Coventry University

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Escape from Empire? Agroecological Autonomy in European Peripheries

Popay, Simon Charles

Award date:
2022

Awarding institution:
Coventry University

Link to publication

General rights
Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of this thesis for personal non-commercial research or study
- This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission from the copyright holder(s)
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal

Take down policy
If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Download date: 06. Sept. 2024

Escape from Empire?
Agroecological Autonomy in European Peripheries

By

Simon Popay

July 2021

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the University's requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Certificate of Ethical Approval

Applicant:

Simon Popay

Project Title:

Escape from Empire: agroecology, food sovereignty and autonomy

This is to certify that the above named applicant has completed the Coventry University Ethical Approval process and their project has been confirmed and approved as Medium Risk

Date of approval:

06 March 2019

Project Reference Number:

P82287

Acknowledgements

In conducting this research, John Holloway's social flow of doing has been the idea that struck me the most. In this flow, any act, "however individual it seems, is part of a chorus of doing in which all humanity is the choir" (J. Holloway, 2002, p. 26). To put only my name on the above title page is to claim too much credit. Most of the ideas I discuss here come from others. I could not have put them together without the thousands of farmers and workers who keep our food systems running.

I will anyway make special mention of a select few groups and people. My thanks to everyone at the Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience (CAWR) and Coventry University. CAWR funded this research, through a studentship in memory of former student Nigel Baker. My research does not directly follow his work, but I hope it does justice to his passion for alternative food systems. My sincerest thanks go to my supervisors, James Bennett, Jahi Chappell and Moya Kneafsey for their encouragement and critical feedback throughout the research. Their investment in time, enthusiasm and intellectual contributions have made this thesis what it is. I am also grateful to the farmers and networks representatives who participated in the research, for giving up their time to speak with me. Research aside, I enjoyed each and every one of the conversations. A special thanks too to Giovanni Felicetti for his assistance while I was in Calabria.

On a more personal level, I am grateful for the support of friends and family. They are too many to mention individually, but have all contributed with encouragement and helpful discussions. My wife Yasemin of course deserves special mention for her persistent optimism and enthusiasm. So to do my mother and sisters, who have always been a source of inspiration. Finally, I would like to acknowledge my father, Ian Popay, who passed away while this research was underway. I dedicate this thesis to him.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements v
Table of Contents vi
List of tables ix
List of figures ix
List of acronyms ix
Abstract x
1 Introduction 1
1.1 Capitalism and agroecology 1
1.2 The diversity and distribution of agroecology 2
1.3 Unpacking autonomy 6
1.4 Contribution and research questions 8
1.5 Outline 9
2 Literature Review 12
2.1 Conditioning autonomy: the neoliberal food regime 13
2.1.1 Radical agroecology and food sovereignty 16
2.1.2 Europe and radical agroecology 18
2.2 Autonomy and agroecology 20
2.2.1 Political autonomy 21
2.2.2 Biotechnical autonomy 25
2.2.3 Agency, autonomy and the problem of choice 29
2.3 The ghost in the neoliberal food regime: re-focusing the peasant subject 31
2.3.1 Marxist, populist and anarchist interpretations of capitalism and agency 34
2.4 Agency-centred autonomy 38
2.4.1 Self-determination and socialisation 38
2.4.2 Freedoms and market imperatives 40
2.4.3 Reproducing and transforming food systems 41
2.5 Summary 42
3 Methodology 44
3.1 Conceptual Framework 44
3.1.1 Agency-centric research 44
3.1.2 Critical realist methodology 46
3.1.3 Political economy and ecology 48
3.1.4 Positionality 49

3.2 Data collection 50
3.2.1 Selecting regional and farming cases 51
3.2.2 Fieldwork 53
3.3 Analysis 59
3.4 Summary 61
4 Peripheries of the core: Cornwall and Calabria 62
4.1 Agrarian differentiation and core-periphery relations in Europe 62
4.1.1 Regional development and agricultural policy in the European Union 65
4.1.2 Alternative food networks and agroecology in Europe 69
4.2 Rural peripheralisation in Cornwall and Calabria 71
4.2.1 Cornwall, UK 72
4.2.2 Calabria, Italy 77
4.1 Summary 82
5 Forms and Fancies of Production 84
5.1 Introduction 84
5.2 Forms and characteristics of production 84
5.2.1 Class relations 85
5.2.2 Forms of production 90
5.3 Fancies of production: from socialisation to self-determination 94
5.3.1 Modernisation, tradition and alternative disciplines 98
5.3.2 Personal histories 101
5.3.3 *Diálogo de saberes* and contemporary processes of socialisation 104
5.3.4 Alter-hegemony and counter-hegemony: between radicalism and viability 111
5.4 Conclusions: Class and values 113
6 Freedoms and imperatives of production 116
6.1 Market dependency and forms of accumulation 117
6.2 Constituting the farm: land access 119
6.3 Reproducing the farm: biotechnical autonomy? 123
6.3.1 Input autonomy 127
6.3.2 Labour autonomy 130
6.3.3 Autonomy in the market 133
6.4 Transforming the farm: capital autonomy 139
6.5 Ambiguous imperatives: three vignettes 142
6.6 Conclusions: market imperatives and room for manoeuvre 147
7 Reproducing and Transforming Food Systems 151
7.1 Reproduction, transformation and conscious control 152

7.2 Scaling-out: real utopias? 154
7.3 Scaling-up: transformation via the state and institutions 160
7.3.1 State-oriented transformation 160
7.3.2 Institutionalising embedded markets 165
7.4 A counter-hegemonic path to transformation? 167
7.5 Conclusions 170
8 Agroecological autonomy in European peripheries 172
8.1 RQ1 – What is the nature of farmers' autonomy in Calabria and Cornwall? 173
8.1.1 The relational autonomy of farmers amid multiple structures 174
8.1.2 Turning in a widening gyre? 178
8.2 RQ2 – What does farmers' autonomy tell us about potential and emerging kinds of food sovereignty and agroecology in these regions and beyond? 188
8.2.1 Reflection on the value of autonomy 190
8.3 Summary: towards agroecological autonomy? 193
9 Conclusion 195
9.1 Postmodernism, peasants and peripheries 196
9.2 Counter-hegemony and agroecological autonomy 198
9.3 Repeasantisation and re-ruralisation 200
9.4 Through and against the state? 202
9.5 Final remarks 203
10 References 205
Appendices 228
1 Interview guides 228
1.1 Farm Interviews 228
1.1.1 English 228
1.1.2 Italian 230
1.2 Network/association interviews 231
1.2.1 English 231
1.2.2 Italian 232
2 Information sheet and consent form 234
2.1 English 234
2.2 Italian 236
3 List of farms and characteristics 238
3.1 Cornwall 238
3.2 Calabria 239

List of tables

Table 3-1: Farms and farmers interviewed. 54
Table 5-1: Land access and holding sizes in sample, compared with distribution of farm sizes in Cornwall and Calabria. 86
Table 5-2: Household and non-household labour on sample farms. 88
Table 5-3: Mixed farming and marketing channels on sample farms. 90

List of figures

Figure 3-1: Distribution of farms interviewed in Cornwall 55
Figure 3-2: Distribution of farms interviewed in Calabria 56

List of acronyms

AFN = alternative food network

CAP = Common Agricultural Policy

EU = European Union

GAS = solidarity purchasing groups (*gruppo di acquisto solidale*)

GDO = supermarket-led food system in Italy *(la grande distribuzione organizzata*)

PCP = petty commodity producer

Abstract

This thesis explores emerging forms of agroecology in European peripheries, by looking at the 'autonomy' of alternative farmers in Cornwall, UK and Calabria, Italy. Agroecology, closely associated with traditional and small-scale 'peasant' forms of production, is concerned with the sustainability and equitability of agriculture and food systems. Agroecology remains contested, with more conventional and radical interpretations, complicated by its overlapping scientific, political and practical aspects. I contrast Tilzey and van der Ploeg's approaches to agroecology and peasant autonomy, particularly in Europe.. Van der Ploeg argues that farms in Europe are increasingly making use of agroecology and becoming more peasant-like, including by aspiring for greater autonomy. Tilzey instead argues that more radical ('counter-hegemonic') forms of food sovereignty and agroecology, which actively challenge capitalism and aspire for 'actual autonomy', are mainly found in the global South. Meanwhile, alternative farms in the global North, including Europe, are more likely to be 'alter-hegemonic', aspiring to a limited form of autonomy that is compatible with capitalism. However, these narratives of peasant autonomy risk denying a more fundamental sense of agency, by assuming the ideological inclinations and practices of farmers in particular class positions. Instead, I argue for an 'agency-centric' concept of political autonomy based in critical realism. This is comprised of self-determination, freedom and conscious control over structural conditions. I also contrast this political autonomy with a 'biotechnical' autonomy grounded in agroecological practices of reducing farm inputs and closing nutrient/energy cycles. I use these concepts to explore how alternative farmers in Europe's internal peripheries relate to capitalist structures, exhibit more alter-hegemonic or counter-hegemonic tendencies, and what the implications are for emerging kinds of agroecology.

I find that most farms in Cornwall and Calabria are market dependent and have alter-hegemonic ideologies, although some farmers' ideologies and practices are more counter-hegemonic. These ideologies stem from complex processes of socialisation, many of which are linked, but not reducible, to class relations and positions. All farmers are subject to market imperatives, but unevenly, including whether they are small capitalists, petty commodity producers, or part-time farms. Farmers with more counter-hegemonic ideologies actively resist these imperatives, but the possibility of doing so depends on less commodified access to land, strong social networks and buoyant markets. The former two are prominent in Calabria, where most farmers have backgrounds in the region. The latter is more prominent in Cornwall, where most alternative farmers are inward migrants, who lack strong local networks, but are sustained by buoyant markets for local and ecological produce, underpinned by a strong tourism sector. Farmers' abilities to influence conscious control over their structural contexts remains the weakest aspect of autonomy in both regions.

Farmers in Cornwall have better access to state institutions than those in Calabria, though this is skewed towards small capitalists. While some farmers are actively seeking to 'scale-out' agroecology, this is ultimately constrained by competition in alternative food networks. In response to this, I explore the prospects of a more counter-hegemonic trajectory emerging in Europe, predicated on a specific form of 'agroecological autonomy'. The main barrier to agroecological autonomy is the depopulation of peripheral rural regions, which hinders the labour-intensification of farming, entails on-going reliance on partial mechanisation, and constrains localised and reciprocal relations.

1 Introduction

1.1 Capitalism and agroecology

Capitalism today is perhaps best characterised by its indifference. A global system with no centre, no conscious brain and no feeling heart, it is by its very constitution unmoved by the suffering and ecological destruction it wreaks on the world. It would be remiss not to begin this thesis by contextualising it within the catalogue of global and uneven crises. These include climate change, soil exhaustion, peak oil, biodiversity collapse, food price spikes, recurring debt crises, land grabbing and poverty. These crises, which collectively threaten the lives and wellbeing of billions of people, are not distinct issues, but part of a single capitalist 'world-ecology' (Moore, 2010). That is to say, they are all interconnected by the eco-social relations that govern how we produce, how we consume, how we eat, how we live. The urgent *need* to address these crises needs no elaboration, but the question of how to do so looms large. That we are faced with innumerable crises *of* capitalism seems clear, but it is questionable whether they represent crises or even contradictions *for* capitalism (Moore, 2010; Tilzey, 2018). Instead, capitalism's resilience continues to prove itself – raising the question of how and when another *better* mode of existence might come about.

Farming and agriculture have a unique role in capitalism and its crises. Not only is farming a primary cause and site of ecological crises, but it is also the primary activity of many considered poor and the source of the most fundamental necessities of life. Perhaps more inspiringly, farming is home to a wide range of structures and practices that at least sit awkwardly within capitalism and at best actively challenge it. These include farming's fundamentally ecological basis, its long-standing and stubborn resistance to capitalist labour relations, its traditional internalisation of production and consumption, and the many resilient and innovative people who do it. It is no surprise then that farmers are frequently identified as pre-figuring post-capitalism (Jones, 2019; Smaje, 2020; Tilzey, 2017; Wilson, 2012).

In this context, agroecology has emerged as a leading but heterogeneous movement, science and body of practice that tentatively promises a way beyond (A. Wezel et al., 2009). While itself having many different variations and aspects, as detailed below,agroecology can be seen as one of many approaches within a broader field of sustainable agriculture. It is distinguished by its ecological systems approach, integration of local and traditional practices, ideal of minimising farm inputs (even organic ones), and emphasis on social justice (Gliessman, 1990; Rosset & Altieri, 1997; Sevilla Guzmán & Woodgate, 2013). One aspect of this distinction is agroecology's considerable overlap with food sovereignty, which, combined with food justice, form a continually-being-shaped-but-otherwise-stable 'three-legged stool' of food system sustainability (Chappell & Schneider, 2016).

Debates around agroecology are populated not only by passionate advocates, but also by fierce and friendly critics. The recent surge in the popularity of agroecology has also raised the risk of its co-optation, including as another productivist 'option' alongside green revolution and genetic engineering technologies (Pimbert, 2018). This has raised the possibility that agroecology may become detached from (and less radical than) food sovereignty (Holt-Giménez & Altieri, 2013). Through these contestations, activists, academics and policy-makers are redefining and elaborating agroecology (Loconto & Fouilleux, 2019; Alexander Wezel et al., 2020). My intention here is not to put forward or defend a specific definition – I would argue that building essentialist definitions is ultimately antithetical to agroecology itself. Instead, I am concerned with exploring agroecology itself as a living and diverse ecology, subject to mutation and evolutionary pressures. The pressures that arise in academic and policy debates are but one part of this – ultimately agroecology must adapt to the wilderness of global and local political economy. It must find ways to evolve amidst market prices, sceptical farmers, impoverished consumers, giant corporations and neoliberal states, while also seeking to fundamentally change those conditions. In this way, the path agroecology takes is perhaps best understood genealogically, much like its symbiotic partner food sovereignty (Edelman, 2014). In this spirit, the purpose of this thesis is to explore the kinds of agroecology that farmers are engaged in, and how these are shaped by context, class and farmers' own values and desires.

1.2 The diversity and distribution of agroecology

In contrast to contemporary capitalism's *nowhere,* agroecology has developed 'bottom-up' both from and within *places* (Escobar, 2001; McCune et al., 2017; Owen et al., 2020). It is hardly surprising then that it takes on many forms and is increasingly recognised as having more and less radical strands. Gliessman (2016), for example, has described five 'levels' of agroecology. These range from incremental changes at the level of farming practices (such as using inputs more efficiently), through to more complex systemic changes in food systems. These latter conceptualisations of 'transformational' change propose a more radical reconstruction of the global food system (C. R. Anderson et al., 2021). This more radical transformational agenda, which also places more emphasis on food sovereignty than food justice and emphasises political and social mobilisation, is often more associated with movements in the global South (Calvário, 2017; Holt-Giménez & Altieri, 2013; Holt-Giménez & Shattuck, 2011; Tilzey, 2017).

Tilzey (2017, 2018, 2020) argues that the most radical forms of agroecology (what he calls 'counter-hegemonic') are likely to emerge among the subaltern classes of global peripheries. For him, the social and ecological contradictions of capitalism are much more vivid in the global South and more likely to provoke movements that counter capitalism's foundations. By contrast, in the global North,

state measures partially ameliorate and legitimate, without challenging, capitalist accumulation. These measures include welfare, devolved forms of government and rural development programmes. Combined with unfettered access to core markets, these constitute ‘flanking’ measures that reduce the political impetus for radical changes. Nonetheless, Tilzey suggests that neoliberal austerity may build more support for radical positions in the global North, including in Europe (Tilzey, 2017, p. 324).

Tilzey’s arguments have been extended by Wach (2019) to explore the history and presence of counter-hegemonic agroecology in Scotland. Wach argues that the land reform movement in Scotland has successfully led to the state’s adopting counter-hegemonic forms of community land ownership in legislation. However, she also argues that more conventional agricultural policies entail that these reforms fall short of confronting the disarticulated nature of the Scottish food system. Grounded in a Gramscian framework similar to Tilzey’s work (but not drawing directly on it), Calvário (2017) explores how repeasantisation in the Basque Country is leading to the formation of counter-hegemonic contestations. She argues that a union of small farmers has developed a counter-hegemonic framing of its activities, but that farmers remain constrained from becoming politically active by the day-to-day realities of farming under generalised commodity relations. These two examples point to the presence, potentials and limitations of counter-hegemonic agroecological logics within European peripheries.

Broader and more inclusive work reveals a much wider, rich and diverse presence of agroecology in Europe (see special issue led by Alexander Wezel & Bellon, 2018). Van der Ploeg (2020; 2019) in particular has identified widespread agroecological practices and initiatives in Europe, which are “changing the social relations of production in agriculture” (2020, p. 2). For him, the modernisation of farming in Europe in the twentieth century constituted a major state and market-led drive towards ‘entrepreneurial farming’, but only partially succeeded in transforming the peasantry. Today, the contradictions within contemporary capitalism are leading entrepreneurial and capitalist agriculture into a dead-end. Instead, the conditions in Europe increasingly favour peasant and agroecological farming and food systems (van der Ploeg et al., 2019). However, these discussions of European agroecology have paid little attention to internal core-periphery divisions in Europe that likely change these conditions and give rise to different ‘repeasantisation’ processes.

Underpinning Tilzey and van der Ploeg’s differing positions on the global and European distributions of agroecology are their respective theoretical perspectives on capitalism, the state, and the peasantry. In particular, these perspectives shape different interpretations of what van der Ploeg (2008) has called the peasant’s ‘struggle for autonomy’. The idea suggests that farmers, individually

and collectively, are challenging the indifference of capitalism by asserting conscious control within and over the circumstances they face. However, the ways and degrees by which they do take on very different meanings in Tilzey and van der Ploeg's accounts.

Van der Ploeg's notion of capitalism draws on Hardt and Negri's (2000) *Empire* and more specifically McMichael's (2009a) *corporate food regime*. *Empire* is a totalising system of global capitalism, which integrates and subordinates markets and states alike, governing through control and appropriation (van der Ploeg, 2008, p. 233). Peasants, although also subordinate to capitalism, are not themselves capitalist in form and operate in a distinctive way. Following Chayanov, van der Ploeg argues that peasants manage their farms through a range of balances that insulate and distance them from the external control of *Empire*. This includes drawing on an 'autonomous resource-base' and the 'co-production of man and nature', and increasing 'self-provisioning' and 'labour-driven intensification' (van der Ploeg, 2008, 2010). This framing unites a wide range of farmers as peasants, both poor and prosperous family farms in both the global North and the global South (van der Ploeg, 2013, p. 69). For van der Ploeg, a*utonomy* embodies the peasant's insulation and distance from *Empire* and its ability to govern itself, including 'farmers' freedom', 'degree of systemness' and 'room for manoeuvre' (which I will elaborate). Although van der Ploeg is not the first to use the term in connection with peasants and agroecology (e.g. Pionetti, 2005), he has stimulated a growing body of work that has applied and further developed the concept (Coolsaet, 2016; Emery, 2015; including S. Schneider & Niederle, 2010; Stock et al., 2014; Stock & Forney, 2014; Timmermann et al., 2018).

Tilzey (2017) has cast van der Ploeg's framing as 'populist' and/or as a Polanyian 'double movement', which places (agroecological) peasants as capital's other and antithesis. For Tilzey, van der Ploeg and McMichael "have failed to uncover the essence of capitalism/neoliberalism" (2017, p. 318), which instead lies in Marxian relations of class and property (and the alienability of land and labour). The Marxian relations of agrarian capitalism have elsewhere been succinctly summarised by Bernstein (2010) as: capital/labour relations, generalised commodity relations, and the imperative to accumulate. Tilzey sees the state itself as a social relation, emerging and acting on the basis of class and class-fragment struggles (Tilzey, 2018). From this perspective, capitalism is variable from place to place, while 'peasants' are far more integrated into capitalism than van der Ploeg suggests. 'Peasants' tend to be formally subsumed into markets, internalise commodity logics, and be considerably differentiated (i.e. as emerging capitalists, petty commodity producers, and/or classes of labour) (Bernstein, 1979; Tilzey, 2017). As such, 'peasants' in the global North engaged in commodity production are 'alter-hegemonic' in class and ideology, and broadly 'conformable with capitalism'. In contrast to the limited autonomy this offers, Tilzey argues, 'actual autonomy' is only possible with a reversal of primitive accumulation, the end of the alienability of land and labour, and

the realisation of unconstrained cooperation. Subaltern classes in the peripheral global South are more likely to adhere to this 'counter-hegemonic' framing. Tilzey argues for this framing as 'livelihood sovereignty', which is grounded in a "thoroughgoing transformation of capitalist social-property relations towards democratic and devolved common ownership (or perhaps better, stewardship) of the means of livelihood" (Tilzey, 2018, p. 318).

My thesis follows and responds to the trajectory of the above empirical and theoretical debates. It explores the presence and radicalism of agroecology in two peripheral regions of Europe – Cornwall in the UK, and Calabria in Italy. These regions are understood as peripheries with respect to national and European political economies, but remain within the European core on a global scale. The core-periphery dynamics that Tilzey emphasises on a global scale – in terms of an imperial relation between countries underpinned by surplus appropriation, social and sectoral disarticulation, and constrained political decision-making – are also present within Europe and between regions. Regions like Cornwall and Calabria are shaped by these imperial relations, and the possibilities of autonomy are accordingly constrained. These dynamics – as I will explore – are complicated by the shifting and multi-layered forms of the state and governance in the European Union.

At the same time, both Cornwall and Calabria are home to small, alternative and what van der Ploeg et al. (2019) have called 'proto-agroecological' farms. To make sense of the kinds of agroecology or proto-agroecology that are emerging in these regions, I explore farmers' autonomy and whether and how they are struggling to increase it. However, the existing use of 'autonomy' in debates around agroecology and food sovereignty (including the above) is inadequately theorised, and used carelessly and often to refer to different things. Naylor (2017) has criticised overly universal uses of the term, and has pointed to some of the diverse forms it takes, whether embodied or territorial, or based on identity or opposition. Van der Ploeg's own use of 'autonomy' refers to both to a political notion and a biotechnical one (see Magne et al., 2019). This conflation leads to an implicit assumption that more biotechnical autonomy leads to more political autonomy (again I will elaborate these terms). Other uses of 'autonomy' have emerged in food sovereignty and agroecology discourse, which place more emphasis on other ideas and philosophical traditions. Bernstein (2014, p. 1050) has also questioned

> "…the encompassing belief that what unites all farmers, at least potentially, is the pursuit of more or less significant 'autonomy' from markets, their 'dull compulsions' (in Marx's term) and disciplines. This claim from first principles that what farmers do (throughout modern history? history *tout court*?) is driven by the desire for autonomy is a matter of faith, in which there are believers and non-believers."

As several authors have recently emphasised (Stock et al., 2014; Stock & Forney, 2014; Tilzey, 2017), farmers themselves possess different visions of what constitutes autonomy. These authors have also offered their views on what constitutes 'actual' autonomy. In contrast, my purpose here is more to provide a framing of autonomy that captures its complex and multifaceted forms.

1.3 Unpacking autonomy

Beyond agroecology, autonomy has become a prominent end and means of social movements around the world, understood as being and becoming beyond the state, capitalism, and hegemonic discourse (Böhm et al., 2010). It has become an organising concept for various bodies of social theory, particularly those concerned with pre-figuring post-capitalist forms in the here-and-now. This includes what can be broadly termed autonomist Marxism (Cleaver, 2019; Gorz, 1982; Hardt & Negri, 2000; J. Holloway, 2002) and anarchism (Roman-Alcalá, 2021), which put aside state-centric notions of revolution in favour of more direct, or even utopian, attempts at re-organising society. Similarly, autonomous geographies (Chatterton, 2005; Pickerill & Chatterton, 2006; Wilson, 2015) explore the territorial, material and social gaps in capitalism in which non-capitalist forms persist or try to do so.

The concept also has a rich history in political philosophy, applied to both individuals and collectives, and the relations between them. The etymology of the word 'autonomy' is Greek and may be translated as self-law or self-rule, although Kallis (2018) points out that *nomos* may also refer to distribution, entailing autonomy as self-distribution. In its modern Western philosophical form, autonomy is often discussed in relation to the ideas of Immanuel Kant (Christman, 2009; Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000). Kant was concerned with deriving a moral law through one's own reasoning, rather than accepting an externally imposed (i.e. *heteronomous)* law, such as that of the church. Kant's notion of autonomy and reasoning was both universal and transcendental. Kant imagined that rationality stemmed from a true self or pure will untainted by experience, and that this rationality would lead to a universally accepted set of maxims[1]. As I will argue, this Kantian rationality underpins Marx's philosophy of freedom, and so is implicitly present in Tilzey's (and to a lesser extent van der Ploeg's) understanding of autonomy and cooperation. This is problematic because Kantian rationality and Marxian freedom are in some respects antithetical towards postmodern ideas embodied in agroecology.

More recent philosophical accounts of autonomy depart from Kant in a number of ways. Castoriadis, in responding to Kant, rejected the possibility of a transcendental rationality, instead emphasising

[1] Such as the categorical imperative: "Act only according to that maxim whereby you can, at the same time, will that it should become a universal law" (Kant, 1998, p. 31).

the fragmented nature of the human psyche and its capacity for radical creativity. In contrast to heteronomy as a condition where norms and institutions were seen to derive from non-human sources, Castoriadis saw autonomy as "capacity of society to collectively and continuously question and change its norms and institutions," which it could only successfully do so through direct forms of democracy (Garner, n.d.; Zografos, 2019, p. 155). Feminist philosophers in similar ways have emphasised the relational nature of the self and the will, while also challenging the underlying masculine idea of the self-made and self-sufficient person (Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000). Heteronomy in these perspectives has become a necessary condition of the self and social action. A similar account of social action has emerged in critical realism (Bhaskar, 1998b). In this thesis I rely on the critical realist view of how social and natural structures shape agency, while agency in turn both reproduces and transforms those structures. Agency is understood as a particularly human capacity to critically and consciously reflect on intentions and actions in the world (Bhaskar, 1998b; Tilzey, 2018). This relation between agency and structure offers a useful framework for understanding how autonomy is manifest in three different ways. The philosophical distinction between self-determination and freedom (Christman, 2018) usefully relates to structural mechanisms that modify the will (and ideology) and those that modify material possibilities (e.g. access to land) respectively. In turn, the possibility of reproducing and transforming social and natural structures as a *conscious* process (Bhaskar, 1998b) corresponds to a third sense of autonomy[2].

Understanding autonomy as self-determination, freedom and conscious control in the structure-agency relation helps to respond to a growing number of authors who have questioned the role of choice in farmers' adoption and non-adoption of agroecological practices. Firstly, when farmers appear to have a choice, they *do not* necessarily choose to practice agroecology (Castellanos-Navarrete & Jansen, 2018; Soper, 2020). Part of the explanation may be that structural mechanisms are socialising farmers into market-based responses, or that farmers are merely 'willing the inevitable' when they have few available options (Shucksmith & Herrmann, 2002). However, regarding such farmers as merely "misled by corporate capital" may deny farmers' more fundamental agency (Jansen, 2015, p. 224). In another sense, structural processes and subaltern positions very often compel farmers to practice farming in certain ways, including ways that appear agroecological (Bernstein, 2014; Jansen, 2015; Li, 2015). Again, this relates to the interplay between farmers' desires and ideologies, and their freedom (or lack thereof) to choose how to farm. To confront this, a second philosophical distinction can be made between *basic* and *ideal autonomy*

[2] This *ontological* framing in some ways reproduces a 'universally defined' sense of autonomy that Naylor (2017) criticises. However, as with critical realism more generally, it offers a highly flexible approach that can accommodate many different perspectives on autonomy, without assuming anything specific about the kinds of agents (individual or collective), structures or relations between them.

(Christman, 2018). Basic autonomy is essentially agency as defined above. Ideal autonomy is an aspiration under which self-determination, freedom and conscious control over structural conditions is maximised. Using this distinction is crucial to maintain respect for farmers' agency, while still challenging the structural mechanisms that (partially) determine how they think and act.

Autonomy is also used in relation to collective notions of agency – that of classes, communities, peoples and so on. Several authors for example have recently referred to 'food autonomy' as recovering a sense of food sovereignty more deeply connected to indigenous struggles for self-determination (Calderón Farfán et al., 2020; Grey & Patel, 2015). In this thesis, I primarily use the structure-agent approach to explore the autonomy of individuals and farming households. However, the approach is also useful for exploring how individual and collective agencies relate to one another. In particular, agents and structures may be related as *holons* – entities which are simultaneously wholes and parts (Bland & Bell, 2007; Koestler, 1967). A collective group can function as an agent, but it can also function as a structure with respect to its constituent parts. This allows for attending to how individual and household agency is related, particular in terms of the neglected intra-household dynamics of gender and generation in peasant autonomy (Agarwal, 2014). While van der Ploeg and Tilzey emphasise how individual and collective autonomy can be mutually supportive, they do not critically interrogate how they also come into conflict (Calvário, 2017; Iles & Montenegro de Wit, 2015).

1.4 Contribution and research questions

The above issues indicate a need to look at autonomy and agroecology more carefully, particularly in Europe. The combination of van der Ploeg's claims about European repeasantisation and agroecology, Tilzey's argument about the global distribution of alter- and counter-hegemonic movements, and the recognition of internal core-periphery divisions within Europe, makes a strong case for exploring alternative food networks (AFNs) in European peripheries. Also following van der Ploeg and Tilzey's debates over the peasant 'struggle for autonomy', I have made the case for incorporating a more theoretical (and philosophical) approach to autonomy as a concept. The critical realist structure-agency relation in particular serves to explore how autonomy relates to farming ideologies, practices, and possibilities of transformation.

Combining these, this thesis looks at the kinds of autonomy that alternative farmers have in Cornwall, UK and Calabria, Italy, and what this reveals about the kinds of agroecology that are emerging. Both Cornwall and Calabria are examples of European internal peripheries whose relations with core regions and states subject them to surplus appropriation and limited political control. Both regions (but particularly Calabria) have a legacy of small family farming, which is also

being renewed by back-to-the-land migrations. However, the regions also differ in their forms of local government and the strength of their 'local markets', with a strong tourism sector in Cornwall contrasting with a relative absence of non-agrarian sectors in Calabria. As I will argue, these conditions shape farmers' autonomy is shaped in particular ways. This brings me to the research questions:

RQ1 – What is the nature of farmers' autonomy in Calabria and Cornwall?

i) How are farmers' values socialised and self-determined?
ii) How much freedom do farmers have in relation to market imperatives?
iii) In what ways are farmers *consciously* reproducing and transforming food systems?

RQ2 – What does farmers' autonomy tell us about potential and emerging kinds of food sovereignty and agroecology in these regions and beyond?

i) How is this shaped by internal European core-periphery relations?
ii) To what extent does 'autonomy' help to illuminate current processes of agrarian change?

1.5 Outline

While this chapter has introduced the key ideas around agroecology and autonomy, I explore these in more detail in the following chapter. Chapter 2 provides a review of the relevant agroecology literature, beginning with an exploration of Tilzey's arguments for how the global structuring of capitalism conditions food and farming movements in different parts of the world. I then review existing uses of 'autonomy' in the agroecology and agrarian political economy/ecology literatures, elaborating on the distinction between political and biotechnical autonomy, and the problem of *choice* and agency in these debates. I outline the role of peasant and farmer subjectivity in capitalism, before finally using critical realism to outline autonomy as farmers' self-determination, freedom and ability to exercise conscious control over structural conditions.

Chapter 3 presents a conceptual framework and methodology, and a description of data collection and analysis. Following my conception of farmers' autonomy, I set out a framework that combines 'agency-centric research', critical realist methodology, and political economy and ecology. The chapter also details my positionality and access into the field, setting out why I chose Cornwall and Calabria as case studies, how I selected farmers within those, and how I conducted my data collection and analysis.

Chapter 4 introduces the two case study regions. It discusses internal core-periphery divides in Europe and the role of agricultural and regional development policy as 'flanking' measures. I then

explore the specific peripheralisation of Calabria and Cornwall, and discuss how these shape farming and food systems. I argue that both regions are predominantly agricultural, with much production oriented to national markets, and lack complementary non-agrarian sectors. Accordingly, both regions depend on transfers through European agricultural and regional development policy.

Chapter 5 introduces the sample of farms, and begins discussion of the findings. I describe the key class relations in the sample, which give rise to a categorisation of small capitalists, petty commodity producers and part-time farms. I then explore farmers' ideologies and values, looking at the major mechanisms of socialisation and self-determination. My findings broadly confirm Tilzey's arguments that most farmers hold an 'alter-hegemonic' ideology, but some can be described as 'sub-hegemonic' or 'counter-hegemonic'. I argue that attending to self-determination reveals that farmers' ideologies may nonetheless transcend their own class positions and interests.

Chapter 6 discusses farmers' freedom. It explores the extent to which farmers are insulated from market imperatives: to produce for the market, to compete and to accumulate. I explore how access to land, biotechnical autonomy, participation in markets and capital accumulation take place on these farms. While all farmers face an imperative to produce to varying degrees (much more so in Cornwall), this is navigated differently by sub-, alter- and counter-hegemonic ideologies. Market opportunities and quasi-monopolistic positions in AFNs signal both 'room for manoeuvre' for some farmers, but also growing dynamics of competition. While room for manoeuvre suggests there is no strong imperative to accumulate, rural depopulation also hinders 'labour-driven intensification'.

Chapter 7 explores the third aspect of autonomy, as the extent to which farmers are attempting to exercise control over their structural contexts. I contrast Tilzey and van der Ploeg's views on the state as a mechanism for social transformation. I argue that most farmers have little faith in state institutions (especially in Calabria), but some farmers in Cornwall are active in trying to influence local state bodies. I also explore the role of more horizontal forms of 'scaling-out' to increase numbers of alternative farms, but suggest that these are constrained by several factors, including the competitive dynamics revealed in Chapter 6.

Chapter 8 brings these findings together and formulates a response to the overarching research questions. I describe how farmers' relational autonomy involves maintaining flexible relations across multiple social and natural structures. I then discuss whether and how the distinct 'alter-hegemonic' and 'counter-hegemonic' framings might lead to increases in autonomy, arguing that the former is inherently blocked by its competitive dynamics. I discuss the implications of this for agroecology in these regions and Europe, before offering some reflections on the value of focusing on farmers' autonomy in these debates.

Chapter 9 offers some concluding remarks, and discusses whether and how a more radical counter-hegemonic trajectory might unfold. I suggest that such a trajectory requires more people in farming, the increasing social and sectoral articulation of rural communities, and a particular kind of 'agroecological autonomy'.

2 Literature Review

With the rise of the food sovereignty movement, peasant farming and agroecology have come increasingly under the spotlight. On the one hand, they are celebrated as the basis for a post-capitalist future, of a more just and ecologically sound agriculture and food system (McMichael, 2008; Smaje, 2020; van der Ploeg, 2014). On the other hand, critical perspectives deny the meaningful existence of a non-capitalist peasantry, instead regarding them as petty commodity producers and 'classes of labour' (Bernstein, 2014; Jansen, 2015). A more nuanced take on these debates is one that recognises that alterity and opposition in relation to capitalism take on different forms in different parts of the world. Several authors (Holt-Giménez & Shattuck, 2011; Tilzey, 2018) have pointed to how the global South is home to more radical variants of agroecology and food sovereignty, while less radical variants prevail in the global North:

> "While the 'progressives', who comprise in the main small and family commercial farms located differentially in the global North, advocate the localization and 'greening' of food production and consumption networks, the 'radicals' by contrast, who comprise in the main the subsistence peasantry and wage labourers (the 'classes of labour' according to Bernstein (2010)) located differentially in the global South, advocate social relational change through land redistribution and the re-gaining of appropriate access to the means of production" (Tilzey, 2018, p. 4).

This literature review begins by exploring the basis for this argument, and its implications for agroecology in Europe. I compare and contrast Tilzey's and van der Ploeg's accounts of the neoliberal food regime, in particular focusing on the relevance of national states. For Tilzey, drawing on Amin (1974, 1977), the legitimacy of capitalism in the global North (core) depends on the social and ecological exploitation of the global South (periphery). This exploitation, and the inability of peripheral states to 'articulate' and legitimate development processes, increases the likelihood of radical anti-capitalist food movements emerging. In Europe, however, the fracturing of the neoliberal compact and internal core-periphery divides raise questions about whether radical food movements might also be emerging within Europe, especially in its rural peripheries. A small number of studies suggest that more radical forms of agroecology are already present (Calvário, 2017; Wach, 2019).

I then discuss the growing prominence of 'autonomy' in agroecology and food sovereignty discourse. Existing research points to its widespread importance as a value for farmers, but also its diverse interpretations (Stock & Forney, 2014). Debates over what constitutes 'actual' autonomy turn in large part on how capitalism, farmers and the peasantry are understood. To help clarify these

debates, I argue that the political and biotechnical notions of autonomy should be distinguished, to allow the relationship between them to be explored more thoroughly. Doing so also highlights the role of farmers' *choices* in farming agroecologically or otherwise (Agarwal, 2014; Jansen, 2015; Soper, 2020).

Finally, I turn to a discussion of structure and agency as the basis for understanding autonomy, as well as the reproduction and potential transformation of capitalism. Here, Tilzey criticises McMichael's assertion of the peasant subject while denying the subjectivity (agency) of class fractions within and beyond the peasantry. I then offer my own critique of Tilzey's account of capitalism and autonomy, by showing how he offers two contradictory notions of agency – one grounded in social reflexivity and one that reduces agency to the pursuit of class interests. I argue instead that agency should be maintained as social reflexivity, but one which is conditioned by structure-agency relations as set out in critical realism. This gives rise to the three elements of an agency-centric autonomy that I discussed in the Introduction: self-determination, freedom ('room for manoeuvre'), and conscious control.

2.1 Conditioning autonomy: the neoliberal food regime

Both Tilzey and van der Ploeg frame contemporary global capitalism as *neoliberal*. Under neoliberalism, financial and transnational capital have become dominant class fractions, and have transformed the state in accordance with their own interests. This entails the ideological (but only partially actual) dominance of free markets and strong private property rights, along with a retreat of the state from ameliorating programmes.

However, Tilzey and van der Ploeg diverge in how they interpret the neoliberal world system, and capitalism more generally. Both authors draw on traditions of world system theory in which capitalism is seen as globalised relations of production, distribution and consumption. However, within these traditions there are divisions between those who emphasise the unity of world systems, and those who emphasise their internal heterogeneity. Stemming from Wallerstein's 'totality assumption' that the world system is defined by its (single) mode of production (Chase-Dunn & Hall, 1997; Wallerstein, 1974), both McMichael (2013) and van der Ploeg (2008)see neoliberalism as relatively totalising, universal and stable. Van der Ploeg draws on Hardt and Negri (2000) to describe the world system as *Empire.* In this view, "the decentralization of production and the consolidation of the world market, the international divisions and flows of labor and capital have fractured and multiplied so that it is no longer possible to demarcate large geographical zones as center and periphery" (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 335). For van der Ploeg, this Empire constitutes a coherent wider mode of ordering that imposes "literally everywhere *sets of generalized rules and parameters*" that

control, exploit and displace locally-specific practices (2008, p. 233 original emphasis). With respect to food and farming, Empire takes form as McMichael's (2013) 'corporate food regime', which not only suggests a relatively homogenous set of production relations, but also poses 'peasants' as a potentially homogenous counter-movement or opposition.

Tilzey (2017, 2018) critiques this perspective for seeing capitalism and neoliberalism as relatively undifferentiated sets of relations (and, as I discuss below, as 'hyperstructural'). He instead draws on dependency theory to argue that the global capitalist system remains differentiated and fragmented, and internal imperialist relations between cores and peripheries continue to shape very different capitalist structures in different places. Tilzey argues that *national* class composition and contestations continue to play, via the state as a 'social relation', a major differentiating role in global capitalism. States combine discursive ('authoritative') and material ('allocative') practices which, to varying degrees of success, serve to sustain the legitimacy of capitalism (Tilzey, 2018, pp. 146–152). However, using Amin's (1974, 1977) theory of underdevelopment, Tilzey argues that nations are differentially integrated into global capitalism[3], while states face different pressures and capabilities to resolve the contradictions that this entails. From this perspective, global capitalism is "authored by states, or more specifically, *by the hegemony of class fractions within hegemonic states*" (Tilzey, 2018, p. 149 original emphasis).

In contrast to an undifferentiated *Empire*, this hegemony sustains a 'profound divide' across the global North and South (Tilzey, 2018, p. 159). For Amin, writing in the 1970s, developed (core) countries enjoyed *sectoral articulation*, in terms of a high level of complementarity and even exchange across sectors (especially industry and agriculture). This served to "diffuse the benefits of progress throughout the economy", thereby bringing legitimacy to capitalist regimes of accumulation (Amin, 1974, p. 15). Today, however, states in the global North sustain legitimacy through a 'sustainable development' discourse and the allocation of credit, subsidies and cheap goods to non-capitalist *consumer* classes (Tilzey, 2018, pp. 158–159). While sectoral articulation no longer prevails, northern countries remain *socially articulated,* implying "a complementarity between the role of the labour force as producers and consumers, or a situation in which their role as consumers outweighs their significance as producers" (Tilzey, 2018, p. 186). Through this process, consumers come to perceive their interests as aligned with hegemonic classes of capital, thereby maintaining 'true hegemony' in the global North (Potter & Tilzey, 2005; Tilzey, 2018).

[3] Tilzey (2018, p. 105) notes that "Amin's mechanism of unequal development, like Lenin's thesis of capital export, was to come to full fruition only during the neoliberal era rather than during the 'age of empire'."

This social articulation however depends on an imperialistic relation between the core global North and the peripheral global South. While part of the function of the periphery historically was as an expanded *consumer* market for core capital, Tilzey argues that its dominant function in neoliberal capitalism is as a source of *production*. This relation is manifest as surplus transfers from the South to the North, in the form of cheap consumer goods, profit repatriation, and the 'accumulation by dispossession' of land and other natural resources[4]. In large part, the production of cheap goods is enabled by various forms of super-exploitation, linked to limited labour regulation and persisting 'non-capitalist' (semi-proletarian) relations. Thus production in the global South is characterised by dual forms of production[5], with capitalist production depending on non-capitalist production to sustain low wages and or subsidised forms of direct production (e.g. contract farming). Capitalist export sectors however remain largely disconnected from their localities, in terms of not being oriented to meet local needs (sectoral disarticulation) and constraining wages and repatriating profits (social disarticulation)[6]. These transfers of surplus also depend on, and serve the interests of, 'receptive' capital classes in the South, (Tilzey, 2018).

Meanwhile, transfers of food (specifically cereals) from the global North to the global South further reinforce disarticulation in the South, while serving to 'resolve' overproduction in the global North (Holt-Giménez & Shattuck, 2011; McMichael, 2013). The hegemonic North's structuring of inter-state institutions (especially the WTO) denies states in the global South the policy avenues to respond to both sectoral and social disarticulation. Instead, food transfers (as aid), NGOs, and a nominal expansion of representative democracy (while also limiting the state's role in governing markets and property) function as *insufficient* legitimating mechanisms. As a result, in contrast to the 'true hegemony' of the global North, dominance and coercion prevail (Tilzey, 2018, pp. 163, 179). In this way, Tilzey frames peripheralisation as a condition of imperialistic subordination, manifest chiefly as production for export (constituting also a key aspect of capitalism's metabolic rift). Within agriculture, more intensive and capitalist forms of production dominate this sector. However, they operate alongside and are integrated with non-capitalist forms of production, which serve to subsidise labour (semi-proletarian farming) or production directly (e.g. contract farming). Integration, but not necessarily leading to social articulation.

---

[4] Unlike historical primitive accumulation, these processes are not concerned with establishing a labour class, but merely with securing access to natural resources (see Tilzey 2017a: 174-5). As a consequence, capital often has no use for the people dispossessed in the process, not even as a labour reserve (Li, 2009).
[5] I.e. the distinction between 'modern' and 'traditional' sectors (Amin, 1974, p. 15).
[6] The extent of disconnection of the modern/export sectors varies from periphery to periphery. For much of the twentieth century, for example, peasant agriculture was extensively integrated into tropical export sectors, in crops such as coffee, cotton and cacao. However, with neoliberalism and the removal of state marketing boards, conditions for peasant forms of production have become less favourable (Daviron & Gibbon, 2002).

There are suggestions that, particularly since the 2008 food crisis, the neoliberal food regime is itself in crisis, raising the prospects of restructuring, reform, or transition to something else (Holt-Giménez & Shattuck, 2011; McMichael, 2013; Tilzey, 2018). The combination of actors seeking to stabilise the food regime and actors seeking to challenge it (as 'food movements') will determine the outcome of these processes (Holt-Giménez & Shattuck, 2011). The disarticulation and lack of legitimacy described above entails that the global South is the 'primary locus' of the crises of neoliberalism. As such, there "is an increased, immanent possibility for more popular forces to re-appropriate, or challenge, the state in re-assertions of national, or even post-national, sovereignty" (Tilzey, 2018, p. 161).

2.1.1 Radical agroecology and food sovereignty

These 'popular forces' however are themselves fragmented across various class fractions and accompanying ideological programmes. Domestic classes of capital (particularly those relatively detached from export sectors) favour a 'sub-hegemonic' re-assertion of 'neo-development', based on a populist re-articulation of national development and economic growth accompanied with some legitimating social programmes. By contrast, a 'counter-hegemonic' programme of 'post-development' and anti-capitalism emerges from the proletarian and middle and semi-proletarian peasantry (as classes of labour)[7]. These class fractions in the global South

> "…increasingly advocate a model of post-capitalist socio-ecological relations that challenges market dependence, asserts the state/nation as the key focus of, and medium for, emancipation, centred around sustainable, non- fossil- fuel-based production. More than this, however, these constituencies, and particularly indigenous people, are destabilizing assumptions about state-ness, seeking, as they are, the redistribution and de-concentration of power away from the state" (Tilzey, 2018, p. 239).

Returning to the global North, Tilzey also frames an 'alter-hegemonic' position. This is mainly made up of small and family commercial farms, including van der Ploeg's (2008) 'new peasantries'. While opposed to corporate forms of food and agriculture, this class fraction advocates the localisation and 'greening' of agriculture and 'sustainable consumption' through alternative food networks (AFNs). While embracing post-development aspects of agroecology and food sovereignty, this class fraction

[7] Both sub-hegemonic and counter-hegemonic movements in the global South constitute real threats to the present legitimating mode of regulation in the global North. However, Tilzey argues, neo-developmentalism does not explicitly challenge capitalism, and so can only reproduce its contradictory tendencies. At best, it can sustain a temporary movement to re-articulate national production, but would be continually threatened by global commodity prices and the breakdown of a "compact between national capital fractions and the urban proletariat" (Tilzey, 2018, p. 162).

remains ‘capitalist’, in the sense of being oriented to and dependent on markets (Tilzey, 2018, pp. 169, 237). These farmers continue to be integrated into ‘true hegemony’, as discussed above, through access to the allocative disbursements of the state (especially in Europe via the Common Agricultural Policy, CAP) and through its authoritative discourse of ‘sustainable development’. While alter-hegemonic fractions may achieve a degree of autonomy in relation to neoliberalism, they have not done so in relation to capitalism (Tilzey, 2018, p. 170). Tilzey here emphasises the production side, but the ‘alter-hegemonic’ position is also aligned with a more consumer-focused ‘food justice’ discourse addressing how class and race shape uneven access to food (Holt-Giménez & Shattuck, 2011).

For Tilzey then, different gradations of radicalism emerge through structural conditions related to class (or class fragment) positions, positions in global divisions of production and consumption, and the legitimating functions and capabilities of the state. As such, particular ideological framings are bundled together with specific class (and geographical) positions to divide out ‘sub-hegemonic’, ‘alter-hegemonic’ and ‘counter-hegemonic’ fractions of opposition to the current food regime. Particularly the latter two class-ideology bundles are associated with agroecology and food sovereignty. This brings us back to the contestations over agroecology and food sovereignty that I raised in the introduction.

While historically associated with a ‘progressive’ (alter-hegemonic) framing, agroecology is both becoming more political and more mainstream, leading to important choices for agroecologists between ‘reformist and radical versions’ (Bellamy & Ioris, 2017; Holt-Giménez & Altieri, 2013). The more reformist version strips agroecology of its political content and counter-hegemonic potential, making it compatible with new ‘green revolution’ agendas (Holt-Giménez & Altieri, 2013). In terms of Gliessman’s (2016) five levels, this kind of agroecology remains concerned with shifting farm level-practices, such as using inputs more efficiently or switching to less harmful inputs. Similarly while food sovereignty often aims to ‘re-territorialize’ power away from the state (Trauger, 2014), it is also increasingly deployed by states as a populist and sub-hegemonic form of neo-development (Tilzey, 2019a). These co-opted approaches to food sovereignty and agroecology often strip agroecology of its political and anti-statist elements. By contrast, more radical and transformative approaches of agroecology remain wedded to the idea that political economic systems remain key shapers of the sustainability of food and farming – thus serving as barriers to, and potential instruments of, food system transformation (C. R. Anderson et al., 2021; González de Molina, 2013). As I discuss below, Tilzey argues that only the counter-hegemonic framing of agroecology and food sovereignty offers a plausible route beyond capitalism. In any case, only by attending to the variegated forms of resistance and ‘balance of forces within food movements’ can we begin to identify what is

potentially transformational and/or post-capitalist (Holt-Giménez & Shattuck, 2011, p. 113; Tilzey, 2018, p. 153). Despite the divisions between the alter- and counter-hegemonic positions and ideologies, there may also be room for cross-class alliances in food movements (Holt-Giménez & Shattuck, 2011).

2.1.2 Europe and radical agroecology

Following from Tilzey's argument, Europe's position in the global North remains deeply relevant to exploring its emergent forms of agroecology. Europe, via CAP, sustains the legitimacy of the neoliberal food regime among most farmers. CAP itself has become increasingly 'bi-polar', aiming to adapt to a neoliberal logic of accumulation (farmers as entrepreneurs) while responding to its social and environmental contradictions (subsidies for 'post-productivist' and multifunctional agriculture). Tilzey argues that this alter-hegemonic post-productivist agriculture is what van der Ploeg and others (van der Ploeg et al., 2019; Alexander Wezel & Bellon, 2018) identify as agroecology in Europe.

On the other hand, Europe's position and homogeneity as a global core is weakening, particularly through the rise of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS), and its own internal political tensions. Growing anti-European sentiment, resurgent nationalism (exemplified by Brexit), and uneven development also point to instability in the neoliberal compact in Europe (Magone et al., 2016). In this context, the core-periphery divides *within* Europe are becoming more important, bringing into question the 'true hegemony' of capitalism. This is particularly true of rural peripheries, which are not only peripheries of urban centres but also of other core regions and countries. The basic qualities of the core-periphery relations at the global scale are also present in Europe, albeit less pronounced. These include transfers of surplus value from peripheries to cores, partially integrated capitalist export sectors, the roll-out of pseudo-democratic reforms (devolution[8]), the transformation of peripheral regions into leisure spaces, and the uneven material allocation of state subsidies (including CAP and rural development programmes). Similarly, the persistence of semi-proletarian and petty commodity producing classes in these peripheries (especially, as we will see, in Calabria) raise questions about whether more radical forms of agroecology and food sovereignty might find currency. However, these relations continue to exist within the wider context of Europe's relatively core position on the global scale. As such, peripheral regions within Europe are *internal* peripheries with respect to core states and the supranational state of the EU, and they are also 'semi-peripheries' in the sense of relating to other geographies both as cores and as peripheries

[8] I use the term 'devolution' in this thesis to refer to the general idea of governance shifting down from higher to lower levels. I will discuss some of the ambiguities of this for Cornwall and Calabria in Chapter 4.

(Roca et al., 2017). The changing function of state institutions at the supranational, national, and regional level within Europe also shape the nested quality of peripheralisation and the possibility of counteracting 'flanking measures'. In a broad sense however, these regions remain partly integrated into the legitimising dynamics that Tilzey describes.

Europe of course has a history of radical social movements, many of which have been shaped by conditions of internal core-periphery relations (Roca et al., 2017). While the European countryside is increasingly associated with 'right-wing populism', there are also suggestions that food sovereignty may offer a more progressive alternative (Mamonova & Franquesa, 2020). Tilzey (2018) has suggested that counter-hegemonic positions may become more common in Europe, and especially its peripheries, with the advance of neoliberal austerity. However, food sovereignty in the global North faces additional challenges:

> "First, to 'visibilize' and 'de-reify' the 'imperial mode of living'; second, to avoid co-optation into the material rewards of consumerism and the ideological obfuscations of nationalism (for example, Brexit and Trumpism); and, third and perhaps most important, to address the immense structural constraints presented by deeply entrenched private property rights, the separation of the citizen majority from the means of livelihood, and the commodification of those means of livelihood (notably land) such that they are unavailable other than to a wealthy few" (Tilzey, 2019b, p. 211).

As briefly mentioned in the Introduction, Wach (2019) attends to some of these dynamics in her study of the Scottish uplands. She emphasises the dual character of Scotland as an early internal periphery of the UK which later came to benefit from the UK's core position on the global scale. Scotland's peripheral position is in large part characterised by export-oriented sheep production. This orientation is shaped by the interests of capital, specifically because of the high labour-productivity of livestock farming, and is maintained by an apparently ecological, but actually discursive, view that the uplands are only suitable for grazing. This adverse integration of Scotland has historically been legitimated by the introduction of crofting and more recently through the post-productivist framings of the CAP. However, as Wach observes, payments to designated 'less favoured areas', such as the uplands, tend to be much less than in areas considered more productive. Partly in response to these conditions, a counter-hegemonic land reform movement has achieved some success through new legislation that allows communities preferential rights to land ownership. While community ownership of land remains premised on land as a commodity (i.e. it must be purchased from its private owners), and agricultural policy still remains relatively sub-hegemonic or hegemonic, it represents a considerable achievement.

Similarly Calvário (2017) explores the experience and impact of a 'counter-hegemonic' peasant organisation in the Basque Country[9]. She explores the case of EHNE-Bizkaia, a member organisation of La Via Campesina, which seeks to bridge the political and economic interests of small farmers and 'popular' consumer classes through a food sovereignty discourse. While promoting agroecology to its members and encouraging new entrants into farming, the organisation also tries to politicise and mobilise its membership base. This includes promoting critical thought about capitalist structures and food sovereignty. However, Calvário finds that the practical challenges farmers face (especially linked to land access, viability, time, and generalised commodity relations) constrain their participation and engagement with the political and state-oriented struggles of the organisation. This echoes Ribot (2014, pp. 695–696), who argues that the possibilities of emancipation depend on "sufficient wealth beyond mere subsistence to enable the individual, household, group or community to walk away from daily labor long enough to engage in shaping the political economy."

These studies suggest then that more counter-hegemonic forms of agroecology and food sovereignty *may* be emerging in European peripheries, but that they also face practical constraints. I return to discuss core-periphery relations in Europe further in Chapter 4, where I explore the specific forms they take in Calabria and Cornwall.

2.2 Autonomy and agroecology

> "…the concept of autonomy is sometimes conflated with one particular conception of autonomy and its attendant conceptions of choice and rights. The most obvious example is the caricature of individual autonomy as exemplified by the self-sufficient, rugged male individualist, rational maximizing chooser of libertarian theory." (Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000, p. 5)

'Autonomy' has been a term of relevance to agroecology and food sovereignty since at least the 1980s. 'Food autonomy' appeared alongside early uses of 'food sovereignty' in Costa Rica in 1988. Around the same time, scientists were identifying 'autonomy' as an important element of agroecosystem analysis (Conway, 1987; Edelman, 2014; Marten, 1988). Since these early framings, autonomy has been used to refer to a *political* concept of emancipation, linked to class and indigenous struggles, and to a *biotechnical* concept concerning material and information flows across system boundaries (Jansen, 2015; Magne et al., 2019)[10]. While both concepts are fundamental to agroecology, neither van der Ploeg nor Tilzey make the distinction explicit. As such,

[9] While Calvário deploys the same Gramscian terminology as Tilzey, she does not draw on his work directly.
[10] Magne et al. refer to these as 'decisional' and 'biotechnical' autonomy. I have opted for labelling the 'decisional' as 'political', reflecting the extent to which it addresses and challenges the farm's position and relations in wider society.

their arguments at times seem to implicitly assume that autonomy in the biotechnical sense leads to autonomy in the political sense.

While political and biotechnical autonomy occupy a central place in agroecology and food sovereignty, they remain only part of the picture. There are many other lenses, such as a struggle for rights (Patel, 2009), that while clearly related to autonomy serve to elucidate other aspects of these movements. For farmers too, and other agents, autonomy may be only one value or dimension among many. As the quote from Bernstein (2014, p. 1050) in the Introduction suggests, it is not clear that all farmers everywhere are 'driven by the desire for autonomy'. Political autonomy nonetheless serves as something of a 'meta-value' in that it concerns the extent to which people are able to develop and realise other values *autonomously.*

2.2.1 Political autonomy

As I suggested in the Introduction, most uses of the term 'autonomy' are inadequately theorised. I elaborate my own theoretical framework further below, in which political autonomy concerns the scope of agency – of increasing the self-determination of the will, the freedom to act, and the possibility of conscious control over structural conditions. This framing captures, and (as I will argue) goes beyond, much of the current use of the term in agroecology and food sovereignty. As above, the term autonomy has a longer historical association with agroecology and food sovereignty, but I am confining myself here to a discussion of the more recent and influential uses of the term. These have emerged since the mid-late 2000s, through Pionetti's (2005) *Sowing Autonomy* and van der Ploeg's (2008) *The New Peasantries*.

Pionetti (2005) used Ivan Illich's distinctive approach to autonomy to explore seed saving and production in India. Illich's (1975, 1976) approach is unusual in that he used autonomy and heteronomy to describe two distinctive spheres of the economy and society. On the one hand, autonomy refers primarily to self-provisioning, small-scale artisanal production, and/or ways of provisioning beyond the market. On the other hand, *heteronomy* exists under a 'radical monopoly' of commodity relations and industrial production, especially for certain products and services. For Illich, a radical monopoly is heteronomous for *both* producers and consumers. Consumers have no choice but to purchase the standard, industrial product, while the use of the product itself demands surrendering oneself and one's activities to be managed by 'professionals'. For producers, the technical and class nature of industrial production reduced the labour process to a kind of slavery. But what is really distinctive about Illich is that instead of calling for an end to the heteronomous sector, he made the case for "a synergistic relation between the heteronomous and autonomous modes of production, aiming at the utmost expansion of the sphere of autonomy" (Gorz, 1982, p.

96). Pionetti used Illich's work to explore how industrial and commercial production of seed was becoming dominant in India, at the expense of women's traditional seed saving practices. However, following Illich, Pionetti recognised the value of combining the industrial and traditional seed systems, while arguing for more support for the latter. Pionetti's use of Illich's particular notion of autonomy has not been taken up widely elsewhere, although, as I suggest in the conclusion, it may be a useful way to explore the future relation between agriculture and industry.

More than anyone else, van der Ploeg has placed autonomy at the centre of current debates over agroecology. He defined the peasant condition as "the ongoing struggle for autonomy and progress in a context characterized by multiple patterns of dependency and associated processes of exploitation and marginalization" (2008, p. xiv). He articulated autonomy as the freedom *from* harsh relations of exploitation and the freedom *to* farm in alignment with farmers' own 'interests and prospects'. He also uses the closely related term, 'room for manoeuvre' which implies "a degree of power, as manifested in the possibility of exerting some control, prerogative, authority and capacity for action, be it frontstage or backstage, for flickering moments or for more sustained periods" (van der Ploeg, 2008, p. 71).

In class terms for van der Ploeg, autonomy implies constantly striving to reach the middle ground in the differentiating tug-of-war between accumulation and proletarianization (van der Ploeg, 2013, p. 62). This entails access to and improvement of a 'self-controlled resource base', a degree of distancing from markets (both in general and from specific markets), self-provisioning, various kinds of cooperation, and 'co-production between man and nature' (van der Ploeg, 2008, 2013). The totality of agricultural practice is framed as a kind of peasant resistance[11]. More recently, van der Ploeg has reframed autonomy as a push to regain control over the labour process and surplus value on farms[12]. Since the 1950s and 60s European farmers have steadily lost control to "a web of increasingly interconnected institutions that specify how the farm is to be operated." Through agroecology and other novel practices, peasants attempt:

> "to move the production, processing, distribution and consumption of food (plus the preservation of biodiversity, the maintenance of scenic landscapes, the accessibility of the countryside, etc.) *beyond the limits imposed by capital and, by doing so, to relocate farming*

[11] Between the heroic and mundane scales of Eric Wolf and James Scott respectively, it "passes through the fields, barn yards and cowsheds, through the many decisions over cattle breeding, seed selection, irrigation and labour input" (van der Ploeg, 2008, p. 32). See also Bernstein (2014, p. 1039), Schneider and Niederle (2010), and Naylor (2017) on autonomy and resistance as embodied in practice. I return to this in Chapter 7.
[12] This notion is closer to that put forward by autonomist Marxism, particularly Negri's idea of 'self-valorisation' (Harrison, 2011).

> *(further) outside domains that are directly controlled by capital*" (van der Ploeg, 2020, p. 20 original emphasis).

Crucially, van der Ploeg (2008) also identifies autonomy more explicitly in biotechnical terms as 'degrees of systemness'. I discuss the meaning of this more below, but it places biotechnical autonomy on a spectrum opposite integration with, and dependency on, the external context.

Other authors have responded to van der Ploeg's work, including by introducing a distinction between 'false' and 'actual' autonomy. Emery (2015) has shown how farmers in England conflate independence with individualism. By perceiving other farmers as competitors, they fail to recognise how they are dependent on and controlled by economic structures. Instead, 'actual independence' (i.e. autonomy) requires critically reflecting on the ideological basis of their actions. Through this process, Emery argues, cooperation and interdependence should become the basis on which autonomy is realised.

For Stock and Forney (2014, p. 161) autonomy is a tool that people use to "maintain, adapt and express one's sense of self regard as a farmer." It plays a role in both negotiating identity and expressing agency, in relation to others, to nature, to the economy, particularly in a complex and changing farming context. In a way that chimes with Emery's notion of actual autonomy, they suggest that by "farming in a way that privileges the wholeness of self, rather than succumbing to the destructive tendencies of neoliberal selfhood, the farming self strives for agricultural dignity in a world defined by commodification" (Stock & Forney, 2014, p. 169).

In related work, Stock et al. (2014) further develop these ideas through an exploration of different cooperatives in England, Switzerland, New Zealand, and Brazil. They also identify a false 'neoliberal autonomy' in which an individual "is 'free' to choose whether to destroy, protect or enhance the natural environment according to the specific and wider [economic] costs and benefits of doing so" (Stock et al., 2014, p. 413). By contrast, drawing on Illich and Marx's critique of bourgeois freedom, 'actual autonomy' emphasises the mutuality of identification and work, and the rejection of capitalism and commodity exchange.

Finally, responding to the above, Tilzey (2017) argues that van der Ploeg's notion of autonomy is grounded in a Polanyian, rather than Marxian, understanding of capitalism. As a result of van der Ploeg and McMichael's hyperstructuralist account of capitalism (see below), they replicate the idea of a Polanyian 'double movement' in the agency of peasants and other citizens. This populist framing allows them to imagine that a generalised 'society' (or multitude in Hardt and Negri's terms) can subordinate markets to its collective interests. For Tilzey however, it is a Marxian understanding that

reveals that transforming the social relations of class and property is necessary to achieve 'actual' autonomy. Unlike Emery, he identifies the problem of individualism not only in ideology, but in the material basis of capitalism. Capitalism generates commodification of subsistence, differentiation of the peasantry and the alienability of land in ways that create generalised competition between farmers. As such, Tilzey argues that 'actual' autonomy as 'strong' or 'unconstrained cooperation', is only attainable with a reversal of primitive accumulation and an end to the alienability of land.

2.2.1.1 Collective autonomy

These debates seem chiefly concerned with the autonomy of farmers as *individuals* (or perhaps farming households). However, agency and autonomy can be manifest at multiple scales. While the above authors almost all posit a strong role for cooperation and collectivism in attaining individual autonomy, many complexities in that are under-explored (Agarwal, 2014). Individuals are enabled *and* constrained by cooperative and collective structures, including relatively democratic ones (Godfrey-Wood & Mamani-Vargas, 2017). Collective notions of agency address both how collective consciousness emerges, while also creating new ways for agents to shape wider contextual conditions (M. White, 2017, 2018). In some ways, the emphasis on cooperation is more fully realised in discussions concerning collective autonomy. Collective framings of the self in agroecology span households, communities, indigenous peoples, nations, territories and the peasantry as a class.

Food sovereignty in particular seems to emphasise higher levels of collectivity. Its early origins were in large part linked to ideas of national sovereignty, and a return to this can be seen as the term is co-opted by 'neo-developmental' projects, as discussed above (Edelman, 2014; Tilzey, 2018). However, 'food sovereignty' has also fundamentally questioned national, state and even territorial bases of sovereignty (Iles & Montenegro de Wit, 2015; Trauger, 2014). This connects food sovereignty to wider considerations of autonomy in geography. This includes raising questions about how collective agency is formed democratically, and criticisms of liberal state-centric representative democracy. Indeed, the normative inclination towards localisation and decentralisation in food sovereignty pushes below the state towards the sovereignty of sub- and cross-national regions, nations and communities. At the same time, capitalism itself is understood as enacted at multiple levels, and food sovereignty necessarily responds to these with its own set of multiple and relational scales (Iles & Montenegro de Wit, 2015).

'Food autonomy' has recently been used to capture the specific issues of food sovereignty as they relate to indigenous contexts and anti-colonial struggles. Calderón Farfán et al. (2020, p. 1) have defined food autonomy as "the collective human right to independently control their food process according to its traditions, practices, customs, needs, and strategic perspectives in harmony with

other human groups, the environment, and future generations". The need for a distinct term seems to stem from the popularisation of food sovereignty, linked at least in part to its widespread adoption across different contexts and agendas globally. Food autonomy is also linked particularly to the struggles of non-state and stateless collective groups. Crucially, indigenous struggles for autonomy and sovereignty are not expressed in purely abstract terms, but are fundamentally connected with practices and traditions that attach these ideas to specific places (Grey & Patel, 2015). Here, *ontonomy* usefully refers to a generalised set of endogenous and traditional norms that exist within an indigenous community or culture. That community or culture may develop its norms *autonomously*, especially through traditional decision-making mechanisms, but may also be subject to *heteronomous* impositions of norms from others outside the community (i.e. through colonialism and imperialism, but also more subtle processes of socialisation) (Esteva, 2015, 2019; Gonzales, 2015)[13].

Although diverse, the above accounts of individual and collective autonomy share much in common[14]. There is a strong emphasis on the freedom to realise one's own values or those of the community, and being free of relations of exploitation and dependency. In this way, both individual and collective notions of autonomy emphasise the formation and scope for exercising different kinds of agency. In particular, autonomy from the structures of capitalism and imperialism seems to be an over-riding focus. What is also crucial is that autonomy is presented at times as something one *has*, and at other times something one is *struggling for*. As I have already suggested, the practice of agroecology – as biotechnical autonomy – is framed as an important strategy for enabling and expanding the political autonomy discussed above.

2.2.2 Biotechnical autonomy

Without making a clear distinction, van der Ploeg (2008) aligns peasants' struggles for political autonomy with autonomy as '*degrees of systemness*'. Autonomy in this sense is the opposite of material, energy and informational integration with other (including higher-level) systems. Such autonomy is necessarily partial and multi-dimensional, and an agroecosystem may be autonomous in some activities or flows, while being highly integrated in others (Magne et al., 2019; Marten, 1988). In this 'biotechnical' sense, agroecology entails a process of reducing dependency on external inputs, increasing the internal re-cycling of energy and materials, orienting production towards the

[13] This relation between community and outside norms is not dissimilar to the relation between vernacular modes of life which have been "muscled into the shadows by an expanding techno-scientific economy" (Samuel, 2016, p. 318).
[14] The emergence of social structures from individuals is broadly analogous with the emergence of mind from the brain (Sawyer, 2001), thereby allowing a broad commensurateness of the autonomy of individuals with the autonomy of collectives.

reproductive needs of the farm, and strengthening the resource base (Magne et al., 2019; Rosset & Altieri, 1997; van der Ploeg, 2008, 2010).

In these accounts, the agroecosystem can be understood as something like an input/output system, with autonomy reflecting the extent to which a farm can supply its own energy and nutrients (Tellarini & Caporali, 2000, p. 116). A more political economic framing sees the agroecosystem as linked to various 'circuits of reproduction'; those within the farm itself ('self-provisioning'), and those which circulate beyond it as either commodity or non-commodity relations (van der Ploeg, 2010). Agroecological practice increases the extent to which the internal circuit of reproduction is relied on. This is achieved through functionally-integrated biodiversity (e.g. 'endogenous' pest management), nutrient cycling (e.g. composting), fixing atmospheric nitrogen (e.g. legumes in crop rotations), and using ecological processes to better exploit soil nutrient reserves (e.g. mycorrhizal fungi to improve phosphorous availability) (Rosset & Altieri, 2017; Vandermeer, 1995; Vandermeer et al., 2010). These practices are mainly developed through mimicking place-specific natural ecosystems and traditional/indigenous agroecosystems that have evolved over long periods of time, adapting to specific local conditions and available local resources (Altieri, 2002; Gliessman, 2005, p. 108)[15].

These framings of biotechnical autonomy usually emphasise energy and nutrients, but another key element in the process is *labour*. The typical notion of the peasant as a subsistence farmer relates to the orientation of production to meet the farm's own food needs. *Self-sufficiency* then has a particular position within the more general self-provisioning of reproductive resources. Importantly, self-sufficiency in practice may involve a combination of both satisfying diverse needs, and being satisfied with fewer needs (Bosman, 2015). Labour is also particularly relevant because it is frequently mobilised through or deployed in off-farm 'circuits of reproduction'. How labour is reproduced, mobilised and deployed *across the farm boundary* forms perhaps one of the most contentious aspects of peasant theory (Bernstein, 2010; van der Ploeg, 2010). However, labour is also central because attaining biotechnical autonomy via the above practices often requires more labour (Rosset & Altieri, 2017; van der Ploeg, 2013). This is particularly so when agroecology and reducing inputs entails reducing dependencies on fossil fuels (van der Ploeg, 2020).

A third sense of biotechnical autonomy which is often under-emphasised is the extent to which 'capital' is itself formed within the farm's own 'circuit of reproduction'. On the farm, capital here refers to "the house and other farm buildings, the land, the many improvements made to it (roads,

[15] A related framing equates agroecosystem autonomy with resilience, or the capacity or self-(re)organize, particularly in response to external changes and shocks (Xu & Mage, 2001).

canals, wells, terraces, increased soil fertility, etc.), the animals, the available genetic material (seeds, a sire), the machinery, the available traction power (of whatever kind)" (van der Ploeg, 2013, p. 24). This capital then is in some ways distinct from resources which are 'used up' in each production cycle. For van der Ploeg (2008, 2013), much of this capital is not acquired through the market (although some of it is), but formed on the farm as part of 'labour-driven intensification'.

