The Spatial Politics and Political Economy of Alternative Food Networks in Post-Soviet Latvia and Lithuania

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Abstract

Spurred by consumer demand and activism, local food systems are gaining increasing prominence as a policy tool to foster sustainability. This development has been buttressed by academic findings that suggest that a component of local food systems, alternative food networks (or direct-to-consumer markets), have beneficial impacts on farmer livelihoods because they provide farmers with added value and premium prices. In this dissertation, I examine alternative food networks in Latvia and Lithuania and I analyze how involvement in these networks has impacted the livelihoods of participating farmers. According to my findings, participation in alternative food networks has led to a variety of livelihood outcomes for farmers. To explain why some farmers have had successful livelihood outcomes by participating in alternative food networks and others have not, I draw upon theoretical perspectives from geography, agrarian political economy and feminist studies. I argue that farmer livelihoods must be examined as constituting and constituted by their sociospatial context. To provide a framework for this kind of examination, I modify the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach by integrating spatial concepts. This modified framework is a potential resource for scholars and policy-makers who recognize that achieving a sustainable local food system also entails ensuring a sustainable livelihood for the farmers involved.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

> Spending time in Riga—once known as the Paris of the East—and missing the Riga Central Market would be a huge sin. After visiting this gem, your local farmers' market would feel as exciting as buying vegetables from your supermarket's clearance bin. Latvia's pulse is on display at the Market, which has been in operation since 1909. If you're a foodie, you'll find paradise here. (Kaye 2009)

> Featuring everything from old ladies selling garlic bulbs and carrier bags to the occasional bargain goat (cash only), one of the city's [Vilnius'] most endangered species is a must-see attraction for anyone who wants a taste of what the rest of the country's really like. One of the best places in town for meat, locally-produced honey and cameras manufactured in the CCCP, also find tropical fish, manbags, Minsk bicycles and cheap cigarettes from the Roma girls near the main entrance. (In Your Pocket 2013)

The foodways of the Baltic have long provided an object of fascination and reflection for travelers, from distinguished theorists such as Walter Benjamin (2009), to modern day "foodie" tourists (Kaye 2009). As prominent places of consumption, the public markets of Riga, Latvia and Vilnius, Lithuania, described above, provide an immediate and highly visible entryway into these foodways. For visiting tourists, they are not only places to buy and consume food, but they are objects of excitement that engender reflection about markets at home (Kaye 2009). They are also places in newly refurbished and tourist-trodden city centers that offer a visceral opening to Riga's and Vilnius' hinterlands by providing a "taste of what the rest of the country's really like" (In Your Pocket 2013), a taste that not only harks "back" to the CCCP, but eastward as well, through connections with the rest of post-Soviet space.

For residents in Latvia and Lithuania, however, markets are part of everyday life. For small-scale farmers, pensioners with kitchen gardens, and even some large-scale growers, markets are places where livelihoods are sustained. Markets are particularly crucial places for farmers who sell their produce through short food supply chains, direct-to-consumer networks that lessen the distance between the field and kitchen by fostering direct relationships between farmers and consumers. In Anglophone academia, these

kinds of supply chains have been labeled "alternative food networks" (AFNs) because they are widely understood to operate differently than conventional food networks.[1]

Among activists, policymakers and academics, AFNs are increasingly considered to be models for promoting sustainability. Their popularity has risen partially because previous models have fallen short of their promises. Widely heralded as a sustainable alternative to industrial agriculture in the 1990s, for instance, organic farming has proven to be remarkably susceptible to appropriation by agro-business, effectively diminishing its environmental and social benefits (Guthman 2004). Similarly, assumptions about the desirability and sustainability of "local" agriculture (the subsequent object of the alternative agriculture movement) have been critically scrutinized (Born and Purcell 2006), while movements for food localization have demonstrated defensive and exclusionary political inflections (Hinrichs 2003). In contrast, AFNs promise a *stronger* alternative than organic or local agriculture (Goodman and Goodman 2009; Watts et al. 2005). More broadly, AFNs represent an ideal of reconnection, potentially bringing estranged parts of society *back* together to form a harmonious whole and providing a space of resistance to time-space distanciation. By uniting spheres of production and consumption, scholars contend that AFNs may be more resilient and sustainable than other forms of alternative food production and distribution (Watts et al. 2005).

Although most of the academic literature on AFNs is dominated by studies conducted in the United States, Canada, and Western Europe, and little research has documented and analyzed the benefits of AFNs in Eastern Europe, policies supportive of the creation of AFNs are still circulating and gaining wider acceptance in the European Union (ENRD 2014). This circulation does not occur in a vacuum; indeed, the interpretation and enactment of ideas occurs in dynamic "friction" with already existing practices (Tsing 2005). Friction, as the term insinuates, produces unanticipated outcomes, but friction is also necessary to further propel the circulation of meaningful discourse.

1. Research Propositions

This dissertation is at once an investigation into the dynamics animating AFNs in the Baltic states of Latvia and Lithuania, and a product of the friction between my personal background, academic training in Anglophone geography and feminist studies, and experiences studying and working within AFNs in the Baltics. As such, my intention in this dissertation is twofold: to produce an intervention in the scholarly literature, which has yet to provide a satisfactory account of and framework for the study of producer livelihoods in AFNs; and to expand the understanding of AFNs in Europe. My intervention centers on two interrelated conceptual arguments:

1.1 First, I make the case for a reintegration of a theoretical framework based on a revised agrarian political economy in the study of AFNs. Despite its earlier dominance in agro-food studies, the theoretical lineage of agrarian political economy has had a marginal influence in research on AFNs[2] and agro-food studies more broadly (Buttel 2001). However, I argue that it still provides useful insights on producer livelihoods.

1.2 Second, in the study of producer livelihoods in AFNs, I argue for a framework that examines how livelihoods shape and are shaped by sociospatial contexts. Instead of focusing on AFNs purely as network formations, my argument builds on scholarship that highlights the importance of considering multiple spatial dimensions (Leitner et al. 2008).

2. Research Contributions:

These interventions are significant for three reasons:

2.1 First, the relationship between AFNs and the revitalization of rural livelihoods is widely claimed in scholarly literature (Ilbery and Maye 2005), but less frequently has this relationship been evaluated at the scale of the farming household. In general, the surprising paucity of economic information on AFNs as well the increasing evidence that many networks are ephemeral has led researchers to argue that cultural analyses of AFNs must be "assessed within a 'hard' economic, or agro-economic, context" (Ilbery and

Maye 2005, 842). While I consider the economic characteristics of livelihoods, the approach I take is a holistic one that highlights how economic assets influence and are influenced by other factors.

2.2 Second, the increasing focus on AFNs among policy makers and academics in Western Europe is emblematic of a broader shift toward harnessing the potential of network formations to enhance economic prosperity. Scholars of rural development argue that the spatial properties of networks productively reveal linkages between the rural and the urban (Murdoch 2000; Renting et al. 2003; Venn et al. 2006). Thus, network concepts challenge the traditional notions of bounded and self-contained rural places implied in rural development policy. Recognizing that network concepts could encourage rural development, some scholars argue that rural development policy should be rearticulated in network terms (Murdoch 2000).

The now dominant focus on networks has neglected the importance that other spatialities have on shaping AFNs (Goodman and Goodman 2007). I draw upon theoretical perspectives on scale, space and place to address this lacuna. Geographers have shown that scales are not fixed, but socially constructed and produced through political, economic and social contestation (Agnew 1994; Delaney and Leitner 1997; Kaiser and Nikiforova 2008). Although the "local" scale is frequently equated with AFNs, scholarly literature has perpetuated a reified and homogeneous notion of the local scale. Only recently have scholars begun to critically examine the processes and actors involved in constructing the local. Indeed, the social construction of the local scale can be critical for farmers in AFNs seeking to market their produce as local (Selfa and Qazi 2005). As Selfa and Qazi demonstrate, the construction of the local cannot be assumed: it is itself an ongoing achievement (2005). Moreover, there is nothing inherently ecologically or socially just about the local scale (Born and Purcell 2006). Conventional food networks or agribusinesses may also stake claims to the local scale, leading to contestation and negotiation over what it is included under the aegis of the local scale (Guptill and Wilkins 2002).

However important the local scale may be for AFNs, scales are relational and should not be examined in isolation (Brenner 2001; Mansfield 2005). For example, in the

practice of alternative food politics the local scale is often situated in opposition to the global scale of transnational agribusiness. This simplistic binary opposition neglects to consider how the restructuring of agro-food systems at the global scale materializes in a variegated manner, partially because such restructuring is mediated by institutions and regulatory frameworks on national and sub-national scales (Hart 2002). Thus far, research on AFNs has neglected to situate the local scale relationally (see Johnston and Baker 2005 for an exception).

Part of the reason why variegation occurs is because of the heterogeneity and multiplicity of space (Massey 2005). Space is an ongoing production of a multiplicity of trajectories, from the cultural to the biophysical. Places, on the other hand, are the meeting points for these trajectories. They are "where spatial narratives meet up or form configurations, conjunctures of trajectories which have their own temporalities" and "where the successions of meetings, the accumulation of weavings and encounters build up a history" (Massey 2005, 139). Therefore, different places are characterized by both the distinctiveness of these encounters and the relationships forged between places through the trajectories that constitute space. For example, as Guthman (2008) notes, the central coast of California is "one of the wealthiest regions in the wealthiest state in the wealthiest country in the world," with "unsurpassed diversity in growing conditions such that an enormous number of crops can be produced year-round within the state's borders" (Guthman 2008, 1180). The particularities of this place, the distinctiveness of the encounters forged in making this place, make it an ideal location for AFNs and a local food movement. However, as Guthman points out, these particularities also make "eating local a task of little sacrifice" (Guthman 2008, 1180). In other words, a spinach grower on the central coast of California can claim the local and gain the support of spatially proximate and wealthy consumers. The trajectories that make California one of the world's most significant agro-export economies are also relevant here. While the spinach itself may be sold locally, it may also be shipped to locations all over the US where it then competes with other "local" spinach. Relations across space, the particularities of place, as well as the relational construction of scale all matter in the shaping of AFNs. In this dissertation, I draw heavily on these concepts in a framework that highlights the

importance of multiple spatial dimensions.

2.3 Third, scholars have argued that AFNs, or short food supply chains, "may hold some of the keys to future developments of European farming in a context where existing support measures are increasingly under debate in view of the present WTO (World Trade Organisation) round, CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) reform, and the enlargement of the European Union" (Renting et al. 2003, 408). Latvia and Lithuania are places with abundant AFNs, and yet little is known about them. Most do not have their own websites or Facebook pages. One of the benefits of EU bureaucracy, however, is that economic activity is assiduously counted and often publicly available. As of April 11, 2014, the Latvian Food and Veterinary Service (PVD 2014) listed over 100 farmers with permission to sell eggs through AFNs and over 700 farmers with permission to sell milk through AFNs (PVD 2014). About half of these farmers sell a portion of their milk and dairy products directly to consumers and another portion to processors (LDC n.d.). Although similar data is not publicly available online for Lithuania, the information on milk quotas for direct selling (as opposed to processing) illustrates the continued prominence of dairy-based AFNs: In Lithuania, 4,437 farmers sell about 75,000 tons of milk through AFNs annually (LDC n.d.; VIC 2013). In fact, there are more farmers with quotas to sell milk directly in Lithuania than there are in most other EU countries (the UK has 311, Germany has 1140, etc.) (LDC n.d.). Significantly, new member states account for 92% of the EU's milk quota for direct sales (LDC n.d.). My dissertation is one small step toward understanding and analyzing this diversity of AFNs in Eastern Europe.

3. Research Methods

In order to answer my research questions, I employed a mixed methods approach, including data collection based on participant observation, interviews with 40 farmers (20 in each country) and public officials, and consumer surveys. I conducted the bulk of my research in 2010, and I carried out follow-up fieldwork over several months in 2011, 2012 and 2013.

I started my research by doing interviews with farmers who sell at least some of their products through AFNs. My unit of analysis was the farming household. Although the household may be a contentious site, and its structures and functions are not universal, the household can be effectively deployed as a unit of analysis with a more flexible definition that goes beyond residence requirements. In addition to considering who lives in the household, I also included "those pooling resources for the purpose of joint consumption and production" (Owusu 2000, 132). Most of the farming households I interviewed were established in the 1990s or earlier. For the most part, the number of household members had remained constant or decreased since then.

My interviews with farmers consisted of a longitudinal livelihood survey, starting with the 1990s and proceeding until the present. I wanted to know when they established their farm, what led them to farming, and when and why they started selling their products through AFNs. I collected information about assets the household had at its disposal and how those changed over time. I also asked about where they sold their produce, how that changed over time, and why they chose to market their production where they did. In the following chapters, all names have been replaced with pseudonyms to protect the identities of the research participants.

My most significant insights on AFNs came from participant observation. I worked on four different farms, two in each country, and traveled with these farmers to the places where they sold their products. In short, I followed AFNs from farm to fork and back again several times. I also spent a significant amount of time hanging out at farmers' markets, markets and fairs in Riga and Vilnius and other smaller towns.

I originally intended to conduct a consumer survey at farmers' markets. However, I quickly realized that it was better just to talk to people as they waited in line, to observe their interactions with vendors and to record what kinds of questions they ask vendors. Quite frankly, in Latvia and Lithuania farmers' markets are not usually places where people go to relax and hang out. Rather, farmers' market customers are intent on just getting their shopping done. So a five-minute questionnaire was really all I could manage without generating a big inconvenience. I have the suspicion that people only

agreed to talk to me because in any regional language I speak, I have a discernable accent that marks me as a foreigner.

At farmers' markets, I found out that people's responses to the consumer survey differed in slight but meaningful ways from how they actually acted. For instance, all customers ranked such characteristics of food as "very important": cost, locally-grown, taste, freshness, uncertified but organically-grown. By observing interactions between customers and farmers, however, I would find out that sometimes *local* would beat *organic* because of cost, or *taste* would override the rest of the customer's preferences. Participant observation provided the opportunity to assess patterns in shopping behavior and to understand what kind of connections between farmers and consumers were cultivated at farmers' markets. The other problem with the consumer survey was that people had long and complicated answers to a question on where they shopped for food, which further prolonged the survey time. Because these answers were fascinating for me I did not abandon the consumer survey. Instead, I arranged to speak with willing consumers at a time and place that was convenient for them.

Although I was intent on collecting economic data, I quickly ran into obstacles. First of all, I started my research during a period of significant economic contraction, making a meaningful comparison of annual household income very difficult. Second, I realized that most farmers I interviewed do not really keep good track of how much they sell (in terms of weight), but they have a good idea of how much money they need to make for one day at the market. For instance, at one farm in Lithuania, we did not count the quantity or the value of the produce we loaded into the van on the morning of the market. The objective at the farmers' market was to come home with a certain sum of money. No one counted how much produce went and came back, although it seemed to me to be the logical thing to do. We also did not count waste that was fed to pigs or went into the compost. Counting and weighing would take time and no one had that luxury during the busy harvest season. Faced with such a reality, I realized that some of my interview questions for farmers were simply ridiculous. This situation might have been different for large-scale farmers who kept receipts and were value-added tax payers.

My position as an American graduate student with personal ties in Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland shaped my research interactions in complex ways. My parents taught me Latvian and took me to a Latvian Saturday school in New Jersey, where I learned Latvian music, history (up until 1944, that is), geography and language arts. During my childhood, the Latvian-American community, largely formed through immigration after WW II, imagined itself as living in "exile" or "banishment" (*trimda*) because most had left Latvia on an involuntary basis as the war front advanced through the country in 1944. Stories about the war and post-war years in displaced persons camps circulated during my childhood. As Judith Butler states: "The children are in some sense impinged upon by the trauma of their parents; it is inherited, it is relayed, and this kind of memory—or, rather, trauma—which is not quite one's own, and not quite another's, forms an opaque bond among the generations" (Davies 2008, 188). This opaque generational bond brought me to rural Latvia when I was a teenager in the late 1990s, and it also provided me with the motivation to pursue this research project. Despite years of schooling, however, during my first visits to Latvia I realized how little I actually knew about the country my parents and grandparents once called home. In a sense, this research is motivated by my conscious attempt to take my political birthright and make it my own (Wolin 1986).

With the help of several scholarships, I learned Lithuanian and Russian well enough to be able to carry out interviews myself. Russian, while not widely spoken in rural areas, is a widely-used language in major urban centers in Latvia, and to a lesser degree in parts of Lithuania. My language abilities in Latvian and Lithuanian made completing my research a lot easier and being able to converse in the languages helped me gain important insights. Because language politics are very sensitive in the Baltics, I got a sense that my willingness and ability to speak in the local languages garnered respect and opened doors. Although I planned to translate my interviews into English, I realized that this was too complex because many words simply did not translate easily. Therefore, I conducted my analysis in Latvian and Lithuanian (and more rarely, Russian), but I wrote my field notes in English and I tried to keep quotations in the local language. All translations of texts cited in this dissertation are my own.

In the process of conducting research and formulating my arguments, I have been attentive to the sociospatiality of knowledge production, as academic theorizing on agro-food has evolved in specific sociospatial contexts and is produced through power relations between researcher and researched, as well as between places across space. This attentiveness requires investigation of the limits of knowledge because "those who claim to be in touch with the universal are notoriously bad at seeing the limits and exclusions of their knowledge" (Tsing 2005, 8). Here I am referencing universal claims about AFNs, or claims about AFNs or other solutions to agro-food system problems that are not situated within their sociospatial context. For example, urban agriculture is increasingly supported as a solution for a variety of social ills and is often credited with increased food security and even food justice (Heynen et al. 2012). In the Baltics, however, urban agriculture has a long history; it is common, in fact, to see greenhouses for vegetables in the yards of the wealthy. For poor people, urban agriculture is more about necessity than about establishing food justice. Therefore, while urban agriculture may help ensure food security, it has hardly played a role in leading toward an enhanced sense of food justice. This is not to say that urban agriculture falls short of its promises, but it is an indication that such promises are an outgrowth of a sociospatiality that is not universal. Nevertheless, it is important to keep a grasp on the universal while paying attention to how it is transformed through friction. That is why I continue to use the term, "alternative food network," even in a place where it is unfamiliar.

Many of the kinds of networks that are categorized as AFNs have a long history in the Baltics even though they have not garnered much analytical attention, nor have they become the focus for social movement making. In fact, AFNs are an accepted part of everyday life, so much so that one consumer I interviewed expressed surprise that it is possible to write a dissertation on something as quotidian as a farmers' market. In addition, there is not much of a recognizable "alternative" food movement in Latvia and Lithuania, even though the ideas are generally attractive to and supported by local residents. One comment from my field notes illuminates this point:

> I am sitting with Agnė in her kitchen, explaining the consent form and my research on AFNs (alternatyvūs maisto tinklai in Lithuanian). I am not

> surprised when she stops me after I mention the term: "alternatyvūs maisto tinklai" is a direct translation that I simply made up to convey a sense of the object of my study. It usually requires some explanation, but Agnė simply says: "'Alternatyvūs maisto tinklai.' I like how that sounds."

As indicated by the reflection, this dissertation has in a small way helped to circulate the knowledge that has been produced on AFNs, even as it challenges some of the assumptions surrounding it. In the following section, I provide an outline of the chapters.

4. Outline of Chapters

In Chapter 2, I examine AFNs in their theoretical context. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section considers the insights of the scholarly tradition in peasant studies, agrarian political economy, and agrarian change. I detail both the insights and the criticisms that led to the tradition's declining influence, including its neglect of nature, culture, consumption and peasant agency, and its capitalocentrism. In the second section, I situate the emergence of scholarship on "alternative geographies of food" (Whatmore and Thorne 1997), of which AFNs are a part. The early scholarship on alternative geographies of food was founded upon a critique of and move away from political economy approaches, which were criticized for problematically assuming a globalized and all-encompassing capitalist system devoid of substantive alternatives. Subsequent theorization of AFNs and producer livelihoods has employed a wide variety of theoretical approaches, but has still steered clear of a focus on political economy and the dynamics of capitalism. I argue that given that empirical case studies highlight the difficulties farmers face in a range of AFNs, a focus on the processes affecting livelihoods is necessary. In the third section of this chapter, I develop a Postonian reading of agrarian political economy (APE), asserting the primacy of social mediation by value and the domination created by labor itself, a domination which cannot be overcome within capitalism. This approach, I argue, opens up spaces for a non-teleological and "open" understanding of capitalist development in which consumer and

peasant politics are potentially transformative. In the last part of this section, I critically assess the absence of spatiality in Postone's approach. The subsequent chapters on space, scale, networks, and place use geographical theories to address this absence.

In Chapter 3, I tell the story of the emergence of AFNs in the Soviet, post-Soviet, and contemporary Europeanizing Baltic states of Latvia and Lithuania. This chapter takes up the challenge of thinking space as relational multiplicity. I argue that linear "transition" narratives and practices sought to enact policies that would pave the way toward Westward convergence, but instead they produced unanticipated and undesirable outcomes. I document how the multiple trajectories of sociospatial change continuously frustrate efforts to establish linear convergence. Understanding space as multiplicity, and thus as always in process, always constituting and being constituted by capitalist globalization, problematizes the idea of convergence. Further, thinking space relationally and considering the production of sociospatial positionality helps us understand the development of agricultural and rural spaces in the Baltics and the changing roles of AFNs in ensuring livelihoods.

Space is not the only dimension that elucidates the processes affecting producer livelihoods. In Chapter 4, I argue that it is equally significant to understand how AFNs are embedded within scalar relations, which in the Baltic states necessitates understanding local, national, European Union, and global relations. Dominant scholarly accounts from political science have highlighted the importance of "Europeanization" in influencing nation-states in the EU. I point out several weaknesses in this literature and propose instead an understanding of scalar relations based on the politics of scale. For example, I show how scalar narratives have been deployed in food safety and hygiene regulations in the Baltics, and I then rewrite the development of hygiene regulations in the EU from the perspective of a politics of scale. Such a perspective provides space for understanding how a conjuncture created the possibility for both Latvia and Lithuania to introduce new food hygiene regulation at the local scale, making it easier for farmers to create AFNs. The result was a proliferation of AFNs and the growing possibility for accumulation to occur at the local scale.

The growth of AFNs in 2008 and 2009 in both Latvia and Lithuania following changes in food hygiene regulations was remarkable. However, such growth led to increased competition between producers seeking to market through AFNs. In Chapter 5, I consider AFNs as a livelihood strategy for the farmers involved, in recognition of the fact that the success of AFNs in bringing together consumers and producers depends upon the extent to which they can provide a meaningful and sustainable livelihood for farmers. First, I examine existing approaches, such as the "value-added" approach, to the study of the socioeconomic benefits of AFNs. I critically assess the merits of this approach before turning to the more holistic account of livelihoods articulated in the "Sustainable Livelihoods Approach" (SLA). Once a widely applied framework in development studies, this approach's popularity has declined in response to a number of critiques, which included the failure to address power, politics, and globalizing economic processes. Despite these criticisms, some scholars have argued that SLA should not be discarded but amended by taking into consideration such factors as scale and dynamics (Scoones 2009). I build upon this argument by spatializing SLA and integrating into it an understanding of economic processes and dynamics. The resulting amended approach integrates cultural, social, economic, and spatial elements, all of which need to be considered when studying livelihoods. Drawing upon examples from my fieldwork, I use a spatialized livelihoods approach (SpLA) to explain the diverging socioeconomic impacts AFNs have had for rural livelihoods in the Baltic states.

While Chapter 5 begins to unpack the rural household, in Chapter 6, I continue that process more explicitly. Recent interventions in scholarly literature have argued that alternative methods of food production and provision, especially ones that are more environmentally sustainable, empower women farmers. However, this literature is largely based on the historical trajectory of agriculture in the United States and Western Europe, where women have been marginalized and excluded as farmers. In contrast, in former Soviet space, women have long been farm workers and farmers. In this chapter, I argue for a focus on the intertwined importance of history and capitalist development in influencing women's empowerment as agricultural producers and actors in AFNs. Drawing upon my research with women farmers engaged in alternative agriculture and

food networks, I demonstrate that women do not face a struggle to be recognized as producers, but that farm and marketing work remains gendered. I argue that these gendered forms of labor have implications for women's empowerment through alternative food production and distribution networks.

Chapter 7 considers the meeting points of AFNs, farmers' markets in Vilnius, Lithuania. Farmers' markets have captured the imagination of government officials, food activists, and academics alike in Western Europe and Northern America. In an era of heightened concern about industrial food and an increase in consumer desires to "know" and reconnect with their food sources, farmers' markets offer an attractive alternative to supermarkets. In this chapter, I examine the emergence and growth of farmers' markets in Vilnius, Lithuania. I demonstrate how different histories of production and consumption shape places, such as markets, and impact their capacity to facilitate reconnection. I also deploy a relational understanding of space, which foregrounds that places are heterogeneous and forged by multiple trajectories and histories. This approach towards theorizing place allows an appreciation of the importance of post-Soviet histories, as well as an assessment of the different positions occupied by producers and consumers.

In the concluding chapter, I consider broader questions raised by my research, specifically on the nature of reconnection and food system change. I argue that in the consideration of alternatives, such as those championed under the rubrics of food sovereignty, what is necessary is not just a place-based approach, but a spatialized framework.

Chapter 2. Theorizing Alternative Food Networks

Alternative food networks (AFNs) are often considered to be new and distinctive phenomena in contemporary foodscapes (Holloway and Kneafsey 2000), yet direct-to-consumer networks have existed in one form or another for most of human history. Only recently have these connections between the farmer and consumer been labeled as "alternative," worthy of considerable scholarly theorizing, and indeed, emblematic of sustainable development.[3] Moreover, what is considered to be "alternative" is often assumed, rather than explained (for an exception, see Whatmore, Stassart, and Renting 2003).

My goals in this chapter are to unpack the notion of "alternative" as it has been applied in the study of alternative food networks and to develop the theoretical perspective that frames my study of farmer livelihoods in AFNs. In order to unpack the "alternative," I first turn my attention to the trajectory of scholarly thought on the political economy of agrarian change (including agrarian political economy and peasant studies). While this literature has delivered insights into the development of capitalism in agriculture and the dynamics impacting farmer livelihoods, it has also been subject criticism by scholars of the alternative geographies of food. Consequently, theoretical perspectives on the political economy of agrarian change have only had a marginal influence on the theorizing of alternative food networks. Although I find merit with most of the critiques directed at political economy, I argue that the approaches that emerged through these critiques have significant weaknesses when trying to account for farmer livelihoods. In contrast to these approaches, political economy has long attempted to provide insights on farmer livelihoods in a capitalist system, as well as on the workings of power and domination within the food chain. Instead of turning away from agrarian political economy, and from Marxist perspectives more broadly, as many scholars of alternative food networks have done, I consider an alternative approach that combines Moishe Postone's Marxist approach as detailed in his book, *Time, Labor and Social Domination* (1993), geographical scholarship on multiple spatialities and feminist

theoretical perspectives. This approach retains fidelity with Marx's writing but simultaneously addresses some of the critiques directed at agrarian political economy.

This chapter is structured as follows. I devote Section 1 to a review of the classical agrarian question and Section 2 to an examination of recent developments in this trajectory of thought. Section 3 starts with the critiques of agrarian political economy and political economy perspectives more broadly. I then go on to evaluate the theoretical frameworks that have embraced alternative food networks as a conceptual focus. In Section 4, I conclude by delineating a revised agrarian political economy perspective, buttressed by a feminist and geographical framework.

1. The Classical Agrarian Question

Since the late 19th century, scholars and activists have been confounded by the pace and form taken by the development of capitalism in agriculture in Europe. While capitalist industry rapidly transformed urban space and concentrated production at increasingly larger scales, the pace of transformation in rural areas seemed to subside. To the surprise of many, the small-scale peasant or family farm persisted as a dominant organizational form in agriculture in the late 19th century. Scholarship at the time offered two different explanations to account for the distinct development trajectory of capitalism in agriculture, a trajectory that came to be known as the "agrarian question." Karl Kautsky, writing at the end of the 19th century, based his analysis of the dynamics of capitalism in agriculture on Karl Marx's writing (Kautsky 1988). In Section 1.1, I examine the lineage of scholarly thought that followed and developed Kautsky's analysis of the agrarian question. By contrast, Section 1.2 offers an alternative response to the agrarian question, one that also generated significant scholarly insights.

1.1 Agrarian Political Economy

At the turn of the 20th century, the agrarian question posed significant conundrums for socialist revolutionaries awaiting the fulfillment of Marx's prediction of

the annihilation of peasant society. It was assumed that this annihilation was necessary to achieve a two-class society of capitalists and workers and that it would hasten the advance of communist revolution. The disjuncture between the Marxian predictions and reality prompted "the gravest doubts about Marx's 'dogma'" (Kautsky 1988, 5) amongst revolutionaries. Early analyses of the capitalist transformation of agriculture therefore had an immediate political purpose, but the analyses also provided the theoretical underpinnings for later scholarly work in agrarian political economy. In sections 1.1.1 and 1.1.2, I examine the contributions of these early analyses. In section 1.1.3, I examine how these early analyses on Europe were applied and transformed in another sociospatial context: 20th-century Latin America. In section 1.1.4, I summarize the relevant concepts from agrarian political economy still utilized today.

1.1.1 Agrarian Transitions in Late 19th-Century Central Europe

In *The Agrarian Question*, Karl Kautsky applied Marxist analysis to the study of agriculture. Focusing on the German Empire and other parts of Central Europe, his intention was not to add "yet another specimen to the vast pile of monographs and inquiries" (1988, 2) on the state of agriculture, and not to separately examine the individual components of the agrarian question; his intention was instead to produce a work analyzing the relationships between the various components "as individual manifestations of one overall process" (1988, 2). In other words, *The Agrarian Question* is based on a methodological assumption that "pre-capitalist and non-capitalist forms of agriculture" must be examined as operating "within capitalist society" (1988, 3).

One of Kautsky's significant findings was that the persistence of the small farm in the late 19th century did not imply its continued autonomous existence. In fact, Kautsky analyzed the manner by which the small (peasant) farm may form a *functional* relationship with large-scale agriculture, a relationship created and spurred through capitalist development (not in opposition to it, although the presence of peasant farms may superficially suggest that). Various European states had indeed utilized incentives to promote the establishment of "undersized" peasant plots and to prevent a potential

agricultural labor force from migrating abroad or to the cities. This arrangement was functional to the extent that the small-scale and large-scale farms did not compete with each other and that the small-scale farms offered a market—and more importantly, a source of labor-power—for the large-scale producers.

Alternately, according to Kautsky, in the face of competition from large-scale producers, peasant family farms may overexploit their own labor-power. Such practices enable small-scale farms to achieve a lower price for labor, but "the lower-than-average price of labour-power...reinforces its functional significance for capitalism" (Alavi and Shanin 1988, xv). By overworking and under-consuming, peasant farms, unlike "rational" large-scale agricultural operations, can survive without relying on technological innovations. Thus, according to Kautsky, "the more agriculture becomes a science" (1988, 111), the greater the competition between "rational" and small-scale producers, and the sharper the increase in exploitation of peasants and their children. In fact, rather than directly engage in agriculture, capitalist agro-industry might extract more profit by leasing land to perennially overexploited peasants. In light of this, Alavi and Shanin, in their introduction to Kautsky's book, posit that "the peasant sector of the capitalist political economy is therefore a source of continuous 'primitive accumulation'" (1988, xvi).

Although "free peasants" appeared to persist, Kautsky argued that they were increasingly dependent on factories, which had become the only outlet for their production. With the industrialization and capitalization of food processing, producer-processing cooperatives struggled to compete with capitalist firms. Kautsky illustrated his point by pointing to Switzerland, where the establishment and expansion of the Nestlé company resulted in the company becoming the sole processor of milk for 180 villages. While the village inhabitants were "still the nominal owners of their land, they [were] no longer free peasants" (1988, 283). The relentless changes brought by capitalist development in agriculture meant that "no field of agriculture [was] completely safe" (1988, 297), and that farmers must always be ready to follow technological developments. Despite their constant threat, these changes did not necessarily reconfigure the size distribution of farms. Significantly, Kautsky placed special emphasis

on the specific characteristics of production based in land: because land is a fixed and scarce resource it is possible to monopolize it. Kautsky noted that peasants exhibited a remarkable desire to keep possession of their land, even under difficult circumstances, and a willingness to buy land at escalating prices. He therefore hinted at the existence of multiple, although subordinate, values at work within the broader system.

1.1.2 Agrarian Transitions in Late 19th-Century Imperial Russia

Writing about the Russian context, Lenin (2004) undertook a similar analysis of the development of capitalism in agriculture. His adversaries were the Narodniks, anti-capitalist intellectuals who believed that Russia was not suited for capitalism and that the Russian village commune embraced elements of socialism that could be harnessed to advance Russia directly into a socialist system. Lenin discounted them as romantic idealists and set about refuting their claims in his own study. Basing his analysis on zemstvo statistics from the late 19th century, Lenin primarily argued against the Narodniks' theoretical claims by proving that a home market was under formation and that class-based differentiation between peasants was already taking place. According to Lenin, the peasantry had ceased to exist as a (feudal) class and was constituted by internally differentiated positions of the rural bourgeoisie and the rural proletariat. Although a few of the remaining "middle peasants" would join the bourgeoisie (a status to which most middle peasants aspired), Lenin predicted that they would generally be flung into the masses of the rural proletariat by undergoing a process of depeasantization. The rural bourgeoisie were defined by their employment of wage labor and their possession of larger holdings (both with respect to land and animals). The Russian rural proletariat, in contrast, typically farmed on small allotments. Lenin maintained that this appearance of "peasant" production was misleading and underscored the fact that agricultural holdings did not preclude dependence on wage labor for survival. Increasing migration accelerated the differentiation between rural proletariat and bourgeoisie in both sending and receiving areas because the middle peasants migrated to new agricultural territories (carrying with them the "elements" of differentiation), while the poorest and

wealthiest peasants stayed behind. As a result, Lenin argued, it is unsurprising to see some peasants expanding production and using improved technology, while for others conditions for farming just deteriorate. The first group had a cumulating advantage, propelled not only by better assets but also better access to credit.

Not only did Lenin critique Narodnik claims about the very existence of an undifferentiated peasant category (and thus its revolutionary status), he also analyzed two different paths of capitalist development: the American path, led by free peasants; and the Prussian path, led by the landed nobility with their large estates (Bernstein 1996). He maintained that although capitalist transitions occurred differently over space and manifested themselves in different forms, the ultimate result everywhere would be differentiation into two classes: bourgeoisie and proletariat. For Russia, however, Lenin preferred the American path because he thought it would hasten the development of capitalism. At the time he was undertaking his major writings on agriculture and he did not foresee the impending developments that would lead to the Russian Revolution, and more importantly, to the failure of socialist revolutions in Western Europe.

1.1.3 Agrarian Transitions in 20th-Century Latin America

In the 1960s, faced with the growing militancy of peasant movements in the Third World, including the rising prominence of Maoism, interest in the early scholarship on the agrarian question spiked. Academics sought to apply the insights of Kautsky, Lenin, and others on agrarian transitions to capitalism outside of Europe and Soviet-controlled territories. Challenged by the realities of different sociospatial contexts, scholars developed new concepts to account for the complexities they encountered. For example, in *The Agrarian Question in Latin America*, Alain de Janvry (1981) analyzed agrarian transitions impacted by existing patterns of capital accumulation in a structurally heterogeneous world economic system, a system that produces differences between central and peripheral nation-states. He contended that while central nation-states are socially and sectorally articulated, peripheral nation-states are disarticulated. Articulated economies are characterized on the supply side by capital accumulation linked to the

production of consumer goods, and on the demand side by rising wages for workers ensuring a rising demand. The tendency for the rate of profit to fall nevertheless necessitates capital to search for profitable investments beyond the articulated nation-states. By contrast, in disarticulated economies, capital expands through profits and rents, as opposed to expanding through a home market. As a result, no incentives are available to increase wages. The result is a "functional dualism between modern and traditional sectors" that "makes it possible to sustain a level of wage below the cost of maintenance and reproduction of the labor force – a cost that would determine the minimum wage for a fully proletarianized labor force" (1981, 36). The condition of functional dualism produced semi-proletarianized peasants, who, without adequate wages, were forced to live off the land.[4] Because of insecurity in waged employment, de Janvry notes that peasants attempt to reverse the loss of "peasant" status and cling to land for survival. Quoting Silvia Teran, de Janvry writes: "The struggles in the countryside – even those of the wage earners – have an essentially peasant character due to the incapacity of the dependent capitalist system to provide salaried employment as a viable alternative for economic survival. It is for this reason that the peasants and workers seek refuge in the peasant situation" (de Janvry 1981, 267).[5] Although skeptical about peasant movements that advanced the idea of land reform, de Janvry contended that land reform could be useful if forged in alliance with workers and in support of the demands of a certain strata of (proletarianized) producers.

1.1.4 Contemporary Farming Households in a Capitalist Society

Scholars of agrarian political economy have provided various explanations for why the development of capitalism in the agricultural sector may not mirror the model followed by industrial development. In so doing, they have analytically clarified the differentiated capitalist integration of various components of farming systems. Family farms may feature prominently in contemporary agricultural landscapes and even out-number capitalist farms, but their "'persistence' is tolerated, and even encouraged, by capital as long as peasant or family farming can continue to produce 'cheap' food

commodities that lower the costs of labour power (wages) to capitalists, and indeed itself produces 'cheap' labour power" (Bernstein 2010, 94).

Following Lenin, who pointed out that the transitions from feudal class relations to capitalist relations vary across space, scholars have documented the multiple paths that agrarian transitions have taken (Bernstein 2010). What is common in all of them is the commodification of subsistence, which may not be total (i.e., labor may not be commodified), but which still forces peasants to depend in some manner or another on commodity relations for subsistence. Although not always obvious, peasants have been increasingly implicated in the processes that characterize capitalism, that is "exploitation of labour driven by the need to expand the scale of production and increase productivity in order to make profit – in short, accumulation" (Bernstein 2010, 22).

Although classes may not appear to be obviously delineated among peasants, the differentiation spurred by capitalism is evident in the inability of all peasants to reproduce themselves as capital (Bernstein 2010). In other words, the class spectrum is occupied on one end by peasants who can sustain their livelihoods as capitalist farmers, and who are therefore able to fulfill the necessities for simple reproduction and for expansion in productivity. On the opposite end of the class spectrum are those peasants who struggle to sustain their livelihoods as capitalist farmers. In the middle are the simple commodity producers who reproduce themselves as capital and labor on the same scale, meaning that they are not engaged in expanded reproduction. For the poor peasants who cannot reproduce their livelihoods as capital, they cannot reproduce as labor either, resulting in the need to sell their labor elsewhere. In contrast, petty commodity producers combine both capitalist and labor class locations. This contradictory position is not some ideal locus; indeed, it poses its own problems. Faced with the need to attend to both replacement and consumption funds, the consumption fund may be sacrificed to supply farming inputs or rent. These positions are far from stable: the force of competition and capitalism's endemic crises may produce more changes as households compete for land, for labor, and as households simply compete in the market.

Despite appearances that may suggest otherwise, farmer livelihoods are bound up within the dynamics of capitalism, producing a changing and differentiated social landscape. According to theorists of agrarian political economy, a class analysis yields meaningful insights into this differentiated social landscape and aids in the recognition, often against the claims of farmers' movements, of farmers' disparate interests. Even the classification of a "small" or "mid-sized" farmer is an analytically weak one that says nothing about the position of that farmer in a socially differentiated world.

Of particular relevance to scholars who continue to analyze the agrarian question are the findings of Kautsky and Lenin. Kautsky found that not only do small-scale farms persist, but that they may form a functional relationship with large-scale, capitalist farms. Similar to the assumptions surrounding small-scale farms in the 19th century, in the contemporary world, small farms are often assumed to be sustainable or even to exist in opposition to large-scale farms (D'Souza and Ikerd 1996). Kautsky's analysis provides a blueprint that shows scholars how to go beyond simple assessments of large-scale versus small-scale and to examine interconnections and the upstream and downstream linkages as a dynamic whole.

With transnational movements in the name of the "peasant" gaining support in the early 21st century, Lenin's influence remains pertinent to the scholars who question the movements that rally in support of peasants. Such scholars argue instead for more complex analyses of class relations and for an understanding of who benefits from the political movements that attempt to represent peasant interests.

1.2 The Agrarian Question Beyond Class Differentiation

1.2.1 Theorizing the Peasant Economy in the Soviet Union

Lenin and Kautsky were not the only classical theorists of the agrarian question who later had an influence on scholars. Alexander Chayanov offered another influential view. Chayanov's studies of the 1920 peasant economy in the Soviet Union started to influence scholarship in the 1960s. Writing before forced collectivization, Chayanov and

other agrarian economists (or social agronomists, as Chayanov preferred to be called), set out to thoroughly study the peasant household. Chayanov's approach emphasized the importance of studying "from below," even if such study entailed bracketing and isolating certain phenomena for the purposes of theoretical abstraction (1986). With this method, he attempted to distill the unconscious logic that propelled the peasant household economy in times of crisis as well as in times of abundance. Significantly, Chayanov argued for the corollary abandonment of categories, such as "wages," that were typically used to study capitalist production: according to Chayanov, the peasant economy required a new theory to understand its continued operation in the capitalist economic system.

Although his work is too vast to outline, his theories continue to be used to demonstrate why peasant family farms can outcompete capitalist farms. Echoing Kautsky's point, Chayanov argued that the family farm's competitive power is fueled by self-exploitation, or the capacity of peasant families to work more (and harder) in order to satisfy their needs. Therefore, in an economy of declining prices for agricultural goods, capitalist firms have to cut back on production, but peasant farms actually work more to make enough income (and thus maximize total income, not profit). Building upon this theory, Chayanov further developed the idea that as families grew and their needs expanded, so too did their agricultural activities. At the time, Chayanov viewed social differentiation in the countryside as principally a factor of demographic change in the life-cycle of the household. Although his view later changed, notably in the less well-known *Theory of Peasant Cooperatives* (Chayanov 1991), Chayanov is commonly criticized for ignoring the impact that capitalist penetration may have had on differentiation. Indeed, Chayanov may have had an even more lasting impact if his plans to study differentiation in the countryside had not been thwarted by his arrest, imprisonment, and eventual execution.

Chayanov cannot be easily classified as a (neo)populist or small-farm romantic, as he continues to be cast: his scholarly work was theoretically eclectic and responsive to critics, some of whom belonged to Chayanov's own Organization and Production School (Shanin 2009). His political position was similarly nuanced and attuned to the changing realities of rural life in the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. Although many of his

concepts have been challenged and disproved by hostile and sympathetic scholars alike (see Shanin 1986 for a more thorough analysis of these challenges), his enduring contributions include his insistence on the limitations of capitalist logic, on the relative autonomy of family labor, and on the recognition of the possibility that peasant family farms can survive in an economic system dominated by capitalism. In sum, even under capitalism, Chayanov argued family farms may operate under a different logic, with different outcomes and possibilities.

1.2.2 Peasant Economies

In the 1960s, Chayanov's theories were widely applied by scholars who sought to make sense of peasant responses to the contemporary and historical development of capitalism. Many scholars who drew upon Chayanov's work argued that peasant production constituted a unique mode of production within capitalism, one governed by its own logic (Vergopoulos 1978). The argument put these scholars at odds with scholars whose arguments drew more directly from Lenin, who analyzed the differentiation between peasants and abstained from formulating generalizable peasant logics. In the subsequent so-called Lenin-Chayanov debate (see Banaji 1976; Bernstein and Byres 2001; Bernstein 2009), Lenin and Chayanov were cast as theoretical adversaries (Bernstein 2009). In the midst of this debate, at least one scholar attempted to use Kautsky to forge an interesting reconciliation (Banaji 1976).

Another attempt to maintain fidelity to Marx and reconcile Chayanov and Lenin's distinct approaches to the agrarian question was offered by Friedmann (1978). In her history of simple commodity production,[6] Friedmann's approach (1978), since labeled Chayanovian Marxism (Buttel 2001), argued against the predominant assumption that simple commodity producers will always lose out to capitalist producers. Her focus of study was the apparent decline of capitalist production (organized through wage labor) and the rise of simple commodity production as a proportion of world wheat production in the late 19th and 20th century. According to Friedmann, capitalist enterprises and household producers are two structurally different "forms of production," each with

different kinds of costs. To examine household simple commodity producers, Friedmann adapted Chayanov's theory, but applied some important modifications. She concluded that the changing patterns of global wheat production, and the ability of simple commodity producers to outcompete capitalist firms, was due to a series of historical conjunctures. Given the appropriate conditions, Friedmann argues, simple commodity producers may persist in modern social formations, and their presence can have important political ramifications (1978).

Chayanov assumed an ontology that was different than that developed by Lenin and Kautsky, but all three theorists were concerned with the impacts and development of capitalism. What binds the work of Kautsky, Lenin, and Chayanov is their common concern with the social relations of production (capitalist or non-capitalist) and their privileging of an economistic understanding of agrarian transitions and change. This focus was critiqued by scholars still adhering to a Marxian tradition, as I detail in Section 2.

2. Agrarian Change Beyond Class Dynamics

While the focus on the relationship between class dynamics and agrarian change and more broadly on the social relations of production remained dominant in peasant studies and agrarian political economy, critiques began to arise about the narrowness of this focus. In particular, scholars attentive to gender drew attention to the significance of patriarchal relations in the household, which were neglected and ignored by most other critics. Similarly, some scholars sought to consider the role of nature in accumulation processes, the increasing importance of globalization, and the limitations of new production practices, like organic farming. In the following section, I summarize contributions made by these interventions.

2.1 Engendering Agrarian Change

Much scholarship on agrarian change rested on the assumption that the household, based on values of sharing and generosity, acted as a unified unit with homogeneous interests. Friedmann's work (1978) was among the first to challenge such assumptions by arguing that patriarchal relations within the household must be understood as intertwined with commodity relations. Feminist scholars followed in Friedmann's wake, seeking to unpack the "peasant household," to critique assumptions of women's innate altruism, and to make women's work on the farm more visible in order to empower women peasants as subjects. In studies of agrarian transition, these scholars pointed out how changes often rested upon reconstituted gender relations. With the development of colonialism and capitalism, women in many places lost access to the resources they needed to undertake social reproduction. Finally, the more recent neoliberal restructuring of the agro-food sector has often relied upon the expansion of gendered non-commodified labor (Razavi 2009).

Later work, using the insights of poststructuralism, examined the construction of the categories of "woman" and "man." According to feminist perspectives, these categories are always in production and endowed with meaning through complex relations with other axes of difference. Because feminist critiques have pointed towards multiple oppressions and have indicated the limits of analyses centered exclusively within the circuits of value and commodities, their contributions to agrarian political economy have gone beyond a concern for the importance of gender and have involved analysis of "how class itself is constituted by gender, race, ethnicity, caste, or other markers of social difference" (Ramamurthy 2000, 552). Feminist analyses have also revealed the importance of recognizing the simultaneity and the multiple dimensions of struggles: "struggles over material resources—accumulation through increasing labor discipline or surplus appropriation—are recognized as being simultaneously struggles over cultural meanings and identities" (Ramamurthy 2000, 553). While this research has generated substantial scholarship within agrarian political economy, its foremost focus of analysis—gender relations—has yet to become a significant component of work within

agrarian political economy more broadly. As Razavi argues: "If neoclassical economists are guilty of distorting gender relations, then political economists of agrarian change must be faulted for ignoring it" (2009, 198).

2.2 The Role of Nature

In contrast to gender, the importance of natural processes in agricultural production was considered by both classical theorists and later agrarian political economists, even if such processes were not a central focus of study. As Friedmann notes, the peculiarities of production based in *land* and the persistence of non-capitalist *labor* on peasant or family farms were the "locus classicus" of the agrarian question (2006). Explaining the peculiarities that land-based production has on the social structure of the farm, Mann and Dickinson argue that the time needed for agricultural production and for labor does not coincide; therefore, constant capital is used inefficiently, labor recruiting becomes a problem, and a lower rate of profit is obtained (Mann and Dickinson 1978). Agricultural production consequently creates disincentives for capitalist investment, which leads to the continued existence of family farms. Although the Mann-Dickinson thesis faced considerable criticism (see Henderson 1998; McLaughlin 1998), it was a significant scholarly intervention that attempted to more seriously consider the role of nature, even though its priority was to explain why family farms persist.

The relationship between nature and agriculture was later the subject of an influential book by Goodman, Sorj and Wilkinson (1987), which criticized the dominant focus on the social structure of agriculture. Instead, they reconsidered the role that nature plays in preventing the transformation of agricultural production into a unified industrial process. Farming systems are based in biophysical processes, which shape and constrain production. For example, weather, pests, and diseases may exact a considerable and unpredictable toll on production, which itself cannot be fully controlled because of the seasonality of agricultural production. "For capital, the central constraint is not the (limited) autonomy of the farmer or owner-operator but the inability to eliminate the risks, uncertainties and discontinuities intrinsic to a natural or biological production

process" (Goodman, Sorj, and Wilkinson 1987, 156). However, the authors argue that industrial capital has been able to adapt to natural constraints by employing strategies of *substitutionism* and *appropriationism.* Appropriationism takes place when value-generating activities move out of the direct sphere of the farmer, effectively commodifying farm processes, such as through the appropriation of the production of agricultural inputs. Substitutionism refers to accumulation from the processing of agricultural outputs, which also leads to a tendency to eliminate the natural product through the production of synthetic and chemical replacements. Goodman, Sorj, and Wilkinson (1987) argue that mechanized industrial processing reshaped the agricultural product into an industrial commodity. The previous example of Nestlé's development in late 19th-century Switzerland illustrates this process (Kautsky 1988). According to Goodman, Sorj, and Wilkinson (1987), the ramifications of this development are much broader than the simple transfer of processing from the farm because processing creates a foundation for the possibility of replacing agricultural inputs with synthetics. Rather than maintaining an association with the agricultural input, the processed commodity is "one whose properties, such as taste or perishability, and 'identity,' would be associated with a specific industrial process (condensed milk) and a proprietary brand (Nestlé, Borden)" (Goodman, Sorj and Wilkinson 1987, 60).

