, children described this food as being similar to 'chewed food.'

When our children say that they do not eat pork they are told that they have to eat what they get! So we pay for meals that they can't eat – they just eat the bread. (Melissa 31, mother of 5 children)

Clearly, these experiences illustrate how food is never just food but that an insufficient quantity of food can transform into health, educational and social inequalities.

QUALITY OF FOOD

Although food is an ordinary and essential part of our lives there are norms and rules that govern our eating and food choices that we hardly ever think about. In this section, the quality of food consumed will be considered including the representation of major food groups and the extent of reliance on microwave/pre-prepared items. Dietary quality in terms of preferences (i.e. are they getting enough of what they want to eat?) and whether their food is obtained from socially acceptable sources (e.g. supermarkets/restaurants versus handouts/rubbish dumps) will also be explored.

In response to the research question "What did your family eat yesterday?" the following findings were recorded.[22] Generally, in most Roma households there was a heavy reliance on meat, potatoes and bread. Typically, the main meal of the day usually consists of an animal protein and a side dish with a starchy base. Meat seemed to be essential and is thought to give structure and meaning to a meal. Bread is always served with every meal; sometimes this is home-made to save costs. There was a marked absence of fruits and vegetables in both materially and severely deprived households.[23] There was also a predominance of home cooked meals and no microwave or pre-prepared food was mentioned.[24] An abundance of processed foods (salami, liver sau-

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22 In terms of analysis, more systematic and actual observations of these food events at home would have been more fruitful but were not possible considering the research aims of the wider research project.

23 The WHO/FAO recommends consuming a minimum of 400g of vegetables and fruit a day (2012: 6).

24 It has been noted that eating foods prepared outside the home is also connected with class. In France, Grignon and Grignon 1980 (cited in Plesz–Gojand 2014: 177) found that middle class households bought more ready-prepared meals than working-class households.

sage, spreads, etc.) usually eaten for breakfast or in the evening was also noted while there was little representation of organic or any foods that could be categorized as health foods. According to a social worker with 26 years of work experience with the Roma, the situation has considerably improved because fewer children are now hospitalized for digestive system problems. Paradoxically, he attributes this to the availability of cheaper and less nourishing food.

> *We had a hospital full of Roma children aged between one and three years or even younger because of digestive problems. Due to poor hygiene, inadequate preparation of food and other things... Now it has improved a little. They can buy ready-made food that has been processed, which is probably unhealthier, but at least they eat, it's cheaper, poorer quality food but at least they are healthier.* (social worker)

Analysis of the interview material shows that household diets depend on three different factors: i) location (i.e. accessibility to foods and the fiscal capacities or 'generosity' of rural municipalities/cities); ii) traditions of locality (available local ingredients) and/or women's natal households (reliance on 'old fashioned food') and iii) socio-economic circumstances. This last factor was overwhelmingly the most salient; a factor that overwhelmingly governs eating practices and food choices. Clearly, findings show that Roma families with at least one employed family member can spend more money on food and exercise more choice in relation to the family diet. As researchers have noted, the higher the socio-economic status, the healthier the diet (understood as higher consumption of vegetables and fruits (Kopczyńska–Zielińska 2015: 8). In comparison, families with low income struggle to make ends meet to feed their families, especially just before social welfare payments. Many adopt saving strategies (even for ordinary condiments) but are also aware that their options are limited since for example, they do not engage in self-provisioning.

> *The crisis days of the month are the 12th and 13th... these days are the most critical!* (Pero, 32, father of 7 children)

> *I have to know how to save money, what is cheaper to buy... for example, I go to the shop for kitchen stuff like Vegeta,[25] salt, oil and I have to look at the prices. I can't afford those things that are expensive!* (Vesna 33, single mother of 2 children)

> *We don't have anything to live on, we don't have any land to plant anything... onions or potatoes, we have to go to the market.* (Elvis 49, father of 11 children)

In relation to dietary quality in terms of preferences (i.e. are they getting enough of what they want to eat?) findings show that Roma families living in food poverty have monotonous diets (e.g. only chicken, fried foods, beans, potatoes, etc.). In sum, these are meals that cost a little but can feed a lot. Frustrated that his family can only afford poultry, this father of 11 children expresses his desire to give his children other types of meat.

> *If I had 1500 HRK (196 EUR) now I would go to... Anywhere and buy a pig and kill it so that the children have something different to eat.* (Elvis, 49, father of 11 children)

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25 A condiment mixture of salt with flavour enhancers, spices and various vegetables invented in 1959 by a Croatian scientist Zlata Bartl.

Adhering to monotonous diets is a household strategy that allows Roma families to survive with the "minimum required" by "eating what is cheaper". This corresponds to Bourdieu's (1986) description of the taste of necessity, which favours the most 'filling' and most economical foods compared to luxury items. Their diets also depend on the available appliance and fuel. Cooking over a wood stove is economical because it simultaneously provides heat, while others used tinned food to reduce cooking time. For example, referring to a Sunday lunch, a Roma mother recalls that she cooked beans using canned beans to save gas. Sweets are definitely a luxury item that is not frequently consumed in households that are living in food poverty.

> *They (her children) want more sweets every day... when I get my social benefits I can only give them sweets on that day and the next, maybe even the third day but the fourth, fifth...* (Vesna 33, single mother of 2 children)

Although poverty obviously reduces the possibility of choosing what we can eat it also determines where our food comes from. Food sources range from acceptable sources such as supermarkets and/or restaurants to less acceptable sources such as handouts and/or rubbish dumps. The search for cheaper supermarkets is usually complicated by transport problems. None of the Roma families that participated in the interviews mentioned ever going to a restaurant for meals. Instead they are dependent on 'scarce' social welfare food coupons or a soup kitchen (if available). They note with dissatisfaction that provisions are inadequate to meet the needs of their families and have even become worse in recent times.[26]

> *We used to get 3,500 HRK (458 EUR) but we don't get this any more. I get 1800 HRK (236 EUR) now. Now please listen, I really need more. I need more for food, for school, for firewood, for electricity... I need money for everything. People steal because they are hungry; we used to get help from the social services. We used to go to the shop and buy everything we need for the kitchen and now there's nothing. What can I buy for 400 HRK (52 EUR)?* (Dijana 49, mother of 11 children)

Eating food that has been thrown away is another option; this is food from rubbish dumps or waste containers.[27] None of participants in this study mentioned going to a 'social supermarket' to obtain food, which is a relatively new concept in Croatia. Evidently, these experiences also illustrate how food is never just food but that an inferior quality of food can translate into health and social inequalities.

Difficulties of feeding large families

Roma families living in food poverty show heightened concern for food as a daily preoccupation in interviews. Many are concerned about day-to-day survival – what they need to do today so that their children can eat; this is anxiety about the "here and now". This is suffering experienced day after day by many families that do not have the necessary minimum to meet their needs. It should also be noted that these families are further challenged in ways that undoubtedly complicate the task of feeding their families, especially if they are large. Namely, their homes often have poor infrastructure and investments in their improvements are financially unattainable and largely ignored by policy-makers. For example, in the entire sample (N=135 households) 24%

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26 It needs to be noted here that more severe cuts (referred to earlier) were introduced following this fieldwork.

27 As tax-free food donations are still not possible in Croatia, many large supermarket chains throw out food that is still edible. A new Law on Agriculture related to this issue is expected to be passed by the end of 2015 in collaboration with Ministry of Finance. There are also plans for a food bank in Croatia that will cover four regions to meet the needs of areas with more inequalities.

do not have a safe water supply; 5% do not have electricity, not counting those with unsafe and unauthorized connections; and 16% do not have an indoor kitchen. Inevitably, the detrimental effects of poor infrastructure combined with poor nutrition inescapably translate into health inequalities for a large number of Roma families. Likewise, the stresses and deprivations of living on social benefits lead to further deterioration of family health. More specifically, kitchen spaces, if indoors, are often used for other purposes such as sleeping and bathing. There is also a marked lack of kitchen appliances or time-saving technologies (e.g. fridges, dishwashers, blenders, microwaves, ovens, etc.) in Roma households. Generally, kitchens are not well-stocked (a lack of essential ingredients) and there is a noticeable absence of furniture such as kitchen tables and chairs. On the whole, substandard housing complicates the routine acquisition, preparation, cooking and storage of food. In addition, the cumulative effect of these conditions has produced extreme conditions in the lives of many Roma families living in food poverty and has made the task of preparing and cooking food more arduous.

Roma households that experience severe material deprivation employ a number of survival strategies to feed their families. Some borrow money for food especially when hunger is acute just before social welfare monthly payments. Some depend on relatives for food, meals, and/or money. With their children, some women beg for food. Roma families living in poverty frequently engage in illicit activities or work in the shadow economy (e.g. collect scrap metal and other recyclables, acorns, firewood, mushrooms/porcini, sell goods at flea markets, food markets etc.). Although profitable, these activities are risky and not cost-effective[28] because of recently enforced restrictions, fines, and health hazards. All in all, Roma compete for the same limited resources in these income generating activities, which generally provide short term solutions that enable them to feed their families that day. Some families are dependent on a soup kitchen that was only available at one urban location. As the soup kitchen is not a homely environment and not conveniently close (40 minutes by bus in one direction), many families take these meals home each day. In some cases, families can stretch these meals across the day but sometimes they are not enough for dinner and/or breakfast the next day. Since this institution is based on 'the policy of acceptance of what they serve you without the possibility of choice,' Muslim families just take the bread on pork days.[29] Food donations are irregular, inadequate and not widespread. Food vouchers and one-time assistance from Centres of Social Welfare are not automatic entitlements and more restrictions have recently been introduced.[30] Structural violence is reproduced through humiliating interactions at social welfare offices where Roma families are often given the run-around. Under such circumstances, they are not always able to shield their children from a shortage of food. Plainly, their predicament is framed by structural forces such as overall recession, severe cutbacks in social welfare, poorly paid and unstable jobs, a precarious labour market, institutional racism and discrimination, especially in health and education.

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28 Article 10 (8) and (9) of the Regulation of Waste Management (Official Gazette 23/14 and 51/14 in force since 21-2-2014) has recently introduced changes that directly affect people who collect recyclables. A limit of a 100 HRK (13 EUR) in cash a day has been introduced and larger transactions must be through an account. Access to earnings from this type of income generating activity is a problem because Roma accounts are often blocked due to debts.

29 Analysis of the soup kitchen's daily menu for the past two months shows that pork or meals that may be pork-based such as minced meat, sausages, meatballs, etc. are served between two and three times a week.

30 See footnote 5.

The ways that households living in poverty cope with food shortages are complex, logical, and varied depending on their resources and circumstances. They must be flexible to deal with day-to-day situations when they do not have enough money to get by. Roma spending patterns suggest that money is primarily spent on food and that costs related to school (food, books, excursions, extracurricular activities, etc.) clothing/shoes as well as public utility and maintenance only come in as a second priority. For many households, barriers to mobility affect Roma's ability to access healthy and affordable food and force them to depend on smaller, more expensive shops that have less choice in terms of quality. Other challenges further aggravate their chances of exiting the vicious circle of social exclusion. For example, Roma parents living in poverty could not afford to send their children to night school (to finish primary school). A mother who cannot afford to send her son who has just turned 15 to night school for two more grades explains:

You need to pay every month, where am I supposed to get this money from? 700 HRK (91 EUR) a month! From where? and transport as well. I can't send him to night school. There are nine of us… we have to survive! I have to cook three or four times a day. How can I afford 700 HRK a month (Slađana 38, mother of 7 children)

Secondary school is a greater challenge. A father of four children sadly told us that his daughter was not able to go to secondary school at least two days a week because he could not afford the costs of transport and food each day. Sometimes she missed out several times a week, especially during the winter months because she was not able to walk in cold weather conditions to her school situated 5 km away. If she used public transport she had to stay hungry at school.

I used to tell her (daughter) not to eat at school because there is not enough money for the bus and food. She wanted to go school and we used to fight about this. I had to tell her that I didn't have enough money but she didn't understand this so I simply didn't let her go to school. (Stanko 36, father of 4 children)

Gendered aspects

As food is intimately bound up with social relations, including those of power, of inclusion and exclusion (Caplan 1997:3) the gendered aspects of feeding Roma families are important to consider. Findings show that most of the Roma women in this study are mothers who breastfeed their children significantly longer than the majority population.[31] Even though their pregnancies are usually back-to-back, mothers sometimes simultaneously, breastfeed their children on average between 1 to 3 years as economic constraints function to support the maintenance of breastfeeding. Roma women, as a rule, are also solely responsible for all domestic chores including cooking and feeding other members of the household. Food preparation tasks in Roma households must be carried out regularly and frequently (this is usually several times a day in large families) and take up more time than any other type of domestic work. Socialisation into these gendered roles usually starts early at 9 or 10 for all girls. Mothers and other female relatives (grandmothers, sister-in laws) through their example teach girls these skills. Girls 'watch and learn' and subsequently do this work for their families.

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31 According to the latest data in the Republic of Croatia, the percentage of exclusively breastfed infants dramatically decreases as infants get older. In other words, 71.8% of infants aged 0–2 months exclusively breastfeed while this figure decreases to 58.2% of infants between 3–5 months and to 19% of infants after 6 months (Croatian Institute of Public Health 2014: 110).

When I cook or when I make pastry she (referring to her 10 year old) has to be beside me to see what I'm doing because tomorrow she'll have her own husband... she has to learn. The day before yesterday we made pastry, home-made filo pastry. She made 5 or 6 sheets while I prepared the other food. (Senija, 33, 10 children)

Conversely, boys are brought up differently in that domestic duties related to food are not taught to, or expected from boys. In comparison, girls often have to end their schooling to meet the needs of their natal household (e.g. cooking, feeding, cleaning, infant and child care, care of sick and 'aged' members) particularly if the family is experiencing severe material deprivation. Subsequently, at a very young age, girls manage their own households[32] often with no help from their female kin. Research has shown the increased availability of time-saving technologies (such as microwaves) has led to a significant reduction in the time spent on domestic labour, especially for lower income women (see Heisig 2011). In contrast, other research (see Šikić-Mićanović 2005) has also shown that Roma fare poorly on measures of well-being with regard to household appliances as well as housing conditions, neighbourhood and community conditions, which make life to a large extent more difficult for Roma girls and women.[33] Although DeVault (1994: 232) contends that food preparation perpetu-ates relations of gender inequality in the household, under given circumstances she reminds us that it can provide 'a valued identity, a source of empowerment for women, and a means to perpetuate group survival.' The continuance of traditional styles of cooking from one generation to the next is mirrored in the contin-ued transmission of knowledge (traditional recipes and techniques) so closely associated with being a proper woman and mother in Roma communities. In comparison, Roma men do not participate in household chores including the preparation and further work around meals that starkly contrasts with other current findings that show that men have increased their participation in household chores including the preparation of meals (see Gershuny, 2000). Nevertheless, they are responsible for what their families eat as they are more likely to be involved in the acquisition of food. Thus, this special relationship of women to food and nutrition in the domes-tic sphere can be seen either as empowering because it is a valued and socially acceptable identity among the Roma or as reinforcing women's subordinate role in the family. Notably, none of the women in this study had ever worked in the formal economy.

Although further ethnographic research on gendered power relations is indispensable to accurately eval-uate the extent of gender inequalities, findings from this study pertinently show how gender intersects with ethnicity, age and class and how this transforms into gender inequalities for women. Namely, Roma women are often expected to prepare food, cook and feed families; although men are mostly responsible for obtaining food these tasks are not equally shared. For women living in poverty, these tasks are complex and laborious, especially if they have large families. Age is another aspect that needs to be considered as young Roma girls are often required to participate in household and care work from a young age especially in large families with economic hardships. If early marriage and multiple childbirth follow this essentially determines their life

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32 It has been officially estimated that about 60% of Roma women enter cohabiting relationships at the age of 13 or 14 and they become mothers by the age of 15 (Ombudsperson for Gender Equality, 2005, 113).

33 Although gender and age play a central role in the ways food resources are distributed within a household (e.g. who eats what, who does not eat what, how much does each member eat, how many times a day, who decides this, etc.) shedding light on gender differences and power relations within families, this area of research was beyond the scope of this study.

paths since further educational and employment opportunities are limited. Finally, class is a salient element because all the tasks related to feeding become more complicated and stressful if access to adequate and different types of food as well as quality of food depends on income. Meals cannot be planned, organized or nutritionally balanced when financial problems are overriding. Roma families living in poverty frequently live in substandard housing with poor infrastructure. In addition, fewer household appliances and inadequate kitchen storage space complicate women's feeding work. Considering their low levels of education, Roma women living in poverty presumably have less knowledge on nutrition and home economics which in turn could make their work more difficult and a source of anxiety.

