LUNDS UNIVERSITET

Lund University Master of Science in
International Development and Management
May, 2014

Growing through the Cracks

A multi-case study of two alternative food networks in Cluj-Napoca, Romania

Author: Josefin Smeds
Supervisor: Tobias Axelsson

Abstract

As a response to limitations of the conventional food system, alternative food networks such as community supported agriculture and direct selling box schemes have emerged in Romania, involving close producer-consumer connections and an emphasis on local and organic produce. Through a multi-case study of two such networks in the city of Cluj-Napoca, their contribution to the establishment of a sustainable food paradigm has been explored. An important synergy within the networks was how good food is equated with peasant produce, but issues regarding quantity, delivery arrangement, power relations, and inclusiveness constituted potential conflicts. Although challenged by unfavourable trends on national and EU levels, the networks are becoming more embedded on a horizontal level, through an intrinsic focus on community in one case and through good quality food stimulating good relations in the other case. Alternative food networks in Cluj-Napoca contribute to a sustainable food paradigm by promoting agroecology, reclaiming socio-cultural factors of food provisioning, and being part of a (re)peasantisation process. To contribute further to a paradigm shift, the question is if actors within the networks can foster closer alliances, further emphasise the socio-cultural aspects of agri-food as well as recognise the broader political significance in their actions.

Keywords: alternative food networks; sustainable food paradigm; conventional food system; embeddedness; (re)peasantisation; agroecology; Romania.

Word Count: 14999

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the help and support from a range of amazing people, many of them in and around Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Thank you Ronen for speaking so vividly about Cutia Țăranului and inspiring me to focus on this topic already in my first few weeks in Romania. Andreea, Nadia, and Anca – thank you for helping me get in touch with producers and consumers, helping me with translation as well as providing me with so many important insights about the networks. I want to thank Attila, Ramona, Bogdan, Cécile and Derek at Eco Ruralis for sharing your passion and extensive knowledge on Romania and its peasantry, as well as assisting me with translation and making my five months in Romania incredibly exciting and rewarding. A warm wave of gratitude goes to Ildi & Levente for opening up your home and farm to me, and letting me enjoy the amazing Romanian countryside together with you. Thank you Sara and Douglas for the tremendously delicious fruits and vegetables you delivered to me and Cécile every week, my life in terms of food has never been so rich. In addition, I want to thank Alistair, Kata, Laura, Inga, and Jonas for peer reviewing my work in progress, your comments and encouragement have been so helpful and valuable. I also want to thank my supervisor Tobias for your support, for challenging me and helping me to strengthen my arguments throughout the thesis process. Last but not least, I want to thank all the participants in this study, this thesis is about you, and I am endlessly grateful for your willingness to take part. I have gained so many insights about growing and eating food, thank you.

Table of Contents

List of Acronyms

AFN	Alternative Food Network
ASAT	Asociația pentru Susținerea Agriculturii Țărănești (Association for Sustaining Peasant Agriculture)
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CFS	Conventional Food System
CSA	Community Supported Agriculture
CT	Cutia Țăranului (The Peasant Box)
EU	European Union
GMOs	Genetically Modified Organisms
IFAD	International Fund for Agriculture and Development
IAASTD	The International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development
UN	United Nations

1. Introducing the Theme

Ensuring that everyone in the world are able to eat well is a central focus for many development institutions, research institutes, as well as activists and social movements. In a context of major ecological challenges, such as climate change and resource depletion, it is crucial to study strategies for doing this in just and sustainable ways (Marsden & Morley 2014). The conventional food system (CFS) has a range of environmental, social, and cultural limitations, and is characterised by a process towards increased control and ordering, often at the expense of small-scale producers (Ploeg 2008). The CFS is here defined as the supply chain largely "dominated by productivist agriculture and large companies producing, processing, and retailing food on a national and global scale" (Morgan, Marsden, & Murdoch 2006:2). These limitations call for exploring ways of organising food systems differently (Marsden & Morley 2014).

As a response to the limitations of the CFS, alternative strategies are being employed in different places around the globe, for example in the form of community supported agriculture (CSA) schemes, community gardens, and agroecology movements (Goodman & Goodman 2009; Ploeg 2008; Wezel *et al.* 2009). In contrast to the CFS, these initiatives are highly diverse and heterogeneous, and in various ways embedding food in spatial and social connections. Food is conceptualised as more than just a commodity, often based on small-scale agroecological food systems and community ownership (Marsden & Morley 2014). This is often referred to as "food from somewhere", in contrast to the disembedded and globalised nature of food exchange in the CFS, where food is increasingly provided from "nowhere" (McMichael 2009). Together, these alternative strategies emerging could be seen as seeds of a sustainable food paradigm.

Some features of such a paradigm can be found in Romania, a rural country with half the land owned by small-scale farmers, using traditional practices with a high level of diversity (Hartel & Fisher 2013; Voiculescu 2008). Transitioning more thoroughly into a sustainable food paradigm might, therefore, be easier here than in countries where small-scale agriculture has been marginalised. However, Romania is following in the footsteps of other countries in the European Union (EU), with a growing focus on industrial agriculture, and an increased presence of commercial actors in the food sector (Rowe 2012). As a consequence, small-scale farmers are challenged and consumers are concerned about the decrease in food quality (Hirsch 2013; Möllers, Buchenrieder, & Csaki 2011).

Strategies for circumventing the growth of the CFS in Romania and sustain local producers are emerging through the construction of close urban-rural ties, such as CSA initiatives and direct selling vegetable schemes (Hirsch 2013; Veţan & Florean 2013), often referred to as "alternative food networks" (AFNs) (Goodman & Goodman 2009).

1.1. Task Description

The idea and practice of a sustainable food paradigm is being established in different places around the globe, including Romania. Since the CFS only recently started to grow in Romania (Rowe 2012), I consider it relevant to study alternative practices here since their prospects to constitute durable alternatives to the CFS should be greater. Further, most research on AFNs has been done in countries where small-scale agriculture is marginal (Goodman & Goodman 2009). Adding a case from the Romanian context could provide new insights on the implications of these kinds of networks. More specifically, through a multi-case study I aim to explore how two AFNs in the city of Cluj-Napoca, Romania can contribute to the process of establishing a sustainable food paradigm, focusing on the perceptions and experiences of the involved actors. Thus, the research question is:

How can alternative food networks in Cluj-Napoca contribute to the establishment of a sustainable food paradigm in Romania?

This involves exploring in what ways the networks are constituting a durable alternative to the CFS. For this purpose, I use Holloway *et al*.'s (2007) multidimensional framework for studying food projects to gain a complex understanding of the AFNs so as to identify relevant synergies and conflicts among the involved actors. I also use *embeddedness* as an analytical tool since the potential of AFNs to contribute to a paradigm shift can be more thoroughly assessed by exploring how the exchange of food is socially, environmentally, and politically incorporated in the local and broader institutional context (Sonnino & Marsden 2006). Therefore, the contribution to a sustainable food paradigm will be understood through the following operational research questions:

- What potential synergies and conflicts of production, supply, and consumption exist *within* these alternative food networks?
- To what extent are these alternative food networks embedded in the local and broader institutional context?