More recently, scholars have argued that nature should also be viewed as a resource to capital: biological systems can be used as a vehicle or an opportunity for capital accumulation (Boyd, Prudham, and Schurman 2001). Analyzing the historical circulation of credit in California agriculture, Henderson (1998) argues that agriculture imposes both constraints and opportunities for capital. While their focus remained on the relationship between nature and agriculture, these studies provided insights on how broader circulations of capital beyond the farm transform agriculture and farming practices.

2.3 New Global Realities

By the end of the 20th century, the new global reality of agro-food systems had become the focus of agrarian political economy (Watts and Goodman 1997). One important dimension of this discourse that continues to develop is the concept of "food regimes" (McMichael 2009). "Food regimes" historicize the global political economy of food by attempting to account for the multiple factors that contribute to periods of stability, transition, and crisis in capital accumulation (see McMichael 2009 for a genealogy of food regimes). Such an approach to agrarian political economy highlights the importance of both national politics (e.g., in encouraging overproduction in Europe and the United States) and international connections (e.g., Northern consumption of Southern fruit and vegetables) (Friedmann 1991). One particularly important component of the new global food regime is the rising global trade in "fresh" fruits and vegetables, a phenomenon often studied using the commodity systems approach (Friedland 1994).

The commodity systems approach was originally conceived to theorize previously neglected areas of focus (i.e. off-farm processes) and to understand the interconnections between five different areas: "production practices; grower organisation; labour as a factor of production; the generation and application of science and technology; and marketing and distribution processes" (Challies 2008, 379). Commodity systems analyses of specific products grew in importance in the 1990s and were paralleled in other fields with the development of concepts such as global production networks and global value chains (Buttel 2001; Challies 2008). Complimenting research on commodity systems were parallel studies on the growing power of transnational corporations (TNCs), their organizational and operational structures, and their relationships with nation-states and other governing bodies (Bonanno et al. 1994). The rise of TNCs went hand in hand with the growing dominance of neoliberalism (Watts and Goodman 1997). Following the first Washington Consensus (WC), which prescribed international policies to increase economic growth, five neoliberal policy reforms were formulated based on the assumptions of the "average representative farmer," purportedly to improve agricultural production in developing countries. These included: the

elimination of subsidies for consumers and agricultural inputs; the mega-devaluation of currency to encourage export; the elimination of state marketing agencies; the liberalization of prices to align with world prices; and the elimination of subsidized credit (Oya 2005). In general, the neoliberal reforms for the agricultural sector, often known as market-led agrarian reform, espoused the efficiency of markets and condemned the distortions of state interventions. Agrarian political economists have actively criticized the assumptions and impacts of market-led agrarian reform (Akram-Lodhi 2007).

2.4 Political Economy and the Emergence of "Alternative" Food

The contemporary dominance of neoliberalism and agro-industrialism has not gone uncontested. Since the 1970s, organic farming movements in the United States have been trying to create an alternative agriculture, but agrarian political economists have lodged several critiques of this movement. In her book, *Agrarian Dreams: The Paradox of Organic Farming in California*, Julie Guthman (2004) synthesizes her critique of the development of organic agriculture by analyzing the historical geography of the state of California, the development of the organic farming social movement, and the agrarian vision that drives the movement. Using concepts from agrarian political economy, such as appropriationism, substitutionism, and intensification, Guthman analyzes the development of the organic farming sector in California.

In California, according to Guthman, the involvement of agri-business led to the intensification of farming practices because heightened competition from new entrants into the organic sector caused price premiums to whither away. In order to compete and survive, even growers committed to the most sustainable practices had to intensify production. In short, all organic farmers must operate within a larger agrarian political economy where the logic of intensification prevails. The logic of intensification in California, Guthman writes, was also driven by previous innovations capitalized into land values. Using rent theory, Guthman attempts to understand how farmers must put their land to the highest and best uses. Guthman found that farmers are under pressure to produce crops with the highest possible value in the least amount of time. This leads to

the abandonment of cropping strategies that create no value but are integral to ecological sustainability. Although alternative food networks were not the central focus of Guthman's analysis, their farmers, as producers of "alternative" food (organic or otherwise) are implicated in intensification and conventionalization. Consequently, Guthman's study (in addition to the work of Buck et al. 1997) became known as the "conventionalisation thesis" of organic agriculture (Lockie and Halpin 2005). Guthman's work is not necessarily a coherent thesis on conventionalization, but is rather an analysis of the organic sector conceptually based in agrarian political economy. The insights it provides reveal that even alternative agriculture production is not isolated from capitalist tendencies.

2.5 Concluding Thoughts: The Political Economy of Agrarian Change

In conclusion, taking the development of capitalism as its core focus, agrarian political economy has developed useful analytical tools to understand farming livelihoods. Starting with a focus on agrarian transitions, its early writers noted both that capitalism develops along multiple paths and that capitalist development does not always occur along a linear trajectory, from feudal to capitalist social relations. By incorporating insights from feminist theorists, recent scholars have further developed a processual approach to agrarian change, underscoring that social processes are constituted by race, ethnicity, and other dimensions of difference in dynamic relation to class (Hart 2002). Although the central focus of agrarian political economy has remained the nature of social relations and agro-industrialization under capitalism, starting in the 1980s scholars began to consider the complexities of nature and capital, as well as the increasingly globalized nature of agricultural production and distribution.

Agrarian political economists have been particularly insightful in pointing out the weaknesses of new "solutions" to problems in agricultural and rural development, whether proposed from "above" (from bureaucratic development institutions or the state) or from "below" (social movements organizing on behalf of "peasants"). Henry Bernstein has described the basic current research questions of agrarian political

economy as: “who owns what? who does what? who gets what? what do they do with it?” (Bernstein 1992, 24). These questions have only become more pertinent as the frontiers of capital in agriculture present new opportunities for accumulation. For example, White and Dasgupta (2010) use Bernstein’s questions as a basis for research on agrofuels, asking: “where will the land for agrofuels feedstock production come from, how will production be organised, and for whose benefit?” (2010, 600). Awareness of the social differentiation produced by capitalist development continues to animate research.

3. Alternative Geographies of Food

The concept of “alternative geographies of food” (Whatmore and Thorne 1997) emerged in the late 1990s, in tandem with increasing scholarly attention to cultures of consumption and the agency of nature. It marked a fundamental turn away from the dominant theoretical perspective and its intellectual focus: the globalized capitalist agro-food economy (see Buttel 2001). While this research produced insightful analyses of growing corporate dominance in the food system, Whatmore and Thorne argued that it also reproduced a certain spatial imaginary, a totalizing account of globalization, devoid of agency and perpetuating “a peculiarly modernist geographical imagination that casts globalization as a colonization of surfaces which, like a spreading ink stain, progressively colors every spot on the map” (Whatmore and Thorne 2012, 235). Their argument mirrored feminist interventions that challenged the reproduction of “capitalonormativity,” a representation marginalizing or ignoring multiple non-capitalist economic practices (Gibson-Graham 1996). According to Whatmore and Thorne and other scholars, Marxist approaches, including those that were the foundation of agrarian political economy, had to be challenged by entirely new frameworks (earlier critiques were improvements upon, not turns away from agrarian political economy). In Section 3.1, I outline the critiques directed at agrarian political economy and Marxist approaches more broadly. In section 3.2, I go on to outline the theoretical frameworks proposed to address these critiques.

3.1 Critiquing Political Economy

Most significant with respect to the subsequent growing interest in alternative food initiatives has been the accusation that Marxist approaches: 1) remain reductionistic and capitalocentric; 2) are dismissive of the possibility of actually existing alternatives to globalized capitalism; 3) neglect the agency of nature and materiality; 4) focus inadequately on consumption and culture; and 5) neglect peasant agency as potentially transformative and politically meaningful. In the following sections, I outline the main components of these critiques.

3.1.1 Capitalocentrism

According to some critics, by focusing exclusively on capitalist transformations of agrarian spaces, agrarian political economy has privileged capitalist logics over others (Whatmore and Thorne 1997). In other words, it has been "capitalocentric." Even when scholars have turned their attention to non-capitalist economic processes, they have mostly foregrounded these spaces as functional to capital or as marginal within the capitalist system. For example, a critic might observe that peasant households operate according to different, non-capitalist logics, but the overarching argument would nevertheless maintain that such households are subordinated to capital. In contrast, unpacking the "economy" and revealing its multitude of non-capitalist economic practices, such as unpaid housework and volunteer work, produces an image in which capitalist practices and the formal economic sphere are themselves marginalized (Gibson-Graham 1996). Critics of agrarian political economy and Marxist approaches contend that the capitalocentrism of existing and past scholarship has privileged certain economic practices over others and has therefore neglected to adequately consider the importance of a wide spectrum of non-capitalist practices (Gibson-Graham 1996; Whatmore and Thorne 1997).

3.1.2 Alterity

Critics of capitalocentrism have further argued that an exclusive focus on global capitalism and conventional food chains deflects attention from already existing alternatives, which could otherwise be recognized, strengthened, and sustained (Whatmore and Thorne 1997). Furthermore, because discourses are themselves productive of the worlds they seek to represent, scholarship that represents food systems as globalized and exclusively capitalist helps produce a world in which seeing and supporting alternative food systems becomes more difficult. To call attention to alternatives and to thereby help shape a world that fosters alternative food systems, Whatmore and Thorne suggest an approach in which "resistance, alterity, and possibility become analytically discernible and politically meaningful" (2012, 236).

3.1.3 Nature

Scholarship in agrarian political economy has also been accused of applying a restrictive understanding of "nature" and materiality (Bakker and Bridge 2006). Even when scholars actively took an interest in nature, it was represented as an obstacle or constraint (Goodman, Sorj, and Wilkinson 1987; Mann 1990), or as a vehicle for capital accumulation (Boyd, Prudham, and Schurman 2001). This critique has extended to Marxist approaches more broadly, which have been criticized not only for restricted understandings of nature but for anthropocentrism and for reproducing problematic dualistic divides (Castree 2002).

3.1.4 Consumption

The focus on production in agrarian political economy reflects the assumption by Marxists that the sphere of production is the sole locus of political agency and potential transformative power. This is where labor meets capital, where surplus value is extracted

from workers through the labor process. Consumption, merely a component of the sphere of exchange, has been generally relegated to a lesser or even invisible position. While consumer movements driven by environmental and other concerns began to make their presence felt in the food chain, scholars had not developed concepts that could provide a more nuanced account of a kind of consumption that was clearly "more than merely a niche marketing opportunity" (Goodman and Dupuis 2002, 18). For consumers, who were otherwise absent from the productive locus of power, political engagement could only be pursued through the unveiling of commodity fetishism. Even analyses of commodity systems, which linked production and consumption, privileged the site of production for scholarly analysis and meaningful political action. In Fine's Systems of Provision (SOP) approach, for example, consumption is theorized as determined by production (Lockie and Kitto 2000). Even though in the 1990s efforts were made to integrate consumption into agrarian political economy, Goodman and Dupuis (2002) noted that consumption in agrarian political economy remained under-theorized and was usually analyzed in economistic terms. The capitalocentrism that privileged the social relations of production meant that agrarian political economists continued to treat consumption as a realm devoid of transformative power.[7]

3.1.5 Peasants

Consumers were not the only agents lacking transformative power according to agrarian political economists. The insistence that peasants did not form a distinct class (neither completely capitalist, nor completely proletariat) led scholars to dismiss or criticize movements that rallied on behalf of peasants. But peasant movements remain prominent today, and agrarian political economy has been criticized for lacking the tools to consider the political agency of peasant movements (Edelman 1999).

3.2 The Emergence of Alternative Food Networks

In light of these critiques, many scholars in agro-food studies turned to other theoretical frameworks to understand what came to be known as the "alternative geographies of food." In the 1990s, within this particular scholarly trajectory, the conceptualization of "alternative food networks" emerged (Whatmore and Thorne 1997). It provided an alternative theoretical approach to agrarian political economy that had the goal of highlighting, analyzing, and even supporting agro-food systems that in some way provided an "alternative" to dominant globalized agro-industrial food systems (Whatmore and Thorne 1997). Two aspects of alterity are therefore at stake in this chapter: first is the explicit turn to study alternative practices and networks; second, and more implicitly, is the turn away from political economy more broadly and towards alternative theoretical perspectives.

Beyond these two rejections (of globalized agro-food systems and agrarian political economy), the meaning of "alternative" remains murky. It is not surprising that disagreements have arisen on how best to understand alterity in the food system. In fact, a wide variety of theoretical perspectives have been generated for the study of alternative food networks. In this section, I compare these theoretical perspectives, including: actor-network theory (Section 3.2.1), diverse economies (Section 3.2.2), moral economy (Section 3.2.3), conventions theory (Section 3.2.4), and farming styles approaches (Section 3.2.5). I pay particular attention to the relative strengths and weaknesses of these approaches and to how they account for: 1) the emergence of AFNs; 2) the sustainment of AFNs; 3) the maintenance of farmer livelihoods within AFNs. In Section 3.3, I conclude by arguing that the growth in theories on the nature of alternative geographies of food has provided noteworthy insights into the workings of food networks. However, as a result of initial (and ongoing) rejections of political economic theory, Marxist theory specifically, these frameworks cannot fully account for the processes impacting farmer livelihoods.

3.2.1 Actor-Networks

In formulating alternative geographies of food, Whatmore and Thorne (1997) draw on post-humanist approaches. Specifically, they use Latour's notions of hybrid networks and Law's conceptualization of "modes of ordering" to counter the orthodox notion that globalization is an expansive and homogenizing colonization of space. According to Whatmore and Thorne, globalization should not be understood as a given, completed process, but as instead dependent upon "intricate interweavings of *situated* people, artefacts, codes, and living things and the maintenance of particular tapestries of connection across the world" (1997, 212). Many conventional food networks extend across space but do not colonize all spaces, and the networks are themselves ridden with instabilities. Globalization is therefore a fragmented, unstable and ongoing process, accomplished through the agency of humans *and* non-humans.

ANT provides the tools to conceptualize space as constituted by a multitude of networks given shape by various actors. The effects of these networks are not pre-given but are relational achievements of all the actors involved in any given network. The promiscuous mixing of the human and nonhuman, revealed by ANT, challenges assumptions that underpin the division of the "social" from the "natural," including the division between the social and natural sciences. In addition to allowing for an expanded understanding of the agency of nature and revalorizing the sphere of consumption as a meaningful space for political action, Whatmore and Thorne argue that ANT, by highlighting the partiality and fluidity of even the most seemingly stable and entrenched food networks, disallows economistic, homogenizing, and politically disabling accounts of globalization. This opens the door for seeing and acting upon alternative food futures (Whatmore and Thorne 1997).

Whatmore and Thorne put this perspective to use in a study of fair trade coffee (1997). The fair trade network relies on a particular "mode of ordering" that brings together network actants in relationships based on partnership and responsibility. This contrasts with the mode of ordering that characterizes commercial coffee networks, that of opportunism and enterprise. In these networks, buyers seek the lowest price and

farmers are paid the market price, regardless of whether the price compensates them for their production costs or provides them with an adequate living. In fair trade networks, the mode of ordering guarantees that farmers receive a "fair" price, and buyers establish direct relationships with farmers to form partnerships. Farmers must also meet certain requirements to comply with principles of environmental stewardship, something that many farmers may be unable to follow through on. This inability represents one of the many ways in which fair trade networks are fraught with instability and are therefore in constant need of network strengthening (which may occur through the provision of extension services to farmers). Similar to other commercial networks, fair trade networks rely on the Cocoa, Sugar, and Coffee Exchange to determine prices. The price is made fair by guaranteeing a minimum price and by exceeding the market price by a certain number of points when the market price goes above this minimum. Therefore, the fairness of the price is based on the complex interactions of the conventional coffee networks that set market prices. In this case, fair trade networks are ultimately interrelated with conventional coffee networks.

ANT provides a useful spatial ontology to challenge homogeneous accounts of the globalization of agro-food systems, to make visible the range of food networks operating according to alternative modes of ordering, and to highlight the fact that any network is an effect of the weaving together of humans and non-humans. In addition, ANT provides conceptual tools and a relational understanding of power that does not privilege either productive or consumptive spheres (Lockie and Kitto 2000). It also allows for an appreciation of the involvement of humans and nonhumans in agro-food networks. Thus, the realm of politics is expanded, without presuppositions about which actors (human and nonhuman) assert political agency. Applying ANT sheds light on *how* different actors are enrolled, and on *how* relationships are created. Similarly, ANT demonstrates *how* network relationships must be maintained to avoid disruption, a process involving all parts and actants of the network. The focus on *how* networks operate illuminates the effort required to maintain network relationships. However, while ANT provides the theoretical tools to understand how networks are sustained through strengthening, it does not help explain the emergence of AFNs, or *why* certain modes of

ordering come into existence. ANT can provide a description of how certain actors (consumers) enroll actants (money) to purchase fair trade goods, but it does not help explain *why* some people have access to money and why others do not.

This inability to respond to such "why" questions has resulted in criticisms, which claim that ANT is an essentially descriptive rather than explanatory approach (Fine 2005). This position is buttressed by Latour's own characterization of ANT as a method rather than a theory and by Law's statement that ANT is more concerned with responding to "how" as opposed to "why" questions (Law 2007). According to Latour, however, it is only after "description is saturated" that explanation can emerge (cited in Castree 2002, 119). ANT's orientation towards process, as well as the seemingly infinite potential network connections and transformations, make completion or saturation difficult. Delimitation becomes necessary, which itself runs into the danger of ignoring that which cannot be incorporated into network theory.

In summary, ANT is useful to underscore the ways that network connections are made (and unmade), and the fact that any network relies on a multitude of actors who come together but who may just as easily be disrupted. Nevertheless, while ANT allows us to examine a certain aspect of the relationship between AFNs and the maintenance of producer/farmer livelihoods (through network strengthening and modes of ordering, for example), it does not provide an explanation for the emergence of AFNs, nor can it account for influences beyond the described network that might also impact livelihoods.

3.2.2 Diverse Economies

The diverse economies framework is another theoretical approach that tries to open up space to recognize the importance of already existing non-capitalist practices and to encourage the enactment of alternative, non-capitalist worlds (Gibson-Graham 1996). This approach is based on a poststructural perspective on class, which understands classes not as fixed categories or defined groups with certain characteristics, but as processes that appropriate and distribute surplus labor. Although capitalism is often considered a dominant and omnipresent mode of production, Gibson-Graham argue that

capitalocentrism has prevented us from reading the economy for different economic practices. Indeed, according to Gibson-Graham, capitalist class processes are one of many diverse economic practices that structure the economy, but they are far from being the dominant practices. Instead, diverse economies are composed of market, alternative market, and nonmarket transactions; wage, alternative paid, and unpaid labor; and capitalist, alternative capitalist, and non-capitalist enterprises. For Gibson-Graham, the concept of "alternative" is linked to transactions, forms of labor, and types of enterprises that distinguish themselves from the wage labor produced in capitalist firms for private accumulation. Gibson-Graham's representation of a diverse economy is not anti-capitalist, nor is it intended to displace capitalist firms (as is evident from its inclusion of green capitalist and socially responsible firms). Rather, they write, "we are interested in incorporating our understanding of capitalist difference into the community economy and in constructing a variety of (mutually transformative) relationships between non-capitalist economic practices and capitalist ones" (Gibson-Graham 1996, 7). Gibson-Graham have used action research methods to first help communities grasp the importance of the diverse economic practices that make their community, and to then collaboratively develop viable non-capitalist community economies that generate and distribute surplus locally.

Enacting diverse economies in food systems involves destabilizing what constitutes the capitalist food economy and rereading the food economy for difference, actions that can pave the way for alternative, non-capitalist economic becomings. Although Gibson-Graham's action research methods appear to be a substantial part of their theoretical framework (as part of enacting diverse economies), scholars of AFNs who draw on Gibson-Graham's work mostly use their theory of diverse economies to understand how to enact possible food economies (Holloway et al. 2007). For example, in their study of collective purchasing, Little et al. (2010) analyze the "'becomingness' of ethical purchasing" (2010, 1797), for its ability to shed light on why consumers get involved in AFNs (i.e., to enact another food economy).

Gibson-Graham's vision has been subject to various critical assessments by scholars (Aguilar 2005; Glassman 2003; Jancius 2006; Laurie 2005), but I contend that

what is most problematic about Gibson-Graham's approach is the theorization of economic difference. They categorize economic practices in discrete spheres according to surplus allocation, with definite boundaries separating capitalist and non-capitalist, market and non-market spheres. This categorization creates divisions between practices that are actually interrelated. For example, food provision is a task that combines capitalist and non-capitalist economic practices; food can be bought as a commodity, and that same food can be processed at home and given away for free to family members and friends. Spikes in food prices may also have impacts on non-capitalist food practices, by forcing greater self-sufficiency or reliance on food aid. As demonstrated by these examples, non-capitalist and capitalist spheres are complexly interrelated.

While Gibson-Graham's framework provides an explanation of why AFNs have appeared, and how they are sustained, it does not account for the dynamics affecting producer livelihoods. Their critique of capitalocentrism runs the danger of sidelining an understanding of capitalist dynamics, jeopardizing experiments in alternative economies that themselves are shaped in complex ways by capitalism. Nevertheless, the critique of capitalocentrism, the focus on the productivity of economic representations, and the spirit behind Gibson-Graham's project that encourages enacting alternative economic becomings, are all valuable contributions.

3.2.3 Conventions Theory

Conventions theory is another framework that emerged in part to address the fact that political economy left "little theoretical space to discern much deviation from the precepts of 'capitalist ordering' (either on the part of producers or consumers)" (Morgan et al. 2006, 17). Originally introduced in France and further developed by Storper and Salais (1997), conventions theory attempts to bring to light the range of values and practices that form the basis of economic action. Economies are diverse because no production system is devoid of conventions, the "humanly constructed orders of routines, cognitive frameworks, institutions, practices, and objects" (Storper and Salais 1997, 12). Conventions are not simply the values that structure production-consumption networks,

they also reflect institutional contexts, social and cultural constructions of quality, and even different understandings of profitability. This has important implications for farmers' livelihoods, as conventions are spatialized and unevenly distributed. To account for the contextual diversity of conventions, Storper and Salais (1997) formulated distinct "worlds of production," two of which are relevant here: 1) the Industrial World, which is geared towards the production of generic, standardized products, competes based on prices and experiences certain kinds of risks associated with business cycle fluctuations; and 2) the Interpersonal World, which is geared toward specialized products. The interpersonal world includes production systems more focused on quality and relationships between producers and consumers.

Marsden et al. (2000) are largely responsible for applying conventions theory to the study of AFNs. They define AFNs as new associational networks that engender different conventions of quality and value and that therefore mark a shift from the "industrial world" to the "domestic world." In this view, the recent emergence and growth of AFNs reflects growing interest by producers and consumers in the conventions unavailable in the industrial world. In contrast to the latter's standardized products, AFNs function by communicating knowledge of the production process, including information about place of origin, and by communicating a distinguishable quality characteristic of the product. Labels and standards help coordinate this communication. Price is of lesser importance than the values held both by producers and consumers and embedded in the exchanged product. The successful translation of these values is what engenders success in starting, building, and maintaining the supply chain. Conventions theory assumes that the AFN will function as long as conventions of quality and value meet both consumer needs and farmer producing capabilities.

Building upon these insights, conventions theory scholars have undertaken work in identification, description, and analysis of short food supply chains, particularly in the European Union (Renting et al. 2003; Roep and Wiskerke 2006; Venn et al. 2006). For example, Wiskerke and Roep highlight the importance of establishing forms of local embeddedness by cultivating a supportive institutional environment and by initiating strategic alliances between chain partners (Roep and Wiskerke 2006). These are

components of alternative food production systems that may help explain why AFNs function well in some places and not in others, where institutional environments and possibilities for strategic alliances are weaker.

Conventions theory provides important insights into the multitude of informal practices, values, and institutional contexts that form the bases for economic action. By unveiling these, scholars can help distinguish between the various conventions that help AFNs thrive and those under which they flounder. For example, defining "quality" can be a contested process, involving negotiations between different actors in the supply chain, and resulting in possible exclusions (Murdoch 2000).[8] In spatially extended supply chains, quality governance through labeling and standards (with the specific purpose of capturing added-value) has had the adverse affect of marginalizing small-scale producers (Neilson 2007).

Conventions theory also has several weaknesses. While highlighting the importance of quality, spatial and social embeddedness, and strong connections between components of the supply chain, it remains economistic and producer-focused, and inattentive to nature's agency and culture (see Venn et al. 2006 for a discussion on the neglect of consumption). The underlying (if under-examined) assumption is that short food supply chains are founded upon a farmer's ability to capture extra value added through alternative networks. Social and cultural factors are important only in so far as they influence economic action. In applications of conventions theory to food studies, aspects of the economic system that impact all worlds of production (albeit differently) have not garnered much focus, even though there is empirical evidence that processes like competition traverse worlds (see Guthman 2004). Just like conventional producers, organic farmers compete with each other and feel pressured to maximize profits (Guthman 2004). Moreover, conventions theory does not provide a framework to explain the exclusion of consumers who practice the conventions of alternative geographies of food, but do not have the money to fully participate in this world of production. More generally, a focus exclusively on the supply chain itself risks ignoring those that have already been excluded and the reasons for their exclusion.

An exclusive focus on conventions also fails to explain why economic actors would be motivated to adopt a new set of conventions. Interestingly, proponents of conventions theory, Morgan et al. (2006, 24), state that: "we need to consider the 'will to power' operating in heavily industrialized food chains that work constantly to expand their reach and to override local ecological and cultural conditions." Conventions theory provides valuable insights, but does not help explain the nature of that will to power.

3.2.4 Moral Economies

The concept of a *moral* economy is often used to convey the idea that economic relations are guided by moral positions, but the concept in fact has a richer and more complex history. Originally articulated by E.P. Thompson, the concept of a moral economy was developed in agrarian studies by James Scott in *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia* (1976), in which the concept was used to explain the roots of resistance and rebellion. Scott argued that precapitalist peasant communities operated following a subsistence ethic, whereby elites and the state guaranteed support for the minimum level of subsistence to which everyone had a right. When these guarantees were ignored, political mobilizations among peasants occurred. In other words, it is not exploitation that caused rebellion, but an abrogation of the moral economy that tacitly existed between peasants, the elite, and the state. Scott's analysis of the peasant household's "subsistence security" drew heavily on Chayanov's work, while also going beyond it to focus on the scale of the village scale and of the state. Edelman remarks that Scott was also indebted to Polanyi: "Scott's vision of peasant economy as embedded in a framework of intra- and interclass reciprocal relations echoes Polanyi's rejection of the presumption that economy constitutes an analytically autonomous domain apart from social institutions" (2005, 334). Although the concept of moral economy is not antithetical to theoretical approaches grounded in political economy (Sayer 2000), Scott's analysis contrasts with agrarian political economy in another manner. Like others drawing upon Chayanov, Scott tended to treat peasants as a distinct group or even a class with generalizable characteristics, such as the existence of a moral economy that centers

around a subsistence ethic, which he stated was shared by peasants from France to Russia to Southeast Asia (Scott 1976, 2). In his case, the existing moral economy was challenged by a market-based capitalist and colonial economy. There is therefore an implied broader historical transition from a moral economy to a capitalist economy.

In more recent scholarship on alternative food networks, scholars have often paired the concept of a moral economy with the "re-embeddedness" they see as characteristic of AFNs. AFNs represent a trend to bring back an eradicated moral economy by forging networks based on certain values, such as mutuality and reciprocity. In one study of AFNs in Manchester, Psarikidou and Szeszynski argue that "the alternative agrofood initiatives … manifested various combinations of the following: relations of solidarity and justice with proximate and distant others, regard for land and for the global environment, concern for social inclusion, interest in the well-being of the disadvantaged, and the reskilling of everyday life—which encourage us to speak in the language of the 'moral economy'" (2012, 36). This suggests that consumers seek engagement with AFNs because of the kind of moral economy fostered by AFNs, economies that then help to sustain AFNs.

Whereas Scott's theorization of moral economy focused on peasant producers and their livelihoods, recent usage of moral economy as a conceptual framework is almost totally confined to the realm of consumption (Edelman's work is an exception). Much of it assumes that moral economy implies social inclusivity, but the moral economy can also support socially exclusive values (such as racism, nationalism, nativism, etc.). Likewise, if the moral economy is simply considered to be a set of values, conventional food networks can also be understood to have their own moral economy based on affordable and widely accessible food. As Sayer notes:

> If we fail to acknowledge that economic activity is at least, in part, morally guided, and that even where it is not, it has moral implications, economic action appears to be wholly a matter of power and self interest. If this happens, political economy reflects the domination of the lifeworld by the economic system, accepting the latter's priorities, and reflecting rather than challenging the de-moralization of economy. 'Positive' (including much so-called 'critical') social science is complicit in this process because it's usually happier explaining action in terms of either

> unconscious causality (naturalism), self-interested rationality (rational choice theory) or conventions and constitutive meanings (interpretivism), than in terms of actors' judgements of responsibility and morally guided action. (Sayer 2000, 98-99).

The scholarship on moral economy provides important insight on how and why relationships within AFNs are created and fostered. I contend that the scholarship can be strengthened by integrating into it perspectives from political economy that better account for how farmer livelihoods are impacted by capitalist dynamics.

3.2.5 Farming Styles: The Wageningen School

The Wageningen School of farming styles, which has become particularly influential in European studies of AFNs (Ploeg 1993; Ploeg 2008; Ploeg et al. 2000; Ploeg and Renting 2004), focuses analysis on the farm scale and on the economic, cultural, and agroecological practices of different farming styles. Farming styles are defined more broadly as:

> A cultural repertoire, a composite of normative and strategic ideas about how farming should be done. A style of farming involves a specific way of organizing the farm enterprise: farm practice and development are shaped in part by the cultural repertoire, which is in turn tested, affirmed and if necessary adjusted through practice. Therefore a style of farming is a concrete form of praxis, a particular unity of thinking and doing, of theory and practice. (Ploeg 1993, 241)

According to this analysis, the mid- to late-20th century was dominated by an entrepreneurial farming style (or "mode"), guided by ideologies of modernization that sought severance with past practices through a reliance on science, technology, and the market. Entrepreneurial farming built economies of scale through the continuous and expanded use of technology, specialization in production, disconnection from nature (and even disregard for ecological consequences of production), and high degrees of commodification and market dependency for both outputs and inputs. Corporate (or capitalist) farming, also dominant in the mid- to late-20th century, constituted another,

similar farming style characterized by dependence on wage labor and an orientation towards agro-exports. While corporate farming and entrepreneurial farming styles continue as the dominant mode supported by states and development organizations, Ploeg argues that this mode is in crisis. Industrialization has led to increased production, but it has also produced a price squeeze for farmers: while prices for farmgate outputs have declined (despite temporary spikes) in real terms, the prices for inputs have increased. Faced with this dilemma, Ploeg argues that farmers have a choice to either deactivate (cease production), increase industrialization, or adopt an alternative farming style.

One such alternative, which Ploeg calls "farming economically," (or the "peasant mode") has grown considerably in Europe following the crisis of the "modernization paradigm" (Ploeg and Renting 2004). Farming economically involves cutting back on costs (including labor costs), reducing capitalization, improving use of resources and increasing autonomy over the production process. Farmers who follow the logic of farming economically diversify production instead of specializing, farm in connection with natural processes, and focus on producing quality and craft-based goods. For example, farming economically involves adopting such practices as organic farming, agro-tourism, heritage foods, biodiversity and landscape preservation, practices that work to remold social and material worlds through a renewed reliance on social, cultural, and ecological capital (Ploeg and Renting 2004).

Rather than occupying a minor and isolated niche, farming economically has grown in importance, even forming the basis of a new rural development paradigm in Europe (Ploeg 2008). Ploeg contends that this new paradigm has been a successful "line of defense" against threats from other farming systems, such as globalized capitalist agro-industry (Ploeg and Renting 2004). Its defense mechanisms include: institutionalized defenses based on quality and local production, the mutual interest of supply chain actors, and the policy protection afforded by quality labeling. Further strengthening the new rural development paradigm is the creation of new subject positions for farmers that have emboldened them to reclaim peasant identities and cast aside traditionally negative connotations associated with the "backward" peasantry. The peasant mode of farming is thus bolstered by new movements that unite actors who adhere to, and defend it.

Alternative food networks are critical components of this farming style because they are largely responsible for providing farmers with outlets to consumers. In contrast, entrepreneurial and corporate farming systems "are mainly linked through large-scale food processing and trading companies to world consumption" (Ploeg 2008, 5). While the peasant farming style itself emerges from a crisis in the modernization paradigm, AFNs are critical in ensuring the success of this transition.

Calculating the value added in peasant and industrial farming styles, Ploeg finds that peasant farmers produce more, not less, value added (2008). He goes on to state that the "creation and enlargement of value added evidently mirrors the peasant condition: hostile environments are dealt with by generating independent production of income by using basically, though not exclusively, self-created and self-managed resources" (Ploeg 2008, 42). In other words, according to Ploeg, the peasant mode produces more per labor input because peasants will over-exploit themselves and their families, which results in extra "value added." However, there has been no research to document who completes this extra work or how these responsibilities become gendered. For Ploeg, the question of difference more broadly is acknowledged, but is not a theoretical concern. Although Ploeg asserts the autonomy of farmers, by claiming the dominance of the "peasant principle" in Europe, he homogenizes an otherwise diverse agricultural landscape. Even if the peasant logic were operating in diverse settings, it is unclear whether other principles (cultural, social, etc.) might effectively diminish any sense of shared peasantness with other farmers. Certainly in post-socialist states, some rural residents long for the days when they were collective farm workers, not peasants living marginally and "farming economically."

Farming styles research has provided valuable insights on the culture of farming and on how farmers have adapted to create a reinvigorated peasant farming style that flourishes because it provides "value added" for the household. However, in accounting for farmer livelihoods, farming styles ultimately rests on simplistic, one-time economic calculation of "value added" gained by alternative producers in comparison to conventional producers. Even when Ploeg demonstrates changes in value added over time, such as a decrease in the value added of Italian peasants (2008), his theoretical

approach inadequately accounts for *why* this proportion of value added declined. His answer, that modernization logic has encroached upon the peasant style, does not elucidate *why* that encroachment of modernization logic occurred. In Ploeg's estimation, alternative food networks, in favor of other peasant modes and logics, emerge as a strategy to counter the modernization logic. Although his claim implies that the peasant mode always takes a resistant and conflicting stance vis-à-vis other farming modes, modernization and peasant logics are not always in conflict: studies have demonstrated that peasant farms and agro-industrial farms can have a functional relationship (de Janvry 1981). Ultimately, this approach accords little attention to the agency of nature or to consumer motivations in constructing AFNs.

3.3 Beyond Alterity

The beginning of the 21st century has witnessed a growing desire by consumers, as well as scholars, to envision and create an alternative food system. Among scholars, the search for alterity involved turning away from political economy approaches because of capitalocentrism and a corollary inability or unwillingness to consider the agency of nature, peasants, and consumers. Scholars explored and embraced other theoretical perspectives with better potentials to illuminate alternative food practices. These emerging perspectives share a common dissatisfaction with the current dominant globalized and agro-industrial food system. However, little agreement exists on what constitutes the most useful approach to understanding and theorizing alterity. I suggest that these perspectives are not mutually exclusive, but rather that each perspective focuses on different aspects of alterity. For Whatmore and Thorne (1997), alterity is equated with a "mode of ordering," a certain way of establishing relationships that is not primarily based on making the most money or farming the cheapest product. Conventions theory goes further in highlighting how certain synergies are necessary for different worlds of production to function: it is not just about making the right connections but also about institutional environments and informal practices. At the farm, Ploeg categorizes alterity in the form of those farming practices that adopt a

peasant logic. Diverse economies highlights the range of practices that could be considered alternative, and moral economy examines the emerging values that are produced by market forces but that also the values that try to go beyond them.

All of these approaches provide insight on how AFNs are sustained, but each has significant weaknesses, especially in the attempts to account for farmer livelihoods. Moreover, in bracketing off what constitutes an "alternative," a representational strategy that seeks to make alternatives more visible, these approaches have not been able to account for the encroachment of conventional modes of ordering, industrial worlds of production, capitalist economic practices or market forces, and modernization logics. Meanwhile, such encroachment affects farmer livelihoods and impacts farmers' ability to sustain AFNs (see Andrée et al. 2010). Indeed, some scholars have recently acknowledged these weaknesses in theorizing AFNs and have consequently argued that alternative and conventional food networks are actually more intermingled, so much so that conventional food networks may exert competitive pressure on AFNs (Sonnino and Marsden 2006).

What is clear is that theorizing alterity has done much to enable an understanding of what is new and different about AFNs and to highlight the values espoused by those involved in AFNs, but theories of alterity have fallen short on providing the theoretical tools to understand how actually existing AFNs succeed or struggle as part of the capitalist economy. I suggest that as a result of initial (and ongoing) rejections of political economic theory, specifically Marxist theory, these theoretical insights cannot fully account for the processes impacting farmers' livelihoods. Moreover, I also argue that the efforts to theorize alterity have neglected to understand how gender relations and other axes of difference constitute AFNs. In the following section, I take another look at the critiques lodged against agrarian political economy, and I formulate a renewed agrarian political economy based on an "open" Marxism.

4. Critiquing Traditional Marxism: Towards a Renewed Agrarian Political Economy

This section is divided into two parts. In Section 4.1, I provide evidence on why we still need an agrarian political economy. Section 4.2 details the foundations for a renewed agrarian political based on an open understanding of Marxism (Section 4.2.1) and founded upon a relational understanding of space (Section 4.2.2) that considers axes of difference as co-constituting economic processes (Section 4.2.3).

4.1 Why We Still Need an Agrarian Political Economy

Capitalism is a necessarily dynamic and profit-oriented system that produces value from the exploitation of labor. Competition forces producers either to improve their productive capacity by investing in technology or to cease production. Consequently, the rate of profit falls and more commodities enter the market, which then leads to crises of overproduction. Any solution or fix to crises, whether in the form of devaluation or macro-economic management, can only be temporary because the same contradictions continually give rise to new crises. Despite these common tendencies, however, the form taken by capitalist development varies tremendously. Building on Sections 1 and 2 of this chapter, in the following paragraphs I summarize how the dynamics informing heterogeneous capitalist forms have become evident in 20th- and 21st-century agricultural livelihoods in Europe and the United States.

4.1.1 Capitalist Dynamics on the Farm

On the farm, intensification (Guthman 2004) has been propelled by an agricultural treadmill that encourages capital-intensive production. The end result is a decreasing number of farms. While farmers who invest early in yield-enhancing technology secure short-term advantages in the market, once the technology becomes widely adopted, or

socially general, these advantages wither away. Furthermore, innovation in technology is usually financed by credit, which typically depends on stipulations to improve production and competitiveness. A number of factors cause farmers to be price-takers in the market, including: first, their dependence on the seasonality of production processes which dictate that crops must be sown but cannot be sold until harvest, and which thereby limit farmers' abilities to make changes once production is underway (even if prices are declining); and second, the perishability of farm products and the high cost of storage, which may pressure some farmers to sell their harvest. While nominally still *family* farms, contemporary farms in Europe and the United States are typically integrated into agro-industry in multiple ways through credit, inputs, and outputs. In these conditions, it is no surprise that the number of farms continues to decline while the average farm size continues to increase. Despite this trend, it is important to note that differentiation between farmers has only increased as the most successful farms expand beyond national borders. Family farming has become an international business, as is evident by the involvement of individual US soybean growers in production in Brazil and Danish farmers in the Baltics, to name a few examples.

4.1.2 Capitalist Dynamics off the Farm

Off the farm, appropriationism and substitutionism have continued, especially as a result of the growing importance of genetically modified seeds. The search for and implementation of fixes to crises of overproduction has led the state to play an increasingly significant role in agriculture, often through subsidies that guarantee minimal prices, quotas that restrict production, the dissemination of surplus production through food aid both within and beyond national borders, and export subsidies that finance the dumping of surplus products abroad. With the shifting food regimes and the increasing globalization that characterize 21st-century agricultural production, these strategies have become more controversial, but they have not been eliminated.

4.1.3 Capital and Nature

In the early 21st century, we have an undeniable climate crisis. In terms of agricultural production, this crisis poses extensive problems identifiable by the *underproduction* of crucial inputs (Moore 2010). Scholarship on agrarian political economy has largely been produced during a time when an ecological surplus has provided cheap inputs, such as fuel and fertile soil. Drawing our attention to the importance of underproduction as well as overproduction, Jason Moore (2010) argues that over the last decade the crisis of underproduction has become increasingly apparent, despite the tendency of appropriation and enclosure (the dialectic of productivity and plunder) to obscure this very crisis. Successive agricultural revolutions have worked as temporary fixes for the crises of underproduction. Moore explains: "So long as these fixes expanded opportunities for appropriation faster than they demanded capitalization, the ecological surplus expanded, and world accumulation revived. Capitalization remains indispensable – indeed, it becomes more crucial over time – but only by accelerating the exhaustion of the very conditions that sustain accumulation" (Moore 2010, 408). The ecological surplus, the conditions that sustain accumulation, has been vastly reduced. In the short term, underproduction crises manifest themselves in such phenomena as the land grab (McMichael 2012).

4.2 Toward a Renewed Agrarian Political Economy

In Section 3, I outlined five major critiques of agrarian political economy, concluding that it: 1) remained capitalocentric; 2) dismissed the possibility of actually existing alternatives to globalized capitalism; 3) neglected the agency of nature; 4) did not adequately theorize consumption and culture; 5) neglected peasant agency as potentially transformative and politically meaningful. In Section 4.1, I outlined reasons why we still need an agrarian political economy, and in this section, I respond to critiques of agrarian political economy by turning towards an open Marxism. This approach allows us to take capitalism seriously without reducing all phenomena to the power of

capital, to enact alternatives while recognizing how they are constrained and directed, to understand nature as more than just functional to capital (though not outside its sphere of influence either), to empower consumers with agency, and to take peasant agency seriously, without attributing it to a historically insignificant outbreak of neopopulism (see Byres 2004).

4.2.1 Beyond Traditional Marxism

To retain what is insightful about agrarian political economy and Marxist approaches more broadly, but also to respond to the critics of these strains of thought, I contend that it is necessary to move away from some of the ontological foundations entrenched in the ways we think about capitalism and its possible overcoming. To make this move, I first draw upon Moishe Postone's approach in *Time, Labor and Social Domination* (1993) by describing his critique of traditional Marxism (which I liken to traditional agrarian political economy) and outlining key features of his alternative Marxist approach.

Agrarian political economy has been focused on class analysis and differentiation because in Marxist theory the proletariat plays an important role in overcoming capitalism. "As is well known, for Marx the possibility of transcending capitalism lay in the hands of the class that it created: only the proletariat, a class free from the ownership of the means of production and free to sell its labour-power, was capable of eradicating class society and ending exploitation" (Akram-Lodhi and Kay 2010, 181). In this manner, agrarian political economy resembles what Postone calls "traditional Marxism," which includes "theoretical approaches that analyze capitalism from the standpoint of labor and characterize that society essentially in terms of class relations, structured by private ownership of the means of production and a market-regulated economy" (1993, 7).

Historical changes are driven by the contradiction between the material and productive forces of production and the relations of ownership and distribution that prevail in capitalist society. Therefore, traditional Marxism envisions the overcoming of

capitalism as entailing the reorganization of the ownership of the means of production, with the proletariat constituting the foundation of a new order (Postone 1993, 50). In this formulation, labor, the source of wealth, constitutes the *social* and overcomes capitalism through its own emancipation as transhistorical labor. Hence, the goal of working class politics is to raise consciousness about labor's transhistorical role. Following traditional Marxism, agrarian political economists have also understood that the realization of the proletariat as subject is the condition for overcoming capitalism. In examining agrarian transitions, class and social differentiation became such a strong focus of analysis because scholars and activists sought to understand which subjects had more revolutionary potential.

Postone points out that some 20th-century Marxist theorists started to produce more complex analyses of capitalist modernity as *exceeding* the sphere of class relations. For example, Georg Lukács (1923) analyzed how the transformation of the subject-object relationship under capitalism renders the subject of labor *passive*, while the object becomes *active*. Lukács' work considerably deepened 20th-century Marxist theory. According to Lukács, the worker creates objects that gain value because they are products of her labor, but that worker does not have mastery over those objects, either in the sense of owning them or controlling them. Lukács uses the term *reification* to describe the ensuing objectification of social relations, so that objects exist in an autonomous and alien form to the subjective processes that created them. Reification also produces material transformations of the work environment, as both machines and factory space are rationalized. In sum, Lukács' concept of reification desribes the deepening of commodity relations, which produce reified thought, space, consciousness, and social life for all classes.

In the study of nature, economy, or society, rationalization and specialization lead to the constant creation of laws that seek to separate and govern increasingly sub-divided parts of life. However, Lukács argues that there is a limit to this formalism because it cannot grasp the "irrationality of the total process" (1923) of capitalist society. Bourgeois thought and science cannot transcend the rationalization and specialization that it produced: "*its own concrete underlying reality* lies, methodologically and in principle,

beyond its grasp" (Lukács 1923). As use-values appear universally as commodities, rational objectification obfuscates any underlying material and qualitative substantiality. Accordingly, empiricist and positivist approaches are destined to constantly fabricate laws based on immediacies that cannot penetrate the real material substratum.

Despite his insights, Lukács, like traditional Marxists, maintained the primacy of the standpoint of labor, or the proletariat as the revolutionary subject. "The critique of capitalism from the standpoint of labor is a critique in which the dominant social relations (private property) are criticized as particularistic from a universalistic position: what is universal and truly social is constituted by labor, but is hindered by particularistic capitalist relations from becoming fully realized" (Postone 1993, 10). Capitalism would only be challenged and overcome when the proletariat realized its historical role as both the subject and object of the capitalist social totality. Therefore, while deeply influential, Lukács' analysis of capitalism, as well as his theory of its overcoming, remained based on the standpoint of labor.

Postone draws upon the insights of Lukács, other writers from the Frankfurt School, as well as other Marxists, but he departs from them by arguing for an immanent critique of labor in capitalism, rather than a critique from the standpoint of labor. He finds the latter problematic because it is based on the assumption that capitalism will be overcome once the proletariat seizes control and ownership of productive forces. Following this logic, the eradication of capitalists as a class and the simultaneous realization of the proletariat would lead to the realization of socialism. Postone argues against this logic by pointing out that the realization of the proletariat as a class would not entail the abolishment of capital or cease the expansion of self-valorizing value. In other words, capital does not necessarily need capitalists, but capital *does* need the value-creating labor of the proletariat (Postone 1993, 357). This leads Postone to decenter the significance attributed to class relations in traditional Marxism and to focus instead on a critique of value-creating labor, specifically the twofold and contradictory nature of commodity-determined labor in capitalism.

The dual character of labor in capitalism refers to the fact that commodity-determined labor has both concrete and abstract dimensions. While concrete labor is a

category that refers to the labor of heterogeneous individuals involved in material production, abstract labor functions as generalized social labor. Abstract labor arises because it serves to equalize heterogeneous concrete labor in order to make the products of individual workers exchangeable. Abstract labor comes to dominate concrete labor because individual workers must conform to a "general external norm;" that is "if one is to obtain the 'full value' of one's labor time—that time must equal the temporal norm expressed by socially necessary labor time" (Postone 1993, 191). For example, producers who invest in technological improvements reduce the labor time required to manufacture a given quantity of commodities, and therefore, spur competitors to follow suit. Once these improvements have become generalized, the general norm of the social labor hour changes, forcing the rest of the producers to adapt. For any given worker, their labor, as well as the individual concrete labors of multiple workers, becomes reconstituted as abstract labor, which eventually transforms the production process itself.

In examining the dynamic relationship between concrete and abstract labor and its impacts, Postone builds upon the ideas of Lukács and other Marxists who argued that the abstraction of concrete labor renders human activity into something objective and independent, "something that controls him by virtue of an autonomy alien to man" (Lukács 1923). However, Postone goes on to argue that this control cannot simply be eradicated by unveiling the source of abstract labor and the true nature of the abstract forms of capital and the commodity. "These impersonal and abstract social forms do not simply *veil* what traditionally has been deemed the 'real' social relations of capitalism, that is, class relations; they *are* the real relations of capitalist society, structuring its dynamic trajectory and its form of production" (Postone 1993, 6). In making this point, he argues that traditional Marxists, who envisioned an appropriation of industrial production under socialism, have neglected to understand how capitalism has shaped the *form* of industrial production and how this materialization of capital-determined production has further contributed to alienation and social domination. Labor under capitalism has become increasingly fragmented and subject to the rationalization and instrumentalization of the production process. "Considered abstractly and on a total social level, the effect of increased productivity on direct human labor, within a

framework characterized by the structural retention of such labor in production, is to render that labor more uniform and simple and to intensify its expenditure" (Postone 1993, 347). Although Postone pursues a critique of the fragmentation of labor under capitalism, he also maintains that the romantic rejection of industrial and technological progress is a product of capitalist society rather than being an orientation that could be followed to overcome capitalism. Instead of rejecting technology wholesale, it is necessary to pursue a systemic and immanent critique that underscores how technology and the labor process have come to dominate workers and transform nature.