Biotechnical autonomy then refers to the extent to which the farm is able to reproduce and develop its own nutrient, energy, labour and capital, without recourse to external systems. The form and degree of biotechnical autonomy may be described as more or less radical. While the farm remains integrated into wider agroecosystems, it may reduce its degree of integration in specific ways, as Gliessman's (2016) five levels of agroecology indicate. In terms of farm practices, farmers may reduce their consumption of conventional inputs by using them more efficiently (level 1), switch to using alternative and renewable practices or inputs (level 2), or redesign their agroecosystems to utilise ecological processes (level 3). A more radical degree of biotechnical autonomy then in large part depends on the degree of on-farm diversification, which enables "the provisioning of all the resources required for the unit of production (as opposed to the unit of consumption)" (van der Ploeg, 2010, p. 6)[16]. In practice, agroecological farming is often expected to meet the agroecosystem's reproductive needs while continuing to export surplus. In this sense, van der Ploeg's idea of agroecology is more concerned with reducing integration on the input side than on the output side (Wach, 2019)[17].

As with political autonomy, biotechnical autonomy can also be applied to higher level agroecosystems – ranging from landscape agroecosystems to foodsheds to local and national food systems. Importantly, agency itself can play the determining role in deciding which boundaries are the most relevant (Bland & Bell, 2007), while the scale of agroecosystems also shapes which kinds of agency are relevant (Preston et al., 2015). Although the term 'autonomy' is less frequently used here, the implications are much the same, pointing to self-sufficiency and reducing external dependencies (Barraclough & Utting, 1987; Clapp, 2017; Zasada et al., 2019). White (2018) also uses the term 'economic autonomy' to refer to building and using economic systems which are partially independent from more oppressive and dominant systems, including through biotechnical autonomy or networks of reciprocity (see below), as a key strategy for developing collective forms of

---

[16] This framing seems to imply that reproducing the means of production takes priority over meeting the subsistence needs of labour (self-sufficiency), which is a more common framing of peasant production (Bernstein, 2010). Self-sufficiency may often refer to the immediate production of subsistence needs, while buying in reproductive inputs (e.g. animal feed) (e.g. Seymour, 1976).

[17] Notably some 'agroecological' practices, if combined with the on-going export of produce, may still lead to soil depletion (Smaje, 2020).

agency 'Articulation' and 'multifunctionality' may also refer to the integration of diverse activities at both farm and regional level (Marsden & Sonnino, 2008; Tilzey, 2018; van der Ploeg, 2020). Ultimately, the variability of scale speaks to the inherent integration of every farm and agroecosystem into higher level processes (Bland & Bell, 2007).

Agroecology as biotechnical autonomy can be associated with sustainability and the 're-articulation' of economy and ecology, particularly through repairing metabolic rifts. Marx's notion of the metabolic rift emphasised how the movement of agriculture goods from country to town undermined soil fertility. Capitalist relations and the profit motive enlarged this movement, including by stimulating long-distance trade, which makes the rift 'irreparable' (Foster, 1999). The core-periphery trade relations discussed above then play a central role in reproducing these rifts. *Resolving* metabolic rifts concerns both shifting farm practices and the wider organisation of labour in society, including reducing the 'distancing' of production and consumption decisions that sunder ecological and social feedback loops (Princen, 1997; M. Schneider & McMichael, 2010). The association between agroecological biotechnical autonomy and resolving these rifts is not inherent however, but depends on the balance of inputs, internal reproduction and outputs, as well as the possibilities of nutrient/energy cycles at higher-levels of aggregation (Jansen, 2015; Tellarini & Caporali, 2000). Similarly, as González de Molina (2013, p. 51) argues, the realisation of sustainability depends not only on technical practices, but "a profound change in the institutional framework" in order to support them. While biotechnical autonomy may be attained at higher levels, this may nonetheless entail the formation of localised metabolic rifts. Accordingly, a sustainable vision of biotechnical autonomy calls for localising food systems "as far as is possible and effective, but no further" (Chappell, 2015, p. 727).

Biotechnical autonomy, as I have outlined it here, can play a role in the struggle for political autonomy as a non-commodity circuit of reproduction. Both van der Ploeg and Tilzey, in effect, maintain this kind of logic, albeit to varying degrees. They each emphasise different aspects of biotechnical autonomy. Van der Ploeg, as with many advocates of agroecology, sees input reduction as a strong basis for more political autonomy. Tilzey, by contrast, is more concerned with how relations in labour and output markets continue to impose imperatives on farmers. By making the different aspects of biotechnical autonomy more explicit, it is possible to see how each set of relations can enable and constrain farmers.

Ultimately however, how farms mobilise and deploy resources beyond the farm is also crucial. Here, van der Plog (2008, pp. 48–49) emphasises networks of reciprocity as one means of mobilising resources beyond the market. Similarly, more ambiguous combinations of commodity and non-

commodity relations may enhance political autonomy. These include AFNs as 'embedded', 'nested' or 'vernacular' markets (Chappell, 2016; Samuel, 2016; van der Ploeg et al., 2012), the ambiguities of which are relevant throughout chapters 5-8. Also crucially, biotechnical autonomy is related to, but distinct from the circulation of *value and surplus* within the farm and local economy. Financial flows remain of central importance in the context of generalised commodity relations, and establish the reproduction of farming as a matter of 'economic viability'. While financial flows may be attached to material flows, they are so unevenly. Surplus appropriation for example may occur as profit, interest and uneven terms of trade, while farmers may also receive income through 'multifunctionality' or 'pluriactivity' which do not necessarily entail material transfers.

2.2.3 Agency, autonomy and the problem of choice

As I pointed out, most discussions of autonomy in agroecology do not distinguish between the political and biotechnical senses. I have made a deliberate point to do so in order to draw out how the two relate. In particular, agroecology encompasses an argument that farms, communities and other groups can enhance their political autonomy by increasing their biotechnical autonomy. There are compelling reasons to think this is so, especially in the multitude of ways capitalism extends its control over farms via material dependencies. However, as Jansen (2015, p. 224) says, "the intrinsic link between social movement struggles and the promotion of low external input farming based on local resources should be up for debate". By making the distinction here, I am forcing the question of when and where this link holds, and how else farmers might struggle for and attain autonomy.

A growing body of research points to how many farmers *choose* to engage in practices that are not agroecological[18]. Instead, farmers frequently *desire* to sustain or even deepen their commodity relations and input-dependent practices (Castellanos-Navarrete & Jansen, 2018; Jansen, 2015; Li, 2015; Soper, 2020). On one hand, there are problems with unambiguously labelling these as decisions and choices without detailing how they are structurally shaped – and in particular the 'epistemic blindness' that emerges within conventional framings of farming and agriculture (J. Nelson & Stock, 2018). On the other hand, these examples are used to counter the dismissal of non-agroecological and market-oriented farmers as mere "cultural dupes" (Emery, 2015, p. 60) who are "misled by corporate capital" (Jansen, 2015, p. 224). There is a considerable risk that, by subsuming biotechnical and political autonomy within a single concept, the basic agency of farmers is denied in the process (Castellanos-Navarrete & Jansen, 2018). Magne et al. (2019, p. 47) for example, point to

[18] It is also necessary to pay attention to the hardship and uncertainty that often prevails in actual situations of self-provisioning (Li, 2015).

research that perceives political autonomy (as 'decisional autonomy') as a barrier to achieving biotechnical autonomy.

A similar problem arises in that practices identified as agroecological may not emerge out of farmers' agency, but may instead be the product of structural conditions. Bernstein (2006) points to how the recourse to subsistence may be a compulsion arising from the failure of capital to integrate an increasingly but still partially dispossessed peasantry in the global South. Soper (2020) shows how meeting certification and market demands in the global North is one of the factors driving partially agroecological production of quinoa in Ecuador. In other cases, self-sufficiency and subsistence relations with particular resources have frequently been imposed by state regulation (Murton et al., 2016). Van der Ploeg (2008, p. 272) too emphasises that "there are millions who have no alternative" to being peasants (van der Ploeg, 2008, p. xiv). Tilzey (2018, p. 73) has also pointed out how crop-rotations – now a mainstay of agroecological practice – were developed in response to pressures generated by emergent capitalism, while the profit motive continues to explain the practice today (Kasu et al., 2019). Similarly, debates over agricultural intensification and involution revolve around how the availability (and relative prices) of different production factors often seems to determine how they are used, even in relatively 'traditional' or peasant agricultural sectors (Martinez-Alier, 1995; Stone & Downum, 1999; B. White, 1983).

These issues go to the heart of what agroecology and food sovereignty can be, and how capitalist structures and farmers' agency interact. Agarwal (2014, p. 1249), for example, has pointed out how food sovereignty's democratic principles may contradict its specific vision for how farming should operate. Part of what is at issue is that self-provisioning, independence and autonomy are tightly bound up with ideological baggage. These ideologies not only compromise how farmers perceive the world, but can also blind researchers to the underlying origins and connotations of the terms they use. Since at least Aristotle's time for example, use-value has been seen as more 'natural' than exchange-value, and this perspective has been carried largely unmodified through Marx and Illich's attitudes towards the market. For Illich (1975, p. 24), the status of being reduced to a consumer was degrading – and this structured his view of self-provisioning as more autonomous. Similarly, the view of subsistence production as more 'traditional' stems from a European misreading of North American indigenous practices, in which self-provisioning and commercial exchange were often integrated aspects of the same activity (M. J. Hathaway, 2016). In another sense, the masculine ideal of autonomy as control and self-sufficiency – highlighted in the quote from Mackenzie and Stoljar above – leads one to ask whether it is the right ideological bundle to champion the rights of women and other oppressed groups. On the other hand, attempts to frame autonomy around co-operation

raise the question of how co-operation and self-provisioning relate, at what scales, and governed by what structures.

All of this reinforces the need to build an idea of *political autonomy* around farmers' agency that takes into account both the structuring of ideology and the extent to which people have freedom of choice. While structures (including class relations and positions) influence farmers' desires, I would suggest that agroecology's commitment to autonomy and democracy requires that those desires must be understood and respected. If not, there is a threat that agroecology becomes a prescriptive, heteronomous framework which seeks to control farmers' operational decisions, as other 'scientific' frameworks have done in the past (van der Ploeg, 2008, p. 220). Focusing on farmers' agency also opens up a wider perspective on the diverse forms that political autonomy and agroecology are taking (and could take). Farmers' strategies might include different combinations of individualist self-provisioning, cooperation, and engagement with markets – pointing to more or less 'radical' variants of agroecology, as well as practices that are contrary to agroecological principles. Some farmers, for example, may choose to further deepen output market relations while minimising their inputs, while others may withdraw from markets altogether. The following section then presents a framework of political autonomy grounded in farmers' agency, drawing in particular on critical realism and a critique of Marxian views of freedom. It focuses primarily on how structure and agency are interrelated, and how autonomy is comprised of self-determination, freedom and conscious control over structural conditions.

2.3 The ghost in the neoliberal food regime: re-focusing the peasant subject

For much of the 20th century, both populists and Marxist political economists saw peasants merely as *objects* of structural forces. Peasants were either a 'historical anachronism' destined to be subsumed into capitalist or socialist visions of modernity, or destined by virtue of their internally-configured structures to stubbornly resist differentiation (Akram-Lodhi & Kay, 2010a; Araghi, 2010; McMichael, 2008). What mattered is that these were destinies – accounts of history supposedly derived from objective 'scientific' political economy. But with the rise of food sovereignty "the state of 'being a peasant' has evolved from a destiny to a choice" (van der Ploeg in Bernstein et al., 2018, p. 695). As McMichael puts it:

> "…the food sovereignty movement fundamentally challenges the institutional relations of neoliberal capitalism that contribute to mass dispossession – paradoxically reproducing the peasantry as an 'unthinkable' social force, as a condition for its emergence as *a radical world-historical subject*" (McMichael, 2008, p. 225 emphasis added).

On one hand, agroecology and food sovereignty constitute a new, historically specific peasant subject as a conscious and democratic movement. On the other hand, seeing peasants as subjects is consistent with a re-theorisation of agency and subjectivity in society in general (see Ashe, 1999). This re-theorisation has discarded purely structural/objective/scientific interpretations of history, such as the historical determinism of Marxist theory (which I discuss below). It instead sees the intentional actions of agents as playing a key role (if not always a determining role) in shaping historical processes.. At the same time, the nature of agency has also been re-theorized; post-modernism has dismissed the transcendent, coherent and rational self-subject, in favour of a socialised and/or structurally-determined agent (Christman, 2009). This then presents a problem: what does it mean for peasants to be agents and 'world-historical subjects' if their agency is itself a product of structure?

Tilzey has gone further to present a compelling framework for the role of agency in peasant struggles, and society more generally. Potter and Tilzey (2005) argued that Friedmann and McMichael's food regime analysis asymmetrically ascribed agency to some actors while portraying the wider political economy in 'agent-less' and 'hyperstructuralist' terms (see also Tilzey, 2018, p. 149). In other words, they privilege the agency of farmers or peasants, while neglecting the agency of other class and class fractions (and the resulting struggles between them) in the institutionalisation and reproduction of capitalism[19]. Tilzey instead outlines a dialectic notion of 'structured agency', drawing on critical realism and political ecology. Human agency stems from the fundamental human-specific capacity for semiosis and social reflexivity that is emergent of our position within nature. This capacity allows us to "regulate or monitor (or not to regulate or monitor) our activities in accordance with normative rules or principles, or indeed to change those normative rules and principles" (Tilzey, 2018, p. 21)[20]. Agency, as intentionality, social reflexivity, and critical thought, is commensurate with a *basic* and near universal human condition of autonomy as understood in philosophical debates (Christman, 2018).

Following Tilzey, I understand the relationship between agency and structure (including capitalism and the neoliberal food regime) in critical realist terms[21]. On an ontological level, the relationship

---

[19] Van der Ploeg (2008) draws on Norman Long's (1984) essay *Creating Space for Change: A perspective on the sociology of Development*, which advances this emphasis on subjectivity over determinism, with what he calls an 'actor-oriented analysis'. Potter and Tilzey (2005) point to a similar body of 'actor-oriented' work which fails to recognise wider processes of agency in forming structures.

[20] This is distinct from the notion of agency developed in actor-network theory, in which non-human and inanimate things can also function 'actants', while not possessing agency in the stronger sense of social reflexivity (Castree, 2002; Pollini, 2013). This sense of 'agency' has been partly taken up in areas of agroecology that emphasise 'nature' as an 'active participant' (Sevilla Guzmán & Woodgate, 2013).

[21] Buchanan (2020) also adopts a similarly agency-centric approach to autonomy, in which she uses the interplay between agency and structure to explore the emergence of 'food autonomy' in Thessaloniki, Greece.

between structure and agency is inevitable. Individuals, collectives, society and nature are always subject to tensions and degrees of alienation. Under Bhaskar's 'transformational model of social activity', social structure and agency iteratively shape one another through time[22]. Society "is both the ever-present *condition* (material cause) and the continually reproduced *outcome* of human agency" (Bhaskar, 1998b, p. 215). Bhaskar's model very effectively strikes a balance across post-structural society and the post-transcendental self that underpins the re-interpretation of peasant subjectivity. It emphasises that agency is enabled, constrained and socialised by *pre-existing* social structures (i.e. which exist before any given action takes place). In turn, social structures are only ever manifest through the actions of agents. Through these actions pre-existing social structures are *reproduced* or *transformed*. Jessop's (2005) variation on this model, what he calls the 'strategic-relational approach', emphasises how the social reflexivity of agents and the structural shaping of agents' incentives may give rise to a condition of 'structured coherence' where agent and structure reproduce each other in a relatively stable configuration. Jessop contrasts this with 'patterned incoherence', where agents and the structural conditions they face cease to align in certain ways – I return to this idea below.

The relation between agency and natural structures is slightly different, in that the latter have an existence independent of human agents (Bhaskar, 1998b). Increasingly, the sphere of human-independent nature has grown smaller as human activity and its effects have come to encompass the globe and many of its ecological processes, while also increasingly manipulating its physical laws (Carolan, 2005). In this way, 'nature' itself has become a socio-ecological hybrid, both reproduced and transformed through human agency (Carolan, 2005; Tilzey, 2018)[23]. As Sevilla Guzmán and Woodgate point out "[i]f people are both socially and biologically constituted, then our actions are better defined as socioecological practices, enabled and constrained by socioecological structures" (Sevilla Guzmán & Woodgate, 2013, p. 40). Under this model, all human agency is subject to socialisation and constraints on action by both social and natural structures, while also having a

While dealing with a similar set of perspectives, her work does not draw on critical realism, and does not define the three distinct aspects of agency-structure relations that I outline here.

[22] Critical realism has grown to include diverse variations on this model (e.g. Jessop, 2005), some of them developed independently. Giddens' *structuration* and Archer's *morphogenesis* both have similarities to critical realism. Morphogenesis is more closely related to critical realism, insofar as it aims to prevent 'collapsing' structure and agency into a single concept and adopts a clearer temporal/cyclical relation across the two (see Archer, 1985, 1998). I am focusing on Bhaskar's account here because of its simplicity and originality.

[23] This hybridity comes to form socio-ecological structures embodied in physical space and materials (i.e. capital as dead labour and transformed nature – e.g. cities, irrigation systems, exhausted fields) which in turn socialise, constrain and enable future social activity. In this way, the 'social structure' is not only manifest in the actions of other agents (cf Bhaskar), but is also literally built into the environment.

(latent) capacity to exercise control particularly over social structures, but also to an extent over natural ones.

2.3.1 Marxist, populist and anarchist interpretations of capitalism and agency

However, under capitalism, agents become alienated in a particular way from other agents, from society in general, as well as from nature. Marx's theory of alienation was based on the idea that capitalism was a "force created by man but alien to him in having its own quasi-natural laws of development which opposed man and dominated him, thwarting his aims instead of being subjected to conscious control" (Walicki, 1988, p. 12). Through the separation of worker from means of production, the products of his or her labour, and from personal ties to other people, capitalism gives rise to the global unification of human activity through the wholly *impersonal* intermediary of value, markets and commodities. Although this is historically specific, it presents itself as a 'natural' and ahistorical process (J. Holloway, 2002; Walicki, 1988). In this way, McMichael's and van der Ploeg's 'hyperstructuralist' view of *Empire* is partially correct – capitalism comes to function and appear as if it is *not* the product of interaction between agents. This is arguably how most farmers (and people in general) worldwide perceive capitalism today.

The result is an economic system relatively devoid of personal relations[24] but instead pervaded by a general competitive impulse that hinders cooperative efforts and gives rise to imperatives to sell wage labour, produce for the market and/or accumulate (Bernstein, 2010; Tilzey, 2017; Walicki, 1988). Both class relations and technologies come to dictate the interests and capabilities of the agents that occupy them, such that human agency appears to be reduced to fulfilling functions within the system (Gorz, 1982; J. Holloway, 2002; Illich, 1975). While even capitalists are subordinated to the law of value, unequal access to resources and proletarianisation create particularly constrained positions for some agents (e.g. where workers have no control over their labour power in the working day) (Harvey, 2018; E. O. Wright, 2010, p. 34)[25]. In this way, class becomes a 'bridging concept' across structure and agency, and establishes contestations between classes (and class fractions) as the driver of social change (Tilzey, 2018, pp. 20, 116). The relation

[24] Personal relations has a specific meaning here, understood as ties between specific individuals, rather than generalised relations. Under feudalism, for example, personal relations prevailed in that serfs or peasants were tied to a specific landlord, and were not 'free' to move from one to another in the same way workers under capitalism are.

[25] The absence of a subject of power in society means that society follows the 'laws' of society in general, and capitalism in particular. Under this understanding, capitalists themselves are the mere 'functionaries' of capital, having no more subjectivity than the worker, but serving the role of oppressor in the system (Gorz, 1982, pp. 52–53).

between class and agency under capitalist structures, and how agency might overcome both class and capitalism, are subject to different interpretations.

For Marx, alienation as commodity fetishism[26] was a *necessary* precondition for both the development of the productive forces (i.e. technology) and the subsequent realisation of man's true self or 'species-essence/being'. Nature was another impersonal force from which freedom must be attained, initially through a process of capitalist alienation (the metabolic rift) which would be subsequently reconciled (Foster, 1999). Only once the productive forces were sufficiently developed, such that man had *control over nature and was free of physical necessity*, could man then be de-alienated from society and nature, reasserting conscious control over both, under communism. Conscious control was, paradoxically, to be reasserted by a working class fulfilling its pre-determined role (and thus class-determined agency) in seizing control of the means of production, via the state. (Gorz, 1982, p. 18; Walicki, 1988, p. 13)[27]. This de-alienation however depended on the formation of a particular kind of unified consciousness, stemming from a pure rationality, free of objective/impersonal determinations, not unlike Kant's transcendental rationality (as discussed in the Introduction). Under this species-essence, individual identity and freedom were to become irrelevant insofar as individual desires were equal to and shared by all, such that a pure collective sense of self underpinned communist society (Walicki, 1988, p. 19). This collective rational consciousness also underpinned the resolution of the metabolic rift and the management of agriculture in such a way as to eradicate want (Foster, 1999).

In contrast to Marxism, 'populist' views have seen peasant forms and modes of production as a pre- and potentially post-capitalist alternative. Emerging from Russian responses to Marx, these views rejected Marx's view of capitalism as a necessary, progressive development (Araghi, 2010). Similar to Marxism however, populism retained a 'teleological' account of history, and saw peasants as a class with a relatively homogenous set of values and objectives which could potentially transcend capitalism. These values in theory favour the persistence of family labour-based and subsistence-oriented production, while opposing both feudal and capitalist relations[28]. In common with wider 'populisms', these framings often employ contradictory views of the state, maintaining both anti-statist discourses while being practically oriented around states as a (potential, if not actual) instrument for support for small farms and cooperation (Roman-Alcalá, 2021). A central Marxist

[26] Referring to a condition where relations between people are reduced to, or rather obscured as, relations between things (Marx, 1976).
[27] Marx and Engels (1992) early critique of utopianism was partly based on the idea that the productive forces were not adequately developed for emancipation.
[28] Or, particularly for Chayanov, the motivation "of peasant households is to meet the needs of (simple) reproduction while minimising 'drudgery' (of labour)" (Bernstein, 2009, p. 59).

critique of populism is that it neglects the extent of internal differentiation among peasants; the peasant category lacks the class-analytical basis that gives the proletariat its coherent historical purpose (Bernstein, 2009; Patnaik, 1979). One populist response is that the expression and development of peasant values depends at least partly on a political self-identification and "the struggle for unity in diversity against a common foe (both material and discursive)" (McMichael, 2015, p. 199).

Roman-Alcalá (2021) contrasts both Marxism and populism with anarchist approaches to critical agrarian studies. Anarchist approaches reject any reduction of politics and ideology to class positions, while emphasising non-deterministic trajectories of history, and rejecting the state as a viable instrument of social transformation. Closely aligned with anarchist thought, Castoriadis critiqued the orthodox Marxist view of agency and its deterministic view of history (May, 1994). Castoriadis saw emancipation from *bureaucratic capitalism* as entailing a rejection of Marx's aspiration for 'conscious control' or rational mastery over nature and society, but rather advocated for direct democratic forms of autonomy[29]. Castoriadis also critiqued what he saw as a Marxist reduction of workers to mere objects of history, defined by their class positions. For Castoriadis, this view led to Leninist vanguard politics, that workers had to be *taught* their own interests (May, 1994). The anarchist approach, informed by Scott (1985, 2012) and Wolf's (1969) see peasants as 'natural anarchists'. From the anarchist perspective, overcoming capitalism depends on the ongoing 'ideological development' of agents and the re-shaping of structural conditions that allows "'better' human natures to emerge and take root. The seeds of future social relations are to be planted in the imperfect soil of today's societies" (Roman-Alcalá, 2021, p. 306).

The accounts of autonomy in agroecology discussed above, including Tilzey and van der Ploeg, draw on these different traditions, but with varying degrees of focus. Roman-Alcalá sees traces of Kropotkin's anarchism in van der Ploeg's framing of autonomy, although van der Ploeg more directly draws on populism via Chayanov. Roman-Alcalá also sees Tilzey as dismissive of anarchist/autonomist approaches – although these are clearly taken up to a degree in Tilzey's analysis, Tilzey remains convinced of the state as a focal point for social transformation. Neither Tilzey nor van der Ploeg see the peasantry as fulfilling a dialectical necessity of Marx's working class, but as indicated both align class positions with ideology. Here van der Ploeg follows a more populist framing, which leads Tilzey (2017) to critique van der Ploeg for failing to attend to how class differentiation shapes farmers' agency. Tilzey instead strongly links agency to Marxist class positions,

[29] For Castoriadis, representation by its very nature entails the people giving up their power, and the creation of a power imbalance between those representing and those being represented. As such, representative democracy could not be emancipatory (May, 1994).

where the awareness and fulfilment of *class interests* does much of the theoretical work in his account of capitalism and sub-, alter- and counter-hegemonic positions[30]. This emphasis on Marxist class relations underpins (and is necessary for) Tilzey's account of the global structure of capitalism, and the assertion that more radical variations of agroecology are likely to stem from the more oppressed classes of the global South. Tilzey's (2017, p. 330) arguments also implicitly contain the Marxist 'species-essence' line of thinking, where he suggests that in communist society, "cooperation becomes unconstrained, close, conscious and free, such that interdependence becomes the recognized means to transform the limitations defined by what was hitherto unrecognized and constrained interdependence."

This latter line of thinking conflicts with the post-modernist theorisation of the self, mentioned above. It also, I suggest, contradicts the pluralism that is central to agroecology and food sovereignty, a pluralism grounded in respect for multiple and indigenous ways of knowing (González et al., 2021; Martínez-Torres & Rosset, 2014; Pimbert, 2018), which is more clearly embraced in anarchist accounts. Certain Marxist interpretations of capitalism as totalising similarly blinds us to both how capitalism *enables* autonomy in ways that historical structural systems have not done so (e.g. the real value of 'liberal' or 'bourgeois' freedom) (Walicki, 1988)[31]. Both populism and anarchism also highlight the ubiquity of non-capitalist ideologies and relations (Escobar, 2001; Gibson-Graham, 2006). Many of these also socialise agents while also functioning as alternative 'circuits of reproduction' (van der Ploeg, 2010). As I will argue in Chapter 8, such a view of multiple social and natural structures allows us to imagine a specifically *agroecological* reversal of alienation

[30] As Potter and Tilzey (2005, p. 585) note: "…it is only under certain conditions that class structure generates class agency since the latter is premised on conscious action by agents in virtue of the class positions that they occupy. In other words, the notion of class agency always presupposes a certain degree of class consciousness". This is problematic firstly because there is considerable evidence that shared class positions very often do not lead to shared class consciousness, particularly in rural contexts (Hahamovitch & Halpern, 2004; Sabia, 1988). Secondly, it is problematic because class consciousness has often been associated with a *denial of agency*, particularly where people are presumed to have 'false consciousness' in class struggles (J. Holloway, 2002).

[31] Although, as with many others working within a lens of 'emancipatory social science' (E. O. Wright, 2006) my attention is mainly drawn towards critiquing, rather than celebrating, contemporary capitalism.

as a direct renewal of personal relations and relations with nature (but which both entail their own forms and logics of autonomy and heteronomy).

2.4 Agency-centred autonomy

As such, I understand autonomy in this thesis as a relationship between agency and structure. As I said in the Introduction, *basic* autonomy is *human agency,* the capacity we all have for social reflexivity. Beyond this, autonomy concerns the scope of that agency – the extent to which it is self-determining, the extent of its freedom to act, and the extent to which it can exercise conscious control over its structural conditions[32]. Increasing the scope of agency moves towards a realm of *ideal* autonomy, a partially imaginary condition in which the basic human condition of agency reaches its full potential. While social and natural structures are multiple, I am primarily concerned with autonomy in relation to capitalist structures and relations. This is a reflection of the specific ways capitalism denies agency and autonomy, and the still central function of class relations in shaping farmers' autonomy. Even if farmers' values and practices cannot be *reduced* to class interests, those interests continue to play a major shaping role. However, it is essential to attend to other (potentially countervailing or reinforcing) structural relations and how farmers as agents navigate those. Taking this approach indicates that farmers may have 'local' autonomy with respect to specific relations or structures, as opposed to a 'global' condition of any given agent in all their relations (Stoljar, 2015). Pursuing an agency-centric account of autonomy in an 'agent-full' analysis of capitalism, I am also forced to be specific about *whose autonomy* I am interested in. In this thesis, I am chiefly looking at autonomy from the perspective of farms and farmers. In doing so, I aim both to avoid hyperstructuralism and to address farmers' autonomy vis-à-vis other agents. In particular, it is necessary to understand structure as a product of interactions and contestations between agents. This includes both inter-class and intra-class contestations – and points to how capitalism channels struggles for autonomy into generalised competition (Tilzey, 2017). I finalise this review by briefly discussing the key aspects of farmers' self-determination, freedom and conscious control within capitalism.

2.4.1 Self-determination and socialisation

The role of socialisation in Bhaskar's model is roughly commensurate with the notion of relational autonomy (or self-determination) in feminist philosophy. Relational autonomy is premised on the idea "that persons are socially embedded and that agents' identities are formed within the context of social relationships and shaped by a complex of intersecting social determinants, such as race,

[32] This framing is similar to understandings of 'social reproduction', which concerns the reproduction of subjectivities, the material reproduction of people, and the reproduction of social relations (Gidwani & Ramamurthy, 2018).

class, gender, and ethnicity" (Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000, p. 4). In Bhaskar's terms, agents are *socialised* "whereby the stocks of skills, competences, and habits appropriate to given social contexts, and necessary for the reproduction and/or transformation of society, are acquired and maintained" (Bhaskar, 1998b, p. 216). In these accounts, many *heteronomous* qualities of society (including interactions between agents) are recognised as essential in the formation of the self and agency[33]. In this way, relational autonomy sustains the relevance of individual autonomy while denying individualistic accounts of humans as "capable of leading self-sufficient, isolated, independent lives" (Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000, p. 6).

Returning to the above discussion, Tilzey's class-ideology bundles suggest that farmers are socialised into specific ideological positions by their class positions. Similarly, van der Ploeg's distinction between entrepreneurs (as '*homo economicus*') and peasants points to the socialising role of state modernisation programmes. However, agents socialised by multiple (including non-capitalist) relations are unlikely to conform precisely to any one of them. A broader sense of socialisation comes from Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus', which "invokes a process of socialisation whereby the dominant modes of thought and experience inherent in the life-world are internalised by individuals, especially in their early years but also through their continuing experiences and social interactions" (Shucksmith & Herrmann, 2002, p. 39).

In this context, *self-determination* – the formation of an authentic set of desires and values – is premised on social reflexivity, 'second-order monitoring' or critical thought. It concerns the formation and exercise of cognitive capabilities centred on "the capacity for reflection on one's motivational structure and the capacity to change it in response to reflection" (Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000, p. 13)[34]. As I discuss in subsequent chapters, an important indicator of this is how farmers distance themselves critically from past ways of thinking and from particular structural relations. Importantly, this is predicated on a *latent* capacity that is not always enacted[35], and agents are never fully aware of the structural context, including the perspectives of other agents (Jessop, 2005). In these accounts, there are still a number of ways in which structures enable and constrain the capacity for self-determination. The capacity and competency for self-determination itself may be created through socialisation, as indicated above. On the other hand, "oppressive socialization can

[33] In more radical formulations, the self is defined not in relation to its own interests, but in in relation to the needs of others (Dryden, n.d.; Levinas, 1969).
[34] There are competing models for exactly what constitutes autonomy and self-determination in terms of this reflection. For a discussion see Christman (2018).
[35] This latency is recognised by critical realism, feminist accounts of relational autonomy and Sen's capabilities approach (Bhaskar, 1998b; Christman, 2018; Jessop, 2005; Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000; Sen, 1992).

lead to the acceptance of norms, which once internalized, block agents' capacities for detecting whether the norms are correct” (Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000, p. 20).

Here in particular, capitalism’s appearance as ahistorical and its mechanisms of fetishisation generate forms of ‘epistemic blindness’, which limit farmers’ perceptions of their eco-social relations. Likewise, farmers’ own values may come to align with the limits imposed by capitalist relations (what Bourdieu referred to as ‘willing the inevitable’) (J. Nelson & Stock, 2018; Shucksmith & Herrmann, 2002). For Samuel (2016, p. 319), it is “the trap of the thought-space delimited by exchange-value and techno-science” which is constraining and ‘pushing into the shadows’ more vernacular forms of practice. These cases suggest that self-determination cannot be understood in isolation from *freedom,* as discussed below.

‘Structure’ in the abstract may enable or prevent the self-determination of people and societies. While it is important not to lose sight of how capitalism may enable some aspects of self-determination, my emphasis here is on how capitalism and its related institutions (the state, markets, technologies) hinder self-determination in particular ways. Chapter 5 interrogates the unfolding of socialisation and self-determination among farmers in Cornwall and Calabria.

2.4.2 Freedoms and market imperatives

As discussed above, van der Ploeg (2008, p. 32) defines autonomy in terms of ‘room for manoeuvre’ or ‘farmers’ freedom’. Tilzey (2018) and Bernstein (2014) critique the idea that farmers have ‘room for manoeuvre’ while still participating in markets. Instead, these authors see production for markets and the commodification of subsistence as a set of imperatives or compulsions. Specifically, farmers face imperatives to produce for the market, to compete and to accumulate. These imperatives are, in a nutshell, the defining features of agrarian capitalism and its main constraints on farmers’ freedom. These market imperatives are tendencies in the critical realist sense (as I will discuss in the next chapter), rather than fixed laws (Bhaskar, 1998c; Tilzey, 2018; Vergara-Camus, 2019).

However, farmers’ freedom *to* farm in accordance with their values may be compatible with these imperatives in some ways. This not only includes the notion that many farming ideologies are compatible with market imperatives, but also that the unfolding of farm activities through these imperatives may allow farmers to realise other aspirations. Alternatively, the presence of multiple social and natural structures, many of which constitute ‘circuits of reproduction’ as discussed above, offer different sets of relations, some of which may be more enabling than others. In this way, I am looking at how farmers are able to reconcile their reproduction under capitalism (which amounts to being economically viable) with their desires, aspirations and values. In particular, alternative

farmers often hold strong social and environmental values; the question is whether and how these are compromised by market production and dependencies. Chapter 6 explores the interplay between farmers' freedom and market imperatives in the particular circumstances farmers face in Calabria and Cornwall.

2.4.3 Reproducing and transforming food systems

For Bhaskar, the reproduction of social structures consists in a 'double function' of all social activity: the doing itself, and the re-making of the conditions of doing (Bhaskar, 1998b, p. 218). This double function exists irrespective of agents' awareness of social structures or their desires to reproduce it:

> "…people, in their conscious activity, for the most part unconsciously reproduce (and occasionally transform) the structures governing their substantive activities of production... Moreover, when social forms change, the explanation will not normally lie in the desires of agents to change them that way, though as a very important theoretical and political limit it *may* do so" (Bhaskar, 1998b, pp. 215–216 original emphasis).

In accordance with a Marxist vision of emancipation, Bhaskar develops this idea to argue that in the 'non-alienating society' "people self-consciously transform the social conditions of existence (the social structure) so as to maximize the possibilities for the development and spontaneous exercise of their natural (species) powers" (Bhaskar, 1998b, p. 217). In this way, a specific kind of freedom emerges as the capacity of exercising conscious control over the conditions of doing. As I come to discuss, this may involve attempts to shape specific institutions, to influence other agents, or to engage in collective processes of decision-making.

The ontological inevitability of structure-agency relations, the post-modern and non-transcendental subject, and a commitment to pluralism place important constraints on the idea of conscious control. Castoriadis, for example, saw Marx's view of conscious control as inherently leading to bureaucratic and hierarchical attempts to control other *people* (May, 1994). Nonetheless, this notion of autonomy is central to more political variants of agroecology and food sovereignty, framed as a conscious and democratic capacity to define food systems (HLPE Committee on World Food Security, 2019), change 'sociocultural and physical infrastructures' (Chappell, 2015, p. 725), and collectively "redirect the course of coevolution between nature and society" (Sevilla-Guzmán & Woodgate, 1997, p. 93). The question of how conscious control may be exercised over social structures is not straightforward. One central point of contention in this is the role and function of the state as an instrument for conscious democratic control. As I argue in Chapter 7, both Tilzey and van der Ploeg are cautious of the state, although Tilzey (Tilzey, 2018) maintains movements oriented towards it, with a view to dismantling it, are essential for emancipation. Van der Ploeg (2008), by contrast,

appears to be more commited to an idea of emancipation through resistance and the construction of 'real utopias'. However, as Calvário's research indicates, farmers may be constrained from political engagement by practical concerns.

Combined, these three elements – self-determination, freedom and conscious control – form my framework for exploring farmers' autonomy. They represent a cyclical process through which agents and structure reproduce and transform each other iteratively. Self-determination is chiefly, for individuals, a psychological process that involves critical reflection that affirms or rejects values and ideologies derived from structural socialisation. For collectives, the equivalent process is a direct and deliberative democratic process for establishing social values and institutions. Freedom concerns the capabilities and constraints that individuals and collectives face, including *in relation to their values and ideologies.* Conscious control then becomes the possibility, grounded in self-determination and freedom, of consciously shaping the reproduction and transformation of structures (which itself flows into subsequent self-determination). Such an agency-centric approach privileges farmers' own values and desires in understanding autonomy, in a way that avoids the risk of denying agency discussed in section 2.2.3 above. At the same time, the conception is flexible enough to accommodate different forms of autonomy when looking at how farmers interact with market and state structures – including those that some farmers enjoy under and within capitalist relations, rather than offering a more narrow conception of 'actual autonomy'. Capitalism however denies autonomy on all three fronts: it denies self-determination by masking itself as an asocial, natural relation, it denies freedom by subordinating all (or most) behaviour to the law of value, and it denies conscious control by denying the possibilities of self-governance of communities and nations.

2.5 Summary

Understood in terms of a structure-agency relation, capitalism is maintained as "a structurally coherent, apparently self-reproducing social configuration" through the "recursive interaction between the strategic selectivities of structures and the reflexive behaviour of agents" (Jessop, 2005, p. 50). The degree of alignment between agents and their structural conditions, maintained by the interactions described above, underpins the 'true hegemony' that Tilzey identifies in the global North. By recognising that today's dynamics of accumulation depend on their continued legitimacy in these regions, the 'state-capital nexus' (Tilzey, 2018) seeks to integrate farmers, not necessarily or even primarily as producers, but rather as consumers. Doing so, for Tilzey, sustains a particular kind of social articulation in the global North, albeit one predicated on on-going imperialistic relations with the global South. However, as I have suggested, internal core-periphery divisions in Europe replicate (albeit to a lesser degree) these forms of imperialism in ways that might stimulate more radical forms of agroecology and food sovereignty.

I have also explored the relationship between agroecology and autonomy. In doing so, I distinguished between political and biotechnical autonomy and discussed how certain notions and assumptions around autonomy could inadvertently deny farmers' agency. In response, I developed a notion of autonomy based on the agency-structure relation, grounded in critical realism. It is on this basis that the remainder of the thesis explores the nature of farmers' autonomy in Cornwall and Calabria – as self-determination, freedom and conscious control – and the implications for the kinds of agroecology that are emerging. To do so, I continue to contrast the different perspectives of van der Ploeg and Tilzey. On the one hand, van der Ploeg's work makes a strong case for the centrality of political and biotechnical autonomy in the distinctive logic of agroecology and 'peasant' farming, while pointing out how 'peasant' aspirations may overcome and resist class-based divisions. On the other, Tilzey provides a more nuanced philosophical and political economic context in which that operates. His emphasis on core-periphery relations in shaping kinds of resistance to capitalism, how market relations constrain autonomy, and the ambiguous role of the state in transformation point to oversights in van der Ploeg's work. However, both authors advance a narrative in which only one kind of autonomy is actual or authentic, and in doing so may inadvertently deny farmers' more fundamental sense of agency.

3 Methodology

The previous two chapters have presented and explored the case for questioning the kinds of autonomy and agroecology emerging in rural European peripheries. This chapter sets out my approach to answering these questions. I begin by elaborating my conceptual framework. I have already set much of this out in terms of a critical realist approach to structure and agency, and drawing on the distinct theoretical approaches in Tilzey and van der Pleog's work. Here, I translate these framings into a research design built around agency-centric research, critical realist methodology, and political economy and ecology. I then outline my reasoning for selecting Cornwall and Calabria as two case studies of European peripheries and how and why I sampled alternative farms in these regions. I provide an overview of my data collection approach, including how I undertook fieldwork and structured my interviews with farmers. Finally I briefly discuss the process of analysing the data.

3.1 Conceptual Framework

3.1.1 Agency-centric research

As I set out in Chapter 2, I conceive of agency in critical realist and relational terms. Bhaskar (1998b) frames this as a human-specific quality of intentionality, with a capacity for 'second-order monitoring', akin to Tilzey's (2018) notion of social reflexivity. Bhaskar (1998b, p. 215) notes that this "gives a person's account of his or her own behaviour a special status which is acknowledged in the best practice of all the psychological sciences." A similar view, which places agents' own interpretations of their actions at the centre of research, is what Scott (2012, p. 12) refers to as a way of looking at social science with an 'anarchist squint':

> "The job of social science, as I see it, is to provide, provisionally, the best explanation of behavior on the basis of all the evidence available, including especially the explanations of the purposive, deliberating agents whose behavior is being scrutinized. The notion that the agent's view of the situation is irrelevant to this explanation is preposterous. Valid knowledge of the agent's situation is simply inconceivable without it."

These framings suggest that a necessary starting point is exploring how farmers perceive themselves, their practices and their wider contexts. In this respect, I am concerned with an *emic* perspective (Harris, 1976), in which I am concerned with the internal mental states of farmers, and how they give meaning to their practices[36]. However, the problem with this approach is that agents

[36] As Harris (1976, p. 336) notes, while it is quite possible to make inferences about an agents' internal mental state by observing their behaviour, this usually entails the researcher being "led astray by their own projections."

themselves are the products of structural *socialisation*. Socialisation not only modifies how farmers (and people generally) see themselves and their actions, but it may also modify their capacity for self-determination. This requires then understanding farmers' perspectives as influenced by their structural backgrounds and contexts. This requires a partially *etic* approach, where the perspective of the outsider/researcher becomes important in re-interpreting practices and actions. To address this, my approach to data collection (discussed below) draws primarily on interviews with farmers, including their own accounts of why and how they farm the way they do, and attending to aspects of their backgrounds that have shaped their values and desires. However, my findings ultimately remain constrained in the sense that I am relying solely on farmers' own accounts of both their internal mental states and their actual actions/practices.

The complexity of human agency and its interaction with structure calls for a partial reduction into workable terms. Here, I have made some use of *self-determination theory* from empirical psychology. Following self-determination theory, people are "most autonomous when they act in accord with their *authentic interests* or *integrated values and desires*" (Chirkov et al., 2003, p. 98 emphasis added). Authenticity refers to a degree of self-reflection and endorsement (Ryan & Deci, 2004), commensurate with my notion of self-determination and agency. Autonomy in this sense, distinguished from individualism, has been widely applied in cross-cultural research to reveal it as a common value and indicator of well-being (Chirkov et al., 2003). Most usefully, Alkire (2005) has combined self-determination theory with the capability approach in order to develop *quantitative* studies of human agency in connection with international development. The structuring of questionnaires in these studies has helped me to form my own interview guides (see Appendix 1), although I have taken a more qualitative approach to questions. By attending to how farmers may have more autonomy in some areas of practices that others, I am considering autonomy as a 'local' or 'dimension-specific' condition of particular relations (Alkire, 2005; Stoljar, 2015). I have focused on a range of practices and relations relevant to agroecology and biotechnical autonomy, as discussed in section 2.2.2 – covering nutrients/energy, labour relations, participation in markets, and capital investments.

Recognising that social structures are the product of multiple agents, I am also concerned with understanding how farmers' agency relates to the agency (and autonomy) of others. This includes relations between farmers – especially between more 'alternative' and more 'conventional' (usually larger, more intensive and arguably more 'capitalist') farmers. It also includes relations between farmers and consumers – linked to the extent of personal dependencies and the extent to which their interests converge and diverge (Graddy-Lovelace, 2021; e.g. Timmermann et al., 2018). It also includes how farmers relate to their various 'suppliers' – of inputs, labour, machinery etc… From the

perspectives of farmers (and some of the networks they participate in) these relations are important as mechanisms of socialisation, freedom (especially in terms of generating and escaping market imperatives), and conscious control. However, they are also relations with other agents, who have their own interests, agency and spheres of autonomy.

3.1.2 Critical realist methodology

Another implication of the structure-agency relation is that agents' own understanding of their structural context is likely to be limited (Jessop, 2005). Just as farmers' perspectives must be understood as a product of structure, structure must be understood at least partially independently of farmers' perceptions of them (i.e. an *etic* approach). Much of the work here has already been done for me. I have already discussed how Tilzey, van der Ploeg and others conceptualise contemporary capitalist structures. I am relying particularly on Tilzey's (2018) account of global core-periphery, state and class relations. As I began to argue in Chapter 2 these structural conditions exist in specific forms within Europe. As I will elaborate in Chapter 4, they also give rise to specific structural contexts in Cornwall and Calabria.

Within critical realism, *structure* is understood as sets of relations between objects, where the relations are essential or necessary to make the objects what they are. Objects may refer to physical or natural things (e.g. soil), or to social forms (e.g. the state, or markets). The relations (such as between state and citizen) both constitute the object itself (the state) and its causal powers (governance). Because the world is *stratified* (with objects being both parts and wholes), these relations can exist between objects at different levels (e.g. state-citizen), or between objects at the same level (e.g. capitalist-labourer).This conceptualisation also entails that social objects are *real* objects, that have emergent powers that cannot be reduced to their constituent objects (the state cannot be reduced to individuals, any more than the human body can be reduced to atoms) and which have real causal effects in the world (Bhaskar, 1998b; Danermark et al., 2002; Sayer, 1998).

Knowledge of structure is achieved by *retroduction* (Danermark et al., 2002; Jessop, 2005). Retroduction concerns the process of moving backwards from observations to theorise the *real* structures and mechanisms that generate *actual* events which give rise to the *empirical* observations. It asks: what must the world be like for us to observe what we do (and to act as we do)? In terms of retroduction, my approach is not only to theorise the global and local social structures that farmers confront, but more specifically to theorise how those structures socialise, enable and constrain the agency of farmers and how farmers in turn reproduce/transform structures. In other words, I am asking *what must the structure-agent relation and the kind and degree of farmers' autonomy be like to explain farm-level practices*. There is also an emancipatory or

normative aspect to the retroduction, which asks how farmers *could* shape structures in a way that would enhance their autonomy.

Critical realism maintains that structures may persist beyond the circumstances in which they are perceived to function (Bhaskar, 1998a). This has three implications of relevance here. Firstly, structures generate tendencies, rather than laws, in determining how events happen in open systems. In any given set of circumstances, many structures are present but are only sometimes enacted, and they often counteract one another[37]. A particular structure (e.g. capitalist class relations) will tend to, rather than always, generate certain kinds of events (e.g. falling rate of profit). Because of this, retroduction depends primarily on *partial regularities* that emerge in open systems to identify structural processes[38]. What becomes central here is the role of *agency* in shaping which structural mechanisms are enacted and how, including by mobilising one structure against another.

The second implication is that 'contrastive explanation' becomes a useful tool in retroduction. Comparisons and explorations of differences where regularities might otherwise have been expected, or vice versa, helps to reveal structural processes (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 105; Lawson, 1998, p. 153). This drives my use of the comparative research method to compare two regions (Cornwall and Calabria) and different kinds of farms within each region to explore how the interaction between structure and agency may be consistent or vary[39]. At the same time, I am sustaining a wider comparison of these farmers' experiences with those predicted by Tilzey's core-periphery model and discussed in other studies of farmers' autonomy. These comparisons help to unpack the conditions under which farmers might be said to have autonomy across agency-structure relations. This includes understanding autonomy across different levels of abstraction (Danermark et al., 2002), from the fundamentals of the structure-agent relation to the specificities of farming agents in Cornwall and Calabria. By exploring these, I hope to make more sense of the diversity of forms of, and struggles for, autonomy and the conditions under which they exist.

The third implication is that my findings in Calabria and Cornwall may be informative for other times and places, particularly where similar structural conditions prevail. This permits me to explore the forms of autonomy and agroecology in Cornwall and Calabria, while also considering the implications

[37] As in Marx's (1973, p. 34) philosophy, concrete and specific events are "the concentration of many determinations."
[38] This is particularly so for social systems, where achieving a closed system and experimental conditions is neither feasible nor desirable. Lawson (1998) refers to these as demi-regularities ('demi-regs') or demi-laws.
[39] The comparative method has also played an important role in research on the agrarian question for similar reasons (e.g. Byres, 1995).

for agroecology and food sovereignty in Europe, in other peripheral regions, and elsewhere more generally.

Finally, a second aspect of critical realist methodology is *abduction*, which concerns the (re)interpretation of a phenomenon using a (new) conceptual framework. Again, much work has already been done here. Agroecology in particular introduces a new way of perceiving farming practices, particularly those which have long been perceived as 'backward'. As I discussed in Chapter 2, 'autonomy' has become a major organising concept for understanding what farmers do and why. In terms of abduction, I am interested in whether autonomy itself is a useful concept for re-interpreting processes of agrarian change. Both the preceding discussion and the growing use of autonomy in the agroecology literature indicate that it is, but throughout my empirical work I sustain a critical and reflexive position in respect of this. I offer some reflections on this in response to my second research question in Chapter 8.

3.1.3 Political economy and ecology

I discussed in Chapter 2 how Tilzey's (2018) use of class as a 'bridging concept' across structure and agency inadvertently reifies class positionality and subjectivity. While seeking to avoid this pitfall, class itself remains an important starting point and central set of structural relations in understanding farmers' autonomy. As Bernstein (2020) has recently emphasised, class relations are ubiquitous within capitalism, but may not always be determining in all circumstances. In this way, understanding class positions and relations is *necessary but not sufficient* to make sense of farmers' values and desires – which can only be ascertained by addressing them as individuals (as discussed above). In this way, while attending to the class-ideology bundles in Tilzey and van der Ploeg's work, I am interested in how farmers' actual class positions and values may diverge from these. I understand class as a broad set of relations that connect agents to networks of capital and labour and production and consumption. This includes relations with other class members and other classes, with productive resources (especially land), with surpluses, with markets, with states, and, ultimately with capitalism on a global level. In particular, Bernstein's four questions of political economy serve as a guide for exploring these relations: who owns what (property, especially over means of production), who does what (labour relations and divisions of labour), who gets what (how production is distributed), and what do they do with it (consumption, reproduction and accumulation)? (Bernstein, 2010, p. 22). As such, my starting point is how class and capitalism a) socialise farmers, b) compel or constrain their actions, and c) shape their ability to influence structural conditions.

However, as I indicated at the end of Chapter 2, I am also interested in how a wider range of non-capitalist structures, relations and forms may serve to counteract or reinforce tendencies generated by class relations. In particular, by exploring how class and other social relations overlay and modify society-nature relations, I am also working in the domain of political ecology. I have already outlined briefly the relationship between human agency and social structures to the various 'natural' and socio-ecological hybrid structures (Carolan, 2005; Tilzey, 2018, pp. 19–29). Throughout the thesis, I consider how capitalist structures and class relations shape farmers' relations with nature, and how 'nature' and perceptions of nature in turn influence and modify those and other relations.

3.1.4 Positionality

As a researcher, I am no less bound up in structural relations. I too have been socialised by the contexts I have grown up in, and those I am working in now. I am both constrained and enabled by the relations that I have used while researching. In approaching these questions, I consider myself as a sympathetic but critical outsider. My own background has always been on the margins of agriculture – my parents were both agricultural scientists, and we lived on a smallholding in New Zealand for the first seven years of my life. I have occasionally, and more vigorously during this PhD, participated in small-scale horticulture and various alternative food networks (AFNs) – and my wife and I now harbour ambitions to become smallholders ourselves. This background and context has been useful for building rapport with some farmers – some of whom have farming backgrounds and others have backgrounds in non-agricultural careers. Nonetheless, my interest in this study is largely academic, stemming from previous studies in development studies and agrarian political economy.

I had no strong previous links to Calabria or Cornwall, though I have lived in both Italy and the UK. As a result, I depended on local gatekeepers and networks to carry out my fieldwork. To an extent, this influenced how farmers perceived me, although I presented myself as a PhD student from Coventry University and therefore at least partially independent of local networks. In many cases, being referred by a local network or person seemed to help establish me as relatively trustworthy and sympathetic[40]. In particular, it aligned me with networks and people involved in the alternative farming community. In a similar way, I relied on an interpreter in Calabria, who also became a good friend and advisor for my fieldwork. As he had existing experience in alternative farming and was well networked in the region, he served as an important gatekeeper. This contributed in some ways to building trust, and allowed my interpreter to offer additional insights and points of discussions during and beyond interviews. However, I also suspected on several occasions that my interpreter's

[40] Perhaps, as Emery (2010, p. 79) reported for his PhD fieldwork with English farmers, showing up for interviews in a battered old car also helped.

presence might have made interviewees more reticent to discuss certain issues. For example, in one interview my interpreter expressed their certainty beforehand that the farmer was secretly buying in milk to supplement his own production, for processing into cheese. When my questioning during the interview touched on the issue (which it would probably have done anyway), my interpreter's relation with the farmer and other related networks gave me specific cause to question the openness of the responses. This also fed into my awareness of mistrust among participants in some AFNs in Calabria. In this way, my reliance on an interpreter, though anyway necessary, offered both advantages and disadvantages.

3.2 Data collection

As discussed above, I am following a comparative research approach to answer the research questions set out in the Introduction. I made the comparison mainly at two levels. Firstly, between Cornwall and Calabria. Secondly, between different farms and farm types within and across each region. To a lesser degree, I have also compared individuals within farms, where I had the opportunity to interview more than one person. I used this comparison to explore how farmers have shared or divergent values, and decision-making hierarchies within farms (see section 5.3.3.1). These comparisons elicited information about the nature of the agent-structure relations, with farmers as agents and peripheral capitalism as the main structure of relevance.

I have collected two main categories of data. Firstly, following my 'agency-centric' approach detailed above, I have focused on gathering primary data from farmers on their experiences, via semi-structured interviews. The content and nature of these interviews is discussed more below. Secondly, I have gathered *contextual* data to provide an overview of structural conditions in each region. I mainly sourced this from existing published material, both academic and non-academic, focused on peripheralisation, political economy and alternative agriculture in each region (as well as Europe more generally). I have also where relevant made use of European Union (EU), national and regional-level policy documents and statistics, and to a lesser extent documents from NGOs and local organisations. Most of this secondary data informs the contextual information presented in Chapter 4. I have also gathered contextual data from farmers themselves, interviews with representatives of local networks, and informal conversations and with a wider range of local informants. I held a number of informal discussions (noted, but unrecorded) with key informants in each region. In Cornwall, this included representatives of Cornwall Council, the National Farmers Union, Mebyon Kernow, a food distributor specialising in food from Cornwall, and several academics at Exeter University. In Calabria, it included academics at the University of Calabria, researchers at CREA (*Consiglio per la ricerca in agricoltura e l'analisi dell'economia agraria)*, organisers of solidarity purchasing groups (*gruppi di acquisto solidale)* in Reggio Calabria, Catanzaro and Cosenza, and a

representative of AIAB (*Associazione Italiana per l'Agricoltura Biologica*) Calabria. These discussions provided invaluable contextual information on major contemporary agricultural and political issues in the case regions. This contextual data fulfils the purpose of understanding structure at least partially independent from farmers' own perceptions (as discussed above in section 3.1.1).

3.2.1 Selecting regional and farming cases

My choice of cases directly responds to Tilzey's argument that radical agroecology and food sovereignty (and 'actual autonomy') are more likely to emerge under conditions of peripheralisation. Both Cornwall and Calabria have long histories of economic malaise, extractive industries and agriculture oriented to supplying their respective cores, as well as suffering from the neglect of central states. Until relatively recently, agricultural production has been dominated by small farms, although processes of differentiation are more advanced in Cornwall than in Calabria. Neither region is fully integrated into a national identity, but rather sustain local and diverse identities. Both regions, by virtue of being recognised as marginalised, have received support through the EU's rural development programmes.

Despite these broad similarities, considerable differences in how the two regions (and the countries they are in) are peripheralised make comparisons worthwhile. Italy itself is somewhat peripheral with respect to northern Europe, while the United Kingdom (or England specifically) is regarded as part of the northern European core (Magone et al., 2016; Sepos, 2016). Italian food culture is more grounded in personal relations and territorialised production, while in the UK it is more industrial, impersonal and based on institutional trust-regimes (Sassatelli & Scott, 2010). Much Italian farming remains highly oriented towards subsistence, while farming in the UK is more thoroughly market-oriented. At the same time, the ecological conditions of production between the Mediterranean Calabria and temperate Cornwall drive marked differences in what is produced (Davidova et al., 2013; Migliorini et al., 2018; Sonnino & Marsden, 2006a). I explore these conditions in more depth in the following chapter. By selecting and comparing these cases, I have been able to elaborate how core-periphery relations create particular kinds of autonomy, as well as shaping possible kinds of agroecology and food sovereignty. My choice of these cases was also linked to practicality – the proximity of Cornwall to where I was living, and my existing but limited familiarity with Italy and Italian.

My selection of farms within each region was driven broadly by an interest in 'alternative agriculture', which can be construed as farms structured or operating in ways outside of conventional, commercial and capitalist farming. Part of my logic for doing so was to find farms that might be practicing, or at least leaning towards, more radical forms of agroecology. Few farms in

Europe identify as agroecological, and so self-identification is not useful. Instead, I aimed for 'proto-agroecological' farms, who are increasingly responding to a squeeze on agriculture by adopting a broadly agroecological set of practices (van der Ploeg et al., 2019). I sought to include relatively small farms who primarily rely on family labour and adhere to 'ecological' practices including organic, permaculture, and biodynamic.

Within this admittedly broad target group, my sampling approach was primarily purposive (Emmel, 2014). I sought to include farmers that were different from one another, as well as 'extreme cases' (Danermark et al., 2002; Merkens, 2004). This included capturing farmers that might be seen to fall across van der Ploeg's 'peasants' and 'entrepreneur' categories, as well as 'petty commodity producers' and 'semi-proletarians'. I also aimed to include a range of backgrounds (e.g. long-term vs new farmers), land access types (tenants, owners), product types, market or self-sufficiency orientation, marketing channels, geographical variation (within each region, and also mountainous/plain areas in Calabria), and degrees of specialisation. Table 3-1 below, and tables 5-1 to 5-3 summarise many of these characteristics. In terms of 'extreme' cases, I included a small number of non-family farms. These were intentional communities (where non-family groups live and work together on a farm), community farms (farms run by cooperative or community organisation for non-commercial purposes) and group farms (farms run by a non-family group of friends, but where the group does not live communally on the farm itself)[41]. These farms have alternative mechanisms of labour and land coordination that bring key issues in autonomy to the fore. I had no specific target number of farms and networks to include in the study, beyond covering as much of this diversity as was practically possible.

I identified farmers for interviews in two ways. Without a pre-existing sample frame, I purposively selected farmers through internet searches and making use of published lists of organic and alternative farms. Secondly, I made use of local informants and gatekeepers along with snowball and opportunistic sampling – asking contacts and farmers to recommend other farmers (Merkens, 2004; Valentine, 2013). These two approaches did not necessarily constitute separate stages, but were both employed iteratively. In this way, I followed a loose kind of 'theoretical sampling', which responded to my growing knowledge of the kinds of farmers and kinds of variation that were present in each region (Merkens, 2004). My reliance on gatekeepers and snowballing created some risk of 'clustered' samples of acquaintances (Ibid.), which could, for example, have led to an exaggerated impression of farms in the region as strongly networked together. However, by using multiple sources and adjusting techniques for finding farmers as sampling proceeded, I was able to

[41] See section 5.2.2.1 for a more elaborate distinction and discussion of the characteristics of these farms.

avoid an overly clustered sample. Sampling looked slightly different in each region (see below), responding to both the specific regional conditions and my access to networks.

My intention was to interview people on farms who were involved in physical work associated with the production of crops and livestock. In most cases, this ended up also being the ‘head’ of the farm – typically the, or one of the, farm owners. Exceptions to this were on community farms in Cornwall, where I spoke with the ‘head growers’, and on intentional communities where there was a less clear hierarchy. I also interviewed multiple people on several farms. This included couples on family farms, as well as multiple members of intentional communities and group projects. This allowed me to capture some issues related to internal cooperation and hierarchies, shared and divergent values and divisions of labour while also offering a mechanism for corroborating data about a given farm. I did not set out to interview a balance of genders, and most interviewees were men (see Table 3-1 below), except when interviewing couples and a small number of farms headed by women (three in Cornwall and three in Calabria). Although an under researched area, other work suggests that woman-led farms are more prominent in alternative and non-commercial than conventional farming (Sutherland et al., 2019). A wide range of ages was included in both regions – with younger people tending to be involved in group projects and intentional communities.

3.2.2 Fieldwork

In both regions, my fieldwork began with an initial visit which included meetings with local researchers and other gatekeepers. These gave me useful contextual information (including references to relevant literature), initial lists of farmers to contact, and in Cornwall a chance to pilot my interview approach (see below). In effect, they laid the groundwork in each region for the subsequent fieldwork. In both cases, I had few difficulties finding farmers to include in the research. As my sampling proceeded I did become concerned that my sampling approach was skewing my sample towards ‘incomers’ in Cornwall and farmers associated with local solidarity purchasing groups in Calabria, in a way that would have reduced the diversity I aspired to (as discussed above). Accordingly, I adjusted the ‘purposiveness’ of my sampling to include farms with other networks and characteristics. Table 3-1 shows the numbers of interviews in each region, while figures 3-1 and 3-2 show the geographical distributions of farms interviewed in Cornwall and Calabria respectively.

My fieldwork in Cornwall took place between April and July 2019. I began with a complete list of certified organic farms in England (from December 2016)[42], an internet search for keywords (including ‘agroecology’, ‘permaculture’, ‘local food’, ‘farm shops’), and through contacts in Duchy

[42] The list of certified organic farms only had physical addresses, so an internet search for additional contact details provided e-mail addresses and phone numbers.

College and the Tamar Grow Local network. Through snowball sampling I identified a broader range of farms, including intentional communities, community farms and non-certified farms. I interviewed 46 farmers across 28 farms, and two representatives of local networks. Twenty-four farms were run by individuals, couples or families, two were run as community farms and two were intentional communities. On nine farms, including two intentional communities, I interviewed multiple people. I held two additional interviews, which emerged as being less relevant for the research – in one case where the individual was not actively farming, but merely rented land out to neighbouring farms, and one who was a member of an intentional community with very little agricultural activity. These two interviews are not included in the table below, or used in subsequent analysis.

In Calabria, the large number of organic farms (10% of all holdings, discussed in Chapter 4), meant that publicly available lists of certified farms were relatively unhelpful for sampling. Instead, I sought farms using internet searches (replicating those used for Cornwall), by establishing a network of contacts in the region, and by visiting local markets. My initial visit to Calabria was in July 2019, with subsequent periods in the field in November 2019 and between January and March 2020. During my fieldwork in Calabria, I spent most of my time living with a farming family, which offered additional opportunities to observe that farm's dynamics, but was well short of being formal ethnography. I interviewed 26 farmers across 22 farms[43], and three representatives of local networks. Fifteen farms were run by individuals, couples or families, five were group farms, one was an intentional community and one was a community farm.

Table 3-1: Farms and farmers interviewed.

For more detail on farm characteristics, see Chapter 5 including tables 5-1 to 5-3. Appendix 3 has a full list of farms in the sample with their key characteristics.

	Cornwall	**Calabria**
Total networks	2	3
Total farms	28	22
Family	24	15
Intentional community	2	1
Community farm	2	1
Group farm	-	5
Total farmers	46	26
Male	28	19
Female	18	7
Interview formats		
Single interviewee	19 farms/individuals	18 farms/individuals
Separate Interviews	4 farms * 2-7 interviewees	-
Joint interviews	5 farms * 2 interviewees	4 farms * 2 interviewees

[43] Significantly less than the number of interviews in Cornwall, mainly reflecting the difficulties in conducting fieldwork in a second language, depending on an interpreter, and with less time in the field.

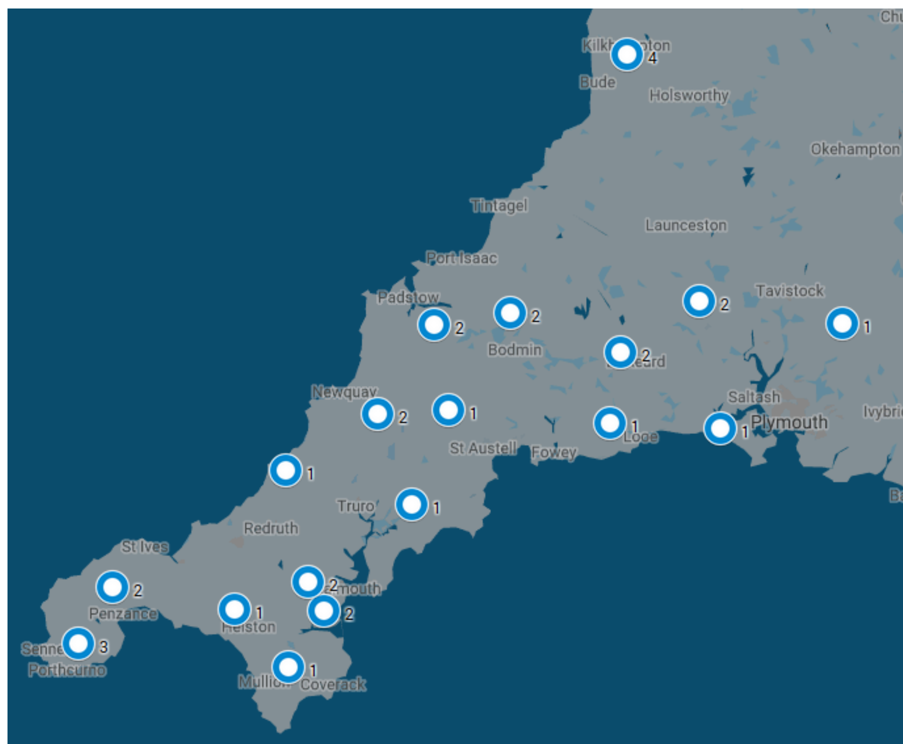

Figure 3-1: Distribution of farms interviewed in Cornwall
By count of high-level postcode (figure generated using Google Maps).

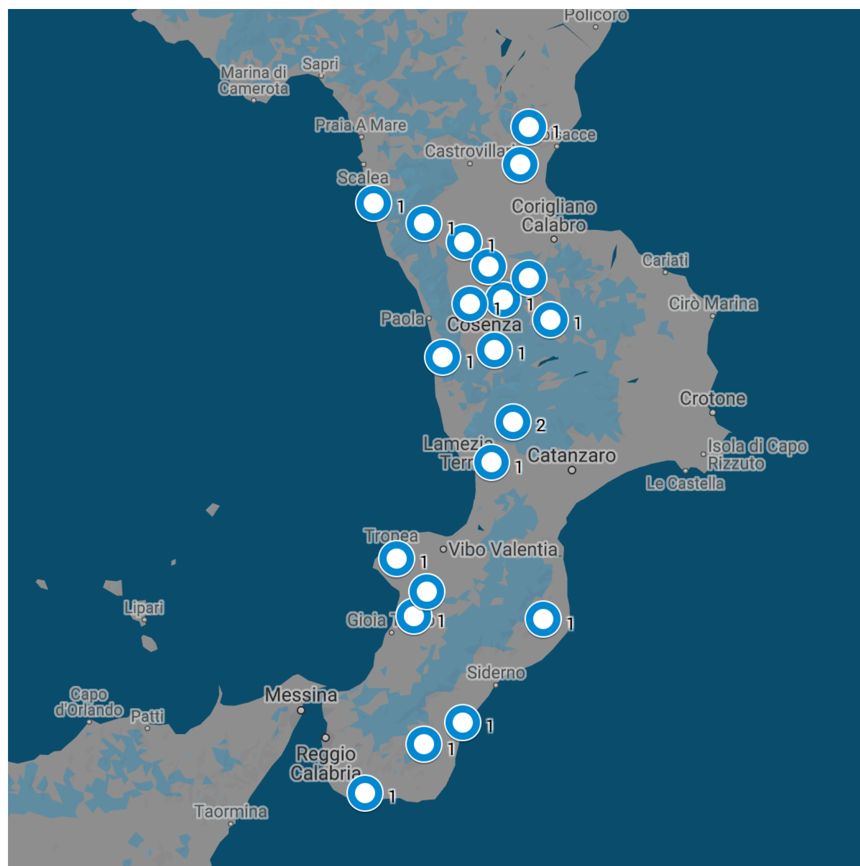

Figure 3-2: Distribution of farms interviewed in Calabria

By count of farms by postcode. Relatively mountainous areas are marked in light blue (figure generated using Google Maps).

3.2.2.1 Semi-structured interviews

Interviews with farmers and networks were semi-structured[44]. I preferred these because they allowed me to cover a consistent set of topics, while also responding to the specific contexts and experiences of interviewees (Valentine, 2013). This was particularly important for being able to reflexively explore how farmers' freedom was related to their specific desires and values. The format also permitted a more conversational and informal approach to interviews, which put farmers at ease. I saw this as a way of 'humanizing the research relationship' (Levkoe et al., 2019). Most interviews took between one and two hours, although some lasted longer.

When I interviewed multiple people on a farm, I generally interviewed people separately. On several occasions I interviewed farming couples together at the same time (see Table 3-1). This was not intentional, but emerged from the informal setting of interviews – which often took place in farmers' homes. This proved to be a double-edged sword. In some cases, it led to more engaged discussions as interviewees responded to one another as well as my questions, revealing more about shared and

[44] I abandoned an earlier plan to also hold focus groups, because of the difficulties with bringing farmers together. Not having a pre-existing sample frame also made this more difficult.

different opinions. In other cases, I had the opposite sense that joint interviews led to farmers concealing aspects of conflict or disagreement, which they might have revealed in a separate interview. This was particularly the case where one partner was dominant in the conversation. When I interviewed farmers at their homes, this was also accompanied by a tour of some or all of the farm (when time and weather permitted). This allowed a wider range of informal discussions, which I was able to note down later where relevant. In a smaller number of cases, I interviewed farmers in markets (three), farm shops (two) or in a bar (one). Interviews with network representatives were more variable – with interviews taking place in markets, cafes, and homes.