1.2. Outline

In section two and three I outline the characteristics and limitations of the CFS, and start conceptualising features of a sustainable food paradigm. In section four, I introduce the Romanian context, focusing on the growth of the CFS and signs of a sustainable food paradigm. I introduce the analytical frameworks of multidimensionality and embeddedness in section five. In section six I describe the methods I have used in the study. Section seven and eight constitute the analysis chapters where I first outline the nature of the AFNs together with the synergies and potential conflicts, after which I discuss the layers of embeddedness. In concluding chapters nine and ten, I summarise the contribution to a sustainability paradigm together with a research agenda.

2. The Conventional Food System as a Backdrop

In this chapter, I first discuss food and agriculture in a broad historical perspective, then address how the situation is different today, for example with neoliberal policies being employed in agriculture. After this I explore the implications, focusing on disembeddedness and dispossession of peasants. Lastly, I acknowledge the sustainability turn within the CFS, but argue that these strategies are unable to ensure long-term sustainability and justice.

2.1. Food and Agriculture in an Historical Perspective

Food has a major socio-cultural significance for communities world-wide, with a range of distinct traditions related to eating and growing, but is often framed simply in economic terms (Murcott 1982; Weis 2007). It is, for example, commonly argued that agriculture is important for global prosperity with significant economic successes precedented by revolutions in agriculture, generating surplus food at low prices (Timmer 2009). These revolutions, however, have mainly been through industrialisation and the use of external inputs such as fertilizers, pesticides, and improved seeds. This can be seen in the Green Revolution which spread around the world from the 1960s, resulting in great yield gains and benefits for global food security, but with side-effects such as soil degradation, pollution, losses of biodiversity and traditional knowledge, and a favouring of wealthy farmers (Griffin 1979:213; Pingali *et al.* 1997; Rosset 2006). Perkins (1997:258) argues that "if success means an increase in the aggregate physical supply of grain, the Green Revolution was a success", but it did not end hunger for disadvantageous groups. Further, the reduction in farmers' autonomy[1] through dependency on external inputs often caused indebtedness (Patel 2013).

1 Autonomy is here defined as "a desire for freedom, self-organization and mutual aid" (Chatterton 2005:545), especially in a context of government and foreign market intrusion (Wilson 2013:727).

2.2. Why the Situation is Different Today

As the externalities of productivist agriculture are becoming evident, it is clear that the Green Revolution model of agriculture is not sustainable (Holt-Giménez & Altieri 2013; Horlings & Marsden 2011). The global food crisis in 2007-8 served as a major shock to the CFS, eroding the notion of an abundance of cheap food (Marsden & Morley 2014; Rosin *et al.* 2012). More than being related to limited food supplies, Bailey (2011) and Brown (2011) argue that the crisis was caused by price inflation, benefiting commercial farmers and impacting mainly the poorest who could not afford to buy food. Even so, the food crisis has sparked a renewed interest around "food security", aiming to increase production, through the use of the same Green Revolution ideas as before, albeit with a greener touch, and an emphasis on trade liberalisation and genetically modified organisms (GMOs) (Holt-Giménez & Altieri 2013).

This is further problematic in relation to the rapidly changing global ecological circumstances, which are challenging many parts of human civilisation, including agriculture. Rockström *et al.* (2009) have identified nine planetary boundaries which set the limits for safe long-term human development. Three have already been passed, namely carbon dioxide emissions, biodiversity losses, and disruption of phosphorus and nitrogen cycles – all associated with industrial agriculture (Rockström *et al.* 2009; Smith *et al.* 2007). Biodiversity loss, for example, is devastating considering the crucial role it plays for ecosystem functioning (De Vries *et al.* 2013; Matson *et al.* 1997). These trends need to be halted in order to avoid "disastrous long-term social and environmental disruption" (Rockström *et al.* 2009:22f.), representing major perturbations to the CFS. Marsden & Morley (2014:10) argue that this is not a short-term "'hiccup' prior to the restoration of business as usual".

2.3. Food and Agriculture under Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism is an economic theory which suggests that well-being can be achieved by "liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade" (Harvey 2005:2). However, according to Harvey (2005) and Klein (2008), in practice neoliberalism has become a political project aiming to restore the power of economic elites, thus diverting from these theoretical principles. This means that the gaps between rich and poor are becoming greater (Peck & Tickell 2002), a trend which can be seen also in the agricultural sector, which has become a new arena for profit-making, especially following the food crisis (McMichael 2009).

The implications of trade liberalisation and deregulation have been increased corporate concentration, with a few large global agribusinesses controlling, for example, seeds, fertilizers, and markets (McMichael 2005; Murphy 2008). Sometimes the whole supply chain is controlled by one company, and the food sector is further commercialised through land appropriations for large-scale export production (*ibid*.). Furthermore, supermarkets have become major institutions for food supply, influencing global production and consumption patterns, and determining "what is produced, where, to what standards and where it is to be sold" (Lawrence & Burch 2007:9; McMichael & Friedmann 2007). Supermarkets can improve food access for consumers and provide opportunities for some farmers and processors, but constitute challenges for small-scale farmers who are less able to compete (Reardon & Gulati 2008).

In essence, the implementation of neoliberal policies in the food sector has not resulted in free markets where everyone can participate equally. Indeed, many argue that this is impossible due to structural features of the economy, for the growth of which inequalities are intrinsic (Harvey 2010; Piketty 2014). Instead, the result has indeed been a concentration of power and wealth in the hands of a few (Peck & Tickell 2002). Ploeg (2008:3f.) refers to these developments in the agricultural sector as "Empire", which following Hardt and Negri (2000) is a process of control, appropriation and ordering, largely driven by agribusinesses, large retailers and states but also embodied in laws, science and technology. However, Ploeg (2008:4) argues that Empire goes beyond its many carriers and expressions and can be strengthened even if those carriers are to collapse. In essence, Empire as "an ordering principle that increasingly governs the production, processing, distribution and consumption of food" (*ibid*.) is a major cause of the crises facing food and agriculture globally.

2.4. Disembeddedness and Dispossession of Peasants

Ploeg (2008:4) argues that "the creation of disconnections is a key word for understanding the *modus operandi* of Empire". Indeed, the globalised nature of food production and consumption means that food is increasingly commodified, disconnected from socio-ecological relations, and provided from "nowhere" (McMichael 2009). This is referred to as disembeddedness which Giddens (1990:21) sees as the "'lifting out' of social relations from local contexts of interaction and their restructuring across indefinite spans of time-space". Commodification further feeds disembeddedness processes, and the environmental consequences of the CFS can be associated with how it disconnects people from understanding how production is constrained by ecological limits (Plumwood 2002:24). Polanyi (1944) argues that disembeddedness causes inequalities since it

reduces the possibility of taking the environmental and social attributes of commodities into account. In this way, consumers in the CFS are more or less socially disconnected from the people engaged in and affected by the food production (Bauman 2004).

A related implication of the developments within the CFS is the dispossession of peasants, who are often defined in derogative terms and seen as relics of the past. However, given the recognition of the importance of peasants for sustainable food systems (McMichael 2005; Ploeg 2008), in this thesis I use Ploeg's (2008) more complex way of defining the peasant condition. Being a peasant is related to continuously adding value to a limited resource base, providing for a range of needs (not only economic), and striving for autonomy "in a context of dependency relations, marginalisation and deprivation" (*ibid*.:23). Ploeg (2008:1f.) contrasts peasant farming with entrepreneurial farming, which is largely market-oriented, built mainly on financial capital, with expansion as an important feature, and capitalist (corporate) farming, which focuses on profit-making, even if this means reducing the value of the resource base. In contrast to entrepreneurial and capitalist farmers, Ploeg (2008:2), emphasises that *peasant* is a social and cultural category as well as an economic.