The intrinsically contradictory nature of capitalist society influences relationships beyond the realm of production. For example, one labors to obtain commodities that are always products of another person's labor. Alienation is therefore produced not just between the worker and her object, but between people who relate with each other through the commodities they produce and consume. As a result, labor becomes a social relation, which appears impersonal and non-social because it is mediated through capital and the commodity. What is available for consumers are goods that are "qualitatively homogeneous bearers of objectified time" (Postone 1993, 312) and standardized products of industrial capitalism. For example, the on-going technological developments in food processing have transformed the available food supply and have nearly eradicated heirloom varieties that cannot conform to the needs of industrial capitalism. People's work schedules have further encouraged the development of processed foods that are easy to prepare. This process has not been without resistance. Responding to the negative impacts that industrial production has had on the character of modern food, new consumer movements have arisen to demand more sustainable alternatives. However, even the independent commodity producers who supply the niche products demanded by new consumer movements are subject to a system of abstract compulsions produced by commodity-determined labor. As such, they do not function in opposition to industrial producers but they are implicated in the same system in complex ways. While a traditional Marxist approaches minimizes the importance of consumption, Postone argues that a historically adequate critique would relate the new trends in consumption to

developments in production (1993). Following Marx, Postone maintains that "commodity circulation is only a moment of a more complex totality" (1993, 274).

In summary, Postone explains that "a central hallmark of capitalism, then, is that people do not really control their own productive activity or what they produce but ultimately are dominated by the results of that activity" (1993, 30). Even though this domination is a product of social labor, it appears as something that is natural and external. What Postone calls social domination cannot be understood simply from the perspective of class exploitation because social domination characterizes capitalist society as a whole. This domination is an abstract force that has mastery not only over producers, but also over people more generally. In other words, even if the proletariat were to gain control over the means of production by taking ownership of the industrial system, the proletariat would still be subject to the kind of social domination described by Postone. In realizing itself as embodied labor, the proletariat would not eliminate the force that drives capital, the force of accumulation for accumulation's sake. Indeed, state ownership and control did not eliminate this force in the Soviet Union, which functioned instead as a "state capitalist" system, and was riddled with its own contradictions.

By shifting the primacy of capitalism from social relations (capital/labor) to social mediation (by value, abstract labor), Postone's approach brings insight to 21st century agrarian political economy. Furthermore, domination becomes materialized in the form of industrial production through the rationalization and instrumentalization of the production process: "*Industrial production is the materialization of capital* and, as such, is the materialization of *both* the forces and the relations of production in their dynamic interaction" (Postone 1993, 352). By emphasizing social domination and its materialization, and by decentering class and exploitation, Postone departs from his vision of traditional Marxism and certain aspects of its political project. Instead, he formulates a theory which emphasizes that the abolition of capitalism requires more than the abolition of private property or the market: it requires the abolition of alienated, fragmented proletarian labor, which would "entail the abolition of both the historically dynamic system of abstract domination and the industrial capitalist mode of production"

(1993, 31). It requires analyzing capitalist society and its individual dimensions as part of a larger whole.

Like traditional Marxism, agrarian political economy has privileged the study of class dynamics, without taking seriously the forms of domination that have emerged in capitalist society. A shift away from "traditional" Marxism, and in my application away from "traditional" toward a "renewed" agrarian political economy, does not discard all of traditional Marxism's insights, however. Instead, it situates these insights within an alternative, but still Marxist perspective. Capitalism remains a contradictory, crisis-ridden system, prone to overproduction and underproduction. But a renewed agrarian political economy allows us to account for consumer and peasant agency, to take alterity and nature seriously, and to understand the importance of capitalism without relying on reductionism, as I detail in the next section. In the following paragraphs, I explain how Postone's approach can be applied to agrarian political economy in assessing contemporary conditions of food production and consumption. I also assess the weaknesses and omissions of Postone's approach, detailing how it can be further strengthened with insights from geographic and feminist theories.

4.2.2 Alternative Food Networks and a Renewed Agrarian Political Economy

In the contemporary context, more and more consumers are concerned about food safety, and they seek to secure healthy, organic food. Likewise, more and more producers are willing to grow this food. However, "what characterizes capitalism is that, on a deep systemic level, production is not for the sake of consumption. Rather, it is driven, ultimately, by a system of abstract compulsions constituted by the double character of labor in capitalism, which posit production as its own goal" (Postone 1993, 184). These abstract compulsions that cause producers/farmers to intensify production result in only short term increases in surplus value generated. Once increases in productivity become socially general, value generated per unit decreases. Even alternative agricultural production is only partially driven by the needs or desires of the local consumer; ultimately, it is driven by production for accumulation. Postone's

approach allows for an integration of the concepts from agrarian political economy that help explain this process. Intensification, substitution, differentiation, appropriation, and commodification all describe some component of the growing dominance of abstract labor over heterogeneous concrete labors.

The domination of abstractions that have become our lived reality in the 21st century has become evident with the impacts of the industrialization of agricultural practices. At the same time, this domination has also produced new needs and new desires to make the world otherwise. I suggest that it is in fact this impersonal and abstract dimension of capitalism that drives alternative food movements, many of which seek a reconnection that can never entirely be fulfilled at the present moment. For example, movements like Slow Food are products of this immanent dynamic. Slow Food offers a subversion of the impersonal and seeks to promote among consumers a more immediate relationship with producers who practice an alternative to industrial production. Likewise, AFNs offer the potential for reconnection between producers and consumers. These movements and practices challenge industrial modes of production and distribution, but in most cases they do not challenge the domination of abstract labor or the systemic nature of capitalism. In fact, the desire for new and different kinds of products has become an opportunity for capital accumulation (see Guthman 2004). Nevertheless, Postone maintains that it is important to understand the historical emergence of these movements at the present moment without dismissing them as simply a form of elitist consumerism. These movements express new needs and therefore, new possibilities. This is precisely why Postone thinks they are important to analyze, not in a laudatory way but in order to understand how these new possibilities may both point beyond capitalism while being entrenched by capital-determined production. They express but are not totally defined by the contradictory nature of capitalism.

In summary, the growing contradictions of capitalist modernity are increasingly evident in food and agriculture in the manifestation of both overproduction and scarcity, of both obesity and starvation, and in the "conventionalization" of alternative methods of producing and distributing (see Guthman 2004). Postone's reinterpretation of Marxism is a non-teleological and open understanding of capitalist development, one that provides

both the tools to understand the manifestations of contradictions, to critique capitalist modernity, and to forge new directions for alternative food practice that point beyond capitalism. Postone argues for an immanent and dialectical approach, one that underscores movement, but not a movement that creates homogeneity between concrete labors. Drawing upon Postone's work, Noel Castree (1999, 141) argues that: "capitalism can be seen as a constitutively 'open' system which, while structured, global and hegemonic, is nonetheless constantly infused by its putatively 'non-capitalist' exteriors". In short, capitalist development does not cancel other logics and one can conceptualize a systemic capitalism without reducing all logics to capitalist logic. In this system, non-commodified and commodified labor may exist side-by-side: there is no linear progression to more and more commodified labor and less peasant or household producers. Indeed, the circuits of capital structure practices, but they do not homogenize concrete labors or cover space like a blanket.

In this dissertation, I use Postone's understanding of the fundamental contradiction of capitalism as a starting point to pursue my study of producer livelihoods in AFNs. His framework serves as a salient starting point because it addresses the critiques lodged at APE. First, it decenters class relations, while not discarding the significance of class. Individual farmers, whose livelihoods are the focus of my research, occupy the position of capitalist *and* worker on their farms. This accounts for the contradictory tensions they experience, prompting them to invest in their farming enterprises so that they can potentially earn a profit and to pay themselves as workers. This tension is related to but does not explain the broader dynamic at work in propelling technological and productive developments both on and off the farm. This dynamic is explained by the fact that "capitalism is a system of abstract, impersonal domination. Relative to earlier social forms, people appear to be independent; but they actually are subject to a system of social domination that seems not social but 'objective'" (Postone 1993, 125). In summary, by decentering class relations as the primary locus of historical change, Postone's approach affirms the possible transformative agency in peasant and consumer politics while maintaining a systemic critique. Second, Postone's approach does not reduce nature to its function in metabolism, a priori, but it acknowledges how

nature becomes enrolled in capitalist domination. Third, although Postone's focus is on capitalism, and more specifically on the abstractions of capital-determined society, he does not deny the existence of non-capitalist practices. As Castree remarks, capitalism is "always intertwined with 'non-capitalist' relations" (Castree 1999, 153). Finally, this approach requires a careful consideration of "alternative" agricultures (including alternative food networks), without a priori demeaning these alternatives as nothing more than the depoliticized production of "yuppie chow" (Guthman 2003).

I contend that Postone's approach is particularly salient to the study of farmer livelihoods in AFNs, and I argue that his reformulation of Marxism provides a backbone that integrates insights from agrarian political economy and Marxist thought. However, Postone's approach was never meant to be an exhaustive framework. Therefore other theoretical perspectives are needed to further explanation of farmer livelihoods in AFNs. Following Gibson-Graham's (1996) argument about the performative nature of economic representations and the need to make visible the multiplicity of economic practices, I highlight these diverse practices in addition to demonstrating the existence of a diversity of logics at work in making livelihoods. However, I depart from Gibson-Graham (1996) by arguing that diverse economic practices cannot be treated as functioning discretely and independently, or producing equal effects. Economic practices are complexly intertwined and because of the characteristics of capital and value, capitalist practices produce their own expansion and create a structured coherence globally (Castree 1999). Geographies are also constituted by capitalist and non-capitalist practices, but Postone does not examine capital's sociospatial dialectic nor does he fully consider the importance of crises and devaluation. Not only have these topics generated considerable geographical scholarship, they have also been continuously refined. For example, recent work on commodity chains has provided new theoretical perspectives on how articulations *and* disarticulations, exclusions *and* inclusions, constitute capitalism's uneven geographies (Bair and Werner 2011). This work draws on feminist scholarship to highlight the importance of social difference: "It is not only the work of linking up constructions of social difference with processes of valuation and capital accumulation, but also that of reproducing geographical difference by linking and delinking places to commodity chains

that are formed and reformed through these moments of connection and severance" (Bair and Werner 2011, 993). In the following sections, I further detail the importance of taking social difference and spatialities seriously for a renewed agrarian political economy. I conclude with a theoretical outline of my dissertation.

4.2.3 Gendering a Renewed Agrarian Political Economy

Capital is not the only process at work in structuring the trajectories that make up space. Transnational feminist scholarship has long underscored that in a globalizing context, capitalism, geopolitics, patriarchal nationalisms, and other systems of power all intersect to form scattered hegemonies across space (Grewal and Kaplan 1994). Feminist geographers have further argued that categories like race, nation, and gender are not aspatial categories with universal meanings; rather, they are sociospatial productions. Therefore, social categories, such as "woman" and "race" cannot be divorced from their spatial contexts, which imbue them with meaning, nor should they be examined in isolation from these contexts. In the relational making of places, dimensions of difference are constituted materially and discursively, and they have diverse spatial articulations (Hart 2002).

Globalization also depends on informal circuits and produces "both gendered processes of marginalization and emergent processes of gendered resistance" (Nagar et al. 2002, 262). Noel Castree argues that Postone's analysis of capital presents "an inherently open system which, through abstract and concrete labour, is constantly infused by its putative 'exteriors': differences of nationality, gender, sexuality, geographical location and so on are constantly gathered together in the domain of concrete labour and, through the abstractions of social labour and labour time, are forcibly articulated into a global system with a structured coherence" (Castree 1999, 153). Feminist scholarship draws attention to *how* this coming together is both a discursive and an embodied production, necessary for value to gain meaning in any given sociospatial context (Wright 2006). By extension, devaluation also gains meaning because it is a lived social process (Wright 1999).

For feminist geographical scholarship, the spatial and the social are co-constitutive, but neither can be reduced to the imperatives of capital. Combined with a renewed agrarian political economy, feminist theory helps explain why agrarian change happens and also why it takes different forms. It has the potential to explain how sociospatial difference functions in the emergence of AFNs as well as their ability to help farmers sustain their livelihoods.

4.2.4 Spatializing a Renewed Agrarian Political Economy

Space is a term widely used in the social sciences, but as a concept, it is often poorly and implicitly defined or simply treated as a container for social activity—a backdrop for action. Geographers, however, have developed various conceptualizations of space that stress that space should not be understood as a bounded entity or a fixed backdrop in front of which events occur. Rather, space is a product of material and social relations, which themselves span and remake space. In the following paragraphs, I detail my understanding of space.

Massey (2005) has stressed the importance of a relational understanding of space and place: places are made not by intrinsic qualities, but by relationships with other places across space. They are heterogeneous and formed by *interconnected* and *multiple* trajectories of sociospatial change (Hart 2002). For example, London is made both by the flows of migrants coming to the city for better economic opportunities, and by the outward flows of investments and influence (Massey 2007). Space is also constituted by coexisting heterogeneity and multiple trajectories. The London of unskilled migrant workers, along with the imaginaries they attach to the city, exists side-by-side with the London of the financial district, the London of parks, of the Thames, and of multiple other trajectories. The term "trajectory" is not meant to imply predetermined goals or points of arrival. Instead, the term conveys the temporal dimensions of space: space is constituted by multiple trajectories that have their own histories and temporalities. The trajectory is the spatial and temporal "process of change in a phenomenon," whether it is a "living thing, a scientific attitude, a collectivity, a social convention, a geological

formation" (Massey 2005, 12). Because the trajectories that make space are always in process, and because they are multiple, any account of space is by definition partial.

The multiplicity of trajectories that constitute space are not equal in their capacities, nor are trajectories separate and independent of each other. Space is a "field of multiple actors, trajectories, stories with their own energies—which may mingle in harmony, collide, even annihilate each other" (Massey 2007, 22). For example, globalization does not flow to enclosed peripheries, as is often portrayed in hegemonic geographical imaginations. Instead, "global" flows mingle with more local trajectories, stories, and practices. As a result, "the global is also locally produced," but most places are "on the receiving end of some wider forces, seat of the production of others" (Massey 2007, 21). A place like London is one seat of production of neoliberal capitalism, producing relations with other places that are infused with power. As Massey explains, "understanding space as the constant open production of the topologies of power points to the fact that different 'places' will stand in contrasting relations to the global. They are differentially located in wider power-geometries" (Massey 2005, 101). Therefore, the relations, flows, and stories that make space a multiplicity are not benign; they constitute and are constituted by power-geometries, or spatialized power relations.

Massey's conception of space as heterogeneous multiplicity allows for an understanding of how capital structures trajectories and weaves together diverse places by redirecting and reworking existing trajectories through its development. Geographers have demonstrated how capital plays a role in the making of uneven development through articulation and disarticulation (Bair et al. 2013). The contradictory characteristics of capital's power-geometries riddle space with both processes of growth and contraction, revaluation and devaluation, and integration and disarticulation with commodity chains. The remaking of space is critical to capitalist restructuring, but space, as a multiplicity that is always in process, cannot be reduced to capital's logic and the social domination it produces. For a renewed agrarian political economy, geographical analysis of space provides an understanding of both the powers and limits of capital's logic. The concept of multiple trajectories of sociospatial change highlights how AFNs

exist as part of a multiplicity of practices that make space. I use the concept specifically to study trajectories of food production, consumption, and distribution.

4.2.5 Multiple Spatialities and Alternative Food Networks

The multiple trajectories that make space are a starting point for this dissertation, but I also underscore that they are not the only significant dimension of sociospatiality. Equally important are scale, networks, place and positionality. In Chapter 3, I consider the relationship between AFNs, the multiple trajectories of sociospatial change and positionality in Latvia and Lithuania. Since the Soviet times, AFNs have played a crucial role in supporting livelihoods in both countries, despite the fact that they were not exactly extolled by Soviet officials. An understanding of multiple trajectories helps depict how even under the Soviet regime, *multiple* economic practices existed and flourished. These practices were also gendered in significant ways. However, they were not independent from the formal state sector; indeed, they were complexly intertwined with the economic relations that spanned the Soviet space economy and forged a positionality for Latvia and Lithuania based on interdependencies with the rest of the Soviet Union.

Following independence, the national elite in both countries were charged with the responsibility of fostering a new regime of capital accumulation. They pursued policies that devalued everything “Soviet,” and in the process of distancing their countries from Russian influence, they embraced the neoliberal policies promoted by global and European institutions and actors. Nevertheless, increasing political ties with Western Europe through European Union (EU) integration could not completely remake the positionality of Latvia and Lithuania or eradicate the multiplicity of trajectories that make space in favor of one development pathway. Russia remains an important export market for food products and is the major source of oil and gas. Despite the introduction of rigorous food hygiene regulations, AFNs that do not adhere to these regulations did not disappear. Up until 2008, they formed significant livelihood strategies for farmers who were marked as “backward” and as “losers” of economic transition. Marginalized consumers garner support for these informal AFNs, helping to ensure simple

reproduction for the farming households involved. The devaluation of informal AFNs gained meaning because these networks were inhabited by living labor with its own social identities.

In Chapter 4, I analyze the significance of scalar relations in shaping AFNs. The dynamics of capital cannot in itself explain how and why scalar relations take the form they do, or how people themselves reproduce certain scalar narratives that normalize scalar arrangements. However, in 2008 and 2009, crises of overproduction of certain agricultural commodities activated political dynamics that ultimately led to the state spatial rescaling of food hygiene legislation. In effect, requirements for AFNs were reduced and more mid-scale and large-scale farmers started forming AFNs.

The introduction of less rigorous regulations may have led to the increase in the number of AFNs, but it did not help all involved farmers equally. In Chapter 5, I develop a Spatialized Livelihoods Approach (SpLA) to explain how sociospatiality and the differential access to assets shaped the livelihood strategies and outcomes for different farming households. I argue that access to opportunities to forge AFNs does not guarantee a sustainable livelihood for everyone and a spatialized LA helps explain why.

Chapter 6 explores the gendered dimensions of AFNs, both from the perspective of agricultural production and consumption. I document and analyze the struggles women face in commodifying their labor. Chapter 7 explores places, like farmers' markets, which are crucial meeting points for AFNs. However, they are not places where "reconnection" between producers and consumers can be established automatically. I explore how the relationality between public markets and farmers' markets, and historical trajectories of production and consumption help explain the contours of producer and consumer practices that constitute new farmers' markets.

While some proponents of AFNs highlight their non-capitalist or post-capitalist characteristics (Trauger and Passidomo 2012), my evidence suggests that they are "capital-constituting, rather than capital-transcending, forms of action and consciousness" (Postone 1993, 371). Nevertheless, compulsions to form AFNs are social and cultural changes, expressing desires for qualitatively different relationships. They are therefore

products of an immanent dynamic, which points beyond capitalism even as the relations within AFNs serve to keep capitalism in place.

Chapter 3. The Multiple Trajectories of Sociospatial Change

Since the Soviet era, what are now known as AFNs have played an important role in securing livelihoods in Latvia and Lithuania. However, they have not always enjoyed the support of public officials, policy makers, or the national elite. Soviet officials tolerated AFNs, but they also considered them historical anachronisms, destined for eradication when "actually existing socialism" would transition to true communism.[9] On the other hand, Western observers saw in these networks the kernels of entrepreneurial activity, all the more remarkable because they emerged in the stifling Soviet economic system. But after the Baltic states became independent in 1991 and policies were implemented that produced an agricultural sector dominated by small-scale farms reliant on AFNs as distribution mechanisms, AFNs were once again cast as backwards, only to be supported to some extent during and after the financial crisis of 2008-09.

This shifting acceptance of AFNs has depended upon the broader geopolitical and sociospatial context of transformation that occurred from the 1980s to the present. Because the fate of AFNs is tied to the agricultural sector and to rural space, this chapter focuses primarily on these two topics. When Gorbachev was at the helm of Soviet policy in the late 1980s, he sponsored the creation of peasant farms. This dramatic shift in Soviet policy was sparked in part by the recognition of the productivity of semi-subsistence private farms and allotment gardens, many of which sold their production through AFNs. In the Baltic states of Latvia and Lithuania, the focus on peasant farms dovetailed with national, anti-Soviet, anti-industrial and pro-Western imaginaries. As a result, before and after Latvia and Lithuania gained independence, agriculture became a testing ground for neoliberal "transition" policies based on privatization, deregulation and the liberalization of prices and markets. When these policies did not achieve the expected results, the agricultural sector and rural space became labeled as "losers" of transition and were targeted as a problem space during EU accession. Just like earlier in the 1990s, EU accession in 2004 produced unexpected outcomes: unable to meet more stringent hygiene requirements, many farmers in AFNs were driven into selling their food illegally. Finally, AFNs were supported again to some extent when the financial crisis

sparked a renewed need to spur capital accumulation at the national scale, and consumers and farmers pressured policy makers to create more favorable policies for AFNs.

In order to explain the shifting political terrain affecting AFNs, in this chapter, I seek to answer two questions: 1) why the implementation of neoliberal transition policies in the early 1990s led to unanticipated outcomes for the agricultural sector and for AFNs; 2) why subsequent EU accession policies also lead to unanticipated outcomes for farmers working in AFNs. In response to these questions, I contend that it is necessary to examine the multiple historical trajectories of production, consumption and distribution that have shaped the emergence of AFNs. With that in mind, Section 1 sets the stage by providing a background on late Soviet agriculture and food practices, as well as how dimensions of difference were vital in producing food and agricultural systems. Section 2 analyzes the transition policies in the early 1990s, which were based upon a "catching up" narrative that positioned the Baltics as "behind" Western Europe and implied the need to pass through a linear developmental transition. These policies also devalued the "Soviet" in favor of national imaginaries.

However, the problem with "catching up" strategies is that they ignored the production of multiplicity and relationality in space and the sociospatial positionality of Latvia and Lithuania. In Section 3, I demonstrate how these very dimensions of sociospatiality help explain why transition policies failed to produce their desired outcomes and had particularly damaging impacts for the agricultural sector and for rural space more broadly. Similarly, I show how dimensions of difference were constitutive of transition, rather than being inconsequential. The prospect of EU accession offered promises of assistance to farmers and access to markets, but as I detail in Section 4, both pre and post accession policies were couched in the same "catching up" narrative that had dominated earlier. Agriculture was particularly targeted as a problem space. In Section 5, I detail how EU policies again disregarded the multiplicity of space and sociospatial positionality, and I outline key impacts for AFNs, including the production of multiple modernities in the spheres of food production and consumption.

My alternative to the catching up transition narrative highlights the importance of sociospatiality and emphasizes the ways that "historically and geographically specific

articulations of difference actively shape and inflect diverse trajectories of socio-spatial change" (Hart 2002, 37). Accordingly, I draw upon the idea of multiple trajectories of sociospatial change (Hart 2002) to help explain the transformations at work in each site. I also underscore the importance of sociospatial positionality in enabling and constraining development possibilities (Sheppard 2002). Building on feminist scholarship, Eric Sheppard has developed the concept of positionality to understand the "shifting, asymmetric, and path-dependent ways in which the futures of places depend on their interdependencies with other places" (2002, 308). Although sociospatial positionality can have many dimensions, for the purposes of this chapter, I consider the economic dimensions of positionality forged by trade relationships. These relations constituting space are not free-flowing and random, but may even exhibit path-dependent characteristics that affect development possibilities. As a result, the prospect that places have to build their own development trajectories does not depend exclusively on local initiative: places are not equally endowed with the possibility to challenge existing power relations and realize alternative futures. Although many studies have already critiqued the notion of a linear transition (Burawoy and Verdery 1999), this scholarship has yet to harness an alternative sociospatial conceptualization, one that creates space for thinking "multiple development trajectories and livelihood assemblages, deconstructing the global North as the natural locus of definitions of the good life and expertise about what constitutes development" (Sheppard 2011, 46).

1. Late Soviet Food Production, Distribution and Consumption

In this section, I describe the multiple trajectories that constituted food production, distribution and consumption in the late Soviet period, which involved formal, informal and household spaces. Food production, distribution and consumption did not just occur within the confines of the formal economic system; Soviet households farmed and gardened to help meet their food needs. However, these multiple trajectories of food in the Soviet Union were not distinct; instead, they were complexly intertwined and even interdependent.

In Section 1.1, I highlight how agricultural development in the Baltics was in part a product of the interdependencies that tied together the different republics of the Soviet Union. Section 1.2 outlines the problems faced by the state-controlled food production and distribution sector, and Section 1.3 describes how both urban and rural residents practiced subsidiary food production and distribution to ensure livelihoods. This was a gendered process, as I detail in Section 1.4. Overall, I argue that AFNs should be seen as intertwined with and not isolated from the formal economy in the Soviet Union and its state-run networks. As such, AFNs are the product of the sociospatial relationalities between the formal and informal economic sectors, in addition to signaling the existence of the multiple trajectories of sociospatial change within the Soviet Union.

1.1 Sociospatial Positionality in Soviet Latvia and Lithuania

Soviet developers had lofty goals. Not only did they seek to outpace the West in economic development, they also intended on achieving industrialization in a predominantly agrarian economy with significant economic inequalities across space. Even though, according to Soviet assessments, the West was not heading towards the true communism that marked the developmental path of the Soviet Union, Western development was always a benchmark by which to measure Soviet success. In the process, the Soviet state had to deal with managing industrialization and promoting regional development. To that end, the Soviet Union administered a redistributive policy by implementing direct transfers between its wealthier and poorer member republics, organizing trade through preferential prices to facilitate indirect transfers, and promoting a policy of interdependency between republics within the Soviet Union (Orlowski 1993).

Despite the efforts to produce balanced regional development, considerable economic differences between republics continued to exist. Within the Soviet space economy, Latvia and Lithuania enjoyed an advantageous sociospatial positionality. Not only did they have the highest GDP in the Soviet Union, but the Baltic region had long been prized as a cultural gateway to the West in the Russian Empire, and then later in the Soviet Union (Misiunas and Taagepera 1983). However, the level of economic

development achieved in Latvia and Lithuania was dependent on the existence of vast interconnections with the rest of the Soviet economy. Soviet planners in Moscow had intentionally built an economy that made the individual republics interdependent and was centered on Moscow as the seat of production for the power relations that spanned the USSR. Remarking on this phenomenon, Wegren states: "It would be fair to conclude that food was used as part of a strategy for creating and maintaining dependencies (and presumably loyalty) to Moscow" (2005, 49).

Food production and processing industries relied on regionally-based distribution networks and on export markets in the other Soviet republics. The Baltics specialized in milk and meat production, and their processed outputs were exported in exchange for grain from other republics. Although the Baltic states had the most productive agricultural sectors in the Soviet Union (Misiunas and Taagepera 1983), their agricultural and industrial sectors were still heavily buttressed by the strength of ties with other republics, which they relied on for both inputs (fertilizers, machinery, fuel) and export markets. In particular, one significant factor promoting economic development in Latvia and Lithuania was the low price of fuel imported from other Soviet republics and the high cost of processed food exports, both of which were subject to centrally-controlled indirect transfers of wealth between Soviet republics (Orlowski 1993).

The sociospatial positionality of the Baltics was produced through interconnections with less economically developed places in the Soviet Union. However, it is also important to realize that from the 1970s onward, Soviet economic growth became more dependent on oil exports, which provided it with the hard currency to purchase grain. Along with this development, the sociospatial positionality of the Baltics also was produced in part by Soviet exports of natural resources and imports of grain. The Baltics, however indirectly, grew more integrated with the global economy.

1.2 The Limits of State Control in Agro-Industry

In the 1980s, Soviet agro-industrial sector was plagued with serious problems that left the shelves bare in state shops and forced the Soviet Union to be a net importer of food. Simple assessments of the situation blamed the collectivized agricultural sector, but more nuanced explanations point to a wide variety of factors. Soviet development was based on state-managed capital accumulation (a regime of accumulation of sorts), which was itself buttressed by a mode of regulation, or the institutional and social norms, practices and expectations that make any given accumulation regime function. The Soviet accumulation regime had relied upon a mode of regulation that promised future material improvements through modernization. Although the form of this promise varied under different Soviet rulers, rising standards of living were possible as long as growth rates were sufficiently high.

In the Brezhnev era growth rates declined while consumer demands increased. Natalya Chernyshova argues that consumer demand under Brezhnev was facilitated by his own version of modernization, which was based on "social change driven by economic improvements in opportunities for consumption, and not the fundamental transformation of industry or the boosting of ideological activism," (2013, 9) a strategy that dominated earlier. In other words, the modern socialism of Brezhnev bred individualism and social distinction through consumption (Chernyshova 2013). In this context, the agro-industrial sector not only had to keep people adequately fed, it had to produce the types of food people wanted to buy, such as meat, delicacies and high quality products. In fact, the now infamous Soviet grain imports of the 1970s were initiated in order to increase the amount of animal feed (Wegren 2005).

Rising demand and a more discerning consumer cannot explain all the problems confronted by the Soviet agro-industrial complex, however. Problems in the agricultural sector were symptomatic of a crisis in Soviet rural space. Because Stalin's economic policies subordinated the agricultural sector to foster urbanization and industrialization, rural areas had been disadvantaged socially and economically since forced collectivization started in the late 1920s. Despite efforts to ameliorate rural living

conditions under Brezhnev, rural areas experienced continuous outmigration, posing problems for an agricultural sector heavily reliant on manual labor.

Problems also resulted in the distribution of food. Inefficiencies in transportation, crumbling infrastructure, poorly coordinated processing and distribution caused problems throughout the food chain and lead to high rates of food wastage (Litvin 1987). On the farm, broken machinery, a chronic shortage of farmworkers and labor-intensive agriculture all helped to make the urban state shops unreliable and largely empty (Bridger 1992).

Both rural and urban dwellers dealt with food shortages by growing their own food in "private" or "subsidiary" gardens. Multiple studies attempted to estimate the extent to which private producers contributed to total food production in the USSR (Wädekin 1990). Although these studies demonstrated the impressive productivity of the private sector, they largely overlook one important dimension of subsidiary agriculture in the Soviet Union: it existed in rural space because of a dual structure of agriculture, not in spite of it. Collective farm workers made use of farm machinery on their own plots and they syphoned off inputs and feed to support their own food production. The trajectories that forged the private subsidiary farms and state controlled collective farms were relational and complexly intertwined. For urban residents with allotment gardens, generous social welfare policies and guaranteed employment provided the time and resources to devote to food production. Therefore, the private food production of city dwellers was also supported in complex ways by the state sector.

1.3 Alternative Food Networks

Despite official distaste for private trading, the practice of forging AFNs as a livelihood strategy was common in the Soviet era (Litvin 1987). Farm workers could sell the food they grew on their subsidiary farms at what were called "collective farm markets." These were markets where collective farms were allowed to sell a portion of their production, but private trading by collective farm workers was also allowed. With no border controls prohibiting movement between individual Soviet republics, collective

farm workers in the Baltics enjoyed access to markets not only in their own towns and capital cities, but also in nearby Russian and Belorussian cities.

Robert Sommer and Maaris Raudsepp (1991) offer a glimpse into the practices constituting such markets in Tallinn, Estonia, in 1989. They found that although the prices at Tallinn's markets were higher than at state stores (sometimes five to ten times higher), the quantity on offer as well as the variety was greater at the markets (Sommer and Raudsepp 1991). Consumers favored markets because they perceived produce there to be of higher quality and the atmosphere more pleasurable, without the long lines and indifferent store clerks found at state stores.

The inefficiencies of the Soviet food distribution system strengthened AFNs, but AFNs should not be seen as opposed to or separate and cordoned off from the public sector. Instead, they were supported by a dual structure in Soviet agriculture, as well as the existence of formally-organized marketplaces where collective farm workers could sell their produce.

1.4 Gendering Soviet Food Practices

Growing food and processing it for household use was, of course, a gendered activity, which must be understood within the broader context of gender relations in the Soviet Union. While the Soviet state claimed to emancipate women by employing them in the labor force, the participation of women in Soviet development was an economic necessity, especially during and after World War II. The stay-at-home mother was an anomaly in the Soviet Union. Most women were expected to work full-time jobs, as they made up the majority of the labor force up until 1979. As a result, the extent of women's employment in the Soviet Union was impressive: in the 1980s, women made up 51% of the industrial labor force, and 40% of the agricultural labor force (Buckley 1992). However, closer inspection of these figures reveals that women made up the majority of unskilled manual laborers, and were disproportionately employed in heavy, dangerous work and night shifts. Despite their dominance in certain sectors of the economy, such as medicine, women held fewer leadership or administrative positions with higher salaries

(Lapidus 1979). Therefore, the official discourses that proclaimed gender equality masked a system that channeled women into positions that reinforced their subordination.

Part of the explanation for this situation rests on the gender relations that were reproduced in the household. While Soviet women were expected to work full-time jobs, they were also expected to perform most household and child-rearing tasks. In the 1980s, the "double burden" endured by women involved not only cooking, cleaning, washing clothes (with or without very basic washing machines) and caring for children, but also dealing with food shortages and rationing, waiting in multiple lines at shops for food, and preserving vegetables for the winter. In fact, even on normal days the task of shopping was burdensome and required a creative approach (Shapiro 1992).

The double burden for working women was not something that went unrecognized, but society blamed the state for inadequately socializing household services rather than working to challenge and change gender relations at home. Indeed, gender was a focus of the "Cold War shadow boxing" that animated the "kitchen debates" between Khrushchev and Nixon over "which system would produce the most and best labor-saving devices for women's household work" (Gal and Kligman 2000, 9). Women's employment in the public sphere was seen as an achievement over the West (which needed "bourgeois feminism"), and the quest for labor-saving devices for household work was an index of the Soviet regime's success, as well as of the overall achievements of a socialist society. Underpinning the public discourses of women's emancipation was a naturalized understanding of "women's work," which was seen to be an outgrowth of women's biological propensity as caregivers. Therefore, the debate focused not on "how to restructure social values and society to make it less patriarchal or sexist, but rather as how to accommodate women's innate differences to the ideal of the New Soviet Man" (Johnson and Robinson 2007, 7).

Women in rural areas faced even more immediate challenges. Rural areas experienced shortages, and depending upon the distance to towns or cities, women faced even greater challenges trying to obtain necessary items for the household. Rural women were also expected to provide for the bulk of their family's food needs by growing food on subsidiary plots, and preserving it for use in the winter.

Rural women were not passive victims of the Soviet regime. They contested their marginalized positions in a variety of ways. Milkmaids used their access to milk to syphon some off for their own benefit or for exchange. Women also continued to seek better opportunities in cities, causing significant labor shortages. Even extensive campaigns to entice them to return to the countryside, specifically to marry and help solve the "bride problem" did not yield success (Bridger 1992). Rural mothers also encouraged their daughters to seek better opportunities outside rural areas (Bridger 1992). Gendered trajectories were therefore crucial in constructing rural and urban space, in addition to being vital to the reproduction of Soviet society.

1.5 Multiple Trajectories of Sociospatial Change

By the 1970s, the economic growth rates that propelled the Soviet economy after WW II began to decline. Although the reasons for Soviet economic decline remain controversial (Bacon and Sandle 2002), growing social dissatisfaction was increasingly evident (Misiunas and Taagepera 1983). However, people survived and even thrived because they relied on multiple economic practices to procure food and to make a living more generally. My examination of food production, distribution, and consumption reveals that these practices helped constitute multiple trajectories, spanning formal and informal economies. Informal food practices evolved to compensate for the inefficiencies of the state-controlled sector, but they were not produced in isolation from the state sector. Subsidiary farms functioned because of their relationship with collective farms.

The Soviet state, the locus of control and the guarantor of social welfare, was the primary object of dissatisfaction. In the 1960s and 1970s, Brezhnev's policies encouraged the cultivation of distinction through consumption, which fostered the creation of a discerning consumer who was increasingly unwilling to accept whatever the state had to offer. In the 1980s, the policies of glasnost and perestroika were designed to appease the unrest by introducing new political, social and economic opportunities, but they only helped to further this unrest by legitimizing its expression in public space.

Discontent also had a sociospatial dimension with diverse articulations: in the Baltic states, growing dissatisfaction with the central authorities in Moscow combined with appeals for political and economic autonomy, and later, national independence. In the late 1980s, independence movements emerged in Latvia and Lithuania, which based their imaginaries on reconfigured sociospatial relationships.

2. Turning Points: Peasant Farmers And National Revival in Latvia and Lithuania (1989-1994)

On August 23, 1989, the anniversary of the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, between 1 and 2 million people formed a human chain stretching across the Baltic States, from Vilnius to Tallinn. Despite political repression and shortages resulting from Russian embargos, the independence movements in the Baltic states of the Soviet Union were gaining momentum. Although these movements espoused the desire for greater economic and political autonomy, the eventual dissolution of the Soviet Union was not a widely believed possibility (Yurchak 2005). In fact, just weeks before the peaceful protest, *New York Times* Moscow Bureau Chief, Bill Keller, wrote that the Baltics were on the road to a "capitalist socialism," having just received tentative approval from Moscow for more economic liberalization (1989). He noted that Baltic economists were planning to adhere to a Swedish model of the economy, guaranteeing social benefits through a progressive income tax while supporting private entrepreneurial development. Keller admitted that the Baltics faced challenges, but he also praised them, likening Baltic culture and entrepreneurialism to that of the West.

What is notable in Keller's article is his insistence on a certain inevitable trajectory toward the West, to which the Baltics enjoyed an advantage over other Soviet republics. The general discourse that represented the (post-)Soviet East as backward and as "catching up" to the West became popular throughout Europe, with the underlying assumption that the East needed the West as an advisor in the "catching up" process of convergence. In the following sections, I examine how this narrative of catching up articulated with national imaginaries and the sociospatial context in the Baltic states. It

was not just imposed from the outside; external narratives merged with local narratives that were constructing national policies but also redefining the relationship between gender, nation and citizen. The policies that were ultimately implemented, which I detail in the last section, did not resemble those that would support capitalist socialism, as described by Keller in 1989; instead they resembled the neoliberal ideologies characterized by the 'Washington Consensus.'

2.1 Anti-Soviet and Agrarian National Imaginaries

The independence movements that gained popular support in Latvia and Lithuania during the 1980s harnessed a particular national imaginary that showcased the agrarian roots of both nations and the prosperity of their brief periods of independence in the 1920s and 1930s. These movements drew heavily on an agrarian imaginary of peasant life, centered around the single, isolated farmstead, as opposed to the village center, typical of Soviet collective farms. The interwar era, which had been marked by a shift to authoritarian rule from parliamentary democracies in both countries, was nevertheless celebrated as an age of prosperity, especially for agriculture. Both countries instituted radical land reforms in the early twenties, effectively dismantling large estates and redistributing land to the landless. This was not only an economic necessity, but also a political one; access to land helped to quell support for Communists in the countryside (Vardys and Sedaitis 1997, 40).[10] Following agrarian reform, the agricultural sector developed with significant state support. Despite the fact that the relative importance of agriculture in the national economies of Soviet Latvia and Lithuania had declined since the 1950s, in the 1980s the population imagined the agricultural sector to be vital in the restoration of independence (Mincyte 2011a; Schwartz 2006).

The agrarian imaginary coalesced with anti-Soviet (implicitly, anti-Russian) and anti-industrial sentiments in the widespread environmental movements of the time. In addition, reactions against the imposition of "utopia" and "experiments" were deeply felt and combined with a yearning for "normality," for something "natural" (Eglitis 2002). What normality actually meant was still contested in the late 1980s and early 1990s, but

the rejection of utopias reflected upon the pervasive Soviet insistence on precisely the *pursuit* of utopia in the eventual surpassing of the West. In Latvia, two prominent articulations of normality emphasized *progress* towards the West and a *return* to the pre-WW II past, directions which were not always contradictory. In both countries, the return to Europe implied that the Soviet era had been a detour from the Baltic states' rightful development as independent European nation-states.

The pursuit of normality was also a gendered process. Rejecting the genderless *Homo Sovieticus* went hand in hand with embracing "normal" gender relations, including the patriarchal family (Eglitis 2002; Zake 2002). Burdened by full responsibilities for housework and formal employment, women were attracted to the idea that they could have the option to stay at home. At the same time there was a widespread understanding that Soviet gender equality had gone too far (Funk 1993).

In sum, in Latvia and Lithuania, national imaginaries implied a rejection of Soviet modernity and an embrace of an agrarian past that was tied to Western Europe. Independence movements embraced more than just political and economic reforms; in their imaginaries, they were also reconfiguring articulations of gender and nation.

2.2 Catching Up: The Neoliberal Path

The Baltic governments declared independence from the Soviet Union in 1990, and hostilities and tension abounded until the failed August coup against Gorbachev in 1991 made the Baltics *de facto* independent. Recognitions from other states followed thereafter, including from the Soviet Union itself on September 6th. Although the pathways towards the transformation of society, politics and the economy had already been paved through the perestroika policies of the 1980s, in 1991 what lay ahead was far from certain. Unlike the other former Warsaw Pact nation-states in Eastern Europe, the Baltics did not have their own currency, national institutions, army, etc. Although they did not have national debts, they did not have any hard currency at their disposal either.

Elites were anxious to implement economic and political reforms, what became known as "transition" policies, but also to firmly establish the credibility of the Baltic

states as independent nation-states (Bohle and Greskovits 2007). Not only was "catching up" with the West necessary for policy makers, but no guarantees existed that independence would continue to be respected by Russia. Conveniently, the catching up narrative was also endorsed by the IMF and World Bank, the institutions that had the obligation of advising the newly (and precariously[11]) independent nation-states. These organizations advocated a package of reforms, dubbed the "Washington Consensus," which had been applied in Latin American countries following the debt crisis in the 1980s. While now associated with neoliberal ideology, the Washington Consensus encompassed the following policy prescriptions: fiscal discipline; the targeting of subsidies to encourage growth; tax reform; market-determined interest rates; competitive exchange rates; trade liberalization; foreign direct investment; privatization of state property and enterprises; deregulation; and ensuring property rights.

These policy prescriptions and the way they were implemented came to be known as "shock therapy." Already before 1991, the IMF, along with Jeffrey Sachs and other economic advisers, had been overseeing the implementation of shock therapy in Poland. In the Baltics, policy oversight came from international institutions like in the IMF, but the movement of policy prescriptions also spread through transnational social networks. For example, a group of economists who had left Latvia to study at Georgetown University in the late 1980s returned to play prominent roles as advisors and came to be known as the "Georgetown Gang." Some of the founders of the Lithuanian Free Market Institute had been educated in Western Europe and the United States, and they went on to play a formative role in policy-making in newly independent Lithuania. Support for conservative fiscal and economic policies was further espoused by Carl Bildt, Prime Minister of Sweden at the time, and other prominent Western European leaders.

In comparison to other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the Baltics adopted the most radical neoliberal market policies (Bohle and Greskovits 2007). They swiftly implemented price and trade liberalization in the early 1990s, supported massive privatization of state assets, followed policies to balance budgets by cutting expenditures and introduced a flat tax on income (in 1994 in Lithuania and 1995 in Latvia). Furthermore, both countries followed stringent monetary policies by adopting a fixed

exchange rate regimes (Latvia, starting in 1993) or a currency board (Lithuania, starting in 1994).

Although there was dissent, the major political parties agreed on the same goals, differing only on the necessary speed of the reforms. Moreover, once in place, it became difficult to change certain policies. For example, in 1996, a conservative government came to power in Lithuania and supported the elimination of the currency board, which had negatively impacted Lithuania's exporting industries (Lane 2001). This move raised international concern with institutions like the IMF, which eventually stepped in to work out a compromise that left the currency board in place (Lane 2001).

The IMF imposed conditionality criteria to motivate reform efforts, but the Eastern European nation-states were also constantly ranked with respect to their progress in implementing market reforms. The catching up narrative was therefore not only used as a comparison between the present situation with the "future" in the West, but it was also used to rank individual nation-states with respect to others. Because the Baltics only gained independence in 1991, they were already behind the rest of Central and Eastern Europe in implementing reforms. Within the Baltics, Estonia was often the leader, and as a result, Latvia and Lithuania were encouraged to follow Estonia's path.

Despite the international pressure, however, political elites in the Baltic states had a stake in following the neoliberal policies that the IMF and others recommended. They wanted to sever ties with Russia, reorient their economies towards the West and gain international credibility as sovereign nation-states. A large resident Russian-speaking population in Latvia was potentially an obstacle to that goal. Following independence in 1991, citizenship was automatically granted to citizens of pre-WW II Latvia and their descendants, but not to the residents of Latvia who migrated there during the Soviet era. This move effectively eliminated political rights for 32% of its population (Bohle and Greskovits 2007). Policies that crippled industry, further disempowered the Russian-speaking population. Therefore, transition policies, the bundle of neoliberal policies designed to facilitate privatization, liberalization and marketization, must be understood in their sociospatial and historical context.

2.3 Agriculture at a Turning Point

In the Latvian and Lithuanian agricultural sector, a transition to “normalcy” (Eglitis 2002) coalesced with the neoliberal ideology held by elite policy makers to support decollectivization, privatization, and restoration of property rights to pre-WWII owners. The path towards this shift had already been laid when Latvia and Lithuania were still part of the Soviet Union. Steps towards privatized agriculture were taken in 1988, when Soviet authorities resorted to drastic measures to repopulate the countryside and boost food supplies by initiating lend-lease agreements with individual farm operators. Effectively, the goal was to reestablish peasant farming. As Gorbachev explained: “Everything depends on how quickly we can get people interested and get work organised in leasing and contract collectives, how far we can attract rural workers into this process to make the peasant the true master of the land” (quoted in Bridger 1992, 44). To meet Gorbachev’s goal, Soviet republics were allowed to pass legislation to create peasant farms, and the Baltic governments soon did so. Establishing new peasant farms was more popular in the Baltic states and Georgia that in other Soviet republics; in 1990, most of the 20,000 peasant farms were in these Soviet states (Bridger 1992).

Gorbachev’s motivation to pursue agricultural reform arose in part because it was assumed that these reforms would produce immediate benefits, thereby inducing more popular support for his other policies. In Latvia, the Soviet Supreme Council pursued this path as well by supporting a resolution that outlined mechanisms for agrarian reform. Therefore, the tendency to prioritize agrarian reform was already established in the Soviet era and it persisted after 1991, when Latvia and Lithuania became independent nation-states. Legislation was soon introduced to privatize and dismantle collective farms, and to restore property rights to pre-WW II owners and their descendants (Davis 1997). Policy makers ultimately envisioned the creation of privately-owned family farms as the goal (Davis 1997). The priority focus on reforming agriculture was also supported by the population, which believed that the agricultural sector would form the foundation for post-Soviet economic recovery (Liepins 1993).

2.4 Summary

In the Baltic states of Latvia and Lithuania, economic transition policies were more than just about creating the conditions for the functioning of a market-based economy, as is often assumed. Rather, they involved asserting a national agrarian imaginary that both explicitly and implicitly devalued the assets and connections that had been built up during the Soviet era. This devaluation was expressed quite succinctly by Latvia's Minister of Welfare in addressing protesting pensioners: "you do not need big pensions, because you worked under the Communist regime, and your work accomplished nothing" (cited in Milanovic 1995, 33). Furthermore, just like previous Soviet development policies, they were based on a "catching up" narrative, but in this case the goal was only a place in space (Western Europe), as opposed to being also a future communist utopia.

3. Outcomes: Agriculture in Transition

Transition policies had an immediate outcome on the economies of Latvia and Lithuania, which experienced dramatic declines in both industrial and agricultural output. In Latvia, real GDP declined by 2.3% in 1990, 11.1% in 1991, 35.2% in 1992, and 16.1% in 1993 (Marin and Schnitzer 2002). In Lithuania, the decline was less dramatic, only reaching -19.6% in 1993, but more extended: GDP growth was not positive until 1995 (Marin and Schnitzer 2002). Writing about Russia, Burawoy et al. (2000) labeled the changes that were wrought by neoliberal transition policies as economic and social involution. Economically, the sphere of exchange expanded at the expense of production, while society retreated from the market and to the household. Instead of fostering growth and capital accumulation, transition policies fostered the growth of financial-merchant capitalism based on trading and exploiting natural resources (Burawoy et al. 2000). Similar developments occurred in Latvia and Lithuania, whose economies remained deeply tied to Russia throughout the 1990s.

In this section, I highlight the main outcomes of transition policies for the agro-food sector and rural space. Section 3.1 details how these policies ignored the sociospatial positionality of the Baltics, even as they tried to reorient positionality toward the West. Section 3.2 delineates how policies designed to create efficient and competitive agriculture created the opposite, by again ignoring the relationalities that had made Soviet rural space function. Section 3.3 details how identities forged around the intersection of gender and nation constituted processes of "transition."

Transition policies were "domesticated" (Smith and Rochovská 2007), interacting with multiple trajectories of sociospatial change and producing complex and differentiated outcomes. However, they did not succeed in harnessing these trajectories into a linear transition. This section explains why.

3.1 Sociospatial Positionality and Agriculture

The sociospatial positionality that had linked the Baltic agricultural and food sector advantageously to the other Soviet republics for decades destabilized in the early 1990s. Political instability caused disruptions in trading relationships between Soviet republics, leading regional authorities to withhold produce from the market, or to search for customers who could pay in hard currency. The agricultural sector experienced significant production declines as inputs from other Soviet republics became more expensive or were difficult to obtain, and other former-Soviet states introduced trade barriers to prevent dumping (Maddock 1995). Significantly, Russia started charging the Baltic states world market prices for fuel, while the existing energy infrastructure allowed for few other fuel sources (see Grigas 2013).

