ON THE FRINGES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION: FOOD SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND THE EUROZONE CRISIS IN SLOVENIA

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Abstract

This thesis examines how food self-sufficiency (*samooskrba*) is interpreted and engaged with in Ljubljana, Slovenia, to analyse its relevance in framing ideas about citizenship during austerity of the Eurozone crisis.

In national agricultural policy, increasing food self-sufficiency is a goal for improving agricultural productivity to withstand the constraints of EU multifunctionality policy and its system of agricultural subsidies. From there, the term entered a wider public debate and has described the incentives behind a variety of practices and projects, including household food production for both personal consumption and for the market, farmers' markets, public employment schemes, green urban development plans, and consumer preferences for domestic produce. Self-sufficiency conveys conflicting meanings in Slovenia: it expresses both nationalist sentiments and ideas of the 'alternative food movements,' and frames both a liberal concept of a self-disciplining citizen and memories of coping with systemic shortage under socialism.

Drawing on this diversity, I argue that Slovenian understandings and forms of food self-sufficiency do not indicate isolation or exclusion from markets or state institutions, but represent attempts of sustaining participation within these networks. By using research conducted with government officials, urban growers and consumers, I propose that food self-sufficiency serves as cushioning against precarity. Slovenes employ the narratives and practices of *samooskrba* to reduce everyday uncertainties, envision viable futures; and seek economic, political and ethical benefits to improve their predicaments. These engagements are more than responses to the crisis; they illustrate the physical and affective work invested in enduring the crisis and making sense of it. This includes challenging ideas of nationhood and European citizenship called upon in these processes.

With demonstrating a tight integration of the economic and the ethical, this thesis builds on the approaches that move beyond the dichotomy and argues for analysing the localised experiences of the Eurozone crisis within the EU.

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List of abbreviations

AFN	Alternative food network
ALMP	Active labour market policy
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy of the EU
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe; Central and Eastern European
CSA	Community-supported agriculture
EC	European Commission
ECB	European Central Bank
EDP	European Deficit Process
EFSA	European Food Safety Agency
ESF	European Social Fund
ESM	European Stability Mechanism
ESS	Employment Service of Slovenia
ESS	Employment Service of Slovenia
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
GA	Gardening Association
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP	Gross domestic product
GI	Geographical indication
GMO	Genetically modified organism
HACCP	Hazard analysis and critical control points
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food of the Republic of Slovenia
MOL	City Municipality of Ljubljana
NVQ	National vocational qualification
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SAP	Structural adjustment programme
SFRY	Socialist Federal Republic Yugoslavia (1945-1992)
SR	Socialist Republic
TTIP	Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership
VAT	Value added tax
WTO	World Trade Organization

Pronunciation guide

A guide to pronunciation of Slovenian, Croatian, Serbian and Bosnian language (adopted from Simić 1973: xvii; Hladnik & Hočevar 2001)

č	ch as in the English *chant*
ć	palatalized č, similar to the t in the English *pasture*
c	ts as in the English *cats*
đ	J as in the English *Jane*
j	y as in the Enlish *yes*
lj	li as in the English *million*
nj	ny as in the English *canyon*
r	rolled as in Spanish, appears also as a vowel (vocalic r) with a pronunciation somewhat similar to er in the English *pert*
š	sh as in the English *shock*
ž	s as in the English *pleasure*

Introduction

Slovenia was badly hit in the 2009 European debt crisis. Its small and import-dependent domestic market, its overblown banking sector and its quick adoption of the euro currency in 2007, three years after joining the EU, contributed to a steep economic downturn. Slovenia narrowly avoided a bailout by the infamous 'troika' by implementing deep austerity cuts and selling off public companies to foreign corporations (Guardiancich 2013). Elevated levels of un- and underemployment, increased out-migration, protests and political instability followed.

With the efforts to mitigate the effects of the economic downturn of the Eurozone crisis, one trope has been resounding particularly strongly in Slovenia: *samooskrba*, self-sufficiency. In its most frequent use, samooskrba (pronounced 'sah-moh-aus-kr-bah') referred to food self-sufficiency. The term first made its appearance in the national agricultural policy to express a key goal of increasing domestic agricultural productivity to insulate Slovenian small and fragmented agricultural sector from being trumped by the volatile European market. As the term entered the wider public debate, it began to stand for a diversity of practices, ethical stances and incentives. Glancing over news articles provided a look into the range of uses of the trope. State-sponsored projects began "promoting awareness of the importance of domestic self-sufficiency." Private new business ventures started renting out vegetables plots with invitations of "increasing your samooskrba with organic vegetables and herbs". Cities were "very successfully implementing samooskrba" with supporting projects of urban gardening, or were pledging to "provide suitable areas for local self-sufficiency." The term began to relate to supermarket retailers' efforts to establish novel product groups of *domače*, home-grown foods and resonated deeply with consumer anxieties about the perceived safety and quality of food imports, felt to represent a growing portion of their daily sustenance. Samooskrba also connoted ideas of autonomy as it began to denote the creation of short food supply chains to strengthen local economies. Solidarity purchase groups called themselves 'self-sufficiency communities.' Anarchist collectives "researched the possibilities for food self-sufficiency in urban areas." Food processing companies started to "encourage Slovenian samooskrba" by developing products that

used solely Slovenian ingredients. Social enterprising initiatives began citing local samooskrba as an exclusive goal of their projects.

Public mentions of samooskrba also traced the increased popularity of self-provisioning activities, such as tending vegetable gardens in the city, foraging for forest fruit and herbs or making preserves, which have significantly extended since the onset of the Eurozone crisis. Media responses related increasing poverty and unemployment levels to household decisions to produce a share of the food themselves. In discussions of poverty, commentators used the trope of self-sufficiency to frame both the liberal notion of a self-improving citizen and memories of tackling systemic shortage in socialist Yugoslavia. The wide use of the trope allowed it to adopt conflicting meanings and blurred the distinctions between national, local and household levels of self-sufficiency. In the 2014 Slovenian parliamentary election, the goal of increasing the levels of food self-sufficiency found its way into the programmes of all political parties, both left- and right-wing, and epitomised how the term could be used to express both nationalist sentiments associated with the political right and desires to forge 'alternative food networks' usually attributed to the left.

In this thesis I explore the diversity of the shapes of samooskrba and examine why this trope has become so salient in this particular time in history. I am starting from the proposition that, although some economies are more reliable on their own production than others, a perfect state of self-sufficiency does not exist. "No economy, whether at the level of the house, community, or nation, can be self-sufficient" (Gudeman & Hann 2015a: 1), because in every human economy, production and consumption are never perfectly in sync. Self-reliance, be it household, community or national, can only strive to meet needs within the economy, rather than outside of it. In this thesis, I focus on what the motivation behind this striving can tell us about the experiences of the Eurozone crisis in Slovenia. When one considers Slovenia's import-hungry domestic market, its small population size and limited agricultural resources, its quest toward increased self-sufficiency seems implausible. What, then, is animating the use of this particular trope? What new social developments does the term samooskrba indicate?

Often thought of as an (ideal) state of independence, self-sufficiency has been depicted as an 'antidote' or a 'pushback' against the market or the state that becomes

particularly salient during market crises. Whether it was governments aiming for autarky to gain political power, or citizens 'Digging for Victory' to compensate for disruptions in the food supplies during wartime, peasant or homesteading households seeking economic or political autonomy through self-provisioning, or consumers worrying about food safety, 'closed economic systems' (Pratt & Luetchford 2014) were understood as attempts to forge plentiful, resilient or ethical vehicles of supplying human nourishment through insulation from the volatilities that come with market exchange.

A popular explanation for an increased reliance on domestic production that follow market stumbles, such as the harsh economic crises in Central and Eastern Europe after the collapse of socialism, suggests that households and communities 'retreat' into the private domain to turn "away from the 'outside', into the 'inside'" and in this way reduce livelihood uncertainties brought by the market (Pine 2002: 108). In this proposal, when market-based income and subsistence can no longer be a predictable factor in the arithmetic of everyday lives, self-sufficiency serves as a "bastion against uncertainty and instability or contingency (Gudeman & Hann 2015a: 11; see also Gudeman 2001). Yet since actual full self-sufficiency is not within reach, retreat to the domestic is symbolic and self-sufficiency is pursued only as an 'ideal' (ibid.), reflected not only in the practices of domestic production such as subsistence farming, clothes-making, elderly care, health, fuel, foraging, bartering and exchanging favours but in placing a particular high moral value on the domesticity itself. Retreat is thus expressed also in "consciously rejecting the world of consumption (particularly of foreign goods)" (Pine 2002: 96), in the "feeling of being pushed back into what seemed to them to be the past" (106) of the traditional subsistence practices, in a vivid celebration of community and locality of the products they produce, in the firm preference for the domestic, authentic, hospitable, ecologically clean or '*nash'* (Caldwell 2011; Jung 2014; Tocheva 2015), and in being proud of being 'sufficient' and therefore not excessive or wasteful like the market (Gudeman & Hann 2015a). Be it by market 'involution' – a shrinkage of the market following a decrease the number of households participating in the market (Burawoy et al. 2000; Dunn 2008) – or state protectionist policies trying to level the playing field in the international market, "self-sufficiency underwrites protectionism as a form of self-defence from the expanding market and promotes exclusion and internal divisions" (Gudeman & Hann 2015a: 17).

Retreating to the household or community as a form of self-defence also seems to aptly describe the proposition that the loss of meaningful work caused by the demands of labour set by the capitalist cycles of accumulation – for instance alienation from one's work due to overly rational and effective production goals – leads people to seek solidarity within communities of nation, family and country (Holmes 1989) and that this form of protection from the 'disenchantment' is an easy target for broad-based nationalist politics (Holmes 2000). In Europe, nationalisms are often interpreted as a retreat in time, as a force pulling backwards, because belonging to Europe is commonly rendered as 'cosmopolitanism' that is "based on notions of Europe as the home of social progress, modernity, liberty and civilization" (Knight 2017: 241). In situations of great social anxiety, the notion of retreat imagines the private, domestic domain as a bubble suspended in a web of threats and challenges represented by the open market, and imagines insulating itself from it as a sort of 'inverted quarantine' (Szasz 2009). In this thesis, I challenge the metaphor of retreat as an explanation for navigating economic downturns. Retreat does not resonate with an increase in self-sufficiency in Slovenia because this metaphor is based on assumptions that the material I collected does not support.

Between 2014 and 2015 I followed samooskrba in the city of Ljubljana from the conversations about local food at formal and informal food markets, through the practices of growing and preparing food on vegetable plots and kitchens of unemployed urbanites, through the aims of state-sponsored employment courses and programmes for jobseekers, to the statements of government officials. Slovenia joined the European Union in the 2004 enlargement (together with Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, and Slovakia), thirteen years after gaining independence from Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). With a population of two million people, Slovenia is one of smaller EU member states. It is located at the edge on the EU; its southern border that Slovenia shares with Croatia and that used to be an inter-republic line within the Yugoslav federation, became the functional outer border of the EU, demarcating the Schengen area of free movement. The succession from Yugoslavia caused a deep economic crisis and a surge in unemployment due to losing the Yugoslav market. However, its gradualist policy of aligning labour and agricultural sectors with the European markets allowed it to enjoy high levels of economic growth afterwards. For a while, Slovenia was termed a 'star pupil' (Fenko & Svetličič 2017) by the EU. In 2007 Slovenia

adopted the common European currency, the euro, as the first of the postsocialist member states in the Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The Eurozone crisis reversed its reputation. The European sovereign debt crisis that forced Cyprus, Greece, Spain, Portugal and Ireland to seek international loans for its bankrupt banking sectors, significantly shrunk the Slovenian economy and caused a steep rise in unemployment. The infamous 'troika' bailout only just missed Slovenia that had to impose harsh austerity measures of reducing state provisions to avoid it.

Samooskrba was weaved tightly with the experience of precarity that had swept Slovenia with the onset of the crisis. As full-time permanent employment (*zaposlitev za nedoločen čas*) became a luxury few Ljubljanans were able to hold on to or secure, 'precarity' (*prekarnost*) and 'precarious workers' (*prekarci*) became items of household conversation. But precarity also shone through in a range of other ways. It was present in the meticulous and minute attempts at household budgeting to make ends meet. It was also visible in the risk-taking behaviour inspired by a lack of employment security. I sensed it in my collocutors' discomfort at my offers to take them for a meal or coffee during our interviews, as a research expense, because they felt unable to reciprocate. In their feeling baffled by how they or people like them made it through the month but also in their nourishing a blind hope that they would, because they always did. In their efforts to find dignity in work at a supermarket cooling storing facility, even when the nature of it changed very little when this warehouse accidentaly burned down and the workers were retained for a while longer to clean up before being let go.

Among my collocutors were unemployed and retired urban vegetable growers who sought to fill their idle time with a meaningful activity; young and old unemployed graduates who volunteered for selected charities and NGOs so that they could get a small sum added to their monthly unemployment benefit payments. I have worked along food traders at an informal Sunday market who started to source local produce to urban customers to forge a new livelihood after being made redundant during the crisis. Some of them acquired the food preparation skills needed in their informal venture through the employment courses organised by the state as response to the low supply of available jobs. I have listened to personal narratives of how a lack of regular employment inspired ideas for self-employment that my collocutors felt they always wanted to try, such as producing simple healthy home-made cosmetics or herbal

medicine. I have talked to impoverished families who had the cost of renting a vegetable patch covered for them by a charity organisation. I have observed public officials tasked with distributing plot garden rentals and market stalls permits in their struggles to respond to the citizens' appeals to pity and in their search for the fine line between equal treatment and a draining openness to help the public.

I observed how the trope of samooskrba enabled Ljubljanans to navigate the crisis in several ways. Through its diverse meanings and associations, samooskrba generated a discursive potential, funding opportunities, aspirations and expectations; and these influenced the material practices of growing and making food, as well as the reverse. Relying on routinized sets of everyday security was no longer tenable after the Eurozone crisis destabilised the previously sturdy social structures. In this condition, samooskrba functioned as a resource for staying afloat, for forging stability, because it linked together different economic and moral orders. This thesis suggests that the amplified salience of samooskrba responds to the crisis of citizenship and that this crisis itself can be traced to three interrelated effects of the recession: the crisis of work and moral worth, the crisis of future-making and the crisis of governance in the EU.

Instead of a retreat to the embrace of the household or community, emerging behind the banner of samooskrba was a lively informal economic exchange, new grey markets promising new informal business opportunities and an increased informalisation of the food and agriculture sector, as observed elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) (Dunn 2003a; Mincyte 2012). Informal or illicit forms of income generation required bending rules or 'finding ways', resulting in uncomfortable compromising of ideas about one's proper conduct, particular to Slovenia, where the civic respect for the law is flagged as a defining characteristic of national identity and a crucial point of difference from the Balkans (Šumi 2004; see also Todorova 1997). Forging an informal livelihood called for a moral buffer that was able to translate private forms of economic activity into a widely accepted moral work (Makovicky 2009). Samooskrba bound the newly emerging informal trading practices to a strong moral message of liberal values, environmentalism, solidarity, enhancing local economies and protecting local agriculture. Camouflaging trade as a collective national goal helped restore dignity to precarious workers in a moral crisis. Moreover, the nationalism implicit in the practices and discourses of self-sufficiency is a forward-looking force in Slovenia and cannot be interpreted as a withdrawal to the tradition.

Beyond its purpose as a moral cloak, samooskrba also offered to expand the opportunity for anticipation. Instead of a retreat into the past, my observations suggest that the anxieties over no longer being able to move forward and in the face of loss of previously stable signs of progress such as European identity, economic growth, a relatively wide social prosperity and social equality, were met with a reciprocal eagerness to find alternative ways of moving on and making a future. These were both individual, as in creating new viable ways of making a living, and social, as in envisioning a new national economy based on sustainable principles.

In Slovenia, samooskrba is high on the agenda of public policy and is embraced as a potential solution also to a crisis of government legitimacy. While EU members forfeited some of their legislative powers in exchange for membership, governing is further constrained in those member-states that needed to implement austerity measures, such as Slovenia. Samooskrba promises to cushion the consequences of diminishing social welfare and loss of jobs and to provide an alternative way of moving forward. Resorting to the notion of retreat to render experiences of crisis would miss the fact that recessions are as catastrophic for governmental authority as they are for the citizenry. The investment of the Slovenian government in cultivating samooskrba as a public policy, in turn, makes samooskrba a novel source of civic claims that people can rely on to secure their moral worth.

Self-sufficiency in Slovenia is a form of perseverance, not of retreat. It responds to issues of both economic subsistence and a crisis of citizenship. Its strength lies in not only what it can physically change but what it can reframe. Samooskrba is a material and discursive resource enabling citizens and the state to draw on its range of manifestations and meanings to preserve the social relationships in a changed economy. As a material resource, self-sufficiency generates economic value in a tight network of exchange, yet to become such a tool, the economic practices of self-sufficiency have to rely on wide socially accepted narratives.

My research was prompted by an observation that local food movements in Slovenia were often modelled on the Western European case studies of gardening projects, rural development policies, heritage food labelling schemes and practices of sustainability, and neglected a rich tradition of household self-reliance in the form of urban vegetable

gardens, food preserving and the often inventive and witty thrift practices, associated with the Yugoslav period. While forms on sustainable modernity were sought abroad, in Europe, the 'home-grown' sustainability got very little public attention and its practices were much more likely regarded as backward and preoccupied with 'making do' of poverty, despite a significant overlap. An apt illustration of this rift can be seen in the almost overlapping projects launched by the Ljubljana municipal government. In the course of demolishing several large informal vegetable garden plots on account of their illicitness and unsightliness, the local government erected new rental allotment sites on municipal property that had a more 'community spirit'. A distinct class-based inequality suggested itself through the vocal assertions of the social causes and purposes of local food activities. As long the practices were not isolated private affairs and could therefore claim to tighten communal relationships, they were heralded as forward-thinking and progressive. Ethnographers around CEE and former Soviet Union have noticed such similar double framing, distinguishing between 'alternative' and 'alterity' (Mincyte 2011a; see also Jehlička & Smith 2012; Dombos 2008). This divide has been intensified in the social science quarters in the argument proposing there was a fundamental difference in the particular roles that local and alternative food practices acquired in societies of the West and elsewhere (for example, Alber & Kohler 2008).

I nurtured hopes that as an undiscriminating label for the spectrum of practices of food self-sufficiency, Slovenian samooskrba held the potential for change. I expected that drawing on the similarities of practices and pulling them toward a shared goal would hinder the reproduction of inequalities. However, while it muddled certain edges of social distinction, it consolidated the fault lines of class and class-based ethnicity and the urban-rural divide along new criteria. I combed through the public archival material to excavate how a national agricultural policy was conceived with the citizens' patriotic sentiments in mind to initiate a national food movement. I later observed how this taste for nationalism as tool for discerning food quality began to turn fuse with the deeply entrenched xenophobia toward ex-Yugoslav ethnicities, now directed at food traders and market sellers. I felt unease at witnessing how the popularity of the samooskrba trope began to dilute the efforts of an anarchist food justice collective of expanding the scope of experimenting with urban spatial relations and associate them with the efforts of urban planning policies of making Ljubljana appealing to investors. Traversing the up and down of class, left and right of politics,

and forward and backward of city and country, samooskrba made the established ways of discerning one's loyalties difficult, while simultaneously driving them further apart.

Tangled up in the vague and multiple meaning of samooskrba, I attempted to analyse it in a way that would bring light to its corners and reveal its shape but the trope only grew hazier and more elusive. I eventually came to understand this ambiguity as its key characteristic and the reason why samooskrba was particularly suited to enduring the Eurozone crisis in Slovenia. The manifold forms and meanings of samooskrba made it suitable for resolving the moral contradictions brought by the Eurozone crisis that were particular to the Slovene experience: how to reconcile cosmopolitanism thought of as European and nationalism regarded as its opposite; how to combine livelihood with morally appropriate work to retain work as the basis of citizenship in light of job scarcity; how to disassociate formal unemployment from contemptibility and civic choice from civic neglect; how to move on within a lack of a national, common, shared future. While enduring the crisis may appear passive, agentless and give a sense one was merely waiting for its end before one was willing to move on, my thesis examines what is at stake in preserving the social and economic structures and how much wit and imagination is needed to persevere, to keep on striving (Das 2006).

By navigating through the trope of samooskrba and stopping at its crucial junctions, this thesis traces the tension accompanying the changing outlines of citizenship and governance in Slovenia in light of large market transformations in the European Union. It explores how ambiguous tropes in late liberalism serve to both fill the social cracks caused by the economic downturn and steer citizenship from one based on work and rights, to one based on sentiments, claims and appearances. Next, I examine the theoretical underpinnings of the metaphor of retreat further before offering an alternative reading of self-sufficiency, by addressing the themes of precarity, hope and future, work and citizenship and how these shift the notion of Europeanisation.

1 Challenging ‘retreat’ on two fronts

The notion of self-sufficiency as a type of ‘retreat’[1] to the household or community draws inspiration and support from Karl Polanyi’s concept of the ‘double movement’ in capitalist economy (2001) and from approaches to moral economy. Polanyi proposed in 1944 that the free market relations and rationality were ‘disembedding’ the economy from its pre-capitalist social bases: traditions, institutions and economic activity based on the principles of redistribution, mutuality and household self-sufficiency. He saw spontaneous social movements for social regulation and protection as the reflections of attempts to ‘re-embed’ the economy in the society. The concepts of ‘moral economy’ and its opposite, the market economy, popularised by E.P. Thompson (1971) and James Scott (1976), run parallel to Polanyi’s binary or market and society. They conceptualise the moral economy as a set of established customs, social obligations, traditions that guide economic conduct, while the market is driven by the logic of profit-oriented price setting and lowering input costs, and is thought of as trampling the existing moral order. This dynamic between market and society, between free and open commerce and autarky, is a prevalent theme in a prominent strand of economic anthropology, championed by scholars such as Chris Hann, Keith Hart and Stephen Gudeman (Gudeman & Rivera 1990; Gudeman & Hann 2015b; Hann & Hart 2009).

The concept of the moral economy behind the ‘retreat’ has inspired both anthropological approaches to postsocialism and the aspirations of achieving economic and political autonomy behind the manifold social movements promoting alternative foodways, as well as the theoretical approaches toward understanding these movements, although they very rarely enter a conversation. On the one hand, practices of self-provisioning are studied to gain knowledge of coping with poverty and food insecurity and are treated as instances of economic behaviour. On the other, self-contained food economies of local and community endeavours are considered in terms of their ethical concerns, such as social justice, environmentalism or food quality. The bifurcation of attention has been paired with a difference in the historical or

[1] With the phrase I have borrowed from Pine (2002) I refer to a wider group of spatial metaphors used to describe relationships in society and the market, for instance involution, enclosure, outside/inside binary etc. I chose Pine’s term because it helps me more clearly draw parallels between the economic hardships endured after the collapse of socialism during the 1990s and the European recession of the past decade that is often analysed through the lens of precarity.

geographical site of research, drawing a problematic map of the world divided between affluent and ethical global consumers and poverty-motivated global producers. Studies that have noted the dissonance and have worked towards bridging the gap have been rare (Jung et al. 2014; Hébert & Mincyte 2014; DeLind 2013) but have been instrumental in pointing out that all human food practices are driven by shared moral principles and ideas of what constitutes good food.

In the alternative food networks (AFN), self-reliance is often understood as a space carved outside of hegemonic politico-economic networks of supplying food (the 'global food system'), untarnished by mainstream economic and monetary relations, a defender of the moral domain (i.e. Wilson 2013). While there is no such things as a unitary global food system (for instance, see Imbruce 2006), the aggregates of markets for national and transnational agricultural products and foodstuffs share certain business rationales, political environments and social consequences that can be usefully bundled together in the notion of the 'food regime' (Friedmann 1993; McMichael 2005). The currently installed food regime is characterised by agricultural mechanisation and reliance on petrochemical inputs and monocultures (Wright 2005); by corporatization of a kind of agriculture that produces raw materials, such as starches, sugars, oil and protein, that are assembled into foodstuffs in the food processing industry (van der Ploeg 2008; Pratt 2007); and by an increasing use of biotechnology, especially as it is related to the ability to protect intellectual property. These elements comprise a vast and costly production system, in which agribusinesses gain competitive advantage on the market by using cheaper labour in the Global South. Growing export crops in developing countries often leads to labour exploitation and to overproduction of cash crops at the expense of farmers' subsistence (Barndt 2008). The trade rules set by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) that remove barriers to free trade between countries exacerbates the 'drive to the bottom', toward low agricultural prices. When food prices reaching levels below the farmers' ability to earn a living in the Global South, rapid urban migration and informal urbanisation that follow can end up with country-wide food insecurity. In the Global North, the result of the falling food prices is an increasingly costly system of state subsidies and welfare needed so that farmers can remain being agricultural producers. The cumulative impacts of the food regime on the environment and climate have also been substantial. On the consumption side of this system – which takes place predominantly in the Global North – long-distance transports allow for all-round seasonal availability of

foods in the affluent parts of the world. These require advanced just-in-time logistics and voluntary standardisation schemes which benefit larger producers and distributors and disadvantage smallholders (Freidberg 2004). The growth of the food processing industry and the supermarket retail sector has also profoundly affected the diets and foodways of people across the world, while various food safety scandals surrounding the 'food from nowhere' (Bové & Dufour 2001) have almost been accepted as a common occurrence under these food supply principles.

Alternative food networks (AFN) and food relocalisation efforts, such as urban gardening activities, community-supported agriculture (CSA), organic vegetable box schemes, or farmers' markets, represent responses to the ails of the industrialised food system. According to Pratt, such initiative belong to one of the five main strands: they aim to mitigate environmental impacts (with tools such as 'food miles'); construct novel small economies capable of operating outside of the capitalist system for (usually radically-left) political reasons; protect small farmers through international movements such as one started by La Vía Campesina; improve farm income by cutting out trade intermediaries and voluntary certification; and improve food quality by advancing the food's locality and *terroir* (Pratt 2007). The idea that connects them is that by limiting the scope of the food economy to its local 'foodshed' (Kloppenburg et al. 1996), to restrain the supply of food to what can be produced within a designated community, meaningful dents can be made into the global food system, thereby mitigating its range of negative effects.

The literature chronicling the motivations, struggles and effects of alternative food movements has usefully shown both the breadth of consequences of the industrial food complex and the range of forms the 'alternatives' to it can take. The efforts have however stuck to a dominant narrative. A major source of inspiration in both formulating alternative movements and analysing them have been the studies and theoretical approaches to resistance, particularly Scott's work on state legibility techniques and on state evasion (Scott 1998, 2009). These have strengthened further the conception of self-sufficiency as space outside of formal market and state relations. Understanding the state as the basis of bureaucratic rationality, formal orders and translation of life-worlds into simplified, measurable, documentable forms on top; and society as left with evading the grip of the grid with 'weapons of the weak' (Scott 1985) in order to preserve the authentic and diverse life-worlds at the bottom, has

widened the conceptual rift between the state and society in these approaches. 'Going off the grid' has been a prominent refrain in conceptions of autonomy as practice of distancing oneself from the dominant modes of power and carving out spaces outside of its grips.

The notion of retreat, then, seems to also fit the ethical considerations expressed in alternative food networks. The social movements based on AFN initiatives often aim beyond affecting food economies and have often positioned themselves as ethical guardians of communities against the entrenchment of market rationality; "an inversion of the impersonality of the market" (de Neve et al. 2008: 3). AFN have worked as a form of urban protest of a range of political issues such as race and ethnicity, migration, gender, poverty and gentrification (Alkon & Agyeman 2011; Fairbairn 2012; Sbicca 2012; Wright & Middendorf 2007). Popular works aimed at the general public also promote practices of individual and community eating and growing as methods of attaining wider social and political change (Kingsolver 2008; Patel 2007; Pollan 2009).

A substantial body of literature challenges the argument that social movements necessarily represent consistent and clear political alternatives with providing concrete examples of power behind the scenes.[2] Examples bring to light sustained evidence that the realms of market and non-market are difficult to keep apart. The point they make – that the advocates of AFN have often assumed a much firmer coherence of entities such as market, state or society, where in fact the borders between them are leaky –

[2] A prominent academic critique aimed at food localisation initiatives and social movements has been represented by the analysis of the extent to which the alternative forms and rhetoric have been co-opted by the mainstream food system, political discourses or modes of governance. A flurry of academic writing within food studies explored the conventionalisation of alternative food movements, either as reducing criteria to make it suitable for mass production, transforming them into elitist forms of consumption or creating opportunities for new mode of governance (Guthman 2008a; Johnston 2007; Johnston et al. 2009; Pudup 2008). Guthman has documented the political struggles behind the food qualifier 'organic.' She analysed how in transforming it from a holistic philosophy originating with the countercultural Hippy movement in Berkeley, California (Belasco 1993; Lappé 1971) to its diluted version of pesticide-free food available in large supermarkets its political charge diminished into a set of technical specifications (Guthman 2004; also see DeLind 2011a for a discussion on conventialisation of 'local' food). In the EU, where local food movements were found to be less associated with civic values and resistance and less politically charged compared to the US (DeSoucey & Téchoueyres 2009), it has been suggested that the receptivity of producers and consumers for the pertinence of local foods also could also serve other agendas. *Terroir*, the EU geographical designations and regional agricultural and culinary traditions can constitute a 'quality turn' of European agricultural policy that acts a protective measure against the damaging rules of the WTO or can represent a way of extracting monopoly rent and ensuring a comparative advantage, which may or may not benefit local small producers (Pratt 2007; West 2013, 2016).

leans on the Gramscian notion of hegemony and its ability to absorb the opposition with its lack of need for consistency or clear division between the inside and the outside. Engagements with the imaginaries encapsulated in the binary local-global have also tapped into considerations that the local can just as well be the site of inequality and domination (DuPuis & Goodman 2005; Hinrichs 2003; Winter 2003). Parallels drawn between market isolation and market exclusion showed how activists' attempts at building autonomous food systems and celebrating self-reliance could be impinging on the subsistence abilities of poor producers and consumers; and how supporting resilience and independence could translate into supporting a reduction in welfare assistance that poor producers receive (Hébert & Mincyte 2014; DeLind 2013).

A line of critique also emerged from within postsocialist studies. Academic contributions engaging with ethical food practices in the postsocialist worlds have emphasised that food practices not normally associated with AFN can also be driven by desires to position themselves as the 'outsides' of dominant sources of power – in this case the state – but that the ethical underpinning for them may be different (Jung et al. 2014). Markets need not necessarily oppose morality and can at times be the very sources of morality, such as in forging security against failures of command economy to provide basic necessities or against extortionist and fraudulent black market strategies (Bridger & Pine 1998; Dombos 2008; Fehérváry 2002, 2009; Smollett 1993; Verdery 1996).

These examples show that anthropological approaches to postsocialism took the concept of moral economy on board in a manner different from how it was conceived originally. Ever since the collapse of Soviet Communism and other European variants of socialism beginning in 1989, anthropologists have been documenting the rich variety of informal economic practices such as household food production and grey food markets that occupied the vacant space created by the economic doctrine of 'transition' and, often, 'shock therapy' which cut off the economy from the supply of state distribution and plugged it into the capitalist webs of production (Bridger & Pine 1998). Situated in the perspective of the everyday coping strategies, anthropology of postsocialism made a valuable critique to 'transitology' (Burawoy & Verdery 1999). The contributors insisted that the postsocialist spread of informal economy and household self-reliance was a novel response to the social and economic

transformation, not an example of stubborn socialist citizens who could not give up their entrenched backward ways of life and step onto a path of Western capitalist modernity and progress (see also Mincyte 2011b).

The postsocialist sentiment of exclusion from the mainstream economy drove the citizens' subscriptions to an alternative set of moral principles. Pine found the notion of retreat convenient to label not only the immediate short-term responses to the economic crisis of transition, but also the general attitude of Poles to the market for years afterwards (Pine 2002). When the factory that pumped blood into a minor Polish city closed after the collapse of socialism, its residents resorted to making a living off the land. Pine notes that this change entailed its own set of moral principles since "having been excluded from the public domain of production, they were consciously rejecting the world of consumption (particularly of foreign goods) and it its place building complicated structures and networks for subsistence production within and around the household" (96). She found that placing a prime value on tradition and the household was accompanied by widespread fear of the outside: from thieves and mafia, to environmental pollution and food contamination, yet this was exaggerated according to her and better thought of as a set of allegories for a "more general sense of unease with and in the world" induced by the retraction of the state (97). Similar social anxieties about food safety and cleanliness were observed in several other parts of the postsocialist world (Caldwell 2011; Jung 2014; Tocheva 2015). In Russia, consumer preferences for 'ecologically clean' food work as social expressions of "concerns about the dangers of capitalism" (Caldwell 2011: 87). According to Pine, the domesticity nurtured through voluntary rejection and fear of the outside is an answer to particularly the breakdown of the public sphere, caused by the opening the command economy to the market. The withdrawal of social welfare, designed by Western economic consultants (Wedel 1998), only aggravated widespread poverty further and in the ruins of collapsed state-owned industry and agriculture and socialist social institutions, new political demands in the form of civil society institutions failed to formulate. Instead, through painstaking emotional and social work to readjust the social relationships with neighbouring community and kin, Pine witnessed an 'efflorescence' of the domestic domain, an "expansion of household production and kinship obligations" (Pine 2002: 97).

When we take the idea of self-sufficiency also having an "ideological value and potency in shaping the identities of persons and groups" (Gudeman & Hann 2015a: 11) and paste it onto the topical terrain of pan-European politics, the domestic retreat aligns perfectly with 'integralism' (Holmes 2000). With integralism, Holmes described the European responses to 'fast-capitalism' in the last two decades of the 20th Century. With fast-capitalism, he refers to the speed of capitalist production and accumulation and the extraction of such economic relations from wider social meaning (Strathern 1992). A resulting Weberian 'disenchantment of the world' prompted a range of counter movements that, while varying in scale and political orientation, all flirted with Counter-Enlightenment – an appreciation of the local, traditional and authentic as opposed to the cosmopolitan, modern and progressive. With the "cultural awareness that allowed [people] to negotiate, if not overcome, the alienation of everyday existence while continuing to maintain manifold bases of solidarity" (Holmes 2000: 3), integralism according to Holmes "creates a space in which an entangled politics arises that is both right and left" (13) and embraces forms of communities besides the nation, such as family, town, country. What makes integralism politically charged is its susceptibility to be harnessed by broad-based politics and presented as a viable option of shaping societies in times of social anxiety.

From today's perspective, Holmes' publication may appear prescient. The rise of nationalism in Europe, particularly in the east, exacerbated by the lingering effects of the economic crisis and the migrant crisis, prompted questions whether it represents a threat to the future of the European Union. Expressions of Euroscepticism such as Brexit, Greek bailout tensions, conflicts over refugee quotas for EU member states suggest the climate is bleak. The rise of right-wing politics in Hungary and Poland suggest a rejection of European values of democracy and liberty. Populism in Europe and the US is represented by academia through the parable of countries forfeiting the values of cosmopolitanism at the slightest sight of economic trouble, as if exiting from a journey together to stop and withdraw into nationalist enclosures (Knight 2017).

But what if this narrative were turned on its head? What if the practices and moral stances ascribed to integralism were in fact vehicles directed forward? While austerity discredits the established ways in which social and economic stability for households and communities is secured through a vision of a shared future, people might hold on to other branches that promise a move forward and may be exploring other ways of

finding meaningful work. In addition, in certain member states of the EU, sentiments deemed integralist might be the key means of governance. Instead of retiring to the cosiness of the known and familiar, could the integralist sentiments and actions be interpreted as civic claims? Studying the dachas in a Russian suburb, Caldwell suggested that household vegetable cultivation is not to be read as survival tactics and a flourishing domesticity in the absence of civil society that failed to take root after socialism's collapse (see Hann & Dunn 1996 for critical view on this popular assertion). Rather, practitioners of self-sufficiency on Russian gardens were shown to be conscious and passionate about ideas of community justice and meaningful labour. "Russia's new democratic values of freedom, autonomy, liberty, and civil association emerge vividly and with tremendous effect in these [natural] settings, and the organic life emerges as a form of civil society that shapes everyday life" (Caldwell 2011: 134–5).

In this thesis I want to reframe self-sufficiency along these more complex lines and show how analysing self-sufficiency may be used for explanations of economic hardship that go beyond survival and bigotry as self-defence; how enduring the Eurozone crisis entails a renegotiation of what it means to be a citizen, for both the state and its citizens; and how processes like this constitute examples of informal Europeanisation that protect the EU from internal tremors in times of privation. The uses of samooskrba in Slovenia presented in this thesis do not fit easily within this overarching theme of isolation or exclusion. Rather, I argue that the understandings and enactments of food self-sufficiency constitute attempts of 'reaching out' to networks of market exchange, state services or political power that were disrupted during the crisis. Food self-sufficiency is better portrayed as 'cushioning' within the context of increased work, life and political precarity brought on by the Eurozone crisis. Samooskrba works as a material and discursive resource, allowing Slovenes to seek economic, political and ethical benefits to improve their predicaments, to envision viable futures and to reduce uncertainty. Rather than being mere responses to a crisis, Slovenian engagements with samooskrba illustrate the physical, cognitive and affective work invested in enduring the crisis and in making sense of it. In the following sections I first examine the theoretical bases that inform my interpretation of the role of samooskrba in Slovenia before turning to its specific characteristics that make it such a potent keyword.

2 Precarity in austerity

Cuts to public spending decreed to lower the rate of borrowing with international creditors have represented the signature public policy of tackling the European economic crisis. The majority of EU national governments reduced the expenditure for welfare services at a period when the economic recession only increased the demand for them. This resulted in austerity, a widely distributed and increased economic hardship (Bear 2015; Bear & Knight 2017). Knight and Stewart understand austerity as different from poverty or underdevelopment in that citizens have had to readjust to newer lower standards of living very quickly (Knight & Stewart 2016). The sharp increase in precarity in Europe is often attributed to the thinning of the welfare safety net (Knight & Stewart 2016; Muehlebach 2012; Narotzky & Besnier 2014).

From the term's limited associations with labour insecurity[3] precarity was made popular by Guy Standing's concept of 'precariat', a social class formed by conditions of flexible, part-time and insecure labour contracts (2011). Since, precarity has become "the word of the times" (Allison 2013: 6) and began referring to a wider, more existential condition of vulnerability and dependency on others, to the politics behind it (Butler 2004) and to its particular affects of hope and hopelessness (Berlant 2011). Recent anthropological engagements with the term employed to cover experiences as broad as scavenging for recyclables in Rio de Janeiro (Millar 2014), feeling abandoned in late liberal USA (Povinelli 2011; Stewart 2012), being young and being old in post-crisis Japan (Allison 2013), being bored as a homeless person in Bucharest (O'Neill 2014), being an environmental refugee (Weston 2012), waiting and feeling stuck (Hage 2009a) and surviving kidnapping and torture in post-invasion Iraq (Al-Mohammad 2012). Much more than insecure labour conditions in the current historic postfordist conjuncture seem to be captured in the use of the term. Precarity has been termed "a defining feature of society in general" (Khosravi 2017: 4). As Lauren Berlant sees it (in Puar 2012: 166), the term expresses at once a) a capitalist 'thriving on instability' in search of increases in productivity, lowering of costs and margins of profit – from labour flexibilisation to financial risks and speculation; b) a politics of privatisation of public wealth in the manner of neoliberal economic doctrine, c) a wearing down of bodies and minds with long hours, no guarantees, low wages, and

[3] When Pierre Bourdieu entitle his 1998 essay *La précarité est aujourd'hui partout,* it was translated into English as *Job insecurity is everywhere* (1998).

little room to imagine otherwise; and d) a ‘structure of feeling’ (Williams 1977) of a giving up on the promises and fantasies of the good life, such as the ‘American life’, that were until recently a stable feature of societies.

A shared characteristic of precarity, as the range of examples reveal, is the toll precarity takes on the everyday temporal rhythms, a “temporal unmooring” (Jansen 2015: 101), that in the absence of reliability and predictability of life become ‘syncopated’ (De Boeck 2015), punctuated with events outside of one’s control (Guyer 2007), and lock one into an ‘uncanny present’, a heightened sensation of presentness (Bryant 2016). During crises, the existing societal narratives and institutions no longer provide a resource able to alleviate a sense of uncertainty. The everyday is no longer a space of safety and stability as a lack of control over time becomes more pronounced. What Standing observed for the temporary and fragmented precariat, also became more broadly applicable for any welfare claimant during the Eurozone crisis: citizens’ time was encroached by numerous bureaucratic processes, time was spent to carefully plan it as much as possible and to plan expenditures, while taking time off work became less probable. Unemployment status and benefits claims made this even more apparent. Regular schedule of appointments at the public unemployment agencies, workfare, and waiting and queueing for these obligations left citizens with little wiggle room to structure the everyday themselves (Standing 2011, 2013).

Precarity slows down, skews, truncates, distorts the “effort to make life” (Narotzky & Besnier 2014: S14) as it takes away the predictable beat of the rhythms of everyday life. Household self-sufficiency practices alleviate this pressure of uncertainty. They offer a practical and local way of regaining stability in the everyday life. Food practices, both as nourishment and as resource, can offer a productive way of understanding the dynamic animating economic and affective behaviour in precarity accompanying significant socio-economic changes. As ethnographic examples of postsocialist sites have demonstrated, coping with structural change, adapting to the loss of past certainties, moral and economic orders, and dealing with diminished social security after the fall of the Iron Curtain have often been expressed through novel foodways, consumer tastes, increases in food preserving and in petty trading in foodstuffs (Bridger & Pine 1998; Caldwell 2004, 2009a; Mandel & Humphrey 2002).

Peasant studies have long admired the strategies comprising a 'subsistence ethic' that were used to "iron out the 'ripples that might drown a man'" (Scott 2000 [1976] :3). The peasant economies did not fit well the economists' models of the free market and were structured by a different type of internal logic of operation (Chayanov 1986; Shanin 1973). According to van der Ploeg, the 'peasant condition' is characterised by a constant struggle for autonomy, an "ongoing construction, improvement, enlargement and defence of a self-controlled resource base" (van der Ploeg 2008: 293). Resource base is the core of peasant household's livelihood and is carefully built up. It consists of all the inputs used in production, i.e. land, crops, water, and social resources such as access to institutions, social networks and local knowledge. To preserve the 'relative autonomy' of the farming household, peasants seek distance from dependency on the market when procuring inputs but seek market connections for the sale of farming outputs. Pluriactivity, generating additional income from non-farming sources such as part-time employment, is also a strategy of strengthening the autonomy of the peasant household, van der Ploeg argues, as it can secure cash income for farm inputs and investments and therefore help the farmer avoid debt and dependency. Berger depicted the peasant life as always improvising, always anticipating, envisaging the future as a series of risks and dangers to be prepared for, and taking on every opportunity (Berger 1979). While the practices of modern day peasants can bear little resemblance to the traditional ways of subsisting, at its core, the peasant's life still entails the same principle of collecting and building resources and managing the unpredictability (West 2014a).

These same principles can also be found amidst urban poverty and in the strategies of overcoming it. Crafting autonomy in the conditions of precarity is "an art of living through a precarious present" (Millar 2014: 48). To an urbanite in Rio de Janeiro, scavenging for recyclables in landfills might be preferred to a more official, yet unreliable form of employment because of a "greater self-determination in her everyday labor – [ability to] to reconfigure her work rhythms, to modify the length, frequency, and intensity of her labor, and to interweave multiple dimensions of her working and non-working life," or what Millar calls crafting of a 'relational autonomy' (*ibid*.)

Samooskrba that takes on the shape of enhancing the resilience of households with self-provisioning, smallholding, and informal food trade, as chapters six and seven

will show, is one way of keeping precarity at bay. It allows households to better withstand the hardship and thus endure through the Eurozone crisis. This aspect of samooskrba alleviates the economic consequences of austerity. What remains an issue is the political crisis, weaved together from a lack of viable social future and hope, from a decrease of available socially respectable employment and from the limitations to national sovereignty presented by the EU legislative apparatus. If left unaddressed, the consequences of precarity for the notions of sociality and the social body (Khosravi 2017) can represent a serious threat to political stability. Samooskrba tackles these aspects, too.

3 Future and hope in the nation

The future has not featured prominently within the anthropological tradition. Anthropology has been engaged with the past rather than the future as manifested in the cultural present (Munn 1992). Magic and witchcraft, divination rituals, cargo cults but were approached as evidence of a culture and therefore of a shared past rather than as practices and ideas related to the future (Jansen 2015). Yet human anticipation, including goals, targets, calculations, wants and needs is amenable to anthropological understanding, if one treats "the future as a cultural fact" (Appadurai 2004, 2013). Forfeiting orientations toward the future to the economic science came at a steep price, as economists' abstract models of future-oriented individuals increasingly gained power to represent reality, but by not being able to capture the wealth of human behaviour, began to constrain behaviour to fit the models instead (Callon 1998; Carrier & Miller 1998).

Despite the narrowing visions of a shared future of humanity intrinsic in the economic models, for instance of development, progress, averting overpopulation and undernourishment, humans 'make futures' through the myriad practices of imagination, aspiration and anticipation. These are socially constrained: they congeal around shared 'horizons' and 'fields of opportunities' (de L'Estoile 2014); they are framed by historical 'regimes of temporal reasoning' that determine which hopes can be articulated and acted upon (Jansen 2015); and the capacities to project life into the future are unevenly distributed in societies (Appadurai 2004).

Among these practices is the act of hoping. In the anthropological explorations of conditions of precarity, hope has been understood as an affective replacement for agency in precarious circumstances in which agency was obstructed (Lindquist 2006), as a method of knowledge production in uncertainty (Miyazaki 2004; Ringel 2012), as social meaning-making (Hage 2003) and as as a sense of movement, of feeling one is 'going places' in life (Hage 2003; Jansen 2015). These accounts help to consider hope as a tool of achieving autonomy and to recognise its cushioning and stabilising effect. Hope can serve as a practical strategy against vigilance, against enforced presentism, as a way of remaining focused on the broader social scope and on the future.

In Slovenia, self-sufficiency can offer such a hope. As explored in chapter five, six and seven, the associations of samooskrba with a viable, sustainable and desirable self-employment, its promise to change how people organise communities and collaborate with each other, its ability to stabilise the everyday, can alleviate Slovenes' struggles to find meaning in the productive activity they were forced to undertake in the wake of the crisis. By making present circumstances bearable with creating a sense of movement, hope can help endure circumstances that would be 'paralysing' without change (Crapanzano 2003).

While it is important to acknowledge the cognitive and affective work that goes into hoping (Ringel 2014), hopes can be mobilised and dispersed for political ends. Hage proposes that blurring the experiences of inequality and injustice in a country can be achieved through a more equal distribution of 'societal hope', the hope that defines the kind of lives that are possible in a society (Hage 2003). Hope plays well with distant utopian futures and can amplify messages of progress and utopia. Hope can help disguise the erasure of previous certainties and the legitimacy of claims of civic entitlement by transforming them into an aspiration (Muehlebach & Shoshan 2012). Through charitable work, hope can fuel political economies (Caldwell 2017). The legitimacy of the state is closely tied to the ability to manage social uncertainty. Managing the unpredictability of the future by developing techniques of managing uncertainty such as statistical analysis and probability and risk assessment, and by reassuring citizens has been central to statecraft (Foucault 2009; Hacking 1990; Mathews & Barnes 2016) and various other forms of political 'anticipatory action'

(Anderson 2010). A lack of widely held societal hope can therefore be a serious threat for the legitimacy of the state.

In Greece, the Eurozone crisis has caused a wide 'temporal disorientation' or the 'temporal vertigo', in which the "aspirations for the future were quite violently torn away from [the Greeks] to be replaced by austerity, unemployment, fears of hunger, and social destitution" (Knight 2017: 239). A struggle to envision and make a future (Appadurai 2013) brought on by an enforced presentism of precarity (Guyer 2007) makes lives in austerity more difficult. The lack of societal hope and direction had a hand in crumbling several European governments (Knight 2017). Hope renders a possible future, makes a future visible. Samooskrba summons such a hope in Slovenia. As the state attempts to forge new certainties as the basis for political legitimacy in crisis (these attempts do not need to necessarily succeed), popular discourses, such as forging a Slovenian food self-sufficiency movement, can be recruited by the state in order to normalise the widely shared sense of crisis and precarity and to diffuse any potential opposition. Social hope is mobilised by wrapping practices of Slovenian food production and consumption in the European ethos of environmental protection, respect for local food traditions and rural development. Social hope in Slovenia is mobilised by giving nationalism a shape of modernity. Contrary to assertions of cosmopolitanism as the mode of European belonging (ibid.), of a European identity as one no longer bound to the territory and the people (Borneman & Fowler 1997), of a European citizenship as 'mutated' and no longer national (Ong 2006), contrary to the efforts of bureaucrats in Brussels of 'inventing' a new European citizen, described by Shore (2000), nationalism functions as a main mode of European belonging in Slovenia and perhaps, elsewhere in the EU.

In contrast to European nationalisms as an integralist force drawing Europeans back into the embrace of safe and familiar traditional communities, nationalism can represent a striving toward a European future. Observing in the early 2000s how scholarship predominantly portrayed nationalism as backward facing and as obsolete, to become supplanted by transnationalism, Gupta focuses instead on the "affirmative, utopian promise of nationalism, this sense that something new emerged in the world" (Gupta 2004: 271), on the "renewed beginning that nationalism emphasises" (272). What propelled the virulent and lively instances of nationalism, was a sense of temporal lag, an allochronism that "always has a utopian or messianic time" (275),

imbuing subjects it interpellates with a sense of urgency and a purpose toward progress and modernity. His proposition resonates with nationalism in Slovenia.

This thesis gives evidence to challenge the understanding of nationalism in the EU as necessarily an expression of an opposition to Europeanisation. Nationalisms can be integral to the understandings of Europeanisation. Not only in the sense of 'gastronationalism' or the production of regional value for the creation of comparative advantage for foods traded within the Common Market (DeSoucey 2010); nationalist ideologies in Central and Eastern Europe are bound up with a sense of inferiority and otherness in comparison to Europe proper, long deployed also as Western interpretations of this region (Todorova 1997; Wolff 1994; Klumbytė 2011; Zarycki 2014). Europe is a 'normative trope' that the member states convincing their citizens of the need to 'catch up' with EU's more affluent members find it hard to reach (Dzenovska & De Genova 2018).

In Slovenia, nationalism has served as a way of resolving contradictions between feelings of inferiority and smallness within Europe and a desire for modernity and Europeanness (Šumi 2004; Vidmar Horvat 2010). Expressing dissatisfaction with the EU governance does not diminish the national idea of Europe as the final aspirational goal. The Polish ambivalence toward Europe and capitalism described by Pine – resentfulness for a lack of promised progress, yet an embrace of traditional ways of life (2002) – is not a contradiction for Slovenes, but rather weaved together into a single narrative. A desire to protect the national agriculture from negative impacts of the Common Market and favouring local foodways is seen by Slovenians as asserting a European identity of a nation able to stand up for itself and protect its own interests among its European peers. Policy circles and public opinion often expressed a wish to be "more like Austria" in this respect. By referring to samooskrba, Slovenians are able to reconcile the tensions between the promise of growth and prosperity within the EU, that ignited independence in 1991, and current realisation that this is not happening for most citizens. With samooskrba, Europe is able to remain an aspiration; not yet reached but markedly on the horizon, despite it challenges. As chapters two and three will show, the discourse surrounding Slovenian self-sufficiency is capable of inspiring a fervent conviction of the superiority of national food while making these assertions simultaneously signs of an aspiration of a European identity (cf. Klumbytė 2011: 851; Dzenovska 2013; Mincyte 2011b).

A study of Slovenian political media discourse on Europe and the EU in major Slovenian dailies concludes that Slovenes "care about [the EU] as long as it enables [them] to use it intensively as a tool of consolidating [their] own national identity" (Vogrinčič 2012: 140) and that,

> as a rule, the EU has the role of frame of reference to make sense of and legitimate [Slovenian] own position. […] The EU is repetitively used to prove [Slovenian] own 'Europeanness', or said differently, referencing the EU asserts [Slovenian] national identity as European. […] This means that the EU is never presented 'on its own' but as burdened with the national and as always nationalised in advance. (*ibid*.)

Shore suggested that the EU community was founded on a 'myth of the future' not unlike the path toward a classless society installed at the core of socialist countries (2000). I propose that instead of a constant improvement to build an ever closely integrated union of nations, the force pushing forward, especially during crises, can also be taken up by the 'catching up' of nations, by the national becoming or remaining European. Enduring the crisis in Slovenia entails preserving its role of the EU Eastern enlargements top performing country. In chapter two, the Slovenian agricultural minister will state: "In crisis, every country first takes care of itself, before others". This assertion of the power held by the nation-state does not question the ultimate goal of belonging to a modern Europe. When crises foreclose other ways of envisioning the future, nationalism keeps propelling forward. It is thus vital to recognise that the European ideals of liberal democracy and cosmopolitanism are not as much under threat by an oppositional and backward force of nationalism by to a great extent responsible for its production.

4 Work and citizenship

Increased levels of un- and underemployment during *kriza* not only test the breaking point of the welfare state model but shake the foundations of citizenship. The rise of flexible, part-time labour and precarious work patterns undermines the basis of the 'status of citizenship' (Marshall 1950), the relationship between the citizens and the state. The socioeconomic systems that produce welfare states, be it the Western

national Fordist modernist kind (Neilson & Rossiter 2008) or those based on Communist ideology, work on the principle of 'citizenship projects', by which nation-states come to think about people as national citizens (Rose & Novas 2005). Among them are:

> defining those who were entitled to participate in the political affairs of a city or region; imposing a single legal system across a national territory; obliging citizens to speak a single national language; establishing a national system of universal compulsory education; designing and planning buildings and public spaces in the hope that they would encourage certain ways of thinking, feeling, or acting; and developing social insurance systems to bind national subjects together in the sharing of risks. (439)

Social insurance such as welfare is based on the idea of social solidarity, which works as the vehicle for the distribution of risks within and between generations. This entails the productive activity of 'citizens-workers' (Neilson & Rossiter 2008) and hinges on the state acting as a guarantor and regulator of the arrangement (Muehlebach 2012: 41), as the "visible expression of the invisible bond uniting living men in the same society" (Donzelot 1988: 399).

Yet in the current economic and political conjuncture, waged labour "has ceased to be the key that allows access to full citizenship" (Neilson & Rossiter 2008: 59). "In a context where work is unavailable to many, work as a key site of 'virtuous citizenship' is undermined. In its place, people are drawn into the field of citizenship on the basis of new criteria" (Barchiesi 2011; Hull 2017: 202). Investigating the effect of the Chernobyl accident on citizenship in Ukraine, Petryna uses the term 'biological citizenship' to address how civic claims to rights and entitlements began to be asserted on the basis of the harms and injuries sustained by the citizens' bodies (Petryna 2002). Elsewhere, work remains the main source of value and moral personhood able to underline good and proper citizens. In South Africa, despite its scarcity, salaried work remains a civic aspiration, while other criteria, such as public accountability and patient (consumer) rights also begin to form sites of civic negotiation (Hull 2017). Since "work remains a crucial source of value, while also being dislodged as a dominant mode of belonging", Hull suggests such mode of citizenship is 'contingent' (206). Others note that bureaucracies in which the 'public goods' of austerity, decentralisation or accountability are negotiated, are replacing labour as the cradle of

citizenship. The "forms of contractually delimited partial inclusion" are making citizenship itself precarious (Mathur & Bear 2015: 28).

In Italy, in the absence of waged full-time labour, work continues to represent the basis of citizenship by volunteering and charity work that take the main role in the practice of proper citizenship. Remaining a source of moral personhood, work in Italy has entered a new regime "that has allowed for the state to conflate voluntary labor with good citizenship, and unwaged work with gifting" (Muehlebach 2012: 6). In a substantial restructuring of the relationship between citizens and the state that Muehlebach terms 'ethical citizenship', "a new mode of social and moral subjectivity, new assumptions about citizens' rights and duties, and new conceptualization of human agency, affect, and will" is emerging (17). The mode of social citizenship of welfare capitalism based on a "universal agreement spanning classes and generations in national society" (43), political ties and civic rights, is being replaced in Italian neoliberalism with the "localized politics of intimacy and immediacy", collective belonging based on the affective ties "as emanating from individual spontaneous will and desire" (ibid.) and civic duties of caring. Labour remains the driving force of the Italian society but its role is now to attend to social care and to help the impoverished and needy directly and willingly. "The ethic governing public life is not concerned with the equality between classes or the redistribution of wealth, but with the mobilisation of affectively laboring individuals willing to engage with the relationally poor in their midst" (44). Citizenship in Italy is no longer guaranteed and cannot be automatically assumed. Instead, it is an "orientation that can be precarious and that must be repeatedly asserted and attained. People have to exhibit the capacity to remain valued members of society" (18).