Although the importance of peasants is increasingly recognised, especially in relation to contributing to poverty reduction and food security (World Bank 2008; IFAD 2010), many of the trends mentioned previously feed a process of depeasantisation. This refers to a "weakening, erosion or even disappearance of peasant practices and associated rationality" (Ploeg 2008:35). Depeasantisation happens, for example, through an increased mechanisation of agriculture, land appropriations, indebtedness due to dependence on external inputs and exposure to volatile prices due to trade liberalisation (Holt-Giménez & Altieri 2013). This trend is further problematic in relation to sustainability, since traditional small-scale farming systems are recognised as important for building resilient food systems (IAASTD 2009; UN 2013).

2.5. Sustainability Turn within the Conventional Food System

According to Marsden & Morley (2014:112), although there is wide-spread denial regarding the severity of global environmental challenges, the CFS cannot legitimate itself without incorporating some sustainability strategies, largely due to consumer concerns. This can be seen with supermarkets including more organic produce in their selection, and agribusinesses engaging in organic and Fair Trade markets. Indeed, these markets are now dominated by a few major transnational retailers (McMichael & Friedmann 2007). Although this can reduce some

environmental impacts, engagement in markets for sustainable produce by the CFS is largely done as a strategy to generate profits. The economic growth paradigm has been criticised widely, for being contradictory to long-term environmental sustainability, increasing inequalities, and reducing complex socio-ecological relationships into simple economic terms (Meadows, Meadows & Randers 2004; Piketty 2014; Schneider, Kallis, & Martinez-Alier 2010).

To some extent the sustainability turn of the CFS can be beneficial for small-scale producers, as can be seen, for example, with the success of many Fair Trade and organic collectives of small farmers (Raynolds 2000). However, in general, the focus on quality food in the CFS "depends on the reconstitution of land and labour relations globally" in order for farmers to be able to take part in these highly competitive supply chains, mainly benefiting entrepreneurial farmers over peasants (McMichael & Friedmann 2007:304). Further, participation in international trade is coupled with increased risk, given the highly volatile and vulnerable global markets (Carr 2011). It also means that more cultural and social aspects of eating and growing food becomes redundant (Weis 2007). Furthermore, this sustainability turn tends to marginalise attempts for transforming food systems in more fundamental ways (Marsden & Morley 2014).

3. Towards a Theoretical Framing of a Sustainable Food Paradigm

> In sum, we have entered a new century, and the questions we face now are different from those of fifty years ago. A new paradigm focused on well-being, resilience and sustainability must be designed to replace the productivist paradigm and thus better support the full realization of the right to adequate food (De Schutter 2014:13).

Following the above call from the United Nation's Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, in this chapter I outline features of a sustainable food paradigm and give attention to a few strands of thought related to alternatives to the CFS, including the role of AFNs. Exploring such a paradigm is important in the light of the limitations of the CFS and the rise in prominence of Empire as an ordering principle (Ploeg 2008), and in order to increase the potential of ensuring sustainable, resilient, and inclusive futures for people and the environment (Marsden & Morley 2014).

3.1. The Emergence of Alternative Solutions

There is a wide range of alternative strategies emerging, largely provoked by the limitations of the CFS. Ploeg (2008:271) argues that these alternatives create "resources, connections, processes of conversion and additional wealth that Empire could never have assembled or provided". Further,

these strategies are not simply a resistance, but also an active attempt to create practical solutions that are substantially different (*ibid*.:269). In other words, the alternative strategies are both growing through and widening the cracks which symbolise the limitations of the CFS. In addition, whereas the CFS is largely characterised by increased centralisation, control and homogeneity in the form of Empire, the alternatives are, and should be, diverse, multi-faceted, and highly context-specific (McMichael 2010). The resistance "is everywhere, it is multiple, it is attractive and mobilizing, it relinks people, activities and prospects" (Ploeg 2008:272). Therefore, I do not define a sustainable food paradigm in strict terms, but instead highlight two strands of thought which can be seen as part of the same process of organising food and agriculture in systematically different ways (Rosin *et al.* 2012:225), namely agroecology and (re)peasantisation.

3.2. Agroecology

Agroecology is an intrinsic part of the food sovereignty concept which has emerged as a discourse in response to the CFS, promoting localised food systems, social justice and the protection of rural livelihoods. The discourse is largely driven by peasants and social movements (Lee 2013; Wittman 2011) and can be seen as "a strategy of reversing the social, cultural and environmental damage" of the CFS (McMichael 2006:415). Agroecology can refer to a science, a practice and a movement (Wezel *et al.* 2009). The movement focuses on promoting local and autonomous small-scale food systems as opposed to the increasingly global and dominant CFS (Altieri & Toledo 2011). As a practice, agroecology is about minimising the use of external inputs, establishing diversified farming systems with a functional interconnectedness between farm components, and adapting to local realities (Rosset & Martinez-Torres 2012). These practices are largely based on peasant farming systems (Holt-Giménez & Altieri 2013). Agroecology can be seen as a resistance to the CFS, both discursively and in practice (Rosset & Martinez-Torres 2012). However, whereas agroecology contains important political and cultural aims, the concept has been co-opted by global institutions, who promote agroecological practices together with the use of pesticides and GMOs, making it depoliticised and devoid of prospects for long-term sustainability (Altieri 2012).

3.3. (Re)peasantisation

As farmers reduce their dependence on external inputs and turn to agroecology, "they are becoming more peasant" (Rosset & Martinez-Torres 2012:5). Ploeg (2008) emphasises the role of peasants in dealing with the current crises, by way of the "peasant principle", meaning a strive to ground farming in ecological, social, and cultural capital. This means seeing healthy ecosystems as

essential for farming, increased local and regional self-regulation as an alternative to the control exercised by the CFS and the state, and closer connections between food producers and consumers. Ploeg (2010:25) stresses that peasants build resilience through these strategies, making their farms "more resistant and better equipped to survive the externally induced crises that are likely to de-activate (if not destroy) capitalist and entrepreneurial farms".

Ploeg (2008) uses the term "(re)peasantisation" to refer to the process towards greater autonomy by peasants, which both entails an increase in quantity, the number of peasants, and in quality, meaning greater autonomy and distance from conventional markets (*ibid*.:7). McMichael (2010) sees (re)peasantisation as a key contributor to sustainable food systems. This is a process which is sparked by the CFS itself, as well as by the reduction in urban opportunities, making people turn to the countryside. Peasants are resisting the CFS through a "wide range of heterogeneous and increasingly interlinked practices through which the peasantry constitutes itself as distinctively different" (Ploeg 2008:265).

Although some argue the above mentioned approaches are labour-intensive and romanticises peasants (Collier 2009), Ploeg (2008) stresses that peasant farming involves a sense of pride and identity in being a peasant which often is more valuable than material benefits. Further, labour-intensity need not be an issue as unemployment is growing globally (Ploeg 2008; Badgley *et al.* 2007). One manifestation of peasant resistance to the CFS can be seen in the engagement in alternative markets, which I discuss more below.