At the same time, support that had existed for the agricultural sector was reduced, prices were liberalized, and trade barriers were reduced. The result was an influx of subsidized imports from the European Union, which further crippled the agricultural sector. In contrast, the European Union was already contending with agricultural surpluses and protected its markets from Eastern European imports. Moreover, Eastern European exports to the European Union did not meet EU standards for food hygiene.

International organizations, such as the OECD, warned the Baltic governments against establishing similar protectionist measures, citing that "the achievement of income parity through market and trade regulation and more direct support policies is not consistent with a market-orientated agriculture" (cited in O'Reilly 1995, 33). In the case of Latvia, the OECD conceded that there is a "difficulty for policy-makers to accept the adjustment required and resist pressures for protection when other countries whose products are appearing on Latvian markets are themselves subsidizing producers and protecting their own markets" (O'Reilly 1995, 34). Rather than protecting their agricultural producers, international institutions encouraged Latvian and Lithuanian governments to foster competitiveness by directing resources to help the agro-industrial sector meet EU standards.

Although certain exports to the EU like natural resources and textiles grew throughout the 1990s, exports of agricultural products remained oriented towards markets in post-Soviet states, especially Russia. Moreover, the whole energy and transportation infrastructure remained integrated with the rest of post-Soviet space. Political efforts to reorient the sociospatial positionality ran up against these persistent interdependencies with post-Soviet space and the difficulties of exporting food products to the EU. As a result, catching up with the West by increasing integration with Western Europe was achieved in a manner that was disadvantageous for farmers in the Baltics.

3.2 Agriculture and Rural Communities in Transition

Decollectivization followed a top-down approach and was informed by a radical policy of family farm fundamentalism (Juska et al. 2005) and largely without considering the perspectives of the rural population (Alanen 2004). A 1990 survey of 448 farmers in Lithuania revealed that only 6.7 % preferred individual, private farming (O'Reilly 1995). Similarly, a study conducted in Latvia in 1991 demonstrated that "most of the respondents were familiar with only two farming structures namely the collective farm and the small peasant farm. They therefore preferred the idea of remaining within their

existing farming structure as they could not see the possibilities in establishing an individual farm" (O'Reilly 1995, 32-33).

The negative perspectives on decollectivization in the countryside can be explained by the fact that even "new family farms developed under the support of the resources of the collective farms" so that "the disappearance of collective large-scale farming paradoxically weakens the institutional conditions of family farming" (Alanen 1995, 14). Despite the relationality between different types of farms, and the unpopularity of decollectivization, national political leaders still directly and indirectly enforced privatization, decollectivization and the establishment of family farms. The relationality of Soviet rural community spirit was also disturbed: Alanen found that people were surprised when they gave away their privatization vouchers to new farm owners and that this new owner "would no longer cultivate their plots or supply pensioners with firewood for the winter, etc." (Alanen 2002, 24).

In general, workers lacked information about the reform process and they found the concepts of privatization, dividends, etc. incomprehensible (O'Reilly 1995). As a result, negative perceptions about privatization prevailed in the countryside, and Alanen noted that even when privatization processes were carried out in abidance to all legal procedures, collective farm workers labeled the practice as "robbing" (Alanen 2002, 22). Nevertheless, decollectivization proceeded as property restitution to pre-WW II landowners occurred and collective farm assets were privatized.

The immediate result was an agricultural sector dominated by a large number of small-scale, subsistence-oriented family farms, which possessed few assets, received little state support, and could not compete with the imports entering the market through the liberalization of trade. As a result, agricultural production plummeted. Analyzing the outcomes of rural changes in the 1990s, Alanen argues that the "family farm project thus turned not only into a plot farm project, but also or at the same time into a poverty production project" (2004, 49). However, it is important to note that some farmers used the opportunity to slowly increase their holdings, and eventually modernize their farms. Although the proportion of large-scale farmers was still small in the 1990s, it was increasingly clear that the category of "family farm" was not homogeneous; while most

family farms were small-scale and subsistence oriented, there was a small group of mid and large-scale family farms that were growth oriented. In other words, multiple trajectories of food production existed side by side.

It is also important to note that agriculture acted as a safety net for newly unemployed rural and urban residents. This tendency, as well as the appearance of rural stagnation in comparison to urban development contributed to an understanding that rural areas and the agricultural sector had become the "losers" of transition. In analyzing representations of rural Lithuania in the 1990s, Arunas Juska argues that the "rural population was stigmatized as deficient in values and character, remaining in the grips of the Soviet mentality and state dependency and, therefore, unable to take advantage of opportunities created by the reforms" (2007, 238). This quotation also describes the differentiation between rural and urban spaces that became increasingly evident in the 1990s.

The experiences of Latvian and Lithuanian rural communities in the early 1990s are not unique. Privatization and decollectivization produced tensions that have been documented elsewhere in post-Soviet space. In addition to dramatically changing agricultural production, decollectivization also dismantled the social underpinnings that constituted rural geographies (Burawoy and Verdery 1999; Creed 1998; Leonard and Kaneff 2002; Verdery 2003). For example, in her study of villages in Romania, Katherine Verdery argues that decollectivization was central in producing new inequalities and remaking boundaries, while also altering the basis of appropriation from the social to the individual (2003). While highlighting the uncertainty accompanying decollectivization and privatization, scholars have also attempted to clarify the persistence of continuities between socialist and postsocialist periods (Creed 1998). Burawoy and Verdery argue that although certain social practices may bear resemblance to older forms, in post-socialism, their causes are actually novel (1999). When rural communities were beginning to feel the impacts of market integration they responded by relying more heavily on what appeared to be older social arrangements of producing food, such as collective farm production in Bulgaria (Creed 1998), or intensified subsistence peasant production in Poland (Zbierski 1999). In Latvia and Lithuania, both

commodified and non-commodified AFNs gained a renewed importance for rural livelihoods, but in contrast to the Soviet era when AFNs were bolstered by deficiencies in state-controlled distribution, in the 1990s AFNs flourished because of the effects of transition policies.

3.3 AFNs and Supply Chains in Transition

AFNs belong to a wide range of direct trading activities that the transition both allowed and even compelled. They were part of the informal economy, which extended from the household to include large enterprises that traded through barter across national borders (Seabright 2000). Farmers seeking to sell their produce through conventional networks were faced with unreliable and shifting market outlets in the early and mid 1990s. For example, early in the decade, recently established private processing companies faced bankruptcies and other processors paid late, not at all, or very little. Later in the decade, the restructuring of supply chains and increasing degrees of vertical coordination, both favoring larger farms, marginalized small-scale producers in certain sectors like meat, vegetable and fruit production. Newly established retail networks sourced their products at a global scale. However, the large food processing capacity that the former Soviet states were bequeathed (due to the large export volumes to other Soviet states) also meant that newly privatized processing companies had an interest in procuring the maximum amount of inputs, especially in the dairy sector. With high numbers of small-scale farmers in such sectors like milk production, large-scale processors continued to purchase milk from these farms, but at a lower price. As a result, small-scale dairy farmers were integrated into conventional food networks, but largely as price-takers who had little choice in determining to whom they would sell their production.

Fortunately, small-scale farmers did not have to depend upon processors or wholesalers to make a living. Just like food production practices were constituted by multiple trajectories, food distribution practices spanned the formal and informal sector. The infrastructure to support AFNs already existed in the form of public markets in most

towns and cities, but the biggest and most lucrative markets remained in the capital cities. Writing about the Riga Central Market, Latvia's largest public market that occupies 16,000 square meters in the center of Riga, one Norwegian professor offered descriptions of everyday life at the market in the early 1990s (Larsen n.d.). He noted how the market featured vendors pouring milk into bottles that customers brought, as stray cats and dogs wandered around the market waiting for scraps to fall from the tile-covered counters. He described how meat was pushed around in open trolleys and no refrigeration was to be seen. As a result, he concluded that "Riga Central Market was the showpiece, an exhibition of [the] Norwegian past" (Larsen n.d.).

As I describe in Chapter 7, public markets have been critical places for the making of livelihoods for farmers as well as resellers, who competed with farmers with cheaper imported produce but also provided consumers with highly desired food items. It is therefore important to remember that public markets are constituted by a multiplicity of trajectories.

3.4 Transition and Difference

Transition policies produced an increasingly differentiated landscape, not only because the privatization and liberalization of the economy increased unemployment, but also because new nation-states emerged that redefined belonging along ethnic lines. In Latvia, the marginalization of Russian-speakers through restrictive citizenship laws as well as regulations enforcing the use of Latvian has been widely documented (Mikkel and Pridham 2004; Kronenfeld 2005; Pisarenko 2006). However, it is also important to highlight how marginalization produced differences by gender, age, class and spatial location. Older people had a harder time adjusting, while retired people received pensions that could hardly cover living costs. Although still expected to work a double shift, women's representation in positions of power decreased. Novikova has argued that "the 'happy marriage' of the neo-liberal economic framework and the neoconservative gender ideology is in reality a restatement of women's political, social, and economic disempowerment through the politics of exclusion and marginalisation" (2004, 7). In the

job market, Russian-speaking women were most adversely affected by transition policies, and were more likely to find themselves trying to make a living in the informal economy (Eglitis 2002).

While women were disadvantaged as a group (Eglitis 2002), transition policies produced a crisis of masculinity for working class men. These men experienced profound social and psychological dislocation, which is evident from their lower life expectancy, increased rates of violence, and substance abuse (Tereškinas 2010). In a study on working-class men in Lithuania, Tereškinas argues that their marginalization "can be explained not only by political instability, social disruption, physical and economic hardship but also by their subjective sense of powerlessness and despair" (2010, 35). Working class men were increasingly unable to succeed as breadwinners, which defined their identities as men.

The spatial dimensions of marginalization interacted with ethnicity, gender and class in complex ways. The decline of the agricultural sector in the 1990s led to the growing recognition that farmers and rural space were the "losers" of transition. This label was applied to certain regions like Latgale, the eastern part of Latvia, which is ethnically mixed and has the highest rates of poverty in Latvia. The losers of transition were blamed for their inability to adjust to the new circumstances and for being unable or unwilling to emerge from the Soviet past. The catching up narrative based on a linear notion of transition marked certain bodies and places as behind in time. In contrast, the concept of multiple trajectories of sociospatial change underscores how marginalization is not a remnant of the past but it is produced by contemporary processes and relations across space.

3.5 Strategic Reversals

In the 1990s, the Baltic states attempted to reorient their positionality towards the West, by adopting the neoliberal policies that Western experts recommended. As Einhorn argues, "the transformation process in Central and Eastern Europe to date has been undertaken—as have political restructuring processes in Western European 'old' EU

member states—under the aegis of an assumed consensus around the neo-liberal market model" (Einhorn 2005, 1024). Yet, the recommended policies for rural areas, decollectivization and privatization, did not produce the agrarian-based recovery that had been imagined. I have argued that one reason for this is that transition policies, which originally saw the seeds of entrepreneurialism in the subsidiary farms of collective farm workers, disregarded the relationalities that had existed between the collective farm and the subsidiary or later the peasant farm. Once the collective farms were dismantled, so was the social infrastructure that had underpinned rural Soviet society.

Rather than being the foundation for development, small-scale peasant agriculture was now understood as being archaic. Ironically, the political elite now viewed the private agricultural sector, the product of neoliberal reforms that dismantled the collective farms, as a problem space marked by inefficiency, fragmentation, poor skills, and a lack of competitiveness. Writing about Lithuania, Mincyte argues that this constituted "a tectonic shift in the political imaginaries in Lithuania" (2011a, 10). Rather than being the steward of the nation, the farmer was now "the loser in the new economy" (Mincyte 2011a, 10).

But even losers can learn how to get by, as was evident by the AFNs constructed by farmers. Neoliberal transition policies were "domesticated," made bearable through everyday practices such as household food production, informal economic work, the maintenance of social networks, and the ability of some members of the population to give up hope for an improved future for themselves (Smith and Rochovská 2007). In other words, transition policies articulated with the already multiple trajectories of food. The result, an agricultural sector dominated by subsistence-oriented small-scale farms, was not predicted. But the question still remains: what caused the tectonic shift in political imaginaries with respect to the small-scale farmer? In Lithuania, Mincyte (2011b) argues that the answer lies in the European Union's increasing role in shaping national politics starting in the mid 1990s.

4. Turning Points: Europeanization and the Lagging Agricultural Sector (1995-2004)

By the mid to late 1990s, the dominance of agrarian national imaginaries and their influence on policy had subsided, as economic development became more focused on furthering the knowledge economy, which was promoted at national and global scales (World Bank 2003a; World Bank 2003b). However, the agricultural sectors of Latvia and Lithuania still employed significant portions of the population. In 1996, agriculture accounted for 18% of employment in Lithuania (Jalinskeine and Stanikūnas 2003), reaching 21.7% in 2000 (Gaugere 2003). In Latvia, 16.7% of the population was employed in agriculture in 2000 (Gaugere 2003).

This high percentage of farmers, as well as other characteristics of the agricultural sector, became a problem when Latvia and Lithuania began the accession process to become full members of the European Union. In effect, the "losers" of transition now became barriers to further change. To explain why and how the agricultural sector was viewed as a lagging space, in Section 4.1 I situate the dynamic of EU accession in its geopolitical context. Section 4.2 focuses more specifically on how the agricultural sectors were represented during the EU accession process. Section 4.3 concludes by considering other controversial issues in EU enlargement.

4.1 Geopolitics of EU Accession

The influence of the European Union on Latvian and Lithuanian politics grew remarkably after the signing of the Europe Agreements in 1995. By signing these agreements, the Baltic states joined other Eastern European nation-states in the EU accession process. One of the prospective benefits of integration into the European Union for the agricultural sector was the possibility to benefit from the EU's market and its generous Common Agricultural Policy. However, the EU's system of agricultural subsidies was also changing in the 1990s; there was no guarantee at the start of the EU accession process that the subsidies would remain the same when the accession states

actually joined. Nevertheless, EU accession was a widely accepted goal among the political elite in Central and Eastern Europe. In Latvia and Lithuania, all major parties were supportive of EU accession.

EU accession entailed a shift in geopolitical positionality, as ties with Brussels became more prominent. Although the influence of international institutions such as the World Bank, IMF and OECD remained strong in the 1990s, the European Union now provided guidance largely on political, economic and juridical matters. More precisely, in its accession negotiations, the European Union prioritized the formation of a stable democracy and a functioning market economy. For instance, reports from the European Commission encouraged further privatization to improve the functioning of the market economy (see European Commission 1998). In order to be considered for membership, candidate countries also had to adopt the *acquis communautaire,* the entire body of EU law that had evolved over several decades. In contrast, in previous rounds of accession, applicants were allowed the benefits of EU membership while they phased in EU requirements.

Not only were the terms of EU accession for the Central and Eastern European states less favorable than they were for previously accepted applicants, the accession process was also marked by tension and an unequal power dynamic. While applicant states were subject to censure on a wide variety of topics, from human rights to agriculture, critics pointed out how the old EU member states themselves fell short of EU ideals (Clark and Jones 2011). Underpinning the accession negotiations was an assumption of Eastern European inferiority, an assumption that has long figured in Western European representations of the East (see Wolff 1994). Hierarchies of power and wealth were reinforced with the production of hierarchies of knowledge (Böröcz et al. 2001), that involved deploying a "set of calculative and assessment technologies that measured and evaluated economic indicators, landscapes, practices, objects, animals and other non-human entities" (Mincyte 2011a, 12). In other words, just as much as EU accession involved adopting political and economic requirements, it also involved applying measures to assess achievements towards certain assumed goals or norms, which because they existed in the EU, were assumed to be universal.

4.2 Agriculture in Accession

The proportion of the population employed in agriculture was one such norm. In 2000, agricultural employment only accounted for 4.5% of total employment in the EU, but in all candidate countries this number was much higher (Gaugere 2003). Even though the EU's agricultural sector was itself heterogeneous, the assumption was that a developed economy would employ less people in agriculture. Therefore, a smaller agricultural population would be a sign of progress.

In evaluating the agricultural sectors of candidate countries, the EU put particular emphasis on achieving quality, productivity, efficiency and competitiveness. Again the EU average or understanding of the concepts was taken as the norm. In a version of Lithuania's first Rural Development Program prepared during EU accession (and in consultation with EU institutions), the Ministry of Agriculture noted that "dependency on agricultural activities in Lithuania is considerably higher than in the EU" and that "the agricultural sector in Lithuania lags behind [the EU] in terms of quality, productivity, efficiency and competitiveness" (Ministry of Agriculture 2000, 7). In these planning documents, quality was understood to mean adherence to EU veterinary and phytosanitary legislation, while competitiveness referred to the ability of farmers to compete on the internal, EU market. Productivity was defined with respect to yields and efficiency was equated with the use of technology. In both Latvia and Lithuania, the high proportion of small-scale farmers was considered to be a barrier to improving quality, productivity, efficiency and competitiveness. There was widespread consensus that these small-scale farmers would not be able to compete in the internal market, and that measures should be devised to either help them modernize or ease them out of agriculture. Moreover, small-scale and semi-substance farmers were increasingly considered a threat to public health because their hygiene practices did not conform to EU guidelines (Sajdik and Schwarzinger 2008). In one *Regular Report from the Commission on Latvia's Progress Towards Accession,* the European Commission commended Latvia's progress in implementing the *acquis,* however it noted that: "a

concerted effort is needed to bring small holdings under general veterinary surveillance" (European Commission 1998, 32).

The high number of small-scale farmers also presented a problem for the EU's farm subsidy system, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The CAP was founded in 1962 with the stated aims of increasing productivity, stabilizing markets, assuring the availability of supplies and reasonable consumer prices, and guaranteeing a fair standard of living for persons engaged in agriculture (according to Article 39 in the Treaty of Rome) (Garzon 2006, 22). Like other agricultural subsidy systems, the CAP was created as an institutional fix to counter the impacts of the long-term decline of real agricultural commodity prices. The CAP had to ensure market supplies and intervene to prevent surpluses from further lowering prices. While motivated by similar crises in agricultural production that had occurred in the past, and for which various agricultural policies had been implemented, geopolitics helped determine the content and form of the CAP. In the context of the decline of Western European colonial empires, European political leaders devised the CAP so that it would help shield the European market from competition from former colonies. As an institutional fix for agricultural crises, the CAP reflected the geopolitical priorities of the simultaneously decolonizing and integrating Western European nation-state states.

As such, the CAP was operationalized through the principles of market unity within the European Community (EC) (the predecessor of the EU), community preference, and financial solidarity (meaning the expenses would come from the EC/EU budget). Originally, the CAP was structured using a market and price policy that relied on import levies, export refunds, and intervention buying. For example, in order to ensure high prices for agricultural products within the EC (to guarantee a fair standard of living for farmers), import levies were applied to make up for the difference between the (usually lower) world price and the (usually higher) EC target price. Within the EC, intervention buying was used when the market prices fell below the target price and tended towards the intervention price (which was set to be lower than the target price).

Although the CAP did succeed in fulfilling some of its original goals, including assuring the availability of supplies, it also produced serious problems. Guaranteed

prices exacerbated tendencies towards overproduction, leading to agricultural surpluses, which both incurred high storage costs and depressed world prices. Like any institutional fix, it did not address the underlying mechanisms causing overproduction; storing or exporting surpluses could not forestall the eventual production of ever greater surpluses. While the CAP was never immune from political contention,[12] by the 1980s its critics started to outnumber its supporters, as the number of farmers declined. The agro-industrial sector, which had originally benefited from the CAP, now had more to gain from global trade liberalization than from protectionism. Critics alleged that the CAP hid downward pressure on prices from farmers, and that it also concealed the high degree of state intervention. Eventually, import levies were insufficient to finance the CAP, and it grew to take up a majority of the EC budget. Furthermore, with prices set to be within the same range throughout the EC, the system benefited certain countries (France, Germany, Netherlands) and certain regions (Garzon 2006). Finally, the productivism that the CAP supported became increasingly scrutinized by environmental and consumer movements.

Quota systems for major commodities like milk and sugar were introduced to counter tendencies towards overproduction. But these also required considerable market intervention. With increasing budgetary pressures and the waning influence of the agricultural lobby, other issues of contention developed internationally, putting pressure on the EC. The US never accepted the highly protectionist nature of the CAP, but it had to tolerate the policy because it supported the geopolitical project of European integration during the Cold War. During the Uruguay round of trade negotiations, the US applied pressure to the EU to reduce its trade-distorting subsidies. The incorporation of agriculture into the GATT caused problems and delays in the negotiations, but eventually the US and EU agreed to a compromise in 1992, called the Blair House Accord. This paved the way for the first major reforms to the CAP, the MacSharry reforms (Bureau and Matthews 2005).[13] Support prices for major commodities were cut by certain percentages, and farmers were compensated by payments per hectare (calculated based on historical yield) and by payments per head for livestock. In an effort to appease other political interests, the reform also introduced environmental measures, early retirement

schemes, and set-aside programs to cut production. The next major reforms, Agenda 2000, made further cuts in support prices and formally divided the CAP into two pillars, the first of which supports agricultural production and the second is designated for rural development measures (funding organic agriculture and biodiversity measures).

Although the rise of neoliberal globalization helped spur CAP reform, it does not explain the form of policy changes to the CAP. A waning but still powerful agricultural lobby, along with nascent Europe-wide environmental groups helped shape the outcome of CAP reform. CAP reform also guaranteed a new role for the EU's institutions and further strengthened the supranational scale. Far from abandoning control over agricultural markets, Mincyte alleges that with CAP reform, the EU "gained a new leverage to monitor and control agricultural practices and actors" by implementing "an intricate system of farmers' registration, audits, regulations and standards" and by using "its funding instrument—direct payments—to steer agricultural development" (Mincyte 2011b, 111). Finally, the impending expansion of the EU to include Eastern European accession states motivated CAP reform, while also shaping its outcome.

Existing member states did not favor the extension of the CAP to the acceding states, but they also failed to agree on how to proceed with accession without it (Sajdik and Schwarzinger 2008). According to Franz Fischler, European Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, and Fisheries, the rationale for not extending the CAP to new member states was that:

> An immediate introduction of our system to new member states would provoke macroeconomic distortions and could lead to social tensions. At the very least, it could induce a reluctance to change, hindering the development of sound agricultural structures. It would be better to help the rural economies of the countries concerned overcome their existing structural handicaps through well targeted development policies and transitional support for the worst off. (Fischler 2000)

He warned that extending the CAP would inhibit the structural reforms that were necessary in Central and Eastern European agriculture. The final decision that the European Commission came to was to phase-in the CAP's direct payments over several years: the accession states would be accepted into membership, their farmers would be

competing within the internal market, but they would receive substantially less financial support from the EU. Although the accession states did not find this acceptable, since the Eastern European countries "were supplicants, these were the rules they had to adopt" (Swain 2004, 200). Powerful interests in the old member states worked to ensure that the status quo would be defended (Swain 2004). Therefore, in addition to receiving reduced funding, the accession states had to accept a CAP structure that had evolved within the old member states, but was not designed for the needs of farmers in Central and Eastern Europe (Swain 2004). Just like the acceding states had to accept certain definitions of quality, efficiency, and competitiveness, they also had to transplant a scarcely modified but not fully funded CAP.

4.3 Gender Difference and Europeanization

Despite the growing importance of gender mainstreaming and gender equality in the EU, these policies have only been minimally applied to EU programs on agriculture and rural development (Oedl-Wieser 2014). The concerns and needs of rural women were sidelined during the accession process, and more generally, the interests of women in the EU accession countries and the relevance or even the applicability of the EU legislation on gender equality and mainstreaming for their lives were not considered during the accession process. European Union policy on gender issues reflects liberal notions of equal treatment and opportunities in the labor market. This policy framework was the gradual product of women's organizing in the European Union, although it also reflected the perspectives of the elite women who were poised to take advantage of these policies (Bretherton 1999). With respect to EU accession, Bretherton remarks that the "lack of input from women is, perhaps, the single most significant factor affecting policy implementation" and "even more importantly, it also inhibits the development of policies which respond to the needs of women" (Bretherton 1999, 145). Potentially exacerbating the situation, Baltic governments chose to follow an "expert-bureaucratic model" for the implementation of gender mainstreaming, as opposed to a participatory model that would involve existing organizations (Novikova 2004, 10). The critiques raised about EU

accession by feminist scholars have implications beyond the realm of gender mainstreaming:

> The discourse of transformation has highlighted gains in civil and political rights, while the process itself has been, in material terms, almost entirely focused on economic restructuring: marketisation, interpreted as privatisation. Thus European Union accession, while embodying hopes in relation to the EU commitment to gender equality through gender mainstreaming, is in practice a process of economic alignment and integration. In this process, concerns not only for gender equality, but also for citizenship and social justice are marginalised. (Einhorn 2005, 1025)

4.4 Summary

EU accession was a process initiated and carried out by political elites. In fact, Eurobarometer polls showed that between 1995 and 2002 support for EU accession never reached a majority in Latvia or Lithuania, and for several years during that time period support was actually decreasing as the proportion of people with a negative perspective on EU membership increased (Cunningham 1995; Guerra 2013). Interestingly, the referenda on EU membership were only held in 2003, after all requirements for EU accession had already been put into place. Although in both states a majority of voters ended up supporting EU accession, these victories were not guaranteed. Consequently, significant resources were devoted to "Yes" campaigns. Because all the legislative changes had already been enacted, politicians presented the hard work of EU accession as a *fait accompli.* To them, all that remained was to receive the benefits. What was already clear to society, however, was that there would be categories of "winners" and "losers," and despite the aid offered to agriculture and rural development, rural areas and small-scale farmers were predicted to fall largely in the category of "losers" (Tang 2000).

5. Outcomes: Europeanizing Agriculture (2004 to 2008)

EU accession was couched in a language and practice of catching up to the West by taking a linear sociospatial trajectory, in which some winners get ahead and the losers

lag behind. This way of thinking disregards the multiplicity and relationality of space, as well as the sociospatial positionality of the Baltics. In Section 5.1, I outline the basic impacts that EU accession had on the agricultural sector, rural space and on the sociospatial positionality of Latvia and Lithuania. Efforts to create a certain rural development trajectory have only interacted with existing practices to further foster multiple trajectories of rural development and multiple modernities of consumption. In Section 5.2, I discuss how certain AFNs were crimilinalized, although they continued operating and were appreciated and valued by customers. In Section 5.3, I discuss how consumers were active in constituting their own constructions of quality, which they satisfied through their consumption practices in AFNs.

5.1 Agriculture, Rural Space, Sociospatial Positionality

Accession to the European Union in 2004 was correlated with economic growth in both Latvia and Lithuania. Capital flows ranged from 80 to 160 % of 2003 GDP and the GDP grew by 8-10% per year (Mitra 2011). While much of the incoming capital was directed towards the real estate sector, capital was also increasingly available to farmers who wanted to invest in their farms. A number of EU programs were also organized to reimburse farmers a certain percentage (mostly 50%) for approved projects. With increases in production, export volumes also increased. However, export destinations for agricultural goods largely remained the same. Compliance with EU standards and the inclusion of Latvia and Lithuania into the EU's market has helped lead to a small but steady annual increase in the value of agricultural goods being exported to the old EU member states. Nevertheless, for both states the Russian Federation has remained an important export destination for food, especially processed dairy and meat products. About 30% of Lithuania's dairy exports go to Russia annually (the largest single export market), where they command higher prices than in the internal EU market and are in demand because of their good reputation (Rimkus and Karlaitė 2011).

However, Russia has strict food safety standards and has periodically banned imports for extended periods from the Baltics and other EU countries when it has found

violations. For example, dairy products processed by certain companies in Lithuania were banned from entering the Russian Federation for several months in 2013 even though these products were declared safe by the European Commission (Hirst 2013). Although academics have argued about whether Russia's actions are motivated by geopolitical conflicts, interests in protecting its own producers or desires to enhance economic control (Elvestad and Nilssen 2010), it is evident that the Baltics' sociospatial positionality ties them with Russia in multiple, complex ways.

Interdependencies between the Baltics and Russia are not necessarily inimical to the interdependencies between the EU and the Baltics, although they are often imagined to be so. For example, EU subsidies helped boost agricultural production, and therefore exports to Russia. Conversely, integration into the EU's internal market also made important imports from Russia, such as fertilizers, more expensive for farmers. Lithuania was also required to shut down its nuclear power plant, which had supplied the country with most of its electricity. As a result, Lithuania became even more dependent on Russia for fuel imports.

Despite the benefits of EU subsidies, there have been significant costs associated with accession. In addition to rising prices for inputs, the price of agricultural land increased dramatically, partially because of the territorially-based subsidies. According to a study done in Latvia, subsidies were also progressively contributing most of the net value added in agriculture, meaning that agricultural production levels were being sustained by subsidies (Melece and Prauliņš 2010). However, not all farmers benefited equally from subsidies. Because subsidies were distributed on a flat rate basis per hectare, farmers with more land received more subsidies. Rural development programs also disproportionately favored large-scale producers and certain central regions, especially in Latvia (Melece and Prauliņš 2010). Other factors, such as increases in competition and dwindling profits because of rising input costs, have led to an overall decline in the number of farms. Growing possibilities to work abroad also enabled migration and consequently, a shortage of skilled labor in rural areas.

In short, EU accession entailed a partially reworked sociospatial positionality, as new relations between places were created. Nevertheless, the agro-industrial sector remained dependent on export markets in Russia.

5.2 Alternative Food Networks in the European Union

Alternative food networks were impacted by EU accession in multiple ways. The farming sector, as a whole, benefited from progressively increasing subsidies and rural development funding. Accelerated economic growth boosted demand for niche products, like organically certified fruits and vegetables, which are almost exclusively sold through AFNs. However, EU accession also led to the adoption of stringent regulations on issues like animal health and food hygiene. The accompanying paperwork on everything from animal registration to milk quota usage inflated the bureaucracy; in Latvia, for instance, farmers regularly interact with fourteen different government institutions. Each one has its own rules, which farmers must be aware of, and requires its own paperwork.

It is difficult to ascertain the effects of EU accession because EU regulations and directives were incrementally implemented over the accession period, and sometimes amended as EU legislation was itself amended. For example, already in 1995, before the Europe Agreement between Latvia and the EU had come into force, the Latvian Ministry of Agriculture introduced regulations on veterinary health for dairy producers, in concert with Council Directives 92/46/EEC and 89/362/EEC. These rules were replaced in 2001 with a new law on veterinary health, which itself underwent four modifications until Latvia was formally admitted to the EU.

Confronted with the sheer complexity of bureaucratic paperwork and their inability to meet all or some of the requirements, many farmers in both Latvia and Lithuania opted to sell their produce through AFNs on an informal basis. This is particularly true for the agricultural sectors most prominent on small-scale farms: dairy, vegetable and fruit production. For example, farmers who sell raw milk directly to consumers may meet the requirements for animal health, but they may not afford to equip their cars with refrigeration to guarantee the correct temperature (Mincyte 2012).

Farmers who sell some of their milk and processed dairy products directly through AFNs may have a quota for direct sales in addition to selling some of their milk to a processor, but they may not be able or willing to abide by all the other rules required for direct sales through AFNs. Although state officials hoped that imposing stringent regulations would encourage the consolidation of small-scale dairy farms into larger, more efficient farms, farmers who could not meet some or all of the requirements could still rely on AFNs that function as informal dairy markets. Sometimes, even under the cover of darkness early in the morning, farmers deliver milk directly to the courtyards of high-rise apartment buildings in cities in Latvia and Lithuania. Mincyte argues that these semi-subsistence farmers who sell milk directly are not a problem to the state because they are "unproductive, inefficient or backward" as policy documents attest, but that they are "too autonomous and effectively, ungovernable" (2011b, 111). Another example of ungovernable, but yet highly visible, AFNs are the informal networks of older women who gather to sell their produce on the outskirts of open-air and public markets. They usually sell a wide variety of vegetables and sometimes also eggs and milk. These informal networks should not be necessarily seen as in opposition to conventional food networks or the formal economy. For example, many small-scale dairy farmers sell some of their milk to the processor and some directly to consumers, tying their livelihoods to fluctuations in the dairy export market and the market for local raw milk.

EU accession also had an influence on *where* farmers could sell their produce. The chaotic public market, while important for consumers and farmers, was considered an archaic remnant from the past, destined to fade away in significance with the rise of supermarkets (Aidis 2003). Indeed, in the early 2000s in Latvia, public markets faced increased competition from supermarkets (Amoliņa 2001; Reardon and Swinnen 2004). The markets also had to undergo expensive renovations to meet new regulations on food safety and hygiene. In Latvia, managers of public markets accused the national government of requiring unrealistic changes in short periods of time, which had the intention of eradicating the markets (see Amoliņa 2001).   Faced with the combined pressure to compete with supermarkets and to meet new standards, many predicted the demise of public markets. However, EU integration did not eradicate public markets.

Despite the animosity that various public officials have expressed for public markets (Aidis 2003), they have remained an important source of livelihood for small-scale shuttle traders as well as for farmers.

The "catch-up" narratives that prioritized an imagined EU norm for food production and distribution put small-scale farmers in Latvia and Lithuania on a trajectory in which they were positioned as backwards, destined to become losers if they did not modernize by undergoing restructuring. But this very policy imperative that seeks to fashion a universal outcome across space encountered the multiple trajectories that make agrarian livelihoods in Latvia and Lithuania. Marginalized farmers found ways to work around the regulations, thereby ensuring their livelihoods.

5.3 Difference and Consumption

Both during and after EU accession, consumers reacted to changes taking place in the agro-food sector by revaluing the very trajectories of consumption that were supposed to be left behind, whether it was Soviet era products or home-processed sauerkraut direct from the farm. Neither of these fit the image that national elites upheld to be appropriate for Europeanizing and modernizing Latvia or Lithuania. Nevertheless, consumers proved to be active agents in cultivating their own trajectories of consumption, and by implication, their own modernities.

AFNs could not exist without the support of consumers who did not embrace the assumption that modernization should entail eradicating their direct ties with farmers. For example, when EU standards were being put in place in Lithuania, consumers rallied in support of small-scale farmers and processors when news circulated that only stamped (ie, regulated) eggs would be allowed to be sold at public markets (Lukas 2004) or that small-scale farmers who make sauerkraut from their own cabbage would be required to meet the same requirements as large-scale processors (Beniušytė 2004).

Ironically, during and after EU accession nostalgia for Soviet era products became more visible in both countries. Klumbytė (2010) argues that nostalgic consumption of Soviet era products in Lithuania is a complex negotiation of present realities, which fall

short of earlier expectations but offer an avenue for the reclamation of a denigrated "Eastern" identity. Furthermore, she states this consumption "implies a critique of the postsocialist neoliberal state and constitutes an attempt to create an alternative modernity that is both post-Soviet and European" (Klumbytė 2010, 22). However, not all consumers have articulated such a critique; Klumbytė (2009) has also analyzed how trajectories of consumption demonstrate increased differentiation in Europeanizing Lithuania. In other words, in addition to the consumers who practice the trajectories of food that make AFNs, there are consumers who aspire to be European and embrace the "modern" supermarkets and conventional supply chains.

6. Conclusion

In this chapter I have contextualized the emergence of AFNs historically and sociospatially within the multiple trajectories that make space. By conceiving of space as multiplicity, and always in process, I have brought to light how diverse food practices of production, distribution, and consumption constitute multiple trajectories. These have played a role in sustaining livelihoods since the late Soviet period. However, not all practices have been embraced equally by the state. For example, before and since integration with the European Union, both national and supranational states encouraged trajectories of food that embodied certain ideas of progress and modernity. These were based on a model, a place in space: Western Europe.

In order to achieve this goal, elite policy makers have deployed a "catch up" narrative, which envisioned certain trajectories of food as more modern, and thus more worthy of support, than others. AFNs were thus positioned along a linear transition, which marked them as backwards. The catching up narrative deployed by elites also imagined a reworked sociospatial positionality for the Baltics, one oriented towards the West. Although a partially reoriented positionality was achieved through EU accession, this has not led to the eradication of ties with Russia. The agro-food sector remains dependent on exports to the Russian market, as it was under the Soviet Union. Because of this relationship, changes in the Russian economy (such as a currency devaluation)

affect farmers in immediate ways, and political instability in Russia affects the Latvian and Lithuanian economies as a whole. AFNs are affected because the loss of export markets or a decline in prices through conventional food networks drives more farmers to market their produce through AFNs, thereby increasing competition. In contrast to the underlying spatialities that underpin the "catching up" narrative, my understanding of sociospatial change underscores the coevalness of multiple trajectories. Accordingly, AFNs are not a relic of the past, but they are part of the multiple modernities that constitute space. Although they may resemble past practices, they are products of the present. Moreover, the multiple trajectories that make modernities are imbued with power relations, as is evident by the fact that some trajectories of food have become marginalized while others have gained dominance. Recently, the type of modernity and the types of trajectories that have gained dominance are those that are more easily subjected to the abstract compulsions that are characteristic of capitalist modernity. This was not an inevitable development; it was put into place through political and social practice. Through EU accession support, the national and supranational state encouraged the rationalization of production, the enforcement of standards and the deepening of commodity relations. Sociospatiality is therefore continuously constructed and influenced by the structuring abstract domination of capitalism.

Although sociospatial relations are constructed, individual actors (states, firms, people) do not have the agency to reorient their sociospatial positionality. Capital enforces a structured coherence globally, but sociospatial positionality helps determine how relations across space are made. I have demonstrated here that Latvia and Lithuania both tried to reorient their sociospatial positionality towards the West. In so doing, they have neglected their persistent and significant relations with the East. The assumption of the necessity to "catch up" with the West was deeply embedded within neoliberal policy prescriptions. This assumption overlooked the constraints and opportunities of sociospatial positionality.

This begs the question, were there alternatives to the neoliberal policy prescriptions? Was there an alternative way to reorient sociospatial positionaliy? A few voices expressed reservations about taking the advise of Jeffrey Sachs and the IMF, citing

evidence of the damage that had been done in Latin America. Andre Gunder Frank, for example, argued for the need to keep the IMF out and to maintain the Comecon division of labor, so that industrial manufacturing would not be dismantled and massive unemployment would be avoided (2006). In other words, he argued that the East European countries should work to maintain their existing trade relationships. Rather than destroying, dismantling and cheaply selling off what had been built during the Soviet period, he pointed out that this could be used as a foundation for development. He warned that the alternative would be a remaking of Eastern Europe into Western Europe's periphery. However, as this chapter has shown, the anti-Soviet imaginaries deployed by national elites devalued or ignored the very infrastructure and relationalities that the Soviet system had relied upon. In the countryside, dismantling collective farms was relatively easy, although in the short term it imposed hardships. In contrast, reorienting positionality is difficult, if not impossible. Considering the everyday lived experiences of people, rather than expert knowledge of political elites and international advisers, would have been another alternative development pathway.

Chapter 4. Beyond Europeanization: Alternative Food Networks and the Politics of Scale

Since 2008, the regulatory landscape governing AFNs in both Latvia and Lithuania changed dramatically as more and more regulations were instituted to define and oversee the direct marketing of products from farmers to consumers within national borders. This sudden interest in and support of AFNs stands in direct contrast to the way they were perceived by EU and national officials in the era before and immediately after EU accession. During the EU accession process, much attention was paid to the inability of Eastern Europe's overwhelmingly small-scale and "uncompetitive" producers to conform to EU regulations and standards, but less attention focused on the legal capacity of nation-states to legislate appropriate regulations for small-scale producers who market their goods within national borders (and not to the wider EU market). Indeed, only a few observers noted that national elites were not taking full advantage of the possibility to legislate appropriate norms in the lead up to EU accession or immediately after that (Gaugere 2003). As a result, not only were small-scale producers marginalized and even criminalized, but many also operated in a legal limbo until more appropriate regulations were finally passed. The question remains: why were appropriate regulations not passed earlier? This is a complex question, but I contend that part of the answer lies in how people understand scalar relations and how their understandings reproduce certain scalar narratives. These scalar narratives influence political agency in complex ways.

This chapter has two goals: first, I seek to examine how scalar narratives have shaped people's understanding of European Union and national politics; and second, I analyze what conjunctural processes were at work to produce the changes in regulations that eventually occurred. I respond to the first question by arguing that one factor influencing the understanding and interpretation of European Union politics in Latvia and Lithuania is a scalar narrative that reinforces a penetrating and unidirectional understanding of European Union politics on the national state. Significantly, this is not isolated to popular discourses in the Baltics, but in fact also pervades academic writing on Europeanization. In contrast, and in response to the second question, I propose a

perspective based on the politics of scale using the case of food safety and hygiene legislation in EU. This framework allows for an understanding of how a conjuncture can reshape scalar relations. What a politics of scale requires is first a critique of the scalar narratives that reproduce an "impact" narrative of Europeanization while understanding the roots and influence of such narratives. Second, the politics of scale also requires that AFNs be situated in a multiscalar context, one that is not naturalized as inevitable but is understood as a product of contestation and struggle.

This chapter is divided into six sections. In Section 1, I analyze research on Europeanization and multi-level governance, two prominent theoretical frameworks used for the study of EU integration. I argue against impact narratives of Europeanization, and in Section 2, I provide a theoretical framework based in geography to achieve a more dynamic understanding of scalar politics. In the subsequent sections, I expound upon this framework by examining Europeanization, food safety, and the politics of scale in Latvia and Lithuania.

1. Scalar Narratives of Europeanization

The relationship between EU initiatives and national contexts has been an important topic in European integration studies, especially in relation to food hygiene legislation. Although earlier analyses of Europeanization focused on European cultural, political, and economic dominance in the context of colonialism, since the 1990s, the term *Europeanization* has become widely used in political science and European studies to describe the "domestic adaptation to the pressures emanating directly or indirectly from EU membership" (Featherstone 2003, 7). Although the conflation of the EU with Europe is problematic, the term "Europeanisation" is now even part of the official EuroVoc Multilingual Thesaurus of the European Union (EuroVoc 2013). As specified by EU law, this website offers a definition of Europeanization, the "process of incorporating the political and economic dynamics of the EU into the drafting of national policy," in all EU languages (EuroVoc 2013).

The interest of institutions at the national and supranational scale in promoting the study of Europeanization is not coincidental. This field of inquiry has been spurred by a preoccupation with the changing nature of the nation-state, as well as by political concerns about the power of the European Union and the prospect of the loss of national sovereignty and distinction. The process of Europeanization of the national state implies convergence not only toward a European standard, but also toward a unified European voice at the global scale. The emergence and strengthening of a European voice has ramifications for Europe's role as a global leader, in addition to impacting the functioning of EU institutions such as the euro, the official currency of the eurozone. As the world's only monetary union of nation-states with a relatively new currency, the eurozone's existence is precarious and the euro's integrity is more heavily doubted than the integrity of other national currencies. Financial markets and investors are particularly sensitive to problems arising even in small and peripheral euro economies, such as Greece. The crisis in Greece sparked greater concern over the stability of its currency, the euro, than similar crises of peripheral economies in the United States have generated over the stability of the dollar. Europeanization is therefore not an isolated academic concern, but one that is central to the functioning of the EU at global and other scales. Therefore, the sought-after accomplishment of convergence across the EU has significant political and economic ramifications.

The presence or lack of convergence and the *form* of change occurring within the nation-state have become central foci for studies on Europeanization. Early research divided scholars on the topic of changes in the relative importance of the nation-state, with research results supporting the position that the EU had strengthened the nation-state (Moravcsik 1994) and other findings supporting the opposite position (Sandholtz 1996). Subsequent research on Europeanization sought to move beyond this binary and account for what increasingly appeared to be divergences between member states following the adoption of EU policies (Börzel 1999). A typical example of Europeanization research focuses on the process and outcome of adopting EU policies in two or more nation-states. For example, in her research on environmental policy in Spain and Germany, Tanja Börzel found that Europeanization led to the declining influence of sub-national regions

in both states, although political institutions diverged because of already entrenched institutional cultures (1999). In other case studies, divergence has resulted from a complex combination of factors, including the existence of export-import ties with other countries, differences in productivity, patterns from past policy adoptions, uneven regulatory burdens, and pressures from civil society (Perkins and Neumayer 2004). In summary, research has demonstrated that Europeanization cannot be understood as a zero-sum game in which the nation-state either loses or gains power and influence (Börzel 1999), nor can it be understood as having produced a homogeneous landscape marked by convergence (Perkins and Neumayer 2004).

Since the 1990s, Europeanization research has contributed significant insights on the transformation of the state in the EU at multiple scales, providing detailed explanations for the variable outcomes produced by single EU policies within different member states. Although Europeanization is an inherently spatial process, its study has been dominated by the discipline of political science. Only recently have geographers drawn their attention to Europeanization. As a result of this engagement, geographers have articulated several critiques of the existing literature. Most significantly, according to geographers, Europeanization studies have assumed a unidirectional understanding of institutional and regulatory changes in the EU, viewing the initiative for change as coming from the EU and descending down towards nation-states, which then implement those changes in Europeanizing (converging) or path dependent ways (Clark and Jones 2009). Clark and Jones argue that this "mainstream interpretation in political science as the 'impact' of the EU upon member-states lacks clarity, creating the impression of a process directed by a supranational 'other' that is penetrating and transforming domestic arenas" (2009, 194). Although a few prominent scholars have analyzed the "uploading" *as well as* the "downloading" of EU policy (Börzel 2002), the predominant focus has been on the latter. In either case, however, scholars have tended to treat space problematically, as a backdrop or container (Clark and Jones 2009). Europeanization research has further focused on the form of change, as opposed to the content of change. As a result, ideologies and processes stimulating certain spatial configurations have also been neglected. Often, such as in multilateral trade negotiations, these emanate from the

global scale. Prioritizing EU-national relations has therefore led to the neglect of the global scale.

Research that specifically engages with Europeanization is not the only field of academic inquiry that has portrayed a penetrating and unidirectional account of EU accession and integration. Ethnographers working in Eastern Europe have also been especially attentive to the impacts of EU integration. For example, one anthropologist writing about rural Lithuania defines “EUropeanization" (spelled that way to shed light on the EU) as the “processes of change prior to and after the EU accession” (Knudsen 2013, 4). Her ethnographic work in a rural Lithuanian village prior to and after EU accession provides a wealth of fascinating information on how farmers dealt with changes in food safety and hygiene regulations. For instance, rather than ceasing agricultural production and processing, she documents how farmers simply started selling their products informally (Knudsen 2010, 2013). Although Knudsen’s study provides valuable insights and ethnographic detail, it is also problematic because her approach to EUropeanization fails to shed light on the relationality of scalar politics and reproduces an impact narrative of Europeanization. EU legislation is formulated with active input from national representatives who have their own interests and agendas, while implementation is also a national responsibility. Furthermore, much EU legislation requires the introduction of national legislation. Multiple and conflicting interests forge the national scale, with political elites constructing careers and the food processing and retail sector exerting influence for their own benefit. Large-scale farmers who have met stringent requirements also have an interest in limiting competition from small-scale farmers. Thus, to gain a more meaningful view of Europeanization, analytical attention must be focused on the heterogeneity of voices composing each scale and on scalar relationality.

The literature on Europeanization attempts to capture scalar relationality by utilizing the concept of “multi-level governance” (MLG), a concept formulated to account for vertical and horizontal structures of decision-making. For EU scholars, the term “governance” marked a shift from a focus on government to governance, which resulted from increasing attention devoted not only to *polity*, but also to *policy*-making

arrangements and *political* mobilizations. The term "multi-level" marked a shift away from an exclusive focus on the nation-state to levels above and below it (Piattoni 2009). According to this research, the formation of policy in the EU is not restricted to the state, but extends to include multiple actors through policy networks and formal and informal institutions, which operate vertically (between levels) and horizontally (at specific levels). In such a manner, research that utilizes MLG attempts to grasp the complexity of actual decision-making by going beyond simple "command and control" state-based approaches, and by including the variety of actors involved at different interpenetrating levels. For example, the EU offers the possibility for both state and non-state based regional actors to participate in decision-making at both the national and supranational level.

By introducing this concept of the "level," some political scientists have tried to grapple with scalar relationality. However, the way the concept has been defined and utilized in the MLG literature on the EU has several analytical weaknesses. First, the existence of levels is largely understood as preexisting and given, rather than as constructed and constantly in production. In addition, Stubbs argues that "fundamental questions about the structures of power relations, often over-emphasised in statist theories, are downplayed in multi-level governance approaches" (2005, 71). Like Europeanization studies, MLG research has largely ignored neoliberal globalization as an influence on the very process MLG attempts to analyze (Stubbs 2005). While studies on Europeanization, including those that integrate an analysis of MLG, have contributed substantial insights on transforming governance in the EU, their conceptual weaknesses are also substantial. Impact narratives of EU and national relations are not only analytically narrow, they are also politically disabling because they disregard the agency of various actors in the formation of EU policy. What is needed is an approach that provides the conceptual tools to disable Europeanization impact narratives. In the following section, I provide the framework for such an approach based within geographical scholarship on the politics of scale.

2. Disabling Europeanization: Towards a Politics of Scale

Geographers have not played a dominant role in debates on Europeanization. Nevertheless, following Jones and Clark (2009), I argue that the work of geographers on the EU and the politics of scale (Agnew 2001; Brenner et al. 2003; Delaney and Leitner 1997; Hudson 2000; Swyngedouw 2000) can serve as a useful entry point to further understanding on Europeanization as a partial but significant and ongoing multiscalar process shaping alternative food networks, as well as farmer livelihoods.