The need to prove their entitlement as citizens endows the public domain with a heightened affective display of care for the other. Instead of calculative rationality often ascribed to neoliberalism (or 'fast-capitalism' in Holmes 2000), Muehlebach finds a "newly sentimentalized public sphere" permeated with emotions and desire to do good (Muehlebach 2012: 17). Restructuring of citizenship in South Africa is occuring along similar lines. New assertions of value require practices of moral self-fashioning that enables "the reimagining of citizenship as shared sociality, rather than one structured by the usual political hierarchies and traditional modes of control" (Hull 2016: 204). Muehlebach finds the Christian and socialist ethos inspiring the ideas of

ethical citizenship that turn volunteering from precarious labour practices and exploitation to a mode of good citizenship supported and actively rolled out in public policy and legislation, bureaucratic frameworks and the in the area of public education and pedagogy. She suggests that morality is "neither epiphenomenal nor as oppositional but as integral, indeed indispensable, to market orders" (Muehlebach 2012: 6).

Similarly, Bear's research along the Hoogly river in West Bengal led her to conclude that economic governance is fused with ethical meanings and deeply influenced by both moral orders such as popular nationalism and orientations toward the future in the form of anticipations and efforts to bring the desirable future into being, both very distant from the economic notions of calculating and rational conduct of agents (Bear 2015). Working with artisanal cheesemakers in North America, Paxson observed how small-scale cheese producers weren't guided by the profits made possible by the increased visibility of artisanal foodstuffs but rather by the allure of being able to earn income 'from the land', from the care for animals and from appreciating the importance of 'good food.' In other words, they were engaging in the 'economies of sentiment' (Paxson 2013). In an ethnography of Wall Street, Ho laid out how ethical values and ideas about appropriate behaviour of the brokers and analysts such as employee flexibility, smartness and hard work are deeply integrated in and affect the way Wall Street operates (Ho 2009). Furthermore, the moral understandings and affective investments of officials guide how policies are performed (Gupta 2012; Mathur & Bear 2015) and the unavoidable gaps between its hoped-for outcomes and implementation of the policy contribute to its overall effect (Abram & Weszkalnys 2013a; Li 2005; Mosse 2004).

These examples point away from the idea of cultural intimacy as a knee-jerk response to a social lack of meaning, certainty and security. They challenge Scott's portrayal of governance projects of ordering and legibility, and its applications on the terrain of EU governance, as failing to take into account the local idiosyncrasies, thus causing significant challenges of local appropriation (Scott 1998; for example in Dunn 2003a; Mincyte 2011a). Instead, they show an integralism encouraged and produced by the structures of governance. As Muehlebach points out, as neoliberalism is capable of incorporating its seeming contradictions, "ethical citizenship operates as a

depoliticising tool while simultaneously opening up new political possibilities" (2012: 169).

The Eurozone crisis that brought on vast unemployment and a decrease in welfare expenditure in Slovenia only intensifies the need to restructure citizenship. This thesis examines samooskrba as the tool that guides Slovene citizenship into a more 'ethical' form, from several perspectives. Samooskrba allows work to remain at the foundation of citizenship but no longer as the main strand of producing social value and solidarity (Graeber 2001). Citizens claim membership of society by exhibiting an appropriate moral orientation toward work, rather than perform it. With referencing self-sufficiency, the state in Slovenia introduces a threshold for civic membership: to exhibit a vision of the future, of their own independent survival and livelihood and of the nation's alternative food future, and to undergo or aspire to the work of self-sufficiency that nourishes the collective body, the family, local community and the nation. In attempting to endure the Eurozone crisis by normalising precarity in this way, the state is able to redirect its claims regarding unemployment and need of welfare to become the duty of the claiming citizens themselves. The shrinking resources from the state in austerity makes competing for them an additional prompt.

There are many parallels between the abandonment and neglect of citizens in need of welfare by the state and the narratives of the neoliberal economic doctrine of the autonomous and self-regulating citizen (Bourdieu 1998; Hyatt 2001; Makovicky 2014; Rose 1996), specifically with reference to self-sufficiency (Hébert & Mincyte 2014). In postsocialist countries, socialist and market-oriented ethics have sometimes clashed (Mandel & Humphrey 2002), but the difference between the experience of poverty and precarity in socialist or rural settings and the constrains of a neoliberal personhood were also found to be remarkably minimal (Hernández 2014; Umbres 2014). But deploying the former (the weakening of welfare state) in the language of the latter (reducing dependency and inefficiency) does not guarantee the reception will be as intended. The parallel between them may in this case exist only on the level of political discourses, to be met with cynical responses from the citizens that see through the wool over their eyes, and to prompt reluctance, resistance and a development of informal economies to navigate around the constraints. Postsocialist citizens are especially familiar with using cynicism as a practical way of coping with socialist regimes (Ledeneva 1998).

With referencing environmental sustainability, indexing local culture and national traditions, just economic exchange and quality and healthy food, samooskrba can work as a discourse that transforms poverty into modernity. Yet samooskrba also works beyond this, as it is able to respond not only to the issues of labour for governance in austerity but to tensions surrounding the morality of work. Precarious livelihoods crafted during the Eurozone crisis, for example unregistered petty trading of foods foraged in the forests, or grown and prepared at home, while volunteering to inflate one's social benefits allowance, and juggling other odd jobs may conflict with one's moral convictions, leading one to endure the austerity only by compromising one's one ideas of what is right. Being unable to procure an income in a lawful, conventional way and having to resort to shadier or irregular ways of sourcing an income to get by will, in Slovenia, attract allegations of moral opportunism from one's peers, regardless of not having any other option, and accusations of being rooted in the socialist past, when informal practices were tolerated rather than set in the present, European ways of the rule of law. Thus, being able to earn a living in a morally appropriate way is an essential element of coping in crisis, as is being able to do meaningful and socially recognised work (Castel 1996). To be seen as doing work in morally appropriate ways in one's community often necessitates devising strategies of value transformation – of camouflaging the exchange value needed to sustain a livelihood into another form of value regarded as preserving community ties (Makovicky 2009).

With its references that go beyond household self-provisioning and its benefits for expanding the household budget, samooskrba has the potential to work as such a transformation belt. It allows a translation of piecemeal livelihood activities into moral and aspirational labour. It therefore offers an ethical cloak to Slovenes finding themselves in need of gambling with their moral reputation for the sake of survival. However, their ideas can clash with those of the state. Citizens might have different takes on what the role of the state should be in aiding opportunities for work. As chapter five will show, when the state is found too fond of praising the role of consumers as champions of samooskrba by shopping locally, petty food producers take offence. Work in austerity changes both how people relate with the state and how they see themselves as persons. In preserving work as the basis of citizenship in Slovenia, samooskrba allows the citizens and the state to negotiate what counts as work and what does not.

5 The ambiguity of self-sufficiency

The main characteristic of the trope of self-sufficiency that enables its use for both moral camouflage and exposing the differences in plans and intentions of negotiating parties, is its mobility and ambiguity. Samooskrba is a mess. A push of austerity into informal practices of self-provisioning and petty trading reminds Slovenes of the 'things they did back then', during socialism, yet they are also noticing how these are now to an extent infused with modern and cosmopolitan ethics of supporting local economies and community-building and can serve as the basis of civic claims. Hopes that the lax adherence to legal frames they require will be tolerated by the authorities is based on their reframing as 'doing good'. While the risk of appearing opportunistic never subsides, the associations with urban greening, neighbourhood revitalisation and good quality food production offers new opportunities to sell home-made goods as commodities. Samooskrba blurs not only the lines between past and future, but also between left- and right-wing politics, fringe and mainstream, formal and informal, moral and immoral. Attributing a high importance to samooskrba and engaging it its practice destabilises the border between both class and ethnicity. Blurring the line between self-subsistence and consumption of green urban space ultimately also shakes the border between producers and consumers as champions of the nation.

Often, the difficulties of navigating its meaning are observed by its users and practitioners, wishing to reinstall the social distinctions that the trope erases by making minor points of difference count as marks of belonging to a particular social group. For example, to sustain deeper social polarities, minor practical distinctions of gardening conduct were asserted to signal ethnicity on a multi-ethnic urban gardening site in Sweden (Klein 1993). Similarly, when growing vegetables in the city of Ljubljana, liberal, middle-class urbanites will assert the difference from working-class plotholders on the basis of gardening arrangement, growing style and crop selection by consciously opting against individual gardening, use of pesticides and classic, ordinary vegetables crops that Ljubljanans 'typically' use (whether or not this is in fact true).

Political tropes in other locales were also recognised for their ambivalent, adaptable nature due to which tropes operate "as the currency that makes commensurable the incommensurable" (Muehlebach 2012: 194). In Italy in the early 2000s, 'solidarity'

was such a keyword, frequenting various social and political circles and "drawing together of disparate projects and agents while seemingly eradicating historical and ideological difference" (171). Muehlebach's Italian collocutors likewise struggled to retain solidarity's traditional links with the political left while seeing it being repurposed for other political aims. In South Africa, democratic tropes such as rights and accountability were found to be "flexible enough to contain both conservative and subversive elements", thereby allowing citizens to fashion themselves as moral while exonerating the state from offering a reduced scope of services (Hull 2017: 204). This ability of neoliberal economies to conjure up concrete realities out of ideas and representations of these realities, even from seemingly contradictory words and performances, has been usefully captured in the terms 'economy of words' (Holmes 2014) and 'economy of appearances' (Tsing 2000).

Samooskrba shares the stage with a family of accompanying words, which I examine more closely through the chapters in this thesis: local and Slovenian, *domače* (home-made), organic, community, autonomy and *znajti se* ('to find a way'). Their associations help unearth a particular flavour of samooskrba or expose its different undertones, and their various combinations make samooskrba a potent material and discursive resource. While my research was prompted by a desire to unravel this mixed metaphor, I came to understand its recombinational quality as a crucial ingredient of the trope. It allows Slovenes to have their cake and eat it, too. It deflates the tension around the desire to remain an EU member while enduring the austerity imposed by the EU. It offers a way of proclaiming sovereignty while remaining economically dependent, cosmopolitanism while flirting with traditional ways of making do, a sense of national belonging while being left to one's own devices by the state. No other trope can capture so well the particular contradictions of enduring the Eurozone crisis in Slovenia and allow to resolve them by blurring the tensions that arise.

The idiom of samooskrba is also particularly well suited to respond to the problems of governance during the Eurozone crisis. While the price of EU membership is a significant cut to sovereignty by way of shrinking the nation-states' legislative scope, rolling out austerity measures weakens the state wiggle room even further as citizens are called to rely on themselves and each other rather than the state. Governing by ambivalence enabled with samooskrba puts on a semblance of sovereignty to avoid close scrutiny of the role of the nation-state during kriza. In this respect, an idiom

similar to samooskrba is ‘active citizenship’, deployed in both Eastern and western Europe and appealing both to socialist ethos of informed citizenry and neoliberal citizen responsibilisation (Gal & Kligman 2000; Muehlebach 2012). The trope’s polyvocality has an “integrative function, providing disparate individuals with a sense that the ethic they ascribe to is socially shared, continuous, and coherent across time and space” (Muehlebach 2012: 193–4). By signalling coherence, samooskrba also promises such a national union. A revived nationalist sentiment should be understood as a practical response to the constraints to national sovereignty during trying times (Gupta 2004). Therefore, retreat does not fit self-sufficiency as a metaphor. Rather, as examined in chapter three, four and five, governing with samooskrba is an innovative form of governance, traced to national and local state levels.

6 Informal Europeanisation

What made the notion of spatial and temporal retreat a fitting way to describe assertions of national and local identity is perhaps also connected to how we tend to imagine Europeanisation. The processes of European integration tend to be associated with implementing and abiding by the *acquis communautaire*, with transforming regional cultures into commercial value, with legibility (Scott 1998) and with flattening of social meaning (Strathern 1992), with an inflated bureaucratic apparatus often assumed to be self-serving (Lyons 2016). Several ethnographies examine the consequences of adopting the EU Common Agricultural Policy and other legislative bundles in the countries of the 2004 Eastern Enlargement and show how the EU attempts to standardise agricultures and food production-based livelihoods in CEE in order to weave them into the Common Market end up erasing the subjects the policies set out to include and creating ‘rogue’ citizens full or resentment against the EU (Dunn 2004; Gille 2009, 2011; Mincyte 2014). These are welcome as they uncover that European legislation, presented as having universal aspiration and a pan-European benefit, often models its scope on Western European cases and therefore fails to distribute the benefits equally throughout the EU (Böröcz & Kovács 2001).

However, the scope of Europeanisation does not end with inclusion into the European ‘technozone’ (Dunn 2005) and everything beyond its scope should likewise not be interpreted as representing a political opposition to the EU. A “surreptitious process

of Europeanisation is occurring in everyday life", through events and goods that give the EU a sort of 'latent legitimacy' (Shore 2000: 227). Shore suggests that Eurovision or Interrail communicate the idea of Europeanness to citizens in a more relatable manner. I propose that several examples of practices more commonly interpreted as nationalistic could also be understood to carry such an intention and effect. The grievances of CEE citizens surrounding the notion of the 'Europe of two speeds' or a sense of lagging behind, especially as it maps onto perceived differences in quality and availability of foodstuffs and other consumer goods (Jancarikova 2017; Vidmar Horvat 2010) can serve as an example of attempts to negotiate a more favourable position within the EU, not of withdrawal. I suggest that retreat present in food ethnographies of Eastern Europe (Aistara 2015; Dunn 2004; Gille 2009, 2011; Jung et al. 2014; Klumbytė 2011; Knudsen 2015) should be reread in a more complex way, as the manifold ways of asserting a European identity and of claiming a European belonging.

While more nuanced anthropological understandings of the state were used to explore the nation-state since Scott's model of the rationalistic and formal apparatus of state power directed toward the situated local knowledge and praxis, his theory has retained a lot of purchase in rendering the reception of the EU in its Eastern postsocialist region. Yet a portrayal of the EU through the theories of the nation-state that emphasize its ambivalent nature and uncertain effects can bring out novel insights and can show how the EU, like what Hull states for the implementation of neoliberalist economics in general, is "neither passively adopted nor 'resisted', but selectively mobilised and reinterpreted" (Hull 2017: 17).

State-systems and state-ideas need not assume unity, according to Abrams (1988). The effects of the state that bring it into being do not require consistency (Herzfeld 1993; Mitchell 1991; Navaro-Yashin 2002). The power of the state lies in its ability to hide its power, to blur the borders of the spread of power and to adopt a flexible presence (Sassen 2004). The state is "neither a purely rational-bureaucratic organisation nor simply a fetish, but […] a form of regulation that oscillates between a rational mode and a magical mode of being" (Das 2006: 163). The magical quality for Das is the state's "uncanny presence it achieves in the life of the community even at the moments of the community's defiance of the state – it is as if the community derives its own

existence from a particular reading of the state" (166). The state is produced in being called upon not only in times of need, but particularly in times of frictions with society.

While Das was developing this around an ethnographic reference to a particular community incident with police in India, replacing the Indian state with the EU in her quote helps me make the following suggestion: that the seeming opposition to the EU, from its softer forms of preference for domestic produce to full blown right-wing populism, is not somehow outside the EU, but can in fact reinforce the union. This strengthening in no way guarantees a tolerant and democratic social body at the heart of the EU, since "every crisis dismantles and produces Europeanness anew" (Dzenovska 2015). The permanent tensions of Europe as a place for fostering hopefulness and the disappointment of these hopes when EU policies do not produce a better life for most Slovenians is what gives the EU its 'magical quality'. The EU can assert its power when it is pushed out of reach. While the EU membership and the adoption of the euro currency necessitated the austerity imposed on Slovenes, the belief that by being 'more' European this difficult predicament could be avoided fuels political and public discourse. With the EU on a level beyond influence, yet a continued source of aspiration, the Slovene government can legitimise its authority since it can provide both a societal future (Hage 2003) and a justification for the taking the steps seemingly dictated by an outside influence to get there (Trouillot 2001).

The need to have a vision of the future during a crisis makes the 'return' to Europe a source of cohesiveness for Slovene citizens. Yet because Slovene national aspirations directed toward the West and 'civilised' Europe continue to demonstrate this entitlement by exhibiting a distance between Slovenian-ness and Balkan-ness ascribed to the ex-Yugoslav republics, this future also entails a high price of reproducing ethnic and economic inequalities via 'nesting orientalism' (Bakić-Hayden 1995). For certain member states, nationalism is a mechanism for a European *re*integration when tensions arise. In austerity, nationalisms can work to channel away Euroscepticism and thus, ironically, allow Europeans to continue experiencing the EU as uneven, unfair, unjust or undemocratic. Striving to increase the levels of Slovenian food self-sufficiency in order to keep up with the European market is only one example. This thesis examines the full costs of staying European in the age of austerity.

7 Fieldwork

"So how did you plan to study samooskrba as an anthropologist, then," asked Rok, an influential agricultural economist, while handing me a cup of coffee in the university faculty break room. Before I switched on my recorder to run by him a series of more structured questions, I was prompted to explain the particular angle my research was taking. What Rok was getting at with the question was that food self-sufficiency in the narrow sense was a macroeconomic index, a term reserved for the rate of national self-sufficiency regarding agricultural produce. In the past he criticised publicly the way the term samooskrba was being used in the media to denote various subsistence activities, including gardening, that had little to do with the effect on national agricultural productivity, or could in fact be impeding it. Since for him, the word belonged solely to the realm of economics, how was an anthropologist planning to make use of it?

To study samooskrba as an adaptable and translational device for resolving the contradictions of Slovene experience of the Eurozone crisis, I borrowed from the anthropology of development and treated samooskrba as a 'scheme' – as a loose entanglement of materials, techniques, ideas, agents and promises; as an assemblage without defined borders or intent; that is nevertheless oriented towards a goals and 'does' something (Ferguson 1994; Li 2005; Mosse 2013), despite the possibility that its most prominent effects can take root in the antagonistic gaps between elements of the constellation (Tsing 2005). Approached as a scheme that stretches over multiple terrains and settings, samooskrba lent itself well to 'studying through,' a methodological approach devised to study policy and its effects (Wright & Reinhold 2011). While samooskrba did not have a consistency and coherence of a policy, the authors note that the approach avoids understanding policy as running in a linear fashion from policymaking levels at the top to sites of its implementation at the bottom. Instead, they focus on what happens in the gaps between actors and sites:

> "The aim is to follow the flow of events and their contingent effects, and especially to notice the struggles over language, in order to analyse how the meanings of the keywords are contested and change, how new semantic clusters form and how a new governing discourse emerges, is made authoritative and becomes institutionalised. What it studies is a process of political transformation through space and time" (101).

Marcus's 'following' approach offers a parallel method. He suggests that following things, conflicts, people, biographies, stories or metaphors can provide a methodological framework able to productively organise the sites included in ethnographies that span multiple sites (Marcus 1995). Adopting a 'following the metaphor' approach to trace the trope of samooskrba across sites in Ljubljana presented me with unique fieldwork trajectory and considerations.

The entirety of my 14-month fieldwork, from August 2014 to October 2015, was conducted in Ljubljana, Slovenia's capital. Ljubljana is situated in the Ljubljana Basin almost right in the centre of Slovenia, on the Ljubljanica and Sava rivers and forms Ljubljana City Municipality. The municipality is divided into 17 district councils, organised into two concentric circles around the Centre district. The inner circle districts, circumscribed by the motorway ring, house urban residential and business areas. Across the motorway, the urban landscape soon blends into farmland and the peripheral districts are predominantly rural. The city accommodates all the national state institutions as well as most corporate headquarters. Ljubljana together with the neighbouring towns constitutes the most developed region in Slovenia that contributes to a quarter of the country's GDP and has levels of the GDP per capita of around 50% above the Slovenian average (Božič 2011). Ljubljana has also been my home for ten years prior to my moving to London and I know the city thoroughly.

Acquiring a broader perspective on how samooskrba as a scheme might operate required me to cast the net of fieldsite selection broadly. While all fields are constructed and all ethnographers are 'fieldmakers' (Coleman & Von Hellermann 2011), this felt even more true during my chase of the metaphor across several research sites. Establishing links between samooskrba as an economic index and its ethical values and sentiments in Ljubljana entailed visiting food markets to talk to producers and shoppers, navigating through bureaucracies of government institutions to conduct interviews, digging in the soil of my own vegetable gardens, chatting endlessly over coffee or beer in Ljubljana's numerous *kafiči* or my interlocutor's homes, attending an educational course on self-employment and extensive reading of policy documents, internet sources and historical material in newspaper archives, libraries and from behind my own computer.

The multisited nature of my research required gaining admission to several social environments. Through the course of my fieldwork I have had contact with 107 collocutors whom I either interviewed one or more times or kept in touch regularly. The majority of my informants were food producers, either farmers, informal market traders or urban plotholders and my work with them provides the core ethnographic material in this thesis. Officials of the local and national state and NGO staff represented the second notable cluster. Material from this group of Ljubljanans was mainly sourced through interviews conducted in more formalised settings, although not as a rule. My initial plan upon entering my field entailed covering self-sufficiency on several scales: national self-sufficiency located in the policy circles, local self-sufficiency of food markets and NGO initiatives and home self-sufficiency of household food production. These constituted my starting points from which, as my fieldwork progressed, I worked to fill the gaps between them by locating myself in fields that lay in the middle, such as unregistered events featuring informal food traders, unemployment courses and community gardens. Besides making new acquaintances through snowballing, I learned about several gardening and local food initiatives and event through the social media.

I began establishing connections with Ljubljanan urban vegetable growers who kept plots on one of the city's several established gardening sites with the help of my family and friends, who knew somebody that tended an urban plot. However, I quickly learned that occasional visits and chats on the garden plot or kitchens would not offer me the level of ethnographic richness and detail I needed to understand the practice. Moreover, introducing myself as a researcher to plotholders was often met with suspecting glances and anxieties that I was conducting project work for an official outlet wanting to stop or hinder their activity. Acquiring a plot of my own proved key for establishing close and daily contact with plotholders, yet this was far more demanding than I initially thought. Even though I was doing anthropology 'at home' and was comfortable with the location and language of my chosen fieldsite, I was entirely unfamiliar with the steps I needed to take and spent several months in pursuit of renting a plot. The quest itself was a valuable source of information on the organisation of the garden plots. Once I secured a small garden plot, getting a first-hand experience of growing vegetables began opening doors. Being seen as eager to learn and hardworking by my garden neighbours dispelled their anxieties that I was a 'foreign agent' of some sort and allowed me to talk to them more freely about their

experiences and motivations. Becoming a gardener also enabled me to adopt a more suitable social role for establishing relationships with gardeners on other sites as well as conducting more informed interviews. Being now able to share the joys and ails of urban gardening, I felt more confident expanding my research to interviewing growers on other garden sites, even without a previous networking link. Although I did not think that obtaining a bodily experience of gardening at the beginning, it later came to be integral to the conclusions I made.

Making contacts in the area of policy and bureaucracy was, conversely, much easier. I identified individuals who I wanted to interview beforehand, through newspaper and online research, and after the initial round of contacts, through recommendations and references. Conducting interviews with Ljubljanans working as public servants and experts normally did not require other methods of gaining access than an email. Visiting and volunteering and agricultural fairs and conferences and introducing myself to politicians and experts I wanted to meet to interview was also a productive avenue since it closely resembled how networking was ordinarily conducted in this milieu. Conducting interviews in the policy and bureaucracy arena necessitated knowledge of, and was aimed to illuminate, policy and legislative documents. I have studied legal acts related to food production, food safety, food security, urban space and land acts, I have examined the minutes of public board meetings, and I have learned the steps of official conduct and procedures needed to file an application, for instance applying for a municipal plot garden or registering a part-time business activity. I also researched the online historic repository of local newspaper articles on national and household self-sufficiency to add a historical component to the policy research. Interviews and reading fed into one another to deepen my understanding of this field. The method was also used to contrast policy intentions and its effects – written word and on-the-ground justification and interpretation.

Getting in touch with collocutors in the field of informal food trading required more tact and patience and was almost exclusively done through introductions from mutual acquaintances. Since the nature of informal or illicit market exchange made its practitioners less willing to talk about it openly, I came to weave my friendliest relationships with food traders and kept in regular touch with them long after my fieldwork had ended. Often, the informal and unregistered status of my friends' trading livelihoods was due to the fact that they were unfamiliar with the official procedures

and fearful that they would be found out by the authorities to be doing something wrong. Due to my extensive study of official documentation they regarded me as an expert and often asked to help them navigate the municipal or state procedures or accompany them on errands that included official interaction. While this was taken as a favour by my collocutors, such state interface events came to represent an important source of data in this thesis.

Examining the mediator roles assigned to the ethnographer by the people I met in the field also constituted valuable sources of insights about my field (also see the use of researcher's mediation to cushion off zones of moral and market exchange in Makovicky 2009). Sometimes, however, my traversing of roles of the 'expert', 'professional', 'friend' or a 'like mind' did not yield beneficial results. When I attempted to exchange contact information with a person at an anarchist squat by giving them my business card for the sake of practicality, the distrustful looks of squatters quickly put me in my place. My faux pas enforced the reluctance of anarchists running a community garden to allow an ethnographer into their midst. Feeling unwilling to be objectified by research, stemming from their having received several requests for survey and interview participation from researchers before me, their community garden remained almost entirely off-limits and represented only a marginal source of ethnographic material.

The task of interrelating the discourses of samooskrba with its practice, the intentions with the effects and the special events with the mundane everyday life that put me in contact with collocutors from a range of areas also necessitated their variable level of research participation. It was neither practical nor possible to seek the same level of depth in all of my fieldsites and in some sites, a level of ethnographic depth, a 'deep hanging out' (Geertz 1998) had to be given up as a result. I did become close and friendly with public officials too, but since bureaucratic and policy circles produce a body of written and media materials that my other collocutor did not, the major share of data collected in this particular field leaned toward the discursive and textual rather than the ethnographic. With dedicating most of my field access and participant observation resources to food producers and traders, the ethnography in this thesis is lopsided and tilts heavily toward the second part. Considering that chapters in the thesis are organised from the structural of policies to the corporeal of gardening and from the least to the most direct research involvement from me, it may appear as if my

thesis is reproducing the state as an entity residing in the legal acts and bureaucratic procedures staked against which are the everyday acts of resistance of ordinary Ljubljanans. I hope, however, to have achieved the exact opposite effect and showed how at each of the scales through the chapters both the state and the challenges to it are continually involved in several dialogues and that the changing nature of the relationship between the citizens and the state can only be gleaned by observing all these scales.

Tracing a metaphor across multiple research locations required an awareness that the path along which I was moving was not already laid out and that I was creating my field as I went. Tracing a rather flimsy trope of samooskrba left me in perpetual doubt over whether a new site on my map fitted in organically or whether my research was led by preconceived ideas of where I should have found myself located. I reflected on these uncertainties extensively in my fieldnotes and resolved the issue partially by actively retaining a broad network of haunts and locations I visited regularly for the duration of my research, rather than immersing myself in sites and switching them completely as my research progressed. This allowed me to gain a more nuanced perspective, better synced with the voices of my interlocutors. However, it separated my days while in the field into distinct spheres of activity: the 'work' of interviews with officials and attending networking events and courses, the 'private life' of tending my vegetable garden and the 'socialising' of my informal visits. Since I had less view into what went on in particular fieldsites outside of these times, I remained a partial stranger in all of them. Maintaining such a wide networks of sites in order to 'follow through and through' was exhausting and was accompanied by a persistent sense that I was pressed for time. This became especially pronounced in the peak of the growing season, when the activities around cultivating plot gardens skewed my research significantly towards participant observation among the gardeners, leaving me with less time to tend to other duties. I later came to understand that the time-consuming element of urban gardening was its significant aspect that would not have made itself so apparent in a different fieldwork setting.

While I had not felt at home with any of the fieldsites explored in this thesis before I started researching, being a 'native' anthropologist proved invaluable in terms of managing such a broad terrain. I was born in Slovenia to Slovenian parents and lived in the country until I embarked on my doctoral programme in the UK. I thus had a

huge advantage: I had perfect command of the language, I was familiar with the location, and I have followed the news and made some key contacts before entering the field. I would not have been able to conduct this research had I not been doing anthropology at home.

The simple distinction of the role of the ethnographer on the 'outsider' as someone not brought up in the location of fieldwork and the 'insider' as someone who was has been problematized along several lines (Abu-Lughod 1991; Halstead 2001; Narayan 1993). No anthropologist is entirely an outsider looking in, nor an insider attempting to introduce some distance between themselves and their collocutors to delimit their field. Rather, one should be attentive to the degrees of familiarity and social identification (for instance class, gender or education) that determine the distance between the researcher and the research participants. This relates to the fact that the ethnography happens through an always 'positioned subject' of the ethnographer (Hastrup 1993), therefore that rather than treading a uniform field, the ethnographer produces material through a series of changes of social and political 'locations' (Gupta & Ferguson 1997). Moreover, as 'thick data' is inseparable from the method through which it was acquired (that is, observed and experienced) (Geertz 1973; Graham 2017). The observer and the experience are necessarily embedded in the narration of this data, therefore "by situating ourselves as subjects simultaneously touched by life-experience and swayed by professional concerns, we can acknowledge the hybrid and positioned nature of our identities" (Narayan 1993: 682).

One of the 'insider' issues I grappled with during the course of my fieldwork was my familiarity with the language of my interlocutors that could potentially render invisible the insights contained within the etymology and meaning of terms. However, since my fieldwork was formed around following a specific metaphor, I consciously evaluated local terms found in connection to samooskrba. Writing my fieldnotes in English was one of my prime methods of retaining this awareness since noticing a struggle with translating a certain Slovenian or Croatian, Serbian or Bosnian term signalled its potential significance. Another issue common to 'insiders' is a perpetual sense that one is never living up to the role of a proper anthropologist since one has ample opportunities for socialising that do not feel like fieldwork. I learned to embrace this sense since it helped me launch myself into locations I was unfamiliar and less comfortable with. My fieldwork involved both 'studying up' (Nader 1974) as well as

'studying down' and my positionality reflected the difference between them. While being associated with a foreign university – being 'from England' (*iz Anglije)* – bought me a favourable image with policymakers, bureaucrats and Slovenian experts and academics, I felt uneasy with their helpfulness and openness about their personal opinions on ways of conduct in their areas of work, sometimes to the point that I feared I did not seek informed consent of research participation clearly enough and repeated it to make sure. I was surprised at their assumption I would necessarily side with them. I did not reciprocate advertising my personal support, since it lied with the impoverished food producers or civil society initiatives that I saw as in potential conflict with the authorities. I struggled with the issue of whether I should have made my personal stance clearer to them, even when it risked my data collection. I usually settled to broadcast a neutral stance to them but refused vocally any requests for information from state officials about my collocutors from among the food producer group.

The ethical issues I encountered among gardeners and traders, especially when I was visiting the sheds on garden plots that sometimes served as second or even first homes, entailed feeling unsafe as a lone female researcher, followed by the constant doubt whether this fear was in fact called for or whether it was a response to class and ethnic difference. Having been brought up in a suburb of a smaller city in the southeast Slovenia by university-educated middle-class parents and having had enjoyed an early life of relative affluence, I often felt out of my comfort zone among some of my collocutors. While my initial discomfort and fear subsided once I got to know my fieldsite better, the need to reflect regularly on feelings of unease with social and cultural difference remained. In my fieldnotes, I tackled the issues of how to best conduct myself to not emphasise and take advantage the lop-sidedness of our relationship, embedded in my cultural and educational capital, yet simultaneously, how not to make it seem as if I did not trust them with being able to handle this difference between us on their own.

8 Thesis layout

Chapter one situates Slovenia historically and through a general background on Slovenian economy and agriculture outlines the dimension of food self-sufficiency. I

present the attempts of Slovenian government to increase the rate of food self-sufficiency in response to a worsening state of national agriculture, attributed to the hindering effects of the EU Common Agricultural Policy. I compare this with the extent of food production on urban plot gardens in Slovenia and point towards its omissions from the official statistical data with which the domestic food production is assessed.

Chapter two describes the public campaign for the promotion of Slovenian food intended to aid the recovery of Slovenian agriculture and the mechanisms by which this goal was intended to be achieved. It then examines the public reception of the campaign for samooskrba. The chapter documents consumer assertions of the superiority of *domače* (home-grown, home-made) fresh produce and of the low quality of imported produce to tie it to the citizens' wider disillusionment with the EU and the national state. I outline how consumer evaluations of home-grown and Slovenian food are constructed in the absence of perfectly reliable consumer knowledge and retail transparency. I argue for attention to 'food hopes' as parallels to food anxieties, and as alternative ways of knowing food by investing trust even without possessing sufficient information. Ljubljanan consumers did not always seek perfect knowledge about the provenance of their food but rather based their judgements on sound moral links.

In chapter three I follow samooskrba as it is articulated through two main terms relating food to statecraft and governance – food security and food safety. I then continue to draw on anxieties of Slovenian consumers surrounding purchasing fresh produce which became exacerbated after the media scandal exposed a large numbers of farmers selling Italian wholesale produce on the main green market in Ljubljana under the domače label. While these were cases of fraud, the state went to great lengths to portray these farmers as selling potentially dangerous and unhealthy foods. Unable to promote or favour Slovenian produce and producers due to EU single market rules yet determined to do so, Slovenian government used the public momentum propelled by the scandal to conflate food provenance with food safety and entrusted policing of food origin to food safety inspectors. While it thereby regained the power identified as necessary to protect Slovenian self-sufficiency, it regarded all small producers as likely to commit fraud and as obstacles toward Slovenian food self-sufficiency rather

than as their main drivers. This proved ruinous for the farmers and the policy therefore risked achieving the opposite effect.

Chapter four explores the uses of the concept of samooskrba by the City of Ljubljana to create novel regimes of environmental protection that helped the municipality clear large areas of informally erected and deemed unsightly individual plot gardens, mostly tended by migrants, and install in their stead open-type community gardens tended by wealthier Ljubljanans, seen as more appropriate environmental stewards of urban green space. By tucking these projects under the heading of food self-sufficiency and thus casting them as an environmental and health practice, the city was able to silence issues of poverty and dwelling on the plots as it dispossessed its most vulnerable users. The chapter also documents various tactics of plotholders to avoid the municipal grip and control on other sites around Ljubljana.

Chapter five follows the developments in a three-month government-sponsored course on self-employment and social entrepreneurship related to foraging, producing and processing herbal plants for registered jobseekers. I demonstrate how samooskrba took on different moral imperatives and stakes held by the participating parties. While both jobseekers and public officials who took part in organising the course identified local herbal products as a significant food trend in Slovenia, the two parties formed very different ideas about what made such work morally sound. Jobseekers saw the engagement in own food production as a way of participating in social justice and equality and saw samooskrba as a public good to which access should be made available to all and from which all could benefit. For the course convenors and public officials, self-reliance and entrepreneurship represented a form of welfare. I chronicle the clashes between the involved actors as these positions were frequently confronted and as their moral stances became known to one another, leading to disappointment, anger and dismay.

In chapter six I examine samooskrba in the kitchen and pantries as a form of autonomy that aids the navigation of uncertain and precarious social terrains. I then identify household pickling and food storing and preserving as an example of a practice offering such autonomy. In looking at food preserving as a cultural institution during Yugoslav socialism and as contemporary practice by a low income Ljubljanan family which allows them to maintain valuable market and non-market relationships to stay

afloat, this chapter challenges the notion that household food self-reliance intends to follow a life off-the-grid.

Chapter seven returns to the site of urban gardening. It challenges the existing analyses of urban vegetable gardening that focus on the end results of the practice, by insisting on shifting the focus toward the process of gardening itself. By engaging in apprenticeship gardening and paying attention to the work invested, I suggest that plot gardening in Ljubljana is better understood as a way of managing uncertainty in crisis by creating temporal structures. With gardening, the growers excluded from the growth of social prosperity and personal mobility found ways of constructing themselves as useful and meaningful members of society.

1

‘If our borders were to close down:’ The falling rate of Slovenian food self-sufficiency and its background

In this chapter, I contextualise samooskrba by introducing Slovenian agriculture through a historical background. The first section outlines Slovenian politico-economic history and more recent developments within the Eurozone crisis in broad strokes. The second section reviews agricultural developments and policies. The third section introduces the background for the development of urban agriculture.

1 From periphery to the centre and back again

Slovenia is situated between the eastern most point of the Alps, northern most point of the Adriatic Sea and western most point of the Pannonian basin with Italy, Austria, Hungary and Croatia as its neighbours. It is one of the smallest European countries, covering approximately 20,000km^2, roughly the size of Wales. Different climes interact on its territory. Most of Slovenia has a continental climate; the short stretch of the Mediterranean coast lets in warmer temperatures and milder winters into the eastern Karst region, while the climate in the mountainous north, covering a tenth of Slovene territory, is Alpine and colder. More than a third of Slovenia constitutes sites designated as Natura 2000 that are subject to special habitat and biodiversity conservation (Natura 2000 v Sloveniji n.d.). Slovenian terrain is uneven and hilly and lends itself well to a natural extensive forest cover, except where the Alps rise above the tree line.

Slovenian history reveals a similar transitional character. A major Slovene history volume suggests that Slovenia could be described as “the land between” (Luthar

2008), whereas others have located it in "an everlasting draught of international flows and influences over its territory" (Fenko & Svetličič 2017, section 5, paragraph 1). In the past hundred years, Slovenian lands have constituted part of an empire, then a kingdom, a socialist federation, an independent republic from 1991, and a part of a Union from 2004. Slovenes have changed several types of currency during this time: the Austro-Hungarian krona for the Yugoslav dinar, the dinar for the Slovenian tolar, and tolar for the euro in 2007. In contrast to the wide array of foreign influences, Slovenia is homogenous in its ethnical constitution. Out of its two-million people, the large majority (83%) define themselves Slovene. 2% are Serbian, 2% Croat and 1% Bosnian. About 0.5% of the population constitute both the formal Hungarian and Italian formally recognised minority and the remaining tenth of the population consists of other European nationalities (SORS 2002).

Slovenian territory was part of the Austrian Empire and afterwards the Austro-Hungarian Empire until the Habsburg monarchy dissolved in 1918 after being defeated in World War I. The Slovenes, Croats and Serbs occupying the southern part of the Habsburg Monarchy formed the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs with the intention of joining the Kingdom of Serbia and forming the multinational state of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (Kingdom SHS). As the long-held ideas of a united Southern Slav nations have come to fruition in this country, in 1929 King Alexander I renamed the state to Kingdom of Yugoslavia (*Kraljevina Jugoslavija*, 'Kingdom of South Slavia'). Called the First Yugoslavia by historians, the kingdom collapsed 14 years later during World War II when the Partisan resistance forces led by Josip Broz Tito proclaimed Yugoslavia a socialist federation after the end of the war. King Petar II, Aleksander's son, fled to London during the war and was banned by the partisans from returning to Yugoslavia. Tito became the prime minister of the Socialist Federal Republic Yugoslavia (SFRY) shortly after the war and remained its president for most of the federation's existence and until his death in 1980. The Second Yugoslavia comprised of 6 autonomous republics and of a total population of 23 million, making it the ninth largest country in Europe. Its constituent republics were: Socialist Republic (SR) Slovenia (8.2% of total population), SR Croatia (20.6%), SR Bosnia and Herzegovina (18.8%), SR Montenegro (2.6%), SR Serbia (41%, with two autonomous provinces: Vojvodina with 8.6% and Kosovo with 8.4%) and SR Macedonia (8.8%) (Čepič 2015a). The nations had equal rights and own independent republic governments, but because it was modelled on the Soviet Union, SFR

Yugoslavia was based on centralist administration under control of the Yugoslav Communist Party (Borak et al. 2005).

The country withdrew from the Eastern Bloc after tensions between Tito and Stalin in 1948 (Luthar 2008) and began to develop its own version of socialism – referred to as Titoism in the literature – based on federalism, self-management and market allocation and in line with the Marxist notions of abolishing the state. These qualities became gradually more pronounced with changes to the constitution in 1963 and 1974. Yugoslav workers', social and local self-management and federalism was called the 'Yugoslav experiment' by the foreign observers in the West (Čepič 2015b; Rusinow 1978). Federal Yugoslavia was an "economically uneven and diverse country" (Čepič 2015c: 13). There were stark differences between the republics in terms of industry, employment, economic development. While Serbia was the largest and most populous of the republics, Slovenia was one of its smallest, yet the most affluent and economically developed. The republics often had opposing interests and agendas. A greater independence within the federation was the Slovenian aim, while Serbia argued for greater decision-making and policy-forming powers to remain in Belgrade on behalf of the federation as a whole (Čepič 2015b). The internal tensions between running the state with a greater degree of centralism on the one hand, and implementing a more pronounced federalist system on the other were constantly accompanying unionist politics until the federation's end. The issues of nationhood partially mapped onto this dilemma. Some advocated a federation as a loose association of multiple Slavic nations, others posited that the ultimate goal of reaching communism also entailed forming a joint Yugoslav nation. Antagonisms over nations using more than a fair share of resources or being in discord with 'brotherhood and unity' were a constant in federal politics as well as informal chats. A variant of the speech first made in the National assembly of the Kingdom SHS resounded throughout the decades and was deemed a truism. Paraphrased by Čepič, it describes Yugoslavia as the country "where the Serbs ruled [...], the Croats were up in the air or made political bargains and the Slovenes were the ones paying" (Čepič 2015c: 15).

Yugoslavia's strong opposition to Western capitalism but also explicit renunciation of the Soviet state socialist model had initially placed it in an uneasy position between the NATO bloc and the countries behind the Iron Curtain and prompted substantial military expenditures after the war. However, good diplomatic relationships in which

Tito played a key role transformed this stance into a unique position that flirted with and benefited from both sides (Lampe 1996). Yugoslavia's membership in the Non-Aligned Movement of which Tito was one of the founders further strengthened its image as the mediator between East and West and allowed access to foreign credit and trade with both sides. Access to Western imports and the expanded domestic production as a result of the self-managed socialist economy and exports to the Non-Aligned members improved the standard of living and supply of consumer goods. For Slovenia, starting out as the most economically prosperous of the republics and sporting a strong processing industry, the free intra-Yugoslav trade further encouraged its growth since Slovenia gained a surplus in the trade (Prinčič 2015).

Life – as long one did not speak against the authorities (Štih et al. 2008) – was overall good in Yugoslavia (Patterson 2012). Between the postwar early 1950s, still marked by a planned economy, and the economic crisis of 1980s, Yugoslavia was a relatively prosperous market socialist state. The country achieved soaring levels of GDP growth from 1960s (Borak et al. 2005). Consumption began to flourish as markets developed, and new department stores and spaces of cultural consumption were built in the republic capitals (Štih et al. 2008; Tivadar 2009). Yugoslav citizens held passports from the early 1960s and could travel abroad freely to both Western and Eastern countries. Passports were also used for what came to be a distinct phenomenon of Yugoslav shopping tourism. Travelling in masses to the closest Western countries, the bordering Italy and Austria, shoppers bought everything from basic foodstuffs like flour and sugar, to clothes, household appliances and other durables (Luthar 2006).

Passports, however, were issued to tackle one of Yugoslavia's most burning problems – unemployment (Štih et al. 2008). Unemployment became pronounced by the end of 1960s. The socialist administration cultivated the myth of full employment of the Yugoslav population and publicly treated any unemployment as a mode made out of personal choice (Kirn 2014). However, the Yugoslav state was aware of the problem and attempted to offset it by making agreements with Western companies to temporary employ Yugoslav workers. A large number of people migrated to Germany, Austria and France for mostly low-skilled and low-paid jobs and helped fuel the economic development of the West. Research on levels of unemployment was not a priority of the official analysis, but figures from 1981 suggest about a million Yugoslav were unemployed, another million were temporary workers abroad and four million

workers were not in regular full-time employment but worked as contract workers in industries such as construction, as farmers seeking seasonal work in mining industry or similar or were working informally (ibid.). Unemployment was distinctly unevenly distributed: Slovenia enjoyed near-full employment, while unemployment in Macedonia and the autonomous region of Kosovo reached 20% (ibid.).

Internal migration was widespread in Yugoslavia. Some estimate that nearly 10% of all Yugoslavs migrated at point in time (Klemenčič 2000). Such migration was mostly economic. Due to severe differences in economic development among the republics, Yugoslavs from less developed regions sought better employment opportunities in the more developed cities and republics. Slovenia and Croatia in the north were the most developed and the economic growth throughout the 1960s and 70s increased these differences. In 1950s, the average income in Slovenia was three times higher compared to the autonomous province of Kosovo and five times higher only a decade later. During the 1960s there were more emigrations from than immigrations to Slovenia due to passports, opportunities for 'guest work' (*gastarbajsterstvo*) in Germany and elsewhere in the West. The trend began to change in the end of 1960s and 1970s when the economic crisis in the West reduced job opportunities, while Slovenia was short on labour in construction and factory work. Slovenia became a destination especially for migrants from Bosnia and Herzegovina (Čepič 2015a). A high share of migrants acquired work in construction during the 1960s and 1970s when the public high-rise housing estates were being intensively built on the city edges (Žitnik 2004). With unprecedented levels of economic growth (Rendla 2015), migrations have nearly doubled during the 1970s and have been strikingly urban-oriented (80%). 40% of all migrants have moved from Bosnia and Herzegovina (Širok 2015). Overall, migrants from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, contributed a third to the increased urban population (Rebernik 2004). A special and not unsubstantial group of migrants consisted of military and state officials and their families who were frequently relocated to Yugoslav cities in accord with the idea of 'brotherhood and unity' (Klemenčič 2000).

During the 1980s, the average Yugoslav unemployment figure of 10% rose steeply to 17%, as response to the economic downturn in Western Europe in the second half of the 1970s, which was prompted by the global oil crisis. Migrant workers began to return to SFRY to seek work (ibid.). The problems of the structural unevenness of the

federation became more distinct. Inflation grew dramatically. The Yugoslav economy collapsed. Public debt accrued to finance the 'good life' of the decades before (Patterson 2012) quadrupled in 1980 (OECD 1990) and reached levels beyond the capabilities of repayment. Refinancing the loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) required Yugoslavia to impose severe austerity measures, called 'stabilisation' (*stabilizacija*), aimed at curbing public spending, tackling the inflation and orienting the economy towards a free market model (Lorenčič 2015). To obtain foreign currency through exports rather than further loans, the government limited imports, causing frequent shortages of foodstuffs and household necessities. Slovenes dealt with occasional yet sudden scarcities of oil, sugar, coffee and chocolate, washing powder and toilet paper (Tivadar 2009), as well as meat, cold meats, butter and cosmetics (Adamič 1982). Shortages of oil and petrol import resulted in limiting public usage of personal vehicles to every other day (depending on the licence plate number). Encountering problems with importing electricity forced the state to introduce power cuts (Tivadar 2009).

In this uncertain climate, the nationalist tensions that were underlying economic hardships during the preceding decade flourished (Horvat 2016). The problems were ascribed to the grave Yugoslav indebtedness, costly self-management and the federalist system of governance (Čepič 2015b). From the second half of the 1980s onward, Slovenian political discourses shifted more explicitly towards blaming a lack of democracy, political pluralism, civil society and respect for human rights, all of which were encapsulated in the idea of Europe (Vezovnik 2010). The territory of Yugoslavia south of Slovenia became imagined as barbarian Balkans, while Slovenia was purportedly different due to its European historical roots and European culture (Močnik 1999; Zorn 2005). The 'brotherhood' between Yugoslav nations was expressed by politicians and intellectuals in public presentations as a burden and a constraint (Bakic-Hayden & Hayden 1992).

Internal tensions grew and eventually led to a collapse of the federation, beginning with Slovenia's secession in 1991 and followed by Slovenian war of independence. The 'Ten-Day War' marked the beginning of the brutal Yugoslav Wars (1991-2001) which Slovenia managed to avoid almost entirely. The perception of smallness and vulnerability of Slovenian ethnonational community had aided the aspirational flight to Europe, as Europe was imagined as a shield from the Balkan threats to national

sovereignty (Deželan 2012). Independence was fuelled by narratives of Slovene return to its civilizational roots (Bakić-Hayden 1995; Hansen 1996; Patterson 2003; Žižek 1990). Politicians uttered statements such as 'Back to Europe to where we always belonged' and 'This is a choice between Europe and the Balkans' (Zorn 2005). Such positive orientations toward Europe fuelled by nationalisms and racisms against internal others were widely observed elsewhere across the postsocialist world (Klumbytė 2011; Verdery 1996).

A new Slovenian citizenship was automatically granted to ethnic Slovenes who were Yugoslav citizens. Yugoslav citizens from other republics residing in Slovenia permanently were invited to apply for citizenship. 25,671 people or more than 1% of the population failed to file the application or had the application rejected (Zorn 2013). Yet instead of granting them non-citizen resident or alien status, Slovenian government erased them from the Registry of Permanent Residents, rendering them stateless and leaving them without any legal, economic, social and political rights – to own property, to have health insurance or to attend public schools (ibid.). Public discourse blamed the victims for moral failure of not showing loyalty to the Slovenian nation. This extended and aggravated the fight of the The Erased group to demonstrate a violation of human rights with the Constitutional Court and the European Court for Human Rights more than a decade later (ibid.). Furthermore, nationalism was embedded in the new Slovenian constitution. Hayden noted that only the rights of the small Italian and Hungarian 'autochthonous minorities' were protected in the constitution (as they were previously under Yugoslav state), while all other ethnic groups were implicated as foreigners (Hayden 1992). Political discourses were also keen on articulating Slovenian identity as Central European and emphasised Slovenia's geographic location 'in the heart of Europe,' with Italy and Austria as its neighbours, to disassociate it from Eastern Europe (Hansen 1996) and its historical Western connotations of lacking, much like the Balkans, the ability for civilizational progress (Todorova 1997; Wolff 1994).

Joining the EU had been a priority goal of Slovenian foreign policy even in the months before proclaiming independence from Yugoslavia (Fenko & Svetličič 2017). Slovenia initiated talks and began orienting legislation toward harmonisation with the *acquis communautaire* (the entirety of EU law) in 1993 and formally applied for membership in 1996 (ibid.). Perhaps reluctant to subject its people to further austerity

after independence, Slovenian government chose a gradualist approach in adopting economic liberalism. Unlike the 'shock therapy' advocated by Jeffrey Sachs for Polish or Hungarian 'transition', the 'Slovenian model' proceeded cautiously with the introduction of free market reforms and sought to preserve social peace by leaving welfare safety nets in place (Mrak et al. 2004). Despite taking the slow route, Slovenia enjoyed high levels of economic growth after independence, with an average rate of GDP growth of 4.5% (reaching 7% in 2007) and a rapid rise in GDP that was reaching the EU average (SURS 2014). Several strong export-oriented enterprises that formed ties to the West during Yugoslav socialism were backed by partially state-owned major Slovenian banks. Unemployment grew steeply immediately after independence but subdued in the following years. Public debt decreased and reached 22% in 2008 (ibid.). Slovenia was portrayed as a 'success story' in the EU integration policy circles (Deželan 2012) and was due to its exemplary implementation of reforms in the accession process often referred to as the 'star pupil' (Fenko & Svetličič 2017). Slovenia joined the EU in the first Eastern expansion in 2004 and until 2013, and was the first and until 2013, when Croatia joined, the only ex-Yugoslav republic to have done so. In 2007 Slovenia adopted the euro as the first postsocialist member state.

The effects of the financial, economic and the Eurozone debt crisis were grave in Slovenia. In 2009, Slovenian economy declined by 8%, experiencing one of the largest drops in the EU (SURS 2014). Several public commentators were quick to suggest that this was the result of Slovenia's enduring ties with the past socialist regime and of an overly paternalistic welfare state with little flexibility for adjustment to changes in the global market. Some attributed the difficulties to the national character. Božidar Jezernik, an esteemed Slovenian ethnologist told The Guardian in 2013 that "depending less on the collective organisation, more on oneself, is not a popular idea here [in Slovenia]" (Gatinois 2013). The contrasting views pointed out that the grave effects of the European crisis were instead provoked by Slovenia's close integration with the international market. Since its domestic market is small, large enterprises have to rely on exports to achieve scale and competitiveness. The European crisis cut foreign demand for automotive, pharmaceutical and household appliance goods made by Slovenian large factories and resulted in extensive cuts to low-skilled labour (Zorc 2013). These registered significantly on the levels of unemployment and had a negative impact on the GDP (Guardiancich 2013). Due to lower tax revenues and higher social transfers, the public debt increased (Furlan 2014). Government budget

deficit rose to levels above 3% (SURS 2014), triggering an Excessive Deficit Procedure (EDP) from the European Commission (EC).[4] The EDP prescribed specific policy actions and reforms to curb the levels of excessive public spending. But the EC measures did not work as intended. The Eurozone crisis was yet to peak.

Succeeding the problems on industry and financial markets, the debt crisis emerged. The European banks made generous loans to companies during the boom years and these were now found to be non-performing. To plug the holes left in national banking systems that threatened the stability of the entire Eurozone economy, several European member states were forced to accept the infamous 'troika' treatment: receive loans under the direction of the EC, the European Central Bank (ECB) and the IMF in exchange for strict adjustments of their national economies and public spending.[5] In 2010 Greek and Irish banks received their first bailout package, Portuguese in 2011 and Cypriot and Spanish in 2012.

Slovenian banks were also badly hit. Bank losses revealed that loans fuelling the period of steep economic growth until 2008 were made out recklessly and to businesses with close ties to the banks of partial state-ownership. News of Slovenian 'crony capitalism' increased the lack of confidence of international markets in the Slovenian fate (Gatinois 2013). The anxiety over Slovenian vulnerability to external market shocks, the future solvency of the state and the potential request for financial assistance from the EU pushed down Slovenia's credit ratings (Inman 2012). This restricted access to cheaper loans and sped up the process of accumulating public debt, further impeding the ability to raise money in order to save the banks (Guardiancich 2013). To mitigate the financial debt crisis, the government further decreased public spending. High levels of unemployment and high uncertainty over work permanence in precarious and temporary contract work (SURS 2014) were further aggravated in 2012 by austerity measures in the form of the bitter and publicly much abhorred Fiscal Balance Act or *'Zujf'* (*Zakon za uravnoteženje javnih financ*). The act stipulated a decrease in pensions, unemployment benefits and other social transfers; a decrease in salaries of public officials and a temporary freeze on all promotions in the public

[4] This procedure is put in place when member states violate agreements of the Stability and Growth Pact that prescribes limits to public spending: budget deficit to 3% of GDP and public debt to 60% of GDP.

[5] Greece was most famous and the austerity imposed by the troika was recently chronicled in great detail by its ex-finance minister Yanis Varoufakis (2016, 2017).

sector; a reduction in the number of procedures covered by public health insurance; smaller public budgets for cultural, research and educational activities and – a measure that Slovenes took to heart because it symbolically represented austerity – the elimination of public holiday on January 2 in the attempt to increase labour productivity with the increase of available working days (Kaj nam prinaša zakon za uravnoteženje javnih financ? 2012).[6] Unemployment rose further between 2012 and 2014, especially among the young population where every fifth person aged between 15 and 29 was unemployed, compared to every tenth over the age of 30 (SURS 2014). The years were a turbulent period for the government too. Country-wide anti-austerity protests helped to topple the government in 2012.