Concluding remarks

Research findings from this study clearly demonstrate that feeding is complex, laborious and highly gendered in some Roma families, especially those living in food poverty. Roma families that are severely materially deprived are more vulnerable to a poor diet and inadequate nutrition due to their substandard living conditions and constrained access to different types of capital. As a result, they are faced with constraints preventing them from affording and accessing healthy and nutritious diets on a regular basis. Their words apart from revealing grim biographical details allowed us to closely examine what is involved when someone is living in food poverty and how this translates into different types of inequalities. Lack of access to healthy and nutritious food aggravates health, social, educational, economic and gender inequalities that squarely places them at the bottom rung of the social ladder and promotes social suffering. Anxiety and stress about affording food, a poor or monotonous diet, high food prices and even hunger are a reality for many families on low incomes in this study and a constant feature of their lives. As hunger is the clearest sign of powerlessness because it means one lacks the control to satisfy one's most basic subsistence need (see Lappé and Collins 1986), urgent measures are needed to introduce inclusive policies that support rather than punish vulnerable people. Research has consistently shown that people living in poverty become criminalized objects of targeted policy and automatic suspects (Jeppesen 2009: 488). The structural violence of unemployment, insecure employment and inadequate social welfare operate invisibly and relentlessly punish vulnerable persons. Accordingly, they are wrongly accused of laziness and inferior intelligence because of their social welfare dependence and distrusted because of their engagement in illicit activities, which are in reality survival strategies. Clearly, these are processes and forces that conspire to constrain their agency and these power imbalances frustrate families and add to the hardship of poverty.

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Laura Nistor

Discourses about the meaning of the local food Investigations in Romanian urban contexts

Abstract

Up to now only a few studies about local food consumption in Romania have been realized and the majority of them are quantitative investigations. The aim of the present research which is based on focus group interviews was to bring further nuance to these previous quantitative data by asking the respondents to develop deeper narratives about what local food means to them, how they relate to local foods, how they perceive the different features of local foods (e.g. tradition, organic, taste, ingredients, etc.) and which are their motivations and impediments in connection with local food consumption. The research showed that consumers' involvement with local food occurs along product-based aspects, i.e. the intrinsic characteristics of food (taste, ingredients) and local food consumption seems to be much more motivated by health concerns and status assignment than by ethical and ecological reasons. Two major definitions of local food were mapped: 1) a place-centred, geographical definition and 2) a production-centred, 'how it is made' kind of definition.

Keywords: local food, geographic narrative, tradition, identity

LAURA NISTOR

DISCOURSES ABOUT THE MEANING OF THE LOCAL FOOD
INVESTIGATIONS IN ROMANIAN URBAN CONTEXTS

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Food consumption – similarly to consumption in general – can be viewed as a cultural strategy through which people are able to make visible and communicate the social and cultural differences between them and to adhere to certain values and ideologies (Dolan 2002). Food consumption links the satisfaction of basic human needs like nutrition, staying alive and maintaining health with the expression of identities (Halkier 2004) and, in this way, it has a number of non-material objectives, which imply ethical, social, political, etc. concerns (Cohen–Murphy 2001).

In traditional societies people succeeded to anchor themselves through the practice of eating. In these societies the act of eating took place within the geographical conditions of a certain location (i.e. the availability of certain plants and animals provided a more or less stable menu for people) and there resulted particular 'foodways' (what, when, how to eat) which bound the local community together (Bildtgard 2008, see also Levi-Strauss 1969, Douglas 1991). Later, in the course of modernity and late modernity, nations and communities have still continued to define themselves through cultures of eating (e.g. national gastronomic cultures, specific cuisines, etc.) and, on smaller scale, foodways are still visible in the forms of specific local and traditional food products. The most dominant structuring force of food consumption in the era of modernity is, however, the rationalization of food production (e.g. through technologies that produced food and through global retailer chains that made the globalization of food possible) which lead to the de-localization of food. This globalized food system implies a great diversity of homogeneous, processed food products available throughout the seasons and regions. Obviously, food processing has a number of benefits like improved preservation, increased distribution potential, convenience, availability of products, etc., but processing also has a number of shortcomings, e.g. reduced nutritional value, negative health effects, pollution associated with the energy of processing and transportation, etc. (Kaplan 2012). Such risks which began to rise in connection with modern food raise a number of questions about what we eat (Bildtgard 2008) and this then causes consumers to re-verify their relation with food and to generate reflexive 'life-politics' in relation with food consumption (Connolly–Prothero 2008). Individuals start to reflect upon consumer "practices, preferences and even the process of reflection itself" (Adams–Raisborough 2008: 1168) and start to adopt alternative ways of food consumption versus the conventional models of food consumption based on industrial production and retailer chains.

The general assumption is that alternative food consumption practices can be motivated by two specific orientations: individualistic values centred around health and safety (Szasz 2007), expressing the "fear of con-

sequences for the consumer's body" (Miller 1995 – quoted by Connelly and Prothero 2008: 135); or by more general moral issues, e.g. the ethical treatment of animals, the morality of the genetically modified foods, hunger and other ways of exclusion, the role of food in constructing gender and personal identity, etc. (Kaplan 2012).

When referring to the axiological roots of the alternative food consumption we must note that food related behaviours are often routine practices and, as a result, in order to choose certain products which are in accordance with specific alternative consumption morals and practices, consumers have to make conscious efforts which then imply extra time and energy. On the other hand, as Beagan et al. (2010) observe, there are cases when consumers routinely make ethical consumption choices, without thinking or talking about it and at the level of practice alternative consumption is neither entirely reflexive nor entirely routine (see also Halkier 2001).

Romanian consumers' preferences for local or other alternative food products have not been systemically analysed and there are only a few, sporadic surveys and local level qualitative studies in this direction (Lubieniechi 2002, Stanculescu–Marin 2008, Stancu 2011, Titarenko et al. 2012, Unlock Market Reserarch 2011, IRES 2013). These studies as well as those comparative research studies in which Romania has been included (e.g. Januszewska et al. 2011, Nistor 2014) show that consumers do have a clear preference for intrinsic food qualities (taste, ingredients, etc.), and such preferences are well explainable on the basis of status variables (e.g. education, income) in the sense that the lack of economic capital can limit consumers' effective engagement with high quality food products. In connection with local food products, the market survey data of the Unlock Market Research (2011) show that half of the Romanian population defines local products in terms of geographical provenance, while the other majority associates local food with national ingredients, respectively with local recipes and preferences for local food are motivated mostly by intrinsic, product-based aspects such as ingredients, taste, etc.

The present article is part of a broader research project[1] whose aim was to investigate the definitions, motivations and impediments of local food consumption. It aims to investigate how local food is defined by a specific public, i.e. Romanian urbanites; compared to the quantitative studies' approach, the present research focused on narratives and discourse repertoires and aimed to discover the ways in which respondents arguments their perceptions and attitudes towards local food. As the recent review article of Feldmann and Hamm (2015) suggests, investigating the meaning and definition of local food is one of the major directions of the studies on local food consumption as much as frequently we do not have a clear official definition of such products. The same is the case in Romania: the rural development strategy for the period 2014–2020 presents the development of short producer-consumer chains as one of the priorities, however it does not define the meaning and extent of such short chains (MADR 2014a); similarly, the MADR (2014b) guidance concerning traditional product attestation defines local food products at the intersection of the local and the traditional and contends that traditional food products are products that are made in Romania, based on local ingredients,

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lack additives and are based on traditional recipes and/or on traditional ways of production and are distinguishable from other products in the same category.

LOCAL FOOD CONSUMPTION AS ALTERNATIVE CONSUMPTION

The alternative forms of food consumption comprise those types of foods which are different from the classical, homogeneous, retailer chains based products. Alternative ways of food consumption can take different forms and are usually motivated by ethical and/or environmental values (e.g. environmental protection, fair treatment of the animals and workers involved in the production), health and taste concerns (e.g. diets, weight-control, functional foods, ingredients, etc.) and, consequently, it is assumed that they constitute *purchasing decisions which go beyond economic considerations* (Micheletti 2003). Alternative food consumption initiatives can have different names, in accordance with their major goal and motivations. They can be referred as ethical consumption (e.g. Shaw–Shiu 2003), sustainable consumption (e.g. Southerton et al. 2004, Seyfang 2006), critical consumerism (e.g. Sassatelli 2006), etc.

Within the alternative food consumption movement, local food consumption is a specific case. In the context of the global food system, within which the distances between producers are increased and direct control over food from the part of the consumers becomes difficult (Tischner–Kjaernes 2010), local or short food chains can provide an alternative for seasonal and supposedly greener, fresher and healthier products (Morgan 2010). In fact, the case of local food is very complex and can be considered a cultural phenomenon (Pratt 2007, Martinez et al. 2010), whose roots are located in several other movements, in each of which the local is promoted for various reasons: e.g. for environmental reasons (i.e. consuming locally reduces the quantity of non-renewable energy used in food transport); for political and economic reasons (i.e. construction and empowerment of local economies and community based agriculture; direct relationships between producers and consumers by cutting out the commercial middlemen and selling direct to consumers, etc.); healthism (shorter transportation routes coincide with fresher products, with the reduced use of additives in the food products), etc.

As a consequence, local food represents a geographical concept related to the distance between producers and consumers (Martinez et al. 2010). On the other hand, and mostly from the perspective of the consumers, local products have a number of benefits which are usually centred around trust: knowledge of the origins of food, ingredients[2], re-personalization of commercial relations, etc. (Smithers et al. 2008). In this latter sense, local food related initiatives include many attempts whose aim is to connect producers to consumers. The shopping experiences offered by taste education shows and local food markets build not only trust, but they also bring pleasure to the consumers in the form of the exploration activities involved in the search of

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2 In this respect, local food is frequently used as synonym for the so called 'organic food' which is considered to be food free of pesticides and chemicals. Organic food is the result of organic agriculture which represents a production system that "sustains the health of soils, ecosystems and people" and "relies on ecological processes, biodiversity, and cycles adapted to local conditions", so that "organic agriculture combines tradition, innovation, and science to benefit the hared environment and promote fair relationships and a good quality of life for all involved (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements 2009, 1 – quoted by Guido et al. 2010: 81). Thus, four principles are at the basis of organic agriculture: health, ecology, fairness and care (Guido et al. 2010).

fresher, tastier, etc. goods. Local food consumption frequently includes a strong social element, meaning that this type of shopping and consumption experiences are usually shared experiences within families, friends and communities (Schaefer–Crane 2005).

When considering local food we must also refer to several critical assumptions which challenge the ethical character of such consumption or consumers' ability to constantly pursue conscious, reflexive purchasing decisions. In the case of local food, there is a risk to fall into the so called 'local trap' which is the tendency to assume that the local is inherently associated with positive attributes (Pratt 2007). Indeed, local food refers to food produced locally, in a specific region with labels of authenticity. However, as Tischner and Kjaernes (2010) contend, such labels can be a problematic dimension of the local products, as far as such labels do not always guarantee fewer food miles, and there are cases when authentic local foods are traded globally. Thus, the best practice in connection with local eating would be to choose those local foods which are produced close to the consumer, but this kind of 'regional sourcing' is in contradiction with the political, economic and social agenda of free trade and thus implies marginalization, for instance in terms of excluding developing countries from exporting their products across the globe (ibidem). Similarly, Martinez et al. (2010) contend, that not all the products sold at farmers markets are local products, as far as some vendors come from outside the local region, while others may not sell products that are produced within the region. Clarke et al. (2008) also mention several shortcomings which are implicit of local food consumption: localist food regimes are not equally available to all social groups of consumers; the ethical values of local alternative food systems may be internally contradictory, i.e. emphasis on localism often privileges ecological sustainability over social justice; the political and ethical branding of local foods may be subverted to mainstream processes, in the sense that the quality of these products is increasingly associated with their premium prices.

Among the critics, there are authors (e.g. Barnett et al. 2005, Devinney et al. 2010) who contend that ethical consumption is nothing more than a myth because the concept itself is too broadly defined, to loosely operationalized and too moralistic in its stance. Consequently, they suggest that it would be more correct to speak about consumer social responsibility instead of ethical consumption, because social responsibility can be better operationalized (e.g. donations or dispositions to be involved in protests and boycotts; product preferences; specific purchasing and non-purchasing behaviour). Criticism also targets the individualistic character of alternative food consumption, which assumes that consumers are "philosophically consistent actors who hold overarching ideologies and continually connect the dots between these abstract values and a wide variety of specific consumption behaviors" (Holt 2012: 239). In fact, empirical studies tend to show that the congruency between values and overt actions is rather a myth and consumer choices are limited also by macro-level constraints. Thus, it would be too naïve to put the accent on the consumers as drivers of social change and to expect that many individuals, added together, can change the world (Willis–Schor 2012).

In summary, as a response to such criticism we can conclude that local food consumption and associated practices can be conceptualized as critical reactions towards the global food industry, respectively towards supply chains. It is not about the fact that alternative consumption does not have imperfections, it is much more about the fact that it is stimulated by various motivations ranging from ethical concerns and consumers' lack

of trust in conventional food products to hedonistic reasons referring to health promotion (Feldmann–Hamm 2015) and, thus provides a fertile terrain to explore the intersections between reflexivity, ethics, consumption practices and identity.

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research was based on a qualitative strategy, including focus group interviews which is the most dominant research design in connection with local food consumption (Feldmann–Hamm 2015). Ten focus group interviews have been conducted in five Romanian urban locations (two groups in each location), including both large cities (Bucharest, Brasov, Cluj-Napoca) and small towns (Sfantu Gheorghe/Sepsiszentgyörgy and Miercurea Ciuc/Csíkszereda). Finally, an online focus group has been conducted via Skype, having as participants seven consumers from these locations. These were consumers who identified themselves as dedicated, conscious consumers of local foods, otherwise the participants in the ten offline focus groups represented the general public in connection with local food consumption[3]. When selecting these localities, the starting rationale was that depending on their residential background (town versus city), citizens may attach different meanings to local food and may have different knowledge, motivations and accessibility about/to such food products. In each of the five localities, one out of the two focus groups consisted of young participants (20–35 years old), living alone in independent households, without children, while the other focus group comprised middle aged and older people (36–75 years old), with family (husband, wife, child/ren). Thus, age and family status were those socio-demographic category alongside participants have been selected in one of these groups, while in terms of other socio-demographic characteristics, the groups were rather heterogeneous. The number of participants in the groups consisted in 5–7 people[4]. Focus groups have been conducted between May and July 2014. The online focus group was conducted in September 2014.

The general aim of the research was to answer the questions of how individuals define local food; what such food means to them; which are those patterns of the local food that are mentioned as salient characteristics of such foods; how consumers are involved in the practice of local food consumption; which are their major motivations and impediments when consuming local food products. During the group interviews the semi-structured design was followed, so that there were some previously defined questioned, while others emerged during the discussions.

Discussions have been tape recorded and then the material has been transposed into written text. The transcripts, were coded using QSR NVivo for Windows. The analysis in terms of codes, major themes and corresponding semantic narratives followed the paradigm of the grounded theory (e.g. Strauss–Corbin 1990).

THE MEANING OF LOCAL FOOD: EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

The process of codification resulted in two major themes regarding the definition of local food, to both

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3 Participants received a filter questionnaire, based on which results they were selected in the groups.

4 Participants have been selected via Facebook messages, so that I posted a call for participation on my wall and asked my network members to share the message in the respective localities. In this way, I succeeded to collect relatively rapidly those 6-8 people who participated in each group.

of them corresponding several specific micro-narratives: 1) a place-centred theme, i.e. a geographic narrative which defines local food by anchoring it to a certain locality, and 2) a production centred theme, i.e. a narrative which is concerned with ways of production (i.e. manufacture), ingredients and commercialization of the local food.

Local food as geography

The identification of local food with a specific place results in a geographic narrative; respondents are operating with an imaginative scale ranged between adjacent, personal places (e.g. one's own garden) and more distant or general places (e.g. Romania). Obviously, the geographic narrative accentuates the 'local' out of the whole local food concept and it is mostly concerned with distances and with authenticity in terms of place and origin of products, rather than with the ingredients or production methods. This definition overlaps with those views of the literature which conceptualize local food in terms of geography and distance, i.e. short supply chains (e.g. Martinez et al. 2010). As Feagan (2007) contends, local food systems are "oriented around some form of geographic delimitations of space variously labeled the local, place and community" (Feagan 2007: 33). Indeed, our interviewees referred to such delimitations when they attempted to define local food. The discourses frequently negotiated between the most adjacent, i.e. personal space and a more distant, i.e. less personal place, e.g. a certain Romanian county or the country itself. Moreover, local identity and community-based traditions were also mentioned as puzzles of the definitions. The respondents tended also to think that local food can have different degrees of authenticity in terms of localness, and some products might be more local than the others. Here, reflexivity occurred mostly in terms of place-consciousness (e.g. the place of origin should be mentioned on the labels), rather than in the form of other product attributes, e.g. intrinsic qualities like ingredients, taste, etc.

> *"Local food is local when I think of my garden. (…) I have a small garden here in the city, and there me and my wife are cultivating our own vegetables… (…) Now, if we are talking about local food, these are the local foods, what we do in our garden… (…) Now, it is another discussion if what we pick up from the market is really local…"* (Man, Cluj-Napoca).