Unlike MLG and Europeanization research, geographical research on scalar relations has been contextualized historically and spatially: scales and the relations between them are produced, socially and materially. This awareness necessitates attention to historical context and path dependencies, as well as to changes and ruptures. Early work on the politics of scale in Europe, informed by Marxist and Regulationist Approaches (RA) to political economy, tended to focus on the scalar arrangements forged to regulate the capitalist economy. Although many schools of RA have evolved over time (see Jessop and Sum 2006), RA approaches are broadly based on the assumption that capitalism is not self-stabilizing and that a variety of institutions help secure stability (if only temporarily) in capital accumulation. Significantly, RA attempts to go beyond capital-logic approaches in understanding the nation-state, which conceptualize the state as a pliant tool under the control of capitalists (Jessop 1990). In earlier RA work, the nation-state was the focus of analysis because of its importance as the site of struggle between diverse interests over the trajectory of the national economy. After World War II, the outcomes of these struggles in the United States and Western Europe are what formed a *regime of accumulation* (relationships of consumption and production that are intensive or extensive) and a *mode of regulation* (internalized social rules) (Lipietz 1986), which were founded on a Keynesian welfare state and managed by the national state.

According to Jessop and Sum (2006), with the rise of neoliberal globalization since the 1970s, the Keynesian welfare national state (KWNS) is now being replaced by the Schumpeterian postnational workfare regime (SPWR), entailing a major shift in political-economic coordination through rescaling (down, up, and outwards) and

restructuring. However, the shift towards SPWR does not necessarily have to involve a neoliberal strategy (with a focus on privatization, deregulation, liberalization). Instead, other neocorporatist, neocommunitarian, or neostatist strategies may be pursued at a variety of scales. As a result, restructuring between nation-states may produce different trajectories, and strategies at different scales within nation-states may lead to considerable divergence (Jessop and Sum 2006).

A similar approach has been pursued by Neil Brenner, whose analysis of Western Europe specifically applies a spatial lens to the study of regulatory restructuring and scalar recalibrations. Like Jessop, he argues that no spatial scale has become the dominant locus of political-economic coordination to replace the national-scale (Brenner and Theodore 2002; Brenner 2004). The nation-state has not withered away; instead, it has been transformed. In fact, it has even played an active role in its own transformation by targeting and coordinating key urban regions to enhance their competitiveness (Brenner 2004). Brenner argues that regardless of whether the urban locational policies are explicitly neoliberal or neocorporatist, this does not alleviate the territorial inequalities and more exacerbated uneven development that have been produced as a result of the rupture with *spatial* Keynesianism (which attempted to support spatial equality through territorial redistribution) (Brenner 2004). He labels the emerging form of state spatiality a Rescaled Competition State Regime (RCSR), which highlights (again with a slight but still significant variation from Jessop's analysis) that "national states have attempted to retain control over major subnational political-economic spaces by situating them within rescaled, but still nationally coordinated, accumulation strategies" (Brenner 2004, 260).

The political economy and RA approaches pursued by Jessop and Sum (2006), and Brenner (2004) highlight the significance of scale (through rescaling, scalar relations, etc.) in contemporary political economic transformations of the nation-state in Western Europe and the European Union. These transformations have produced new state spaces, in which the geography of capital plays an increasing role in molding state space (Brenner 2004). However, the dynamics of capital are not the only forces prompting radical scalar recalibrations; political, social and other processes also play a role in the

construction and reproduction of scalar relations (Delaney and Leitner 1997). Indeed, the construction of a *European* supranational scale (as opposed to, for example, Mediterranean) has more to do with imagined historical, cultural, and racial affinities than with capitalist processes. Likewise, important transnational partnerships based on common environmental concerns have emerged at the regional scale (such as around the Baltic Sea). A geographical critique also illustrates that scales are not pre-existing or static, and that the process of scalar construction is itself imbued with power, contestation, and negotiation.

Geographers have also analyzed how scaled visions put forth in scalar narratives matter both in the production of scale and the imagination of alternative scalar arrangements. Scalar narratives are explanatory discourses that serve to justify existing or possible scalar relations and arrangements, providing them with meaning (Kelly 1997). They are also productive of scalar relations in the sense that their very circulation and repetition either helps solidify existing scalar relations or helps imagine new ones. For example, policy makers who seek to advance a neoliberal agenda often invoke the global scale in a way that stresses the need for a competitive entrepreneurial national state. As Kelly states, “the global scale in particular has been susceptible to metaphorical construction as political choices are deferred to the ‘imperatives’ of the global space of flows” (1997, 167). In contrast, alter-globalization activists have articulated radically different scalar narratives as they contest neoliberal globalization.

Of course, dominant scalar narratives do not always mirror material scalar practices. In his analysis of the 1980s peace movement in Massachusetts, Byron Miller demonstrates that scalar representations that imagined the state of Massachusetts as an advocate for peace at the federal scale did not coincide with the material practices of state representatives who quietly assented to defense spending that would benefit their state (1997). The effects of this contradiction between scalar narratives and representations and material practices became evident when the peace movement tried to pass a binding referendum to establish a nuclear-free zone in Cambridge, a city with significant stakes in the defense industry. Not only did material scalar practices and their representations collide, the dominance of certain representations of Massachusetts prevented the peace

movement from adequately considering the real impacts of defense spending. Scalar representations and narratives, even when they do not reflect materialities, shape political practices.

In addition to explaining the production and reproduction of scalar relations, an approach based on the politics of scale challenges a penetrating account of Europeanization, while also examining the conditions that perpetuate unidirectional accounts of EU integration. By naturalizing scalar relations in a way that employs a top-down and penetrating account of EU and national relations, current scholarship on Europeanization perpetuates a politically disabling account of European integration. Although scales bear similarities to the levels that make up MLG approaches, a politics of scale actually foregrounds scalar production, places scalar arrangements within a geohistorical context, and is attentive to power struggles and heterogeneity. This approach necessitates a critical analysis of the form of Europeanization, the primary focus of Europeanization scholars, as well as the influence that power relations have on the content, outcomes, and beneficiaries of Europeanization. In the following section, I employ an approach based on the politics of scale to examine the creation of new and comprehensive food safety and hygiene legislation in the EU.

3. Europeanization, Food Safety and a Politics of Scale

The "European" project was reinvigorated in the early 1990s with the reunification of Germany, the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact, and the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Treaty of Maastricht, signed in 1992 and enacted in 1993, formally established the European Union and provided the foundation for future monetary union and the Single Economic Market (SEM) for the free movement of goods, services, people, and money within the EU. This was not a sudden achievement but the culmination of a long process undertaken by the European Community, and especially the Commission, to create a "freer" market between nation-states devoid of trade barriers and discriminating regulations. Signficantly, creating a freer market involved more, not less, regulation.

The regulation of food governance has been central and often spotlighted in this transformation. Understanding the creation of EU-wide food safety legislation requires underscoring that spatial scales, and the relations between them, are always in production and that this is a conflicted and contested process. In the 1990s, food safety legislation became a particular focus of conflict at the global scale, because such legislation was a barrier to trade liberalization (Vogel 1997). At the same time, the need for stronger food safety legislation was increasingly evident because by the mid 1990s several food safety crises had occurred in Europe. For example, Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, a fatal disease linked to Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), left 137 people in the UK dead and led to an EU ban on British beef imports. Additionally, the outbreak instilled a wave of consumer mistrust in the food system, as well as in national and EU capabilities to regulate the system. Because most food imports into EU nation-states originate from within the EU (an intelligible effect of years of market integration), the food safety scare brought EU integration into question as well.

Although criticized for its slow response, the European Commission finally issued a Green Paper in 1997, which stated that current legislation did not address the needs of the consumer, producer, or manufacturer of food products. The subsequent negotiations led to the passing of comprehensive legislation, the General Food Law (Regulation (EC) 178/2002), and to the creation of the European Food Safety Agency. More detailed legislation followed, including: Regulation (EC) 852/2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs; and Regulation (EC) 853/2004 on specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin.

The result was a monumental achievement of state spatial rescaling. However, the negotiations over this legislation were far from harmonious or predictable. Tensions arose around conflicting cultural, political, economic, and scientific interests and processes both within and between scales. The EU had already made a commitment to multilateral trade at the global scale, most notably through its membership in the WTO. Any potential legislation would therefore have to be in accordance with WTO agreements (or it would jeopardize the EU's negotiating position), including the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, which privileges a certain relationship between risk assessment, management, and communication (Taylor and

Millar 2004). In other words, an agreement on new food safety regulation would have to contend with the economic interests that had facilitated global trade integration, in addition to adhering to the more longstanding bilateral agreements furthering the free market in food, in particular, between the US and the EU (Taylor and Millar 2002). The dominance of neoliberalism in the 1990s, especially at the global scale, and the growing acceptance of market-based solutions by some EU institutions, meant that restoring confidence in the market while facilitating greater market expansion was a priority. However, influence from groups at the national scale was also important, as were cultural, social, and scientific perspectives articulated at national and supranational scales. Member states sought to privilege their own national food safety models in the creation of a supranational system. Other interest groups argued against delegating ever more authority to the supranational (EU) scale.

Although not all member states exerted equal influence, they were part of the process of generating policy and, more importantly, executing it. With the new legislation, national institutions were not transformed in a homogeneous manner across the EU. Studies on the Europeanization of food safety policies noted that, following the application of the General Food Law, some member-states completely overhauled their regulatory system, while others adapted their existing systems to new requirements (Abels and Kobusch 2010). Risk assessment and management were separated in some countries, but integrated in others, and differences were noted between federal and unitary states, as well as between old and new member states. Yet, none of these arrangements are completely stable because the politics of scale is an ongoing process. Indeed, the resulting legislation reflected the shifting politics of scale between different institutions and voices at the supranational scale, as well as between global, supranational, and national scales. All of these relations were and remain imbued with power that is not downwardly unidirectional, from the supranational to the national.

The contents of the law are too vast to outline here, but important themes include risk analysis, transparency, and traceability ("from farm to fork"). The follow-up Hygiene Package (specifically, Regulation (EC) No 852/2004) is of particular relevance for AFNs. While it expounds upon the principles of risk analysis, transparency, and

traceability, it also includes discussion about flexibility, exceptions, and national measures. Excerpts from the regulation in Table 4.1 show the various elements of the text related to these topics. Excerpts 1 and 2 delineate the circumstances in which flexibility is warranted, Excerpt 3 mentions a relevant exception to the rules, and Excerpt 4 provides an example of when national measures could be justified. Significantly, ambiguous terms like “small quantities” (Excerpt 3) and “traditional methods” (Excerpt 2, 4) create significant openings for nation-states in their own legislation. Similarly, for Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 on hygiene requirements for food of animal origin, specific exceptions were provided for producers selling small quantities directly to consumers.

Although the new member states were not yet part of the EU while the General Food Law and its attendant Hygiene Package were being formulated, they were members by the time the main legislation was in force. Even though this legislation provides nation-states with the opportunity to design and legislate appropriate regulations for AFNs at the national scale, neither Latvia nor Lithuania took advantage of the full opportunity to do this. While Lithuania did provide regulations for the direct marketing of food of animal origin and for processing dairy products on farms (VMVT 2006), it required that all dairy processors have a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) system in place, instead of providing best practices guidelines (as Excerpt 1 suggests). Other Eastern European EU member states also failed to take full advantage of Regulation (EC) No. 852/2004. As participants in a multinational project on AFNs wrote: “The FAAN project found that Regulation (EC) No. 852/2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs had been implemented badly in many countries (particularly in Eastern Europe) restricting local sales of products such as jams from farms. This does not appear to be such an issue in the UK, where the regulations have been implemented more flexibly” (Environmental Audit Committee 2012, 146).

Table 4.1 Excerpts from Regulation (EC) No 852/2004[14]

Excerpt #	Text
1	"(15) The HACCP requirements should take account of the principles contained in the *Codex Alimentarius*. They should provide sufficient flexibility to be applicable in all situations, including in small businesses. In particular, it is necessary to recognise that, in certain food businesses, it is not possible to identify critical control points and that, in some cases, good hygienic practices can replace the monitoring of critical control points. Similarly, the requirement of establishing critical limits does not imply that it is necessary to fix a numerical limit in every case. In addition, the requirement of retaining documents needs to be flexible in order to avoid undue burdens for very small businesses."
2	"(16) Flexibility is also appropriate to enable the continued use of traditional methods at any of the stages of production, processing or distribution of food and in relation to structural requirements for establishments. Flexibility is particularly important for regions that are subject to special geographical constraints, including the outermost regions referred to in Article 299(2) of the Treaty. However, flexibility should not compromise food hygiene objectives. Moreover, since all food produced in accordance with the hygiene rules will be in free circulation throughout the Community, the procedure allowing Member States to exercise flexibility should be fully transparent. It should provide, where necessary to resolve disagreements, for discussion within the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health established by Regulation (EC) No 178/2002"
3	"Article 1. 2. This Regulation shall not apply to: (c) the direct supply, by the producer, of small quantities of primary products to the final consumer or to local retail establishments directly supplying the final consumer."
4	"Article 13. 3. Member States may, without compromising achievement of the objectives of this Regulation, adopt, in accordance with paragraphs 4 to 7 of this Article, national measures adapting the requirements laid down in Annex II. 4. (a) The national measures referred to in paragraph 3 shall have the aim of: (i) enabling the continued use of traditional methods, at any of the stages of production, processing or distribution of food; or (ii) accommodating the needs of food businesses situated in regions that are subject to special geographical constraints."

It was not clear why national officials chose not to take advantage of the flexibility offered by EU legislation. Scholarly accounts on Europeanization, which do not take into consideration the heterogeneity of voices at any given scale, or which disregard the national scale, cannot adequately respond to this question. As the literature on the politics of scale underscores, scales are made up of heterogeneous, sometimes

conflicting, interests. There are farmers and processors in the Baltic states who benefited from the restricted regulations because facilities and farms that did not comply were closed down, and competition was thereby reduced. However, this explanation does not account for why those who would be negatively affected by the regulations did not attempt to influence national policy. For example, farmers in AFNs could have feasibly had a voice, just based on their sheer numbers. It is therefore necessary to examine how these farmers understand scalar relations through their scalar narratives. In the following section, I examine the scalar narratives of Europeanization produced among farmers in AFNs in Latvia and Lithuania.

4. Scalar Narratives of Europeanization in Latvia and Lithuania

> *Midsummer night is a national holiday in Latvia, involving a mass exodus from the cities to the countryside for several days of festivities. This year, a few nights before June 23rd, I find myself at a festival taking place at the site of an old rural museum, with an open-air stage featuring songs, dances, a play, and a thousand spectators. Around the periphery, each of the rural municipalities in the district has arranged tents and stands featuring handmade products and local produce. With the strawberry season just commencing, I am overwhelmed by the tastes and sounds of summer.*
>
> *On this relaxed and festive occupation, I witnessed an inspection by the PVD (the Food and Veterinary Service). At a stand where I was admiring the delicious strawberries, which had just been picked that day, a woman appeared, glanced around at the produce and sternly inquired about the source of the goat cheese: "Where is this from?" This woman was wearing a long flowery dress, looking like just any festival participant, not the business attire I imagined should be worn by a state official. She didn't introduce herself, but to everyone around it was clear who she was. She continued to ask: "Why doesn't this cheese have the correct label?" The women behind the table looked at each other quietly, and one responded that it is just for tasting, that the label indicates what farm it is from. The PVD representative ordered that the cheese be put away. She then lingered for a few more minutes, eyeing everything else on the display. (Field notes, LV)*

This brief interaction spurred a discussion on the logic behind the inspector's source of concern: the cheese and its lack of a correct label. After the inspector had left, I asked about the kind of public health concern this minimal amount of cheese could cause, especially given that most local people could probably identify the farm from which it came. The women around me seemed to agree that this inspector was just concerned about implementing "European" regulations. But at the same time, one woman insisted that their (own, national) regulations are harsher than those in the old EU member states, and that national officials are especially keen on treating small-scale farmers strictly. One woman noted: "small-scale farmers are just a nuisance for inspectors; it is easier for them to control a few large farms." She also added that the person who produced this cheese was not present, but she wanted to provide some of her cheese to the festival's participants so that they could sample it and so that she could gain a better idea of whether or not she should pursue the laborious task of seeking approval. There was no question that the women at the stall, some of them farmers, saw nothing wrong with the fact that the presence of the cheese broke some rules. So, after the danger had subsided, the cheese was brought back to the table.

This brief interaction illustrates multiple complex themes relevant to AFNs, from the importance of hygiene regulations to the nature and spatiality of state power. More generally, however, this interaction indicates the ways that AFNs—whether old or new—are always shaped and re-shaped by the multiscalar geographies of the European Union. Indeed, the insistence upon the right kind of label, one that enables state authorities to trace a product "from farm to fork," is a relatively new component of European Union food safety law. As the discussion above demonstrates, among Latvian farmers this EU influence is often expressed as a Europeanization impact narrative in which national-scale bureaucrats attempt to exceed EU regulations in their strictness. Much research has critically analyzed EU accession, especially the uneven relationship between the new and old member states, the speed by which the *acquis communautaire* had to be adopted by the new member states, and the power and authority that the European Commission wielded over the acceding states (Kuus 2004). While acknowledging these power relations, critical social scientists have also assessed the roles of national elites, who

played an active role in the accession process (Clark and Jones 2011). Despite the power inequalities between the European Commission and the accession nation-states, the role that national elites played in streamlining accession cannot be overlooked. After accession, the nation-state gained a formal role to play in EU institutions; it is not simply the subordinate receptor for EU policies.

Regardless of the changing role of the national state, however, scalar narratives in the Baltic states continue to be characterized by impact narratives of Europeanization. This is especially the case in more controversial areas of social policy, such as equal rights for sexual minorities. Indeed, dominant scalar narratives often characterize Latvia and Lithuania as being forced to adopt policies that are antithetical to national values. For example, in the annual Baltic gay pride parades, which circulate between the Baltic capitals, signs with slogans "Stop the EU" and "EU = USSR" show that anti-pride protestors equate LGBTQ rights initiatives and movements with the European Union. Conversely, parade participants proudly wave the EU flag and showcase EU politicians, again reinforcing that EU imperatives coincide with their agenda. Both sides construct impact narratives of Europeanization, which effectively erase the national scale as a participant and generator of EU policies. In addition, these representations continue to produce a penetrating scalar narrative about the nation-state as either a willing recipient or a victim of EU policies.

Although scalar narratives may resemble material practices in part, they cannot fully account for the complexity of scalar arrangements. As illustrated above in the example of the Midsummer night festival, dominant scalar narratives reproduced a penetrating account of European integration, while maintaining that the nation-state is active in creating regulations that exceed EU requirements. In fact, during EU accession process, national governments were accused of implementing regulations that were stricter than the corresponding EU legislation (Melece 2003). In Latvia, for instance, at one point a law was drafted that implied that dairy cattle would not be allowed to be milked by hand. These early efforts to outdo the EU have cemented a scalar narrative that only gains more strength as similar incidents are mentioned in the press or people themselves try to better understand discrepancies in the legislation. In one interview, a

farmer recounted how she came to understand the existence of different requirements through excursions abroad organized for farmers' education:

> *F- When you go abroad, you see that there the requirements are lower by half. Let's say, we went to an organic farmer's dairy unit. The washable walls are covered with oil-based paint. But here it is required to cover them with tiles…*
> *R - But these requirements are not from the EU. They are national?*
> *F - Yes, Lithuania's. In Lithuania we make things bigger, because of risks. Before entering the EU we increased requirements even more for our own…[..]*
> *R - What accounts for such a policy?*
> *F- They said, behold, we did it this way to demonstrate that here everything is very good. But in reality, abroad is where everything is normal. (Interview, F/LT)*

Covering walls with paint, as opposed to tile, is significantly cheaper. Yet, this farmer explained, national regulations (she claimed) require tiles even though EU regulations only stipulate that the walls must be easily washable. In her explanation of this scalar narrative, she gestures to the attentiveness of national bureaucrats to prove the nation-state's readiness to be a full-fledged EU member. In other words, according to the farmer's perspective, national bureaucrats and lawmakers are more concerned with the impressions they make at the EU scale than with the problems their requirements impose on local farmers. This scalar narrative has a disabling effect by creating conditions in which fear and apprehension are cultivated. As another Lithuanian farmer told me:

> *F- They [farmers] are afraid of hygiene requirements, because they are very high. We saw that in Switzerland, a milk-processing unit was in a residential house and everything was OK! Why can't that happen for us? But now, a separate building needs to be built at least 50 meters from the residential house…*
> *R – Who demands such strict requirements? Lithuania?*
> *F- Yes, yes. This is already Lithuania's prank. They [bureaucrats] always say that it is the EU that demands it this way. But maybe it isn't like that. I mean, we saw in the Czech Republic that by the farmhouse there was an addition, where they make cheese. And there was no problem with that.*
> *R – But why does the government make it more difficult?*

F – So that there would be a guarantee that nothing would happen, heaven forbid. That no one would get sick, so that no one would be to blame. This is from Soviet times: "just in case, so that nothing would happen." But for the farmer it is difficult. But I still think that small business should be supported, that farmers should make their own dairy processing units. In this region people are working like that, but of course, without abiding by the hygiene requirements. (Interview, F/LT)

This quote highlights the perception that bureaucrats justify strict regulations by suggesting that the requirements are mandated by the EU. This farmer's experiences on educational tours proved otherwise, further cementing her (and other farmers') belief that national officials just want to make things harder for their own people. Interestingly, Switzerland is not in the EU, but for this farmer and others, those kinds of details do not matter. Their understanding is that modernizing food production and processing has the purpose of attaining the standards in place in Western Europe or the West more broadly.

In farmers' scalar narratives, they also report a difference between how bureaucrats at the national scale interact with agricultural producers and rural residents more generally. In other words, according to them, the heterogeneity of the national scale is composed of divergent rural and urban interests, but the urban interests in the capital cities are sure to overpower rural interests. Even representatives of farmers who live in the capital are understood as corruptible. This has implications for EU politics, because often farmers understand that if they are not supported at the national scale, they will not be supported at the EU scale. In one conversation about EU and national relations, a Latvian farmer first explained the problems one of his representatives had in Brussels. Then he went on to explain why he has no say in the national policies that govern his livelihood.

F- There [in Brussels] there aren't enough translators, those who can really translate what is going on and you have to really struggle... you have to elbow your way through... those mortals like us [have to elbow their way through...]
F- I, I don't know the details. I don't concern myself with those matters because I know that I can't influence anything anyway. I know that even here, with our association.. we were struggling with the association so

that we would be allowed to write on our flour that it is made from organic grain. We sent everything in and we never got a reply. You understand?
R- [asks for explanation]
F- You know even in our association there are people who are practically already associated with someone else [...] So there is a big processor who is making organic flour and someone at the association is together with that processor [...] So, so... everywhere there is a kitchen, you understand? Maybe we haven't grown to the level so that we would think about how others also need to be doing well and they have their needs, because in the beginning everything is mine and after that...
(Interview, M/LV)

Farmers are very attentive to the heterogeneity of interests at the national scale, all struggling economically to gain a greater market share as well as politically to gain influence over lawmakers. Another informant illustrated the particular difficulties facing small-scale farmers by recounting to me the problems she had in trying to register as a home-processor of meat products. She lives in Latgale, the eastern region of Latvia, and according to her, it takes longer for the necessary bureacrats to schedule their inspections because of her remote location. As a result, she has waited several months to start her business. The gulf between her and the national bureaucrats she interacts with is more than about spatial location. Farmers uniformly reported that interactions with inspectors of any kind are a souce of significant stress. Stress arises not because farmers feel that they are doing something wrong, but for other reasons: they are stressed because they do not know what to anticipate; they might not have everything in order, especially paperwork; there is a general lack of clarity over what to expect; and of course, their livelihoods are on the line. Farmers complain specifically about the burden of paperwork and that inspectors come and spend most of the time looking at paperwork instead of actually inspecting the farm. The dissatisfaction and the perceived inattention on the part of the inspectors further contributes to a general belief in the lack of credibility of national institutions. The farmer in Latgale expressed such opinions about the various inspectors she encountered during the year it took for her application to gain approval. At one point, she even had to go to Riga, the capital, a considerable trip for her. She

waited at an office for two and a half hours before someone saw her, only to tell her that she should call another office:

> *F- "You should call the other office." That is what this office said. I call to the other office, and my hands start shaking, I almost start to cry. I thought, the papers are all taken care of, time is wasted again, and I ask, what is this bad luck? And they say that I need this and that paperwork. I asked, but why didn't the inspector say anything when he came? They responded: "You have a document on growing, you have the document from the Food and Veterinary Service, but our document, you don't have." (Interview F/LV)*

This farmer has a difficult enough time interacting with national bureaucrats, she cannot imagine anyone caring about her opinion in Brussels. This serves to reinforce the impact narrative of Europeanization: what matters to the farmer is not how she can influence policy changes at the supranational scale but how she can manage with more immediate and more local problems. Other farmers in the region of Latgale construct similar scalar narratives that reinforce their spatial marginalization with the nation-state and within the EU more broadly. But in both Latvia and Lithuania, scalar narratives revolve around the theme that the EU imposes requirements and national officials somehow try to outdo the EU by making things more difficult. These scalar narratives, even if they do not reflect material practices, are ultimately productive because as these stories circulate among farmers, they inform farmers' actions. However, farmers can also challenge the very narratives they construct. In the following section, I outline such a scenario.

5. The Milk Crisis and the Politics of Scale

Scales and scalar relations may seem static, as is evident from scalar narratives I examined above, but in reality they are always in production and require constant reinforcement. Similarly, all scales are composed of heterogeneous interests, which may compete with each other. These interests change over time as some groups gain more

influence and others lose influence. During the EU accession process, a handful of large dairy-processing companies were able to modernize their facilities, acquire smaller companies and consolidate their power over the processing sector, and by extension, dairy farming. In their interactions with these companies, farmers have usually been forced to accept whatever remuneration and terms are on offer. Despite the EU's milk quota system, milk prices in the Baltics are the lowest within the EU. Small-scale farmers are particularly marginalized because they receive the lowest prices; on average, companies pay more to those suppliers who supply more milk. But the large-scale dairy farmers also have had problems with the processing companies. The number of large-scale farmers started to increase more steadily in the early 2000s and after EU accession. The power of these farmers was also slowly growing as they exerted more influence over lawmakers, thereby slowly reconfiguring the heterogeneity of the national-scale.

In late 2007, tensions between farmers and processors were growing in Latvia, and the Farmers' Parliament (Zemnieku Saeima), a leading farmers' organization, appealed to the government multiple times to represent their interests in the conflict with the processing companies. The farmers were also angry with the government, faulting the Minister of Agriculture for lacking leadership, failing to defend the interests of Latvian farmers at the EU, and not doing anything about the crisis in meat production and other sectors. Finally, on December 18, 2007, farmers called for the resignation of the Minister of Agriculture. Although Lithuanian farmers had similar problems with milk processors, this kind of tension with the Ministry of Agriculture did not exist there.

For dairy farmers in both countries, however, 2008 brought significantly lower milk prices, further increasing tensions between farmers, processors, and governments. Milk prices dropped by 30% for medium- to large-scale producers, but the drop was even greater for small-scale producers. Some processors even stopped picking up milk from farmers, leaving them with no income and also no place to sell their milk. As a result, the number of raw milk AFNs multiplied, as greater numbers of medium-scale dairy farms began to participate in an act of desperation. Faced with rising prices for dairy products in stores, consumers welcomed the cheaper products sold directly by farmers. In Latvia,

the Farmers' Parliament called on consumers to support local farmers by buying milk and dairy products through AFNs. As one board member of the Farmers' Parliament stated:

> Milk has become an exclusive product, so much so that many cannot even afford to buy it now. Retailers are the beneficiaries of today's high prices, and consumers can have an influence on prices through their choices. We invite consumers to buy products made by farmers themselves or to buy directly from farmers. (ZSA 2008)

In Lithuania, in early April 2008, dairy farmers gathered to discuss problems in the dairy farming sector. They considered possibilities for regulating the mark-up on dairy products charged by processors, traders, and retailers. The farmers argued that Austria had such a rule regulating mark-ups. They received a reply from the Ministry of Agriculture stating that Lithuania had ceased regulating prices in 1995, but that a draft law was being tabled in the Parliament at the time (ŽŪR 2008). Farmers blamed the processors for the milk price crisis, but they also blamed the government because of its role in encouraging farmers to increase their production, which lead to surplus milk production.

Despite the demands issued by the farmers' organizations, the milk price crisis persisted in both countries. Farmers continued their pressure on the governments. They organized protests on scales that had been rarely achieved in the Baltics. At these protests they organized to give away free milk in central parts of the capital cities. The protest actions gained significant support from the population. This forced the national government to confront the issue of direct marketing, especially of raw milk.

In Lithuania, the government started to formulate and finally issued new regulations for the sale of small quantities of raw milk and other dairy products directly from the farmer. Incidentally, revised regulations (B1-251) were passed on April 24, 2008, the day after dairy farmers declared a protest in which they would be giving away free milk to the public. This created an opening for producer and consumer organizations subsequently to hold several meetings with the State Food and Veterinary Service over the course of 2008 to create new and simpler regulations for home processing and the

direct marketing of most food products. In effect, a new set of regulations was created exclusively for production and sale of limited quantities within the national market. For example, the limit for dairy producers was set at 1000 kg of milk per day. The regulations for farmers' markets were also eased, making it easier for farmers to sell food of animal origin at temporary marketplaces. In Latvia, similar changes in food hygiene regulations occurred, especially after farmers were also able to force the Minister of Agriculture to resign in early 2009.

By then the financial crisis had already started to cripple the Latvian and Lithuanian economies. In 2009, Latvia's GDP contracted by 20%, and Lithuania's GDP contracted by 15%. Both national governments responded by implementing austerity measures, including massive cuts to public spending, increases in certain taxes, and wage cuts to restore competitiveness. These policies caused an increase in poverty, inequality, and high rates of out-migration. At the same time AFNs thrived because they provided farmers with better livelihood opportunities at that moment and because the crisis had prompted a turning point for consumers. More consumers in both Latvia and Lithuania began to demand locally-grown food. This put pressure on the governments to keep on reducing the requirements for AFNs. Table 4.2 provides details on the changes made to the requirements on the small-scale processing and the direct marketing of dairy products in Lithuania. In 2008, the requirement to have HACCP plans in place was replaced by the requirement to follow established best practices (much more appropriate for small-scale producers). Allowable quantities to be processed and sold were increased, while many of the monitoring requirements decreased. The next amendments, which were put into law a few months later in December of 2008, eliminated several requirements that were required for dairy processing units, like the need for even and easily cleanable ceilings. Not only were the regulations made simpler, some of the requirements that could be interpreted strictly by inspectors (such as "easily cleanable ceilings") were eliminated.

Table 4.2 Changes in Legislation on Small-scale Processing and Direct Marketing of Dairy Products in Lithuania[15]

1: "In reference to the requirements for the production of dairy products on farms and for product sales, confirmed"[16]
Date of decision: April 24, 2008, Nr. B1-251 Date of publication: May 17, 2008
Eliminates previous separate legislation on the sale of raw milk and dairy products processed on farms, and includes the following changes: - Sets the limit for small quantities (1000 kg) - Eliminates HACCP (RVASVT) in favor of Best Practices for dairy processing (I. 4) - Eliminates obligatory visit by veterinarian (I.) - Increases the amount of milk for processing (from 50 to 200kg) that qualifies for annual laboratory checks (as opposed to two checks a year) (III. 17) - Increases the amount of milk for processing (from 50 to 100kg) that allows farmers to sell once a week at a retail marketplace (III. 18) - Changes where processed dairy products can be sold, from "retail marketplace" to "specific places that are set-up for selling" and are equipped with "cooling equipment" (V. 31) - Decreases the number of times the VMVT comes to check on the dairy processor (from at least once every quarter to two to three times per year) (VII. 41)
2: "Amendments to the law: In reference to the requirements for the production of dairy products on farms and for product sales, confirmed"[17]
Date of decision: December 12, 2008, Nr. B1-623 Date of publication: December 18, 2008 Effective: December 19, 2008
- Adds that in addition to processing milk from their own farm, dairy farmers can process the milk from the farms of other cooperative members (16) - Changes obligatory microbiological analysis from once every 6 months to once a year (17) - Decreases the frequency of laboratory tests for some processors (18) - Decreases the number of specific requirements for the dairy processing unit from 15 to 10, by eliminating such requirements as the need for level and easily cleanable ceilings (23) - Decreases the number of times the VMVT comes to check on the dairy processor (from two to three times per year to once per year, at least) (41) - Eliminates other requirements
3: "Amendments to the law: In reference to the requirements for the production of dairy products on farms and for product sales, confirmed"[18]
Date of decision: April 7, 2010, Nr. B1-143 Date of publication: April 12, 2010 Effective: April 13, 2010
- Simplifies requirements for control and for the issuance of permits

The milk price crisis that preceded the financial crisis in 2008 provided the opportunity for farmers' organizations to challenge a disabling scalar narrative in which Europeanization was understood as the imposition of strict requirements, made even

stricter by the practices of national bureaucrats and lawmakers. Farmers' protests, the manifestation of an increasing number of AFNs marketing raw milk directly, and consumer demands forced the governments to change existing regulations and to introduce new requirements that solidified the national scale as a regulatory arena on food safety and hygiene. A confluence of political, economic, and social factors prompted this shift. For national lawmakers, the financial crisis further heightened the importance of stimulating local production and processing for local consumption, as well as legalizing existing and new AFNs. Since then various state-supported programs have been launched to encourage the creation of AFNs, signaling a shift in the state spatial strategy in support of producers and processors of small quantities of food.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to examine how scalar narratives have shaped people's understandings of European Union and national politics, and to analyze what conjunctural processes were at work to produce the changes in regulations that eventually occurred in Latvia and Lithuania. In so doing, my purpose has been to reveal the significance of scalar relations and narratives on the workings of AFNs. I began with a critique of the scholarly literature on Europeanization and MLG, and I argued for a framework based on the politics of scale, which I applied in an analysis of food safety regulation. This framework includes both an examination of how scalar narratives are deployed to make sense of scalar arrangements, and how those narratives could be destabilized through a conjuncture.

The changes in food safety and hygiene regulations since 2008 in both Latvia and Lithuania signaled a shift in the state spatial strategy on food hygiene, and for a brief period of time the scalar narrative of Europeanization was challenged as well. However, it has not been displaced by another narrative. The interviews I conducted all took place after important changes in the national regulations had already occurred. I offer two explanations for this. First, while some changes were initiated prior to the financial crisis, the implementation of severe austerity measures and the failure of large-scale

protests to change the course of austerity politics in Latvia and Lithuania had an impact on scalar narratives. A broad sense of disillusionment with the possibility to change national politics was reinforced. Second, not all farmers benefited equally from the changes in regulations and many did not even know about them. The small-scale farmers who had already been marketing raw milk through AFNs continued to do so, whether they gained permission or not. Although the new and changed regulations made it easier for some small-scale farmers to operate legally, they also opened the door to large-scale farmers who could now build their own processing units without having to adhere to the standards required of large-scale industrial processors. The importance of assets in shaping livelihood possibilities is a subject I turn to in the following chapter.

Chapter 5.
Alternative Food Networks and Farmer Livelihoods:
A Spatialized Livelihoods Approach

The proliferation of farmers' markets, their publicity in the media, and the high consumer demand for local foods present a rosy picture for alternative food networks in the Baltic states. However, this superficial perspective does not take into account the more subtle issues related to farmer livelihoods, such as who has successfully started AFNs, and who has not been so successful. Alternative food networks are often viewed as a new cultural and social phenomenon, but they also must be understood as a complex livelihood strategy for the farmers involved. The success of alternative food networks in bringing together consumers and producers depends upon the extent to which they can provide a meaningful and sustainable livelihood for the farmers involved. Although the relationship between alternative food networks and the revitalization of rural livelihoods is widely assumed to be positive, this claim is less frequently thoroughly evaluated (Goodman and Goodman 2007). Instead, a significant recent focus has been on the impacts of alternative food networks on regional economies and their contributions to rural development (O'Hara and Pirog 2013). I contend that in addition to studying the wider benefits of AFNs on regional economies, a central focus should be the impact on the households involved in AFNs, in particular who benefits from participation in AFNs and who does not.

This chapter takes the livelihoods of farmers in alternative food networks as its central focus. During the course of doing my research on AFNs and farmer livelihoods in Latvia and Lithuania, I found that participation in AFNs improved the livelihoods of some farmers, but not all. Participants often fell into one of three groups. One group of farmers stopped farming altogether, abandoned commercial agricultural production, or stopped marketing through AFNs. For another group, AFNs enabled their farming households to maintain simple reproduction, that is, to accumulate as much as was needed to replace investments (or to reproduce the household as capital/labor). The final

group was much more economically successful; they were able to use AFNs as a vehicle for expanded reproduction.

My purpose in this chapter is to explain what has caused such differential outcomes. First, I examine existing approaches to the study of the economic benefits of alternative food networks, such as the "value-added" approach. I critically assess the merits of this approach before turning to the more holistic account of livelihoods articulated in the "Sustainable Livelihoods Approach" (SLA) (Scoones 2009). After describing the SLA, I provide examples of how the approach has been used, and I detail some of the critiques that have been voiced against it. Building upon these critiques, I amend the framework for the study of farmer livelihoods in AFNs by integrating spatial concepts.

The rest of the chapter is then devoted to describing and analyzing farmer livelihoods and their outcomes. By analyzing information from four case studies, I provide more evidence for a spatialized livelihoods approach (which I call SpLA). I argue that this amended approach integrates cultural, social, economic, as well as spatial elements, all of which need to be considered when studying livelihoods. Although they interact in complex and dynamic ways, spatial concepts integrated with insights from feminism and agrarian political economy provide a framework to help explain diverging livelihood outcomes.

1. The Nature of "Value-Added"

In this section I examine the concept of value-added, which has been used to justify the benefits that AFNs have for farmer livelihoods and for rural development. Section 1.1 describes the two understandings of value-added that are applicable here. Section 1.2 goes on to detail specific case studies of the value added by AFNs. Section 1.3 critically assesses the value-added approach.

1.1 Defining Value-Added

The concept of value-added has a bewildering number of meanings and usages, but there are only two that are relevant here. First is the concept of Gross Value Added (GVA), and second is the notion of value-added agriculture. GVA is a widely used quantitative calculation of the total output minus the cost of intermediate inputs for any given economic unit, such as a nation-state, region, sector or firm. Net Value Added (NVA) further factors in the cost of depreciation. In national accounting, GVA can be used to calculate the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). By aggregating returns to capital and returns to labor, both GVA and NVA represent the production process as one that produces balanced gains throughout the economic unit. As calculations firmly rooted in neoclassical economics, they perpetuate an understanding of the production process as a sealed "black box."

Value-added is also used in agricultural production and processing to convey the extent to which changing a primary agricultural input can yield a greater return on investment. Value-added agricultural products include everything from jams and cheeses to braided garlic. It is important to note here that the term is often applied without any confirmation that the change applied to the raw agricultural product actually yielded a greater return on investment. Value-added agriculture can also refer to the practice of branding agricultural products to fetch a premium price. With the help of a brand, such as "local" or "regional," otherwise undifferentiated fruits, vegetables, meat, etc., can gain a higher price with appropriate clientele. In both senses, value-added agriculture provides a potentially quantifiable premium.

1.2 The Value-Added of Alternative Food Networks

The claims about the connections between alternative food networks and the regeneration of rural livelihoods come mostly from several case studies in Western Europe that mostly relied on farming systems approach and convention theory (described in Chapter 2) as a theoretical basis. The starting point for much of this research, a

comparison between alternative food networks (or short food supply chains) with existing conventional food networks, reflects the historical agricultural geography of alternative food in Western Europe, in which most farms involved in alternative food networks converted from conventional production when confronted with the "price squeeze" of the 1990s. During this period, input costs increased while farmgate prices decreased, causing a strain on farming livelihoods. Instead of abandoning farming as a source of livelihood, something that experts had predicted, many farming households responded by reorienting their activities towards multiple farm and non-farm income sources, what came to be known as "pluriactivity." One segment of households in particular started to create new supply chains, what came to be known as alternative food networks, focused on delivering quality produce more directly to consumers. According to Ploeg et al., the key practices mobilized in this reorientation are the "revalorization and recombination of resources, the co-ordination and (re-)moulding of the social and the material, and the (renewed) use of social, cultural and ecological capital" (2000, 400). Significantly, the process of reorienting production starts with the assumption that households "have access to the resources and experience necessary to reconfigure old and create new constellations" (Ploeg et al. 2000, 401).

The emergence and success of the Llyn Beef cooperative in the UK is a closely studied example of such a dynamic (Marsden et al. 2000). Originating from the combined pressures of falling beef prices and declining consumer confidence, beef farmers on the Llyn peninsula in Wales formed a cooperative to improve financial returns and ensure that consumers receive a quality and fully traceable product. By branding Welsh beef and ensuring that the brand represented high standards of quality and animal welfare, Llyn Beef was able to bring considerable financial rewards to its members with relatively few additional costs. This is a prime example of value-added agriculture. A new model of cooperation along the supply chain was cultivated, and efforts were made to promote the brand locally in Wales. The results have met with financial success in the form of premium prices: while the average gross margin per head was calculated at 37 pounds sterling, the Llyn Beef farms earned a gross margin of 64 pounds sterling per head. Marsden et al. emphasize that the creation of this supply chain required new "equations

between space, nature, quality, value and product" which in turn necessitated the creation of "new synergies" along the supply chain (2000, 435). In addition, new definitions about quality were fundamental in reconstituting relationships. The case demonstrates how significant amounts of value added have been generated at the farm-level by the initiative, and that new supply chains can be successfully created, even by groups of formerly "powerless" producers operating in the mass industrial food system (Marsden et al. 2000, 435). In other words, the success of the new arrangement can be attributed to the relationships sustained between actors in the network; "to succeed, participants in new short food supply chains need to rely heavily upon their own knowledge and networking abilities as the Llyn case clearly testifies" (Marsden et al. 2000, 436). However, Marsden et al. (2000) caution that little evidence exists whether or not short food supply chains will have a transformative impact on the rest of the food system.

At least one tentative attempt has been made to assess the extent to which alternative food networks have had a broader socio-economic impact (Renting et al. 2003). Using national-scale statistics on Net Value Added (NVA) to the agricultural sector, Renting et al. (2003) argue that Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs, which they call a type of alternative food network) in seven Western European countries have demonstrated the ability to add additional value over conventional agricultural production: "The additional net value added generated on top of conventional agricultural production (ΔNVA) was used as a measure to express the rural development gains of SFSCs in comparison to more conventional, productivist development trajectories" (Renting et al. 2003, 405). In this usage, value-added is a general national statistic comparing a sector that includes direct selling, agri-tourism and organic farming, with conventional production.

While the types of supply chains they studied were diverse, ranging from quality products to organic farming, the authors found that "direct selling" (such as on-farm sales, CSAs, farmers' markets) contributed the greatest net value added. "Direct selling, largely coinciding with face-to-face SFSCs [short food supply chains], at overall European level represents the largest number of farms involved and the highest impact levels" (Renting et al. 2003, 407). Although the authors admit that the existing evidence

is still exploratory and that longitudinal analysis is needed, they also suggest that new rural development practices are encouraging the development of new rural synergies “leading to a revised geography of rural development across Europe” (Renting et al. 2003, 408).

1.3 The Limits of Value-Added

The estimation of NVA provides a general quantitative indication of the benefit of alternative food networks to the agricultural sector. However, this quantitative indicator has only a limited potential to assess the variegated impacts of alternative food networks for different groups at various scales. National-scale farm statistics are also formulated in specific ways and are underpinned by certain assumptions (Hill 1998): informal networks may not be counted, and their impacts may be dramatically underestimated as a result. In addition, the Renting et al. (2003) did not disaggregate the sources of NVA. In another study examining the NVA of organic agriculture in Latvia, researchers revealed that more than 75% of NVA came from subsidies for agriculture and that NVA from selling farm products was actually decreasing over time (Melece and Prauliņš 2010).

In their applications of a value-added approach, both Marsden et al. (2000) and Renting et al. (2003) undertake a comparison with conventional forms of distribution: the farm gains value by doing something differently and presumably better than a conventional farm would. This assumption is problematic, however, because not all farms assume this trajectory (from conventional to alternative forms of production and distribution), and not all sectors have conventional distribution outlets. Moreover, questions remain about who does this extra work and how the extra value and extra work is distributed throughout the household. Competition between different farming households is also not captured by the NVA statistic. Finally, the exclusive focus on the agricultural sector neglects important questions related to consumption. More value may be accumulating in agriculture, but this may also entail selling an exclusive product to those with the financial means to purchase it. In summary, value-added approaches provide an insightful but general statistic, which in these cases has been built on the

assumption that producers "transition" from conventional to alternative modes of distribution. These approaches disregard differentiation between and within farming households as well as the meaning different producers may ascribe to their livelihoods. A more holistic account for assessing the impacts of alternative food networks on farmer livelihoods is needed.

2. Sustainable Livelihoods

The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) is such a holistic framework that has been widely used in the study of rural livelihoods in Africa, Asia and Latin America. In Section 2.1, I examine its background and key features. In Section 2.2, I present case studies of its application, and in Section 2.3, I conclude with a summary of its limitations.

2.1 A Background on SLA

The SLA has been developed as a framework to take a holistic account of the multiple, complex factors that shape livelihood strategies and to understand the implications that these livelihood practices have for sustainable development. While not yet labeled as such, livelihoods approaches have their roots in rural development analysis, which took place in Africa in the mid-twentieth century and which featured an approach that was interdisciplinary, "integrative, locally-embedded, cross-sectoral and informed by a deep field engagement and a commitment to action" (Scoones 2009, 173). These approaches preceded the growing dominance of modernization theories in the post-WW II era, which favored the application of neoclassical economics and technical fixes largely based on expert knowledge from the biological and physical sciences. In contrast to earlier integrative approaches, development projects based on modernization theory eschewed local embeddedness and failed to consider negative environmental and social consequences of development (Scoones 2009). Once these became more evident, development discourses shifted again, with a greater focus on the environment and sustainability, as well as on the importance of local context.

With these concerns in mind, the development practitioners as well as academics started to formulate the components of what became known as the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach in the 1990s (Chambers and Conway 1992; Scoones 1998). A livelihood was defined as comprising "the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living; a livelihood is sustainable which can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels and in the short and long-term" (Chambers and Conway 1992, 6). This definition clearly tried to go beyond economistic definitions of livelihood, while integrating an analysis of the impact of economic activities on the environment. This conceptualization gained wider consideration and application only after the failure of the Washington Consensus and the protests against neoliberal policies, such as at the WTO ministerial in Seattle. In the late 1990s, SLA started gaining prominence in development projects managed by the UK Department for International Development.

In development applications, SLA was increasingly used to understand how interventions by organizations and institutions could harness or build upon existing assets (capitals) to produce sustainable outcomes. Rather than assume a priori that sustainable livelihoods could be achieved by applying certain technological fixes or by introducing more market opportunities, SLA involved researching existing livelihood strategies and understanding locally-based opportunities and constraints. SLA was framed by the following questions:

> Given a particular context (of policy setting, politics, history, agroecology and socio-economic conditions), what combination of livelihood resources (different types of 'capital') result in the ability to follow what combination of livelihood strategies (agricultural intensification/ extensification, livelihood diversification and migration) with what outcomes? Of particular interest are the institutional processes (embedded within a matrix of formal and informal institutions and organizations) which mediate the ability to carry out such strategies and achieve (or not) such outcomes. (Scoones 1998, 3)

In SLA applications, the various capitals were defined broadly: *social capital* included social networks and relationships of trust; *natural capital* encompassed resource endowments; access to *financial capital* meant access to savings, income and credit; *physical capital* included infrastructure, buildings, etc.; *human capital* was considered to mean skills, knowledge, labor (Brocklesby and Fisher 2003). Particular attention was paid to the institutional context, because this is where development interventions occurred.

2.2 Applications of the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach

As SLA became more popular, so did its variations. For example, scholars and development practitioners working on fisheries developed their own SLA in the West Africa Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme (SFLP), which promoted development interventions to "enhance the contribution of small-scale fisheries to poverty reduction and improve livelihoods and food security of fisheries-dependent people" (Allison and Horemans 2006, 757). This involved not only focusing on fisheries, but transcending sectoral boundaries and taking a broad view of sustainability as involving economic, institutional, social and environmental dimensions. Faced with a certain vulnerability context, people depend on assets to build livelihood strategies that can have a variety of outcomes. Because policies, institutions, and processes influence and shape who has access to assets, they are also possible sites for development interventions.

In the SFLP project, the asset platform (or the pentagon of capitals) was the focus of community projects. Possible interventions included the following: education and training to improve human capital; increasing access to infrastructure (physical capital); improving post-harvest use of resources, thereby enhancing natural capital; strengthening social capital by supporting social networks and building trust; and improving access to credit (financial capital). This example illustrates how SLA was used productively as a multidimensional development framework.