The stress tests to which Slovenian banks were subjected by the ECB in 2013 revealed a gaping 4.8 billion EUR hole in Slovenian banking sector, representing a 13% share of its GDP in that year. The result made the dreaded troika bailout scenario very likely. The new government presented a further package of measures to raise the funds for injection into the banking sector and to stave off troika (Vlada potrdila zvišanje DDV in druge ukrepe 2013). 5 billion EUR was secured by increasing value-added tax; by privatising 15 major public or semi-public enterprises, including the national telecommunication company and the national airline; and by making further cuts to public spending, especially welfare provisions. Due to record high budget deficits (15%), public debt doubled and reached peak in 2015 when Slovenia owed 83% of its GDP, up from 46% in 2011 and 22% in 2008 (SURS 2014). While the deadline for EDP completion had been extended due to these "unexpected and adverse economic conditions," the price of renegotiation was a sterner demand for a delivery of labour, pension and health reforms, deemed necessary to the EC to decrease government spending in a sustainable manner (European Council 2016). To signal good faith to the EC and foreign investors, the National Assembly voted in favour of amending the constitution to include the 'golden budget rule,' the fiscal rule preventing spending or borrowing outside of EC limits. The assembly also voted in favour of prohibiting future referendums that would incur consequences for the public budget (Slovenija uvaja zlato fiskalno pravilo 2012). For public commentators and trade unions, putting creditors before the needs of the people represented a loss of national sovereignty, a

[6] The results on productivity were negligible. The public holiday was put back on the calendar in 2017, this time symbolising the end of austerity (Velika vrnitev 2. januarja: poslanci izglasovali, ne bo nam treba v službo 2016).

disabling of the welfare state and a surrender to the institutions of troika (Lorenci 2013; Vogrinc 2013; ZSSS 2012). An especially thorny issue regarding the draconian cuts to public spending was the fact that Slovenia shrank its budget while simultaneously contributing to Greece's bailout fund which the country then refused to reimburse. CEE leaders regarded Greek attitude surrounding bailouts as "an exercise in national narcissism" as it made them unpopular with their own national audiences (Traynor 2015). In Slovenia, this further strengthened the national narrative of government's subservience (and Slovenia's in general) to larger political forces.

From 2015, Slovenia started showing signs of positive economic growth and was able to demonstrate that its public debt and deficit were within the EC limits, thereby closing the EDP process. Unemployment figures began to decrease. Yet the feeling that the crisis was over was far from gone. The number of people living below the poverty line increased from 11.5% of the population before the crisis had started, to 14.5% (or around 60,000 people) in 2013 and the number remains close to the 14% figure in 2017 (Intihar 2017). 5% of all households and 10% of single parent households rely on charity provisions (SURS 2017a). Labour flexibilisation, such as the share of workers in fixed-term, part-time and student work, continues to increase, while the risk of poverty for Slovenes in self-employment is also rising (Ignjatović & Kanjuo Mrčela 2016). Young people work in particularly precarious conditions as more than three quarters in this group have fixed-term contracts (up from two thirds before the crisis, ibid.).

The crisis also accentuated Slovenian agricultural problems and legitimised the narrative that urgent reforms are needed. I look at Slovenian agriculture in the light of its geographical, historical and political limitations next.

2 Agriculture between burdens of the past and anxieties about the future

"If our borders were to close down, we'd be a hungry oasis within Europe," said the Food Supply Chain Relationships Ombudsman in his first interview with a major daily newspaper (Grah 2015). His role, a mouthful, was created by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food (MAFF) in 2015 as a part of its ongoing efforts to increase Slovenian low rates of food self-sufficiency and boost agricultural

productivity. Ombudsman's tasks entailed monitoring relationships within the Slovenian food supply chain and supporting those kinds of relationships that helped Slovenian producers reach domestic consumers.

Slovenian rates of food self-sufficiency had been worrying policymakers since Slovenia joined the EU and adopted the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) but concerns have become particularly pronounced during the Eurozone crisis. Historically a potato and dairy producer and exporter, Slovenia nowadays produces mostly cereals (61%) and meat (18%) (Gale 2014). It is self-sufficient in meat, particularly poultry, but needs to imports around 50% extra cereals consumed, 40% potato and more than 60% vegetables. Slovenia is among the EU member states with lowest rates of self-sufficiency. It imports around 60% of all food consumed within its borders, mostly from its neighbouring countries (ibid.). Its largest imports are wheat, vegetables, beef, cooking oil and sugar (Plut-Pregelj & Rogel 2007). Policymakers worry about the speed with which agriculture is declining. A growing forest cover and a shrinking agricultural area, most noticeably under potato cultivation, added to a 41% decrease in total agricultural production from 2004 to 2013 (Gale 2014). This has implications for the capacity to produce sufficient food in the future. As expressed by the Slovenian Parliamentary Environmental Council in 2004, the available farmland did not represent "sufficient volume of land for cultivation to ensure food self-sufficiency" and added: "So far this hasn't been risked by any other European state!" (MAE 2004).

The problems grew further since. The CAP, the pan-European model of agriculture, put Slovenian agricultural sector with its idiosyncrasies at a disadvantage. Opening markets and gradually reducing state support and interventionist measures did not have a favourable effect for Slovenian farmers. Market instability brought on by the food price crisis in 2007-2008 and the Eurozone crisis made these concerns even more potent (MAE 2010). While only 4% of Slovene population is officially employed in agriculture full-time and while agriculture adds a negligent amount to the GDP (SURS 2014), part-time farming and pluriactivity are significant. Only around 30% of Slovenian agricultural workers are full-time farmers (Eurostat 2017a). This suggests that "agriculture as an economic branch is more important in the national economy than indicated by official data" (Plut-Pregelj & Rogel 2007: 7) and is one of the core components that make up Slovene livelihoods.

Slovenian low agricultural productivity partly originates in the geographical and environmental givens. Due to its extensive forest cover and hilly or mountainous terrain, animal husbandry has prevailed traditionally over extensive crop cultivation. Out of the just over 2 million hectares that make up Slovenian territory, 62% percent is covered by forest. The rest of the area is divided between agricultural (23.5% or 0.5 million hectares) and other uses such as settlements, roads and other infrastructure. Of all the area dedicated to agriculture, more than half of it is permanent meadows and pastures. Only 8.5% of all Slovenian territory (174,000 ha) is arable land. Going deeper, over half of the arable land is used to grow cereals (4.8% of all area or 98,000ha), roughly a third of it is under fodder plants (2.6% of all area or 53,000ha) and the remaining sixth (or 1% of all area) is divided between growing industrial plants, potatoes and vegetables. According to the official data, vegetables grow on around 4,000ha, which translates into 0.2% of all area (FAO 2017; SURS 2013).

Slovenian fragmented land structure, resembling those in other postsocialist EU members states, represents the other end of low agricultural productivity. The average size of agricultural holdings is 6.5ha (up from 5.6ha in 2000) and only 16% of holdings are larger than 10ha (Eurostat 2017b), which explains the high share of mixed farmers. Small farms are often not a viable source of livelihood and a high share of small agricultural holdings signals an impoverished peasantry. Before turning to the government measures proposed to mitigate these shortcomings as they play out on the EU single market, I will outline the historical background on which this structure persisted.

Fragmentation of agricultural holdings marked Slovenian farming in 19th Century under Austro-Hungarian rule and originates in the inheritance laws by which land was divided equally among the heirs. At the beginning of 20th Century more than a third of all farms managed holdings smaller than 2 hectares and 87% of all farms did not exceed 10ha (Fischer 2005: 73). Even though the proportion of agrarian population dropped decidedly at the end of 19th Century and leading up to the WWI (in 1880 the rate was 81% and in 1914 67%), Slovenes joined Yugoslavia as a predominantly agrarian population (Fischer 2005; Godina Golija 2008). Besides major urban centres such as Ljubljana and Maribor, and industrial and mining settlements, most Slovenes

lived in the countryside at the beginning of the 20th Century. This figure was higher still in the rest of Yugoslavia.

The goals of Yugoslav politico-economic policy after WWII were a rapid industrial modernisation for post-war restoration and defence and the expropriation of large landowners, in line with socialist rule of the people. With the Agrarian Reform, large landowners such as banks, the Catholic Church (in Slovenia and Croatia) and foreign private owners with land rights originating in feudal relations were expropriated and their land was transferred to the state Land Fund from where it was redistributed to the landed and not-yet landed peasantry (Luthar 2008). Access to land was guaranteed for anybody that wished to cultivate, given that the landholding did not exceed 10ha (Hočevar Knežević & Černič Istenič 2010). Under the slogan "the land belongs to those who work it", land nationalisation and redistribution was a political project. In contrast to the Soviet forced collectivisation where peasants were perceived as a reactionary force to be tamed, Yugoslav Communists were tempted to treat peasants as partners and agriculture as a sector in tune with the ideals of socialist self-management (Čepič 2005a). Most of agriculture in SR Slovenia and the SFRY in general was private, with only around a tenth cultivated in socially and state owned enterprises (ibid.).

These shares were insufficient for an increase in agricultural production that could fuel the steady and fast industrialisation. Smallholders found it difficult to support their livelihoods through agriculture alone and had sought additional sources of income outside of farming or reverted to subsistence agriculture (Stipetić 1982). Half of private farmers, however, were part of cooperatives and were engaged in contract farming (*kontrahiranje*), with a share of their yields in exchange for the certainty of sales, better prices and access to tools and other agricultural inputs. During the 1970s, access to farm crediting and agricultural inputs increased, yet the initial fragmentation deepened the unfavourable position of agriculture despite this fact and proved too big of an obstacle in the long run (Čepič 2005a). The land reform increased the number of small holdings, and over the following decades drove down the size average. From 1950s to 1980s the agricultural land decreased, arable land has given way to meadows for animal husbandry, forest and fodder cultivation. The rate of agricultural population was falling steadily but the land continued to be fragmented. By 1970 Yugoslavia had 20% more agricultural holdings than the whole of the United States, with an average

size of less than 4ha (Stipetić 1982). Unable to sustain livelihoods through farming, the rural populations sought employment in the industry but were reluctant to sell family land and had continued to cultivate it for subsistence. A characteristic category of the 'worker-peasant' rose quickly; up from about a fifth in 1950, a full half of all agricultural holdings in 1975 were in the hands of people employed outside agriculture (Hočevar Knežević & Černič Istenič 2010; Stipetić 1982). In 1980s, only around a tenth of Yugoslav farms were 'pure,' not mixed (Prinčič 2013).

The process by which the "flight from land was quicker than the flight from the village" (Hočevar Knežević and Černič Istenič 2010: 37) forced Yugoslavia to become a net food importer in the 1960s (OECD 2001). As the most industrialised of the Yugoslav republics and oriented toward food processing and retail, Slovenia relied on food imports from the southern part of the federation. It imported wheat, maize, sugar, cooking oil and fruit from Vojvodina region in Serbia. Slovenia was the main potato producer in SFRY and exported it to the south in large quantities, although its advantage decreased in early 1960s as other republics began to cultivate it with lower cultivation costs (Prinčič 2015). The rate of Slovenian food self-sufficiency steadily decreased throughout the socialist decades. During the 1980s the overall rate was 80% and the rate of self-sufficiency with plant crops around 45% (ibid.). From 1970s Slovenia began supplementing traditionally grown crops, such as early greens, cabbage and apples with intra-Yugoslav imports and grew a liking for tomatoes and peppers from Macedonia and Serbia (ibid.). The Yugoslav debt crisis during the 1980s was particularly hard on the agricultural sector that had to endure rising prices and inflation, insufficient access to fertilisers and other inputs and unfavourable loan conditions (Čepič 2005a).

After gaining independence in 1991, the first Slovenian agricultural policy in 1992 noted the need to address the "consequences of the burdens of the past" and help transition the agricultural sector through "detaching from the Yugoslav and attaching to the European market" (Hočevar Knežević & Černič Istenič 2010: 25, 17). The policy intended to confront the issues of low self-sufficiency, trade deficit, low productivity and the unfavourable farm structure and pursue levels of agricultural productivity comparable to European. To do that, the *Strategy of Slovenian Agricultural Development* proposed better land consolidation processes and an increase in labour productivity. The government chose a path of gradual transitioning

and moderate development. The standard goals of a national agricultural policy – ensuring food security, preserving population density and retaining rural population, preserving and protecting land, ensuring parity income for the most productive farmers and permanently increasing competitiveness (OECD 2001) – were to be achieved through a "combination of 'ecosocial' and market concept" (Hočevar Knežević & Černič Istenič 2010: 18). By 'ecosocial' the Ministry of Agriculture understood the social, environmental and spatial functions of agriculture – closely related to the EU concept of 'multifunctionality.' The policy noted that ensuring such moderate but steady increase in agricultural output while preserving the natural resources and rural ways of life would require an active role of the state and substantial public expenditure. The state fixed prices for basic agrifood products and subsidised agricultural inputs to protect the producers. Additionally, the state subsidised the processors of bread and milk to secure that consumer prices stayed low if farm prices rose (OECD 2001).

In assessing the results of the agricultural policy a few years later, the Ministry noted that the costly state intervention did not bring the desired structural changes. Farmland continued to fragment or be left fallow. As a result of open markets, farmers' position worsened with foreign competition and agricultural productivity did not rise (Hočevar Knežević & Černič Istenič 2010). These unresolved problems gained an even stronger weight when farm policy was further aligned with the demands of open markets. As a member of the WTO, Slovenia lowered its border protection and 'freed' trade to implement "less distortive types of support" (OECD 2001: 17). The Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA), an agreement between European non-EU member states, of which Slovenia was a member until 2004, also required market liberalisation in decreasing state intervention. In the negotiations for EU membership, some changes in the state support in agriculture were also aimed at bringing the farm sector gradually in line with the CAP. While the stated goals of the agricultural policy remain the same until present day (with minor modifications), the tools with which it is possible to achieve them have since altered significantly, signalling a less active role of the state.

The subsequent policies supporting improvement of agricultural efficiency and competitiveness were largely aligned with the prescriptions of the trade liberalisation advocates such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). According to the organisation, the unfavourable farm structure, recognised

as the main obstacle to agricultural development, necessitated farm consolidation and improved labour efficiency. This however meant "less people involved in agriculture" (OECD 2001: 25). Although OECD acknowledged the Slovenian "strong preference for owning the land" (24), also as a reserve source of additional income, its authors advised to implement policies that would support creating rural employment without involvement in food production. The OECD encouraged the creation of mechanisms and market incentives that would help put land into the hands of productive farmers, while making commercially viable the natural and cultural resources of rural Slovenia through tourism, recreation and the creation of niche markets for local products. This would have eased the "tendency of smallholders to keep land for social security reasons, thus speeding up the shift of land to larger and commercially oriented producers" (25).

The OECD critiqued the 'ecosocial' function of agriculture, intended to protect the non-commodity benefits of agriculture, for serving mainly to increase public support for state intervention. Slovenia was advised to ensure that the non-commercial factors did not impede the commercial viability of the agricultural sector. However, when Slovenia adopted the CAP in 2004, it found that its post-independence and pre-accession 'ecosocial' policy was already fairly compliant with the CAP reforms designed to curb the problems of overproduction.

The CAP was born together with the introduction of the common European market after World War II. After recovering from postwar shortages with the assistance of the US Marshall Plan, Europe set out to rebuild its agricultural sectors and to ensure food security in the future. Insulating its market from the outside with export subsidies and import tax helped set a producer price that was higher than the world price. Setting price floors and using buffer stocks ensured that the prices remained high. Putting no limit on how much farmers could produce, the agricultural productivity in Europe increased, but also overshoot. Soon enough, European states, like the US, were searching for outlets on which to dump their subsidised agricultural surpluses. The reforms of the CAP in the subsequent years – and there were many – had battled the overproduction with set-aside programmes and production quotas. The reform of 1992, in anticipation of the WTO's Agreement on Agriculture that banned forms of state intervention with direct impact on production, began to dismantle the support for unlimited production support with 'decoupling' prices from the cost of production

(Herman & Kuper 2002). Agenda 2000 reform introduced subsidies for rural development. These developments gave the impression that the policy of 'multifunctionality' began to replace the productivist paradigm characterising the past decades. Yet the reform also enabled the EU to continue to subsidise its agriculture while remaining compliant with the WTO rules (Watts et al. 2005). Yet another considerable reform of the CAP took place a year before the 2004 EU Eastern enlargement that would double the number of farmers in the EU (Dunn 2003a). The 2003 reform introduced the Single Farm Payment scheme in order to further 'decouple' subsidies from production. The direct payments were made dependent on the size of agricultural holding and were being paid upon demonstrating compliance with the practices of 'good farming' and a number of environmental and animal welfare requirements. The postproductivist stance of the current CAP has been met with suspicion. Watts et al. emphasise that the importance of seeing agricultural multifunctionality, postproductivism an ecological modernisation in the context of the global food governance and the WTO Doha round continues to apply. The authors suggest that these changes can be more appropriately understood as a reorientation of production in the light of sustainability and public health concerns (2005).

Thus, Slovenia's underdeveloped and fragmented state of agriculture was sustained further (Fenko & Svetličič 2017; MAE 2010). The EU accession in 2004 and the common market was harsh on agricultural producers protected with state intervention measures. Without state protection, they found themselves unable to compete with the low prices of produce offered by agricultural workhorses like Spain, Italy, Hungary and the Netherlands and the production levels fell significantly. The changes were especially visible within horticulture and potato production (Gale 2014). The government noted that the "existing measures of the CAP (decoupled payments, measures of the Rural Development Programme) have worked towards maintaining the existing farm structure which is worrying in regards to Slovenia's development" (MAE 2010: 3). While CAP has worked to keep the countryside populated, the CAP subsidies did not help expand the volume of production. Subsidies were disliked by farmers and the wider public for the notion that increasing amounts of public money were wasted on a diminishing amount of food produced. According to an agrarian economist, subsidies were "an important cause of the dismal levels of self-sufficiency" in Slovenia (Pihlar 2013a).

After the global food price crisis in 2007-2008 and 2011 (see Chapter three for a brief summary), leaders elsewhere around the globe – European leaders among them – began to include food security and food self-sufficiency among important policy themes. The postproductivism of the earlier period seemed to have given way to a renewed imperative of increasing food production. These concerns augmented Slovenian issues with the CAP. The Eurozone crisis further added to the burden, as the urban and rural austerity and lower incomes discouraged practices that would have helped to increase labour productivity and competitiveness. Slovenes held on tightly to their agricultural plots (Šoštarič 2012). The fluctuations of food prices made net-importer countries more exposed to the effects of the crisis (MAE 2010).

In 2011, Slovenian government outlined a new directive to tackle these issues with a resolution entitled *Ensuring Food for Tomorrow: The Resolution on the Strategic Objectives for the Development of Slovenian Agriculture and Food Industry by 2020* (UL RS 25/11). The document outlined the strategic goals of Slovenian agrifood development: food security with a stable production of safe, high-quality and accessible food; competitiveness of the agrifood sector; and social and environmental sustainability of rural development (ibid.). The document noted that

> Slovenian agriculture […] achieved significant development, yet it is still lagging behind the competition on the internal and external EU market. Structural lags and further liberalisation of the common European market and globalization of agricultural markets require effective measures for a perpetual increase in competitiveness and greater farm flexibility. With the active role of the state and a pronounced private initiative, agriculture and food production need to be restructured into an innovative, flexible and interconnected economic chain, based primarily on knowledge and sustainable and efficient use of natural and human resources. (MAE 2010: 12)

The policy outlined measures of achieving the set strategic goals: intervention measures, incentives, educational programmes and public promotion of domestic agricultural products. The reach of direct payments and other intervention tools was limited: intervening in markets by favouring domestic consumption or attaching subsidies to production by individual member states violates the EU Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, one of the cornerstone documents that create Europe as a union. Article 34 of the Treaty, for instance, addresses the 'free movement of goods' and prohibits restrictions on imports between member states or measures

with an equivalent effect. Member state activities favouring the consumption of domestic products over goods from other member states are heavily sanctioned.

With its hands tied, Slovenian government stated that the desired boost in agricultural productivity would need to be "achieved in a more indirect way" (MAE 2013: 7). National promotional campaign was a significant element in this strategy. Since it was also the most publicly exposed element, it could also help the government seek public endorsement of its efforts. Increasing demand and creating new consumers was intended to help farmers to better compete against cheap European food imports and to prevent further abandoning of entrepreneurial farming.

The reasoning was that if consumers were reminded to choose Slovenian food over cheap imports by arguing for both consumer benefits such as health and food and ethical aspects such as showing them that their consumption mattered to producers and the environment, consumer demand would increase. This would prompt the supermarkets to stock Slovenian food on their fresh produce aisles, sending a signal to producers. By producing more, the existing high food price would begin to fall, thus allowing more people to access Slovenian produce and increasing the competitiveness of Slovenian agrifood sector. I outline the elements of the promotional campaign and its effects in the following chapter.

At first glance, the narrative of this chapter so far has been a familiar one. It suggests a small country swept of its feet by a large technocratic force of the EU, being pressured to abandon its local ways. It gives the impression of resentment, isolationism and protectionism in the face of international political and market pressures. The story seems plausible and resembles countless stories told in other postsocialist and postcolonial situation and locales. A closer inspection complicates this narrative.

The government policy to increase self-sufficiency emphasised both state intervention and greater economic flexibility that responds to greater liberalisation and globalisation of food markets. Moreover, it argued for state intervention so that greater market flexibility could be ensured. This goes against the expected notion, expressed by the OECD recommendations above, of state intervention and free market movements as opposing sides. It also speaks against the narrative of isolationism of the member states and the policy outlined advocates a productivist agricultural model.

At the core of this productivist model is a food relocalisation strategy and the following chapter gives full attention to unravelling how these do not necessarily form opposites. Furthermore, the policy does not signal an anti-European stance of Slovenian government officials and public opinion. Quite the reverse, they signal an attempt to assert a European identity that entails being able to protect its vulnerable sectors. When I interviewed public officials overseeing agriculture, several expressed that Slovenian policy regarding national agriculture should mimic the Austrian. The agrifood sector of this neighbouring country is small, yet it is able to protect it from liberalising and globalising influences. If it were not for Slovenian attitude of inferiority and servility, they would add, Slovenia could be in a position quite like Austria. This narrative corresponded with notions of Slovenianness held widely among Slovenes (Šumi 2004).

The following sections provides a brief look into another area that challenges the narrative of corroding influences of globalising forces on localities. It briefly introduces urban food production.

3 Urban food cultivation

The rate of self-sufficiency, a proportion of domestic production within the overall supply, is a figure derived from a food balance sheet, a type of representation of the production, trade (import and export), non-consumption uses (seed saving, fodder, the producer's own consumption) and losses of an agricultural product, with which a total availability of a food in a given country can be assessed and the consumption estimated. According to the FAO, the food balance sheets began to be widely used after the WWII to assess the amount of food available to the population (FAO 2001). They are generated by states and by the FAO from the official national data. They can get difficult to compile. For instance, to make a balance sheet for tomato, the amount of it in processed food, such as tomato sauce on a frozen pizza, should also be included by estimating its amount and adding it to the total. In Slovenia, the data for them is collected by the national Statistical Office, calculated and compiled by the Agricultural Institute of Slovenia and the numbers are published as official data. Even though the compilation of food balance sheets is no longer requested by the EU,

Slovenian government deems them of a special national importance in the current climate or agricultural crisis and change and continues to support their creation.

For 2016, the calculated rate of Slovenian self-sufficiency in vegetables was 41.3%. A look into the methodology with which the figure is obtained reveals that underneath the modes of bureaucratic legibility lies a particular ideological framework. The data for the domestic production of vegetables to calculate the rate is generated from an assessment of the yield of area under vegetables, reported by all farms of a certain size. Excluding very small agricultural holdings from the farm survey allows to lower the costs of running the survey and is permitted by the EU as long as the impact on these cuts does not significantly skew the results. Yet the production volume on very small holdings and private gardens is substantial. According to results of the Slovenian household budget survey in 2013, around 25,000 tonnes of potatoes and 30,000 tonnes of vegetables consumed by households (roughly adding a third to total amounts produced) are produced on kitchen and plot gardens and not acquired through the market (SURS 2017b).

To assess agricultural productivity, the first agricultural policy in independent Slovenia published in 1992 (MAF 1992) also created food balances. The estimate of the volume of horticultural production was much higher, however, and it included a figure of production of vegetables grown on kitchen gardens. With estimating that around 10,000ha was used to grow vegetables in Slovenia, self-sufficiency rate for vegetables amounted to 92%. On the basis of this figure and self-sufficiency rates for other foodstuffs shown as similarly favourable, the policy paper attempted to refute the threats and warnings of ending "independent, but hungry," expressed by the opposition and concluded that there should not be any problems with food security in the post-independence period (ibid.).

Therefore, by including or excluding the kitchen gardens and small growers from the calculations, the food balance sheets and self-sufficiency rates can be a way of reinforcing a particular policy. After Slovenian independence they were used to legitimise and strengthen the distance from the old Yugoslav policies, and to confirm that the decision for independence was the accurate one also from an agricultural and food production standpoint. Today, the figures serve to set the ground for the expansion of the market for domestic produce.

Growing food on plot gardens in Ljubljana, the Slovenian capital and largest city, remains widely spread urban phenomenon. In general, a large proportion of Slovenes engages in growing food for own consumption and this is not uncommon even in urban and suburban areas and is not related to income levels. House gardens are ordinarily utilised to grow at least a small share of fruit or vegetables consumed by the household. According to an assessment from 2009, approximately 5% of Ljubljana's residents tend a horticultural plot (Jamnik et al. 2009). Farmers selling their produce on green markets could perhaps best describe the share of vegetables that Ljubljanans produce on their own gardens. Even though vegetable self-provisioning does not enter any food self-sufficiency statistics and is mostly ignored when plans for boosting domestic provisioning are discussed and devised in national policy circles, during the peak summer season farmers feel the extent of vegetable self-reliance, the consequence of urban Ljubljanans either growing at home or acquiring food from rural kin. Farmers I talked to complained about the slow summer months that left them unable to sell as much of the summer gluts as they hoped for. Off-season trade in winter when the urban gardens laid fallow was better.

A particular historic pattern of the 'deagrarisation without urbanisation' that was especially pronounced in Slovenia (Barbič 1990; Klemenčič 2001) contributes to the significant role that private urban gardens play in Slovenian food production. Since Slovenia was among the smallest Yugoslav republics, industrial modernisation processes did not require workers to move to the cities for work and allowed them to remain on the countryside while communing daily. While deagrarisation in Slovenia was underway five times faster than elsewhere across SFRY, urbanisation did not follow suit and expanded at a much slower pace, reaching the current levels of around 50% in mid 1980s (Čepič 2015a). That the rural residents were able to remain on the land while seeking employment in cities was further assisted by a polycentric model of urban development by which new factories and industrial centres were built in out-of-the-way places (Rebernik 2004). Such strategic spatial dispersal was implemented for security reasons and was meant to reduce the extent of damage that could have been caused by potential enemy attacks. Further, in the economic boom period of 1960s and 1970s housing could hardly keep up with the demands for labour so commuting daily was in some cases the only option (Čepič 2005b). This slow type of urbanisation gave people access to land and many workers remained part-time

farmers. In the cities, the result of this process was that the space available for urban vegetable gardening did not decrease with the speed observed in other cities. Urban histories constitute and important part of understanding national food security and self-sufficiency, yet are often neglected.

4 Conclusion

This chapter contextualised Slovenia historically, politically and geographically to point towards the moment samooskrba became a part of public discourse. Subsequent chapters build on this in showing how samooskrba was reappropriated and imbued with alternative meanings different from the economic index. The aim of this chapter was to make the initial step toward challenging suggestions that alternative and local food movements in Slovenia could be unproblematically treated as expressions of anti-EU sentiments and policies. I've shown that government policies behind samooskrba do not challenge the principles of agricultural liberalisation and that these are assessed by the Slovenian government as necessary to keep up and participate in the EU agricultural market, despite explicitly pronouncing a focus on sustainability.

2

Food anxieties and food hopes: Domestic food in green markets and supermarkets

This chapter will look at government's attempts of influencing Slovenian consumers to buy products of domestic agriculture, in order to increase the rate of Slovenian self-sufficiency while remaining compliant with the EU law on free trade. I analyse the public advertising campaign that resonated with ethics of the alternative food movements and emphasised the forging of 'reconnections' by stressing consumer benefits. Even though the advertising claims fell within the bounds of the EU regulations, Slovenian consumers were able to decode them as implicitly promoting food of Slovenian origin.

While the connection seems straightforward, given the country's small size, I argue that the link between 'local' and 'Slovenian' food does not come automatically but is rather made possible due to the affective work of consumers. The advertising messages went hand in hand with the moral reservations the consumers had for low-quality imported food that they felt was permeating the food market. The consumer anxieties were partly resolved with consumption of local food, with its emphasis on the origin of food and its implications of closeness, familiarity, freshness, health, and ethical consumption.

To balance food anxieties, Slovenian consumers cultivate 'food hopes'. I use this term to show that methods of assessing food quality with increasing knowledge about the food are not always desired by consumers. They may instead opt for food that they can 'just know'. I show how sustaining these food hopes invited stronger government regulation for consumer protection. Food fears, food anxieties and trust in food do not exhaust the range of affects that orient foodways and shape the industrial food systems and their alternatives. Food hopes, grounded in mythologies of countryside production

and renouncing perfect trust or knowledge about food also importantly influence foodways.

1 Promoting Slovenian food

Vsa sveža sem, hrustljava,
domača sem, sočna in zdrava,
pridi pome, čakam te,
naredi nekaj dobrega, sem le zate.

(I'm fresh and crunchy / I'm *domača*, succulent and healthy / Come get me, I'm waiting for you / Do something good, I'm here for you.)

The long-lashed curly lettuce head sang these words seductively, accompanied by a bunch of tall slowly-swinging asparagus back vocalists in a new animated television ad unveiled at a press conference at the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food in October 2014. "The food grown close to you is tastier and more nutritious because it is ingested at the peak of ripeness," said a voice that followed the singing lettuce. That local food was tastier and carried health benefits was one of the three key statements of the government 2014 campaign for the promotion of Slovenian agricultural products. Other two ads emphasised environmental sustainability and food safety. "A diverse and preserved Slovenian environment allows nature and people to produce food in a friendlier way" was heard after a choir of fruits finished their jolly jingle. "Slovenia has one of the best food safety regulation systems in Europe" wrapped the performance by a chunk of cheese, suggesting the Slovenian state could vouch for the safety and quality of local foods by subjecting local food producers to stricter control. "When buying food, check its origin," continued the narrator. The witty slogan read *Kakovost nam je blizu*, "Quality is close to us," and concluded the ad.

"Aren't they cute? We thought they were very cute and friendly," began the advertising agency representative after all three ads have been unveiled to a conference room packed with journalists and camera operators. "We made the foodstuffs anthropomorphic, because we wanted the campaign to have a very cute and friendly feel." The endearing cartoon characters were the most recent attempt of the Ministry

of Agriculture to seek results in one of its top priorities, "the area of informing consumers about the meaning of local food," as stated by the Minister's press secretary. The press packs received by the audience contained a press release with further details about the benefits of ingesting such food might be for the consumers as well as what an increase in consumption might mean for local producers. But its gloomy prose was a strong contrast to the ads: "In crisis, every country first takes care of itself, before others" read one statement.

Just few months before the press conference, Russia embargoed EU agricultural products, among others, in response to international sanctions applied against Russia for its military intervention in Ukraine (BBC 2014). As a minor exporter, Slovenia was not directly affected by the ban, but the government feared that the unexported surpluses of European agricultural commodities intended for the Russian market – like Polish apples – could now flood the Slovenian market in search of a new buyer and would disadvantage domestic producers. Persuading Slovenes to resist the cheap imported produce and instead buy Slovenian was deemed paramount. As outlined in chapter one, favouring products of the domestic economy directly in a government advertisement constituted a barrier to free trade on the internal EU market and risked inviting EU sanctions for breaching the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union ('the Treaty'). In the official statements and other forms of addressing the public, the government avoided directly emphasising Slovenian origin but alluded to it by using messages and expressions associated with the topics the EU supported: short food supply chains, organic farming, multifunctionality principles, rural development and regulating food safety. All of these had the capability of being translated into 'Slovenian' by consumers.

Vicinity has featured as an important theme in the advertisements and promotional activities funded by the agricultural ministry. Under the slogan "Food from your local area [*hrana iz vaše bližine*]", the TV ads in 2012 advised consumers to "choose [food] that hasn't travelled hundreds of kilometres." However, in a country that measures 248 km in length and 163 km in width, such messages are easily understood by Slovenes to connote food of explicitly Slovenian origin. With establishing a firm link between 'local area' or 'local environment' and Slovenia, the government could list the benefits of local foods consumption and see them interpreted as benefits of national foods. The ads asserted that the less-travelled foods were fresher and therefore tastier,

of higher quality and had less transport impact on the environment (MAFF 2014). The promotional campaign featuring the singing lettuce also linked locality with quality but further expanded the scope of benefits. These included ecological and social benefits such as preserving biodiversity, supporting food producers and increasing food self-sufficiency. Joining the consumer benefits of better health, quality and safety properties of food from local area was the "rich and traditional taste" of such food to which Slovenes were allegedly used to from their childhood and which Slovenian producers and food processers respected in their recipes (MAFF 2016).

The latest campaign, launched in 2016, continued building on the connection between local/Slovenian origin and high quality of food. The slogan *Naša superhrana*, "Our superfood" concluded the TV ad featuring idyllic shots of Slovene countryside and countryfolk, accompanied by a woman's narrative about her long search for the very best food to give her family that came to a close once she located it just close by, in her vicinity, where it was all along. Strengthening the correlation between the terms local and Slovenian further are what appear to be slips of the tongue in campaign press statements such as "compared to imported food, local food has many advantages" read off the official promotional website (ibid.). Viewers have no trouble understanding words like 'us' and 'our' in advertising slogans as referencing the Slovene nation, especially as they are broadcasted by an official body. Such framing bears a striking resemblance to the classifications of Russian consumers between '*nash'* (ours) and '*ne nash*' (not ours) foods that express Russians' broader nationalist sentiment, described by Caldwell and by Humphrey (Caldwell 2002; Humphrey 2002).

Activities accompanying advertising campaigns are typically less restricted in asserting in an unequivocal way the superiority of Slovenian when measured against imported food. The Council for the Promotion of Agricultural and Food Products functions as an advisory body to the MAFF and comprises of Ministry employees, agricultural and marketing experts and food sectors representatives and has been meeting since 2011 to plan and implement the promotional activities of Slovenian food aligned with EU regulations. The campaigns described above are what the Council called a 'generic promotion.' In contributing toward the national policy goal of increasing food self-sufficiency as stated in the Resolution (see Chapter one), the Promotion of Agricultural and Food Products Act (UL RS 26/11 and 57/12) additionally specified a creation of a higher quality foods designation scheme, for each

of the agrifood sectors. The scheme named *Izbrana kakovost* (Selected Quality, SQ) was designed by the Council as a voluntary scheme to label food products sold on the Slovenian market with standards of higher quality as agreed upon by the individual food sectors. The scheme is open to applicants from all member states, as stipulated by the EU law, and the use of the designation would be awarded for food products containing only ingredients sourced within a particular state. To make the scheme work as a designation of Slovenian origin rather than general higher food quality in the EU, the Council had only to hope that no foreign food producer would apply. To fund the Slovenian leg of the SQ and the accompanying advertising, the Council decreed the funds be provided in part by the Slovenian food producers who were made liable to pay a 'mandatory contribution' tied with the size of their production. The other part would be granted by the Slovenian state as a form of State aid provided it did not violate the Article 107 of the Treaty and did not disturb the internal market of the EU (European Commission 2014; UL RS 2016).

Outside of Council's scope of duties, the Ministry of Agriculture had parallel projects of support for the campaign. MAFF worked on formulating ways of increasing the share of Slovenian foods in public procurement. Once a year, it funded a Traditional Slovenian Breakfast[7] in the attempt to influence provenance preferences of school children. A Day of Slovenian Food was designated for the third Friday in November from 2011 and was commemorated by events celebrating farm products since. MAFF also intervened – within limits drawn by the EU – in the production side. Under the restructured Rural Development Programme in the new CAP reform in the 2014-2020 period, the government made allowances for a small coupled subsidy to aid horticultural growers. Since vegetables had the lowest rate of self-sufficiency among groups of foodstuffs, an increase in this area would prove a success for the agricultural policy. Yet because the subsidy was low, the measure worked merely as a symbolic gesture to communicate goals of the policy to the public. To oversee the relationships between agents in the food supply from production to retail, to resolve disputes, and therefore to create favourable circumstances in which Slovenian food producers – smaller than suppliers of imported food – could access the Slovenian market, MAFF created the position of Food Supply Chain Relationships Ombudsman. The

[7] The breakfast consisted of wholemeal bread, butter, honey, a glass of milk and an apple. There was nothing particularly traditional about this breakfast besides its symbolic connotations of an imagined modest peasant diet and the fact that apart from wheat all the other ingredients of the breakfast are produced in relative abundance by Slovenian farmers.

Ombudsman's priority was to look into the conditions of supplying food to major supermarkets retailing in Slovenia. These seemed to systematically dissuade Slovenian food producers from accessing the supermarket shelves with insisting on contract obligations that smaller food producers found difficult to accept. Despite the idyllic images of the countryside, farmers and farm stalls abundant with fresh produce, the majority of food is procured in the supermarkets in Slovenia. Increasing the share of Slovenian products in supermarkets to increase overall agricultural production was therefore an important strategy for MAFF.

An ostensible synergy developed between the state and the supermarket retailers. The three largest retail chains, *Mercator*, *Spar* and *Tuš*, benefited from aligning themselves with the state-directed promotion of Slovenian origin and developed their own promotional campaigns. The calls to buy Slovenian food did not constitute a market distortion when asserted by private businesses and they worked to amplify the state-sponsored messages. Even though domestic produce represents only a minor share of food available in the supermarkets and is due to its higher production costs and price segmented into categories for more affluent consumers, the companies enjoyed a boost in their public reputation by being seen to echo the national interest (Mavrič 2014). This development was welcomed by the retailers after the high dependence on food imports in Slovenia began to be related in the media also with the purposeful and unethical suppying practices of such giant market agents (Pihlar 2015). For the way Slovenian food was widely advertised yet widely inaccessible to consumers, in scope and in price, the government promotion received critique: was the public promotion really contributing to increasing demand, thus increasing production and eventually lowering the price; or was it in fact merely contributing toward justifying its high price by emphasising its superior quality (Drevenšek 2014).

The campaign was assessed as successful by Ministry's representatives. The extensive state efforts to influence consumer behaviour seemed to have solidified the link between Slovenian and local food. They were not just able to avoid trampling on the regulatory boundaries set out by the EU; they imbued Slovenian food with meanings of local food attributed by the alternative food movements (Pratt 2007). However, the public popularity of local food was not necessarily provoked by the state campaign. It merely resonated with it. Instead of health benefits and ethical aspects of local food consumption promoted by the government, Ljubljanan consumers sought to protect

themselves from perceived ill effects, a lack of transparency and a dubious morality of food imports. I look into these notions in the following sections.

2 Avoiding food imports

I first heard about the *ampula* from my friend Jelka, a middle-aged mother, in the shade of her large vegetable garden, while chatting about what made home-grown produce invaluable. To illustrate her point with a contrasting one, she told me she had heard that an acquaintance of hers bought a head of lettuce in the supermarket, of foreign origin, brought it home, put it in the fridge and could not remove the lettuce from the fridge the following day. Overnight, it grew so much that it got stuck between the shelves of the refrigerator. He claimed to have found an ampoule, a small glass vial that allegedly contained growth hormones, placed between the lettuce leaves. This miraculous growth was supposedly caused by a failure to remove the growth-inducing vial before selling it to the consumer, thus augmenting its effects. Jelka did not have doubts in the veracity of the story; she commented that she found astonishing the lengths to which the industrial growers would go for profit. She reckoned the vial was used to cut costs while producing vegetables of immaculate appearance, large size and ability to keep fresh for longer during long transport. But these vegetables, although appealing to look at, were "poor" with nutrients, "empty," and would never be close to the food grown at home, Jelka believed. Better to stay away from them, she advised me, all kinds of ailments could result from eating such unnaturally grown produce. Although I had never seen a vial like this myself, I came across the mention of its discovery between the lettuce leaves a few more times during my ethnography. The ampula anecdote entailing an acquaintance, a vegetable and a stuffed refrigerator was sometimes told as a story in the hopes of provoking a gasp from the listeners. More often, the vial's alleged existence served my interlocutors to exemplify imported produce in general, particularly fresh produce, sold in Slovenian's supermarkets. With the story they wanted to justify their suspicions over imported produce and preference for home-grown food or produce bought at a market stall. In Slovenia, due to its relativelly small extent of production, imported and industrially produced fresh fruit and vegetables are understood as virtually synonymous.

Despite little proof of its existence, the ampula story made sense to Ljubljanans. A vegetable enhanced by an ampula, an object one might find in a laboratory, fit well into the local category of *kemija*, a repository of notions of potentially harmful and unhealthy foodstuffs produced with the use of chemicals or by other means considered 'unnatural.' The ampula spoke to persistent consumer concerns about the health effects of excessive pesticide use and GMO foods with a suggestion that these did not exhaust the range of issues to be considered, that there was always something new to be made aware of and avoided. It also spoke to considerations of the quality of the industrially produced fruit and vegetables. The consumers I spoke to about their views on fresh produce sold in Slovenian supermarkets often held in-depth knowledge of the methods employed in industrial horticulture. Ljubljanans could picture with ease the faraway greenhouses where vegetables were grown in substrate and under artificial lightning instead of real soil and open air, the use of fertilisers and plant protection products to improve the visual aspects of the vegetable as to make it more appealing, the harvesting before they were fully ripened to aid the transport, with the final touches of ripening by chemical irradiation applied to them in the supermarket storage just before sale. A tiny glass vial did not seem an entirely implausible method of producing vegetables that Ljubljanans considered were already only low-cost mirages of vegetables, without the less visible qualities such as good nutrition and taste. "It looks like it was painted, it looks perfect… But it's empty. And it tastes of nothing. It's just water," said Ivo, a nearly retired military official and echoed Jelka's thoughts. Deplored imported produce found on the shelves of Slovenian supermarket resembles the category of 'fake food' (*mente*), used by wary shoppers in Sophia, Bulgaria for processed food suspected of fraud and agricultural imports, suspected of being produced by 'unnatural' methods (Jung 2009, 2014).

Except for a few staple things produced in surplus such as white cabbage and apples, supply of fresh produce in the supermarket in Slovenia consist predominantly of foods imported from other countries. Small and scattered, the domestic producers find it difficult to offer their harvest under the conditions, price, quantity and stability of the supply appealing to retailers. Most of the produce is European, predominantly from Spain, Italy, sometimes the Netherlands and (increasingly) Croatia. With the notable exception of the publicly much detested garlic imported from China, it is rare for supermarkets to stock produce grown outside Europe. Since most of imported food originates in the EU and since Slovenian retail market is too small to make importing

specialties outside of it lucrative for the retailers, supermarket produce follows seasonality. It is uncommon to see summer produce like cucumber, green beans or eggplant out of season. During the short asparagus season, lasting from mid-April to end of May the supermarkets would be offering Italian harvest which would disappear from the shelves shortly after the time the Slovenian producers would end their season. As supermarkets do not offer an extension to the growing season and mostly mimic Slovenian seasonal cycles but replace the more expensive Slovenian produce with cheaper imports, supermarket food is suspect by Ljubljanan shoppers for offering cheap food of low quality at low prices.

Such food fears and avoidances are known to consumers, retailers, policymakers and researchers, yet there is little consensus on what they might stand for. Some suggest that food avoidances and a generalised direction to the wholesome, the local, the organic represent a significant incentive forcing agribusinesses to change. According to popular authors like Nestle and Blythman, the fact that there is not more open disagreement with the practices of the industry points to the fact not enough information made public about the how parts of the food system link together or how food materials are treated throughout this process (Blythman 2015; Nestle 2013). Others tried to show how food anxieties themselves were often the driving force of the developments within the industrialisation of food. Levenstein proposed that food fears were very much a part of public life even before the widely industrialized manner of food production and supply and suggested industrial food was a response to them (2012). He sets out to show that often the public food scares did not correspond to any "real" issue and aims to demonstrate that the history of the modern food is a history of eating fads, a history animated by an economy in which food fears are a valuable currency for profit-making rather than a critique.

Authors on both sides give the impression that a lack of consumer knowledge animates developments in industrialised food and that with greater transparency of the industrialised agrifood complex socially, environmentally and morally moot business practices would be forced to change. However, in the history of industrial food, Freidberg demonstrates that retailers' efforts to increase transparency and thus alleviate consumer food anxieties significantly shaped the industrial food supply. By exploring the history of the concept of food, Freidberg shows how inextricably bound the alleviation of consumer food anxieties was with the industrial food system (2009).

Fresh food bought in the supermarket became a marker of purity and naturalness and had helped alleviate older concerns about food adulteration and contamination. The link between freshness and safety did not occur automatically, Freidberg describes, as she illustrates how North American consumers were first suspicious of shop refrigeration and cold chains that kept food safe during transport and for longer. The idea of prolonging the life of foods was at first considered an unnatural method of seeking a commercial gain. With time however, the insistence on fresh factory food dismissed an older notion of foods made safe to eat through preserving by pickling, drying, smoking and similar techniques (Shephard 2000).

Attempting to ensure food safety can in fact account for much of the complexity of the contemporary food system. Vertically integrated chains, overseen by single corporate entities, suggested more oversight of the food supply; factory production suggested more sanitary conditions of handling food; and translucent packages in the supermarket suggested cleanliness and transparency of process (Freidberg 2009). Furthermore, as Freidberg proposed elsewhere, major changes in the global political economy of food, such as government interventions, trade barriers, international trade agreements and food quality standards have developed to address food fraud and other consumer fears (Freidberg 2004). She shows how the increasingly sensitive and demanding consumers of the Global North shaped stricter food safety policies, higher standards and more rigid accountability and audit practices that were not easily fulfilled by producers in the Global South and made their livelihoods difficult to sustain.

That sometimes supermarket food can in fact serve as a beacon of safety and reliability is demonstrated by Abbots. North American retirees moved to Ecuador in search of a simpler life and simpler food out of the industrial food system. The expectations of wholesome natural food procured freshly from local markets have fuelled their migration. Upon learning that street markets in Ecuador were no less integrated into international industrial food supply chains than Americans, yet enjoyed less consumer protection, the ‘privileged migrants’ resorted to procuring food from the supermarket, thought safer and cleaner (Abbots 2013).

Researchers of avoidances, suspicions, panics and doubts related to food procurement in the European context noted that persistence of such anxieties seems contradictory

given that food safety systems have improved enormously with time (Jackson 2015). On this point, food scholars proposed that broader issues of the food system animate consumer anxieties and food works to manifest them. The suggestion is that food anxieties expressed by consumers stand for the increasing levels of risk inherent in the industrial food system.

In Jackson's view, the "increasing gap between food producers and consumers" as well as "gaps between expert knowledge and lay understanding" of food and food production processes are the cause of consumer anxieties about food (Jackson 2015: 13, 49). The uncertainty about the safety of food procured through industrial food supply chains and the contradictory knowledge about how it works and how to eat, "disrupt established routines, [disturb] the rhythms of everyday life" (51). In other words, lengthening the supply chain increases the number of elements for consumers to oversee which increases anxiety. On the other hand, since such food entails so many aspects, the anxieties about broader themes such as climate change, democracy, migration also heighten.

Complementing Jackson's ideas about anxieties and uncertainties as results of gaps – in relationships, locations or knowledge – is the approach developed by Kjærnes and her colleagues (2007). They see consumer wariness in supplying food though industrial food channels as expressions of distrust in the agents of market and structures of governance. Trust, for them, is a property of social relationships. It is an expression of the stability and reliability of the social structures, institutions and routines, but at the same time, it is also a way of facilitating them. Read together, the authors propose that the increasing distance in the industrial food system threatens to disrupt the balance of a smooth-operating system of the food supply by losing a main ingredient required for operation – trust. To assess how a balance could be preserved, Kjærnes and colleagues were interested in how trust in food relates to the way the state governs food systems and pointed out the important role states can have in alleviating public anxieties about food.

Distance has been an enduring framing device for problems of food. Scholars have proposed that terms like 'distance' and 'disconnection' can aptly describe the industrial food supply chain in more general terms and can shed light on the sentiments of its participants. In the operations of food production and retail, food covers long

distances to reach the consumer; is assembled from differently-sourced food materials into a processes final product; passes through numerous processing points and hands; and is subjected to chemical processes to preserve its qualities when presented to a consumer. Food is also sold as a commodity by disinterested traders and treated with chemical and mechanical agricultural processes, which disembed it from its environment. Countless other examples of 'disconnections' could be thought of. The complex and contingent food supply structures are prone to numerous contamination events. The product of these long and complex global supply chains is "food from nowhere" in the words of French farmer activist Jose Bove (Bove 2001; McMichael 2009a).

In line with this, the ampula worries because it denotes distance. It is easy to see how the popular imaginary of the ampula corresponds to both an expression of anxiety about food safety and distrust in the agents and institutions responsible for food's safety. The ampula seems to offer a rare glimpse into the working of the industrial food system and signal the lack of consumer's overview. As Freidberg noted, vegetable freshness worked as a gauge of transparency of the food supply. Freshness signals the immediacy of relationship, the absence of distance. Savvy Ljubljanan shoppers are well versed in assessing the freshness of lettuce. Adding bulk and weight to lettuce and retaining its freshness for longer by soaking it in water is common, especially by farmers and market sellers. Ljubljanans take pride in being able to uncover such tricks; they inspect the water content, judge the weight, check the stem for signs suggesting when the lettuce was cut. The ampula, however, is immune to such investigations; the usual ways of going about detecting the deception and assessing whether the grower or vendor are honest and fair, fail. The anecdote therefore also resonates with the public perception of the inadequate state regulatory mechanisms that were supposed to ensure the safety and quality of food in events where consumer strategies fail but were unable to stop the delivery of such goods to its citizens.

A move toward local, trusted food from one's own garden or from the farmers' market would then seem to imply a desire for 'reconnection,' 're-embedding' or 'authenticity' and provisioning from food systems where food and food producers are known and trusted (Kloppenburg et al. 1996; Lyson 2012; see Pratt 2007 for an overview of dicourses). But consumer anxiety and a lack of trust do not exhaust the points made

by the narrative about the vial-fed lettuce. The fact that the anecdote placed the ampula between the lettuce leaves rather than another kind of vegetable, offers a clue as to how.

3 Commenting on food imports

Lettuce is central to Slovenian ideas about what constitutes a proper family meal. The everyday vegetable simply called *solata*, like the dish, complements the working class Sunday lunch of meat and potatoes. It is usually simply dressed with oil and vinegar and served in a large bowl to be picked from by the entire table. Garlic is sometimes added to the lettuce, or brown beans. If there is any salad left by the end of the meal, the bowl is usually emptied by the *solatar*, a family member particularly fond of lettuce. Every family has one. In season, lettuce gives way to other leafy vegetables in the salad bowl. Some prefer the bitter red chicory (*radič*), grown in late summer, or the early winter corn salad (*motovilec*). Young leaves of dandelion (*regrat*) are especially valued for their nutritional content and are foraged in early spring when garden-grown lettuce is not yet available. For a short period in early April, reclining bodies cutting dandelion plants in open meadows become a common sight in the Slovenian countryside.

Lettuce is central to ideas about purity, naturalness and freshness. Lamentations about industrial agriculture and supermarket retails and how they influence produce quality would much more likely be expressed with rendering specific properties of lettuce than any other fresh fruit or vegetable. Slovenes nurture a strong preference for home-grown salad crops. Many grow lettuce in their home gardens or acquire it from family and friends. Some have even started gardening so they could avoid buying inferior produce. “I would never buy lettuce from the supermarket! I find it revolting,” explained Darinka, a 60-year-old retiree. Such strong sentiments suggest lettuce is an intimate affair. Its delicate leaves are in need of careful handling and a simple dressing to protect its qualities, subtle taste and texture. The ampula is more insidious and makes a stronger point about the quality of food imports when attached to the delicate lettuce leaves than another vegetable. Suspicions that ampula was used to extend the life of well-travelled lettuce echo Freidberg’s descriptions of stubborn consumers in

the past, cautious of prolonged freshness of refrigerated icebergs that seem amusing from today's perspective.

Ljubljanans are aware of the work needed to produce delicious lettuce. Jelka, who told me the ampula anecdote first, put in a lot of effort growing her own lettuce that season. Some of the seeds that she got from a seed exchange event did not sprout at all. A few days of unseasonably warm and sunny weather in spring killed off all her newly planted salad leaf seedlings. In the peak of summer, she lost access to the homemade artesian aquifer made by her neighbour and her family was forced to move endless numbers of water canisters in a wheelbarrow from their home each evening to prevent the more sensitive plants from shrivelling. Whereas perhaps the stark contrast between the technological and chemical means of inducing growth and the raw, fresh and unprocessed natural character of the vegetable might appear as the most prominent feature of the ampula story, for Ljubljanans this might not be its main opposition. Rather, often having first hand experience with growing vegetables themselves or engaging in networks of vegetable exchange, Ljubljanans are very well aware of what it takes to produce something of natural creation that seems as if untouched by human hand. The speedy and inordinate growth was opposed to not only because the profit-seeking orientation of food producing businesses clashed with the notions of a respectable market conduct, but even more so because it challenged the knowledge and experience of the work involved in nursing a head of lettuce from the seed in the garden bed to the salad bowl.

Ampula felt plausible to Ljubljanans because it gave complex and difficult to grasp issues a tangible, an easily representable and imaginable form. It helped navigate the industrialised food system. It provided a reading of how a vast constellation of labour relations, transport logistics, state and supra-state policies and trade agreements, chemical inputs developments and supermarket price wars produced a head of lettuce of inferior quality, a mirage of what a lettuce was supposed to be. By creating a more tangible category of produce of industrialised agriculture, it helped to render the notions of good food better and to provide a guideline to distinguish between the two. And it acted as proof, a confirmation that the suspicions over the products of the food industry, the anxieties and unease about the imported produce sold in supermarkets were well founded.

The ampula thus came to represent not only the food production system but worked as a synecdoche for the entire nexus of capitalist market relations, including the place in it for the state that enables them. As if the unfair, unequal political relations could be distilled into a liquid to be packed inside a glass vial. And as if avoiding the produce potentially grown with the help of this liquid could help one step out of the system. The ampula was a 'collective speculation' about the nature of things (Jasarevic 2015), a marker of warning, a cypher for interpretation. More than a symptom of food anxiety, the ampula was directed at untangling the industrialised food supply system so that one could better insulate oneself from its hazards. Far from being a demonstration of an incomplete knowledge about the manners of industrialised agriculture and supermarket retail and distance, the ampula example shows an attempt to organise the vast knowledge that people possess about their everyday food. The fact that that it encapsulated so many facets of what Ljubljanans perceived to be the pitfalls of the industrialised food system was what made it such an attractive notion and so sound, even when people have not come across one themselves.

Within the context of austerity in Slovenia, the story about unnatural growth induced by a vial resonated with Ljubljanans because it was not an expression of public food fears but rather a moral commentary on growth. On growth out of nowhere and for profit. On economic growth that had lined the pockets of the wealthy and powerful but bypassed ordinary citizens. On feelings of stuckedness (Hage 2009b) while others profited. The ampula is also a commentary on the national state. The ampula's alleged existence amplified consumer suspicions that the government was servicing the interests of large European agribusinesses instead of the people. Ljubljanans I spoke with who disregarded the ampula as a figment of someone's imagination without a further thought, did so on the basis of the sense that if it were true, such adulterations would be discovered and prohibited by the authorities. Finding the ampula plausible had to forgo such certainties in the state, then, and considering both sides, these accounts show how a particular relationship with the state and the trust that this relationship enables, is a part of considerations of what makes food good and safe.

The ampula, finally, is also a moral commentary on the European Union and the particular space occupied by Slovenes within it. What prompts Slovenians to be suspect of food imports is the widely believed notion that while the exporting countries are not incapable of producing quality foodstuffs comparable to Slovenian farmers,

they have reserved them for their own consumers or for the demanding consumers of richer European countries, for example Germany. The produce that reaches the Slovenian market is of lower quality, second class. This perspective was reinforced by agricultural policy commentators in the media, who suggested that Slovenian consumers were undemanding and were prepared to purchase food that Italian or Austrian neighbour consumers would not had accepted (Krljić Vreg 2015).