> *"Everything what is produced inside a certain circle, for instance in a county, or inside a region, for instance in the Szeklerland region, is local food. (…) But these are less local compared with my grandparents' garden."* (Man, Miercurea Ciuc)

The so called 'localization of the local' brings into the discussion the issue of identity: a frequent strategy of the definitions is the anchoring of the local food to certain traditional local foods, gastronomic heritage or brands. Some food products, which in their names, brands or labels make reference to a certain local place, region, community or gastronomy are perceived as being more local or being 'the' local products, compared with those products which – even if they are made in the same locality, region, etc. – do not assume through their brands, labels, etc. their clear provenance. In the respondents' view, marketing and branding strategies have a huge role in anchoring a product to a place or community, even if in some cases these locally labelled products are marketed far away from their primarily origin. When associating the local food with such kind of brands, the interviewees provide big emotional discourses and usually refer to some generic brands for specific

Romanian counties whose names have been developed during the socialist era, when each county had its distinctive brand of food products. During the transition period of the 1990s, these brands, production lines, etc. have been privatized, and the products became commercialized throughout the country, but in many cases the name of the products has remained the same.

> "*Napolact* [The brand name of the milk products produced in Cluj county during the socialist era was preserved even after the factory became privatized – author's note] *for instance is a local product. (…) We all know that it is not local any more because they bring the milk from other counties outside Cluj, and I also heard that they have factories outside our county as well, and the brand itself is sold to foreigners, but I still think of the Napolact as our brand. (…) Sometimes, when I opt for other milk products (…) I feel somehow guilty… as if I am unfaithful to my Napolact…*" (Woman, Cluj-Napoca).

> "*Harmopan* [the brand name for bakery products produced in Miercurea Ciuc/Csíkszereda – author's note], *the products which are named Székely Termék, the Gobé foods, the Csíki sör, Borsec mineral water or Tusnad – these are the local products for me. But, after all, all those products, which are made in Romania are local products. (…) I think we must think in stages, about products made in a locality, then in a county, and after these, in the country*" (Man, Miercurea Ciuc).

> "*I am very addicted to Poiana chocolates. These used to be our brand in Brasov. Now we call them Suchardine, but I still think of Poiana as a local chocolate. We are familiar with Poiana in Brasov, because everyone knows someone who has worked in the chocolate factory… (…) And the same is the case with other products, like mineral waters, Borsec, Tusnad… With meat products, like Sergiana…*" (Woman, Brasov).

> "*There was some years ago a huge promotion around ROM chocolate. (…) There was a campaign to find the most authentic Romanian product, and that resulted in the ROM chocolate… This is packaged in a paper which is painted in red, yellow and blue… like the Romanian flag. This is quite explicit (…) If I remember well, the chocolate has written on it Bucuresti… So this is the genuine Romanian chocolate… And yes, I think people really perceive it like Romanian… Thus, you can have a local product and you can ensure its local nature through a campaign…* (Man, Bucharest).

These types of narratives which put the accent on identity can be interpreted in terms of specific foodways (Bildtgard 2008) and illustrate that there are brands which can be tied to certain communities or localities and they continue to be impregnated by emotions, habits and trust and generate strong "alimentalities" (Bildtgard 2008) in connection with local foods.

Local food as manufacture

While the place centred narrative is not or only in a small degree concerned with production and commercialization methods and with the intrinsic qualities of the products, the another major definition of local food puts the accent exactly on these aspects. Compared to the former narrative, this is a broader one and comprises both process- and product-based (cf. Bond et al. 2008) definitions. Out of the many micro-narratives, the most dominant are 1) those which accentuate that local products mean traditional and small scale production/commercialization practices, i.e. small farms, small enterprises (manufactures), small markets, etc.; 2) those which insist on the ingredients of the local products, and define them in terms of organic, natural food (e.g. fresh products, lack of E, natural ingredients, healthy ingredients, etc.). Thus, this is a narrative which re-

fers to both extrinsic and intrinsic aspects of local food production.

Compared with the previous, geographic definition, this definition is stricter: besides the importance of distances, it insists on specific production practices (process-based attributes) which go well beyond the issue of identity. Here, local food is the synonym of the small, slow and organic food, and constitutes the alternative food to the industrialized, retailer chains-based products.

"(…) local food is something which is made in small farms or in small factories, in small series, and for these reasons you are not able to find these foods all over the country. Local food is something exclusive, if I can say, because it is made in small numbers (…) I have experiences with products which started as local foods, on a small scale, and once they started to produce them on a larger scale their quality became questionable. The local is where the human hand is still visible" (Man, Bucharest).

"You can have standards in small enterprises as well. The question is if you are producing the food in traditional ways… (…) You can use machines and technology. The question is if you are intending to tie these products to something old, authentic, local…" (Woman, Cluj).

In these narratives identity means something more than a certain place, brand or product; it means traditional production practices and corresponding marketing strategies, preferably short supply chains. Local foods have a human face, are easily recognizable not only in terms of packaging and selling practices, but also in terms of their producers. Thus, local products are frequently tied to the issue of trust in terms of knowing the origin of food and the producers (cf. Smithers et al. 2008). Farmers' markets are here defined as the 'showrooms for local products', as specific sites for food producers and consumers to find each other are important scenes for experiencing not only the local food itself, but also trust and identity. Local food is much more a social enterprise, than a commercial enterprise and is filled with emotions, trust and entertainment. This aspect is especially important in the case of the dedicated consumers of local foods (the interviewees who took part in the online focus group), but other members emphasized this issue as well:

"You can buy the Hungarian stuffed cabbage as a conserve, but this is just an illusion. A bad illusion… The genuine cabbage is what you are cooking in a traditional way, in a clay pot, by using traditional ingredients… (…) If you want to eat genuine stuffed cabbage, you go to grandma, to a traditional restaurant or to a food festival… That's all. Now we can replace the cabbage with other foods… If you want the local tradition in the form of a food, you can have it only in such places…" (Man, Miercurea Ciuc).

"Local food is what we can find at traditional markets. These are the products which are made in the kitchen or in small factories and then are sold at these occasions. They are labelled as natural, organic, traditional and so on and frequently are sold by the producers themselves. I was once or twice in such markets (…), I liked that there were producers as well… I have got a kind of insight…" (Woman, Brasov).

The intrinsic, product-based narrative (i.e. characteristics of products like ingredients, taste and healthiness) is an important part of this definition. The literature about local food contends that local food is frequently used as synonym for the so called 'organic food' which is considered to be food free of pesticides and chemicals (Guido et al. 2010). Indeed, our interviewees tended to identify local foods with organic products and insisted on several intrinsic attributes of such foods. It is important to mention that such characteristics are articulated also in terms of expectations towards local foods. Respondents delivered extensive narratives

about how local products 'should be'; such narratives overlap with those in which respondents expressed their doubts and mistrust about local food and its quality. There are situations in which respondents bought something because they supposed it is local and thus the product has several characteristics respondents were looking for (e.g. freshness) and then they observed that the product failed to fulfil the expectations. Such inconsistency between expectations and concrete experiences caused dissonance especially in the case of those consumers who (probably because of the inconsistency itself) are not buying local foods on a recurrent basis. On the other hand, the dedicated consumers of the local food seem to be more permissive towards the quality of the local food, but it is important to observe that this permissiveness regards the extrinsic rather than the intrinsic patterns of the food products. Our data suggest that extrinsic product qualities are the most important to attract the consumers to the local foods, but in order to attach them on the long term to these products, intrinsic product qualities are more important cues.

> *"For me the package is not important… It happens that the product is packaged in a bad way… I mean, if I look at the product I have the feeling that the product is ugly or bad… But I know that the product inside this package is OK, it tastes well and it is natural. That is more important for me."* (Woman from the online focus group)

Respondents' concern about the quality of the food products is perfectly intelligible and comes not as a surprise, since the Romanian consumers, similarly to in other countries, put a great emphasis on the intrinsic qualities of food products (Januszewska et al. 2011). Here it must be mentioned also that interviewees tended to perceive local food as being more expensive compared with the conventional products and thus their expectations in terms of cost-benefit ratio is even more accentuated (cf. Olson–Jacoby 1972).

> *"Ingredients. That is the point. We all knew that there is the assumption that local food is the food which is made in grandma's garden. But give me a break! Do you want to say that grandma does not use pesticides?! (…) Local food is something rare, because it is not affordable for the producers to produce clean things. Yes, theoretically, local food is what is produced by small farmers and sold at these markets, but in practice, local food exists only more or less, because of the questionable ingredients."* (Man, Brasov).

> *"When I come to such markets I usually come for the natural products. (…) It happened to me that I bought products which later on proved to be not so natural. But, I still like the atmosphere of these markets, the fact that I can meet the producers, I like to taste the products, to explore… In any case, these are more natural than all those foods sold in the supermarket… Unfortunately, we cannot afford to buy everything from here … "* (Woman, Brasov).

The meaning of local food is not a clear thing by far: respondents usually have their own specific opinions, but they bring into question very many other definitions as well, and afterwards they negotiate between these and finally develop a definition which is viewed with reservations by the respondents.

> *"For me, local food is mostly about localization… Where do we place the product… I think… But now, I am not quite sure… Local food can be also something which is organic… Or is the local food organic?... I am not quite sure…"* (Woman, Cluj-Napoca).

> *"Everyone can have a certain meaning. We used to call those products which are sold at farmers' market local foods, but there are local foods which are not sold at such markets… And sometimes we think that*

only vegetables from our own garden are local… The local can have very many meanings, but I am not quite sure…" (Woman, Bucharest).

The most insecure respondents about their definitions are those who are the least involved in the effective consumption of local food, while those who are dedicated consumers of local foods (e.g. the participants of the online focus group or those who live in small towns) manifest a clearer view about the meaning of the local food. This finding accentuates the role of food- and lifestyle-communities in developing clearer attitudes towards alternative forms of consumption in as much as during the course of modernity and late-modernity individuals are 'left alone' and they have to choose between different lifestyles and identities all by themselves. In the absence of anchoring, individuals' choices very much imply the risk of failure (i.e. the choice of non-adequate food whether we take the issue of adequacy from the perspective of individual health or social or environmental concern, e.g. the choice of food which is 'too global', so that it implies greater food miles and results in considerable pollution) and in this context there is the need to rely on secondary agencies and institutions – like the market or the mass media – when making the food choice (Bauman 1992, Wilska 2002)[5].

It was a surprising finding that respondents' place of residence (city versus town) did not have a clear influence on the definitions. In the case of both cities and towns respondents provided definitions in accordance with the geographic or with manufacture narrative. The most striking difference was that the effective experiencing of the local food is somewhat more common in the case of the participants from small towns. This has to do, probably, with the fact that small town citizens are experiencing the so-called self-supplied food, i.e. food which is grown in their or in their parents' and grandparents' gardens[6] more and more often and they had also experienced the farmers' markets more frequently (farmers' markets are organized on a regular basis on both Sfantu Gheorghe and Miercurea Ciuc).

Beyond the definitions: the involvement with local foods

The analysis suggested that interviewees consume those foods which they label as local mostly in the absence of a conscious decision concerning sustainability of ethics. They consume local food as a routine (e.g. in the case of those who grow vegetables in their own garden or those who were used to buy vegetables from farmers' markets), as entertainment (e.g. those who go to a farmers' market), as health protection (those who more or less constantly choose local products), or as a fashion (e.g. those who are frequenting slow food type restaurants). In spite of these loose motivations in terms of ecological and social sustainability, the majority of the respondents – especially young, well educated respondents – are aware that local food consumption has a number of benefits in terms of sustainability both concerning the producers and the environment.

"I usually know that we should buy only the local… Because it is good for all of us… It helps small produc-

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5 The participants of the online focus group which consisted in people who identified themselves as dedicated consumers of local foods, showed that such people are members of several online or offline communities concerned with the issue of local food, healthy eating, etc. Thus, they are continuously sharing information about local foods, farmers' markets, etc. The information about local foods is the theme of a different article (Nistor 2015).

6 It must be noted, however, that self-supply is specific for the whole Romanian, and more generally, for the whole Eastern European context. In Romania the urban population has a significant degree (depending on the social status of the household) of self-consumption, coming from the transfers of products from their relatives who live in the rural area (cf. Alexandri–Alboiu 2009).

ers… The food is healthier, it is not transported miles and miles… I know… Sometimes I think of these, but I cannot say that all of my shopping goes in this way… Sometimes I choose what is cheap, other times I choose what is tastier, or what I used to chose before. I also try to think of my weight" (Woman, Cluj-Napoca).

"When I go to the market I go because I have more trust in those products. I think they have not so many pesticides… I go for sure because of my health" (Man, Bucharest).

"We have a producer who brings us vegetables and milk. He is an old man from a village nearby. He used to bring products for my parents as well (…) Even when I pay my old man for the vegetables, I do not think that I am helping him. It is much more a routine… He brings the vegetables… I pay for them…" (Woman, Bucharest).

The literature on sustainable consumption contends that through buying or avoiding certain food products citizen-consumers can be mobilized to address social and/or ecological injustices (Beagan et al. 2010, Johnston 2008) and thus the adherents of various forms of alternative food consumption are forming a broader social movement which challenges the unsustainable and the unfair nature of global food production. Food citizens are also members of an imagined community of ideas and practices (Shaw 2007) or they form 'neo-tribes' (Bauman 1992) and no matter that members of such communities are situated far away from each other they are linked together by the values and practices they share in connection with food consumption. In our case, this is not very much the case: even the most dedicated consumers of local foods (e.g. the participants of the online focus group) outlined the importance of product-based attributes and health related concerns as the most important motivations of consuming local food (cf. Titarenko et al. 2012). Process-based attributes are important mainly in the sense of traditional production methods, and – at least in terms of effective practices – they rarely correspond to motivations related to altruistic motives (e.g. supporting local farmers, minimizing ecological footprints, etc.).

Thus, our data correspond much more to the observations of Szasz (2007) who considers that the turn towards alternative ways of consumption can be conceptualized in terms of individual safety and egocentric motives: by choosing to consume such products, consumers try to protect themselves and their motivations are individualist rather than political (cf. citizen-consumers).

It must be emphasized that local food consumption does not occur as a purely ad hoc practice. Respondents are usually aware of their choices, can outline specific motivations for consuming local foods, but these motivations only rarely correspond to ethical motives. Indeed, consumers are – on an abstract theoretical level – aware that local food can have an important role in ensuring sustainability, but such ethics only rarely become the driving forces of effective consumption practices.

However, self-centred motivations are not enough for turning the discourse into practice, and local food consumption seems to be a rather infrequent practice. The broader research showed that this occurs due to a number of impediments which are in line with those mentioned in the literature (see the review of Feldmann–Hamm 2015): not having enough information about the role of local food consumption in generating sustainability and thus even if they are dedicated consumers of local foods, they do this in practice for other reasons

("We hear all the time about healthy eating, but I do not get enough information about how can I help farmers… There are only a few occasions to meet them… What can I do?"); local food is perceived to be expensive, and even if there is knowledge about the role of local food in generating sustainability, consumers cannot afford to enter the arena ("These are expensive products… I know that farmers have to invest in production and their living is dependent on what they sell. I cannot afford it, even if I want to"); scepticism regarding the intrinsic quality of the products ("Producers should think about losing consumers if they mess with the products. I do not trust these products… Farmers are also using pesticides, so what is the point?") or the extrinsic quality of the products ("I do not share the opinion that local products must not be packaged in a showy way. I think it is important how a product looks"); inefficient marketing ("It would be easier to find these products in the supermarkets. Farmers' markets are nice events, but you cannot rely solely on them. People are going several days a week to a supermarket, if such products are there they will come across them, so they will buy them, and so on…"); etc.

Concluding remarks

The majority of the interviewees define local food at the intersection between geography and tradition; this in line both with the official definition and with the previous quantitative data (e.g. Unlock Market Research 2011), but adds to them a further nuance: e.g. the fact that the geography of local food is a complex construct and the map of local food can have stricter or looser boundaries, it can refer to one's own garden or to the whole country. Those who define local food in terms of manufacturing practices, are divided also between those who accentuate the extrinsic aspects of production, and those who put the accent on intrinsic product features.

This study aimed to contribute to a more comprehensive picture regarding local food in Romania. Obviously, the findings based on qualitative investigations cannot be generalized for the whole Romanian urban population, but they can serve towards a better interpretation and grounding of the existing or future quantitative data.

The analysis showed that in spite of its various motivations and more or less (in)coherent practice, local food is very much debated reflexively. Besides anchoring it to certain geographies or traditional production practices, local food is viewed as "a trusting (re)connection between the anxious consumer and the responsive producer" (Clarke et al. 2008: 220). Ethics has only limited structuring power and – at least on the basis of the present research – it is more suitable to consider local food consumption in terms of the aesthetics of consumption (Venkatesh–Meamber 2008), meaning that consumers' decisions are motivated by strategies of identity construction, self-preservation rather than by moral duties and responsibilities. Our data suggested that local food related attitudes and practices depend not only on products' intrinsic or extrinsic attributes, but also on consumer characteristics (age, gender, available income, family composition, etc.); as far as food choice is a complex function of sensory preferences, attitudes, ethical concerns, and price, in order to better theorize the case of local food consumption in Romania, we need more systematic research, both in terms of qualitative and quantitative approaches.