2.3 Critiques of the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach

Although the SLA became widely used, its application also varied tremendously. For many development projects, the focus remained on economic outcomes and instrumental interventions. Since the early 2000s, SLA has become the focus of several critiques (Scoones 2009). In his assessment, Scoones (2009) identifies four prominent critiques: 1) a focus on the local led to the lack of engagement with processes of globalization; 2) the lack of attention to power and politics in most work on livelihoods, and vagueness of the category of "contexts"; 3) even though SLA included a focus on sustainability, attention focused on local environmental issues and not on broader processes like climate change; 4) with its local and short-term focus, SLA failed to address broader processes of agrarian change. Despite these critiques, Scoones (2009) argues that SLA frameworks should not be abandoned, but that they should be amended to account for knowledge, politics, scale, and dynamics. He elaborates: "thus to enrich livelihood perspectives further, there is a need to be more informed by an explicit theoretical concern with the way class, gender and capitalist relations operate (O'Laughlin 2004), asking up-front who gains and loses and why, embedded in an analysis informed by theories of power and political economy and so an understanding of processes of marginalisation, dispossession, accumulation and differentiation" (Scoones 2009, 187).

The kind of analysis Scoones suggests is profoundly geographical, and resonates both with the concerns of agrarian political economy (and questions about who gains and loses) and feminist geography. Although geographers have been using livelihoods approaches, less often have spatial concepts been integrated into the framework. The importance of place, scale, and networks is highlighted by Bebbington, who writes "place and livelihood clearly intersect as, to a considerable extent, places are produced out of the livelihoods of people, while at the same time structuring elements of those livelihoods. But clearly neither livelihood nor place are ring fenced. Thus any discussion of place and livelihood must also be infused with concerns for *scale* and *network*" (2003, 302).

In summary, SLA has provided a holistic framework for the study of livelihoods. It has also proved to be malleable and amenable to critique.

3. Spatializing Livelihoods

Building upon the insights of SLA, in this section I present and apply a spatialized version of SLA. In Section 3.1, I describe its basic features and in Section 3.2 I apply it to the analysis of livelihoods and alternative food networks in Latvia and Lithuania.

3.1 Spatializing SLA: Core Concepts

My application of a Spatialized LA (see Figure 5.1), or SpLA, starts with a different goal than is usually present in SLA. For example, in common applications of SLA, the primary motivation is to put in place a development intervention focused on improving assets (the capitals) that could potentially provide a more sustainable livelihood. In contrast, my interest is in understanding what outcomes a specific livelihood strategy, marketing through AFNs, has on the livelihoods of farmers and their households. Although it would be valuable to closely examine the topic of sustainability, that is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, the SpLA does not preclude consideration and reflection upon the sustainability of diverse livelihood outcomes.

The first question my SpLA seeks to answer is: given a particular context shaped by space (Massey 2005), place (Massey 1994), scalar relations (Delaney and Leitner 1997; Sheppard and McMaster 2008) including relations of sociospatial difference (Sheppard 2002), and a combination of livelihood assets (natural, physical, human, financial, social capital), what are the general outcomes for farmers and their households who rely on alternative food networks as a livelihood strategy? I define livelihoods as comprising the capabilities, capitals and activities (Chambers and Conway 1992), which are an integral part of social reproduction, whether on a simple or expanded basis.

During the course of doing my research on AFNs and farmer livelihoods in Latvia and Lithuania, I found that participating in AFNs improved the livelihoods of some

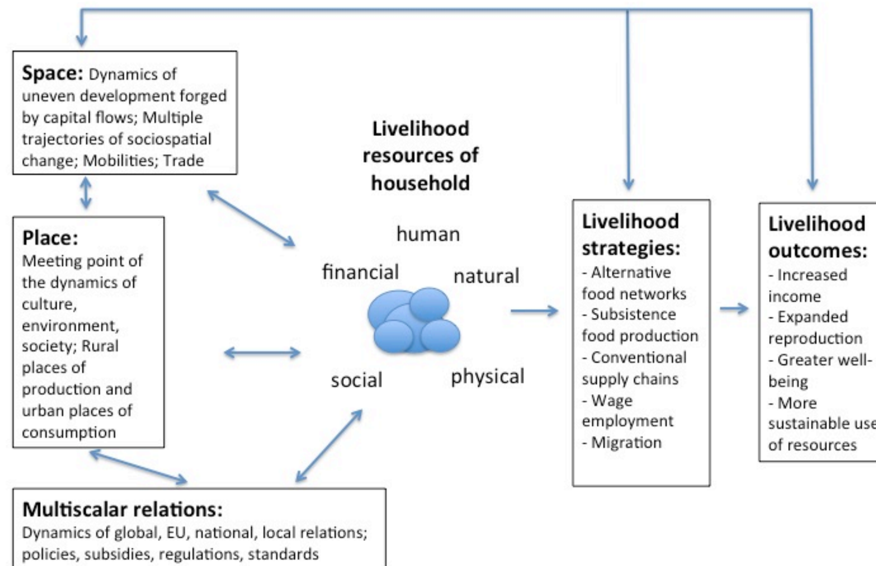
farmers, but not all. Therefore, my second question asks: how can a Spatialized Livelihoods Approach (SpLA) help account for such variegated outcomes? Before I proceed, a caveat: it is important to recognize that space is always in process and that any account of sociospatial relations can only ever approximate a partial snapshot. I have attempted to account for change and dynamics by doing a longitudinal study of livelihoods, one that focuses on their histories and contemporary changes. Over the course of doing fieldwork, I have also kept in touch with most of my informants. Nevertheless, I underscore that although spatial concepts grasp a dimension of sociospatial relations, by definition, no account can claim to be exhaustive. Therefore, to describe my SpLA (see Figure 5.1) I highlight the characteristics of spatialities that proved most relevant in my research, providing examples of how they interrelate with livelihood assets:

Space: Space is constituted by a multiplicity of trajectories, which are themselves composed of practices, representations, and material flows (Massey 2005, also see Chapter 3). These trajectories help forge relationships, uneven and power-laden, between different places. In Chapter 3, I described how the transition of the 1990s and EU accession reoriented spatial relationships, augmenting the trajectories across space that tied Latvia and Lithuania to European Union states, but not severing ties with the East, an important export market for agricultural goods as well as the major source of oil and gas for both countries. One example of how this is significant for AFNs is that following EU accession, capital flows in the form of rural development funding allowed some farmers to access financial capital and then increase the value of their farm's physical capital.

Place: Places are the meeting points of various trajectories, from the biophysical to the cultural. They derive their characteristics not from some essential properties, but from their relationships within and with other places, which are themselves forged by various trajectories. For my purposes here, I focus on places of production (the farm or the rural community) and places of consumption. Places of consumption, such as farmers' markets, are crucial meeting points for farmers and consumers in AFNs (see Chapter 7). As such, having access to marketplaces or other places of consumption helps farmers enhance their capital assets, especially their social and financial capital.

However, access is not enough to guarantee patronage: places are also where farmers compete with each other for customers. Although this understanding of place is an open and unbounded one, that does not mean that attempts to bound place by restricting trajectories do not occur. For example, in some cases only certain farmers (local, organic) may gain permission to sell at farmers' markets. However, attempts to bound place are not always successful (see Chapter 7).

Figure 5.1 A Spatialized Livelihoods Approach



Scale: From the local to the global, scalar relations both enable and restrict the functioning of AFNs. Scales are hierarchical and relational constructs, but each scale is not composed of homogeneous voices. Scalar construction and relationality is an ongoing and contested process. For example, while some actors may support national and supra-national legislation that favors AFNs, others may not. Moreover, participation in scalar construction both may depend upon and increase available assets, such as human and social capital.

Sociospatial difference: Farming households may pool livelihood assets to greater or lesser extents, but they should not be understood as homogeneous units with similarly homogeneous interests. Hence, they are better represented as individual circles rather than a single pentagon (see Figure 5.1).

Livelihood assets: Natural, physical, human, financial and social capital are the main livelihood assets that practitioners of SLA usually invoke, but rather than understanding assets as simply several categories with a set number of items, I understand assets as co-constituting and relational. Property is not defined solely by possession, but by the fact that access to that property or asset is limited to the asset holder to the exclusion of others. Hence, assets are defined by property relationships, which are always also social relationships. Moreover, the various forms of capital are often co-constitutive: the reproduction of capitalist society occurs through social and economic means because social capital can enable access to and the expansion of financial capital (see Lee et al. 2005, who draw upon Bourdieu 1984; 1999). Nonetheless, social capital can also be a burden in AFNs: networks of reciprocity can be coercive just as much as they can be beneficial for those involved.

3.2 Spatializing SLA: Applications 1

In the following sections, I apply SpLA to analyze the divergent outcomes that participating in AFNs has had for farmers in Latvia and Lithuania. I start off with two cases in which AFNs have not been able to ensure a sustainable livelihood for the farmers and their households. I then move on to consider more successful cases.

3.2.1 'Mikelis' Latvia (m/40s)

Mikelis is a farmer in his early forties from Western Latvia. During the 1990s, he gained his ancestral property of about 18 hectares of arable land, pasture and forest. At the time, he only farmed on a subsistence basis, while working at a nearby sawmill. However, his employment there was very precarious and the salary was low. In the early

2000s, he decided to develop his farm on a commercial basis by growing organic vegetables. He already had the natural capital (the land), and he took the necessary courses to improve his human capital. However, his access to sufficient physical capital was more limited. Not only was his small Soviet-era tractor constantly breaking down, the necessary repairs would sometimes force him to delay doing important agricultural tasks. Over the years he had not accumulated substantial financial capital to buy a new tractor, nor was he willing to make a risk by taking a loan. Nevertheless, as Latvia prepared to join the European Union, it started introducing agricultural subsidies in alignment with the EU's system. As a result of shifting scalar relations, specific funding for organic agriculture became available. This provided Mikelis with the encouragement to start farming on a commercial basis. Although he was originally farming on his own, he could also rely on his girlfriend and other family members to help with manual tasks (see Figure 5.2).

In the early years of the organic farming movement, he was an active member of the Latvian Organization of Organic Farmers, participating in monthly meetings in the capital. His access to social capital, through this organic farming association, helped him gain a spot at a weekly organic farmers' market in the capital, Riga, which started in 2003. During the following years, he used the contacts he gained at the market to start a home delivery system serving about 35 weekly clients. His farm is not close to Riga, but he does not live far from a major road, which is paved. With access to this physical capital, he did not face the challenges that others faced: bad roads causing wear and tear on cars.

Although he said that he felt competition, he used to have such a high demand that he needed to supplement his sales with vegetables bought from neighboring farms. Earlier on he had more pensioners among his client list, but then families dominated the list, especially families with members who had allergies or other health problems. They valued the delivery service, as well as the organic produce.

Figure 5.2

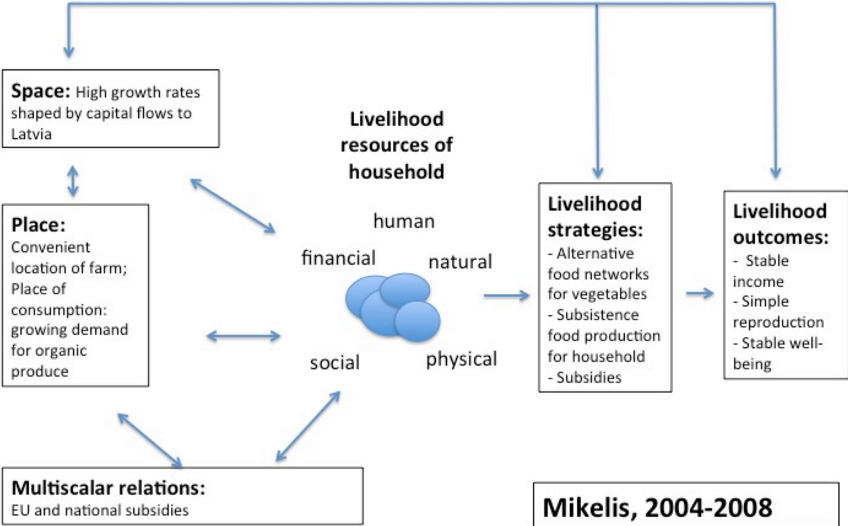
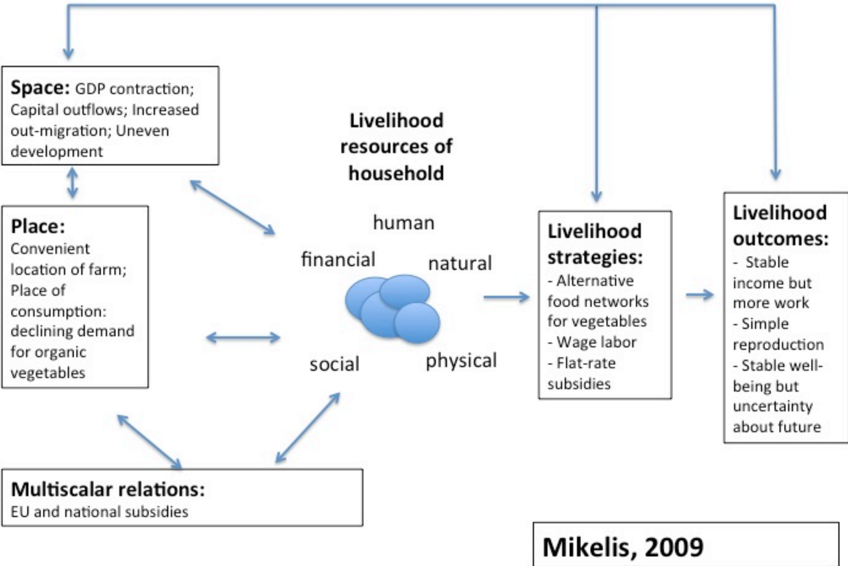


Figure 5.3



In general, he considered the system of direct delivery to be preferable over selling at farmers' markets because he knew exactly how much to bring and could pack his car accordingly. As a result, he hardly wasted any produce. In any case, as a small-scale organic vegetable grower AFNs (through a farmers' market or through direct delivery) were the only marketing mechanism he had available. Processors and supermarkets were not interested in working with such small-scale growers.

In combination with other livelihood strategies, such as applying for subsidies for organic agriculture and growing most of his own food for consumption, AFNs provided Mikelis with a sustainable livelihood from 2004-2008. He was also able to start and support a family. This was a period of economic growth which accelerated after EU accession in 2004. As one of the fastest growing economies in Europe, Latvia was an attractive investment. In other words, financial flows across space were fueling economic growth, attracting yet more capital looking for profitable investments. As a result, the purchasing power of Mikelis' customers was increasing. There was also a growing number of people who were wealthy enough and interested in paying a higher price for organic produce.

Mikelis' fortunes changed with the onset of the financial crisis in late 2008, causing a shift in the spatial relations (see Figure 5.3). Capital flows to Latvia came to an abrupt stop, and the government spent its resources on saving a failing bank as well as maintaining the currency peg of the Latvian lats with the euro. With the subsequent implementation of austerity policies at the national scale, the social capital that Mikelis had built up was insufficient to guarantee him the steady clientele that would purchase at the same prices and the same quantities as earlier. People were still ordering vegetables, but they were ordering much less. He explained: "last year [2008] the demand already started to fall. I can't predict how long the crisis will last."

Because of the general decline in prices and demand in 2008/2009, he decided not to reapply for subsidies for organic production (they are approved for a five year period at a time). His first five years in the program had gone by and it was time to renew his contract for the subsidies, but he decided that he could not adhere to the new national rules that require farmers to demonstrate that their products were sold on the market and

specify minimum values per cultivated hectare. These rules were implemented to encourage farmers to actually sell their produce: some were allegedly receiving the subsidies, planting crops but then not harvesting and marketing them. In reflecting on his choice to withdraw from the subsidy scheme for organic farming, he stated: "it was better to refuse participation, to be free of papers." With falling prices and rising costs for vegetable production, and with the need to support his family, Mikelis started to look for waged employment. But he had no intention of selling his land, or getting rid of the other assets he had acquired for his farm.

For Mikelis, and his household, AFNs played a significant role in guaranteeing a sustainable livelihood for several years. EU accession led to shifts in scalar relations that improved funding for organic agriculture. Mikelis' social and human capital grew, as a result. However, those subsidies were not sufficiently substantial to allow Mikelis to lower his prices when the financial crisis affected consumer purchasing power. Shifts in flows across space, combined with shifts in scalar relations, entailed that AFNs no longer played a significant role in providing Mikelis and his household with a sustainable livelihood.

3.2.2 'Eva' Lithuania (f/40s)

Eva, her husband and two sons have a 10 ha farm, which they gained through the restitution and privatization processes of the 1990s. With European Union accession (a shift in scalar relations) Eva decided to certify her farm as organic and to start farming on a commercial basis. The subsidies provided her with the financial capital to invest in her farm. She built two new greenhouses, thereby augmenting her existing physical capital. She also took out a loan to buy a tractor. She sold her vegetables through AFNs at farmers' markets and her organic grain was sold to a conventional processor (for lack of other outlets). Following EU accession, Lithuania, like Latvia, experienced among the highest growth rates in Europe. As capital flowed into the country (dynamics across space), consumer spending increased, as did capabilities to purchase more expensive organic food.

According to Eva, for small-scale organic vegetable growers, there is no alternative but to market produce directly to consumers in the capital, Vilnius. In other words, all places of consumption are not the same. Although she has tried to sell in a local farmers' market, as well as in a market in another city, she prefers to drive to Vilnius where people are prepared to pay more for certified organic produce. Selling to big supermarkets is not an option. She explained: "As a small farmer, they don't need you." Even a farmer she knows who grows organic produce and sells to supermarket chains can only sell for the same price as conventional vegetables. So even for this farmer, who has the available assets to work with supermarkets, there is an advantage to direct selling: farmers get more money for their product and they get it right away. Selling to the new organic specialty shops in Vilnius is also not a viable possibility. She explained: "Oh, those 'eco' stores… they are just resellers. They only want to take your certificate. They'll order vegetables from you... but only half a kilogram of radishes per week. So what kind of selling is this? Five kilograms of potatoes per week…" Products sold in stores are also assessed a value-added tax of 21%. This, in addition to the store's surcharge, makes fresh produce significantly more expensive than the same produce costs at a nearby farmers' market.

For Eva, sales were good from 2004 until 2009 (see Figure 5.4), when the impacts of the financial crisis and subsequent austerity measures marked a turning point (see Figure 5.5). She explained: "Like, the sales dropped, and that's it. You were counting your income, that per month you will get, say, those four thousand, and that you will pay your bills and you will survive. And now you see, the sales have dropped, and you don't collect such an amount." Although she still had her clients, they also did not buy as much as they used to. "They come, but they buy in smaller amounts. And now, for example, you can't keep the price at two litas. Last year, the year before last, the year before last year, potatoes used to cost up to three litas [per kilogram], nobody would ask, if it's expensive. Nobody said anything. And now you sell a potato for one litas and a half, and they haggle with their eyes all wide. They ask to put the price down, put it down." The pressure to set lower prices also increased the necessity to sell more, which meant trying to cover more markets. Eva's goal was to maximize her income, not her profit

(Chayanov 1986). Therefore, in a period when prices were falling, she was pressured to work more.

Figure 5.4

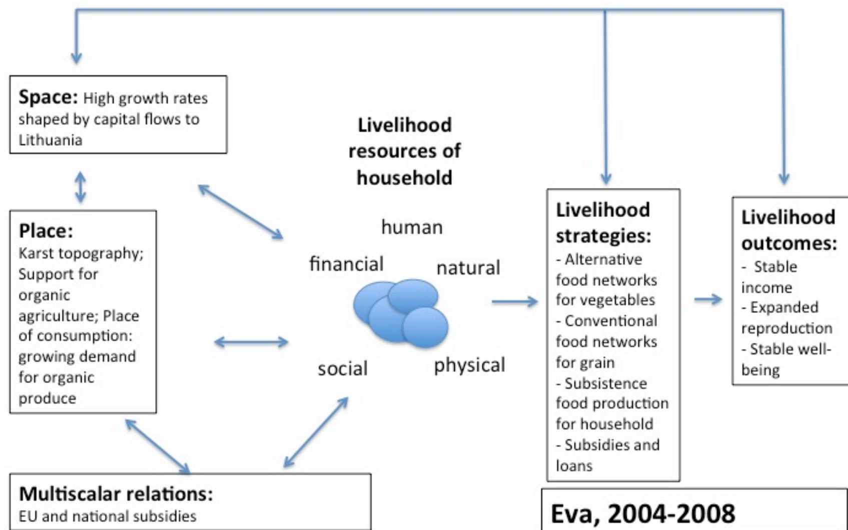
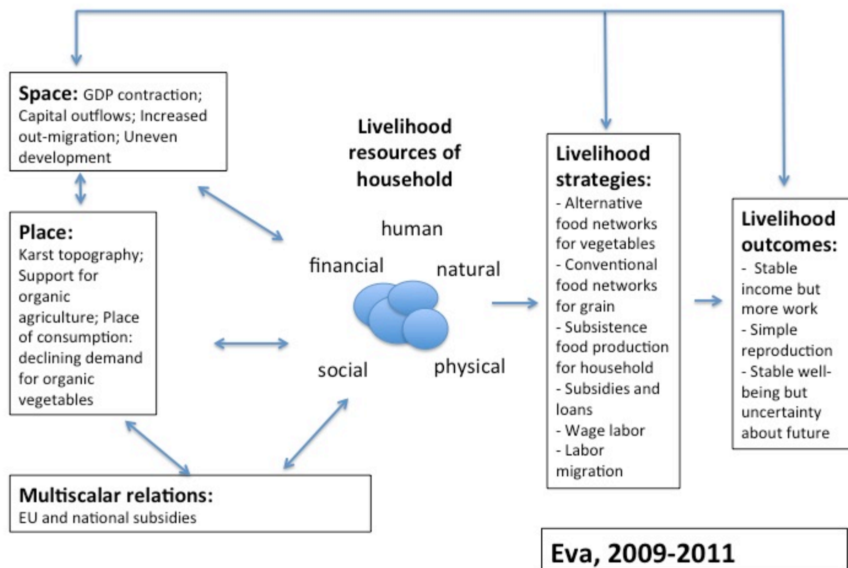


Figure 5.5



However, covering more markets is not an easy venture because of the human capital required, but also because there are few markets that are specifically for organic farmers. In other places of consumption (public markets, other farmers' markets), organic vegetable growers face competition from resellers, conventional growers, and also pensioners who grow vegetables on their allotments to supplement their pensions. The popularity of homegrown fruits and vegetables has also increased since the financial crisis leading eco-conscious but cash-strapped customers to go to the farmers' market just to supplement their own production.

Like Mikelis, Eva started her farm with sufficient natural capital: she had access to enough arable land for potentially profitable vegetable production. However, her lack of physical capital, the necessary tractor, forced her to be dependent on other, neighboring farmers. Because she had not accumulated substantial financial capital to buy a new tractor, she took a loan to make the purchase.

Already in the beginning of the 2010/11 farming season, it was clear that prices would not be rising, despite the fact that Lithuania's economy was now growing again. The human capital of Eva's farm was also declining. Her husband found a job as a truck driver and one of her sons, who had just graduated from high school, left to look for a job in Ireland. As a result, she was left with her youngest son to manage the farm. The relatively short growing season in Lithuania means that the demand for labor is very high during specific months, especially July and August. Few workers in her village were willing to work for the wages that she could afford to pay. This lack of human capital in the household, combined with the decreasing prices, pushed Eva to stop selling through AFNs. However, she had committed to the organic subsidy scheme for five years, and had to pay back the loan for the tractor. She ended up transitioning to exclusively growing grain organically and looking for waged work. In other words, alternative food networks could no longer provide her and her household with a sustainable livelihood.

3.2.3 Summary

For Eva's and Mikelis' household livelihood strategies, the financial crisis and its aftermath was the turning point. Decreasing purchasing power impacted places of consumption, which in turn reconfigured livelihood outcomes for farmers. However, it was not the only factor that led to the declining importance of AFNs in their livelihoods. For Eva, the lack of human capital in her household made fulfilling all her tasks difficult. Mikelis was unprepared to deal with the increasing demands of paperwork associated with changes in legislation. For both of them, their natural capital (organic vegetables) was unfortunately easily replaceable at the market with homegrown, conventionally-grown, or imported produce. A spatialized LA helps explain how a shifting sociospatial context influenced available assets and livelihood outcomes.

3.3 Spatializing SLA: Applications 2

The difficultly that Eva and Mikelis encountered was not universal, even during the financial crisis. For many other farmers, AFNs have provided the opportunity to maintain simple reproduction or pursue expanded reproduction. For example, a small group of large-scale farmers were able to take advantage of changes in national food hygiene legislation both preceding and during the financial crisis to set-up processing units on their farms. Although their numbers are small, in some places (like Vilnius farmers' markets) and for some products (like meat, both fresh and processed), they control a considerable share of the market. In these instances, the farmers transitioned from supplying conventional food networks to building their own AFNs. Other farmers, especially dairy farmers, "dip in" to AFNs when conventional prices are low. This occurred throughout Latvia and Lithuania during the milk price crisis of 2008 and it underscores the importance that relations across space, such as trade flows, have even for small-scale farmers. In the following sections, I analyze two cases in which AFNs have enabled either simple or expanded reproduction. In both cases I draw attention to the specificity of the assets involved. For example, dairy cattle, in contrast to vegetable

plots, are not something to which urbanites in Riga or Vilnius have easy access. Dairy products can also be processed, making a “value-added” product. However, it is important to note that “value-added” does not necessarily mean that a higher return on investments was received, as I discuss below. Although dairy production in Latvia and Lithuania is seasonal, especially on small-scale farms (cows usually calve in the late winter/early spring and are dry for two months beforehand), it is an important livelihood strategy because it can provide an income for most of the year. The materiality of natural capital is intimately related to the seasonality of the place of production, which in turn provides financial capital on a regular basis. However, as the milk price crisis that started in 2008 demonstrated, this regularity is a product of sociospatiality, which, by definition, is always also in process.

3.3.1 ‘Inara,’ Eastern Latvia (f/late 50s)

Inara and her mother have a mixed farm with 35 hectares, which includes arable land and forest. They started farming in 1992 after they gained their ancestral land, and the collective farm where they worked was privatized. Their decision to farm was based on the fact that they already had the human, natural, and physical capital (an old tractor). In addition, she lives in Eastern Latvia, which is much more impoverished than the rest of Latvia. In her place of residence, there were few other employment opportunities.

Up until 2008, Inara and her household were able to secure a stable livelihood by keeping dairy cattle (about five milking cows), growing and selling vegetables through AFNs, and growing most of their own food themselves (see Figure 5.6). Milk on the other hand, was sold to a large-scale dairy processor in the region, one of Latvia’s largest cheese exporters. EU accession provided subsidies, but it also imposed new food hygiene and environmental requirements (a shift in scalar relations). Inara applied for three different small EU grants to cover the cost of meeting the new requirements. Although Inara and her mother do most of the work on the farm, Inara’s grown son also helps by doing any tractor work.

Figure 5.6

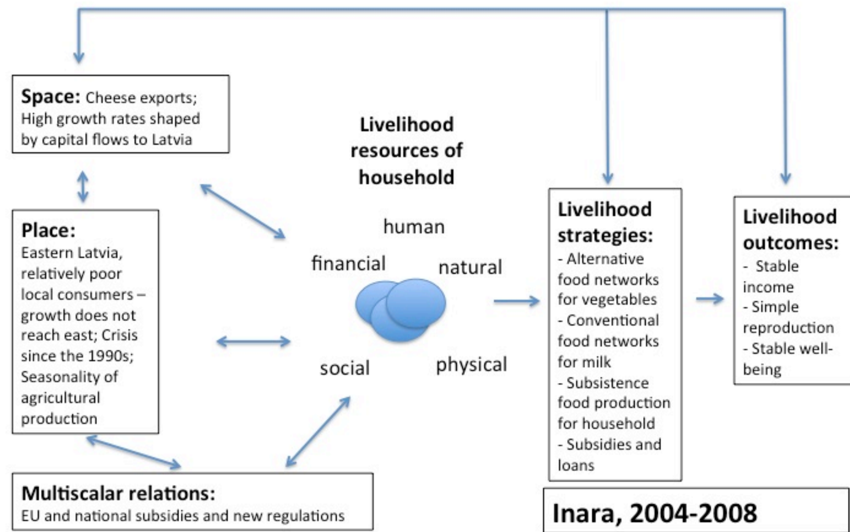
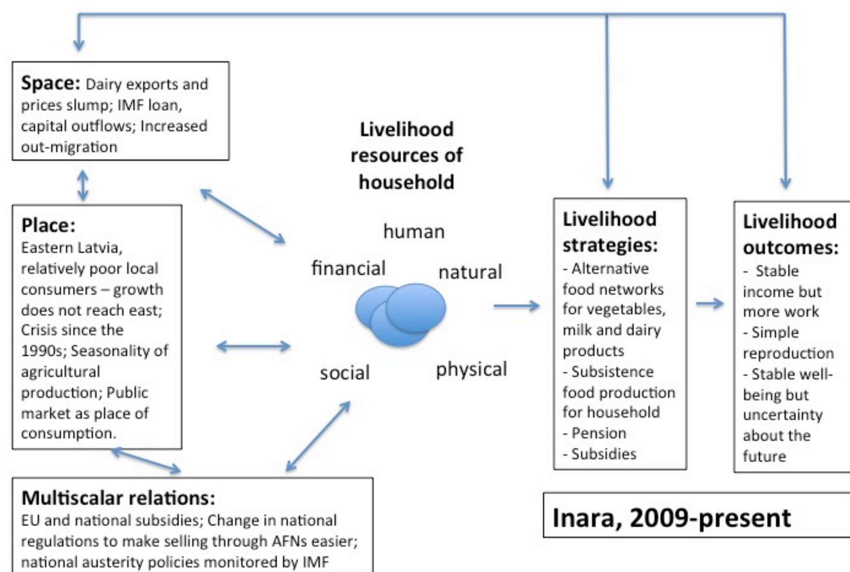


Figure 5.7



When dairy prices started to fall in 2008 and 2009, Inara was forced to reconfigure her livelihood strategies (see Figure 5.7). She did not want to liquidate her dairy business by selling her cows, but she could not afford to sell her milk for the low prices the processor was now offering. Therefore, she started selling milk directly to residents of a nearby town by delivering milk to the courtyard of apartment buildings and by selling her milk, vegetables and dairy products at the public market almost everyday. Any milk that is not sold at the market during the day is then processed into butter or cheese in the evening and sold on the next day. The flexibility of this natural capital is something Inara uses to her advantage.

Inara's direct marketing of milk was facilitated by changes in national-scale regulations, but she also needed to reconfigure her assets, including her human, social and physical capital. With more farmers marketing milk and dairy products directly in public markets or in courtyards, she also faced competition. It took a while for her to develop a regular customer base, but now they expect her at the market and wait for her. They value her milk, not only because it is cheaper than what is found in the stores, but because they can use it to make cheese or soured milk and they can skim off the cream.

Nevertheless, she emphasizes that she is barely making ends meet, just covering her costs because of the rising prices of electricity and fuel. She says: "Everything is pulling along, if only to survive, just to survive… It would just be a shame to liquidate everything, if you think about it…" She notes that she has no savings left if something breaks, but she is thankful that she has no more loans to repay and that her mother receives a pension: she adds that "pensioners are wealthier than farmers." Her neighbors with loans are worse off. The toughest time is the end of the month because her clients are pensioners and families with young children. By the end of the month, their pensions and wages have been all used up. Inara could try to sell her milk in a different town, but she cannot guarantee that the additional transportation costs would be covered.

Inara's case demonstrates that developing AFNs takes a variety of assets: natural, physical, financial as well human and social capital. AFNs have enabled her to maintain her material well-being, as well as to keep producing at the same scale as she was before.

However, because of the uncertainty she feels, she would not consider her present livelihood to be sustainable.

3.3.2 'Egle,' Lithuania (f/early 50s)

Like Inara, Egle gained restituted farmland in the 1990s, but in contrast to Inara, at the time she was living far away from the land, in the capital city of Vilnius. She also had a higher education. Although her experience in agriculture was limited, she had big dreams about starting her own farm. She traded in her restituted land for land that was closer to Vilnius with easy access to a major highway. Because she wanted to do something different, she decided to raise organically-grown goats for meat and dairy products. She faced obstacles in realizing her dreams because there was not even a house on her land, and the property had no access to electricity or water. With loans and money saved by working abroad, she finally established a farm in 1997, alongside her mother and her son.

Once her farm was established, Egle had difficulty legally selling her milk and meat because she could not meet hygiene requirements for on-farm processing (see Figure 5.8). There were few if any conventional networks through which she could sell her dairy or meat products. Therefore she sold her products through informal AFNs and right off the farm. It was not until she was able to submit a project for partial financing (50%) through EU rural development funding that she was able to build her own processing unit and receive all the approvals needed from the State Food and Veterinary Service to make cheese. With new processing possibilities, her herd grew to include over 500 goats (not all of which are milked at the same time). Her natural capital grew, but she also had to improve her human capital. Through trial and error she learned to make cheese and she developed over 30 of her own recipes.

Figure 5.8

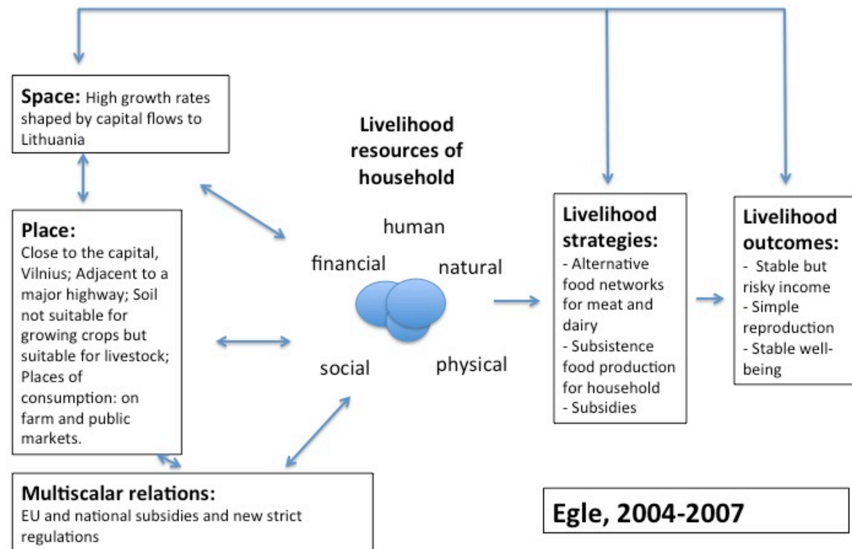
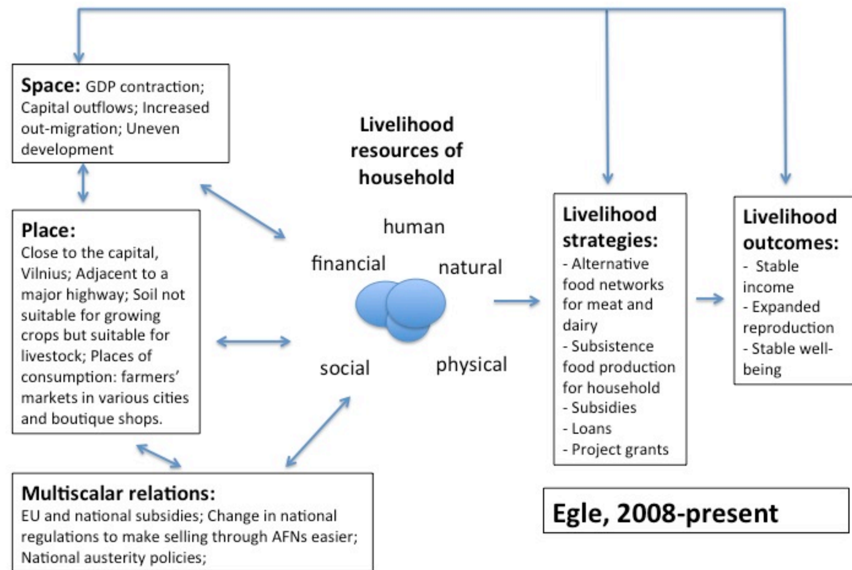


Figure 5.9



In 2008 her dairy business benefited from changed national regulations on farmers' markets and more supportive policies by Vilnius' city government. She was one of the first farmers to start selling at a popular organic farmers' market that opened in Vilnius in 2008 (see Figure 5.9). During the financial crisis, new places of consumption (more farmers' markets) were organized in Vilnius and other cities. Although consumption was affected by reduced purchasing power, the financial crisis also sparked renewed demand for local food. Egle had loans to repay and so she expanded her production as well as her product variety in order to attract customers. She sells her cheese at farmers' markets in different cities and some specialty shops. Although she has sold some of her cheese to supermarkets, she prefers to sell at farmers' markets. She explains: "if I sell myself, I interact with people, I know what they want, and what I can offer them. I can always manage to supply what is needed. In the big supermarkets the cheese can sit on the shelves for a week among lots of other different cheese; in contrast, in the market the customer knows she can get something that is fresh." Furthermore, she adds that her product is expensive and will never be made in the quantities necessary to make selling at supermarkets a viable option. Therefore, the farmers' market functions as a distinctive place of consumption.

Egle is planning to expand her business to include agro-tourism and she is also looking for export opportunities for her cheese. Throughout the financial crisis and its aftermath she has maintained her prices, despite the fact that her input prices have gone up. She explains that local people cannot afford to pay more. She is already exporting some cheese to Poland and has export opportunities in Germany, where organic specialty shops are willing to pay 40 euros/kg for plain organically-certified goat cheese. In contrast, in Lithuania, she receives about 12 euros/kg for the same cheese. After cultivating local social capital, she is now doing the same abroad by participating in trade shows. AFNs have thus enabled Egle's livelihood to move from simple to expanded reproduction; she anticipates that exports may occupy an increasingly prominent position. She maintains that her current livelihood is sustainable, but she acknowledges that the need to pay back her loans puts pressure on her to seek out places where she could sell her production.

3.3.3 Summary

These examples demonstrate how multiple spatialities, as well as multiple capitals, are co-implicated in the making of livelihood strategies and outcomes. For example, changes in national food hygiene regulations were instrumental in improving Egle's and Inara's livelihood outcomes by making it easier for farmers to sell food of animal origin at farmers' markets. In order to create a viable AFN, access to a place of consumption was needed, as were changes in scalar relations. Farther away from the capital city of Latvia, where wealth is concentrated, Inara has had more limited opportunities.

4. Conclusion

I began the chapter with an assessment about the advantages and disadvantages of using a "value-added" approach to the study of the impacts of participating in AFNs for farmer livelihoods. I found that the assumption that AFNs can be compared to conventional food networks does not always carry weight. This and other weaknesses led me to examine the possible insights that could be gained by using a Sustainable Livelihoods Approach. The concept of livelihoods, as applied in development studies, has not been used in European rural development research or more broadly in the Global North (Anderson 2008). I align myself with Anderson (2008), who notes that this understanding of a livelihood is a "worthwhile aspiration for workers in any country, not only those that are 'developing'" (2008, 594).

However, I have also argued that livelihoods must be understood as embedded within a dynamic sociospatial context. One of the problems with SLA has been its restrictive focus on the local scale, and neglect of the dynamics operating at the global scale. A spatialized LA helps account for global-scale processes, as well as how they are mediated by national policies. Livelihood assets are also not static: maintaining and developing social, human, physical, and natural capital requires effort. However, effort

may not be sufficient in changing sociospatial circumstances. This was evident in Mikelis' and Eva's case. For both, AFNs failed to provide a sustainable livelihood when the financial crisis impacted purchasing power. But what explains the different outcomes in Egle's and Inara's case? One important difference is that Inara is older, approaching retirement, and is therefore unwilling to expand her production even if she had the resources to do so (Chayanov 1986). Egle is not only younger, but also more prone to take risks. She moved to the countryside from the city in order to pursue her dream. However, Egle also has to pay back her loan, which forces her to keep looking for new opportunities, to diversify her production, expand her herd, and even go into other sectors. Finally, Egle has the advantage of being closer to the biggest cities in Lithuania, where she already has a regular clientele.

In summary, a spatialized LA provides insights into the multiple factors that shape livelihood strategies and livelihood outcomes. At a time when AFNs are gaining greater prominence in policy circles, a spatialized LA provides insights on who benefits from AFNs and why.

Chapter 6. Engendering Alternative Food Networks

Emerging research has begun to more explicitly consider the relationship between gender and alternative food networks (AFNs). Focusing on women farmers in the US and Western Europe, scholars have found that alternative methods of food production and distribution are empowering (Blum 2011; Jarosz 2011; Trauger 2004; Trauger et al. 2010). However, these findings are based on a historical trajectory of food production and consumption in which women farmers were marginalized from agricultural spaces, particularly since the late nineteenth century. The growing popularity of sustainable agriculture and AFNs has provided women with an opportunity to pursue farming as a livelihood activity. In Soviet and post-Soviet space, in contrast, women were not marginalized from agricultural space, even if agricultural labor was gendered. Therefore, possibilities for women's empowerment as farmers have to be understood as emerging within specific historical and gendered trajectories of agricultural production and produced by scattered hegemonies. Even in proximate places, which are now governed by similar agricultural and rural policies (like Western and Eastern Europe), different possibilities exist for women farmers.

Drawing upon interviews and ethnographic fieldwork with women farmers who participate in AFNs, in this chapter I examine the gender regimes that exist on family farms in Latvia and Lithuania, I analyze whether women farmers have faced obstacles in taking up farming as a livelihood activity, and I describe the specific challenges faced by women farmers. In contrast to existing findings on gender in agriculture in Europe, I argue that women have not faced obstacles in taking up farming as a livelihood activity; rather, women farmers face challenges related to the agricultural gender regimes and to women's responsibility in managing social reproduction and production for profit. I define social reproduction as the "fleshy, messy, and indeterminate stuff of everyday life" (Katz 2001b, 711), involving both the everyday and the long term reproduction of labor power.

To explain the differences between my findings and existing research, I base my analysis on the understanding that space is constituted by multiple trajectories of

sociospatial change. These historical trajectories inform current agricultural gender regimes in Latvia and Lithuania. Similarly, historical trajectories have informed agricultural gender regimes in Western Europe, which has had an impact on theorizing gender and agriculture in European rural sociology and geography. Therefore, it is necessary to bring these different trajectories to light, but it is equally important to reveal connections (Katz 2004). To do this, I turn to Katz's notion of counter-topographies (Katz 2001a), as well as Pratt and Yeoh's (2003) call for transnational feminist counter-topographies- "a metaphor that suggests tracing lines across places to show how they are connected by the same processes, and simultaneously embedding these processes within the specifics of fully contextualised, three-dimensional places" (2003, 163). My final goal in this chapter is to trace the contour lines that connect the stories of my subjects with those represented in the established scholarly literature.

This chapter is divided into three sections. In Section 1, I analyze the literature on gender and agriculture in Western Europe. In Section 2, I focus on the rather limited literature on gender and agriculture in the Soviet Union and post-Soviet Latvia and Lithuania. In Section 3, I analyze the challenges women farmers face in Latvia and Lithuania, and I describe contemporary agricultural gender regimes.

1. Farming Women

Spurred by the development of capitalism, the industrialization of agriculture accelerated throughout Europe and Northern America in the 19th and 20th centuries. After World War II, the state started to play an active role in these changes by facilitating technological improvements to enhance efficiency and productivity. These developments came to be known as the modernization paradigm in agriculture (Ploeg 2008). Although the social structure of the family farm still prevailed and was even buttressed in Western Europe by state policy, its gender relations were radically transformed. Nevertheless, like any process interacting with the multiple trajectories that make space, modernization had diverse gendered articulations. In Section 1.1 and 2.1, I analyze how the modernization of agriculture produced different gendered outcomes for women farmers

in Western Europe and the Soviet Union, and I explain how scholars have conceptualized these outcomes. This review is not meant to be comprehensive; rather, my goal here is to identify major themes.

Eventually in the last decades of the 20th century, the modernization paradigm produced its own sets of crises, which had environmental, social and economic dimensions. In response to these crises, new forms of "relocalized" agriculture started gaining prominence in Western Europe and Northern America, as I detail in Section 1.2.

1.1 Agricultural Modernization as Gendered Exclusion

In 20th century Northern America, the UK, and other parts of Western Europe, women faced significant challenges in their efforts to take up farming as an occupation (Brandth 2002; Sachs 1996). While established practices of inheritance limited women's access to farms, occupational discrimination prohibited them from becoming educated and working as farmers. Instead, they were relegated to the status of "farmwives" or "helpers" (Brandth 2002). On the farm, the (male) farmer was the farm's public face and its private authority, even though a *family* farm often relied on the labor of all family members. In her review of gender relations on Western European family farms, Brandth argues that women's responsibility for household work and care was "regarded as a 'natural' distribution of work on the basis of certain gender specific attributes" (2002, 184). Women's labor took place in the privacy of the farm household, a spatial seclusion that enabled the invisibility of women's farm labor.

Despite impressions of the entrenched and traditional nature of the family farm, along with its attendant subordinated position for women farm workers, the masculinization of agriculture is a recent achievement (Brandth 2002). Before the 19th century, when the commodification of agriculture and tendencies toward greater mechanization and specialization revolutionized agricultural production, women's labor on subsistence peasant farms was both visible and sometimes even autonomous (Brandth 2002). In Norway, for instance, men only started to take more control over farming when it became profitable in the late 19th century (Haugen 1990), a process that was

legitimized and enforced through the mechanization (and masculinization) of production. With this transformation, women were marginalized from the spaces they had controlled, such as the barn.

Similarly, in 20th century Germany, women farmers lost access to the personal incomes they generated through the direct marketing of milk, eggs and home-processed goods when these activities were progressively prohibited in the 1930s (Prugl 2004). These transformations were supported by an interventionist state, which consolidated its role in directing the agricultural sector under the Nazi regime (Prugl 2004). After WW II many of these policies remained in place as the West German state sought to further modernize and rationalize agricultural production. In so doing, it reinforced the social structure of the family farm, which was now considered to be an anti-Communist symbol (Prugl 2004). Elisabeth Prugl uses the concept of "gender order" to conceptualize how state policies enforce certain gender relations, both implicitly and explicitly. She argues that in West Germany, a patriarchal agricultural welfare state came into being after WW II, with policies based "on subsidised prices, social insurance for men, discourses of rationalisation and anti-communism" (Prugl 2004, 355). In this gender order women "were constructed as supplemental labour, regardless of their labour contribution, and deprived of an independent source of income. Indeed, the modernisation of [West] German farming happened on the backs of the unpaid and unrecognised labour of women farmers" (Prugl 2004, 355).

In other sectors the advance of capitalism also relied on the marginalization of women and the reworking of gendered labor (see Federici 2004). However, this process was not an isolated historical incident; the geographies of capital are constantly reworking "the basis of labor's value to capital, a process of reproducing and recombining interlocking social differences into novel combinations of exploitable workers" (Werner 2012, 403). The production of gender relations thus constitutes and enables capitalist restructuring.

With the modernization of agriculture in Western Europe, women continued to play important but poorly recognized roles on farms. This led researchers to focus more specifically on the dynamics at work within the family farm. The concept of "gender

regime" is often used to capture how gender relations become solidified within institutions like the family farm (see Evans and Ilbery 1996). On family farms gender regimes enforce a gender-based division of labor, which is imbued with power relations. In 20th century Western Europe, the gender regime on family farms relied upon women's labor to maintain the general economy of the farm. Within these gender regimes, it was the women's responsibility to do work that was both subordinated and unremunerated.[19] Writing about mid-twentieth century France, for instance, Christine Delphy describes how women were delegated to do the "subordinate, dirty, difficult, nonmechanized tasks" (Delphy 1980, 27), especially those concerning animal care. She explains that although the division of labor on the farm meant that women were responsible for manual labor, there is nothing inherent about manual labor that makes it more exploitable. Indeed, the unpaid labor devoted to processing farm products (such as cheese, jams, etc.) becomes paid labor when it is transferred off the farm (Delphy 1980). Therefore, the division of labor is not in itself the cause of exploitation, but rather the relations that govern the household and its interactions with the broader economy produce women's exploitation and oppression.

The analytic necessity to study both household economic relations and relations within the broader agrarian economy motivated Whatmore's (1990) research on British family farms. By unpacking the household, and the relations through which it is constituted, she argues that the family farm should not be treated as a sealed black box. In that assessment, her work mirrors that of other feminist researchers who sought to unpack the household, exposing the heterogeneous and even conflicting interests and power relations that constitute what appears to be a homogeneous entity (Whatmore 1990). Accounting for these relations, as well as situating the household economy within the broader political economy, Whatmore's (1990) notion of the "domestic political economy" intermingles an analysis of social reproduction and production for profit. Ideologies of what constitutes 'proper' work, or work that is worthy of remuneration, legitimize the domestic political economy, including women's position within that economy (1990). In her study, Whatmore found that women themselves acquiesce to a situation in which their work remains undervalued and therefore unpaid.

While recognizing its theoretical insights into the labor process, Patricia O'Hara (1998) critiques Whatmore's assessment for leaving little analytical space for women's agency. She explains that "capitalism and patriarchy may compete for women's labour" (1998, 36), indirectly enhancing women's positions by enabling various economic possibilities. Moreover, women's decisions to become part of the paid labor force are not just an outcome of the demand for their labor. In 20th century Ireland, for example, women exhibited widespread and nuanced forms of resistance to marrying farmers and becoming farmwives or "farm women." In fact, O'Hara argues that their "resistance to marriage to farmers, as expressed in high female migration and low farmer marriage rates, threatened the reproduction of family farming" (1998, 61). In addition, O'Hara found that even some women who married farmers, and were already familiar with family farming, possessed "room to negotiate a marital relationship in which they manage to significantly challenge and erode patriarchal structures" (1998, 66).