As discussed above, I worked closely with an interpreter in Calabria. Particularly at the beginning, he was very useful for identifying and contacting farmers. As I gained confidence with my Italian, I conducted a number of interviews on my own. Working in a foreign language meant that interviews were sometimes less nuanced and detailed. While all of the same topics, as outlined in the interview guides (Appendix 1), were covered, I was not always able to ask follow up questions as easily as I did in Cornwall. Interviews also tended to take longer in Calabria than in Cornwall.

I managed ethical considerations formally by providing interviewees with a participant information sheet, and asking them to sign a consent form (see Appendix 2). While most farmers also gave consent to be identified, I have opted to keep them anonymised in this thesis. All names have been changed to pseudonyms, but they still reflect gender. All interviews were recorded digitally for ease of subsequent transcription and analysis (see below).

I kept interview guides deliberately broad to gather data on a wide range of issues related to autonomy. I invited farmers to discuss their backgrounds, their past and present development of the farm, what they previously and currently desired to do with respect to farming, their underlying values, the structuring of their farms, and major capabilities and constraints. In line with retroduction, these questions sought to elicit information about how agency and structure interact and shape farming practices. My intention was to understand each farm's particular structural conditions (particularly in relation to peripheral capitalism), and their responses to those, as a way to delineate between the contingent and necessary features of the structure-agency relation. Questions also focused on the compromises farmers had to make, and their major unfulfilled desires in relation to farming. Reflecting the relevance of second-order monitoring and 'epistemic blindness' (J. Nelson & Stock, 2018) in farmers' socialisation, I also sought to ask interviewees to critically reflect on their actions, reasons, and underlying values. Very often, simply asking 'Why do you do that?' or 'Why don't you do [agroecological practice] instead?' led to a discussion of issues which sat

outside farmers' everyday thought processes[45]. Similarly, where farmers' practices appeared contrary to their expressed values or desires, I ask them to explain why this was the case. In a rough sense, the interview served as an intervention to trigger precisely the social reflexivity and critical thought that underpins human agency, but which also served as a kind of 'social experiment' in terms of the retroductive process (Danermark et al., 2002).

A significant part of interviews went through a range of farm and household practices. These questions focused on farming practices linked with agroecology, input-reduction and biotechnical autonomy. This included, where relevant, nutrient management, seeds, fuel, labour, machinery, water, pest control, packaging, animal feed, breeding, slaughtering/butchery, marketing, construction, and household consumption. I modelled my approach to these questions on self-determination theory (mentioned above), and specifically Ibrahim and Alkire's (2007) 'domain-specific autonomy' indicator. This reflects how an agent's autonomy might vary from one set of relations or practices to another (as discussed above). However, in contrast to the quantitative and closed-question approach in Ibrahim and Alkire's work, I preferred open-ended questions. Specifically, I asked farmers to reflect on the extent to which their own values drove practices, as opposed to other influences or considerations (such as financial constraints)[46].

My first interview in Cornwall acted as a pilot, allowing me to revise the interview guide to ensure I was able to elicit the desired information. As early interviews proceeded, I made further minor adjustments to the guide. Similarly, as I proceeded, my interviewing technique improved – as I became more sensitive to the local context, but also became more attuned to issues of relevance that were emerging. For the Calabrian fieldwork, I translated the interview guide into Italian, and corroborated the translated version with a native Italian speaker and researcher. Again, as I began interviewing in Calabria, further adjustments were required to reflect local contextual issues and difficulties with translation and interpretation. While this did not compromise consistency in terms of topics covered, it allowed me to explore local and farm-specific issues in more detail.

---

[45] Several farmers commented after these interviews that they appreciated the chance to discuss and reflect on their farm practices.

[46] Following the approach taken in self-determination theory questionnaires, I also asked participants to give a rating of the extent to which they considered each relation or activity as autonomous. While doing so served as a useful prompt to elicit qualitative discussions about where and why farmers felt their practices were not autonomous, I generally found that the precise meaning of the rating scale was often misunderstood. Specifically, farmers tended to understand my deployment of the rating scale in terms of 'am I happy with how it works'. As such, I did not use the ratings themselves, as they did not accurately capture the notion of autonomy I was trying to get at.

3.3 Analysis

I transcribed all of the interview recordings, partly using automated transcription software (otter.ai), and uploaded them into RQDA[47] for coding and analysis. I partially analysed data from Cornwall before beginning fieldwork in Calabria, which helped to identify initial themes and inform later interviews. I transcribed and analysed interviews from Calabria in Italian, and only translated quotes used in this thesis. Where I had problems with transcribing, I checked with my interpreter. I translated quotes myself, but had a professional Italian-English translator corroborate and correct them.

My analysis moved through several stages, partly in response to on-going engagement with the academic literature and to comments on earlier drafts from my supervisors. In part because of a commitment to an 'agency-centric' approach, I was initially reluctant to classify farms into conventional categories. My coding initially sought to identify farmers' values and desires, key relations and practices, and comments that confirmed, or diverged from, the existing literature on autonomy and agroecology. I was struck by the diversity of values, relations and practices throughout the sample, and somewhat overwhelmed by how these many complex variables interacted in specific ways on each farm. As a result, I initially looked for commonalities across all or most farms, which revealed in both regions a high degree of dependency on commodity relations and a broad ideological framing which accepted those relations as normal. In this respect, my initial analysis focused on retroduction to a more abstract level of the agency-structure relation, as well as identifying the most common elements across farmers in these peripheral contexts. However, with further refinement of my theoretical framing (in particular breaking autonomy down into its components of self-determination, freedom and conscious control) and a reflexive process of re-coding and categorising the data (roughly following Dey, 2003), I was able to develop a clearer and more nuanced analysis. As such, my retroductive analysis moved to a more concrete level, which focused on variation in the structure-agency relation across each region and group of farmers.

Reflecting my focus on class, I categorised farms as different 'forms of production' (Friedmann, 1980), in respect of their labour relations. I also noted other distinguishing characteristics in the sample that appeared to play a key role in autonomy (specifically community forms of production and 'back-to-the-land' migration). I then sought to isolate data that concerned socialisation and self-determination, focusing on farmers' backgrounds and relations that had shaped desires and values, and how farmers reflected critically on these. Specifically, and as referred to above, I compared this data against the class-ideology bundles in Tilzey's and van der Ploeg's work, to see whether and how

[47] Open source R-package for Qualitative Data Analysis. http://rqda.r-forge.r-project.org/.

class positions shape farmers' values. Both the categorisations of farms and findings concerning self-determination are detailed in Chapter 5.

In exploring farmers' freedom, I identified the main relations that either enabled farmers ('freedom to') or constrained or compelled them ('freedom from'). I looked in particular at how farmers experienced freedom or unfreedom through market, state and personal relations, and relations with nature. I then explored these experiences and relations of freedom in two ways. Firstly, I looked at how farmers' own perceptions of their freedom were shaped by their own values and desires, and whether they have to make compromises in order to survive. Secondly, I looked at freedoms in relation to market imperatives: the imperative to produce for the market, to compete and to accumulate. As I suggested in Chapter 1 and 2, the relationship between freedom and market imperatives is one of the more contentious issues between Tilzey and van der Ploeg. The findings of this are presented in Chapter 6.

I explored the possibilities of conscious control by identifying where and how farmers were opposed to aspects of their structural context, and how they were acting to change that context. This was again responsive to farmers' values and desires, and how they experienced certain aspects of the structural context as unfree. This also draws on the notion of structure and agency being in a condition of 'structured coherence' or 'patterned incoherence' (Jessop, 2005). I also explored whether and how farmers' practices might reproduce or transform the wider social structure in unintentional ways. I again used Tilzey and van der Ploeg's differing accounts of how farmers can change structure (Tilzey places more emphasis on the state for radical transformation) to explore how farmers are or could contribute to these processes. These findings are detailed in Chapter 7.

In responding to the second research question on potential and emerging kinds of food sovereignty and agroecology, I explored the different activities and practices farmers engaged in, in relation to agroecological principles. I was interested in how the above aspects of autonomy related to different kinds of agroecology. I explored how different farm structures and activities related to the possibilities and actualities of agroecology. This included attending to how all farms engaged in agroecological practices (e.g. input reduction) in *some* farm activities, but not in others. I also paid close attention to the extent of mixed farming, in ways that enabled functional integration. Moving beyond farm-level practices, I have also explored the extent to which farmers engage in alternative producer-consumer networks, as well as being actively concerned with and involved with political activities. These different aspects of agroecology broadly align to Gliessman's five-levels of agroecology as a high-level typology. However, I have avoided formulating a more narrow typology

of agroecology, given the complexity of the diversity of farms, in terms of activities, practices (including both what is produced and how), and relations.

3.4 Summary

This chapter has firstly set out the conceptual framework that underpins this research. Commensurate with a focus on autonomy understood as the scope of agency, I have made the case for an 'agency-centric' approach which puts farmers' values and experiences at its centre. My critical realist understanding of the agency-structure relation aligns with a wider critical realist ontology, epistemology and methodology – specifically using retroduction and abduction. Political economy and ecology provide the more specific set of structures and relations, particularly around capitalism and class. Secondly, this chapter also set out the practical aspects of sampling (of both regions and farms), conducting research, and collecting and analysing data. My approach allowed me to address my research questions around the nature of farmers' autonomy in Cornwall and Calabria, and the kinds of agroecology emerging in these regions. The remainder of the thesis sets out the answers to these questions. The next chapter begins to do so, by looking at the major structural contexts in Europe, and Cornwall and Calabria specifically.

4 Peripheries of the core: Cornwall and Calabria

In Chapter 2, I set out Tilzey's argument that counter-hegemonic agroecology is more likely to emerge in the global South. I suggested that peripheral conditions *within* Europe might constitute a similar set of conditions. This chapter furthers that argument, by exploring in detail the internal divides and mechanisms of legitimation within Europe, and the specific forms of peripheralisation in Cornwall and Calabria. The purpose is firstly to outline how the peripheralisation Tilzey articulates for the global South is also present (albeit modified and less extreme) in these two regions. Both Cornwall and Calabria face conditions of social and sectoral disarticulation, through exports of surplus value, pseudo-democratic reforms (devolution), the partial persistence of semi-proletarian farming, and the limited functioning of state support measures. Secondly, this discussion serves to describe the local structuring of agrarian capitalism and related institutions, so as to contextualise famers' autonomy in the following chapters.

4.1 Agrarian differentiation and core-periphery relations in Europe

I already briefly addressed Europe's position in global core-periphery relations in section 2.1.2. This section elaborates and problematizes that position, by outlining Europe's internal core-periphery relations and the uneven efficacy of legitimation mechanisms. Tilzey (2018) and van der Ploeg (2008), among others (Goodman et al., 2012; Sonnino & Marsden, 2006b), see agriculture in Europe as broadly divided across two agricultures – one relatively territorial and multifunctional, which is both locally and socially embedded in the places it operates, and one relatively de-territorialized, industrial and internationally competitive. Tilzey (2018) describes how the division was reinforced through the shift from national food security-oriented 'political productivism' to neoliberalism in the 1970s. Richer and larger farms, concentrated in low-lands and plains, became more deeply integrated up- and downstream with processing, distributing and retail interests. By contrast, lower and middle farmers, particularly those facing more difficult topographical conditions, continued to depend on the embedded and subsidised nature of the market that had prevailed previously, and/or participation in labour markets. The differentiation in these two agricultures, along with a recognition that the ecological and social conditions of the countryside were not being reproduced in the process, shaped a 'bi-polar' policy – particularly embodied in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) – which supports both forms of agriculture (Goodman et al., 2012; Tilzey, 2018). For van der Ploeg (2008, p. 151) these two agricultures represent 'competing development trajectories' – one of industrialisation and one of repeasantisation. For Tilzey, the policies supporting them represent attempts to sustain both accumulation and legitimation functions (Tilzey, 2018, pp. 154–155).

What concerns me here is whether and how this differentiation and 'bi-polar' policy are formed unevenly *within* Europe. Europe's varied internal divisions are well documented, many of which are manifest as core-periphery relations, both across and within member states. Such relations exist between early and later members of the European Union (including the accession of historically Soviet-aligned states), between the northern and southern economies, and increasingly through the partial-integration of Europe's immediate neighbours (through pre-accession policies and the 'externalisation' of borders) (J. Anderson, 2007; Bialasiewicz, 2012; Sepos, 2016, p. 39). Despite expectations of economic convergence within Europe, the single market has exacerbated many historical spatial disparities (Keating, 2010). Since the 1980s, there has been a marginal convergence of GDP/capita at national levels, while more divergence has been reported within countries (Farole et al., 2011). Economic indicators of inequality have frequently combined with political-institutional and ethno-national aspects of differentiation and demands for greater self-determination (Keating, 2010; Willett & Giovannini, 2014). The weakening of the European Union's (EU) global core position with the rise of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS), the repercussions of the 2008 financial crisis, and resurgent nationalisms have accentuated these core-periphery dynamics (Magone et al., 2016).

Echoing Tilzey's arguments at the global scale, Sepos (2016) has argued that the rise of financial capital and financialisation are re-shaping Europe's internal core-periphery relations. Financial capital in the core regions (e.g. the UK, France and Germany) have "exported financial products, credit (loans) and high-tech manufactured goods to the periphery, mainly in exchange for raw materials and agricultural products" (Sepos, 2016, pp. 43–44). Similarly, core capital is also increasingly sent to peripheral regions as real estate and construction investments, transforming those regions into 'leisure spaces' for the consumption of core residents (Roca et al., 2017). Several other authors have argued that labour flows (both highly-skilled and low-paid unskilled) from European peripheries towards core regions constitute another 'spatial fix' to the over-accumulation of capital in European cores (J. Anderson & Shuttleworth, 2007; Antonucci & Varriale, 2020)[48]. Through these relations, core accumulation is sustained while offering consumption and aspirational migration as legitimating, or 'flanking' measures in the peripheries.

[48] There is a question here over the extent to which core European capital distributes itself over Europe's 'internal', proximate external and more distant peripheries. Although addressing such a question is beyond the scope of this paper, it would be relevant for understanding the interaction between European level and world system level dynamics in the neoliberal food regime. Recent formulations of the European Union as an 'empire' (see below), which emphasise 'concentric circles' and 'fuzzy borders' (Zielonka, 2006, p. 1) would be a good basis for exploring this distribution.

Alongside these dynamics, the rise of the EU has reshaped governance across the continent and changed the political capacity of peripheral regions. This has changed the relevance of traditional European states and the levels at which class contestations play out, and legitimating mechanisms are enacted[49]. While conventionally understood as either a federation of states or a unique political entity, a growing number of authors describe the EU as a 'neo-empire' (J. Anderson, 2007; Behr & Stivachtis, 2015; Zielonka, 2006). While this designation is not without its problems and limitations, it usefully emphasises how the EU maintains a hierarchical mode of ordering, moving outward from its multiple cores to its multiple peripheries (J. Anderson, 2007; Zielonka, 2006). The institutionalisation of the Euro, for example, tended to favour the core by removing key currency and economic stabilization mechanisms from peripheral states. With the Eurozone crisis, core member states were able to impose austerity and reforms on southern peripheries deemed to have borrowed irresponsibly (Magone et al., 2016; Sepos, 2016).

Governance has also been modified by an ongoing process of *regionalisation* across Europe (Keating & Wilson, 2014). While member states continue to shape EU policies and influence their implementation at the national level, local and regional levels of government increasingly play a (limited) role in setting priorities and disbursing funds, particularly for Cohesion Policy and the rural development aspects of CAP (see below). However, regionalisation processes are frequently driven *by* national states and interests (rather than in response to bottom-up demands), and so in many ways align with the neoliberal hollowing-out of the state. Accordingly, responsibilities are frequently delegated to regional levels without significant power or resources. Policy discourses and agendas remain set at national (or even EU) levels – although as I discuss below this varies considerably across the UK and Italy. In these ways, EU member states and their internal regions are, in ways similar to Tilzey identifies to the global South, constrained from overcoming the conditions of their own peripheralisation. Despite these limits, regions have become points of mediation across territorial, sectoral and class interests, albeit very unevenly across Europe (Keating & Wilson, 2014). In this way, they are beginning to provide some of the functions more traditionally associated with the national state. These unfolding dynamics have also generated new forms of opposition. The EU's pre-existing 'democratic deficit' has been worsened, with rising anti-European populism on both the right and left (Zielonka, 2015). As Sepos notes, the 'coercive Europeanisation' that followed the Eurozone crisis led to "profound social unrest and a rupture of the social fabric of some of the most vulnerable countries in the [European] South" (2016, p. 48). New radical social movements in

[49] As Tilzey's argument illustrates, and I discuss below, it is the EU's Common Agricultural Policy which legitimates contemporary agrarian capitalism for Europe as a whole, even though member states continue to play an implementing role in the policy.

southern Europe, including those gaining political power in Spain and Greece, have called the European neoliberal compact into question (Roca et al., 2017; Sepos, 2016). Rural communities in Europe are increasingly characterised by right-wing populism (Mamonova & Franquesa, 2020). The adverse integration of peripheries and the rise of these populist and anti-neoliberal movements brings into question whether the 'true hegemony' that Tilzey (2018) identifies in Europe actually holds.

In several ways, these tensions also shape the 'bi-polar' nature of European agricultural policy. As Magone et al. (2016) note, divergent views on budgetary policy roughly correspond to core-periphery divides in Europe – e.g. the 'friends of better spending' and the 'friends of cohesion', representing the neoliberal/austerity in the core and the more 'political productivist' logic in the peripheries. This points towards the growing disarticulation of the prevailing compact, and its disarticulation between states. In this way, member states have become increasingly divided across the 'neoliberal' and 'embedded' aspects of the above policy.

4.1.1 Regional development and agricultural policy in the European Union

As mentioned above, Tilzey argues that the European CAP attempts to maintain the dynamics of accumulation while sustaining wider legitimacy. While CAP makes up some 40% of the EU's budget, another third is taken up by 'Cohesion Policy' much of which is oriented towards promoting 'convergence' and reducing economic disparities across Europe (Farole et al., 2011; Montresor et al., 2011). Both of these policies function across supranational, national and regional levels of government in Italy and the UK. While both CAP and Cohesion Policy are formulated at the EU level, these depend on inter-state negotiations in which national governments – but also regional authorities – may influence policy development (Huggins, 2018; Roederer-Rynning & Matthews, 2019). Once set, national member states are effectively 'subordinate' to and dependent on the EU in terms of agricultural policy (Ieraci, 1998). However, national and regional state authorities continue shaping policy implementation in ways that can reinforce its uneven application. This includes choosing whether to implement optional elements of CAP, specifying which activities are eligible for direct payments, influencing strategies and funding priorities, and specifying the form of regional structures that implement policy. I discuss how Italy and the UK vary in these respects below.

Since its inception in 1958, the CAP has undergone many rounds and reforms. Originally seeing farmers as producing food for member nations, it has since shifted to a neoliberalist perspective, seeing farmers as entrepreneurs. This has entailed a partial 'decoupling' of subsidies from production levels, which also sought to respond to problems of overproduction that had emerged following the introduction of CAP (Knudsen, 2009, p. 276). During the 1990s, a 'post-productivist'

policy emerged alongside the neoliberal, emphasising 'sustainable development' and multifunctionality. The most recent reforms suggest a focus on rural development and building a 'vibrant countryside'. While specific instruments have come and gone, newer approaches have overlain older ones, giving rise to the multi-layered or 'bi-polar' set of policies mentioned above (Medina & Potter, 2017; Tilzey, 2018). Today, CAP primarily consists of three areas of support: direct payments, market supports and rural development. Market support measures are in some ways the least significant – they represent a small percentage of the overall CAP budget and are generally enacted in response to market crises for particular products (e.g. market instability linked to health scares).

Direct payments (or 'income support') are the most significant aspect of CAP financially. These payments make up roughly half of the farm income of 7 million farms in the EU, cover 90% of utilised agricultural land, and amount to 72% of the CAP budget. While rules for direct payments are set at the EU level, states have considerable flexibility in implementing them, including choices as to whether to apply certain aspects of the scheme (European Commission, 2017b). For the 2014-2020 period, direct payments include a basic payment and top-ups for 'greening' and young farmers under 40. Greening payments are conditional on a very limited diversification of arable (two crops with 10-30ha of arable, and three for farms of over 30ha of arable), maintaining permanent pastures, introducing or maintaining 'ecological focus areas', or being certified organic (European Commission, 2017b). Rural development policy is somewhat broader, and has shifted from a 'sectoral' to a 'territorial' focus (D. Watts et al., 2009). Rural development plans, framed at the national or regional levels, specify key issues and priorities. 'Agri-environmental' schemes and capital investment support (including LEADER[50]) are the main funding supports for farmers under these (Biagini et al., 2020).

The distribution of these supports and access to them are uneven, both geographically and by type of farm. Both CAP and Cohesion Policy maintain specific supports for more marginalised areas of Europe. CAP offers additional funding via direct payments or rural development programmes for 'areas of natural or other specific constraints'[51] regarded as difficult areas for farming, such as mountainous regions. However, as Wach (2019) has pointed out for Scotland, these classifications may also be associated with granting much *lower* direct payments per hectare. The Cohesion Policy, which includes the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund, also

[50] The LEADER programmes aims to stimulate rural development by planning and delivering funding through 'local action groups'. It nominally give communities and regions greater say over how funding is distributed.
[51] Previously referred to as 'less favoured areas'. The measures discussed here displaced a previous Less Favoured Areas Support Scheme, which nonetheless continues to operate in some member states.

channels more funding towards 'less developed regions' (where regional GDP per capita is less than 75% of the EU average). Both Cornwall (and the Isles of Scilly) and Calabria fall into this category – although Cornwall historically did not while it was grouped together into the 'South West' region of England (Willett & Giovannini, 2014). The combined EU funds (across both agricultural and Cohesion Policy) for the 2007-2013 period paid out €3.5 billion to Calabria and €544 million to Cornwall (European Commission, 2020b).

Tilzey (2021, p. 11) suggests that CAP supports farmers as *petty commodity producers*, i.e. as market dependent producers rather than "producers of use values for their own family reproduction". The policy framework however is more generally geared towards larger and commercial farms, often to the exclusion of the smallest producers. Very small farms are excluded from receiving direct payments altogether (either on the basis of landholding or minimum payment amounts), nominally to avoid creating administrative burdens on the state. Member states are able to set these thresholds, and England (along with Wales) has the highest minimum landholding of 5 hectares. Italy has a minimum payment threshold of €300 (European Commission, 2019)[52]. Similarly, capital funding is typically only offered at 40-50% of the total cost of an investment or project, is paid in arrears, and can have quite large minimum project sizes[53]. This entails that funding is more suited to larger-scale farms with access to financing – the implications of which I will discuss in Chapter 6. As a result, direct payments and other CAP supports tend to benefit farms with larger holdings with already higher incomes (Ciliberti & Frascarelli, 2018), particularly in England. Approximately half of farm holdings in the EU sell less than half of their farm output, although these holdings are more common in southern (including Italy) and new member states. These farms are generally less likely to access, or are disadvantaged by, CAP policies which favour larger and more commercial farms (Davidova et al., 2013; Medina & Potter, 2017). Member states also have access to optional schemes which allocate funds to relatively small farms (still above the minimum thresholds). The Small Farmers Scheme for example allows additional payments to farms under 10ha. England and UK choose not to apply this scheme, but Italy does so, where it provides additional support to over half of the farms eligible for direct payments (European Commission, 2017b).

---

[52] Entitlements to receive payments may also be traded between farmers, including in Italy where there are fewer entitlements than eligible hectares (Biagini et al., 2020). This can create barriers for new entrants, who may have to buy the entitlements (which are not automatically transferred with farm ownership or tenancy).
[53] In the UK, the minimum grant under LEADER funding was £2,500, which can be no more than 40% of the total project value (DEFRA, n.d.). The Rural Development Programme England Growth Programme, which also funds farm diversification and capital projects, had a minimum project size of £50,000 (of which £20,000 could be received as a grant) (DEFRA, 2019a). I have been unable to find an equivalent published grant size for Calabria, but several farmers reported that capital investment projects were expected to be around €100,000.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Tilzey argues that CAP and its associated policies play a key role in incorporating smaller and family farms into a regime of 'true hegemony'. However, as the above discussion reveals, this hegemony has elements of being highly uneven. The increasing tensions within Europe, particularly following the Eurozone crisis, align with growing concerns about food security in the global North, linked to the post-2008 global food crisis and awareness of the ecological exhaustion of natural resources (Tilzey, 2018, p. 215). While CAP and Cohesion Policy do offer additional funding to marginalised regions, this is shaped by the policy decisions of member states and regional governments themselves. In the UK, both rural development programmes and direct payments are managed at the country level (i.e. England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) (European Commission, 2017a). In practice, this means the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) administers payments and rural development plans centrally for all of England. In Italy, direct payments are managed at the national level (led by the Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policy), while rural development is largely managed at the regional level (Calabria has its own rural development programme) (European Commission, 2016). For Cohesion Policy, the share of funding allocated to 'less developed regions' is determined by central EU policy, but these are also shaped by how member states define their own internal regions (as in the case of Cornwall, see below). The EU also defines 'thematic concentrations', which requires that member states allocate a proportion of funds to particular areas or sectors. Mirroring the difference in CAP, 'Operational Plans' for funding are agreed between the EU and country-level authorities in the UK, while in Italy Operational Plans are in place for both national and regional levels of government. In practice, both national and regional authorities in the UK and Italy share responsibility for selecting projects to receive funding through Cohesion Policy (European Commission, n.d.; Huggins, 2018).

In this way, the possibility of CAP and Cohesion Policy to resolve the discontents generated by capitalist accumulation varies between Italy and the UK, particularly in terms of how they are controlled nationally or regionally. However, the more regionalised nature of these policies in Italy does not guarantee that regional legitimacy is sustained – for example, the resources may nonetheless be captured by local elites (see below). It is otherwise difficult to assess the extent to which the flows of resources through CAP and Cohesion Policy offset surplus flows in the opposite direction[54]. Likewise, the bias in CAP towards larger and commercial farms entails that smaller and subsistence oriented forms of production are not as fully integrated into the prevailing hegemony as

[54] European peripheries in general tend to receive *more* than they contribute to the EU's budget (Magone et al., 2016). Establishing whether these budgetary flows compensate for the surplus transfers out of peripheral regions (e.g. via profit and terms of trade) is not straightforward, given a lack of data at regional levels.

Tilzey suggests. Finally, it is worth noting that the UK's departure from the EU entails that its agricultural and development policies will no longer be 'subordinate' to EU directives, constituting a reassertion of the national level in state governance. One implication is that UK policy is likely to become more neoliberal compared with the rest of Europe[55]. Europe's policy and discursive direction is less clear – and the current reform round of CAP has been delayed until 2023. On the one hand, Tilzey (2018) suggests an emerging 'neo-productivist' logic of 'sustainable intensification' in Europe. However, with the loss of one of its core promoters of neoliberalism, European policy may take unexpected turns. In any case, there remains space for an ongoing dynamic between emerging counter- and alter-hegemonic challenges, and EU and state-led responses of co-optation.

4.1.2 Alternative food networks and agroecology in Europe

A major dynamic in European agriculture in the last thirty years is the emergence of 'alternative food networks' (AFNs). While these networks come in many different forms, they broadly refer to more direct and 'embedded' links between producers and consumers that depart from the more dominant supermarket-led and industrial supply chains (Renting et al., 2003; Tregear, 2011; Venn et al., 2006). For Tilzey (2018), these AFNs are typically 'alter-hegemonic', grounded in local, quality and ecologically-sound forms of produce, while still being essentially market-based. Van der Ploeg et al. (2012) are also critical of the emphasis on consumer morality and food characteristics in the literature on AFNs, instead focusing on short, embedded networks that connect specific people in specific places[56]. It is the latter which are associated with repeasantisation, and the emergence of new agroecological or 'proto-agroecological' forms of farming and cooperation in Europe (van der Ploeg, 2008, 2020; van der Ploeg et al., 2019). AFNs are also differentiated geographically within Europe, including along core-periphery (especially north-south) divides (Kopczyńska, 2020; Sonnino & Marsden, 2006b).

Agroecology as a term is not widely used among European farmers, even if its practices are increasingly adopted. However, there are suggestions that it is becoming more explicit, and it is also beginning to be taken up into policy discourses, albeit in more technical (i.e. non-political) forms (Ajates Gonzalez et al., 2018). As far as I am aware, there are no current studies exploring the history or presence of agroecology in England or the UK more generally, although Sevilla Guzmán and Woodgate (2013) link today's agroecology to historic peasant activism in England. Aside from Wach's (2019) study's in Scotland, Owen et al. (2020) explore the agroecological content of

---

[55] The UK government appears set to further advance the neoliberal agenda by phasing out direct payments as income supports, while retaining a 'post-productivist' scheme with payments for a wide range of 'public goods' (DEFRA, 2020).

[56] This distinction is similar to that made by Watts et al. (2005) in describing strong (network-focused) and weak (food-focused) AFNs.

Geographical Indications in Wales, Ajates Gonzalez et al. (2018) discuss an example of a policy document discussing agroecology in the UK, Smaje (2014a) looks at the interaction between agroecology and box-scheme marketing, and Pimbert and Moeller (2018) critique the lack of agroecological focus in UK aid. Several membership organisations in England are actively pushing for more support for AFNs. This includes the Soil Association, the largest certifying body of organic agriculture in England, which has recently begun employing a discourse of agroecology (Soil Association, 2020). The Permaculture Association, which arguably represents a form of agroecology (Ferguson & Lovell, 2014; M. D. Hathaway, 2016), has attempted to replicate and scale-up alternative agriculture, but with a limited impact on mainstream farming in Britain (Maye, 2018). The more recently formed Landworkers Alliance, a member of La Via Campesina, advocates for food sovereignty as the right of communities to define their own food and farming systems (The Landworkers Alliance, n.d.). Van der Ploeg et al. (2019) also cite Innovative Farmers, the Pasture-Fed Livestock Association, and the Centre for Alternative Technologies as other examples of farmer networks developing agroecological practices in the UK. Despite the presence of these associations and networks, the larger and more conventional National Farmers' Union (NFU) continues to dominate political discourse, while underrepresenting small and alternative farming interests (Medina & Potter, 2017).

Agroecology has long been present in Italian academic discourse, but organic farming is dominant. Organic farming itself has been conventionalised, with the result that farmers tend to focus on an input-substitution approach rather than an agroecological framework (Corrado, 2018; Migliorini et al., 2018). As in the UK, Italy has a number of organisations and initiatives representing farmers' interests and building AFNs. The largest union, *Coldiretti*, although maintaining a discourse of support for small farmers, is characterised by a low degree of opposition to the conventional food system (Dansero & Pettenati, 2015). A more radical perspective is offered by *Genuino Clandestino,* established in 2009 to claim 'the right to exist' for small producers, especially in the face of restrictive regulations on food processing (Borghesi, 2014). The organisation has had a fundamentally 'autonomist' stance, by developing food networks for processed products which do not meet legal requirements (which I discuss further in Chapter 6). Although the movement is not a registered member of *La Via Campesina*, it has campaigned on a similar set of goals including 'land access, biodiversity, solidarity economy networks and participatory guarantee systems' (Borghesi, 2014, p. 157). Other linked associations and networks include the Campaign for Peasant Agriculture (which has fought for a unique legal framework to enable and support peasant farming) and *La Via Campesina* members *Associazione Rurale Italiana, Associazione Italiana per l'Agricoltura Biologica*, and the *Associazione Lavoratori Produttori Agroalimentari* (Borghesi, 2014; La Via Campesina, 2018).

4.2 Rural peripheralisation in Cornwall and Calabria

In understanding the peripheral positions of Cornwall and Calabria in relation to Europe, it is useful to start with the positions of their respective countries. The UK has unambiguously been part of the economic and political core of Europe (Magone et al., 2016), although with its departure from the EU this position is in some ways in doubt. Its original (but late) entry into the European Economic Community was intended to sustain capitalist accumulation and comparative advantages in the globalising economy (Antonucci & Varriale, 2020, p. 46). However, the UK's ongoing relationship with the powerful US "has allowed the British for 350 years to imagine themselves as both part of Europe and not part of Europe, and to define their identity in part against Europe" (Gamble, 2010, p. 101). Despite this apparent ambivalence, the UK has been a major policy driver in the EU, particularly for the single market. Its powerful position has enabled it to 'opt-out' of many European policies, giving rise to the 'differentiated integration' that underpins contemporary European institutional structures (Gamble, 2010), and permitting a degree of resistance to the EU's more imperial qualities. Following the 2008 financial crisis, the UK government sustained bailouts and light regulation of financial capital while calling for collective investment programmes at the EU level (Schweiger, 2016). As indicated above, the departure of the UK from the EU could signal further divergence of UK and EU policy.

By contrast, although Italy has often been seen as a peripheral state within Europe, Magone et al. (2016) place it on the 'perimeter' of the European core and periphery, because of its own internal north-south core-periphery relations. Like other southern European states Italy's public debt is high, but unlike others its private debt is low, it has a relatively strong industrial sector in the north and it has continued to play a strong role within the EU and internationally (including as a member of the G8). Italy itself has perceived Europe as both a catalyst for modernisation and a mechanism for insulating itself from broader global forces, and this dual role has informed Italy's integration in the EU (Brunazzo & Sala, 2016). However, the fragile stability of Italy's post-war governance regimes depended on public spending to mobilize support, particularly to sustain their legitimacy in the south (e.g. *La Cassa per il Mezzogiorno,* an industrial development programme). However, participation in European institutions, "by the 1990s, meant having to make difficult choices that constrained the ability of political parties to use public finances to mobilize support" (Brunazzo & Sala, 2016, p. 219). In other words, Europe constrained the capacity of the Italian state to sustain its own internal legitimacy, and by extension, that of the prevailing dynamics of accumulation both internally (South-North) and externally vis-à-vis Europe and the world. Accordingly, following the Eurozone crisis, Italy's position within European institutions has waned. Political positions within Italy in relation to Europe diversified, and the populist view that Europe compromised Italian

sovereignty came to the fore, represented by the *Movimento 5 Stelle* (Brunazzo & Sala, 2016, p. 221).

Both the UK and Italy are themselves comprised of diverse regions, the relations between which may be described in core-periphery terms. In the UK, the south (and more particularly London and the south-east) dominates England, while England continues to dominate its Celtic neighbours (Morgan, 2002). The UK has also not undergone regionalisation in the same way as other European states – although Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have considerable political self-determination, policies in England remain largely centralised and are more directly subject to the UK government and parliament (Huggins, 2018). In Italy, it is the industrial north which has long dominated the southern *mezzogiorno,* characterised by its rurality and cultural differences (Mingione, 1993). Since the late 1990s, regional electoral reform and regional access to Cohesion Policy funds have considerably reshaped and regionalised aspects of policy in Italy (Casula, 2020; Graziano, 2010). On this basis, the following sections explore the history, peripheralisation and food systems of Cornwall and Calabria.

4.2.1 Cornwall, UK

Cornwall is a peninsular at the south-western tip of Great Britain, largely separated from the rest of the country by the River Tamar. Historically Celtic, the region has a long history of political marginalisation and economic extractivism. Its population today is slightly more than half a million people, though this swells considerably in summer as the county is a major tourist destination, with around 23 million overnight stays and 14 million day trips to Cornwall every year (Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership, 2018). Cornwall is often considered one of the poorest and most deprived regions of the UK (Bosworth & Willett, 2011; Sandford, 2006; Williams, 2003). In 2018, the region had the fourth lowest regional GDP per capita in the UK (Eurostat, 2020b)[57]. The historical and contemporary peripheralisation of Cornwall is characterised by its function in the structuring of the UK economy and its lack of self-determining government structures.

One of three 'Celtic nations' of Great Britain, Cornwall has been dominated by the English and aspects of its cultural and linguistic heritage have been marginalised in the process. The region today has far less political and economic independence than Scotland and Wales. The UK government has long ignored demands for greater political control, instead largely treating Cornwall as part of 'South West England'[58]. This treatment has played a significant role in obscuring Cornwall's distinct ethnic

---

[57] Most recently published data on Cornwall also includes the Isles of Scilly. As the latter is relatively small, from hereon in I refer only to 'Cornwall' when using such statistics.
[58] An administrative region consisting of the 'ceremonial counties' of Bristol, Dorset, Devon, Gloucestershire, Somerset and Wiltshire, alongside Cornwall.

identity and forms of economic marginalisation, while also restricting its access to European regional development funds until 1999 (Payton, 1993; Sandford, 2006; Willett, 2016).

Cornish identity remains a contested and dynamic subject, but a revival of attachment to a Celtic heritage in the twentieth century has been overlaid with class, periphery and other processes of marginalisation to shape a distinct ethno-regionalist movement (Hale, 2001; Payton, 1993; Willett, 2013). This movement is arguably led today by the centre-left Cornish nationalist party, *Mebyon Kernow,* which was founded in 1951. Since the 1990s, active campaigning for devolution has brought a greater recognition of Cornish identity and partial re-organisation of governance. In 2001, a petition calling for a Cornish Assembly, signed by 50,000 people (10% of the population), was ignored by the central government[59]. Only in 2009 was Cornwall granted a unitary council, though this also led to the demise of more local district councils in the county. In 2015, a 'Cornish devolution deal' was signed between the UK government and local Cornish authorities, although this provides little opportunity for local people to shape policy priorities (Willett, 2016).

The background to the county's deprivation lies largely in its position as a centre of extractive economic activity. In the early 19th century, Cornwall was the world's mining centre, particularly for tin, copper and lead. For a period, this enabled the region to industrialise and become a major exporter of mining machinery and skilled labour[60]. However, because the area remained dependent on coal imports, and because of the particular structures of capital in the mining sector, the "roots of industrialisation were not deep" (Williams, 2003, p. 57). As the mining industry declined at the end of the 19th century, the flight of skills and capital from the area led to depopulation and economic decline.

According to Perry (1993a), Cornwall's historical demographic formation was unusual in England, with a widely distributed, multi-centric and low-density population even up to the 1950s. Farmers and farm hands lived 'cheek by jowl' with mineworkers, and together constituted impoverished but otherwise 'egalitarian' rural societies, although titled landowners and landed gentry existed[61]. Major shifts however were already occurring, including the breakdown of religion-centric community life, the introduction of the welfare state and the emergence of secondary schools in towns which drew young people out of their home communities. Farm mechanisation and the poor state of rural

[59] Even though, at the time, the UK government was actively encouraging devolution in other parts of England (Willett & Giovannini, 2014).

[60] These mining diasporas would later play a key role in the formation of a distinct Cornish identity, particularly in Australia (Payton, 1993).

[61] Established in the 12th Century, the Duchy of Cornwall currently holds 2% of Cornwall's land, with larger holdings in neighbouring Devon. The benefits of the holdings (while also exempt from corporation tax) accrue to the eldest son of the reigning British monarch (Shrubsole, 2019).

housing also contributed to young people leaving the countryside. By the end of the fifties, a quarter of male farm hands had left the land and unemployment was emerging as a serious issue (Perry, 1993b, p. 51).

From the mid-twentieth century, the dominant forces in Cornwall were a rapidly expanding tourism sector and inward migration (Bosworth & Willett, 2011; Hale, 2001; Williams, 2003). Central government policy strongly encouraged these forces through the development of roads, at the expense of other infrastructure (Perry, 1993b, p. 66). This renewed the extractivist form of the economy, allowing value transfers to England via exports and profits. Non-indigenous capital exercised considerable control within the region and Cornwall's economy become increasingly dependent on the rest of the UK. This occurred through the emergence of a 'branch factory' economy and outward migration from the UK's urban metropoles (especially London), which Payton described as a third phase of Cornish peripheralism (Payton, 1989; Perry, 1993b, p. 80).

These dynamics allowed outsiders to shape Cornwall's development, particularly in ways that preserved outsiders' perceptions of rural idyll or coastal wilderness. Incoming 'entrepreneurs' in the 1980s desired to 'escape the city rat race' and to 'be one's own boss' (Perry, 1993b, p. 73), in sentiments echoed by many of today's incomer farmers in Cornwall (discussed in the next chapter). Inflows of people into the region have had mixed impacts on the rural economy, but have largely failed to revitalise rural communities or offer new forms of livelihood to local people (Bosworth & Willett, 2011; Perry, 1993b; Williams, 2003). Also associated with the inflow of people is outsiders' perceptions of 'the Cornish' as stupid, backward, and sly, something which overlays the widespread use of pejoratives for rural people in England (Perry, 1993a, p. 45; Smaje, 2014b). Today, inward investment, tourism and inward 'lifestyle' migration continue to play major roles in pushing up land prices, providing a demand for local agricultural produce, while also intersecting with the consolidation of agricultural holdings.

4.2.1.1 Farming and food systems in Cornwall

The impact of the mining boom on Cornwall's agrarian structures appears to be understudied. Payton (2017) suggests that early 19th century agriculture oriented itself to meeting the needs of a growing mining population, stimulating arable and potato production (which subsequently declined as the mining industry did). However, most surplus capital from the mining boom was invested not in agriculture, but in coastal regions and tourism or transferred beyond the region (Perry, 1993a). The initially slow transformation of agrarian structures was linked to the relatively poor road infrastructure that prevailed at the time, "little changed from horse and cart days" (Perry, 1993a, p. 31). In accordance with wider regional shifts since the 1950s however, agrarian structures have been

severely disrupted and restructured. In the 1950s, there were some 11,000 agricultural holdings and a similar number of landless farm workers (Perry, 1993a, p. 36). Almost all holdings were under 120 acres, and 60% were under 20 acres; an average farm size half that of the rest of Britain. Through consolidation however, the number of agricultural holdings in Cornwall fell to fewer than 5,000 in 2016. Only 2% of commercial holdings[62] are under 2ha and 36% are over 50ha (~120 acres), while farms larger than 100ha control more than 55% of agricultural land area (see also Table 5-1). Despite this process, farms in Cornwall remain smaller than average across England, where in 2016 farms larger than 100ha made up 24% of farms and controlled 74% of farm land (DEFRA, 2019b; Perry, 1993a). The 2003 CAP reforms (which introduced direct payments) contributed to the 'polarisation' of small and larger farms in the South West generally[63], while also leading farms to be more 'responsive' to market prices (Lobley & Butler, 2010).

These restructuring processes have been accompanied by changes in farm practices and a re-shaping of food systems. Farming in Cornwall has become more industrialised, more specialised and more oriented to external markets – although to a lesser extent than many other English regions (Ilbery & Maye, 2011; Ricketts Hein et al., 2006). There has been a general decline in mixed and traditional farming in England generally, and farmers increasingly rely on external information rather than their own local and tacit knowledge of their farms (Morgan & Murdoch, 2000). While Cornwall is one of the areas in England where organic production is concentrated (Ilbery & Maye, 2011), it remains marginal at approximately 3.3% of holdings[64]. Organic farming has generally not been supported by the UK government (except more recently via compulsory aspects of CAP), and the sector is dominated overwhelmingly by supermarket supply chains and imports, rather than domestic and localised networks (Ilbery & Maye, 2011; Morgan & Murdoch, 2000). One of the UK's largest organic food box schemes, Riverford, is headquartered just outside Cornwall, in neighbouring Devon (Clarke et al., 2008).

Lobley et al. (2011) note that Cornwall's geography, poor transport links and high levels of primary food production may incline the region to a higher level of circularity in the food economy.

[62] These statistics present an incomplete picture – in the 2000s DEFRA moved from publishing data for all holdings to only publishing 'commercial' holdings (in line with recent EU farm structure statistics guidelines), which excludes farms under 5ha unless engaged in intensive specialist production. Reflecting this change, the published count of farms under 5ha in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly between 2005 and 2009 fell 85% (DEFRA, 2019b; Eurostat, 2020a). 'Commercial holdings' may include most market gardens, but it is unlikely to include 'hobby farms' and other diverse and non-commercial smallholdings.

[63] At the larger end of the scale, Riviera Produce and Southern England Farms, which control 5,500 and 7,000 acres respectively, and supply mainly into UK supermarket chains have come to be dominant players in Cornish agriculture (FarmingUK, 2018; Southern England Farms, 2021).

[64] This estimate is my own calculation based on a published list of organic certified farms in 2016 (DEFRA, 2016) compared to the number of commercial farms in the same year (DEFRA, 2019b).

According to a 2006 'Index of Food Relocalization' in the UK, Cornwall was first-equal relating to food production, 12th relating to marketing, and fourth overall (Ricketts Hein et al., 2006)[65]. Despite this, Cornwall's food production is highly geared towards consumption outside the region. Based on 'poor to fair' quality data, only 44% of primary production in the South West enters local businesses or directly to households. Food and drink manufacturers source only 42% of their inputs from the region, and sell only 28% of their outputs in it (Lobley et al., 2011). The Cornish pasty, one of Cornwall's few protected geographical indications, is an emblematic example. Since at least the 1980s (and echoed in comments to me by two farmers in Cornwall) these regional disarticulations have been a source of discontent. The Cornish are "no longer happy to see potatoes dug out of the ground and taken to England to be put in plastic bags and sold back to them via Tesco" (Christmas cited in Payton, 1993, p. 17).

There is some evidence that since 2000, AFNs (e.g. direct marketing, farm gate sales, box schemes, alternative retail stores etc.) have grown much more rapidly in the UK than conventional food retail systems (Ilbery et al., 2010). In the South West, successive food crises have spurred the emergence of alternative, locally embedded food networks. These have often been led by 'ecological entrepreneurs' implying an at least partly market-driven logic. The 'boundary maintenance' of these processes is not so much *territorial* as it is framed in terms of quality and brand that can provide better positioning within the market (Sonnino & Marsden, 2006a). In Cornwall, AFNs are closely related with the tourism sector as well as inward migrants into the region (Carrigan et al., 2017; Everett & Aitchison, 2008; Hale, 2001).

The conventionality and disarticulation of the Cornish food system can be linked to both Cornwall's peripheral position in the UK economy, and UK agricultural policy. As indicated above, policy remains highly centralised and driven largely by DEFRA. As Willet (2016, p. 586) notes, the 2015 'Cornish devolution deal' *does not* allow "Cornwall to interact directly with the European Commission with regard to the negotiations over structural funding." As a result, farmers in Cornwall face England's broadly neoliberal agricultural and rural development policy, which has generally been to 'let the market decide'. Market relations are framed as a kind of 'consumer sovereignty', in which consumers wield the power to determine what is produced and how (Sassatelli & Scott, 2010). Agriculture has been viewed as a separate and disembodied economic sector, rather than something embedded in rural communities. As such, rural development and agricultural policy are treated separately. This policy context has hampered the emergence of organic and multifunctional farming

[65] The index was based on three production indicators (no. of local food directories, no. of producers listed in directories, organic producers) and three marketing indicators (Farm Retail Association membership, farmers markets, and Women's Institute Cooperative Markets).

grounded in rural communities (Marsden & Sonnino, 2008; Morgan & Murdoch, 2000). At the same time, tradition, locality, artisanal production and cultural identity have not been mobilised significantly as values in the UK in comparison with Italy and other parts of Europe (Sassatelli & Scott, 2010). This is also reflected in how the UK implements EU rural development policy, with rural development plans issued at the national level (i.e. England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland), rather than the regional level (as in Italy). As Sonnino and Marsden (2006a) point out, AFNs have emerged in the South West despite, not because of, the state.

4.2.2 Calabria, Italy

Like Cornwall, Calabria is also a peninsula. It sits on the southern extreme of mainland Italy, with a population of roughly 2 million. The region is predominantly mountainous and hilly, albeit with significant plateaus and plains, which has shaped the agrarian and cultural characteristics of the region. Since the unification of Italy in the 19th century, Calabria, as with much of southern Italy, has occupied a peripheral position in relation to the northern industrial core. This position is underpinned by outward flows of agricultural produce and people. Calabria suffers from a low and falling regional GDP per capita, high unemployment and poverty rates and depopulation (Musolino et al., 2020). In 2018, Calabria had the lowest regional GDP per capita in Italy (Eurostat, 2020b).

Calabria's regional identity was historically grounded on its rurality, including the peasantry's "rhythm, its organization, its values and its system of knowledge that, for centuries and centuries, bound men to the land as the only source of wealth" (Placanica, reproduced in Ambrosi, 2014, p. 19). This identity lacks a single (albeit contested) ethnic narrative like Cornwall's – instead, multiple ethnic identities such as the *Grecanici* and the *Arbëreshë*, as well as considerable other forms of diversity exist throughout a region divided by tall mountain ranges (Placanica, 1999)[66]. These multiple Calabrias (*le Calabrie*) have meant there are few strong calls for political independence or devolution. Where regional powers have been granted or called for, there has been resistance to the idea of a unified region (Ambrosi, 2014). Here for example, the 'Reggio Revolt' in the 1970s was triggered by the designation of Catanzaro, rather than Reggio, as the capital of the newly formed regional government. The struggle and its demobilisation was linked to the uneven economic and political integration of different parts of Calabria (S. Wright, 2002).

Perhaps surprisingly, Italy's northern regions have led recent calls for more devolution of political power, in part linked to anti-southern sentiments, with referendums in Lombardy and Veneto held in 2017 (Giovannini & Vampa, 2019). Nonetheless, Italy's legal framework is such that regions can

[66] As with the Cornish case, Calabrian identity has become stronger in diasporas, also prominently in Australia (Marino, 2019).

exercise considerable control over matters of agriculture and food – such as in resisting GMOs and promoting autochthonous varieties (Bertacchini, 2009; Sassatelli & Scott, 2010). While historically seen as "a new instrument for the old mechanism of state control", regionalisation in Italy has been advanced by crises of the Italian state, anti-state movements, an economic liberalization and privatization agenda intended to reform inefficient state bureaucracies, and EU integration (Giordano & Roller, 2003; Ieraci, 1998, p. 21). Electoral reforms in the late 1990s and the EU's Cohesion Policy have driven stronger regional governance, including in Calabria (Graziano, 2010). However, business organisations have in other respects feared regionalisation as a process of fragmenting markets (Keating & Wilson, 2014). Within Italy, food systems and food regulation are highly regionalised. Constitutionally, responsibility for agriculture falls on regional governments rather than the central state (Bertacchini, 2009).

Southern Italy's peripheral position has been frequently presented as a result of the 'backwardness' of the region and its peoples (J. Schneider, 1998). However, its underdevelopment is very much linked to its adverse integration into the politically and industrially dominant north[67]. Much of the unification of Italy entailed repressive and forced integration of southern Italy. Early protectionist policies in unified Italy created shared interests between northern industrialists and southern landowners that favoured the exploitation of proletarian and peasant classes (Urbinati, 1998). Since the 1950s, northern Italy's rapid industrialisation in part depended on cheap labour from southern regions, which, alongside urbanisation, has led to rural depopulation (D'Attoma, 2017). Although the Italian state has long sought to 'develop' the south, through investment programmes and agrarian reforms, industry has largely failed to take hold. Funding allocated from the north, first through *La Cassa per il Mezzogiorno* and subsequently from European funding mechanisms, have been largely captured by local elites, including those linked to mafia organisations (Aiello et al., 2019). More emphasis has been placed recently on the prospects for tourism in Calabria, but the numbers and economic impact of the sector remains mixed and highly seasonal, with most tourism concentrated in coastal areas. In 2019, the region saw 9.5 million overnight stays (Ferrari et al., 2021).

Calabria is also noteworthy for having strong family-based networks, which are also considered detrimental to the possibility of forming 'public' or non-familial networks and relations (D'Amico, 2015, p. 52; Mete & Sciarrone, 2012). Calabrian society has often been labelled as *clientalist* in a pejorative way, often merely referring to vernacular ways of life – i.e. as anything that departs from the official expectations and norms (Lemarchand, 1989). But this label is also linked to the on-going

---

[67] The 'southern question' of Italy in particular is built around the idea of 'backward' southern regions, equivalent to orientalism (J. Schneider, 1998). The southern question has also been used to discuss the adverse integration of the South into the northern economy, most notably by Gramsci (1978).

presence of mafia networks, known as the *'ndrangheta* in Calabria. In the early twentieth century mafia networks were often "seen both as a mutual aid society and as an opportunity to escape the socio-economic malaise", while also operating as a local ruling class (Truzzolillo, 2011, p. 366). While the *'ndrangheta* remains socially and territorially bound to Calabria, it also has extensive global reach and power today (Sergi & Lavorgna, 2016). Within the region, its networks permeate much economic and political activity, occupying an extensive 'grey area' across state, capital and vernacular. While acting itself as a capital class (including links into conventional supermarket networks), the mafia's subordination and co-optation of other capital classes, including through 'extortion-protection mechanisms' backed by violence, continues to constrain entrepreneurial activity in Calabria (Sciarrone, 2010; Truzzolillo, 2011). At the same time, mafia networks deploy gift giving as a way to sustain social capital and legitimacy within Calabrian society (Pipyrou, 2014). The *'ndrangheta* have also been associated with the capture of state and EU subsidies and funding for agriculture and infrastructure projects, labour exploitation, the use of cows as a tool of intimidation[68], and exporting fraudulently labelled olive oil (Albanese, 2019; Bacchi, 2017; Sergi & Lavorgna, 2016). In addition, significant amounts of land and other resources confiscated from the *'ndrangheta* have been entrusted to public authorities and made available to various alternative food projects.

4.2.2.1 Farming and food systems in Calabria

Calabria's peripheralisation played a crucial role in the shaping of its agrarian structures, most famously analysed by Arrighi and Piselli (1987). They framed Calabria's peripheralisation much as Tilzey does for the global South today, underpinned by the transfer of surplus, unequal exchange and direct forms of surplus appropriation. In the hundred years prior to the First World War, land tenure in Calabria shifted from the dominant *latifondi contadini*[69] towards three distinct social forms. The first form were large capitalist enterprises (*latifondi capitalistici*) around Crotone, under which estates were farmed by wage labour and produced for the market (and profits). The second form, found further south on the Plain of Gioia Tauro, was similar to the first, but was combined with estates selling part of their holdings to peasants. While the estates became medium-scale capitalist enterprises, the peasants then tended towards hiring or selling wage labour depending on their economic position. The mafia played a particular role here in hindering the development of markets, capitalist class-relations and the state (while at other times reinforcing processes of accumulation and differentiation). The third form emerged around Cosenza, as a more stable

[68] The *vacche sacre della 'ndrangheta* ('sacred cows of the '*ndrangheta'*) are cows linked to mafia families which are variously allowed to roam free or used to cause property damage in various parts of Calabria.
[69] Large estates partly farmed by the landowner using wage labour and partly subdivided into plots rented by peasants.

peasant arrangement grounded in the disappearance of large estates and supported by remittances of migrant labour (then considered surplus to household production). These different structures are noteworthy for a) having emerged at roughly the same time and b) all in the context of Calabria's peripheral position in the newly emerging Italian nation (Arrighi & Piselli, 1987).

However, after the Second World War, and following a period of peasant revolt, land reform considerably re-shaped the agrarian structures in Southern Italy (Mingione, 1993). Farming in Calabria converged on:

> "a system of production in which, one, a large proportion of previously cultivated land was no longer put to agricultural use, and, two, the land that did remain under cultivation came to be exploited throughout Calabria by a combination of vertically integrated agrobusinesses, full-lifetime farmers using capital- and skill intensive methods of production, and part-lifetime wage workers who integrated their wage incomes with agricultural production for sale and/ or direct consumption" (Arrighi & Piselli, 1987, p. 656).

However, much like Cornwall, Calabrian farming has undergone considerable consolidation since the 1980s. Between 1982 and 2016, the number of agricultural enterprises fell from 209,246 to 99,129, with most of that decline occurring since 2000. Utilised agricultural land area also fell steeply between 1982 and 2000, but has remained fairly consistent since. While these figures seem severe, they are fairly similar to trends throughout Italy (Amaranto & Biamonte, 2014; Istat, 2020). The figures suggest that there has been a dual process of land abandonment (especially between 1982 and 2000) and growing farm sizes (especially between 2000 and 2016). Mountainous land is more commonly abandoned than land in the plains. For example, the area covered by actively managed terraces along the Costa Viola, north of Reggio Calabria, fell by roughly 85% between 1955 and 2014 (Modica et al., 2017). However, land owners are discouraged from completely abandoning land, with a regional law requiring they take measures to prevent forest fires[70].

While remaining smaller than Italy more generally, average farm sizes (by utilised land) increased from 3.2ha in 2000 to 5.8ha in 2016 (Amaranto & Biamonte, 2014; Istat, 2020). Just over 50% of farms have less than 2ha of land (see Table 5-1 for more details on the distribution of holdings) (Istat, 2020). Smaller farms have become fewer in number, while farms larger than 10ha are becoming more common (Amaranto & Biamonte, 2014; European Commission, 2020a). Approximately 47% of farm holdings are 'semi-subsistence farms', indicating that more than half of

[70] Regional Law n.51/2017, article 7, requires landowners and tenants to maintain protective strips on land, even if it is uncultivated or abandoned. Several farmers cited this law in discussing the emergence of *comodato d'uso* in the region (see Chapter 5).

farm output is consumed in the household. This compares with roughly 40% of holdings across Italy (Davidova et al., 2013; Istat, 2020)[71]. The combination of small farm sizes and orientation towards meeting subsistence needs suggests a high-degree of 'part-time' farming, with farmers relying on non-farm sources of income. Davidova et al. (2013) estimate that on 23% of farms under 2ha in Italy the farm owner-manager has another source of income. This number is likely to be much larger if other family members are taken into account. Despite these changes, Arrighi and Piselli's assessment of Calabria remains broadly valid today, with agriculture characterised by larger more capitalist farms and small family farms reliant on local distribution networks (Amaranto & Biamonte, 2014; D'Amico, 2015, pp. 50–51). A significant amount of both organic and conventional produce is sold through conventional supermarket chains, including outside the region, a system referred to as *la grande distribuzione organizzata*, or GDO (Corrado, 2018). Most production in Calabria is concentrated in olives, cereals, and livestock, with citrus, grapes and other fruits and vegetables also significant.

Most farms operate on a combination of family and non-family labour, a significant proportion of which is irregular and informal. A growing proportion of labour in the region is provided by inward migrants, especially from eastern Europe and Africa. The scale of migrant and irregular labour is not always clear, with some estimates that up to 90% of foreign labour in Calabrian farming is irregular. European and state policies which criminalise migration combine with racism and industrial agriculture's structural need for an itinerant work force. The result is that much commercial farming depends on the state-enabled super-exploitation of migrant labour – not as semi-proletarian peasants but as workers without recourse to state labour protections. Migrants frequently work as gang-labour (*caporalato*) or for irregular piece-rates. The exploitation of people in these ways has led to considerable unrest, such as the revolt in Rosarno on the Plain of Gioia Tauro in 2010 (Corrado, 2011).

Calabria is one of Italy's largest producers of organic produce (*agricoltura biologica*). Land area registered as organic has doubled in the last 10 years, commensurate with a similar increase throughout Italy. Organic farms tend to be much larger, more commercial, and more reliant on non-family labour than non-organic farms, indicating the 'conventionalisation' of the sector (Amaranto & Biamonte, 2014; Corrado, 2018). Roughly 10% of farms in Calabria are registered as organic, making up over 36% of the utilised land area. The average size of organic holdings was 18.5ha in 2016

[71] There is some cause for concern about the quality of these estimates, with figures in the last ten years showing fluctuations, from under 20% to over 60% of farms being counted as 'semi-subsistence' (Istat, 2020). Equivalent figures for the UK are not collected.

(compared to 5.8ha in general, as above)[72]. This is consistent with the rest of southern Italy, where the average organic farm is almost three times the size of the average farm holding (SINAB, 2020b). Organic production is chiefly in olives and citrus fruits, with Calabria producing 25-30% of all Italian output in these products (European Commission, 2020a). Despite the conventionalisation of organic production, a number of AFNs exist in Calabria. These are either traditional forms that have survived restructuring, or more recently emerging networks that are intended to rival the GDO. These networks emphasise a range of direct and local relations between producers and consumers, generally known in Italy as *filiere corte* (short supply chains) or *km 0* (D'Amico, 2015; Giuca, 2012). They are also largely underpinned by the personal and particular 'trust regimes' that dominate Italian food markets, in sharp contrast to more universal and institutional regimes found in the UK (Sassatelli & Scott, 2010). Solidarity purchasing groups (*gruppi di acquisto solidale,* or GAS) are a novel, marginal but rapidly growing, type of AFN. They typically involve a group of consumers who consciously seek to purchase food and other products more directly from producers, beyond conventional distribution systems and emphasising equity and ethics (Cembalo et al., 2013; D'Amico, 2015). Although some GAS emphasise local purchasing, others engage in purchasing practices nationally and internationally. Also prominent in Calabria are social agriculture and educational farms (*agricoltura sociale* and *fattorie didattiche*, respectively), in which educational and social functions form a central part of a farm's operations and income. While elements of these functions exist in some English farms, in Italy they have a specific legal status (Musolino et al., 2020; Napoli, 2006). Although these forms of alternative farming and food networks have been growing rapidly, they remain much less prominent in Calabria than in northern parts of Italy.

4.1 Summary

The above discussion reveals how core-periphery dynamics play out in Europe, echoing in several ways those that Tilzey identifies at a global level under the neoliberal food regime (as I set out in Chapter 2). Alongside shifting loci of political powers and responsibility, these dynamics also involve movements of capital and labour in ways that constitute the adverse integration of peripheral regions into core dynamics. These dynamics are also related with a bi-polarity in European agriculture and policy, which seeks to simultaneously sustain capital (core) accumulation and legitimacy and 'sustainable development' in peripheral regions. While the UK is unambiguously part of Europe's political and economic core (although its departure from the EU may affect this), Italy

[72] This is my calculation based on data in SINAB (2020a). ISTAT (2020) provides a very different set of data for 2016, giving a much higher number of organic farms (24,571) and a lower organic area (167,672ha) compared to SINAB data (11,055 farms on 204,527ha). I have favoured the SINAB figures as they are available historically and are more consistent with figures reported in Amaranto and Biamonte (2014).

sits on the boundary of core and periphery. Cornwall and Calabria in turn have histories of being more or less forcefully integrated into the cores of their respective countries. Political devolution remains limited (but also continually renegotiated) in both regions, although Cornwall has more active demands for greater political control. The integration of these regions into Europe has underpinned processes of differentiation and outward-orientation of agriculture, as well as a generalised process of a limited *social* and more significant *sectoral* disarticulation. However, the adverse integration of these regions is at least partially offset through extensive subsidisation, outward migration, and the contribution of growing tourism sectors (especially in Cornwall).

Despite a shared condition of peripheralisation, Cornwall and Calabria have significant differences in their farming and food systems. As I briefly discussion in section 3.2.1, these include different food-related trust-regimes and different climatic and ecological conditions. In this chapter, I have shown how Calabrian agriculture remains populated by small-farms, many of which are in large part oriented towards subsistence. While farms in Cornwall are smaller than in many other parts of England, the region does not have an equivalent base of small, family, subsistence land holdings. Both regions have significant histories of emigration, but Cornwall in particular has seen very high *inward* migration. Similarly, while both regions have noteworthy tourism sectors, Cornwall's plays a more dominant role in the region, with implications for marketing opportunities. Finally, the presence of the *'ndrangheta* in Calabria, while not central to my research here, also plays an important and specific role in the region, with no obvious equivalent in Cornwall. These conditions shape the kinds of alternative farming that are emerging in Cornwall and Calabria, which I discuss in the coming chapters.

5 Forms and Fancies of Production

5.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces my sample of farms and outlines the first aspect of farmers' autonomy, self-determination. The first section discusses farmers' relations with land, labour and markets, leading to a classification of farms as small capitalists, petty commodity producers, and part-time farms. This serves as a class-based starting point for subsequent analysis. I also refer to other key characteristics of the farms, in particular a sub-group of community and group farms and the prevalence of 'back-to-the-land' migrants in both regions. The second section then explores farming values and ideologies through the lenses of socialisation and self-determination. I unpack how contextual, class and personal historical relations shape 'peasant' or 'entrepreneurial', and 'alter-hegemonic' and 'counter-hegemonic', approaches to farming and capitalism. I use these to explore how values and ideologies are arguably self-determined, and how this entails a possibility of transcending class positions and interests.

5.2 Forms and characteristics of production

In this section I describe the various 'forms of production' (Friedmann, 1980) present in my sample. I am attempting to balance attention to both external social relations and internal household relations (i.e. Marxian and Chayanovian approaches respectively). In some sense, all of the farms in my sample *could* be regarded as peasants. But to use the category so widely would obscure more than it reveals, as when 'peasant' can refer to all small land-based producers (McMichael, 2015) or be used as a political rather than analytical category (Edelman, 2009).

Farm activities, scale, land ownership, labour structures, diversification, and income sources all vary in major or subtle ways from farm to farm. My aim is to offer an analytical description of the sampled farms that captures much of this ambiguity and variation in the instantiation of theoretical class categories. These farms embody a "contradictory unity of class places" in their combinations of capital and labour (Bernstein, 2010, p. 103). Similarly, they constitute "movements through time" rather than stable positions (McMichael, 2015; van der Ploeg, 2008, p. 12). Both individual farmers and farms in my sample have moved historically through different class relations. Consistent with van der Ploeg's (2008) 'new peasantries', farming tends to be highly dynamic, with farmers having gone through many years of trying different practices, varieties, processes, marketing arrangements, non-farm activities, and even farm structures. What follows then is an attempt to provide a snapshot of farmers' relations and positions at the times when I interviewed them[73]. I begin by describing

[73] With the exception of four farmers who had recently retired or begun moving into retirement, in which case the data represents the most recent year of substantial activity.

farmers' various relations and practices in terms of land, labour, specialisation and marketing. I then draw on political economy and rural sociology categories to identify the forms of production, attending to the limitations and ambiguities contained in the descriptions that arise. Finally, I point to some variations across these forms of production, including community and group farms, and back-to-the-land migration.

5.2.1 Class relations

5.2.1.1 Land

In terms of van der Ploeg's (2008) 'self-controlled resource base', farmers accessed land through family, purchasing and/or tenancies. Of 24 family farms in Cornwall, only five farms used family land (either inherited or still owned by a relative) and 16 had purchased land (including one owner of family land that had purchased additional land). Three of these farms also rented land, while a further four farms were exclusively tenants. Of the four non-family farms (two intentional communities and two community farms, described further below), three owned their land and one was a tenant. Overall, calculated by land area, 46% of the land in the sample was owned – compared to 65% of all farmed area in Cornwall (DEFRA, 2019b). Total farm holdings range from less than one hectare up to 160 hectares (with an average holding of 95 hectares), with larger farms tending to be tenanted or mostly rented. Compared to regional statistics, smaller farms were over-represented in my sample (see Table 5-1 below).

Of 22 farms in Calabria, 10 farms owned all of the land they farmed. A further eight farms combined owned land with other forms of access. In most cases, land was owned through family relations (e.g. inheritance), but three farms owned land only by purchasing it, and four farms had purchased land to supplement family holdings. A further two farms had acquired land through forms of occupation[74]. Rates of land ownership in the sample (82% of farms own at least some of their land) is slightly lower than Calabria as a whole (88% of all farms) (Istat, 2020). A particular form of non-commodified tenancy (*comodato d'uso gratuito*) was also prominent, for which landowners do not receive payment[75]. Four farms depended exclusively on *comodato d'uso*, while another seven farms combined *comodato d'uso* with owned land. The use of *comodato d'uso* was much more common in my sample (50% of farms made some use) than in Calabria in general (13.5% of all farms) [76]. Another

---

[74] In one case through an overt occupation of abandoned state land, which was subsequently given by the state to a cooperative community farm. In another case a group farm had acquired land through *usucapione* (adverse possession, or 'squatter's rights'), a legal provision that grants land ownership through continued activity on the land over 10-12 years.

[75] Although in-kind payments, such as a share of the harvest, were frequently made by farmers in my sample – either as part of an informal arrangement or as a token of thanks.

[76] 5.5% of farm enterprises in Calabria have access to land only via *comodato d'uso,* and a further 8% make use of it in addition to having access through commodified renting and/or land ownership (Istat, 2020).

two farms in my sample combined owned land with paid-for rented land (compared to 4.6% of farms in Calabria) (Istat, 2020). As in Cornwall, farm sizes ranged widely, from less than 1 hectare to over 120 hectares – an average farm size of 15 hectares, although a higher proportion of farms were very small. This reflects the high proportion of very small farms in Calabria generally. Unlike Cornwall, however relatively large farms (over 10ha) were over-represented in my sample (see Table 5-1).

Table 5-1: Land access and holding sizes in sample, compared with distribution of farm sizes in Cornwall and Calabria.
Source for regional data: Eurostat (2021).

			Holding size					Total sample (%)
			Below 2 ha	**2 to 10ha**	**10 to 20ha**	**20 to 50ha**	**Above 50ha**	
Tenure type	**Cornwall**	**Owner**	2	7	5	4	2	71%
		Tenant	1	1	-	-	3	18%
		Mixed	-	1	-	-	2	11%
		Total sample (%)	11%	32%	18%	14%	25%	
		Region[77] (%)	2%	23%	17%	24%	34%	
	Calabria	**Owner**	3	3	1	3	-	45%
		Comodato d'uso	-	4	-	-	-	18%
		Mixed	2	2	1	2	1	36%
		Total sample (%)	23%	41%	9%	23%	5%	
		Region (%)	50%	39%	5%	4%	2%	

5.2.1.2 Labour

Of the 28 farms in Cornwall, household labour consisted of a couple on 12 farms, families (an individual or couple with children or parents) on five farms, an individual on seven farms (including where a partner worked full-time off farm), and group/community labour on four farms. In the two intentional communities, community members worked either collaboratively or individually, with some tasks paid a wage by the community (usually connected with maintenance of buildings or equipment rather than farming activity directly). On the two community farms, labour was provided by an employee – either full-time or part-time, as well as volunteer labour by others involved in the community farm (e.g. as consumers or board members). Seven farms combined multiple sources of external (non-household/community labour). Seven made only use of occasional labour from family and/or friends who lived nearby. Five farms only made use of regular workers, while eight farms only made use of occasional workers or contractors. One farm only made use of volunteers (such as

[77] As noted in footnote 56 in section 4.2.1.1, these regional figures exclude an unknown number of smaller non-commercial farms in Cornwall.

through the WWOOF network), although several others combined occasional workers with volunteers.

Of the 22 farms in Calabria, internal labour consisted of groups of friends or cooperative members on six farms, families on seven farms, and an individual on nine farms (again including where partners worked full-time off the farm). Friends and wider family were a much more important source of external labour in Calabria than Cornwall. Most farms made use of friends and family beyond the immediate household, but six farms relied only on this as external labour. Four farms only made use of regular employees, and another three only made use of more occasional labour or contractors. Two farms relied solely on volunteer labour, again drawn from networks such as WWOOF, but other farms also combined volunteer labour with other types. Seven farms used some combination of non-household sources of labour. Compared with regional estimates in 2010, a higher proportion of my sample made use of regular labour (28%) compared with the wider region (10.5%), while occasional labour (also 28%) was less common than the wider region (45%) (Amaranto & Biamonte, 2014).

Pluriactivity, as in time spent working off-farm or dependence on off-farm income (including pensions), was also significant on 13 farms in Cornwall and 14 farms in Calabria. This mainly occurred where one partner or group/community member worked off the farm, while others worked full-time on the farm. However, on five farms in Cornwall and seven in Calabria, all of the farmers had some work off the farm (defined below as 'part-time' farms), but the extent of this varied considerably. On 13 farms in Cornwall and six farms in Calabria there was little to no off-farm work.