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Aleksandra Bilewicz[1] – Ruta Śpiewak[2]

Enclaves of activism and taste:
Consumer cooperatives in Poland as alternative food networks

Abstract

Alternative Food Network (AFN) is a broad term encompassing many initiatives connected by the aim to build an alternative to globalized industrial food production and distribution. AFN is a term that covers many ways of connecting producers and consumers on the local level, e.g. community supported agriculture (CSA), farmer markets or food cooperatives. In this article, the authors analyse the newly established consumer cooperatives all over Poland, as a local form of alternative food network. The authors describe the specific character of this type of AFN, both from the consumers' and producers' point of view, and reflect on the issue of how specific social and historical background influence their development. The authors also discuss the "enclave" character of the cooperatives, that is suggested to be specific to the Polish type of AFN. The cooperatives studied varied considerably, so the authors propose two distinct types: activist and consumer-oriented. Polish food cooperatives possess characteristics that the authors have decided to label with a common term of "enclave" character.

Keywords: models of alternative food networks, consumer cooperatives, sustainable farming, social enclaves.

1 The Robert B. Zajonc Institute for Social Studies, University of Warsaw

2 Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development, Polish Academy of Sciences

Aleksandra Bilewicz – Ruta Śpiewak

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Introduction

The term "alternative food networks" (AFNs) was coined in the beginning of the first decade of the 21st century (Renting et al. 2003, Goodman 2004, Marsden 2004). AFN is a broad term encompassing many initiatives of varying scale and character, connected by the aim to build an alternative to globalized industrial food production and distribution. AFNs are often conceptualized as a response to growing civil distress connected to social and environmental attributes of food (Murdoch–Miele 2004: 156). Some researchers suggest that alternative approaches to food should be regarded as a symptom of a new "postproductivist order" emerging in the West (Renting et al. 2003).

Alternative food networks are understood as attempts to respacialise and resocialise food production (Jarosz 2008). Food systems are re-localized and heterogeneity in food production and distribution is being re-established by fostering regional distinction and "reinventing traditions" connected to food (Hinrichs 2003: 34). AFN is a term that encompasses many ways of connecting producers and consumers at the local level, e.g. community supported agriculture (CSA), farmer markets or food cooperatives (see e.g. Hinrichs 2000, Jarosz 2008, Goodman, Goodman–Dupuis 2013).

One of the first attempts to organize consumer and producers in networks alternative to the market in Poland are consumer cooperatives (*kooperatywy spożywcze*) that have been emerging all over the country, especially in larger cities, during the last six years. There have been over 30 attempts to establish cooperatives all over Poland, however, not all of them succeeded and managed to survive a longer period. Despite the growing popularity of cooperatives, which gained interest of popular media, only about 15 function regularly after five years of the movement's development. Interest in quality food, purchased directly from producers results also in a growing number of commercial initiatives like buying groups. The difference between a buying group and a cooperative is that being a member of food coop requires dedicating time and contributing to a common fund and a varying degree of democracy in decision making.

In this article, the authors analyse the newly established consumer cooperatives as a local form of alternative food network based on their own research. Their aim is to describe the specific character of this type of AFN, both from the consumers' and producers' point of view and reflect on the issue of how specific social and historical background influence their structure, relations to the food system and interaction with their social surroundings. In the following parts of the article, we will describe briefly the history of the emergence of cooperatives. The next section is devoted to describing cooperatives from the consumers' and farmers' point

of view. We will present the division of the cooperatives in two types – activist and consumption-oriented – and discuss their connection to different social milieus – radical intelligentsia and the new middle class. We will show the character of farms delivering to cooperatives, discuss the motivation of farmers to collaborate with this type of AFN, their social background and their role in their local communities. In this part, we will also discuss how the basic features attributed to the Western AFNs – such as food localness and food quality – are understood in the Polish context.

Finally, we will reflect on the specific feature that links both types of cooperatives – their "enclave" character that we claim to be specific to the Polish type of AFN. We will discuss how the Polish food system on the one side, and some characteristic of the Polish civil society on the other, can probably be linked to this special character of Polish alternative food networks.

Cooperatives as alternative food networks

Alternative food networks: key concepts

One of the key concepts used to describe alternative food networks is the notion of embeddedness originating from the works of Karl Polanyi (see e.g. Polanyi 1968, 2001). In the works of AFN researchers, "embedded food production/distribution" is meant as an opposition to "placeless foodscapes" produced in an industrial way and conventionally distributed (Sonnino 2006). Socially embedded food is connected to a specific territory and submerged in different social relations. For example, Hinrichs sees embeddedness as *social relations, reciprocity and trust* that modify and enhance economic exchange (Hinrichs 2000: 297). For Sage (2003), who describes the development of AFNs in the South-West of Ireland, food becomes socially embedded when *relations of regard* are established. They are built on reciprocity between the producer, who offers high quality food while giving up profit maximization but gaining consumer's trust and loyalty instead as well as the custom of the consumer.

A very important issue in the context alternative food networks is the question of food re-localization. Analysing specific cases has driven AFN researchers to a conclusion that "local food" is a social construct, as its meaning is socially negotiated. Hinrichs (2003) points to the fact that the borders of the "local" are arbitrary – they are often connected to an administrative unit such as a county of a state. Not all AFNs are based on local food – in the case of the Fair Trade movement. For example, Higgins et al. (2008) distinguish three types of AFN in relations to space – "face to face" (as in a farmers' market), proximate (CSA, consumer cooperatives) and extended – relying on product certification (certified organic or fair trade products). In the last case, certification is meant to substitute for social embeddedness.

Some other authors point to the fact that the "local" refers not only to the dimension of distance, but also to the time, tradition and history that form the concept of territory (Sylvander 2004). There are many other ways of understanding the notion of local food: by types of marketing channels (number of middlemen in the supply chain), or by production methods – for example sustainable production and distribution techniques (Martinez et al. 2010). This ambiguity is better understood through studying interaction between actors rather than basing it on some pre-defined criteria (Lamine 2005).

Quality of food is another important and disputed notion in the AFN literature. The term "quality turn" is often used to describe alternative food movements, such as Slow Food (Murdoch and Miele 2004). Quality is a multidimensional term which encompasses many traits of food: traceability, aesthetic attributes or nutritional value. Some researchers state that the notion of quality is used in the conventional food discourse and is therefore inadequate in the context of AFNs. Sage (2003) proposes "good food" as a notion that should replace describing alternative food in terms of quality. "Good food" is defined by its properties such as taste, look, socio-cultural environment of its origin, and the social dimension of embeddedness.

The above general overview of the notion of AFN above goes back to the time when the phenomenon began to be analysed by researchers – in the first decade of the 21st Century. After the first studies were published, the mainstream food provisioning system created a response for activist movements by co-option or adapting new marketing strategies (Sonnino 2006, Goodman–Goodman–Dupuis 2013). In the US, the mainstreaming process resulted in the emergence of a billion dollar organic food industry, while many alternative food movements adopted "entrepreneurial" language and strategies (ibidem:136). The so-called "second generation" AFNs have to fight mainstreaming by adopting new strategies, such as e.g. turning to new distribution methods or their own production, employing farmers or using urban plots of land, as is observed in the UK (Goodman, Goodman–Dupuis 2013: 118–128). The other side of the mainstreaming process is the ongoing elitism of the "real" grass-roots, alternative food movements. Many studies from the USA as well as Western Europe indicate that their members tend to be white, highly educated and middle to upper income and can be identified as middle or upper middle class (Hinrichs 2000, Goodman, Goodman–Dupuis 2013: 146, Bryant–Goodman 2013). One of the challenges of the second generation of AFNs is to fight associating AFNs and similar movements with middle classes holding 'post-materialist' views that are not shared by the wider population (Goodman–Goodman–Dupuis 2013: 126) and change their exclusionary character.

Recently, authors dealing with the issue of alternatives in food provisioning tend to be more critical of the basic ideological premises of AFNs, for example, challenging assumptions like a romanticized notion of countryside and nature in AFNs (Maye 2013), or the real possibility of mainstreaming sustainable or just food consumption, not as a corporate marketing strategy. Goodman–Goodman–Dupuis (2013) indicate that the division between the alternative and conventional food networks is not sufficient any more to describe the variety of initiatives dedicated to the issue of food production and distribution. The term AFN has often been criticized for being less adequate for precise analysis of recent direction of changes. It is defined in terms of its distinction from the mainstream food system, while it is more and more difficult to draw a clear line dividing the two systems (Sonnino 2006). Some authors point out that the term AFN suggests that only consumers play an active role in creating the network, while some of them are also initiated by farmers (Renting et al 2012).

However, bearing in mind the latest critical stances, the authors of this paper have purposely chosen the term "alternative food networks" to describe the case of the Polish food movements in opposition to the mainstream food system. We understand AFNs as grass-roots, consumer-driven initiatives that are based on direct sales and operate beyond the food market system.

Because their development is very fresh and most of them function as small and informal groups of urban consumers, Polish cooperatives should be treated as "first generation" AFNs, which are only beginning their institutionalization. As our study has shown, the aspect of "alternativeness" is also quite essential for the members of cooperatives as well as for some producers. It is easy to distinguish AFNs from the mainstream, although commercialization of such practices has already begun. We find the use of the term AFN reasonable in the Polish context due to the fact that cooperatives are a marginal phenomenon, still in the making, that has grown from the need of creating an "alternative" to the mainstream food provisioning system.

Consumer cooperatives as a form of alternative food network (AFN)

Cooperatives are seen as one of the popular forms of alternative food networks in urban areas (Jarosz, 2008). Based on a simple idea of establishing direct links between an organized group of consumers and producers, they are described as "proximate" AFNs (Higgins et al. 2008) or an "institutionalized form of interaction between consumers and farmers, which is co-produced by both of them." (Jaklin et al. 2015: 44). Cooperatives were supposed to empower ordinary people by establishing enterprises owned and democratically governed by their members (Restakis 2010). Poland has a long tradition of a strong consumer cooperative movement, originating in the middle of the 19th century and flourishing in the inter-war period, that was largely lost during the times of communism and forgotten or distorted after the system transition in 1989 (Piechowski 1999). In the contemporary Polish context, consumer cooperatives are usually small, informal groups with a structure and ideology similar to the Western "new cooperativism" movement (Vieta 2010), associating people who buy food directly from farmers and local food processors. The authors' observations show that because cooperatives bypass middlemen, they can keep prices of high quality food lower than in regular stores. Cooperatives aim also at creating an alternative to consumerism patterns, such as unlimited consumption or focus on individualism (Bilewicz–Potkańska 2013). Disappointment with the hegemonic food system is a major motive for members of food cooperatives all over Europe. Similar motivation can be found in the case of the Polish cooperatives. However, we can also point to more particular reasons for joining the cooperatives such as choosing a particular lifestyle, where health and ecological issues play an important role. It also concerns an economical motivation – the food purchased in the coop is cheaper than similar products in ecological or quality food stores. Cooperatives are considered a form of a new social movement, seen as laboratories shaping more sustainable forms of social life. They are also regarded as forms of "food citizenships" since consumers take responsibility for organizing the food distribution chain (Goszczynski 2014, 2015). In this sense, even though cooperatives are a marginal phenomenon, they can be viewed as vanguards of change.

Factors influencing food purchases – the Polish context

Until recently, Central and Eastern Europe was almost absent in the analysis of the emerging alternative food networks. One of the reasons for scarcity of Polish and, in general, Central European perspectives in the existing literature (for exceptions, see Gorlach et al. 2006, Goszczyński–Knieć 2011) is a relatively low number of initiatives resembling the forms described in the Western literature. In Poland, one of the reasons for such absence lies in the specific character of the agri-food system – understood as "the whole array of activities,

ranging from input distribution through on-farm production to marketing and processing, involved in producing and distributing food to both urban and rural consumers" (Staatz 2000). The Polish agri-food system is shaped partly by the country's long history as a "peasant state" and, at the same time, its recent rapid economic transformation after the fall of the communist rule in 1989 (Halamska 2011).

Agricultural model

As the industrial model of food production became the negative point of reference for Western alternative food networks, it is important to note that Polish agriculture, has not yet entirely undergone transformation into the industrial model of large scale, capital intensive farming. Although recently we can observe a tendency to enlarge farm size (see Sikorska 2013), the average size of a Polish farm is still 10.3 hectares (see ARMA 2010), whereas for the EU as a whole the figure is 15 hectares. The still dispersed agricultural sector that retains some traditional production methods, especially in poorer, Eastern regions of the country, could be a suitable base for development of sustainable or ecological agriculture, which consists of only a small percentage of Polish agricultural production.

The economic factor

One of the reasons for the slow development of local alternative food movements is the economic factor that plays the most important role in the structure of food consumption in Poland (Kwasek 2012). Most of the consumers turn to the still growing sector of supermarket and discount stores to buy food. The system of mass food distribution is relatively new in post-transition Poland and seems attractive for most consumers. This way of purchasing food is convenient and, above all, cheap. As one of the recent national surveys shows (CBOS Report 2013), 73% of Poles buy at least half of their food in discount stores owned by Western companies (the German Lidl or Portugese Biedronka). During the years 2007–2011, the discount stores noted a doubling in sales. The most popular among these, Biedronka, had 2 thousand stores all over Poland in 2011 (Cichomski 2012). 37% Poles buy at least part of their food in the so-called "corner stores". Traditional markets are getting less popular than they used to be: 50% of Poles never buy food on local marketplaces.

Although according to Eurobarometer (Special Eurobarometer 410), most Poles value quality food, they do not buy accordingly. For example, demand for certified ecological food is still very low. Mean annual spending of an average Polish consumer on ecological food equalled 1.7 % of the amount an average German consumer spends on this type of food (Smoluk-Sikorska 2008: 23). According to Smoluk-Sikorska, even for those who claimed to buy ecologically certified food, it consisted on average of only around 9% of their food purchases.

Food self-provisioning

Another reason for slow development of AFNs might be a widely popular and vivid tradition of food self-provisioning. People produce some of their food in the backyards or summerhouses popular among urban residents. According to Smith, Kostelecky and Jehlicka (2015), food self-provisioning is very widespread in both Poland and the Czech Republic. For example, in the second half of the 2000s, 54% Polish households were

growing some of their own food, while in Western Europe it was around 10% (Smith–Jehlicka 2013). Food growing is also independent from the social status of the survey participants. Most of the food obtained that way is produced with a low use of pesticides or completely organically (Smith et al. 2015).

Additionally, many people living in cities still have relatives in rural areas who provide them with quality food. As Sikorska's extensive research (2013) has shown, in 2011, similarly to previous years, half of the farmers sold their produce directly on local markets or to their neighbours or family members. According to the author, it is a consequence of dispersal of agricultural production in Poland[3]. These producer-consumer networks were especially popular during the socialist period due to frequent problems with the provisioning of shops. Anthropologist Janine Wedel (1986) emphasized the role of informal networks of reciprocity during the times of "real socialism" – the role of "środowisko" (social environment) that was crucial in "załatwić sprawy" (managing one's own affairs) – which could mean obtaining a passport or a place in a hospital, but also meat or eggs, which were difficult to get in shops, from the countryside. This specific anti-institutional tradition (of informal relations, characteristic of Poland under partition, with citizens organizing against or beyond foreign government structures, a practice to some extent continued under the communist rule), probably has its role in the development of the Polish form of direct food provisioning.

Post-modern patterns of food-purchase

Beyond the traditional self-provisioning and direct producer-consumer food chains, there is a growing, although yet small in scale, interest among the younger and educated urban populations in both quality (which doesn't always entail local or organic, as it often means ethnic, "cosmopolitan" cuisine using many imported ingredients, see de Solier 2013) and local food. Apart from chic restaurants, the emerging urban middle class is developing an interest in quality food sold on a few organic markets, the so called "breakfast markets", healthy food stores or through online farmer box schemes. The emerging Polish foodie culture is however limited to the largest cities and people with a higher income, since this type of quality food is unaffordable for the larger population. It is the middle class that is seen by researchers as a social base for both foodie culture (de Solier 2013) as well as alternative food networks (Goodman–Goodman–Dupuis 2013, Bryant–Goodman 2013). According to some sociologists, the middle class is weak or almost non-existent in Poland, as historically it was the intelligentsia that played its role (Domański 2012). Currently, it is the intelligentsia and the emerging, but definitely not numerous new middle class that develop AFNs in Poland, as we will show in the later parts of the article.

To summarize, the Polish food distribution system is in general divided between traditional informal networks and food self-provisioning and the dominant, ever growing supermarket and discount chains, gradually eliminating local corner shops and food markers. In this context, new forms of alternative food distribution and consumption are still a marginal phenomenon, although gaining popularity, also because of widespread media attention. Their ideology and organizational patterns are based on their Western counterparts, despite existing local food channels. The still large and not completely industrialized agricultural sector, with many small farms sticking to some of the traditional methods of production could be a good base for the development of food

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3 "Petty agricultural producers constitute over a half of all users of individual farms in Poland" (Sikorska 2013: 37).

re-localization movements, but they are still on the initial stage of their development.

Consumer cooperatives in Poland: consumers' and farmers' perspective

A short history of cooperatives, 2010–2015

The first informal, grass-roots cooperative in Poland was established in January 2010 in Warsaw. "Warszawska Kooperatywa Spożywcza" – Warsaw Consumer Cooperative – was created by a small group of friends, most of them young left-wing activists from politically-inclined associations (such as the Young Socialists Association – Młodzi Socjaliści) or informal movements, some of them anarchist in character. Initially, the cooperative purchased conventionally produced fruit and vegetables from a large vegetable wholesale centre on the outskirts of Warsaw, but later, although with some difficulties, it established partnerships with a few small farmers.