Feminist analysis of 20th century family farming in Western Europe has produced insights on the consequences of the modernization of agriculture, in addition to honing theoretical tools to understand the relationship between the household and capitalist economies. Feminist scholars highlighted how the modernization of agriculture was enabled by the reworking of gender regimes on the farm and gender orders at the scale of the nation-state. Men took control of farming sectors that had been overseen by women, and although in most cases women's farm labor was still significant and integral to the success of the farm, it became subordinated and unrecognized politically and economically. These developments reveal how capitalist and household economic practices are intimately intermingled; while capitalist logic is clearly limited, that does not mean that non-capitalist household economic practices are insulated from capital's circuits. On the other hand, the transformed gender regimes that maintained household economies also underpinned the success of the modernization paradigm, contributing eventually to a crisis.

1.2 Localization as Gendered Empowerment

Starting in the 1980s, the modernization paradigm in agriculture began to experience a crisis in Western Europe. Up until then, the industrialization of agriculture had continued as long as the long-term decline in real producer prices and the simultaneous increasing costs associated with the capitalization of farming were both offset by a growing demand that could absorb an increasing food supply (IMPACT 2014). What eventually resulted was that farmers in the developed world were increasingly competing with each other for global markets. The concomitant rising influence of neoliberalism after the fall of the Soviet Union encouraged national governments and a strengthened European Union to foster an ideology of rural entrepreneurship and global competitiveness by exploiting comparative advantages and niche markets (Prugl 2004). Because fewer farmers could compete on such terms, this generated a crisis for agrarian livelihoods and for the patriarchal agricultural welfare state (Brandth 2002). Shifting gender orders in agriculture played a central role in facilitating these changes. In fact, challenges to the patriarchal agricultural welfare state generated a crisis of masculinity in rural areas in Europe (Brandth 2002).

Specifically, the rigid gender regimes of the family farm have indirectly contributed to its decline and to the crisis in rural masculinity (Brandth 2002). Practices of inheritance and the general masculinization of agriculture had encouraged women to leave farming and rural areas, but men tended to be tied more closely to their farms economically, socially, and culturally. In Norway, “remote rural areas are turning into male bastions with recruitment and bachelor problems” (Brandth 2002, 191). In contrast to the men on isolated “one-man” farms, who are considered to be “abandoned, unmodern and even pitiable,” women “have changed position from being subordinated and invisible and gradually excluded from a position in productive work, to being pictured as taking action and choosing a different life for themselves far better adjusted to late modern society” (Brandth 2002, 191). More broadly, feminist organizing contributed to the expansion of women’s opportunities (see Prugl 2004).

The modernization paradigm also generated a surge of criticism from environmental movements, which criticized the state for supporting environmental degradation. As a result of continuous pressure, new policies to support organic farming were implemented by the EU. The new support for organic farming had a geopolitical dimension, too: the EU was facing pressure at the global scale for its subsidies and introducing organic subsidies allowed it to maintain less controversial support for its farmers. Nevertheless, the crisis in rural masculinity and industrialized agriculture, coupled with new state support, brought about an opening for women farmers to engage in sustainable and organic agriculture. In Europe, there is a growing presence of women who are recognized and recognize themselves as farmers, as opposed to farmwives. Despite reduced institutional barriers, however, women in a number of West European countries still confront difficulties in asserting their identities as farmers (Pedersen and Kjaergard 2004; Prugl 2004). Their struggles parallel the obstacles faced by women farmers in the United States, where patriarchal gender regimes have remained firmly in place to ensure that "when women assume the role of farmer they transgress the traditional gender roles, work culture, and ideologies that define the social narratives of farming" (Trauger 2004, 290). However, Trauger (2004) argues, the possibility to practice sustainable agriculture has created a space that is conducive to women's identities as women and as farmers. Hence, women are more likely to farm organically than following a conventional model (Trauger 2004). This trend is also mirrored in various European countries (Pedersen and Kjaergard 2004; Prugl 2004). In addition, evidence from some countries suggests that they are more likely to market their production through AFNs, as opposed to seeking conventional distribution channels (see Prugl 2004). Organic and sustainable farming methods and AFNs have therefore been linked to women's empowerment (Jarosz 2011; Trauger 2004).

While these developments are remarkable, they must also be seen as rooted in specific agricultural histories. As detailed in Chapter 2, scholars of agrarian politics have been sensitive to the diversity of agrarian transitions. In particular, feminist scholars of agrarian change have demonstrated that the commodification of agriculture produced diverse outcomes in different places in part because of how capital articulated existing

markers of social difference, state policies, nationalism, imperialism, and women's feminist practices (see Ramamurthy 2000).

With this in mind, in the following section, I map gender orders and regimes in the agricultural sector in the Baltic states, which, despite being a part of the European Union for the past 10 years, have seen different outcomes than those documented in the literature on European family farming.

2. Rurality, Gender and Farming in Soviet and Post-Soviet Latvia and Lithuania

The industrialization of agriculture in the Soviet Union was largely achieved through a violent process of forced collectivization. Eventually, women became wage workers on collective farms. Although this did not occur in Western Europe, there are similarities between the two processes of modernization, as I detail in Section 2.1. The rest of Section 2 analyzes how gender orders and gender regimes were reworked with the crisis of industrial agriculture and the failure of the Soviet modernization paradigm in Latvia and Lithuania.

2.1 Modernization as Proletarianization

In the Soviet era, women were not marginalized from agriculture or from formal employment. Most women in the USSR were expected to work full-time jobs, as they made up the majority of the labor force up until 1979. In addition to working full-time, they were also responsible for most household and caring labor. The "double burden" for women prevailed throughout much of the Soviet era. In these respects the gender order in Soviet agriculture differed from the patriarchal agricultural welfare gender order in Western Europe. In the Soviet Union, women were recognized as farm workers, and they were even recruited to work on farms. In other respects, however, the two gender orders bore great similarities. For example, on the collective farm, the bulk of women's agricultural labor was unskilled, time-consuming, physically demanding and poorly paid. Women were largely responsible for manual labor, like milking cows, a task done by

hand three times a day (Bridger 1987). Although mechanization eased the workload, it often signaled men's entrance into and domination of a sub-sector, such as dairying. Finally, while overrepresented as manual laborers, women were underrepresented in the positions of power and control on the collective farm. It appears that although women were recognized and paid as workers in the Soviet Union, they often did the same kind of agricultural work delegated to "farm wives" in other parts of Europe, including household and caring labor.

In both cases, scholarly literature has demonstrated that women were not passive victims (Bridger 1987; O'Hara 1998). In the Soviet Union, young women fled to cities at higher rates than men, mothers urged their daughters to further their education, and women collective farm workers managed to creatively negotiate the double burden of working on the collective farm and managing the social reproduction of the household. In the 1980s, the Soviet Union was experiencing a growing "rural bride" problem, similar to the one occurring in parts of rural Western Europe. Despite these similarities, however, the crisis of agro-industrialization had different roots than in the West (see Chapter 3). Moreover, when Gorbachev introduced reforms to support the creation of family farms (or peasant farms) this shift signaled the failure of collectivized agriculture and a turn to the West. In the late 1980s, Western Europe increasingly became a model to be emulated politically, economically, also in the agricultural sector. For a changing Soviet agricultural gender order it entailed pursuing the creation of private family farms as model farming enterprises.

2.2 Transition and the Making of the Family Farm

The post-Soviet rural landscape of Latvia and Lithuania is dotted with villages that are sometimes centered around a restored or dilapidated castle, manor, or church, but more frequently consist of Soviet-era buildings, including apartment buildings and prefabricated individual houses, and other pre-WWII structures. Beyond the village are scattered individual farmsteads, many of which had been abandoned when Soviet authorities forced rural inhabitants into village centers. In the 1980s, these individual

farmsteads became symbols of national revival, and with property restitution, many new farmers were able to regain their ancestral farmsteads and land.

This move back to the land by setting up family farms upheld a particular gender regime. Bridger notes that the move to set up new peasant farms in the Soviet Union was considered to be a "male activity" that involved a subordinate but essential family unit (Bridger 1997, 40). "The entire language which surrounded the issue –'making the peasant the master of the land' – was couched in masculine terms and reinforced by the media images used to illustrate the progress of reform" (Bridger 1997, 40). Interestingly, two thirds of the new peasant farming families in the Soviet Union came from urban areas (Bridger 1997, 40), whereas rural people were more cautious about starting peasant farms.

In Soviet Latvia and Lithuania specifically, the imagined recovery of a pre-Soviet past, symbolized by individual farmsteads, implied a restoration of pre-Soviet gender norms and roles (Eglitis 2002). Widespread condemnation of the Soviet disregard for gender difference led to the cultivation of essentialist understandings of gender, in which a certain categorization of gender roles and norms was considered "natural." It was widely imagined that women were supposed to take back their natural roles as mothers of the nation and return to a feminized private sphere, which contrasted with the masculinizing public sphere (Eglitis 2002). In Latvia, where ethnic Latvians made up a bare majority of the population, the countryside was a privileged place for such national revival, with its higher average fertility rates and its close association with Latvian national culture (Eglitis 2002).

The gender regime upheld by public discourse were not matched with actual practices on the new peasant farms in the Soviet Union, or on the new private family farms that grew in number following independence and the implementation of transition policies. There are two important factors that help explain this shift. First, women's farming labor was a necessity on these farms because of the multiple constraints the farms faced (Bridger 1997). The imagined retreat to the household was not practically possible. Instead, a gender regime similar to the Soviet regime persisted: men undertook any mechanical work and women were responsible for manual labor and caring for

animals. Second, the tumultuous changes that occurred in the 1990s had gendered impacts, especially in rural areas. While women were disadvantaged as a group (Eglitis 2002), men experienced profound social and psychological dislocation, evident from their lower life expectancy, increased rates of violence, and substance abuse (Tereškinas 2010). In Latvia, between 1988 and 1995 life expectancy dropped from 66.26 to 60.76 for men, and from 75.14 to 73.10 for women (Demogrāfijas Centrs n.d.). The life expectancy of men in rural areas was lower than the average (Demogrāfijas Centrs n.d.). In a study on working-class men in Lithuania, Tereškinas argues that their marginalization was represented by a "subjective sense of powerlessness and despair" (2010, 35).

The crisis of masculinity that affected Latvia and Lithuania, as well as other post-Soviet societies, harbors similarities to the crisis of masculinity in rural Western Europe. In both cases the crisis of masculinity coincided with a crisis in the modernization paradigm. In addition, women appeared to fare better when faced with similar difficulties. In an article explaining the reason for this manifestation, a leading rural development specialist in Lithuania stated that: "During the transition a portion of men lost their role as the head of the traditional family and the supporter of children. Quite a few rural men fell apart. They did not manage to adapt, but women—like cats—are more viable" (Jockus 2008). However, there are also considerable differences. The new heads of family farms in the Baltic states faced chaotic economic and political circumstances, coupled with the pressure to succeed as breadwinners, which continued to define masculine gender identities. For men, the decline of the agricultural sector in the 1990s and the growing recognition of farmers and rural space as the "losers" of transition (see Chapter 3) compounded the sense of loss. For women, being categorized as "strong" or "more viable" does not necessarily imply empowerment. In the following section, I examine the perspectives of the women farmers to shed light on the challenges they face and on contemporary agricultural gender regimes.

3. Post-Soviet Rural Gender Regimes in Latvia and Lithuania

In remembering the 1990s, the women farmers I interviewed did not claim that women faced greater disadvantages. The laws governing privatization and decollectivization were ostensibly gender-neutral, and no woman reported having more difficulty getting a farm started than men did, although most took up farming as a family. Couples sometimes had to choose whether or not to relocate if each received restituted land in a different location. Most often these decisions were made based on convenience and expense. Therefore, land tenure and farming arrangements varied widely: some families lived and farmed on the wife's land, others did the opposite; and still others held newly-acquired property jointly.

The transition to independent farming was facilitated by farmers' educational and experiential qualifications. Most of my interviewees, both women and men, had work experience in agriculture and even specialized education at the secondary or university level before they started their own farms. The women with higher educations had worked as agronomists, accountants, or veterinarians at collective farms. One woman, Jurga, remembers the feeling of optimism she felt when she and her husband started a peasant farm in late Soviet Lithuania. She took care of her four children in addition to working full-time on her farm. Despite the difficult work, she remembers this period positively. In an effort to attract and retain young families in rural areas, the government offered partial grants and loans without interest for families to build homes. Jurga now considers this as an incredible fortune, pointing out that in "independent Lithuania" no one would provide such a thing. Her positive hopes were progressively dashed throughout the 1990s, however, as her family farm struggled with declining prices and delayed payments by processors. Although she wanted to specialize, fluctuating prices and few guarantees with respect to markets led her to develop a mixed-use farm growing vegetables for sale through AFNs, and milk for sale both through AFNs and to conventional processors. For Jurga, farming is a livelihood activity that is inseparable from rural space, but also from her role as a mother and now grandmother. She prides herself on being able to offer her grandchildren organically grown vegetables, and her

farming income is now an important supplement to her and her husband's meager pensions.

Jurga's own identification with farming as a livelihood activity appropriate for women in Lithuania contrasts with the masculinization of farming in Western Europe. This contrast is also evident in Latvia, where I witnessed a conversation between a Latvian woman farmer, Daina, and a visiting French farmer, Marie. Marie was particularly interested in relaying her experiences of discrimination and exclusion as a woman while attending Swiss and French agricultural schools. She recounted with great detail the obstacles she had faced in establishing herself as a farmer. She went on to inquire about the discrimination Daina had faced. Daina stared back with a blank face. Although she showed interest in the discussion, and even disbelief at the way Marie had been treated, she had not shared these experiences and consequently had little to say. It was apparent that she was uneasy, so the conversation drifted away from the topic.

While farming is not out of reach as an occupation for women in Latvia and Lithuania, women explained that they experience marginalization in other ways. For my informants, their identity as woman farmers was intertwined with their identities as small-scale farmers, rural residents, and in Latvia, residents of the peripheral eastern region of Latgale. Egle, an economically successful small-scale farmer in Lithuania and sole holder of her farm, described her biggest difficulties in terms of dealing with the changing political and economic situation as a small-scale farmer with a limited market. In particular, she contends that bureaucrats do not care whether or not she is a woman; rather, she explains that she gets treated in demeaning ways because she is a small-scale farmer with little money or power. According to Egle, then, marginalization occurs as a result of the intersecting identities of class and occupation.

While Western European women farmers face obstacles in being recognized as farmers, neither Jurga, Daina nor Egle reported problems in assuming the identity of a farmer. In addition, they did not identify as farmwives or as mere assistants or helpers on their farms. Although this might be different for the few existing large farms that sell through conventional channels (and are therefore not a part of this study), the concept of a farmwife does not exist in either Latvia or Lithuania (although both have a word for the

female head of household). However, the gender regime of the family farm imposes other limitations on women farmers, which I detail in the next two sections.

3.1 Organizing the Family Farm Gender Regime

Despite the difficulties faced by family farmers, the family farm is still implicitly the dominant social structure in agriculture. A certain gender regime has solidified since the early 1990s with the preferred family unit consisting of a husband and a wife, or at least one adult woman and one adult man (possibly a mother and son). This partnership is conceived of as complementary by some of the farming couples I interviewed. According to my informants, women and men contribute in their own ways, according to the "natural" skills of each gender. Men are largely responsible for heavy lifting, transportation, construction, all mechanized work, and women do manual work in the field, any processing, most administrative and community-oriented activities. In addition, women are primarily responsible for housework, such as cooking and cleaning. Children contribute mostly by helping with housework and manual labor, such as weeding or picking pests from plants. A small minority of the farmers I interviewed hired workers on a seasonal basis, but they preferred to get by with the help of immediate family, or even other relatives who work in exchange for food. Regardless of these arrangements, the idealized structure of the family farm involves a husband and wife at its head.

This gender regime imposes limitations on the possibilities women have to take up farming as an occupation, largely because it is harder to find workers qualified to do what are considered to be men's responsibilities. For example, Jurga's daughter considered taking over her parents' farm, but only with the help of her husband or another male relative. Her husband expressed no interest in farming. For the time being, Jurga's daughter manages her vegetable garden for her family's subsistence needs, but believes that taking on more work on the farm by herself would compromise her role as a mother of two young children. Once her children are in school, she says she will look for a full-time job instead. She does lament that her parents have built up their farm and

none of their children want to take it over, but she does not see this as solely her responsibility.

Eva, another farmer in Lithuania, elucidated the difficulties women have when they try to farm for the market by themselves. She started her farm with her husband, and together they applied for a loan to buy a tractor. Aided by subsidies for organic farming, her farm was doing well until the financial crisis reduced the purchasing power of her customers substantially. To make ends meet, her husband found a job as a truck driver, and she was left to manage the farm with her two teenage sons. While her sons helped, in our conversations, she consistently lamented the lack of a masculine presence on the farm, especially because she had to manage the farm and the household. She hired people in her village to do some of the manual labor that she would have done herself, but she found it more difficult and more expensive to hire someone who is skilled and trustworthy to do the tractor work. In other words, she found women's work to be more easily replaceable by hiring day laborers. However, she also admitted that her farm cannot compete for the best workers with the wages she can offer; the best workers end up working at the larger farms. She competes with neighboring farms for workers and for customers in the marketplace, and the adjacent presence of other, more successful farms, where husband and wife work together, reminds her of her disadvantage.

Similar situations confront Latvian women farmers, who experience the absence of masculine labor on their farms as a serious obstacle to both agricultural production and social reproduction. Inga is a single mother of four who lives with her mother. Her abusive father has long passed away and her ex-husband suffers from alcoholism. She feels overburdened with responsibilities and she longs for a "normal" family life with a man who could fix things around the house and in the garden. Even though her situation is common in rural areas, she experiences it as abnormal.

Other women manage to farm alone by scaling down production, hiring someone with a tractor to plow their fields, or relying on male relatives to help with particularly heavy tasks. But most of these women are also pensioners who only sell food through AFNs to supplement their pensions. Like Jurga and Eva, they see a masculine presence as necessary on the farm. Egle stands out in that respect. She started her farm as a single

mother, and she contends that while it was difficult to juggle raising a child and farming for the market, the benefits outweighed the sacrifice. She also had her mother's help with housework and childcare. She explained that she did not want to risk having a man interfering with her plans or possibly pushing her back into the domestic sphere.

For most other women farmers, however, the gender regime of the normative family farm is both a desirable but sometimes absent arrangement. Other organizational structures for agriculture that could potentially help alleviate the position of woman farmers, such as service or marketing cooperatives, are uncommon in rural Latvia and Lithuania. The domestication of women that constituted the post-Soviet transition in these countries (Eglitis 2002) can be interpreted in the rural and agricultural context as confining possible farming arrangements to the realm of the family. The gendering of farm work enforces women's feelings of helplessness when there is no male presence to undertake men's work. However, the problem is not that women cannot do what is categorized as men's work, but that they cannot handle more responsibilities in house and farm work. Women farmers already face a challenge managing social reproduction and production for profit. As one farmer told me: "I farm just for survival, nothing more. I sit and count the little coins (*kapeiciņas*). It is still good if you have some kind of man in the house, but my husband, he died…" The problems encountered by women farmers are exacerbated by a continuous decline of rural community infrastructure, such as schools, kindergartens, and public transportation.

3.2 Doing Gender Differently?

Individuals do challenge the hegemonic gender regime of the family farm. For example, some women drive tractors or produce honey (also considered a masculine occupation), and some men are starting home-processing businesses. Over the course of doing fieldwork, I had the opportunity to witness several different farmers make cheese in their own kitchens. Although this is usually considered women's work, there are now also some men who produce cheese for sale through AFNs. In the following paragraphs I analyze two of my encounters with cheese-making, one with a woman and another with a

man, to reflect on whether and how men's take-up of cheese-making involves doing gender differently.

Jurga makes cheese for her family and for her clients from the nearby town and village. Her kitchen is small but cozy. Only one person can occupy the workspace, so I sat in the corner. As she worked she described what she was doing, told stories about her past, and fed and played with her grandchildren, who ran in and out of the kitchen. She did not remember exactly where and how she learned to make cheese; this is her everyday life (*kasdienybė).* She was relaxed and nonchalant through the whole process, but attentive and watchful of the thermometer. In the end, the cheese was pressed and formed in the traditional Lithuanian way (in the form of a big teardrop). The pieces sat waiting on the kitchen table adjacent to her granddaughter's unfinished dessert. When the cheese had set, she delivered some pieces to her clients' homes, and she kept the rest for her family.

Mindaugas makes cheese that he sells at a farmers' market in the capital, Vilnius. He learned how to make cheese by doing an internship abroad. Although he is not from the countryside, he is enthusiastic about becoming a farmer and developing his skills in the craft (*amatas*) of cheese-making. He thinks that modern society undervalues these skills, and he finds fault in the fact that rural people sell their products below the cost of production. During my cheese-making encounter, his house provided a rustic atmosphere (without an indoor toilet), and his attitude towards his work was serious and attentive. He strictly abided by his schedule and methodically checked the temperature of the milk. His ingredients were similar to Jurga's, but the atmosphere was different. The cheese was set in special small plastic molds or made into spreadable cheese. At the farmers' market, Mindaugas nicely arranged the cheese on a table and made samples available for customers to try.

The differences between Jurga's and Mindaugas' cheese-making are not considerable. The ingredients are similar and so are the available resources and assets. However, while Jurga approaches her cheese-making as part of her everyday life, for Mindaugas, it is a serious business and a craft that he is cultivating. Jurga's knowledge of cheese-making is a product of her rural life, while Mindaugas learned to make cheese

abroad at a reputable institution. Perhaps the biggest difference between cheese-making as everyday life and cheese-making as a business and a craft is the final price: Mindaugas' cheeses cost more than Jurga's, sometimes twice as much. When I asked Jurga why she does not increase her prices (her milk is certified organic, after all), she explained that people would not be able to afford it. Mindaugas, on the other hand, sells his cheese to wealthy urbanites in the capital city. This market is too far for Jurga, and she claimed that she does not produce enough to make the trip financially viable. Mindaugas explained that he calculates his prices in order to cover the costs he incurs, and that the prices he charges have to sustain his livelihood. He thinks that the problem is not that his prices are too high, but that there is not enough solidarity between consumers and producers. Jurga, on the other hand, does not calculate her costs or the time she spends working. Because it is so interwoven with her housework, it would probably be impossible.

Figure 6.1 Cheese-making as everyday life (left) and as craft (right)

The take up by men of traditionally women's work is still too marginal to be able to make generalizable conclusions about its implications. There are also other factors involved. As a pensioner, Jurga does not rely completely on her income from AFNs to support her livelihood. In contrast, Mindaugas is much younger and lives almost entirely off the income he makes from processing cheese. This prompts the question of whether a young women farmer would take up cheese-making as a craft, in the manner Mindaugas

has. Given that few young people are starting to pursue animal husbandry on a full-time basis this question would be difficult to respond to. Nevertheless, what this short vignette alludes to is that AFNs are bifurcated between the subsistence oriented AFNs that bring together small-scale farmers and low-income consumers, and newer AFNs that connect wealthy urbanites with farmers who offer distinctive products in new places (I elaborate on this in the following chapter). My research suggests that men who want to pursue traditionally women's work focus on trying to participate in the latter set of AFNs.

It is also important to remember that historically, transgressions in gender regimes, such as when mechanized dairying became a masculinized sector, did not benefit women. For now, farmers like Jurga are able to manage social reproduction and production for sale on their own terms. But she also has a husband who drives the tractor, carries the milk canisters, etc. In that sense, her farming structure is reflective of the ideal model of the family farm, which other women farmers yearn for and consider the normative gender regime.

In the following sections I turn to consider the practices of urban women who garden on a subsistence basis and sell surplus products through AFNs. In contrast to rural women who farm full-time, they are not encumbered by the gender regime of the family farm. Nevertheless, they do face challenges, which I detail and explore.

3.3 Commodification and Subsistence

In Latvia and Lithuania, rural residents are not the only people who pursue farming as an income source. It is common for urban households to grow food in allotment gardens or to have familial connections to farms in the countryside where urbanites could grow or procure food. Although urban dwellers primarily grow food for subsistence purposes, many also sell their surplus products through AFNs. Significantly, women and pensioners perform a significant portion if not most of the work in these semi-subsistence gardens. They also control the income they receive through AFNs. Interestingly, the women gardeners who I interviewed reported that economic necessity was not the primary reason motivating them to start subsistence gardening. Rather, it was

the need to provide healthy and fresh food for their families. Although the money they make through AFNs is valued, these women also experience tensions between social reproduction and production for sale as I detail in the following paragraphs and in the next section.

Virga lives with her family in a towering new apartment complex built on the outskirts of Vilnius for the aspiring middle class during the real estate boom. Her building is nestled tightly in between two other apartment buildings, providing for considerably less courtyard space than is available with the Soviet-era housing in the adjacent residential area. The layout of the apartment itself is similar to a Soviet-era apartment, but with a kitchen that opens into the living room, where we sat and talked.

Virga is in her early 30s, married and raising two preschool-age children. Although she had a job before having children, she has had difficulty finding a new job now that her children are in a full-day preschool program. The financial crisis in particular has made it harder for mothers of young children to find work. As a result, she is now trying to run her own jewelry-making business to supplement the income her husband receives running a construction business. More recently, she has started selling the surplus vegetables she grows on her mother-in-law's land in the countryside. When she had children, she began to think more about trying to consume healthful food (*sveikas maistas*) and food of good quality (*kokybė*). She considers it important to provide healthy, natural produce for her family, but notes that it is incredibly difficult given that she already spends 50% of her monthly household income on food.

Shopping for her family involves a creative search for the best quality food for a reasonable price; this search involves navigating multiple places, from her countryside vegetable garden to the open-air markets and supermarkets of the city. In general, she does not trust the quality and the safety of the food in the stores. She says that bread in particular is a catastrophe: everything is filled with 'e' additives (the classification of additives and preservatives in the EU usually involves an 'e' with a number). She buys bread from a small bakery based in her hometown, which also has a stand at one of the bigger public markets in Vilnius. While she would like to be able to eat more vegetables in the winter, she knows the vegetables in the markets and the stores are sprayed with

chemicals, and she does not trust the organic markets. She noted, "It's better to find someone through your own networks, so you know how they grow their food." Of course, this is not always possible, and when it is not, Virga tries to buy food grown and produced in Lithuania: "If you won't buy Lithuanian, who will buy? We have to support our farmers. And I think they fertilize less here. The Spanish tomatoes are covered with chemicals so they can last longer."

Although Virga has had a garden and preserved produce since she was a child, the desire to provide her family with fresh and healthy produce led her to intensify her efforts to grow, procure and preserve food herself. Now her apartment's springtime balcony is covered with potted seedlings waiting to be transplanted. Although she enjoys gardening and the healthy relaxation that a summer in the countryside provides for her and her children, she sometimes experiences tension with her mother-in-law. She is attempting to carve out her own space on her mother-in-law's land, by building her own greenhouses and now also living in a separate mobile home. This independence is in part facilitated by the money she gets from selling her vegetables. She now supplies six families with vegetables throughout the summer and early autumn months. She does not have a problem finding customers, who are mostly other mothers her own age from her circle of friends. About her own generation, she reported, "everyone wants to buy, no one wants to grow themselves." However, her prices are still the same as the prices at the public market; she does not charge more. So when she reflected on the work she puts into her garden, she added that "selling the vegetables doesn't pay for my labor; it pays for the fuel for the car to the farm and back." But she must make regular trips to the city anyway.

The tension between producing food for sale and producing food for her own needs is something Virga thinks about frequently. She detailed, "my heart hurts to sell the zucchini for 2 litas. Such a nice big one. You know all the work, the weeding, the watering. It's better for me to marinate it. Once you start to sell, you realize how much work you put in it and how it isn't worth much. It's better not to sell it but to give it away as a present. For those 2 litas, my heart hurts. It seems like my work isn't valued." Her ambivalence about selling her produce is confirmed when she insists that she'll only

continue selling her surplus until she gets a full-time job. After that, she'll only grow and preserve food for her family.

For Virga, gardening on her own helped her ensure social reproduction, something she valued. Production for sale enabled her to make extra money, but it also produced conflicted feelings about the devaluation of her labor. These kinds of conflicts can be handled in multiple ways, as I discuss in the next section.

3.4 Disentangling Social Reproduction

Dovile is a woman in her 50s who tries her best to grow as much food as she can for her family of five children. Dovile divides her time between a two-room apartment in a Soviet-era building and her large allotment garden (*sodas*) just outside of the city of Vilnius, where some of her family members reside in a small house. There she grows vegetables, berries, and other fruit, and she keeps about 40 chickens for eggs for her family and for sale. She insisted that this is the cheapest way to get the best quality produce for her and her family. She has been gardening for most of her life, in addition to supplementing the income she receives at a part-time job with sales from picking berries and mushrooms in state-owned forests. Through connections with relatives in the countryside, she also manages to get meat directly from farmers. Dovile is not reflective about her work for her household. In fact, she prefers not to talk about it. However, she emphasized that she grows food for her family because she wants them to have what is "clean" (*švarus*) and "ecologically-grown" (*ekologiškas*). She claimed that she only uses fertilizers occasionally in the spring, but other than that, everything is "natural" (*natūralus*). Her commitment to feeding her children and her grandchildren is evident by the fact that it extends across national borders. Every few months, she carefully packs about ten five-liter jars of pickled vegetables and other items to send via bus to her daughter's family in Western Europe. She claims that the food "in Europe" is not as good and healthy as it is in Lithuania.

Dovile often produces a surplus of vegetables, but she does not choose to sell them. In contrast, her berries (from her garden and the forest), mushrooms, and eggs are

always only for sale. Her customers, mostly her neighbors, receive a text message when she arrives at her apartment with anything to sell. Often she sells everything in under an hour. When I happened to get there on time, she always made sure to fill my bag with vegetables from her garden. Because I bought berries, mushrooms, and eggs from her, I usually tried to pay her for the vegetables too. But she insisted that the vegetables are "just greens" and that I should take them if I need them. When I wondered aloud about the work that went into the vegetables over the whole growing season, as opposed to the minimal labor that went into picking the berries that grow in the wild, she responded that the vegetables are not for sale.

I surmised that she refused to commodify the painstaking labor that went into her vegetable garden, which is mostly devoted to growing produce for her family. In contrast, the eggs, berries, and mushrooms were easier to pick, count and sell.

4. Conclusion

Women's involvement in agriculture in Latvia and Lithuania is significant. In Latvia and Lithuania, 47% and 46.4% of all sole/main holders are women respectively (European Commission 2012). In Germany, by contrast, only 9.6% of sole/main holders are women (European Commission 2012). The high representation of women farmers in Latvia and Lithuania in the present and the recent past provides a stark contrast to the historical trajectories of Western European agriculture. In this chapter I have discussed this difference underscoring how historical trajectories inform contemporary gender regimes. In many Western European nation-states, modernization was associated with women's exclusion from farming as an independent livelihood activity. Now, even with equal rights legislation, women still encounter resistance when they try to farm or identify themselves as farmers. However, recent support for organic and sustainable agriculture has opened up space for women to become farmers. In contrast, I argue that women farmers in Latvia and Lithuania have not faced obstacles in taking up farming as a livelihood activity or identifying as farmers. Consequently, support for organic farming has not been as important in openning up spaces for women farmers as it has been in

Western Europe. Rather, they face challenges related to agricultural gender regimes and to their responsibility in managing social reproduction and production for profit.

The agricultural gender regimes in Latvia and Lithuania are based on the social structure of the family farm in which women and men do separate but complementary tasks. As part of this gender division of labor, women are primarily responsible for household and caring labor. I have analyzed cases in which this gender regime functions in a way that is satisfactory for the women farmers involved, but I have also documented cases in which sole women farmers face challenges because of the hegemonic nature of this gender regime and the lack of alternative social structures in agriculture (like service or marketing cooperatives). Some urban women circumvent this obstacle by keeping small-scale semi-subsistence gardens that they can manage practically by themselves. However, they also face challenges when confronted with the need to commodify their labor. When the products of their caring labor are valorized, these women express dissatisfaction and allude to the difficulty of monetarily accounting for the caring work that makes up social reproduction. In other words, they realize that their own social reproduction is undervalued, and by charging lower prices they are agents of that devaluation. This is the critique Mindaugas articulated about other producers, like Jurga, who sell their cheese for prices that do not cover the costs of production. His answer, as well as the answer of other producers who are in similar positions, has been to charge higher prices and market to a wealthier clientele. In so doing, he is able to maintain his status as a small-scale producer.

However, producers like Jurga are not solely responsible for driving down the price of cheese. They are also competing with the industrially-processed cheese on display on supermarket shelves, which is qualitatively different even though it bears the same name. There are larger forces at stake, in other words, which exert abstract compulsions on the producers to produce more and charge less, and the consumers, to buy what they can afford. While charging more for the cheese produced by small-scale farmers may serve to sustain some farmers' livelihoods, it does not challenge or eradicate the pressures generated by capitalist industrial production. But capital is not the only force present. Evident in Jurga's willingness to charge less for her products is an ethics

of care that traverses the boundaries of the household and the family. Her AFN is embedded within her local geography, tying consumers and producers in caring relationships. These are the practices that sustain social reproduction, but just like the strategy of charging a higher price, these practices do not challenge the systemic nature of capitalism.

Another alternative is to take the kind of systemic approach that I argue for in this dissertation, while making visible the multiple non-capitalist practices that sustain social reproduction, demonstrating their importance, and drawing counter-topographies to connect the processes impacts social reproduction across the multiple trajectories that make space. This approach acknowledges that there are multiple logics at work in livelihood practices but that capitalism enforces a sort of structured coherence. The small-scale growers are competing with large-scale growers, who are able to offer lower prices that serve as a reference point for farmers and consumers. These conditions foster a situation in which social reproduction for small-scale farmers is devalued, regardless of its importance in sustaining the livelihoods of farming households and consumers.

This systemic approach has potential political importance for women farmers because it has the capacity to discern commonalities and differences across space so that a common political project could be formulated. Influence can be exerted at the supranational scale, where rural and agricultural policy in the European Union is largely formulated. For example, I suggest that a focus on social reproduction has the potential to support women as farmers throughout Europe. I define social reproduction as the "fleshy, messy, and indeterminate stuff of everyday life" (Katz 2001b, 711), involving both the everyday and the long term reproduction of labor power and including political, economic, ecological, and cultural elements. Social reproduction in the Baltic states has been a challenge for most residents, requiring creative strategies to secure food, given the lack of functioning systems of procurement in the Soviet era and the impoverishment of the population after the financial crisis. However, social reproduction is a necessity for the continuation of capitalism, even as capitalist development threatens to destroy the basis for social reproduction. So, as Katz notes, even with the withdrawal of the state, capital, and civil society, social reproduction will be accomplished despite the costs to

families and households (2001b). But it also can form the basis for oppositional politics, entailing a struggle to redistribute "responsibility for social reproduction back to capitalists and the state, transnationally and at all scales," which would "begin to recalibrate the costs and benefits of globalization in ways that would pinpoint its widely distributed costs and promulgate increased social justice and equality across classes, nations, localities and gender" (Katz 2001b, 719). One commonality between the women farmers whose livelihoods I analyzed here, as well as those whose perspectives are already examined in existing scholarly literature, is the importance placed on social reproduction. Supporting social reproduction does not entail relegating women to the domestic sphere. Rather, supporting social reproduction would allow women to continue engaging in the activities they value, while fostering an understanding that the devaluation of practices of social reproduction is a systemic feature of capitalist society.

Chapter 7. Geographies of Reconnection at the Marketplace

In 2009, the urban landscapes of Lithuania witnessed a dramatic increase in the number of farmers' markets. In a little over a year, the number of farmers' markets in two of Lithuania's largest cities, Kaunas and Vilnius, grew from just a few weekly markets to over 40, functioning for the most part on a yearlong basis. This trend is consistent with the growing popularity of farmers' markets in Europe and Northern America in the recent past. Farmers' markets have become emblematic of new efforts to foster alternatives to industrially produced, processed, and marketed food; they are crucial meeting points for 'alternative' food networks, direct-to-consumer supply chains that circumvent conventional modes of distribution and often operate under organizational principles that prioritize reconnecting consumers with producers (Goodman et al. 2012). In Europe and Northern America, policy makers, activists and scholars have confirmed that the impressive growth of farmers' markets is explained in part by their success in satisfying a need for reconnection between producers and consumers (Karner 2010; Kneafsey et al. 2008).

Scholars have found that the face-to-face interactions between consumers and vendors at farmers' markets foster *social* and *spatial embeddedness*, meaning locally-based relationships characterized by trust and reconnection (Feagan and Morris 2009). While the concept of embeddedness has been variously defined and utilized in academic work (see Peck 2005), I use the concepts of social and spatial embeddedness as they have been developed in the literature in agro-food studies (Feagan and Morris 2009) to examine the relationships between producers and consumers in Vilnius' farmers' markets. I demonstrate that in contrast to existing findings on farmers' markets, social and spatial embeddedness are not guaranteed outcomes of market transactions in my case study sites. To explain the discrepancy between my findings and existing research, I argue that farmers' markets should be better understood as place-making projects, which are relationally constructed with other retail places, and produced by particular historical trajectories of production and consumption. More specifically, thinking relationally

about farmers' markets requires understanding how they are connected with existing retail places, which in Vilnius includes not only supermarkets, but more importantly, the longstanding and popular public markets where a certain kind of market culture has developed over time.[20]

This chapter is organized into five sections. In the first section, I review the research on farmers' markets and locate my research in this literature. In the second section, I develop a theoretical approach designed to address gaps in our understanding of farmers' markets. In the third and fourth sections, I focus on public markets and farmers' markets respectively, first providing a context for their development and then analyzing and comparing the interactions that occur in both.[21] I conclude with reflections about the implications of my research for policy formation and scholarly research.

1. Making Space for Farmers' Markets

In Northern America and parts of Western Europe, farmers' markets have experienced a revival in popularity in recent years, gaining public attention and also becoming central to scholarly inquiry and public policy on consumption and rural development (Holloway and Kneafsey 2000; Sage 2003). Since World War II, farmers' markets, as well as public markets more generally, experienced a period of decline that was in part spurred by the explosive growth of supermarkets (Brown 2002). The near obliteration of farmers' markets for several decades has contributed to the novelty and excitement surrounding the establishment and growth of new farmers' markets during the last decades of the twentieth century. In the UK, for example, farmers' markets "represent a new and distinctive dimension to the somewhat 'placeless' foodscape of contemporary Britain" (Holloway and Kneafsey 2000, 286). More than just a fleeting novelty, scholars contend that "FM [farmers' markets] and other new retail forms are bringing together ever-larger numbers of producers and consumers within a fundamentally different type of relationship than that found in conventional supply chains" (Sage 2007, 150).

While research has demonstrated that the creation of farmers' markets has potential positive impacts on the environment, health, and local economic development (Brown and Miller 2008; Holben 2010), scholars have also sought to understand why consumers and producers are increasingly shopping or selling at farmers' markets. It is often argued that the turn away from conventional modes of food distribution is part of a broader movement to recover the moral dimensions of economic activity (Sage 2003). In contrast to conventional supply chains that work by fostering distance and ignorance between spheres and production and consumption, farmers' markets help bring together producers and consumers in direct, face-to-face relationships. In his analysis of farmers' markets in Ireland, Kirwan explains that "the producers and consumers concerned are engaging in face-to-face interaction in order to create conventions of exchange which incorporate spatial and social relationships that can replace 'uniform standards' with individualized judgment, thereby helping to overcome uncertainty" (2006, 303). Scholars have categorized this re-incorporation of spatial and social relationships into the economic sphere as forms of *spatial* and *social embeddedness* (Feagan and Morris 2009).

While social embeddedness denotes relations of trust, reconnection and responsibility between consumers and producers (Sage 2003), spatial embeddedness locates these relationships spatially within the local scale (Feagan and Morris 2009). The face-to-face interactions at farmers' markets help forge social embeddedness by allowing producers to respond to individual consumer questions and needs (Kneafsey et al. 2008), and by helping producers build the trust necessary to ensure a low-risk market outlet devoid of the official contractual obligations that characterize conventional supply chains. By providing an outlet for local food, farmers' markets not only ensure spatial embeddedness but they are also considered to be "keystones" for the socioeconomic infrastructure needed to rebuild local food systems (Gillespie et al. 2007).

Farmers' markets and the local food systems they support are not universally praised (DuPuis and Goodman 2005). In the Anglophone world, the local can be variously defined. Rigid and arbitrary definitions of the "local," such as a set circumference around a city, may exclude marginalized farmers who live farther from wealthy urban centers. Farmers' markets have also been critiqued for fostering an

exclusive form of social embeddedness by catering to wealthy and highly educated consumers (Slocum 2008). Further research has revealed the limitations inherent in any market-based solution to the problems of the food system (Alkon and Mares 2012). Although these critiques have cast a shadow on laudatory claims about farmers' markets, few scholars have investigated how the historical sociospatiality of farmers' markets as places influences the relationships they sustain. For example, the claims that farmers' markets are providing a venue for the cultivation of social and spatial embeddedness assumes that existing retail places did not offer such forms of embeddedness. While this may be the case in some places, such as the US, post-Soviet space offers another sociospatial context, with its own history of marketplaces that plays a role in shaping even *new* farmers' markets.

In the following section, I draw upon the work of Doreen Massey and others to help account for the importance that history and space have in the making of farmers' markets as places, which has ramifications for their capacity to foster social and spatial embeddedness.

2. Rethinking Markets as Places in Lithuania

While commonplace understandings of place characterize places as fixed entities with defined borders and stable characteristics, the approach I utilize to rethink farmers' markets as place-making projects builds upon an understanding of places as heterogeneous multiplicities that are open and unbounded and always in the process of being made (Dzenovska 2013; Massey 2005). What makes a farmers' market a place are the multiple practices, meanings, and material and immaterial elements that come together and forge a dynamic, disparate configuration. An open and unbounded understanding of place does not presuppose complete spatial fluidity; rather, place-making is a structured and structuring process that articulates with local histories and relations across space (Hart 2002). Indeed, particular historical trajectories are at work in the making of farmers' markets in contemporary Lithuania. Trajectories of production and consumption have been radically transformed since the break-up of the Soviet Union

and the implementation of 'transition' policies in the 1990s. Subsistence farming and allotment gardening were widespread practices in the Soviet Union, but the reforms of the 1990s, including privatization and decollectivization, led to the creation of an agricultural sector dominated by small-scale farms (Alanen 2004). Although the new small-scale farmers were able to sustain themselves in the difficult conditions of the 1990s by drawing upon an existing knowledge basis and forming alternative food networks, many experienced marginalization with EU accession (Aistara 2014; Knudsen 2013; Mincyte 2011b). For consumers, practices have evolved from a brief period of fascination with the newly emerging Western-style supermarkets to include preferences for buying food directly from farmers and even nostalgia for Soviet-era products (see Klumbytė 2009 on changing consumption practices). These two intertwined trajectories of production and consumption help make farmers' markets heterogeneous places in Lithuania.

Equally important in the making of farmers' markets as places are relations across space, such as between the rural and the urban, and between farmers' markets and other retail places. While the imaginary of the "local" (*vietinis*) in Lithuanian encompasses spatially bounded relations between rural and urban places, in contrast to the US and the UK, the boundaries of the local are not ambiguous or contentious; the local has come to be equated with the territory of Lithuania. The connection between the local and the territory of the nation-state, rather than an arbitrary circumference around a city or a subnational region, carries with it certain implications that have to do with national belonging.

Until the arrival of farmers' markets, the urban, public markets were important meeting points for the trajectories of consumption and production that bring together the rural and urban, forging places where social and spatial embeddedness could be practiced. Although Vilnius' public markets have existed and survived throughout multiple different political regimes, they blossomed during the 1990s, not only with farmers selling their own produce but also with resellers trying to make a livelihood in difficult economic circumstances. These resellers are also part of the trajectories that make public markets as places. While public markets do not claim to be farmers'

markets, they play a significant role in the place-making that occurs at farmers' markets because places are produced through their relations to other places, such as other places of retail. In the US and Western Europe, where public markets have only had a marginal presence in the past few decades, farmers' markets offer an interpersonal shopping experience that is attractive to those consumers who seek an alternative to comparatively impersonal supermarkets (Sage 2007). As a result, farmers' markets have become new and hopeful places for disillusioned consumers. For the farmers who cannot meet the standards required for selling in supermarkets, farmers' markets help ensure livelihoods. In Vilnius, farmers' markets have emerged in relation to supermarkets *and* existing public markets. Therefore, not only are interpersonal connections between farmers and consumers nothing new, they also carry with them certain meanings and practices that have become very much a part of farmers' markets. The purpose of the following section is to delineate the kind of market culture that has emerged in the public markets of post-socialist Lithuania. I analyze two of Vilnius' prominent public markets by focusing on how recent historical trajectories have come together to make these marketplaces and by examining the kinds of interactions between vendors and consumers that take place there. This analysis forms a framework for understanding the development of farmers' markets in Vilnius, Lithuania.

3. Trajectories Making Places: '*Turgus*'

With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the easing of border controls, open-air and public markets (in this section, simply 'market' or '*turgus*') filled a retail vacuum until new supermarkets and shopping malls began to dot Vilnius' urban landscape. Although their prominence has faded since the 1990s, markets are still important places for consumers to purchase food and where farmers sell directly to consumers. In fact, a recent study revealed that 77 % of Lithuanian residents shop at markets for food (Mikelionytė et al. 2010). Despite their popularity, markets have not been universally perceived as respectable places. During the Soviet era, they were crucial places for the functioning of second economies (Sik and Wallace 1999), but officially "they were

considered either as remnants of an outdated and unnecessary form of commerce or as a dangerous challenge to the socialized retail sector, as places where profit-making was combined with criminal activity such as speculation, pickpocketing, or the reselling of smuggled and stolen property" (Sik and Wallace 1999, 697). As state control over trading weakened in the 1980s, public markets began to thrive, and following the collapse of the Soviet Union, they grew throughout post-Soviet space (Aidis 2003; Hohnen 2003; Hüwelmeier 2013; Mažeikis 2004; Polese and Prigarin 2013; Yükseker 2007). They became places to procure everyday consumer products, in addition to being places for the sale of counterfeit and illicit goods. While their chaotic and unruly characteristics and their connection with the Soviet past was a cause for frustration among public officials, who believed such markets should not exist in a "civilized market economy" (Aidis 2003, 469), these officials also believed that the establishment of a formal retail sector would cause markets to become obsolete.

Despite efforts to eradicate or control them, however, markets did not disappear. Instead, the orderly chaos of the markets led to the growth of a market culture resembling the bazaar cultures widely studied by anthropologists (Geertz 1978). In bazaars, the absence of standards, fixed prices or other official methods to ensure quality, motivates consumers to prioritize establishing relationships with vendors, who might then offer special deals, preferential access or simply, highly-coveted information. This situation prompts buyers and sellers in the bazaar economy to become "intimate antagonists" (Geertz 1978, 32), brought together by mutual necessity and interest, but in a situation in which both parties are motivated to get the best deal. Successful interactions breed "clientelization," the on-going patronage of the same sellers by consumers who favor reliability over trying something new and more risky. In the bazaar economy, qualities of social embeddedness like trust or responsibility are not guaranteed through face-to-face interactions, but must instead be cultivated. Similarly, spatial embeddedness must also be cultivated through social relations with vendors who are trusted to sell locally-produced goods, either their own or those procured from others.

The resemblance that markets of the post-Soviet sphere may bear with bazaars worldwide notwithstanding, scholars of the region have argued that post-Soviet markets

have had a path-dependent development trajectory (Czakó and Sik 1999). Whereas markets took advantage of a niche produced through deficiencies in the centrally-planned economy, after 1991, they persisted and even grew with the opening of borders, the undeveloped formal retail sector, and simultaneous consumer demand. Moreover, economic transition policies in the 1990s produced high unemployment, but working people also struggled with low and insufficient salaries. As a result, post-Soviet societies hosted a ready supply of potential traders, who sought to maintain their livelihoods in an increasingly unstable environment. For farmers without reliable processing or other retail outlets, markets were important trading places, and the practice of selling at markets was not unfamiliar. Although trading may have been seen as immoral in the Soviet period, as Czakó and Sik (1999) explain, small-scale trading in Central and Eastern Europe has a strong cultural legacy. This legacy, as well as the human capital that came along with it, decreased the transactions costs for starting and maintaining markets or for becoming a trader (Hohnen 2003).

In summary, the importance of markets in the 1990s was made possible by the coming together of various historical trajectories. For consumers, markets provided a place to shop for highly valued but scarce consumer goods in the Soviet period, and in the post-Soviet period, they grew in significance as the state-supported retail sector crumbled. For all sorts of vendors, whether they sold used automobiles or vegetables from their kitchen gardens, markets provided a meaningful source of livelihood. Yet, markets continued to be contradictory places, both valued and regarded with suspicion. For consumers, the twofold characteristic of the markets as places where one can potentially bargain for the best deal *and* places where one can be cheated are common perspectives. Despite efforts to control, contain or eliminate markets, and despite the contemporary dominance of a formal retail sector, markets are still important places of consumption, especially for food products (Mikelionytė et al. 2010).