Notion that one's home market was a dumping ground for cheap surplus produce is familiar to consumers across the postsocialist world. A curious shopping practice of carefully scrutinising the expiration dates of supermarket food was observed by Poles, Slovaks and Russians who were of the belief that expired goods were imported to their countries on the basis that they were no longer marketable on the Western markets (Patico 2003; Stenning et al. 2011). In Slovenia, Vidmar Horvat has observed the discriminatory practices of shopping for imported branded and luxury foodstuffs and household products (2010). When the ingredients declarations were listed in predominantly Eastern European languages, this denoted to the consumers that the product has been made for a less demanding Eastern market and was of lower quality. She found that shoppers made efforts to obtain the 'original' products created for Western markets and would drive out of their way to shops stocking chocolate and washing powder with English, French and German declarations. Slovene friends of mine would sometimes ask me to bring them 'original' food products such as Twinings tea from the UK since the one sold in Slovenia was suspected of being designed for less demanding markets and was inferior in taste. Recently, the governments of Visegrad Group member states – Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland – have complained to Brussels over the 'double standards' that multinationals have for industrial food products intended for 'old' and 'new' EU members and called to end such unethical practices (Jancarikova 2017). Results of laboratory tests in these countries suggested systematic differences in the quality of ingredients in popular household products. To respond to Slovenian consumers, Slovenian government conducted its own product comparison and reported no significant differences (MKGP 2017).

The tensions between desires for Western goods during socialist and aspirations to be 'modern' and 'European' on the one hand, and disappointments over the goods when capitalist markets became accessible after socialism on the other have been well

documented in Europe (Drazin 2002; Fehérváry 2002; Jung 2009; Luthar 2006; Rausing 2002). These tensions have not diminished after more than a decade since the EU Eastern Enlargement, but seem to have become more pronounced. The uneasy experience of postsocialist citizens of a desire to be fully European and a realisation that such role is not extended to them by Europe map onto constructions of CEE national identities as 'backward' and 'provincial' and solidify the notions of first and second class EU citizens (Gille 2011; Klumbytė 2011; Mincyte 2011b).

The ampula works as a myth in order to address and tackle such issues. While ideologies about goods are ordinary in all forms of commodity exchange, Appadurai suggests that "such stories acquire especially intense, new, and striking qualities when the spatial, cognitive, or institutional distances between production, distribution, and consumption are great" (Appadurai 1986: 48). When the spheres of exchange are isolated from one another, mythologies about the origin of production held by consumers, the destination of consumption held by producers, and the conditions of production and consumption held by traders and speculators (such as those trading in commodities) can be strikingly discordant.

The government's call to Slovenian consumers for help with increasing the national rate of self-sufficiency by purchasing Slovenian foods resonated with consumers. But it did so because of consumer distrust for foreign goods; a distrust that was modelled on the popular perceptions that the nation-state could not protect its citizens from an influx of low quality food imports. While the state emphasised food benefits for the consumers, Slovenes saw issues of imported food as a civic and ethical problem. The next section explores the Slovene category of *domače* (home-grown) food, regarded as standing opposite industrial and imported food.

4 Considering food hopes

"You know what, some farmers don't care at all what they spray on the vegetables they sell on the market. They don't eat those themselves. For their families, they have their own separate gardens. I much prefer buying from the sellers who you can see are selling surplus from their own gardens." These words from Jelka aptly encapsulated the best local definition of *domače* food that I encountered. *Domače* – home-grown,

homemade, homely – is food provisioned by traditional means, outside of markets and involving familial and friendly ties. It is sought on farmers' markets but from sellers one had cultivated a relationship with. While it refers to the natural, it does so by indexing the traditional, the familiar, the trustworthy. Ingesting such food does not carry risks for the consumers, it is believed, because it is also consumed by its producers.

As a response to anxieties brought by the international agrifood nexus, a desire for domače seems to imply a desire for 'reconnections' within the food supply chain (Alkon & Agyeman 2011; Kneafsey et al. 2008; Lyson 2012). Reducing the 'distance' on which the industrial food system had relied has been a key claim of the diverse food relocalisation movements or 'alternatives' to the food system. Alternative food networks (AFN) have promised solace to anxious consumers and change to anxious producers by a number of ways: contracting geographical distance; reducing the numbers of processes and people in the food supply; forging personal relationships with the grower; reducing distance between the ingesting body and its environment, the producing body and its heritage. A key premise of the AFN is that good and safe food originates from food supply that respects the principles of transparency. Fair Trade, organic agriculture, farmers' markets, CSA and community gardening, as well as the rise of artisanal and craft foods and other forms of preserving heritage translate trust in food into knowing food.

A main line of critique issued at AFN movements and scholarship is that they can fail, they can create 'disconnections' (West 2016): organic and local food can be co-opted by conventional food supply (DeLind 2011a; Guthman 2004); AFN can cater to elites instead of those hurt the most by the industrialised food supply (DuPuis & Goodman 2005; Johnston et al. 2011; MacMillan & Dowler 2012); they can stimulate governmentality and increase regulation (Guthman 2008b; Pudup 2008); heritage food can appeal more to distant consumers than local eaters (West 2014a). The ability to 'reconnect' might be out of reach of the AFN because such networks are no less prone to distance and to subsequent mythologisation.

Fair Trade is a form of ethical consumption initiative, likewise pray to mythologies – not because of the vast geographical distances its commodity flows traverse, but because such projects "rely on such alternative moral perceptions of the economy" on

the part of consumers (de Neve et al. 2008: 3). Furthermore, AFN and ethical food initiatives can orient themselves around diverse but narrowly formulated goals. Pratt lists five main strands: mitigating environmental impacts, constructing novel small economies, protecting small farmers, improving farm income and voluntary food certification. As each strand understands 'authenticity' differently, the initiatives do not necessarily work in sync (Pratt 2007). As Luetchford enlightens us, Jelka's sentiment of domače was precisely the ideal of peasant self-sufficiency; it was a desire for:

> "peasant forms of provisioning in which family households are romantically assumed to work their own land, to produce what they consume, and consume what they produce. The idealised household exists in our imagination as an autonomous space outside the impersonal market, in which needs and wants are satisfied from nature and through the mutually supportive and reciprocal activities of family members" (Luetchford 2008: 8).

Urban consumers imagine semi-subsistence farmers as producers of domače food. They formulate the category by referencing an imagined practice of rural self-sufficiency. Therefore, an imagined distance between cities and the countryside, one of the most pervasive historical myths (Williams 1973), seem to have an influence on modes of localised food consumption (Domingos et al. 2014).

Examples from postsocialist studies provide further support for the mythical nature of local food chains. Jung (2016) suggested that a consumer distrust in the quality of imported industrialised food supply, including the role of the state in it, manifests itself in two forms: in nostalgic consumption (Klumbytė 2010; Mincyte 2011b) and through nationalism. The effects of capitalist markets – in the form of either the dissatisfaction with quality of industrialised consumer goods or the pervading divisions between the East and West – have expressed themselves in food nationalism (Caldwell 2002; Humphrey 2002; Patico 2003). Postsocialist citizens of Russia, Bulgaria and Bosnia and Herzegovina cultivated an organic, ecological nationalism in their preferences for national foods, believed to align citizens' bodies to national natures (Caldwell 2007; Jasarevic 2015; Jung 2014; Yotova 2013) and developed intricate discriminatory shopping practices (Caldwell 2014; Patico & Caldwell 2002). Such 'ethnonatural' foods were used by postsocialist consumers to insulate from the negative impacts associated with a distrust in the state a broader crisis of its legitimacy (Jung 2009;

Mincyte 2014). Asserting nationalism through the vehicle of food suggests that the myth of nation, an imagined community (Anderson 1983), works to fill the distance between producers and consumers. The reverse process, crafting national identities through the vehicle of food, has been a process documented around the world (Appadurai 1988; Avieli 2016; Cwiertka 2004; Wilk 2006).

Therefore, consumers do not necessarily desire a greater transparency of food systems and perfect knowledge of producers, distributors, origins and other processes as they seek good and safe food they can trust. Local and national foodways crucially depend on mythologies not because of the inability of AFN for transparency but a lack of desire for transparency on the part of the consumers. While the practical reasons consumers developed to cut corners in achieving perfect knowledge about provenance and production conditions of foods were observed, these were understood as ways of stopping a bottomless process that could induce more anxiety (Jackson 2015; Jung 2009). But I suggest food choices are made not only to lessen food anxieties but to cultivate *food hopes*. Food hopes in the form of consumer expectations about the properties of certain foods and foodways importantly shape food systems. In Ljubljana, domače food was an expression of such a food hope.

My interlocutors often affirmed their preference for domače with the expression "at least you know what you're eating" ("*vsaj veš, kaj ješ*"). I had encountered the phrase numerous times when Ljubljanans sought to describe to me their vegetable provisioning methods that employed resources outside the supermarket. Because of the rhyme, the phrase appeared to be an old wisdom saying but its widespread use was in fact very recent. The expression "*Veš, kaj ješ?"* (Do you know what you're eating?) was first made popular by the Association of Slovenian Consumers (Združenje potrošnikov Slovenije) upon launching its nutritional values indicator project in 2011. The project consisted of a searchable online database of foodstuffs, particularly processed food products, and their main nutritional information for sugars, fats and salt, colour coded for easier interpretation. The aim of this online tool was to improve consumer competency by revealing sometimes unexpected amounts of harmful or unwanted ingredients in food, for example amount of sugar in fruit juices.

As the phrase percolated into public speech, it retained the original emphasis on the importance of knowing the food one ingests, but the expression was appropriated for

a different purpose. Rather than denoting transparency by revealing a complete list of ingredients, production and processing methods or origin, the phrase began to stand for domače food. It came to stand for an *absence* of explicit knowledge about the food, an absence of information baggage, an absence of consideration, warning or an anecdote about growth-inducing vials. Domače food was good and pure to the point that there was nothing to say or know about it. The food that was bad was used in anecdotes as a plot device.

Rather than being based on an informed decision arrived at through research, the category of domače depended on a different mode of knowledge: a tacit knowledge (Polanyi 1958), *mētis* (Scott 1998), a experiential and bodily knowledge, a memory. In this mode, the taste, smell or texture of fresh produce from farmers' markets were not ends in themselves, but clues to the quality, safety and rich nutritional value of the food. This was food that Ljubljanans 'just knew' it would be good. With it, Ljubljanan consumers expressed a preference for food not requiring state regulatory system to make it safe and not needing to comply with dry and rational supermarket quality standards or nutritional charts (also see Mincyte 2014; Paxson 2013). Instead, consumers modelled their preference for the familiar, domače, trustworthy food on the imaginary of foods in rural self-sufficiency households; fresh, wholesome, traditional, 'natural', organic and local.

Yet the method of 'just knowing' good and safe food had a price. On the one hand, food hopes aided consumers in resolving issues of trust in food and food producers. In the words of a shopper at a farmers' market: "I don't trust the sellers completely, but I do cultivate a profound hope that the food is from where they say it is from." Even if one did not trust the food completely, one could hope the food was good and safe. This allowed consumers to avoid running into contradictions regarding their food choices as food systems did not abolish 'distance' between producers and consumers but rather found an appropriate mythology to cope with this distance. On the other hand, sometimes 'just knowing' was not enough. As Blumberg observed on a food market in Vilnius, Lithuania, the appeal of subsistence farmers selling batches from their own modest gardens could fast become the target of elaborate trading schemes (Blumberg 2014). As ampula suggested to Ljubljanan shoppers, sometimes examining freshness was not a sufficient measure to assess quality. And semi-subsistence farmers sometimes sold produce that they did not grow themselves. In such instances, 'just

knowing' food by hoping that it is good, did not expel doubts and anxieties. Yet rather than to adjust their expectations to the modes of production of semi-subsistence farm that were better aligned with actual processes, Ljubljanans expected producers to fulfil their food hopes. I examine such a case in the following section.

5 Food hopes challenged

"Is the tomato yours?" inquired an older woman passing by Majda's stall situated in the midst of a large housing estate on the outskirts of the city one hot and sunny July morning. Majda, a local farmer selling on the estate for 25 years, assured her the season for tomatoes on her farm had indeed arrived and the customer decided to buy a *kila* (kilogram). She would only be purchasing the tomatoes that day, the woman explained, she was stocked with everything else she needed to cook lunch. "The customers have become very curious recently, you know," Majda commented on the exchange once the woman left. "They became very cautious and meticulous. Selling is not as simple as it used to be." The buyers nowadays wanted to know how the crop was produced, who grew it and in what conditions. They had high standards for the produce they considered purchasing, especially produce bought from a market stall.

Although Majda did not sell crops that would not originate from a local farm, she sometimes supplemented her range of vegetables with some of her neighbour's to offer her customers a complete seasonal range on her stall and so to prevent them from buying the produce at the supermarket next door. Yet by offering somebody else's crops she risked being met with suspicion by the customers, no matter whose it was. If she were seen as *prekupčevalka* (a reseller, a dealer), her produce would be immediately cast into doubt about its quality, as if marketing crops not of one's own labour necessarily entailed a profit-seeking agenda, whereas selling one's own was always accompanied with honest labour. Majda was aware of that and juggled daily between offering a fuller range of vegetables and selling somebody else's produce. On that particular day, she had no green lettuce to offer. Hers wasn't ready for harvest and she didn't get any from her neighbour. This wasn't ideal and she felt uneasy about it. Lettuce was a basic crop and from her point of view, every vegetable farmer sold lettuce.

Although her tomatoes were newly available, the haricot beans were particularly popular that day. She had brought a crateful that morning, around six kilograms, and she sold it well before the end of her market day, leaving people still enquiring about the crop. It was a good batch of beans; she was happy to sell it. As a general rule however, the sales in July weren't the best. She was able to sell more produce in February and March than she could in the summer. A lot of her customers were either on holidays or they were able to cover their needs with the yield from their own or their kin's vegetable plots. She enjoyed selling produce for which she was certain it would satisfy her customers. Yet she could not afford not to sell produce that fell below the quality she hoped for. Sometimes the harvest was not perfect, the weather conditions not as favourable, or the season too close to the end. The haricot beans would be smaller, thinner, curled. She still had to sell such crops but she felt bad about it. She felt as if she was cheating her buyers; she imagined that they might discover later at home that the vegetables weren't as good as they appeared and consider that she was swindling them.

Majda was a local semi-subsistence farmer, the kind idealised by consumers and the state, the kind portrayed would fuel Slovenia's rise in food self-sufficiency. Her 13-hectare farm was only about a kilometre away from her produce stand. She grew maize, barley, wheat, grass for hay, potatoes and vegetables and she kept twenty cows, six hogs and forty chicken. Apart from some goods she at times sold in larger quantities, like potatoes or meat, her stall in the midst of the high-rise estate was her only way of generating income. She started her day at 6am and spent until 8am milking cows and tending the animals. Every morning except Sundays, she stacked crates of vegetables she picked that morning or the evening before, eggs, milk and *skuta* (a type of cottage cheese), stands and a portable weighing scale into the boot of her minivan and drove to the heart of the estate where she set up a small market stall in front of the estate supermarket. In this way, she was noticed by the shoppers and could hope they would prefer to buy the fresh produce from her. She based her prices on those at the central food market and lowered them a bit to attract buyers. Besides minding the stall the entire morning, there was a lot of work on the farm for the rest of the day. Evenings were spent preparing vegetables for the next day. Sometimes her day finished as late as 9pm. This was no 8-hour workday, she pointed out. She never married and was the sole head of the farm. Beside her, there were two other people on the farm: her ageing

father and her 16-year old son. Not nearly enough hands, she said. She was having trouble keeping the farm together by herself.

Urban development in this end of the city stopped with the housing estate. Beyond it, farmland abounded. A national water protection regime banned all new construction. It also put restraints on the type of agriculture and use of plant protection substances that could be used there and horticulture was one of the more sensible orientations. The border between the urban and rural space was visually distinct as well as reinforced by rural inhabitants. The farmers continued to think of the estate dwellers as *priseljenci* (immigrants, newcomers), even though the estate was erected during the 1970s, and they avoided having too much contact with the estate community. The lifelong farmers in this area were expropriated by the socialist authorities so that the space for the residential estate housing 2,000 people could be created. They therefore did not hold the estate residents in high regard. Likewise, the estate dwellers learned to provision their food from the supermarket on the estate or from one of food markets further toward the city centre, despite the fact that here were several horticultural producers in the area close to the estate.

Majda was one of the rare local figures who had been crossing this divide, although this had been starting to change. Larger and more commercially-oriented vegetable farmers in the area began to open farm shops that were becoming popular with the estate residents. Before that they relied on bulk orders for catering business or trading at the food market. A 'food trail' initiative from the estate even mapped the local farms and their produce, put down the times at which farms were open for business and distributed the brochures into the mailboxes on the estate in the bid to improve the connections between the communities. A certified organic farm with a roadside farm shop became a particularly popular stop on this trail. While inciting urban consumers to step into the countryside was becoming an attractive new income stream for the farmers, crossing the divide in the opposite direction, like Majda did, was risky. Selling produce out of bounds of food markets or a farm shop was Majda's niche but it was bound to invite suspicion and distrust from shoppers. As next chapter will further examine, urban and roadside produce vending in Ljubljana was suspect of reselling produce of unknown origin and deemed unethical. Some consumers preferred to visit the local farms for their produce, others bought theirs in the supermarket. Majda did not benefit from the increased public presence of samooskrba

and local foods. Her stall visitors mostly consisted of small but loyal group of long-term customers who knew Majda personally.

Small dairy farmers in Lithuania and in the US selling raw milk and raw dairy products suffered an informalisation and disarticulation of their peasant selfhoods under food safety and governance regimes. But this prompted as a result a renewed demand for raw milk from consumers who valued the food precisely because it was incompatible with forms of state regulation (Mincyte 2012, 2014; Paxson 2013). While the idea of natural, organic domače food one 'just knew' also guided Ljubljanan shoppers, when presented with a tension between homeliness and state regulation as the basis of trust, they opted for the formal: certified, listed on the broshure, sold from formally recognised farm food outlets.

Moreover, the story of Ljubljanans seeking good and safe food in domače resonates with Abbots' ethnography on American 'privileged migrants' hopeful of finding a simpler life and simpler food in Ecuador (2013). But whereas the American retirees returned to provisioning in the supermarkets following their disappointments that their food hopes could not be realised, Ljubljanan consumers could persist in their food hopes and could solicit the help of the state to protect consumers, as examined in the next chapter. Such formalising of domače had worked to significantly inconvenience farmers, semi-subsistence farmers especially.

6 Conclusion

This chapter began by outlining the values and sentiments in the promotional campaign by the Ministry of Agriculture to increase the consumption of Slovenian produce and thereby attain agricultural change. I showed how compliance with EU Common Market regulations necessitated an explicit promotion of spatially-bounded local foodways. Then, I outlined how these governmental messages resonated with the attitudes of urban publics who sought to insulate themselves from the inrush of low-quality imported food by consuming domače. Therefore, the governmental idea of translating Slovenian food into local food so as to abide by EU regulation was realised through consumer anxieties that endowed nationally-bounded food by allowing it to adopt local and AFN food associations such as freshness, quality and healthiness.

While consumer valorisations of domestic food strongly echo in the promotional campaign by the state, they do so for precisely opposite reasons. While the campaign aims to link the values ascribed to domestic food with the trust in the state in order to preserve its legitimacy, the consumers are effectively shopping against the state, by finding protection in domestic markets when the state cannot protect them from an influx of cheap foreign food. However, as their perspectives align around the notion of domače, as both sides come to idealise peasant autonomy as path to national self-sufficiency, the semi-subsistence farmers become increasingly more regulated and their livelihood scopes constrained. The following chapter outlines how.

3

Blurring the lines between safety and security: Standardising authentic food with affect

Strolling around the vegetable part of the central Ljubljana market, surveying the seasonal produce, Mojca, a cooking and gardening enthusiast and a newly-minted grandmother, commented on how the market did not use to be as expensive. In the past, Ljubljanans did not get their daily groceries at the supermarket, but at the main *tržnica*. Now it has become too pricey for her to buy here very often, although she wished she could. Yet on the other hand, she went on, the market was not very trustworthy in the past. There used to be a lot of "foreign" vendors selling produce of bad quality. She recalled the Serbian fruit vendors luring shoppers from behind the displays of artistically formed pyramids of strawberries on their stalls, perfect-looking on the outside, but often to disguise the rotten fruit inside the pile. At that time, the produce available in supermarkets was in fact often of better quality and fresher that at the market and, as she imagined, better regulated. To get good quality fruit and vegetables at the market, one needed to establish long-lasting relationships with the vendors. Mojca forged hers decades ago and was still visiting the same vendors to that day but she was fond of supporting market newcomers if she deemed they offered good quality food and if she could afford to.

Like Mojca, many Ljubljanans trusted that the main Ljubljana tržnica was a space where they could acquire domače, trustworthy produce from local farmers. It therefore came as a grave shock when it came to light a year earlier that under the guise of offering their own produce, often with organic labels, many market vendors all around the country were selling fruits and vegetables bought across the border. The fraud stayed in the news for several weeks. In summer of 2013, the main evening TV news opened with the following announcement:

> "Tonight the usual grand topics with which this programme ordinarily starts will be put aside for a moment and we will begin with the biggest and most important of them all – *food safety*. Since we understand the effects of food on health and wellbeing, we are prepared to pay a bit more for food that is produced at home. That was *supposed* to be produced at home. Because behind the market stalls one finds not only honest vegetable producers..." (Doma pridelana zelenjava iz veletržnic 2013).

In the news report that followed, farmers selling produce regularly on the green markets and claimed it as their own product, were filmed early in the morning buying vegetables from a large wholesale market across the border in Trieste, Italy. So many farmers had been "cultivating the Trieste wholesale plot of land" that the migrant Nigerian workers at the market were greeting them in Slovene (Carl 2013). The public outrage over the fraud was significant. The news prompted a series of public statements from politicians and government officials in the days following, condemning the deceitful practices and promising a greater regulatory oversight in the future. It seemed that the samooskrba policy the government hoped will boost Slovenian agricultural production by creating demand for Slovenian, domače produce had flopped. Producers found it easier and more profitable to benefit from the consumption trend by merely labelling their foods as domače.

Interestingly however, what Slovenes found detestable about the news, was not only the farmer's lucrative activity of buying cheap foreign produce and adding a high margin. Rather, it was a sense that the imported food was not safe; that it had contaminated the pure domače food. As the news anchor suggested, it was the safety of the food that was being questioned. This was a significant point that defined food policy in the wake of the scandal. The fraud acted as an opening wedge for the government to reclaim some of the regulatory authority over agricultural production, by way of policing food safety. Stepping in to monitor food safety also worked as an outreach to worried consumers of domače, who were – as the preceding chapter suggested – buying domače due to a diminished trust in the regulating authorities. The news helped reinscribe the role of the national state as the traditional mediator between consumers and producers that had been constricted by the EU regulations. The scandal offered an opportunity to do this without impinging on EU rules. This chapter outlines how regaining the intermediary role of the state was attempted by standardising domače food and what the implications of this process were, especially for small food producers.

I begin by historically contextualising the role of the state as the mediator between rural food producers and urban populations. After pointing out that food security had always been crucially related to the legitimacy of the state, I look at the connections between food security and food safety to show how instituting the latter can be appropriated to serve the needs of the former.

I then look at the legislative changes and that stemmed from the news of the scandal. These sought to capture the notion of domače within narrowly prescribed guidelines, in effect standardising domače, even though domače, the authentic, had been characterised by evading any such categorising. In line with literature on EU standards and food and personhoods, I show a tight relationship between imposing standards and disarticulating producers. But while the state could create standards and introduce fault lines for producers, it had to rely on factors outside its immediate reach – consumer anxieties and hope about domače; nationalist sentiments toward migrants; and legislative outsourcing (such as sharing the agenda with the local state) – to evaluate producers and their foods. What allowed the national state to impose stricter regulations on producers and market vendors were precisely its use of the loose and flimsy meanings of samooskrba and domače.

1 Food security, food safety and the state

The term food security – as used in policy and academic literature – describes a state of there being enough food. In the past four decades, since the term was launched into international food policy at the FAO World Food Conference in Rome in 1974, the concept was a subject to many changes and contestations in its definition (Midgley 2013). In international policy, mainly in the contributions from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Bank, the definitions of the term have distinguished between the different subjects of having sufficient food available (a country, an individual, the world) and further specified the kind of food (nutritious, safe, preferred) and the ends that this food should serve (subsistence, livelihood). The current definition by the FAO describes it as a state "when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food, which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an

active and healthy life" (FAO et al. 2013). The term evokes associations with the 1970s food crisis, food aid in the Global South, trade liberalisation and structural adjustment policies. Within the past decade it has also made an appearance in the EU policy. After the food price crisis of 2007-2008 and with an eye towards climate change and preserving the productive capacities of land as well, global food security has made it back on the international agenda.

By contrast, food safety has to do with the quality of food and its appropriateness for human consumption. Concerns over food safety concerns are concerns of food contamination, frauds, additives, pesticides etc. Unlike food security that is a politico-economic issue in the classical sense, food safety falls under the purview of public health. In Europe, food safety is harmonised across the Union and regulated by European Food Safety Agency (EFSA).

Both terms are crucial in governing of the food supply. Managing the food supply is at the core of state governance. The form of power we now call the state has emerged together with the need to manage the supply of food through the extraction of agricultural surplus and redistribution of food (Allen 1997). The grains have 'domesticated us' by requiring cultivation that was particularly suitable to state formation: easily stored grains permitted its redistribution; the concentrated harvests above ground eased (forceful) crop appropriation; the predictability of yield of cereals allowed for state taxation (James C. Scott 2014; Scott 2009). The centralisation of state power was justified and achieved through a promise that the state would take on the task of ensuring protection against famines (Friedmann 1993). If it failed, the sovereign's position of power quickly came under threat, making apparent the frail fabric of the social order. The terms of state power simultaneously bound the state in a relationship – especially in the cities – in which the "fear of the people commanded attention to the people's fears" (Kaplan 1976 in Murcott 2013: 7). "Food supply was the Achilles heel of the early modern state;" food riots represented devastating crises for the state (Scott 1998: 29). This still holds true as the food riots in the wake of the global increase of food prices (the 2007-2008 food price crisis) attest (Patel & McMichael 2009). Citizens hold the state responsible for disruptions of the food supply, even if they originate from a scale beyond the nation-state.

To prevent food riots and their consequences for the 18th Century French state, great efforts were put into monitoring the food supply and responding if necessary through production, price and storage controls. Techniques of making legible to the state the multitude of local practices, such as standardised units of measurements, were developed as a response (Scott 1998). The problems of subsistence were also intimately tied with the subsequent growth of the state apparatus, such as the growth of knowledge about the governed population that allowed for better regulation of the food supply (Kaplan 1976). Moreover, the notion of the population itself as well as the *laissez-faire* economic doctrine have their origins in the difficulties of managing the food supply in 18th Century France (Foucault 2009). In the lecture delivered in January of 1978, published as the second chapter of his *Security, Territory, Population*, Foucault detailed how the state embraced the introduction of the liberal economic system for a promise of a better management of scarcity and famine. The problems it faced were not limited to unpredictability of harvests and crop losses. Setting the right price for agricultural produce was impossible. Set too high, the urbanites would starve. Set too low, the peasants would have not earned enough and production the following year would shrink. Suggestion of an economic system, in which the state did not intervene in these matters, did not aim to obliterate of prevent scarcity, but rather treat it as a necessary component of an economy. By the market's internal mechanisms, hunger would provide an incentive to the market to alleviate it. In understanding hunger as 'natural' part of the economy, the state shifted the concerns from the 'people' and the individual food producer and consumer, to the 'population.' Food left a moral economy of hunger and entered a political economy of food security (Nally 2011).

With the advent of industrialisation, the government worries about a stable supply of food were back. Faced with the 'fundamental dilemma' of agriculture, states teetered between development and self-sufficiency, between urban social order and a viable agricultural sector (Streeten 1987). In France, early industrial development and international competition required cheap and logistically simple systems of food provisioning (Kaplan 1976). In England, this dictated that the country's food self-sufficiency be sacrificed very early in exchange for acquiring cheap food from the colonies in order to feed the industrial workers and ensure social stability (Friedmann 2005). By contrast, the fascist regime in Italy before the Second World War strived to achieve autarky to reduce Italy's dependence on foreign supply, even at the cost of

insufficient nourishment of the population. It began promoting an austere meat-poor diet based on pasta, bread, polenta and fresh vegetables, recognised today as the Italian cuisine (Helstosky 2004). A totalitarian regime on the other side of the political spectrum, in the Soviet Union, had meanwhile experienced its dreams of industrialisation to keep on par with the West shatter, when the forced collectivisation in the 1930s caused peasant revolts and a devastating famine (Scott 1998).

In a further example of managing the balance between rural production and urban development and consumption, urban agriculture has often served to overcome periods of hardship and food shortages. In Kampala, Uganda, the prominent practice of urban agriculture is both discouraged by the government for fears of dampening the urban demand for domestic agricultural products and at the same time tolerated since it functions as a buffer and allows the public policy to pursue a more austere measures without fear of public upheavals (Maxwell 1999). A reliance on people's abilities to take care of themselves through growing food on dachas was documented in Russia, past and present (Caldwell 2011; Ries 2009). In Havana, Cuba, urban agriculture became widespread after the collapse of the Soviet Union severed Cuban imports of agricultural inputs. With the viability of industrial agriculture severely diminished, urban agriculture was formalised by the Cuban state (Altieri et al. 1999; Premat 2012). In British and US cities, 'victory gardens' were promoted and implemented by the state to help avert food shortages by lowering the market demand during the first and second World Wars (Lawson 2005).

In the US, food aid represented one possibility of resolving this dilemma. The agricultural surpluses of the post-WWII agricultural intensification were taken off the internal market where they would drive down prices and donated as food aid to the Third World (Friedmann 1990). 'Feeding the world' was also used as a tool of US foreign policy; muscles were frequently flexed by withholding US aid from the communist countries, radical regimes, or countries with policies in conflict with the US (Wallensteen 1976). Food aid also helped with dealing with the agricultural dilemma for heads of state in the recipient countries, as it facilitated a focus on national development projects (Friedmann 1990: 14). The 'food regime' marked by the US food aid as its most potent characteristic (Friedmann & McMichael 1989) was refined into a relationship between the Global North and Global South, in which the term food security obtained its most widely held connotations: as related to developing countries,

international donor organisations, liberalising trade and undernourishment; as the kind of food security that rather causes food *in*security (Patel & McMichael 2009); as a "method of food provisioning through the world market" (*ibid*.: 24).

The shift from food security as interchangeable with a country's food self-sufficiency to food security as an attribute of individuals and populations has been accredited to Amartya Sen's seminal contribution to the scholarly field of famine and food security. In *Poverty and Famines: Poverty and famines: An essay on entitlement and deprivation*, Sen proposed a simple argument in essence: that while there may be sufficient food available in a country, this does not say anything about how it distributed within the country or who is entitled to it (Sen 1981). But while Sen argued for fairer distribution policies and welfare safety nets in the Global South, the international policies adopting Sen's work had not. Policymakers cited Sen to argue that instead of planning for sufficient food availability, 'free' markets and international agricultural trade were key for attaining food security. They advanced Sen's assertion that poverty equalled difficulties of food access, yet at the same time avoided addressing the structural causes of poverty that were causing the lack of access (Mackintosh 1990). Poverty and hunger became associated with a broader problem of development, which was to be attained through economic growth. Growth was to come with the establishment of conditions where developing countries could afford to buy sufficient food cheaply on the world market rather than produce it themselves.

The words 'food security' played a significant role in formulating the goals of the structural adjustment programmes (SAP) by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as well as in advocating and instituting the liberalisation of trade through the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and later the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Agreement on Agriculture. These policies and programmes were documented to have propelled the displacement of peasants and rural migration and have in fact contributed to greater levels of poverty, especially in the Global South (Patel & McMichael 2009). By omitting from the definitions of food security the specifications of the ways in which food security is to be ensured and of whose responsibility it is to ensure it, the refinements of the definition did little to challenge the neoliberal imperative of attaining it through a 'food from nowhere' regime (McMichael 2009a). Moreover, by disregarding such issues, the

conceptualisations of food security did not only come to adequately work "as a mirror of international political economy," but also to facilitate it (Patel 2009: 664). By shifting the focus of attaining food security onto the individual level, the definition worked to treat the reduction of poverty as an apolitical project of merely finding the right technical fixes, thus obscuring the way global power imbalances are produced through the food system (Jarosz 2011). By discursively disassociating food security from questions of a nation's self-sufficiency, the definitions normalised the idea that food security is a market relationship in which food is to be ensured at the global level (McMichael 2005).

In becoming almost synonymous with international food governance, the term has come under extensive critique. To challenge the conceptualisations and institutions of global food security and address its consequences, the international peasant movement La Vía Campesina has coined the term 'food sovereignty.' Food sovereignty put the agroecological approaches to agriculture and the localisation of food systems at the core of attaining food security (Patel 2009; Schanbacher 2010). Recently, scholarly literature had adopted the concept of food sovereignty to describe the aims of food activists arguing for the democratisations of food systems in urban settings in the Global North, for example by relating it to the concept of community food security in the US (Alkon & Mares 2012; Anderson & Bellows 2012; Block et al. 2012; Clendenning et al. 2015). There has also been an tendency to use the concept as a generic replacement term for the concerns over food security that have a localised or national focus, understanding it as the 'good' food security and in effect equating it with national food self-sufficiency, while pitting it against the 'bad' food security of policies of the international organisations (for example Müller 2014). Such use risks paying insufficient attention to what is occurring to the sovereignty of food producers and consumers within those levels. Encapsulating the idea of food sovereignty has been the assertion that 'food is different' (Rosset 2006), that it is a basic human need, a matter of livelihoods and a fundamental part of cultural worlds and therefore should not be a subject of international trade regulations, speculations and profit-making through large corporate monopolies. Yet one could argue it is precisely because it is different, that food has always been the source of manipulation, calculation, exploitation and power struggles, in international as well as national settings. As Belasco has shown, struggles for power have included struggles to predict the future of food for a long stretch of history (Belasco 2006).

The world food price crisis of 2007-2008, coupled with anxieties over the sharp growth of world population and threats to agriculture posed by environmental and energy issues such as climate change, land degradation and 'peak oil,' moved the problems of a stable food supply back into the heart of issues of the Global North and has shaken the dominant perspective that institutionalised food security. The world food price inflation or 'agflation,' was initiated in 2007 by poor weather and a series of bad harvests around the world and further exacerbated by a cascading series of wheat and rice export bans and restrictions that reduced the global supply of grain. Diverting the crops to biofuel production and a sudden interest in investments in commodity futures helped to drive the prices even higher. While countries with sufficient domestic production and grain reserves, like China and Japan, were able to avert the consequences, the countries that have eliminated the barriers to free trade were struck by sudden price fluctuations that were directly experienced by the impoverished communities (McMichael 2009a, 2009b).

Concerns over such price spikes recurring in the future caused a shift in international food policy (Jarosz 2011; Maye & Kirwan 2013a), apparent at the FAO Summit on World Food Security in 2008. Organised directly in response to the food crisis, the summit launched the now ubiquitous projection that by 2050 the world population will have increased to 9 billion and that to feed them, global food production will need to increase by 70% until then.[8] This marked the beginning of a new discourse of global food security where now production rather than trade was again framed as a key element of attaining it. While some have welcomed this shift (Jarosz 2011), others have pointed out that the flourishing corporate interests in biotechnology and genetic modification might be adding the fuel to such shifts (Nally 2011). As several scholars observed, academia also began to use food security in a context different from its previous connotation and market-based solutions and individual hunger and poverty (Hinrichs 2013; Kirwan & Maye 2013; MacMillan & Dowler 2012). A renewed interest in insuring sufficient food in the future has also been spotted in the media and public opinion (Jackson 2015; TNS Opinion & Social 2012). The term food security also started to re-enter the policy discourse of the European Union and its individual

[8] For an examination of how this statement was transformed from an assessment of a most likely future ('the production will increase') to a normative assertion ('the production must increase') see Tomlinson's article (Tomlinson 2013).

member states, especially those whose food supply depends on the broader EU single market or international trade (Maye & Kirwan 2013b).[9]

To capture the characteristics of food that make it fit for human consumption, food safety policies outline the requirements to minimise the risks of unsafe food entering the market or reaching the consumer. When they do, food safety scandals represent similar challenges to the legitimacy or national and supra-national governments as food security issues such as rising prices or supply disruptions. The infamous example of John Gummer attests to this. In the wake of the BSE crisis, the British Minister of Agriculture in 2000 fed his 4-year-old daughter a beef burger in front of the press to convince the public that the meat was safe (BBC 2000).

For the EU, food safety is one of the key elements in regulating the European agrifood sector. A unified internal European market can only work if consumers trust the food that is distributed through it (Arienzo et al. 2008). Indeed, the BSE crisis caused pressures for the EC and prompted a reform of the EU food security policy in order to regain consumer and citizen trust. The new Food Law that emerged as a result (Regulation 178/2002) added to the risk assessment array the 'precautionary principle.' The principle puts the burden of proof that a food products is safe on the producer and allows the regulating authorities to bar a food from the market in cases of scientific uncertainties over the nature as scope of the risk (European Commission 2004). The precautionary principle has been the main focus of arguing that European food safety, while effectively working as a "tool to support the free movement of goods" within the EU (Arienzo et al. 2008: 34), is used by the EU to create barriers to free trade as specified by the WTO. While some point out that this remains a speculation (Goldstein & Carruth 2004), others posit that the WTO has a very limited scope for applying the principle in trade deals and has sanctioned the EU on this account in the past (Stoll et al. 2016). Moreover, the currently negotiated Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) agreement between the EU and the US revealed the precautionary principle to be one of the key setbacks for reaching a deal (Hilary 2014; Kollewe 2015). Among other differences in their food safety regulation such as GMO and pesticide use, the US food law puts the burden of proving a food is unsafe on the state.

[9] Chapter one has more on EU and Slovenian food security.

Another significant technique of risk management introduced by the 2002 EU Food Law was traceability. The law stipulates that being able to trace any food 'from farm to fork' was crucial for ensuring food safety. To be able to track the complete chain for a certain food, each of the food producers and processors along the food chain are obliged to keep track of where the food handled by them originated from and where it was heading to – the 'one-step-backward, one-step-forward' approach (European Commission 2004). Traceability is also the basis of regulating GMO ingredients, establishing organic standards and instituting the European systems of geographical indications (GI) (Arienzo et al. 2008; Lees 2003; West 2016).

Food safety also works as a technique of governing food producers. Since supermarkets represent the last link in the food supply chain before foods reach consumers, their reputation is quickly at stake in the event of a food safety scandal. Consolidation of international retail business increased the difficulty of ensuring food safety as the food supply chains grew longer, yet the costs of the loss of consumer trust grew alongside it. To avoid the loss, traceability practices have been also been implemented by supermarkets of their own accord (Freidberg 2004), but have imposed great obstacles for food producers, who were effectively barred from importing to the EU (*ibid*.), as well as having to change their production methods within the EU to comply with supermarket standards (Murdoch et al. 2000). Harmonising food and food safety standards across the EU has promised to reduce barriers to internal trade and to open opportunities for reaching larger and lucrative markets, especially for the countries joining the EU after 2004. Yet unified standards can have the opposite effect, as Dunn has shown: for Polish food producers, the standards in effect erected barriers to trade and the price of entry to the 'technozone' of EU food safety was too steep (Dunn 2003a). Similarly, semi-subsistence pastoral farmers in the Slovenian Alps have had to significantly reshape their subsistence practices to fulfil the EU food safety requirements (Frelih Larsen 2009). Furthermore, food safety standards and their harmonisation across a single geographical region can act as tools for 'governing at a distance' (Dunn 2008; see Miller & Rose 1990), regulating not products but persons. The intensive traceability audits and required record-keeping work as techniques for self-disciplining and aligning with the regulations of the EU. Dunn's interlocutors found that their role in food production shifted from possessing and cultivating a craft and a knowledge about their work, towards following and carrying out administrative steps, while the hierarchy of quality grading of the foods they were able to produce

(for export or domestic use) had the effect of also grading the producers and Poles in general as certain kinds of European citizens, deserving of a certain quality of food (Dunn 2003a, 2005). Finally, standards and technologies of audit create zones of exclusion where non-fitting citizens become risky and dangerous subjects, revert to subsistence and evasive practices and personhoods of the past era and no longer see themselves as European (Dunn 2005; Knudsen 2015; Mincyte 2011c, 2012). Ironically then, adds Dunn, the EU "may find that the products and people it wants to regulate become less regulated than ever before" (2005: 190).

My interlocutor Ančka encapsulated these points most succinctly. She has been farming for the past 40 years. Starting with dairy farming ("every Ljubljanan farm was a dairy farm in the past"), she and her husband switched to sauerkraut and vegetables production in mid 1960s when dairy farming was no longer as profitable. Ančka is semi-retired today and sells the soured cabbage at the central food market in a much smaller scope; the farm, now under the management of her son, has been restructured and focuses mostly on cultivating asparagus. But she noticed the changes in the way farm work is organised: "Now you need to have a designated fire assembly point. And you need to have a fire extinguisher. And you need to have a special washbasin. There's a myriad of such small meaningless regulations." She protested the bureaucracy, the high taxation rates and other expenses imposed on farms. "Those communist bastards, they still rule us! They take from the farmers and the poor. They are only after the miserable [*samo reveže lovijo*]," she said. Ančka, having farmed throughout the socialist period and being a devoted Catholic, was a fervent critic of the past regime. That she saw the EU food safety regulations and the CAP prescriptions as 'communist,' suggests a fundamental disconnect between the bureaucratic apparatus of the EU and the needs of the people under its purview. It also signified how pushed out of this system the food producer can feel.

This section presented the scopes of food security and food safety and established that whereas issues with both get governments in trouble, regulatory frameworks of the latter can work in governments' favour. The food fraud scandal undermined the trust in farmers and governmental supervision. Moreover, it undermined the trust in and appeal of domače food, the cornerstone of the public campaign to strengthen Slovenian food security (discussed in Chapter one). In response to the scandal, the government tightened regulation and increased farm and market inspections. Yet to

regulate domače, what was required was its conversion from a loose assembly of meanings related to authenticity "of the romantic tradition [,] in opposition to 'modernity'" (Pratt 2007: 287) to a synonym for a fully traceable and fraud-free food (as represented for example in Lees 2003).[10] The following sections outline how the conversion from domače as the basis of food security to the basis of food safety was attempted through the vehicle of traceability. I show how in this process, the farmers and food vendors marginalised by the EU traceability requirements were further vilified by the Slovenian state as purveyors of suspect and unsafe foods of a foreign, non-Slovenian origin.

2 Fighting fraud with increased regulation

At the end of April, at the start of the season for strawberries and asparagus, the sides of Ljubljana's arterial roads were suddenly lined with produce stalls dressed in plastic red polka dot tablecloths and protected by red sunscreens. In front of the stalls stood signs bearing the words 'DOMAČE JAGODE' (domače strawberries). Ubiquitous as they were, the stalls around the city became topic of discussion in Ljubljana. Even though the uniform stalls proudly announced they were selling domače products, Ljubljanans seemed to know this wasn't true. Some asserted that the produce was imported from Italy, others heard that the strawberries were indeed Slovenian but grown on a large strawberry plantation in the southeast of the country, in a conventional and industrial manner. The big immaculate strawberries were not resembling a truly domače fruit. Friends had pointed out to me that the stands were tended by students, who were dropped off every morning by a car and picked up at the end of the working day. I began to wonder how the stalls operator was confident enough to display the signs advertising that the produce was domače. As I approached one of the stalls, I noticed a small label on the side of it, stating as required the name and information details of the vendor. The produce stand was not operated by a farmer but rather a private company, conveniently called Domače Ltd. (*Domače d.o.o.*). The signs were completely legal, even if seen by passers-by as morally dubious.

[10] West (2016: 429, note 2) observed this difference between the two meanings of authenticity.

I interviewed a manager in the company that manages the central food market in Ljubljana. He suggested that as much as three quarters of all grocers at the central market were merely reselling while giving the impression that the produce was theirs. "Well, maybe I exaggerate a little. Three quarters out of season." To offer a complete range of produce to their customers, the grocers often supplemented their range with their neighbours', but if the neighbour was also out, the farmers would supply it elsewhere, perhaps at the wholesale markets which mostly sold imported produce. "Some of the grocers are so lazy, they don't even remove the packaging but will still claim the produce is theirs." The executive said they often came across such 'domače' produce still in its original Italian packaging while touring the market but believed that this fact was overlooked by the customers. "The lack of awareness on the part of consumer is still very strong." He believed that one of the roots of the problems was that consumers did not know when certain kinds of fruits and vegetables were in season. In this climate, swindlers could thrive. Recognising when seasonal specialities were domače was more difficult however. During the cherry season, 'Slovenian cherries' were sold for weeks and weeks at market stalls all across the country, while the amount of cherries that Slovenia produces is large enough to be sold out in a couple of days at this sales capacity. During that season, the domače cherries were mostly coming from Hungary, said the manager casually.

To protect consumers and tighten legislation in the wake of the scandal, the government amended the Agricultural Act in 2014. The main change was to specify the kind of articles farmers and other agricultural producers and retailers were allowed to sell. The agricultural minister vowed to criminalise "amphibians" – farmers that were also registered as self-employed sole traders (an '*espe'*) – so that farmers wishing to sell food directly to consumers on the farm and markets would no longer be able to buy produce as a business entity from other commercial sources. This did not apply to farmers/traders selling food to other business and restaurants (Pihlar 2013b). While limiting the opportunities for fraud, this prohibition was also deemed to make clearer to the consumer whether the vendor was trustworthy or not.

Changes were also introduced for farmers wishing to sell produce from other farms (in case of a gap in their crop) or wishing to subject their crops to any kind of processing (even staples like sauerkraut and *skuta*, a type of cottage cheese). A registration of a farm supplementary activity became mandatory. A successful

supplementary activity registration was subject to demonstrating a compliance with food safety standards in case of food processing. To be eligible for this form of farm registration, a threshold farm size of 1 hectare was set, thereby disqualifying smaller farms from offering any kind of processed food. For the Ministry of Agriculture, this additional registration represented an even tighter hoop though which producers would have to jump to forge the provenance of domače.

Appropriate labelling of foods became the main focus of inspectoral visits to the market. Country of origin needed to be clearly visible. For processed foods and dairy products, ingredients and the sell-by date needed to be stated on the packaging. Majda, the farmer whom we met in the previous chapter, kept her vegetables neatly labelled on her stall with name and price. For her milk and cheeses she needed to supply an appropriate packaging and have adequate labels made. She kept a batch of labels at home but did not always apply them to the products. She said she was just too lazy to do it sometimes, there was too much hassle with it. Her regulars would probably not even notice them, but an inspector coming her way would probably mind, she reckoned. They would also mind that she didn't provide proper refrigeration for her dairy products. Refrigeration would have made things quite difficult for Majda, as she neither had a mobile fridge nor did her stall have an electric outlet in which to plug it. While the supplementary activities registration she applied for so that she could process dairy and occasionally sell vegetables from her neighbour when she was out of her own crop were free of charge, there was a health insurance related to it, since supplementary activities were considered a riskier type of work. Majda paid an additional 32 EUR per month, which she didn't think was as a small expense. "This is just rude," she complained. "See, another negative side of our state. It has become rather greedy. Its puts the burden on the farmer, on the one who actually works."

The legislative changes aimed to mitigate the risks that farming and farm products posed for the consumers by better traceability and oversight of food related activities. The risks that farming posed to the farmers' bodies was to be managed by an extended health insurance. Yet nobody was concerned about the risks that these changes brought to Majda's livelihood. She commented that farming and selling food was always *rizično*, risky. One could never rely on one's harvest. Sometimes the crop failed, the weather was bad, and there were pests. Sometimes the crop was stolen. Selling was also risky as she risked having to dispose of any produce left unsold at the end of the

day. Being able to rely on someone by complementing the crop with her neighbour's produce was an important strategy to avert risk for Majda. She said they often helped each other out among the farmers from the area and they exchanged advice on the best courses of action. The popularity of domače and its imposed associations with farmers selling only their own produce was hindering this cushion against risk in significant ways.

Inspecting that farmers and market vendors had correctly labelled food alone did not provide the level of protection against fraud that the state wanted to insure. But as a food safety inspector I interviewed told me, examining if a crop had really grown on farmer's land like they claimed, was very challenging. Farmers did not need to comply with any internal traceability requirements or keep harvests records; yields were estimated on land size. To prove a farmer was swindling, they needed to be caught in the act, like the ones exposed by journalists in Trieste. Inspection on the farm might help uncover fraud, for instance if a crop claimed as their own was found yet unharvested by the inspector. That constituted sufficient evidence, but obtaining proof any other way was difficult. "It's almost impossible to catch them if they mix their own produce with some cheap Italian ware." The inspector advocated an even stricter legislation to curb resellers. "To help the god-fearing and law-abiding and to destroy the fraudulent. This is the point of the law, in my opinion," he inspector concluded.

The authority of the local government and consumer nationalism usefully worked as an extension of governance where the reach of the national state was limited.

3 Local government as an outsourcing service

An ally in government's project came in the form of local state governance. The City Municipality of Ljubljana (*Mestna občina Ljubljana*, MOL) has the authority to regulate the use of public space. An analysis of the legislative acts administering urban space I conduct in this section, reveals a municipal policy largely overlapping with the aims of the national samooskrba policy. While the national agenda was difficult to implement through national law, the local state had fewer obstacles. The main tool used by MOL was the regulation of the use of public space. Since 2011, food trading outside of the confines of the organised food market has been vigorously restricted.

Food vending on public property in the City of Ljubljana, outside of designated food markets, requires the vendor to obtain a permit for a fee.[11] To install any kind of equipment such as a market stall, the City requires the applicant to acquire consent from the MOL Urban Planning Department. Application documents should include precise location and sketch of the objects wishing to be installed. Not all purveying activities are allowed. Since the regulation of small trading became consolidated in 1999, food vending directives have gone through several alterations. Stalls selling food in Ljubljana were not prohibited at first. The initial ordinance merely elaborated on the required equipment for two specific foods, ice-cream and roasted chestnuts. A 2011 rewrite of the act changed this and banned vending of all foods with the exception of roasted chestnuts, corn on the cob, roasted almonds and similar, hot dogs and Carniolan sausage (*kranjska klobasa*). Amendments of the ordinance over the following years loosened the regulations and expanded the food exempt from the ban to 'traditional Slovenian dishes.' The permits for agricultural produce were granted for sale 'in season,' if the vendor sold their 'own products or produce.' These changes reveal the underlying policy of Ljubljana's public space regulation: to cater to visitors and tourists; to offer variety to various open space events through carefully curating the array of 'traditional' foods. Roasted chestnuts are a popular winter street food in Ljubljana, yet Ljubljanans tend to think of it more as a perk. The Carniolan sausage and hot dogs became a common form street food that catered to factory workers during socialism when the factories often failed to ensure sufficient meals (Mlekuž 2014). But they do not enjoy the same level of popularity amongst the locals nowadays. Burek, burger and kebab, dishes less easily bestowed with the title 'Slovenian' or 'traditional' were far more coveted and widely available in local food corners.

After I interviewed officials at several departments at MOL[12] and obtained documents there, other reasons for this restriction became apparent. Food markets in Ljubljana were operated by a limited company called LPT, owned by the City of Ljubljana. Farmers selling agricultural produce at one of the designated food markets paid a fee for the stall and space rental that was higher than the rent for the generic public space use. Moreover, applicants wishing to sell hot or prepared meals on public space were

[11] Vending is regulated by the *Ordinance on the special and subordinate use of public space* (*Odlok o posebni in podrejeni rabi javnih površin*).
[12] The Department for Commercial Activities and Traffic, the Department for Environmental protection and the Department of Urban Planning.

denied on the grounds that they may act as an unfair competition to the catering establishments that had rented public space for their outdoor gardens. Outdoor cafés were a profitable source of income for MOL. In 2014, the City has collected over 800,000 EUR from public space rents (Zabukovec 2015a). The annual fee for the most prominently located outdoor café at the Tromostovje bridges was 120,000 EUR (Jesenšek 2016). Furthermore, restricting access to vending permits aimed to address the "fragmentation and chaos currently pervading the fruit and vegetable stalls," as one municipal official put it. With this they referred to the *prekupčevalci,* resellers, such as the uniform red polka dots stalls selling strawberries. The City too was keen on chasing such grocers without their own production off the streets and enclosing them in the space of food markets.

Exceptions were made, rarely, if a lack of a designated food market on the Ljubljanan outskirts was deemed by the City to limit access to fresh farm produce for local residents. Only four such exceptional permits were ever issued to agricultural producers or vendors; only if the applicants were not a threat to the Ljubljana food markets and only upon supplying sufficient proof that the produce was either their own or of Slovenian origin. Majda had been granted such a permit for several years. She acquired consent from the MOL urban planning department upon an official assessment that her stall does not disturb the flow of pedestrian traffic.

Requiring such evidence of origin of food was a privilege that the national state did not have. Moreover, issuing permits of the basis of formal consent from the Urban Planning Department was according to the opinion of an official from this department, an especially non-transparent way of pursuing personal and private agendas disguised as urban planning expertise. The official believed that virtually any application could be denied on the basis of being inappropriate from an urban planning perspective and that this method was causally used to keep unwanted applicants – such as grocers selling imported produce – from using public space.

Vending on privately owned space was more difficult to regulate. When the local authorities had chased vendors off pavements and roadsides for operating without a location permit, their stalls would reappear on private car parks in front of shopping centres. "They know alright, they know very well where the areas of private property are located," said a city inspector, commenting on the surge of seasonal produce stalls

during the past three or four years. The inspectorate felt that little could be done against the stalls of strawberries, peaches, blueberries, cherries, mushrooms and asparagus that abounded in the traffic dense areas. MOL later learned that trading in goods on private property was in fact not exempt from regulation by the municipality. The City of Ljubljana sought expert opinion on the matter from the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology and received a letter in reply with an explanation that the national Trade Act authorised the local government to define the activities and usage of space – regardless of ownership – through its zoning plans. "Despite the acquired consent from the owner or authorised manager of space, the trader can sell the goods only on places defined as appropriate in the acts of the local community. Hence, consent of the local community is needed […]. […T]he local community is [thus] given the opportunity to prevent unfair competition, to protect the environment, to ensure road safety and to enable transparent conduct of economic activities."

A further narrowing of pure domače sellers and others was also planned for the main Ljubljana market. Local farmers who sold on the market and submitted evidence of their farming were already able to acquire a discount for renting the market stalls. But in the future, the food market management also planned a special market corner with around thirty stalls for only truly domače produce. The executive I interviewed claimed the initiative came from the farmers themselves upon observing the loss of consumer trust after the market scandal had erupted. Yet the executive was aware that this shift would be difficult to initiate. They would be dealing with a tough crowd. Oftentimes the specific trading spot at the market was handed down from generation to generation and it was important for the sellers to retain it since the buyers got accustomed to the location. The corner positions were always the best; people passed them by from two directions and represented more potential customers. "Any intervention could be considered an encroachment of the rights obtained in the past decade or more. A shift of only two metres could spark a small revolution." The traders considered the food market their space, they considered themselves to have contributed in its production and to be more than just its tenants.

This section demonstrated how the local state effectively filled the gaps in the reach of national governance. While the policies of the national and local authorities are by no means necessarily aligned, the local state can potentially work as an outsourced service for governance for both national and supranational levels.

4 Market stall nationalism

"Not everyone is made for the market [*ni vsak za trg*]," is a phrase I came across often in conversations about selling food at markets. Selling behind a stall is hard work. Not only is it tough to stand on one's feet outdoors for several hours, sometimes in the cold and rain, but "if you didn't bark at the customer passing by, you didn't sell a thing," as the market manager put it. Majda whom we met in the previous chapter put it so: "Working with people is quite difficult. You need to demonstrate your high spirits even if you don't feel like to and this is difficult sometimes because nobody's in a good mood all of the time." This suggested that selling fresh produce at the market was a skill. But who was and who was not 'made' for the market was also assessed on another set of criteria. The most pervasive method of gaining public approval for instituting Slovenian food as safe and in need of stringent public protection against the threats of swindling was nationalism.