3.4. Alternative Food Networks

Looking into alternative food practices can be a "a critical innovative vehicle for showing us ways of creating a real sustainable food paradigm" partly since they create new urban-rural connections and overturn established supply chain models (Marsden & Morley 2014:21). AFNs generally refer to an increased connection between consumers and producers through a focus on food with certain requirements, such as local, organic, and Fair Trade, often distributed through alternative channels such as farmer's markets, box schemes, and food cooperatives. The rise of AFNs is related to a discontent with the CFS, mainly regarding aspects such as quality and sustainability (Goodman & Goodman 2009). AFNs are often re-localising food production and consumption which can be seen as a response to the de-localisation caused by the CFS (Watts, Ilbery, & Maye 2005:24).

CSA is one kind of AFN, referring to "local markets with special arrangements between consumers and producers", involving them co-planning the production and supply of food (O'Hara & Stagl 2001:145). Some of the production costs are paid in advance (*ibid.*). Many scholars see potential in CSA since it often blurs consumer and producer roles, has an intrinsic focus on community and works towards a de-commodification of food (Higgins, Dibden, & Cocklin 2008; Wilson 2013:728). Further, it is argued that CSA and other AFNs can address consumers' demand for more ethical, sustainable, and personal produce, contribute to increased awareness on sustainability and ethics, build trust, and provide a diversity of products (O'Hara & Stagl 2001).

In summary, agroecology and (re)peasantisation are two strands of thought aiming to bring about more sustainable alternatives to the CFS. A sustainable food paradigm involves a range of heterogeneous practices, often characterised by autonomy, self-regulation, and a re-grounding of farming in ecological, social, and cultural capital. Spatially and socially connected food systems such as AFNs have the potential to be part of this process. Later, I largely discuss the AFNs included in this study in relation to these strands of thought.

4. Romanian Context

In this chapter I outline the Romanian context, first by accounting for how agriculture was re-shaped during communism, then how things developed post-communism and what the situation is like today. I give particular attention to the growth of the CFS, and an overview of existing elements of a sustainable food paradigm in Romania including an introduction to the cases under study.

4.1. From 1948 to Today

Starting in 1948, Romanian peasants were forced to work on large industrialised collective farms, producing mainly for export. Gürel (2014) explains that some see the collectivisation experience in Eastern Europe as a failure since it violated principles of market-oriented production, whereas others focus on the positive contributions of collectives. Another point of view is a criticism towards collectivisation as well as capitalism for reducing the autonomy of peasants (*ibid*.). Considering the previously claimed importance of farmer autonomy for sustainable food systems, I focus on this perspective when accounting for the Romanian history.

The process of organising peasants into collectives occurred between 1949 to 1962, accompanied with peasants expressing frustration with the proposed policies through resistance and revolts (Kligman & Verdery 2011). The collectives mainly engaged in industrial agriculture, thus having a

range of environmental implications (Knight 2010). After the fall of communism in 1989-90, the lands from the collectives were redistributed, and while some land came to peasants, most of it became large private farms owned by the previous collective farm directors (Voiculescu 2008:80). Thus, post-communism did not improve the socio-economic situation for peasants, but reinforced previous inequalities (*ibid*.:78).

Today, Romania's agriculture has a dual structure, with a large number of small-scale farms taking up half the land and a few large-scale commercial farm enterprises controlling the other half (Möllers, Buchenrieder, & Csaki 2011; Voiculescu 2008). Thirty percent of the population are employed in agriculture, although since 2001, the agricultural employment has been declining, showing a trend of depeasantisation (Voiculescu 2008:84). Ninety per cent of Romanian land holdings are under 5 hectares, and 80 % of all farms produce mainly for self-consumption (Möllers, Buchenrieder, & Csaki 2011:134f.). Peasant farming in Romania is characterised by the use of traditional low-intensity practices and highly diversified production systems, resulting in a high farmland biodiversity (Hartel & Fischer 2013).

Since joining the EU in 2007, supermarkets have spread rapidly in Romania (Prada 2008). The farmers' markets are also becoming dominated by the produce from retailers who can set lower prices for their produce, partly since they receive EU subsidies (Möllers, Buchenrieder, & Csaki 2011). This growth of the CFS is challenging for peasants, further intensified through a government focus on industrial agriculture (Rowe 2012). Indeed, “the movement of peasants off the land has been billed by the government as an inevitability, a hitch on the road to becoming a prosperous, western economy” (Dale-Harris 2014). In essence, many of the implications of the CFS mentioned in the previous chapter can be seen in Romania, hindering a potential paradigm shift. However, in the next section I outline some trends which can been seen as signs of a sustainable food paradigm.

4.2. Seeds of a Sustainable Food Paradigm

Following the growth of the CFS, shorter food supply chains and markets for local traditional produce has grown in Romania, especially after the global food crisis of 2007-8 (Cioloş 2013 *cited in* Tudor, Macau & Butu 2013:2). The potential of trading organic and traditional products through alternative channels such as direct markets is increasingly recognised, especially in relation to providing opportunities for sustaining rural areas and peasant livelihoods (Tudor, Macau & Butu 2013:1). There are also discussions on introducing certification schemes for traditional produce

(*ibid*.). According to Ion (2012), 1-4 % of Romanian farm land was used for organic farming in 2010. However, this only accounts for the certified organic farming, which is largely for commercial purposes, and neglects the large number of peasants and their traditionally diverse and largely organic farming systems (Hartel & Fischer 2013; Ion 2012).

4.2.1. Cluj-Napoca

Cluj-Napoca is the capital of the historical region of Transylvania in the North-Western part of Romania. Although the presence of supermarkets has increased, local farmers' markets are still the most common place for people to buy their vegetables (Szocs 2013a). As mentioned above, farmers' markets are a type of AFNs but in this thesis I have chosen to focus on AFNs in which the organisation differ more from the CFS, namely CSA and direct selling box schemes. In Cluj-Napoca there are at least three such AFNs which have emerged in the last few years, all having in common the fact that boxes with local produce are delivered weekly from rural producers to urban consumers (Hirsch 2013; Meaker & McFarlane 2013; Veţan & Florean 2013).

Noteworthy is that these kinds of arrangements between rural producers and urban consumers are not new to Cluj-Napoca, having a history of *hostezeni*. This refers to peasants living near the city responsible for providing citizens with fresh and organic fruits and vegetables (Deac, Irimus, & Pacurar 2013:107). The information about this phenomenon is limited, but some state that it dates back to the seventeenth century, and is said to constitute a lifestyle rather than a profession (Cluj.com 2013). The *hostezeni* survived the collectivisation process, but disappeared quickly between 1978 and 1984 when their land was confiscated in order to build apartments for the expanding city (Cluj.Travel 2013). According to Cluj.Travel (2013), there are currently only 20 *hostezeni* left around Cluj-Napoca, a few of which are producers in the AFNs included in this study. This heritage will be discussed further in the analysis chapter.

In this thesis I focus on two of the AFNs in Cluj-Napoca, namely *Asociaţia pentru Susţinerea Agriculturii Ţărăneşti*[2] (ASAT) and *Cutia Ţăranului*[3] (CT). The third initiative, *Gustare*[4]*,* is managed by a couple who buy vegetables from peasants in a neighbouring city and deliver them to a pick-up point in Cluj-Napoca for about 5 weekly consumers (Meaker & McFarlane 2013). This case has been excluded from this study, given its small size and the dependency on an intermediary.