Table 5-2: Household and non-household labour on sample farms.

Internal household labour			Sources of non-household labour					
			Only Friends/ Family	Only Volunteers	Only Occasional wage	Only Regular wage	Various[78]	Total (%)
Internal household labour	Cornwall	**Individual**	3	-	2	1	1	25%
		Couple	4	-	3	3	2	43%
		Family	-	-	3	1	1	18%
		Group/ Community	-	1	-	-	3	14%
		Total (%)	25%	4%	29%	14%	25%	
	Calabria	**Individual**	4	-	-	2	3	41%
		Couple	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Family	-	-	2	2	3	32%
		Group/ Community	2	2	1	-	1	27%
		Total (%)	27%	9%	14%	18%	32%	

5.2.1.3 Specialisation and marketing

Farms were highly variable in terms of the extent of specialisation and multifunctionality[79]. This is significant because it interacts with demands on land and labour, influences the possibility of biotechnical autonomy, and modifies external relations – in particular the kinds of marketing channels available. Key forms of multifunctionality in the sample included energy generation (Cornwall), educational projects in farming, agritourism, as well as activities connected with processing and marketing food (including six farms in Cornwall and two in Calabria with associated restaurants/cafes).

On all farms there was some degree of diversity in terms of agricultural activities. Farms were growing multiple kinds of crops or husbanding different kinds of animals, or both. However, most farms specialised in, or were dominated by, particular activities. Table 5-3 provides an outline of degrees of 'mixed farming', compared with different marketing channels. For the purposes of European Union (EU) statistics, mixed farming is defined as the "combined production of crops and animals without a specialised production of crops or animals", where specialised production is more than 66% standard gross margins of either crops or animals (Eurostat, 2008, p. 100). To reflect the different degrees of agriculture diversity among farms in my sample, I refer to this kind of mixed

[78] These farms used some combination of non-household labour, such as family/friends and occasional labour.
[79] Throughout this thesis, I use 'multifunctionality' to refer to non-farming activities that take place on the farm. By contrast, I use 'pluriactivity' to refer to off-farm labour, whether deployed in farming or other activities.

farming as ‘Highly mixed’[80]. By contrast, ‘Less mixed’ refers to some diversity among animals or crops, but not both[81], while ‘Moderately mixed’ refers to some combination of animals and crops, or a high diversity of either, but with a general imbalance across activities (e.g. a predominantly livestock farm with a small vegetable garden).

On balance, farms in Calabria were more mixed than those in Cornwall, particularly by integrating grain production with vegetables, olive oil production and small-scale animal farming. Many of these practices were oriented to both self-consumption and markets, consistent with the high rates of semi-subsistence farming in the region (Davidova et al., 2013). Eight farms were dominated by a smaller range of activities, with income derived primarily from the sale of citrus fruits, grain, honey, meat or cheese. In Cornwall, nine farms were practising small-scale but intensive horticulture (usually referred to as ‘growing’ rather than ‘farming’). Seven of these could be considered ‘market gardens’ producing diverse vegetables and occasionally fruit, mainly oriented towards local markets (Navarrete, 2009). While often growing a diverse mix of fruit and vegetables, only some of these gardens integrated animals. Ten farms were engaged in relatively extensive livestock production. These farms mainly produced beef or sheep meat, but one was farming poultry and another had a significant dairy production. Many of these farms were ‘mixed’ by virtue of producing feed for animals (e.g. growing grain or beets alongside pasture).

Farms in both regions mainly sold directly to consumers, through alternative food networks (AFNs). In addition to selling produce, a small amount of bartering and reciprocal gifting occurred on most farms (see section 6.3). As indicated in Chapter 4, the kinds of AFNs farmers were participating in varied considerably. In Cornwall, 15 of the 24 farms were selling exclusively or predominantly directly. Channels included vegetable or meat-boxes, informal networks of friends and family, road-side stalls, farm shops, farmers markets, and cafes/restaurants managed or co-managed by the farmers. Less direct channels included selling to local shops and restaurants, while specialist wholesalers and supermarket supply chains were also relevant (the latter especially for beef and dairy producers). Most farms had multiple marketing channels at any one time. A few farms stood out for having distinct marketing networks – including one which was tightly integrated into the local community and collaboratively running a farm shop and café and another which had a very extensive informal network for selling produce (with all purchases arranged over the phone).

[80] To be clear however, I have not gathered data on gross margins, but rather classified farms based on qualitative descriptions of activities and their degree of importance.
[81] This includes for example horticultural farms producing multiple types of vegetables, which farmers themselves might consider as ‘diverse’ in relation to conventionally grown field crops.

In Calabria most farms sold directly, either through informal networks of friends and families (three farms relied solely on such networks), farm shops, local markets and solidarity purchasing groups (*gruppi di acquisto solidale,* GAS). GAS operated both locally, in the north of Italy, and even in other parts of Europe. A smaller number of farms were also selling produce online (one), via a cooperative (one) or indirectly via traders (four farms). The high rates of direct selling are above the already high rates present in Calabria more generally – in 2010, 64% of farms selling produce in Calabria were selling directly, compared to 26% of farms in Italy (Amaranto & Biamonte, 2014).

In relation to marketing, organic certification was high in both regions. Around half of sampled farms in both regions were certified (14/28 in Cornwall and 10/22 in Calabria), compared to 3.3% of all holdings in Cornwall and 10% in Calabria (as discussed in Chapter 4).

Table 5-3: Mixed farming and marketing channels on sample farms.

			Marketing channels				
			Direct	**Indirect**	**Mixed**	**No sales**	**Total (%)**
Degree of mixing in agricultural activities	**Cornwall**	**Low mixing**	2	2	2	-	21%
		Medium mixing	10	-	7	2	68%
		High mixing	1	-	2	-	11%
		Total (%)	46%	7%	39%	7%	
	Calabria	**Low mixing**	2	-	1	1	18%
		Medium mixing	7	-	4	-	50%
		High mixing	3	-	4	-	32%
		Total (%)	55%	-	41%	5%	

5.2.2 Forms of production

The above outline of the farms studied in Cornwall and Calabria reveals some of the particular characteristics and diversity of the sample. In order to classify these farms, I have adhered to core political economy class categories, primarily defined in terms of labour relations and the commodification of subsistence (Bernstein, 2010; Tilzey, 2017). I distinguish between small capitalists, petty commodity producers and part-time farms. These categories overlay the sample quite well. However, reflecting the complexities and practicalities of applying abstract categories to reality, there are some arbitrary points of division where labour hiring and off-farm labour distinguish petty commodity producers from other classes. Likewise, these class groupings do not capture all of the details and characteristics that could otherwise divide the sample. Land tenure for example does not align clearly with these class categories - with inherited, purchased and tenanted land being present in each. To recover some of these details, I discuss some secondary classifications and other key characteristics below. In order to explore the link between class positions and

farmers' values and ideologies, I am deliberately avoiding here a classification based on farmers' values. As discussed in Chapter 3, these class relations serve as a starting point for exploring the wider set of relations that shape farmers' autonomy.

> ***Small capitalists****:* Six farms in Cornwall and four farms in Calabria fell in this category. Small capitalists were distinguished by their dependence on regular external labour (either year round or for much of the year). They also tended to be larger, capital intensive, more specialised and highly market-oriented. While still relying on their own and perhaps family labour, wage or salaried labour was integral to production. This labour took various forms, including self-employed workers, fixed-term employees, or profit-share arrangements. These farms had all invested heavily in food processing or marketing infrastructure – which farming activity came to be centred on, driving scale expansion, specialisation and/or buying in produce from other farms. While generally specialised, two farms in Cornwall and one in Calabria were highly multifunctional – with a wide range of on-farm income streams. These farms vary in their marketing channels, but often still sell directly. Two farms in Cornwall are distinctive because of close working relationships with specialist premium wholesalers.

> ***Petty commodity producers (PCP)****:* Seventeen farms in Cornwall and 11 farms in Calabria were petty commodity producers, who despite relying primarily on family labour and maintaining a degree of subsistence-oriented production remained market dependent (Akram-Lodhi & Kay, 2010b; Tilzey, 2021)[82]. While most of these farms relied on some external commodified labour, it tended to be far more occasional and for specific tasks. Instead, these farms relied *largely* on internal and/or non-commodified labour of family and friends. Most of these farms, and many farming activities, remained oriented towards markets, and they generally maintain a degree of specialisation. Nonetheless, they also practiced varying degrees of self-provisioning (more so in Calabria). These farms also usually depended on some multifunctionality or pluriactivity. While PCPs had at least one person working full-time on the farm, roughly half had one partner working off-farm full or part-time. The PCP is perhaps the most contentious category theoretically – Tilzey (2021) argues

[82] Two PCPs in Calabria *could* technically be counted as small capitalists. One group project in Calabria was legally structured as a single owner with employees, for assuredly bureaucratic reasons. Another farmer had fixed-term contracts with two employees, hired with charitable funding and for primarily charitable purposes (including regularisation of migrant status). The farmer maintains a very strong peasant identity, and I feel that it would be deeply unfair to regard him as a capitalist! Similarly, two farms in Cornwall were connected with farm shops that employed staff. On one of these, the farm shop appeared as a more integral part of the farm and household structure, and so I have regarded the farm as a whole as a 'small capitalist'. On the other farm, the farm shop was run 'independently' by the farmers' sibling, and was a relatively minor outlet for the farm produce. As such I have treated this farm as a PCP.

that van der Ploeg's fundamental error is to conflate them with peasants, by underplaying the extent to which they depend on markets for their reproduction. PCPs have been seen as a transitional stage between peasant and capitalist modes of production, but van der Ploeg seems to suggest that it is more permanent condition, or part of a process of repeasantisation. PCPs are where the 'contradictory unity' of class is most contradictory; they may be interpreted as having (and sharing) the class *interests* of capital or labour (Byres, 1996; van der Ploeg, 2020).

***Part-time farms**:* Five farms in Cornwall and seven in Calabria are 'part-time', in the sense that farming was heavily dependent on off-farm income (in some cases pensions). I have used the term part-time farm, because 'semi-proletarian' and 'hobby farmer' have distinct implications (Bernstein, 2010; L. Holloway, 2002)[83]. Some of these farmers had stable, well-remunerated jobs, while others were partially farming due to a lack of work or inadequate income. Part-time farms are distinguished from PCPs by *not* having at least one person working full-time on the farm (and not receiving off-farm income).

5.2.2.1 Community and group farms

The above classes include all the farms in the sample, but a particular subset of farms have very distinctive *internal* labour relations from family farms, as well as modifying how individuals access land and how farming decisions are made. These farms themselves however are not really a coherent group, but take on three distinct forms:

***Intentional communities**:* Two farms in Cornwall and one farm in Calabria fell in this category, which refers to non-family groups of people living together, often constituting "a deliberate attempt to realise a common, alternative way of life outside mainstream society" (Meijering et al., 2007, p. 42). Land is owned (or in Calabria accessed via *comodato d'uso*) and farming decisions are made collectively, albeit in very different forms in each community. These farms are classed above as part-time, as most community members depend on off-farm sources of income.

Community farms: Two farms in Cornwall and one farm in Calabria were community farms. In Cornwall these were governed by boards and employed growers/farmers, while the Calabrian farm was run as a cooperative. These farms owned or tenanted land and supplied local communities – via a community supported agriculture scheme in one case, or

[83] Bernstein (2014, p. 1050) also suggests using the term 'part-time' in place of 'pluriactivity'.

vegetable-boxes and direct selling in the other cases. These farms are classified above as PCPs[84].

Group farms: These farms were particular to Calabria. Five farms were organised collectively by friends, without living together on the farms as in intentional communities. These farms accessed land in a variety of ways (often depending on family land of group members), but made decisions collectively. In several cases, these farms lacked legal status, or lacked a legal status as cooperatives. In one case, the farm was registered as having single farm owner with employees (see footnote 76 above). Two of these farms were part-time, while three were PCPs.

5.2.2.2 Other characteristics and variations

A high proportion of farmers in my sample are ‘back-to-the-land’ migrants (Wilbur, 2013). This takes a different form in each region. In Calabria, all but four of the 26 farmers in my sample were born in, or had close family ties to, the region. Although most had parents or grandparents connected to agriculture, half of farmers interviewed had spent time working in unrelated careers, including in north Italy or abroad. In Cornwall, only nine of 46 farmers had existing family connections in the region, while 17 had backgrounds in farming (all of those with family connections also had farming backgrounds). These backgrounds shape farmers’ values and access to land and labour, as well as connecting to wider structural processes in the peripheralisation of the two regions. The back-to-the-land movement arguably constitutes a particular aspect of ‘repeasantisation’ – distinct from that occurring among existing farmers as van der Ploeg (2008) describes. It has historically and elsewhere (particularly in the USA) played a key role in the emergence of organic agriculture and AFNs (Goodman et al., 2012). However, these migrants do not fall into any single class category – instead being small capitalists, PCPs and part-time farms. It is also worth noting that other research in the South West of England has emphasised the stability and longevity of family farms in the region (Winter & Lobley, 2016). The over-representation of back-to-the-land migrants in my sample, rather than stable family farms, might reflect their higher tendency to engage in ‘alternative’ forms of farming – but it may also indicate that my sampling approach has tended to select these types of farmers too.

Another key variation in farming practice is the extent to which farmers are engaged in self-provisioning (van der Ploeg, 2010). I have classified farmers above on the basis that they are all

[84] Again, this classification is somewhat arbitrary. The employment of workers on these farms gives them capital-labour relations that resemble capitalist ones, but the community ownership of capital seems to modify this significantly.

partially dependent on market and off-farm income. However, there was considerable variation in the extent to which farmers were interested in, and achieve, a level of self-sufficiency in household food, as well as minimising external (and commodified) inputs. Exploring this variation is a central aspect of the following chapters. For now, it is worth mentioning that a small sub-set of part-time and PCPs appear able to meet a much higher proportion of their food needs than others. This is mainly thanks to having a much more mixed farm output – particularly in terms of producing staples, and as such is more prominent in Calabria than Cornwall. While these farmers are the closest to being quintessential 'middle peasants', they remain constrained by the wider context of generalised commodity relations. Finally, there are a range of other characteristics which I will draw on below when relevant. These include varying levels of farming experience and knowledge, gender, debt, different forms of pluriactivity/multifunctionality, access to subsidies, and organic certification.

5.3 Fancies of production: from socialisation to self-determination

> "The external limitations become internal definitions, self-definitions, identification, the assumption of roles, the adoption of categories which take the existence of the walls so much for granted that they become invisible. But never entirely." (J. Holloway, 2002, p. 207)

At the end of Chapter 2, I argued that autonomy concerns the scope of agency. This scope is broken down into three parts: self-determination, freedom, and conscious control. This section addresses self-determination, through an exploration of the formation of farmers' values and ideologies. I discuss whether and how these ideologies can be considered alter- or counter-hegemonic, whether they lean towards biotechnical autonomy, and how they diverge from more 'entrepreneurial' or 'capitalist' farming logics.

To recall Chapter 2, Tilzey (2018) distinguishes between alter-hegemonic and counter-hegemonic class-ideology bundles. Alter-hegemonic positions are framed *ideologically* in terms of opposition to corporate agriculture but with an on-going commitment to the market as a means for sustainability (as localised and 'ecological' production and consumption networks). Counter-hegemonic positions are instead framed as a more direct opposition to capitalist relations (specifically the capital-labour relation and private property in land), a stronger favouring of 'moral economy', and a political orientation towards the state as a mechanism for change. Van der Ploeg (2008, p. 17) presents a separate bundle of class positions and ideologies: entrepreneurs, for whom both "long- and short-term objectives centre on the search for, and maximisation, of profits" (as *homo economicus*); and peasants who, as decidedly more complex beings, aim to develop self-managed resources bases, interact with but avoid dependency on markets, and, ultimately, survive. As I discuss below, van der

Ploeg's terminology is closely aligned with the discourse in Calabria, which distinguishes peasants (*contadini)* from entrepreneurs (*imprenditori)*.

Tilzey argues that counter-hegemonic resistance is likely to emerge among the 'subaltern classes', comprised of "the new proletariat, semi-proletariat, the peasantry, and indigenous peoples" who lie "outside the hegemonic influence of capitalism due to their continuing material/ideological attachment to an independent means of production—most particularly land" (Tilzey, 2018, pp. 7, 40). Tilzey is not alone in arguing that those most subject to capitalism's crises and contradictions are most likely to have a radical disposition. Holloway (2002) makes the point for capitalism more generally, while Scott (1985) also argues that subordinate rural classes can 'demystify' prevailing ideology[85]. Similarly, van der Ploeg (2008, p. 272) suggests that those who do not have an alternative to farming bring "a new doggedness into the construction of responses and alternatives."

However, I also argued in Chapter 2 that Tilzey equates social reflexivity with class consciousness – and so reduces agency to class interests. While Tilzey is opposed to essentialising peasants, he risks doing the same for a more narrowly defined set of class (and geographical) positions. Other research suggests that the link between class position and ideology is more nuanced. Sutherland et al. (2019) for example find that 'non-commercial' (i.e. not profit-oriented) farms in Scotland range from specialist smallholdings through 'commercial scale' livestock holdings, up to large estates. Niska et al. (2012) find that most farmers in Finland hold a mixture of 'peasant' and 'entrepreneurial' values. They argue that farmers' values are both 'intrinsic' (as an end in itself) and 'instrumental' (as a means to an ends, particularly for generating income). Emery (2010) too has emphasised how farm typologies do not simply equate with a set of values. Through a study of farmers in the North York Moors in England, he shows how the modernisation of farmers' world-views is incomplete, and farmers retain various traditional and non-entrepreneurial outlooks. These studies hint at more complex processes of socialisation and self-determination.

Shucksmith and Herrmann (2002, p. 39) explored the socialisation of Scottish farmers using Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus'. Habitus "invokes a process of socialisation whereby the dominant modes of thought and experience inherent in the life-world are internalised by individuals, especially in their early years but also through their continuing experiences and social interactions." For Bourdieu, *habitus* is mainly a subconscious process which gives rise, like Tilzey's framework, to predictable patterns of behaviour for certain classes. Here however, I want to contrast *habitus* with the process of relational self-determination, through which farmers critically reflect on and/or

[85] Emery (2010) contrasts Scott's views with Bourdieu's argument that relations of domination depend on their being 'misrecognised' as moral relations.

consciously endorse or refute aspects of *habitus*. From the perspective of relational autonomy (Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000), there is no transcendental or objective basis from which to ascribe self-determination to farmers' desires and world views. Instead, my purpose is to unpack the mechanisms of socialisation at work, and positions of resistance and critical thought that indicate processes and different forms of self-determination[86].

A central aspect of this is where and how structural socialisation defines *limits* on what farmers consider possible, by generating forms of 'epistemic blindness' (Bhaskar, 1998b; J. Nelson & Stock, 2018; Shucksmith & Herrmann, 2002). This is of course not independent of farmers' freedoms; a significant part of the 'blindness' is connected to real material limits, which lead farmers "to refuse what is anyway denied and to will the inevitable" (Bourdieu cited in Shucksmith & Herrmann, 2002, p. 40). Following Shucksmith and Herrmann, farming practice in turn derives from an interaction of habitus and the freedoms/limitations made available by household resources and structural context, which I will discuss in the next chapter.

A good place to start is to recognise that farmers themselves may be more or less cognisant of where their values originate. Both small capitalists and self-identified peasants could frame their outlooks as something they were born with, rather than something they had been socialised into. This indicates that the reproduction of structure through farmers' ideologies is not so much a specific feature of capitalism and commodities, but a more general feature of social structures (Bhaskar, 1998b). Thus both positions are (potentially) characterised by particular conditions of epistemic blindness:

> "I think I'm congenitally [like that]. When I left the City initially… I did a build management diploma, but I was just going stir-crazy. I'd organised the garage and re-organised the garage and in the end I had to do something. It's just my make-up. I am quite driven." *Roy*[87]*, small capitalist, Cornwall, 8 May 2019*

> "I think that maybe you're born that way. If you're a calm, simple person who wants to live without taking advantage of the next person or nature or anything else, then you'll do

[86] As I discussed in Chapter 2, the possibility of critical reflection is a *latent* one. An agent may be considered self-determining if critical reflection and social reflexivity are merely possible, but not necessarily enacted. A person could be considered self-determining *if* on reflection they would hypothetically endorse values/desires, even if this is not necessarily enacted (Christman, 2018). This creates the ambiguity between farmers' agency and their being regarded as 'cultural dupes' (Emery, 2015, p. 60). In particular, it serves as an entry point for notions of 'false consciousness', where authentic values are equated with supposedly 'objective' class interests, rather than the actual values that individual class members hold (J. Holloway, 2002).
[87] As mentioned in Chapter 3, I have replaced all names with pseudonyms, but retained the gender of the original interviewee.

organic agriculture. If instead you have a gene that means you have to make money, always make more and more money, then you do industrial agriculture. You're no longer a simple *contadino,* but you're an agricultural *imprenditore*." *Imelda, PCP, Calabria, 12 February 2020*

Perceiving something as genetic or natural however does not necessarily mean that farmers are resigned to it. Instead, the struggle to overcome such impulses forms a key aspect of free will and self-determination (Baumeister, 2008):

"I probably [am competitive], even if I don't realise it, cause it is a human nature thing. But I tend to try and opt out of everything that's competitive actually, to a big extent because competition generally leads to sort of… aggro. You know the next step beyond a bit of healthy competition is out and out war." *Harry, PCP, Cornwall, 23 April 2019*

In contrast to those who saw farming values and ways of thinking as congenital, others emphasised how they had changed through time. The farming 'movement through time' (van der Ploeg, 2008) is at least partially a matter of changing values and perspectives on how to farm. These may lead farmers to become more 'peasant-like' or more 'entrepreneurial'. Consciousness of these processes itself serves as an indicator of more-or-less critical self-reflection:

"Initially it was very much about escape society, grow for ourselves, do our own thing. But then you know, hell, we get older, we want a child, we want to provide for that child, so it's got to be economically viable." *Ian, PCP, Cornwall, 24 June 2019*

"At the moment I'm lowering my expectations. The business with the hemp started as an economic project, to make money. Now I'm more returning to a *contadino* [perspective], that is, I don't want to lose this land." *Marco, part-time farm, Calabria, 18 January 2020*

Before discussing farmers' values in more detail, it is worth noting that the term 'autonomy' itself has little direct resonance with farmers. Most farmers recognise the ambiguity and multiple meanings of the word itself, but also interpret it in various ways in respect of their farm practice. For some, it was a condition of being able to make their own decisions and working hours – a contrast made in comparison with working for others (see also Stock & Forney, 2014). For others, it indicated being outside of the capitalist system – several farmers in Calabria referenced '*autonomia'* in relation to the *Autonomia Operaia* movement for example[88]. Some understood autonomy as self-sufficiency and individualistic independence – and so could shun it on that basis. For others, working

[88] *Autonomia Operaia* ('worker autonomy') was a prominent anti-state and anti-capitalist movement in Italy in the 1970s, associated with Antonio Negri and autonomist Marxism (see S. Wright, 2002).

collectively was itself a precondition for autonomy. The use of ‘autonomy’ then does not itself clearly serve as an indicator of a specific ideology.

5.3.1 Modernisation, tradition and alternative disciplines

For van der Ploeg (2008, p. 126), modernisation has constituted a ‘cultural offensive’ against the moral economy of the peasantry. In European agriculture, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in particular is seen as a socialising force that has modernised farmers’ outlooks, transforming them into *homo economicus* (Marsden & Sonnino, 2008; Niska et al., 2012; Tilzey, 2018; van der Ploeg, 2008). Commodity-oriented forms of production are linked to long-term processes of the commodification of livelihoods and socialisation in which state-led modernisation has played a key role (Castellanos-Navarrete & Jansen, 2018; Kumar, 2016). As discussed in the previous chapter, modernisation has not unfolded completely or evenly. This is particularly true in Calabria, where reference to tradition and peasant agriculture (*agricoltura contadina*) serve as critical frameworks for outlining farmers’ values, particularly in opposition to entrepreneurship (*impresa*)[89]. Fifteen of the 26 farmers referred to themselves as peasants (*contadini)*, while only two called themselves entrepreneurs (*imprenditori*).

While *agricoltura contadina* can be framed as a radical and counter-hegemonic opposition to the profit motive and the supermarket led food system (*la grande distribuzione organizzata*, GDO), it is also a contested term. Increasingly, it is used as a marketing discourse for more commercial farms, for example by *Coldiretti*, the Italian farmers’ union which organises some 600 local farmers markets throughout Italy. As discussed in the previous chapter, the union is not strongly opposed to the conventional food system, and profit motives often underlie farmers’ participation in its markets (Dansero & Pettenati, 2015; Migliore et al., 2014). On the other hand, the definition of *agricoltura contadina* has itself evolved, coming to take on a more alter-hegemonic quality framed in market terms. While once associated with self-sufficiency and community, it aims today “above all for the reproduction of productive resources” but also the generation of income (Gaudio et al., 2008, p. 1):

> “Our work isn’t only staying in the field or cultivating the land. But the work of the modern *contadino*, compared to before, is that you also need to worry about selling.” *Lodovico, PCP, Calabria, 13 February 2020*

[89] This discourse is no doubt in large part the source of van der Ploeg’s own distinctions. In the preface to the Italian translation of *The New Peasantries,* he states that of all the agricultures he has studied, “Italian agriculture is the one that has impressed me the most” (van der Ploeg, 2009, p. ix).

Two farmers however saw *impresa* itself as something that was once oppressed in Calabrian culture. In this context, entrepreneurship itself is a potentially critical position vis-à-vis a dominant traditional culture:

> "I use *impresa* a lot because it's something that, for me, has changed a lot with time. When I was younger, *imprenditore* was almost an insult… it was an offense to call someone an *imprenditore*. Instead, I believe now that *impresa*, an ethical one at least, is one of the keys to change our territory, at least in Calabria." *Giuseppe, PCP, Calabria, 15 November 2019*

Complicating these dynamics in Calabria is the presence and perception of *mafia* organisations. As discussed in Chapter 4, the mafia in Calabria is often associated today with the GDO and state corruption. While mafia create a number of practical constraints on farming (see the next chapter), they also constitute a particular form of capital and a way of thinking[90], from which autonomy may also be sought:

> "The mafia here manage the money, more or less. We initially thought that the *mafioso* was a person, but in reality it's a mentality, an attitude that is in any case widespread… We have another system. In our network, we don't shop at the supermarket, and so we keep money away from the mafia." *Lodovico, PCP, Calabria, 13 February 2020*

In Cornwall (as in England more generally), there is no clear discursive equivalent to *agricoltura contadina* (see Smaje, 2014b). Some farmers in the sample used 'smallholder' to distinguish themselves from larger-scale commercial farmers (and in one case vice versa). But this term has its own ambiguities – Holloway (2002) for example distinguishes between small but commercially-oriented 'smallholders' and lifestyle-oriented 'hobby-farmers'. Perhaps linked to the general lack of farming backgrounds, farmers less often referred to tradition to describe farming practices or to represent alterity. Different farmers perceived 'traditional farming' in quite different ways, reflecting different timescales and the transformations that farming in Cornwall has undergone. One part-time Cornish farmer emphasised the strength of local community and reciprocal relations as key aspects of traditional Cornish farming. A PCP with a farming background outside of Cornwall emphasised self-sufficiency, mixed farming and selling locally as 'traditional'. Another incomer to Cornwall, a small capitalist, described their emphasis on mixed farming as contrary to the practices of their neighbouring 'traditional' farmers:

> "A lot of Cornish farms are quite small, and they're quite traditional. We don't see anyone around us immediately with the same views on growing to us. I think you've got farms that

[90] For a discussion of the '*ndrangheta* as a 'behavioural model', see Sergi and Lavorgna (2016).

> have been handed down from generation to generation and they're still farming as their grandfathers farmed. So they're growing cabbages… they're just not really bothered about the hedgerows and they're just doing a sort of monocrop in each field, quite large fields if they can." *Amy, small capitalist, Cornwall, 25 April 2019*

In a similar way, while farmers generally saw local food systems as desirable, this was not aligned with a sense of Cornish identity. Only a small number of farmers expressed support for political devolution or the Cornish nationalist party *Mebyon Kernow*. Despite the absence of a coherent framework of traditional or Cornish farming to draw on, farmers in Cornwall nonetheless expressed a similar diversity of views with respect to modernisation and entrepreneurialism. Some farmers (not only small capitalists) entertained more instrumental or economically-oriented values, while others distanced themselves from that way of thinking. These indicate, as in Calabria, a divergence between more alter-hegemonic and more counter-hegemonic perspectives on farming:

> "I mean the main concern is financial, I think, just to make sure all the business costs are covered, and people are paid and there's some left over for me to eat from." *Samir, small capitalist, Cornwall, 10 May 2019*

> "I've spent a lot of years not actually having any money, and just making and modifying and doing things like that, so I think it is a sort of space that you slowly evolve in to. If you're brought up, educated, go get a job, get your money, buy the things that you want, then it's just in there, you know, it's fixed." *Harry, PCP, Cornwall, 23 April 2019*

Another specific factor in Cornwall is a historical experience with cooperatives. One local network and food hub, which was acting as a local distributor for small farmers, described how this experience led established farmers to see cooperation as a risk. They described how cooperatives for processing soft fruit were established in the 20th century subsequently broke down, with higher quality producers leaving the cooperative, and many more risk-exposed farms in the cooperative failed. This history continues to shape how the farmers that survived perceive cooperation with the network:

> "[Farmers] definitely think of us as a wholesaler. Yes. And it's a business transaction, as much as we would like to [say]: 'but this is a movement for collective good and rural economic development' and all this kind of thing. That's not a message that they would enjoy." *Richard, network representative, Cornwall, 14 June 2019*

In articulating a point of difference from modern and conventional farming, many farmers also drew on alternative farming disciplines. Courses, books, friends and online platforms all served as sources

of information and inspiration related to these disciplines. Organic agriculture was the most commonly cited of these disciplines – even among uncertified farmers. While often committed to organic agriculture, many perceived the certification process itself as too rigid (see also section 5.3.3.4). Permaculture was also commonly referred to, particularly in Cornwall, where 14 of the 46 farmers had taken permaculture courses or described their practice as permaculture (compared to four of 26 farmers in Calabria). Permaculture is noteworthy for its radically distinct approach to farming, as well as its maintenance of a strong boundary against wider agricultural knowledge systems, at least in the UK, that limits its wider influence (Maye, 2018). Several farmers cited permaculture courses as a key pivot that changed their values, or brought them into farming:

> "I think the dissatisfaction with something was there at kind of an early age… and when I found the permaculture books it kind of ticked all the boxes and I thought 'Finally here's something I can get my teeth stuck into'." *Andrew, part-time farm, Cornwall, 24 April 2019*

5.3.2 Personal histories

An important consequence of partial modernisation is that farming today is no longer the 'highly bounded social world' that once entailed relatively homogenous moral norms and logics (Shucksmith & Herrmann, 2002, p. 41). Modernisation has brought about considerable dynamism within farming families, as well as dynamism linked to migration in and out of farming communities. On one level, instrumental values and world views have become more widespread. On another, farming values have become more specific to farming individuals than to farming communities. As such, personal histories of individuals become an important, and often distinguishing, source of values. Farmers cited a wide range of historical influences – ranging from childhood to education[91] to career backgrounds – as key socialising processes. A key division in my sample with respect to socialisation are those who had grown up farming, or those who had come from non-farming backgrounds. In between were farmers who, while not having grown up as farmers, had proximate connections to farming. This was particularly common in Calabria, where almost all farmers had grandparents, if not parents, who had farmed.

For those coming from farming backgrounds, both individual farming experiences and experience of broader cultural changes in farming contributed to farmers' views. This includes, for example, the association of cooperation with risk discussed above. Particularly in Cornwall, experiences of working on intensive or conventional farms served as a critical point of reference for current values:

[91] Including agricultural colleges, as one farmer reported: "We were always taught at college the number one priority of a business is staying in business, and so we've always tried to stay in business. But it's quite tricky." *Susan, PCP, Cornwall, 26 June 2019*

> “I worked on farms as a contractor… when I was spraying potatoes I got some of the spray on my jeans and within about 10 minutes there's a big hole in my jeans. I said ‘What on earth am I spraying?’ He said ‘Well, it's a bit like battery acid.’ So from that moment on I thought ‘That's it, I'm not doing this!’ and went 100% behind organics.” *Laura, PCP, Cornwall, 25 June 2019*

The predominance of farming backgrounds in Calabria entailed that farmers were more conscious and aware of local and historical issues with farming. Several farmers articulated the historical process by which *agricoltura contadina* had been disrupted with the arrival of fertilisers, pesticides and the advice of agronomists:

> “I saw it, because I was a child when the fertiliser arrived. In reality the advent of chemicals was a problem that the agronomists had created… they made the *contadino* believe that his way of working was an old, antiquated system; that modern industry had the solutions to overcome pests.” *Alessia, PCP, Calabria, 2 February 2020*

Growing up on farms does not entail an unambiguous process of socialisation however. One farmer in Calabria discussed how his father had discouraged him from farming, pushing him instead to find another career. Three farmers, one in Cornwall and two in Calabria, spoke instead of being compelled to farm in ways that denied them other opportunities:

> “I'm one of the unfortunate ones, I didn't actually go very much to secondary school. Father would say ‘I'm doing so and so, they need an extra pair of hands, you're staying home.” *Terence, PCP, Cornwall, 15 June 2019*

This sharply contrasted with other farmers in Calabria who strongly emphasised that being a *contadino* was for them a conscious *choice*. This was usually linked with having had a possibility – or actual experience – of leaving the farm to pursue another way of life. The decision to stay or return to farming, and to farm in a particular way, emerged as strongly self-determined*:*

> “For many children of *contadini*, it’s an obligation to work in agriculture, because it was already a given that they would be able to do only this and knew how to do only this. I had a family that didn’t force me to work on the land. I went to university, I went away, I worked… it was my decision based on what I knew. I slowly began to see its beauty, without being compelled. So, certainly to do this work, it’s very strongly based on choice, for me.” *Alessia, PCP, Calabria, 2 February 2020*

Those who had come from other careers, places and/or had gone ‘back-to-the-land’ drew on distinct sets of experiences. Almost all had nonetheless been shaped by *some* experiences linked to farming

– such as involvement in gardening and allotments, as farm labourers or volunteers, or participation in food related networks. For example, several farmers in Cornwall cited the Transition Movement[92] as a particular inspiration for entering into alternative forms of farming. Wilbur (2013, p. 152) argues that back-to-the-land migration "offers one form of action in a series of wider strategies to combat hegemonic power structures." For Wilbur, back-to-the-land radicalism is not necessarily visible through social movements and collective action (of the kind Tilzey expects of counter-hegemonic framings), but rather enacted through active disengagement from urban structures of coercion and hierarchy.

This kind of view was very apparent in both Cornwall and Calabria, with many seeing farming as a form of escape from city life and/or the constraints of employment. Those from relatively lucrative careers or more humble backgrounds shared this broad sentiment. However, the degree of radicalism varied considerably, from farming as offering "the good life" (*Roy, small capitalist, Cornwall, 8 May 2019*) or a "way to get out of our existing jobs" (*Jan, PCP, Cornwall, 4 April 2019*) to allowing farmers to become "more independent of the system" (*Chris, PCP, Cornwall, 9 May 2019*) or to "not participate in gross domestic product" (*Lodovico, PCP, Calabria, 13 February 2020*). Rurality and farming in these framings served as forms of insulation from the instability of financial markets, peak oil and climate change and the dominance of plastics, as well as a way to avoid the 'rat race' of the city[93].

Back-to-the-land farming then appeared as a conscious and deliberate choice to escape aspects of capitalism – even if only occasionally framed in those terms. How this 'escape' was framed serves as an indicator of alter or counter-hegemonic ideologies. Just as importantly, coming from outside farming could also grant a kind of freedom from the ideologies held by existing farmers:

> "We had the benefit that we weren't born into farming, so we didn't have generations before us with that sort of deep connection to a landscape that we would have to continue. We can literally come in and say 'No, that's all wrong. We can do it this way. This is better'."
> *Paul, PCP, Cornwall, 14 May 2019*

On the other hand, back-to-the-land migrants could bring *more* entrepreneurial approaches to farming. The owners of four small capitalist farms in Cornwall came from outside the region and from non-farming backgrounds, while a fifth had also lived and worked abroad. On two of these

[92] The Transition Movement emerged as a response to climate change and peak oil in 2005, centred in nearby Devon (Hopkins, 2010).
[93] These motivations then seem to differ sharply from those in the global South, where access to land and engagement in farming, particularly for semi-proletarians, is often presented as a matter of survival (Bernstein, 2006, 2014).

farms, farmers with backgrounds in business and finance had developed capital-intensive food processing businesses, despite originally purchasing land for lifestyle purposes. One of these embodied 'neoliberal cooperation' (Stock et al., 2014; Tilzey, 2017) with the co-location of quasi-independent food processing enterprises on a farm, with shared accounting and market activities.

5.3.3 *Diálogo de saberes* and contemporary processes of socialisation

Farmers are not only socialised by historical processes, but also by their contemporary relations. Here, the role of heteronomous relations in forming the self in accounts of relational autonomy (Steiner & Stewart, 2009; Stoljar, 2015) is replicated, in a way, by agroecology's notion of *diálogo de saberes*, or 'wisdom-dialogues' (Martínez-Torres & Rosset, 2014). These dialogues underpin 'transformative agroecology learning' as a tool for transforming food systems. Although these dialogues are used to describe the formation and maintenance of farming knowledge, I suggest that they are equally relevant in the formation of farming values and ideologies. For Anderson et al. (2019, p. 536) the success of these dialogues depends on "bringing together actors from different backgrounds." Participants in Anderson et al.'s research, among agroecological networks in Europe, specifically emphasise the relevance of dialogues among food producers, between producers and other food system actors (especially consumers), and between farmers and research/education institutions.

These dialogues are inherently two-way processes – farmers both influence and are influenced. Consciously seeking to influence others emerged as a common theme, both in Cornwall and Calabria – either by being 'exemplary' as a way to demonstrate that alternative farming was possible or by persuading others to adopt a similar way of thinking. I explore this persuasive inclination further in Chapter 7 as a form of conscious control over structural conditions. On the other hand, farmers had mixed views about being open to other ways of thinking, or giving others agency within the farm:

> "If someone arrives tomorrow and says 'Look, I want to work here', we'll speak, [the farm] can change… that's my approach." *Giuseppe, PCP, Calabria, 15 November 2019*

> "My father comes down twice a week for like two or three hours… he does help with the strimming and stuff but two or three hours isn't really enough, and he kind of wants to do what he wants to do rather than what I think he should be doing." *John, PCP, Cornwall, 22 April 2019*

5.3.3.1 Dialogues between producers

Although not addressed by Anderson et al., perhaps the most important (at least the most frequent) dialogues are those that occur on the farm itself. Internal household or community relations play

important affirming and critical processes in shaping values. Attending to these relations is also essential in order to understand *whose* autonomy is at issue, as well as power imbalances between agents.

Farming couples generally reported having broadly shared values, with tensions or disagreements occurring only over practical matters. On three family farms (two in Cornwall and one in Calabria) decision-making was explicitly led by men, although it also seemed that way on other farms in the sample[94]. Back-to-the-land migration was relevant in each of these cases. As Wilbur (2014) has shown, these migrations can lead to the adoption of more traditional gender roles. Six farms (three in Cornwall and three in Calabria) were headed by women, reflecting other findings that suggest that woman are more prominent in non-commercial forms of farming (Sutherland et al., 2019). Decision-making was often aligned with divisions of labour on the farm (e.g. with one person responsible for animals and another for horticulture), although one farming couple was actively trying to break these divisions down:

> "[The division of labour] is starting to cross back over and she's more involved with the stuff that I've previously taken on and I'm getting more involved with the stuff that she's previously been doing. That's nice. It gives us a bit more of an understanding of each other again." Norman, PCP, Cornwall, 12 May 2019

As already mentioned, intergenerational relations could also be a source of socialisation. Aside from whether farmers' children were compelled or free to choose to farm, the ongoing presence of multiple generations on the farm entailed ongoing confrontations of values and positions of relative power. This unfolded in diverse ways, ranging from a willing subordination to the wishes of new generations, to family members falling out and leaving farms altogether. Intergenerational relations were more relevant in Calabria than Cornwall, where families (see Table 5-2 above) and farming backgrounds were more relevant. The combination of not having a farming background and the shifting meaning of *agricoltura contadina* also became a point of contestation between generations on one farm:

> "[My partner's] mother's a *contadina*, she's 82, an older generation. There was a cultural clash. I don't come from the countryside, from a peasant life. So for me everything was new, but I had different ideas to her mother about agriculture. So it was interesting because for

[94] As Scott (2012, p. 59) has noted, "the patriarchal family still thrives and could not exactly be called a training ground for autonomy and independence, except perhaps for the male head of household."

> the first two years there was this confrontation. I respect her mother a lot, she's taught me many things, but we argued about how to work." *Lodovico, PCP, Calabria, 13 February 2020*

On small capitalist farms, more hierarchical relationships between farm owners and employees was also noteworthy. There was a clear distinction here between employers who emphasised shared decision-making, and those who didn't – something which I have treated as indicative of a more sub-hegemonic ideology below. Three capitalists in particular (two in Cornwall and one in Calabria) emphasised how their employees had relative freedom in their farming roles and actively participated in farming decisions. By contrast, the remaining capitalists expressed relatively little interest in shared decision-making:

> "We would rather not have volunteers. We'd prefer to pay people and they just get on and pick and they're not expecting us to socialise with them." *Amy, small capitalist, Cornwall, 25 April 2019*

In sharp contrast to these relations, group projects and community farms tended to emphasise more egalitarian and democratic forms of decision-making. Like farming couples however, these groups tended to have shared values, but could also be sites of conflict, divisions of labour and hierarchical relations. Community farms were governed by boards, while growers (as employees or self-employed) were granted considerable freedom to make day-to-day decisions. Intentional communities were governed by internal decision-making, involving a variety of formal and informal processes of deliberation (see also Meijering et al., 2007). Group farming projects in Calabria tended to have less formal decision-making processes. The more explicit 'structuring' of relations in communities and groups entails both a more conscious submission to the social body, while also providing tools to members that allow them to shape those structures – hinting at a kind of *conscious control*. Communities however arguably reduced the capacity of *individuals* to make clear plans for farming. As one long-term community member described:

> "I have no idea how it will develop because it just totally depends on who is here, and what they put into it. I've given up trying to predict the future or even make plans. I don't really make plans anymore. I've got ideas but I definitely don't make plans." *Steven, intentional community member, Cornwall, 10 May 2019*

Finally, relations between farms, including neighbouring farms and through farming networks, markets, and working on other farms, also form an essential set of socialising processes. Particularly in Cornwall, farmers almost universally saw themselves as having a different set of values compared to their more conventional farming neighbours. This was often manifest as not being taken seriously

by other farmers, who “come in here and probably have a laugh at what we do” (*Amy, small capitalist, Cornwall, 25 April 2019)*. Having a different outlook on farming could be a point of pride for some farmers, but it could also be a point of conflict with negative implications for cooperation. In part, mixed experiences with neighbours have led many farmers to seek out relatively ‘inter-place’ (C. R. Anderson et al., 2019) interactions with more *like-minded* farmers or specialist groups[95]. This is linked to values being a product of individual, rather than community, histories mentioned above. Participation in formal and informal farming networks was limited, but variable, with more participation in Calabria. Farmers were (or had been) connected via markets (especially GAS in Calabria), online platforms, discussion groups and other loose affiliations. Providing less of a confrontation than the more ‘place-based’ relations between neighbours, these often offered affirmation of farming ideologies and approaches.

5.3.3.2 Dialogues with consumers

As Anderson et al. point out, the highly urbanised configuration of European populations renders the producer-consumer dialogue of great importance. The market dependencies of farmers entailed that most relations with food consumers are *primarily* commodity relations. Nonetheless, there is a key division here between distant and impersonal commodity relations, and those which are more direct, ‘embedded’ or ‘nested’ (Selwyn & Miyamura, 2014; van der Ploeg et al., 2012). Through more indirect markets, the relationship between producers and consumers is more fully fetishized – that is, reduced to a relation of things rather than people[96]. In contrast to framings of these commodity relations as *heteronomous* (Pimbert, 2009; Pionetti, 2005), a small number of farmers indicated a willingness to be subject to abstract market demand:

> “I think you have to accept that you will always be constrained by your market. And I think that part of the problem with conventional farming is there's been a mentality that you’re trying to sell what you produce instead of trying to produce what you can sell.” Alexander*, PCP, Cornwall, 26 April 2019*

Farmers engaged in more direct relations *also* expressed a willingness to subject themselves to market demand, but it tended to be expressed as a desire to feed people and communities. For most

---

[95] Nelson et al. (2014) explore how ‘strong’ (close bonds with like-minded people) and ‘weak’ (more dispersed, diverse and fluid bonds) ties can stimulate and sustain ecological innovations among conventional farmers. They suggest that weak ties (especially with other alternative farmers and government agencies) are important as points of information exchange that can stimulate the adoption of new practices. As mentioned earlier, Maye (2018) presents a related set of ideas in research on the Permaculture Association in the UK. He argues that the Permaculture Association maintains quite a closed learning network of more radical alterity, with limited engagement in and influence over mainstream agricultural knowledge systems.

[96] It is also important to note though that dialogues with intermediaries (such as wholesaler representatives) may also be influential for some farmers – see for example the vignette in section 6.5.1.

farmers this remained within an ideological framing that sees markets as the normal and natural way to do so. For a smaller number, supplying communities also took on non-market dimensions. This serves as a key indicator for more counter-hegemonic ideologies. As mentioned above, several farmers in Calabria and one farmer in Cornwall sold mainly to friends and family, suggesting a stronger degree of embedding than other more fleeting relations where the commodity was more central (such as selling to tourists in Cornwall). Different types of markets then point to different degrees of personal dependencies between producers and consumers, which may entail different forms and degrees of socialisation. For the most part, farmers valued these relations as a source of feedback that both indicated what they should produce, but also that what they produced was valuable. For other farmers, it served as an affirmation of what they were doing, as an avenue to influence others, and a chance for a deeper relationship:

> "It's good to have an exchange with locals, because selling products locally allows you to have a more meaningful relationship with the locals, to show yourself to more people. Many different people come here, a lot of local people buy honey… so we meet and we speak about this and that, so there's an exchange, there's a dialogue, and that's important."
> *Vittorio, PCP, Calabria, 7 February 2020*

5.3.3.3 Dialogues with research institutions and the state

Finally, the relationship between education/research institutions and farmers was not significant for most farmers. Although farmers' views had been shaped historically by education at schools, universities and agricultural colleges, few had strong ongoing relations with these institutions. One group of organic farmers in Cornwall, the Tamar Valley Organics Group[97], was actively involved with several universities researching the take up of nutrients in different pasture mixes – although the group otherwise met infrequently. Another food processing project in Calabria was led in part by research interests. Although well received by one farmer it was criticised by another for diverging from the interests of farmers. Several farmers in Cornwall recalled the historical function of local research stations – now entirely absent[98] – in informing and supporting farmers. Another farmer in Cornwall was running a collaborative project with a local university on biodiversity.

More broadly, farmers' relations with *the state* continue to play a key socialising, if not modernising, role. Several farmers commented that rurality, as well as being small, offered the ability to evade the state in many ways – creating space for a more critical perspective of policy. As discussed in the

[97] For a detailed study of this group, see James (2016).
[98] The Agricultural Development and Advisory Service (ADAS), which offered extension and local research services, was curtailed in the 1980s and privatized in the 1990s. James (2016) also reports that several farmers in Cornwall bemoaned the loss of access to the advice this service provided.

previous chapter, funding through agri-environmental schemes and capital grants come with requirements that may or may not cohere with farmers' values and world views. Capital grants were generally seen as too large or bureaucratic to be useful for smaller farms (especially in Calabria – see Chapter 6), although they might otherwise coincide with farmers' desires to provide local employment. Similarly, some farmers saw agri-environmental schemes as something that coincided with how they wanted to farm anyway, although as Emery (2010, p. 208) notes these schemes represent a "rhetorical attempt to make that policy appear more conformant with extant farming values than it may really be." Other farmers were accordingly more critical, and there was a negative perception of being told what to do by people who don't know about farming:

> "It so happens that that our method of farming coincides with the [agri-environmental] stewardship scheme and with the organic requirement." *Chris, PCP, Cornwall, 9 May 2019*

> "You're being consistently told what to do, or what you should be doing, but it's not being told by people who are on the ground doing it, it's being told by people who are sat in an office." Alexander*, PCP, Cornwall, 26 April 2019*

Even if heavily one-sided, there remains a two-way dialogue with the state on some level. The extent to which farmers sought to influence the state was generally limited. Farmers in Calabria were particularly critical of and distant from the state, both as a result of seeing the state as corrupt and/or ineffective. However, a small number of farmers were more actively attempting to influence local and national government through movements and associations. One farmer in particular was closely involved with *Associazione Rurale Italiana*, one of the Italian members of Via Campesina. In Cornwall, more farmers were actively involved in politics. This included participation in the Extinction Rebellion movement, as well as participating in parish and Cornwall councils as councillors, advisors, or in more informal relations. The substance of these efforts to influence policy and politics is discussed in Chapter 7, but it is worth noting here that many farmers do express a desire to influence the state, but often feel powerless to do so:

> "It's very easy for us as individuals at a parish or district level, or a county level to go 'I can't really make a difference'. I've seen it with the councils we've been involved with over the years. Their hands are so tied and they're so worried about their positions... and that's on a local level." *Norman, PCP, Cornwall, 12 May 2019*

5.3.3.4 Socialisation and certification: the evolving farming will

As a way of summing up some of these mechanisms of socialisation, the following illustrates the critical thought processes of one farmer engaged in organic certification. Certification itself – as a

willing subordination to an institutional set of rules that govern farm practices – raises complex questions about self-determination.

Socialisation and certification

Sandra is a PCP with a family farming background in the north of England. She moved to Cornwall in the late 2000s with her family. Her partner works full-time off-farm. Originally aiming for a self-sufficient holding that sold surplus locally, she runs an organically certified farm that is unusual for its tight integration into the local community. In collaboration with other farmers, she operates a small shop and café in the local village, through which much of the produce is sold. Her customers "are actually more bothered about local than organic", which has led her to re-consider the value of organic certification.

Overall, she is committed to organic principles, and maintains that she would practice in much the same way even if she weren't certified. Her experience with the certifying body is good, particularly as she has had the same inspector for several years, with whom she gets on well. Despite this, she experiences aspects of the certification as a heteronomous imposition:

> "Sometimes when someone in an office somewhere is telling me that I can't run the farm in a particular way because that doesn't fit with the organic standards, it's frustrating."

This is particularly because there is a lack of locally available pig breeders, making it difficult to source organic weaners. She says her partner is more committed to organic farming than she is, partly because he works off-farm:

> "I think [my partner] is more committed to organic farming because he experiences less of the difficulties of that on a on a day-to-day basis. I applaud him for his commitment to organic farming but it's very arduous at times to carry that out."

At the same time, close working arrangements with other farmers, some of who are not organic certified, means that she sees her neighbours "perhaps finding an easier way through than me, because I've got to, you know, jump through all the organic hoops."

The combination of these dynamics illustrate how farmers' views are continually re-shaped by intra- and inter-household relations, and contextualised by markets and market-related institutions (in this case the certifying body). While remaining committed to an original set of principles, the farmer has experienced the institutionalisation of those principles as problematic. It is clear that the combination of structural conditions constitute mechanisms of socialisation that are leading her

away from organic certification, although she also claims that she would adhere to the underlying principles regardless.

5.3.4 Alter-hegemony and counter-hegemony: between radicalism and viability

It should come as no surprise that such a complex array of socialising processes has led farmers to internalise diverse and complex sets of values and aspirations, as Bourdieu's *habitus* emphasises. Returning to van der Ploeg and Tilzey's ideological framings, it seems that most farmers in the sample fall somewhere between van der Ploeg's peasant and entrepreneur ideal types, echoing similar findings elsewhere in Europe (Emery, 2010; Niska et al., 2012). This combination of intrinsic and instrumental values is better captured by Tilzey's 'alter-hegemonic' framing. As Tilzey describes, these farmers advocate the 'localisation and greening' of production and consumption, while being oriented to and dependent on markets. However, reflecting the diversity in my sample, there are also a smaller number of farms who expressed more 'counter-hegemonic' and 'sub-hegemonic' perspectives.

Within my sample, alter-hegemony is manifest as an ideological and practical commitment to markets as the normal purpose of farming. This includes, for example, the shifting conceptualisation of *agricoltura contadina* to market-oriented production, which blurs the distinction with *impresa.* Nonetheless, alter-hegemonic positions do sustain a degree of difference from conventional farming and markets, including through partial commitments to co-operation and biotechnical autonomy. These farmers value their own (and others') ability to consume ecological and high-quality food, while rejecting excessive forms of consumerism. Although emphasising the benefits of embedded markets and collaborative relations, and being somewhat willing to subordinate themselves to the needs of local communities, they retain a degree of distance that favours independence and self-control over both labour and land. Importantly, they tend to also have values which resist pressures of differentiation and accumulation. While sharing this broad framing, these alter-hegemonic farms nonetheless expressed a spectrum of values, including varying degrees of alterity. However, their inclinations towards *survival* (van der Ploeg, 2008) are conflated under generalised commodity relations into a desire for *economic viability*:

> "We've tried to make a business here that can sustain us. So, the fact that we don't earn any money at all, and we're on tax credits, and have been for about twelve years, is just the way we accept. That's the way we are, and, to be honest, that doesn't really worry us. The only thing that worries us is not having enough money to pay bills." *Jan, PCP, Cornwall, 4 April 2019*

> “It was a life choice that I made, consciously, to be a *contadino.* I chose to live in nature, finding ways to live with the things from nature, even on an economic level, instead of another career.” *Vittorio, PCP, Calabria, 7 February 2020*

A small number[99] of PCPs and part-time farms expressed a more counter-hegemonic perception of their farming. This included positioning themselves as explicitly anti-capitalist, expressing discomfort with their ownership of private property (especially among family farmers), and maintaining a political view of farming. In the discussion above, key indicators of this position included more radical motivations for back-to-the-land migration, approaches to non-market forms of supplying local communities, and more radical narratives around *agricoltura contadina* or other farming disciplines (e.g. those deploying a permaculture discourse appear to be more radical than those using an organic discourse, although not always). Combined, these offer a stronger sense of ‘resistance’ rather than ‘compromise’ (Tilzey, 2017). Through these discourses, counter-hegemonic farmers also expressed a stronger inclination towards *biotechnical autonomy*, but also emphasised community and non-commodity forms of cooperation. In this way, they expressed a greater willingness to be subordinated to personal relations and to nature and natural processes. While also compelled by generalised commodity relations, this appears to be something more resigned to and/or resisted, rather than desired. These counter-hegemonic farmers are not a homogenous group. They include, for example, a cooperative community farm in Calabria which has persistently demanded (but not received) support from the state for *agricoltura sociale.* They also include a highly mixed self-sufficiency oriented family farm in Cornwall which maintains close links to immediate neighbours. I explore more of this diversity in the coming chapters, including how counter-hegemonic ideologies are expressed in practices. For now, it is enough to note that these farms indicate that more radical counter-hegemonic movements, at least on a discursive level, may be possible within European contexts:

> “Because society has come round more and more to economics, and that being the primary concern rather than community sufficiency, there's not the same need to help each other out. Because all you need is money and then you can get everything that you need. So that's

[99] I would identify around 10 farms in this category, equally divided across Cornwall and Calabria, although I am reluctant to be so explicit. As I discuss below, the division between alter- and counter-hegemony is not so clear cut, but is better described as a spectrum of difference. It is quite possible that my sampling approach may have under-represented counter-hegemonic perspectives. By making use of internet searching and visiting markets, I have possibly skewed sampling towards market-oriented producers. There is some reason to believe that I may have missed other more insular small, traditional and self-sufficient oriented farms that exist in Cornwall and Calabria.

> very much the feeling, which is why it's so nice to move away from money here and start doing things through exchanges.” *Kelly, PCP, Cornwall, 12 May 2019*

> “The idea is to produce more, even to sell and exchange. Unfortunately we still have needs. We have to pay for electricity, petrol, even though we don’t use the car much, we have to pay for the internet. For me everything should be free.” *Gabriele, part-time farm, Calabria, 1 February 2020*

While it is a reflection of my deliberate sampling of *alternative farms* that all farmers maintained some ecological and socially-minded values, two small capitalists in Cornwall and two in Calabria leant towards more entrepreneurial or sub-hegemonic views. These farmers expressed a stronger willingness to further their subordination to markets and wider capitalist structures, while also tending to have a more hierarchical view of decision-making within the farm. Although conscious of the implications of expansion, they nonetheless saw being a fully-blown capitalist as a route to freedom:

> “It gives me satisfaction to think that it’s growing. My principle is an economic one. I’ve created a business… and the day that I can leave from here and go away for a bit and the business continues by itself with someone that keeps everything ticking over, even without the *imprenditore* being there… That will be the day that the business makes it, the day that the business is autonomous.” *Gianluca, small capitalist, Calabria, 31 January 2020*

There remain considerable ambiguities across these ideological categories. As I have discussed, the dominant framings of alterity (such as a*gricoltura contadina,* organic agriculture or permaculture), and autonomy as a term itself, may be conceived in different ways by farmers that indicate more or less radical attitudes. Because these farmers all participate in broadly defined AFNs, they are not necessarily easily distinguished from one another in terms of practices. This also highlights an ambiguity in how counter-hegemonic farms relate to markets, and whether doing so reluctantly can sustain a meaningful difference from alter-hegemonic farms.

5.4 Conclusions: Class and values

Both van der Ploeg and Tilzey bundle together class and ideology. This bundling is partially borne out by my data, but not entirely. Small capitalists tend to hold more entrepreneurial or sub-hegemonic ideologies. Most PCPs and part-time farms tend to be alter-hegemonic with peasant-like ideologies, although some express a stronger counter-hegemonic leaning. However, the alignment between class and ideology is not perfect – a more complex array of socialising processes are at work linked

to context, personal histories, and on-going relations. While class positions shape values, it is also true that values shape class positions, as in the case of one newly retired farmer:

> "That was basically the size we got to and felt comfortable with. Didn't want to start down the road where there's employment, and I'd be in the office and not doing what I loved, which is growing. So we just stayed at that kind of size." *Laura, PCP, Cornwall, 25 June 2019*

This suggests that ideology and values play a key role (and potentially a determining one) in resisting processes of differentiation that might otherwise emerge from the commodification of subsistence. PCPs and part-time farms may perceive self-sufficiency as largely unattainable, and so exercise relatively little effort to attain it – yet this does not necessarily stem from a lack of suitable land. At the same time, context and personal histories seem to play a role in how these values emerge. More counter-hegemonic positions seem to stem from a particular view of *agricoltura contadina* in Calabria, which in many ways appears as an 'ontonomous' set of values partially linked to indigeneity. However, following Esteva's (2015, 2019) framing of ontonomy, these values continue to be subject to a heteronomous re-shaping through modernisation processes – specifically by becoming compatible with stronger market orientations. By contrast, relatively counter-hegemonic perspectives in Cornwall stem from a particular kind of 'back-to-the-land' migrant. This suggests that particular ideological values/views are not *intrinsic* to class positions, but are at least partially contingent. Taken from another perspective however, these diverse ideologies also warn against the assumptions of more populist accounts of 'peasant' farming – which suggest that all food producers share a consistent set of interests and values.

It is useful, in this complex melange of class relations and values, to recall that small farmers in particular occupy a "contradictory unity of class places" (Bernstein, 2010, p. 103). As such, Holloway's (2002, p. 223 emphasis added) interpretation of class is all the more relevant: "the working class is not a group of people but the pole of an antagonistic relation. *The class antagonism cuts through us, collectively and individually*." The resulting tension – not only between conflicting class interests, but more generally between those interests (whether individual or collective) and one's actual values and ideology – entails that any given farm's trajectory is not simply determined. This is of course a micro-level assessment of a small-number of 'alternative farms', based on snapshots and accounts of farming histories. It highlights how agency can play a determining role in specific cases – whether this agency is sufficient to confront wider structural tendencies (e.g. towards differentiation or repeasantisation) at a macro-level is quite a different issue.

If class alone does not determine farmers' values, then we can ask whether they are somehow self-determined. Self-determination appears to emerge through a mixture of maintaining difference

from other forms of farming and ways of life, while also depending on affirmation from other like-minded people (partners, other farmers, consumers), as well as having the space for critical thought. It is tempting to assert that one set of values is more self-determined or authentic than others, but I do not think it can be borne out by the data available here. Arguably, counter-hegemonic perspectives suffer less from the 'epistemic blindness' (J. Nelson & Stock, 2018) of entrepreneurialism, but it is perhaps better to see each ideology as having its own 'epistemic field of vision'. In the absence of the 'highly bounded social world' of traditional farming communities, farmers are exposed to and aware of a huge diversity of different views about how to live and farm. In such a context, for both newcomers to farming and more established farmers, approaches to living and farming may constitute critical and conscious *choices*, but ones which are shaped by past experiences. These conscious choices have a strong claim to being self-determined. In this way, drawing on tradition and in some ways 'going back to the way things were' cannot be interpreted simply as unthinking reactionary impulses – as peasant movements have often been (Bernstein, 2004). Instead, farmers' values and desires may transcend their class and contextual positions, without themselves being transcendentally grounded.

This chapter has, in the first instance, offered an introduction to the farmers in my sample, by exploring their class relations and values. It has explored the relations between these, particularly through the lenses of socialisation and self-determination. I have deliberately begun with this discussion because farmers' values and class positions determine their freedoms, and whether and how they matter to farmers. But farmers' freedom also, in turn, shapes and constrains values and desires. Even if farmers – to paraphrase Bourdieu – will what is denied and refuse the inevitable, this breaking of the 'symbolic order' is not enough. As Durkheim recognised: "Even when I free myself from these rules and violate them successfully, I am always compelled to struggle with them. When finally overcome, they make their constraining power felt by the resistance they offer" (cited in Bhaskar, 1998b, p. 219). In exactly the same way, Tilzey (2017) argues that it is not a mere *ideology* of 'competitive individualism' that binds farmers to capitalism, but the material relations of reproduction. I turn to these in the following chapter.

6 Freedoms and imperatives of production

This chapter addresses the second aspect of farmers' autonomy: their freedom. More specifically, I look at the gap between *imperatives* to produce for the market, to compete and to accumulate (Bernstein, 2010; Tilzey, 2017; Vergara-Camus, 2019; Wood, 2002), and farmers' 'room for manoeuvre' in engaging with markets and pursuing labour-driven intensification (van der Ploeg, 2008). I refer to the combined imperatives to produce for the market, to compete and to accumulate as *market imperatives.*

It is possible to treat these imperatives and freedoms in relation to farmers' own values and ideologies, or as independent of them. This reflects the distinction between emic and etic approaches I discussed in Chapter 3. The analysis could depart from farmers' own perceptions of their freedom. As I argued in the previous chapter, most farmers fit within an 'alter-hegemonic' ideological framework. Smaller groups of farmers have less (sub-hegemonic) and more critical (counter-hegemonic) views of market dependencies. These different sets of values could form the basis of exploring where and how markets are enabling and constraining. On the other hand, it is possible to start from a more theoretical perspective, one that identifies how relations enable and constrain farmers in general, irrespective of their perceptions. If we are concerned that farmers are overly-socialised into capitalism, and merely 'willing the inevitable', then the latter approach is necessary. If, however, we want to maintain a strong commitment to farmers' *agency*, the former is perhaps more important. As much as possible, I integrate these approaches throughout this chapter.

I argue here that while all farmers face an imperative to produce for the market, they nonetheless retain a degree of room for manoeuvre. Commodity logics are pervasive in farming practices, even those which are not directly commodified, but are balanced against farmers' own ecological and social interests. Freedom from market imperatives stems from particular forms of land access, biotechnical autonomy, non-farming sources of income, market conditions and quasi-monopolistic and niche market positions that permit *some* PCPs and part-time farms to relieve the competitive pressures of the market place. As such, these farmers are (perhaps temporarily) free from strong imperatives to accumulate. State policy meanwhile, incentivises large-scale capital investments, rather than more gradual forms of accumulation. More labour-intensive forms of capital accumulation are also blocked – largely because of depopulation and decline in rural communities. Farmers remain dependent on small-scale technologies, partial specialisation, and embedded market forms for their continued existence.

I begin by reiterating and expanding on the link between freedom and market imperatives, as I began discussing in Chapter 2. I then present three ways in which farmers' freedom is shaped.

Firstly, in the constitutive formation of the farm, as land access, which often entails debt or rent, and so creates an imperative to generate income. Secondly, in reproducing the farm, and practices related to inputs, labour and participation in markets. Thirdly, I discuss transforming the farm, particularly through the formation and accumulation of capital. I then present a series of examples of farms and their freedoms, representing the sub-, alter- and counter-hegemonic approaches, before offering some concluding remarks.

6.1 Market dependency and forms of accumulation

> "To be clear, in today's world, just as in the past, it is impossible to reproduce the family and the farm without recourse to the markets. Nobody is independent from commodity circuits" (van der Ploeg, 2013, p. 33)

The imperative to produce for the market stems from a condition of *market dependency* (Brenner, 2001; Tilzey, 2018; Wood, 2002, 2009). Market dependency is subject to competing interpretations, but it also takes specific forms in particular contexts. Wood (2002) identified two distinct kinds of market dependency – one where competitive land rental requires production for the market, and one which stems from the need to meet subsistence requirements through markets (commodification of subsistence). For Wood, the first kind of dependency underpinned the emergence of capitalist development (accumulation) in England[100]. By contrast, in the Netherlands, farmers faced a commodification of subsistence (in part due to land degradation), but nonetheless had 'room for manoeuvre'. They responded to market access to cheap imported grain for subsistence by specialising in other forms of production, but primarily *as an opportunity*.

The commodification of subsistence compromises not only the possibility of meeting household food directly through farm production, but the possibility of reproducing all resources required for farming (Bernstein, 2010; Tilzey, 2018; van der Ploeg, 2010). Van der Ploeg argues that by pursuing 'self-provisioning' and maintaining a 'self-controlled resource base' farmers retain relative freedom within markets. In this way, van der Ploeg emphasises the kind of market dependency that Wood identified in the Netherlands. While farmers may specialise and depend on markets for subsistence, they are able to contract or expand "at moments deemed appropriate: becoming entrapped will be avoided as much as possible" (van der Ploeg, 2008, p. 27).

---

[100] Another feature in England was the emergence of the proletariat, creating a particular kind of market with both huge demand but limited purchasing power, stimulating an improvement in agriculture in order to produce cheap food (Wood, 2002). This is notably different from the present condition in Europe of significant middle classes with disposal income willing and able to purchase premium quality foods, while also having access to cheap imported food (Tilzey, 2018).

Within this kind of market dependency, van der Ploeg asserts 'labour-driven intensification' as a peasant-specific form of growth in contrast to capitalist accumulation. This intensification entails an "ongoing increase in the production per object of labour", including yield, through labour investments (van der Ploeg, 2008, p. 45). This form of growth "is intrinsic to peasant agriculture" but depends on farmers having the freedom to pursue it, including from excessive surplus appropriation (van der Ploeg, 2014, p. 1006). Labour-driven intensification is still premised on the accumulation of capital, but not based on the capitalist appropriation of surplus value from labour. Capital instead consists of the land, buildings, animals, machinery which support, rather than displace, labour (van der Ploeg, 2013, p. 24).

In contrast, Bernstein and Tilzey consider market dependency as a condition where farmers are *unable* to return to subsistence production. Whether farmers like it or not, "reproduction *cannot* take place outside commodity relations" (Bernstein, 2010, p. 102 emphasis changed). As a result, commodity logics come to be *internalised* within the farm itself. Furthermore, these authors also argue that the need to compete in produce markets, coupled with the possibility of land alienation, *may be sufficient* to generate an imperative for accumulation. Farmers who are market dependent face a 'simple reproduction squeeze' that arises through (direct or indirect) competition with the capitalist sector, and are forced, in Wood's terms, to 'compete or go under'. Whether this leads to accumulation however depends on the extent and forms of surplus appropriation, and the interests of the appropriating classes (Bernstein, 1979, 2010; Tilzey, 2017).

From an agroecological perspective, market dependency is not only a question of commodity relations, but also of the material circulation of nutrients and energy. Market dependency is linked with reliance on external inputs (especially fertilisers and pesticides), and so drives metabolic rifts at both the farm and food system level (M. Schneider & McMichael, 2010). For Rosset and Altieri (1997), specialisation (especially to the point of monoculture), mechanisation, high labour-productivity (i.e. low labour intensity) and high inputs are mutually reinforcing processes in conventional farming. Input-substitution, of more organic or ecologically-sound commodity inputs in place of artificial fertilisers and pesticides, fails to challenge "either the monoculture structure or the dependence on off-farm inputs that characterize agricultural systems" (Rosset & Altieri, 1997, p. 284). In this way, building and maintaining *biotechnical autonomy* emerges as a key strategy for insulating the farm from external imperatives to produce for markets and to accumulate. Biotechnical autonomy is premised on maintaining conceptual and material boundaries between the farm and the outside world. Even if *biotechnical autonomy* is increased, farms inevitably mobilise external resources, including labour and material inputs. To do so, farmers rely on a combination of relatively 'disembedded' commodity relations, embedded commodity relations and non-commodity

relations to access inputs and resources more generally. However, property relations between farmers and their land, which are *constitutional* of the farm itself, may also subject farming to market imperatives – as Wood (2002) argues.

Finally, as I also cautioned in chapters 2 and 5, farmers may face imperatives that push them into, or keep them in, subsistence production and biotechnical autonomy. One major factor here, particularly in peripheral regions, is the absence of opportunities in labour markets (Bernstein, 2006). Another factor is inadequate access to, including the ability to afford, inputs. This has long been seen as a barrier to the development of modern (capitalist) farming (Ramprasad, 2019). The aversion to inputs in agroecology therefore may be another way of 'willing the inevitable'. This also serves as a warning against seeing 'subsistence' and 'self-sufficiency' as the default or normal setting for small farms, around which freedom should pivot. As I mentioned above, farmers' own attitudes and values then become key in understanding whether and how farming practices can be considered autonomous.

As I discussed in the previous chapter, the *survival* of farmers (van der Ploeg, 2008, p. 30) in the context of generalised commodity relations entails remaining *economically viable*. The need to remain viable in this sense merely means that monetary costs are met with the equivalent or greater income[101]. My starting point, which is perhaps a banal one to make in the European context, is that all farms are market dependent in the sense of meeting many of their needs through market relations. The reason for this, and its extent, are not the same for all farmers however. The variation in form and degree of market dependency shapes whether farmers produce for markets, compete and accumulate capital as a *choice* or *compulsion*.