Market stall nationalism, such as the kind casually expressed by my friend Mojca in remarks about Serbian sellers in the opening of this chapter, can be traced to the 1970s. Local news articles from that period reveal complaints over increasing prices of fresh fruit and vegetables offered on the food markets compared to those sold by retail organisations. In 1970s, the main Ljubljana tržnica opened its doors widely to vendors from other Yugoslav republics in the hopes of bringing down the high prices of fresh fruit and vegetables, caused by small scale of Slovenian production (B.P. 1977a). Yet "to what extent this was achieved successfully each of us buying fruit and vegetables at the market can see for themselves" (*ibid*.). The vendors from Croatia, Serbia and Macedonia drove price even higher, it was reported. In the first 6 months after they joined, vegetable prices have gone up for 67% and fruit prices for 75% (E.R. 1975). The high prices were believed to be caused by the high margins added by the resellers, on food bought from large producers, even 100%. "It is not unusual for the vendor to throw the goods (especially tomatoes and lettuce) into the Ljubljanica river instead of lowering the price," reported the local journalist and called for a ban on such trade practices (Zakaj posredniki? 1973). The resellers wanted to create the appearance of lower market supply in order to keep prices high, observed another author (Jerman 1975). The prices often changed during the week, sometimes even during the day and were often not even marked on the goods (E.R. 1975). Moreover, the reselling grocers were seen as creating a huge increase in supply only in season and then disappear,

leaving the regular produce vendors to collect all the customer consumer grievances (B.P. 1977a).

The opinions on the root of the problem of high prices and on how to stop the so called "green mafia" were varied. Some suggested the system of governance was responsible; that there was an insufficient level of inspection on the market to prevent extortionist prices (E.R. 1975). Others held the view that the expensive grocers were merely filling the gaps of an inflexible system of organised socialist food supply and turning them into opportunities; that more and better socialist planning was needed (T.K. 1978). Yet some believed that the dishonest practices of vegetable brokers were preventing the system of organised supply to work efficiently. Since the grocers were "mostly from the southern parts of the state, it would be possible to solve the question of their presence" by legislating to revoke their access to Ljubljana's food markets, it was proposed (Jerman 1975). Others however, saw the cause of high prices in Ljubljana's food supply not being open enough toward the southern markets. It was suggested that the prices would decrease upon integrating large producers from the southern republics, who could produce more and cheaply, into the supply chain (Breznikar 1978).

The local news and commentary crystallised into a debate between assigning the responsibility for an unsustainable state on the food market to a lack of planning an organisation on the part of the state or, alternatively, on the opportunistic and amoral behaviour of the traders from the other Yugoslav republics. It had a striking resemblance to the debates accompanying structural adjustment and market liberalisation policies discussed in the section above. With one significant difference. As described in Chapter one and Chapter six, the Yugoslav self-management system eliminated the possibility of blaming the state for such issues, since economic activity was planned and managed by the workers' organisations themselves. Hence, it was perhaps easier to blame the intra-Yugoslav migrants for the troubles experienced on the Ljubljana central market.

The debate returned a decade later with an influx of fruit and vegetable kiosks in Ljubljana. The municipal assembly issued a decree that allowed *zasebniki*, private individuals, to engage in trade of fruit and vegetables in kiosks outside of food markets (Logar 1981). The intensive residential construction that was under way in the 1970s

did not pay enough attention to the amenities and often provided a single food shop for the entire estate. The retail infrastructure lagged behind and food kiosks run by private entrepreneurs helped fill the void in supply (Dvoršak 1983). The rumours that the private owners were profiteering by running these shops were investigated by a local reporter, who sought to exonerate them by analysing their tax records and noting that the claims were unfounded. The income of kiosks-owners was meagre and some had to make additional income from their farms to keep the retail outlet running (*ibid*.). Near Ljubljana's largest housing estates, the kiosks were rented out to three brothers, Kosovar Albanians (and another Kosovar bearing the same surname but of no relation to the brothers). As the son of one of the brothers told me, the brothers had been selling fruit and vegetable at a market stall in the 1970s and seized the opportunity to rent a kiosk in a residential neighbourhood. Since it was easier to establish a steady supply network through connections to the fruit and vegetable abundant south of Yugoslavia, many kiosk grocers were Kosovar Albanian, but not exclusively so. Yet in the popular imagination, the green grocers' kiosks became equated with Albanian businesses. While the origin of food was not a pronounced consumer concern during the 1970s and 1980s and the main characteristics of good food seem to have been fair pricing and unblemished appearance, the ethnicity of the vendor played also had a key role in the consumer assessment of food quality as it was used to deliberate on the honesty of trading practice by shoppers.

The impression that swindling market stall fruit and vegetable vendors were migrants from other former Yugoslav republics or Albania was still present during my fieldwork. I encountered it among the public officials at the City of Ljubljana when I stated that I was conducting research on samooskrba. From several departments at the municipality, my mention of samooskrba did not prompt requests for further elaboration of what I meant by it, but was rather met with approving nods and a premise that our interests were aligned. The officials told me the City departments have been collaborating on a project of farmers' markets for "increasing local samooskrba" that would reduce the presence of resellers' stalls on the streets. "We want to cut off the Albanians," said one official, "*šiptarji* [ethnic slur for Albanians] and *južnjaki* ['southerners,' ethnic slur for ex-Yugoslav ethnicities other than Slovenes] are only searching for holes in the system. They will be excluded from this." I was surprised at how openly the local state employees used derogatory language for traders they perceived were not Slovenian and how forcefully the City wished to

suppress their operations that they thought were illicit and unethical. Especially surprising, considering that this was prompted from my side only by the mention of the word samooskrba.

Consumers overall expressed a similar attitude. By drawing on the national imaginary of fraudulent migrant vendors, any reselling practice was suspect. In contrast to the dealers in the past suspected of driving up prices therefore representing a threat to food security, the dealers now provoked anxieties over the safety of produce. As food safety was believed to be at stake, consumers welcomed increased government regulation and perceived it as an expression of a much needed attention to their concerns, as an expression of a safety net by a welfare state. "Things can quickly turn into an exploitation," opined a shopper at a farmers' market, "so it has to be left to some form of regulation." Consumers should not have to deal alone with inspecting food origin and authenticity, this should be the task of the authorities, she added. "It is most certainly the right thing that there is some control over them [the small farmers]," expressed another, "I will not buy a single thing without knowing how it's been produced." In contrast to Lithuanian small farmers that were able to benefit from consumers' understanding of marginality as the very source of authenticity (Knudsen 2015; Mincyte 2014), rouge farmers in Ljubljana did not stand such a chance as Ljubljanan consumers endorsed increased state regulation.

A focus on resellers by the authorities shifted Slovenian issues with food safety and quality from being seen as forged by the economic structures in the EU that systematically disadvantages smaller and postsocialist member states, to being attributed by an incomplete break with the socialist past, by which unwanted practices persisted. Socialism continued to serve as a useful repository for shifting public attention (see Chapter five and Chapter six for more on this theme). This allowed the state promotional project of increasing samooskrba to remain seemingly plausible, but the costs for the small farmers was high. Like Majda in the previous chapter, smallholders faced a much more difficult task of proving their authenticity, honesty and safety of their produce to consumers. Agricultural advisors I talked to however suggested that the existing CAP regulation was already very rigorous and any additional national-level regulation only worked to burden smallholders. The advisors held the opinion that semi-subsistence farmers who relied on their crops and sold a

portion on the market were in fact practising the safest kind of agriculture (see also Dunn 2003a; van der Ploeg 2008).

5 Conclusion

This chapter traced the changes in public opinion and state regulation in the wake of a domače food scandal. It started by reviewing literature suggesting that what is at stake when a country has low rates of food self-sufficiency is ultimately the legitimacy of government. A key role for the state, or even what makes up a state, is managing the food supply by mediating relationships between rural populations of food producers and urban populations of food consumers.

To prevent a deeper plunge of public trust in Slovenian food after the scandal had revealed undesirable effects of the state promotional campaign, the government implemented additional measures. While the authorities of EU member states for regulating domestic agricultural production are sparse, food safety regulatory structures are able to control detailed aspects of food production and distribution. In appropriating the structures for regulating food safety in EU to support the national agenda of increasing samooskrba, the elasticity of the meaning of domače was a key element of the process.

I suggest that with shifting the meaning of samooskrba from increasing production of food in Slovenia to policing the provenance of food sold on Slovenian markets for seeming reasons of safety, the government gained the ability to reinscribe itself into the crevices of the relationship between domestic production and consumption and regained its foothold as the mediator. In this process, the narrative of blame for the declining agricultural sector changed. From deeming the rigid EU politico-economic structures as the cause of inhibiting farming incentive the discourse shifted to attributing the blame to the practices of fraudulent farmers that did not embark onto the national project of samooskrba as protection of domače food.

The shift disadvantaged and marginalised those small farmers that the Slovenian agricultural policy initially claimed to protect. However, with it the government addressed its own political precarity and rearticulated its authority and legitimacy all

the same. The promotional campaign then should not be understood as being unsuccessful as it created a demand for domače produce but paid too little attention to production incentives. Rather, it should be read as an attempt at gaining leeway, gaining power, as an indirect mode of governing itself, enabled by using loose rhetoric and harnessing public moral views.

4

‘Green grabbing’ in urban space: Local self-sufficiency as municipal regulatory practice

It is a mid-August afternoon in the midst of a heat wave – one of many in the summer of 2015 that came to hold Ljubljana in its grip for several long and sweaty days. A city inspector protects his head with sunglasses and a canvas hat before closing the door of his car boot. The compact black methane-powered automobile bearing the words *Ljubljana* and *European Green Capital 2016* on its sides is soiled from the dust unsettled by the drive on the unpaved road that led him to his destination. He has parked his car just on the edge of a large plot garden site; he does not want to attract attention. An unpleasant task is waiting for him today. To a number of plot gardens on this site that were located on the land owned by the City of Ljubljana he will attach a paper notice with the following words:

> “A call to users of the *vrtički* [plot gardens, singular *vrtiček*] at the Rakova Jelša Way
>
> In September 2015 we will go forward with the restoration for the second phase of the Rakova Jelša Park due to which the illegal gardens and all the structures and installations on them will have to be removed from this area. The City Municipality of Ljubljana is the owner of the land that hosts these gardens and that additionally entails barracks, garden sheds, tool sheds, gardening equipment, and construction and other types of waste. […]
>
> Since all of the listed plots are owned by MOL, we urge you to remove all structures and installations from the gardens by 20 September 2015. In the opposite case we will be forced to remove the structures at the expense of their owners.”

The document additionally announces that after the restoration, around 450 new vegetable plots, ranging from 25 to 75m^2 in size, will be available at this site before the new gardening season the following year. The interested *vrtičkarji* (plot gardeners,

singular *vrtičkar*, *vrtičkarica*) could inquire further about their rental through the listed contact number.

The city inspector pulls a copy of the notice from his bag, inserts it in a plastic clear sheet to protect it from the weather and ties it to the high padlocked fence or another visible spot for the plotholder to find. He works the terrain equipped with a detailed aerial photograph with an overlay of a cadastral map. He uses this map to pinpoint the gardens that are situated on a narrow plot of municipal land and to avoid hanging the announcement onto the gardens situated on private land that surrounds MOL's plot on both sides. He also plots a way of reaching the gardens with the map, but the navigation to the entrances of the individual garden enclosures proves perplexing. Whereas the aerial photograph shows a tidily patterned formation of square plots lined between perpendicular trails, a vegetable Manhattan, on the ground the inspector runs into dead ends, blocked by wooden fences or trench drains or overgrown with shrubbery.

A month later, around fifty plotholders will have started to move their possessions out of their garden barracks, demolish their garden sheds, burn the combustible material in large bonfires, forfeit their established vegetable gardens and canopies to weeds and draught. Months after this, the bulldozers will level the narrow MOL plot, erasing in a day of two the traces of the past ten or twenty years that the ploholders have left there. MOL will start creating a new gardening site, with paths, an orchard, hundreds of small vegetable plots with compost crates, large barracks housing communal tool lockers and water. The municipality will spend around 800,000 EUR (Valenčič 2017) for this project and will proudly celebrate it as part of having won the title of the European Green Capital 2016. Local state officials will say they are responding to an increased interest in food self-provisioning of Ljubljanans (European Commission & Directorate-General for the Environment 2015); that they are making an increase in local self-sufficiency one of its strategic goals in the municipal environmental protection policy (MOL 2014), that they will be turning "brownfields" and "degraded areas" (Park Rakova Jelša 2016) with currently only "a few abandoned vrtički" (Department for Environmental Protection, City of Ljubljana 2015) into sites "intended primarily for samooskrba" (Park Rakova Jelša 2016). When the project will have been completed the following summer, the vast majority of vegetable plots will remain vacant. There will be little interest in getting a garden here. Only a quarter will

be rented to Ljubljanans and a fraction of them, around 30, will be seen struggling to protect their vegetables from the intrusive weeds reclaiming the adjacent empty lots.

The inspector disseminates the notices to plotholders on the municipal plot. He is relieved when the task is done. It is a very hot day and he is tired. He is only months away from retirement.

This chapter is structured around the following questions: why did the local state's project failed; why did the popular trope of samooskrba failed to attract growers to that particular area; and why did the urban revitalisation project under the banner of EU environmental agenda destroy rather than improve urban gardening. I argue that gardening as a form of self-provisioning was difficult to institutionalise because the local state did not take into account the multitude of components that shape this practice, including the local state's own planning and managing role. Plot garden sites in Ljubljana are entanglements – this chapter traces how they are produced and what sustains them. I find that the practice of urban gardening is propelled less by EU-led discourses of urban sustainability and green development; instead it thrives in conditions of urban precarity. This analytical route leads me to acknowledge that it is not sufficient to ask why projects fail in the forms they were planned. To understand what schemes 'do' (Ferguson 1994), they should be analysed in their broader temporal contexts, as promises, intentions and rhetorics, along seeing them as exercises of power to transform spatialities, regardless of their actual outcome (Abram & Weszkalnys 2013b).

First section describes the Rakova Jelša site in greater detail to outline its significance and summarises the analytical approach. Section two locates a base for mass gardening in socialist austerity. Section three looks at developments after the break of Yugoslavia and shows how plot gardening acquired a new character in a newly independent country with a goal of entering the EU. The last section describes municipal interventions and plotholders' tactics of evasion and puts them in the context of their precarious, tenuous nature. I show how forms of urban self-provisioning are always a relationship, never an isolated individual pursuit.

1 Gardening site as a palimpsest

As I trailed behind the city inspector handing out notices in the summer heat and retracing his steps at several points, I observed how unwelcoming the site was to anyone unfamiliar with it and I recalled mentions made by several other state officials that they got disoriented when they visited, despite using maps. It was a peculiar landscape of narrow footpaths between high fences, protecting from view all but the tops of well-kept summer cottages and poles of runner beans, interspersed with tall spruce and cypress trees and with unoccupied plots vacated during a municipal intervention projects in the past. These lots housed bare concrete building foundations where cottages used to stand, heaps of durable waste – from used tyres to hazardous asbestos panels – remains of burned down vehicles and patches of Japanese knotweed or other invasive plants reclaiming the land quickly and assuredly and converting it to wilderness. The surreal panorama of an unlikely coexistence of the tidy and cared-for gardens and the signs of utter abandon and ruin was both unsettling and captivating. There was no sense of place that would envelop comfortably over the entire plot garden area. The gardens were pockets of place turned into themselves, away from the uninhabited and inhospitable dissonance outside of their individual borders that was left to occasional visitors.

The area of Rakova Jelša brings a sense of notoriety to the minds of Ljubljanans. Encompassing a nearby informal residential settlement, the urban area of Rakova Jelša is popularly regarded as a place of *južnjaki*, migrants from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Macedonia. The site has a reputation for being dangerous and I was often discouraged from visiting by white-collar professionals in the city centre who informed that a more than growing vegetables was going on in that area. I collected rumours of shots being fired in the night, of drugs and weapons dealer networks operating and of organised prostitution. It seemed that nothing that could have been going on in Rakova Jelša garden site was quite beyond the imagination of Ljubljanans that seldom set foot in the area. While I did not find their impressions to be well founded, personal hardship did make plotholders make use of the gardens for reasons other than vegetable self-provisioning. Reporting on the municipal clearing project at this site in 2011, a journalist described a garden shed in Rakova Jelša that

> "did not serve only as storage for gardening tools but was for the past two years also the abode of the [21-year-old] young man. He thus lost his dwelling together with his 'job' in the nearby illegal material recovery facility [a landfill], also to be removed in a few days. […] The young man explained to us that he used to reside at [an Old Town address] but after the divorce of his parents (the mother returned to her native Bosnia, the Albanian father moved to Domžale [a town north of Ljubljana] or since he was 14 years old, he lived in such '*vikendice'* [weekend cabin] at Rakova Jelša. Where to next, he did not know. He does not have an apartment and since he spent some time in jail for theft he also cannot get a regular job, even though he is a trained mechanic. How many such stories are hidden in the gardens of Rakova Jelša we do not know, but probably this is not an isolated one…" (Petkovšek 2011).

I have met several other plotholders in Rakova Jelša who had similar stories to share. After his divorce, Mirsad was forced to move to the cottage on the plot he and his wife once tended together. His disability pension allowed him to rent a small room from a private landlord where he did his weekly bath and laundry and picked up post. But positive stories also flourished on this site. A few weeks after the inspector did his rounds, I found myself sitting down on a wooden bench in front of Sando's garden shed and three large polytunnels filled with peppers and tomatoes, listening at the banter of three men. A distant sound of an eager chainsaw was padding the discussion on the renewal project in the background; the deadline for clearing out the municipal site was fast approaching. Sando kept his garden plot to grow vegetables. He liked gardening; he designed and constructed the polytunnels himself, he installed a complex irrigation system for his tomatoes and pepper plants. He produced enormous quantities of both to make huge quantities of *ajvar* preserve (see Chapter six) from the produce. Haris kept his small garden plot for the shed alone. He did not grow any vegetables but he occasionally threw a barbecue for his lover when she was in town. His plot was a love nest Haris' wife knew nothing about. Jožef disliked gardening too but his overzealous wife refused to give up the garden. However, Jožef seemed to like complaining about this predicament to his fellow plotholders whose company he much enjoyed. The community of plotholders in Rakova Jelša extended beyond socialising; people here helped out in construction tasks, investigated into reasons for a plotholder's long absence from the plot, kept an eye on gardens while someone was away, offered car rides to each other. Often their life situations gave them little choice but to rely on these mutual aid networks.

“So this is it then,” said Anton softly upon reading the inspector’s notice and learning that his plot will be lost. He returned to his *brunarica* (wooden cabin) to inform his wife. He and his family had invested a lot of his time and funds into this project and the cabin Anton had built himself was a source of pride for him. The 700m^2 plot consisted of a vegetable garden, a lawn and a tall spruce tree shielding from the outside views. The space was the family’s way of compensating for the crammed high-rise living arrangement. While Anton’s uncertainty might had grown and an abrupt end like this was expected more and more as time went by, his garden and cabin grew larger, more stable and solid with each passing year as he invested his labour in improving them. The plotholders understood that the threat of being charged with the removal expenses was probably empty and even illegitimate, yet found the risk of ignoring it untenable. Rumours had it that the fine imposed on trespassers could be anywhere from 500 EUR to 3,000 EUR, too high a price for most Rakova Jelša plotholders. The gardeners also felt compelled to comply with the municipal demands also because in a real estate survey undertaken by the national government on the site in 2007, national government officials took their names and addresses and measured their sheds. While they suspected that the different domains of state authority would not share information among each other, the plotholders felt too documented and surveilled to feel comfortable with leaving their belongings behind.

Anton has been a plotholder at Rakova Jelša for 25 years and has been through all of this once before. The City of Ljubljana had been attempting to remove the plotholders at the Rakova Jelša garden site for several years. In 2010, MOL issued notices requesting removal of trespassers and their property from the holdings owned by MOL. MOL had acquired these plots from the national state the year before. Anton recalled ‘going out of his mind’ when he dismantled everything he had been building for years before. He described the mood of the site during that period: embittered neighbours burning stacks of wooden planks, keeping to themselves, trying to finish the task as quickly as possible. Many of them found this too painful and had refused to go through with the clearing and left it to the authorities. Yet after the deadline had passed, plotholders waited in vain for MOL construction contractors. No bulldozers arrived. The lucky handful who refused to tear down their sheds could continue to tend their plots undisturbed until the following year. In 2011, MOL organised a second, larger intervention at the Rakova Jelša garden site. By citing the offence of *‘črne gradnje’* (buildings without planning permission), the municipality recruited the help

of national building inspectors, who had the authority to issue sanctions accompanied by steep fines. This persuaded even the most reluctant plotholders to leave the site. The young man reported on by the journalist above who stood in front of the ruins that used to be his home, tore it down himself (Petkovšek 2011).

After the clearing project, no development on the site took the place of the demolished plots. Among those who lost their possessions, some returned and started anew, like Anton, but many abandoned plots became illegal landfills (Bogataj 2011). Things were different afterwards, said Anton. Plotholders began to be more careful with expanding their gardens and investing in them. They began to shut themselves in by enclosing their gardens with higher fences. The outside appearance of ruin and abandonment and the lack of 'eyes on the street' (Jacobs 1961) drew burglars onto the site.

Learning from past mistakes, the City approached a novel demolition project in 2015 with a plan of developing the site. A key force animating the redevelopment project in Rakova Jelša was the title of European Green Capital 2016 that the City of Ljubljana won in 2014. The title has been awarded to EU cities by the European Commission since 2008 and rewards "cities which are making efforts to improve the urban environment and move towards healthier and sustainable living areas" (European Commission 2017a). In competing for the title, one of the plans outlined by the Ljubljana municipality was the rehabilitation of brownfield sites and degraded areas such as abandoned barracks, shanty settlements and illegal garden allotments by transforming these into green areas such as parks. The bid also indicated a creation of 400 new plot gardens in different locations across Ljubljana, recognising the contribution to food self-sufficiency by the Ljubljanans' motivation for self-provisioning (European Commission & Directorate-General for the Environment 2015). These statements aligned with the City's Environmental Protection Programme (2014-2020) which brought samooskrba to the fore. The policy listed "developing a network of plot gardens and food growing projects" and "establishing at least one plot gardening site in each of the local communities" as its explicit aims (MOL 2014). The use of the samooskrba trope and the shift of the limelight on the needs of Ljubljanans for food quality, environmental protection and community values steered the focus away from the fact that the project revoked access to land to certain groups in the urban population.

I propose that this EC-endorsed project that the City of Ljubljana carried out constitutes an instance of 'green grabbing'. Fairhead and his colleagues (2012) borrow the term from Guardian journalist John Vidal (2008) to describe justifying the transfer of ownership or use rights to land from the poor to the powerful by calling upon environmental ends. Green grabbing is related to a novel way of imagining nature, Fairhead et al. suggest, a 'green gaze'. The green gaze imagines nature as made up of component parts that can be managed, protected, isolated or utilised, rather than as an interconnectedness of humans and ecologies and as a human rootedness in the historical and ecological processes (Fairhead et al. 2012). In Ljubljana, a narrow use of the samooskrba keyword that referred to merely the municipal distribution of vegetable plots, combined with a broad public approval for projects of environmental urban revitalisation, legitimised dispossessing plotholders at the Rakova Jelša site.

Considering that there was very little public interest for renting a garden in the area developed by MOL, despite spending public funds to appropriate land from previous plotholders in a bid to offer the land to more people, the City's green grabbing attempt seems bitterly unsuccessful. The outcome of this redevelopment project easily lends itself to comparison with James Scott's take on the failed modernist 'schemes' unable to take the lived realities into account in their planning (Scott 1998). However, Li suggests that the planning failure is visible only from an analytical point of an "all-seeing state operating as a preformed repository of power spread progressively and unproblematically across national terrain, colonizing nonstate spaces and their unruly inhabitants" (Li 2005: 384). If instead, following Ferguson and Li, we ask not 'Why have schemes failed?' but rather 'What do schemes do?', the shift in focus toward their effects can render a different picture (Ferguson 2015; Li 2005). While projects can fail in spatial terms or in gaining legibility over spaces and populations, they do not lose the evocative power of the promises implied in planning (Abram & Weszkalnys 2013b). As examined in the remainder of this chapter, plot gardening in Ljubljana has long been implicated in a variety of governing aims. Understanding space as "constituted through interactions" and "as always under construction" (Massey 2005: 9), I suggest to analyse urban garden sites as entanglements of actors, factors, relationships, land tenure systems, spatial arrangements, urban planning and other municipal and national policies across time. The space of Rakova Jelša plots consists of decades of accumulated spatial practices, holes in space claimed by plants and of future threats. To treat the space as a palimpsest (Holston 1999), a constellation

of semi-transparent and non-uniform layers of space, will help tease out ways in which the power of the local state operates.

Examining the formal (called first) and the informal (called second) economy in Soviet socialism, Creed pointed out that while the second economy of black markets, smuggling and midnight farming represented an important way of coping with the first, often gridlocked, unproductive and supplying insufficient amount of necessities to the workers, it was ultimately also exhausting it of both material and labour resources (Creed 1998; see also Ledeneva 1998). Creed used the term 'conflicting complementarity' to illustrate this dynamic and I find it useful to emphasise the relationship between the 'official' and the 'vernacular' order as employed in the Rakova Jelša plot gardening site. An account that sees the official order simply as imposing itself of the existing authentic structures and erasing their subtle differences, or one that sees the vernacular order as employing the agency allowed by the existing official structure misses the way in which both orders are produced in response to each other. As Li posits, the gaps between the one and the other are inevitable and sustain both the ruling regime and oppositions to it (Li 2005).

I find the metaphor of weeds evocative for this purpose. The metaphor might seem fitting for plot gardens because it captures the general sentiment of dislike that the gardens elicit. Weeds seem to disturb a representation of order, and call for things to be put in order. This resonates with Mary Douglas' account of dirt as matter out of place (Douglas 1966) that sees weeds as constructed as such in the eye of the beholder. In contrast to this understanding, however, I take my cue for utilising the weeds metaphor from Richard Mabey, a British nature writer, who challenged Douglas' notion of dirt as an idea of disorder in his analysis of plants. Mabey pointed out that the perceived disorder of weeds is produced by the very order that attempts to curb it. Weeds become resilient due to the attempts at curtailing them. The plants adapt in order to prosper in the cracks overlooked by order. Weeds are what humans envision as such, and the category is flexible as plants continually go through stages of being considered useful and not. But they are more; weeds are also created as such by being treated as unwanted and thus prompted to thus find niches in which they can prosper. Mabey suggested that weeds, in their crossing of the boundary between domestic, cultivated nature and wilderness, were the human "most successful cultivated crop" (Mabey 2010: 291). The kind of dynamic that Mabey describes for outlaw plants

resonates well with the particularities of plot gardens as a spatial and temporal form. As this chapter will illustrate, contrary to municipal and wider public perceptions of the Rakova Jelša site, the gardens weren't a product so much of a lack of order, a failure to be put in order, but of too much order, too many orders, too much effort to define, describe, articulate, find use and purpose for an activity that doesn't let itself be so easily captured.

2 The growth of plot gardening during the socialist period

Man, plucked from the earth prematurely, in the outskirts where he lives,
establishes a land. Before his eyes a lorry shakes the soil off its back.
To establish a land in the middle of the tower blocks and balconies,
sometimes in the armpit of two roads, is an *actus dei*.
Man, plucked from the earth prematurely, grows in this soil,
brought in from the wind, delicate leaves of lettuce.
Man, plucked from the earth prematurely, straightens and measures this soil,
nurtures its edges, marks the cultivars on it, digs it, covers with it, improves, fertilises, waters it.
Man, plucked from the earth prematurely, would you sell me this land?
Not a chance in the world! (Legally speaking, he is not even its owner.)
Come seventh or eighth year, a bulldozer arrives, disturbs the cultivars,
erases the edges, destroys the boundaries. A lawn replaces the garden.
Man, plucked from the earth prematurely, withdraws to the balcony.
He pours the soil into pots (the family no longer eats from the same bowl, too).
He sells the shovel and buys a trowel. He grows fond of flowers that rarely blossom
and don't need to be watered frequently. Foreign culture supplants the domestic.
(Geister 1969: 21, my translation)

Geister's verses, part of his essay on plot gardening, are telling. They portray a cultivator whose small plot helps him overcome the loss felt by being uprooted from the countryside. His man is placed in a suffocating atmosphere of a newly built urban concrete residential estate and into poverty of his household (connoted with the expression 'eating from the same bowl') which rendered his cultivation meaningful beyond his love for plants. In the text accompanying the poem, Geister asserts that he understands plot gardening as a "by-product of the migration culture" (*ibid.*). Geister's gardener arrived to Ljubljana during the modernisation period of the 1960s and 1970s in search of employment. While the Slovene rural population that sought a job in the

city could often afford to remain in the hinterlands and balance a daily work commute with afternoon work on the land, rural migrants from other parts of Yugoslavia in search of work found their abode in the newly erected residential tower blocks. The extra space and privacy offered by a plot garden and a garden shed were welcomed by the residents of the high-rises yet unaccustomed to urban life.

Even today, almost every high-rise residential estate that emerged during the modernisation period of the 1960s and 1970s in Ljubljana remains in close relationship to a near-by plot garden site cultivated by the residents of the high-rise. This was made possible by planning the construction of the residential estates in largely remote farming peri-urban areas. In addition to use of farmland for construction, the Slovenian land inheritance regime tended to fragment the plots and leave the land surrounding the high-rises less suitable for cultivation (see Chapter one). Idle land in the vicinity of the estates could have also been part of the socialist land category of *splošno ljudsko premoženje* or SLP ("general people's property") – land taken from peasants whose ownership in total exceeded 10ha.

The same urbanisation force that on the one hand found expression in urban gardening as a product of 'migration culture' and fragmented land use, on the other hand served to erase it when Ljubljana expanded further, as Geister's poem also noted. Yet Geister was incorrect in anticipating that losing the horticultural plots to construction would discourage the practitioners from replacing the loss. With the spread of urbanisation, the plot garden sites moved outwards too. Bulldozers running over the delicate lettuce leaves were a constant and stable occurrence for plot gardens ever since the 1950s, even when plot gardening was carried out within an organised setting. Plot gardening was not a spatial practice recognised by urban planners. It was both produced and erased by urbanisation of Ljubljana and this process was slow enough to accommodate a relocation of the garden sites. In the capital cities of other former Yugoslav republics, faster and more extensive urbanisation process wiped the horticultural plots out much earlier and left little space for their renewal (Bajić-Hajduković 2016).

Reports from a plot gardening organisation that operates since 1954 demonstrate the burden of the relocation process for its members. The members lamented the loss of investment in land rent and of a substantial improvements of soil made before it was suitable for intensive horticultural use. "It even occurred that the bulldozers drove into

the gardens in the middle of the year, when everything was at its fullest growth!" the organisation stated in the local press (Vrtičkarstvo v občini Šiška 1971). Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the organisation had continuously attempted to secure new rental agreements to replace cultivated areas lost to construction. At one point, the organisation even changed its name to better correlate with the locations of most of its plots (Ramšak 1975).

Growing vegetables on plot gardens in Ljubljana remains a widely spread urban phenomenon, akin to many other postsocialist cities (Caldwell 2011; Czegledy 2002; Jehlička & Smith 2012). For Slovenes, vegetable gardens are a norm. In the countryside and the suburbs, houses not accompanied by a vegetable plot are difficult to find. Even in urban areas, house gardens are ordinarily utilised to grow at least some fruit or vegetables. High up in the hilly parts of the countryside, the holiday cottages (*vikendi*) of urban flat dwellers usually sit atop of a hobby vineyard, but small vegetable plots are also very commonly tended. City plot gardens are cultivated by urbanites who cannot afford the luxury of any of those. Some suggest that as much as 5% of Ljubljana's inhabitants engage in such form of land use (Jamnik et al. 2009). There are around 300 garden sites spread around the city outskirts. The individual garden plots are usually small, measuring between 50m^2 and 150m^2 and a garden site accommodates anywhere between 10 and 100 plots (*ibid*.). The fragmented garden sites continue to rent pockets of farmland or make use of patches of idle land, such as construction sites, belts of land on the sides of railroad tracks or arterial roads, the areas around high-rise buildings and industrial zones, or spaces under the power lines. Most of them are located near enough to be reached by gardeners living in residential estates by bicycle or on foot. The land is often cultivated without a formal consent of the owner of land or official permission and plotholders are often not formally connected through an organisation. Many have determined by the growers themselves when the plot garden site was established (Vezovišek-Goriup et al. 1984). An urban gardening renaissance began in Ljubljana in the 2010s. Several new smaller sites were established that were either managed by associations or rented out by private landlords. The City of Ljubljana began to manage a smaller number of plots located on municipal land. Student- and activist-led community gardens cropped up in abandoned and overgrown pockets of urban space.

The Rakova Jelša garden site is an old one and one of the largest in Ljubljana as it spreads over more than 20 hectares. It is rather remotely located just across Ljubljana Ring Road at its south most end where the swampy and flood-prone terrain of the Ljubljana Marshes (Barje) makes it less appropriate for construction and intensive agricultural use of land. The individual plots at Rakova Jelša are much larger than the average vegetable plots closer to the city centre. Most of them range from 300 to 1,000m^2, accommodate a weekend cottage and are likely protected with a fence.

The location of the Rakova Jelša gardens was unoccupied during the rapid urbanisation period of the 1960s and 1970s. During the 1970s several informal housing settlements began to emerge nearby on the Marshes that socialist planners consider inappropriate for residential construction, but the garden site location remained a fallow land. The area was owned by a large industrial dairy cooperative[13] that intended to grow maize for its dairy cattle feed, but found the area too flood-prone and the soil consisting of too much peat. The land was left fallow, as it was in the past. Marta, the current owner of a part of land used by some of the plotholders in Rakova Jelša, remembered playing in these meadows as a child before the WWII. Her father kept the plot for hay to feed the odd family horse.

Rakova Jelša site was established in the early 1980s when the popularity of plot gardening exploded. In contrast with the assertion in Geister's verses of a transitory character of urban gardening that would subside once rural migrants would replace their rural practices with the urban activity of tending decorative plants, the vegetable plots began spreading like never before. Every inch was cultivated, the local journalists reported: the sides of rail tracks, the forks of roads, the lawns in front of residential estates (Žitko 1984). The plots were described in the press over and over again with the phrase "springing up like mushrooms after the rain" to denote their seemingly aleatory occurrence and frequency. The field upon which the plotholders dug their hands and hoes was not always common property. The news occasionally reported on angry landowners surprised to see a nascent horticultural colony that emerged on their property over the course of a weekend (Čontala 1983).

[13] Ljubljanske mlekarne dairy is a public company today and is owned by the multi-national Lactalis.

Contributing to the surge in plot gardening was the political crisis that occurred after Tito's death, the economic austerity following Yugoslav debt crisis (*stabilizacija*) and in the second half of the 1980s, a growing environmental awareness, propelled by concerns over the Chernobyl nuclear accident in 1986. A high cost of food and living brought by the Yugoslav crisis and anxieties over food supply made cultivating food at home into a common household practice to an unprecedented number of Ljubljanans, as reported in the press. Through the analysis of the changes in the notions of healthy food during the socialist period, Tivadar observes how organic food (*biohrana*) began to be praised for its purity and richness in nutrients during the 1980s (Tivadar 2009). Since there were no markets selling organic food then, it had to be grown. A novel discourse that producing one's own vegetables pays off – if one doesn't include the labour costs – appeared and proliferated (Guzej 1984). Petrol prices rising beyond the affordability of working class families made larger plot gardens also a cheap vacationing option for Ljubljanans (Bibič 1984). In addition, vegetable gardening in the city as utilising a *bio* (organic and biodynamic) method of cultivation was framed as a way of protecting both the health of the cultivator by growing healthy produce and the environment by supporting biodiversity.

Vegetable plots began to appear in Ljubljana Marshes in 1983 after an agricultural cooperative (TZO Vič, *Temeljna zadružna organizacija ljubljanske kmetijske zadruge*) that managed large areas of farmland there, decided to switch from dairy farming to horticulture and to produce marketable vegetables for sale to Eta, a large food preserving factory from Kamnik. A part of the cooperative land was offered to individual plotholders who could garden for free if a portion of their harvest was given to the cooperative (Kaučič 1983). A gardening organisation by the name of *Emona vrtiček* also rented land in the area. In 1983 a large new garden site on the grounds of a former landfill was unveiled (N.Č. 1984). Garden tenants worked to remove waste and cover the terrain with fertile soil. The land was then divided into equal plots and the garden sheds were built in a uniform way. The tenancy agreements were long-term, for several years, giving plotholders ample time to plan their crops and invest in their garden equipment. A pleased plotholder told a journalist: "We will be very happy on the plot. My husband and I live in a tower block and now that the petrol is so expensive, we hardly ever go anywhere" (Bibič 1984). "It was very nice to see the happy faces of first ones to receive a plot. They were not only Slovenes, on the contrary, among them were a lot of Croats, Bosnians, Vojvodinans, Serbs,

Macedonians, even Bulgarians were among them. On 20 hectares they will be able to meet every day and thus most directly develop brotherhood and unity," reported an eager local journalist (N.Č. 1984).

Emona's next big project was the establishment of the Rakova Jelša garden site. The dairy cooperative was only too happy to rent out 20ha of its farmland that it found it less suitable for its cultivation needs (Šegula 1983). Continuing in a similar fashion, the plotholders divided the area in Rakova Jelša into equal plots in a perpendicular grid. Smaller groups of plotholders were organised into groups headed by group representatives who collected rent and reported on members' comments and requests. Ljubljanans showed a lot of interest in the area and the number of plotholders grew steadily. Emona organisation also engaged in education and publishing. Šegula founded the Gardening University (*Vrtičkarska univerza*) in 1986, which organised gardening classes and excursions to gardening fairs in Western Europe, published gardening manuals and designed a biodynamic gardening calendar. Each member of Emona vrtiček received a copy of the calendar and the opportunity to attend the lectures. The organisation's logotype consisted of a symbol of a smiling sun, a hoe, and a slogan: "We're here to help you survive" (Oblak 1994).

Echoing other accounts of self-provisioning in socialism (Stenning et al. 2011), during the 1980s, urban food cultivation became the site where citizens could actively contribute towards socialist self-management and the goals set out by the state. Land was discussed in terms of its productivity for food production and fallow land – 16,000 ha around Ljubljana in 1984 (Zupančič et al. 1984) – as an unused potential for food production that needed to be tapped in. Resonating with the post-war economic reconstruction efforts and rhetoric, the issues of increasing Slovenian food self-sufficiency began to come to the fore. Media began portraying the Slovenian reliance on food imports, Yugoslav and foreign alike, as a problem. The austerity measures called out to citizens to curb their consumer expectations. The lack of foreign currency available to Yugoslavia for imports was intended to be resolved with an increased productivity of export goods. Commentators in the press presented household self-provisioning as a way of reducing the pressure of demand on the market, effectively driving the high prices of vegetables down (Šegula 1983). Individual urban gardening could contribute to an increase in Slovenian food self-sufficiency so that the nation would be able to break free of its reliance on food imports, increasing ever since the

post-WWII era. “Samooskrba is also a part of *stabilizacija* and the results will surely be better if it is well organised,” wrote the national press (Burnik et al. 1984).

Advocates of plot gardening proposed it could also be usefully understood as part of *splošni ljudski odpor* (“general people’s resistance”), the ideology of a constant state of vigilance and preparedness of the population for the eventuality of an enemy attack. Urban food production could play an important part in the contingency plan if something unexpected were to happen and could help any general disruptions in the food supply (Bibič 1984; N.Č. 1984). Cultivating plots could bring happiness and fulfilment to the socialist workforce and thus greatly improve labour productivity. Allowing workers to cultivate small patches of land could help with workers’ willingness to abandon the supplementary afternoon work on their family farms, thus causing less absences from work during the high farming season on account of falsely reported illnesses (Burnik et al. 1984).

However, the same self-provisioning activity was also presented as having subversive potential and foster civic values opposite the dominant socialist ideology. Commentators in the press proposed that gardening could improve a sense of individual progress and development that was hindered in the workplace by the wage levelling system (*uravnilovka*), which for the sake of worker’s equality killed personal initiative. In the garden a person’s individual skill, quality of work and innovativeness paid off, since more effort translated into more yield and a more beautiful garden overall. The surge in popularity of plot gardening during the 1980s could in their view be understood as an expression of workers wishing to escape the perceived personal hindering of initiative to realise themselves on the garden plot (Zupančič et al. 1984). Some claimed that the Communist Party regarded plot gardening organisations as a way of luring workers away from progress and politics and back toward primitive manual labour (Šegula 1987; also see Lovšin 2014: 152; Czegledy 2002). Others recognised that plot gardening had been long regarded as expression of a “narrow-minded mentality of smaller private ownership, the negative revival of land ownership atavisms, people closing themselves off into their own personal sphere, a retreat from collective interests, etc.,” but expressed hope that these prejudices would dissipate as popularity surged and that an appreciation of the “social, recreational, educational, mentally-hygienic, urban design/style, and economic importance of allotment gardens” would prevail (Vezovišek-Goriup 1984, cited in Lovšin 2014: 64).

In general, public evaluations of the increasingly popular practice generally offered a sympathetic and supportive view. Calls for putting it in order stood for managing a practice in a sustainable and long-term way that would make it available to as wide an audience as possible. Household savings and stabilising the market demand were foregrounded among the benefits, but the quality of leisure and the health and nutritional qualities of the produce were also not missed by commentators in the press. But the popularised afternoon activity also propelled disapproval as news sometimes brought images of often deplorable conditions on the garden sites: of chickens, rabbits and hogs being kept on the small plots, of moonshine bars illegally operating in the cottages, of fracas amongst the future plotholders over patches of land. Anxieties that gardening sites would become shanty towns were expressed by the local journalists and the local state (Čontala 1984). The non-organised plots came to be referred to as 'wild gardens' (*divji vrtički*) and the need to find an appropriate organised form for the practice became louder.

3 The decline of plot gardening after the Yugoslav break

After socialism collapsed and Slovenia gained independence in 1991, plot gardening began to expand enormously. Compared to estimations of the extent of plot gardening in 1984, the area covered by plot gardens had nearly doubled by 1997 (Simoneti 1997).[14] A sense of a general crisis that accompanied the period before the break with Yugoslavia lingered on. Increased poverty and unemployment after independence (Vošnjak 1992) and crammed living arrangements and poor living conditions on general continued to drive Ljubljanans to the gardens. The war in Slovenia had been short, however, the Balkan wars that erupted following the independence of other Yugoslav republics rampaged for years and left a sense that war was always nearby. Urban gardening sites that housed larger sheds or cottages became temporary first homes for a good number of Balkan war refugees and in some instances for the Erased (see Chapter one).

[14] The publication estimated that the area cultivated by individual gardeners had risen from 130ha to 259ha.

The land restitution process (*denacionalizacija*) had greatly influenced the practice of urban gardening. Returning private property taken by Communist government after WWII to its pre-war owners had on the one hand, deterred the work of gardening organisations, and on the other, created a temporary void in land ownership to the plotholders's advantage. Land restitution rights legislation, passed shortly after independence, gave the ownership applicants two years to file claims. After application, an often lengthy legal process was initiated until a new legal property owner was named.[15] Demonstrating a property right was often embroiled in owner disputes, inheritance battles or was complicated by situations where the heirs moved abroad sometime in the past. Upon returning the land to the owner's family after more than 45 years, several inheritance beneficiaries often had conflicting ideas on how the land should be utilised. Marta, the partial owner of the plot adjacent to the new municipal urban gardens, who recalled running among the haystacks on her father's meadow before the WWII, returned to the plot after independence together with her six siblings only to find the land populated with vegetables and wooden sheds. The heirs had no intention of selling the land, yet did not agree on how to make use of it. Removing the horticultural trespassers seemed too big of a project so plot gardeners had the owner's silent consent to continue with their practice.

All agricultural and barren land in the process of obtaining a legal owner or without ownership claims came under the management of the newly established Farmland Fund (*Sklad kmetijskih zemljišč in gozdov Republike Slovenije*) and Slovenian state assumed ownership of its holdings. The Rakova Jalša plot did not acquire a private owner and became the property of the Fund. At first the Fund intended to continue to rent out individual plots, but the institution found itself unable to manage the numerous private tenants and abolished the plan (Goljevšček 1998). Gardening organisations found it very difficult to persist in this new situation. Emona organisation substantially loosened its hold over the gardening activity in Rakova Jelša and was dissolved in mid-1990s. The plotholders remained, but were no longer gardening in an organised setting, no longer paid rent or fees and newcomers were no longer allocated a space but choose it freely. Several plots in Rakova Jelša were repurposed and began housing storage spaces for small businesses or landfills.

[15] In some cases it took years for claims to be solved. A small number of claims remains unsolved today.

Despite growth of number of gardens, aided by pockets of farmland lost in bureaucratic processes, the process of *denacionalizacija* also brought a change in the social relations and cultural values of land. Well documented across the former socialist world, the decollectivisation and privatisation processes had a profound influence on economic as well as social and cultural relations in the new states (Creed 1998; Humphrey 1998; Leonard & Kaneff 2002; Verdery 2003). In Slovenia, the expanded institution of private property, especially land impropriation, shaped the notion of citizenship and national belonging. The idea that property and land 'naturally' have an owner was stressed in the media. Private property was idealised by politicians as the cornerstone of democracy. Verdery suggested that as privatisation was an effective way of dismantling the authority of the socialist state, it also changed the relationship between the new state and citizens (1996). The new Slovenian state incorporated its subject differently as Yugoslavia did; it constituted citizens through granting rights to property and protecting these rights. In this changed relationship, some land uses – such as plot gardening – fell completely out of favour. No longer did the socialist slogan "the land to those who work it" rang true.

Moreover, plot gardening worked as a conduit for the nationalist tensions that arose after the collapse of socialism (see Chapter one). Cultivating informally after the organisations had given up, plotholders became widely regarded as trespassing immigrants from Yugoslavia (Mihelič 1994). Plot gardening was used to amplify a nationalist stance and became a potent visual aid of presenting the importance of instituting and protect private property in order to curb the spatial chaos caused by land appropriating migrants (ibid.). Unregulated plot garden sites housing shabby homemade garden sheds worked very well as an illustration. While there was some disapproval of the inurbane and 'wild' appearance of urban gardening in the past, this issue became much more central to the framing of the practice after 1991. A novel gaze imagined an outsider, a European, gazing upon the capital city of a newly born country and noticing with dread the vegetable plots scattered around the city's main traffic arteries (Mihelič 1994). Expressing an open critique of urban gardening also became a way of making apparent the need to put public policy on a path leading away from the Yugoslav socialist political regime and toward a 'return to Europe' (see Verdery 1996).

"Surnames are not important here. We are all a single family, joined by love for the soil," stated a Ljubljanan cultivating a garden before Slovenia proclaimed independence (Vošnjak 1984). Afterwards, urban gardening was described in a local newspaper as the use of "shovels [by] greedy *priseljenci* [immigrants], otherwise citizens of the Republic of Slovenia, [who] without order or respect for our common property cut into the grasslands where without a doubt flowers would bloom otherwise and the hardworking bees would collect pollen for the domače honey." The author saw "their" appropriation of "our" land as "mocking the state governed by the rule of law" (Skledar 1992). Ljubljanans began to associate these spatial forms as remnants of the past, representing a now unpalatable socialist ethos. In the press, muddled gardens and piecemeal land appropriation was attributed to migrants' attachment to the traditional rural ways of life, unable to adapt to the urban lifestyles. Unkempt garden appearance was ascribed to the persisting socialist ideology of the growers, who disregarded any aesthetic qualities, since ostensibly tidiness and organisation were considered bourgeois by the revolutionary regime (Mihelič 1994). Keeping farm animals on the plot, chickens, rabbits or pigs, was considered an especially inappropriate urban land use. Such claims of 'allochronism' (Fabian 1983) were common points of asserting novel ideologies of democratic liberalism and justifying the economic downturn across the postsocialist world, as Buchowski demonstrates (2012). Refusing to be erased as signs of unpleasant history like other markers of socialism – monuments, state insignia, street names and currencies – plot gardens fuelled Slovenian nationalism for years to come.

The notion that gardening on an urban plot is foreign and alien, both because of its foreign practitioners and for the effects it has on land, had crystallised even further in the new millennium. If the pollution that the plotholders were contributing to was only metaphorical at first, it later became quite literal. The media started to report that the scavenged and recycled material that plotholders were using to construct the durable parts of their plot gardens was potentially toxic and could be polluting the environment if improperly stored (like the asbestos roof panels). Toxicological tests were carried out on samples of the produce grown on urban gardens, and suggested that the vegetables were high in air pollutants, especially lead, and might not be healthy. The press no longer praised the home-grown vegetables for their high nutrient content and freshness but rather advised to best avoid them due to their toxicity or blamed the "negligent gardeners who fed their children with unhealthy vegetables" (Kršinar

1997). Public policy grew more sensitive toward environmental protection and the use of phytopharmaceutical products. The City of Ljubljana suggested that plotholders were also polluting the soil and the groundwater with the immoderate use or misuse of fertilisers and pesticides (Jamnik et al. 2009).

In this changed social and political landscape, plot gardening was no longer something that could be justified with claims of common sense and found a good enough use for. Critics could no longer understand why an ordinary citizen might take an interest in it. They sought personal motives for the practice and connected it to the actor's psychology, so that either an ethnic or a peasant rationality was often taken as the basis for urban cultivation. An urban planner I spoke with described her understanding of the causes of Ljubljanan plot gardening as stemming from a 'mental privatisation,' that is, a belief that the land belonged to one only because one cultivated it. Plotholders became a source of ridicule. A witty column in the Delo national daily described them as Agriculus Urbanus and likened them to a distinct plant-animal species in the following way:

> The real *vrtičkar* (*Agriculus Urbanus*) differs from the other species of the same genus that lives in rural areas (*Agriculus ruralis*) mainly in that the land is only an additional source of support to him, while the other is so attached to the land that he cannot live without it. *Vrtičkar* likes well-fertilized soil that is not too moist. […] He doesn't tolerate the summer heat and drought very well; he waters himself with beer, spritzers or simply water. *Vrtičkar* is a perennial. […] His enemies are voles, mice, snails, mole crickets, aphids, urban planners and other such vermin, because they weaken his roots or demoralise him in other ways. For the family he is a considerable expense since he tends to throw a lot of money at fertilizers, seeds, seedlings, plant protection and tools. […] Go to the outskirts of the city and take a look around. You will find many specimens crawling in the field […]: the real *vrtičkar* is the one who has his bottom on top and his head somewhere in the ground, in the weeds (Nabergoj 1998).

Linking private property closely with an imagined notion of Slovene citizenship shifted the understanding of plot gardening away from a civic practice. Popular imagination began to understand it as a failure to observe private property and thus a clear sign of non-citizenship and an invasive display of 'foreign' ways of life. These served Ljubljanans as a reminder of an imagined fault line between the Balkans and Europe that Slovenia had to still cross. So when a new mayoral administration headed

by Zoran Janković decided to began demolishing the largest and most exposed garden sites from 2007, most Ljubljanans welcomed the project. The most visibly uncovered sites deemed to "tarnish" Ljubljana's appearance were removed to make the city presentable for Slovenian presidency of the EU in the first half of 2008 (Kocmur 2007; Žolnir 2007). "The physicality of the built environment has a very direct relationship to the ideologies that particularly endorse it," suggested Herzfeld of spatial cleansing and urban depopulation (2006). It appears that the municipality was aware of this only too well as ideas and aspirations about the place of Slovenia in a modern European Union began to directly shape urban space. In an effort to beautify, organise, tidy up, Europeanise the capital, Mayor Janković's administration continued to demolish plot garden sites in Ljubljana in the following years. "Ljubljana is the most beautiful city in the world," was Mayor Janković's signature statement, but as his critics pointed out, it was also his city management policy that put interests of the wealthy elites and businesses before the interests of Ljubljanans (Zabukovec 2015b). In 2009, after the demolition projects, the total area cultivated by plotholders had shrunk to 130ha (Jamnik et al. 2009: 65), half of the area measured a decade earlier and the same as measured during the 1980s.

"I don't like Janković but I do like what he has done with the gardens," I often caught while chatting with Ljubljanans after the sites had been cleared up. Some residents felt that the unruly urban gardens cast a dark shadow on the modern capital. Others, that they made the entire gardening activity look disorderly. The demolition brought Janković a huge push in public approval. The people were pleased that these chaotic structures, seemingly unfit for urban landscapes, were vanishing. I had considerable trouble explaining my research interest in plot gardens to my Slovenian friends before I embarked on fieldwork. They almost all assumed that I wished to approach them negatively, as an urban nuisance, and therefore either applauded a more in-depth exploration of the practice that would bring about the tidier use of public space or didn't seem to understand my interest at all.

A powerful technique of eliciting support for creating 'more' public spaces in place of plot gardens was also to render visible the intimate realm that the gardens occupied. Journalists reporting on the events surrounding the gardening site demolitions from 2006 to 2010 contributed to this significantly. Noticing how the "sheds uncovered stories" once disturbed, the reporters sought unusual life stories: women crying over

the loss of their horticultural treasures or resident plotholders that were about to become homeless. With a mixture of pity and distaste, the news showed broken down toilet bowl on heaps of construction waste, small decorative ponds cemented into the yards and municipal workers saving beds of carrot plants into plastic bags before the bulldozers levelled the ground. This clear demonstration of a profoundly private and intimate space that was produced and that came oozing out on the garden sites worked to suggest to Ljubljanans a deep sense of disorder and lawlessness pervading the sites and seemed to reaffirm their position for the plots' necessary removal. While the municipality was keen on portraying the plotholders as enjoying themselves during their leisure activities and had referred to them often as *vikendaši* (users of vikend holiday cottages) rather than the usual *vrtičkarji*, some of the resident plotholders felt safe in the embrace of this latter term that connoted growing food as they were able to preserve their dignity by not making it immediately apparent that they were using the gardening spaces for their residence. The media encapsulated Žižek's ironic portrayal of intra-Yugoslav ethnic relationships from before the Yugoslav break:

> Slovenes are being deprived of their enjoyment by 'Southerners' (Serbians, Bosnians) because of their proverbial laziness, Balkan corruption, dirty and noisy enjoyment, and because they demand bottomless economic support, stealing from Slovenes their precious accumulation by means of which Slovenia could already have caught up with Western Europe (Žižek 1990: 55).

4 Garden interstices in the European capital

So far I have shown that the urban landscape for urban vegetable gardening consists of first, a historical layer of public and institutional approval of plot gardening as a legitimate and beneficial spatial practice during socialism that aided the increase of the practice; second, the reversal of local state policies propelling the removal of the garden sites upon entering capitalism; and third, a dissonance between the maps of land ownership and those of previously established land uses causing both conflicts and stalemate situations. In this landscape, the only plot gardens that remained were the ones that occupied the interstices hidden from the sight of the public or the state. Tactics of evading the legibility and reach of the state (de Certeau 1984; James C. Scott 2014; Scott 1998) were a daily practice for socialist citizens who sought to obtain

scarce resources through the 'second economy' (Bridger & Pine 1998; Caldwell 2011; Creed 1998; Luthar & Pušnik 2010; Verdery 1996). Moreover, the "things that lay outside of the control of the state were highly valued locally, and were often used as symbols of what was pure, real and 'ours'" (Haukanes & Pine 2004: 108). Yet urban gardeners in Ljubljana found the local state in the postsocialist period to be far more repressive.

In this section I show how the interstices populated by, on the one hand, urban vegetables are produced by plotholders' practices of evasion, and on the other, by the very regimes of legibility and ordering with which the local state attempts to curb or remove the garden sites. This points to the limits of the theoretical approaches to the state that attribute its project failures to the inability to fit its unitary vision with the real complex reality (Scott 1998). Instead, it leans toward the approaches that instead of a monolithic entity of the state recognise the multiplicity of state agendas, actors and attempts that lack any unified direction (Gupta 1995, 2012; Tsing 2005).

Tactics of evasion: Insufficiency of maps

Maps and other technologies of visual oversight, like the aerial photograph printout the city inspector was holding in the opening vignette, often proved inadequate for navigating the plot gardening terrain. The garden sites ducked and misled the outsiders. Sites of substantial size, easily discernible on an aerial photograph, appeared almost invisible from the ground or had an entry point that was very difficult to find. After locating the large Rakova Jelša site on a map, it took me three separate visits to locate a way onto the site. Its entire border consisted of elaborate shrubbery of invasive plants, partially revealing the sheds behind it but firmly denying access. As my research progressed and my eyes grew accustomed to the particular visual logic of the plot gardening sites, I would sometimes notice the tiniest speckle of architectural scatter and disarray between otherwise concrete and tidied up lines of the buildings. Inspecting it would often reveal a rich and seasoned garden site tended by experienced long-term gardeners, sometimes as long as 40 years. Almost imperceptible to a passer-by on the street, plots amidst industrial or residential zones managed to withstand construction either due to ownership issues, zoning conflicts or other legal matters.