The Warsaw Consumer Cooperative soon became a pattern for other cooperatives that emerged in other large Polish cities in the course of the next year: Łódź and Gdańsk. Those two cooperatives, as the former ones, were also established mainly by members of the Young Socialists and situated in the social centres led by the organization in those cities. That is why they adopted not only the ideology of the Warsaw Consumer Cooperative, but also its structure pattern: informal character, no official leaders, functions performed in a rotational way, consensual decision making. They also borrowed the first internet ordering system created by one of the Warsaw Cooperative founders. In the years 2011 and 2012, other cooperatives emerged in larger Polish cities, such as Poznań and Kraków. Some other cooperatives were also established in other districts of Warsaw. They were no longer connected to the Young Socialists, but were similar in terms of structure, values and social milieu in which they operated.

Overall, there were over 30 attempts to establish cooperatives all over Poland. They emerged in the largest cities, such as Warsaw, Łódź, Gdańsk, Poznań, Wrocław, Kraków, Białystok, Lublin, Katowice or Bydgoszcz but also in smaller ones, with around 100 000 or even fewer than 50 000 inhabitants, such as Opole, Zielona Góra, Gliwice, Dąbrowa Górnicza. Not all of them moved beyond launching an Internet or Facebook website. Some of them had to suspend their activity, only to re-emerge later. In 2015, only around 15 cooperatives function regularly, most of them in Warsaw, Kraków and other larger cities. As the following section will show, not all of them resemble those modelled according to the pattern produced by the first Warsaw Cooperative.

Research methods

The following analysis is based on two-phase research, using ethnographic methods (Babbie 2007). To capture the whole picture of cooperatives as food networks, we decided to interview both consumers and farmers delivering to cooperatives. The first, longer phase consisted of in-depth, unstructured interviews with members of 15 cooperatives (altogether 42 interviews) from different cities all over Poland. We tried to reach all cooperatives active and functioning on a regular basis in the time of the research (2012 – January 2015); not all of them turned out to be accessible, but finally we were able to reach most of them. Most of the interviewees were the more active members of the cooperatives, some of them were also among the initiators

and founders of cooperatives. This means the interviewees were, on the one hand, highly aware of the details of the everyday activity of those groups; they also not only adhered to mainstream cooperative values, but often shaped them and decided how they were realized in practice. However, we also tried to reach members of the small group of the most involved activists, some of them no longer belonging to the cooperatives or inactive members – as that kind of informers can be sources of important information about the studied group (Hammersley–Atkinson, 2007). In general, the interviews focused on most active members, but we tried to retain a balance between different categories of respondents. The interviewees were recruited to the study mainly using the snowball method. Some of them were found through official channels, like contacts on cooperative websites or Facebook sites.

Additionally, the study of the consumers is based on participant observation made by Aleksandra Bilewicz during her 3 year study of consumer cooperatives in the years 2012–2015. Most observations were made in Warszawska Kooperatywa Spożywcza, the first of the established consumer cooperatives. Some shorter observations (participation in one shopping session) were made in other cooperatives – in Gdańsk, Poznań, Katowice.

After gathering data about consumers, we turned to the second phase of the research, which was performed at the turn of the years 2014–2015. We decided to interview farmers collaborating with chosen cooperatives using the semi-structured interview scheme (altogether 18 interviews) – in this part of the study, we aimed at acquiring data about the farmers' methods of production, the size and general character of their farms and their motivation to collaborate with cooperatives and the scope and practice of this collaboration. The interviewees were chosen using the snowball method. This part of research was delivered mainly in Kooperatywa Grochowska in Warsaw, but also in 5 other cooperatives from Warsaw and Krakow.

"Activist" cooperatives

The cooperatives studied varied considerably and during the research two distinct types were observed. They have been divided according to the goals they try to meet, members' values and methods of their operation.

The first type of cooperatives, which we call "activist", is based on an anti-capitalist attitude and alternative lifestyle, which both have a strong effect on their structure, decision-making and types of products sold. One of the Gdańsk activists explained his involvement, referring to understanding a cooperative as an "experiment": "I want to participate in an experiment that checks, if and to what extent cooperativism can be an alternative to the capitalist system of product distribution and exchange".

Cooperatives of this type are meant to be grass roots, non-hierarchical, serving also redistributive purposes, based, at least theoretically, on direct relationships with local farmers. Decisions are most often taken consensually at meetings. Almost all cooperatives of this type have established a special "communal fund" (*fundusz gromadzki*), which is collected by adding 10% to the price of each product. Almost all of them are also vegetarian, although most of them, not without discussion and a strong opposition from vegans, decided to buy eggs and cheese.

The members' attitudes to food attributes and to the notion of localness is diverse, but in general we can say that it is based on the values adopted by activist cooperatives, that can be summarized in a form that has been used by many of them: "building a more just, democratic and more environmentally friendly economy". Emphasis is put on food localness and supporting local farmers, but rather for environmental reasons ("food miles") or issues connected to social justice than issues of tradition, taste and territory (Sylvander 2004). Apart from that, healthy food, produced without the use of pesticides, is also an important factor in understanding food quality for cooperative members.

Activist cooperatives are based on an ideology that is detached from issues of territory and local identity. Their members oppose industrial farming and want to support small farmers, but they are rather indifferent to real local conditions of such production, issues such as traditional local products, the specific character of local soils, climate or social relations etc. All that they require from a farmer is to be close to their place of residence (although locality is usually not precisely defined) and sticking to "natural" ways of production (which are not clearly defined, either). In practice, many activist cooperatives experienced difficulties in reaching local farmers. Some of them, trying to meet egalitarian standards, deliberately abstain from buying certified ecological food, since it would raise the prices. Some cooperate with both certified ecological and conventional farmers.

The structure of activist cooperatives seems to be based on the ideas that shaped the "newest social movements" that emerged after the birth of alter-globalist ideas around 1999, according to Canadian sociologist Richard Day (2005). The phenomenon of "new cooperativism" (Vieta 2010, Curl 2010) in Western Europe, the US and South America can be seen as a part of this trend and was especially strengthened after the 2008 economic crisis. The other, albeit less important source of inspiration for new Polish cooperatives was the rich and forgotten tradition of Polish cooperativism, especially the writings of its probably best-known advocate, Edward Abramowski (see Abramowski 2010). Most of the members, however, reported not to be deeply interested in the cooperative tradition and are rather oriented towards Western-driven ideas of ecology, sustainability and social activism. The structure and decision-making system adapted by cooperatives indicates that. One example is consensus decision-making (Bressen 2007), used widely by left-wing movements in the US, also by the "Occupy Wall Street" movement and "Indignados" in Europe. Consensus in cooperatives is a new idea, definitely inspired by the context of new social movements (Buechler 2013). Activist cooperatives have a very loose, leaderless structure, which often leads to problems in sustaining a regular rhythm in their basic functions. One of the exception is "Dobrze" cooperative based in Warsaw that decided to register as an association and exploitss a cooperative shop run by both members and employees.

"Consumer-oriented" cooperatives

The second type of cooperatives, which we call "consumption oriented", emerged somewhat later, around 2012, although the first cooperative of this type, Kooperatywa Grochowska, existed as early as 2010 in the form of groups of young mothers buying food directly from producers. Most of the cooperatives of this type are based in Warsaw, there are also examples from Łódź and Kraków.

Consumption-oriented cooperatives have a different structure and are also based on different values.

They emerged as Facebook groups organized to buy quality food from small farms and refined producers. They are called "cooperatives" but lack some substantial features of cooperatives in terms of democratic decision-making – those organizations are mostly governed by so-called "group administrators", although recently some changes in this model can be observed. Consumption oriented cooperatives have developed some redistribution mechanisms, such as membership fees, but that is not always the case. Cooperative activities are much more individualized, although socializing events, such as picnics or workshops, are also organized. There are however much fewer common meetings than in the activist cooperatives, most of the work is done individually, through the internet. Individual cooperative members are responsible for "actions" for a particular product – they have to contact the producer, gather the orders, and sometimes deliver the product to the place where a shopping session takes place. While activist cooperatives tend to be small, consumer-oriented cooperatives usually have more than 200 members. One of them, Kooperatywa Grochowska based in the Grochów district of Warsaw, even had 700 members at some point and had to reduce membership due to coordination difficulties, since most of the organizational tasks rest on a small group of people. The majority of members didn't work for the coop, they just did their shopping. It functioned more as a store with quality food. Those who worked for the public good decided that all people not engaged in work, had to quit the coop.

Most of the consumption-oriented cooperative members are people with stable work and a family. One of the founders of the former "Rydz" cooperative from the fashionable Warsaw district of Saska Kępa described other members as "affluent" and "foodies". They also often describe themselves as busy people who need to spend as little time as possible to do their cooperative shopping. Most of the cooperative members fit into the characteristics of new emerging Polish middle-class understood as professional wage-workers (Domański 2012), a group that is still not numerous. The cooperative structure has been modified to meet their specific needs.

Comparison of the two types

An important difference between the two types of cooperatives can be found in food quality and prices. In the consumer-oriented type, prices are higher than in most activist cooperatives and the products are more refined. For example, in Kooperatywa Południowa (operating in the south of Warsaw) there was an offer, although not very popular among members, for New Zealand beef and kangaroo meat. Consumer-oriented cooperatives buy organic citrus fruit from Sicily or Cypriot cheese. Most of food sold in cooperatives comes from Poland, but it is hard to call this food policy as "relocalisation", even if "local food" is not merely considered within the "zero miles" concept. Food is delivered almost from all over the country, from regions specializing in a specific product. For example, rare fish comes from Mazury lake district, some cheeses are also bought in the north of Poland. Farmers and producers delivering to cooperatives come from different communities, usually with no contact with each other.

Understanding food quality s is a complex issue in both types of cooperatives. What seems to be crucial in both types is assessing certainty of how and by whom the food is produced. This conviction is most often based on trust to farmers or on other members' opinions – a recommendation of someone they know is the

decisive factor. As interviews with members have shown, food is perceived as "good" (Sage, 2003) not only because of healthy and ecological production methods, but also because it is considered "real". Consumers feel a special connection to food bought in cooperatives, which is established by their knowledge of its origins or a personal relationship with its producer. Food bought in a cooperative is of special value for members just because it comes from a cooperative – which practically can mean different things – being local, seasonal, ecologically produced, bought from friends or acquaintances or bought in a large vegetable retail center - but there is always a surplus value which makes food from a cooperative better than ordinary food bought in a supermarket.

For members of consumer oriented cooperatives, taste and health – linked to the wellbeing of the consumer in general – are two dimensions that define "good food". They are definitely seen as more important than animal welfare or environmental standards of food (e.g., virtually all of the studied consumer-oriented cooperatives deliver meet products to their members). Health standards, understood as "natural" methods of production are also considered important, especially for families with small children, which are prevalent in this type of cooperatives.

While the activists emphasize meeting the environmental and social standards when thinking of food quality, the notion of the local is problematic in case of both types of cooperatives, but especially for consumer-oriented co-ops. Farmers delivering to those cooperatives come from different places of the country. It is not spatial proximity and preexisting social relations referring to local food tradition that bind them with cooperatives, but producing specific, alternative food and the farmers' ability to contact urban groups of consumers and to answer their needs. The products they deliver is sometimes typical for the region, which makes the "origin of food" perspective (see Fonte 2008) relevant – e.g. the case of Mazurian fish, but in other cases it does not have anything in common with its place of origin – e.g. lavender delivered from Mazury, a Mediterrenan plant which is not typical for the region and for Poland as a whole. So, the notion of "territory" seems to play a role, but usually there is no particular region that member of cooperatives stick to.

The second dimension is a matter of a slightly different values of member of cooperatives. In case of activist cooperatives, members are more focused on environmentalism, workers' (including farmers') rights, animal welfare. In case of consumer oriented cooperatives, members choose values related more to their own health or health of the family, sometimes also focusing on ecology or preserving traditional farming.

As it was mentioned above, the division is also a matter of organizational issues. In case of the second type of cooperatives, the cooperation is based on social media and meetings mostly on for the purpose of picking the food, the first type is focused on close relations between members and negotiating all issues in a very egalitarian/democratic manner.

The division between activists and consumer-oriented is also based on different social background and occupational characteristics of the majority of members. While activist cooperatives are created by young left-wing intelligentsia, students, graduates, often also NGO employees or the educated precariat, most of the members of consumer-oriented cooperatives are professionals working in international corporations, media, finance or own their own companies. The structure of consumer-oriented cooperatives reflects pragmatism,

individualism and order characteristics of middle class lifestyle (Bourdieu 1984, Gdula–Sadura 2012).

In general, it seems that in both types of Polish cooperatives we witness a similar process of creating exclusionary food movements observed by AFN researchers in the West, but in a local form. Bryant and Goodman (2013) suggest that alternative food is used as a means of social distinction, especially in countries where middle class is a weak and emerging group. Poland is such a country, and as interviews have shown, consuming quality food has become an important part of members' identity. The prices of food indicate that being a member of such cooperative requires economic capital. Prices are slighlty lower in activist cooperatives, but there are other barriers that make them almost inaccessible for members coming from other than activist intelligentsia background. Activist cooperative members follow a very particular lifestyle (e.g. biking, being vegetarian or vegan). They describe themselves as "freaks", "individualists", "idealists". People being politically engaged and/or of different lifestyle are often called "the normals" (normalsi) by cooperative members. The normals are criticized by some interviewees for not being active enough, not being politically aware or not understanding how a cooperative works. Thus, being a fully accepted cooperative member requires some specific embodied cultural capital (see Bourdieu 1984, 1986, Zarycki 2008)[4]. As some authors claim, the role of cultural capital is specific in Poland and other Eastern-European countries with lack of sufficient economic resources and is connected to a specific role of the intelligentsia that is perceived as a substitute for Western bourgeoisie (see King–Szelenyi 2004, Zarycki 2008). Activist cooperatives are a kind of exclusive enclaves in which cultural capital plays an important role. It is confirmed by interviews with ex-cooperative members who decided to leave. One of the former members of Warszawska Kooperatywa Spożywcza said, referring also to the problem of age: „I just feel much less alternative, I am not an anarchist, and all this together… (…) I feel that I have somehow grown up, this is a milieu of younger people… I have an impression that I don't entirely fit".

 In the case of consumer-oriented cooperatives, lifestyle issues doesn't seem to play such a meaningful role, although sticking to particular food can be also regarded as part of a lifestyle. However, due to the fact that this type of cooperatives function mostly as internet groups, and joining them usually requires no personal contact, we conclude that economic resources is a more important barrier in this case, especially due to the fact that food prices are usually higher. Both type of cooperatives, however, are a kind of elitist enclaves based on distinction from people buying in "conventional stores".

Farmers and food manufacturers

The research interviews have shown that the farmers delivering to cooperatives are a specific, distinct group of farmers, applying specific standards to their products.

The age of the interviewed producers ranged from 25 to 53. Most of the research participants were men, most also had a university degree. Almost all of them had strong ties with the city – around twenty five percent of indicated farmers decided to move out to the countryside leaving behind the urban life they

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4 According to Pierre Bourdieu (see Bourdieu 1984, Zarycki–Warczok 2014), cultural capital are combined forms of knowledge, skills, education and advantages that person has and gives higher position in society. There are three forms of cultural capital: embodied, material and institutionalized. The embodied state of cultural capital is, as Bourdieu explains, "in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body" (Bourdieu 1986: 243).

had lived before, some combined working in the city with managing their farms. Other have studied in the city, their spouses work in bigger agglomerations. We can infer that cooperation with cooperatives requires knowledge and both social and cultural capital that most of the "usual" farmers probably possess to a lesser extent. For others it may be difficult to find information about cooperatives, they may be simply unaware of alternative ways of food distribution.

The farms of the interviewees varied in terms of size, but all of them can be qualified as small: from 0.9 to 15 hectares. The location of the farms and their distance from the location of cooperatives varied considerably. In the case of the Warsaw cooperatives, the most distant farm was 220 km from Warsaw, the nearest – 20 km. The mean distance was 80 km. In the case of the Cracow cooperative (Wawelska Kooperatywa Spożywcza), located in the south of Poland, the average distance was similar, but all of the farms were located in regions surrounding Cracow – Małopolska and the Carpathian Mountains, as for Warsaw the farmers often came from further regions, such as Podlasie or Mazury. Cracow cooperatives, as interviews have shown, are based on traditional small-scale agriculture from the south regions of Poland. Members of Krakow cooperatives had no major difficulties finding contact with local farmers – in case of Warsaw cooperatives it was much more problematic.

Almost all interviewees inherited their farms from their parents or grandparents. All of them are family farms, and in almost all cases only family members work on the farm. Only in exceptional cases, such as work overload during the season, outside workforce is used. Many farms were based on diversified production, some of them had only animals (goats, hens, pigs) or fruit and vegetables. Most of them, however, maintained both animal and plant production, which is currently rare in Poland.