6.2 Constituting the farm: land access

Farmers' access to land considerably shapes the possibilities of viability and room for manoeuvre. Land constitutes a 'self-controlled resource base' that "allows a degree of freedom from economic exchange" which is "built, at least partly, *upon an exchange with nature"* (van der Ploeg, 2008, p. 25 original emphasis). This exchange is constitutional, or existential, of the farm itself. Without a link between farmers and the land, there is no longer a farm in any sense. This privileges land access and property relations over other relations in understanding how farms are reproduced. As long as this relation remains a commodified one, it shapes and constrains the possibilities of autonomy in other domains.

[101] In other words, the 'labour product' for a peasant household is not below zero (van der Ploeg, 2013, p. 24). Of course, debt becomes one avenue for reproduction under these conditions.

Different ways of accessing land (see Table 5-1) then entail different pressures for generating income. Particularly in Cornwall, access to land depends on either already having significant financial capital, or taking on debt. In Cornwall, ten of the 19 farms that bought land had borrowed money to do so. Some had purchased at times when land prices were lower and less competitive, but those who purchased more recently were saddled with more debt. In three cases however, loans attained from family members reduced the pressure on production:

> "The mortgage was actually with the bank of father-in-law, which we were very fortunate for. So we're under no real obligation at the moment with that, which is great. I mean we are able to pay it back which is fine, but thankfully we wouldn't be in a situation of losing our capital if that changed." *Norman, PCP, Cornwall, 12 May 2019*

Similarly, tenancies in Cornwall could be a demanding source of rents, while also being competitive and difficult to find. The England-wide decline in county farms (local council owned farms), which have typically offered lower rents and smaller farms for new entrants, as well as the introduction of Farm Business Tenancies[102], have made this situation worse (Ingram & Kirwan, 2011; Shrubsole, 2019). On the other hand, tenancies still offered farmers a way to access land without taking on debt or having a large source of capital, which could be seen as a source of freedom[103]:

> "There's times where we think wouldn't it be nice to have our own. But no, we actually spend more time looking at the benefits of actually being free. We actually see ourselves as being very free." *Ian*, *PCP, Cornwall, 24 June 2019*

In most cases, the use of inherited or family land appears to be a strong basis for independence from markets. As indicated in Chapter 5, this was far more important in Calabria, where 78% of farms that owned land did so via family, compared to only 25% in Cornwall. However, intergenerational succession may also create dependencies in other ways. One farmer in Calabria cited land fragmentation as a cause of land being abandoned, as plots became too small to be viable and landowners are unable to reach agreements on sharing the land. In Cornwall, a farmer who was the only of his siblings to continue farming his parents' land, discussed how inheritance might generate financial pressures:

---

[102] These reforms have led to new entrants and farmers looking for a whole farm competing with established farmers looking to expand existing holdings (Ingram & Kirwan, 2011).

[103] Another interesting, although not directly relevant, advantage for a local community project was that tenancies were seen to put the organisation on an equal footing with other farmers, helping them to establish relations in the community.

> “The current issue that we're trying to sort out at the moment is the succession, which is always a nightmare on a farm… At the end of the day, the only way [my sister] can get something out of the farm is if there's some money, and the only way that you can realize money is by selling something... It might be a case of having to split the farm up as the only way of keeping everybody happy.” *Max*, *PCP, Cornwall, 19 June 2019*

Alongside inherited land, *comodato d’uso gratuito* in Calabria generated perhaps the least pressure for market dependency. While in principle free, many farmers provided landowners with a share of the harvest either by informal agreement or as a gesture of thanks. In one case however, the agreement was partially monetised when the farmer agreed to pay legal costs to formalise the landowner’s inheritance, in return for the *comodato d’uso* access. However, in general, *comodato d’uso* permitted farmers to practice without access to capital:

> “If we hadn’t had this possibility of land for free, we wouldn’t have ever started. We didn’t have money for this.” *Maria, part-time farm, Calabria, 18 January 2020*

Intentional communities introduce a particular form of secondary land access for individuals. Community members did not own land directly, but either owned a part of the holding body or rented land and housing from it. In some ways, the resilient ownership structures make community access to land relatively inalienable, even if individuals may leave the community. By offering a more affordable form of access, community members face a lesser imperative to generate an income:

> “So the whole structure of having the housing co-op and the workers co-op and the trust, that's a structural permaculture thing. That allows people to live there with a much reduced financial need, which allows them to have a lot more freedom in the time that they can put into things, and that allows people to try and farm, not enough to be financially viable in a conventional farming system, but actually at [the farm] where your housing is cheap and the land's available to you and nobody's going to turn around and say 'You've gotta go because you aren't producing enough', they can produce their own food, they can produce a few thousand pounds worth of income for themselves.” *Karl*, *intentional community member, Cornwall, 23 April 2019*

McMichael argues that for peasants land is “viewed not as an economic asset but as a cultural relation” (2009b, p. 297). However, whether farmers are at liberty to view it in this way is clearly shaped by how they access land. Those who have been able to buy land outright, who have inherited land, or have accessed it through *comodato d’uso* face a lesser imperative to deploy and maintain land as an economic asset. By contrast, those who have accessed land through debt or tenancy face

an immediate requirement to generate income. The type of land access does not appear strongly associated with class (i.e. whether a PCP, part-time farm or small capitalist), but may be linked to the possibility of sustaining a 'counter-hegemonic' ideology[104]. Accordingly land was viewed *both* as an economic asset and cultural relation, although with different degrees of emphasis for different forms of access.

Land access is clearly different between Calabria and Cornwall, with land in the former tending to be accessed without debt or rent. This is not a result of distinct systems of property relations, but rather of the specific market conditions in each region. As discussed in Chapter 4, land in Cornwall is highly competitive, facing pressures not only from conventional agriculture but also the tourism sector and housing developments. In Calabria, competition is much lower, particularly in mountainous areas where conventional and larger-scale mechanised farming is more difficult. As a result of these conditions, more farmers in Calabria are able to access land on the basis of personal relations and trust. In the case of *comodato d'uso*, this is not necessarily without its own difficulties. Agreements may be relatively informal and difficult to reach with multiple landowners, recovering abandoned land requires more upfront investment, and tenure security may be a problem:

> "We're renting something that has little value at the moment, or rather the owners don't value it much. In ten years things could change. We're adding value to the land in terms of fertility. With organic techniques, we're improving land that wasn't producing anything… Because of this we have a bit of fear. In five years [the owner] can say I'm taking it back… Sooner or later, the best thing would be to buy some land." Claudio, *PCP, Calabria, 21 February 2020*

Tilzey (2018, p. 176) argues that farmers in the global South more strongly desire access to land as a means of securing livelihood, although this is partly because of an absence of plausible alternatives (e.g. stable employment in the capitalist sector). Back-to-the-land migration however seems to represent a new recognition of land as a means of livelihood in Europe (Wilbur, 2013). Not all farmers however desire to maintain their livelihood on the land. Farmers frequently prefer to reproduce themselves through a combination of farming and non-farming activities (see below). Two farms in Calabria stood out as having entered agriculture in the absence of other opportunities. Two back-to-the-land farms in Cornwall were also thinking of leaving farming, but for different reasons. In one case, the processing arm of a small capitalist farm had reached a scale where they

[104] Only one farm that I could consider to have a 'counter-hegemonic' ideology had accessed land in a way that generated an imperative to produce for markets. For farmers with 'alter-' or 'sub-hegemonic' ideologies, 40-50% of farmers accessed land in such a way.

were considering giving up farming altogether. In another case, a farming couple (the tenants cited above) were considering leaving farming because of the constraints it imposed:

> "We've missed all our friends' weddings for years, because we've not been able to pull ourselves away, because it's been a financial cost to go and all the rest of it. There's a world out there and we're beginning to work out exit strategies." *Ian*, *PCP, Cornwall, 24 June 2019*

6.3 Reproducing the farm: biotechnical autonomy?

Taking access to land as given, the possibility of freedom in markets also depends on farmers' ability to meet their subsistence and reproductive needs through self-provisioning and/or non-commodified relations (Bernstein, 2010; van der Ploeg, 2008). Where access to these resources is (however partially) commodified, reproduction entails sustaining economic viability through the provisioning of income through markets and other channels. This section covers the possibility of input, labour and income autonomy, which are all shaped by degrees of specialisation, alternative income sources, and the presence of reciprocity (non-commodity) relations beyond the farm.

The possibility of input autonomy is linked to the degree of specialisation of farming activity. Specialisation is closely linked to the commodification of subsistence (Brenner, 2001; Wood, 2002), while the 'functional integration' of diverse farming activities is essential for an agroecological reduction of input dependencies (Rosset & Altieri, 2017). As Table 5-3 showed, relatively few farms practice 'highly mixed' farming in a way that enables extensive self-provisioning. Two qualities of specialisation stand-out. Firstly, the extent to which staple crops (especially cereals, but also potatoes) are produced which might meet the bulk of household subsistence/calorie needs[105]. 12 of the 22 farms in Calabria were producing grain for example, compared to only three in Cornwall (two of which were growing it as animal feed). Secondly, the extent to which livestock is combined with crop production, in ways which might permit the internal cycling of nutrients across the activities, was limited, as the distinction between medium and high mixing on farms in Table 5-3 revealed.

The drivers of specialisation are complex, but include land, labour and capital constraints. For perhaps only two or three of farms in each of Cornwall and Calabria, land-holdings were too small (less than 2ha) to be able to meet subsistence needs[106]. This is very relevant in Calabria, where

[105] Tilzey (2018, p. 237) critiques alter-hegemonic farming for failing to offer an alternative to generalised imports for staples: "how can the supply of staples for *general* consumption, rather than merely the supply of niche markets for higher income groups, be undertaken autocentrically on an ecologically sustainable and socially equitable basis?" Although note also critical views of a grain-centric view of staples (Smaje, 2020, pp. 107–114).

[106] Whether or not subsistence is possible at or around 2ha depends on a wide range of factors, including the quality of land, available labour, and tools and machinery. John Seymour (1976), a well-known advocate of

roughly half of holdings are less than 2ha, but less so in Cornwall (see Table 5-1). These very small farms depended heavily on off-farm and non-farming activities as income sources. Beyond farm scale, farmers also reported environmental conditions, including the quality of land, climate, and water availability, as constraints on producing for subsistence. Calabria's sharp differences in mountainous and lowland terrain – affecting soil and climate – also created limits on what could be produced. While some of these represent serious constraints on diversification, others are partially discursive, constituting forms of 'epistemic blindness'. Wach (2019) shows for Scotland how discourses of environmental constraints have justified specialisation of production in livestock grazing and a corresponding loss of subsistence practices. Similarly in Cornwall, the region's long history of mixed farming, including cereal production[107], suggests that more diverse farming practices are ecologically possible in general – although individual farms may face specific local constraints. However, only one PCP with a counter-hegemonic ideology was producing cereals for self-consumption in Cornwall. For other farmers, these environmental constraints, perceived or real, fed into processes of specialisation:

> "We had an agronomist here to give us some advice on what to grow, and I think the last question we asked him was 'Well, what do you think the best crop is here?' He said without a slightest hesitation grass." *Anthony, part-time farm, Cornwall, 2 July 2019*

> "Every area has its own predisposition. For example planting grain here would be unthinkable, because you need a large area. The thresher couldn't pass through here. So here you could grow many vegetables and then exchange them for wheat, say, or produce a lot of fruit or other things, but not cereals." *Gabriele, part-time farm, Calabria, 1 February 2020*

A second consideration is the extent to which farmers are able to realise their income needs without relying (solely) on selling produce. This includes engaging in pluriactivity (off-farm work), multifunctionality (on-farm non-agricultural activities) and receiving state subsidies[108]. These constitute important alternative 'circuits of reproduction', which may also permit reinvestment in

self-sufficiency in the UK cited by several farmers in Cornwall, estimates that 2ha can comfortably feed a family with surpluses.

[107] Which has declined in the last hundred years, falling from 47,000ha in 1905 to about 36,000ha in 2016, but remains significant at about 14% of all farmed area (DEFRA, 2019b).

[108] In one intentional community in Cornwall, the community had historically relied on state welfare, as a form of political opposition to the prevailing government. Access to this welfare allowed the farm to invest in the farm's ecological capital and to carry out many communal activities. However, in the 1990s, with access to welfare becoming more difficult, the community underwent a cultural shift towards becoming more 'self-reliant' (or rather, market reliant) for income. The community now depends on a cooperative vegetable-box scheme for selling produce, and off-farm work.

capital and farm inputs (van der Ploeg, 2010). As mentioned above, these activities are also subject to debates over whether they may be *choices* or *compulsions* for farmers, and in any event are not available uniformly to all farmers (Bernstein, 2014; S. Schneider & Niederle, 2010; Tilzey, 2017; van der Ploeg, 2010). Off-farm and non-agricultural income (e.g. from agritourism), for example, appears to be more available in Cornwall than Calabria, thanks in part to the strength of the tourism sector. Also, as discussed in Chapter 4, smaller farms are unable to receive income support through the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Some farmers *do* desire to make all of their income from farming, while others see diverse activities as more desirable. Either way, many farmers cannot reproduce themselves without recourse to these income sources:

> "It's lucky that [my partner]'s job is quite well paid because I couldn't pay the mortgage from the income from the farm. No chance." *Sandra, PCP, Cornwall, 18 June 2019*

As discussed in Chapter 2, Tilzey frames these possibilities as 'flanking measures' which integrate farmers *as consumers* into the overall hegemony of capitalism in Europe. While partially releasing farms from the need to farm more intensively or commercially, these other sources of income also constrain farm practice by taking up land, labour and capital or by subjecting the farm to funding conditions[109]:

> "We shouldn't necessarily be seeking to provide all of our income just from farming. I always think that we need to add value or, or be quite diverse, because I think when we don't do that, we start to mine. We take without putting back because that's the only way you can sort of earn above what that farm is able [to provide]." *Hillary, PCP, Cornwall, 29 June 2019*

> "If you've got to go and work somewhere else off the farm, that reduces the amount of time you're on the farm, so that makes growing your own stuff on the farm harder and there's that cycle that happens." *Karl, part-time farm, Cornwall, 23 April 2019*

Finally, non-commodified forms of cooperation and exchange may contribute to farmers' material reproduction, in ways that avoid recourse to commodity networks. While widespread in both Cornwall and Calabria, for most farms they make a marginal contribution to their reproduction. Manure, timber, tools, repairs could be exchanged for vegetables, hay, meat, eggs, milk and so on. In practice, these relations often and easily shift in and out of being more commodified. In both regions, reciprocity was seen as some specific to rural areas, but also a historical feature of farming,

[109] As indicated in section 5.3.3.3, some farmers receiving support for direct payments and agri-environmental schemes did not see them as particularly constraining, although unnecessarily time-consuming to apply for. One farmer in Cornwall cited that they were specifically blocked from planting trees (which could have provided firewood) because they were farming in an area where heather conservation was favoured.

more common in the past[110]. In Calabria, stronger networks of family and friends were particularly relevant for access to less commodified forms of labour. Material forms of cooperation were mainly constrained to exchanges between neighbours and nearby local farms. Exchanges of manure and crops between more specialised farms was particularly common, although as I discuss below, becoming more difficult.

> "There's a chap who's just retired who used to have sheep and cattle, and he used to take the hay off our field for his sheep and his cows, and he'd return farmyard manure to us for our vegetable plots in return." *Karl, part-time farm, Cornwall, 23 April 2019*

> "They're happy that we clean out the stables, and we barter. We bring them some pasta or oil, we always bring something." *Stavroula, PCP, Calabria, 25 November 2019*

Barriers to more reciprocity included competition with other farmers (especially where many farmers in the same area are producing the same products), and the geographical distance between 'like-minded' farmers (as discussed in Chapter 5)[111]. This particularly constrained more counter-hegemonic farmers, who sought to use more non-commodity forms of relating. In this way, the suggestion that autonomy can be enhanced through the interdependence of those committed to food sovereignty (C. R. Anderson et al., 2019, p. 538) is potentially undermined without sufficient geographical proximity:

> "We've got friends who've got smallholdings, and we could really help each other out if we were closer together, you know, because it's like, she's got a topper, I haven't got a topper, we've got building skills… We could quite easily exchange and help each other on that, but we are spaced out quite a lot, you can't just nip up the road for an hour." *Laura, PCP, Cornwall, 25 June 2019*

> "I tried [to work with others] a little around here, but it's not simple really. Because when you're in an area where everyone has the same product, there's a lot of competition. It's difficult to try to create a network that allows you to come together." *Alessia, PCP, Calabria, 3 February 2020*

---

[110] The lack of co-operation also aligns with recent findings in the South West that suggest farmers are withdrawing from local communities, with smaller farms in particular being less likely to collaborate with each other (Winter & Lobley, 2016).

[111] It is worth reflecting that my use of snowball sampling, which might be expected to lead to 'clustered samples' of acquaintances (Merkens, 2004), did not lead to geographic concentrations of tightly cooperating neighbours.

6.3.1 Input autonomy

Roughly 80% of farmers in both Cornwall and Calabria expressed some desire for self-sufficiency. This desire was generally partial, and not contrary to a desire or expectation to produce for markets – although farmers gave different levels of priority to production for subsistence. Some farmers (particularly small capitalists) spoke of having originally aspired for self-sufficiency, only to subsequently shift to more market-oriented aspirations. In this way, the desire to be self-sufficient is not in and of itself a counter-hegemonic logic, let alone a persistent one. These desires were partly shaped by perceptions of whether and how self-sufficiency and subsistence production is possible (or very difficult):

> "The initial objective was always self-sufficiency and the idea of producing what I was eating. I know that you can't produce everything that you eat, but you can produce some of it."
> *Matteo, PCP, Calabria, 29 February 2020*

As discussed in the previous chapter, farmers with more counter-hegemonic ideologies tended to express a stronger desire for self-sufficiency. These farms tended to be more mixed, with mixing explicitly carried out in order to fulfil subsistence needs. A noteworthy contrast emerged between the two intentional communities in Cornwall. In one community, farming activity was oriented around a small vegetable-box scheme. While the box scheme generated some income for most members (and a significant amount for some), most continued to depend on other off-farm work. In the other community, all food production (of milk, meat and vegetables) was oriented to self-sufficiency. Community members instead depended on pensions, off-farm work, and several small on-farm businesses (e.g. camping) for income.

Another aspect of self-sufficiency included rejecting a consumerist lifestyle, and being able to make do with less. These perspectives reflect a principle of 'sufficiency' or a more 'ascetic' notion of consumption (Princen, 2010; Smaje, 2020). While most farmers indicated their contentment with fewer possessions, they did so to varying degrees. Doing so also served as a way for farmers to reduce the imperative to produce:

> "We like our life very simple. And our overheads are very minimal. We don't need much, so we're not making money. We're not trying to make money. That in a way is our strength because we're not under pressure to grow a whole field of wheat, and get it milled into flour and sell it." *Lisa, PCP, Cornwall, 27 June 2019*

A small number of farmers framed their farming as intentionally low-input farming, including farming as a 'closed circuit', or saw such farming as desirable. However, almost all farmers used a

wide-range of practices that reduced their need for specific inputs. This included rotations, green manures, growing animal feed, recycling manure, reducing machinery use (to avoid fuel purchasing), renewable energy systems, water harvesting and saving seed. In some cases, these practices may shift the input burden elsewhere into the farming unit (e.g. buying in more seed to maintain clover in a pasture), in ways that constitute a specific kind of input-substitution. While some farmers aspired to be self-sufficient and reduce inputs as a matter of principle, for many it was primarily seen as a way to save money, constituting what van der Ploeg (2008) calls 'farming economically'. This approach to cost-reduction does not clearly distinguish PCPs from small capitalists – as Wood (2009) argues, costs are one of the few things capitalists have control over in the context of market competition:

> "[In] all our grass now we make a lot of use of clovers and whatnot with the view to cutting down nitrogen usage, again it's a two-pronged thing, it's better for the environment but it's also cheaper." *Alexander, PCP, Cornwall, 26 April 2019*

> "My new favourite thing to think about is: 'if you don't spend it, you don't have to earn it'." *Samir, small capitalist, Cornwall, 10 May 2019*

Particularly in the context of specialisation, farmers were also widely engaged in input-substitution practices, which displace chemical fertilisers and pesticides with organic alternatives (Rosset & Altieri, 1997). The kind and forms of these substitutions was highly variable, depending on farm specialisations, ecological constraints, inclinations and the availability of local services. Some could be regarded as community or regional level forms of nutrient cycling (such as exchanging manure for vegetable waste, or using municipal compost). For some farmers, the higher prices and/or inefficacy of organic substitutes meant that they continued to use more conventional inputs, or were considering a move to more mixed farming:

> "I noticed that when you buy fertiliser, even if it's natural, the costs are high. While with an animal there's a natural cycle, both with the grass that grows spontaneously and using animal manure. So the ideal way of managing it is to have a core of animals." *Alessia, PCP, Calabria, 3 February 2020*

For farms more specialised in horticulture (predominantly in Cornwall), fertiliser took a number of forms, ranging from commercial products (such as pelleted chicken manure) to municipal compost to animal manure from nearby farms. As discussed above, the latter was often received for free or through bartering arrangements, although these could be with relatively intensive neighbouring

farms or ‘horsiculture’ farms[112]. However, in both regions, farmers spoke of declining availability, as more conventional farms have come to recognise its value – either for spreading on their own pasture or as something to be sold for energy production in bio-digesters.

> “Now they won’t even sell [manure] to us anymore, because they use it to make biogas. They recycle everything from A to Z, so you don’t find much of it around. Those producing it in small quantities use it for themselves, and they won’t sell it to you. The land is slowly becoming impoverished because you can’t find it.” *Massimo, part-time farm, Calabria, 13 February 2020*

For those involved in livestock farming, which tended to be on much larger farms, there was a distinction between those dependent on buying in animal feed and those attempting to meet animal needs within the farm. Again inputs could be more conventional and commercial, or sourced through other local farmers. Farms who maintained livestock for subsistence alongside more specialised horticultural activities tended to buy in animal feed rather than produce it themselves. In some cases this was because producing feed would displace other activities, or because of a perceived need to provide a specialised and nutritionally balanced feed. Other farms more actively sought to maintain a balance between available feed and livestock numbers, although this could be thrown off balance with unpredictable harvests:

> “It sounds glib to just throw out global climate change, but we had the worst drought that we'd had in a couple of decades last year, and or at least in in the last 10 years. We thought we got through it all right, [but] it was tough because the cattle had far less grazing. It meant that our 36 acres of hay had half the crop that we'd normally get, so fodder was low. And if you need extra fodder, and you've got to buy it organic, that costs you a fortune.” *Ian, PCP, Cornwall, 24 June 2019*

Van der Ploeg (2008, p. 33 original emphasis) argues that as inputs cross the threshold of the farm, they become considered as use-values, and are no longer “strictly assessed in terms of exchange value”. This “gives the peasant the *freedom to* do with them what he thinks best.” However, the exchange value of these inputs remains a major driver of farming practice, particularly in terms of the desire to reduce inputs[113].

---

[112] Some farmers did express concerns with bringing in manure from more conventional farms, and it was a particular issue for organically-certified farms who are restricted from using manure from animals fed with genetically-modified feed.

[113] Two farmers in Cornwall also mentioned that their self-sufficiency was ‘costed’ for accounting purposes, constituting a particular way in which self-provisioning remains subject to exchange value.

6.3.2 Labour autonomy

In the previous chapter, I distinguished between small capitalists, petty commodity producers and part-time farms, based on the extent to which they are integrated into labour markets, either as employers or workers. For almost all of these farmers, time, labour and skills were perceived to be major constraints – although for different reasons. For some farmers, age was seen as a major constraint on physical activity – a reflection of the general phenomenon of the aging farming population in both regions (Carillo et al., 2013; DEFRA et al., 2020). For back-to-the-land migrants, a lack of existing farming skills could be a major constraint, although some also brought in valuable non-farming skills (e.g. mechanical, construction or marketing skills) from previous careers or education. In Cornwall, these migrants also suffered from a lack of local family and friend networks from which to draw labour[114], exacerbating the effects of rural depopulation. For small capitalists and other farmers hiring occasional labour, accessing an adequately skilled and willing workforce could also be challenging – as could be having sufficient income to cover those expenses. There was also a widespread perception in both regions that people did not want to do the manual, unglamorous, and poorly paid work of farming[115]:

> "I think the attitude towards that kind of hard physical, manual work, and sometimes the pay associated with it [is limiting]… We've got a lot of work to do with British people, specifically coming round to the idea that actually it's OK work, it's good, it's satisfying, it's meaningful, it's not beneath us, that kind of thing." *Andrew, part-time farm, Cornwall, 24 April 2019*

I discussed above farmers' mixed views on pluriactivity and multifunctionality, and how they could also reduce the labour available to farming. Similarly, farmers have mixed attitudes about doing farm work themselves, or relying on external sources of labour. Some farmers valued doing the work on farms themselves, while for others it could also be linked to having insufficient income to employ others:

> "Most of it we do ourselves, because to pay someone to come in, it's a bloody fortune. Like getting a plumber to come and plumb the house, it's like 'No, let's get a book out of the library'. This is how you do it. Let's give it a go. We don't earn a lot of money to pay other

[114] Although in several cases farmers' extended families has also migrated to Cornwall.
[115] In these contexts, farmers may resort to more exploitative labour arrangements. Two farms in Calabria and one in Cornwall were using migrant labour, while one in Cornwall was considering using gangmaster labour for harvesting. Farmers otherwise sought to distinguish themselves from the more generalised use of these more exploitative forms of labour (particularly in Calabria where the use of irregular migrant labour is widespread on commercial farms).

people to come in. So we learned how to do it ourselves." *Laura, PCP, Cornwall, 25 June 2019*

Reciprocal and embedded labour relations were common, particularly in Calabria where farmers can rely on networks of family and friends (see Table 5-2). Seven farms in Cornwall and six in Calabria made use of volunteer networks, such as WWOOFing. These networks connect farms with people willing to work in return for food and accommodation. In Cornwall, one farm was running a nine-month long 'internship' programme along similar lines (see vignette in section 7-4). In Calabria, several farmers had also participated in occasional shared labour days through a local permaculture network, although this network was largely inactive during my fieldwork. Several farmers also reported that informal labour sharing, including among family and friends, was increasingly policed by the state, in favour of more formal work contracts. Despite this, collaborative attitudes to work were favoured by those maintaining a *contadino* form of farming:

> "I'm the *contadino* of the farm, but everyone in the family collaborates... We grow peanuts. It's really tiring work when we harvest them. So we organize a day, her mother, [our friend], his friends… we go and collect all of the peanuts. Then we eat together. We try to help each other in this way." *Lodovico, PCP, Calabria, 13 February 2020*

Community and group farms benefited from additional labour relative to family farms, although it remained constrained. I indicated in Chapter 5 that these farms have shared values and aspire to democratic decision-making, but that they could also be sites of conflict. Conflicts could be manifest as difficulties coordinating labour, driving more individualistic divisions of labour on some farms[116]. Intentional communities had more internal labour, but most members are heavily dependent on off-farm income, which reduced the application of labour on farms. Community farms seem to rely on, and be able to mobilise, more reciprocal forms of volunteer labour through local communities. Group farms could also benefit from more internal labour, although on one farm a group member left because of a lack of income from the project and another had suffered from emerging hierarchies:

> "…then he felt like some things were slipping out of his hands… because he didn't have control. While we on the other side felt like we were always being controlled… as if I was working for you, no?" *Maria, part-time farm, Calabria, 18 January 2020*

[116] As Smaje notes, this is partly why relations of kin are typically favoured in agrarian societies, because those doing the work "have skills and temperament born of intimate residence, and have a shared long-term stake in the well-being of the farm that requires no day-to-day supervision" (2020, p. 168).

‘Internal’ household or community labour, as well as potentially reciprocal relations with family and friends, could nonetheless be partially commodified. In both intentional communities, some internal labour relations were partly structured as commodities – with many forms of labour paid an hourly wage. Several farmers in Cornwall also observed that labour from family, friends and volunteers was inadequately productive, and so fully commodified labour was preferred. One farmer in Calabria also emphasised the need for local workers to receive a monetary and living wage. The perception and actuality of internal and external labour as a commodity put it into explicit competition with non-farming wage rates:

> “[My son] worked on the farm for about five years, but now he's earning £18 an hour whereas I could only afford to pay him £8.” *Leonard, PCP, Cornwall, 24 April 2019*

> “Everyone who works with us, and also the others [in the group] are paid according to the real wage. A farm worker in Calabria normally works here, on the coast for €30 a day, in the mountains for €35, €37 a day. The legal wage would be €68. Those who work in this project are paid the legal wage.” *Stavroula, PCP and group member, Calabria, 25 November 2019*

Although less reliant on commodified labour than small capitalists, many PCPs and part-time farms relied on occasional commodified labour for specific tasks (very often as contractors who also use their own machinery or equipment). Combined with the possibilities of income from pluriactivity, the use of both internal and external labour is then limited by its *financial and opportunity cost*. In other words, farmers face a trade-off between time and money, and often rely on inputs and capital to reduce the labour burden. Farmers often avoided labour-intensive activities that could enhance biotechnical autonomy (such as seed-saving, breeding livestock, producing compost), lead to diversified farm practices (especially incorporating livestock), or increase cooperation with others. While farmers may seek to minimise their monetary costs, in practice doing so was balanced against their capacities to do the work themselves or to mobilise labour in non-monetised ways:

> “We have some contractors in the area. I use them when there’s something that needs doing, while trying to limit the expense. I act as the worker for the person I’ve hired… For example, when pruning the citrus trees or the olives I take care of collecting the wood, to avoid the work taking too long and therefore too many economic costs.” *Alessia, PCP, Calabria, 3 February 2020*

> “Time is short for me this year and I just wanted to get it done. I paid [for commercial pelleted chicken manure], but I got it done quicker, as opposed to getting it for free and

then working for days digging cow muck into the beds. If you want to do it, great, and I probably would have done that, if I had the time." *Andrew, PCP, Cornwall, 24 April 2019*

6.3.3 Autonomy in the market

While farmers *are* producing for markets[117], different kinds of markets entail different market imperatives. Markets were shaped by the conditions described in Chapter 4. Both regions are relatively depopulated, agrarian and impoverished, which constrained local marketing opportunities. Cornwall's buoyant tourism sector, the seasonality of which coincides with that of horticultural production, offers more opportunities. In Calabria, local markets are also constrained by the general population having high rates of access to produce through family networks and self-sufficiency. As I outlined in the previous chapter, most farmers are comfortable with producing for markets in general, despite having to make compromises in production decisions:

> "You're growing because that's what your market is basically telling you they want, so your own kinds of principles of what you grew for yourself… you've got to be a bit more fluid. So you know it may be a variety or something. I'm not madly keen on growing charlotte potatoes, but there's no point me growing something that they're not going to buy. So you've got to say right OK, then I'm going to grow charlotte potatoes." *John, part-time farm, Cornwall, 22 April 2019*

Almost all farms in both regions were selling directly, with the exception of two small capitalists in Cornwall, both supplying wholesalers. As discussed in section 5.2.1.2, direct selling took many forms. Farmers often used more than one of these, which could reduce dependency on any one. Direct selling is usually very labour intensive, involving marketing, packing and transporting, to the extent that it often constrains farmers' time on the farm. However, it allowed farmers to respond better to consumers' needs, to build personal relations, as well as realise ecological and social objectives. In this way, direct selling constitutes what have been called 'embedded' or 'nested' markets, based on a Polanyian notion by which commercial imperatives are constrained or modified by social ones (Selwyn & Miyamura, 2014; van der Ploeg et al., 2012). These networks also permit the 'bypassing' of conventional food systems (van der Ploeg et al., 2012), potentially disrupting patterns of surplus appropriation and accumulation, while offering farmers higher returns. While many farmers discussed how low prices in markets failed to reflect the 'real costs' of farming, some farmers were also attentive to not orienting their production exclusively to 'premium' markets. This echoes the

[117] With the exception of two part-time farms in Cornwall and one in Calabria, see Table 5-3.

distinction in how farmers are willing to subordinate themselves to markets in abstract or as a way to feed local communities (section 5.3.3.2):

> "So there's just no way that we could have carried on farming and doing what we're doing just from our farm... We needed to basically expand the direct selling to customer part of the business, because that was really the only part of the business that was making any significant amount of profit." *Joanie, small capitalist, Cornwall, 1 July 2019*

> "I am ideological to a point and I'd much rather spend my time growing food for people locally, rather than being down here in beautiful Cornwall and that being some kind of trademark and logo and selling point for people that are paying four, five, or six times more for it in London." *Paul, PCP, Cornwall, 14 May 2019*

Another specific aspect of this in Calabria is the possibility of keeping money out of networks and markets linked to the mafia, as the quote from Lodovico in section 5.3.1 illustrated. As indicated in Chapter 4, the *'ndrangheta* control various aspects of agricultural markets and claim agricultural subsidies, while land confiscated from mafia is frequently used in agriculture or for social projects (one farmer in my sample was managing such land, while a GAS was making use of a confiscated building as a market and cultural space). While no farmer reported collaboration with mafia (which I would not have expected, even if remaining a possibility), a number did report fear of and negative experiences with the mafia – ranging from theft to intimidation[118]. In this way, the presence of the mafia create conditions under which farming becomes more difficult:

> "In Calabria, it's a struggle in many ways… it's an area that's also famous for the criminal underworld… and to leave the farm alone here and go elsewhere means that they will steal something from you at night… or to have a piece of land that isn't close to your house means that they will come at night. So to practice agriculture here is hard." *Alessia, PCP, Calabria, 2 February 2020*

However, what concerns me here is whether and how direct and embedded markets insulate farmers from market imperatives more generally. In the previous chapter, I suggested that embedded markets contribute to the de-fetishisation of the commodity relation by opening up more direct relations between *people* (rather than obscuring them as relations between things). The

[118] Sciarrone (2010) provides a clearly structured overview of how the *'ndrangheta* interacts with Calabrian political economy, identifying three degrees of mafia control over business enterprises: mafia entrepreneurs (i.e. run directly by mafia individuals or groups), collusive entrepreneurs (non-mafia businesses that see mutual benefit in collaborating with the mafia) and subordinate entrepreneurs (those more coercively compelled to cooperate through an 'extortion-protection mechanism'). Sciarrone does not directly address the presumably fourth category of those able to distance themselves from these relations more completely.

degree to which this occurs is highly variable, and depends on the specific form the market takes[119]. While alter- and counter-hegemonic farms often participated in the same markets, the latter tended to market in more informal networks. These networks consisted of friends and families or acquaintances, with distribution arranged by phone calls and messages or farm visits. While these networks did not necessarily offer a stable or secure market for all farmers, they seem to be experienced as less of an imperative:

> "It's quite rewarding that you've got that contact with the end user all the time. And you're getting people coming... 'Oh that... that lamb we had last week was fantastic'. You're getting that feedback. And that's payment in itself, you know, it's not just all about an income you get. It's about you know, feeling that you're doing something that people will actually notice." *Max, PCP, Cornwall, 19 June 2019*

> "I buy cheese, let's say for €10 or €15 a kilo, and you buy the honey. That doesn't mean that there isn't also a human relationship. It's both. The relationship isn't only commercial or only human. For me the relationship has to be human in every case; in some cases there's also a commercial relationship." *Vittorio, PCP, Calabria, 7 February 2020*

Consumer demand for quality, ecological and 'fair' produce and the farmer-consumer price difference created by conventional food systems has created new opportunities for farmers *in general* (van der Ploeg et al., 2012). However, in both regions, accessing the benefits of alternative markets depends on partially monopolistic positions, which evade competitive pressures. In response to market saturation, farmers in both Cornwall and Calabria were producing niche products, processing to 'add-value', but also engaging in anti-competitive market structures. GAS function as exclusive markets, for example, where consumer groups select a few particular producers to buy from. Despite the 'embedded' nature of and Italy's 'personal trust regime' (Sassatelli & Scott, 2010), several GAS also suffered from mistrust and producers misrepresenting produce. Physical markets, particularly those in Cornwall, tended to select a narrow few stallholders in order to prevent competition between them. Local shops too may give farmers dominance within a local community. This brings into question whether van der Ploeg's (2008) peasant strategy of 'value-adding' is really a strategy of 'value-capturing':

> "I've kind of become the main supplier for the local shop and cafe, which has put me in a very, very good position. Because if other suppliers come along, asking to sell things and it

[119] The extent to which markets were local played some role in this, but several farmers in Calabria were still linked into northern Italian markets through personal relations. This included in particular farmers who had previously worked in the North.

conflicts with something that I'm already selling, I've been left with the responsibility of saying ‘Actually, no, there isn't a vacancy for that at the moment’.” *Sandra, PCP, Cornwall, 18 June 2019*

While several farmers expressed a desire not to compete with others, market conditions were often such that it was unavoidable. Perversely, however, exclusive access to some of these channels gave some farmers the sense that they were not competing with anyone and were effectively “outside the market” (*Stavroula, PCP, Calabria, 25 November 2019)*. In effect however, a combination of competition and anti-competitive behaviour emerged as significant in both regions. Some farmers deliberately avoided markets for fear of competition, while others were unable to participate. In this way, as Bernstein (2010, p. 105) identifies, even farmers’ simple reproduction may be “at the expense of their neighbours who are poorer farmers,” who do not enjoy the same monopolistic market access:

> “I've suffered so much with that. [The local markets] are sometimes run like a cartel. ‘That's the one that's coming, no one else. He's my friend, so he's got the place’. That sort of thing.” *Eleanor, PCP, Cornwall, 1 July 2019*

> “Let’s say that the margins [at the local market] are not very clear, and there are other producers that already have the same products as us. We decided not to go.” *Giuseppe, PCP, Calabria, 15 November 2019*

Here a clear distinction emerges between Cornwall and Calabria in terms of the buoyancy of local markets. Cornwall’s strong tourism sector contrasts with potential consumers’ widespread access to food through family networks in Calabria. One GAS organiser discussed how several early consumer participants subsequently re-activated subsistence production on their own land, rather than continuing to purchase through the GAS. Even in Cornwall, where the tourism market offers a strong possibility of selling locally, farmers and networks were conscious of local markets being saturated. One community organisation was addressing this risk by further processing produce and developing new marketing networks within and beyond the region:

> “So we've got lots of development of people setting up box schemes and community supported agriculture, and they're all butting up against each other in terms of territory already. There's not much room in the market for more box schemes. So there has to be another buffer market to absorb that volume. So we're trying to create that with the ready meals and the wholesale distribution to even out across the whole region.” *Richard, network representative, Cornwall, 14 June 2019*

While monopolistic positions allow some farmers to resist some competition, they remain subject to competitive pressures from wider conventional markets. Van der Ploeg et al. (2012, p. 140) acknowledge that nested markets "are a specific segment of [conventional] markets and are susceptible to the same influence". Bernstein (1979) argues that participation in markets brings PCPs into competition with the capitalist sector, and drives a need to maintain equivalent levels of productivity. In both regions, farmers cited the extremely low prices offered in supermarkets as a barrier to their own marketing efforts. Competition then is partly manifest through the on-going participation of consumers in conventional markets:

> "The people come here with a bag from Conad [a large supermarket], so they go to the supermarket to do their shopping and then come here to buy some things. I think they expect to buy them at a lower price, but they don't understand that I'm giving them a higher quality. But if someone is used to eating from the supermarket for 10 or 11 months in a year, eating genuine, organic, more natural things for two months isn't going to change anything."
> *Giovanni, part-time farm, Calabria, 23 November 2019*

Tilzey (2018, p. 169) observed that for alter-hegemonic farming in Europe "the turn to 'economies of scope' and niche markets, and therefore to dependency on middle-class consumption as the principal revenue stream for smaller producers, was likely to afford only temporary respite from the pressures of competition as more producers entered the field of quality production". This thesis is strongly validated by the presence of competition and anti-competitive market structures in both Cornwall and Calabria. It entails that farmers do face an imperative to compete, with the perverse outcome that 'avoiding' competition entails creating monopolistic and exclusive market structures. Some farmers are able to capture a higher share of a higher consumer price, in ways that sustain viability, but this appears to be partly at the expense of other farmers.

6.3.3.1 Market production and input imperatives

While all farms were engaged in some self-provisioning, producing for markets often compelled farmers to purchase inputs in various ways. This is underpinned by regulatory and funding programmes which reproduce a conceptual and practical division between subsistence and commercial production. In both Cornwall and Calabria, regulations permit farmers to slaughter their own animals for self-consumption, but meat for the market must be slaughtered at an authorised abattoir. Self-slaughtering for home consumption was more common in Calabria, with only two farms in Cornwall doing so (both with relatively counter-hegemonic ideologies)[120]. In Calabria,

[120] More farms were slaughtering their own chickens, including for marketing processes, which are governed by different regulations than red meat.

regulations limit the size of herds that can be kept for self-sufficiency purposes (see section 6.5.2 below). They also place strict requirements on food processing for marketing purposes. In Cornwall, planning regulations require farmers to meet certain standards of economic viability and agricultural activity in order to receive consent for buildings and other infrastructural developments.

Taken at face value, these regulations compel farmers to either produce only for subsistence or primarily for the market, to access (commodified) local services and/or invest heavily in food processing infrastructure (see capital autonomy below). In practice, many farmers in both regions 'resist' these regulations by engaging in the practices they prohibit[121]. The *Genuino Clandestino* movement (originating in northern Italy but with a limited presence in Calabria) is an example of this resistance on a more political level. The movement supports farmers to continue producing and marketing food in contravention of regulations, while also campaigning for legal recognition for these forms of processing. Most farmers in Calabria were actively producing and marketing produce contrary to regulations, by selling home-made processed foods. While some farmers seemed content with remaining relatively small, for others increasing levels of production brought concerns that they would become subject to more scrutiny:

> "It's a time when you begin to have greater quantity, more volume, more visibility… there's a fear of being checked. We're moving into a phase in which we're trying to understand what [legal] form to take, that's more in line with how we think." *Claudio, PCP, Calabria, 12 February 2020*

These forms of resistance suggest that farmers are struggling for *better market access* rather than 'distancing from the market' (van der Ploeg, 2008) per se. This is a reflection of farmers' desires to both produce for themselves and for markets, something which Hathaway (2016) points out has a long association with traditional food systems. However, market-oriented production may itself erode subsistence and self-provisioning. Food processing activities needed to 'add-value', particularly on a large scale, required purchasing in additional produce and ingredients. Processing and marketing required packaging, although farmers often tried to minimise this significant expense. More fundamentally, particular marketing channels (especially vegetable boxes and farm shops) led farmers to buying in additional produce in order to provide a diverse and consistent supply[122]. These

---

[121] Several other regulations were partly ignored. This includes a regulation in the UK, which restricts farmers from feeding kitchen scraps to animals (which hindered functional integration rather than subsistence) designed to prevent the spread of disease (DEFRA, 2019c). A group in Calabria were also growing hemp without a licence to do so, and were actively campaigning to get its production legalised.
[122] In Cornwall this frequently meant purchasing produce from Riverford, the very large-scale organic food producer and distributor located in neighbouring Devon.

activities could offer farmers an additional source of income, but could come into conflict with farmers' own desires to supply local produce:

> "When we set up the shop the original emphasis was very much that nothing we sold was going to come from out of Cornwall… The reality of it is, I think, that that idea was more important to us than it was to the actual customer. We believed that we should be selling that, but… they want to go to a shop and be able to buy what they want to buy." *Alexander, PCP, Cornwall, 26 April 2019*

Seed saving, for example, a central aspect of farmers' autonomy for Pionetti (2005), while constrained by a lack of labour, skills and a suitable environment, is more specifically restricted by a perceived need for reliable and consistent seeds in commercial vegetable production[123]. Regulations also hinder the use of variety names when marketing produce from saved seed (again one farmer in Calabria was doing this regardless). The suggestion is that these are constraints that specifically relate to marketing, rather than production for subsistence:

> "From a market gardening point of view you need kind of good germination, propagation. Things need to come ready at the same sort of time if you're doing something like a box scheme, so that you've got enough." *Sarah, part-time farm, Cornwall, 3 July 2019*

6.4 Transforming the farm: capital autonomy

All farms are engaged in processes of growth and accumulation. However, the form this takes is variable, reflecting the distinction between capitalist accumulation and labour-driven intensification, as well as the extent to which capital functions in a *convivial* way (Illich, 1975). Here, a division emerges between farmers whose investment in capital is slow and small-scale, and those where it is quicker, linked to debt, and much larger-scale. These correspond in many ways to van der Ploeg's (2013, p. 128) 'peasant' and 'entrepreneurial' roads respectively, with "a minority of farmers (some 15 to 20 percent)" in the European Union (EU) following the entrepreneurial road. The division falls along class lines in my sample, with small capitalists engaged in larger-scale investments that much more deeply embed them in commodity relations. The division appears to arise through a combination of farmers' own attitudes towards debt and risk, the kinds of production they are involved in, and the particular structures and incentives they face.

[123] I am reporting this here, but I find the idea that reliability is more important in commercial production than self-sufficient production slightly strange. Surely if one's own subsistence depends on food production, it would be *more not less* imperative to have reliable seeds. Perhaps this partly arises from farmers' perception of non-commercial production as hobby farming, such that food can always be bought from other sources. On the other hand, careful attention to the distinction between reliability and consistency perhaps reveals that what matters for commercial production is that seeds behave uniformly and predictably.

In particular, state funding and regulations drive larger-scale investments in capital. As discussed in Chapter 4, EU funding for capital investment tends to favour large-scale projects, linked to job-creation. Only projects above a certain value are supported, and must be match-funded by farmers. Farmers are typically only able to receive such grants by taking on debt, both to meet the match-funded component and because LEADER funds are only disbursed after the farmer has made the investment. The regulations in Italy that require heavy investment in food processing facilities, discussed above, also reinforce these dynamics. These conditions suggest that EU policy not so much 'correctly' identifies farmers as market dependent PCPs (Tilzey, 2021) as much as attempts to convert them into small capitalists, locking them into ongoing cycles of accumulation. For most PCPs in my sample, investments of such scale were not desirable. This relates to attitudes around risk and debt aversion, but also for a preference to grow more slowly. Some farmers rejected state support altogether, seeing it as a 'drug', while others desired access to smaller amounts:

> "A farm like mine maybe needs €10-12,000, not €100,000. I've never participated in a call for public funds, because I get scared of the difficulty of creating such a large project. I prefer to do things calmly… I like to go forward slowly." *Alessia, PCP, Calabria, 2 February 2020*

Capital is nonetheless developed at the smaller-scale through on-farm capital formation (which resembles *labour-driven intensification*) but also through capital purchasing. While I discussed above how land may constrain production decisions, many farmers seek to 'strengthen the resource base' (van der Ploeg, 2008, p. 31). Because of the ways farmers have accessed land, soil and infrastructure was often lacking or of poor quality. As such, farmers actively sought to improve their farms in terms of ecological and physical capital. This could be significantly more constrained on tenanted farms (see for example the quote from Philip in the following chapter, section 7.3.1.2)[124]. Several farms in Cornwall for example had planted woodland, both out of environmental considerations (e.g. climate change) and as a source of fuel and timber for self-consumption and marketing. Also in Cornwall, farmers often accessed land without housing, and so sought to build new houses. In some cases this entailed (more) debt, while three more counter-hegemonic farmers had built their own homes. While these processes of capital formation are ongoing, the labour and financial demands associated affect the farms viability. For many PCPs however, this capital formation had a sense of 'growing up' rather than aspiring to infinite growth (Kallis, 2018, p. 86):

---

[124] Another farmer cited the Farm Business Tenancy in the UK as discouraging tenants from capital investments, by changing how improvements are treated at the end of the tenancy: "Under the Farm Business Tenancy system the landlord's agent can come along… and say 'You've just put down this much concrete, it's ten years old. We'll give you a pound for it.' And you say 'That's not fair, that cost me the equivalent of three thousand quid, and there's plenty of life left in it.' [They'll say] 'Well if you don't accept it, pull it up and take it away'." *Leonard, PCP, Cornwall, 24 April 2019*

> "It would've been nice to have inherited and be debt free. I mean that's a huge instant leg-up especially in the British land price climate. To have gone into this with no debt and a house existing on the land, well then the whole thing makes complete economic sense from day one. As it is we've had to build to where we are now." *Paul, PCP, Cornwall, 14 May 2019*

In the context of limited labour, farms are particularly dependent on a wide range of small-scale mechanised and fossil-fuel based tools – tractors, chainsaws, strimmers, olive rakes, food processing equipment etc…[125]. These tools may serve to minimise certain inputs and dependencies, permitting a higher degree of self-provisioning. The widespread use of small-scale energy generation is one example. In another sense, the competition discussed in markets above may drive some degree of small-scale capital accumulation – for example by acquiring food processing equipment to 'add value'. Farmers also typically preferred older and second-hand equipment (including inherited equipment on family farms), which is both cheaper to buy and easier to maintain than newer models. Nonetheless, the use of these tools depends on access to wider economic networks of manufacturing, as well as fuel and skilled maintenance. The need for such technical inputs then contributes to and reinforces the commodification of subsistence:

> "Obviously we cannot make everything that we need, I mean, the obvious things are technical or mechanical things. We can't manufacture our own tractor. But, the idea was to manufacture or produce something which would be in a high demand so that we can exchange that for those things that we need and can't produce ourselves, and that's basically in our case meat." *Chris, PCP, Cornwall, 9 May 2019*

Instead of owning capital, farmers may mobilise it from outside the farm, through hiring, contracting and sharing. This includes accessing local services, such as abattoirs, oil presses or grain mills, which are often just as necessary for subsistence as market-oriented practices. As mentioned above, farmers often used contractors to bring in both labour and machinery (though contractors are increasingly specialised and oriented towards large-scale conventional farming). The sharing and pooling of machinery was much less common, in part again due to distances between 'like-minded'

[125] Whether these tools have contributed to the depopulation and de-intensification of labour on farms, or if the causal link runs in the other direction is not so clear. In all likelihood the relationship is a reciprocal one. A small number of farmers also aspired to incorporate animal draught power, but this was generally considered unviable or more difficult than using machines.

farms (see section 6.5.2 below). As with other aspects of farm practice, decisions about investing in capital or relying on outside services responded to prices and availability:

> "As machinery costs have increased, we've taken the view [that] certain things we concentrated our machinery and equipment costs on, and other things we've farmed out to contractors. It's gone more that way over the last twenty years definitely, but it constantly changes." Alexander, *PCP, Cornwall, 26 April 2019*

For van der Ploeg (2008), *scale enlargement* is a central strategy of entrepreneurial farming. Small capitalists in both regions tended to have increased their scale in terms of production. However, nine PCPs and part-time farms (five in Cornwall and four in Calabria) had also increased, or were planning to increase, their scale in terms of land. Notably, this was done for a mix of commercial and relatively counter-hegemonic reasons. Land was increased for speculative reasons, in response to offers from neighbours for *comodato d'uso*, in order to maintain organic status, to prevent property development, or to create opportunities for other alternative farmers (see discussion in the next chapter):

> "We're buying a piece of land attached to my property because we were worried about who might buy it, and by the idea that a person buying the land wouldn't have the same principles of farming naturally. They could pollute in some way, and even pollute our farm next door. It was a political decision, let's say, not an economic one." *Alessia, PCP, Calabria, 2 February 2020*

6.5 Ambiguous imperatives: three vignettes

I have discussed above how farmers face different degrees of room for manoeuvre, in relation to how the farm is constituted (access to land), reproduced (in terms of inputs, labour and through market-relations), and transformed (through capital investments). Farmers vary a great deal in how they navigate the relations that these processes entail. The following vignettes explore some of this variation in terms of sub- alter- and counter-hegemonic ideological framings. They illustrate how the constitution, reproduction and transformation of farming entails a mixture of opportunities and constraints, but also how farmers' values and decisions can develop those in different ways.

A sub-hegemonic response to markets

Tony specialises in salad leaf production on eight hectares of land rented from a Cornish family. Without a farming background, he started out with an interest in self-sufficiency and organic gardening, and then as an inward migrant working on organic farms in Cornwall. He started producing salad leaf on three acres of rented ground from one of these farms and selling the

produce to local chefs. While being a tenant constrained some fixed investments, he invested in a bed former and seed drill, and moved on to a larger area of land. Other than a loan from his parents, he has not borrowed to expand the business, although in retrospect he sees this as a cautiousness linked to his lack of experience. He was in large part driven by the perceived difficulties of competing with larger-scale producers:

> “Doing mixed market gardening on a small scale, you're always up against the economies of scale of big growers. So for example when you're doing 2 acres of organic spuds and you're using a little 1920s row flicker to flick the row and go and pick them up with the bucket you are in a hard, hard place when you’re looking at a million pounds worth of machinery in a field doing ten acres in an hour.” Tony, small capitalist, Cornwall, 14 May 2019

He now sells his produce exclusively through a wholesaler, which only distributes it within Devon and Cornwall. He has a production licensing agreement with the wholesaler, which took an equity stake in his operation. Despite the constraints of this arrangement, Tony says it allows him to concentrate on farming itself:

> “I'm totally in control of the day-to-day management and the growing, but they sell everything for me so I haven't got to do any sales or marketing or delivering or cash collection. They take care of all that. They collect from us on a daily basis, which has allowed me to focus on the growing.”

Because it is locally produced and of high-quality (which Tony feels is strongly supported by people in the region), the produce is sold at a higher price point than some competitors. The farm was previously certified organic, but has since moved away from certification. This is due to the additional costs of an organic processing licence (which would be required for washing and packing the produce), the wholesaler’s lack of an organic licence (which means even organically produced salad leaf could not be sold as organic), commercial pressures and local environmental conditions. While Tony uses some conventional fertilisers and fungicides, he continues to use fertility-building practices like rotations and cover crops:

> “So compared to your bog-standard commercial leaf grower, who would perhaps grow under plastic polytunnels or glass houses, we are on the way lighter side of the chemical usage scale... but there's just no way around it, so the practicalities of a commercial business came into it.”

Another shift has been from employing a local person to relying on two migrant labourers from Eastern Europe, who work full-time from March to September, and local students for the summer season. Tony's parents also help out (and were busy helping to wash and pack salad when I visited). As a consequence, the farm has few ties into the local community:

> "Because of our imported labour, apart from the family obviously, and the nature of our relationship with a local wholesaler… really apart from the daily student help that we have in the summer who come and help in the pack-house, I'd say that we're really quite low profile."

Although still a small farm, Tony continues to aspire towards growth, including considering investing in vertical farming, increasing land holdings, employing more workers, and being open to the possibility of selling into the more conventional supermarket chains:

> "To be able to put into a supermarket we would have to invest probably half a million quid, just to get there, to be at the point where you've got supermarket accredited pack-house and the other items required on the packing line… We would take that step, if [large supermarket] Tesco's could go 'Yeah, we will have your stuff,' we definitely would, and I think it would be a good thing."

An alter-hegemonic response

In Calabria, Matteo uses 31 hectares of land to grow wheat and keep a herd of 50 goats. His main income is from a non-agricultural job, which he does from home. His turn to farming was motivated primarily by the idea of self-sufficiency. Beginning with access to just under 10 ha of family land, including an established olive orchard, he began with growing vegetables and olive oil, "a series of things that have always been done in the family." Working in collaboration with a friend, still with a view to self-sufficiency in milk and cheese, they soon acquired seven goats. This was already the maximum permitted for self-sufficiency, according to local sanitary laws. Within two years, as the goats increased in number (the males were killed and eaten, while the females were kept), the two friends registered themselves as two separate holdings for self-consumption.

At the same time, they noticed that there was local interest in their products – that came from sharing the product with friends and neighbours. With the herd continuing to grow, they decided to register as a commercial farm, noting that "it wasn't us that moved towards an idea of entrepreneurship. It was the goats who brought us to this decision." The increasing number of

goats also led to a kind of specialisation, although access to vegetables through relatives offset this:

> "One thing leads to another… until I said 'OK, let's [register commercially]', which we were almost obliged to do because the number [of goats] was already over 20… We were almost obliged then to leave the vegetable garden, and leave the other things that we were doing. We had chickens, we had rabbits, we had bees."

At the same time, the amount of land increased – through comodato d'uso: "Some neighbours stopped us in the street and asked if we wanted to cultivate the land, which we formalised with a simple contract." The land is used for pasture for the goats, production of fodder, and wheat as both feed and for flour, some of which is also sold. The land also permits the collection of EU direct payments. As a result, there are relatively few inputs for animal feed. They feel little pressure to produce high yields, and are satisfied with the lower yields derived from traditional varieties of wheat. As scale has increased, the friends have purchased a tractor for managing the increase in land. This has taken them away from a collaborative arrangement with another nearby farmer (a small capitalist, also in the sample):

> "We bought the tractor last year. Until then, we used [the other farmer's] tractor and his equipment. That was the sort of mutual help. This year for example he's borrowing our trailer, which is bigger."

The production of goat cheese however remains clandestino, without having the necessary kitchens and licences for commercial production. Despite this, they are able to sell most of their cheese locally and through informal channels – although some has also been taken to other parts of Italy, and he is aware of opportunities to sell abroad (mostly through friends). Despite their rapid growth, they remain cautious about accessing state support:

> "There is funding, like from the Rural Development Programme or some others. But I have little faith in these organisations. I was always afraid that it's a bit of a trap, they close you in and force you to do things. I don't like [the idea] much. It's probably my own limitation."

A counter-hegemonic response

Claudio, along with several others, farms two hectares of comodato d'uso land, mainly accessed through informal agreements. Several participants in the project have other income sources,

including through a related heritage and eco-tourism project. Claudio maintains a strong anti-capitalist ideology, and frames the project in opposition to the conventional visions of development of the EU and local authorities. He perceives these as being only interested in exploiting, rather than adding value to, local resources. His vision is instead based on an acute awareness of how agriculture in their local area has changed in the last fifty years:

> "In the 70s and 80s there was an individualisation of agricultural activity, and an idea of *impresa* behind that activity. We're trying to go back, in the sense of collectivising the activity and trying to do things together. We're trying to break the mould of the usual company that only thinks about profit."

As a recent project (starting in 2015), they continue to grow and develop in different ways. While mainly producing vegetables, their production is increasingly diverse and also includes wheat, chickens, honey and olive oil. They produce their own compost, save and exchange seeds, but also buy some commercial organic inputs. While they would prefer not to use machines, they see it as unavoidable for the scale they are working at – and so rely on local farmers to plough their land. Their principle objective is to create work and opportunities for income, in a context where people regularly emigrate. They also aspire to bring people back into contact with the land and agriculture, and bring abandoned land back into production. In order to access land, they have had to build up trust with the landowners, and they provide some of their produce in return as a token of thanks. However, as the quote from Claudio in section 6.2 illustrates, they are mindful of the risks of informal agreements and adding value to the land.

They sell their produce either directly to local families (they have a network of customers who they contact through WhatsApp) or through local GAS. They also occasionally sell produce to the north of Italy, through an arrangement with another local farmer. They perceive a lack of local *consumo critico*[126], and so actively try to develop it, while serving as an example for others. They are actively trying to build an alternative economic system. However, while able to meet their costs and reinvest some money in the project, they are unable to derive an income from the project. At the time of my interview, the project was not formally registered, but as the quote from Claudio in section 6.3.3.1 indicates, they were on the brink of doing so. Through this process, they are beginning to compromise on their sense of autonomy:

> "To create, or recreate, an alternative economic system isn't 100% possible at the moment. It isn't sustainable from an economic point of view... we need to take further

[126] See section 7.3.2.

steps. We're processing products, which we can't do legally. We have this network we've created which allows us to sell, but it's not enough… So we're thinking at the moment to take a step to partially lose that vision of autonomy, but to try to take forward a principle objective of being [economically] self-sustaining, to try to survive with this kind of agriculture."

The above three examples indicate clear divergences between sub-hegemonic, alter-hegemonic and counter-hegemonic farms. They also illustrate how they overlap and have their own ambiguities. Both Matteo and Tony represent examples of an early focus on self-sufficiency that has gradually been transformed into a more market-oriented logic and growth. However, in Tony's case this has reached the extent where commitments to organic agriculture have been weakened by commercial pressures. His agreement with the wholesaler has locked him into a dynamic of competition and accumulation, and the prospect of large-scale capital investment and entry into conventional food chains are on the horizon. In Matteo's case, production for the market remains an 'opportunity', in the sense that his land access is non-commodified, and he can still rely on part-time work and family networks for subsistence. Despite the barriers to accumulation and lack of assistance from the state, his money from part-time work has also allowed investment in capital that has detached him from a local cooperative arrangements. Both Matteo and Claudio sell through similar informal networks. However, Claudio's project so far appears to be 'growing up', rather than a more significant form of accumulation. Despite retaining a strong anti-capitalist and post-developmental approach, the project is confronting the need for economic viability – or the imperative to produce for markets. In this case, this also entails confronting state regulations, and potentially making compromises in relation to a vision of an alternative and collective economic system.

6.6 Conclusions: market imperatives and room for manoeuvre

Farmers in Cornwall and Calabria are all market dependent, but in different ways and to different extents. In the European context, the commodification of subsistence is normalised such that farming demands economic viability. However, beyond this general point, there is considerable variation in farmers' freedom, between Cornwall and Calabria, between different class positions, and between different ideological approaches. Most fundamentally, access to land entails market dependencies for tenant farmers and farmers who have borrowed to buy land. These are overwhelmingly located in Cornwall, against the dominance of inherited land and *comodato d'uso* in Calabria. These latter forms of land access offer a stronger basis for reproducing the farm outside commodity relations. However, farms are able and/or inclined to do so to different degrees. The

possibility of biotechnical autonomy and input reduction is constrained by (perceptions of) ecology and specialisation in farm production. These are again more limiting in Cornwall, where farms are more specialised and less inclined to cereal production. At the same time, while labour remains a constraint in both regions (and farmers depend on small-scale machinery as a result), Calabria again has the advantage of stronger family networks between farmers for mobilising both labour and material resources. Non-family farms are also potentially able to mobilise more labour, but this may not be easily coordinated, particularly in intentional communities.

While 'nobody is independent of commodity circuits', as van der Ploeg states above, farmers experience markets in different ways. For many farms, access to off-farm and non-farm sources of income (which appears to be better in Cornwall), entails a degree of freedom from the imperative to produce for markets[127]. However, these activities inevitably entail further constraints on the labour available for farm production. More generally, different kinds of markets entail very different pressures. Informal markets of friends and family, which are more common in Calabria and which more counter-hegemonic farms tend to rely on, offer a less heteronomous set of market relations than others. As the vignette above illustrates, these network may not always provide farmers with sufficient returns. Other AFNs can offer improved margins for farmers, with the support of consumers also willing to pay a premium. Such markets are notably stronger in Cornwall, with farmers in Calabria more likely to supply such markets in northern Italy[128]. While these markets create an impression of being 'outside the market', they remain connected in various ways and ultimately subject to competitive dynamics, between alternative farms, and with conventional producers more generally. As a result, only *some* farmers have access to the 'room for manoeuvre' that these market provide. This room for manoeuvre, along with regulatory and funding regimes that constrain more gradual forms of accumulation, suggests that *some* PCPs and part-time farms have relative freedom from the imperative to accumulate. For those unable to find and hold a stable position in the market however, petty commodity production comes to resemble a kind of 'relentless micro-capitalism' (Bernstein, 2010). As one young farmer stated:

[127] It is worth reflecting that much of the Cornish countryside is occupied by people with *neither interest nor imperative* to produce from the land. Bosworth and Willett (2011, p. 210) note that many inward migrants into rural Cornwall are attracted by the 'rural idyll' and "an anticipated holiday lifestyle and the consumption of place."

[128] This finding echoes a comparative study of organic farming in South East England and South West Wales. In South East England, more localised product markets are enabled by a relatively affluent and vibrant rural population while most producers are converts from conventional agriculture attracted to the premiums. In South West Wales, with a heritage of organic farming and well organized formal and informal networks and cooperation, produce tends to join more national supply chains. To an extent, South East England organic farmers – "tend to retain their independence and competitive behaviour", in contrast to more cooperative behaviour in South West Wales (Ilbery et al., 2016, p. 122).

> “I've tried a lot of different things to try and make money on the farm, and most of it has exhausted me, and turned out not to be worth it for the money.” *Andrew, part-time farm, Cornwall, 24 April 2019*

As the vignettes above illustrate, farmers may make different use of the opportunities they face. Small capitalists with sub-hegemonic ideologies may pursue, and through competitive pressures be compelled to, more rapid capital accumulation. Alter-hegemonic farmers – under the right set of conditions, such as often prevails in Calabria, may pursue market production as *opportunity*, but run the risk of becoming over specialised and facing a stronger set of market imperatives. However, for both of these groups of farmers the *desire* to produce for the market is largely compatible with the generalised imperative to do so. Instead, for counter-hegemonic farmers (who remain the minority), the imperative to produce for the market is *felt* as one, and the constraints on building more collaborative forms of farming are significant. However, as the above discussion indicates, these farmers are able to sustain their ideology and partially translate it into practice, insofar as they have less commodified access to land and networks of like-minded farmers. Here the possibilities are clearly greater in Calabria, but some farmers in Cornwall also have similar opportunities (see section 7.4). These relatively counter-hegemonic strategies may be interpreted as moving more explicitly towards peasantness – and so relocating farming further “outside domains that are directly controlled by capital” (van der Ploeg, 2020, p. 20).

Nonetheless, *labour-driven intensification* is also blocked through the depopulation of rural communities, the small sizes of rural households, and the dependence on off-farm income and multifunctionality. This leaves alter- and counter-hegemonic farms averse to heavy investments in capital, and highly dependent on small-scale capital and tools. Agroecology itself, despite pushing for a wide capacity for self-provisioning, tends to emphasise the production of food and underemphasise the extent to which these tools matter. These give rise to questions about whether and how farming in Europe can become more labour-intensive *and* to how an ‘autonomous’ agrarian sector of PCPs can relate to manufacturing and non-agrarian producers. I return to these questions in Chapter 9.

Because biotechnical autonomy and non-commodity relations do not fully extricate farms from market relations, commodity logics are internalised in the farm, even for counter-hegemonic farms. All farming activities – whether directly commodified or not – are subject to a responsiveness to market prices and considerations. While the previous chapter argued that this was so *ideologically,* I have argued here that it is also true *materially* and *practically*. Within this context, the ‘struggle for autonomy’ (van der Ploeg, 2008) constitutes a continuous re-balancing of practices and relations

that account for the constraints on land, labour and capital that are mediated by markets. While farmers have different forms and degrees of ‘room for manoeuvre’, they also choose to use it in different ways.

7 Reproducing and Transforming Food Systems

The previous chapter explored how farmers reproduce *themselves* while facing market imperatives. This chapter turns to asking how they reproduce and/or transform their structural conditions, and the third aspect of autonomy as *conscious control*. As I discussed in Chapter 2, all social activity, by its nature, consists of a ‘double function’: the doing itself, and the re-making of the conditions of doing (Bhaskar, 1998b, p. 218). This double function is itself two-fold. There is a re-making of the physical conditions of doing (e.g. tools, ecologies), and a re-making of the social conditions (e.g. class relations). If agroecology aspires to *reproduce the physical conditions of production*, it also aspires to *transform its social conditions*. As McMichael (2009b, p. 308) argues, “the transformation of rural subjectivity is not confined to defending property or territory, but includes re-envisioning the conditions necessary to develop sustainable and democratic forms of social reproduction”. Van der Ploeg (2020, p. 2) argues that an agroecological transformation of the social relations of production is already underway in Europe. For Holt-Giménez and Shattuck (2011), such a transformation depends on ‘durable alliances’ between radical and progressive food movements.

I set out in Chapter 4 how Cornwall and Calabria, while benefiting from the core position of Europe on a global scale, remain peripheral within Europe. This peripheralisation is manifest as particular forms and degrees of social and sectorial disarticulation. These forms of disarticulation underpin and are promoted by on-going surplus transfers into core regions, a dominant and specialised agricultural sector, rural depopulation and farm differentiation. While there are key differences between the two regions (especially in terms of competition for land and the strength of the tourism economy), farmers in both regions remain integrated into capitalism in large part as *consumers.* In Chapter 2, I also quoted Tilzey’s observation that realising agroecology and food sovereignty in the global North requires additional work to ‘de-reify’ the ‘imperial mode of living, avoid co-optation into consumerism, avoid nationalism and “perhaps most important, to address the immense structural constraints presented by deeply entrenched private property rights, the separation of the citizen majority from the means of livelihood, and the commodification of those means of livelihood (notably land) such that they are unavailable other than to a wealthy few” (Tilzey, 2019b, p. 211).

Whether such a transformation is occurring in Cornwall and Calabria is one thing, but I am specifically looking here at whether and how such a transformation could be driven by the *conscious* intentions of farmers. As I discussed in Chapter 2, what matters for autonomy is how the agent-structure relation comes to be one where “people self-consciously transform the social conditions of existence (the social structure) so as to maximize the possibilities for the development and spontaneous exercise of their natural (species) powers” (Bhaskar, 1998b, p. 217). I am not

suggesting that farmers in Cornwall and Calabria might have attained this radical notion of emancipation, nor am I making a strong claim that farming and food systems in Cornwall or Calabria are undergoing substantial transformation. However, I am interested in how farmers might be consciously attempting to shape the structural conditions they face. I am also interested in how their specific structural conditions limit the possibilities of conscious control. The possibility of conscious control is intimately connected to the forms of self-determination and freedom that I discussed in the previous two chapters. It depends on people maintaining a set of desires and values that are formed through critical reflection on structural relations, and having 'room for manoeuvre' to exist within and exercise influence over those relations.

I argue here that conscious control over structural conditions is the weakest aspect of farmers' autonomy in Cornwall and Calabria. Attempts to exercise conscious control remain tentative and scattered. Farmers are engaged in attempts to change structural conditions via the state and institutionalisation ('scaling-up') and by directly seeking to influence and modify their relations with others ('scaling-out') (Rosset & Altieri, 2017, p. 98). While these efforts are not uncommon, they often take second place to the day-to-day matter of farm reproduction, and current institutional structures do not permit farmers to exercise much influence. Different ideological framings entail different means and ends of attaining conscious control. I argue that the dominance of alter-hegemonic positions and the limits imposed by markets and market competition (identified in Chapter 6) constrain the possibilities of new forms of social and sectoral articulation. While 'alter-hegemonic' farms constitute a sizeable minority in Europe, I argue that these farmers *cannot* become the majority unless they are able to overcome the price disadvantage relative to major supermarkets, and find ways to generate local sectoral articulation. Advancing this trajectory of autonomy depends on collectively competing against and capturing market share from conventional food systems – a prospect which, while seemingly unfeasible, would also tend anyway towards a reproduction of capitalist dynamics. Meanwhile the counter-hegemonic group is much more of a minority. It offers a more radical degree of difference and potential for transformation, but it faces the greater challenge of being ideologically incompatible with current hegemonic discourse and institutions.