Navigating within a site was also very difficult for outsiders. Garden sites unwelcoming to foreign callers grow paths and routes differently. When plotholders

need to reach only one's own plot and the plot of one's close-by friends, some pathways get abandoned and overgrown and work to considerably confuse an outsider expecting a path where one no longer exists. I often experienced this even when I was invited to the plot by its tenants and given directions. The visual aids along the way that I was supposed to follow to reach the destination (the direction were almost always very elaborate and contained many steps and direction changes) were very pronounced in the eyes of the plotholders, yet proved insufficient for me. 'The plot with a green fence in front if it', 'the garden with the bean poles', or 'turn right at the shed with the bushes, then the path will lead you straight to here,' were useless to me and I had to admit defeat and ask them to come get me on the way.

The misleading terrain of gardening sites wasn't a result of a planned and successfully implemented idea of evasion. Rather, the sites suggested that these areas were out of sight for passers-by because they were out of use. Despite this, these techniques served to protect the privacy of plot gardening practice. Plot garden sites that were more visually exposed operated through other practices to achieve this.

Tactics of evasion: Treasure hunt technology

Early into my fieldwork, I visited a smaller garden site on a narrow plot amidst a farm field, a short walk away from Fužine, a large residential estate in east Ljubljana. In late September there were not many plotholders about any longer. The heat was gone and with it both the frequent need to water and harvest the vegetables and to weed out unwanted plants. I stopped by a lone woman clearing away wilted beans. I told her I intended to rent a garden of my own that I could cultivate for a full season and I asked who I could talk to about getting a plot at the site if any plots cleared up. She did not know. She learned about an empty plot from her friend, who was now her neighbour on the plot. Once a year a man collected rent by hanging notices on informing the plotholders of the time slot during which he would be on the site and during which he expected the tenants to bring the rent money in cash. She suggested I talk to him but I neither knew his name nor had his phone number. She knew someone who might, though. She gave me a surname of a plotholder who has been growing here since this site first started operating and directed me toward his home. She didn't know his address and had instead pointed toward the direction of his home and described how the building looked like. What I needed to do to find him was to locate a small cluster of four-story buildings with red roofs, about a kilometre away. She seemed certain I

would be able to find it within the estate housing 5000 residents if I only followed the direction of her outstretched arm. I was not but I gave it a try. After an extensive circling around the estate I stumbled across the red-roofed buildings she described and after reading through all the surnames on all the entrance doorbells I found the right button. I rang the doorbell. I waited. The man answered the door, yet told me that he, alas, did not have the rent collector's phone number but that he lived nearby. He gave me further directions and pointed his finger to a different cluster of buildings where I could find him. Another go at reading the surnames displayed on doorbells did not yield any success. Just as I was about to give the experiment up, a woman armed with a basket holding gardening equipment came rushing out of one of the buildings. Would she happen to know the rent collector by any chance, I approached her. I was in luck, she knew the rent collector, he used to live right on her floor but he had moved out just earlier this month. She added that he wasn't the landowner himself but was operating on his behalf. She did not know who the owned the plot. She searched for the rent collector's number in her mobile phone and gave it to me, if I not to tell him I got it from her.

Upon recounting this adventure to a friend of mine later that day he commented that the story reminded him strongly of Kafka's bureaucratic labyrinth he devised for his character Josef K. I thought at first his comparison was unusual since the plot gardens were a wholly informal organisation, but later I came to appreciate the parallel. The purpose of employing the technology of a treasure hunt was the same for both bureaucrats and plotholders – to not be easily attainable. Not being easily reachable by common modes of communication could prove crucial for the ability of plotholders to avoid potential encounters with the authorities that might want to formalise rent agreements, issue fees, prohibit inappropriate use of space according to the zoning plan or any other thing the plotholders were not able to anticipate. To retain privacy while out in the open, the garden site lacked a centralised organisation or a representative that would allow the authorities to approach it as an organisation or an entity. This was an example of hiding in plain sight and in the present, in the here and now, in the cracks left by the reliance of official bodies (and doctoral researchers) on such data as surnames, addresses and phone numbers and this proved to be the norm at other gardening sites, too.

Cultivating neighbours of sometimes twenty years – close friends on the plot – did not have each other's phone numbers and knew only remotely where each of them resided. They saw each other on the garden almost every day and had little need to do so outside of the borders of the garden. Even formal gardening organisations were hard to reach. To reach the organisation in order to apply for a plot, one had to be told by the existing plotholders of the location and the office hours (an hour a week) during which the executive members could be contacted. This manner of communication wasn't used because members were too old; the gardeners were mostly pensioners but in their private lives they turned out to be as tech savvy as anyone else; many used mobile phones and email on a daily basis. That there was no other way for an outsider to get into contact with the association was a matter of choice and its executive members wanted it to stay this way. If it was popularly perceived that their garden sites were a result of individual land use rather than organised land allotment through voted representatives, it was more challenging for the authorities to approach them.

Bureaucratic crevices at the local state

For some gardening sites, the tighter grip on plot gardening in Ljubljana assumed by the local state allowed the practice to prosper or achieve at least temporary immunity from removals. The undetermined state of plot gardening (of what type of land use it is and what purposes does it serve) made the overall presence of plot gardening in Ljubljana difficult to manage for the city. It didn't fit easily within any existing department or duties of municipal officials. At the City of Ljubljana, managing plot gardening came to reside within three departments. The Department of Urban Planning was overseeing zoning and emplacing the areas within the city fabric. The main role was assumed by The Department for Environmental Protection that served as an ideologue of the development of Ljubljana's urban agriculture. The Department for Real Estate managed the land tenancy agreements, interacted with the current and prospective plotholders directly, kept a directory of plot tenants etc. The sanctions and regulation lied with the City Inspectorate but it only had authority on the land in municipal ownership. Other aspects of the urban horticultural practice, such as construction regulations and ground water protection policy, exceeded the authority of the local state. While this setup allowed the city to manage plots it could only do so if the gardens were located within the appropriate zone according to the spatial plan, and if this also coincided with municipal ownership. Yet this did affect the majority of smaller sites in Ljubljana. Plot gardening sites slipped through the cracks of

bureaucratic oversight. Urban gardens were created and sustained by the gaps, by the "zones of erasure and incomprehensibility" (Tsing 2005: 195), but were publicly disapproved of for occupying these grey zones.

If the garden site, zoning and local state ownership aligned, the municipality 'legalised' the garden site. By this term, the city officials denoted the process of dividing anew the area into individual gardens of around 50m^2, delineating clear borders while removing any fencing, and issuing their cultivators with formal rent agreement and payslips for annual rent depending on the size of their plot. This strategy allowed the City to add to the count of gardening plots it made available – 643 plots in 2017 (Vrtičkarstvo v Ljubljani 2016) – and thus add towards fulfilling the policy goal of increasing local samooskrba.

The 'legalising' processes revealed a difference in aims and expectations between the two parties once the transition would have been complete. For instance, growers on one such site expected that the municipality would install a water system as compensation for charging rent but the City claimed it was too big an investment. The official was happy to offer a portable chemical toilet and sanitation service in the price of rent, but the plotholders had no need for it since most of them resided on the estate just across the street. The formal intervention also changed the dynamics of many aspects of the site, including plot allocation. Managed informally, the plot belonged to a person if they cultivated it regularly. If not, it was passed onto somebody else who did. The gardens that were deemed abandoned by the community were allocated to a new grower from existing plotholders' kin or acquaintances or were divided and cultivated by the immediate plot neighbours. Under formal management, plots were allocated on the basis of a public call or application proving local residence and demonstrating that one held no ownership of property fit for horticultural use. To collect the certificates requested in the application, a visit to three different government offices was needed. Failure to cultivate a plot was considered a violation of the tenancy agreement, yet this did not bare any practical repercussions. Due to understaffing, municipal garden sites were not policed and no notices or cancellations of agreements were issued in actuality. If the gardeners resigned, the plots were returned to the central pool of all available plots and assigned to a new tenant upon a successful application. This took time and meanwhile the gardeners bordering on such a vacant plot strongly disapproved the bureaucratic process since the weeds covering

the abandoned plot spread to the ones next to it. Thus, while the City explicitly stated that it strived to increase the number of plots and access to urban gardening, this process had the opposite effect: the plots were becoming less accessible. Tenancy agreements made with each individual plotholder rather than an organisation also meant that the plotholders were less able to unite in their interests and potentially oppose their new landlord.

The City had used a wide range of technologies – from aerial photography and land register data, ability to plot equal and just allotments of space, making tenancy agreements, cost distributions and land rights. After extracting rent and gaining the ability to terminate a garden tenancy, the city officials reduced their presence on the site, expecting that everything will go on as it did before. Yet the municipal management affected the day-to-day conduct of the sites. By not taking sufficient notice of how garden sites operated on the ground, it found itself involved in the minute matters of the plot.

The issues that were earlier resolved on the plot amongst the gardeners themselves, were now directed at the city official. The public worker received numerous inquiring phone calls from plotholders, filling their day almost entirely. Growers wanted to ask about the benefits they were hoping to receive since they were paying for the plots. They refused to blankly accept that municipal ownership of the land was enough to charge them rent, given that the gardeners improved the soil and the surrounding area over the years. Gardeners complained about every ostensibly abandoned plot and investigated when it would be filled. Once, the official received a complaint from a tenant that the soil on a gardener's plot was full of stones and thus inappropriate for use and he requested that it be cleaned – despite the fact that he had been cultivating the same plot for decades. Another call was to appeal for a rent reimbursement for that particular season since all of the plotholder's seedling plants had wilted due to bad weather and she felt that she had not used the soil that year. A lengthy call-in episode made the official privy of suspicions of soil poisoning from a neighbouring gardener in order to get the caller to move to another location. The plotholders became paying customers and expected a provision of service for the amount they paid. Arguments from the city that plotholders had been working on land that did not belonged to them free of charge and should hence be grateful that no past reimbursement was sought did not receive much understanding. 'Legalising' gardening sites might have given power

to the municipal hands but it had also overwhelmed the municipal official for whom resolving such minor issues became a daily occupation. The municipality had to continue to rely on the local order on the site and the contingency of the gardening practice.

I got to learn of such stories through the officials' desire to bemoan their own predicament of being thrown in the midst of such perceived triviality. The stories were told as comical anecdotes mocking the plotholders' petty character. Yet, they are reminiscent of a 'work-to-rule' strike, in which workers follow regulations to the letter, bringing the production process, always dependent on workers' improvisational practices, to a halt and thereby showing that "the formal scheme was parasitic on informal processes" (Scott 1998: 6). Moreover, the stories show that the petty practices of everyday interaction were the very means that constituted the daily order on the site. The pettiness, seen by the official as the inability to see beyond one's immediate personal concerns and to attend to broader issues or to put themselves in someone else's (the official's) shoes, was in fact the material from which the fabric of community (by no means one of romantic and cosy familiarity) was knitted on the site. Complaints, quarrels, gossip, hearsay, preferential treatments, small talk were practices of producing space, ways of engaging in relationships on the plot in order to preserve access to urban land over which no official citizen's property rights could be claimed. Despite the fact that growers tended individual gardens, interstitial garden sites had to function as community endeavours.

5 Conclusion

This same disregard by local state officials that urban gardening is a relational spatial practice suspended in a historical and situational context (Massey 2005), resulted in the failure of renting out the vacant plots on MOL's newest gardening site at Rakova Jelša. Failing to observe that plot gardening exists in the interstitial spaces created by multiple opposing and overlapping forces is why so few Ljubljanans wanted to rent a garden there, despite the great pomp at the unveiling of the European Green Capital 2016. However, this did not prevent the municipality from destroying the existing plots. As the public opinion tipped in favour of (organised) urban gardening and samooskrba, the achievemnet of the desirable European identity has once again been

used by the municipality to fuel the garden sites removal projects, although they were now disguised as 'preservation' and thus as, paradoxically, the *creation* of public space.

The City found the trope of samooskrba and the environmental protection and green urban development connected to the European Green Capital 2016 title to be particularly useful for pursuing the municipal agenda of 'spatial cleansing' (Herzfeld 2006) and preventing undesirable urban space uses. As mentioned above, MOL referred to the existing plot gardens at Rakova Jelša as 'brownfields' or 'degraded areas' to be transformed into green public spaces, "intended especially for *samooskrba*." MOL emphasised conservation (of fruit trees left behind on garden plots) rather than the elimination (of gardening plots). MOL also noted that it had removed 450 tons of waste (construction, asbestos, used tyres and 'non-native vegetation') from the Rakova Jelša area and created 80,000m^2 of green areas, installed 404 elements of public furniture and equipment and spotted 8 endangered bird species (presumably) returning to the area, to put the focus onto the creation of public space rather than its destruction (Park Rakova Jelša 2016).

The appearance of creation of public space was also helped by further decreasing the reported figure for area cultivated with private urban horticulture. With introducing a land use category for plot gardening in its spatial plans[16] and designating with it around 45ha on 23 locations around Ljubljana, the City effectively reduced the perceived extent of urban gardens to 45ha, a sixth of the actual area before the removal projects. Through advertising this figure in statements made by the local authorities, the popular expectations of tidying up the horticultural growths were met and gardening issues more easily forgotten. If their daily urban paths did not pass a plot garden site, Ljubljanans often assumed these no longer existed in the city. With a combination of actual and imaginary deletion of the plots, the municipality sought to create an appearance of order and allowed any future removal projects more easily digestible for the public.

If spaces are relationships (Massey 2005) and if the municipal project, viewed broadly in its effects, created public spaces, however imagined these were, then the argument

[16] So-called 'ZV raba' ('ZV – površine za vrtičkarstvo').

that the planning scheme had failed is no longer very persuasive. This chapter showed how the samooskrba trope had an instrumental a role in such a scheme.

5

Crafting ethical livelihoods: Food self-sufficiency as welfare

This chapter examines samooskrba as a tool of social policy in austerity. Whereas other chapters analysed samooskrba as a response to precarity prompted by austerity, here I look at how the trope of food self-sufficiency is related to cuts in state welfare provisioning. Most of the chapter traces the interactions of Ljubljanan jobseekers participating in a three-month self-employment course and shows how notions of samooskrba and autonomy were negotiated in the course as subjects of competing notions, opinions, stakes and authorities.

I engage with a prominent line of thought in studies of social movements and alternative food networks that understands autonomy-asserting practices such as community gardening, farmers' markets or solidarity economies on the one hand as grassroots movements pursuing political goals – among them social justice, right to food or urban gentrification – and on the other as amenable to cooptation by the very hegemonic forces to which these movements were opposed (Alkon & Mares 2012; DeLind 1999; Guthman 2008b; Johnston 2007). To challenge this theoretical narrative, I make a detour and first examine community gardens in Ljubljana to point to the difficulties of drawing a distinct line of cooptation as well as its exact direction.

After this, on turning to unemployed Ljubljanans participating in a government-sponsored entrepreneurship course, I show how despite the appearance of appropriation of samooskrba to normalise austerity and precarious forms of employment, the trope of food self-sufficiency has in fact worked to open up opportunities for continuous welfare transfers, albeit by its unintended effects. While seen from afar, the project had the indications of a 'roll-out' neoliberalism (Peck & Tickell 2002), utilising government or government-like agents to align citizens with moral responsibilities of self-management and self-improvement, closer inspection

revealed a multitude of agents with agendas of public good. The impasse caused by conflicts between them produced the effects of an apparent neoliberal agenda when events where made sense of by the participants.

1 Surveying food growing initiatives in Ljubljana

The plot gardens presented in the previous chapter were the most prevalent form of urban gardening in Ljubljana, yet one that received the least bit of attention beyond news of site demolitions. New forms of 'community' gardens began to pop up from around 2010 that Ljubljanans categorised in a separate register from the existing vrtički forms.

In autumn of 2014 I attended an international interdisciplinary academic summer school on urban agriculture, organised in Ljubljana. The desired outcome of the academic training was to devise a proposal for design and management of a new urban agriculture site. The participants were first taken on a field trip to become familiar with the "existing state of urban agriculture" in Ljubljana. We visited three sites chosen by the organisers to represent an exemplary type of urban gardens. We first visited a "traditional" vrtički site. Our local guide presented it to the participants as "illicit, but around for a very long time," and briefly described the way it operated. The site had no house rules, no established process of receiving new members and expelling offense-makers and no mediator in case of conflicts. Yet some of the plotholders have been cultivating their plot for as long as 40 years. The site was located in a triangle between two roads and a canal and could no longer spread, so there was not enough space to accommodate larger plots with elaborate sheds. The plotholders harvested water from the nearby canal and carried it to the plot in watering cans. The land they were cultivating changed several owners through the years. Most recent landowner, the state, planned a museum on this site but the design was still years from any actual development or construction.

From there we proceeded to what was described by our guide as a "community garden in a guerrilla kind of way." The garden was located behind an abandoned housed on a street with family homes and was cultivated by a group of anarchist activists. The vegetable beds were beautiful and rich, full of mixed crops and little tags marking the

sowed crop. The gardeners had an oral agreement for its use with the owners who planned to eventually sell the house. The growers decided to not split the land into individual plots but to tend it jointly and to also share the produce among themselves. Decisions were reached by seeking the consent of all the members. They organised picnics where the harvested vegetables or they offered them for free or voluntary donations on their monthly alternative markets.

Our field trip's guide position that these two sites belonged to distinct plot garden types was unwarranted. While the traditional garden site was cultivating land without an explicit owner's permission (although based on the fact that the changes of ownership did not affect the gardens, it seems to have had an implicit one), it was the activist 'community' garden started with the owners' consent that was designated as a 'guerrilla garden' by our guide. The summer school participants quickly picked up on these differentiations made by the guide too. At the traditional site, they were instructed to interact with the 'locals' and collect information. At the 'community' garden, the participants asked the activists whether the growers cultivated good relations with the 'locals' next door or whether they had been trying to involve the 'locals' in any of the activities on the garden.

The third gardening site we visited was run by a woman who bought the land from a farmer for the purpose of creating an organic urban garden site and renting it out to gardening beginners. She charged a steep price for offering very small plots but the rent included gardening equipment, manual and educational courses. Several other private landowners without an interest in farming had started to divide their land into smaller garden-sized patches and offer them to enthusiastic Ljubljanans in search of a profit.

Fault lines were also drawn within the novel forms of urban gardening. A few months after our daytrip, I attended a meeting in the basement of one of the buildings on a student halls of residence estate. Undergraduate and postgraduate students and recent graduates discussed establishing a community garden on the grounds within the campus. The management of the halls of residence was launching a grounds revitalisation project and considered a vegetable garden fitting in nicely with the project. The students were given a budget for the materials needed to transform a 300m^2 empty patch of land behind the laundry building into a 'community' garden.

Beyond that, the students were free to decide who would participate, how the garden would be managed, what crops would be grown and how the garden would be designed. That gardening method should be organic permaculture was the only thing insisted upon by the students organising the introductory meeting and they offered a short lecture on the principles of permaculture. Matevž, the lecturer, a young postgraduate student of microbiology, clarified promptly that permaculture meant much more than constructing spiral herb gardens and raised beds. It was based on a number of principles that responded to protecting the environment and people and using resources in an ethical way.

Each of the meeting participants drew a small piece of paper from a bag with a permaculture principle spelled out on it to read out loud and then reflect on what it meant and how it would be possible to implement it in the garden. “Problem = solution,” said one of the strips, conveying that obstacles on the garden could be turned into opportunities. Other pieces read “Creatively use and respond to change” and “Use edges and value the marginal.” “Self-regulate and accept feedback,” read another to suggest a response whenever a change in the garden environment is perceived. If one noticed that after rain a puddle formed at one end of the garden, Matevž elaborated, one should think about making a pond in that place instead of fighting the flood. Overall, the principles advocated good planning with attention to diversity to aid the garden’s resilience, but making do with what was available and being flexible to with accommodating changes were central to this farming philosophy. Over the next few meeting the aims of their project became clearer. The students did not expect to harvest large yields and contribute to their food self-reliance but instead intended to encourage socialising among resident students through community work and harvest picnics. They wished to explicitly distance the project from the traditional vrtički sites that they perceived as too individualist, their fences as too unwelcoming and their gardening methods as too unfriendly to the environment.

But as the student campus garden developed in the coming spring months, as the pit behind the laundry building was covered with organic soil brought by a truck, as the campus carpenter (there really was one) built a roomy shed and a pair of large compost heaps still smelling of freshly cut wood, as the mulch and the stones for decorating the raised beds were brought in by another truck, the keen observers of this project began to express doubt over how the principles of permaculture were implemented. Samo, a

gardener activist involved in fellow community growing initiative, unemployed and in his early 30s, commented that he found it odd that the student campus garden was being handed resources. It was unusual for a non-profit project such as this to have all the expenses covered and not need to search for funding calls or private sponsorship. To contrast, he told me that if his group needed to buy large quantities of manure or a gardening tool, they organised a fundraising event, usually in the form of cooking a vegan dinner for forty people. They collected food for free at the central market at the end of the market day when many farmers were eager to dispose of unsold produce. The student garden, Samo believed, did not occupy urban land and transformed it into a community garden. Instead, their project was planned and prepared. This was not how activism looked like in his opinion.

In an online essay, Zadruga Urbana ('the Urbana cooperative), an anonymous anarchist collective of urban gardeners from Ljubljana engaged with the 'community guerrilla garden' from our field trip, critique the adoption of the principles and forms of resistance and social movements by other groups in line with the Gramscian theory of cooptation, essential also to the academic approaches to these themes:

> "The annoying feature of capitalism is its capability of absorbing alternative and marginal ideas or processes. This occurs at the moment when those ideas or processes become so powerful that they endanger the system or when they come to represent a potential marketing niche which is possible to penetrate. It so happens that the fight of the activists against the destruction of the environment turned into green capitalism and the fight against the global food industry turned into the *eco*, *bio* and fair-trade brands. Instead of the fight for urban public spaces we got rented gardens and their managers who create so called green jobs. In the agricultural sphere the current, intriguing fight is one against privatisation of the seeds" (Zadruga Urbana 2014).

Similarly, Pudup looked at how community gardens can work as "sites where citizen-subjects are produced" (2008: 1232). Whereas in the US a very diverse set of urban gardening forms, from war gardens to school educational plots, goes by the name of 'community gardens,' the moral connotations of the vague term 'community' make the practice also amenable to projects of moral reform, for example attempting to instil values of cooperation and hard work through organising gardens in a prison. In other words, the allusion to a romantic notion of community can help disguise the fact that they acts as civic 'responsibilisation' (Rose 1996) and diminish their political charge.

On the basis of these two positions, the student garden could receive critique first, for being enlisted as a part of a green revitalisation project with which the management at the student halls of residence sought to improve their reputation with inexpensive spatial interventions, and second, for failing to recognise that the offer of participation and freedom to determine the scope of the garden project in fact constituted unpaid student labour. Both arguments were quite convincing to me and I found it difficult to disagree with them at first. In addition, compared to traditional plot gardens, cultivated by impoverished Ljubljanans to compensate for low incomes and tight living spaces, the students seemed to have a smaller stake in their garden and could cope more easily if the project failed (DeLind 1999, 2011b). In explicitly distancing their project from the ordinary Ljubljanan vrtčki sites by emphasising community work, permaculture and social change, they helped to disadvantage those plot gardeners for whom gardening activity and the crops represented an important livelihood strategy.

Yet as I followed the student garden project further, I came to see their practice in a different light. The student community gardeners were living on very low budgets. Katja, one of the meeting organisers, a 26-year-old graduate of forestry science, was currently lodging at her friend's place and cat sitting while the friend was away on a student exchange. She had a hard time with covering her food expenses and utility bills. She got by on social benefits (260 EUR) and an additional workfare payment (70 EUR) received for volunteering at an NGO. Although unexpectedly, Katja and other gardeners found themselves relying on the produce when the season came. Several among them admitted that their diets improved and their budgets stretched a little further when garden produce was abundant. When the summer was over, Katja moved with her partner and another couple to a farm outside Ljubljana with the goal of starting a self-reliant and self-contained life of a homestead. The couples found it difficult to implement their initial plan and kept finding themselves having to rely on their social benefit payments. To top this, the homesteaders offered friends and acquaintances a chance to spend an 'authentic' weekend on the farm in exchange for any kind of food or household consumables they could afford. They also organised permaculture courses and children's holiday camps to be able to afford living off-the-grid.

I realised that the students tending the community garden were still following the permaculture principles laid out in the beginning of the project. They worked with what they had. They seized opportunities. They made a pond out of a puddle by not passing up on the management's willingness to fund the project extensively and by utilising the flow of money to equip the garden with tools and fittings able to serve the garden for many years to come. The student growers incorporated the funds available on account of a favourable image and impact of urban gardening as part of green revitalisation in the city and the desire of the student halls director to be seen as a supporter of this trend. They had a stake in this tenuous structure, even though different from an imagined activist practice, in which community gardening was practiced as a critique of the existing economic system. The students also actively co-opted urban gardening; they fitted it to their own purposes.

2 Rural Challenges from peasant literacy to ethical consumption

Where better to gauge the discursive and material implications of the trope of samooskrba for constructing self-disciplined citizens than a jobseekers' course on self-employment? Unemployment has been the forefront issue of austerity and welfare cutbacks during economic crises but the governmental discourses about the poor and unemployed had tended to portray them as overly dependent on social transfers or as fraudulent opportunists (Bourdieu 1998; Hyatt 2001; Lyon-Callo & Hyatt 2003; Wacquant 2009).

While unemployment in Yugoslavia was significant, the levels of unemployment in Slovenia as its most prosperous republic were low (Kirn 2014; Štih et al. 2008). Unlike several other Eastern European countries, Slovenia did not implement the 'shock doctrine' in adjusting to the Western capitalist market, but instead adopted a gradual approach to social policy reforms which saved it from experiencing the 'welfare gap' in social security (Kolarič et al. 2011). The Slovenian state maintained an extensive presence in the provisions of public services such as education and healthcare, retained a universal right to healthcare and a high ceiling for certain provisions such as child benefits that were granted to a majority of parents (Filipovič Hrast & Rakar 2015). Workers' rights were protected by workers' unions which incorporated most of workers (ibid.). However, Slovenian unemployment benefits sunk in the decade after

independence. Slovenia lost an important export market when Yugoslavia disintegrated in the Balkan wars. Closing down of several major companies caused a surge in unemployment (Štih et al. 2008). The government gradually but significantly reduced the expenditure on unemployment benefits and tightened the eligibility thresholds. The number of unemployment compensation recipients almost halved from 1992 to 2002, while the number of unemployment assistance recipients decreased by two thirds (Mrak et al. 2004: 329–330).[17] Unemployment benefits remain less generous from other social benefits and the unemployed have "by far the largest incidence of poverty" (Mrak et al. 2004: 331).

While the conditions have been improving since, the global economic crisis increased the rate of unemployment to levels of the post-independence (Filipovič Hrast & Rakar 2015). The welfare reforms addressing the debt crisis, implemented in 2010, further shrank the social security budgets (Filipovič Hrast & Rakar 2015; Ignjatović & Kanjuo Mrčela 2016). Changes included setting very specific ceilings for benefits entitlement such as amount of savings, the value of vehicle in possession and residence size. In addition, claimants needed to satisfy criteria for 'active jobseeker' role to keep welfare payments. These entailed attending educational courses, taking on voluntary work or jobs for which they were overqualified (Leskošek & Dragoš 2014). Limiting the access to welfare increased the levels of poverty. The rise of poverty during the Eurozone crisis has been the steepest in Slovenia (Dragoš 2016); it has increased from 11.5% in 2007 to 14.5% in 2013 (Filipovič Hrast & Rakar 2015).

To offset the reduction in unemployment benefits, Slovenia has been expanding the area of workfare or 'active labour market policy,' ALMP (Filipovič Hrast & Rakar 2015; Mrak et al. 2004). ALMP denotes schemes of government intervention in the labour market such as creating jobs via 'public works' or providing training or employment services. Underpinning the workfare policy is the hypothesis that the long-term unemployed become dependent on social benefits while their skills and motivation atrophy. ALMP's proponents see searching and engaging in 'active' work, even voluntary, as ways of avoiding this (Filipovič Hrast & Rakar 2015: 291). The legal act which rolled back social welfare in 2010[18] is accompanied by these words:

[17] Unemployment compensation benefit grants the recipient a gradually decreasing portion of their previous income for a certain amount of time after their employment has ceased (up to two years). After this period, unemployment assistance benefit gives the beneficiary a lower flat-rate benefit.
[18] Social Rights Act (UL RS 61/2010).

"The longer the period of receiving social benefits, the more dependent on it the receivers are. They find it increasingly difficult to accept work that is offered to them because this implies a great change in their lifestyle developed during the long period of receiving social benefits" (51). The critics of ALMP policies note that the shrinking welfare substituted by workfare was additionally legitimised by an official narrative of an existing high rate of fraud and exploitation by the benefit recipients and a need of implementing harsher measures to prevent it (Leskošek & Dragoš 2014).

Workfare is a loose collection of governmental and non-governmental projects and schemes but its measures fit within in four areas (OECD 2009: 92–94): first, counselling and assistance with searching for jobs, in Slovenia provided by the Employment Service; second, training and education, such as for specific vocations or national vocational qualification (NVQ) courses; third, promoting employment and self-employment, such as offering work through public works schemes of offering self-employment subsidies and other start-up incentives; and fourth, increasing social inclusion of unemployed citizens. An example of the latter are various literacy courses, offered through Business Educational Centres (OECD 2016: 138–139). Slovenian workfare projects receive very little from the national budget and are funded predominantly through the European Social Fund, ESF (Ignjatović & Kanjuo Mrčela 2016), but the selection criteria for the projects is prepared by the Slovenian government.

In spring of 2015 I joined a group of approximately 60 jobseekers from across the country in the Rural Challenges course in Ljubljana. The three-month course was aimed at introducing the basics of social entrepreneurship and helping the jobseekers acquire skills to start their own enterprises and no longer depend on state support. As described by several ex-participants, word for word, the programme was designed to "prepare one for an independent path (*te pripravi na samostojno pot*)." The course was available to those who registered with the Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS) as 'active jobseekers' and counted as fulfilling the obligations to maintain this role. The programme was run by an adult learning college in Ljubljana in partnership with a non-profit organisation specialising in training social entrepreneurs.

The Rural Challenges programme would have originally fallen under the 'increasing social inclusion' area of ALMP. It is one among the programmes offered within the

Adult Learning scheme (*Usposabljanje za življenjsko uspešnost*, UŽU), a publicly certified basic literacy programme established in 2005. There are five courses designed under the UŽU umbrella (Ileršič 2007), which adapt the learning outcomes to different groups like rural populations, adults with learning difficulties, adults enrolled in the first 3 years of education, or adults wishing to continue with their education. The Rural Challenges programme couples teaching basic literacy with skills of particular benefit to rural denizens, such as spotting rural business opportunities and filling out farm subsidies forms. They were ordinarily offered in rural municipalities, to rural un- and underemployed Slovenian citizens. From 2014, the course began to be organised in urban areas too and the emphases of the course shifted. It began to be offered to jobseekers as a comprehensive training in entrepreneurship with which participants would learn to produce and market domače and natural products, recognised as a marketing opportunity. For example, the course I attended focused on herbs and herbal products and the invitation email from the regional employment office read:

> "Do you have the basic skills and experience with producing and processing various ingredients and substances (such as herbs and forest fruits) for pharmaceutical use? Do you seek career opportunities not only in regular employment but know that you can create a job yourself? [...] We are inviting those with a willingness to cooperate and make new contacts, who are active, independent and who don't wait for others to find work for them. To those we will offer knowledge and support and to those we will give opportunities."

From the initial purpose of the course as literacy training to reduce social exclusion, the programme changed and was now proposed as a business opportunity for the 'active, independent' unemployed. The idea was that the course participants would learn the basics of running a business and would organise a start-up business after the course.

The initial programme plan was ambitious. According to the organisers, a large Slovenian pharmacy business had been expressing interest of buying bulk quantities of locally produced herbs. The demand for natural herbal remedies grown in Slovenia had been booming. The idea was that the jobseekers would form a cooperative that would be able to forage and cultivate these herbs and sell them to the pharmacy. The course would have taught the participants how to form a cooperative and how to run it. The cooperative was the recommended form of business association because it did

not require any initial capital and it offered a way of distributing costs and risks among its shareholders.

The cooperative would work as a social enterprise and the course participants would become social entrepreneurs. As Matej, the course convenor explained, social enterprise was about "finding solutions to social problems by applying a business logic." Yet the course did not go as planned.

3 Learning social entrepreneurship

Three main reasons brought the participants to the course. Some had no interest in starting their own herbal businesses but were referred to the scheme by their employment case workers and were required to attend in order to continue receiving unemployment benefits. For them, enduring the lengthy three-month course was arduous. Tanja, a middle-aged mother of two university students, who held a university degree in art history, was one of them. Since she became unemployed two years ago and registered with the ESS, she felt constantly monitored. She had to respond to calls from her case worker, had to attend regular meetings with them, had to undertake training programmes that they recommended to her, and had to "behave like a good citizen, really wishing to find a job." She told me she felt "like being on probation." The second reason why jobseekers applied was because they couldn't afford to miss the small activity allowance that the participants were entitled to. As the course exceeded a hundred hours in duration, the participation was remunerated with 1.1 EUR per hour, amounting to about 132 EUR. For some, this sum was too big to miss, even if their work interests lied elsewhere. The third reason for joining the programme, for around a half of the participants, was a genuine interest in the course. Many among them had been complementing their low incomes during unemployment with foraging, growing or producing foods and they were hoping to connect with fellows in similar occupations and learn how to legalise their endeavours.

The first setback came soon after the course had started. It came to light that the pharmaceutical company would not be able to buy bulk quantities of herbs from small independent producers. There were stringent safety standards required for pharmacy-grade substances that small producers would be able to meet only with great difficulty

or not at all. This came to a great disappointment to the participants but the course redirected its focus on developing ideas for smaller independent businesses.

Work in the programme was project-oriented. Participants were clustered in groups of five or six participants and the groups were tasked with developing a product or service that could be the basis of their start-up after the course. Project work was supervised by the course convenor who guided the participants through initial market research, inception, planning and marketing strategies development stages. In each stage, coursework was complemented by guest lectures giving detailed and current information. A wide array of guest speakers was invited: marketing experts, specialists on legal forms of enterprising, fellow social entrepreneurs who shared their experiences, accountants who explained taxes and public officials elucidating regulation in the area of health, sanitary and food safety.

When I joined the programme as an observer approximately three weeks in, the groups had already devised their project foci. One of the groups proposed to start a cold-pressed sunflower oil business. Another wanted to develop a line of home-made cosmetics and natural remedies. A third was interested in producing a hand-sewn children's mattress with an herbal filling to induce better and healthier sleep. A group of younger jobseekers assembled around the idea of toys made from natural materials. Another group decided to stick with the original idea and had worked on a plan to grow, harvest and dry chamomile and sell it to food processing companies as a food additive or an ingredient in herbal infusions.

Well into the second half of the programme, the distinctions between notions of social entrepreneurship and the expected outcomes of the course began to grow apparent. Drago, a print technologist nearing his sixties, was a member of the group working on proposal for a cold-pressed sunflower oil start-up. He gave the initial idea. He said he got the inspiration from a memory of a trip to the south of Italy he took several years ago. Driving through the countryside by car, he observed endless sunflower fields. The beauty of the landscape stuck in his mind and inspired him to propose to the group they should focus on sunflower cultivation and oil extraction. He believed that this honey plant would not only be beneficial for the environment but would also make a high-quality and healthy domače foodstuff. He attracted seven people to the Sunflower

Group, among them former salespersons and small business owners with years of experience. Drago took this fact as a promising sign.

The group was passionate about producing unrefined sunflower oil. In their meetings they discussed how embarking on a journey of cold pressed sunflower oil production represented a political move against the large agricultural corporations stocking the supermarket shelves with cheap refined nutrient-poor cooking oils. In contrast, the product they were planning to produce was good and wholesome, it created jobs, provided environmental benefits and preserved the countryside. In their view it warranted all the support they could get. It mattered less to the group if the proposed project was commercially viable.

I noticed this perspective shared widely among course participants. When instructed by course convenor Matej to define a target group for their product so that they could select the appropriate marketing tone and channels, the participants were upset when the convenor proposed as an example "those who have no problem with spending money and have a preference for healthy food." The groups were reluctant to limit their products to a specific group and saw healthy foods as of interest to everybody, moreover, as a value in itself for which money was not and should not be an obstacle. Healthy food was one of the cornerstones of healthy life in general and it was possible to eat healthily even with little money.

Showing great initiative and enterprise, the Sunflower Group independently arranged a meeting with the heads of the Rural Development Department at the City of Ljubljana to inquire if the municipality might be interested in supporting and sponsoring their project. Matej accompanied the group to their meeting on request of the public officials and was disgruntled in class the following day. The meeting had been a disaster.

"I think your group took on too big of a task. I heard a sentence from you, Drago, in the meeting yesterday that told me everything. You said 'we are not able to see this project through'," said the convenor. "Alone. We are not able to see it through *alone*," said Drago. He believed that the group had a very good idea but that they needed support in the form of funds, land and an assigned and experienced project leader. And this is what he had told the local government representatives. "What kind of a request

is that? This is your task! This is your project, not theirs!" the convenor raised his voice in bewilderment over how inappropriate the group's conduct had been. He told them he had expected a short and succinct presentation of a clear business plan in order to spark the interest of a potential investor. "You can't handle the investors in this way! This is not entrepreneurship (*podjetništvo*)!" Drago was unconvinced by these words. "We need help. This is a fact. What is so wrong with asking for help?" He saw the state and the municipality's role to help the people in need of it, not only to listen to various business ideas, he added. "Business just doesn't jump at cries for help," said Matej, now with more resignation in his voice. Help had little room in the business world, he elaborated, because helping meant helping out your future competition. "But our group wants to change the world in which this holds true!" said Drago to deliver his final blow. To somewhat lessen the dramatic effect felt by everybody in the room when it suddenly fell silent, he added that a lot of the group members had experience with busted companies in their past and were reluctant to repeat their mistakes by jumping into a risky business where all the stakes were theirs alone. The supervisor closed this topic of discussion by reporting that the City representatives also felt that the meeting did not go well. The municipal officials were reluctant to make any firm arrangements with the Sunflower Group for the time being but left open the possibility of future deals if the group were to approach them with a coherent business plan.

I understood Matej. My past experience of working as a freelance designer and in the advertising industry have taught me that that products and services need marketing strategies and target groups. This felt normal to me. The idea that one has to propose a business pitch in a certain way at business meetings in order to elicit interest from clients and investors felt familiar to me. But I also felt close to Drago's stubbornness and unwillingness to play the game. I got a strong impression that for many participants in the course their romantic views that their proposed products and business ventures had the potential of for social change and public good were a vital strategy of dignifying their existing or potential sources of livelihood. The course participants, especially the ones over fifty, like Drago, were most likely no longer in a position to become successful businesspersons or marketing masters. They felt they needed support and they expected it.

Evident in the class conflict was the tension between doing working in a way that was viable and turned a profit and working in a way that was morally good and just. Social entrepreneurship's claims of 'solving social problems by doing business' have been challenged by anthropologists of development and corporate social responsibility (Cross & Street 2009; Dolan 2012) by examining their adverse effects on the target population. In Ljubljana it appeared that the two aspects of it were not only clearly incompatible to the minds of participants, but likewise at odds to the course convenor, who advocated social enterprise at the expense of solving any problems the participants reported.

The classroom also disagreed about what the notion of entrepreneur entailed. To Drago and his group, an entrepreneur was someone who seized opportunities, was flexible and committed. To Matej, an entrepreneur was someone who conducted business without relying on state support. In the context of the jobseekers' training, the message that arose clearly from this exchange was that the state was to be treated as a business partner rather than an institution the jobseekers would be able to count on for security. This was very different from the impression participants had at the beginning of the course. Instead of the assurances of a cooperative producing herbs to the pharmaceutical company, they have now been told that they responsible for their own visions of their future incomes. And they were also the ones that had to provide a belief in these ideas, a confidence that they were feasible.

The participants grew increasingly disappointed and disillusioned with the programme. Their smoking breaks, at first lively exchanges of ideas and planning arrangements, were becoming marked by disgruntled hushed remarks about the programme. Towards the end of the course, their exasperation grew even further.

4 Constructing a face of the state

On one of the last days of the course the convenor scheduled a long day of lectures: two public officials from the Office for Food Safety[19], a health inspector from the Ministry of Health, an accountant, and a farmer who recently started an enterprise

[19] The Administration of the Republic of Slovenia for Food Safety, Veterinary Sector and Plant Protection.

selling homemade herbal cosmetics. The participants were looking forward to these as they hoped that the lecturers will be able to offer them some practical and concrete advice on how to conduct their business in the future.

The food safety officer, scheduled to shed light on legal requirements and procedures of enterprises engaged with herbal substances, stood at the far end of the large classroom and began by introducing herself and her department at the Ministry of Agriculture uneasily into the microphone before offering to answer questions from the participants. One of the questions prompted the bureaucrat to elucidate the issues regarding 'food claims' for home-grown herbs and herbal products. The herbal entrepreneur in the audience had heard that stating the benefits of the herbs and herbal products to potential customers was not allowed. But how was she supposed to explain to potential customers what these herbs and products did? How was she supposed to sell anything? With a sour smile, as if she knew she was going to deliver bad news, the civil servant confirmed that the EU regulations banned producers and retailers from making any claim about a food or herb that was not approved by the European Commission.

The EU Regulation 1924/2006 EU pertains to nutrition and health clams, such as 'low fat,' 'rich in vitamin B' or 'promotes healthy bone growth' and assesses if these are justified statements to make. Unless chosen from a public database of claims approved by the EC, claims need to be applied for case by case with the EC. "The objective of those rules is to ensure that any claim made on a food's labelling, presentation or advertising in the European Union is clear, accurate and based on scientific evidence" to prevent fraud and protect consumers (European Commission 2017b). Folk medicine and home remedies, however uncontroversial and commonly known, were not excluded from these rules.

"So we are not allowed to explain what an herb is good for," asked an audience member. "No." "And we are not allowed to write on the packaging for instance, that lemon balm is soothing? Or that Echinacea helps fight the common cold?" "No."

Authored pieces such as magazine articles could not be prevented from making such claims but the sellers were not allowed to make use of such texts as this would constitute an indirect form of advertising and again be subject to rules regarding

making registered and approved claims. The course participants were expecting some useful pointers on the bureaucratic process from the civil servant, but instead they found out that the EU regulations were greatly curtailing their capabilities to market their products to consumers.

Up next was Vera, a farmer who recently started to cultivate herbs and make herbal products and cosmetics on her farm. She was scheduled to talk about her ways of tackling the food safety regulations and thus to complement the civil servants' advice with practical instructions on how to navigate the administrative procedures. She confirmed that she was aware that advertising medical indications that the product sought to relieve or cure was indeed prohibited and had a story to tell about this issue. Once at a farmer's market when she had just started selling her herbal products, a food safety inspector visited her stall and told her to remove all the products that were accompanied by short food claims on labels in front of the products she had displayed on the counter. After she removed them, the inspector expressed interest in purchasing one of her ointments. "Sure thing," said Vera, "but I can't tell you what it's good for!" The inspector admitted that the legislation had shortcomings but said that she had no influence over it. "Inspectors are only human, too," Vera told the course participants. "The law is dumb! The law needs changing!" said a voice from the audience. Vera agreed. She believed that these laws were designed in the interest of pharmaceutical companies to which the herbalists (*zeliščarji*) like her represented a strong oppositional force. "*Farmacija* is a rich and powerful lobby," said Vera, "and there are many obstacles put in our way."

There were ways of going around the hurdles. Vera bypassed the prohibition regarding claims regarding medical indications by conducting a lot of her business on her farm, at her place of residence because "nobody can tell you what you can or cannot say in your own home." She transformed a spare room on the ground floor of her house into a small visitors' point where she explained the beneficial properties of plants she grew on her farm to her guests and potential buyers. She did a significant portion of her business through the post. At farmers' markets she was careful that the label on the packaging of her products fell within the limits of the law. Her daughter sometimes helped her by providing pamphlets and mini-lectures on herbal properties at the stall next to Vera's while Vera sold the products at hers. As long as the same person was

not doing the selling and claiming, Vera explained, it did not break the law. “Sometimes you just have to find a way.”

In order for Vera to do what she understood that the food claims law intended; that is, to protect consumers from fraudulent and misleading producers and to favour honest ones, like Vera undoubtedly believed herself to be, she needed to bend this very law a little. Even though she conducted her business immaculately, the fact that she could not keep her business completely within the legal confines, left a sense of wrongdoing. Her instructions were considered useful by the course participants, but her lecture seemed to only enhance the sense that the playing field was set against them.

The presentation by a second food safety officer concluded the morning session. The presenter introduced matters of registering a food production and processing facility and explained the basics of implementing a food safety management system. This consisted of following good hygiene practices and designing a production workflow based on Hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP). HACCP, explained the official, was much less intimidating and much more straightforward than people assumed. It did not necessarily entail a large investment into a prescribed set of equipment related to more expenses. The procedure consisted of writing down the guidelines for best practice. As the presenter began to outline the steps of the procedure, the audience interrupted. “What department did you say you were working for again?” The participants grew confused. In contrast to what the official had said, they found the outline of the procedures numerous and rather complicated. Gradually the official’s voice explaining the mechanics in detail got monotone and began to fade into the chatting whispers as participants lost interest in following the presentation. The chatting became louder and livelier and the walkouts increasingly unabashed.

Smoking outside in the sun, the participants brought back another frequently invoked argument with which the trouble of insurmountable obstacles being put in one’s way could be mitigated: “By being overly complicated, bureaucracy (*birokracija*) is preventing people from helping themselves, even when they show initiative.” The claim of the bureaucratic impasse seemed to have been provoked by their boredom and confusion, but the claim itself was a sort of truism, something one murmurs to a companion casually when one encounters an administrative obstacle (Herzfeld 2005). Yet it seemed to indicate a shift from their perception of the playing field as one tilted

in favour of "powerful lobbies" and large corporations in order to hinder small players that could potentially harm them, expressed early morning, to a sense that the biggest obstacle the participants were facing was an impersonal force of administration and paperwork that cared neither for the small producers nor the large players, but cared only for the forms and regulations and thus preventing anyone from achieving anything worth doing.

The afternoon session turned their disappointment with the programme into an indignation and rage. The speaker that followed painted for them an image of the state not as cold and disinterested and a source of structural violence, but as warm, moral and protective of its citizens. A health inspector had been invited to illuminate the cosmetic perspective of herbalism to complement the food perspective discussed so far. Given the fears that inspectors often encounter with the individuals that are subject to review, the health inspector was keen on presenting her work and her department in a positive light. In the field, the inspectors were not forcibly seeking inconsistencies with the regulation in order to issue penalties and fees, she explained. Warnings were issued first and a reasonable deadline within which to remedy the condition was designated. The inspectors were always prepared to listen to reason in defining the deadline. They worked case by case and didn't seek to impose an equal rule for all since they understood that the liable subjects were not all the same. The EU legislation was not predisposed to the kind of levelling disciplining either. It contained directions on what outcome was to be achieved rather than detailed prescriptions for instance of the type and colour of ceramic tiles used in the kitchen, or specifying exact measurements, familiar under the old regime.

The inspector proceeded to outline the next area where she felt the inspectorate was "trying to be good". Their mission was to protect the consumers. She said that the producers of cosmetics would however not be finding it easy to comply with the law. "The EU legislation regarding cosmetics is better suited to larger producers, unfortunately. This means that documentation is required prior to market launch. Registration is needed for each product. And the producer has to possess relevant knowledge. Not only in general but specific knowledge and proper education." This information was new to the participants and drew out several irritated grumbles. The obstacle of needing to have an appropriate education in order to formalise their practice was too restrictive for the participants interested in cosmetics. An audience

member inquired about advertisements for diet pills. If prolonged consumption of diet pills was known to be unhealthy, how come there was not more regulatory focus directed toward the obvious scams such as this, he wanted to know. “We are trying to protect the Slovenian consumer, but we can’t protect them against their own naivety,” replied the inspector. The regulation and the extent of their power had its limits. She expressed hope that the participants were not planning on using these obscure examples of contemporary marketing and alluded to the jobseekers’ inner moral sense.

After the presentation, fury as well as cigarette smoke were gathering above the heads of the coursetakers outside. They felt the inspector’s treatment was unfair. They too felt like they were trying to protect the consumers; wanting to offer them only the best of what they had and did. But instead they were the ones so heavily regulated in the name of safety and protecting the consumers, while harmful grooming products or household cleaning agents – things reported to be carcinogenic – were allowed onto the shelves of supermarkets. While their activities were restricted and prohibited by the state, all around them the fraudulent sellers of products like dieting pills that didn’t work and were potentially harmful to one’s health were thriving. The group of smokers lamented about how what stood as traditional and therefore safe, was now being increasingly treated as risky and as needed to be protected against. “There is no sense in these laws, absolutely no logic. Do they think the people here are all idiots will just calmly take this?” One participant called for people to get together and start to practice civil disobedience and just do whatever they felt was right, regardless of laws. Another responded on the back of this, that the Arab Spring too was provoked because an unemployed youth with university degree started selling something at his stall in the middle of the square and the state removed him.

The participants came to a conclusion that their initial hopes for this course, as outlined in the aims of the course stated in the invitation, would not be seeing the light of day. Navigating the regulatory fortress was not viable. The subsequent realisation that they did not matter to the state, that the inspectors worked to protect consumers from them, moreover that they were presented as too risky to be entrusted with their own enterprises came as an injury. The smokers’ group came to the conclusion that someone must have earned something with this course. Since they experienced the state as their biggest obstacle and culprit that kept them in their precarious positions at a time when the market was sympathetic exactly to the kind of small-scale domače

wholesome food and herb products they wanted to provide, they came to the conclusion that the corruption emanating from the state was the largest issue at hand. The suspicions that the course was a merely a front for a transfer of public funds into private hands grew large and explicit. The course-goers commented that the vulnerable groups like the unemployed are often the target groups of social programmes which need to be realised without an actual positive result in mind other than to not let the money obtained by EU calls go to waste. They suspected that in a scheme of turning a profits, the participants were "mere pawns that are supposed to play entrepreneurs of some kind," as one of the participants said.

The diverse and often negative effects of the EU policy-making on the political and economic structures in CEE member states has been well documented by anthropologists (Ekiert 2008; Kürti 2008; Zielonka 2007). Ethnographies of changes within the agrofood sector in postsocialist member states have proved as one of the most productive approaches of examining the interface between EU governance and local understandings, appropriations and consequences (Aistara 2015; Dunn 2003b; Gille 2011; Klumbytė 2011; Mincyte 2011a; Knudsen 2015). These studies have importantly pointed towards numerous possible outcomes that the rollout of EU policies had in CEE. Yet their collective portrayal gives an impression of the EU as a state with a unified, technocratic rationality and a goal of creating a legible and harmonised 'technozone' (Dunn 2005).

Instead, the ethnography presented in this chapter shows a multitude of contradictory messages from the EU, communicated by the agents upon representing the different realms of governance to the jobseekers in the course. Moreover, in contrast to assertions of 'bureaucratic indifference' caused by routinisation (Herzfeld 1993) or 'structural violence' (Farmer 2004; Graeber 2012), the programme, the convenor and the presenters all seemed genuinely interested in providing a service that was useful and encouraging to the participants. My ethnography better aligns with proposals of bureaucratic practice as oriented by an ethical conduct and notions of public good (Bear 2015; Mathur & Bear 2015), and with a structural violence caused not by a rigid bureaucracy constraining the scope of action, but rather the very room for manoeuvre in terms of interpreting the rules (Gupta 2012). Officials' own senses of duty and care ultimately translates into "production of arbitrariness" (14), because the results of bureaucratic deliberations can never be relied upon with certainty by the clients, Gupta

argues. The unintended consequences of such good intentions produce structural violence. In India, these have caused the striking persistence of high mortality rates, despite developmental efforts (ibid.).

The participants' assertions that they did not understand what the regulations were trying to do, who they were trying to serve, can be seen as signalling such unintended consequences of national and EU bureaucratic processes. They understood the law as a moral source and tried to ascertain what the particular moral guideline behind it was. Failing to observe a coherent logic behind the information given in the programme prompted the participants to shift their interpretations to what was going on in the course several times. They started the course holding honest expectations of a practical way out of unemployment based on the promise in the organiser's email. They were then faced with a different perspective: seeing the state as a business partner, which they needed to appeal to by a strong case for cooperation. Suspicions of lobbying of larger corporations to simplify regulations for themselves were superseded with lamentations against the bureaucratic purposelessness. Later still, the suspicions of corruption reappeared when the participants felt that the bureaucratic obstacles were placed to purposefully defer them from market activity. As the jobseekers tried to formulate a reasonable theory that would explain the disarray in the encounter with the state they experienced, they constructed a face of the state as a powerful source acting against the interest of most of its subjects. In the same process, they constructed themselves as disgruntled citizens. As lessons from the anthropology of the state have taught us, to conjure up the state as a powerful entity, one does not need to endorse it, as discourses of corruption (Gupta 1995) and of everyday acts of 'mundane cynicism' (Navaro-Yashin 2002) symbolically construct the state as well.

5 Conclusion

This chapter began with outlining how the trope of food self-sufficiency could be utilised by the government not only to educate consumers into ethical market agents capable of behaviour in line with the agricultural policy, but to normalise austerity by promoting the idea of autonomous independent producers able to create own livelihoods without relying on state benefits and thus glossing over the reduction of welfare distribution.

However, the realisation of the participants at the end of the course suggested that a creation of livelihoods via petty production and trading of domače products was not in fact a viable option. They concluded that the state saw the participants as potential threat to food safety and that their market activity needed to be limited in order to protect the consumers. Considering this, the discourse of samooskrba in its effect in fact served to justify the continuation of social transfer payments by asking its recipients to express merely an intention and a desire for work, without having the actual possibility for it. This resonates with Hage's assertion of endurance as becoming a normal civil subjectivity during a crisis as citizens are asked to 'wait it out' and hang in their troubled lives (Hage 2009b). In this chapter I examined how samooskrba presented one of the effects of the state that helped produce the subjectivities of *sperocitizens*, of hopeful civic subjects waiting for change.

James Ferguson recently discussed novel forms of social distribution policies regarding the bottom poor across Africa that were not based on any agenda of making the poor useful to capital but were instead given on the basis of "not having any plans for them to ever be included" (Ferguson 2015: 11). He called to observe the limits of unproductive opposition to neoliberalism that ascribed to it a coherent plan and an ability to insinuate its logic into all spheres of life. Instead, economies are mixed and as much as a fifth of the population in some locales no longer relies on waged labour for survival. This meant that they also formulated new kinds of civic demands, which distributive policies should pay attention to. Ferguson's suggestion seems to fit well fit Slovenian unemployment policy, despite its claims of otherwise. The title of Ferguson's book is *Give a man a fish*, a truncated version of the Chinese proverb to signal that there was no catch to the social transfers he observed, no hidden agenda and no plan. This applied to social transfers in Ljubljana too, but with a catch: to justify them, a hope needed to be kept alive that they were in reality achieving something. Samooskrba helped propel an 'economy of appearances' (Tsing 2000), perhaps best illustrated by a quote written on a wall in the classroom of the unemployment programme, an extended version of the Chinese proverb by an American social entrepreneur that read: "Social entrepreneurs are not content just to give a fish or to teach how to fish. They will not rest until they have revolutionised the fishing industry. –Bill Drayton-"

6

Finding a way through uncertainty: Household food preserving off- and on-the-grid

Brigita's feet were cold. She was trying to warm herself up by stepping on the spot but she did not want to show she was feeling cold. She put on her retail smile; it had a missing tooth in the corner of her mouth, although it was not any less persuasive because of it. It was a damp and foggy Sunday morning in February and she was standing in front of the open boot of her car. A colourful selection of fruit jams, bottles of apple juice and cider vinegar that she preserved in autumn lay inside the boot. Every other Sunday morning, the quiet and vast car park of a family restaurant – closed that day – hosted a pop-up informal market where Brigita's makeshift stall was one in a row of ten or so similarly improvised counters displaying homegrown and homemade foods. A young Croatian woman named Eva organised these events through Facebook. Interested buyers placed an order with her online, then picked up their goods from the vendors.