Only one of the interviewees had a European certificate of ecological farming for the whole farm and two were under conversion. Nevertheless, virtually all of the participants claimed that their production was ecological or "natural". They either use integrated agriculture methods, effective microorganisms to protect their plants, or try to limit the use of artificial fertilizers and pesticides. Most of the farmers also process food produced on their farms – pickle vegetables, make cheeses, preserves or cold cuts. In most of the cases, food manufacturing was not officially registered, or only partially registered (in Poland, a farmer cannot legally sell processed food without obtaining a permit). One of the registered honey producers also makes mustard, vinegar, and bread on the basis of honey, but she has not registered this additional production. One of the farmers producing cheese suggested that the informal character of the cooperative was adequate to her needs: "I like the cooperative also because no one asks me here to show papers, but when anyone is interested, I always invite them to my farm, everyone can see everything". Nevertheless, cooperative administrators in consumer-oriented cooperatives demand current veterinary documents from meat producers and certificate confirmation from certified organic farmers.

There are two main reasons for farmers to decide to work with cooperatives. The first can be called ideological, the other – financial and organizational. In their opinion, working with a cooperative is an alternative to big retail companies, it is also treated as an opportunity to popularize "good food". Contact with the consumer and a possibility to know their opinion was also important. Farmers and manufacturers emphasized

that for the consumers what and how they buy and eat play a very meaningful role. Two interviewees stressed the prestigious role of meeting complicated demands of cooperative members – being able to do fulfill the expectations was treated as a proof that their food was good, which stimulates producers to keep and improve quality standards.

Prestige and direct contact with consumers is obviously linked with financial motivation– prices that the farmers and manufacturers can dictate in cooperatives are higher than those in retail centers. It was also important for the interviewees that food was preordered, so they know exactly the amount to prepare and none gets wasted.

As stated above, food relocalisation (Sonnino–Marsden 2006) and network character are important factors in building alternative food networks. Therefore interviewees were also asked about their potential collaboration with other institutions such as local authorities, NGOs and other farmers from the community. None of the interviewees had any authority or local institution support in their production or food distribution. We have to stress that most of the interviewees do not seek such support. One of the farmers rhetorically asked: "Do the local authorities help anyone?"

Only 2 interviewees confirmed cooperation with another local farm. One participant bought additional ingredients for meat preserves from a neighbor, another based most of his production on meat bought from local slaughterhouses. Other interviewees declared no cooperation with other farms because of not being sure if their neighbors' production was trustworthy, if they met standards of production which the participants considered important and a source of pride and prestige. They feared that using others' produce could contribute to losing good opinion among consumers. It suggests lack of trust for their neighbors, but is also a result of an exceptional, elitist character of the farms that choose to be the cooperative deliverers. Let us quote one quite extreme but meaningful statement about cooperation with other local farmers: "No, firstly, I don't know anyone who would be interested, but also because the things I do are important for me from the ideological point of view – animal welfare is most important for me. We came up with the "fairfarm" concept – I don't want to sell rural milk, I want to sell milk from happy goats. I won't cooperate with anyone who keeps the goats chained".

The farmers also have declared no cooperation with each other in delivering their produce, mainly due to the fact that they are located far from each other. Many of the farmers started working with cooperatives only recently, so they do not have many opportunities to meet other producers. Not many of them showed though any interest in initiating such cooperation.

The main feature of all the farmers is that they operate on small scale farms (under 15 ha), which are considered by some economists too small for sufficient income (Baer-Nawrocka, 2014). Even that most of them are not EU-certified ecological farms, all of the farmers declare their production to be sustainable. Over half of the suppliers are new rurals, who took over farms recently and treat their occupation not only as a source of income but also as mean to improve life quality both of their families and their customers. Farmers delivering food to cooperatives are loosely connected with their own communities. They also reluctantly cooperate with other farmers delivering food to cooperatives. Polish farmers as a whole group are characterized by low level

of social capital, including low level of social trust (Fedyszak-Radziejowska, 2014). Those who are engaged in food cooperatives are also quiet reluctant for cooperation, that is due to lack of social trust. The cooperation is usually initiated by consumers. However, as cooperatives are becoming more popular, more farmers seek the possibility to deliver their products to cooperative members.

Cooperatives as social enclaves

Class/ lifestyle enclaves

After investigating the consumer and producer part of alternative food networks, it has become visible that they possess characteristics that we decided to label with a common term of "enclave" character. To some extent, their elitist character resemble their Western counterparts, described as "exclusionary" in terms of skin colors or class (Jarosz 2008, Goodman–Goodman–Dupuis 2013). In the Polish context, both economic and cultural factors play a role, making cooperatives a place for the more affluent (especially consumption-oriented ones) or educated and following a particular, alternative lifestyle (activist type). Activist cooperatives are formed by groups of friends among young and socially engaged intelligentsia connected to particular social organizations or informal groups. Although they declare openness in fact the membership requires embodied cultural capital as well and social capital specific to the group of activists. For consumer oriented cooperatives, it is mainly economic capital that creates the barrier, although lifestyle issues and values can also play a role. The exclusionary character of the cooperatives is also visible on the producer side of the coin – as the farmers delivering to cooperatives are educated people strongly connected to urban networks, which allows them an easy cooperation with consumer groups and adapting their production to the needs of an alternative food network.

Food enclaves

The cooperatives can be seen as enclaves also from the food system point of view: they enable a new way of distribution of local, quality, often ecologically certified food, but due to the low demand for that kind of food in Poland, as discussed above, their expansion will be unavoidably limited in present conditions. The other limit of this form of those food networks in terms of food issues is its weak connection to particular regions – the territorial side of food localness (Sylvander 2004). As we have shown, members of activist cooperatives define local food in terms of distance ("food miles"), while the consumption-oriented ones pick regional products from all over Poland, without establishing any specific connections with a particular region, and that could strengthen the links between local producers and encourage their self-organizing.

Cooperation problems

The "enclave" character of the cooperatives can be attributed also to other aspects of how the cooperatives interact in their social surroundings. It encompasses both the position of cooperatives in their urban milieu, the relationship with other cooperatives, as well as the interaction between farmers delivering to cooperatives and their own role in the rural communities.

The other sense of the "enclave" notion in the consumer context is that the cooperatives work mainly independently, with little collaboration with each other or other institutions. Although until now four cooperative "rallies" were organized in three largest Polish cities, the participating members were unable to organize cooperation for a larger scale, not only in terms of linking the food networks together, but, for example, in terms of establishing a body that could facilitate solving the common problems of cooperatives or enable lobbying for changing the law to make easy registration of a cooperative possible.

The enclave characteristics are also visible in the producer context. Farmers connected to cooperatives are rarely closely bound with their local communities – none of the interviewees looked for support of local organizations, local government or cooperated with neighbours in order to produce or sell food. Almost all interviewed farmers are educated people, some are back-to-the-landers who decided to take over the farms of their families, some were born in the city and bought land to establish ecological, natural and animal welfare-friendly food production. We can infer that there is a social and cultural barrier between the rural community and the separated farmers, which is strengthened by a difference in production methods. Urban consumers, not members of their local communities, are an important point of reference for this group of farmers in terms of lifestyle and values. Most of the interviewed farmers sell their produce not only to cooperatives but also on high quality food marketplaces, organized more and more often in larger cities.

Relationships with farmers, although declared by the cooperative members as desirable, are not very stable and deep. Practically, most of the cooperative members, especially in activist cooperatives, have few "real life" contacts with suppliers. However, in a slow and specific way, some relations between the city and the country are re-established.

Potential explanations

The "enclave character" of the cooperatives seems to be a distinctive feature that could probably be also observed in other Polish AFNs. It could be explained by many potential factors – one of them is a low level of social trust as well as a low level of engagement in activities for the benefit of one's own community (Czapiński–Panek 2014) that has its roots in Polish history, especially in the long period of lack of independence, and was strengthened in the communist times and also during the years of transformation (Szafraniec 2002). This results in the general weakness of the Polish civic activity. In this context, it seems relevant to refer to Gliński's and Palska's thesis on the enclave character of civic activity in Poland, understood as "intensive social activity taking place in isolated spheres of social life and concerning relatively alienated, "excluded" social milieus" (Gliński–Palska 1997: 371). According to Gliński, the enclave civic activity can either take a form of "exclusive niches" or outer-oriented enclaves influencing their social and institutional surroundings (Gliński 2006: 183). While "enclave activity" according to Gliński and Palska referred to NGOs, which bagan to develop in Poland only after 1989, in our opinion it can also be attributed to informal social activities, among them alternative food networks. According to our interpretation, activist cooperatives were initially designed as "outer oriented enclaves" in the sense that they declared aim was to influence food distribution and democratize the economy, they turned out to be exclusive niches for radical intelligentsia, and turned to be themselves quite ephemeral

in character – many of those small, informal organizations do not function on a regular basis, some have already disappeared. Consumer oriented coops were from the beginning thought as networks created to fulfil the needs of their members, so the exclusive niche description can also be applied in this context.

Thus, it is probable that the Polish alternative food networks are not only exclusionary in terms of class or social background, as is reported about their Western counterparts – there are more dimensions of their enclave, isolated character, also because of weak cooperation between the cooperatives themselves and between producers. Further comparative research should show whether those features are specific to Poland and/or Eastern European AFNs, or if are they connected with the initial stage of AFN development in this country.

Conclusion

Our study has shown that Polish consumer cooperatives face some similar features and problems as those in the Western Europe and North America, however, some of their other features, among them development barriers indicate their specific, local character. As the first generation of AFN in the West, they are small, grass-roots initiatives popular among the more educated and/or wealthy part of the population. The class character of the cooperatives, especially the activist ones created by the young radical intelligentsia, can be even more important and persistent due to the specific role of cultural capital in Poland as well as the growing need for social distinction in the emerging professionals class (the case of consumer-oriented cooperatives). The research has confirmed the problematic and subjective character of the basic notions used to describe AFNs: food quality, which is understood differently by different cooperative members, as well as the notion of local food that turned out to be rather blurred and practically non-existent in consumer-oriented cooperatives. Also, the dimension of social embeddedness in the form of "relations of regard" between consumers and farmers is not always realized according to the values declared by cooperatives. The specific, enclave character of the cooperatives is strengthened by difficulties in cooperation between members and between cooperatives, and also, on the other hand, by the situation in the countryside, where consciously alternative, sustainable and/or ecological farms are a minority and operate rather in isolation from other conventional farmers. The producers delivering to cooperatives represent sustainable or animal welfare oriented modes of farming that are often unusual in their local communities, and they rarely cooperate with other local farmers, NGOs or local authorities.

The future of the Polish consumer cooperatives is vague. On one hand, they have considerably developed over the last 5 years. Also, the structure of Polish farming seems to facilitate the extension of such alternative food networks. But the cooperatives, after an initial enthusiasm, are developing very slowly. Many cooperatives, especially the activist ones, face some difficulties or have even suspended their activities due to internal problems with cooperation and member engagement. However, we have to bear in mind that cooperatives are still in an initial state of their development and they can be perceived as "laboratories" of more sustainable forms of social life, while interest in quality food and sustainable agriculture is growing. One of the problems could be that the activist cooperatives have somehow mechanically adapted Western ideas, categories and

structures, without thoroughly recognizing local conditions, such as situation of local farmers and their mode of production, or consumer preferences. The first activist cooperatives strongly refer to the structure and ideas of the Western newest social movements, only partly basing on the local cooperative tradition, largely lost during the times of planned communist economy and liberal economic transformation (Brodziński 1999). Consumer-oriented cooperatives that emerged somewhat later can be seen as a better and more functional adaptation to local condition (e.g. a more individualized work organizing), but they go even further away from cooperative values and resemble buying groups, which could be also interpreted as a mainstreaming strategy. By now, they however remain independent from the commercial context.

Our study suggests that the shape of alternative food networks in Poland is dependent on larger processes and divisions in the Polish society connected to the post-transformation and semi peripheral status of the country. An example is the "enclave character" of the cooperatives connected to the nature of informal networks in the Polish society and the role of cultural capital, or cooperation difficulties connected to the general weaknesses of the civic activity in Poland (that can be explained by historical turbulences). Further investigations are needed to the trajectory of development of consumer cooperatives in Poland, also in comparison with other Eastern European countries.

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Bernadett Csurgó – Boldizsár Megyesi[1]

Local food production and local identity:
interdependency of development tools and results[2]

Abstract

Self-promotion and reinterpretation of local identity is becoming increasingly important in rural communities. Local identity building is achieved very differently by rural municipalities and regions. The paper analyses the role of local food production in local identity creation. It is based on two contemporary discussed phenomena of rural development: local cultural heritage and local food production, as a part of local cultural heritage. Using the example of three Hungarian rural micro-regions we analyse how a local community presents itself through local food production, and how local communities can be built by revitalizing a part of the local cultural heritage: a local food product.

The paper is based on the literature about alternative food networks and on the role of cultural heritage in rural development The case-studies were conducted as a part of a larger research project on agricultural restructuring in the last two decades in Hungary. It is based on qualitative and anthropological methods: document analysis, semi-structured interviews, transect walking and participatory observation. The paper analyses the role of short food supply chains (SFSC) and local food culture in the three micro-regions and the process of local community and identity building. It analyses the differences of the SFSCs; our results suggests that local food products and relating local events can hardly be a base of the local image outside the region, but it can help to build and strengthen the local community and local identity.

Keywords: local food, cultural heritage, rural community, local image, rural development

1 Institute for Sociology, Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences

Bernadett Csurgó – Boldizsár Megyesi

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Introduction

Self-promotion and reinterpretation of local identity is becoming increasingly important in rural communities. Local identity building is achieved very differently by rural municipalities and regions. The paper analyses the role of local food production in local identity creation. It is based on two contemporary discussed phenomena of rural development: local cultural heritage and local food production, as a part of local development. Using the example of three Hungarian rural micro-regions we analyse how a local community presents itself through local food production, and how local communities can be built by revitalizing a part of the local cultural heritage: a local food and artisan food products.

The paper is based on the role of cultural heritage in rural development (Bessière 1998, Miele–Murdoch 2002, Ray 1998, Tellstrom et al. 2005)on the literature about alternative food networks (Fonte–Papadopoulos 2010, Lamine 2005, Renting et al. 2012), and to contextualize the research, on agricultural restructuring and on the role of local food in Central-Europe in the last decades (Benedek–Balázs 2014, Tisenkopfs et al. 2011, Trenouth–Tisenkopfs 2015). Although there is a growing literature on food self-provisioning (Jehlička–Smith 2011), on alternative food networks, on civic food networks (Zagata 2012), on the role of communities in developing PDO and PGI products (Bördős–Luksander–Megyesi–Mike 2012), on community supported agriculture in Central-Eastern-Europe (Dezsény–Réthy–Balázs 2014, Möllers–Bîrhală 2014), or in Hungary (Benedek–Balázs 2014), the relationship between local food in rural image, local culture and rural community building is a less studied area.

The analysis is focusing on selected non-industrial foods produced locally. Thus, we excluded products produced by the food industry, or lack local specifiers; like the wheat produced by a mill in the Zalaszentgrót case study area (CSA), or a sausage produced in the Létavértes CSA. Local identity is measured by the attachment to the local products. The case studies are parts of different research studies conducted in Hungarian rural communities: on agricultural restructuring in the last two decades in Hungary and on the role of cultural heritage in rural development. The paper aims at understanding the complex relationship between local food and local image. The analysis of the *first case* demonstrates the path-finding of a local community to create a local image through quality food production, the analysis of the *second case* demonstrates how existing traditional, local food and plant production (the horseradish with a PDO label) can contribute to image building and local community development, while the analysis of the *third case* study shows how a strong local micro-regional image can be the basis for different kinds of local food products. The paper analyses the role of local foods and

local food culture in the local community of the three micro-regions, in identity building inside, and local image building outside the micro-regions. The analyses of the three case-studies show that food products, local food culture and related local events can hardly strengthen either local community and the local image within the area or the micro-regional image outside the area; also a strong local image does not necessarily lead to the promotion of local food products.

In the case studies we analyse the relationship between local food production local identity and local image by focusing on the following elements of local food production:

- the characteristics of local food products;

- the institutional background of the main stakeholder, who produces local food, or initiated its production;

- the background of the typical consumers, and also of the main markets of the product.

Theoretical background

Our paper analyses the role of local food in rural development, as a cultural phenomenon, as an image and identity marker. Theories on rural development emphasize the role of local cultural heritage in development processes (Ray 1998) for decades, and also the eminent role of farmers in rural development (Van Der Ploeg et al. 2000, van der Ploeg–Renting 2004). Since the early 2000s several papers were published on the role of food in transforming "the conventional intensive and productivist agriculture" (Renting–Marsden–Banks 2003, 395). The analysis of this paper is at the interface of these recent findings of rural studies: how the papers exploring the aesthetics of food (Bessière 1998, Miele–Murdoch 2002) contribute to image creation and thus to local development.