2 In English: Association for Sustaining Peasant Agriculture.
3 In English: The Peasant Box.
4 In English: Tasting.

4.2.2. ASAT

The first ASAT partnership based on a model of community supported agriculture (CSA) model from France started in the city of Timișoara in 2008 as an initiative of a social economy organisation (Veţan & Florean 2013). In order to spread across the country, they recruit volunteers which take the responsibility to find potential producers and consumers. In 2013, they had partnerships in 6 Romanian cities; in Cluj-Napoca they started in 2012, with the help of two active consumers (ASAT 2013; Veţan & Florean 2013). ASAT has an explicit focus on solidarity, consumer involvement, and on supporting local small-scale producers, preferably those which might have difficulties selling their produce otherwise (*ibid*.).

4.2.3. CT

CT was initiated in late 2011 by a Romanian-Israeli couple who moved to the countryside near Cluj-Napoca in 2010. In order to make good quality products available for conscious consumers in the city, and provide peasants with a more secure market, they encouraged their neighbours to try out a subscription system with weekly boxes (Hirsch 2013). They set up a website, and spread the word within a Facebook group for new mothers in Cluj-Napoca; the available spots filled up within 48 hours. CT is available in Cluj-Napoca and in Bucharest. In Cluj-Napoca, most of the producers deliver vegetables, but there are also boxes with bread, dairy, and lamb during Easter (*ibid*.). In this study, I focus on the vegetable producers.

5. Multidimensionality and Embeddedness as Analytical Lenses

In this chapter, I first present Holloway *et al.*'s (2007) analytical fields which are useful to outline the multidimensionality of the AFNs, and start understanding main synergies and conflicts related to production, supply, and consumption. Secondly, I introduce the embeddedness concept, focusing particularly on Sonnino & Marsden's (2006) multi-level conceptualisation. Later, I use insights from the multidimensional analytical fields and the layers of embeddedness as a basis for discussing the contribution to a sustainable food paradigm.

5.1. Multidimensional Analytical Fields

Holloway *et al.*'s (2007) analytical framework was developed in order to move away from the restrictive conventional-alternative binary so as to study food projects “in a way that preserves their specificity and diversity” (*ibid*.:80). This means exploring a range of analytical fields, namely the site of food production, the food production methods, the supply chain, the arena of exchange, the

producer-consumer interaction, motivations for participation, and the constitution of individual and group identities. Using these fields can generate a more complex understanding of the diverse and relational nature of AFNs, and to some extent of "where in the projects the potential is found for countering prevailing power relations in food supply systems" (*ibid*.:90). However, although Wilson (2013) praises the framework for opening up for diversity, she also criticises it for focusing too much on production rather than consumption, and for not defining the fields thoroughly. Therefore, I use the framework as a guidance rather than a strict model, and have aimed to incorporate the consumers' perspective more by using additional methods, as is explained in section 6.2. Below I outline how each of the fields are defined in this thesis, drawing largely on Holloway *et al.* (2007).

Site of Food Production

Within this analytical field, the characteristics of the place in which the food is grown within the AFNs, including the scale and location, are important. These sites can have different degrees of permanence and controversy. Examples of sites are community gardens, allotments, small- or large-scale farms, and occupied lands.

Food Production Methods

How and by whom the food is grown and prepared is relevant to look into within this field, including to what extent they are different from industrial production. This also involves exploring what kinds of inputs, such as pesticides and seeds, are used. Of particular importance is how the methods can be a result of producer-consumer relations or negotiations. Examples of food production methods are organic, biodynamic, traditional, and industrial.

Supply Chain

This refers to how the food travels from the site of production to the site of consumption through different technologies, intermediaries and levels of consumer involvement, for example if the supply chain is local or global. In this thesis, I also give attention to the planning of food production, what kinds of arrangements are made between producers and consumers, and how the networks are marketed.

Arena of Exchange

Both the physical field in which the food is exchanged, and the material and symbolic exchange itself are part of this field. This includes the characteristics of the produce, and whether the exchange is for money, farm work, volunteering, or something else. The food can also involve an

exchange of various inter-subjective aspects of producer-consumer relationships, such as sense of gratitude and solidarity. Examples of physical places are shops, home-delivery, and pick-up points.

Producer-Consumer Interaction

This refers to the meeting points between consumers and producers, which can be material or symbolic, formal or informal, face-to-face or communications at a distance. Of particular relevance is what kinds of relationships are under construction and how this influences the ways the AFNs are developed. This interaction can for instance take place in planning meetings, during deliveries or social events, and via phone or e-mail.

Motivation for Participation

Motivations are related to the reasons different actors have for participating in the AFN, including their attitudes and behaviours related to food. This category also involves how actors perceive and adapt to the motivations of others. Motivations can for example be related to stable livelihoods, health concerns, good taste, activism, convenience, and supporting local producers. Motivations are seen as subject to change rather than being static.

Constitution of Individual and Group Identities

This is related to how some AFNs are dependent on or assume certain roles for participants, and how they can serve to produce or reproduce such identities. This can involve consumers identifying or being identified as co-producers or ethical citizens, producers taking or being given an identity of a peasant, or provider of good food, and projects centring around solidarity, support for disability groups and/or environmental sustainability. The identity of the AFN as a whole is seen as constructed by the actors involved.

When studying these fields, I also give attention to the material and symbolic significance of the food itself (Holloway *et al.* 2007:81). Studying these fields should help me to gain insights on a range of different aspects related to the networks in a structured way. I see all the fields as relevant for exploring the nature of the networks and identifying synergies and conflicts, and to start gaining insights into their embeddedness. However, in the analysis, focus is on fields closely connected to aspects of embeddedness, namely the supply chain, the arena of exchange, the producer-consumer interactions, the motivations, and the constitution of identities.

5.2. Layers of Embeddedness

In contrast to how social relations largely are lifted out of transactions within the CFS, embeddedness is about bringing them back, which according to Granovetter (1985:490), can change the nature of exchange between actors, for example by generating trust. More specifically, social embeddedness refers to an intrinsic focus on "principles of social connectivity, reciprocity and trust", principles which are said to be fundamental for many AFNs (Sage 2003:47). It also refers to a concern for wider common goods over personal interests, in other words "the willingness of actors to offset purely personal financial incentives against social criteria involving collective, community or environmental benefits" (*ibid*.:48).

The concept of embeddedness is often used exclusively to describe the social dimensions of AFNs, although recently researchers have begun to emphasise the importance of a more holistic perspective (Sonnino & Marsden 2006:188). Further, Sonnino & Marsden (2006) criticise research on AFNs for being too focused on specific cases with little attention to the context in which they operate. Thus, they advocate for the analysis of AFNs to examine the vertical as well as horizontal embeddedness of the networks, in order to conceptualise the governance of AFNs in a more holistic way (Higgins, Dibden, & Cocklin 2008). This approach is also useful to understand "the complex and changing competitive boundaries" between alternative and the CFS (*ibid*.:17).

Horizontal embeddedness refers to the extent to which AFNs are "socioculturally, economically, and environmentally embedded in their locality" (Sonnino & Marsden 2006:194). Exploring this dimension involves looking into how the AFNs emerge, develop, and are sustained by the actors involved in relation to the particularities of the local context, especially related to the CFS. In this thesis, I largely analyse this dimension through a discussion on key aspects from the analytical fields mentioned above, with particular attention to the co-constitution of relationships between actors and the implications of those relationships.