Eva modelled the market on 'community purchasing' farmers' markets she came across in Ljubljana and in Zagreb, Croatia. These functioned in the following way: a group of farmers, contacted by the organisers, collected the orders in advance, prepared only the ordered amounts and sold them at a predetermined time.[20] But Eva had a different scheme in mind. She wanted to connect a group of small urban food producers she met through the entrepreneurship course organised by the public employment service (ESS) and through the occasional get-togethers at a vegetable garden site where she was renting a plot, with consumers she met through a Facebook group of amateur plot gardening specialists. She wanted to offer a broad range of foods. If she couldn't supply a certain item from one of her personal contacts, she searched the internet for a local farmer that produced it. She wished for the events to

[20] These were possibly modelled on 'solidarity purchase groups' that are extensive in Italy (for an ethnographic account see Grasseni 2013).

be ‘contributing toward building a community’ so that buyers would put their trust in the sellers and the sellers would strive to do their very best in order to preserve it. A young blonde and her husband were handing out whole organic chickens from the back of their van to a queue of buyers. They started raising them a year ago, after none of them was able to find a job. A recent university graduate was selling honey. Beekeeping used to be her father’s hobby but she was hoping she could transform the little enterprise into a livelihood for herself. Two obese women were demonstrating their baking skills with homemade bread rolls and biscuits laid out on a small table. Peter, Eva’s good friend, brought handmade egg noodles and a range of herbal dips and sauces. Next to his stand, a farmer was selling sacks of potatoes and onions. A young jobseeker-turned-farmer brought fresh flour from her mill. In spring, when the market caught on, the offer range expanded further to include dried herbs, hemp tea, chilli pepper sauces, fresh dandelion leaves and walnut oil, an intensely dark liquid used as a skin tanning product made from unripe walnuts.

After all the orders were fulfilled that Sunday, after all free samples of Brigita’s apple juice were happily consumed and all the vendors left the cold car park, Eva sat down to a coffee in a nearby café with a sigh. She was happy with the overall event but less so with some of the vendors. The bread from the pair of women was not very good, she though, it had not risen enough in the oven. Peter had been very clumsy weighing his fresh noodles on the scale. His packaged fare also did not look attractive. “Ah, I told them many times before. This is not how you do it! It all looked like something I would make in my own kitchen,” said Eva. “Well, I do realise they had to make it in their home kitchens, but it’s difficult to sell something like that. I guess not everybody’s made for the market.” The sauces, honey and Brigita’s fruit jams were better, she thought, jars were easily made to look presentable to the buyers.

This chapter turns to the practice of making food preserves at home and explores its relation to tackling poverty and precarity. I argue that home canning continues to have relevance for alleviating the consequences of poverty, but only if a broader understanding of this practice is employed. I broaden the scope of home canning with an historical overview of making winter stores in the SFRY and show how private preserving practices were considered an integral element of a stable food supply and therefore of social security by the socialist state. As a type of welfare, winter preserves formed a contract between citizens and the state, reflecting the particular kind of

citizenship defined by the Yugoslav self-management politico-economic system. I then demonstrate how home preserving during the Eurozone crisis similarly offered a way of enhancing social security, but in a different form: by allowing one to access a range of spheres of exchange and sociality and by not limiting home canning to either home consumption of production for the market. Eva, the market organiser, was lamenting the fluidity of the border between market goods and foods for home consumption that she saw was effecting consumer perceptions of quality. This chapter explores the opposite angle – how precarious and impoverished Ljubljanans utilised this fluid border to their advantage, rather than understanding it as an obstacle.

1 Home preserving in socialism and postsocialism

A question often underlying scholarly engagements with the theme of home food preserving is how come this labour-intensive activity persists in the era of the industrialised food system for which one would expect that it would render obsolete the traditional food self-sufficiency techniques. Before the "demise of the old traditional food preserving techniques in the 1950s and 1960s," writes Shephard (Shephard 2000: 9), diets did not change much. The industrialisation of the food supply brought the inexpensive stability and reliability to the nourishment of populations. It also dictated a change in farming practices – farmers began specialising and, like urbanites, became part of the market demand for foods they no longer produced. Whatever food preserving activities went on in the rural and urban households after this rupture with the past, according to Shephard, served purposes other than mere sustenance. She links the renewed popularity of preserving food to the desire of "wanting to be in control of food, to know where it came from and how it was prepared and processed" (338). Stockpiling and hoarding food in pantries also persisted in industrialised Europe, even in countries where a lack of foods, regardless of seasonality, was not an issue. To explain this, Shephard suggests that the demands of hospitality (having something for the case of unexpected guests) or the memories of shortage – collective or experienced – provoked people to prepare for the worst.

Growing and processing food at home, she suggests, makes sense if the food supply networks break down, as she shows with detailed descriptions of inter and post-WWII household food preserving efforts in the UK. While in Western Europe self-reliance

began to lose importance after the food supply systems had stabilised after the war, behind the Iron Curtain and in the Balkans such practices remained common, even in the cities, for a long time after. A persistence of tending small vegetable plots and canning the produce at home was down to the notoriously unreliable socialist food supply in the Eastern Bloc (Caldwell 2009b). Due to its limited ability to ensure food, resulting in frequent shortages of certain foods and in overall low quality and limited variety of foods available for purchase, socialist citizens strived to supply their own. Dislike and distrust in standardised canned foods of Bulgarian socialism that led urbanites to preserve their own vegetables, subsided after the breakdown of socialism. As the choice on the shelves of supermarkets expanded, consumers became confident in their abilities to discern quality products (Jung 2009). When such self-reliance practices remained a remarkable feature of postsocialist households – and they did – the motives were likewise sought in the symbolic rather than in subsistence; home preserving was seen as being driven by "the memories and increasingly nostalgic, rather than necessary, practices" (Jung 2009: 32).

The persisting, even renewed examples of practices of self-reliance in postsocialist Eurasia were recently observed by contributors to a volume edited by Gudeman and Hann (2015b). In its introduction, the editors posit that household self-sufficiency practices are better understood as gestures that do not relate to any "real" autarky of the household, since in a specialised market economy it was close to impossible to achieve it. Rather, the self-sufficiency practices in the household are "an ideal, a standard to be maintained and even vigorously asserted in the course of daily life" (Gudeman & Hann 2015a: 10), for example treating guests with homemade wine. Applying their approach in an example close to Slovenia, Monova studies the domestic cooking and canning of *ajvar*, a peppers-based winter salad preserve common to Macedonia and the Balkans in general. She looks at the idiosyncrasy of making ajvar under the auspices of self-sufficiency (*samoizdržuvanje* in Macedonian, *samodovoljnost* in Serbo-Croatian) while relying solely on the store-bought peppers to do so (Monova 2015). She is interested in the discrepancy between the claims of the residents of Macedonian towns that growing the peppers at home wasn't worth the effort, and their time-consuming process of making enormous quantities of ajvar at home, involving roasting and peeling the peppers and cooking them with aubergines. Monova understands the acquisition of store-bought ingredients as an exercise of market rationality, but concludes that cooking the ajvar dish at home is about prestige,

identity, good taste and the belief that it is healthier if one makes it at home. On the basis of this, Monova suggest that self-sufficiency is closer to an ideology than it is to a reality.

In another example, Dunn demonstrates how nostalgic home canning can be lethal (2008). Investigating the background to cases of botulism induced by consuming home vegetable preserves in postsocialist Georgia, she concludes that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Georgians sought a sense of security in recreating the flavours of industrially preserved vegetables distributed by the socialist state. However, in canning at home, Georgians did not observe the necessary safety precautions, which led to spore contamination of their jars. Whereas food production standards of the Soviet state ensured that tinned food was safe, the failed Georgian neoliberal state "abandoned" the jars, which contributed to the high levels of botulism (ibid.).

This relates to a second theoretical strand frequently expressed in ethnographies of home canning and household self-sufficiency: that as self-sufficiency practices are "a bastion against uncertainty and instability or contingency" (Gudeman & Hann 2015a: 11), that they serve as instances of the 'double movement,' as social forces pulling in the direction opposite of market forces that bring about the uncertainty. In other words, that such 'householding' – a term they borrow from Polanyi (2001) – serves to insulate, even symbolically, the household and protect it from negative impacts of the market. In a similar vein, Dunn posits that for Georgians, "the primary survival strategy in the face of economic collapse was involution, or a turn away from the market and toward nonmonetized production" (2008: 249), like home canning.

While I build on her proposition that Georgian citizens abandoned by the state sought to contain and preserve the sense of care of the previous paternalistic state by doing their own food preserving, I challenge her suggestion that taste of a lost Soviet tinned dish was the vehicle to deliver this sentiment. While I concede with the argument that home preserving and other forms of self-sufficiency are insulating tactics, I challenge the notion that 'involution' is an isolated sphere that protects by cutting its connections with the market and broader social world. While I maintain that 'jar foods' (Jung 2009) are closely related to forging household security, this chapter shows that in Ljubljana, nostalgic tastes and involution were not its underlying principles.

Like in Georgia, home canning in Ljubljana is a response to experiences of decreased social security and increased risks-absorbing tasks of the citizens. It is aimed at improving the livelihoods and lifeways of households, but not by producing foods that are difficult to procure or safer than those from the market. I found home canning to be tightly weaved into networks of sociality and economy that can help one navigate an uncertain terrain of poverty or lack of employment. In other words, that pickling works as a buffer insulating autonomous action without creating dependencies. Moreover, for Ljubljanans, these insulating 'economies of jars' (Smollett 1989) were inseparable from other forms and networks of security.

Slovenian verb for canning is *vlagati*. It translates as 'inserting,' such as inserting contents into a jar. The same verb also translates as 'investing' in its widest sense: investing in the stock market, investing profits, investing into education or the agricultural sector, investing efforts and investing into one's future. In the sections below I show how home canning is only a part of wider set of precarious practices of collecting resources – material, information and opportunities – that would enable an investment so that one could catch a break, get relief from the vigilance of their lifeways. In its third meaning, *vlagati* refers to filing an application to initiate an official administrative process. As I demonstrate in the final section looking at bureaucratic procedures, this kind of 'preserving' may impinge on the abilities of unemployed Ljubljanans to forge security and autonomy. It drives their actions towards complying with predetermined categories – such as the idea of separate realms of household and the market – while the basis of the picklers' autonomy is in traversing them. This chapter highlights that harnessing perishability and instability – of fresh vegetables, fleeting opportunities or informal livelihoods – is a matter of power.

2 Socialist pickles as social welfare

As historical examples can attest, food canning had been always meshed with the exercise of power. Nicolas Appert developed the process of canning to respond to Napoleon's call for ideas on how the army could overcome problems arising from disruptions to their food supply while out on the front. Appert's proposal of sealing

food in jars offered a stable supply of unperishable food stored in practical transportable containers and meant that troops were not dependent on separate distribution flows and could bring their food with them (Goody 1982; Shephard 2000). In the Soviet Union, canning was an important tool of exercising power over socialist citizens. Dunn noted that canned food was "a primary means through which socialist state regulated the citizenry" (Dunn 2008: 212). With tinned food, the state aspired to standardise diets and integrate local idiosyncrasies into a single cuisine across the Union. It also attempted to standardise time, by detaching food availability from seasonality and weather. Food canning gave central planners a better grip over the food supply, after a previous reliance on food sold by farmers was in part replaced by dependence on tins provided by the state. Food standards were a key element of controlling the food supply. Not only practically, to coordinate the production processes, but also to give the appearance that the state-supplied jars came from a coherent and concerned paternalistic state that cared about its citizens. Georgians, Dunn adds, "developed a taste for the state" (248) as they stepped into the roles of 'citizen-children' (Verdery 1996).

Building upon Dunn's suggestion that tinned food both expressed and structured a socialist mode of citizenship in the Soviet Union, I suggest that in SFRY an equivalent is to be found in *ozimnica*. Ozimnica (called *zimnica* in other SFRY republics) refers to the collection of foods, particularly jar foods, for household use during winter. By showing how the socialist state participated in this annual household ritual, I will demonstrate how it understood it as a form of social welfare derived in symbiosis with its citizens. I will demonstrate how ozimnica shaped and ideologically reflected the relationship between citizens and the state that was particular of the Yugoslav workers' self-management system. Ozimnica was compatible with a notion of self-managing autonomous citizens and with a notion of the state as a provider of a safety net, rather than direct subsistence.

Ozimnica consists of fresh fruit and vegetables that could be preserved by storing in cool and dark basements; canned produce and frozen food; as well as coal or wood for heating. The term makes no reference to the purpose for storing and preserving food; making reserves in expectation of a disrupted food supply in winter or higher prices of foods out of season; preventing a waste of summer gluts; or producing seasonal specialties for periods when nutritious foods were less available. The most basic

ozimnica consisted of crates of potatoes, scattered with quicklime to prevent rot, and apples, stored in the basement. Onion, cabbage and turnip were also easily stored in cool and dry spaces, as could smoked and dry-cured meats. When home freezing became widely accessible to households from 1970s, larger quantities of fresh meat were stored in freezer chests. Home freezing was also convenient for storing tender fresh fruits and vegetables like raspberries, foraged blueberries and haricot beans. While rural households stored their own produce this way, urbanites bought these foodstuffs before winter and stored them in their basements and pantries.

Canning (*vlaganje*) took more time and skill. Sauerkraut (*kislo zelje*) and soured turnip (*kisla repa*) were central ingredients of winter meals. Households that grew cabbage and turnips fermented the thinly cut or grated brassicas in large vats or sometimes in the bathtub for several months before winter. Due to the length of the process and the equipment required, urban households more likely relied on buying sauerkraut as it was never in short supply at the farmers' market. However, for certain foods home canning remained very popular. Gherkins, red peppers, hot green peppers (*feferoni*) and beetroots are grown in vegetable gardens especially for pickling, or bought on the market and preserved at home. Cooking *ajvar*, the Macedonian pepper salad preserve, is also typical. Fruits preserves like jams and compotes are also often made at home. Plums, peaches and apricots are the most popular choice. These foods make bleak winters warmer and can be made according to the tastes of individual house members.

While jars are often filled when the particular crop is in high season, households began to fill up their pantries in larger number from late September. An excerpt from a local newspaper idyllically describes this process in early October so:

> "Autumn is here and with it the time to buy ozimnica. Streets are filling up with cars with carriages, and people pushing carts or crates mounted on their bicycles are all making their ozimnica ready. Občani of [Ljubljana] Center can be especially pleased since their municipality hosts the main food market where the choice of produce suitable for ozimnica is the largest. In particular, people buy gherkins and peppers for pickling from the market. Most grocers offer other ozimnica produce in sufficient quantities" (S.V. 1973).

The amounts of food included in ozimnica were significant. Ljuba, a farmer at Ljubljana central market, told me that it wasn't uncommon for households to buy 300 or 400 kg of potatoes to store in the basement and use through the year. However,

potato consumption decreased with expansion of living in high-rises and on residential estates as these usually did not have cold basements. Moreover, the number of household members was lower in urban households. A Ljubljanan worker told a local newspaper in 1979:

> "Our ozimnica looks like this: potatoes we got at home [from rural kin] in Sneberje, other things were taken care for by the company. We bought apples from them. […] Winter should be fine. We won't be short of anything to eat. I preserved a lot of peppers myself. I also made quite a few jars of ajvar. But today it is also worth buying ozimnica produced by our industry. […] Look into the shops, you can get almost anything there. And the price is almost the same as if one made it at home" (I.A.S.B. 1979).

Another one reported:

> "I have been canning myself for as long as I can remember. This year I preserved 20 jars of peppers, 10 jars of gherkins, 20 jars of ajvar. You know, I prefer to do it myself, at least I know what we are eating this way. No, I am not distrustful of our industry, but it is nice to do things by oneself, it's more appetising" (ibid.)

Even though home canning in socialist Yugoslavia could counteract the unreliable supply of food in the market and give citizens a sense of trust in what they were eating, it was never a private household pursuit. The state and self-management bodies actively participated in the process. Urban demand for ozimnica had a substantial effect on the market because of the large quantities bought by households. In the 1950s, this required estimating the necessary amounts in advance and large storage facilities where the distributors could store the supplies. For the winter of 1955, Zagreb city council planned to secure 9.5 million tonnes of potatoes, 150,000 tonnes of dried beans and 500,000 tonnes of onions, 1.3 million tonnes of cabbage and 750,000 tonnes of apples to the retail companies, designated for distribution of ozimnica. These companies tried to avoid problems with insufficient storage space for the designated amounts by selling them directly from storehouses or supply them wholesale to labour organisations. In contrast, a news article stated, Ljubljana was going to be able to avoid problems with supply, as potatoes and apples are crops grown in the immediate vicinity and most people either produce their own or are able to procure them from farmers themselves (Miloševič 1955).

In later decades, ozimnica supplies were no longer planned by the local state, but the government and labour organisations made several concessions to make ozimnica widely accessible. In Ljubljana, a board of retailers, state guarantors and trade unions fixed the prices of key ozimnica ingredients, every year and for each winter month, from November to March. Retailers that agreed to the deal, were announced in the newspapers and had to offer the produce under these prices. Bank offered loans for ozimnica to retailers and consumers. (Lipužič 1974). Trade unions (*sindikati*, sing. *sindikat*) also had a prominent role in the procurement of ozimnica to workers as they offered the ozimnica foods at cheaper prices to the company employees.

Political activists and Communist party members often derided the *sindikati* for providing this service to workers instead of pouring their efforts into more general pursuits of improving work conditions (Sindikat ni zaradi ozimnice 1977). Still today, the word 'sindikat' evokes association to 'ozimnica' and bring smiles to faces who with a mixture of mockery and nostalgia recall the yearly distribution of cratefuls of apples and potatoes at the car park of their regular place of work. The conceptual link between trade unions and ozimnica was an effect of the workers' self-management system that made workers the owners of companies where they were employed. The workers faced a dilemma in this system: either to formulate goals around worker benefits (such as wage increase), or to maximise productivity and market share. In this 'paradox' (Kirn 2014), trade unions were tasked with ensuring a minimum standard of living for workers. The activities they oversaw were in most cases limited to organising daytrips (*sindikalni izleti*) and cheaper holiday breaks for employees and arranging discounts for ozimnica foods, since ozimnica represented a larger household expense.

Yet a quote from an ozimnica coordination board of 1974 suggests that ozimnica can be recognised for its political capacity. The board made a recommendation to workers' organisations to "consider the ozimnica *as a broader concept*" (Lipužič 1974, my emphasis) and elaborated that ozimnica "should include – besides vegetables and fruit – a fuel source as well as basic school supplies for children," while it stressed the importance of making ozimnica affordable for the "disadvantaged citizens (*socialno ogroženi*), single mothers and people with disabilities." Ozimnica in socialist Yugoslavia was a form of state-supported welfare based on a symbiosis between

citizens and the state. The state helped the citizens with self-provisioning which helped the state to offset disruptions in market supply.

In the decades of steady economic growth it seemed that this kind of welfare was needed less and less. Economic reliance on ozimnica and homemade canned foods had been decreasing, as industrially-produced jar foods were of decent quality and readily available at affordable prices. The autumn ritual persisted. Local journalists suggested that Slovenes engaged with this "yearly nuisance" because it was "traditional" (B.P. 1977b). Yet the 1980s were marked by significant economic and political crisis that culminated in the break of Yugoslavia in 1991. During the austerity period of 'stabilisation,' food prices increased, which reinstated ozimnica as a sensible household investment. A significant expense, but as a local news article noted, "being left without is not an option, as many items will be much more expensive during winter" (Polanec 1984). With prices rising and real incomes falling, "ozimnica is and will stay one of the regular expenses of any family. Buying potatoes, onions, apples and other foods in the middle of winter is a possibility only for the very few" (Popov 1984). The institution of ozimnica was unscathed by open markets after 1991. It remained 'just something one did,' without contemplating on whether it was truly essential for the household from the point of subsistence to have a good stock of foods during the winter. In 2006, half of households were still recorder to regularly stocking up on ozimnica foods. Among these, the majority reported that it made ozimnica at home, and the rest bought it in the supermarkets and farmers' markets or acquired it from rural kin (Pal 2006).

As a type of welfare, the socialist ozimnica was a risk-absorbing cushion of the private sphere. Instituted by the state, it allowed individuals to make their own choices, to exert agency from their own private space. In contrast to the Soviet state, Yugoslav self-management did not make its citizens completely and directly dependent on the flows of the social forces that it managed. Ozimnica not only provided citizens with subsistence security, but also helped them to envision themselves as political subjects. The next sections looks at how Ljubljanans sought to recreate this type of security as the austerity of the Eurozone crisis depleted welfare provisioning.

3 Fluid spheres of household food exchange

Brigita was trained as an accountant and used to work as an executive in her father's knitting enterprise. The family company designed and produced clothing and sold it in one of their four boutiques. Knitting was a difficult business as the availability of cheaper textiles from Asian countries reduced the demand for local craft. Yet the company had a loyal base of customers. The Eurozone crisis hit their business with force. Unpaid receipts piled up when several of the merchandise recipients defaulted. Since all business profits the business were reinvested, the company had no savings. On top of this, Brigita fell ill around that crucial time for a prolonged period for, as she put it, just long enough to fall out of sync with the fashion trends, which didn't help either. The company went bust and Brigita had not been formally employed since.

Thinking about her prospects, Brigita estimated that finding a new job during the economic crisis would leave her in roughly the same financial position as if she were to stay at home and provide for a portion of the family's food needs by means of self-sufficiency. She began cultivating a plot of 500m^2 that she rented from a farmer in the close vicinity to their home. She never gardened before and never had an interest in it but she began collecting seeds, making seedling plants, tending the garden. When I met her, she was anticipating her harvest for the third season. Her husband and her adult stepson helped her with the harder tasks. She didn't quite fall in love with working the land, even after several seasons, but she did like the fact that she was providing her family with healthy and homegrown food.

500m^2 under vegetables was sufficient to cover the four family members' vegetable needs over the course of the year. While she wasn't able to give an estimate of how much produce she harvested for immediate consumption, she had a clearer idea of how much produce she stored or preserved at the end of season for use in the winter months. Five 30kg-cratefuls of potatoes was stored in the basement. Brigita cooked around 80 litres of tomato sauce and canned around 100 large jars of pickles, among them gherkins, peppers and beetroot. A huge amount of vegetables was frozen. The couple estimated that 100kg of haricot beans and 150kg of mixed vegetable packets (carrots, broccoli, and cauliflower) was put in the chest freezer in the basement. They fermented and canned around 30 litres of pickled turnip, 40 litres of sauerkraut out of the cabbage from the plot and an additional 60 litres from the cabbage they bought. They engaged

in other self-sufficiency activities too – the family produced their own heating source. Her husband Marko had a verbal agreement with a forest landowner to clear the fallen branches and dead wood from the woods. The family made regular excursions to the forest to top-up their fuel reserves. Brigita acquired larger quantities of fruit from her parents who had a small *vikend* (a holiday cottage) with an orchard in the southeast Slovenia. From the apples, pear, peaches and grapes she cooked jams, juices and vinegar. Brigita's father distilled a delicious pear brandy (*šnops)*. Brigita also picked and dried all kinds of herbs she found in the meadows and woods surrounding their plot to use as infusions and to make jars of herbal syrup.

But Brigita quickly realised that samooskrba was not a clear-cut sphere of private production and consumption as she had imagined. While 500m^2 of cultivated horticultural area was just sufficient for a family of four, it was also the threshold size at which exchanging and trading of surplus produce began to make sense. Having *enough* to cover own needs necessarily meant producing a *surplus* which could be gifted or exchanged for other goods or money, not only preserved for later use. Brigita showered her friends with fresh produce. She also persuaded a few acquaintances to sign up to her vegetable box scheme for a small price. And she occasionally sold haricot beans and other vegetable to a local catering business. As this has been progressing well, they were planning enlarge their cultivation area to 800m^2 the following season and were hoping to take the surplus trading a step further and make it into a proper registered business in the very near future. Brigita saw a lot of potential in selling vegetables. It was "a very sensible way of people taking care of themselves in times of crisis," she said. "It's like with *tetke* ('aunties', older women) you see at the sea resorts. They bring some vegetables, maybe some eggs, some other produce they've made extra, in front of the supermarket and when they sell some, they are able to buy something they need from the supermarket." Brigita soon found herself enmeshed in webs of exchange. Brigita was interested in herbal healing properties of herbs and made ointments and creams for various ailments from the herbs she foraged. She found that these homemade remedies were in high demand and she could sell them for a good price but to make them she needed particular ingredients she did not make herself. Spruce beeswax – she claimed it was the best – she got from an acquaintance by swapping it for either the ointments themselves, her father's brandy or something from the remaining stock of knitted cardigans from the failed family business. With a well-off friend who often travelled abroad she had been trading

vegetable seedling plants she raised herself for collections of English young adult novels for her daughters.

Brigita's canned food further revealed the many realms of exchange situated between household self-sufficiency and the market that Brigita traversed fluidly. Several 'economies of jars' (Smollett 1989) became transparent if one looked at the content of those jars. I enjoyed Brigita's pickled gherkins and peppers, when she served them in the middle of the dining table as a salad dish accompanying a winter meal, simply with their lids open. I was asked to take home a few jars of sauerkraut when the winter season was nearly finished and the family discovered they will be unable to consume all of the stocks but were reluctant to waste it. As both a show of her skill and a token of hospitality, I was sent home with a bottle of preserved elderflower syrup another time I visited the family. Brigita compensated for my help with harvesting haricot beans by asking me to take home as much of the harvest as I wanted. I bought a jar of Brigita's broadleaf plantain ointment she recommended to use for burns and small cuts and a bottle of her father's pear brandy which I bought as a gift. While all the products were in everyday or regular use within Brigita's family, they had distinctive values and were used for a range of purposes outside of it.

Preserved vegetables do not circulate far in Ljubljana. Pickled gherkins, beetroot, peppers and sauerkraut are staple foods and not valuable as an exchange item. They are not easily given as a gift or sold by household jar makers. One might give them to one's close kin or friend if they run out of such a staple. As ingredients of commensality, homemade pickles stay within the family circle and do not feature in exchanges beyond this sphere. When such foods venture outside of family consumption, when they are given as gifts, they risk being labelled as unsafe and impure by its recipients. Indeed, I must confess that being unable to refuse Brigita's surplus sauerkraut jars made me feel uncomfortable. I felt uneasy about opening them and consuming their content. After contemplating what to do with them for several days, I decided to dispose of them.

Ljubljanans grow the vegetables that end up in jars especially for pickling and use in season when the gardens are inactive; pickles are not simply summer gluts. If no such vegetables are grown at home, they are very commonly bought fresh from farmers and preserved at home or preserves are bought in the supermarket. Gherkins, beetroot and

vinegared peppers are not an item sold on the farmers' market stalls, but Slovenian farmers do commonly sell fresh pickling produce. While sauerkraut is a winter farmers' market staple, jars of home-fermented vegetable are less impressive as parting gifts for house guests. There is a thin and porous line between domače foods and food prepared in the home. Eva's dilemma described in the introductory vignette of wanting to host producers of natural and wholesome domače foods while avoiding the appearance of being produced in home kitchens speaks directly to this distinction. It also echoes Abbotts' 'privileged migrants' in Ecuador who found that their idealised notions of local foodways were shattered by the need to share the food space with local vendors and restaurant eaters (Abbots 2013).

The radius of circulation for ajvar, a more processed preserve, is wider. Especially if made by a special recipe, this food is more appropriate to give a house guest. It can show the host's skill and hospitality and can be used to sustain kindred and kindred-like networks, although its reach is still confined to recipients who are close to the donor and whose personal preferences are well known. Jams and other fruit preserves like syrups and juices are much more fitting as house visits gifts, even if parties are not very well acquainted. Homemade alcoholic beverages like spirits, liqueurs (*orehovec*, made from walnuts soaked in brandy, *borovničevec*, from blueberry or *višnjevec*, from sour cherry), wine from one's weekend vineyard or olive and pumpkin seed oils work well as gifts or items for barter in Ljubljana and can settle past favours or buy future ones. Unless sold on an informal domače market, fruit preserves are difficult to sell for cash. In contrast, creating an income is viable by producing coveted homemade alcoholic drinks and oils. Brandy and brandy-based beverages were regularly sold informally in Slovenia. When acquired as a gift, this last groups of foods can also be 're-gifted'. This is not true for fruit preserves as receiving them second-hand would incite doubtful thoughts over the purity of the food.

The trust in foods acquired through informal exchange networks and their value point us towards the degrees of liquidity. The more homogeneous, processed and distilled and stable the content of the jar is, the farther outside the producing household the jar can circulate. The less apparent human intervention is in the food, the more anonymous its recipient can be. The more liquid the content of the jar, the more the jar is a liquid asset, easily translated into cash. I take my cue for using the term liquidity to observe the degrees of exchangeability of jar foods in Ljubljana from Rogers' study

of circulation of Siberian moonshine as a local currency. In the article, he argues for a focus on the forms of exchange inhabiting the space between and interlinking the informal and commodity types of exchange (Rogers 2005). When I visited Brigita on another occasion and asked her about her vegetable marketing endeavours and plans for expanding her business, she cut me off: "What is it that you are researching again?" I told her that self-sufficiency constituted a blanket term for my research interests. "But self-sufficiency is one thing and selling is another," she protested. This seemed unusual coming from Brigita. Even though she had now put such a stark contrast between them theoretically, her actions and her justifications for them provided ample evidence that she did not and could not draw a line between them in practice. She pondered comparing earning a regular income in a full-time badly paid job with staying at home to reduce the household expenses by growing vegetables for home consumption and trade. She engaged in several 'jar economies' that served distinct purposes. Moreover, the lines between the different markets were blurred while Brigita fluidly moved goods between them in order to participate in all of them.

Blurring of the lines between the spheres of circulation were caused by, first, what seems like a contradiction of agricultural production, pointed out above. Having enough vegetable to harvest means having too much of it, just in case, and utilising the surplus by preserving, exchange or both. Second, not all of household needs can easily be covered by household self-provisioning. In fact, even though Brigita's initial aim was to isolate her family's food provisioning from the market, keeping a normal life meant staying plugged into the social and commodity flows. Home canning practices are not way of staying 'off-the-grid' as much as they are way of keeping on it, as safely and securely as possible.

As outlined in the thesis introduction, the distinction between self-sufficiency and the market that Brigita made so explicitly links with many theoretical approaches that understand self-sufficiency as a move directed away from participating in the market. Furthermore, the Slovenian public debate on samooskrba and the enhanced media coverage on the related practices, such as community gardens and seed exchange events, solidified this distinction as they bestowed upon home-growing and home-canning a moral edge. Self-provisioning and bartering were positive, respectable and conducive to building one's local community; selling one's produce for money informally were held in contempt. Even though Brigita could not risk to keep these

realms nice and separate, the particular moral narrative of samooskrba rubbed off on her. Her claims of samooskrba and off-the-grid living were also employed to present her precarious position in a more favourable light. She had no trouble discussing her self-provisioning but she was more tactful with telling me about her informal and illicit market exchange practices. Approaching these economic realms as theoretically separate contributes to further marginalisation of those precarious lifeways that seem to gather strength and security precisely from being able to traverse them.

Not only did Brigita expand her food production activities beyond the realm of the household but she found herself needing to supplement the household's budget by taking up various odd jobs for cash. Since Brigita was still technically a business owner – they kept the company alive on paper just in case some odd-job or temporary project was easier to run under the company banner – she wasn't entitled to any unemployment benefits and wasn't registered as a formal jobseeker. Her husband received 1000 EUR for night- and weekend shifts and overtime as a storekeeper in a retail cooling facility. Only the minimum wage of 562 EUR was left in his account after the creditors – the utility companies – took their share Brigita and Marko owed them. The couple was paying off a house mortgage. While they were doing their best to pay off the debt, they were visited by bailiffs on a monthly basis. They were falling behind on their current bills. Brigita got 240 EUR in child allowance for their two girls. Her eldest daughter received a monthly scholarship (for secondary school students) of 95 EUR. Brigita received an additional social assistance transfer of 94 EUR per month, covering the difference in reaching the state ensured minimum amount of 240 EUR per household member. "As if 240 Euros were enough to survive," said Brigita bitterly. As if a 1000 EUR a month could sustain a family of four.

She broke down the household budget for me while we were driving to a town on the Italian border, about 2 hours from Ljubljana by car, where she was sent to work as a security guard at a small open-air concert in the main town square. Brigita's neighbour Klemen, a macho in his early forties whom she suspected was a criminal of some kind, ran a small security business and occasionally helped Brigita out by offering her one-off jobs when his regular crew could not cover them. Brigita would be earning 40 EUR and travel expenses that evening. Not a lot at all, she commented, but it was still something and she could either sit at home and do nothing or she could earn the money.

I accompanied her on her request, saying that she found the security work to be boring. En route, she told me about her other odd-jobs she took up recently. She had been house cleaning for a friend twice a week, or, as she put it, “running her household.” She had been helping out in a local factory when larger orders created demand for additional workers at the conveyor belt. She considered herself a person with special sensitivities and spiritual medium abilities and occasionally performed counselling sessions for a few regular clients. She could charge as much as 50 EUR for a session but she could not count on their frequency. She took up assembling a thousand ball-point pens at home for a stationary company. She and the girls finished it one go over the course of the evening. All this came in addition of tending the large garden and selling vegetables, yet she always had more ideas, more plans and more half-arranged future jobs.

All this was wearing her down however, she confessed over a cup of cold coffee next time I visited. She confessed that all her little odd-jobs and income making schemes she had going were making her tired and keeping her too busy to properly tend the garden. Keeping the garden in good shape during the summer months without having a water source on site proved to be a challenging task. “But this is how things are, at least for the time being. I will just have to accept this,” she added. Her mobile phone rang and I listened in on her part of the conversation. The call was from a mobile network representative calling to inform that her service would soon be disconnected. Brigita tried to negotiate a deferral. She would be able to pay her bills the following week. Could they kindly bear with her until then? But her pleas yielded no result. Their home internet access had been disconnected the day before but Brigita had no money to pay the bill – both she and Marko were broke – and now, without the use of her mobile phone she also lost a way of contacting the internet provider and trying to plea for a temporary access with them. In fact, the family could not find a single phone in the entire house either without a bar on calling or with some top-up credit left. Just as Ana, their youngest daughter, aged 15 was calling the internet company’s help centre from my phone to ask if they could postpone disrupting their service a while longer, Klemen appeared with Brigita’s summer earnings, 260 EUR in cash. Quite unexpected and as if send by god, Brigita said. Later that day, we chatted during some weeding in the garden and she recapitulated the events of the day. Things always turn out alright in the end, she said, she only needed to stop stressing out about it. The crisis came, she had no money left and she didn’t know what her next step should be, but Klemen

showed up and saved the day. “It’s difficult to be broke,” she said, “but it always works out somehow. Some money always appears eventually. You just need to trust that it will, even if it doesn’t look like it. Things always work out somehow.”

Stories from other vendors at Eva’s informal Sunday market reveal a similar uncertainty about making ends meet. Drago was made redundant in his job as a print technologist during the crisis. He was a recovered alcoholic and aged around fifty. Just a few months prior to our interview, he found his “soulmate” and moved in with her. But it was hard to muddle through, even when they joined forces. “I often ask myself, how we do it. How can we succeed in making it through with so little, yet without lacking anything substantial? I don’t understand how we manage to make do. Somehow we do.” The social benefits they both received – 260€ a month for each of them – were not enough. Debts mounted. If they found occasional alternative sources of income, creditors would be repaid first. Her partner’s father was recently diagnosed with terminal cancer and taking care of him also put strain on the couple’s budget since it left them with less time to hunt for a job. They tried to supplement the gaping hole in their budgets by different means. In season, they would forage young dandelion from the meadows and sold it to large produce wholesale companies who were offering it to restaurants in search for a domače-inspired menus or at Eva’s market. Their walnut sunscreen oil was made by soaking unripe walnuts in olive oil in the sun for several weeks until the oil turned a dark brown colour. A small bottle could fetch them 7 EUR if they were lucky to find a buyer. Drago and his partner also kept a large vegetable garden to keep their expenses low and additionally provisioned food only in the discount supermarkets.

Ivana who sold hemp tea and dried herbs at Eva’s market lost her job as an accountant during the Eurozone crisis. She was in her forties and a divorced mother of two secondary school students. She wasn’t eligible to receive basic social benefits; unemployed homeowners – she owned the 2-bedroom flat she lived in – were disqualified from the scheme. She spent around 500 EUR a month from her savings that included a small inheritance she got after the death of her father. Both were draining out. She received a monthly child allowance of 97 EUR and withheld a further 50 EUR from her teenage daughter’s state scholarship that was deposited into her account. On the inherited 3,000m^2 plot of land in south Slovenia Ivana decided to start growing industrial hemp. She was selling it as tea but the plot was still an expense,

not yet a source of income. She summed her fragmented livelihood by replying to my questions about how she managed to get by with: "Look, I find a way (*znajdem se* [infinitive *znajti se*])."

'Znajti se' is how precarity is expressed in Ljubljana. I frequently encountered the expression among my interlocutors to connote various ways of getting by and making do in a new socioeconomic environment of recession that no longer included previous forms of security and assurances. The expression was not reserved for long-term unemployed and low-income households like Brigita's. Young university graduates suddenly found themselves having to 'find a way' to earn an income, often by trying to find a job abroad. 'Znajti se' described efforts of crafting a flexible and individualised livelihood by filling out niches. Selling a local food specialty, for instance. 'Finding a way' meant finding and seizing opportunities as they appeared on one's horizon. It meant thinking on one's feet. Working with what one had. It meant navigating an uncertain and unknown terrain.

The wayfinding practices were not deployed just to cope with the ongoing demands of life but were oriented toward overcoming the volatility of material and income flows – 'ironing out the ripples.' My interlocutors used their skills in an attempt of creating a shock-absorbing cushion, to insulate themselves from the uncertainty, to weave their own safety nets. 'Finding a way' meant not only keeping one's head above the water but striving toward a position outside of the emergency; being able to manage the rhythms and flow of life, being able to wait out to act on a good opportunity, not only plunge into the most urgent one, it meant gaining a foothold. 'Znajti se' represented the meandering around the obstacles encountered on the way towards the goal of a stable livelihood. Some ways were more formal than others, some deemed more moral than others.

Precarity brought by the crisis is a movement without a rhythmic structure. Documenting life in Kinshasa as provisional in character, De Boeck describes poverty as 'syncopated' rhythms, in which the temporality of one's day is constantly punctured by time-consuming unpredictabilities demanding a response and narrowing one's options. Being unable to align with a stable cadence of life, "everything is a fight," getting onto a bus, making some cash, securing a meal (De Boeck 2015: S155). The lives consist of "everyday emergencies," others note (Millar 2014; Penglase 2009) as

days are full of 'events' that "interrupt the usual flow of things" (Žižek 2014, quoted in Knight & Stewart 2016: 5) and brings the present into an enforced and amplified conscience that Bryant calls the "uncanny present" (Bryant 2016). Precarity is marked by movement, but by movement stuck in place: "survival time, the time of struggling, drowning, holding on to the ledge, treading water, not-stopping" (Berlant 2007: 279).

Precarity can be "an economic and political condition suffered by a population or by the subjects of capitalism generally; or a way of life; […] or an existential truth about contingencies of living, namely, that there are no guarantees that the life one intends can or will be built" (Berlant 2011: 192). An existential precariousness can be understood as the vulnerability of life in general and its unavoidable dependency on the anonymous others for our own subsistence (Butler 2004).

In conditions of stuckedness and uncertainty, autonomy acquires a different meaning. It is related to a movement of flow than Instead of occupying a space off-the-grid, it is related to being able to move with the flow. It is better conceptualised as a toolbox aiding social navigation (Vigh 2009). The emphasis on autonomy – although rarely stated in those terms – draws our attention to two aspects in particular: to the particular strategies employed to manage uncertainty that involve a combination of both market and non-market activities to enhance security and mitigate risks; and to the ways in which the navigational practices are influenced by the ability to orient themselves toward the future, to plan, aspire, imagine. Brigita's initial idea of working towards household self-sufficiency had led her toward income generating activities that she did not expect. But she came to realise that her household's poverty made it necessary to collect and respond to any opportunity that appeared, while at the same time not being tied to a limited income source allowed her household to adjust to a change of circumstance.

Numerous examples describe the ingenious strategies of income generation concocted by unemployed or poor urban Russian and Eastern European citizens after 1989 (Caldwell 2004; Ledeneva 1998; Walker 1998). In another part of the world and another time, Hoggart recounted in detail the various provisioning tactics of English working class families in his classic study (Hoggart 1966). From Brazil, Millar reports of attempts to craft autonomy that she sees as "an art of living through a precarious present" among the *catadores* scavenging for recyclables in Rio de Janeiro's landfills

(Millar 2014: 48). 'Relational autonomy' here is about the "greater self-determination in her everyday labor – [ability to] to reconfigure her work rhythms, to modify the length, frequency, and intensity of her labor, and to interweave multiple dimensions of her working and non-working life" (*ibid*.) For peasants and urbanites alike, these strategies are creative investments into acquiring more leeway capable of better sustaining the volatilities of the everyday and are geared purely at accumulating resources. These accounts show that autonomy is related to and pursued for attaining security. Autonomy does not stand opposite security, as Bauman would have it; it traverses the binary of freedom and security (Bauman 2001).

4 Finding a way through the state

As I sat in Brigita's kitchen on another occasion, she told me she felt uneasy about selling fresh vegetables without a form of registration. She wanted to do it legally, she did not want any problems but she said she got lost in the legal requirements and paperwork. She got discouraged each time she thought about making her vending formal. "You're not allowed to sell *na črno* ('black', illegally), but they won't give you the opportunity to do it legally," she lamented. "If one wishes to take care of themselves in order to not cling to the public institutions, the state doesn't let them and doesn't offer any support to them. The state *wants* you to be dependent. Even though it's trying to convince the public of the opposite, the state doesn't support small businesses at all," said Brigita and firmly put a cup of coffee on her kitchen table in front of me.

Eager to help Brigita out of her predicament and learning a lot about legal frameworks of unincorporated and farm trade as my field research progressed, I came back to her after a while with news. She was right. The government was pursuing a policy that kept household activities as far away from market exchange as possible and was promoting household self-sufficiency as confined to the private sphere. Food safety and inhibiting the grey economy were the most frequently offered explanations for this restriction. Yet selling fresh vegetables grown on a plot she legally rented and had the paperwork to prove it was no different from a regular agricultural production for which bureaucratic processes really were very simple and nonrestrictive. All she needed to do was enter the plot in the land register as a rented garden by filing a copy

of her rental agreement with the local administrative office. She would not need to issue receipts or pay taxes.

However, Brigita refused to go through with it. A woman of enviable grit, who had no reservations regarding sharing her stories of hardship with me, stopped just short of crying at only just contemplating formalising her vegetable trading activity, despite its simplicity. She said bureaucrats frightened her. She never knew what to say, she was afraid she might say something wrong. “My mind just goes blank when I reach the counter,” Brigita explained. She postponed it to some indefinite time in the future and kept selling her vegetables off the books. Partly, Brigita’s fear of state bureaucracy was itself a tactic of preserving the dignity within one’s meagre and unenviable position by making a point that somebody or something else was keeping them in it. As I came to understand, Brigita’s “grumbling against the state” might not have been necessarily expressions of a desire to change the situation, but to “excuse [her] humiliation at its hands,” what Herzfeld calls ‘secular theodicy’ (Herzfeld 1993: 127). But her fear also suggested a sense of being exposed, having your name put down in public registers, and being visible to the state. This made the possibility of making a mistake too risky, as she was unsure of the exact consequences her actions could have.

The perception that government officials and bureaucratic processes would create obstacles was often unwarranted. When I accompanied my interlocutors on their ways through such outlets on other occasions, or sat with them at meetings with inspectors or other public officials, they were often genuinely surprised at the helpfulness and friendliness of the public service and at the ease of red tape procedures. Some of them later commented that their initial anxiety had been baseless. The officials helped out in one-on-one meetings with their potential subjects to advise them on how to follow the law accurately and effectively. They were told the inspectors issued warnings and recommendations for corrective action with a generous deadline. Officials in charge of receiving formal applications sometimes exhibited attitudes of rebelliousness against the officials higher up or politicians aiming for popularity by legislating unreasonable things. The state knew how to put on a carrot-showing face (see previous chapter for a discussion).

Despite the friendly administrative behaviour, the anxieties about doing something wrong regarding paperwork or independent business conduct were endemic among

the small informal producers. Dunja might clear up as to why. I met Dunja through purchasing one of her herbal ointments. She made them at home from a variety of herbs with healing properties she foraged herself and she was selling illicitly locally and to acquaintances, by going door to door through offices and shops. She enjoyed both. She did not enjoy doing it without a proper registration, yet the options to do otherwise were limited. “Bloody idiots,” she announced on the verge of tears while we were sitting in a café, sipping a *kava z mlekom* (espresso with cold milk), surrounded by filled out and blank forms and instructions on legal procedures for her to read. Dunja was referring to ‘them,’ to the state. She had just completed a half-day run through various government offices in a pursuit of a form of registration for her herbal venture and asked me to accompany her. She registered for ‘supplementary personal work’ (*osebno dopolnilno delo*), a recent form the government proposed to reduce informal work and to collect taxes from simple jobs like babysitting, tutoring and house cleaning. This registration option wasn’t ideal for Dunja – the supplementary work registration stipulated that one could trade in objects of traditional crafts made by one’s own labour, but that these should exclude edible foods and products of personal care. Selling forest fruit and herbs was an exception but only when they were fresh and not processed. This including even simple drying of the plants. Under this scheme Dunja wasn’t technically allowed to sell herbal cosmetics but this was the only viable option – forms of business incorporation were too costly for her and thus too risky. But regulations could be bent a little. A loophole some small producers made use of was to remove from their food or cosmetic products labels that would indicate them as such and simply call them something else. Since she was allowed to sell products for the home, she could claim her ointments were scented candles for example. This would work for Dunja, but since the repercussions of having the authorities found out about the mislabelled products were not known, Dunja felt uneasy. She also felt tired. The registration itself was very straightforward and took only a few minutes and almost no preparation of paperwork in advance, but it created new demands for office visits. The Tax office needed to be made aware of the new registration, insurance needed to be established. Receipt forms needed to be bought. The health insurance form was the one thing left for her to fill out and send off to an address given in the office we visited last.

Instead of celebrating a successful achievement of battling through bureaucratic hoops, Dunja was visibly overwhelmed and stressed when we sat down for coffee.

When asked what it was in particular that distressed her so, she replied: “Damn, this is serious now.” She elaborated that she now realised that when she had been selling the cosmetics informally, it had been as a joke, as a role play. But this had now been over; now her name appeared in public registers and she felt she was monitored, yet she still could not sell her products completely within the legal frame. She disliked paperwork; filling out forms made her uncomfortable. While she was struggling to fill out the last form when there was still help around (she meant me), she shook her head: “I am no good with *podjetništvo* (entrepreneurship). I am no good with these papers.” I tried consoling her by reminding her of an event she told me about. Dunja had been pulled over by a police officer for speeding but managed to persuade him with a skilful sales pitch to reduce the fine in exchange for a couple of her herbal creams suitable to the particular ailments of the police officer and his wife. Entrepreneurship wasn’t filling out forms, she was already very enterprising, I tried. But Dunja stayed despondent.

What Dunja seemed to express with “this is serious” was that whereas before her income-generating practices were tailored to fit her needs, now they needed to fit the categories, however loose, prescribed by the authorities. Ljubljanan informal food producers were aware of this and often expressed resentment at having to translate their life situations into a myriad of combinations of bureaucratic procedures and jurisdictions regarding their work experience, marital status, dependents, income, assets, health and other personal characteristics. The fear was that the valuable leeway of ‘finding a way,’ crafted ever so intricately so that one could keep their head above water, would be lost with formalising their livelihood. If the verb *vlagati* in its third meaning, that of filing an application to initiate an administrative procedure, aptly describes their administrative errands, it shows these in direct opposition to the *vlagati* practices described above, those of pickling, preserving and investing foods as well as opportunities.

To insulate themselves against the uncertainties emanating from the state, the unemployed Ljubljanans aimed to gain an advantage by collecting as much information about the legal procedures and formal details as they could. Akin to preparing ozimnica, they were pickling and preserving information: figures, amounts paid, dates, deadlines, office room numbers, articles of law, formal registration details, tax proportions. Concrete pieces of information were the most valuable. On several

occasions I found that my interlocutors were far more knowledgeable about the minute and practical details of various legal concepts and entities than the officials that were supposed to be informing them. Ivana was particularly worried about the possible persecution or penalties by the state and spent a lot of time studying relevant legislation and administrative procedures. She had filed an application for all forms of registration for her industrial hemp growing practice available to her, including announcing of her undertaking with the local police department. "Just so they won't think I'm growing something else." But she confessed that she still did not feel safe and did not understand completely what she was supposed to do to abide by the law. She wished for advice on "where to turn to, what to do to even get to understand the basics." According to Ivana, to "fidget with savings, or with moonlighting or with some weird types of formal registration" was because there was no one who would help the unemployed entrepreneurs with such guidance.

It is hard to communicate the creativity and tenaciousness involved in making ends meet by any other term than 'znajti se.' The derivative adjective *iznajdljiv* describes a resourceful, creative and inventive person. However, the expression carries a historical baggage which complicates its use. I learned about its negative meaning while explaining to an acquaintance about the various tactics of 'finding a way' that I encountered during my research. Jože wasn't at all persuaded by my fascination. "You know, it is because of the people that are 'finding ways' that there are so many problems in Slovenia today." For Jože, 'finding a way' stood for finding legal loopholes for tax evasion or other means of siphoning public resources. He saw no difference between the 'znajti se' practices of political and economic elites whose stories of corruption scandals were filling daily newspapers and the inventiveness of precarious migrant workers who sought to make their daily struggles more bearable. 'Finding a way' connoted tricking the system for personal gain and in Jože's view, this was morally unacceptable regardless of the scope. 'Znajti se' activity suggested a suspicious and less legal activity. As I later realised, this meaning of 'znajti se' was quite commonly held. The creativity and resilience of people, so celebrated by anthropologists and neoliberal advocates alike (for a critical discussion on the topic of agency and the parallels between the two see Gershon 2011), when cast in the language of 'finding a way,' was not seen romantically in Ljubljana. For example, Tomaž, manager of a soup kitchen sponsored by a major service club – and a manager in a successful company – complained that most of their guests were not very poor or

starving but they did nothing to improve their conditions of poverty, so that they could remain entitled to social benefits, social housing and free meals in soup kitchens. "People are very quick to 'find a way,' they are fast at calculating how to profit from the state, to keep their *sociala* (social benefits)," said the wealthy manager. "Do you think it's fair that others have less because of them?"

Needing to find a way fell out of favour with Ljubljanans for being too reminiscent of the socialist necessity of bending the rules in one's favour and appropriating common wealth for one's personal gain. With Slovenes' post-independence stance in firm favour of the 'rule of law,' finding a way was more akin to getting ahead at the expense of others than acting out of necessity. In Second Yugoslavia, the murky personal activities of gaming the system would be justified by the person engaged in them with the saying: "Tito said 'find a way,' comrade!" (In Croatian *Tito je reko, snađi se, druže*) and a shrug of the shoulders to imply one wasn't really doing anything morally questionable. An anecdote, shared by children in socialist times and remembered by adults today, had Tito uttering these words during WWII. Tito had allegedly replaced a torn shoelace from his boot by a worm and declared it was important to 'find a way' within the given circumstances. While the worm story only survived as a joke rather than a parable of creativity and thrift, every Yugoslav seemed to know the expression of 'finding a way' and used it. Dunn described a comparable Polish notion of 'cleverness' (*spryta*), used to describe circumventing regulations and accompanied by a "snaking gesture with their hands" (Dunn 2005: 188) when explaining its applications.

Equating semi-legal with semi-moral, Ljubljanans' claims of fairness and equality put the creativity and quick thinking practices on equal standing with disruptions, no matter how ingenious or urgent they were. Not only the affluent like Tomaž, but the underprivileged like Brigita – perhaps especially the underprivileged like Brigita – were fiercely opposing accounts of any individualised appropriations of opportunities, despite having to employ them herself.

Brigita once proclaimed herself an "opponent of neoliberalism" in our regular long chats on her porch. Asked to explain what neoliberalism was by her 15-year old, who was present on the porch, she told her that it was related to the free market. This in itself was a positive thing, said Brigita, but in Slovenia the situation was different than

in other countries. In Slovenia, she elaborated, the remaining elements of socialism allowed people in influential positions to be corrupt, to cheat and to appropriate public money. She started the discussion as an opponent of neoliberalism but ended it advocating the free market, deregulation and privatisation policies, which she understood as protection from the symptomatic unlawful embezzlement of public funds and corruption. This was a very popular perspective, held widely by Slovenians, and has helped to ease in the introduction of neoliberal policies with their portrayal of being fairer and better adhering to the rule of law. While those impoverished by the austerity measures introduced during the Eurozone crisis learned that neoliberalism was a 'bad word' from numerous NGOs and social movements and proclaimed their opposition to the policies associated with it, they nevertheless found themselves supporting it for its alleged fairness.

One of my interlocutors summed up the difference between the 'znajti se' of the previous era and current precarious conditions so: "We used to search for loopholes to avoid paying taxes [in socialism], today we do it so that we can function normally." When this distinction in not made explicit, those presently caught up in the scope of 'znajti se' find themselves having to justify the moral values of their practices. Without a clear distinction present in the social welfare policies, 'znajti se' can conversely become a justification for subjecting impoverished citizens to further precarity, as well as seen as its description.

5 Conclusion

If food canning in Georgia and annual ozimnica practice in Yugoslavia could be approached as both expressing and structuring a particular socialist mode of citizenship, what can be made of the current samooskrba practices in Ljubljana? This chapter has demonstrated that these are productive locations for observing how precarity embodies human practices and strategies of subsistence, yet also used to construe novel categories of social exclusion and discrimination by the state.

7

Cultivating hope:
Food self-provisioning as future-making

The month most generous to Ljubljanan gardeners is July. Come July, the vegetables bringing the most weight, substance, taste and satisfaction, are ready for harvest. The tomato plants on the vegetable plot that I had been renting during the 2015 growing season held plump and heavy fruits that July. So bountiful was the yield that the plants kept capitulating under the weight of the tomatoes and needed to be tied and tied again to the supporting cane. Potatoes were also promising abundance and were ready for harvest. With my hoe and my fingers I carefully dug the soil of a small garden bed and to my sheer delight, kept stumbling upon exceptionally large spuds. A ten-kilogram bag was laying at my feet in no time. My eighty-year old neighbour Štefka, with forty years of vegetable gardening under her belt, stopped by my garden on her way home as she often did to comment and to dispense with gardening tips for beginners like myself. She too seemed impressed with the rich harvest of my plot and inquired about the specific cultivars that I had planted. She commended me on how pretty my garden looked and how well I was doing, considering I had no previous experience with growing vegetables. I felt proud as a peacock. Not long after she had left, my other neighbour Đurđa passed by my garden from the opposite direction with a grin on her face and asking to survey my miraculous vegetable crop. She had run into Štefka on her way over and Štefka had been bemoaning the injustice of my luck to grow such large potatoes, given that I had only just started cultivating. I was taken aback by this sudden change in Štefka's attitude but Đurđa was amused and, still grinning, told me not get upset over a little gardener's envy. The following day, Štefka too decided that the time has come to harvest her potatoes and had solicited the help of her husband and son to dig them up. Suddenly, her head peaked out of the thick green curtain of beans that enclosed her plot. "Hey, girl, come over here, come see!" she called out excitedly and pointed to a pile of spuds even larger than my own and that had so beset her with resentment the day before. In all her time on the plot, she had never seen such

a good potato season, she declared. The boot of their family car was quickly filling up with cratefuls of fresh potatoes, dirty with black moist soil. When their work was done, they counted six twenty-kilogram crates and drove home happy. Happy that they too were lucky this year.