Growing interest was found in rural sociology literature to consider culture as a fourth pillar of sustainable development (Kivitalo et al. 2015, Marsden 2006). The focus of these studies are foremost related to the cultural dimension in the context of rural restructuring and rural sustainability, more specifically the cultural meaning of food

Cultural aspects of place and place making are crucial in our approach to local food. Our understanding is rooted on the constructivist scope of rurality and rural place making, (Halfacree 2007). It is based on Lefebvre's space triad theory to explain how place is socially produced. He analyses space in terms of social relations and identifies three types of activities that make up social space: (1) spatial practices (perception of space), (2) representations of practices (conceptualization of spaces) and (3) representational practice (experience of space). According to this approach rural space is regarded as triad space. In the case of relationships between local food and place the third aspect (representational practice) has crucial importance, it refers to local culture including the experience of lived place constructed trough everyday life, perceptions, symbols and values and meanings related to places (Lefebvre, 1991). Applying Lefebvre's theory Kivitalo et al. (2015) argue that culture is embedded in all aspects of rural space. Furthermore, they stated that *"the lived space emphasises the meaning and symbolism constructed through the everyday life of local people"* (Kivitalo et al. 2015, 97)

Places and even more the constructions of place are constituted by social and cultural struggles and practices (Escobar 2001). Place making and strategies of localization can be seen as cultural construction including the constitution of identities (Horlings 2015). Several scholars emphasise the constructivist notion of place and call attention to the importance of subjective perceptions, symbols, narrative constructions and place identities concerning local development, territorialization and localization (Horlings 2015, Kiss 2015,Kivitalo et al. 2015, Ray 1998, 2006) There are some studies in rural sociology literature which focus on local identity from the perspective of local culture and cultural heritage. Bessière (1998) identifies local food and gastronomy as an identity marker of a current geographic area through a French case study. There is a growing demand for rural nostalgia in Hungary and local food and gastronomy culture appeals as one of the main nostalgia based objects and identity markers. Consequently, more and more rural places promote themselves and present their identity through their local food and gastronomy (Csurgó 2014). All cases to examine food and gastronomy as cultural heritage objects show that this heritage construction has a central importance in the development of local identity included in local knowledge based endogenous development. (Bessière 1998, Csurgó 2014, Ray 2006)

There is also an increasing importance of the cultural components in rural development policy in Europe. According to the concept of a culture economy rural areas are increasingly adopting cultural markers as keys in the pursuit of development goals (Ray 1998). These cultural markers include food, crafts, folklore, visual arts, literary references, historical and prehistorical sites, landscapes and associated flora and fauna. The culture economy in rural areas replaces the primary production-based economy with the consumption based one. Culture economy works through a local cultural identity. Culture is regarded as key mechanism in development of local economy (Ray 1998). As Ray stated *"local cultures are characterized as forms of intellectual property that may allow local rural economies to impose some level of control over social and economic development"* (Ray 1998, 3). Applying Ray's idea this paper focuses on the economic and social potentials of food as cultural heritage. We purpose to see local food as diversified to become, for example, networks of social or cultural positions which offer inspiring possibilities for revitalizing local identity, community building and even for business.

Van der Ploeg et al. (2000) argue that in most parts of Europe farmers possess the major part of local natural, human and social resources, thus this group could be the initiator and beneficiary of rural restructuring in the nineties. During these changes in the European agriculture horizontal networks of the farmers became important again, and as a part of that former relationship between the rural and the urban, the consumers and the producers were re-established. Farmers are interested in rural development as it helps them to find their way to multifunctional agriculture and to continue their farming activity and their way of life. Food production and new consumer-producer relationships are among the new services of multifunctional agriculture, and as the authors argue both rural and urban people benefit from participating in these networks.

Renting et al. (2003) differentiate several types of non-conventional food networks: alternative food networks, short food supply chains, localized food systems (SYAL), local food systems and civic food networks. Alternative food network is an umbrella term, and focuses mainly on producers (Renting et al. 2012, 394) while

the term short food-supply chains refers to all participating actors and their networks: *"covers (the interrelations between) actors who are directly involved in the production, processing, distribution, and consumption of new food products"* (Renting et al., 2012, p. 394); under the term civic food network the role of consumers and initiators of such activities are analysed (Renting et al., 2012, pp. 292–293). Our paper aims at shedding light on the role of local food in rural image making and local identity building, and on the actors influencing such initiatives, thus it can use insights from the concept of short-food supply chains and civic food networks.

Our analytical framework focuses on the characteristics of local food products (Bessière 1998, Ray 1998), and on the characteristics of the main stakeholder (Renting et al. 2012), and we also present how and more specifically through which channels the local food products are provided for consumers.

To understand the *main characteristics of local food products* we aim at exploring the role of local food in local image building and identity making. Local food products and artisan food products are defined here as local food and we exclude industrial products of local produce from our approach on local food. We focus on the interactions between food production and identity construction. The aim of the case studies is to present the process how local food product were selected and gained their symbolic meaning. We focus on local initiatives to highlight local food as part of place making which can increase the attraction of a place and the economic development. Our purpose is to present the symbolic and cultural meaning of local food rather than its economic characteristics.

The *main stakeholder* can be the producer of the local food, or the stakeholder, who initiated the production (collection) of the local food. Three characteristics of the main stakeholder are analysed: its institutional background, its earlier activities and the knowledge set used in his or her activity.

In our cases most of the stakeholders are producers, farmers from the private sector, who are usually active in rural development (Van Der Ploeg et al. 2000), but we can also find members of the civic sector and local governments among the stakeholders.

We base our analysis of the different knowledge forms used in farming and rural development on Tovey's and her colleagues' research. They differentiated three knowledge forms: local/traditional, scientific, and managerial knowledge (Tovey 2008). Local/traditional knowledge appears in agricultural methods, in the use of certain species, in the management of certain pieces of land; it is learned from the former generations and during farming activity.

Scientific knowledge provides overall concepts, scholarly methods (e.g. modern production methods, or organic farming practices) and previously gathered information which can be used by local and non-local actors in their agricultural practice.

Managerial knowledge is intermediate between the above two: it is neither scientific nor local. Though it is explicit, specialized and learned in public education and training, it can be informal, experiential and person bound (Bruckmeier–Tovey 2008). Managerial knowledge carries site specific elements, albeit it does not belong to certain localities but a wider institutional and economic environment. As argued in a previous article stakeholders use complex knowledge sets daily (Kelemen et al. 2008).

The main markets of the products differ significantly as the literature also shows (Mácsai et al. 2012); our analysis is not reduced to short-food supply chains or direct consumer-producer relationship: in the following case-studies we present examples of different kinds of markets: on-farm sales, farmers' market sales and contact with whole-sellers as well.

Research questions

The main aim of the paper is to analyse the role of local foods in identity building inside, and local image building outside the micro-regions. Our main research question deriving from it: what is the relationship between local food and local identity. To understand this relationship, we aim at answering the following research questions also: how local foods are presented in local identity, how local food(s) contribute to local image building.

Case studies

In the following we present three case studies. The first was conducted in a micro-region, which has neither a well-known local food product, nor a characteristic image, but local identity is strong. The second case study was conducted in a micro-region which has a known and typical local food product, but it does not have a characteristic image. The third case study area has several a local, not well-known food products, a characteristic image and strong local identity.

The presented case studies are based on qualitative and anthropological methods: document-analysis, semi-structured interviews, transect walking and participatory observation (Kvale 1994). In each case study areas we conducted 25 semi-structured[3] interviews with producers, local decision-makers, and members of local civic associations. We used transect walking and participatory observation mainly as a triangulation method and to understand the possible contradictions emerging during the interviews; the case studies were conducted between January 2014 and August 2015.

The search for the typical local food product: the case of the Zalaszentgrót micro-region

The first case study was conducted in small Western-Hungarian micro-region which has agricultural traditions. Traditional products were fruits, vegetables, pork and dairy products. Now main products are arable crops, and poultry. During the last two decades former socialist-type cooperatives and the system of household-farming collapsed, then different types of private farms became main actors in agriculture. After a long decade of the pre-accession period, in the 2010s the former actors of the socialist agricultural companies established new agri-food networks, and nowadays: huge agricultural companies, integrated into the national and international food market define local agricultural activity. This picture is coloured by the presence of medium and small scale family farms selling their products at national and local markets, and former workers returning to the countryside and retired town's people starting household or subsistence farming (Váradi 2008).

The main food products of the case study area are the following: wheat and semolina made by a local

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3 Interviews undertaken and/ or co-ordinated by the authors and by Viktória Bene, Petra Baluja, Orsolya Ditzendy, László Lipcsei, Ildikó Somogyi and Anita Szatmári.

mill which has a capacity of 70 tons per day, escargots (snails) collected by locals for a French company, which prepares and exports them, honey, goat cheese, wine, jams and pumpkin oil. Although the local mill uses the name of a local village as its trade mark ('wheat from Tüskeszentpéter') in marketing, because of the character of the product (that it is a mass-product) we do not regard it a local food product. Also, escargots are not local food products; these are also mass-products (although hand-made products). The case of the escargots could be worth further analysis, as there has been a Food-festival since 2011 about escargot. The programmes aim at promoting escargot consumption and link escargot production and escargot dishes to the area, thus to use it in local image building. The effects of the festival on local identity are weak; probably because escargot is a really untraditional dish in Hungary. Snail collection and the factory preparing escargot appear in the interviews as an employer of the under-class.

In our case study we focus on foods which are considered also by the interviewees as local foods. There are two main types: fresh vegetables and fruits, and different processed foods, like goat cheese, wine, jams, honey and pumpkin oil.

Fresh fruits and vegetables are produced by medium size farmers, subsistence farmers and local social farms. The production of fruits for commercial use has declined in the last decades (Bíró et al. 2012); most of the fresh fruits and vegetables are produced in small-scale, subsistence farms. The group of subsistence farmers is mixed: there are locals who always produced some vegetables, fruits, some animal products, and towns' people who moved to the area only recently, and started gardening in recent years. Despite this diversity they have some common characteristics: they farm on small plots, produce mainly, but not exclusively, for self-consumption, thus they have weak market relations. Their activity is labour-intensive, built on family networks and own labour force. Their farming activity is also a hobby, a part of their lifestyle. A minor part of fresh vegetables and fruits is produced by social farms. Social farms were initiated by local governments and subsidized by the Hungarian government since 2011. There were two social farms in the case study area operating in five settlements. The programmes employ around 10 locals; the wages, the purchase of the machinery and the input materials are financed by the state subsidies. Most of the products are sold at the local markets or donated to local poor people. The main aim of the activity is to provide employment for the local underclass, and to produce food locally for the locals. Fresh vegetables and fruits have few unique characteristics, thus those can hardly be used effectively in local image building, but these products are highly valued by the locals and local self-provisioning became part of the local image.

The other group of local products, honey, wine, herbs, pumpkin oil, and goat cheese are prepared by certain medium and small scale farms. The typical medium size farmer of the area has a diverse product range, his/her market relations are weak and uncertain, but has dense, informal cooperation with neighbouring farmers, and uses a mixed knowledge set (Kelemen et al. 2008). The producers of the foods form a special sub-group among the medium size farmers; the members of this sub-group seek new, niche markets for their products, and try to establish direct consumer relations. Most of the products are sold at the local farmers' market and on the farm. Most of them have a university degree, farm on around 15–50 hectares, sell processed products and are embedded in the local community. These food products are important in local image building and also

became important in local community building.

Local food production is encouraged by several initiatives of a rural-development civic association: they opened a local food shop and had several initiatives to promote and produce local foods. Earlier in the socialist times the local consumers' cooperative bought up locally produced vegetables and fruits, but in the last ten years that stopped, because of the lack of sufficient amount of products, and because at the wholesale market the prices were lower than the local prices. The local food shop had to be closed after one year. It was the result of local consumers going directly to the producers, and because of a lack of products and a poor assortment; thus the income of the shop was low. The food shop itself had almost no impact on local identity, and also did not contribute to local image building.

The initiative on promoting local food products seems to be more successful. It was financed by a LEADER project. The coordinators collected all possible food products from the case study area and published them on the Internet, in a hard-copy catalogue and promoted selected products at the local spa and other nearby tourist destinations. This initiative became important in local image making, and effected slightly local identity. The initiative had limitations in image building and identity formations: there were more than 60 producers in the catalogue, and there was no distinguished product which could become a symbol of local foods.

The result is that the micro-region does have some typical local food products, but the existing ones can contribute neither to local image building, nor to local identity formation. The first case study demonstrates the efforts of a community to build a local image by using local food products, and possible factors of failure.

Shaping place identity through local food: the case of Derecske-Létavértes micro region

The second case study was conducted in the Eastern part of Hungary in Hajdú-Bihar County, in the historical region of Hajdúság. The surface of Hajdú-Bihar County is characterized by the Great Plain. Our sturdy area, the Derecske-Létavértes micro region consists of ten settlements including two small towns. A decrease in population characterizes the whole county, as well as the micro region. The most important sector of the economy is agriculture; it is quite stable and productive. However, the number of agricultural employees has dramatically dropped in the last two decades as a result of the collapse of former socialist-type cooperatives. After the political transformation in the 1990s the agricultural structure has transformed. Huge agricultural companies and several small and medium scale farms have developed in the last decades. Private firms and agricultural entrepreneurs became the main actors of local agriculture. The traditions of subsistence farm-ing and food self-provisioning are very strong in the micro region, mostly in the small villages. Cereals and vegetables are the main products of local agriculture. However, there are more and more small farms providing local food products (fruits, vegetables) to the local community. The micro region is famous for the cultivation of horseradish, which became a PDO (protected designations of origin) in 2006. The main area of horseradish production inside the micro region is situated in Létavértes town and its surrounding villages and the centre is Bagamér a village where the main horseradish producer company is located. 80% of the Hungarian horseradish production comes from the micro-region, but it is also one of the largest areas of cultivation for horseradish in all of Europe. A big local firm and several medium and small scale farmers are involved in horseradish production.

Cooperation between horseradish producers is very strong both in formal and informal ways. Horseradish producers are the main actors on the local labour market, they are the main employers and also because of the demand for hand pickers in the cultivation they provide temporary jobs for the lower strata of local society.

Horseradish as the most characteristic and unique agricultural product of the micro region implies a symbolic meaning and symbolic interpretation of locality. Horseradish recently is regarded as the most important local tradition with several cultural aspects. In the beginning of the 2000s (in 2002) a local civic association, the Horseradish Tourist Route Association was established by eight local governments, four horseradish producer firms and a local restaurant. Several other local actors (cultural centres, schools, civic associations etc.) are involved in the activity of the Association. The main actor of the Horseradish Tourist Route Association is one of the biggest horseradish producer companies, the Hungarotorma Ltd. The local horseradish ('Horseradish from Hajdúság') proposed by the director of the Hungarotorma Ltd. is inscribed on the Hungarian Repository of Values.

The main purpose of the Association is to generate tourism activities rooted in the tradition of horseradish. They published a brochure for tourism presenting local horseradish culture and other cultural heritage of the joint settlements. They organize a Horseradish Day, a Horseradish Festival as cultural events every year, involving more and more settlements of the micro-region. In 2013 a seven day long festival had been organized with the participation of 6 settlements. The organizing team included employees of local governments, local cultural institutions, local tourism actors and cultural civic associations. The Horseradish Tourist Route Association also started an initiative to revitalize the horseradish based local gastronomy, they collected old recipes and invited local restaurant to provide horseradish based dishes. A Horseradish Round Table was organized to negotiate roles and opportunities of horseradish in local development.

Thus, the main target group of those events and activities are not only the tourists, but also the local enterprises and the local community. The Association also focuses on networking with local stakeholders and they intend to build (or rebuild) the local community on the basis of the redefinition of horseradish. Meet ups were organized to create a space where up and coming local creative people, horseradish producer entrepreneurs, and tourism makers come together to share stories, create networks and learn from each other. The most important goal of this local network was to give a new cultural meaning for horseradish. They negotiated how the cultural and traditional elements of horseradish production can be used for local development.

> *"Well, many traditions link to horseradish… the cultivation itself is a tradition, for example, it is watered not in daylight but at night, that is a tradition, the traditional cultivation method itself (…) everybody can have old things, handmade implements related to horseradish, they had collected and brought them here and we exhibited them, we did it. Keep the horseradish traditions alive, this is the main goal".* (a member of Association explained the role of local events and activities)

Horseradish did not have a cultural meaning before the Association started its activities. Horseradish had been regarded as the main economic resource of the micro region; Horseradish products (mostly as fresh crop) are sold only on the international market. Thus, cultural redefinition of horseradish means not only the

cultural use of horseradish as an important element of local traditions but also it implies the appearance of horseradish products in the local market as a local food. Horseradish as a local economic resource is converted into heritage product including local food through interpretation. Horseradish as a heritage product has a very specific meaning and appearance. Horseradish heritage appears as symbol of local events, as part of local gastronomy, as traditional know-how on agricultural cultivation and as local food. Horseradish as local food means here the traditional horseradish based dishes. However, horseradish as an agricultural product keeps the mass production characteristic, it is sold in the international market and does not appear in local groceries. Horseradish is distributed through the informal market (among friends and relatives) in the local community.

Horseradish as a local heritage became the main determinant of the symbolic character of place. Horseradish is in the centre of local identity building process. The case of Derecske-Létavértes shows that negotiation process on touristic use of heritage is in practice a place identity planning, where the cultural meaning of local food became the driving force of identity making based community building. The use of horseradish as a local food in shaping local identity has significant importance.