Vertical embeddedness is the hierarchical linkages between actors on the local level and "the larger society, economy, and polity of which they are part" (*ibid*.:189). These political, institutional and regulatory linkages can constrain the activities of AFNs or open up opportunities. In this thesis, I focus on this mainly through secondary sources but also through the involved actors' perception and experiences related to the wider context. In relation to a sustainable food paradigm, exploring embeddedness through these horizontal and vertical dimensions can shed light on whether AFNs are contributing to a paradigm shift which "redefines nature by re-emphasizing food production and

agroecology" and which stresses the socio-ecological importance of agriculture for broader development processes (Sonnino & Marsden 2006:193).

6. Using a Multi-Case Study as a Method

In this section I outline the methodology, which involves discussing the research design, the data construction methods, the quality of the research, and the analysis process. Relevant methodological and ethical considerations are addressed continuously. In short, I have explored AFNs in Cluj-Napoca through a multi-case study with the use of interviews, observations, and a digital survey in order to understand the functioning of the networks and the experiences of the actors involved.

6.1. Research Design

The strategy of inquiry is a multiple case study, which is useful for exploring something in depth, such as networks (Creswell 2013). Cluj-Napoca is a city with several examples of AFNs, and with a history of similar initiatives (*hostezeni*) which makes it a good research choice, since insights can be gained on a range of different aspects related to a sustainable food paradigm. Further, by interning with a peasant association, Eco Ruralis, in Cluj-Napoca I could access important gatekeepers to consumers and producers. As mentioned previously, Romania is a country where many features of a sustainable food paradigm already exist which makes it relevant to study since exploring these cases can facilitate for[5], and deepen the understanding of, a transition process.

Two AFNs were included in order to show some of the diversity within alternative food practices in Cluj-Napoca. Although they are compared to some extent, the point is not evaluate them against each other but rather to gain a broad range of insights. All types of actors involved in the networks were included, namely producers, consumers and initiators. "Producers" refers to the household as a whole, although interviews was mostly with the main person involved with the AFN, or with the individual with the best English proficiency. One representative from each consumer household took part. "Initiators" refers to the individuals who started up the networks, two for each AFN.

6.2. Data Construction Methods

When constructing a case study it is important to gain an in-depth understanding, which generally involves using more than one source of data (Creswell 2013:98). In this thesis, the main data

5 In order to facilitate for a transition process, I plan to share my research findings broadly, for example by writing an easy-read report to CT, ASAT, and Eco Ruralis. I will also present my thesis at the 4th International Conference on Degrowth in September 2014.

construction methods for understanding the AFNs have been in-depth interviews and participant and non-participant observations, complemented with a digital survey. The pool of primary data also consist of e-mail conversations with initiators and photographs during observations. For further insights into the vertical embeddedness, secondary sources were used, especially related to policies on national and EU levels.

6.2.1. Sampling

Given their limited number, all producers and initiators in the AFNs were included in the study. For the consumers, all 265 of them were invited to participate in the survey, and to select some of them for in-depth interviews a convenient sampling strategy was used. Consumers were able to submit their contact information in the survey if they wanted to be interviewed. Therefore, the sample might consist of the most involved, the most satisfied, the most disappointed and/or the most available consumers. However, although their perceptions might differ from others, I see involving these consumers as useful to "purposefully inform an understanding" (Creswell 2013:156) on a range of different aspects. Further, although the picture would be enriched by interviewing more household members, I consider it relevant to interview the individual who is most involved with the practicalities of the network in order to gain insights on embeddedness and producer-consumer relations. In the next section I address the construction of the different methods more in detail; a specification of the interviews and observations I conducted can be found in Appendix I.

6.2.2. Interviews

I carried out in-depth interviews with initiators, producers and consumers, before which respondents were informed about the purpose, that their participation is voluntary and that their anonymity is ensured. The aim was to understand the involved actors' perceptions and experience of the AFN and the context in which they take place, with a specific focus on motivations and relationships between actors. Permission was asked for using a dictaphone. All interviews except five were conducted in English, the others were done with translators. One interview was conducted in basic Romanian by me, without translation. Although some details and nuances in the responses are likely to have been lost from the interviews, I do not see this as a major issue since the topics are fairly uncomplicated nor very sensitive in nature.

Most interviews with initiators were informal with notes taken during and afterwards. I interviewed most producers on their farm, while being showed around or helping out with work. I recorded one

interview with two producers, otherwise I made field notes. I visited Producer 1, CT on several occasions, participating in work activities and social activities. An interview guide for producers is available in Appendix II. Consumer interviews were conducted either in the offices of the respondents or at cafés in Cluj-Napoca. I did 5 interviews with ASAT consumers and 15 with CT consumers; all except one were recorded and transcribed. See Appendix II for an interview guide.

6.2.3. Observations

Observations were made on farms so as to understand the site of food production, the methods used and also to some extent the livelihoods of the producers. In two cases, these were participatory with me assisting with farm work. Further, observations were made at the various meeting places between producers and consumers in order to get insights into the relationships between the actors, and how they relate to each other and the food itself. For CT, I managed to visit all farms except two and also did observations during one delivery. I visited all ASAT farms and pick-up points as well as two evaluation meetings and one farm visit for consumers. I took notes and photos during the observations to better remember the visits. An observation guide can be found in Appendix II.

6.2.4. Survey

To complement the interviews, I conducted a digital survey so as to further understand the demographics of the consumers, their general experience of the AFN, their motivations for participating, their values when it comes to food and their attitudes towards the CFS. Having a digital survey was relevant since some network practicalities take place online, meaning that the involved consumers have internet access and they were able to fill it in when convenient for them.

I sent the survey to all consumers, namely 220 from CT and 45 from ASAT. The total response rate was 53.2% (47.3% for CT and 82.2% for ASAT). Thus, the sample size consists of 141 respondents, of which 104 from CT and 37 from ASAT. The high response rate for ASAT gives indication of a high level of consumer engagement, as will be discussed more in the analysis. The survey questions can be found in Appendix III.

6.3. Reflexivity

Before starting the research, I took into consideration that I am a young Swedish academic, passionate about food, agriculture, and peasant empowerment but with a limited understanding about the Romanian context. Also, I entered the field as an intern at Eco Ruralis, a well renowned association, actively supporting peasant farmers. However, I conveyed these details only in the end

of visits and interviews to reduce the potential impact on people's perceptions. Following England (1997), I was conscious about reducing my impact on people's lives, although this meant that I had to cancel some visits and observations when I felt it would be inconvenient for the participants.

I have also considered how my passion for the topic might influence the research. My own expectations for the networks might not correspond to the view of the actors; I have therefore tried to design the research openly, emphasising that the focus is on the actors and the meaning they put into the networks. However, I am aware that I am the one constructing the data, and likely to lean towards painting a positive picture of my cases, since I chose them due to their potential relevance for a sustainable food paradigm. This positive attitude can also be useful, since I aim to discuss limitations and weaknesses constructively rather than rejecting the relevance of the AFNs simply because of those limitations. I see stating these reflexive insights and keeping them in mind as helpful for me to be sufficiently critical of my own interpretation of the constructed material, and making the research process as a whole more meaningful and accurate (Sultana 2007:383).