7.1 Reproduction, transformation and conscious control

> "Here consciousness and will, language and machine are called on to sustain the collective making of history. The demonstration of this becoming cannot consist in anything but the experience and experimentation of the multitude. Therefore the power of the dialectic, which imagines the collective formed through mediation rather than through constitution, has been

> definitively dissolved. The making of history is in this sense the construction of the life of the multitude." (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 405)

The possibility of exercising conscious control is connected with two interlinked debates of political ecology and economy. This first concerns whether capitalism can/will be brought to an end by agency (as *collective, conscious* and *democratic* processes) or as a result of inherent structural contradictions that unfold in a mechanical way (Burawoy, 2020; J. Holloway, 2002; E. O. Wright, 2010). The second concerns whether society can *voluntarily* give up growth and accumulation, or whether such a shift depends on us first running out of the resources that underpin these dynamics (especially fossil fuels) (Kallis, 2018; Moore, 2017). As I argued in Chapter 2, conscious control cannot be based on appeals to a universal and transcendental rationality. Likewise, conscious control cannot be understood as peasants versus the 'hyperstructure' of capitalism. The possibilities of conscious control depend on how farmers interact with other agents, who also play a role in the reproduction and transformation of food systems. Conscious control is understood as the unfolding of awareness among agents and intentional engagement with democratic mechanisms. This entails at least some degree of pluralism, or "*local* solutions to global problems. Blueprints are avoided" (van der Ploeg, 2008, p. 271) [129].

Any discussion of conscious control must address the role of the state in (emancipatory) social transformation, as well as other possible channels of democratic control. Both Tilzey and van der Ploeg are cautious of the state, but Tilzey (original emphasis 2018, p. 239) retains a view that counter-hegemonic transformation depends on of "the state/nation as the *key* focus of, and medium for, emancipation." He argues for a 'dual power' strategy which constructs 'material autonomy' from the state, while transforming the state itself and dispersing its powers downwards (2018, p. 317).

For van der Ploeg (2008, p. 218), in many cases the state "typically relates to the peasantry as an expression of *Empire."* State-peasant relations are 'disarticulated' and plagued by 'mutual distrust' (2008, p. 182). As such, van der Ploeg emphasises various kinds of peasant 'resistance'. This encompasses 'overt struggles' ('peasant wars') and everyday defiance ('weapons of the weak'), but also the "wide range of heterogeneous and increasingly interlinked *practices* through which the peasantry constitutes itself as *distinctively different*" (2008, p. 265 original emphasis). In this way,

---

[129] This is not to say that local solutions and pluralistic visions need be disconnected, although it seems likely that some degree of local difference must be maintained. "Any proposition of a particular community in isolation, defined in racial, religious, or regional terms, 'delinked' from Empire, shielded from its powers by fixed boundaries, is destined to end up as a kind of ghetto. Empire cannot be resisted by a project aimed at a limited, local autonomy"(Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 206).

repeasantisation involves the creation of 'actually existing utopias' (van der Ploeg, 2008, p. 271 citing Burawoy). These function "as a symbolic critique of, as well as an alternative to, the type of market-governed conversions that are central to Empire. Indeed, they may be viewed as acts of *insubordination* to Empire" (2008, p. 270). Farmers are also engaged in 'self-regulation' and 'self-organisation' at more collective levels, including through embedded markets and cooperation between farmers which may help to 're-articulate' state-peasant relations (van der Ploeg, 2008, p. 279, 2020). For van der Ploeg then, the mere survival of alternative farms is enough to constitute a form of resistance. However, the possibility of this difference leading to the transformation of food systems depends not only on *reproducing* alternative farms and food networks, but on expanding their dominance.

7.2 Scaling-out: real utopias?

This returns us to the question of *what kind of difference* farmers are maintaining. By virtue of my sampling 'alternative farmers', all of the farmers in my sample certainly see themselves as different from conventional forms of farming. In Chapter 5 I argued that maintaining a sense of difference was an important element in farmers' self-determination, but that this difference ranged ideologically from sub-hegemonic to counter-hegemonic. In Chapter 6, I showed how some farmers are able to sustain this difference in material terms, but particularly for the alter-hegemonic fraction this depends partly on competing (or often avoiding competition) with others. The quote from Giuseppe in section 5.3.1 also illustrates how *difference* is context specific, and how *impresa* can still be regarded as a point of difference in the context of Calabria.

Different ideological framings shape whether the prevailing structure is seen as enabling or constraining, and in turn whether 'conscious control' would aspire for reproduction or transformation in that structure. As I referred to at the end of Chapter 2, a 'self-reproducing social configuration' is one where the 'strategic selectivity' of the social structure privileges the kinds of agents and agency that lead to the reproduction of that structure (Jessop, 2005). In this sense, farmers with an alter-hegemonic ideology, who already have access to land and a degree of 'room for manoeuvre' in markets may not actively seek to *transform* the structural conditions that enable this. Accordingly, many farmers have a sense of being content and 'untouched' by wider political and structural processes:

> "There isn't much on the outside that really does bother or phase me to be honest. I feel quite removed from it. Not in a negative way, I feel very self-contained and content in what in what I'm doing here, and that's enough." *Andrew, part-time farm, Cornwall, 24 April 2019*

These farmers continue to represent important beacons of alterity in relation to conventional farming. As I have discussed in the previous chapters, to varying degrees farmers try to maintain more ecological and local forms of farming and food production. This is true in both regions, but is made more clearly visible by the discourse of *agricoltura contadina* in Calabria, as discussed in Chapter 5. Farmers are, unsurprisingly, busy with the day-to-day practicalities of farming in ways that may constrain their political participation (Calvário, 2017; J. Ribot, 2014; Wilbur, 2013). However, many farmers, including those with alter-hegemonic and counter-hegemonic framings, can see themselves as van der Ploeg (2008) does; as actively engaged in forms of resistance:

> "I always say that to be organic, especially now, is a political idea. A way of thinking that not everyone subscribes to, unfortunately, but could do." *Ugo, PCP, Calabria, 22 January 2020*

One aspect of the politicisation of farming practice is advocating for land, agriculture and rurality as a means of livelihood. Doing so serves to resist on-going dynamics of depopulation, while also potentially serving to influence more conventional farmers. By making alternative values and possibilities viable and visible, these farms may contribute to shifting wider political imaginaries (Goodman et al., 2012). Here, networks among farmers, and between farmers and consumers, were particularly important. Several farmers saw part of their role as influencing others, although farmers could equate being exemplary with being economically viable and profitable:

> "Our work is to make others aware. That's another objective we have. We tell whoever comes here what we are telling you. It's also important to be conscious that one can choose to do or not do things, but we want everyone to be aware. There's another way to live, there's another way to think." *Lodovico, PCP, Calabria, 12 February 2020*

> "We need it to be profitable for ourselves but we also need it to be profitable for anybody else who might want to turn up here to do some work for us and think actually I can make a go of this." *Paul, PCP, Cornwall, 14 May 2019*

In Chapter 5 I discussed how similar processes had shaped and socialised the farmers in my sample. Here, I am concerned with how farmers in turn attempt to *socialise* other agents, as a means of influencing their own structural conditions. As in Chapter 5, networks and associations serve as key tools in these processes. In Cornwall, the Transition Movement had a significant impact on starting and encouraging small farms and community projects. The Extinction Rebellion movement (discussed below), also appears to have potential to further reinforce this process. Other local networks in Cornwall – such as Tamar Grow Local and the Tamar Organics Group – can also contribute to promoting alternative forms of agriculture. Similarly in Calabria, networks like *gruppi di*

acquisto solidale (GAS), *Genuino Clandestino* and *SOS Rosarno*[130] offer channels for shaping and politicising the views of other farmers. Some farmers however saw these networks as having little overall influence:

> "You have to see whether these networks really exist and have an influence on the territory or not. In my opinion the networks here have very little influence." *Stavroula, PCP, Calabria, 25 November 2019*

A related issue is whether current farms are able to socialise younger generations in ways that might sustain alternative farming in the long run. Inter-generational succession represents a serious problem for traditional and small farms, and for agriculture in Europe more generally. It will be 'increasingly decisive' for the future of peasant farming (van der Ploeg, 2013, p. 9). Many farms in my sample, including back-to-the-land farmers, while making land-based livelihoods more visible, are not necessarily able to reproduce themselves as *family* farms. Of the older farmers, few had children who were active and/or interested in taking over the family farm. Some had even discouraged their children from farming (as previous generations have done, mentioned in Chapter 5). In one noteworthy case, farmers who had invested heavily in establishing forest on their land were unwilling to pass their land on as a farm, planning instead to leave it to a trust for preserving the woodland:

> "At the moment we're looking at the Wildlife Trust, but we need to talk to them because we are small. But, our families are not well off, we've got nephews and nieces. But I know for a fact they'll come in here and cut it all down, so sod it." *Laura, PCP, Cornwall, 25 June 2019*

The risk is that, even if farms are able to sustain themselves as distinctively different in their lifetimes, they may subsequently be lost back into processes of differentiation or 'deactivation' (van der Ploeg, 2008). Here, community farms and intentional communities may offer a more resilient model, which not only lowers the barriers for accessing land, but also survives the coming and going of individual members:

> "Because the land is there held in trust, the workers co-op goes up and down, it has poorer years and better years, but it's very hard for it to actually go under, because its needs are very low." *Karl, intentional community member, Cornwall, 23 April 2019*

---

[130] SOS Rosarno was a project set up following the uprising of irregular migrant workers in Rosarno on the Plain of Gioia Tauro in 2010. The group aimed to bring together farmers, food traders and migrants to improve the latter's working conditions. However, as recounted to me by one of the farmers involved, the group subsequently broke down over disputes around political representation and the high margins some traders were putting on produce. For more information on *SOS Rosarno*, see Iocco et al. (2019).

Communities and group projects are also in other ways more ‘distinctively different’ than conventional farms, particularly for their internal decision-making dynamics that replicate neither the patriarchal hierarchy of the family farm, nor of the capitalist-labour relation. Partly on this basis, community farms and intentional communities in particular are spoken about as ‘commons’ or ‘utopian laboratories’ (Fois, 2018; Maughan & Ferrando, 2018). Cayuela (2021) argues that the survival of such commons depends on their expansion, either by increasing the extent to which material reproduction takes place through commons, or as a persuasive endeavour that aims to politicise others and encourages the formation of new commons. *Farming* communities in particular appear to be a strong basis for the former strategy, but both intentional communities remain dependent on off-farm labour and community and group farms remain primarily market-oriented. While these communities were not actively attempting to multiply themselves and politicise others (although they did have some links to networks which were working in this space[131]), there was a perceived need for more such communities:

> “I'm living here as well because I believe in these types of things, and it can be a little bit anarchist here as well. I believe in this type of community, they decide, they organise themselves, you know, so we need more of these.” *Peter, intentional community member, 10 May 2019*

In one interesting case of scaling-out, an intentional community in Cornwall had stimulated several new small farming enterprises. The community provided its members with land, housing, skills and a vegetable box scheme for marketing produce locally. Several members who had actively participated in farm production in the community subsequently left and set up their own farms nearby. This had been facilitated by access to a specialist wholesaler, supplying organic food to premium markets in London. Instead of replicating the alterity of the community structure, they had gone on to become small capitalists – including providing a major source of employment for remaining and new community members. In a way, although expanding a certain kind of alternative farming, this process failed to duplicate the commons model. It seems difficult to label the resulting network as a kind of ‘commons ecology’ (Cayuela, 2021), even though it was stimulated by a commons structure initially. While the intentional community was valued for what it offered, its limitations were also a driver for members to move on to more individualistic ventures:

[131] One intentional community in Cornwall was started with the support of ‘Radical Routes’, a network of housing cooperatives that, among other things, provides loans. However, as one community member noted, as membership in the community changed, the desire to remain connected to this network had waned.

> "I think the co-operative structure kind of hinders [the intentional community] slightly in that they aren't free to do whatever they want… If that was somebody's private farm that would be looked after much better I think. So I think there's a real negative to nobody having ownership over it, in a weird way, but there's also a positive in access to land, which is massive you know, that's really hard to get isn't it, especially for someone who's not from a farming background… I think [the community] should be kind of like a nursery for people to come and grow and then they learn, they learn how to grow or they experiment and then they move onto something else. I think its strength is in it how transient it is." *Samir, small capitalist and former intentional community member, Cornwall, 10 May 2019*

The possibilities of scaling-out alternative farming on a wider-scale remains constrained by access to land. There appear to be more opportunities for new entrants in Calabria, either through inheritance or abandoned land and *comodato d'uso*. However, as I discussed in the previous chapter, these forms of access only remain possible under prevailing economic conditions. These conditions are an important limit on any significant increase in the numbers of alternative farms. In Cornwall however, land constraints represent a greater barrier to the emergence of new forms of farming. Attempting to address this problem, the Tamar Grow Local network runs a 'farm start' scheme with affordable small-scale tenancies for market gardening, offering advice and an established market outlet[132]. Two household farms, one in Cornwall and one in Calabria, were also expanding their land holdings with a view to creating new opportunities for others (see also 7.4 below). One older farmer noted:

> "I'm taking this land on a personal level for a technical reason. Then I'll give it to the young people, because I don't have children. I'll leave it to young people who intend to be *contadini.*" *Ugo, PCP, Calabria, 22 January 2020*

Any expansion in the numbers of these alternative farms must confront the multiple ways that farmers continue to depend on wider capitalist networks. This includes reliance on non-farming sources of income[133], the existence of a large consumer class as a market (including tourists, urban centres and non-local markets), access to manufactured tools (including tractors, alternative energy systems), contractors, and reproductive inputs (e.g. manure, animal feed, compost). As (or rather if) these alternative farms are to increasingly displace conventional systems of farming, these dependencies themselves must be replaced or reworked. This raises questions about how a 'small farm future' might work on a larger scale (Smaje, 2020), particularly if farms are to remain market

[132] For details see https://tamargrowlocal.org/farm-start/.
[133] It is worth noting that the widespread reliance on income from agritourism contributes to the on-going transformation of rural peripheries as leisure spaces for urban/core residents, as discussed in Chapter 4.

dependent. It also raises questions about how *social* and *sectoral articulation* might re-emerge. I briefly address some of these issues in the Conclusion.

Ultimately, while these tentative attempts to 'scale-out' alternative forms of farming may constitute a form of 'insubordination' relative to 'Empire', they remain marginal and unable to give rise to a form of *conscious control* per se. The possibility of these forms of alternative farming giving rise to a social transformation depends on a complex array of factors, including notably for Holloway (2002) the extent to which they disrupt capital's normal mechanisms of accumulation[134]. However, there is some suggestion that these farms, by 'bypassing' conventional networks of surplus (as well as mafia networks in Calabria), may be able to channel more resources into local communities. For some farmers, the possibility of expanding the numbers of farmers engaged in direct selling could lead to radical social transformation:

> "Even if there are few of us, we can do something. Because those of us who use these techniques and have this political idea are a minority in Italy. If everyone practised this kind of agriculture and marketing, I think the system that we're in now would collapse." *Ugo, PCP, Calabria, 22 January 2020*

On the other hand, these farming practices may reproduce the 'functional dualism' of the peasantry, as both barrier to and means of capitalism (Holt-Giménez & Altieri, 2013). Acts of insubordination may challenge capitalism, but they may also feed it in unexpected ways[135]. The conventionalisation of organic agriculture for example shows how an oppositional alternative can be taken up and transformed into a mechanism of capitalist accumulation (Corrado, 2018). How these current 'real utopias' evolve then depends on both sustaining forms of production and consumption which are both qualitatively different enough from capitalism, and quantitatively significant enough to disrupt conventional forms. At present, I suggest that alter-hegemonic farms fail on the first condition, while both they and counter-hegemonic farms fail on the second. Certainly for some farmers, the limited impact of their actions is apparent:

> "I think back to all the past fourteen years here on the farm. We have done lots on the farm itself, undertaken various ways of farming and living here. We have had lots of open days, we must have had at least a thousand people visiting us here, giving talks, right here in this house, in this room, and then going around the farm and giving people information. So hopefully

[134] Here the multiple destinations and mechanisms of accumulation of European core capital (see footnote 43, Chapter 4) would limit the transformative potential of *local* disruptions. As a result, the possibility of significant disruption would likely depend on simultaneous large-scale shifts in multiple geographies.
[135] Indeed for Holloway (2002, p. 161) and other autonomist Marxists it is the insubordination and ongoing re-composition of labour as a political force that is *the* driving force of capitalism .

some of them have adopted some of these ideas for themselves. And then the Transition Movement and so on, but really looking back at it, have we actually achieved anything? And the answer is almost nothing." *Chris, PCP, Cornwall, 9 May 2019*

7.3 Scaling-up: transformation via the state and institutions

7.3.1 State-oriented transformation

Echoing Calvário's (2017) findings in the Basque country, few of the alternative farmers in Cornwall and Calabria were politically active in a more organised sense. Few saw the state as an effective means for transforming food systems, and even fewer had access to the state or were actively attempting to influence it directly or indirectly. Only two farms in Calabria were trying to affect government institutions, but more farmers in Cornwall were active in this regard. Two small capitalists were part of a group advising Cornwall Council and other agencies on agricultural issues. These farmers were small compared to other members of the group, which suggests that influence is skewed towards larger capitalist farms. However, one PCP was a former councillor on Cornwall Council, while another had run in elections. Another PCP and one part-time farm were councillors in their local parishes, and another participated in a parish planning sub-committee[136]. Several others were engaged in attempting to influence parish council actions (see below). Access to the state in these ways offered some, but limited influence. Those with links to Cornwall Council could influence regional agricultural and environmental policy. Parish councils however were perceived as lacking significant control over local farming and food systems:

> "I don't think they're in control of anything. It's hard to equate what goes on here in terms of the entire landscape use with anybody actually. I think they're sat on the back of this very quick, very angry creature and they just don't let go or try and stop it because of what it might do to them if they do." *Paul, PCP, Cornwall, 14 May 2020*

A larger number of farmers, in both Cornwall and Calabria were participating in networks and associations that were involved in politics both locally and nationally. Farmers' participation in most of these associations was not primarily for political reasons, but reflects the dual function of organisations in providing services to farmers while also lobbying the government. Local marketing associations, such as GAS or physical markets, could have a limited degree of interaction and influence with local councils. However, the most significant organisations here are relatively conventional ones (such as the National Farmers' Union in Cornwall and Coldiretti in Calabria), through which farmers might receive insurance and support accessing subsidies. Similarly, while

[136] Parish and town councils are England's lowest level of government. In the case of very small parishes, 'meetings', which are open to all residents, are held in place of a formal council.

most organic farmers were certified out of principle or for marketing purposes, some farmers in Cornwall also valued the certifying bodies for their political influence:

> "I've been a bit disappointed with organisations like the [National Farmers' Union] because they don't hold the same principles as we do. They really are speaking the language of the big estate owning farmers… I want to stay in the Soil Association. They're expensive and you have to go through all that paper work and that inspection, but I totally respect the fact that they do so much lobbying on behalf of agriculture as a whole." *Amy, small capitalist, Cornwall, 25 April 2019*

Only a small number of farmers were involved in more explicitly political networks, such as *Genuino Clandestino*, which campaigns for legal recognition for more traditional and small-scale food processing. A few farmers in both regions were members of networks affiliated to *La Via Campesina*, including the Landworkers Alliance in England and the *Associazione Rurale Italiana*. As I hinted in the previous chapter, many of these networks represented relatively alter-hegemonic positions, concerned with improving state recognition of the market participation of smaller farms. Through the latter network, one farmer in particular was deeply involved in political campaigning around *agricoltura contadina*, at both the national and European levels:

> "We think that we have to expand across the whole territory, not only nationally, but above all in Europe, and look to obtain a law that protects *contadini,* because at the moment there's no such law." *Ugo, PCP, Calabria, 22 January 2020*

At the time of my fieldwork in Cornwall, the Extinction Rebellion movement was also having an influence on farmers and their politics. On seven farms, people mentioned an interest or their active participation in the movement. While the movement may lead to a horizontal scaling out not unlike the Transition Movement (as mentioned above), it also clearly generated more state-oriented political activity. Two farmers had been involved in getting parish councils to declare a 'climate emergency', while members of one intentional community had gone to London to join in protests. Two farmers also reported an increase in sales which they attributed to the movement. The interest in the movement was in large part linked to its promise of influencing the government:

> "The only way to actually achieve something on a sort of major scale is to go through governments, and this is why I'm excited about Extinction Rebellion. They are actually going after the government, and possibly after some of the largest companies, but mainly after the government because governments have the power to set laws and once laws are set then

those both corporations and individuals by and large, will obey those laws, and therefore suddenly everybody will do the right thing.” *Chris, PCP, Cornwall, 9 May 2019*

7.3.1.1 Limits of the state

For the majority of farmers however, the ‘mutual distrust’ that van der Ploeg (2008, p. 182) identifies as a structural feature of state-peasant relations appears to dominate. In contrast to those engaged with the state above, these farmers saw the state as captured by hegemonic interests, ineffective, and/or unable to comprehend alternative ways of farming. These views were present in both regions, but more pronounced in Calabria. This distrust appears to be a major factor in limiting the state-oriented politicisation of farmers[137]:

> “Politics just seems to be mental and if anything it's just driving me further into self-sufficiency so I can live in my own bubble basically, and not have to deal with the mentalness that goes on outside our parameter.” *Harriet, PCP, Cornwall, 13 May 2019*

Several farmers commented how they saw state regulation as ‘captured’ by agri-business and large-scale interests. The advisory group to Cornwall Council mentioned above exemplifies this. Even local politics could be beset by uneven access to the state, and farmers in both Calabria and Cornwall cited examples of relatively powerful local actors using state bodies to advance their own agendas and restrict others[138]. The idea of state capture by agri-business is also linked to a perception that most regulations are designed for larger-scale farms, and place unsuitable constraints and burdens on smaller farms:

> “All the legislation that comes through is big boys lobbying, right, it's just like Europe. There’s more lobbyists in Europe than there are MEPs, and it's the same in this country, probably worse in this country. And basically, the legislation that comes from that is all for the big boys.” *Mark, PCP, Cornwall, 2 April 2019*

A related issue was a view that the state, and especially regional institutions, were unable and unwilling to comprehend, let alone support, non-conventional forms of farming. This represents, on the one hand, the dominance of conventional ideologies in national and regional state bodies. On

[137] In one community farm, the grower suggested that there should be a division of labour within the project between state-oriented politics and agriculture itself: “I don't want to dabble in local politics at all. I want to keep my head down, personally keep my head down and just keep plugging away and, and not make enemies and make a go of it. I think the board of directors should be doing more of that kind of thing, rather than us here on the ground.” *Philip, community farm grower, Cornwall, 29 June 2019*

[138] In Cornwall for example the planning system may be exploited by those with more influence and the resources to take planning decisions through courts. In Calabria, one farmer had been blocked from grazing on public lands despite winning a contract to do so. They attributed this to a dominant local family exercising influence over the local authorities.

the other, it indicates that not all farmers are integrated into the 'true hegemony' that Tilzey (2018) identifies in the global North (see section 2.1.2). The 'authoritative' and 'allocative' tools of state legitimacy do not integrate all farmers equally:

> "I have a big problem communicating with the institutions. It's one of my biggest limitations. At the beginning we even asked for regional funding, to contribute to what we'd invested, but everything they saw was unconventional agriculture, [for example] the type of kitchen we wanted. They didn't understand the project, and so they didn't fund us." *Stavroula, PCP, Calabria, 25 November 2019*

Aside from perceptions of the state as ineffective or inaccessible, farmers also saw themselves as lacking time to be engaged, either directly or via networks and associations. This again echoes Calvário's (2017) findings that the everyday realities of farming are a constraint to politicisation and mobilisation. Here the labour constraints on farms that I discussed in the previous chapter play a role. Having multiple people involved in farming, such as in an intentional community, offers an advantage in this regard:

> "Because there's a lot of different people involved, and none of them rely on it for the entirety of their incomes, it's got a lot of resilience if people need to take a bit of time. So, for example, the last couple of weeks there's been half the farm in London banging themselves on bridges and things [for the Extinction Rebellion protests], and the rest of us have been covering it and the businesses hasn't crashed because there's been somebody who can do it." *Karl, intentional community member, Cornwall, 23 April 2019*

7.3.1.2 Political devolution

The multi-layered nature of sovereignty in Europe also shapes the perceptions and possibilities of exerting influence through the state. The movement for greater Cornish political autonomy, which I discussed in Chapter 4, had only a few strong supporters among the farmers I interviewed (views on Cornish autonomy were mixed among both ethnically Cornish and incomers). More often, farmers spoke of the value of 'Cornwall' as a brand which enhanced the value of their products[139]. In Calabria, the absence of a single regional identity and internal tensions between the three provinces (Cosenza, Catanzaro and Reggio) hinder any strong calls for further devolution (Ambrosi, 2014). The need to localise and democratise food systems however makes the 're-scaling' of sovereignty (Iles & Montenegro de Wit, 2015) a key issue. In both regions, neoliberal forms of devolution entail that local authorities are retreating from the provision of public goods, while often demanding higher

[139] A wide range of so-called 'Cornish' products have emerged as a result of this brand value, including teas, coffees, and olives, which have a very marginal aspect of production or processing carried out within Cornwall.

taxes from constituents. Both of these processes were mentioned by farmers in each region. In Cornwall, as in other parts of England, the regional council had been selling off county farms (Shrubsole, 2019). In one example, the council's drive to sell a farm hindered and almost led to the demise of the community farming project on it[140]:

> "What they wanted to do was sell it. And we didn't have the money to buy it. So I think they probably just thought it was better to keep us here as a kind of a caretaker while they found a buyer, and they obviously didn't manage it. And then at the end of the six months, we had a one month rolling lease, and at some point, we were like 'Shall we plant these plants, what's the point?'" *Philip, community farm grower, Cornwall, 29 June 2019*

This represents a process of privatisation and a loss of commons, but it also represents an attempt to "'play the game' of private ownership in order to create commons-like spaces" (Maughan & Ferrando, 2018, p. 4). Another example includes a farm in Cornwall who, with grants and loans, purchased additional land, planted it as a woodland and established it as a public charity (see section 7.4 below). In a distinct case in Calabria, another community farm which occupied and rehabilitated an abandoned urban farm were subsequently given the land by the state. However, the project has only survived thanks to the support of volunteers, and the income it derives from selling produce, and providing services to disabled people as a form of *agricoltura sociale.* Despite pressuring the state for assistance, the local authorities have not been willing to contribute:

> "Did they do anything to stop us? No. They did as much as they could to not help us. Do you know how many times we went there to tell them to do something? 25 years!" Paolo, c*ommunity farm coordinator, Calabria, 28 November 2019*

Exacerbated by these neoliberal dynamics, the general mistrust of the state discussed above extends to local authorities. Many farmers saw local authorities as irrelevant for agriculture, and so had little interest in further devolution of powers. While some farmers recognised the need and potential for local decision-making, others were sceptical that the right decisions would be made at a local level:

> "If you decentralize but then you're making un-environmental decisions or detrimental policies then it's not great, but I think ultimately things need to be solved locally... and worked on locally." *Mary, part-time farm, Cornwall, 10 May 2019*

Finally, perceptions of the supra-national European Union (EU) relative to national governments differed between Cornwall and Calabria. This reflects the ambiguous relations between the EU and

[140] Fortunately the project was able to access private funds from community members and lottery grants to subsequently buy the land from the council.

its member states discussed in Chapter 4. While farmers varied in their perceptions, in Calabria the EU was more often seen as a source of unreasonable policy impositions. In Cornwall by contrast, the EU could be seen as a moderating influence on the relatively neoliberal UK government. This was particularly the case with Brexit, and the uncertainty surrounding the restructuring of agricultural policy:

> "I wish we were staying in the EU. I think most of their legislation about animal welfare and farming practice is to the benefit particularly of small farmers like myself. I personally don't believe that the British government will advocate strongly for small farms. I think, in fact that the British government is more likely to support extremely large landowners, and I think that will be very much to the detriment of what I feel is an important part of the farming environment." *Sandra, PCP, Cornwall, 18 June 2019*

Overall then, mistrust in relations with the state and day-to-day preoccupations prevent farmers from seeing the state as an avenue for the transformation of food systems[141]. Farmers seem to perceive the state as a fixed or given structure, rather than a 'social relation' (Jessop, 2005) that can be re-worked and re-shaped by social forces. Farmers in Cornwall appear to have greater political access at regional and local levels than their Calabrian counterparts, this is skewed towards small capitalists and farmers who are more compatible with hegemonic discourses. The same is true of networks and associations. The dominant and relatively conventional networks (the NFU and Coldiretti), which for the most part represent hegemonic or sub-hegemonic interests, not only have the largest membership base but also the most political influence (see also Medina & Potter, 2017). Under these conditions, both national and regional policies remain 'bi-polar' (Tilzey, 2018), as a mixture of dominant neoliberalism alongside support for (commodified) public and environmental goods. However, more alter- and counter-hegemonic framings and networks are present, and appear to be gaining some traction with local forms of government, particularly in Cornwall with the Extinction Rebellion movement. It is noteworthy that the greater degree of engagement with local authorities takes place in England, where most aspects of EU policy and funding remains highly centralised. This suggests that the regionalisation process in Italy has not led to the integration of (alternative) farming communities into regional political forums.

7.3.2 Institutionalising embedded markets

In Chapter 5, I explored the role of embedded or nested markets in socialising farmers, and in Chapter 6 as a potential mechanism for insulating farmers from market imperatives. Here, they can

[141] This appears to be a particular barrier for the most local forms of government, with farmers perceiving their powers as derived from higher levels of state rather than from the communities they govern.

also be understood as a Polanyian ‘double movement’, in which ‘society’ comes to exercise conscious control over the market (van der Ploeg et al., 2012). Tilzey critiques this perspective, arguing that markets “defined competitively on the basis of exploitative social relations” cannot be adequately constrained by cooperation in the ‘more-than-economic domain’ (Tilzey, 2017, p. 322). As I argued in Chapter 6, competition itself appears to be a major feature of these embedded markets in both regions.

Despite these constraints, some GAS in Calabria have attempted to create themselves as more radically democratic organisations, in which producers and consumers participate collectively in decision-making. As primarily consumer-driven networks however, the extent to which producers play a role is variable. As D’Amico (2015, p. 58) notes in her study of alternative food networks (AFNs) in Calabria, “most producers limit themselves to producing and delivering the products” rather than participating politically. As such, producers are not necessarily consciously active in the creating and maintaining of networks, even if they do benefit from them. Even where farmers were participating in decision-making, producers themselves could act to maintain an essentially competitive market structure. In the case of one GAS, the group had evolved to run a physical market, which entailed more choice for consumers, but also more competition. Proposals to remedy the situation however where not supported by all the producers:

> “Most of the blame lies with us, the *contadini* who take part in the GAS… If you reserve a box from me, perhaps I don’t put the best products I’ve got, because you’ve already bought it. Whereas if I begin to offer such and such to those who’ve come freely [to the physical market], then it becomes a problem… [Another farmer] made a suggestion that for me was interesting. It was to have a single table with everyone’s products, with some of the *contadini* explaining the farms. But it wasn’t supported, because the majority decided instead that they had to go personally and take their own produce, and sell only their own.”
> *Alessia, PCP, Calabria, 3 February 2020*

GAS have also become institutionalised through the state. The Calabrian government has recognised GAS and similar markets with a specific regional law. This law allows already active GAS to become formally registered, and receive financial support up to €5,000 for expenses (Coscarello, 2014). As Coscarello notes however, relatively few GAS in Calabria had taken this up, perhaps reflecting that few GAS have a need to constitute themselves as a formal association. Finally, as noted in Chapter 4, GAS and *agricoltura sociale* are less common in Calabria than in northern Italy (D’Amico, 2015; Musolino et al., 2020). Several farmers commented on the lack of a *consumo critico*, or critical

consumption, culture in the region. As a result, promoting a culture of critical consumption forms a central function of GAS in Calabria (D'Amico, 2015).

Ultimately, efforts to 'embed' markets, to institutionalise them and subordinate them to democratic forces must contend with the problem of competition. The possibility of a wider transformation of food systems, following the path of alter-hegemonic market dependent farms, is constrained, as I discussed above, by the available market. While embedded markets in both regions already face competitive pressures and exclusionary dynamics, these could in theory be relieved if AFNs are able to win more market share from conventional channels. This is likely to entail a combination of institutionalisation, with support from local, regional and national governments (scaling-up) as well as growth in the number of consumers willing and able to avoid supermarkets. It is also likely to depend on class and cross-class alliances (Holt-Giménez & Shattuck, 2011), especially among alter-hegemonic farmers (to limit competition between them) and with consumer-classes. There is also a need to be careful that these 'alternatives' do not come to compete with or discourage wider practices of self-sufficiency, which is a particular risk in Calabria[142]. However, as many farmers indicated, the possibility of competing with supermarkets on price remains a remote possibility:

> "The [Community Supported Agriculture] membership has taken on the fact that they want their food grown locally and properly and ecologically, whereas a lot of people, I guess, just couldn't care less. They're happy with their mass produced and processed food, and [some people] haven't got the money. It's going to be more expensive to do it the right way. I mean, we can try to keep the cost down with volunteers, but if you look at it dispassionately, I suppose it's very easy to go to the supermarket and buy vegetables which are on the face of it very much cheaper. Not as good obviously, but very much cheaper." *Ben, community farm grower, Cornwall, 20 June 2019*

7.4 A counter-hegemonic path to transformation?

The above discussion has explored how farmers are in some ways able to and attempting to increase the number of alternative farms, to use farming as a political tool, and to use the state as a means to challenge structural conditions. The vignettes in the previous chapter outlined how farmers with sub-, alter- and counter-hegemonic ideologies navigate their contexts differently. In this chapter, I have also shown how sub-hegemonic farmers tend to have better access to the state, while alter- and counter-hegemonic farmers maintain (to some degree) a more political view of their activities. A

[142] As the example from the GAS representative in 6.3.3 indicates, consumers in AFNs are also potential farmers.

final vignette, of a counter-hegemonic family farm in Cornwall further illustrates how this can unfold.

A counter-hegemonic struggle for conscious control

Norman and Kelly have an 11 hectare mixed farm. They originally wanted an intentional community, but disagreements, planning constraints, and illness soon left only the two of them to run the farm. The land was bought with a family loan, without strong pressures for repayment. Farm production is mainly for self-consumption, although they still buy staples from nearby farmers and a food co-operative. When there is surplus produce it is sold through a community project in the local village. Their main income source is from a very specific form of non-agricultural land use[143], but this is gradually giving way to income from a woodland coppice they established. Having also recently received some inheritance, they see themselves as financially secure. Although they continue to rely on a range of inputs, they aspire to reduce these and get most of what they need from people within the local community. They are also trying to use reciprocal exchanges in the local area more. They retain a 'counter-hegemonic' world view, which at least partly views the state as a way to change things:

> "We are in a system that still relies almost completely on capitalism and commercialism. Those two things, and the knock on effects have, put us in the position that we're in now, planetarily and environmentally. Not the only way, but one of the main ways that we are going to ever change is through the way that we're governed, and policies that actually make some of the things that are currently happening not happen." *Norman*

While Norman is less active politically, Kelly has become active with a group linked to Extinction Rebellion. The group has helped to persuade Cornwall Council and various parish councils to declare a 'climate emergency'. By working with the council and other local people, she hopes to have an influence on how people in the area live. Kelly sees Extinction Rebellion as opening up new ways of communicating with the local community, and a chance to shape institutions who are unsure how to put 'climate emergency' declarations into practice: "the powers that be are starting to listen to people from outside the system, because they've realised the system hasn't got the answers, and is stumbling because it only understands everything based on economic growth." Despite her work with local authorities, she still sees a need to keep pressure on the central government:

[143] Which I cannot reveal without effectively identifying the farm.

> "We still need to be doing an awful lot of work on influencing decision-making in central government. That's paramount because if central government can start telling the truth about what's going on, that would make the job so much easier for being able to influence other things further down." *Kelly*

The farm has some links with the local community, although Norman says that "the village here is quite indifferent to us. [We're] sort of far enough out that they're not that bothered. There's a few people that know us." Home educating their children, for example, has meant less networking through schools, although Kelly emphasises that it has created another kind of network, calling it "community education rather than home education. It's recognising that there's a wealth of knowledge and experience and interesting stuff going on outside the family unit." Extinction Rebellion has also created new opportunities in community involvement, with Kelly giving talks at the local school on climate change. Another contribution to the local community has been, with grants and volunteer support, to purchase and reforest a neighbouring 3 hectares. They have set up a charity, and given the land to it, to manage it as a community woodland. They have also opened up much of their own land to public access.

Norman and Kelly do much of the work on the farm themselves, generally not relying on contractors as others do. They slaughter their own livestock – one of only two farms in my sample in Cornwall to do so. Having previously done WWOOFing, they now have a long-term resident and three 'interns'. The interns stay on the farm for nine months, contributing their labour in return for food, accommodation and training in a wide range of land management skills. Increasingly, the interns are also contributing to other nearby farms and community projects in return for learning specific skills. Having these interns has allowed the farm to overcome its labour constraints:

> "Having more people here enables us to do the project as we intended it to be… The whole permaculture thing of trying to feed everything back into itself and closing all the loops, you can only do that if you've got that energy and the help behind it, because it's intensive. It's hard work." *Norman*

Finally, through their interest in building up networks with the local community, they want to encourage other similar projects. To this end, they are considering purchasing some nearby land:

> "There are not enough people presently doing what needs to be done to support people locally, which is why we're looking at potentially buying the place next door, so that somebody over there can be doing something that can be related to here and we can all support each other in in providing what we need." *Kelly*

7.5 Conclusions

In Chapter 2, I quoted Bhaskar's (1998b, pp. 215–216) suggestion that structural transformations are not normally brought about by agents' desires for those transformations, though it is "a very important theoretical and political limit" that they *may* be. It seems here that, despite farmers maintaining a wide range of critical views on structural conditions, relatively few farmers are actively organised in projects to shape these in meaningful ways. While most of the alternative farms here are distinctively different (albeit to different degrees), it is not clear whether efforts to demonstrate and persuade others are, or can, lead to serious changes in contemporary food system structures. Perversely, but not unexpectedly, those with the least need to transform prevailing structural conditions (sub-hegemonic small capitalists) have the greatest influence over state institutions, either directly through advisory groups or indirectly through farming organisations. Nonetheless, there are hints at new opportunities to influence state institutions and other farmers, particularly via new and more radical networks and organisations. In particular, the space created by Extinction Rebellion has allowed farmers in Cornwall, including those with more counter-hegemonic dispositions, to open up new forms of dialogue with local state institutions.

In terms of the structure-agency relation, it is tempting to suggest that there is a broad condition of 'structured coherence'. The prevailing structural conditions of capitalism reward forms of agency that reproduce those very structural conditions. However, the presence of more counter-hegemonic attitudes towards food and farming indicates some degree of 'patterned incoherence', in which the desires and practices of these farmers actively push against the prevailing set of social structures. While these farmers face more immediate barriers to the realisation of their preferred forms of farming, they also have a stronger inclination to see changes brought about in the overall social structure. Nonetheless, the possibility of exercising 'conscious control' remains constrained by insufficient access to state mechanisms and a lack of strong collective networks and movements.

While farmers may attain a degree of 'room for manoeuvre' within markets, it is not clear that conscious control over them is possible. Again, this conforms to Tilzey's (2017) arguments that a Polanyian double movement that seeks to 're-embed' the market in society fails to account for markets' internal competitive dynamics. One implication is that farmers may inadvertently reproduce key aspects of market dependency and peripheralisation in these regions. This is not to dismiss the conscious efforts made by farmers, such as those discussed in the GAS example above. It is merely to point out that, at best, such attempts are a first step in a long-road towards building a higher level of self-determination, freedom and conscious control.

8 Agroecological autonomy in European peripheries

The previous three chapters explored farmers' autonomy. Chapter 5 set out the forms and characteristics of production in my sample, and how the socialisation and self-determination of farmers gave rise to a dominant 'alter-hegemonic' ideology. There was some evidence of some 'sub-hegemonic' and 'counter-hegemonic' farmers too. Chapter 6 looked at farmers' freedom, and argued that while farmers are all market dependent, different forms and degrees of this shape room for manoeuvre in particular ways. While sub-hegemonic small capitalists pursue rapid accumulation, other farms may evade the imperative to accumulate with access to non-farm incomes and partially monopolistic access to buoyant markets for ecological and ethical produce. Chapter 7 then looked at the prospects of transformations in food systems, and the extent to which farmers had or strove for conscious control over their structural conditions. I argued that a lack of trust in state institutions meant that few aspired to influence or become involved in them, although this was more pronounced in Calabria. While alternative farmers remain important beacons of alterity, markets impose constraints on their scaling-out in these regions.

This chapter turns to discuss the implications of these findings, presenting an overall response to the initial research questions and the main bodies of literature set out in Chapter 2. I begin by considering the nature of farmers' *relational* autonomy in the two regions. I then discuss autonomy as *cyclical* and discuss the potential for alter-hegemonic and counter-hegemonic 'trajectories of autonomy'. As I argued in Chapter 2, autonomy relates to the expression of agency through self-determination, freedom and conscious control. Self-determination consists in the critical reflection of structural socialisation, freedom in the structural enabling and constraining of action, and conscious control in the self-determined, intentional reproduction – or transformation – of structural conditions. The preceding chapters have approached these as three distinct aspects of autonomy – which has offered some analytical and presentational clarity. However, the critical realist approach makes clear that these three aspects of autonomy are tightly integrated and overlapping. Following Chapter 7, I argue that even though the alter-hegemonic trajectory offers some autonomy, it is inherently constrained by its market-orientation. The counter-hegemonic trajectory, by contrast, is far more constrained by present structural conditions, but may indicate (in line with Tilzey's arguments) a more viable alternative in the long-run. Despite their differences, I also suggest that alter-hegemonic and counter-hegemonic trajectories might mutually support each other in the medium term, and so there is a strong basis for cross-class (or rather cross-ideology) alliances.

I then turn to address the second research question, outlining what these trajectories of autonomy entail for 'agroecology' in European peripheries and beyond. There is considerably more 'agroecological' practice in Calabria, where 'traditional', mixed and subsistence-oriented farming is more widespread, underpinned by a strong discourse of *agricoltura contadina* which is increasingly revalued by back-to-the-land migrants. In Cornwall, back-to-the-land migrants lack strong links to local areas, so are largely disconnected from 'traditional' farming, and many farmers have had to develop new skills. In both regions, farmers attain some degree of biotechnical autonomy but are constrained by rural depopulation (more so in Cornwall). I then offer a brief reflection on the value of 'autonomy' as a concept for studying agrarian change, before offering some final thoughts on how we should think about a particularly 'agroecological autonomy'.

8.1 RQ1 – What is the nature of farmers' autonomy in Calabria and Cornwall?

In chapters 1 and 2, I set out how autonomy has become a major organising concept in the agroecology and food sovereignty literature. Although there are several strands of thought in this literature, the most prominent stems from van der Ploeg (2008, p. xiv), for whom the peasant condition is "the ongoing struggle for autonomy and progress in a context characterized by multiple patterns of dependency and associated processes of exploitation and marginalization". Tilzey (2017, 2018) suggests that many of the farmers that van der Ploeg has in mind are actually market dependent petty commodity producers. For Tilzey, peasants are those more concerned with meeting subsistence needs and entering markets only as an opportunity. He argues that subaltern classes (including semi-proletarian and middle 'actual peasants') in the global South are more likely to have a radical outlook that directly challenges capitalism's foundations – specifically through a reversal of primitive accumulation that would enable 'actual autonomy'.

Responding to these debates, I asked whether farmers in European peripheries might also exhibit some of this radicalism. To explore this, I used a critical realist account of structure-agency relations to conceptualise *political* autonomy as the scope of agency. Agency is the fundamental human capacity for social reflexivity and second-order monitoring of our thoughts and actions (Bhaskar, 1998b; Tilzey, 2018). I suggested that autonomy consists of self-determination, freedom and conscious control over structural conditions. I also introduced the notion of *biotechnical* autonomy (stemming from Magne et al., 2019) which refers to the ability of farms to reproduce themselves, without recourse to external nutrients and energy. I have used these concepts to explore the autonomy of 'alternative' farmers in Cornwall and Calabria, with particular attention to capitalist structures and relations, through chapters 5 to 7. What then, can be surmised from this?

8.1.1 The relational autonomy of farmers amid multiple structures

In Chapter 2, I articulated autonomy as *relational*, starting from the view that individual identities and values are formed through their relations in society (Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000). The inverse of this view is that there is no transcendental rationality, neither on which to base an assessment of self-determination nor to attain some 'unified consciousness' in a post-capitalist utopia. I also noted how, although capitalist relations are ubiquitous and dominant, non-capitalist relations also permeate society. This gave rise in Chapter 5 to a discussion of how modernisation has disrupted the stability and 'highly bounded social worlds' (Shucksmith & Herrmann, 2002) of traditional rural communities. Accordingly, farmers' values and world views are increasingly determined by a complex array of personal histories and *diálogo de saberes*, across both capitalist and non-capitalist forms of relating. Similarly, I discussed in Chapter 6 how farmers made use of these forms of relating as different 'circuits of reproduction' (van der Ploeg, 2010). While all farmers face an imperative to participate in markets, they are able to respond to this in different ways. Many farmers have access to income via subsidies, pluriactivity and multifunctionality, and many reduce their need for income through biotechnical autonomy and/or reciprocal relations with others. I then discussed in Chapter 7 how farmers made use of different networks to influence others and build institutions. These included direct relations between farmers, between farmers and consumers, farmers and state institutions, as well as a range of more indirect relations through networks and associations.

Under these conditions, *relational autonomy* appears to be a navigation within and across multiple social and natural structures. Autonomy is not necessarily attained in the 'interstices' of capitalism (Pickerill & Chatterton, 2006), but rather by maintaining multiple sets of relations (or the possibility of relations) with across different social objects simultaneously. This permits 'distancing' from any one set of structures when and where necessary, and using one set of relations to counteract the constraints imposed by another (such as by drawing on relations with the state to reduce the impetus to engage in markets). While structures and relations could be specified at a more or less fine-grained level, here I am still speaking at quite a general level. The structures which are most important appear to be those that connect farmers to the state, institutionalised associations, personal relations, nature, and markets. There is also, particular to Calabria, the matter of relations with *mafia*. I have explored farmers' relations with each of these in the previous chapters. It is worth bringing together the key aspects here to frame how farmers adapt to, seek distance from, or seek to change their structural conditions.

The state: For Tilzey, the state generates 'flanking measures' which sustain the legitimacy of contemporary capitalism, in larger part by integrating farmers *as consumers*. In Europe, the 'state' has undergone significant restructuring such that it now functions across the

supranational level (EU), the national level (member states) and the regional level. The integration of farmers is largely achieved through state transfers via the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and Cohesion Policy, but also through limited but growing state support for alternative food networks. While some farmers do benefit from these measures, smaller farmers do not and 'alternative farms' may struggle to access funding and exercise influence within state institutions (even the in the relatively regionalised context of Italy). I also discussed in Chapter 6 how state regulations and funding sustain dividing lines between subsistence and commerce, and slow and fast forms of capital accumulation. These dynamics drive some farmers to variably evade state monitoring (especially in Calabria) or to refuse funding support from the state. I also discussed in Chapter 7, how farmers predominantly see the state as ineffective or captured by larger-scale interests (especially in Calabria). Small capitalists have better access, but there are some openings for more alter- and counter-hegemonic discourses.

Markets: All farmers face commodification of subsistence and an imperative to produce for markets (Chapter 6). While farmers may attain some distance from markets, they persist as the central 'circuit of reproduction' – either as output markets for farm produce, markets for various kinds of 'multifunctionality', or as the labour-market for 'pluriactive' farmers. For sub-hegemonic and alter-hegemonic farmers, the ideological framing of markets as normal and desirable (Chapter 5) corresponds to Bourdieu's 'willing the inevitable'. But this framing can also be applied to farmers who have low incomes while maintaining an anti-consumerist or pro-self-provisioning ideology. I also discussed in Chapter 6 how some markets offer more 'room for manoeuvre' than others – particularly where farmers are able to attain monopolistic positions. More 'embedded' markets may also offer space for the defetishisation of market relations, especially when they take the form of personal relations and 'democratically' controlled spaces, but they also remain constrained by internal and external dynamics of competition.

Personal relations: By personal relations, I am referring to relations which exist as ties between specific people (Walicki, 1988). This includes for example families, friendships, neighbours and local communities, ties with whom cannot be equally or easily substituted with other individuals. These relations serve as crucial mechanisms of socialisation, although they may also be oppressive forms of heteronomy, such as household patriarchal structures (Chapter 5). The dynamics of these relations are different between Cornwall and Calabria, related to farmers' different backgrounds. In Calabria, these networks are much stronger and serve as a basis for material cooperation, as alternative 'circuits of reproduction'. In

Cornwall these networks are present but much weaker, although some farmers have been able to integrate themselves more into local communities than others (e.g. comparing the vignettes in sections 6.5.1 and 7.4 reveals some of these dynamics)[144].

Institutionalised associations: Institutionalised associations and networks represent a meso-level between personal relations and state institutions. For van der Ploeg (2008) they serve to 'rearticulate' state and peasant relations, while for Rosset and Altieri (2017) they represent a form of 'scaling-up' and the institutionalisation of alternative farming practices. As discussed in chapters 5 and 7, these associations play a key role in socialising farmers, and serve as mechanisms by which farmers can try to socialise others and influence state institutions. However, for many farmers they primarily offer a range of services, such as insurance, certification or marketing channels, which contribute to farmers' economic reproduction. While larger and more conventional networks appear to have more influence over the state, more radical networks also play a key role in maintaining farmers as 'distinctively different'. Examples such as the Transition Movement, Extinction Rebellion, *gruppi di acquisto solidale* (GAS), and *Genuino Clandestino* in particular have played or are playing key roles. Much of this remains achieved on a discursive level, with material cooperation through these networks being marginal, linked to the wider geographic dispersal of members.

Nature: For van der Ploeg (2008), another key element of the peasant condition is 'co-production' between man and nature. As I discussed in Chapter 6, this relation depends on the valuing of land-based livelihoods and access to land as a 'constitutive' element of the farm. Self-provisioning and biotechnical autonomy function as alternative 'circuits of reproduction' that work through natural processes. However, these relations are also shaped by ideological perceptions, such as what can be grown where, and whether and how soil can be improved. Nature also has its own limits – the impact of drought on Ian in section 6.3.1 for example illustrates how dependencies on nature may entail another set of risks.

Mafia: Finally, it is worth briefly mentioning the mafia as an institution specific to Calabria. Mafia relations have historically served to limit the influence of the state and markets in parts of Calabria, while also overlapping with a wide range of vernacular networks and practices (Arrighi & Piselli, 1987; Lemarchand, 1989). Farmers actively seek autonomy from

[144] Bosworth and Willett (2011) argue that the likely impact of inward migration on rural communities depends on the extent to which migrants themselves desire community. While this appears partially true, some back-to-the-land farmers in my sample also found receiving communities may be – for a variety of reasons – relatively hostile, while incomers may also be hostile towards other incomers.

mafia relations and ways of thinking, and no farmer in my sample referred to relations with mafia. However, some benefitted from reallocations of mafia resources (including land), and farmers had also been subject to threats and thefts associated with mafia networks.

Farmers then frequently depend on and are integrated into relations with the above structures simultaneously. While each set of relations has different implications for autonomy and heteronomy, farmers as individuals are positioned across these different structures, to different degrees, in ways that constitute positions and relations of autonomy. As I have argued, farmers' relations with each structure are shaped by how farmers' perceive a given set of relations (manifest as a degree of 'difference' or acceptance), the extent to which they are constrained/enabled by them, and how they perceive their ability to influence or shape that set of relations.

While all farmers are embedded in multiple structures, their positions within and between those are not all the same. Even though all the farms I am dealing with here occupy a 'contradictory unity of class places', the 'class antagonism' cuts through them at slightly different angles. As I discussed in Chapter 5, farmers' class positions are partially aligned with ideologies, but the multiplicity of structures and complex array of personal histories entails that there remains a possibility of ideologically transcending class positions and interests. In Chapter 6, I explored how different relations between land, inputs, labour, markets and capital shape farmers' freedom. I argued that inherited and *comodato d'uso* land, and land purchased without debt offered the strongest possibilities of autonomy – because they generate fewer compulsions to produce for markets, but also because they offer the possibility of 'co-production between man and nature' (van der Ploeg, 2008). I also argued how farmers with stronger social networks (especially as personal relations) are better able to mobilise resources outside of markets. While farmers in Calabria enjoy better access to land and social networks, those in Cornwall have more buoyant markets to participate in. In Chapter 7, I also argued that farmers have very limited capacity to exercise conscious control over structural processes. While small capitalists appear to have more influence over state institutions, farmers attempting to exercise control over markets are blocked by their competitive dynamics. However, this chapter also showed an important role for institutionalised associations and movements more generally in creating space to influence the state, even at local levels.

Van der Ploeg (2013, p. 96) discusses how peasants 'fine-tune' their agricultural practices, including by identifying and addressing the 'most limiting growth factor'[145]. This idea can be extended to how

[145] It is worth noting that Rosset and Altieri (1997, p. 288) argue that the 'most limiting factor' logic drives farmers to address the limiting factor by applying specific inputs, rather than through functional integration. Van der Ploeg (2013, p. 123) does acknowledge that the logic, while having 'didactic value', does not account for the "multiple interactions and synergies between specific growth factors."

farmers respond to the multiple structural relations they face. Farmers perceive their structural conditions as enabling or constraining depending on their particular values and world views[146]. Similarly, values and world views shape the impetus for and perceived possibilities of exercising conscious control over these. While in van der Pleog's (2013, p. 95) 'fine-tuning' model growth factors "have not simply been there since the beginning of time," farmers are often unable (or see themselves as unable) to directly influence the structural conditions they face. The possibility of influencing structural conditions is also a matter of *time* and *patience.* I would suggest that radical counter-hegemonic change depends on a perception that all natural and social structures are amenable to change, including through the conscious actions of human agents. This is particularly supported by a view of social structures as a collective product of human agency. As White (2018, p. 7) notes, how "people understand and conceptualize their own agency affects their beliefs about whether they can influence the course of events in their own lives."

8.1.2 Turning in a widening gyre?

The concept of autonomy I have presented here is a cyclical process. Self-determination brings ideology in and out of alignment with hegemony, freedom enables the material and social realisation of sameness or difference, while unconscious and conscious social processes reproduce and transform structural conditions. Like farming itself, autonomy is a 'movement through time' (McMichael, 2015; van der Ploeg, 2008, p. 12). As farmers work to reproduce themselves and transform their contexts, their positions of autonomy may too be reproduced or transformed. This raises a question. Is the cycle virtuous or vicious? Do the unfolding structure-agency dynamics lead to more autonomy or less?

In Chapter 1, I distinguished between basic autonomy and ideal autonomy. Basic autonomy is agency, the capacity of social reflexivity and second-order monitoring that we as humans have (Bhaskar, 1998b; Tilzey, 2018). *Ideal* autonomy is a partially imagined condition under which the scope of agency is maximised. By attending to autonomy as agency-centric, the struggle for ideal autonomy, the widening of the gyre, depends first and foremost on agency. If agency is to widen the gyre, it must maintain *difference* against its structural context. This difference can also be understood as a *negation,* whether an "inarticulate mumble of discontent, tears of frustration, a scream of rage, a confident roar" (J. Holloway, 2002, p. 1). In the previous chapters, I discussed how this 'difference' has sub-, alter- and counter-hegemonic forms. My findings in Chapter 5 supported

[146] As Berlin (Berlin, 1969, p. 122) points out, "this use of the term [coercion] depends on a particular social and economic theory about the causes of my poverty or weakness." That is to say, one's perception of freedom and unfreedom is intimately connected with one's more general perception of how the world works. Just as importantly, the "struggle takes place within an accepted framework of that's-the-way-things-are" (J. Holloway, 2002, p. 108).

Tilzey's thesis that most alternative farms in Europe fit in an alter-hegemonic class-ideology bundle. I described farmers' sub-, alter- and counter-hegemonic ideologies in 5.3.4, and illustrated how these shaped practices in section 6.5. Briefly, the alter-hegemonic position advocates local and ecological forms of production, while remaining market oriented and dependent, especially in association with alternative food networks (AFNs) (Tilzey, 2018). In Chapter 5, I argued that alter-hegemonic farms see markets as normal and even desirable, while they continue to place high value on various social and ecological goals. These goals include a partial degree of biotechnical autonomy and participation in increasingly 'embedded' markets. Thanks to buoyant market conditions for ethical produce and monopolistic positions for some farmers, these farmers retain a degree of 'room for manoeuvre' in markets through which they can realise many of those goals. Despite this, Tilzey argues that the alter-hegemonic position is 'conformable' with capitalism (Tilzey, 2017), suggesting a tendency to reproduce rather than negate existing relations.

The counter-hegemonic position advocates "post-capitalist socio-ecological relations" that confront market dependence, focus on but also dismantle the state, and emphasise sustainable non-fossil fuel-based production (Tilzey, 2018, p. 239). I have argued that only a small number of farmers in each region fit this model. These farmers identify capitalism as a major cause of contemporary world problems, attempt to attain a stronger degree of biotechnical autonomy and focus more on reciprocal arrangements than embedded markets. While these ideologies do not clearly stem from particular class positions (in that farmers with similar class positions may be alter-hegemonic or counter-hegemonic), I have suggested that counter-hegemonic ideologies can only be sustained if land access creates fewer pressures to produce for markets and if there are sufficient like-minded farmers to create space for non-market ways of relating. While counter-hegemonic farms continue to face an imperative to produce for the market (although usually less pronounced than other farms), they actively seek opportunities to retreat from it. For Tilzey (2018) this radicalism emerges out of a necessary struggle among subaltern classes in the global South. Here however, these more radical views stem from an ideological view of structural conditions and positions of relative freedom from market imperatives.

Finally, 'sub-hegemonic' small capitalists are capital-intensive, depend on hired labour, and aspire to move along the capitalist pathway, including to access more conventional markets. These farmers maintain a low level of 'difference' from more conventional farms, though they may maintain a narrative of difference primarily for marketing purposes. They may be able to attain a certain kind of 'neoliberal autonomy' (Stock et al., 2014; Stock & Forney, 2014), assuming they do not go under as a results of the risks they accrue. These farmers are the most likely to be 'conformable' with contemporary capitalism, so I will not discuss them further here.

While the difference between alter-hegemonic and counter-hegemonic farms is not clear cut, attending to the distinction reveals how farmers navigate the above multiplicity of structures in different ways. The vignettes presented at the end of Chapter 6 for example show how these different ideological groups respond to market opportunities and pressures, and shift their relations over time with markets, the state, personal relations and so on. Chapter 7 also illustrated how some farms may feel little impetus for challenging or exercising conscious control over contemporary social structures, but this is also a function of 'epistemic blindness' about what can and cannot be changed. The sense, for example, of being 'largely untouched' by politics on a day-to-day basis (see quote from Sandra in section 7.2), indicates that many of these farms have been co-opted into what Tilzey identifies as the legitimating functions of the state in the global North. By contrast, the counter-hegemonic perspectives of Claudio (6.5.3) and Norman and Kelly (7.4) indicate a more critical and active political approach to farming, including attempts to reshape hegemonic social structures.

8.1.2.1 Market dependent trajectories of autonomy

The distinction between alter- and counter-hegemonic positions give rise to different *trajectories of autonomy*. That is to say, the cyclical process of self-determination, freedom and conscious control is likely to take them as individual farms in different directions, while also – if practiced by a wide enough number of people – leading to different transformations of food systems and capitalism. To discuss this is necessarily somewhat speculative, and I am constrained by my research methodology. Though I have gathered farmers' own accounts of their histories, much of the data consists of a snapshot in time. While longitudinal studies are necessary to explore these issues in more depth (van der Ploeg, 2008), it is nonetheless possible to explore how farmers' 'autonomy' might unfold in these peripheral regions.

To do so, I want to discuss the condition of market dependency in more depth, and what it means for different trajectories. In particular, I am interested in further unpacking the theoretical implications of participation in produce or output markets, which remain central to the alter-hegemonic position. As has become clear in the preceding chapters, AFNs and 'embedded' markets are central to the kinds of autonomy that are emerging. They are socialising forces – both as a mechanism of fetishisation and as a forum for social interaction. They shape freedom, in both the sense of 'liberal freedom' and the compulsion to mobilise subsistence through markets and to generate income. They both restrict and enable new forms of conscious control – competition hinders cooperation, but marketplaces also generate opportunities to persuade and work with consumers and other farmers.

A starting point is that markets per se are not a defining feature of capitalism. As I discussed in Chapter 6, only where production for markets is an imperative, rather than an opportunity, are markets capitalist (Wood, 2002, 2009). Whether this holds depends on how widespread markets are, and particularly the extent to which land, labour and subsistence are commodified. On this point, I do not think that Tilzey is as far removed from van der Ploeg as the former makes out, at least on a theoretical level. Van der Ploeg (2008, pp. 44–45) distinguishes very explicitly between peasant and market-dependent reproduction, the latter defined as a necessary recourse to markets for inputs in general[147]. Instead, what separates the two are empirical and interpretative claims about the nature of production for markets in AFNs, and whether a retreat back into subsistence is actually possible for as many farmers as van der Ploeg suggests.

In my sample, farmers are market dependent in a range of ways. These include 1) an ideological framing that sees markets as normal, 2) an imperative to generate income to sustain access to land, 3) a lack of knowledge and skills for subsistence production, linked to back-to-the-land migration, 4) depopulated communities which hinder labour-driven intensification, 5) high degrees of specialisation, 6) a desire to maintain 'standards of living' with consumerist qualities, 7) state policies which attempt to divide subsistence and commercial activity, and 8) insufficient landholdings. Each of these drivers is present in both regions to an extent. 1-6 are more pronounced in Cornwall (much more so in the case of 2, 4 and 5), while 7 and 8 are more particular in Calabria. Under these conditions, as I discussed in Chapter 6, farmers face an imperative to produce for the market, or to generate an income otherwise (e.g. off-farm work or state subsidies).

The market dependency argument does not depend on knowing anything about the *kind of markets* farms are selling in. This has the implication that no amount of 'embedding' output markets can provide autonomy from the imperative to produce. However, as I discussed in Chapter 6, it is also clear that farmers may have different forms and degrees of autonomy *within* markets. In particular, embedded markets may distance farmers from the 'abstract' or world price for commodities[148], thus insulating farmers from competition with capitalist agriculture. This is particularly the case when markets are relatively informal networks of family and friends. Some markets may permit more agroecological forms of farming, while others tend to push farmers into specialising and buying more

[147] There is something slightly off about how van der Ploeg (2010, p. 6) defines self-provisioning in relation to "the unit of *production* (as opposed to the unit of consumption)". He seems to be implying that subsistence (consumption) is less important than meeting the other material reproductive needs of the farm, but it is not very clear.

[148] The idea of a unified world price for commodities emerged under the first food regime but is more fully realised under today's food regime (McMichael, 2013). The 'world price' is of course never *fully* realised. Under the 'corporate food regime' or *Empire*, markets themselves are subordinate in some ways to new forms of control and sovereignty (Hardt & Negri, 2000; McMichael, 2013; van der Ploeg, 2008).

inputs. More embedded markets also offer a partial de-fetishisation of market relations, though they seem to stop short of forging new 'realms of common meaningfulness' (Steiner & Stewart, 2009). Similarly, the democratic model of the GAS discussed in section 7.3.2, while not overcoming competitive dynamics, does give farmers *more* conscious control than they would have in other settings.

Market dependency is not only a central point of contention between Tilzey and van der Ploeg's visions of autonomy, but it also underpins many of the contradictions contained within today's food systems and society more generally. In particular, the separation and distancing of production and consumption via markets sustains metabolic rifts, urbanisation and the absence of labour from the countryside, oversupply problems and price instability, inter-sectoral divisions (divisions of labour) and disarticulation, and surplus transfers and social disarticulation (i.e. integration as producers but not consumers). This is not to attribute these diverse and complex processes to markets alone, but to recognise that they cannot be sustained without markets, and that AFNs may inadvertently reproduce them.

The central contradiction of the alter-hegemonic trajectory is that it *depends* on the continued existence of a large and well-off consumer class (Tilzey, 2018) and intra-agricultural and inter-sectoral divisions of labour. The dominance of agriculture, depopulation and relative poverty in Cornwall and Calabria, as discussed in Chapter 4 and typical of peripheral regions more generally, constrains the presence of a strong local consumer class to fulfil this function. Instead, this is largely fulfilled in Cornwall by the tourism sector. While constituting a form of 'social articulation'[149], this constitutes an *illusory* form of localisation and sectoral articulation, because tourists function solely as consumers, are only marginally embedded, and play no productive role the regional economy. Calabria lacks a strong equivalent, although it too has a growing tourism sector, and local markets are constrained by widespread familial networks through which many would-be consumers meet their subsistence needs. As a consequence, to the extent that farmers in Calabria face pressures to produce for markets, they are more likely to depend on AFNs nationally and internationally. Production in Calabria therefore remains 'extroverted', in the sense of being oriented towards export markets. In both Cornwall and Calabria then, AFNs reproduce a *disarticulation* between production and consumption, but in different ways – in Cornwall as production for tourists, in Calabria for export.

[149] As discussed in Chapter 2, social articulation refers to "a complementarity between the role of the labour force as producers and consumers, or a situation in which their role as consumers outweighs their significance as producers" (Tilzey, 2018, p. 186).

Despite this, AFNs permit farmers to capture more value from their markets, as they receive a higher share of what is often a higher consumer price. Through better terms of trade, and reducing intermediaries, AFNs may challenge s*ome mechanisms* of surplus appropriation (e.g. by supermarkets or mafia) and extra-regional transfers. Insofar as AFNs are premised on the production of high-value niche products, they remain circumscribed by conventional markets' abilities to supply diverse foods very cheaply. Likewise, they are unable to integrate relatively poor consumers – a widely reported finding elsewhere in the global North (Pratley & Dodson, 2014). As more specialised farmers remain dependent on both markets and inputs (for subsistence and farm reproduction), they remain exposed to the 'double squeeze on agriculture' (van der Ploeg, 2008, p. 130). Instead of prompting a retreat into subsistence[150], this is driving farms into more 'value-capturing' activities, as the quote from Sandra in section 6.3.3 suggests. This entails either more food processing, which depends on being able to capture yet more value from a well-off consumer class, or selling to more distant networks which merely reproduces metabolic rifts and the disarticulation that characterises these peripheral regions.

As a result of these conditions, alter-hegemonic farmers and AFNs are unable to attain a high degree of autonomy from *or* within markets, and do not radically challenge conditions of peripheralisation. Any attempt to significantly increase the number of these farmers (which is anyway constrained by a low value placed on land-based livelihoods among non-farming populations, as well as constraints on land access in Cornwall), is likely to exacerbate rather than alleviate the above dynamics. As a consequence, an unfolding alter-hegemonic trajectory is likely to reproduce the 'farm problem' of the overproduction of agricultural produce that sustains low prices (Gardner, 1992). As van der Ploeg et al. (2019, p. 13) recognise, "there is the possibility of agroecological agriculture resulting in overproduction which would exert negative pressure on the [value added / gross value of production] ratio and create entry barriers for new [agroecological] farmers." In this way, while AFNs may offer some relief from overproduction dynamics, they are likely (as Tilzey argued and my findings in Chapter 6 confirmed), to be temporary at best. Overproduction in AFNs may come to reinforce the 'cheap food regime' (McMichael, 2012), rather than challenge the current mode of regulation and legitimacy of capitalism. Ultimately, the alter-hegemonic trajectory remains blocked by its own internal dynamics of competition and its dependency on a large consumer class. The capitalist centre holds, and the gyre is unable to widen any further.

---

[150] Subsistence itself may not resolve peripheralisation at a macro-level, any more than attempting to capture a (temporary) greater share of value in national and global divisions of labour. However, subsistence, along with other more direct links between production and consumption, do more directly 'articulate' production and consumption at a micro-level.

This does not preclude however, that alter-hegemonic farms are, by maintaining themselves as 'distinctively different', contributing to a more generalised trajectory that re-values land-based livelihoods and re-imagines rural communities. These farms, and the AFNs they participate in, still count as social experiments and attempts to build 'real utopias'. This is particularly clear for back-to-the-land migrants, for whom land-based livelihoods and petty commodity production is a radical departure from city and proletarian life (Wilbur, 2013). While alter-hegemonic farmers may attain a degree of autonomy for themselves, their contribution to the transformation of food systems and peripheral society depends on their transforming into, or inspiring, something more radical. The challenge for these farmers is to find ways to build on the temporary opportunities offered by alter-hegemonic AFNs to extricate themselves from the above dynamics. For example, the different kinds of capital investments that farmers make (section 6.4) and attempts to institutionalise new structural relations (Chapter 7) will shape the extent to which they are dependent on markets in the future.

8.1.2.2 Counter-hegemonic trajectories

The counter-hegemonic trajectory does not necessarily fare better, at least in the short-term. As I discussed above, these farms seek a more radical separation from markets, moving increasingly into biotechnical autonomy and bartering arrangements. Their ideology and orientation is more radical, which in some ways leaves them (at least feeling) more constrained than others. Maintaining and advancing these positions depends on having a low and decreasing imperative to participate in markets. As I discussed in Chapter 6, this entails relatively free access to land (e.g. inherited, purchased debt-free or *comodato d'uso*), which is more prevalent in Calabria than Cornwall[151]. It is on this basis that Tilzey advocates for a state-oriented movement that, among other things, 'dialectically negates' primitive accumulation and decommodifies land and labour. While counter-hegemonic farmers broadly reject notions of private property (as do the various community and group farms), they remain a minority unable to exercise enough 'conscious control' at the state level.

Another strategy that emerged in the previous chapter was to use private ownership to create commons-like spaces (Maughan & Ferrando, 2018). The example of group and community farms generating alternative ways of providing access to land illustrate one possible avenue to 'reverse primitive accumulation' (Tilzey, 2017). While accessing land in this way is unlikely to become widespread, it can perhaps serve to create resilient forms of farming that are able to resist the

[151] On the other hand, as the vignette in section 6.5.2 illustrated, these conditions may also sustain alter-hegemonic trajectories towards greater market dependency.

threat of alienation. Group and community farms also represent experiments with possible forms of direct democratic decision making within the farm, reflecting the kinds of continuous questioning of norms and institutions that Castoriadis identifies as autonomy. More generally, the counter-hegemonic trajectory entails using but repurposing conventional capitalist relations in various ways. Besides land, this might include employing labourers to provide them with a wage or to help regularise the status of a migrant (referred to in footnote 76, Chapter 5) while emphasising non-hierarchical forms of cooperation. While these do reproduce capitalist relations in some ways, they also challenge them and use them for relatively counter-hegemonic ends. Again, as the group and community farms illustrate, addressing the land access aspect of capitalist and market relations does not necessarily entail that a counter-hegemonic perspective is taken in all farm activities. Most of these farms remain within an alter-hegemonic logic of production for the market. As discussed above then, counter-hegemonic farms represent experiments that attempt to find less capitalist ways of relating within the constraints imposed by capitalism.