Tasting the place through local food: the case of Őrség micro region

The third case study region is the Őrség, located in the Western part of Hungary in the corner of the Austrian and Slovenian borders. Settlements of Őrség region belong to two counties: Vas and Zala. The historical Őrség region played a frontier-guarding role, and its name: 'defence region' reflects this historical role. The western frontier location resulted in a special status for the region with a higher degree of control and a lower degree of development during the socialist era. As a result of this disadvantaged status the Őrség region keeps its traditional shape of landscapes with special traditional settlement structure and shape of houses and with an untouched nature.

From the late 1980s and most significantly after the change of the political system from 1990 onward, Őrség became one of the main tourism destinations for the middle upper classes (mostly from Budapest) demanding rural idyll. The National Park of Őrség was established in 2002 on the territory of the Protected Landscape of Őrség created in 1976. The National Park became the leader of tourism activities of the region, and the protection of nature is also guaranteed by them. It provides events, services and products, publishes brochures etc. Őrség National Park provides thematic routes and open-air museums. Most of the activities are strongly connected to nature protection and sustainability but local cultural heritage is also strongly emphasized.

Year by year more and more urban inhabitants (mostly from Budapest) bought second homes in the Őrség region and many of them stay there from spring to autumn or settled down permanently. They were the pioneers and initiators of new tourism activities. In the first period their main service was accommodation in a rustic, idyllic rural milieu. The Őrség has been regarded as an idyllic rural landscape ever since that time. As a result of that kind of tourism development several forms of local food and gastronomy appeared in tourism services. Landscape and food interconnected. First, local restaurants started to provide special local dishes and then more and more local food products appeared in tourist shops. The most traditional local food is

the pumpkin oil, it has the so called Őrség label traditionally, but recently there are several other local food products from honey and mushroom through marmalade and pretzel to snaps provided in gift shops and local markets for tourists. Őrség as a landscape has the meaning of rural idyll. The sense of place contents rural traditions, rural idyll, nostalgia for peasant culture and traditional know-how, and also traditional shapes of houses and settlement structures.

Local food conveys the escense of Őrség. It means that food produced locally is strongly connected to the symbolic meaning of the place. However, we can find two ways of food use in place making. On the one hand the National Parks system in Hungary has an initiative to label the local food products based on traditional methods and know-how. In the case of Őrség Nemzeti Park this Őrség National Park product brand was given for local enterprises and husbandry operated within the National Park area and using special nature friendly or traditional methods for their productions. There is a strong emphasis on ecological sustainability in this branding process. This brand system classifies the producers very strictly. Brand is provided only for those who not only pay attention to avoid damaging the environment, but also to those who strive to preserve the valuable habitat and to contribute to the preservation of protected species. The key purpose of this branding process is that the selected products represent the natural and cultural specialities of the area.

> *"And we are strict because of the quality, there is a line, we have created a system to classify the objects by several points of view, a total score is given to summarize the quality of the object (it can be food, handicraft, rural accommodation etc.). Of course one does not know what the other does. And then it's a unified system we do the same classification method for each group of products. (…) I tell you, for example in the case of rural accommodation, there are 168 rural accommodations here in the region but only two received our brand, of course not all of them applied for it, but plenty did and there are only two having this brand."* (A staff member of national Park presented their branding system)

Only a very limited number of local food products has this Őrség National Park Brand, because of this strict system. There are several pumpkin oil producers using the label of Őrség and they produce their oil based on a traditional, local know-how, but only one has got the National Park brand.

On the other hand, urban second home owners and accommodation providers discovered local food products as an object of rural idyll. They demanded to taste the place and the connections to local traditions and they found it to be significant in local food consumption and gastronomy. They started to produce food products and created relationships with local small scale producers and they also started to use traditional recipes. Resulting from this so called revitalized local food products are provided for visitors and tourists of the region as a part of their tourism services. A group of the newcomers with the participation of a local civic association established a local artisan market in Őriszentpéter which is the central town of the region. Local small scale farmers, artisans, handicrafts and home-made product producers are invited. Involvement and participation are based on local origin, short supply chain characteristics and a strong informal network. All producers who are able to provide a kind of local sense – it sometimes only means that the product is produced in a local garden – can be involved in this network.

> *"I try to tell you why people who live here, and who number, not one, not two, but more, why they like to come here. Because it is actually a kind of club life, I can say. So there is a social scene to where we*

go and talk about things. Most people wish to live close to the nature, or even produce something, or do things. And we exchange our experiences on what we do and like, and discuss what seeds are used now."
(A member of local producer market talked about her community)

There is not a specified selection criteria system behind the participation in the local market even if the local embeddedness is strongly highlighted. A strong informal network was developed based on the local production-consumption relationship in which the local food producer has a central position. A special, personal bond is forming between local producers and local and non-local consumers. Several forms of local food are provided in local events and also in tourism services. Local food products became key symbolic goods of the 'Őrség idyll'.

COMPARISON OF THE CASES AND CONCLUSIONS

In the following we sum up our main results and compare the local food products of the three case studies, focusing on the role of the initiator, on the character of the products, on the main market, and finally on the mutual effects of local food product and local identity and image on each other.

In the case of Zalaszentgrót several types of local food products were found, none of them were really typical to the area; moreover one of them was a complete outsider in the local culture (namely the escargot). Local farmers and local governments are the key actors in local food based activities like local markets, gastronomy festivals etc. The main target group of their activities is the local community. Local image is very weak they did not find a good symbol to represent local characteristics even if they have several local products. There is no relationship between local food and the local image. However, local identity is very strong here, but this strong local community is not able to introduce their specialities elsewhere. In the case of Derecske-Létavértes one key local food product, the horseradish has been identified. This case provides a good example of local food product based image building and identity construction. The initiator of this process is a local horseradish firm, but local governments are also active actors. Horseradish based activities and events target both tourists and locals. Both local image and local identity were very weak and it seems that horseradish as a local food and local heritage has a growing impact on the development of both image and identity. The case of Őrség shows how local food products can be positioned in a very strong local landscape image where the local identity is also very strongly rooted on this strong landscape image. We found that local food and local image significantly enforce each other. There are several forms of local products that are provided for tourists and urban newcomers by locals and urban newcomers. Local food products include the sense of place and are regarded as an evident symbol of the local milieu.

The following table shows the above written in comparison. Different forms of interactions between local food production and local identity construction were presented in our three case studies.

The character of the foods is different: while in the Zalaszentgrót and Őrség case there is no key-product, in the Derecske-Létavértes case there is one. Comparing the stakeholders, we see three different groups in each case: local governments, farmers, local companies, local people and newcomers, the target groups are clearly different: tourists in the Őrség case, locals in Zalaszentgrót and a mixed group in the Derecske-Létavértes

case. Local image is strong only in the Őrség case, while local identity is strong in the Őrség and Zalaszentgrót cases.

Table 1. Comparison of the local foods, local identity and local image of the three cases.

Case-study area	Zalaszentgrót	Derecske-Létavértes	Őrség
Character of the products	Mixed	One key	Mixed
Main stakeholders	Local governments and farmers	Local agricultural firms and local governments	Locals and urban newcomers
Main target groups	Locals	Tourists and locals	Tourists and newcomers
Local image	Weak	Weak	Strong
Local identity	Strong	Weak	Strong
Relationship: (local food & local image)	No	Growing impact	Significantly enforce each other

Finally, if we compare the relationship among local food products, local image and local identity, we see three different settings in the three cases: in the Zalaszentgrót case there is almost no relationship between local food product, local image and local identity, in the Derecske-Létavértes case a well-defined local actors group is building local image and local identity using the local food product, while in the case of the Őrség, locals try to develop local food products, using the strong local identity and the strong local image. Also, the geographical coverage of the local food product is different: for example in the Derecske-Létavértes case, it is much more linked to Létavértes town and its surroundings, than to the other town Derecske.

All three cases can be interpreted as examples of the cultural economy, although the Őrség case seems to be the best example of the presence of territory embodied in the food-product. In each case we found that mostly one or several local agricultural products were selected and processed using traditional local methods. We found exceptions only in the Zalaszentgrót case, where local image is the weakest. The difference is much stronger among the local identity and local image of the case study areas, it seems that if both the local image and local identity is strong, those can contribute to the development of local food products, and also a strong, and traditional, culturally embedded (Bessière 1998, Kivitalo et al. 2015) local food product can be used to build local identity and strengthen local image (Escobar 2001). Our cases also enforce the argumentation of the new paradigm of rural development (Van Der Ploeg et al. 2000); although the initiators of producing local foods are farmers only in two cases, but also in the third one, local small-scale farmers benefit from local food production.

Analysing the cases as alternative food networks (Renting et al. 2012), we find that the Zalaszentgrót case functions similarly to the descriptions provided in the literature (small distances, local farmers producing food for the locals, exchanging at local markets). In the case of horseradish, produced in Derecske-Létavértes almost all elements of alternative food networks are missing, while in the case of the Őrség, the strong presence of the newcomers as initiators and of tourists as main target group challenges the building of local food networks. The speciality of the local products in this latter case, the strong local image make the case less proper to build

alternative food networks.

In the future the extension of the empirical base, by conducting further case studies would be important to deepen our knowledge on the factors influencing local food products, local identity and local image; it would also help us to better understand the links between them. It would also be interesting to analyse how the wider changes in Hungarian agriculture affect local food production, local identity and image building, whether such initiatives can contribute to the decrease of land-use concentration and the increase of small scale farming, thus improving rural livelihood.

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ÁGNES BLÁGA

LEADER: RESULTS AND PROBLEMS AT LOCAL LEVEL

Leo Granberg, Kjell Anderson and Imre Kovách (editors):

Evaluating the European Approach to Rural Development: Grass-roots Experiences of the LEADER Programme

Ashgate, 2015

The LEADER programme has been running for over 20 years and what makes it unique is that it applies the same development policies and methods in different countries, in different social contexts. Analysis of the experiences and local practices raises a lot of interesting and important questions related to the effectiveness and the impact of the LEADER programme in rural development and questions that researchers, programmes, professional and institutional actors of rural development are interested in.

In April 2015 Ashgate Publishing published the new volume of the series *Perspectives on Rural Policy and Planning, entitled Evaluating the European Approach to Rural Development,* written for each actor of rural development. In this book recognized social researchers, sociologists and rural development professionals discuss the current results and problems of the LEADER programme at the local level in a unique approach, through their research. The main objective of the book edited by Leo Granberg, Kjell Anderson and Imre Kovách is to examine whether the LEADER programme strengthens local democracy or not and how it affects the power balance between national and local actors and between genders. An important objective is to examine the structure and functioning of local action groups. A further issue is to ask whether LEADER projects are indeed grass-root level activities, reflecting local needs and ideals, or if they represent something else.

The 235-page book is divided into thirteen chapters. Except for the introduction and summary chapter, each study paper analyses the functioning of LEADER based on the experiences from a country or a region. This approach is useful and interesting for any researcher and layman interested in the functioning of society.

In the first, introductory, part entitled *Leader as an Experiment in Grass-Roots Democracy,* the editors present the theme and aim of this book, the specificities of LEADER, and the questions to be discussed highlighting numerous examples from the studies. According to the authors the LEADER approach has changed the old local power structures in rural development and a new 'project-class' has taken over the dominant role of farmers and their organizations which devalues the bottom-up character of the approach. However the EU guidelines prescribe the participation of women, agricultural producers and young people, in many cases these groups are left out of the development processes. In this view the LEADER approach cannot be successful enough.

In the study titled *LEADER and Local Democracy: A Comparison between Finland and the United Kingdom* Johan Munck of Rosenschöld and Johanna Löyhko discuss the democratic features of Local Action Groups (LAGs) and LEADER projects in Finland and the United Kingdom. The main conclusion of the study is that although the internal functioning of LAGs follows the integrative model of democracy, the LAGs are predominantly closed for external participation in both countries, indicating a major problem from the democratic point of view. This raises the question whether the internal openness of the LAGs is a result of the exclusion of external actors or if this is a result of the LEADER method itself. Another important conclusion is that the level of participation varies in different stages of the projects so the authors suggest further researches about the output of LEADER projects and their long-term democratic consequences.

The third study analyses the LEADER approach and LAGs through Spanish experiences of LEADER practices. Javier Esparcia, Jaime Escribano and Almudena Buciega highlights that, apart from certain weaknesses, the LEADER method and LAGs have become an instrument for the socio-economic development and participatory democracy in Spain. The study also expresses some suggestions to improve the effectiveness of LAGs. Study title: *A Perspective of LEADER Method in Spain Based on the Analysis of Local Action Groups.*

In the study titled *The LEADER Programme in Hungary – Bottom-up Development with Top-down Control?* Imre Kovách and Bernadett Csurgó discuss the characteristics of local democracy, power balance, bottom-up and top-down initiatives in three Hungarian regions through statistical data. After the authors present the implementation of LEADER and compare the three local models, they express some criticism of the political management and suggest new cooperation models. The three case studies give much evidence that LEADER practice does not meet European Union principles of grass-roots initiatives and local decisions. According to this, the system is over-bureaucratized, the LAGs mostly represent the model of aggregative democracy, and many important local actors are excluded from the development process. The authors argue that despite of this, the experiences of the LEADER-type development are not always negative, which could provide a basis for the advent of local democracy.

In the fifth chapter Annette Agaard Thuesen presents an overview of aggregative and integrative democratic theory through partnerships in Danish LEADER local action groups. According to the author the functioning of the LAGs points towards integrative democracy, because more and more citizens are involved in the decision-making processes. In addition, local experiences, national initiatives and guidelines may promote participatory democracy and LAGs can become important mediators between formal authorities and rural

citizens in rural governance. Study title: *The Democratic Capabilities of and Rhetoric on LEADER LAGs in the EU – The Danish Case.*

In Chapter 6 Marko Nousiainen analyses the political particularities of the Finnish LEADER. The author's insight is that the features of consensus and integration that characterize the internal LAG work in Finland are not natural borne but rather LEADER characteristics, which are introduced in practice by external actors in cooperation with dominant LAG members. Study title: *A Political Perspective on LEADER in Finland – Democracy and the Problem of 'Troublemakers'.*

The subject of the seventh part titled *LEADER and Possibilities of Local Development in the Russian Countryside* is an experimental research study, which was carried out in the vicinity of Lake Ladoga, North-Western Russia, in 2011–2013, in which local actors applied the LEADER method to support small-scale initiatives. The main question of this analysis made by Leo Granberg, Jouko Nikula and Inna Kopoteva is how this approach can be applied in rural Russia, in a region dominated by bureaucratic steering and local passivity.

Annette Aagaard Thuesen and Petra Derkzen in their study titled *Questioning the Gender Distribution in Danish LEADER LAGs* analyse and discuss the democratization of the entrance channels and the gender balance in Danish LAGs with rich statistical information.

In Chapter 9 (Title: *LEADER LAGs: Neocorporatist Local Regimes or Examples of Economic Democracy?)* Giorgio Osti points out that in Italy, despite positive examples, a significant part of the LAGs operates according to aggregative principles, and municipalities, organizations and 'vested interests' are competing for the LEADER resources, in which the territory is only a marketing device. The author also questions the dual model of aggregative and integrative democracy.

In Chapter 10 titled *Bottom-up Initiatives and Competing Interests in Transylvania* Dénes Kiss and Enikő Veress analyse the implementation process of the LEADER programme in Transylvania, Romania. Besides the presentation of socio-economic background the case study analyses the conflicts of interest that occur between political, interest and professional groups, between rural and urban population, as well as the conflicts of interest between ethnicities. The analysis focuses on the impact of macro-societal conflicts on rural development processes.

In Ildikó Asztalos Morell's study the Hungarian LEADER is discussed in a new approach using interview fragments: through a project targeting the Romani community this chapter analyses how different interests influence the targeting and realization of developmental goals aimed at improving the living conditions of marginalized groups, and whether and under which conditions the new model of governance can work at the local level, for the benefit of those with the least resources. Study title: *Can Renewable Energy Contribute to Poverty Reduction? A Case Study on Romafa, a Hungarian LEADER.*

In Chapter 12 Aude-Annabelle Canesse analyses determining development policies, developmental institutions and instruments in the last decades in Tunisia. Study title*: Developing or Creating Instability? Development Management, Scale and Representativeness in Tunisia.*

In the last chapter titled *Conclusion: The LEADER Colours on the Democracy Palette* the editors summarize the most important insights of case studies, the impact of LEADER on societies with democratic and authoritarian traditions.

The aim of this review is to briefly introduce the topics and unique approaches of studies published in the book about LEADER programme. Although the book forms a thematic unit, the studies related to the different regions discuss key issues of rural development in diverse and unique approaches. The studies are related by the new understanding of rural development, highlighting successful examples, and by indication of problems and deficiencies. Reading the book the commitment of social researchers, sociologists and rural development professionals can be felt, because they express opinions and suggestions in social, political and economic contexts.

Overall, the book is unique because it analyses the new rural development possibilities and problems of European countries in different contexts, at the international level. According to the summary of the editors, the LEADER programme could be recognized because it is still viable and growing, while most community initiatives have been forgotten since the 1990s. Furthermore, it has influenced the urban community too, and has resulted in initiatives that demonstrate the democratic properties of the method, promoting social and economic development.