6.4. Quality of the Research Process

Since data validation in qualitative research is more multifaceted than traditional, positivist studies, it is better to use a broader set of criteria for evaluating the research (Silverman 2009). Creswell (2013:249) describes a range of strategies which are useful for assessing "the 'accuracy' of the findings". I have pursued several of these strategies during the length of my research, such as triangulation, long and recurrent field visits, and describing the findings thoroughly. However, long and recurrent field visits have especially been with one producer, meaning that I base many insights on their experience, which I acknowledge might not attune entirely with the other producers. Although the cases are described concisely in the analysis chapter, these descriptions are based on more detailed accounts developed continuously during the analysis process. My work has also been peer reviewed on a regular basis, and although it would have been useful to check key statements with respondents I did not have the time to do so.

The pursuit of these strategies should increase the validity of my research to some extent, but I acknowledge the open-ended nature to validation in which all interpretations are "temporal, located and always open to reinterpretation" (*ibid*.:248). Further, before conducting the research in Cluj-Napoca, I did a brief pre-study with initiators, producers, and consumers in ASAT in Timişoara. Having an initial understanding of ASAT was useful when planning interviews, observations and the survey, and should improve their quality and relevance. In addition, although it would have been

relevant to include producers and consumers which have left the networks, they were excluded due to difficulties in accessing them. I acknowledge that the understanding of the AFNs is likely to be less critical than it would be by including those perspectives.

6.5. Analysis Process

The analysis of interviews and observations was assisted by a web-based coding programme for qualitative research, called CATMA.[6] Excerpts from field notes or transcription notes were tagged according to the analytical fields, often also using sub-categories. Other relevant categories were added such as the general opinion of the networks, the local context, how actors became part of the network, policies, challenges, and general information about boxes. Data constructed from ASAT and CT was initially analysed separately, and insights were then contrasted and compared to deepen the understanding of the AFNs. The survey was analysed using SPSS, generating descriptive statistics for the different questions. In the following analysis chapters, insights from the survey are largely discussed descriptively. In the beginning, I discuss ASAT and CT separately whereas later I largely discuss them together, either referred to as "the AFNs" or "the networks". Throughout the analysis, I mix insights from the interviews, the observations, and the survey.

7. Analysing the Networks across the Analytical Fields

In this chapter I outline the arrangements of the AFNs in relation to the multidimensional analytical fields, focusing on identifying aspects which make them function and how they challenge or are different from the CFS. Secondly, I go further in depth by comparing the two networks and discussing key insights related to the supply chain, the exchange itself, the producer-consumer interactions, and the demographics of the consumers. These insights constitute important synergies or conflicts, which may have implications for the functioning and sustainability of the networks.

7.1. ASAT

ASAT is a CSA project with three producers supplying fresh vegetables to a total of 45 consumers in Cluj-Napoca; each producer has around 10-20 consumers. Initiator 1, ASAT, organises meetings and handles the internal and external communication; Initiator 2 is mainly involved with organising social events for producers and consumers. Most of the consumers are highly educated young families with household incomes well above the Romanian average. The producers manage farms

6 http://www.digitalhumanities.it/catma

which range from 1.5 to 8 hectares in size; two of them also have jobs in the village or city. They state that they grow organically, which is a precondition for ASAT, and this is also a main reason why consumers say they are part of the network. Producers say that the methods are largely decided by them, but is influenced by the consumers' requests and suggestions, as the production is co-planned during a series of planning meetings. As observed and as stated by producers, the farming is done through traditional and diverse methods, but whereas most peasants in Romania grow mainly for themselves (Möllers, Buchenrieder, & Csaki 2011:134f.), the ASAT producers produce more than that. They also claim to strive for more diversity so as to please the consumers.

Consumers sign a contract for a year, a budget is made to cover all the production costs, and then a part is paid in advance, as a form of risk-sharing. This implies a great deal of trust in the producer (Hinrich 2000:300). The vegetables are then supplied weekly through deliveries to a pick-up point, near the home or office of a consumer. Currently two of these are car parks, and Initiator 1 would like the pick-up points to be more pleasant meeting places. The exchange consists of bags with freshly harvested and organic vegetables. As I have observed and understood through interviews, this exchange comes together with a sense of solidarity, through a direct producer-consumer connection, as will be discussed more below. The average weekly price is 29-35RON which some state is almost the same or slightly more than in the market, but that "minimum wage people would not go for this" (Consumer 1, ASAT).

ASAT is marketed mainly by word-of-mouth, the food provisioning thus involves relationships of trust, both between producers and consumers and between consumers and potential consumers. Direct forms of consumer-producer and consumer-consumer interaction are produced in several ways: through planning meetings, farm visits, social events and a Facebook group. However, as of now, it seems like many consumers do not "understand the idea of the community, only the idea of a service" (Consumer 5, ASAT), people "are busy, pick their basket up and go home" (Consumer 2, ASAT). Although many consumers are mostly interested in the service, others would like "to have a closer relationship, to share more things, because obviously we have common interests" (*ibid*.), and would like to "visit the farmer more, put my hands in the ground, play a bit" (*ibid*.).

The motivations for being involved in ASAT can be said to be "nested within each other" (Cox *et al.* 2008), with more personal reasons such as accessing fresh, tasty, and organic produce often being expressed together with broader aims such as knowing where the food comes from and supporting small-scale producers. For producers, it is a matter of gaining a more secure source of

income, but also to access a more rewarding system, since the prices are directly linked with the production costs and their efforts are acknowledged by a group of engaged consumers. Thus, the identities that are being constituted by the actors in ASAT are that of a group of active consumers, "consum-actors" (Initiator 1, ASAT), supporting a local small-scale producer, which in the discussions often refers to the woman in the producing family. The identity of the network as a whole is that of being more about community and not just a service; ASAT is "reshaping that social village, even though we are in the cities and they are in the villages, we connect that network of relearning the basics" (Consumer 3, ASAT).

The way ASAT has organised itself, focusing explicitly on community and promoting food provisioning embedded in social relations and solidarity, operates in several way counter to the dominant relations in the CFS. In this way, ASAT can both be seen as a resistance in practice and discourse against existing powers in food supply (Holloway *et al.* 2007). CSA is often seen as an alternative to the market rather than an alternative market (Hinrich 2000), since it seeks "to remove food from values built on market rationality and work toward the de-commodification of food" (Wilson 2013:728). However, perhaps ASAT should still be considered as an alternative market, since the main focus of consumers is accessing good quality food, albeit to some extent involving an interest in building community and supporting local producers. See Table 1 below for an overview of the functioning of ASAT.

Table 1: ASAT across the analytical fields

Analytical Field	**Brief description**
Site of Food Production	Small-scale family farms
Food Production Methods	Traditional and organic, diverse; negotiated with consumers
Supply Chain	Local; word-of-mouth marketing; consumers and producers co-planning production; risk-sharing
Arena of Exchange	Pick-up point; bags with vegetables: 29-35RON/week; a sense of solidarity
Consumer-Producer Interaction	Distributions, planning and evaluation meetings, farm visits, Facebook group
Motivations	Consumers: Organic, taste, health, know source, freshness, support local producers. Producers: Additional/more secure income, rewarding system.