More generally however, the counter-hegemonic trajectory is constrained by the absence of 'like-minded' farmers in rural communities. Similarly, generalised commodity relations entails that few other agents (e.g. consumers) are able to participate in, or rely on, reciprocal relations. As I discussed in Chapter 6, while reciprocal relations are widespread in both Cornwall and Calabria, they remain marginal. This entails that relatively counter-hegemonic farmers find it difficult to rely on non-monetised relations, compelling them instead to mobilise resources through the market (which corresponds to a stronger imperative to produce). Here however, the contrast between Cornwall and Calabria reveals that the latter is able to attain a higher degree of biotechnical autonomy and self-provisioning, thanks to the on-going presence of small-scale *contadini.* Insofar as these counter-hegemonic farms remain subject to an imperative to produce for markets, they are not free of the dynamics in AFNs described above. They too will be subject to competition, though they may be less 'squeezed' than others.

As I have discussed, relatively few farmers in my sample express strong counter-hegemonic ideologies. This suggests that a counter-hegemonic trajectory remains unlikely, unless there is a radical shift in the dominant farming ideology and structural shifts that enable more people to become farmers. As discussed in Chapter 7, some farmers are actively involved in 'scaling-out' alternative farming, through attempting to shape other farmers' values and increasing the opportunities available for people to enter farming. This suggests that it is only through the 'ideological development' (Roman-Alcalá, 2021) of the countryside that a more radical trajectory can emerge. Should these constraints be surmounted, by increasing the numbers of such farmers, the counter-hegemonic trajectory may offer a more plausible trajectory in the long-run. This is because,

in contrast to the alter-hegemonic trajectory, the more farmers there are, the more resilient the counter-hegemonic model of reciprocal relations becomes.

However, this also depends on these farmers and other rural community actors offering a sufficiently diverse range of products and services that can displace flows from elsewhere. This includes increasing the local production of tools and non-food goods and services. As these reciprocal relations increase, rural economies may become increasingly articulated (both sectorally and socially), as production and consumption becomes much more proximate and oriented around use-values. Likewise, it is only with a growing number of these farmers that the counter-hegemonic trajectory can become a meaningful force politically, which may permit the more fundamental social relational changes that Tilzey (2018, p. 320) refers to as 'livelihood sovereignty'. While this may seem like a fantasy, particularly in Europe, it is increasingly being advocated as the only viable alternative in the face of capitalism's many crises (e.g. Smaje, 2020). If this is correct, the question that remains is whether we will choose this trajectory, or the trajectory will choose us.

8.1.2.3 Possible alliances

While the rise of the agroecology and food sovereignty movement is in the process of building a new 'peasant subject', there remain challenges to overcome. As Chapter 7 made clear, most farmers remain relatively disconnected and inactive politically. There is no unified collective movement of 'peasants' in either Cornwall or Calabria. Instead there are multiple organisations dedicated to representing and lobbying on behalf of 'farmers', which, as discussed in Chapter 7, tend to more strongly represent more conventional and larger forms of farming. While the alter- and the counter-hegemonic approaches differ, they face similar challenges that may warrant a united political front. Holt-Giménez and Shattuck (2011, p. 131) suggest that if radical and progressive food movements can converge on a global level "they might contribute significantly to the construction of a new food regime." These movements exist nationally and internationally, and many of the alliances must cut across class and core-periphery divisions. I am not suggesting here that alter- and counter-hegemonic farms in Cornwall and Calabria could change the food regime by coming together, but it is possible that they could collectively expand their positions of autonomy. Both alter-hegemonic and counter-hegemonic farms have a shared interest in confronting conventional food systems: the more market share they are able to collectively capture, the less they will face the competitive pressures discussed above. This is the only way to ensure a shared interest in increasing the number of small and ecological farms. This could in the longer run advance the possibilities of revitalising rural communities and enabling more counter-hegemonic forms of relating (i.e. reciprocal exchanges). Such a movement could also be mobilised with a view to simultaneously rejecting imperialist relations with the global South that underpin cheap food and the imperialist subjugation

of peripheral regions by Europe. On the other hand, it would be clear that particularly larger ‘sub-hegemonic and ‘alter-hegemonic’ farmers might stand to benefit more from these processes.

The possibility of alliances with consumer classes are ambiguous – with many alter-hegemonic farmers depending on premium markets that in turn depend on neoliberal inequalities (Tilzey, 2018). However, there is also a case for new ‘emancipatory social contracts’ between farmers and non-farmers (Graddy-Lovelace, 2021). Ongoing struggles are needed to forge collectivities that recognise and create shared interests. There is considerable room for ‘synergies’ between producers and consumers within food sovereignty, but there are also conflictual elements to work through (Timmermann et al., 2018). Newly embedded market relations may form part of this process, although as I discussed in Chapter 5 the socialising dynamics remain limited. While consumers have interests in cheap food and environmental sustainability, farmers may have shared interests in ensuring that urban and consumer classes have access to sufficient incomes to access the healthy, quality and ecological foods they promote. In this way, alternative food movements may be able to connect politically with more traditional left movements. However, there is a need to confront the barriers that on-going market dependencies present to biotechnical autonomy and non-market forms of cooperation, as I discussed in section 6.3.3.1. There is also the challenge, as Tilzey identifies, to avoid right-wing populist tendencies, which as discussed in Chapter 4 are increasingly present in rural Europe. Finally, above all, farmers must overcome political inertia. This is not only a matter of practical constraints (Calvário, 2017; J. C. Ribot, 2007), but also the illusion of being ‘untouched’ by politics and ideological perspectives that preclude attempts to gain conscious control over structural conditions.

Today, the autonomy of alternative farmers in Europe turns in large part on market relations. While some farmers are partly insulated from those relations through state supports, personal relations, and nature-based subsistence, markets remain the central enabling and constraining force. This is particular so as many farmers accept markets as a normal and acceptable mode of farming. Alternative food networks also appear to offer some *temporary* respite for *some* farmers from the harsher aspects of these. However, as I have argued, this respite is limited at best. Ultimately, the trajectory that dominates will depend on which sets of relations work within the prevailing constraints. It is the access to multiple 'circuits of reproduction' and the capacity to responsively adjust them (and exiting altogether where necessary) that makes up a position of autonomy. It seems that in the short run, those who are able to position themselves well within AFNs, and strike a balance between competition and cooperation are the best placed. In the medium-term, if conditions do change as I have suggested above, those more willing to relax their environmental and social values may have the competitive edge. But all of this depends on how wider structural

conditions shift, including whether and how AFNs make inroads into the market share of conventional food systems. In this way, agency and structure must co-evolve, giving rise to different trajectories of autonomy, some of which will face dead-ends, while others will prosper.

8.2 RQ2 – What does farmers' autonomy tell us about potential and emerging kinds of food sovereignty and agroecology in these regions and beyond?

In the Introduction, I suggested that agroecology is best understood *genealogically*. That is to say, agroecology has a diverse range of forms, in both ideology and practice, the evolution and flourishing of which depends on specific contexts. I also defined in Chapter 2, a notion of agroecological practice and logics centred on 'biotechnical autonomy'. This notion is premised on closing nutrient and energy cycles, as well as also capital and labour development and reproduction, within farms and food systems. I have also explored above and in the previous chapters the *political autonomy* of alternative, or 'proto-agroecological' farms in Cornwall and Calabria. This autonomy is premised on a degree of self-determined 'difference', as discussed above, which is largely manifest as a desire to farm in accordance with a range of ecological and social values. As discussed in Chapter 5, these values are not generally expressed as 'agroecology', but rather in terms of organic farming, permaculture, *agricoltura contadina* and various other framings. Only a small number explicitly emphasise low input farming, including relatively counter-hegemonic farms.

As a form of political autonomy, the partial and temporary degree of room for manoeuvre in markets described in Chapter 6 allows farmers to give effect to many of their values. Farmers use a wide range of input-reducing practices, although they also engage in 'organic' input-substitution (see Rosset & Altieri, 1997). As discussed in Chapter 6, input-reducing practices are favoured for both ecological values and the economic advantage. In other words, farmers in both regions are actively working in what Gliessman (2016) describes as the first two levels of agroecology. These practices were more grounded in tradition in Calabria, where *agricoltura contadina* closely resembles agroecology as biotechnical autonomy, in that it combines the reproduction of productive resources with income generation (Gaudio et al., 2008, p. 1). Combined with a higher degree of mixed farming, farmers in Calabria were also able to meet a wider range of subsistence needs while building a stronger degree of functional integration. By contrast, in Cornwall, specialisations into either horticulture or livestock production entailed dependencies on nutrient inputs – as fertiliser or feed respectively. While some farmers were able to cycle nutrients at a higher level (such as exchanges between farmers), others relied on more conventional commodity inputs, often coming from outside the region. In these ways, the third level of agroecology (agroecosystem design for functional integration) remains limited, particularly in Cornwall, even at the farm level. It is

constrained by farmers' perceptions of local ecology, market requirements and the labour requirements needed for more diverse and functionally integrated farming systems.

In both regions, there is also an infusion of back-to-the-land migrants. As I discussed in Chapter 5 and 6, this shapes how farmers approach farming, access land, and the skills they have. In Calabria, most of these farmers return into existing family networks of farming, indicating a degree of continuity – although recovering abandoned land also entails some discontinuity. In Cornwall, there is a distinct discontinuity, as new farmers have few links into existing communities. As Paul in section 5.3.2 put it, "We can literally come in and say 'No, that's all wrong. We can do it this way. This is better'." Combined with on-going issues of intergenerational succession (discussed in Chapter 7), this lack of continuity represents a fundamental barrier to agroecological practices and stable agroecosystems, which are usually regarded as grounded in locally-adapted practices that emerge over long time periods (Gliessman, 2005)[152].

Perhaps above all else, the formation of more agroecological farming systems is limited by insufficient labour. As I argued in Chapter 6, this entails that most farms are unable to proceed along a path of 'labour-driven intensification'. The path is blocked by depopulation, but also by the nature of inward migration into Cornwall and the transformation of peripheral areas into leisure spaces. While back-to-the-land migrants in Cornwall lack local networks, farmers also face income constraints that prevent them from employing more labour (which also prevents them from becoming small capitalists). In both regions too, farmers saw a general lack of willingness to engage in manual agrarian work. This indicates that factor availability will continue to shape agroecology in these regions, with limited capital and labour favouring small-scale machine use[153]. The lack of labour is also linked to the super-exploitation of migrant labour in farming more generally, which is particularly prolific and visible in Calabria (as discussed in Chapter 4).

That these farmers have the autonomy to realise many of their broadly 'agroecological' farming desires and values offers some grounds for hope. They represent tentatively agroecological practices *as a conscious choice*. By working against trends of outward flows of people and resources, the industrialisation of agriculture, and establishing farm-level networks of self-provisioning, they are able to achieve some degree of localisation (although less so at the level of markets). With the sometimes limited resources they have available, they are able to restore exhausted or abandoned

[152] Smaje (2020, p. 188) associates intergenerational succession with the emergence of 'good long-term land husbandry'.
[153] This set of conditions also points to the problems of resolving what Bernstein (2006) has identified as the 'agrarian question of labour', and whether and how trajectories of alternative farming can absorb the proletarian and semi-proletarian forms of labour that are excluded from urban and industrial capitalisms.

land, contribute to the bringing back of autochthonous varieties, and inject new or recover old values in rural communities.

As I discussed in Chapter 2, capitalism alienates people from nature, as metabolic rifts (section 2.3.1). Ultimately, even though on-farm *practices* may partially undo the metabolic rifts linked to industrial agriculture, the rift persists in a more fundamental form in the *organisation of labour* (M. Schneider & McMichael, 2010), specifically as the disarticulation of production and consumption. This separation is manifest both in the producer-consumer divide for agricultural produce (linked to inter-sectoral and rural-urban divisions) but also in the divides that emerge *within* agriculture through the specialisation of production. The extensive presence of direct producer-consumer relations among these farmers indicates engagement with what Gliessman calls the forth level of agroecology. However, this level remains subject to the tensions in combining commodity and non-commodity forms of relations, which hinder a more transformative orientation (as illustrated in section 7.3.2). Agroecology therefore needs to progress from farm level practices to territorial and landscape scales (González de Molina, 2013, p. 52). As long as this more fundamental rift remains, the competitive market dynamics described above may drive an increasing wedge between farmers' economic viability and their ability to realise their ecological and social values.

Within the growing emphasis on the presence of agroecology (or 'proto-agroecology') in Europe, it is worth reflecting on what the experiences of farmers in Cornwall and Calabria tells us about wider possibilities. I have focused much of my analysis on these regions as peripheries. As such, these case studies can perhaps inform explorations of other European peripheries, which are likely to deal with similar issues, even if in different forms and degrees. This includes the specific challenges associated with sectoral disarticulation, and the absence of a strong consumer class in some regions (except where perhaps tourism fulfils this role), but also the opportunities afforded by still strong familial networks of semi-subsistence farms, which remain prominent in other parts of Europe (Davidova et al., 2013). Core regions are perhaps more likely to fare differently, perhaps taking on more sub-hegemonic forms, as conventional farms adapt to the opportunities afforded by AFNs (e.g. Ilbery et al., 2016). In general terms, it seems likely that 'agroecology' in Europe is taking an alter-hegemonic trajectory, as Tilzey argues. But this trajectory is blurred by internal diversity, geographical variation and the presence of more sub- and counter-hegemonic farmers pushing for other alternatives.

8.2.1 Reflection on the value of autonomy

This thesis is a necessary response to the growing use of 'autonomy' in the literature on agroecology and food sovereignty. Autonomy is presented as something farmers are struggling for and/or achieve through agroecology, without attending to the complex and at times contradictory

implications of the concept. In the Introduction I highlighted its different philosophical interpretations – ranging from the transcendental rationality of Kant to the relational concept I emphasised in this thesis. In Chapter 2 I pointed to the distinction (and frequent conflation) between political and biotechnical autonomy. In Chapter 5, I also showed how farmers' own understandings of what autonomy means is highly variable. The malleability of the concept makes the claim "that what farmers do (throughout modern history? history *tout court*?) is driven by the desire for autonomy" (Bernstein, 2014, p. 1050) valid, albeit in a banal sense. I also discussed in Chapter 2 that Emery (2015), Stock et al. (2014) and Tilzey (2017) all place emphasis on a kind of 'actual autonomy', which treats to varying degrees the autonomy enjoyed under neoliberal capitalism as illusory. While I too have explored this here, I have tried to show that the autonomy farmers enjoy within capitalism still has a very real quality to it. However, only counter-hegemonic farmers appear to be coming close to the 'actual autonomy' the above authors identify. Particularly in Europe, where generalised commodity relations are so widespread and normal that 'autonomy' from capitalism remains impossible, there is a need to understand and respect the reality of farmers' experiences.

Accordingly, I have eschewed framing certain kinds of autonomy as more real than others, instead seeking to look at the different kinds of autonomy built around farmers' own desires and values. This has entailed attending to both farmers' own perceptions and interpretations of their situations (an *emic* approach), while also using my own and other theoretical perspectives to interpret those situations (the *etic* approach). I have used critical realist accounts of structure and agency to make sense of this, seeing autonomy as the combination of self-determination, freedom and conscious control. Through this lens, many farmers experience their positions as *autonomous,* even if many aspects of their own values and practices are shaped by market and non-market structural mechanisms. It also reveals that each farmer brings their own set of values and desires, as well as positions in the wider structural ordering – giving farmers divergent values and interests, and so different trajectories of autonomy.

One of the difficulties, both philosophical and practical, is understanding when and how farmers' values are held authentically and have been 'endorsed' through second-order monitoring. While I have tried to elicit these ideas in my interviews, I have largely taken farmers' accounts of their values and ideologies at face value. This stems from a view that we cannot make sense of farmers' agency without attending to their own accounts, as discussed in Chapter 3. On the other hand, by relying primarily on interviews, I have also relied on farmers' own descriptions of their practices and activities. It is not always straightforward for farmers (and people in general) to think beyond the confines of practical constraints, but I have explored this by teasing out contradictions in farmers' own accounts of their ideologies and practices, and drawing on my own and other theoretical ways

of interpreting those accounts. For example, in Chapter 6 I contrasted farmers' perceptions of being 'outside the market' with evidence that their activities and practices remain embedded within market relations. Any study of autonomy must draw then on both emic and etic approaches in order to make sense of how agency is shaped by and responds to structural conditions. However, undertaking longer-term ethnographic work, in which the researcher directly observes farmers' practices and activities would permit a more *etic* perspective than I have deployed here. This would allow an even deeper reflection of the entanglement of farmers' own mental states, structural conditions, and practices.

The disadvantage of this approach is that 'autonomy' remains broadly defined. A study of farmers' autonomy – like this one – suffers from needing to attend to many different dimensions. In attempting to do full justice to autonomy, I have at times felt overwhelmed by the number of issues to consider and the amount of data I have collected. At other times, I have found myself frustrated by only being able to scratch the surface and make cursory remarks on important issues (e.g. on intra-household dynamics). To make sense of all of this, I have leaned heavily on broad class and ideology categories – which although useful for illustrating some of the different trajectories that are emerging, also lose some of the finer aspects of variation and the ambiguities that pervade the categories. However, the agency-centric approach to autonomy provides a framework for more focused studies. Future work could explore the 'local' autonomy that farmers enjoy in specific sets of relations. Or they could concentrate on self-determination, freedom, or conscious control rather than all three at once. Given what I have discussed above, studies of territorial or community-level political and biotechnical autonomy could also offer interesting perspectives. Although these different aspects of autonomy remain connected as a whole, a narrower focus on any one could reveal important issues.

By studying 'alternative farms', I have deliberately sampled farmers who maintain ecological and social values which are proximate to agroecology. Accordingly, this study does not explicitly test whether 'political autonomy' is or is not aligned with struggles for more 'biotechnical autonomy', although I have explored some of the links between them. However, following Magne et al.'s (2019) work, the distinction between these autonomies does create the conceptual framework for more rigorous testing, rather than the increasingly used assumption that peasants are "inherently ecological and opposed to capitalism" (Soper, 2020, p. 2). This testing in particular needs to consider the extent to which agroecology and food sovereignty reproduce masculine notions of self-sufficiency, assumptions about the desirability of land-based livelihood (and that this should be the only form of livelihood), and the subsistence-commercial binary. Part of this testing must also attend to the autonomy of other agents in food systems – conventional farmers, consumers, food traders

and processes too all have agency and degrees of autonomy which may not align with that of 'alternative farmers'.

In the end, a focus on farmers' autonomy is to read into how farmers as *agents* feed into processes of structural transformations and change. It is to emphasise their role in and against transitions to capitalism, and perhaps transitions beyond. It is a direct attempt to find evidence of an emancipatory impulse among farmers. I have argued that this impulse has not given rise to any kind of 'conscious control' over structural conditions, and farmers for the most part are being channelled into reproducing markets and market competition. As such, to paraphrase Bhaskar (1998b, p. 216), the explanation for changing food systems in Cornwall and Calabria does not lie in the desires of farmers to change them that way, but it remains a very important theoretical and political limit it *may yet* do so.

8.3 Summary: towards agroecological autonomy?

The above discussion summarised my answers to the research questions. The first section discussed the nature of farmers' autonomy in Cornwall and Calabria. I brought together the discussions on self-determination, freedom and conscious control. I argued firstly that farmers' autonomy is *relational*, and depends on positions in society that socialise, limit and create opportunities for farmers to modify their structural conditions. More specifically, this relational autonomy is a position that farmers have within and across multiple social structures. I briefly summarised some of the key issues in relation to the state, markets, personal relations, institutionalised associations, nature and the mafia. I then explored how these positions of autonomy might drive an expanding dynamic of autonomy for these farmers and the food systems they are in. I argued that the alter-hegemonic trajectory is ultimately constrained by its own internal dynamic of competition. By contrast, the counter-hegemonic trajectory is more constrained at present, but lacks a strong competition dynamic and so is more compatible with an expansion in the number of alternative farms. Despite these differences, both groups have an individual and collective interest in working against the conventional food system.

The second section then discussed what farmers' autonomy tells us about agroecology in these regions and Europe more generally. I argued that while farmers do not draw on a discourse of 'agroecology', they maintain a range of social and ecological values that are compatible. In part thanks to their 'room for manoeuvre' in markets, they are able to realise many of these values. Conditions are different in the two regions, and there is more space for optimism in Calabria. Not only is land relatively accessible, there are also strong remnants of peasant culture (*agricoltura contadina),* more mixed farming and generalised household self-sufficiency practices, and an

emerging back-to-the-land movement rooted in familial networks. There are also state/policy structures which inadvertently create a barrier to commercialisation and capitalization. Overall, in both regions the pursuit of ecological and social forms of farming is motivated by a conscious desire. Although a few farmers in Calabria expressed an absence of other opportunities, most farmers were actively trying to maintain and develop farming livelihoods. However, the prospect of competitive markets, in the alter-hegemonic trajectory, entails that these opportunities for ecological forms of production may be constrained in the future. Many of these attempts to develop ecological forms of production are already reproducing aspects of peripheral capitalism.

In navigating the many social and natural structures they face, farmers' autonomy depends on selective distancing and access to multiple circuits of reproduction. Through biotechnical autonomy, farmers are becoming more dependent on 'co-production between man and nature'. Similarly, through networks of reciprocity, farmers are putting more emphasis on personal relations. To the extent that personal relations and relations with nature are favoured, this gives rise to a particular form of *agroecological autonomy.* However, all farmers remain attached to other circuits of reproduction, and understandably so as depending solely on personal and natural relations would also be a restriction of autonomy. Nonetheless, increasingly favouring an agroecological autonomy offers perhaps the best possibility for countering the eco-social metabolic rifts of contemporary capitalism. I have argued that counter-hegemonic farms in particular mobilise these relations in order to confront or evade market and state relations. The biggest barrier to an agroecological autonomy, in both regions, is a lack of people actively engaged in agriculture. This is connected above all to the ongoing disarticulation between production and consumption, between the rural and the urban, between periphery and core. Unless this can be resolved, and I have suggested that the alter-hegemonic trajectory cannot do so, the prospects of a more agroecological future in Europe are slim. This requires more people willing to pursue land-based livelihoods, and more opportunities for them to do so. I explore some of these issues in the following chapter.

9 Conclusion

I began this thesis describing capitalism as ‘a global system with no centre, no conscious brain and no feeling heart’. While there is no single centre of capitalism, there remain *cores* that integrate peripheral and rural regions into capitalism’s indifferent dynamics. Tilzey argues that the adverse integration of the global South creates a basis for radical anti-capitalist movements. By contrast, Europeans, as part of the northern core of global capitalism, are integrated into capitalism as both producers and consumers. This gives rise to a condition of social, but not necessarily sectoral articulation. I have explored these dynamics as they play out in rural European peripheries. Both Cornwall and Calabria have experienced adverse integration into their respective cores. As I discussed in Chapter 4, both remain dominated by agriculture and sectoral disarticulation (though this is partially resolved for Cornwall through tourism), and Calabria is characterised by an on-going presence of ‘semi-subsistence’ forms of farming.

Within these contexts, I have explored the nature of farmers’ autonomy, through the lens of the agency-structure relation. While ‘alternative farms’ are unevenly integrated into their peripheral capitalist contexts, they largely occupy what Tilzey (2018) has identified as an ‘alter-hegemonic’ position and ideology. Maintaining (or in the case of the back-to-the-land migrants, acquiring) access to the means of production, these farmers remain market dependent and/or integrated into capitalism through labour relations and the commodification of subsistence. Because of access to relatively stable off-farm work, state subsidies and opportunities offered by alternative food networks (AFNs), many of these farmers are able to attain a degree of autonomy if not *from* markets, then at least *within* them. This is not an even set of processes. Farmers in Calabria face more opportunities linked to the availability of land and a persistent set of agrarian traditions on which to build. However, they also face weaker local markets and fewer opportunities for stable off-farm work. In both regions, individual farmers are integrated to different degrees, and some farmers have better (i.e. more monopolistic) market positions than others. This notwithstanding, I confirm Tilzey’s thesis that farmers in the global North – even its relative peripheries – remain in a broad condition of ‘social articulation’.

However, as I explored in the previous two chapters, an alter-hegemonic trajectory remains blocked by its own internal dynamics of competition, and circumscribed by competition with the dominant ‘cheap food regime’ (McMichael, 2012). As a result, I suggested that the ability of farmers to realise their social and ecological values might be compromised in the medium to long run. By contrast, a counter-hegemonic trajectory, which puts more emphasis on biotechnical autonomy and reciprocal relations, faces more constraints in the short-term. These include a lack of nearby ‘like-minded’

farmers and the on-going pressures of market dependency. I also argued that this trajectory may lead to more autonomy in the longer-run. As (if) the number of smaller-scale counter-hegemonic farms increase, they are likely increasingly to reinforce one another – rather than competing with one another in markets. In this way, the counter-hegemonic trajectory is the only viable option for agroecology to be 'scaled-out' (Rosset & Altieri, 2017). By way of concluding, I want to discuss some of the challenges such a trajectory faces, what a counter-hegemonic autonomy might look like, and some of the trade-offs it faces.

9.1 Postmodernism, peasants and peripheries

Both Cornwall and Calabria have been posed as questions. *La questione meridionale,* or the 'Southern Question', has persisted in Italy since the time of unification. The 'Cornish Question' also now refers to Cornish self-determination and political control (Sandford, 2002). These questions have been answered in two ways. Firstly, from an 'orientalist' perspective which sees people of southern Italy or of Cornwall as backwards and bereft of civilisation (Perry, 1993a; J. Schneider, 1998). Secondly, from a critical perspective that emphasises the adverse integration of these regions into imperial dynamics. Gramsci, for example, quoting the Turin Communists perceived how the "Northern bourgeoisie has subjugated the South of Italy and the Islands, and reduced them to exploitable colonies" (Gramsci, 1978, p. 441). Some 70 years after Gramsci offered his thoughts on the Southern Question, the terms have changed. The Italian sociologist Franco Cassano offered instead *Il pensiero meridionale*, or Southern thought:

> "A thought from the South, a South that thinks the South, wants to achieve the maximum autonomy from this gigantic mutation, to set evaluation standards different from those that hold forth today, to think of a different ruling class and a different grammar of poverty and wealth, to conceive the dignity of a different way of life" (Cassano, 2012, p. 2).

This thought constitutes the quintessential postmodern response to the condition of peripheralism. It is a rejection of dominant development paradigms, and a demand for the dignity of people and communities to define their agency and autonomy. Cassano is clear that Southern thought is not a mere reassertion of tradition, nor does it seek to replace modernity's totalitarianism:

> "Yet, precisely because it was born on the sea, Southern thought is not extraneous to modernity and knows that they share some of the same roots. But because, contrary to modernity, it has not lost the gift of moderation, Southern thought tries to prevent modernity from becoming one-dimensional, and to defend it from the numerous historical choices that seem to reduce it to an example of the perpetual and unstoppable motion of Monsieur le Capital" (Cassano, 2012, p. 4).

In this, Cassano has articulated something very close to the demand for autonomy that underpins agroecology and food sovereignty today. In Chapter 2, I discussed the notion of a new 'peasant subjectivity', as put forward by van der Ploeg (in Bernstein et al., 2018, p. 695) and McMichael (2008, p. 225). This subjectivity – like all postmodern subjectivities – does not stem from a pure Kantian notion of rationality. It is instead a confused and muddled subjectivity, made up of different and contradictory values and ideologies shaped by, but not reducible to, class and other eco-social relations[154]. This confusion, which permits the different Marxist, populist and anarchist interpretations of the peasantry, is something to celebrate. At the very least, it indicates that the totality of 'Monsieur le Capital' is incomplete, and that other worlds persist, even if marginalised, even if only imagined. This suggest that agents always retains the capacity to transform the social conditions in which they exist.

I have argued in the preceding chapters that, amidst the confusion, farmers occupy a spectrum from sub-hegemonic to counter-hegemonic ideologies. These ideologies *broadly* correspond with class positions, with small capitalists tending to have more sub-hegemonic views and PCPs and part-time farms having a mix of alter- and counter-hegemonic views. Across these, sub- and alter-hegemonic ideologies 'will the inevitable' of market participation, while counter-hegemonic ideologies 'will what is denied'. Particularly the counter-hegemonic view suggests that farmers retain some degree of self-determination that allows them to transcend the logic of their positions in society. On this basis, I have argued that class relations shape, but do not determine, human agency. As such, agroecology and food sovereignty remain diverse, contested and changing, and through *diálogo de saberes*, or 'wisdom-dialogues' (Martínez-Torres & Rosset, 2014) they sustain a pluralist vision of moderation across traditional knowledges and modern science (Rosset & Altieri, 2017). In this way, agroecology aims to avoid the fundamentalism or 'epistemological violence' of capitalism and modernity, whereby "a way of life in one part of the world aspires to become the way of life of the entire planet" (Cassano, 2001, p. 6).

Contained in this idea too is a rejection of *historical determinism*. The possibility of transformations in the social structure – both within and beyond capitalism – are structurally constrained and enabled. However, if there is space for human agency, there is space for conscious and agent-driven transformation. I have argued that the possibility and extent of conscious control is the weakest aspect of farmers' autonomy. As discussed in Chapter 2, the peasant subject lacks the dialectical necessity of Marx's proletariat to seize control of the means of production, and the coherence that

[154] "The 'we' of our starting point is very much a question rather than an answer: it affirms the social character of the scream, but poses the nature of that sociality as a question" (J. Holloway, 2002, p. 4).

populist accounts often ascribe to it. Nonetheless, some farmers are trying to 'scale-out' their numbers and institutionalise aspects of alterity, including through new openings in the state. Because the peasantry remains confused and divided (including, albeit ambiguously, across Marxist class categories), I have chosen not to use the term 'peasant' analytically. But the rise of agroecology and food sovereignty justifies considering the term *politically* (Edelman, 2009). This includes addressing the possibility that peasant movements which may overcome internal class and ideological divisions, to forge an iterative, and partially anarchist, trajectory of autonomy. It demands an answer to the question: can the peasant subject become a revolutionary subject?

9.2 Counter-hegemony and agroecological autonomy

I argued in the preceding chapters that sub-hegemonic and alter-hegemonic trajectories of autonomy are inevitably constrained by their dependencies on large consumer classes and their own dynamics of competition. These dynamics are likely to reproduce metabolic rifts and the social and sectoral disarticulation that characterise peripheral regions. In the context of already saturated alternative food networks, one farmer's autonomy in the market compromises another's. The counter-hegemonic trajectory, in contrast, is more immediately constrained by the lack of like-minded farmers and sectoral disarticulations that constrain reciprocal relations. Despite these constraints, I have suggested a counter-hegemonic trajectory offers a more promising future, in which one farmer's autonomy depends on, rather than compromises, the autonomy of their neighbours. On this basis, I suggest that only a counter-hegemonic trajectory allows the peasant subject to become a revolutionary one.

A counter-hegemonic trajectory would aim to 're-articulate' rural communities, taking as a starting premise that "decisions and food systems should be localized as far as is possible and effective, but no further" (Chappell, 2015, p. 727). What this means in practice is necessarily subject to contestations, preferences, experimentations, and a whole range of eco-social constraints. One vision of such a future is Tilzey's (2018, p. 316) counter-hegemonic 'livelihood sovereignty', which advocates a "'de- or no-growth solidarity', wherein the ecological imperative to construct 'steady-state' economies in a world without fossil fuels is united with the political means of obviating exploitation and growth through equality, cooperation, reciprocity, and 'commoning'". Another is Smaje's (2020, p. 141) 'small farm future', "based on the careful husbanding of overwhelmingly local resources, which must be normalised in the political economy as something that's widely supported and that most people actively practise." These are grand visions, but visions that take into account the complexities and ambiguities of 'localised' food systems, the need to be responsive to context, and a pluralistic or postmodern view of the world.

Partly in response to these visions, but also in response to the experiences of farmers in Cornwall and Calabria, I am interested how autonomy relates to a counter-hegemonic trajectory and vision of post-capitalism. Both Tilzey and Smaje use the language of peasant autonomy, but I suggest that they would benefit from a more specific conceptualisation. In Chapter 2, I reviewed and critiqued existing uses of peasant autonomy. I put forward instead an ontological notion of autonomy grounded in critical realism. This notion takes human agency, or basic autonomy, as its starting point, and then explores the scope of that agency as self-determination, freedom and conscious control. I have used this framework to show how certain kinds of autonomy (those of market-dependent farmers) are valid, but ultimately constrained and not accessible to all. In the previous chapter, I suggested a more specific notion of *agroecological autonomy*, one grounded in a willing (but not total) subordination to personal relations and nature. Agroecological autonomy reflects the counter-hegemonic ideology, both as outlined by Tilzey and as I have observed among farmers in my sample. By advocating for a more direct reversal of alienation among people and between people and nature, it directly confronts the qualities of capitalism I described in section 2.3.1. It also, by recognising the on-going existence of non-capitalist social and natural structures, provides a clearer sense of what "local autonomies from centralised state and market power" (Smaje, 2020, p. 232) might look like, and the trade-offs they might entail. Manifest primarily as *biotechnical autonomy* and reciprocal relations, agroecological autonomy could serve as a means to recover eco-social metabolisms, or to paraphrase Holloway (2002), to recover the fractured eco-social 'flow of doing'.

Any counter-hegemonic trajectory must confront the contradiction that Agarwal observes in food sovereignty's commitment to democracy and a specific vision of farming and food systems. In arguing for this trajectory, I am not suggesting the peasants are 'inherently ecological and opposed to capitalism'. Nor am I suggesting that those who do not subscribe to this trajectory are merely 'misled by corporate capital'. I am arguing however that sub- and alter-hegemonic trajectories offer a more limited autonomy, and *cannot* realise a vision of democracy grounded in the notion of 'conscious control' over structural conditions. I also suggest that a revolutionary peasant subject, as local, national and global movements, can only be formed by respecting and building on peasants' relational autonomy as individuals, farms, families and communities. In this sense, Chappell (2015, p. 727 original emphasis) aligns La Via Campesina with Hardt and Negri's *multitude,* "as its crucial distinction from previous democratic forms is that it does not require the sacrifice of *singularities*. That is, diverse peoples are able to work together, negotiate, and lobby for societal changes and restructuring, without giving up their distinctiveness." I have suggested, for example, that counter-hegemonic and alter-hegemonic ideologies could find common cause in working to capture more market share from more hegemonic actors in the food system. However, the peasant subject must

avoid becoming a hollow populism of 'us, the people' against the 'adversarial them' (Borras, 2020). It must sustain a specific view of the structures that constrain us (capitalism), and the 'functionaries' (see footnote 24, Chapter 2) that do the bidding of those structures (which is here likely to include larger capitalists, landlords and large landowners, but also increasingly 'right-wing populists'). This entails recognising that the capitalist structures that constrain us are the continuously reproduced outcome of agents' own doings. It also entails actively building direct forms of democracy, grounded in personal relations between agents and 'human-scale' institutions.

As mentioned above, the counter-hegemonic trajectory is constrained by a lack of like-minded farmers and conditions of sectoral disarticulation. The outstanding question then is how might a counter-hegemonic trajectory further unfold? How can personal relations and relations with nature escape the pressures that generate the 'self-reproducing social configuration' (Jessop, 2005) of states and markets? How, in other words, can farmers escape from *Empire*?

9.3 Repeasantisation and re-ruralisation

In Chapter 6, I drew attention to rural depopulation and a lack of labour on farms. This constrained farmers from pursuing labour-driven intensification, more mixed farming and more biotechnical autonomy. I also discussed how a lack of labour meant farmers depended on a range of small-scale machinery. I showed how the lack of non-agricultural sectors (with the exception of tourism) and specialisation within the agricultural sector in peripheral regions constrained local market development and relations of reciprocity between farmers. Under these conditions, farmers are unable to attain a more 'agroecological' relation with nature and reduce their dependencies on markets for inputs and subsistence.

A counter-hegemonic reversal of these constraints depends on integrating more *people* into rural communities (Smaje, 2020; Tilzey, 2018). I use people in the full sense of the word – not as 'labour' employed on existing farms, but rather as people with their own agency and right to autonomy. The current prospects of this happening are not good. Rural communities continue to decline throughout Europe, linked to aging farm populations, declining opportunities for young people, barriers to land access, and on-going processes of urbanisation (European Commission, 2021)[155]. The United Nations' Population Division (2018) estimates that 74% of European populations live in urban areas,

[155] These dynamics have also shaped capitalist farms' reliance on migrant labour in much European agriculture, including Italy and the UK (Corrado, 2011; Findlay & McCollum, 2013). There are important questions about how these migrants can contribute to processes of ruralisation. The example of Riace in Calabria, which sought to integrate migrants into a depopulated rural village is both a cause for optimism, while the Italian state's response is equal cause for pessimism (see Ranci, 2020).

projected to rise to 82% by 2050[156]. This on-going urbanisation raises doubts about whether low-input and labour-intensive agroecological farming could meet the needs of the world population (Bernstein, 2014). Proponents of agroecology argue that good *yields* are possible, but that this depends on adequate labour intensity (Rosset & Altieri, 2017; van der Ploeg, 2013). If urbanisation continues, it is unlikely that rural regions will be able to meet the needs of non-farming populations *agroecologically.* However, as urbanisation is only sustained by fossil fuel-based transport networks and widening metabolic rifts (Moore, 2011), it is unlikely that any kind of agriculture could sustain the current trajectory. Rather, if urbanisation is reversed[157] (a big if), then the problem is, somewhat fantastically, entirely resolved:

> "…because there is no longer a division of labour between city and countryside (the bulk of people now having direct access to land), or the compulsion to minimize the cost of wage foods for profit maximization by capitalists, the imperative to maximize 'cheap' surplus to supply a huge non-farming proletariat is also removed" (Tilzey, 2018, p. 334).

While I cannot offer an account of how such a reversal might happen on scale, this thesis can offer some insights on the dynamics it might involve. In particular, a reversal of urbanisation demands a growing number of 'back-to-the-land' migrants. While attachment to land-based livelihoods appears limited in the global North (Tilzey, 2018), such migrants are already playing a significant role in alternative farming in both Cornwall and Calabria. For many of these farmers, becoming 'peasants' is a *conscious choice*, which partly depends on having had other opportunities (see for example the quote from Alessia in section 5.3.2). For a smaller number, a lack of alternatives, such as limited employment opportunities in rural communities, is also a driver for entering into farming. However, there are also considerable barriers facing back-to-the-land migrants. Access to land, particularly in ways that do not generate imperatives to produce for markets, is a major challenge in Cornwall. *Comodato d'uso* and inheritance in Calabria indicate how greater autonomy is possible, but these overlay land as commodity and absolute private property. This suggests that a reversal of primitive accumulation (Tilzey, 2017) or new non-commodified regimes of property that combine private and commons access (Smaje, 2020) are badly needed. In Chapter 8, I referred to how back-to-the-land migration entails discontinuities in rural communities and farming, which prevents more

[156] In the UK the current figure is around 83% forecast to rise to 90% by 2050, while in Italy the proportion is forecast to rise from 70% today to 81%.
[157] Another part of the solution is likely to be a growing 'hybridity of urban and rural livelihoods' and recognition of urban spaces as potential sites for (agroecological) food production (Tornaghi & Dehaene, 2020). "Agroecological transitions that aim to seriously take into account the urban, need to devise strategies to decouple urbanism and capitalism, if they are not to resign to imagining a future made up only of autonomous self-sufficient rural farmers" (Tornaghi & Dehaene, 2020, p. 600).

agroecological systems emerging. In both regions, this included a lack farming skills. In Cornwall, it also included a lack of social networks to serve as non-commodity relations. However, what back-to-the-land migrants *choose* to do is of crucial importance. Migrants may inject themselves into rural communities in different ways, ranging from consumers of the rural idyll (Bosworth & Willett, 2011), to new capitalists, to counter-hegemonic farmers who re-invigorate peasant traditions.

There are other major challenges facing a counter-hegemonic transition. One concerns whether markets, and what kinds of markets, might play a role in transitioning to post-capitalism, or whether all markets fundamentally and inescapably reproduce capitalism's dynamics. I argued in Chapter 6 that despite their anti-capitalist perspectives, counter-hegemonic farmers remain compelled to participate in markets. This raises the question of whether the very informal market-networks of friends and family that they tend to participate in may offer a transition towards less capitalist forms of markets. Another challenge concerns how to increase sectoral articulation at local, rural levels. The possibility of meeting farmers' needs for capital (including small-scale machinery) and non-agricultural goods through local networks will remain constrained without adequately diverse production in rural communities. This includes addressing, as van der Ploeg[158] and Smaje have recently emphasised, the interface between industry and agriculture in an agroecological future. One possible avenue to explore this is Illich's vision (mentioned in Chapter 2) of a duality between an 'autonomous' sector of convivial, self-provisioning and reciprocal production and a 'heteronomous' sector of socially-necessary and industrial production. A final challenge, and perhaps the greatest, is to find ways to increase conscious control over social structures. I argued in Chapter 7 that while a number of farmers are actively trying to influence their contexts, there remain serious constraints on doing so. As I suggested in Chapter 8, people's beliefs that they *can* deliberately shape social structures is a crucial basis for a more radical form of agency and autonomy.

9.4 Through and against the state?

As I have discussed it here, the role of the state in Europe is a contradictory one. This represents its constitution as a 'social relation', balancing different class and ideological interests at regional, national and European levels. While Tilzey is right to point to its legitimating function, which sustains broad support for the state-capital nexus in Europe, I have also pointed to how some smaller and alternative farms remain excluded from this social contract, and how many farmers are sceptical of the state as a mechanism for transformation (the 'mutual distrust' that van der Ploeg identifies).

[158] Van der Ploeg et al. (2019, p. 13) describe the dependency on machinery as the 'Achilles heel' of agroecological farming, which "can only continue to generate higher incomes if appropriate labour-saving devices are available to contain increases in labour demand. This, in turn assumes the existence of well-functioning technological support structures that are able to generate the socio-technical innovations required."

These concerns relate to, and are informed by, the orthodox Marxist and anarchist perspectives on the state as a possible instrument for social transformation[159].

While CAP and Cohesion Policy serve to reallocate surplus to peripheral regions, these policies also – to some extent – sustain smaller-scale and 'alternative' forms of farming. However, as I highlighted in Chapter 4 and Chapter 6, these supports tend to favour relatively large farms, and encourage family farms into paths of more conventional capitalist accumulation. This includes the distribution of subsidies (including capital supports which encourage indebtedness, or favour wealthier farms), regulations governing food processing (specifically in Calabria), and the framing of support in terms of growth and employment.

The possibility of these alternative farmers influencing (let alone seizing the power of) the state remains limited. It is perhaps greater in a post-UK Europe, where traditions of family farming remain stronger than in the UK. Such influence is perhaps more accessible for alter-hegemonic class-ideology positions, who are not only larger in number and more conformable to existing state discourses, but also draw on a supportive consumer class – a sizeable group who favour the 'localisation and greening' of consumption. However, as I have also indicated, there may be space for a political alliance between alter-hegemonic and counter-hegemonic positions to influence state policy as a way to iteratively improve conditions for small farms, planting the "seeds of future social relations" (Roman-Alcalá, 2021, p. 306). Policy changes which could favour these farms include re-orienting subsidies towards small farms, *in ways which sustain them as small family farms*, as well as new programmes that encourage back-to-the-land migration through land access and education (not unlike the farm start scheme mentioned in 7.2), and favour the *productive* use of rural spaces rather than their transformation into leisure spaces for consumption. While pushing for more state support for smaller and alternative farming forms may serve to *reproduce* state relations, it may also create the conditions for more radical social formations to emerge from renewed rural communities.

9.5 Final remarks

In theorising Southern thought, Cassano describes the uniqueness of the Mediterranean as 'a sea *between* lands', between the 'fundamentalism of the land' and the 'fundamentalism of the sea':

> "It knows the equilibrium of land and sea: not of land alone, or belonging, group, ethnicity, state, language; nor of sea alone, the individuals wrapped up in themselves, irresponsible, the ridiculous isolation of the individual caused by utilitarianism, the silent and frigid fundamentalism of economy. The Mediterranean, which is at the same time departure and

[159] See also Koch (2022) on the tension between state-centric and non-state strategies for social transformation in the degrowth movement.

> return, guards a complex consciousness, the desire to leave in those who remain, and the desire to return in those who depart" (2001, p. 5).

It is this sense of *moderation* that pervades the notion of relational autonomy that I have explored in this thesis. It is a moderation which grasps the *(im)possibility* of struggles for more autonomy (Böhm et al., 2010). Capitalism constrains farmers' autonomy, but so too do many social and natural structures. Autonomy turns first and foremost on a sense of self-determination, manifest as difference, as a scream (J. Holloway, 2002). Through conversations with alternative farmers, I have explored how that self-determination shapes freedom, and how it may yet shape new forms of emancipation, perhaps as greater conscious control over the crises we face today. While autonomy is a complex and contested concept, I have argued in this conclusion that an *agroecological autonomy*, grounded in dependencies on nature and personal relations, offers a deeper sense of autonomy for counter-hegemonic approaches to agroecology. Such an autonomy still entails specific and local forms of heteronomy, but these are perhaps better able to confront the social and sectoral disarticulation that sustains peripheralisation and metabolic rifts.

A counter-hegemonic trajectory appears fanciful. It does so particularly in the global North where most people are integrated into the 'true hegemony' of capitalism. However, through the lens of autonomy that I have applied here, it also appears possible, and urgently necessary. Scott (2012, p. 54) asks whether we should assess institutions based on the kinds of people they foster. This seems a good place to start. As Castoriadis (1997, p. 405) notes we must create "institutions which, by being internalized by individuals, must facilitate their accession to their individual autonomy and their effective participation in all forms of explicit power existing in society." Trapped as we are in a cyclical interplay of agency and structure, the question is how we can find a virtuous spiral, a widening gyre, a trajectory of autonomy. If the question starts with socialisation, about how society comes to shape its members, then we must look for an answer in social structures that give us the tools to reflect critically on those same institutions, and on ourselves, and our own values and ideologies. We must build institutions that foster us as agents who think and feel, and who can collectively negate the indifference of capitalism.

10 References

Agarwal, B. (2014). Food sovereignty, food security and democratic choice: critical contradictions, difficult conciliations. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *41*(6), 1247–1268. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2013.876996

Aiello, V., Reverberi, P. M., & Brasili, C. (2019). Regional diversity in experiences of cohesion policy: The cases of Emilia-Romagna and Calabria. *Papers in Regional Science*, *98*(6), 2275–2293. https://doi.org/10.1111/pirs.12461

Ajates Gonzalez, R., Thomas, J., & Chang, M. (2018). Translating agroecology into policy: The case of France and the United Kingdom. *Sustainability*, *10*(8), 1–19. https://doi.org/10.3390/su10082930

Akram-Lodhi, A. H., & Kay, C. (2010a). Surveying the agrarian question (part 1): Unearthing foundations, exploring diversity. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *37*(1), 177–202. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150903498838

Akram-Lodhi, A. H., & Kay, C. (2010b). Surveying the agrarian question (part 2): Current debates and beyond. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *37*(2), 255–284. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066151003594906

Albanese, M. (2019, January 30). Le vacche sacre della ’ndrangheta non sono più intoccabili [The Sacred Cows of the ’ndrangheta are no longer untouchable]. *L’Espresso*. https://espresso.repubblica.it/attualita/2019/01/30/news/le-vacche-sacre-della-ndrangheta-non-sono-piu-intoccabili-1.331075

Alkire, S. (2005). Subjective quantitative studies of human agency. *Social Indicators Research*, *74*(1), 217–260. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-005-6525-0

Altieri, M. A. (2002). Agroecology: The science of natural resource management for poor farmers in marginal environments. *Agriculture, Ecosystems and Environment*, *93*(1–3), 1–24. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0167-8809(02)00085-3

Amaranto, M., & Biamonte, A. (2014). Una breve analisi del settore agricolo in Calabria [A brief analysis of the agricultural sector in Calabria]. In M. Coscarello (Ed.), *Oltre il consumo e la produzione: percorsi sostenibili di sviluppo locale* (pp. 17–44). Università della Calabria.

Ambrosi, L. (2014). La regione frammentata. Storiografia e identità della Calabria contemporanea [The fragmented region. Historiography and identity of contemporary Calabria]. *Rivista Calabrese Di Storia Del ‘900*, *1*, 15–34.

Amin, S. (1974). *Accumulation on a World Scale: A Critique of the Theory of Underdevelopment*. Monthly Review Press.

Amin, S. (1977). *Imperialism & Unequal Development: Essays by Samir Amin*. Monthly Review Press.

Anderson, C. R., Bruil, J., Chappell, M. J., Kiss, C., & Pimbert, M. P. (2021). *Agroecology now! Transformations towards more just and sustainable food systems*. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1080/21683565.2021.1952363

Anderson, C. R., Maughan, C., & Pimbert, M. (2019). Transformative agroecology learning in Europe: building consciousness, skills and collective capacity for food sovereignty. *Agriculture and Human Values*, *36*(3), 531–547. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10460-018-9894-0

Anderson, J. (2007). Singular Europe: An empire once again? *Geopolitics of European Union Enlargement: The Fortress Empire*, 9–29. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203448984

Anderson, J., & Shuttleworth, I. (2007). Fixing capitalism and Europe’s peripheries: West European imperialism. *Geopolitics of European Union Enlargement: The Fortress Empire*, 125–141. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203448984

Antonucci, L., & Varriale, S. (2020). Unequal Europe, unequal Brexit: How intra-European inequalities shape the unfolding and framing of Brexit. *Current Sociology*, *68*(1), 41–59. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392119863837

Araghi, F. (2010). The invisible hand and the visible foot. In A. H. Akram-Lodhi & C. Kay (Eds.), *Peasants and globalization: Political economy, agrarian transformation and development* (pp. 111–140). Routledge.

Archer, M. (1985). Structuration versus morphogenesis. In S. N. Eisenstadt & H. J. Helle (Eds.), *Macro-sociological Theory: Perspectives on Sociological Theory Volume 1* (pp. 58–88). SAGE Publications.

Archer, M. (1998). Realism and morphogenesis. In M. Archer, R. Bhaskar, A. Collier, T. Lawson, & A. Norrie (Eds.), *Critical realism. Essential readings* (pp. 356–381). Routledge.

Arrighi, G., & Piselli, F. (1987). Capitalist Development in a Hostile Environment: Fueds, Class Struggles and Migrations in a Peripheral Region of Southern Italy. *Review*, *10*(4), 649–751.

Ashe, F. (1999). The Subject. In F. Ashe, A. Finlayson, M. Lloyd, I. MacKenzie, J. Martin, & S. O’Neill (Eds.), *Contemporary Social & Political Theory: An Introduction* (pp. 88–110). Open University Press.

Bacchi, U. (2017, February 21). Italian police break mafia ring exporting fake olive oil to U.S. *Reuters*. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-italy-crime-food/italian-police-break-mafia-ring-exporting-fake-olive-oil-to-u-s-idUSKBN1602BD

Barraclough, S., & Utting, P. (1987). *Food security trends and prospects in Latin America.* (No. 99).

Baumeister, R. F. (2008). Free Will in Scientific Psychology. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *3*(1), 14–19. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-6916.2008.00057.x

Behr, H., & Stivachtis, Y. A. (2015). European Union: An empire in new clothes? *Revisiting the European Union as Empire*, 1–16.

Bellamy, A. S., & Ioris, A. A. R. (2017). Addressing the knowledge gaps in agroecology and identifying guiding principles for transforming conventional agri-food systems. *Sustainability*, *9*(3), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.3390/su9030330

Berlin, I. (1969). Two Concepts of Liberty. In *Four Essays on Liberty* (pp. 118–172). Oxford University Press.

Bernstein, H. (1979). African Peasantries: A Theoretical Framework. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, *6*(4), 421–443. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066157908438084

Bernstein, H. (2004). “Changing Before Our Very Eyes”: Agrarian Questions and the Politics of Land in Capitalism Today. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, *4*(1–2), 190–225. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-0366.2004.00078.x

Bernstein, H. (2006). Is There an Agrarian Question in the 21st Century? *Canadian Journal of Development Studies / Revue Canadienne d’études Du Développement*, *27*(4), 449–460. https://doi.org/10.1080/02255189.2006.9669166

Bernstein, H. (2009). V.I. Lenin and A.V. Chayanov: Looking back, looking forward. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *36*(1), 55–81. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150902820289

Bernstein, H. (2010). *Class dynamics of agrarian change*. Fernwood Publishing.

Bernstein, H. (2014). Food sovereignty via the 'peasant way': a sceptical view. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *41*(6), 1031–1063. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2013.852082

Bernstein, H. (2020). Unpacking 'authoritarian populism' and rural politics: some comments on ERPI. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2020.1786063

Bernstein, H., Friedmann, H., van der Ploeg, J. D., Shanin, T., & White, B. (2018). Forum: Fifty years of debate on peasantries, 1966–2016. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, *45*(4), 689–714. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2018.1439932

Bertacchini, E. (2009). Regional legislation in Italy for the protection of local varieties. *Journal of Agriculture and Environment for International Development*, *103*(1/2), 51–63.

Bhaskar, R. (1998a). Philosophy and Scientific Realism. In M. Archer, R. Bhaskar, A. Collier, T. Lawson, & A. Norrie (Eds.), *Critical Realism: Essential Readings* (pp. 16–47). Routledge.

Bhaskar, R. (1998b). Societies. In M. Archer, R. Bhaskar, A. Collier, T. Lawson, & A. Norrie (Eds.), *Critical Realism: Essential Readings* (pp. 206–257). Routledge.

Bhaskar, R. (1998c). The Logic of Scientific Discovery. In M. Archer, R. Bhaskar, A. Collier, T. Lawson, & A. Norrie (Eds.), *Critical Realism: Essential Readings* (pp. 48–103). Routledge.

Biagini, L., Antonioli, F., & Severini, S. (2020). The Role of the Common Agricultural Policy in Enhancing Farm Income: A Dynamic Panel Analysis Accounting for Farm Size in Italy. *Journal of Agricultural Economics*, *71*(3), 652–675. https://doi.org/10.1111/1477-9552.12383

Bialasiewicz, L. (2012). Off-shoring and out-sourcing the borders of Europe: Libya and EU border work in the Mediterranean. *Geopolitics*, *17*(4), 843–866. https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2012.660579

Bland, W. L., & Bell, M. M. (2007). A holon approach to agroecology. *International Journal of Agricultural Sustainability*, *5*(4), 280–294. https://doi.org/10.1080/14735903.2007.9684828

Böhm, S., Dinerstein, A. C., & Spicer, A. (2010). (Im)possibilities of autonomy: Social movements in and beyond capital, the state and development. *Social Movement Studies*, *9*(1), 17–32. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742830903442485

Borghesi, R. (2014). Peasant resistances. *Scienze Del Territorio*, *2*, 153–158.

Borras, S. M. (2020). Agrarian social movements: The absurdly difficult but not impossible agenda of defeating right-wing populism and exploring a socialist future. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, *20*(1), 3–36. https://doi.org/10.1111/joac.12311

Bosman, P. (2015). Ancient debates on autarkeia and our global impasse. *Phronimon*, *16*(1), 16–28. https://journals.co.za/content/phron/16/1/EJC186231

Bosworth, G., & Willett, J. (2011). Embeddedness or Escapism? Rural Perceptions and Economic Development in Cornwall and Northumberland. *Sociologia Ruralis*, *51*(2), 195–214. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9523.2011.00533.x

Brenner, R. P. (2001). The Low Countries in the transition to capitalism. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, *1*(2), 275–338. https://doi.org/10.1484/m.corn-eb.3.293

Brunazzo, M., & Sala, V. Della. (2016). Italy between transformismo and transformation. In J. M. Magone, B. Laffan, & C. Schweiger (Eds.), *Core-Periphery Relations in the European Union: Power and Conflict in a Dualist Political Economy*. Routledge.

Buchanan, C. (2020). *Food Autonomy at a Time of Capitalist Crisis : A Participatory Video inquiry into Thessaloniki ' s Autonomous Food Initiatives*. Coventry University.

Burawoy, M. (2020). A Tale of Two Marxisms: Remembering Erik Olin Wright (1947–2019). *New Left Review*, *121*(Jan/Feb), 67–98. https://doi.org/10.1177/0032329220966075

Byres, T. J. (1995). Political Economy, the Agrarian Question and the Comparative Method. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, *22*(4), 561–580. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066159508438589

Byres, T. J. (1996). *Capitalism from Above and Capitalism from Below: An Essay in Comparative Political Economy*. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-25117-9

Calderón Farfán, J. C., Torres Soto, M. A., Quintero Montoya, V., Cruz Rodríguez, L., González Cerón, J., Vargas Guadarrama, L. A., & Arias Torres, D. (2020). Practices of food autonomy in the nasa indigenous cosmovision in Colombia. *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems*, *45*(2), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/21683565.2020.1812789

Calvário, R. (2017). Food sovereignty and new peasantries: on re-peasantization and counter-hegemonic contestations in the Basque territory. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, *44*(2), 402–420. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2016.1259219

Carillo, F., Carillo, M. R., Venittelli, T., & Zazzaro, A. (2013). Aging and succession on Italian farms. *Politica Agricola Internazionale - International Agricultural Policy*, *1*, 39–55. https://ideas.repec.org/a/ags/eiapai/166005.html

Carolan, M. S. (2005). Society, biology, and ecology: Bringing nature back into sociology's disciplinary narrative through critical realism. *Organization and Environment*, *18*(4), 393–421. https://doi.org/10.1177/1086026605281697

Carrigan, M., Lazell, J., Bosangit, C., & Magrizos, S. (2017). Burgers for tourists who give a damn! Driving disruptive social change upstream and downstream in the tourist food supply chain. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, *25*(11), 1563–1582. https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2017.1291652

Cassano, F. (2001). Southern Thought. *Thesis Eleven*, *67*(1), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1177/0725513601067000002

Cassano, F. (2012). *Southern Thought and Other Essays on the Mediterranean*. Fordham University Press. https://doi.org/10.5422/fordham/9780823233649.003.0001

Castellanos-Navarrete, A., & Jansen, K. (2018). Is Oil Palm Expansion a Challenge to Agroecology? Smallholders Practising Industrial Farming in Mexico. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, *18*(1), 132–155. https://doi.org/10.1111/joac.12195

Castoriadis, C. (1997). *The Castoriadis Reader* (D. A. Curtis (ed.)). Blackwell Publishing Ltd. https://iep.utm.edu/castoria/

Castree, N. (2002). False Antitheses? Marxism, Nature and Actor-Networks. *Antipode*, *34*(1), 111–146. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8330.00228

Casula, M. (2020). *Economic Growth and Cohesion Policy Implementation in Italy and Spain: Institutions, Strategic Choices, Administrative Change*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Cayuela, S. R. (2021). Bridging Materiality and Subjectivity : Expanding the Commons in Cooperation. *Antipode*, *Early View*, 1–25. https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12719

Cembalo, L., Migliore, G., & Schifani, G. (2013). Sustainability and New Models of Consumption: The Solidarity Purchasing Groups in Sicily. *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics*, *26*, 281–

303. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10806-011-9360-0

Chappell, M. J. (2015). Global movements for food justice. In R. J. Herring (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Food, Politics, and Society* (Issue January, pp. 717–738). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195397772.013.015

Chappell, M. J. (2016). Alternative Agriculture, the Vernacular, and the MST: Re-creating Subsistence as the Sustainable Development of Human Rights. In J. Murton, D. Bavington, & C. Dokis (Eds.), *Subsistence under Capitalism: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (pp. 254–291). McGill-Queen's University Press.

Chappell, M. J., & Schneider, M. (2016). The new three-legged stool: Agroecology, food sovereignty, and food justice. In M. Rawlinson & C. Ward (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Food Ethics* (1st ed., pp. 419–429). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315745503

Chase-Dunn, C., & Hall, T. D. (1997). *Rise and Demise: Comparing World-Systems*. Westview Press.

Chatterton, P. (2005). Making autonomous geographies: Argentina's popular uprising and the "Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados" (Unemployed Workers Movement). *Geoforum*, *36*(5), 545–561. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2004.10.004

Chirkov, V., Ryan, R. M., Kim, Y., & Kaplan, U. (2003). Differentiating Autonomy From Individualism and Independence: A Self-Determination Theory Perspective on Internalization of Cultural Orientations and Well-Being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *84*(1), 97–110. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.84.1.97

Christman, J. (2009). *The Politics of Persons: Individual Autonomy and Socio-historical Selves*. Cambridge University Press.

Christman, J. (2018). Autonomy in Moral and Political Philosophy. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, *Spring 2018*. https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2018/entries/autonomy-moral/

Ciliberti, S., & Frascarelli, A. (2018). The CAP 2013 reform of direct payments : redistributive effects and impacts on farm income concentration in Italy. *Agricultural and Food Economics*, *6*(19), 1–18.

Clapp, J. (2017). Food self-sufficiency: Making sense of it, and when it makes sense. *Food Policy*, *66*, 88–96. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodpol.2016.12.001

Clarke, N., Cloke, P., Barnett, C., & Malpass, A. (2008). The spaces and ethics of organic food. *Journal of Rural Studies*, *24*(3), 219–230. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2007.12.008

Cleaver, H. (2019). *Thirty-Three Lessons on Capital: Reading Marx Politically*. Pluto Press.

Conway, G. R. (1987). The properties of agroecosystems. *Agricultural Systems*, *24*(2), 95–117. https://doi.org/10.1016/0308-521X(87)90056-4

Coolsaet, B. (2016). Towards an agroecology of knowledges: Recognition, cognitive justice and farmers' autonomy in France. *Journal of Rural Studies*, *47*, 165–171. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.JRURSTUD.2016.07.012

Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership. (2018). *10 Opportunities: Towards a local industrial strategy*. https://www.cioslep.com/vision/10-opportunities

Corrado, A. (2011). Clandestini in the Orange Towns: Migrations and Racisms in Calabria's Agriculture . *Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts*, *4*(2), 191–201. https://doi.org/10.2979/racethmulglocon.4.2.191

Corrado, A. (2018). Agricoltura biologica, convenzionalizzazione e catene del valore: un'analisi in Calabria [Organic agriculture, conventionalisation and value chains: an analysis in Calabria]. *Meridiana Revista Di Storia e Scienze Sociali*, *93*(Agricolture e Cibo), 155–177.

Coscarello, M. (2014). Nuove forme di produzione e commercializzazione [New forms of production and commecialisation]. In M. Coscarello (Ed.), *Oltre il consumo e la produzione: percorsi sostenibili di sviluppo locale* (pp. 45–64). Università della Calabria.

D'Amico, S. (2015). *Alternative Food Networks (AFNs) in Calabria. A sociological exploration of interaction dynamics*. Wageningen University.

D'Attoma, J. (2017). Divided nation: The north-south cleavage in Italian tax compliance. *Polity*, *49*(1), 69–99. https://doi.org/10.1086/689982

Danermark, B., Ekstrom, M., Jakobsen, L., & Karlsson, J. C. (2002). *Explaining Society: An Introduction to Critical Realism in the Social Sciences*. Routledge.

Dansero, E., & Pettenati, G. (2015). Alternative Food Networks As Spaces for the Re-Territorialisation of Food. the Case of Turin. In G. Cinà & E. Dansero (Eds.), *Localizing urban food strategies. Farming cities and performing rurality. 7th International Aesop Sustainable Food Planning Conference Proceedings* (pp. 552–565). Politecnico di Torino.

Davidova, S., Bailey, A., Erjavec, E., Gorton, M., & Thomson, K. (2013). *Semi-subsistence Farming - Value and Directions of Development*. European Parliament.

Daviron, B., & Gibbon, P. (2002). Global Commodity Chains and African Export Agriculture. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, *2*(2), 137–161.

DEFRA. (n.d.). *LEADER Applicant Handbook 2014-2020*. http://www.localactioncornwall.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/SELAG-Handbook-Template-v4.1Final-14.03.2017.pdf

DEFRA. (2016). *Currently registered organic farms in UK*. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/currently-registered-organic-farms-in-uk

DEFRA. (2019a). *RDPE Growth Programme: Business Development Handbook*. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rdpe-growth-programme

DEFRA. (2019b). *Structure of the agricultural industry in England and the UK at June*. https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/structure-of-the-agricultural-industry-in-england-and-the-uk-at-june

DEFRA. (2019c). *Supplying and using animal by-products as farm animal feed*. https://www.gov.uk/guidance/supplying-and-using-animal-by-products-as-farm-animal-feed

DEFRA. (2020). *Farming is Changing*. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-farming-changes-to-farming-in-england

DEFRA, DAERA (NI), Welsh Government, & The Scottish Government. (2020). *Agriculture in the United Kingdom 2019*. https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/agriculture-in-the-united-kingdom-2019

Dey, I. (2003). *Qualitative Data Analysis*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203412497

Dryden, J. (n.d.). Autonomy. In *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

Edelman, M. (2009). Synergies and tensions between rural social movements and professional researchers. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *36*(1), 245–265. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150902820313

Edelman, M. (2014). Food sovereignty: forgotten genealogies and future regulatory challenges. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *41*(6), 959–978. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2013.876998

Emery, S. B. (2010). *In Better Fettle: Improvement, Work and Rhetoric in the Transition to Environmental Farming in the North York Moors* [Durham University]. http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/379/

Emery, S. B. (2015). Independence and individualism: conflated values in farmer cooperation? *Agriculture and Human Values*, *32*(1), 47–61. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10460-014-9520-8

Emmel, N. (2014). *Sampling and Choosing Cases in Qualitative Research: A Realist Approach*. SAGE Publications.

Escobar, A. (2001). Culture sits in places: reflections on globalism and subaltern strategies of localization. *Political Geography*, *20*, 139–174.

Esteva, G. (2015). The Hour of Autonomy. *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies*, *10*(1), 134–145. https://doi.org/10.1080/17442222.2015.1034436

Esteva, G. (2019). Autonomy. In A. Kothari, A. Salleh, A. Escobar, F. Demaria, & A. Acosta (Eds.), *Pluriverse: A Post-Development Dictionary* (pp. 99–101). Tulika Books.

European Commission. (n.d.). *Regional Policy*. Retrieved January 5, 2022, from https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index.cfm/en/

European Commission. (2016). *CAP in your Country: Italy*. *September 2016*. https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sites/agriculture/files/cap-in-your-country/pdf/it_en.pdf

European Commission. (2017a). *CAP in your Country: United Kingdom*. *June 2017*, 1–6. https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/food-farming-fisheries/by_country/documents/cap-in-your-country-uk_en.pdf

European Commission. (2017b). *Direct Payments for Farmers 2015-2020* (Issue May). https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/541f0184-759e-11e7-b2f2-01aa75ed71a1

European Commission. (2019). Direct Payments: Eligibility for Direct Payments of the Common Agricultural Policy. In *Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural*. https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-

European Commission. (2020a). *Factsheet on 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme for Calabria*. https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/rural-development/country_en

European Commission. (2020b). *Historic EU payments by MS & NUTS-2 region*. https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/EU-Level/Historic-EU-payments-by-MS-NUTS-2-region-filter-by/2qa4-zm5t

European Commission. (2021). *Evaluation of the impact of the CAP on generational renewal, local development and jobs in rural areas*. https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/4bd0b0a2-0503-11ea-8c1f-01aa75ed71a1

Eurostat. (2008). NACE Rev. 2 – Statistical classification of economic activities in the European Community. In *Office for Official Publications of the European Communities*. Eurostat. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-manuals-and-guidelines/-/KS-RA-07-015

Eurostat. (2020a). *Farm Structure Survey: Survey Coverage*. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Farm_structure_survey_–_survey_coverage

Eurostat. (2020b). *GDP per capita in EU regions*. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/9618249/1-26022019-AP-EN.pdf/f765d183-c3d2-4e2f-9256-cc6665909c80

Eurostat. (2021). *Farm Structure Surveys*. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/agriculture/data/database

Everett, S., & Aitchison, C. (2008). The role of food tourism in sustaining regional identity: A case study of Cornwall, South West England. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, *16*(2), 150–167. https://doi.org/10.2167/jost696.0

FarmingUK. (2018, April 27). Family behind Riviera Produce crowned Cornwall's Farmers of the Year. *FarmingUK*. https://www.farminguk.com/news/family-behind-riviera-produce-crowned-cornwall-s-farmers-of-the-year_49164.html

Farole, T., Rodríguez-Pose, A., & Storper, M. (2011). Cohesion policy in the European Union: Growth, geography, institutions. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, *49*(5), 1089–1111. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.2010.02161.x

Ferguson, R. S., & Lovell, S. T. (2014). Permaculture for agroecology: Design, movement, practice, and worldview. A review. *Agronomy for Sustainable Development*, *34*(2), 251–274. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13593-013-0181-6

Ferrari, S., Hernández-Maskivker, G., & Nicotera, T. (2021). Social-cultural sustainability of roots tourism in Calabria, Italy: A tourist perspective. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*. https://doi.org/10.1177/13567667211020493

Findlay, A., & McCollum, D. (2013). Recruitment and employment regimes: Migrant labour channels in the UK's rural agribusiness sector, from accession to recession. *Journal of Rural Studies*, *30*, 10–19. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2012.11.006

Fois, F. (2018). Enacting Experimental Alternative Spaces. *Antipode*, *51*(1), 107–128. https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12414

Foster, J. B. (1999). Marx's Theory of Metabolic Rift: Classical Foundations for Environmental Sociology. *American Journal of Sociology*, *105*(2), 366–405.

Friedmann, H. (1980). Household Production and the National Economy: Concepts for the Analysis of Agrarian Formations. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, *7*(2), 158–184. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066158008438099

Gamble, A. (2010). 'Anglo-America' and Atlantic Europe. In K. Dyson & A. Sepos (Eds.), *Which Europe? The politics of differentiated integration* (pp. 99–111). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230289529_7

Gardner, B. L. (1992). Changing Economic Perspectives on the Farm Problem. *Journal of Economic Literature*, *30*(1), 62–101.

Garner, J. V. (n.d.). Cornelius Castoriadis (1922—1997). *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. https://iep.utm.edu/castoria/

Gaudio, G., Angelisi, S., & Coscarello, M. (2008). L'agricoltura contadina tra competitività e innovazione [Peasant agriculture between competitiveness and innovation]. *XLV Convegno Di Studi SIDEA*.

Gibson-Graham, J. K. (2006). *The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It): A Feminist Critique of Political Economy*. University of Minnesota Press. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-7939.1998.tb00525.x

Gidwani, V., & Ramamurthy, P. (2018). Agrarian questions of labor in urban India: middle migrants, translocal householding and the intersectional politics of social reproduction. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *45*(5–6), 994–1017. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2018.1503172

Giordano, B., & Roller, E. (2003). A comparison of city region dynamics in the UK, Spain and Italy: More similarities than differences? *Regional Studies*, *37*(9), 911–927. https://doi.org/10.1080/0034340032000143913

Giovannini, A., & Vampa, D. (2019). Towards a new era of regionalism in Italy? A comparative perspective on autonomy referendums. *Territory, Politics, Governance*, *8*(4), 579–597. https://doi.org/10.1080/21622671.2019.1582902

Giuca, S. (2012). Conoscere la filiera corta [Knowing the short supply chain]. In F. Giarè & S. Giuca (Eds.), *Agricoltori e filiera corta: Profili giuridici e dinamiche socio-economiche* (pp. 11–29). Istituto Nazionalie di Economia Agraria.