3.1 Vilnius Markets

Within the city of Vilnius, the two biggest markets are Halės Turgus and Kalvarijų Turgus, located on opposite sides of the center of the city. While both markets offer similar consumer goods, such as processed and fresh food and clothing, product variety is much greater in Kalvarijų Turgus, which fills a whole city block and also has a section devoted to used goods. Both markets include indoor market spaces, outdoor stalls, and entryways that are usually surrounded by elderly vendors selling their products without paying for a space within the market. Within the market, vendors include pensioners seeking to earn extra money, resellers who procure their goods from various places both abroad and close-by, farmers and processors who have been marginalized from the formal retail sector or who prefer to sell at markets.

Within the confines of market territories, the vegetable, fruit, and honey vendors (who are permitted to sell outdoors) usually display their products on tables but they tend not to hang signs to identify their farm or business. Prices for individual items are sometimes displayed, as are handwritten labels that indicate the country of origin or that the produce is local. However, according to the consumers I interviewed, signs and labels cannot be trusted. Their concern centers around whether the vendor is actually a farmer (if they claim to be one), and whether the vendor can actually be trusted to sell quality, natural and local produce. According to customers, the sign designating that something is local simply cannot be trusted; trust emerges instead through relationship-building with vendors, whether they are resellers or farmers.

While buying from farmers is preferred and resellers tend to be stigmatized, the boundary between the legitimate farmer and the reseller is actually quite blurry. In informal interviews, many vendors admitted to buying and reselling for their rural neighbors who could not make it to the market, or buying from wholesalers to supplement their offerings. Resellers also claimed to offer a service to farmers who could not market their produce by themselves. Selling at the market demands time and money to pay for the space, in addition to the transport costs, a luxury that some small-scale farmers cannot afford. Ultimately, the low official entry barriers to selling at the

market are conducive to some small-scale farmers but are also attractive to resellers and vendors. In fact, pensioners with allotment gardens, who crowd the entryways of the markets, are often in a position to offer the cheapest prices. The varied participation makes the market a competitive terrain in which resellers, farmers, and pensioners all offer prospective, if not guaranteed, possibilities for social and spatial embeddedness.

The story of what led one middle-aged vendor, Daiva, to sell at Kalvarijų Turgus helps elucidate one common trajectory for vendors and sheds light on the nature of the market interactions that may lead to the cultivation of social and spatial embeddedness. Daiva and her family moved from the city to the country in the early 1990s and started farming on land restituted to her family. Like others, she explained, she thought that it would be possible to survive on family farming, but these high hopes were met with continued disappointment. The latest problem her family farm confronted was the sharp decline in milk prices in 2008, which prompted her to get out of the dairy business and start selling honey in Vilnius. For Daiva, the financial crisis and its aftermath have not hampered her success in selling honey, and she even claims to have retained regular clientele. She explained that she has not had one complaint about her honey, and that over time, her customers have grown to trust her and to trust that her honey is local, pure, fresh and unadulterated. When I ask if such trust is difficult to establish, she responds that of course, there are always lying vendors at the market and that once she even had a table next to her where the vegetables were just "too clean" to be sourced directly from a farmer. Daiva's story demonstrates that at markets, social and spatial embeddedness is not guaranteed through face-to-face interactions, and that these interactions may even be defined as deceptive.

The interpersonal and face-to-face world of the public market does offer other advantages, if not a guarantee of social and spatial embeddedness. All sorts of possibilities for bargaining or striking a deal exist, especially when buying regularly or in large quantities. While customers may often pursue discounts, vendors sometimes proactively offer discounts. For instance, Daiva's flexible prices allow her to provide discounts to her less wealthy customers. Relationship-making at the market is therefore a two-way process. To regular clientele, vendors offer discounts or free items by adding an

additional vegetable or by rounding down on the scale to the customer's advantage. They provide trusted information, which is both lacking and desired in the markets; for example, they might make suggestions on the tastiest variety of a vegetable, or direct a customer towards the freshest items. They may also make small efforts to practice a form of social justice by providing discounts to those in need.

In summary, the trajectories that converge to make the place of the public market help explain why public markets continue to be significant everyday livelihood places for consumers, producers, and resellers, even though these markets are still regarded with suspicion by consumers. This type of simultaneous consumer skepticism and attraction to markets is the ongoing product of a trajectory of consumption that began in the Soviet period and coalesced in the 1990s, when consumers experienced markets as unruly but valued places. Later on, after the growth of supermarkets, public markets were not eradicated; in fact, supermarket growth produced the opposite effect: an appreciation by some consumers of the value and quality of the products at public markets. This perhaps surprising effect suggests that the making of place is also a relational process, as consumers ascribe value to certain places in relation to other places. Similarly, for the farmers involved, selling at public markets has become a livelihood strategy, in part because they have been marginalized from the conventional supply chains that provide supermarkets with produce. The dominance of small-scale farmers, a product of the reforms of the 1990s, has facilitated this process. Resellers who have been marginalized from the formal economic sector or who need to supplement low wages or pensions have also developed a livelihood strategy out of selling at public markets. Public markets are therefore heterogeneous places, where imported foods mingle with locally produced products, and where multiple actors are involved in building everyday livelihoods. Yet, they are also places *in process*: despite their well-entrenched appearances, the position of markets as privileged places for procuring local foods and for providing the possibility for social and spatial embeddedness has been challenged since the creation of new farmers' markets.

4. Trajectories Making Places: New Farmers' Markets

Already in 2007 small groups of farmers and consumers started experimenting with the creation of local systems of community supported agriculture, but in 2008, a conjuncture of events stirred more consumers and farmers to spearhead the creation of *farmers'* markets in Vilnius and other cities. While consumers were increasingly frustrated about the lack of availability of local produce in public markets, producers faced their own economic challenges (Melnikienė et al. 2013). A dramatic fall in milk procurement prices caused widespread and unprecedented protests by dairy farmers, and motivated some mid-scale dairy farmers to start selling milk directly to consumers, a practice that had been previously dominated by small-scale farmers. Policy makers responded to this pressure by working with consumer and producer groups to create new and less rigorous regulations for the sale of local produce through alternative food networks.

Trajectories of consumption and production were therefore changing already before the onset of the financial crisis in late 2008. While the consequences of the financial crisis and subsequent austerity measures caused considerable societal distress (Woolfson 2010), they also heightened the economic importance of the local market both for consumers and producers. In other words, both social and spatial embeddedness became more coveted by farmers seeking markets and consumers seeking to support local farmers and obtain locally-grown produce.

The idea of forging reconnection between farmers and consumers was an important motivation that spurred some residents of Užupis, a central Vilnius neighborhood, to organize a farmers' market called Tymo Turgus in 2008. An organizer later recounted that at the time there was no other regular farmers' market, and that consumers were having difficulties procuring locally-grown and organically-certified food, while small-scale farmers were being increasingly marginalized from the conventional food market. But the initial impetus of organizing a farmers' market was not just to create a marketplace for local food, but to create a certain atmosphere: "Our goal is to collectively create a community market, which would attract those who want to

live healthfully and openly. It would be simultaneously a meeting point and an event in which ecological products would be sold and tasted, where people would come and get to know each other, listen to music, stories, concerts, and enjoy life together" (Balsas.lt 2008). Originally planned for every other Thursday evening, the market opening hours were intended to accommodate working customers, who would arrive to shop after work and be greeted with music, concerts and food, of course. Municipal authorities originally embraced the idea and allowed the use of Tymo Square, a newly built marketplace that had mostly stood empty, aside from occasional fairs and events (Verslo Žinios 2001). Organizers placed emphasis on the idea of trust and reconnection between consumers and producers, but in selecting farmers they first prioritized certified organic growers and they included other small-scale farmers and non-certified organic farmers to provide consumers with a greater diversity of products. By overseeing the market and allowing only certain farmers to participate in what was advertised as the Tymo Turgus of "environmental cultures," organizers sought to create a place that would guarantee both social and spatial embeddedness.

Several months following the inauguration of Tymo Turgus, other state and farmers' organizations started to publicly endorse the concept of a *farmers'* market. These organizations and institutions, including the Ministry of Agriculture, participated in a conference in December, 2008 entitled *Promoting Lithuanian Farmers' Production*, which had the goal of encouraging mid and small-scale family farmers to sell their home-grown produce at small markets. These farmers were in particular need of such assistance because they had been marginalized in public markets, which were allegedly dominated by resellers (ŽŪMI 2008). This initiative was also invested with a certain kind of meaning that emphasized the need to produce and consume natural, traditional and Lithuanian food. For example, one government official highlighted the importance of encouraging "small- and mid-sized farmers to return to the forgotten natural, traditional production and selling of farm products" (ŽŪMI 2008). As announcements of the preliminary markets in December of 2008 circulated, organizers also emphasized that quality and safety would be ensured for the natural, Lithuanian grown and made produce

at the farmers' markets. Therefore, at the new farmers' markets, the natural and traditional would go hand-in-hand with the safe and modern.

After a few preliminary farmers' markets in Vilnius in December of 2008, the initiative to organize markets was taken up by Lithuanian Farm Quality, a cooperative organized by the Chamber of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania with the mission to encourage: "the popularization of Lithuanian countryside and farm quality in cities, the strengthening of the connection between the city and the country, the popularization of natural food, the production of food that satisfies safety requirements for consumers, the encouragement of connections between the consumer and producer" (LRŽŪR 2011). Organizers determined that the best way to achieve these goals would be to create farmers' markets. However, instead of building a permanent marketplace that requires infrastructure, Lithuanian Farm Quality markets would be "mobile" and temporary, serving various city districts on different days of the week. Hence, the markets were officially called Mobilieji Ūkininkų Turgeliai (meaning small, mobile farmers' markets) or simply Mobilieji Turgeliai. While the temporary characteristic of the market was borrowed from the farmers' markets in Ireland, which one organizer had witnessed, this characteristic also served to distance the new farmers' markets from existing public markets. Instead of being situated close to existing public markets, these markets mostly occupy spaces near supermarkets or shopping malls. But in contrast to supermarkets, on offer are traditional products, such as "natural milk, natural cottage cheese, natural farmers' cheeses, and also meat products, which are cold-smoked, traditional, and a heritage from the olden times" (Žilinskaitė 2009).

Like Tymo Turgus, the goal for the Mobilieji Turgeliai was to foster social and spatial embeddedness by providing a managed marketplace for selected farmers and local processors to sell their goods directly to consumers, but their strategies were remarkably different. While the original Tymo Turgus organizers were motivated to promote healthy and ecological living, Lithuanian Farm Quality created Mobilieji Turgeliai to reconnect consumers with an imagined Lithuanian heritage based in "natural" agriculture and processing, while at the same time advertising adherence to modern norms for food safety. They also had an ambitious goal to establish a weekly farmers' market in each of

Vilnius' residential districts. Therefore, they sought to offer the possibility of social and spatial embeddedness on a more widespread basis.

Despite the differences, Tymo Turgus, the Mobilieji Turgeliai and other new farmers' markets were enthusiastically welcomed by Vilnius residents, many of whom became regular shoppers. However, the efforts to distinguish farmers' markets from public markets by enhancing the trustworthiness and credibility of the marketplaces has not prevented consumers from practicing the same type of skepticism and discerning behavior practiced at public markets. In other words, the culture that makes public markets has been reproduced at farmers' markets, despite efforts to ensure social and spatial embeddedness. In the following section, I describe the farmers' markets and I analyze the interactions that take place there, pointing out their continuities with the practices and trajectories that forge public markets.

4.1 Tymo Turgus

Tymo Turgus takes place on the outskirts of Vilnius' Old Town near the Užupis neighborhood, popularly considered to be a gentrified neighborhood and an artistic center for wealthier urbanites. Within walking distance of the central Cathedral Square and other popular tourist sites but far enough away from the bustling center to offer ample parking opportunities, the marketplace occupies an advantageous and also prestigious location. Situated downhill from the city's old defensive wall and the Vilnius barbican, Tymo Square is partially surrounded by a hill covered with scenic greenery. Its entrance is marked by a large wooden gate followed by identical wooden stalls lined up along a long wooden boardwalk. Usually the marketplace is quiet and empty, or occupied by a few groups of teenagers, but on Thursdays it experiences a dramatic awakening with the arrival of a bustling farmers' market.

On offer are fruits and vegetables, fresh and smoked meat and fish, honey, dairy products, baked goods, homemade jams, teas and even plants and flowers. In the summer especially, farmers offer a greater variety of fresh vegetables than what is available at public markets, but otherwise the products are quite similar in appearance to those found

at public markets. While some products like meat are usually wrapped and priced, typically there are not prices affixed to the boxes of vegetables. Some farmers hang their certificates, but others display no signs or certificates. When I inquire about this, farmers respond that there is no need for extra signs; their customers already know them. Despite its relatively brief history, Tymo Turgus appears to be an established institution.

The celebratory ambiance of the market persisted for its opening season, but the end of 2008 also marked the beginning of the financial crisis in Lithuania, popularly known as *sunkmetis* (hard times). The decline in purchasing power among the general population was felt in the market, and the municipality also started charging the market fees. The economic difficulties affecting the country are now evident in the physical structure of Tymo Kvartalas: repairs are badly needed to the boardwalk, which despite being relatively new, was not designed to withstand Lithuanian winters and has broken in several places. Musical and other events are now only rarely organized, and the market starts and ends earlier than was originally planned. In other words, it is no longer a special event and a novelty, but a regular, weekly market, with hours that start in the morning and end in the afternoon.

Although the market's celebratory ambiance faded away and the market's physical infrastructure bears signs of wear, Tymo Turgus has endured as an institution and has even thrived. At first glance there is not much that distinguishes the products on offer at Tymo Turgus from those in other markets. The practices of bargaining and obtaining favorable deals are also present at Tymo Turgus. But absent are the vegetables and fruit that would be out of season in Lithuania, and no lines of elderly women clamor by the entrance with their goods. Prices also tend to be higher, and the clientele is dominated by mothers with children and wealthy working-age adults—even a few celebrities shop at the market. Although vendors do not always post signs with their names, the market's website features photographs and descriptions of some of the vendors and their farms. The market's appearance, as well as its advertising, appears to enforce the notion that this should be a place where social and spatial embeddedness is guaranteed.

However, even this market has not been able to avoid a few instances in which unsanctioned vendors sold their goods, or permitted vendors resold produce that was not their own. These incidents did not surprise the customers I interviewed because they remain skeptical that building trust and reconnection can be completely delegated to the markets' administrators, the vendors themselves, or to certification schemes. Instead, even at Tymo Turgus, building trust requires building relationships, ideally to the point where you buy from your "own" farmer at the market. According to my interviewees, the most ideal method to ensure trust is to visit the farm itself to make sure that the farmer sells what he or she grows. Face-to-face interactions, although important, are clearly not enough to establish social embeddedness. Instead, social embeddedness is cultivated over time and becomes manifest in multiple ways. Customers exhibit their trust by returning to the same farmers and recommending them to others, and in return they may receive a little extra from the farmer or a more favorable reading of the scale.

For the marketplace as a whole, this kind of clientelization results in uneven patronage. Although over fifty farmers and producers may be present at any given time, long lines form at the stands of only a select few. According to a market organizer, competition exists between market vendors, and suspicious rumors circulate about the growing practices of more successful participants. Even though participation in the farmers' market does not in itself guarantee reconnection for farmers, gaining a place in the market is itself an achievement. A market organizer attests that she receives several phone calls from prospective vendors on a weekly basis, and unless they offer something different from what is already being sold, she has to turn them away.

Although fashioned to foster embeddedness, in everyday life Tymo Turgus functions like public markets: customers emphasize building relationships, and even go so far as to visit farms. According to them, these kinds of efforts are necessary to establish trust and reconnection and to ensure that the products are actually locally produced.

4.2 Mobilieji Turgeliai

Like Tymo Turgus, the Mobilieji Turgeliai opened with much fanfare and press coverage, but unlike Tymo Turgus, which has not grown much since its inception, these markets have multiplied throughout Vilnius and in other cities as well. While only officially starting in early 2009, by January of 2011 over 40 weekly markets were functioning in the most prominent residential districts of Vilnius and Kaunas, with about 200 participating vendors in total and 60 yearlong vendors. This spatial strategy was part of the organizers' effort to bring natural and local food to as many people as possible, but also to make sure that this food was affordable and adhered to quality standards. According to an organizer, by reselling foreign produce and claiming it as Lithuanian, vendors at public markets had tarnished the reputation of Lithuanian farmers. Therefore, part of the task of the Mobilieji Turgeliai was to regain consumer trust and confidence in the products of local farmers and certified traditional processors. The farmers and processors would in turn help ensure that trust by utilizing the logo of the cooperative.

The initial strategy organizers used to achieve affordability, quality, and accessibility was to help large-scale farmers restructure their businesses to include the capacity to process, deliver, and market their products directly to consumers. Producers who could take advantage of economies of scale were then able to quickly populate the weekly markets with their delivery trucks. Although not all farmers who sell at these markets operate on large scales and the membership includes organic as well as conventional farmers, a handful of farms and processors are able to sell at several markets during the week. The dominance of a few vendors can be explained by the capital investments required for participation. Because Mobilieji Turgeliai do not take place in permanent marketplaces with their own facilities, those selling fresh meat and dairy products need to invest in refrigerated trucks for transportation and for vending. While the necessary capital investments favored large-scale farmers, they also ensured that more neighborhoods would be served with markets more quickly.

In a typical market, vendors offer their products from refrigerated trucks, tables under tents, and sometimes also from the trunks of their cars or vans. Each market is

organized so that there is a balance of dairy, meat, fish, breads, and fruits and vegetables, with the emphasis on providing natural products. Some of the larger and centrally-located markets attract more consumers and vendors, but most neighborhood markets have only four or five vendors at any given time. Markets continue to function during the winter despite the limited availability of fresh produce and lower numbers of vendors.

Consumer support of the markets is attested to by their growth and persistence, but already in the beginning there were problems with controlling the marketplaces. The Mobilieji Turgeliai operate with low overhead costs, which means that there is actually very little oversight by organizers at the numerous individual markets. As a result, some of the more popular markets attract resellers as well as farmers who do not belong to the cooperative. Some of the smaller markets even have unaffiliated vendors set up tables or display their produce on the ground right beside the market. In effect, this exemplifies how the marketplace is porous and open, despite efforts to contain it and to publicize the market as a place only for certified vendors. The cooperative itself recommends that farmers advertise using the cooperative's logo and that the vendors wear aprons with the logo to distinguish themselves from intentional or unintentional interlopers (LRŽŪR 2011).

From the perspective of consumers, however, the logo itself does not provide a sufficient guarantee. According to the market practices pursued by consumers, caution is necessary when confronted with any labels, logos or guarantees. As in public markets, consumers only establish trust after multiple transactions in which the purchased product has had consistent and good quality. The presence of resellers is not surprising for consumers, and resellers are not the only source of suspicion. Some consumers suspect that even bona fide farmers may import non-local meat and sell it as their own.

Despite the efforts of organizers of farmers' markets to carve out an exclusive marketplace for local farmers who produce and process using natural methods, consumers still approach these places with discerning and cautious behavior. When I asked customers why they shop at farmers' markets, sometimes they did not even recognize that they were shopping at a *farmers'* market; rather, they classified it as just another market or as a "little market" (*turgelis*). In summary, logos, advertising, and

appeals to the essential Lithuanian qualities of the products available at the markets are insufficient to guarantee trust and reconnection, or social and spatial embeddedness.

5. Conclusion

Farmers' markets are increasingly capturing the imagination of policy makers and academics in Western Europe and Northern America, where they are considered to be places of social and spatial embeddedness. They are places where face-to-face interactions produce trusting relationships and reconnection between consumers and producers of food (Kneafsey et al. 2008). For example, in his research on farmers' markets in Ireland, Kirwan explains that "most consumers assume that the produce at FMs [farmers' markets] is somehow genuine, and in this sense the institution of FMs establishes a baseline trust for them" (2006, 307). Farmers' markets have also been documented as places that help make locally grown food more widely available and accessible. Gillespie et al. (2007) even argue that farmers' markets operate as a social economy by creating spaces that conjoin market transactions with social interactions, thereby enhancing civic life. However, the dominant literature on farmer's markets, which is focused on parts of Western Europe and Northern America, has not adequately accounted for how historical trajectories and contemporary practices forge spaces of consumption in interrelated and complex ways, thereby impacting how farmers' markets function to guarantee social and spatial embeddedness.

In this chapter, I utilize a relational comparative perspective to examine the potential of farmers' markets to foster social and spatial embeddedness in a post-Soviet context. As such, I make a contribution to the small but growing literature on alternative food networks and farmers' markets in post-socialist contexts (Spilková and Perlín, 2013; Zagata 2012). I also argue for the ongoing relevance of the scholarly literature on postsocialism and public markets, which is necessary in order to make sense of what appear to be "new" or pan-European phenomena in post-Soviet contexts.

Vilnius is a city that already had a thriving market culture and persistent but evolving marketplaces before the introduction of farmers' markets. At public markets,

clientelization helps farmers and consumers achieve social and spatial embeddedness, but this could also be a long and difficult process. Public markets are perceived with a contradictory perspective: they are valued for bargains, deals, and the potential for social and spatial embeddedness, but they are also despised for their unruliness and the potential for consumers to be cheated. The organizers of new farmers' markets promised to provide places that would ensure social and spatial embeddedness, but rather than becoming fundamentally different places, the practices that constitute new farmers' markets mirror the ones that make public markets. A relational understanding of place helps explain why these new places do not cultivate entirely new practices: similar trajectories of consumption and production forge a meeting point in both public markets and farmers' markets. This relationship has positively impacted the growth of farmers' markets because the practice of selling and buying at markets was already culturally intelligible, but it is a practice that does not resemble immediate and harmonious reconnection between consumers and producers. Nevertheless, the direct contact enabled by farmers' markets does facilitate relationship-building, that is a source of consumer confidence more valued than labels (see also Skulskis et al. 2011 on organic products). Social and spatial embeddedness are possible but not guaranteed.

In the European Union, local food networks are gaining increasing prominence in policy discussions at multiple scales. One of the proposed strategies to support the development of local food systems is to put in place a label specifically for local food (European Commission 2013). The analysis I have presented here casts doubt on the viability and suitability of such a strategy in Lithuania, where consumer skepticism and lack of trust in logos, brands, and certification schemes has been widely noted and not only with respect to farmers' markets (Kavaliauske et al. 2013). Indeed, this phenomenon has been documented and analyzed in different post-Soviet spaces, where distrust exists not only between vendors and consumers in markets, but also between society and the state (Matonytė 2006). Therefore, a new logo might simply become irrelevant, and the process of implementing and regulating a certified local food system may risk marginalizing those producers (and their consumers) who cannot meet the administrative requirements. I would like to conclude by suggesting that consumer

distrust be viewed as a *strength* and a manifestation of resilience in coping with the ruptures and historical changes that have shaped Lithuania's post-Soviet and Europeanizing present (Mincyte 2012). Instead of introducing another label or another regulated marketplace, I suggest that attention must be placed on "vernacular" forms of sustainability (Mincyte 2012, 41) and how they already foster social and spatial embeddedness in distinct ways in different sociospatial contexts. Considering the rich variety of alternative food networks in contemporary Lithuania, including those created through informal milk delivery networks, nascent community-supported agriculture schemes and public markets, farmers' markets offer one place of many where consumers and producers connect and where vernacular forms of sustainability are practiced.

Chapter 8. Concluding Remarks

On a beautiful August day in 2010, I spent the afternoon sitting in one of Riga's many cafes discussing the difficulties and possibilities in establishing formalized AFNs with Ieva, a woman who was in the midst of organizing a collective direct marketing initiative. The first of its kind in Latvia, at least to our knowledge, Ieva's AFN was inspired by the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) systems that exist in other countries, but it differed from them in at least two respects: it did not require pre-payment for the whole season and it included a handful of organic farmers who offered different products. Ieva's system was basically a collective purchasing cooperative in which consumers would place orders on a weekly basis, farmers would cooperate to deliver the products to a set location in Riga, and consumers would volunteer on a rotating basis to process the orders. The financial constraints of the participating consumers influenced the structure of the AFN. A CSA-type model with pre-paid seasonal shares was not possible because most participating consumers would not have the required money at once. Furthermore, the idea of receiving items that were not specifically chosen (as usually occurs in CSA or box schemes) was not appealing because the consumers involved already spend at least 30% of their household income on food and they did not want to waste money purchasing unwanted items.

Within a year, Ieva's AFN was operating smoothly and interest had grown so much that Ieva's group had to turn away prospective consumers. However, they did help other groups get started. As a result, now there are a handful of similar AFNs operating out of Riga. This is a remarkable development and it certainly has fostered benefits for the consumers. They are able to order organic and locally-grown food for prices that are generally lower than those in stores. Collective purchasing has also fostered a sense of community among the consumers and a feeling of reconnection with producers. For the participating farmers, these initiatives have brought benefits too. Farmers get paid immediately and with orders in place, they know exactly what to deliver. As a result, farmers generally welcome these new AFN initiatives, but they have no illusion that they can exclusively rely on them for their livelihoods; thus far only a small portion of

participating farmers' total sales are made with these new AFNs. Ordering also becomes more erratic in the summer months when people take vacations. This is precisely the time when farmers experience a glut in available produce. Therefore, farmers must still seek out other markets or channels, such as export markets or conventional supply chains, in order to sustain their livelihoods. Faced with such a situation, the farmers who are knowledgeable about CSA systems see it as an ideal, however unattainable in the present circumstances. While discussing the merits of CSA systems, one farmer in Lithuania stated: "To have your own consumer, that is the ideal. To ensure that you have your consumer, like in America, or in Norway, as some organic farmers do it there. They provide for 500 people or something like that. That would really be the ideal." Although there are a wealth of different types of AFNs in Latvia and Lithuania, they do not meet the ideal imaginary of reconnection held by many farmers.

The question of how to further reconnection has been much debated within geography and cognate disciplines. Generally, certain types of AFNs, like box schemes and CSAs, are considered to be among the "strongest" of alternative systems of food provision, offering the greatest possibility for reconnection (see Watts et al. 2005). In other words, scholars claim that reconnection can be facilitated when relationships between individual network actants are strengthened (see Whatmore and Thorne 1997). However, focusing exclusively on relationships within networks risks ignoring the processes that act upon networks or their individual actants. Considering the example of a collective direct marketing initiative above, an analysis of the network itself would not explain why interested consumers do not have sufficient funds to cover the cost of a CSA share. Exclusively studying relations within the network would not reveal the reasons why producers can get better prices for their produce abroad than through domestic AFNs.

In this dissertation, I make a contribution to the study of AFNs by developing a theoretical framework that goes beyond an exclusive focus on relations within networks to consider how multiple processes impact network actants, particularly producers and their livelihoods. I contend that networks must be analyzed as embedded within a broader whole. To understand the nature of this embeddedness, I utilize an approach

based in a renewed agrarian political economy, feminist perspectives and an understanding of the multiple spatialities that shape and are shaped by livelihood strategies. In the process, I have been attentive to the sociospatiality of knowledge production. Space is made up a multiplicity of trajectories, including historical trajectories of food production and consumption. These inform the way we think about and practice AFNs. In a given sociospatial context, AFNs can be something new and promising, but in another context they can be ordinary and mundane. Nevertheless, because space is always in process, the reasons why AFNs appear are always partially new: AFNs are interconnected with ongoing processes and relations across space. The AFNs of the 1980s in Latvia and Lithuania are different from the AFNs of the 2000s, even if they appear similar on the surface. In the 1980s, AFNs were valued because they provided what the Soviet state failed to provide. In the late 2000s, AFNs helped consumers and farmers endure the impacts of the financial crisis and austerity policies. I develop a theoretical perspective that helps explain both the lingering importance of historical trajectories on AFNs, in addition to detailing the influence of more contemporary phenomena.

This dissertation also makes a contribution by examining AFNs in Latvia and Lithuania. Despite their numerical prominence, relatively little academic research has been conducted on AFNs in the Baltics (see Mincyte 2012 for an exception). In Western Europe, scholars have found that AFNs are helping marginalized farmers secure added value, while supporting sustainable development (Ploeg et al. 2000). As a result, they have been gaining popularity as a new development strategy for depressed rural regions across the European Union (EU). However, the relationship between AFNs and the revitalization of rural livelihoods has remained largely unexamined in the new EU member states of Eastern Europe, where integration into the EU and its Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has not been accompanied by convergence with Western European rural development models (Gorton et al. 2009). By studying the impact that participation in AFNs has had on farmer livelihoods in Latvia and Lithuania, my research goal has been to address this gap while making broader contributions to geography and agro-food studies.

1. Review of Key Findings

In Chapter 2, I analyze the strengths and weaknesses of different theoretical perspectives on AFNs, and I formulate my own approach to the study of AFNs based on a renewed agrarian political economy (APE), transnational feminist theory, and the geographical concepts of multiple spatialities, including networks, space, scale and place. In developing a renewed APE, I retain the conceptual insights from APE, but I respond to its critics by following Moishe Postone (1993) and reconsidering some of the basic assumptions of traditional Marxism. This renewed agrarian political economy underscores that capitalism is a structured but open system, which is propelled by the basic contradiction between concrete and heterogeneous labor and abstract labor. Capitalism is a system that produces exploitation as well as domination by abstract labor: producers are constantly forced by abstract impersonal force to intensify their production. Industrialization of agriculture is a manifestation of this capitalist tendency. So are movements that seek to create alternatives. Capitalism is, after all, a contradictory whole.

The circuits of capital produce articulations and disarticulations, development and underdevelopment across space. Although these movements are significant and potentially disruptive, space cannot be reduced to capital. Space is produced by multiple trajectories of sociospatial change, in which capital is a relatively recent structuring agent. In Chapter 3, I consider the multiple trajectories of food production and consumption in Latvia and Lithuania. Understanding space as multiplicity allows me to explain how policies aimed at eradicating or delimiting AFNs do not produce the expected outcomes: the multiplicity of trajectories of consumption and production has ensured that some farmers continue to sell their production through AFNs, even if they may do it illegally.

The formation of and contestation over food policy are the focus of Chapter 4. I highlight how AFNs are influenced by multiscalar relations, especially with respect to supranational policies on food safety and hygiene. I argue that the scholarly literature on Europeanization has problematically reproduced an “impact” understanding of European

integration. By focusing on national adoption and implementation of EU policies, this scholarship has neglected to examine how policy formation and adoption is a multiscalar affair. I contend that geographical scholarship on the politics of scale has much to contribute to debates on European integration. I use such an approach to examine the contestation over and transformation of scalar relations in Latvia and Lithuania, specifically on the topic of food safety. I demonstrate that multiscalar relations are not fixed but can be contested and transformed. This occurred in both Latvia and Lithuania in 2008 and 2009 after considerable protests by farmers led to the creation of new regulations to ease the regulatory burden on farmers in AFNs.

Scalar relations and spatial trajectories are not the only processes influencing AFNs. Scale, space, *and* place are the core concepts of the Spatialized Livelihoods Approach (SpLA) that I introduce in Chapter 5. That chapter begins with an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of existing theories and methods used in the study of AFNs in Europe, such as the “value-added” approach. Studies of the value added by AFNs, usually conducted in comparison to conventional food supply chains, have demonstrated that AFNs allow farmers to obtain a greater proportion of the food dollar, resulting in indirect benefits for rural communities. These studies have been largely conducted in Western Europe, where farmers have been shifting from conventional to alternative food networks, leading to a methodical approach based on a comparison between the two types of networks.

In contrast, in the Baltic states and in post-Soviet space more broadly, the historical trajectory of agriculture and food provision is different and AFNs have a long and multifaceted history. For example, I found that since the 1990s small-scale and organic farmers have only been able to market their vegetables through AFNs because no conventional food networks would accept their produce. In this case a comparison between conventional and alternative food networks is not realistic, but other cases more closely mirror the Western European model. A few large-scale and conventional farmers have been able to shift from selling their produce through conventional food networks to AFNs and to successfully take up a large share of the market. Moreover, since the financial crisis, I found that large-scale industrial and small-scale organic farmers are all

competing for consumers through AFNs, with adverse effects for small-scale farmers in particular. Any analysis of the impact of participation in AFNs on farmer livelihoods must therefore take into account the diversity of producers involved, in addition to assessing the differential effects of competition and other processes. I argue that the value-added approach, while useful in certain places to achieve a generalized and comparative quantitative calculation, fails to account for differences between farmers, neglects qualitative aspects of livelihoods, and also does not account for changes over time. To address these critiques, I adopt and modify the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) (Scoones 2009) by integrating a theoretical perspective in agrarian political economy as well as feminist perspectives on gender relations in agriculture and geographical conceptualizations of space, place and scale.

SpLA is a holistic approach that links livelihood strategies (e.g., participation in AFNs, wage work) with resources (e.g., economic, human capital) and outcomes (e.g., economic gain, improved quality of life). I have found that this framework helps explain the diversity of outcomes linked to participation in AFNs, while agrarian political economy connects those livelihoods with global processes impacting the agricultural sector. In Chapter 6, feminist perspectives on gender and agriculture provide me with the framework to unpack and analyze the relations that make up the farming household, and to consider how AFNs are gendered. Most of the existing literature on gender and AFNs has primarily focused on the US and Western Europe and has documented the marginalization of women farmers in conventional agriculture and their recent empowerment in the sustainable agriculture movement. In Latvia and Lithuania, I demonstrate that women do not face a struggle to be recognized as farmers, but farm and marketing work remains gendered. These gendered forms of labor influence the possibility of women's empowerment through alternative food production and distribution networks.

AFNs are a livelihood strategy performed by gendered actors, but also a spatial practice of network creation between places, in part forging place-based histories and development trajectories. In the post-socialist context, transition policies created greater spatial inequalities, a factor which I have found influences the capacity of AFNs based in

different places to secure livelihoods. AFNs also depend on the availability of places of consumption, such as markets, to connect producers with consumers. In Chapter 7, I use a relational understanding of place to argue that markets must also be analyzed as places with their own socio-cultural histories. My research documents how markets are perceived as places where shoppers can bargain for the best deal, but also be cheated or deceived about the quality or origin of products. The new farmers' markets are places where this market culture is reproduced, even as organizers advertise that farmers' markets are more trustworthy than public markets. Consumers tend to distrust these claims, and also certificates and labels, but they build loyalty to certain farmers over time. This makes it difficult for new entrants, as well as small-scale farmers who cannot guarantee a consistent presence at the market.

In summary, my dissertation provides insights on AFNs in two new EU member-states where the relationship between AFNs and the revitalization of rural livelihoods has been largely unexamined, and it makes theoretical contributions to geography and European studies. I provide a new way to assess the impact of AFNs on livelihoods by using a modified Sustainable Livelihoods Approach, which I find appropriate given the complex rural geographies of post-Soviet space. Furthermore, I draw attention to the gendered labor that AFNs depend upon, which contrasts with existing findings on the relationship between AFNs and the empowerment of women farmers. Finally, my framework reveals the relationships between networks, place, and scale, further advancing a new research direction in geography (Leitner et al. 2008). Recently, network formations have attracted scholarly attention in European rural geography because they productively challenge dualistic notions, such as the urban-rural dichotomy (Murdoch 2000). However, the now dominant focus on networks has neglected the importance that other spatialities (such as place and scale) have on shaping AFNs (Goodman and Goodman 2007). My dissertation demonstrates how these spatial concepts help explain why farmers operating in AFNs have such variable outcomes.

2. Implications for Politics

Contemporary rural Europe faces a number of challenges as austerity measures continue to impact the financial support to the agricultural sector and rural communities that has long served to unify the EU. Many critics of contemporary EU agricultural policy agree that changes are necessary, and that more support should be given to AFNs, local food, and alternatives to the agro-industrial paradigm more generally (see www.faanweb.eu). In the Baltic states, AFNs have been a critical livelihood resource, but these networks are not homogeneous, as my dissertation research demonstrates. As the EU attempts to reorient its agricultural policy, and as movements to create alternatives continue to grow, nuanced research of the type my dissertation provides is needed to understand the viability of these alternatives as well as who is most likely to benefit from them. However, this research by itself is insufficient to understand the politics of transnational social movement network building that has been occurring to unite farmers across the EU around similar values.

One such social movement, the European Food Sovereignty movement arose during the last round of CAP reform (2009-2013). Spearheaded by the European Coordination Via Campesina, it drew together advocates of food sovereignty across Europe. It organized several meetings, including a Europe-wide forum with over 400 participants in August of 2011. At this meeting a declaration was issued outlining current problems in the food system and a pathway to food sovereignty. The declaration placed particular importance on developing AFNs, and supporting them politically and socially.

Despite significant advance preparation, the possibility to obtain financial assistance and the central location of the forum, participation from Eastern Europe was minimal. Because many of the proposals advanced by the food sovereignty movement would be beneficial to the small-scale farmers that dominate agriculture in most Eastern European countries, it is particularly surprising that there was not a higher turnout from these countries. In seeking to gain an explanation for this apparent contradiction, I informally asked other forum organizers, most of whom were from Western Europe. In response, many cited several lacks, such as the lack of civil society, language skills, and

information. I found these explanations to be inadequate. Indeed, farmers' organizations from the Baltic states had devoted a considerable effort organizing awareness over the inequality of subsidies within the EU. They had planned several protests in their own states and in Brussels. Their culminating protest involved driving a Soviet-era tractor from the Baltics to Brussels to highlight their plight. For the farmers involved, being treated as an equal within the EU was their first priority. Farmers represented in these protests came mostly from large-scale, conventional farms, although all of my informants, primarily small and some mid-scale farmers, supported equality in the distribution of subsidies. They also endorsed the principles of the food sovereignty movement when I showed them related documents. Nevertheless, none felt that there would be any particular purpose for them to participate in a transnational movement for food sovereignty. When I suggested otherwise, slight mockery was directed my way. Decisions on collectivization, de-collectivization, and even EU accession (which was largely established before the referendum on joining occurred) had been made without asking the rural populace. People cited previous failed efforts that confirmed their suspicion that their voices do not matter. However, this is not simply a case of disempowerment. Many farmers demonstrated their willingness to actively find ways to confront the difficulties they faced. But instead of organizing to change the law, they preferred to evade the law or otherwise try to work around restrictions legally.

In the following paragraphs, I present more reflections on the problems of politics and livelihoods in a post-Soviet context. I start with some observations from my preliminary fieldwork in 2007 in Latgale, an eastern Latvian region known for its relatively high rates of poverty and ethnic diversity. In a small town on the outskirts of Latgale's largest city, Daugavpils, I struck up a conversation with a pair of teenage girls who were waiting on the side of the road. I eventually asked them what people do around the area to make a living. One of the girls shrugged, as if the answer were obvious, and responded in Russian: "Like always, everyone for themselves." At first I was puzzled. This was at a time before the financial crisis when growth rates soared and the impacts of EU accession were visible through projects like major road renovations and sprawling new rural tourism complexes not far from where we were talking. Hadn't this conferred

a positive impact on the broader rural community? And wasn't that what rural development was all about? The "everyone for themselves" ethic rings true for the 1990s, when economic instability cultivated this ethic as a matter of survival. Latvia had changed since then, or so I thought.

Anthropological scholarship on postsocialism provides deeper insights on this issue. In an ethnography on everyday life in postsocialist Moscow, Olga Shevchenko describes how households have learned to cultivate autonomy for themselves after developing distrust throughout the chaos of the 1990s. For example, in the early 1990s people trusted institutions like banks, only to fall victim to pyramid schemes and conmen (Shevchenko 2002). She explains: "By framing the early 1990s as the period of idealism and delusion, and the late 1990s as the time of sobriety when individuals finally realised that 'in our country you can not rely on anyone but yourself', they suggested that a personal transformation that had taken place was not unlike the process of gradual maturation of a child into an adult" (2002, 861). Developing distrust and a hardened attitude were seen as progress. Realizing that the world was structured in a way in which everyone was for themselves was an achievement. Shevchenko later describes how this formed part of a "tool-kit" for the savvy postsocialist subject:

> Among the cultural tools in the 'tool-kit' of a savvy postsocialist subject were the ability to unmask deceptive political and media imagery, the capacity to foresee and forestall potential mishaps, awareness of the fundamentally constructed nature of historical and political narratives, distrust for all forms of civic participation, and the ability to insulate one's life from all of the above. In the cultural logic of postsocialism, these skills, developed or rediscovered during the postsocialist decade, designated one's competence and personal emancipation from earlier political illusions. (Shevchenko 2008, 170)

Disillusionment with politics and widespread distrust of political parties is a characteristic shared by Shevchenko's informants in Moscow and many of my informants, small-scale farmers in Latvia and Lithuania. With narratives of disorder and distrust prevailing, Shevchenko (2002) adds that it is no surprise that people in Russia have gravitated towards supporting politicians that bring about order and stability.

However, she goes on to point out the problems with this savvy postsocialist subject: "By equating political emancipation with their emancipation *from* politics into the autonomous household, potential political actors inadvertently passed up the chance to change the conditions they bemoaned" (Shevchenko 2008, 170). The challenge of organizing a transnational food sovereignty movement may be the savvy postsocialist subject, who is distrustful of such political initiatives and already emancipated from politics anyway. However, the findings in this dissertation reveal that there are multiple subjects involved in AFNs. The savvy postsocialist subject does not adequately describe the farmers who rallied for changes in regulations or those who aspire to gain a share in export markets. I have also highlighted significant gender-based differences and how spatiality plays a role in livelihoods, and therefore, subject-making. There are multiple subjects, savvy postsocialist and aspiring Europeanizing, to name a few.

What this suggests is that movements that desire to foster the creation of AFNs through policies and regulations that are supportive of them at the supranational scale face numerous challenges and must confront sociospatial difference. It suggests that movement building is unlikely to prosper with more information, more money or more civil society. What is necessary is to understand the emergence of sociospatial difference and attendant postsocialist and Europeanizing subjectivities within particular but interrelated and ongoing multiple trajectories. While this dissertation has focused on the sociospatial context of agrarian livelihoods, more research is needed on the sociospatial context of post-Soviet and transnational agrarian politics.

A perspective based within an understanding of multiple spatialities, transnational feminism, and agrarian political economy is well-suited for this task and for advancing the food sovereignty movement more broadly. For example, food sovereignty advocates tend to equate capitalism with large-scale farming, whereas smallholder farming is understood to be separate from capitalism. Agrarian political economy has provided evidence that such a division does not hold much credibility. This movement also has the tendency to understand globalization as a situation in which "place" loses its coherence and distinctiveness. A defensive view of place positions space and place in a binary, with place being penetrated by a globalizing space. In contrast and according to the

understanding of space and place that I use here (Massey 2005), politics would require a negotiation of the stories and trajectories that forge interconnected places, as well as an acknowledgment of the power relations that differentiate places. Finally, a transnational feminism underscores that achieving desired transformations involves navigating axes of difference like race, class, ability, nation and sexuality. These social divisions are not fixed, but are constantly remade, performed and created. Feminist scholarship problematizes essentialist understandings of social differences, while still highlighting how differences come to matter in understanding and confronting oppression.

My dissertation has provided a framework in which to understand how and why AFNs function to sustain farmer livelihoods, and sometimes even reconnection. The next task is to foster a political practice that would create and not encumber reconnection.

Notes

[1] The values that animate AFNs have been broadly described as such:

- "AFNs are organized flows of food products that link up those who wish to consume more 'ethically' with those who wish to get a better deal for the food they produce, or who prefer to produce food in ways that market forces currently discourage" (Whatmore and Clark 2008, 365).
- "Variously and loosely defined in terms of 'quality', 'transparency', and 'locality', AFNs are (somewhat contentiously) signaling a shift away from the industrialized and conventional food sector, towards a re-localized food and farming regime" (Sonnino and Marsden 2006, 181).
- AFNs are socially embedded systems of food provision (Sage 2003).

[2] An exception includes Guthman (2004). According to Goodman and Goodman, "the literature on AFNs has drawn but sparsely on meso-level theories and concepts. These include the network paradigm, actant-network theory, conventions theory, and cultural economy approaches" (2009, 5). While recent engagements concerning food sovereignty and the politics of AFNs rely broadly on a political economic framework to critique the limitations of AFN politics, they largely do not consider producer livelihoods from an agrarian political economy perspective.

[3] One exception was Peter Kropotkin, who saw a revolutionary potential in the productivity of small-scale market gardeners. They thrived around the urban centers of industrializing Europe in the 19th century (Kropotkin 1992).

[4] De Janvry defines functional dualism as a "mechanism of primitive accumulation, which allows wages to be driven below the cost of maintenance and reproduction of labor power" and "is itself contradictory because it simultaneously functionalizes peasants to the needs of disarticulated capital accumulation and negates their reproduction as agriculturalists by differentiating them into the essential classes of the capitalist mode" (1981, 262).

[5] More recently, Edelman (1999) makes a similar point about peasants in Costa Rica: that even though they might have diversified livelihoods and depend less on agriculture than before, as long as they lack stable employment in other sectors, they will continue to have 'campesino' aspirations. He refuses to understand the "peasant" as an intellectual fabrication. Edelman's work is more specifically situated in the "moral economy" approach. Edelman proposes to "bring moral economy" back in to the study of transnational peasant movements (2005).

[6] She is clear to distinguish between simple commodity producers (household-based specialized producers who are integrated into capitalist markets) and peasant producers who produce use-values for subsistence purposes.

[7] "Politically conscious action cannot occur in the sphere of circulation because in that sphere, according to Marx, the only apparent relationships are those between things. Fetishism precludes politics in this sphere, or makes political what is really just bourgeois ideology. Bourgeois ideology gives consumption the appearance of emancipation when, in fact, it is implicated with capitalism as, for example, when upper income consumers buy so-called 'niche market' products" (Goodman and Dupuis 2002, 9).

[8] Indeed, as Murdoch et al. warn: "In this endeavor we should not be fooled into thinking of localness, naturalness, and embeddedness as sufficient in themselves; rather, we must show how these qualities come to be asserted and negotiated in food supply chains. In other words, the concern for food quality must be seen as enabling the exercise of a new kind of power in food networks. And it is not easy to predict who will wield this power, for it can be either localized or transnationalized. Thus struggles over quality, especially as it is linked to nature, will become more and more central in determining the future economic geography of food" (2000, 122).

[9] Marianna Pavlovskaya explains: "The Soviet social scientists were quite creative in coming up with different stages of social development, signifying the state of always approaching the socialist (and communist) future by never realizing it. This strategy aimed to reconcile the discrepancy between formal ideological descriptions of socialist society and the reality of everyday experiences of the Soviet people. As a result, the term 'actually existing socialism' has become a joke in popular culture that designated the

failure of the socialist project in the Former Soviet Union" (Pavlovksaya 1998, 1). Also see Hirt, Sellar and Young (2013).

[10] As Vardys and Sedaitis write: "In Gorbachev's age of glasnost', the life, politics, and achievements of independence emerged as the rightful legacy of Lithuanian citizens. Old leaders and institutions that had been denounced by the Soviets were fondly remembered and idealized. The experience of national independence had become a permanent part of Lithuania's political culture. It survived a ruthless half century of Soviet violence and manipulation and could not be eradicated from the national memory" (1997, 43).

[11] The last Russian troops did not leave Latvia until 1999.

[12] During its first thirty years of existence, the major issues of contention focused primarily on the annual setting of prices. These 'annual fights' took place within a closed institutional setting, and primarily involving agricultural ministers representing national governments (within the Council of Ministers), and the European Commissioner of Agriculture. Although qualified majority voting was legally allowed, decisions were only made through unanimous support by all national governments involved (this was based on the Luxembourg Compromise) (Garzon 2006).

[13] Although international pressure to liberalize the CAP have been consistent since this first agreement, EU politicians are keen to de-emphasize this in their public discussions on CAP reform. It is important to point out that a small faction of globally-competitive farms as well as EU agribusiness have benefited tremendously from increased liberalization of agricultural markets. Although they still benefit from CAP subsidies, these benefits are marginal in comparison to gains to be reaped from international trade.

[14] Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs (OJ L 139, 30.4.2004).

[15] All translations are my own. I have translated to the best of my abilities and I have attempted to maintain clarity and accuracy, and I have also included links to the original texts for readers to consult the actual texts with legal status.

[16] Translated from: Lietuvos Respublikos Valstybinės Maisto Ir Veterinarijos Tarnybos Direktoriaus Įsakymas Dėl Reikalavimų Pieno Produktų Gamybai Ūkiuose Ir Jų Pardavimui Patvirtinimo. http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=320139 (Accessed June 25, 2014).

[17] Translated from: Lietuvos Respublikos Valstybinės Maisto Ir Veterinarijos Tarnybos Direktoriaus Įsakymas 2008 m. Balandžio 24 d. Įsakymo NR. B1-251 "Dėl Reikalavimų Pieno Produktų Gamybai Ūkiuose Ir Jų Pardavimui Patvirtinimo" Pakeitimo. http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=333852 (Accessed June 25, 2014).

[18] Translated from: Lietuvos Respublikos Valstybinės Maisto Ir Veterinarijos Tarnybos Direktoriaus Įsakymas 2008 m. Balandžio 24 d. Įsakymo NR. B1-251 "Dėl Reikalavimų Pieno Produktų Gamybai Ūkiuose Ir Jų Pardavimui Patvirtinimo" Pakeitimo. http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=369478 (Accessed June 25, 2014).

[19] A saying, suggesting the position of the farmwife in mid-twentieth century France: "'Michel needs someone to help him, and he can't find a servant. If only he would get married…'" (quoted in Delphy 1980, 27).

[20] I use the term 'public market' or simply 'market' to refer to bazaars, open-air and urban markets.

[21] See Mažeikis (2004) for a general discussion of markets in Lithuania.

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