This chapter will argue that considering such sentiments is crucial for understanding why gardening is important during economic crises and that the key to samooskrba practices in the gardens is the work process and its relation to a sense of growth. To argue against the theory of the Primitive Economic Man who pursued only self-interest with a minimum of effort, Malinowski in the Argonauts argued of the Trobrianders' gardening practices that "work is not carried out on the principle of least effort. On the contrary, much time and energy is spent on wholly unnecessary effort, that is, from a utilitarian point of view. Again, work and effort, instead of being merely a means to an end, are, in a way an end in themselves" (1922: 60). In a nod to Malinowski, I suggest that in debates on urban gardening, particularly in postsocialist areas or crisis situations, little attention was given to how work constitutes an end in itself. The practice was often explained with the reasons growers gave for why they were gardening, with little space for sentiments.

This chapter is about Ljubljanans who produce significant amounts of vegetables, yet hardly ever use the term samooskrba explicitly to describe their actions. I question and examine the relationship between self-reliance and plot gardening from the perspective of the growers themselves. I suggest that rather than growing a useful nourishing substance or a currency for social exchange, the gardens help to grow 'useful' humans. In participating in a human-plant collaboration with an orientation towards work, gardeners regained a sense of being useful members – family members by growing produce, members of society by utilising their idle time engaged in productive work, and human beings using work as a way of hoping. I interpret the emphasis on work I encountered in the garden sites as a way averting the negative consequences of crises by reconnecting to growth via another structure and temporal order, that of seasonality and demands of the garden.

1 Defining utility on postsocialist gardens

As my fieldwork was coming to its end, Ljubljanans I talked to about vegetable gardening would sometimes ask me about what I have learned from my research. “So tell me, what have you concluded, is it worth it?” they would ask, expecting a definite and educated answer from a doctoral student who had spent a year observing vegetable cultivation. They were interested in learning whether the data I collected indicated that Ljubljanans were tending plot gardens to save on buying produce and so to lower their household expenses. Did I believe the reasons to be mostly economic? Did Ljubljanans garden for leisure or to procure healthy and safe produce?

A similar division between economic reasons and other concerns has also characterised academic approaches to European phenomena of urban vegetable cultivation and have plotted them onto a division between East and West.

In the formerly socialist part of Europe and former Soviet Union where plot cultivation is widely spread, researchers have been more interested in the economic reasons underlying gardening and have understood the practice as corresponding with high levels of poverty in these countries. Scholars concluded that urban garden plots, along with other forms of household food production like keeping small farm animals, foraging in the forests and preserving for the winter, made economic sense to people too poor to participate in the market (Rose & Tikhomirov 1993; Seeth et al. 1998). In the affluent West however, allotment cultivation and community gardens were more likely approached as a long and proud national tradition of embeddedness in the local landscape (Thorpe 1975; Tilley 2008); as a leisure activity to explore relations to nature and alternative constructions of the self (Acton 2011; Bhatti & Church 2001; Degnen 2009; Delind 2006); or as a form of food activism (DeLind 1999, 2011b; Goodman et al. 2011). Research by Alber and Kohler encapsulates this rift when they interpret the large difference in levels of food self-provisioning between Eastern and Western European households, observed in survey data, as result of Eastern impoverished economies and Western affluence (Alber & Kohler 2008). This separation echoes Miller’s suggestion about consumer provisioning, where care for one’s family and ethical concerns for ‘distant others’ are mutually exclusive (Miller 1999).

Critics of this perspective call attention to several issues in this approach when they outline their evidence of the contrary. In Kunming, China, Klein's interlocutors expressed concerns about the health of their food regardless of their income and social status (Klein 2013). Explicitly engaging with Alber and Kohler, Jehlička and Smith demonstrated that food self-provisioning in the urban Czech Republic constitutes a sustainable hobby: regardless of income, Czechs stated that healthy and fresh produce was their main reason for growing it themselves (Jehlička & Smith 2011; Smith & Jehlička 2013). From a different perspective, factors other than levels of national income could help explain the difference, such as an attachment to the land, a result of relatively late urbanisation process in Central and Eastern Europe and the distinct land tenure regimes (Stenning et al. 2011). In addition, several authors point out that household food cultivation is not, in fact, 'worth it.' It requires skills, tools, practice and time – all more likely to be available to the better off (Caldwell 2011; Clarke et al. 2000; Jehlička & Smith 2011; Ries 2009).

Contesting claims of direct connection between income levels needed for market participation and urban plot gardening may seem to run against the grain of historical and contemporary evidence on the broad social movements of household cultivation in response to acute food shortages, such as Victory gardens in the US (Lawson 2005), the Dig for Victory campaign in Britain (DeSilvey 2003; Ginn 2012) and the spread of organic urban agriculture in autarkic Cuba (Premat 2012; Rosset 1998). Yet anthropologists and geographers of postsocialism note that the varied conditions animating food self-provisioning practices share a basis with these examples. The rapid socio-economic changes after socialist regimes had collapsed brought a political and economic crisis. In observing the circumstances in Russia, Lindquist succinctly articulated it as a wide sense that a country has turned from a predictable yet repressive 'prison' to a 'jungle' of unknown terrain (Lindquist 2006). Ethnographers' findings coalesce around understanding self-reliance in this period as response to the uncertainty over the future and to the lack of trust in governments and new social elites. In such circumstances, Caldwell asserted, plotholders "rely on the earth to compensate for what the state cannot provide, especially in times of political and economic uncertainty" (Caldwell 2004: 126).

In Ukraine, impoverished growers began selling homegrown produce to earn an income (Round et al. 2010). As an element of safety nets in Hungary, Slovakia and

Ukraine, garden produce was also used in networks of informal exchange to strengthen social bonds and access mutual aid (Acheson 2007; Czegledy 2002; Round et al. 2010), in a practice similar to the 'economy of jars' observed in communist Bulgaria in the 1980s (Smollett 1989). Through sharpening such survival skills, Russians felt better prepared should an acute crisis present itself (Ries 2009). Growing vegetables in Russia and Belarus restored a sense of dignity through meaningful production and pride over fruits of own labour in times of scant labour opportunities (Hervouet 2003; Zavisca 2003).

Interpreting the widespread phenomena of cultivating urban land in postsocialist Europe as responses to a perceived crisis was a part of a broader project in anthropology of postsocialism that strived to demonstrate that the myriad of self-reliance practices persisting well into the 1990s and 2000s were not expressions of citizens' supposed rootedness in rural traditions to be eradicated by harsh market liberalisation policies, but were responses to the disastrous consequences that these had (Bridger & Pine 1998; Leonard & Kaneff 2002; Mandel & Humphrey 2002).

I suggest that this observation doesn't exhaust the way in which urban gardening makes sense to its practitioners. I suggest that in Ljubljana, plot gardening is likewise a respond to a crisis, but the way in which it is a response arises from other aspects.

While the studies of postsocialist gardening challenge ascribing a narrow economic sense to the practice and have raised awareness of the alternatives in which it was 'worth it', they have tended to approach the practice as a means to an end and have focused on the importance of produce. I challenge this suggestion with shifting the focus onto the centrality of the process of gardening. Furthermore, existing research has tended to rely on accounts of urban vegetable growers as the basis for interpretations. Investigations into the practice have typically sought to elucidate the motives and preferences of individual gardeners for this type of cultivation and have rarely engaged in the method of apprenticeship to acquire personal and bodily experience of gardening.

Some Ljubljanans are able to articulate their motivation for gardening in detail. I heard Irena's story on three or four separate occasions – talking to her in an interview, listening to her presenting to conference participants and watching her public lecture

on YouTube. It always contained the same narrative. Irena, a fifty-year old successful freelance graphic designer and mother to a teenager, told her audience how she was shocked to discover that her favourite loaf of bread from the supermarket – a fresh and healthy-looking seeded rye and wheat – comprised over forty ingredients. The revelation that supermarket-bought food could not be trusted clashed with her desire to provide wholesome and healthy food for her family. She decided to obtain a vegetable patch in Ljubljana centre and start growing organic produce herself. As her skills and enthusiasm grew, the number of gardens she tended increased to seven, and she began to view and promote this endeavour as a part of wider conscious and consistent lifestyle choices people could make towards greater social and environmental justice.

Peter, an 86-year-old retired manual worker who had been gardening on the outskirts close to a large road was unable to give an elaborate account of how he started. When asked why he has taken up gardening, he said: "We owned some land back home, my wife's family also had some, so when we moved here [to Ljubljana], and we started working on land too… Hard to say why." Asked next if he was able to save some money of if the produce he grew himself was better than what he could buy in the supermarket, Peter said: "It might be better, it might not be, who knows. The soil is quite contaminated in this area. I can't say that I save anything. Potatoes are much cheaper in the supermarket, lettuce is also very cheap… Some people also grow grapes. That might be worth it." Harvest is sometimes lost to pests. "We got a lot of *strune* [garden chafer] and voles in the soil on this side of the city… And then there are also the 'domestic voles,'" he added and elaborated that thieves sometimes disappeared entire crops overnight.

Yet despite these drawbacks or lack of an explicitly stated motivation for his activity, he has been dedicatedly cultivating his plot for almost forty years. The lack clarity and definition, I came to believe, was in fact the most telling part of Peter's response. It suggested that Peter felt no need to put reasons into words and so that the answers could not always be obtained by seeking explicit reasons. The ambiguity of his answers also suggested that acquiring garden produce wasn't the (sole) focus of his cultivation. I wasn't yet asking the right questions.

Learning how to garden myself has helped me to understand Peter and has allowed me to challenge existing interpretations of this practice. I acquired a small vegetable patch of around 65m^2 with an established gardening organisation in early 2015 and grew vegetables for the duration of the main growing season, from March to late October 2015. Although I consulted gardening manuals, magazine articles and internet advice, my main source of knowledge were my neighbours on the plot garden site. I sowed what they sowed, planted what they planted, watered and fertilised, weeded, dug, covered, uncovered and composted what and when they did. I grew lettuce, radish, onions, peas, beans, cabbage, kale, kohlrabi, cauliflower, potatoes, tomatoes, cucumbers, courgette, squash, strawberries, herbs and sunflowers. And while not all crops were a success, in the height of growing season, from May to September, the garden provided sufficient produce for a two-person household. I also both donated my gluts and received other surpluses from my fellows.

An apprenticeship in keeping a plot garden has helped me in understanding an intriguing uniformity of responses that some more elaborate growers gave as rationale for gardening. Plotholders of very different backgrounds all listed a very similar array of gardening benefits as their personal motive. "You save a bit of money, you get some fresh vegetables, some fresh air and some exercise… And you make some good company," summarised one of them. Such responses matched the ones recorded by empirical studies (Jamnik et al. 2009; Smith & Jehlička 2013). However, growers of whom I learned were not interested in recreation much, insisted that exercise was why they gardened. Growers not in any financial need still listed the ability to save some money as one of their motives. After I started gardening, I realised that these were not articulations of motives for deciding to garden, but rather the results, the side effects, of gardening. They were rationalisations of an activity that was – apart from the choice of crops – almost entirely dictated by the requirements of the garden.

One of the less emphasised characteristics of household vegetable gardening in the literature – less accessible due to a lack of ethnographers' bodily engagement with the practice (although see Caldwell 2011) – is the time-consuming nature of the activity. While working days started earlier in the past and allowed tending one's plot in the afternoons, such luxury is less frequent nowadays. Seasoned plotholders shared numerous stories of young families or couples starting afresh in spring time, making plans about what they will grow, buying expensive seedlings, only to find themselves

overwhelmed with weeds and the need for constant watering come summer and then deciding to leave the plot. In Ljubljana, the amount of work required increases significantly in the dry, hot and fertile summer months and failing to keep up with the work only creates more work and demands more time in the future. As my fieldwork was split between this site and several others, I often found myself pressed for time. The garden had own demands that couldn't wait. I had to juggle between scheduling interviews or meetings and having to tend the plot. Half a day too late and the courgettes would have grown too large. A few days of neglect and the weeds spread out, the seedlings died. Absence of weeding for a week or two resulted in overgrowth of unintended species that was so extensive that I had trouble recognising my own garden. The daily requirements of watering and weeding, the seasonal requirements of sowing and harvesting all need to come at the right time and not where is time to spare. Plot cultivation reorganised one's day substantially and what a gardener is left with to report, are the benefits that are really *appointed* to them, rather than being chosen by them.

In Ljubljana, one is either dedicated to their plot or finds it difficult to keep one at all. There is little wiggle room. The garden does not accommodate other demands, the garden does not wait. Vegetable growing ties one strongly to a sequence of tasks, seasonal rhythms and to a place. Suggestions that growers regain a sense of control by making the decisions while working on the plot and that this may account for the popularity of plot gardening under socialist repression (Haukanes & Pine 2004) had little resonance for my fellows and me. Successfully keeping a garden necessitated a practitioner with lots of free time – a pensioner or an unemployed grower.

2 The Gardening Association, a socialist enclave

Ljubljana Ring Road cuts through the land featuring factories and offices in the industrial zone on one side and farmland hosting a municipal water supply station on the other and makes them appear further apart. Hundreds of plot gardens pad the sides of the noisy road. Plotholders here ordinarily live nearby, within thirty minutes walking distance. Many come on foot or by bicycles, some drive their cars. They visit daily, either in the morning or early evenings before dark. If the weather is nice, people tend to spend their days there too. The majority of plotholders tends to be above

pension age. The gardens are managed by the Gardening Association (the GA, a pseudonym), a rare instance of organised urban gardening that developed during the socialist period to have survived to present day. A true socialist enclave; cultivating the values and forms of association that structured work and social life in Second Yugoslavia but that now came to line up with the plotholders' desires to mitigate the uncertainties of kriza.

Entering the GA office to apply for membership felt like time travel. Tall fibreboard cupboards, binders, crocheted dollies on a large desk laminated in plastic, a large potted *monstera* plant in the corner, brown ceramic floor tiling, a typewriter. For one hour each week, the president of the GA organisation and his secretary were seated behind the large desk and available to members' queries and requests, by phone and in person. The requests prompted folder to be pulled out of the cupboard, documents flipped through, maps consulted, tasks dictated and tasks accepted with "of course, president." The receipts, invitations and other member mail on half-page printouts was sent in cheap blue envelopes with addresses on them written by hand.

The GA was renting land from landowners in the area and offered plots, around 120m^2 in size and with running water access, to its 350 members for an affordable annual fee, payable in a single or in two instalments. The organisation kept and enforced strict rules for gardening conduct and had an elaborate organisational structure with an executive and disciplinary boards to which any member could be elected in the annual assemblies. Membership included invitations to an occasional lecture.

In early spring of 2015 I attended a general assembly with about a fifth of all members to discuss the impacts of recent administrative changes on the conduct of the GA. The majority of the plots managed by the association was located in the sensitive area of ground water protection, subject to legal land use restrictions. A national decree in fact prohibited plot gardening in a large area under GA plots but the legislation has not yet ever been enforced. From time to time, a public official would come to inform the organisation that it could proceed undisturbed for the time being but that in the near future the situation would most likely change. This uncertainty went on for several years and had become something the organisation learned to rely on as a guarantee that in fact nothing would change. But now the board had reasons to believe that something could, very soon. There were news of fines issued to farmers cultivating in

water protection area in West Slovenia. The organisation had already been prescribing organic gardening and outlined in its house rules each member received with registration. But the executive board felt that the rules and techniques need restating to strengthen the members' adherence to them. "None of the inspectors had yet decided to bring the actual condition in line with the Directive," Ivan told the audience, "and we are grateful for it and hope it could stay this way." 85-year old Ivan was a retired CEO and the president of the GA. He had hopes that their diligent organic gardening policy might dissuade the authorities to intervene. The executive board was also prepared if official encounters could not be avoided. The president explained:

> "[The board had] formulated arguments to help us to continue with our work despite the strict regulations, but conscious of them. We had been gardening here for more than thirty years and neither the inspectorate nor the landowners had chased us off during this time. It could happen, but if we are smart, it won't. […] What is more, Slovenia imports 60% of its food, farmers are abandoning farming, farmland is being overgrown with woodlands. This is, say what you like, absurd. Everybody, on the regional level, the national state level and in the wider society is encouraging the *so-called samooskrba* and expressing a position that Slovenia should be headed towards producing as much food as possible. Our plot gardening is one of activities that contribute to samooskrba and we can justify our activity with this claim."

Food production was an important emphasis in the GA conduct and the executive board hoped the authorities would recognise how well the activities of the GA aligned with the national policy of samooskrba. The membership rules stipulated that plots be cultivated by April each new growing season. Erecting garden sheds or canopies for resting and 'loud socialising on the plot' were not allowed. Plots needed to be kept tidy and weed-free. Signs of the opposite were evidence of not fully utilising the productive potential of the garden in the eyes of the board and signalled a lack of true dedication. This also applied to plotholders who cultivated too many easy to handle decorative or fruit plants instead of using the fertile soil to grow vegetables.

Further comments from board members confirmed that the GA rules of conduct were modelled on what its leaders believed constituted proper gardening. The GA president once commented in a private interview that in the last few years, the organization began to receive applications from young people and families with a "pronounced need to supplement their low incomes by producing a portion by themselves." The GA

was happy to help out, but impoverished households often failed to make good use of the plot, he said. He recalled with regret a young Macedonian couple and their four children who rented a plot with a donation from the Red Cross organization, but soon ended up using the plot for leisure and not cultivating much food, leaving the fertile soil to weeds. Along with young growers, the board members expected GA members from "other places" and of "other nationalities" (within the former Yugoslavia) to most likely contravene the GA order. Echoing the impetuous nationalism observed by Klein on a garden site in Sweden (Klein 1993), a board member asserted: "Young people and people of other nationalities often just want to party and barbecue. We are aiming to keep alive a primary, primordial desire to garden – the procurement of quality produce along with a normal degree of socializing. But we've been having lots of trouble with taming members so that the plots are all cultivated."

Most of the GA executive and disciplinary board members had been in the organization longer than regular members and many among them have been the founding members of the organization in 1985. They formed a small elite interested in keeping the organization running in line with their visions. They had little opposition – plotholders normally did not share an interest in sitting on disciplinary committees, organising meetings, preparing annual reports and similar tasks. Their stern rules confess a high valuation of work and a belief that hard work makes a person.

Most of the GA long-term members have been employees of Litostroj, a former large factory conglomerate located next to the GA plot gardens that was shut down after Slovenia gained independence. The Litostroj factory (short for *Li*varna in *to*varna *stroj*ev, Foundry and Machine Factory) was established right after WWII and produced heavy machinery to reconstruct and improve the Yugoslav electrical grid. The complex was built on pristine farm fields away from the city centre and envisioned as a city within a city capable of covering all of workers' basic needs. Located next to the factory were a large residential estate, a health centre, post office, a factory canteen and schools to train machinists and engineers. It was the largest such factory in Yugoslavia and considered a marvel of socialist urban planning (Mrevlje 2017). Peasants from all Yugoslavia came to work as industrial labourers. To supply the factory canteen, workers cultivated the surrounding farmland. This activity gradually acquired the form of plot gardens as they appear today which continued to be managed by the factory. With morning shifts running between 6am and 2pm, and the midday

meal provided in the canteen, workers' afternoon were relatively free and gardening was a popular way of filling that time. As a form of relaxation, plot gardening also appealed to managers. Anton, an octogenarian board member and a former president of the GA, recalled his first garden plot at the side of the road adjacent to the Litostroj main hall. He had hoped gardening would offer him a break from work but since he was the CEO of a Litostroj production branch, the workers passing by would stop to lament the poor working conditions or low salaries. He disliked it. As a founding member of the GA when Listostroj plot gardening was formalised into a civil society organisation in 1985 he asked to be relocated to a quieter and less exposed spot.

Anton came to Ljubljana as a young farmer's son, to be schooled as a machinist and employed by the factory. He was smart and hard-working and continued his education to middle school and university for a degree in engineering, funded by the factory. After the degree and a year of conscription in the Yugoslav army, he began teaching in the technical middle school and was later promoted to headmaster. After a decade, he went to work as the *direktor* (CEO) of one of the production branches in Litostroj where he worked until the harsh privatisation following the end of socialism restructured the company, cut down jobs and caused the factory's eventual collapse. Ivan, the current president and a plotholder for 32 years, had a similar story to tell. "From trainee to *direktor*," he began describing his 45-year long career with Litostroj. Being plucked from the countryside, he had also started in the vocational school and afterwards steadily progressed throughout his career by managing increasingly prominent departments and retiring as the CEO of one of Litostroj companies.

For the leading members of the GA with similar biographies, socialism worked well. Their lives were housed within a single corporation that ensured economic security and rewarded hard work and loyalty with steady social mobility. They were respected at work and – as Anton suggested – in the afternoons spent on the plot, even though this part may not had been welcomed by them. They found Slovenian capitalism into which they retired significantly less favourable. Their incomes decreased. A university degree added no particular weight to their social esteem, as it ceased to count as a guarantee of a good employment. Litostroj's new management was accused of corruption. In the new market economy, growth and personal mobility appeared to no longer be fueled by workers' efforts and labour productivity but have become embedded in profits created by the new elites in fraudulent ways. The board members

were beneficiaries of the old system but found themselves excluded from growth in the new regime. They remained loyal to the company and to the political system that enabled their career accomplishments.

The plot gardening organization was a space where these once accomplished individuals could still elicit respect from other members. Where they could still be addressed with their professional title *inženir* instead of Mr to express reverence, even if such university graduate titles were deemed antiquated in times of high graduate unemployment. Where they could remain leaders of workers (members) and where the values they held dear could continue to guide the members' conduct. To them, vegetable production was a respectable activity. It demanded dedicated and honest work and it allowed one to cultivate virtues that the leading members believed had faded: a sense that improvement, prosperity and self-fulfillment result from working hard toward a goal. With vegetables and work, these influential women and men created a socialist enclave, impenetrable by contemporary market values and conduct, the sped-up rhythms of urban time; impenetrable by modernity.

Not all gardener members were satisfied with the way the organization was run, many believed that it had been too limiting. Yet these rigid structures and socialist bureaucracy, led by stern women and men, not tolerant of alternative ways of gardening and spending leisure, could also foster hope, stability and a sense that lives are leading somewhere for Ljubljanans that felt the consequences of the crisis most profoundly. As I show over the next two sections, the meanings of work for the elite plotholders aligned with those of ordinary members.

3 Ending up in a garden

I began working on my plot garden in early March. As I introduced myself to my neighbours, I explained that I was conducting an ethnography and that cultivating a plot of my own was part of my research methodology. I found it difficult to get my point across. My neighbours, all pensioners with many years of gardening experience, were delighted to see that a person of the younger generation showed interest in horticulture, yet also readily assumed that I was in some sort of a rut and that I was currently unemployed or doing low-paid casual work. When Štefka asked me what I

did for a living, my reply that I was a doctoral student conducting research offered her little orientation. She inquired if this 'research' was part of working casually through the student work scheme (*"prek študenta"*) and added that a relative of hers who was nearing her forties was also formally still enrolled as a student in order to get work. Finding a permanent full-time job was becoming scarce as employers began looking for ways of avoiding paying income tax. "There are very difficult times for young people nowadays," Štefka said. Her son, also in his fourties, was currently seeking employment. My other neighbours' son in his mid-thirties was also out of work. Over the course of the season I had spoken to many more retired plotholders, who shared the view that employment and life in general was more difficult for the younger generation than it had been for their own. Their conclusion suggested that there was a particular pattern in the biographies that had led people onto the plots.

While I was chatting with my neighbour Đurđa one day on the plot, a large expensive car drove in our view and parked by the side of our cluster of plot gardens. "Look at that. I wonder why he should need a garden," Đurđa hissed. Driving an expensive looking car to the plot rather than arriving by bicycle or on foot risked disapproving looks from one's plot neighbours, as did an appearance of being well-off. But low income was not the only factor that justified keeping a garden in the eyes of one's neighbour.

As the inquisitive looks of accompanied all new plot arrivals, the garden site gossip attempted to discover what brought them to work on the land. Was the newcomer a lonely widower? A spinster? Did they have a good relationship with their children? Was she a drunk? Did he argue a lot with his spouse at home? Đurđa was particularly good with such speculations. She was a sharp observer and interested in the stories of her fellows. As I came to gradually understand through listening in on the garden site whispers, being compelled to seek the haven of a plot garden was closely related to a particular life situation that one found themselves in. One 'ended up' on a garden because one needed it, not merely because one enjoyed gardening.

Đurđa got her garden in 2008. She told me it had saved her life. She left the Macedonian countryside where she was herding sheep and came to Ljubljana with her husband in 1970s to find a job. She was 27 years old. All of her possessions were in a single carrier bag and she had money enough for two month's rent. "Young people

nowadays are so worried all the time how things will work out and how they will be able to make a family when there is no money and no security. But I came to Slovenia with only a plastic bag! I didn't even have a *lična karta* [*osebna izkaznica* in Slovene, national ID card]. I had never even been to the doctor before I got here. My mother made home remedies when we needed something." Blagoj, the husband, got a manual job but the first years in Ljubljana were very trying for them. Đurđa gave birth to a son and 3 years later, a daughter. Their rented room was cold and damp. The children often caught colds. Once, after having to pay an unforeseen expense, the couple ran out of money, there was not any even to buy food. But Blagoj got a better job, which also offered to move them to a bigger and warmer flat through their housing scheme. Đurđa got a job at factory assembly line. The family continued to live thriftily but Đurđa worked on weekends and afternoons to save as much money as they could. Things began to improve. After 1991, they applied for Slovene citizenship. They gained in the privatisation process. They were able to buy the flat they were living in cheaply under the Housing Act.[21] They invested their citizen ownership certificates[22] in fast-growing Slovenian businesses and by selling the shares at a good moment years later, earned some money to help their children toward buying homes of their own (the biggest share came from loans however). Blagoj expanded their smallish flat by converting the balcony into a room adjoining the living room.

The company where Đurđa worked as a manual labourer went bankrupt in 2005 and workers were made redundant. Đurđa was in her mid-fifties; the prospects of finding another job were slim, yet she wasn't old enough to retire. She spent her unemployed days at home; spent mornings in tears. She was diagnosed with mild depression and later got physically ill as well. Her family tried to help. Her daughter got her in touch with a household where Đurđa could do some casual cleaning work and spend a few hours a day out of the house. Blagoj rented the plot garden for her so that she could spend some time outdoors. She had no previous experience with horticulture apart from her youth spent on the farm but she never looked back. But Blagoj hit the spot. "Petra, I was born again," she said.

[21] Popularly nicknamed the Jazbinšek Act after one of its main authors, it was envisioned as one of the cornerstone policies of the 'transition' to capitalism and allowed residents in socially-owned property, like Đurđa's family, to buy it under heavily discounted prices – the price of a car.
[22] With the Ownership Transformation Act (Zakon o lastninskem preoblikovanju podjetij), citizens were granted an ownership certificate with which they could purchase shares of the business where they were employed, in other listed companies or in investment funds. Also called 'voucher privatisation', this process was employed in several CEE countries after 1989.

Đurđa and Blagoj have both retired, each with a small 400€ pension, and have since spent most of their time on the plot. Their children help with major household expenses. When I visited their home that summer, the couple showed me their new household additions: air conditioning, a white leather sofa, a washing machine and dryer, a tall freezer unit in the hall. These were indications to her that her family was doing better than it used to. Đurđa was proud her tough life was a life of improvement. She was proud that she could provide her children with more than was available to her in her youth. She was proud that when she no longer could provide, they were there to help her. Đurđa was conscious of and content that her life had led somewhere.

Other plotholders shared their stories. Midhad's 18-year-old son had died in a car accident. Midhad got ill and was receiving psychiatric treatment; he could no longer work. Tending the garden, doing small improvements on the garden shed and spending time with a neighbour helped Midhad pass the long morning hours while his wife was at work. Marta sought the embrace of the plot to recuperate from an illness. Štefan got unemployed in his fifties. For him, the garden was an escape from his wife who would otherwise berate him for not doing anything useful with his time. After Daniela's life-long partner died, she found it difficult to structure her days and to find a meaning to them, before she acquired a vegetable plot. Urban horticulture for these growers was not about leisure or food poverty alleviation; it was about purposeful and productive work that could structure their everyday into a narrative – a life.

Anthropology has covered the consequences of spending days in uncertainty on many fronts and has documented the diverse strategies of attempting to overcome it. Desjarlais has shown how daily events do not come to constitute experience for the homeless in Boston, USA, for the experience need to be weaved into a narrative and needs a space of reflection and security to do so, in their case, a home. With no possibility for learning outcome or cherished memories, events are avoided by homeless urbanites because they are risky (1997). Similarly, O'Neill reports of homeless Bucharestans in Romania feeling bored and "cast aside" in a "neoliberal era of supposed ascent" (2014: paragraph 8). To overcome the void of surplus time and feelings of redundancy and uselessness, jobless Senegalese youth perfected their tea making and tea drinking skills (Ralph 2008).

Narotsky and Besnier propose that while the popular mentions of 'crisis' refers to the "structural processes generally understood to be beyond the control of people," therefore constituting a backdrop for social action, the referrals also express "people's breach of confidence in the elements that provided relative systemic stability and reasonable expectations for the future" (Narotzky & Besnier 2014: S4). In a breakdown of stability represented an "anchoring of individual and household concerns within ordering frameworks" (Jansen 2015: 42), the social arrangements and cooperations that used to make up a livelihood no longer work and novel ways of making a life need to be created. Crisis is thought of as a temporal rupture in stability, a sort of liminality, deemed to pass as it gives way to a new order of stability (ibid.).

Muehlebach and Shoshan note that social lives as they were imagined in the golden era of Fordist capitalism (and socialism, I add), were framed as moving together with the economic model of growth, which was the source of economic security and life aspirations. Like growth, lives were perceived also as 'going somewhere' while lives in the present crisis are marked by an absence of such movement (Muehlebach & Shoshan 2012). Similarly, Hage asserts that the normality of social life is experienced as a constant movement and an 'imaginary existential mobility' ("how's it going?") (Hage 2009b). Conversely, crisis is experienced as a feeling of stuckedness. He suggests that the feeling of stuckedness has itself become normal and enduring, as the endurance in 'waiting it out' has been recruited as the normal civic subjectivity in which the citizens are expected to be patient. In his study of the lives and livelihoods of Algerian peasants, Bourdieu also saw the social order as consisting of rhythms and cyclical events, not static structures (Bourdieu 1979).

Scholars observe that the possible claims on the future have radically changed with times in which the promise of economic growth no longer holds (Muehlebach & Shoshan 2012). Neoliberal labour patterns such as flexible work and short-term contract work, self-employed service operators, 'gig economy' and 'zero-hour contracts', affect the abilities to predict, preempt and prepare for the future. Anticipations of a better future, hardcoded into social structures and institutions had been replaced by an 'enforced presentism' and 'fantasy futurism' (Guyer 2007) and by nostalgic invocations of the past. In precarity, "the present becomes so uncertain that it devours the future and prohibits thinking about it except in fantasy" (Wacqant 1999, quoted in Berlant 2007: 300). In such circumstances, life "seems to be formatted

by conditions that are increasingly dictated by fate or by miracle" (De Boeck 2015: S147) or by 'cruel optimism,' a stubborn affective investment into an unworkable future (Berlant 2011).

When inspecting the hopes of Sarajevans in the post-war and pre-EU 'Meantime,' Jansen observed how they are able to formulate themselves only around immediate futures or utopias positioned very distant into the future (2015). Other life-projects that the Sarajevans pursued (daily errands, bureaucratic processed, educational programmes) were described with the verb 'to chase' (*ganjati*) and expressed a great degree of uncertainty as to their final outcome. He parallels the absence of hopes directed at a workable future in Bosnia and Herzegovina with Jane Guyer's proposition of an 'evacuated near-future' punctuated by dates (use-by dates of foods, debt repayments dates, limited periods for consumer and civic complaints) that do not feel like steps on a ladder but rather create the sense that the near-future is not a space one can have much control over (Guyer 2007). Bourdieu makes a relevant distinction with two French terms: *l'avenir* for the future for which realistic aims can be addressed and *un future* for the utopian future (Bourdieu 1979: 63).

In Ljubljana, unemployment or retirement greatly extended the hours that were available in a day and that needed to be filled with an activity in a meaningful way. Precarious income sources increase the vigilance needed to get by daily. The loss of a life partner in old age severely changes the order of the everyday life. Personal tragedies cause lasting ripples in a life. And all of these are worsened in austerity, where the welfare safety nets are severed and replaced with a personal responsibility to handle one's misfortunes. A disruption of the ordinary and an uncertainty about what is to come in the future is what drives people onto the vegetable plot.

In the next section I show in more detail how the socialist notion of work directed towards growth and the growers' need to structure their everyday through meaningful work aligned in the process of vegetable growth. I show how they are able to resist the pull of unstructured days and months that threatened to dissolve their lives into being and weave the events of the day back into a central narrative by gardening. If the plotholders "rely on the earth to compensate for what the state cannot provide, especially in times of political and economic uncertainty" (Caldwell 2004: 126), what

the provision that the state is lacking the most in Ljubljana is, I believe, is an assurance of growth, a sense of stability and order.

4 Work and growth

In a "life without a promise of stability" (Tsing 2015: 2), how does gardening restore it? Gardening is about transforming an endless vigilance of precarity into a commitment; a daily uncertainty into a structured everyday. Acquiring my own experience with cultivating vegetables has prompted me to question the approaches to urban plot gardening that have understood the practice as oriented mainly toward production.

Czegledy observed how garden produce and preserves from Hungarian 'hobby plots' circulated as specialty goods – clean, healthy, tasty and from a trustworthy source – and were used as gifts to tighten and sustain social bonds or to solicit favours (Czegledy 2002). He proposed that the continued popularity of plot gardening in postsocialism can be construed as a re-evaluation of homegrown and homemade goods as antitheses to the mass-produced inferior products of Western capitalism. Although coveted and idealised during socialism, their low quality had come to disappoint Hungarians. In demonstrating how Hungarians used homegrown food to avoid participating in degrading capitalist markets, Czegledy envisions plot gardening almost as a means of producing a form of currency to be used as gifts in future exchanges. In light of the abundance that a single garden plot can produce, it seems difficult to refute the proposition that gardening is oriented towards obtaining this wealth of produce. Yet I suggest it is rather the contrary: it is the abundance that mobilises one to seek out social relationships, it is not the need to form bonds that steers one toward plot cultivation.

Gluts are unavoidable on the plot. Surplus management is an important part of plot gardening and an arduous task. No matter how experienced the growers were at estimating their needs and sowing crops in smaller intervals to distribute yields over a period, they often grew too much. How well a crop would to in a particular season was difficult to predict, so growers always grew more. Crops like tomato could be splendidly preserved and eaten later as a tomato sauce. Crops like gherkins were

grown so that they could be pickled and eaten all through a vegetable-poor winter. But some vegetables resisted further processing or freezing. Lettuce, cucumbers and courgette gluts needed to be eaten fresh and welcomed a grateful recipient that would take them of a grower's hands.

Composting surpluses seems sensible since it could be used to improve the soil the following season. Yet plotholders considered it as disposal. They much rather donated their gluts to an acquaintance or incidental visitor. Any acquaintance or incidental visitor. Produce wasn't grown to be invested into meaningful relationships; relationships were sought so that surplus – and thus the fruits of their labour – would not go to waste.[23]

Garden produce had value because it was an expression of grower's time. The beneficiary of garden produce bestowed it with value and with this, legitimised the labour invested in growing the food. To echo Marx's description of the relationship between production and consumption in *Grundrisse* (Marx 2015), the recipient realised grower's work as meaningful and useful. While the appeal of gardening remains in the activity itself, such wider social acknowledgment is an important and inevitable past of the plot gardening process. It is the way the plants grow that necessitates a social connection.

The freshest, most recently picked vegetables were not necessarily the ones most valued by the growers and not the ones considered most appropriate for valuable gift. Additional processing, such as examples presented in the preceding chapter, created foodstuffs that the growers would choose to give as treasured gifts. My neighbours and other retired plotholders were also opposed to the idea of selling their surplus produce or to grow a crop with the purpose of selling it, as if setting a concrete price

[23] The logic of avoiding waste and managing surplus continued with the unconsumables of the garden: garden sheds, furniture, equpment and decorations made from scrap, recycled, reused material. Plot gardens were often repositories of things that were not used in the 'first home' but assessed still useful by growers, both as a shame to waste and as a repository of possible future uses. The idiosycratic look of the garden sheds was observed across the Central and Eastern Europe during socialism (Sulima 2005) and after it (Caldwell 2011; Czegledy 2002). Evaluating their appearance only within the environment of the plot itself would do them a disservice; the plots are tightly bound within resource management system of the main household and are often utilised to catch the spill-over of any resources. In addition, the peculiar shabby appearance is partially the result of accomodating new cirumstances and cultivation needs with time. This rationale is not limited to gardening sheds alone, as demonstrated by the artist Polonca Lovšin in her video Why Slovene Houses Look the Way They Do (Lovšin 2007).

would devalue their work. Where fresh vegetables worked best as objects of circulation, was in keeping the valuation and the meaning of the exchange fuzzy and ambiguous. Mere hope that the recipient would consume the produce given, even if there was reasonable doubt that they might dispose of it themselves, was often enough assurance for the grower. Donations of fresh produce were mutual favours.

My neighbours' gardening style speaks against a desire to obtain as much yield as possible, to satisfy food needs or strengthen informal exchange network. My neighbours cultivated the soil in an environmentally friendly way. They avoided using pesticides, inorganic fertilisers or planting hybrid cultivars that would boost their yields and cut the losses. But they also did not compensate the expected smaller harvests by using methods such as permaculture, even though it promised abundant yields with little human labour investment. Permaculture had been surging in popularity in Slovenia; young gardeners in community gardens fervently professed it, and popular gardening TV programmes explained the principles in detail. Yields could be increased, garden space better used and pest protected from successfully with techniques like intercropping (growing different crops together rather than in separate beds), mulching, raising garden beds, improving the soil without digging, and, above all, planning carefully and diligently before the season started. Permacultural gardens could flourish as ecosystems of soil, plants, insects and birds, with very little subsequent human intervention. This did not have much appeal for my neighbour gardeners, but not at all because of an aversion to test out novelties on their plots. They were familiar with new techniques and incorporated a number of them into their practice. Mulching to prevent water evaporation was a must in high August heat, in fact. Both permaculture and the 'classic' style that relied on pesticides and fertilisers attempted to maximise produce yields while simultaneously minimise human labour investments. In contrast to these, the gardening style of my neighbours seemed rather to induce more work.

For example, without using pesticides, the cabbage heads were difficult to protect from the cabbage whiteflies that feed on the outer leaves. While a yield-oriented organic gardener would be compelled to forfeit the outer leaves to the fly so that inside the cabbage would remain intact, my neighbours preferred to peel the shoddy-looking leaves away to reveal a healthy and pretty head of cabbage underneath, only to relinquish further leaves to the pest. Likewise, plotholders dealt with pests such as

Dotyphores (the Colorado potato beetle) by picking them manually day by day, instead of reducing their numbers with planning in advance, for instance by intercropping the potatoes with fragrant herbs. It seemed more important to create a tidy garden bed before sowing in it in the spring, than layering the soil with compost and mulch to increase fertility of soil. Skilful with the rake, plotholders could straightened the surface and sharpen the corners of a freshly dug bed into perfection.

These techniques were employed in part so that the labour invested into the garden would be visible to others. Keeping one's plot free of weeds was a crucial step in making a garden look tidy. It also played a role in preventing the weeds from taking root in the neighbours' soil and was therefore considered as showing respect for one's neighbours. The immediacy of the daily tasks also gave growers a good overview of the state of the garden and allowed them to intervene fast if a crop demanded so.

The emphasis put on work was also apparent in the social conduct on the plot. One is commended and commends others for working hard. By adding "What a lovely garden you have!" to a greeting, gardeners acknowledge their fellow's hard work. Lamentations in reply to questions about how one is doing revolve around ailments or moods that have prevented one from working full strength. I recorded a response to "How are you?" in my fieldnotes: "Eh, don't ask, I'm not very well. Things haven't been well lately. My knees are getting worse. I don't know if I'll last for another season." Older growers are kept in high esteem for persisting with the work. Young gardeners are complimented on their work ethic when their gardens are tidy, but can expect a comment from their garden elders as soon as this changes.

Yet work was not just a front. Keeping the gardens weed-free and tidy was not only to impress the neighbours and the occasional visit from the GA's disciplinary board. What the work ethic allowed and was ultimately valued for, were the possibilities it created for enjoying the uncertainty of the plot; for turning uncertainty from a disruption into an event to be looked forward to.

Plotholders' gardening tasks were repeated year after year and performed in the same way plot after plot. Everyone sowed beans in the same week. Everyone earthed up potatoes in the same week. Although the weather and seasons were unpredictable and harvests uncertain, following the same growing pattern reduced the grower's influence

upon seasonal outcomes. By making certain that growers did all that they could do, they could readily accept the uncertainty of whatever the season held. Negative events were not mourned for very long. There was nothing one could do if frost came or if one's crops were stolen. "These things happen," a plotholder told me, "you just plant a bit more." However, employing a planting routine also allowed one to be open for events of positive uncertainty. Good harvests came as a pleasant surprise and, as Štefka had demonstrated with envy and subsequent joy over potatoes, these happy events were welcomed and cherished. Chance occurrences and unexpected yields were interpreted as evidence of having deserved them. In Štefka's view, I wasn't a gardener for long enough to have earned such a generous yield. But she was.

There was more to gardening work than pride of having grown one's own sustenance or joy of being complimented and recognised. Vegetable gardeners – myself included – felt like their work allowed them to become privy to a process by which miniature seeds became plants and these became food, as if by magic. And the best part, one could take this food home for free. "Isn't it wonderful that we don't know how much a kilo of tomatoes costs in the supermarket!" uttered one of my neighbours, her voice betraying the delight at receiving the free garden gifts. Something other than the grower's immediate agency was responsible for producing food. Providing human labour was only a part of the process. Plant labour, too, was a part.

Garden talk revealed that plants 'worked' too. Instead of using the more formal verb *uspevati* (to flourish, to succeed) when describing plant growth, plotholders would very often say that a plant 'was working' to refer to a state when the plant began producing edible parts. "Finally, the peas began to work" (*grah je končno začel delati*) or "the tomato was working all through October this year" (*paradižnik je delal še oktobra*). "The cauliflower wasn't working at all this season" (*cvetača sploh ni delala*).

On the plot gardens in Ljubljana, plants were in a partnership and cooperation with human growers, and all were engaged in a camaraderie of productive growth. Every aspect of the garden was oriented toward work, plant and human alike. Anthropologists have observed these garden relationship elsewhere, too. In the north of England, gardeners have nourished a loving relationships with their plants and saw them as belonging and behaving in human-like ways (Degnen 2009). In Mozambique,

Archambault portrayed the acts of growing ornamental plants as making relationships underpinned by love and affection in order to make the cultivators into beings capable of being loved (2016). Interestingly, utility plants (both for food and medical) were excluded from these relationships, to emphasise the authenticity of care for the plant as an end in itself, Archambault suggests. By contrast, growers in Ljubljana enlisted vegetables in particular as members in projects of stimulating growth and cared less about decorative plants.

To tackle the loss of 'everydayness' (Berlant 2008), the co-working relationships with vegetables helped make human growers feel cared for, useful and hopeful. For my neighbours on the plot, growing vegetables was less connected to feelings and abilities of self-reliance. Gardening was about the possibility of relying on another, being cared by and cooperating with another, and not being dependent on one's own efforts alone. Ljubljanans who could no longer rely on the state, employer, spouse, children, came to rely on another productive power, that of nature and its cycles and rhythms and demands and to work together with it. This partnership of productive plants and hardworking humans produced growth. In this process, surplus time was transformed into tangible results, helping to reconstruct a sense of self as useful. Idle time and purposeless labour was translated into the rhythms of the garden, into seasonal and daily flows. The workhorses capable of producing food help their growers feel useful. For Ljubljanans who have been excluded from growth in this present crisis, who were not reaping the benefits of economic growth, not enjoying social mobility, not 'going places' in life nor have a sense that their lives lead somewhere, gardening can also feel hopeful. As growth offers a sense of security, while retaining a sense of hope and open-endedness, the plotholders can grow themselves as useful humans and dignify their existence. Being open to unexpected events on the garden suggested allowed one an outlet where their precarity could be translated into something more productive, like hope and anticipation.

5 Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the practices of samooskrba in households. In contrast to those described in previous chapters where the samooskrba activities were oriented toward opening up opportunities for market and social networks exchange, here

samooskrba was rather the means of structuring time and uncertain futures into a narratives. Both roles were important tools of tackling precarity in the Eurozone crisis.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have examined Slovenian narratives and practices of food self-sufficiency, samooskrba – as they manifested on the level of the national and local state, urban communities and Ljubljanan households – with the intent of illuminating the connection between the high visibility of this trope and the particular experience of the Eurozone crisis in Ljubljana. I traced its manifold roles of an economic index, a national policy, a source of policing power, an ethical value and a descriptor for numerous practices of impoverished citizens for enduring the crisis and structuring their precarious lives. I examined how samooskrba formed novel anticipatory discourses: building sustainable cities, creating alternative food futures, or expecting the coming gardening season. I challenged the dominant explanation for self-sufficiency and self-reliance as a form of social or economic isolation, involution, enclosure or 'retreat' (Pine 2002) able to increase the social group's autonomous economic conduct by reducing dependency on social agents outside of this group. I have considered the term of self-sufficiency within the themes of citizenship, governance and labour and emphasised its ethical connotations. I argued that interpretations of the market by spatial metaphors that envision self-sufficiency as the drawing of political or existential borders around households or communities – to break ties with the market and to not sink amid an economic downturn – fail to take into account several elements my ethnographic material pointed toward: a) that practices of self-sufficiency such as household food self-provisioning are not necessarily acts of cutting social ties but can constitute civic acts (Caldwell 2011); b) that in order to endure an economic crisis, achieving a relative economic autonomy is not sufficient and that a morally appropriate and socially meaningful way oriented toward a social future is required to turn a precarious existence into a stable one (Hage 2003; Makovicky 2009); c) that the challenges to the legitimacy of national government during an economic crisis impel the nation-state to assert its authority and relevance through its role as the mediator, thereby making governing in and over self-sufficient enclosures less viable. All three suggest an aspiration, from states and citizens alike, to retain participation in the existing social structures rather than retreat from them. To sum my argument, strategies of persevering the Eurozone crisis in

Slovenia do not entail retreat, but a 'reaching out'. The government was reaching out when it resorted to nationalism as a form of civic participation. The food producers were reaching out with striving to formalise and register their food livelihoods. The plotholders were reaching out as they connected to the natural rhythms and stability in absence of firm societal ground. Self-sufficiency is not a form of self-defence (cf. Gudeman & Hann 2015b), but a response to the hit that citizenship takes during a crisis, a reply to losing the feeling of 'being held' by society during a period of precarity (Berlant 2007), to losing a sense of 'mattering', particularly as it relates to changes in work availability and its impact on citizenship.

The thesis illustrated how austerity ruffles the stability of everyday existence both by disrupting the daily flows of life and by putting a heavy burden on the vision of a shared social future and its ability to carry the nation. This in turn dishevels the moral economy of labour and the basis of citizenship. Slovenes use samooskrba to address the changes in the relationship between citizens and the state. The trope of samooskrba helps sustain work as the basis of citizenship. On the one hand, practices of food self-provisioning and the making of livelihoods based on local food economies offer citizens a shot at 'mattering' in their societies by providing them with a sense of meaningful work and personal worth. On the other, by preserving work as the basis of citizenship in a period when work is scarce, the state employs samooskrba to shift work from forming the basis of social solidarity to a new role of signalling the affect of hopefulness and willingness to endure difficult economic conditions until they end (Muehlebach 2012). The term samooskrba helps the state to hold on to its legitimacy by inscribing a new national goal of an alternative food future of increased national self-sufficiency and abandoning its previous duties toward its worker-citizens. In this sense, samooskrba helps turn precarity into the normal state of affairs. In addition to underscoring the particular concerns of two divergent sides, the diverse and ambiguous meanings of samooskrba ensure that the most apparent conflicts between them are disarmed. With reference to Slovenian samooskrba, precarity is translated into opportunity for self-making and a feeling of sovereignty is reclaimed without having to denounce the costly membership within the European Union.

I have shown in this thesis how precarity is tackled in Ljubljana through a range of strategies, from growing, foraging and preserving food, to selling foodstuffs on the market. The food self-provisioning practices are employed both to seek a stable source

of subsistence and income and to give human activity a value, meaning and a sense of orientation toward the future. Household samooskrba is a form of future-making because of its ability to tie one's labour to a range of natural temporal rhythms leading toward a personally and socially sanctioned aim. Urban vegetable gardens are not museums of socialist resilience and wit but spaces of potentiality, where everything is an opportunity and everything is in nascent form.

However, these grassroots attempts at making durable lives and livelihoods are hindered by the state and retained in its precarious state, often by employing the keyword of samooskrba. To assert its legitimacy during the Eurozone crisis, the state in Slovenia hampers the self-reliance of its citizens while at the same time demands from them a show of ability for self-reliance to qualify as responsible citizens, engaged in the national project. It paradoxically re-translates Slovenians into citizens able to exhibit self-sufficiency by denying them a meaningful shot at actual self-reliance. In this way, when the conditions are grim, the state weaves precarious food producers into the citizenry by the very act of abandoning them. In this thesis I examined at length the faces of the state as they were presented to the unemployed course-goers to show how a reformulation of citizenship toward an 'ethical' form (Muehlebach 2012) emerged during the course, was sceptically received by the participants and could not be effectively countered by them due to a lack of distinctive vocabulary to address the issues.

I further found this pattern of governing by contradiction reflected in the way of turning the anxieties over the proper European identity, expressed in the Slovenian fear of being regarded as second class EU citizens, into assertions of European identity by marginalising those who did not fit the representation of Europeanness, such as Balkan market stall traders or unproductive farmers; or in the sustainability goals of the local state in Ljubljana that fuelled the dispossession of those deemed unsustainable and un-European. Examining the policies of the national and local state and their effects showed that clumsy governing attempts of increasing national agricultural self-sufficiency or improving urban sustainability were not failures; behind them lay new sources of power for the state (Graham 2017; cf. Scott 1998). As a collection of loose impressions, acts and narratives, samooskrba and the projects created around this keyword helped the Slovenian government mitigate the constraints on its scope of governance enforced by the EU. Moreover, I showed how the scheme

to boost Slovenian agricultural productivity worked to expand the scope of governance of the national state. The ethical connotations of samooskrba drawn upon by public officials enabled them to pursue agendas that would be difficult to realise by other means. For instance, invoking samooskrba allowed the government to dodge unpleasant issues of political legitimacy brought on by austerity measures and privatisation, divert these problems as originating in the EU, portrayed as a force beyond its influence, and posit itself as the vanguard of a nation-wide orientation toward a hopeful future.

The material on living ethically and governing with self-sufficiency during the times of shrinking welfare and certainty collected in this thesis contributes to several wider topical conversations. One concerns how doing ethnography in the EU margins can help anthropology illuminate the perspectives on populism in the EU. The rising popularity of nationalist groups and governments in Europe, fuelled by the anti-migrant sentiments that only add to the feelings of stuckedness amid the economic crisis, expressions of Euroscepticism such as Brexit, tensions surrounding the Greek bailouts and the strong backing of right-wing governments in Hungary and Poland suggest a worrying state of affairs. Yet looking at these issue through a lens of less oppositional Eurosceptic tensions in Slovenia can offer a corrective for understanding the current intra-EU political dynamic. The pride of Slovenes at topping the economic performance in the group of countries of the 2004 EU Eastern enlargement and of the countries of the former Yugoslav federation recently shook upon learning the news that the prime title in recovering from the effects of the Eurozone crisis was taken by the Czech Republic (Hren 2015). This thesis has tried to capture precisely the civic sentiment accompanying this geopolitical role – of having made it as a new country but being forever on its toes about preserving this role in light of foreigners and public scandals potentially tainting this reputation. The 'Eastness' of nesting orientalism that translates the anxieties over being orientalised by Western Europe into the orientalising of own internal Others is common in Central and Eastern Europe and represents a way of demonstrating a European belonging, not an opposition to it (Dzenovska & De Genova 2018; Zarycki 2014). The less electric Slovene example therefore helps to point out that the issues of work scarcity, precarious citizenship and constrained governance are at the heart of integralist sentiments across Europe, and beyond it. Problems of 'mattering' of ordinary citizens today can be tracked from racist sentiments in the US ('All lives matter') to the 'abduction of agency' (Gell 1998)

of conspiracy theories disseminated on social media (see also Berlant 2016). Recent developments regarding variable food quality in CEE compared to the rest of the EU should also be taken in this light and seen not only as proclaiming the national identity but also the authority of the nation-state.

If nationalism can serve as a tool a European reintegration in austerity, what follows is that the examples of such informal Europeanisations cannot be thought of as separate from its formal counterpart and they embody the key vehicle of governing in austerity EU. Following Roitman's argument, in line with several commentators, about the global recession not representing an example of error in the capitalist system but rather constituting a normally occurring event, I suggest the same can be said for right-wing nationalist and xenophobic politics of the EU. An Enlightened and cosmopolitan pan-European polity of a technocratic governance requires its emotional, darker side rolled out by national governments to form a whole. The EU should not be romanticised as being removed from manifestations of populism and the rise of right-wing politics. New forms of citizenships come with new forms of supra-states and the global economy can no longer be explained in terms of competing national states (Ong 2006), but while they shed some of its former powers and authorities, in the EU the role of the nation-state remain a central one. However, a crucial element of the nation-state remaining relevant is its ability to govern through ambivalence and sentiment and to manage a citizenry based on ethics (Muehlebach 2012). The extensive examples of governing by tropes and ambiguity in this thesis have hopefully shown the need for close attention to the changing mode of national governance in future studies.

In the engagements with local food economies within social science, hope has tended to have a rather narrow role. In the debate on the possibilities of forging alternatives to the dominant industrial food system and failures to withstand the absorption into it, avoiding a Foucauldian admittance that power permeates the social fabric and cannot be successfully resisted often comes with a concession that conflict is a basic condition of human communities, yet the process and its results are contingent. Therefore, that there is hope that the outcomes will have changed in the future. Critical examinations of contemporary forms of alternative food have often ended their analysis with a recommendation to keep possibilities open, to not narrow the 'politics of the possible,' and to remain hopeful (i.e. Pratt 2007, Guthman 2008, West 2014a).

This particular orientation toward the future of food echoes a more general anthropological critique of capitalism and/or neoliberalism in which "there is no alternative." To counter this assertion, attention has been given to opening up of 'spaces of hope' (Harvey 2000; Solnit 2016) and to expanding the political imagination. Ortner suggested that the breadth of anthropological attention has recently been shifting towards studying the 'good' of human lives, such as ethics, happiness, hopes and affective attachments, after being predominantly engaged in 'dark' anthropology of charting social suffering under neoliberalism. She sees this shift as the result of the anthropologists' refusal to prolong the suffering by documenting it (2016). In engagements with hope, Jansen notes (2016), the emphasis has been more on 'replicating' the hopes of ethnographer's interlocutors (Miyazaki 2004) rather than engaging with the political economy of hope (Hage 2003).

While the attitude of hopefulness in social science research has rendered visible the forms of human behaviour that would likely be overlooked, I find the academic task of dispensing hope to expand the possibilities and political imagination difficult to take on. Acts of giving and receiving hope are not power-neutral. They 'do' something. Studies with a hopeful attitude are likewise not immune to being absorbed by the social force that they were hoping against. Moreover, an approach that sees as solution a particular positive orientation toward the future, fails to see how the multiple orientations toward the future already influence and change the social processes under research. As Das suggested, "potentiality […] does not have the sense of something that is waiting at the door of reality to make an appearance as it were, but rather as that which is already present" (Das 2006: 9).

What is at stake in adopting a wholly positive approach to hoping and open-ended future is to miss how experiences of precarity might prompt desires for stability and routine; how the seeming open-endedness of vague tropes populating public policy might help devolve the state's responsibilities and how liminality of the absence of firm social structures does not necessarily entail moments of potential but rather governance by 'camouflage'. 'Politics of the possible' today is no longer a counterhegemonic tool. Adopted by the nation-state, it has become a way of governing in precarity.

In this thesis, food self-sufficiency has served as a method of unravelling the affective and anticipatory elements surrounding the experience of the Eurozone crisis in Slovenia. I believe that anthropological studies of foodways could offer a lot more towards understanding how humans build their futures, structure anticipations and endure uncertainties. Therefore, I propose that they do not end their social analyses with hopefulness, but rather use it for new beginnings.

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