Gliessman, S. (1990). *Agroecology: researching the ecological basis for sustainable agriculture*. Springer.

Gliessman, S. (2005). Agroecology and agroecosystems. In J. Pretty (Ed.), *The earthscan reader in sustainable agriculture* (pp. 104–114). Earthscan.

Gliessman, S. (2016). Transforming food systems with agroecology. *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems*, *40*(3), 187–189. https://doi.org/10.1080/21683565.2015.1130765

Godfrey-Wood, R., & Mamani-Vargas, G. (2017). The Coercive Side of Collective Capabilities: Evidence from the Bolivian Altiplano. *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, *18*(1), 75–88. https://doi.org/10.1080/19452829.2016.1199169

Gonzales, T. (2015). An Indigenous Autonomous Community-Based Model for Knowledge Production in the Peruvian Andes. *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies*, *10*(1), 107–133. https://doi.org/10.1080/17442222.2015.1034433

González, C. F., Ollivier, G., & Bellon, S. (2021). Transdisciplinarity in agroecology : practices and perspectives in Europe. *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems*, *45*(4), 523–550. https://doi.org/10.1080/21683565.2020.1842285

González de Molina, M. (2013). Agroecology and politics. how to get sustainability? about the Necessity for a political agroecology. *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems*, *37*(1), 45–59. https://doi.org/10.1080/10440046.2012.705810

Goodman, D., DuPuis, E. M., & Goodman, M. K. (2012). Alternative Food Networks: Knowledge, practice and politics. In *Geography Review* (Vol. 22, Issue 2). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-024-1179-9_513

Gorz, A. (1982). *Farewell to the Working Class: An Essay on Post-Industrial Socialism*. Pluto Press.

Graddy-Lovelace, G. (2021). Farmer and non-farmer responsibility to each other: Negotiating the social contracts and public good of agriculture. *Journal of Rural Studies*, *82*, 531–541. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2020.08.044

Gramsci, A. (1978). *Selections from Political Writings, (1921-1926)* (Q. Hoare (ed.)). Lawrence and Wishart.

Graziano, P. R. (2010). Regional & Federal Studies From Local Partnerships to Regional Spaces for Politics? Europeanization and EU Cohesion Policy in Southern Italy. *Regional & Federal Studies*, *20*(3), 315–333. https://doi.org/10.1080/13597566.2010.484568

Grey, S., & Patel, R. (2015). Food sovereignty as decolonization: some contributions from Indigenous movements to food system and development politics. *Agriculture and Human Values*, *32*(3), 431–444. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10460-014-9548-9

Hahamovitch, C., & Halpern, R. (2004). Not a "Sack of Potatoes": Why Labor Historians Need to Take Agriculture Seriously. *International Labor and Working-Class History*, *65*(65), 3–10. https://doi.org/10.1017/S014754790400002X

Hale, A. (2001). Representing the Cornish: Contesting heritage interpretation in Cornwall. *Tourist Studies*, *1*(2), 185–196. https://doi.org/10.1177/146879760100100205

Hardt, M., & Negri, A. (2000). *Empire*. Harvard University Press.

Harris, M. (1976). History and Significance of the Emic/Etic Distinction. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, *5*, 329–350.

Harrison, O. (2011). Negri, self-valorisation and the exploration of the common. *Subjectivity*, *4*(1), 29–46. https://doi.org/10.1057/sub.2010.28

Harvey, D. (2018). *A Companion to Marx's Capital: The Complete Edition*. Verso.

Hathaway, M. D. (2016). Agroecology and permaculture: addressing key ecological problems by rethinking and redesigning agricultural systems. *Journal of Environmental Studies and Sciences*, *6*(2), 239–250. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13412-015-0254-8

Hathaway, M. J. (2016). Rethinking the Legacies of "Subsistence Thinking." In J. Murton, D. Bavington, & C. Dokis (Eds.), *Subsistence under Capitalism: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (pp. 234–253). McGill-Queen's University Press.

HLPE Committee on World Food Security. (2019). *Agroecological and other innovative approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition*. www.fao.org/cfs/cfs-hlpe

Holloway, J. (2002). *Change the World Without Taking Power*. Pluto Press.

Holloway, L. (2002). Smallholding, hobby-farming, and commercial farming: Ethical identities and the production of farming spaces. *Environment and Planning A*, *34*(11), 2055–2070. https://doi.org/10.1068/a34261

Holt-Giménez, E., & Altieri, M. A. (2013). Agroecology, food sovereignty, and the new green revolution. *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems*, *37*(1), 90–102. https://doi.org/10.1080/10440046.2012.716388

Holt-Giménez, E., & Shattuck, A. (2011). Food crises, food regimes and food movements: Rumblings of reform or tides of transformation? *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *38*(1), 109–144. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2010.538578

Hopkins, R. J. (2010). *Localisation and Resilience at the Local Level: The Case of Transition Town Totnes (Devon, UK)*.

Huggins, C. (2018). The Future of Cohesion Policy in England: Local Government Responses to Brexit and the Future of Regional Funding. *Cuadernos Europeos de Deusto*, *58*, 131–154.

Ibrahim, S., & Alkire, S. (2007). Agency and empowerment: A proposal for internationally comparable indicators. *Oxford Development Studies*, *35*(4), 379–403. https://doi.org/10.1080/13600810701701897

Ieraci, G. (1998). European integration and the relationship between state and regions in Italy: the

interplay between national and common agricultural policies. *Regional and Federal Studies*, *8*(2), 21–33. https://doi.org/10.1080/13597569808421049

Ilbery, B., Courtney, P., Kirwan, J., & Maye, D. (2010). Marketing concentration and geographical dispersion: A survey of organic farms in England and Wales. *British Food Journal*, *112*(9), 962–975. https://doi.org/10.1108/00070701011074345

Ilbery, B., Kirwan, J., & Maye, D. (2016). Explaining Regional and Local Differences in Organic Farming in England and Wales: A Comparison of South West Wales and South East England. *Regional Studies*, *50*(1), 110–123. https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2014.895805

Ilbery, B., & Maye, D. (2011). Clustering and the spatial distribution of organic farming in England and Wales. *Area*, *43*(1), 31–41. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4762.2010.00953.x

Iles, A., & Montenegro de Wit, M. (2015). Sovereignty at What Scale? An Inquiry into Multiple Dimensions of Food Sovereignty. *Globalizations*, *12*(4), 481–497. https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2014.957587

Illich, I. (1975). *Tools for Conviviality*. Fontana/Collins.

Illich, I. (1976). *Medical Nemesis: the expropriation of health*. Pantheon Books. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.4.5946.719-a

Ingram, J., & Kirwan, J. (2011). Matching new entrants and retiring farmers through farm joint ventures: Insights from the Fresh Start Initiative in Cornwall, UK. *Land Use Policy*, *28*(4), 917–927. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2011.04.001

Iocco, G., Lo Cascio, M., & Perrotta, D. (2019). Lavoro migrante, mercati nidificati e sviluppo rurale nelle aree ad agricoltura intensiva del Sud Italia: due esperienze in Calabria e Sicilia [Migrant labour, nested markets and rural development in the areas of intensive agriculture in South Italy: two . *Mondi Migranti*, *1*, 37–51. https://doi.org/10.3280/mm2019-001003

Istat. (2020). *Risultati economici e struttura delle aziende agricole [Economic performance and structure of farms]*. http://dati.istat.it/

James, T. C. (2016). *Resilience characteristics of transformations in social-ecological systems : a case study of the Tamar Valley Organics Group* [Exeter University]. https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/bitstream/handle/10871/23146/JamesT.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y

Jansen, K. (2015). The debate on food sovereignty theory: agrarian capitalism, dispossession and agroecology. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *42*(1), 213–232. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2014.945166

Jessop, B. (2005). Critical Realism and the Strategic-Relational Approach. *New Formations: A Journal of Culture, Theory and Politics*, *56*, 40–53.

Jones, B. M. (2019). (Com)Post-Capitalism. *Environmental Humanities*, *11*(1), 3–26. https://doi.org/10.1215/22011919-7349347

Kallis, G. (2018). *Degrowth*. Agenda Publishing.

Kant, I. (1998). *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511605727.010

Kasu, B. B., Jacquet, J., Junod, A., Kumar, S., & Wang, T. (2019). Rationale and Motivation of Agricultural Producers in Adopting Crop Rotation in the Northern Great Plains, USA. *International Journal of Agricultural Sustainability*, *17*(4), 287–297.

https://doi.org/10.1080/14735903.2019.1633900

Keating, M. (2010). The Spatial Dimension. In K. Dyson & A. Sepos (Eds.), *Which Europe? The politics of differentiated integration* (pp. 54–66). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781420086980-19

Keating, M., & Wilson, A. (2014). Regions with regionalism? The rescaling of interest groups in six European states. *European Journal of Political Research*, *53*(4), 840–857. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12053

Knudsen, A.-C. L. (2009). *Farmers on Welfare: The Making of Europe's Common Agricultural Policy*. Cornell University Press. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/4189%5Cnpapers3://publication/uuid/E126432B-7978-47D5-88D3-4BB1D5DC024B

Koch, M. (2022). State-civil society relations in Gramsci , Poulantzas and Bourdieu : Strategic implications for the degrowth movement. *Ecological Economics*, *193*(March 2021), 107275. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2021.107275

Koestler, A. (1967). *The Ghost in the Machine*. Hutchinson and Co.

Kopczyńska, E. (2020). Are there local versions of sustainability? Food networks in the semi-periphery. *Sustainability*, *12*(7). https://doi.org/10.3390/su12072845

Kumar, R. (2016). The Perils of Productivity: Making "Good Farmers" in Malwa, India. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, *16*(1), 70–93. https://doi.org/10.1111/joac.12084

La Via Campesina. (2018). *La Via Campesina Members*. https://viacampesina.org/en/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/03/List-of-members.pdf

Lawson, T. (1998). Economic Science without Experimentation. In M. Archer, R. Bhaskar, A. Collier, T. Lawson, & A. Norrie (Eds.), *Critical Realism: Essential Readings* (pp. 144–169). Routledge.

Lemarchand, R. (1989). Review: The Mafia and Clientalism: Roads to Rome in Post-War Calabria. *The American Political Science Review*, *83*(4), 1436–1437.

Levinas, E. (1969). *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*. Duquesne University Press.

Levkoe, C. Z., Brem-Wilson, J., & Anderson, C. R. (2019). People, power, change: three pillars of a food sovereignty research praxis. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, *46*(7), 1389–1412. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2018.1512488

Li, T. M. (2009). To Make Live or Let Die? Rural Dispossession and the Protection of Surplus Populations. *Antipode*, *41*, 66–93. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444397352.ch4

Li, T. M. (2015). Can there be food sovereignty here? *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *42*(1), 205–211. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2014.938058

Lobley, M., Barr, D., Bowles, L., Huxley, R., Kehyaian, E., Rozarieux, N. de, & Shepherd, A. (2011). *A Review of Cornwall's Agri-Food Industry : Final Report* (No. 32; CRPR Research Report).

Lobley, M., & Butler, A. (2010). The impact of CAP reform on farmers' plans for the future: Some evidence from South West England. *Food Policy*, *35*(4), 341–348. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodpol.2010.04.001

Loconto, A., & Fouilleux, E. (2019). Defining agroecology: Exploring the circulation of knowledge in FAO's Global Dialogue. *Jrnl. of Soc. of Agr. & Food*, *25*(2), 116–137. http://www.fao.org/director-general/my-statements/detail/en/c/1113703/

Long, N. (1984). Creating Space for Change: A perspective on the sociology of Development. *Sociologia Ruralis*, *24*(3–4), 168–184. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9523.1984.tb00642.x

Mackenzie, C., & Stoljar, N. (2000). Introduction: Autonomy Refigured. In C. Mackenzie & N. Stoljar (Eds.), *Relational Autonomy: Feminist Perspectives on Autonomy, Agency and the Social Self* (pp. 3–32). Oxford University Press.

Magne, M.-A., Martin, G., Moraine, M., Ryschawy, J., Thenard, V., Triboulet, P., & Choisis, J.-P. (2019). An Integrated Approach to Livestock Farming Systems' Autonomy to Design and Manage Agroecological Transition at the Farm and Territorial Levels. In *Agroecological Transitions: From Theory to Practice in Local Participatory Design* (pp. 45–68). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-01953-2_4

Magone, J. M., Laffan, B., & Schweiger, C. (2016). The European Union as a dualist political economy. In J. M. Magone, B. Laffan, & C. Schweiger (Eds.), *Core-Periphery Relations in the European Union: Power and Conflict in a Dualist Political Economy* (pp. 1–16). Routledge.

Mamonova, N., & Franquesa, J. (2020). Populism, Neoliberalism and Agrarian Movements in Europe. Understanding Rural Support for Right-Wing Politics and Looking for Progressive Solutions. *Sociologia Ruralis*, *60*(4), 710–731. https://doi.org/10.1111/soru.12291

Marino, S. (2019). Ethnic identity and race: the "double absence" and its legacy across generations among Australians of Southern Italian origin. Operationalizing institutional positionality. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *42*(5), 707–725. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2018.1451649

Marsden, T., & Sonnino, R. (2008). Rural development and the regional state: Denying multifunctional agriculture in the UK. *Journal of Rural Studies*, *24*(4), 422–431. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2008.04.001

Marten, G. G. (1988). Productivity, stability, sustainability, equitability and autonomy as properties for agroecosystem assessment. *Agricultural Systems*, *26*(4), 291–316. https://doi.org/10.1016/0308-521X(88)90046-7

Martinez-Alier, J. (1995). In Praise of Smallholders. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, *23*(1), 140–148. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066159508438603

Martínez-Torres, M. E., & Rosset, P. M. (2014). Diálogo de saberes in La Vía Campesina: food sovereignty and agroecology. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *41*(6), 979–997. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2013.872632

Marx, K. (1973). *Grundrisse*. Marxists Internet Archive. https://doi.org/10.2307/40138257

Marx, K. (1976). *Capital Volume I*. Penguin Books.

Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1992). *The Communist Manifesto*. Oxford University Press.

Maughan, C., & Ferrando, T. (2018). Land as a commons: Examples from the UK and Italy. In J. L. Vivero-Pol, T. Ferrando, O. De Schutter, & U. Mattei (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Food as a Commons* (pp. 329–342). Routledge.

May, T. (1994). *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism*. The Pennsylvania State University Press.

Maye, D. (2018). Examining Innovation for Sustainability from the Bottom Up: An Analysis of the Permaculture Community in England. *Sociologia Ruralis*, *58*(2), 331–350. https://doi.org/10.1111/soru.12141

McCune, N., Rosset, P. M., Salazar, T. C., Saldívar Moreno, A., & Morales, H. (2017). Mediated territoriality: rural workers and the efforts to scale out agroecology in Nicaragua. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *44*(2), 354–376. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2016.1233868

McMichael, P. (2008). Peasants make their own history, but not just as they please... *Journal of Agrarian Change*, *8*(2–3), 205–228. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-0366.2008.00168.x

McMichael, P. (2009a). A food regime genealogy. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *36*(1), 139–169. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150902820354

McMichael, P. (2009b). Food sovereignty, social reproduction and the agrarian question. In A. H. Akram-Lodhi & C. Kay (Eds.), *Peasants and Globalization:Political economy, rural transformation and the agrarian question* (pp. 288–312). Routledge.

McMichael, P. (2012). The land grab and corporate food regime restructuring. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *39*(3–4), 681–701. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2012.661369

McMichael, P. (2013). *Food regimes and agrarian questions*. Practical Action. https://doi.org/10.3362/9781780448794

McMichael, P. (2015). A comment on Henry Bernstein's way with peasants, and food sovereignty. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *42*(1), 193–204. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2014.936853

Medina, G., & Potter, C. (2017). The nature and developments of the Common Agricultural Policy: lessons for European integration from the UK perspective. *Journal of European Integration*, *39*(4), 373–388. https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2017.1281263

Meijering, L., Huigen, P., & Van Hoven, B. (2007). Intentional communities in rural spaces. *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie*, *98*(1), 42–52. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9663.2007.00375.x

Merkens, H. (2004). Selection procedures, sampling, case construction. In U. Flick, E. von Kardoff, & I. Steinke (Eds.), *A Companion to Qualitative Research: Paradigms, Theories, Methods, Practice and Contexts* (pp. 165–171). SAGE Publications.

Mete, V., & Sciarrone, R. (2012). Overcoming the 'Ndrangheta: contrasting methods and continuities of action: A report from the "La ferita" conference, Reggio Calabria, November 2010. *Modern Italy*, *17*(2), 257–260. https://doi.org/10.1080/13532944.2012.673760

Migliore, G., Caracciolo, F., Lombardi, A., Schifani, G., & Cembalo, L. (2014). Farmers' participation in civic agriculture: The effect of social embeddedness. *Culture, Agriculture, Food and Environment*, *36*(2), 105–117. https://doi.org/10.1111/cuag.12038

Migliorini, P., Gkisakis, V., Gonzalvez, V., Raigón, M. D., & Bàrberi, P. (2018). Agroecology in mediterranean Europe: Genesis, state and perspectives. *Sustainability*, *10*(8), 1–23. https://doi.org/10.3390/su10082724

Mingione, E. (1993). Italy: the resurgence of regionalism. *International Affairs*, *69*(2), 305–318. https://doi.org/10.2307/2621596

Modica, G., Praticò, S., & Di Fazio, S. (2017). Abandonment of traditional terraced landscape: A change detection approach (a case study in Costa Viola, Calabria, Italy). *Land Degradation and Development*, *28*(8), 2608–2622. https://doi.org/10.1002/ldr.2824

Montresor, E., Pecci, F., & Pontarollo, N. (2011). The convergence process of the European regions: The role of regional policy and the common agricultural policy. *Studies in Agricultural Economics*, *113*(2), 167–177. https://doi.org/10.7896/j.1112

Moore, J. W. (2010). The end of the road? Agricultural revolutions in the capitalist world-ecology, 1450-2010. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, *10*(3), 389–413. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-0366.2010.00276.x

Moore, J. W. (2011). Transcending the metabolic rift: A theory of crises in the capitalist world-ecology. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *38*(1), 1–46. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2010.538579

Moore, J. W. (2017). The Capitalocene Part II: accumulation by appropriation and the centrality of unpaid work/energy. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *45*(2), 237–279. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2016.1272587

Morgan, K. (2002). The English question: Regional perspectives on a fractured nation. *Regional Studies*, *36*(7), 797–810. https://doi.org/10.1080/0034340022000006114

Morgan, K., & Murdoch, J. (2000). Organic vs. conventional agriculture: Knowledge, power and innovation in the food chain. *Geoforum*, *31*(2), 159–173. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0016-7185(99)00029-9

Murton, J., Bavington, D., & Dokis, C. (2016). Introduction: Why Subsistence? In J. Murton, D. Bavington, & C. Dokis (Eds.), *Subsistence under Capitalism: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (pp. 3–39). McGill-Queen's University Press.

Musolino, D., Distaso, A., & Marcian, C. (2020). The Role of Social Farming in the Socio-Economic Development of Highly Marginal Regions : An Investigation in Calabria. *Sustainability*, *12*(13), 1–20.

Napoli, L. (2006). A New Reality for Italian Rural Areas : Educational Farms. In P. Claval, M. P. Pagnini, & M. Scaini (Eds.), *The Cultural Turn in Geography, 18-20th of September 2003* (pp. 333–345).

Navarrete, M. (2009). How do farming systems cope with marketing channel requirements in organic horticulture? the case of market-gardening in Southeastern France. *Journal of Sustainable Agriculture*, *33*(5), 552–565. https://doi.org/10.1080/10440040902997785

Naylor, L. (2017). Reframing autonomy in political geography: A feminist geopolitics of autonomous resistance. *Political Geography*, *58*, 24–35. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2017.01.001

Nelson, J., & Stock, P. (2018). Repeasantisation in The United States. *Sociologia Ruralis*, *58*(1), 83–103. https://doi.org/10.1111/soru.12132

Nelson, K. C., Brummel, R. F., Jordan, N., & Manson, S. (2014). Social networks in complex human and natural systems: The case of rotational grazing, weak ties, and eastern US dairy landscapes. *Agriculture and Human Values*, *31*(2), 245–259. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10460-013-9462-6

Niska, M., Vesala, H. T., & Vesala, K. M. (2012). Peasantry and Entrepreneurship As Frames for Farming: Reflections on Farmers' Values and Agricultural Policy Discourses. *Sociologia Ruralis*, *52*(4), 453–469. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9523.2012.00572.x

Owen, L., Udall, D., Franklin, A., & Kneafsey, M. (2020). Place-based pathways to sustainability: Exploring alignment between geographical indications and the concept of agroecology territories in Wales. *Sustainability*, *12*(12). https://doi.org/10.3390/SU12124890

Patel, R. (2009). What does food sovereignty look like? *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *36*(3), 663–673. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150903143079

Patnaik, U. (1979). Neo-populism and Marxism: The Chayanovian view of the agrarian question and its fundamental fallacy. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, *6*(4), 375–420.

Payton, P. (1989). *Modern Cornwall: the changing nature of peripherality*. *Ph.D.*

Payton, P. (1993). Contemporary Cornwall: A Suitable Case for Treatment? In P. Payton (Ed.), *Cornwall Since the War* (pp. 6–21). Institute of Cornish Studies.

Payton, P. (2017). *Cornwall : A History* (3rd ed.). University of Exeter Press.

Perry, R. (1993a). Cornwall Circa 1950. In P. Payton (Ed.), *Cornwall Since the War* (pp. 22–45). Institute of Cornish Studies.

Perry, R. (1993b). Economic Change and "Opposition" Economics. In P. Payton (Ed.), *Cornwall Since the War* (pp. 48–83). Institute of Cornish Studies.

Pickerill, J., & Chatterton, P. (2006). Notes towards autonomous geographies: Creation, resistance and self-management as survival tactics. *Progress in Human Geography*, *30*(6), 730–746. https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132506071516

Pimbert, M. (2009). *Towards Food Sovereignty: Reclaiming autonomous food systems* (Reclaiming Diversity & Citizenship).

Pimbert, M. (2018). Global Status of Agroecology. *Economic & Political Weekly*, *53*(41), 52–57.

Pimbert, M., & Moeller, N. (2018). Absent Agroecology Aid: On UK Agricultural Development Assistance Since 2010. *Sustainability*, *10*(2), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.3390/su10020505

Pionetti, C. (2005). *Sowing autonomy: gender and seed politics in semi-arid India*. IIED.

Pipyrou, S. (2014). Altruism and Sacrifice: Mafia Free Gift Giving in South Italy. *Anthropological Forum*, *24*(4), 412–426. https://doi.org/10.1080/00664677.2014.948379

Placanica, A. (1999). *Storia della Calabria: dall'antichità ai giorni nostri [History of Calabria: from antiquity to the present day]*. Donzelli Editore.

Pollini, J. (2013). Bruno latour and the ontological dissolution of nature in the social sciences: A critical review. *Environmental Values*, *22*(1), 25–42. https://doi.org/10.3197/096327113X13528328798192

Potter, C., & Tilzey, M. (2005). Agricultural policy discourses in the European post-Fordist transition: Neoliberalism, neomercantilism and multifunctionality. *Progress in Human Geography*, *29*(5), 581–600. https://doi.org/10.1191/0309132505ph569oa

Pratley, E. M., & Dodson, B. (2014). The spaces for farmers in the city: A case study comparison of Direct Selling Alternative Food Networks in Toronto, Canada and Belo Horizonte, Brazil. *Canadian Food Studies / La Revue Canadienne Des Études Sur l'alimentation*, *1*(1), 72–87. https://doi.org/10.15353/cfs-rcea.v1i1.22

Preston, B. L., King, A. W., Ernst, K. M., Absar, S. M., Nair, S. S., & Parish, E. S. (2015). Scale and the representation of human agency in the modeling of agroecosystems. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, *14*, 239–249. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cosust.2015.05.010

Princen, T. (1997). The shading and distancing of commerce: When internalization is not enough. *Ecological Economics*, *20*(3), 235–253. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0921-8009(96)00085-7

Princen, T. (2010). *Treading Softly: Paths to Ecological Order*. MIT Press. https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/8573.001.0001

Ramprasad, V. (2019). Debt and vulnerability: indebtedness, institutions and smallholder agriculture in South India. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, *46*(6), 1286–1307. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2018.1460597

Ranci, P. (2020). Migrants to repopulate depopulated villages - Riace in Calabria, Italy and its mayor Mimmo Lucano. In C. Henry, J. Rockström, & N. Stern (Eds.), *Standing up for a Sustainable World: Voices of Change* (pp. 309–313). Edward Elgar. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781800371781.00058

Renting, H., Marsden, T. K., & Banks, J. (2003). Understanding alternative food networks: Exploring the role of short food supply chains in rural development. *Environment and Planning A*, *35*(3), 393–411. https://doi.org/10.1068/a3510

Ribot, J. (2014). Cause and response: vulnerability and climate in the Anthropocene. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *41*(5), 667–705. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2014.894911

Ribot, J. C. (2007). Representation, citizenship and the public domain in democratic decentralization. *Development*, *50*(1), 43–49. https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.development.1100335

Ricketts Hein, J., Ilbery, B., & Kneafsey, M. (2006). Distribution of local food activity in England and Wales: An index of food relocalization. *Regional Studies*, *40*(3), 289–301. https://doi.org/10.1080/00343400600631533

Roca, B., Martín-Díaz, E., & Díaz-Parra, I. (2017). Introduction: Social movements and radical politics in the European periphery - a world-systems analysis. In B. Roca, E. Martín-Díaz, & I. Díaz-Parra (Eds.), *Challenging Austerity: Radical Left and Social Movements in the South of Europe* (pp. 1–16). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315438092

Roederer-Rynning, C., & Matthews, A. (2019). What common agricultural policy after brexit? *Politics and Governance*, *7*(3), 40–50. https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.v7i3.2117

Roman-Alcalá, A. (2021). Agrarian anarchism and authoritarian populism: towards a more (state-)critical 'critical agrarian studies.' *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *48*(2), 298–328. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2020.1755840

Rosset, P. M., & Altieri, M. A. (1997). Agroecology versus input substitution: A fundamental contradiction of sustainable agriculture. *Society and Natural Resources*, *10*(3), 283–295. https://doi.org/10.1080/08941929709381027

Rosset, P. M., & Altieri, M. A. (2017). *Agroecology: science and politics*. Practical Action. https://www.cabdirect.org/cabdirect/abstract/20183059233

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2004). Autonomy is no illusion. In J. Greenberg, S. L. Koole, & T. Pyszczynski (Eds.), *Handbook of Experimental Existential Psychology* (pp. 449–479). Guilford Press.

Sabia, D. R. (1988). Rationality, Collective Action, and Karl Marx. *American Journal of Political Science*, *32*(1), 50–71.

Samuel, S. (2016). In Defence of Vernacular Ways. In J. Murton, D. Bavington, & C. Dokis (Eds.), *Subsistence under Capitalism: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (pp. 318–345). McGill-Queen's University Press.

Sandford, M. (2002). *The Cornish Question: Devolution in the South-West Region*. *September*, 86.

Sandford, M. (2006). English regionalism through the looking glass: Perspectives on the English Question from the North-East and Cornwall. *National Identities*, *8*(1), 77–93. https://doi.org/10.1080/14608940600571347

Sassatelli, R., & Scott, A. (2010). Novel food, new markets and trust regimes responses to the erosion of consumers' confidence in austria, Italy and the UK. *European Societies*, *3*(2), 213–244. https://doi.org/10.1080/146166901200543339

Sawyer, R. K. (2001). Emergence in sociology: Contemporary philosophy of mind and some implications for sociological theory. *American Journal of Sociology*, *10*(3), 551–585. https://doi.org/10.1086/338780

Sayer, A. (1998). Abstraction: A realist interpretation. In M. Archer, R. Bhaskar, A. Collier, T. Lawson, & A. Norrie (Eds.), *Critical Realism: Essential Readings* (pp. 120–143). Routledge.

Schneider, J. (1998). Introduction: The Dynamics of Neo-orientalism in Italy (1848–1995). In J. Schneider (Ed.), *Italy's "Southern Question": Orientalism in One Country* (pp. 1–23). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003085768-1

Schneider, M., & McMichael, P. (2010). Deepening, and repairing, the metabolic rift. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *37*(3), 461–484. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2010.494371

Schneider, S., & Niederle, P. A. (2010). Resistance strategies and diversification of rural livelihoods: The construction of autonomy among Brazilian family farmers. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *37*(2), 379–405. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066151003595168

Schweiger, C. (2016). National interests and differentiated integration in the EU under crisis conditions: The cases of Germany, France and Britain. In J. M. Magone, B. Laffan, & C. Schweiger (Eds.), *Core-Periphery Relations in the European Union: Power and Conflict in a Dualist Political Economy* (pp. 59–71). Routledge.

Sciarrone, R. (2010). Mafia and Civil Society: Economico-criminal Collusion and Territorial Control in Calabria. In J.-L. Briquet & G. Favarel-Garrigues (Eds.), *Organized Crime and States: The Hidden Face of Politics* (pp. 173–196). Palgrave Macmillan.

Scott, J. C. (1985). *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. Yale University Press.

Scott, J. C. (2012). *Two Cheers for Anarchism: Six Easy Pieces on Autonomy, Dignity, and Meaningful Work and Play*. Princeton University Press / The Anarchist Library.

Selwyn, B., & Miyamura, S. (2014). Class Struggle or Embedded Markets? Marx, Polanyi and the Meanings and Possibilities of Social Transformation. *New Political Economy*, *19*(5), 639–661. https://doi.org/10.1080/13563467.2013.844117

Sen, A. (1992). *Inequality Reexamined*. Clarendon Press.

Sepos, A. (2016). The centre – periphery divide in the Eurocrisis: A theoretical approach. In J. M. Magone, B. Laffan, & C. Schweiger (Eds.), *Core-Periphery Relations in the European Union: Power and Conflict in a Dualist Political Economy* (pp. 35–55). Routledge.

Sergi, A., & Lavorgna, A. (2016). *'Ndrangheta: The Glocal Dimensions of the Most Powerful Italian Mafia*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Sevilla-Guzmán, E., & Woodgate, G. (1997). Sustainable rural development: from industrial agriculture to agroecology. In M. Redclift & G. Woodgate (Eds.), *The International Handbook of Environmental Sociology* (pp. 83–100). Edward Elgar. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781843768593.00013

Sevilla Guzmán, E., & Woodgate, G. (2013). Agroecology: Foundations in agrarian social thought and sociological theory. *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems*, *37*(1), 32–44. https://doi.org/10.1080/10440046.2012.695763

Seymour, J. (1976). *The Complete Book of Self-Sufficiency*. Corgi Books.

Shrubsole, G. (2019). *Who owns England?* William Collins.

Shucksmith, M., & Herrmann, V. (2002). Future changes in British agriculture: Projecting divergent farm household behaviour. *Journal of Agricultural Economics*, *53*(1), 37–50. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1477-9552.2002.tb00004.x

SINAB. (2020a). *Bio-Statistiche [Organic Statistics]*. http://www.sinab.it/content/bio-statistiche

SINAB. (2020b). *Bio in Cifre 2020 [Organic in numbers 2020]*. www.sinab.it

Smaje, C. (2014a). Kings and commoners: Agroecology meets consumer culture. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, *14*(3), 365–383. https://doi.org/10.1177/1469540513488406

Smaje, C. (2014b). Peasants , Food Sovereignty and the Land Workers' Alliance. *The Land Magazine*, 29–31. http://joc.sagepub.com/content/early/2013/05/13/146954051348840

Smaje, C. (2020). *A Small Farm Future: Making the Case for a Society Built Around Local Economies, Self-Provisioning Agricultural Diversity, and a Shared Earth*. Chelsea Green.

Soil Association. (2020). *Ten-Years to Agroecology and Sustainable Diets: 2020 Progress Report*. https://www.soilassociation.org/media/22078/ten-years-to-agroecology-and-sustainable-diets-progress-report.pdf

Sonnino, R., & Marsden, T. (2006a). Alternative Food Networks in the South West of England: Towards a New Agrarian Eco-Economy? *Research in Rural Sociology and Development*, *12*, 299–322. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1057-1922(06)12012-0

Sonnino, R., & Marsden, T. (2006b). Beyond the divide: rethinking relationships between alternative and conventional food networks in Europe. *Journal of Economic Geography*, *6*(2), 181–199. https://doi.org/10.1093/jeg/lbi006

Soper, R. (2020). From protecting peasant livelihoods to essentializing peasant agriculture: problematic trends in food sovereignty discourse. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, *47*(2), 265–285. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2018.1543274

Southern England Farms. (2021). *About - SEF LTD Southern England Farms*. http://www.sefltd.com/en/about

Steiner, P., & Stewart, J. (2009). From autonomy to heteronomy (and back): The enaction of social life. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, *8*(4), 527–550. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-009-9139-1

Stock, P. V., & Forney, J. (2014). Farmer autonomy and the farming self. *Journal of Rural Studies*, *36*, 160–171. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2014.07.004

Stock, P. V., Forney, J., Emery, S. B., & Wittman, H. (2014). Neoliberal natures on the farm: Farmer autonomy and cooperation in comparative perspective. *Journal of Rural Studies*, *36*, 411–422. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2014.06.001

Stoljar, N. (2015). Feminist perspectives on Autonomy. In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2015). https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2015/entries/feminism-autonomy/

Stone, G. D., & Downum, C. E. (1999). Non-Boserupian Ecology and Agricultural Risk: Ethnic Politics and Land Control in the Arid Southwest. *American Anthropologist*, *101*(1), 113–128. https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.1999.101.1.113

Sutherland, L. A., Barlagne, C., & Barnes, A. P. (2019). Beyond 'Hobby Farming': towards a typology of non-commercial farming. *Agriculture and Human Values*, *36*(3), 475–493. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10460-019-09930-5

Tellarini, V., & Caporali, F. (2000). An input/output methodology to evaluate farms as sustainable agroecosystems: An application of indicators to farms in central Italy. *Agriculture, Ecosystems and Environment*, *77*(1–2), 111–123. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0167-8809(99)00097-3

The Landworkers Alliance. (n.d.). *Our Vision*. Retrieved April 5, 2021, from https://landworkersalliance.org.uk/

Tilzey, M. (2017). Reintegrating economy, society, and environment for cooperative futures: Polanyi, Marx, and food sovereignty. *Journal of Rural Studies*, *53*, 317–334. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2016.12.004

Tilzey, M. (2018). *Political ecology, food regimes, and food sovereignty: Crisis, resistance, and resilience*. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64556-8

Tilzey, M. (2019a). Authoritarian populism and neo-extractivism in Bolivia and Ecuador: the unresolved agrarian question and the prospects for food sovereignty as counter-hegemony. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *46*(3), 626–652. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2019.1584191

Tilzey, M. (2019b). Food democracy as 'Radical' food sovereignty: Agrarian democracy and counter-hegemonic resistance to the neo-imperial food regime. *Politics and Governance*, *7*(4), 202–213. https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.v7i4.2091

Tilzey, M. (2020). Is the 'radical' agroecology of the 'populists' really radical? *POLLEN Biennial Conference*.

Tilzey, M. (2021). From neoliberalism to national developmentalism? Contested agrarian imaginaries of a postneoliberal future for food and farming. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, *21*(1), 180–201. https://doi.org/10.1111/joac.12379

Timmermann, C., Félix, G. F., & Tittonell, P. (2018). Food sovereignty and consumer sovereignty: Two antagonistic goals? *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems*, *42*(3), 274–298. https://doi.org/10.1080/21683565.2017.1359807

Tornaghi, C., & Dehaene, M. (2020). The prefigurative power of urban political agroecology: rethinking the urbanisms of agroecological transitions for food system transformation. *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems*, *44*(5), 594–610. https://doi.org/10.1080/21683565.2019.1680593

Trauger, A. (2014). Toward a political geography of food sovereignty: transforming territory, exchange and power in the liberal sovereign state. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, *41*(6), 1131–1152. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2014.937339

Tregear, A. (2011). Progressing knowledge in alternative and local food networks: Critical reflections and a research agenda. *Journal of Rural Studies*, *27*(4), 419–430. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2011.06.003

Truzzolillo, F. (2011). 'Ndrangheta: Lo stato della ricerca storiografica ['Ndrangheta: The state of histiographic research]. *Modern Italy*, *16*(3), 363–383. https://doi.org/10.1080/13532944.2011.554805

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, P. D. (2018). *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2018 Revision, Online Edition.*

Urbinati, N. (1998). The Souths of Antonio Gramsci and the Concept of Hegemony. In J. Schneider (Ed.), *Italy's "Southern Question": Orientalism in One Country* (pp. 135–156). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003085768-9

Valentine, G. (2013). Tell me about...: Using Interviews as a Research Methodology. In R. Flowerdew

& D. M. Martin (Eds.), *Methods in Guman geography: A Guide for Students Doing a Research Project* (pp. 110–128). Routledge.

van der Ploeg, J. D. (2008). The New Peasantries. In *The New Peasantries: Struggles for Autonomy and Sustainability in an Era of Empire and Globalization*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781849773164

van der Ploeg, J. D. (2009). *I nuovi contadini : le campagne e le risposte alla globalizzazione [The New Peasants: the campaigns and responses to globalisation]*.

van der Ploeg, J. D. (2010). The peasantries of the twenty-first century: The commoditisation debate revisited. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *37*(1), 1–30. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150903498721

van der Ploeg, J. D. (2013). *Peasants and the art of farming: A Chayanovian manifesto*. Practical Action.

van der Ploeg, J. D. (2014). Peasant-driven agricultural growth and food sovereignty. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *41*(6), 999–1030. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2013.876997

van der Ploeg, J. D. (2020). The political economy of agroecology. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, *95*(1), 1–24. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2020.1725489

van der Ploeg, J. D., Barjolle, D., Bruil, J., Brunori, G., Costa Madureira, L. M., Dessein, J., Drąg, Z., Fink-Kessler, A., Gasselin, P., Gonzalez de Molina, M., Gorlach, K., Jürgens, K., Kinsella, J., Kirwan, J., Knickel, K., Lucas, V., Marsden, T., Maye, D., Migliorini, P., … Wezel, A. (2019). The economic potential of agroecology: Empirical evidence from Europe. *Journal of Rural Studies*, *71*(October 2019). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2019.09.003

van der Ploeg, J. D., Jingzhong, Y., & Schneider, S. (2012). Rural development through the construction of new, nested, markets: comparative perspectives from China, Brazil and the European Union. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *39*(1), 133–173. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2011.652619

Vandermeer, J. (1995). The Ecological Basis of Alternative Agriculture. *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics*, *26*, 201–224.

Vandermeer, J., Perfecto, I., & Philpott, S. (2010). Ecological Complexity and Pest Control in Organic Coffee Production: Uncovering an Autonomous Ecosystem Service. *BioScience*, *60*(7), 527–537. https://doi.org/10.1525/bio.2010.60.7.8

Venn, L., Kneafsey, M., Holloway, L., Cox, R., Dowler, E., & Tuomainen, H. (2006). Researching European “alternative” food networks: Some methodological considerations. *Area*, *38*(3), 248–258. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4762.2006.00694.x

Vergara-Camus, L. (2019). Capitalism, Democracy, and the Degrowth Horizon. *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*, *30*(2), 217–233. https://doi.org/10.1080/10455752.2017.1344868

Wach, E. (2019). *The Potentials for Agroecology and Food Sovereignty in the Scottish Uplands*. Coventry University.

Walicki, A. (1988). Karl Marx as philosopher of freedom. *Critical Review*, *2*(4), 10–58. https://doi.org/10.1080/08913818808459537

Wallerstein, I. (1974). The rise and future demise of the world capitalist system: Concepts for comparative analysis. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, *16*(4), 387–415. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429269400-14

Watts, D. C. H., Ilbery, B., & Maye, D. (2005). Making reconnections in agro-food geography: Alternative systems of food provision. *Progress in Human Geography in Human Geography*, *29*(1), 22–40. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315237213-9

Watts, D., Ilbery, B., Maye, D., & Holloway, L. (2009). Implementing Pillar II of the Common Agricultural Policy in England: Geographies of the Rural Enterprise Scheme and Processing and Marketing Grant. *Land Use Policy*, *26*(3), 683–694. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2008.09.004

Wezel, A., Bellon, S., Doré, T., Francis, C., Vallod, D., & David, C. (2009). Agroecology as a science, a movement and a practice. *Sustainable Agriculture*, *2*, 27–43. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-0394-0_3

Wezel, Alexander, & Bellon, S. (2018). Mapping agroecology in Europe. New developments and applications. *Sustainability*, *10*(8), 1–3. https://doi.org/10.3390/su10082751

Wezel, Alexander, Herren, B. G., Kerr, R. B., Barrios, E., Gonçalves, A. L. R., & Sinclair, F. (2020). Agroecological principles and elements and their implications for transitioning to sustainable food systems. A review. *Agronomy for Sustainable Development*, *40*(6). https://doi.org/10.1007/s13593-020-00646-z

White, B. (1983). “Agricultural Involution” and its Critics: Twenty Years After. *Critical Asian Studies*, *15*(2), 18–31. https://doi.org/10.1080/14672715.1983.10404871

White, M. (2017). Collective Agency and Community Resilience: A Theoretical Framework to Understand Agricultural Resistance. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*, *7*(4), 1–5. https://doi.org/10.5304/jafscd.2017.074.014

White, M. (2018). *Freedom Farmers: Agricultural Resistance and the Black Freedom Movement*. The University of North Carolina Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/jahist/jaz822

Wilbur, A. (2013). Growing a radical ruralism: Back-to-the-land as practice and ideal. *Geography Compass*, *7*(2), 149–160. https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12023

Wilbur, A. (2014). Back-to-the-house? Gender, domesticity and (dis)empowerment among back-to-the-land migrants in northern italy. *Journal of Rural Studies*, *35*, 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2014.03.005

Willett, J. (2013). National identity and regional development: Cornwall and the campaign for Objective 1 funding. *National Identities*, *15*(3), 297–311. https://doi.org/10.1080/14608944.2013.806890

Willett, J. (2016). Cornwall’s devolution deal: Towards a more sustainable governance? *Political Quarterly*, *87*(4), 582–589. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-923X.12284

Willett, J., & Giovannini, A. (2014). The uneven path of UK devolution: Top-Down vs. Bottom-Up regionalism in England - cornwall and the north-east compared. *Political Studies*, *62*(2), 343–360. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9248.12030

Williams, M. (2003). Why is Cornwall Poor? Poverty and In-Migration since the 1960s. *Contemporary British History*, *17*(3), 55–70. https://doi.org/10.1080/13619460308541003

Wilson, A. (2012). Beyond alternative: Exploring the potential for autonomous food spaces. *Antipode*, *45*(3), 719–737. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2012.01020.x

Wilson, A. (2015). *Sowing the Seeds of a Collective Autonomy: An Analysis of Post-Capitalist Possibilities in Food-Based Livelihoods*. https://curve.carleton.ca/26bb378d-fcfc-44b1-8972-ba947c55987c

Winter, M., & Lobley, M. (2016). *Is there a future for the small family farm in the UK? Report to The Prince's Countryside Fund*. http://www.princescountrysidefund.org.uk/downloads/research/is-there-a-future-for-the-small-family-farm-in-the-uk-report.pdf

Wolf, E. R. (1969). *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century*. University of Oklahoma Press.

Wood, E. M. (2002). The question of market dependence. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, *2*(1), 50–87. https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-0366.00024

Wood, E. M. (2009). Peasants and the market imperative: The origins of capitalism. In A. H. Akram-Lodhi & C. Kay (Eds.), *Peasants and Globalization: Political Economy, Rural Transformation and the Agrarian Question* (pp. 37–56). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203891834

Wright, E. O. (2006). Compass points: Towards a socialist alternative. *New Left Review*, *41*, 93–124.

Wright, E. O. (2010). *Envisioning Real Utopias*. Verso.

Wright, S. (2002). *Storming Heaven: Class Composition and Struggle in Italian Autonomist Marxism*. Pluto Press. https://doi.org/10.1215/00166928-35-1-176

Xu, W., & Mage, J. A. (2001). A review of concepts and criteria for assessing agroecosystem health including a preliminary case study of Southern Ontario. *Agriculture, Ecosystems and Environment*, *83*(3), 215–233. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0167-8809(00)00159-6

Zasada, I., Schmutz, U., Wascher, D., Kneafsey, M., Corsi, S., Mazzocchi, C., Monaco, F., Boyce, P., Doernberg, A., Sali, G., & Piorr, A. (2019). Food beyond the city - Analysing foodsheds and self-sufficiency for different food system scenarios in European metropolitan regions. *City, Culture and Society*, *16*, 25–35. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ccs.2017.06.002

Zielonka, J. (2006). *Europe as Empire: The Nature of the Enlarged European Union*. Oxford University Press.

Zielonka, J. (2015). The uses and misuses of the imperial paradigm in the study of European integration. *Revisiting the European Union as Empire*, 45–58. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315745411-4

Zografos, C. (2019). Direct democracy. In A. Kothari, A. Salleh, A. Escobar, F. Demaria, & A. Acosta (Eds.), *Pluriverse: A Post-Development Dictionary* (pp. 154–157). https://doi.org/10.4337/9781849806039.00019

Appendices

1 Interview guides

1.1 Farm Interviews

1.1.1 English

1. *Section 1: Farm characteristics and background*
   1.1. **How did you get into farming and for long have you been doing it?**
      1.1.1. **What are your dreams and aspirations about farming here?** (e.g. organic, agroecology, permaculture, profit, survival etc...).
      1.1.2. **How would you describe your values when it comes to farming?**
         1.1.2.1. **To what extent is autonomy an important value to you? What does autonomy mean to you?**
         1.1.2.2. **To what extent is being local an important value to you?**
            1.1.2.2.1. **What do you understand by local?**
            1.1.2.2.2. **Does your idea of the local align with how you identify yourself?**
      1.1.3. **How did you come to have these aspirations and values?**
         1.1.3.1. How have your values and beliefs changed over time? How stable are they now?
   1.2. **Tell me about the farm here**
      1.2.1. **How much land do you use, and how do you have access to it?** (e.g. owned, leased, co-operative etc…)
      1.2.2. **Who else is part of the farm?** (e.g. partners, children, workers, WWOOFers etc…)
         1.2.2.1. **Does everyone on the farm share a similar set of aspirations and values?**
         1.2.2.2. **What are the decision-making processes on the farm?**
      1.2.3. **What networks and associations are you a part of?**

2. *Section 2: Self-determination and autonomy*
   2.1. **What would you really like to be able to do with your farm that you cannot right now?**
   2.2. **What are the biggest barriers to you realising your aspirations and values about farming?**
      2.2.1. **What aspects of your farming practice are decided by others?** (i.e. those outside of the farm – buyers, consumers, suppliers, government etc…)
   2.3. **What are your biggest assets for realising your aspirations and values about farming?**
   2.4. **In what ways does the structure of the local food and farming system help or hinder you in farming the way you want?**
      2.4.1. **What role do you play (if any) in local and national decision making?**
      2.4.2. **Do you, or would you, feel less constrained by more local relations rather than longer-distance relations?** (e.g. local banking society or selling to local consumers rather than national supermarkets / exporters)
      2.4.3. **Is there enough local control over the food and farming system?**

3. *Section 3: Practices and external relations*
   3.1. **Describe to me how you manage the following aspects of your farm** [Key prompts: Internal/external, quantity, frequency, commodity, barter, credit/debit, personal, local, exclusivity, availability of alternatives (market and non-market)] **and tell me to what extent**

is your practice driven by your own values and aspirations[160] [entirely [4] mainly [3] partly [2] not at all [1]]

- 3.1.1. General farm
  - 3.1.1.1. Nutrients/fertiliser
  - 3.1.1.2. Seeds/seedlings
  - 3.1.1.3. Fuel
  - 3.1.1.4. Farm labour
  - 3.1.1.5. Machinery/tools and maintenance
  - 3.1.1.6. Water
  - 3.1.1.7. Pest control
  - 3.1.1.8. Packaging
- 3.1.2. Husbandry
  - 3.1.2.1. Animal feed
  - 3.1.2.2. Stock (breeding)
  - 3.1.2.3. Veterinary care
  - 3.1.2.4. Slaughtering/butchery
- 3.1.3. Buildings
  - 3.1.3.1. Construction materials
  - 3.1.3.2. Building/maintenance labour
- 3.1.4. Household
  - 3.1.4.1. Healthcare
  - 3.1.4.2. Household appliances
  - 3.1.4.3. Household consumables
  - 3.1.4.4. Household (domestic) labour
  - 3.1.4.5. Food
- 3.1.5. Money
  - 3.1.5.1. Income
  - 3.1.5.2. Financial capital (equity/debt)
- 3.1.6. Outputs (Prompt on activities: processing, packing, marketing, retailing, deliveries)
  - 3.1.6.1. Food
  - 3.1.6.2. Fuel
  - 3.1.6.3. Fibre
  - 3.1.6.4. Accommodation
  - 3.1.6.5. On-farm services
- 3.1.7. **Are there any other key aspects of your farm practices that I've missed?**

3.2. **Are there any figures or accounts that you could share with me showing inputs/outputs?**

[160] As opposed to: a desire to avoid punishment or gain reward, a desire to avoid blame or so that other people speak well of you, external constraints (e.g. laws and regulations, market structures), and resource limitations (e.g. not enough land, money etc…).

1.1.2 Italian

1. *Section 1:* ***Caratteristiche dell'azienda***
   1.1. **Come hai iniziato a fare l'agricoltore e da quanto tempo lo fai?**
      1.1.1. **Quali sono i tuoi sogni e le tue aspirazioni riguardo al fare l'agricoltore qui? (es. biologico, permacultura, profitto, sussistenza etc...)**
      1.1.2. **Come descriveresti i tuoi valori inerenti all'agricoltura?**
         1.1.2.1. **Fino a che punto l'autonomia ha un valore per te? Che cosa significa autonomia per te?**
         1.1.2.2. **Fino a che punto è importante per te essere locale?**
            1.1.2.2.1. Che cosa intendi tu per 'locale'?
            1.1.2.2.2. La tua idea di 'locale' è in linea con come ti identifichi?
      1.1.3. **Come sei arrivato ad avere questi aspirazioni e valori?**
         1.1.3.1. Come sono cambiate nel tempo le tue aspirazioni ed i tuoi valori?
   1.2. **Raccontami dell'azienda**
      1.2.1. **Quanta terra usi e come hai accesso alla terra? (es. prorpietà, affitto, cooperative, etc.)**
      1.2.2. **Chi altro fa parte dell'azienda? (es. partners o compagna/o, bambini, lavoratori, volontari, WOOFers etc.)**
         1.2.2.1. **Tutti in azienda condividono aspirazioni e valori simili?**
         1.2.2.2. **Come prendete decisioni in azienda?**
      1.2.3. **Sei membro di una rete o associazione?**

2. *Section 2:* ***Auto-determinazione e autonomia***
   2.1. **Cosa ti piacerebbe fare di più con l'azienda, ma adesso non puoi?**
   2.2. **Quali sono gli ostacoli principali per realizzare le tue aspirazioni e i tuoi valori nell'agricoltura?**
      2.2.1. Quali aspetti delle tue pratiche agricole sono decisi o controllati da altri? (per esempio acquirenti, consumatori, fornitori, il governo)
   2.3. **Quali sono le più importanti risorse che hai per realizzare le tue aspirazioni e i tuoi valori nell'agricoltura?**
   2.4. **In che modo la struttura della catena alimentare e dell'agricoltura ti aiuta o ostacola a fare agricoltura come preferisci?**
      2.4.1. **Qual è il tuo ruolo nei processi decisionali locale e nazionale?**
      2.4.2. **Ti sentiresti meno limitato da relazioni più locali, piuttosto che da relazioni più lontante? (per esempio con le banche, consumatori, supermercati)**
      2.4.3. **C'è abbastanza controllo locale sulla catena alimentare e l'agricoltura?**

3. *Section 3: Practices and external relations*
   3.1. **Descrivi come gestici i seguenti aspetti dell'azienda e fino a che punto la pratica è determinata dai tuoi valori e dale tue aspirazioni [totalmente [4], principalmente [3], in parte [2], niente [1]].**
      3.1.1. In generale
         3.1.1.1. **Nutrienti del suolo / fertilizzante**
         3.1.1.2. **Semi / piantine**
         3.1.1.3. **Energia / combustibile**
         3.1.1.4. **Lavoro in sul terreno**
         3.1.1.5. **Macchine / utensili e manutezione**
         3.1.1.6. **Edifici – costruzione/materiali/manutezione**

3.1.1.7. **Acqua / irrigazione**
3.1.1.8. **Controllo parassitario**
3.1.1.9. **Imballaggio**
3.1.2. Gli animali
3.1.2.1. **Mangimi per animali**
3.1.2.2. **Bestiame / allevamento**
3.1.2.3. **Cure veterinarie**
3.1.2.4. **Macellazione**
3.1.3. Soldi
3.1.3.1. **Reddito**
3.1.3.2. **Capitale finanziario**
3.1.4. **Uscite / produzione (incl. cibo, combustibile, fibre, alloggio, servizi…)**
3.2. **Ci sono altri aspetti importanti che non abbiamo menzionato?**

1.2 Network/association interviews

1.2.1 English

1. *Section 1: Background*
1.1. **Why was the network set up and what was it designed to achieve?** Looking for evidence of localisation/autonomy, plus a historical sense of how the network and its aims came about
1.1.1. To what extent is 'autonomy' relevant to the network's aims, and in what ways? To draw it out if not already explicitly mentioned; looking for evidence of farm-level vs local/group level ideas of autonomy
1.1.2. To what extent is 'local' relevant, and in what ways? Want to draw out what should be local vs what shouldn't be in the networks views.
1.2. Over what area does the network operate?
1.3. What is the structure of the network?
1.3.1. Who are the members of the network?
1.3.2. How are decisions made in the network?
1.4. What are the networks main activities?
1.4.1. To what extent do members work together in these activities? (vs say a professionalised office doing the work) Driving at interdependence and de-commodification/embeddedness
1.5. Apart from your members, what other organisations do you work with? (e.g. local councils, businesses, the government, funders)
1.5.1. To what extent are these relations local?

2. *Section 2: Self-determination and autonomy*
2.1. In what ways do food and farming in the local area fall short of the network's goals?
2.2. To what extent does the network represent all food/farming interests in the areas?
2.3. What are the main barriers to achieving the network's goals?
2.3.1. What are the main constraints on the network's operations?
2.3.1.1. To what extent do the other organisations you work with constrain the way the network operates?

3. *Section 3: The local food system*
3.1. How are decisions made in your local food system?
3.1.1. How involved is the network in decision-making about the local food system? Do you feel like the network has a reasonable degree of control/influence over it?

3.1.2. **What aspects of the local food system are determined/decided/controlled by people/organisations from outside the area that shouldn't be? (e.g. national government)**

3.1.3. **Are there any aspects of the local food system currently controlled locally, but perhaps would be better controlled nationally/globally?**

3.2. **In terms of processes related to farming and food, is there anything the network would like to see being done locally that isn't currently?** (e.g. food processing, retailing, input manufacturing/substitution, consumption processes, rules/regulations)

3.2.1. Why? This can be used/analysed to see if self-determination/autonomy is a driving theme in localisation.

3.2.2. Is there anything you are currently doing to bring these things into the local system?

3.3. Is there anything is currently being done/sourced locally that you think should be done/sourced from beyond the local area?

3.3.1. Why?

3.3.2. Is there anything the network is currently doing to achieve this?

1.2.2 Italian

1. *Section 1: Background*

1.1. **Perché la rete o il gruppo è stato isituito e a che fine?** Looking for evidence of localisation/autonomy, plus a historical sense of how the network and its aims came about

1.1.1. **È il concetto di autonomia pertinente al scopo della rete/gruppo, e se è così come?** To draw it out if not already explicitly mentioned; looking for evidence of farm-level vs local/group level ideas of autonomy

1.1.2. **È un sistema alimentare locale importante per la rete, e se è così perché?** Want to draw out what should be local vs what shouldn't be in the networks views.

1.2. Su quale area opera la rete / il gruppo?

1.3. Com'è la struttura della rete / il gruppo?

1.3.1. **Chi sono i membri della rete / il gruppo?**

1.3.2. **Come le decisioni vengono prese?**

1.4. Quali sono le attività principali della rete / il gruppo?

1.4.1. **Fino a quell punto I membri lavorano insieme in queste attività?** (vs say a professionalised office doing the work) Driving at interdependence and de-commodification/embeddedness

1.5. A parte i vostri membri, lavorate con altre organizzazioni? (e.g. local councils, businesses, the government, funders)

1.5.1. Queste relazioni sono locali?

2. *Section 2: Self-determination and autonomy*

2.1. Quali sono gli obiettivi della rete in relazione al sistema alimentare e agricolo nell'area locale?

2.2. La rete rappresenta tutti gli interessi alementari e agricoli nella regione/area?

2.3. Quali sono i principali ostacoli da raggiungere gli obiettivi della rete / il gruppo?

2.3.1. **Quali sono i principali vincoli alle operazioni della rete / il gruppo?**

3. *Section 3: The local food system*

3.1. A secondo voi, come vengono prese le decisioni nel sistema alimentare locale?

3.1.1. **Coinvolge la rete / il gruppo nei processi decisionali del sistema alimentare locale?**

3.1.2. **Quali aspetti del sistema alimentare locale sono decisi/determinati/controllati delle persone/organizzazioni da fuori la regione/area?**

3.1.3. **Ci sono degli aspetti del sistema alimentare locale che sono decisi/determinate/controllati localmente, ma sarebbero meglio controllati in un modo più nazionale or globale?**

3.2. **In termini dei processi legati all'agricoltura e alimentazione, c'è qualcosa che la rete/associazione vorrebe vedere essendo fatto localmente che non essendo fatto adesso?** (e.g. food processing, retailing, input manufacturing/substitution, consumption processes, rules/regulations)

3.2.1. Perché? This can be used/analysed to see if self-determination/autonomy is a driving theme in localisation.

3.2.2. C'è qualcosa che state facendo adesso per portare queste cose nel sistema locale?

3.3. C'è qualcosa che adesso essendo fatto localmente che la rete pensa dovrebbe essendo fatto fuori dell'area locale?

3.3.1. Perché?

2 Information sheet and consent form

2.1 English

Self-determination of farmers and local food systems research interview

Participant Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in research on the self-determination of farmers and local food systems. Simon Popay, PhD Researcher at Coventry University, is leading this research. Before you take part, it is important that you understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to better understand when, why and how farmers prefer to do things 'locally' (either on the farm or in their local area or region). In particular, it looks at whether and how doing and deciding things locally improves farmers' 'autonomy', or their ability to live and farm the way they want to.

Why have I been chosen to take part?

You have been invited to join this study because you are an organic, agroecological or similar farmer in Cornwall. You may also have been invited because you are involved in local farming and food networks or associations.

What is involved?

If you choose to participate, the interview will last 1-2 hours. You will be asked a range of questions, but it will otherwise be an informal and relaxed discussion. Topics covered could include information about your farm and background, your beliefs and values about farming, the compromises you make, and your views on local farm and food systems. The interview will be held at a place and time that is convenient for you (e.g. on your farm, during the day or evening). With your consent, the interview will be audio recorded.

What are the benefits of taking part?

By sharing your views with this research, you will be helping to improve our understanding of local farming and food systems in Cornwall. This research may subsequently help farmers and networks in Cornwall to improve their local farming and food system, while also being a resource for other academics, networks and farmers around the world.

How will my data be used?

All data collected from you (audio recordings, transcripts and notes) will be retained securely. The data will be used solely for preparing academic research. Nothing will be attributed to you publicly or privately, unless you explicitly consent. You do not have to participate in the project if you do not want to. If you do participate, you may subsequently choose to withdraw your data from the research by contacting me before **31/1/2020**. The findings of this research will be published in academic journals and a PhD thesis, and may be presented to academic conferences and shared with farming networks in Cornwall and the UK. I am more than happy to share the findings and discuss them with you too.

Contacts

This project has been approved by Coventry University. If you have any questions, please contact Simon Popay, popays@coventry.ac.uk, 07736 730 823. If you have concerns or would like to make a complaint about the project, please contact James Bennett, apy073@coventry.ac.uk.

Self-determination of farmers and local food systems research interview

Consent Form

You are being invited to take part in research on the self-determination of farmers and local food systems. This involves an interview that will last 1-2 hours covering a range of topics including your background, beliefs and values about farming, the compromises you make, and your views on local farm and food systems. Before you take part, it is important that you understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please read the attached Participant Information Sheet before completing the form below.

	Please tick
1. I confirm that I have read and understood the participant information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.	
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.	
3. I understand that all the information I provide will be treated in confidence	
4. I understand that I also have the right to change my mind about participating in the study for a short period after the data has been collected (until **31/1/2020**).	
5. I agree to be audio recorded as part of the research project	
6. I agree to information and quotes I provide **being attributable to me** when published in research findings.	
7. I agree to take part in the research project	

Name of participant: ....

Signature of participant: ....

Date: ....

Name of Researcher: ....

Signature of researcher: ....

Date:...

2.2 Italian

Intervista a scopo di ricerca sull'autodeterminazione dei contadini e i sistemi alimentari

Foglio Informativo per i Partecipanti

Siete stati invitati a partecipare ad un progetto di ricerca sull'autodeterminazione dei contadini e i sistemi alimentari. Simon Popay, un dottorando della Coventry University nel Regno Unito, conduce questa ricerca. Prima di partecipare è importante che capiate il motivo di tale ricerca e che cosa comporta.

Qual è lo scopo di questo studio?

Lo scopo di questo studio è capire meglio quando, come e perché i contadini preferiscono fare attività a livello locale (in azienda oppure nella loro area o regione). In particolar, lo studio riguarda se e come fare e decidere cose localmente migliora l'autonomia dei contadini, o la loro capacità di vivere e fare l'agricoltore come vogliono.

Perché sono stato scelto per partecipare?

Siete stati inviati a partecipare in questo studio perché siete un contadino biologico, agroecologico o simile nella Regione Calabria. Oppure perché sieti coinvolti in reti e associazioni locali.

Cosa comporta la partecipazione in questa ricercar?

Se sceglìete di partecipare, l'intervista durerà 1-2 ore. Vi verranno poste una serie di domande, seguita da una discussione informale e rilassata. Gli argomenti trattati potrebbero includere informazioni sulla vostra azienda, il vostro passato, le vostre opinioni e i valori che attribuite all'agricoltura, i compromessi che fate, e le vostre opinioni sui sistemi di agricoltura locale.

Quali sono i vantaggi del partecipare?

Condividendo le vostre opinioni, aiuterete a migliorare la nostra comprensione dei sistemi agricoli in Calabria. Successivamente, questa ricerca potrà aiutare i contadini e le reti di contadini in Calabria a migliorare il loro sistema agricolo. Allo stesso tempo, questa ricerca sarà una risorsa per altri ricercatori, reti, e contadini nel mondo.

Come saranno utilizzati i miei dati?

Tutti i dati raccolti (registrazioni audio, trascrizioni, appunti) saranno conservati in modo sicuro, in confermità con il Regolamento Generale sulla Protezione dei Dati (RGPD/GDPR). I dati saranno usati solamente a scopo di ricerca accademica. Niente sarà attributo pubblicamente o privatamente a voi, a meno che non acconsentiate esplicitamente. Non dovete partecipare nel progetto se non volete. Se partecipate, potete successivamente scegliere di ritirare i vostri dati contattandomi prima di 30/06/2020. I risultati di questa ricerca saranno pubblicati in riviste accademiche e in una tesi di dottorato, e potranno essere presentati a conferenze accademiche e condivise con reti di agricoltori in Calabria e Italia. Sarò felice di condividere e discutere i risultati della ricerca con voi.

Contatti

Questo progetto è stato approvato dalla Coventry University, nel Regno Unito. Se avete delle domande, per favore contattatemi, Simon Popay, popays@coventry.ac.uk, +44 7736 730 823. Se avete delle preoccupazioni o dei dubbi, o se volete presentare dei reclami in merito al progetto, per favore contattate James Bennett, apy073@coventry.ac.uk.

Intervista a scopo di ricerca sull'autodeterminazione dei contadini e i sistemi alimentari

Modulo di consenso

Siete stati invitati a partecipare ad un progetto di ricerca sull'autodeterminazione dei contadini e i sistemi alimentari. Questo comprende un'intervista che durerà 1–2 ore, su una serie di argomenti tra cui il vostro passato, i vostri valori e il vostro parere sulla agricoltura, i compromessi che fate, e le vostre opinioni sui sistemi di agricoltura locale. Prima di partecipare, è importante che capiate perché la ricerca è stata condotta e che cosa comporta. Per favore leggete il 'Foglio Informativo per i Partecipanti' allegato prima di completare il modulo sottostante.

	Per segnare
1. Confermo di aver letto e capito il 'Foglio Informativo per i Partecipanti' per lo studio di cui sopra, e di aver avuto l'opportunità di porre domande.	
2. Capisco che la mia partecipazione è volontaria e che sono libero di ritirarmi in ogni momento senza dare una ragione.	
3. Capisco che tutte le informazioni che provvedo saranno trattate in confidenza, in confermità con il Regolamento Generale sulla Protezione dei Dati (RGPD/GDPR).	
4. Capisco che ho il diritto di cambiare idea sulla partecipazione al progetto per un breve periodo dopo la raccolta dei dati (fino a 30/06/2020).	
5. Accetto di essere registrato (audio) come parte del progetto di ricerca.	
6. Accetto che le informazioni e le citazioni che provvedo siano attribuibili a me quando pubblicate con i risultati della ricerca.	
7. Accetto di partecipare al progetto di ricerca.	

Nome e cognome del partecipante:..

Firma del participante: ....

Data: ....

Nome del ricercatore:...

Firma del ricercatore: ....

Data:...

3 List of farms and characteristics

3.1 Cornwall

Class	Mixing	Size	Tenure	Internal labour	External labour	Marketing	Certified organic?
Small capitalist	Medium	10 to 20ha	Owner	Couple	Regular	Mixed	Yes
Small capitalist	Low	Above 50ha	Owner	Couple	Regular	Mixed	Yes
Small capitalist	Low	2 to 10ha	Owner	Individual	Regular	Indirect	Yes
Small capitalist	Low	2 to 10ha	Tenant	Individual	Family/Friends + Regular	Indirect	No
Small capitalist	Medium	Above 50ha	Owner	Couple	Regular	Mixed	Yes
Small capitalist	Medium	Above 50ha	Mixed	Family	Regular	Direct	No
PCP	Medium	2 to 10ha	Owner	Couple	Occasional	Direct	Yes
PCP	Medium	2 to 10ha	Owner	Couple	None	N/A	No
PCP	Medium	Above 50ha	Tenant	Family	Occasional	Mixed	Yes
PCP	High	Above 50ha	Mixed	Couple	Occasional	Mixed	No
PCP	Medium	20 to 50ha	Owner	Couple	Occasional	Direct	Yes
PCP	Medium	10 to 20ha	Owner	Couple	Occasional + Volunteers	Mixed	No
PCP	Medium	2 to 10ha	Owner	Couple	Occasional + Volunteers	Mixed	Yes
PCP	Medium	2 to 10ha	Owner	Individual	Occasional	Mixed	Yes
PCP	Medium	20 to 50ha	Owner	Family	Occasional + Volunteers	Direct	Yes
PCP	Low	Below 2ha	Tenant	Regular	Volunteers	Direct	No
PCP	Medium	Above 50ha	Tenant	Family	Occasional	Mixed	Yes
PCP	Medium	2 to 10ha	Mixed	Couple	Family/Friends	Direct	Yes
PCP	High	Above 50ha	Tenant	Family	Occasional	Mixed	No
PCP	High	20 to 50ha	Owner	Couple	Family/Friends	Direct	No
PCP	Medium	10 to 20ha	Owner	Regular	Occasional + Volunteers	Direct	No
PCP	Medium	20 to 50ha	Owner	Individual	Occasional	Direct	No
PCP	Medium	2 to 10ha	Owner	Couple	Family/Friends	Direct	No
Part-time	Medium	2 to 10ha	Owner	Individual	Family/Friends	Direct	No
Part-time	Low	10 to 20ha	Owner	Community	Occasional + Volunteers	Mixed	Yes
Part-time	Low	Below 2ha	Owner	Individual	Family/Friends	Direct	No
Part-time	Medium	Below 2ha	Owner	Individual	Family/Friends	Direct	No
Part-time	Medium	10 to 20ha	Owner	Community	Occasional + Volunteers	N/A	No

3.2 Calabria

Class	Mixing	Size	Tenure	Internal labour	External labour	Marketing	Certified organic?
Small capitalist	Medium	20 to 50ha	Owner	Family	Regular	Mixed	Yes
Small capitalist	High	20 to 50ha	Owner	Individual	Regular	Mixed	Yes
Small capitalist	Medium	20 to 50ha	Owner	Individual	Regular + Volunteers	Mixed	Yes
Small capitalist	High	Above 50ha	Mixed	Individual	Regular	Mixed	Yes
PCP	High	10 to 20ha	Mixed	Group	Family/Friends	Direct	Yes
PCP	Low	Below 2ha	Mixed	Individual	Family/Friends	Direct	No
PCP	Medium	20 to 50ha	Mixed	Group	Occasional	Direct	Yes
PCP	Medium	2 to 10ha	Owned	Community	Volunteers	Direct	No
PCP	High	Below 2ha	Owner	Individual	Family/Friends	Direct	No
PCP	Medium	2 to 10ha	*Comodato*	Individual	Occasional + Volunteers	Direct	No
PCP	Medium	Below 2ha	Mixed	Family	Family/Friends + Volunteers	Direct	No
PCP	Medium	2 to 10ha	*Comodato*	Group	Family/Friends	Direct	No
PCP	High	2 to 10ha	Mixed	Individual	Family/Friends + Regular	Mixed	Yes
PCP	High	2 to 10ha	Owner	Family	Occasional	Mixed	Yes
PCP	Medium	2 to 10ha	Owner	Family	Regular	Mixed	Yes
Part-time	High	2 to 10ha	Mixed	Family	Family/Friends + Volunteers	Direct	No
Part-time	Low	2 to 10ha	*Comodato*	Group	Family/Friends + Volunteers	Direct	No
Part-time	Medium	10 to 20ha	Owner	Family	Family/Friends + Volunteers	Direct	No
Part-time	Medium	Below 2ha	Owner	Individual	Family/Friends	Direct	No
Part-time	Low	Below 2ha	Owned	Family	Occasional	Mixed	Yes
Part-time	Medium	20 to 50ha	Mixed	Individual	Family/Friends	Mixed	No
Part-time	Low	2 to 10ha	*Comodato*	Community	Volunteers	N/A	No