Constitution of Individual and Group Identities	Consumers as "consum-actors", high-income, health-concious; producers framed as small-scale female farmers; producer-consumer community

Source: (the author)

7.2. CT

CT is a direct selling box scheme, with four vegetable producers around Cluj-Napoca providing vegetables for about 220 consumers; each producer state that they have between 10-70 consumers. The initiators manage the CT website and the communication with producers and to some extent the consumers, who are fairly affluent, well educated young families. The producers are friends or relatives and manage farms which range in size from 2 to 8 hectares, using traditional practices with a mix of their own and bought seeds. The producers state that they to some extent adapt the methods to the interests of the consumers, for example by growing a greater diversity of crops, or by transitioning completely to organic farming (Producer 1, CT). The other producers use pesticides from "time to time when you really have to do it to not lose everything, but this is very rarely" (Producer 3, CT). They are aware that consumers are health conscious, meaning that they might reduce their chemical use. All producers are successors to previous farmers in the family; Producer 3, CT, used to be *hostezeni*, and expresses pride in continuing the heritage of peasants feeding urban dwellers, something which will be discussed more later.

Consumer sign up for a specific producer on a website, discuss the practicalities with the producer and fresh vegetables are then delivered to the home of the consumer weekly. Advertising is mainly done through word-of-mouth. Most consumers subscribe to a box worth 40RON which many say is slightly more expensive than the market. The exchange focuses on the food, but consumers emphasise that it is not just a seller-buyer relationship as in the market, it is "more than that" (Consumer 5, CT). The consumer-producer interaction is limited to brief talks during deliveries, and some consumers are satisfied with this, with Consumer 3, CT, stating that "I don't think those veggies need my love to grow". Others value this relationship highly and want to get closer with the producer: "you have to talk to the peasants, you become his friend and support, he also becomes your support" (Consumer 1, CT).

Similarly, whereas the consumer motivations initially was a range of personal reasons such as convenient access to tasty, fresh, and healthy food, consumers indicate that being part of the

network can serve to foster motivations which are related to wider benefits, such as the well-being of the producer and an active support of peasant agriculture. The producers take part in CT since it is more secure and "better than standing in the market, waiting" (Producer 4, CT), although for Producer 2, CT it seems to be more of a pleasant side-activity than an important income source, since they have very few boxes. Another motivation is related to continuing a heritage, with Producers 1 and 3, CT, expressing concern that their children might not take over the farm.

In CT, the consumer identity is mostly that of a client receiving a service and at the same time supporting local producers, as a "win-win situation" (Consumer 12, CT). The producer identity is constructed as that of a peasant family, with consumers sometimes referring to the producer as "my family" or "my peasant" (Consumer 11, CT). Many producers express a sense of pride in being a peasant, knowing that your "work is worth it" (Producer 3, CT). Regarding the identity of the system as a whole, it is largely about knowing the origin of your food, accessing good quality food and supporting local producers: "a good way to help the community, to help yourself, to know the products, that they do not use chemical products, that it is worth the money" (Consumer 14, CT).

The functioning of CT is many ways similar to the CFS, since producers cater to a consumer demand for good quality vegetables, with the exchange mostly centring around the product and its monetary value. There is limited focus on constructing qualitatively different social relations around food, as would be the case in many CSA initiatives (Hinrich 2000). However, the actors involved are in the process of embedding this system in something more, where the CFS can be challenged as consumers construct a notion of quality food based on "trust, tradition and place" (Feagan 2007:28), and equating good food with vegetables produced by local peasants, as I discuss more later. Table 2 gives an overview of the functioning of CT.

Table 2: CT across the analytical fields

Analytical Field	**Brief description**
Site of Food Production	Small-scale family farms
Food Production Methods	Traditional and largely organic, diverse; adapted to consumer interests
Supply Chain	Local; word-of-mouth marketing; home delivery
Arena of Exchange	Home-delivery of bags with vegetables, mostly for 40 RON; exceptional quality
Consumer-Producer Interaction	Deliveries; practical details by phone; interest in more interaction

Motivations	Consumers: Freshness, health, taste, organic, support peasants, convenience. Producers: More secure and better income, continuing heritage.
Constitution of Individual and Group Identities	Consumers as recipients of a service, high-income, health conscious; producers framed as peasant families; win-win system

Source: (the author)

7.3. Comparison and Discussion

7.3.1. Supply Chain (In)conveniences

Regarding the supply chain, consumers in ASAT emphasise that going to a pick-up point is inconvenient and that they would prefer home delivery, like in CT. This inconvenience is highlighted in research on CSA (Goland 2002; Laird 1998), but as argued by Wilson (2013:731), from the point of view of producers, a pick-up point is more useful and also entails an opportunity to build relationships. Furthermore, as mentioned previously, the consumers' feeling of inconvenience might be mitigated if the pick-up points were more inviting. However, some consumers focus mostly on the service aspect of ASAT, and suggest that there could be a more expensive box which gets home delivered (Consumer 5, ASAT). This, however, can create divisions between affluent and less affluent participants and makes the food supply chain less different from the CFS, since the community aspect is missed out (Bîrhală & Möllers 2014:21).

7.3.2. Quantity and Construction of Quality

As for the exchange itself, many consumers emphasise that the food quantities are too large, with Consumer 3, CT, “freaking out because it was so much vegetables”. In ASAT, the quantity is co-decided, but the actual quantity differs from year to year due to weather differences. It is therefore difficult to satisfy the needs of all consumers due to variability. In CT, some consumers negotiate with the producer about getting a smaller share, although the initiators recommend the producers to not accept such negotiations. Nevertheless, considering that the AFNs mostly are used by affluent consumers, having a smaller and cheaper box for everyone could make the networks more accessible. In this case, however, the costs should still cover the expenses of the producer (Bîrhală & Möllers 2014; Hinrich 2000). As the situation is now, the quantity issue seems to be creating some friction in the network, but it can also be an embedding factor, since consumers often solve the issue by sharing or giving away vegetables to colleagues, family, or friends.

Another aspect related to the food is the perceived quality (especially within CT), which according to Consumer 1, CT is of "superior quality compared to what I have eaten before". Consumer 3, CT describes how they were "in awe" after tasting the first batch of tomatoes. Some state that they are explicitly looking for food produced by peasants, and others do so implicitly by talking about the importance of natural food "that has seen the ground" (Consumer 6, CT), and about "quality as in the real product, the real deal, not the supermarket deal" (Consumer 4, CT). This notion of quality is related to the agri-food literacy among the consumers, who often are connected to rural areas, either by growing up there, having relatives living there, or wanting to move there to engage in farming. They mainly eat seasonal food and prefer Romanian vegetables, since they claim to know "the difference between the original taste and the one of the imported tomato from Turkey for example" (Consumer 14, CT), and that they get "whatever is in the garden, because the peasant is not a hypermarket where you can get whatever you want" (Consumer 13, CT).

Thus, for the CFS to out-compete these AFN, they need to supply food of equal quality as the involved producers, since currently this "collective configuration of quality and trust" (Stassart & Whatmore 2003:460) relies in part on the perceived better taste of the produce compared to the CFS. However, consumers in CT and ASAT focus on more than just the product *per se;* as the mode of production and the supply chain are also seen as important, it should be difficult for the CFS to subvert these AFNs, following Watts, Ilbery, & Maye (2005).

7.3.3. Power Relations

Producer-consumer interaction is a more intrinsic part of ASAT than CT, but there are power dynamics to consider. Although the co-planning of production in ASAT is largely a result of mutual discussions between the actors, I have observed that the consumers have some leverage on the producer in these interactions. Consumers want the producer to "be more open and flexible to our suggestions" (Consumer 2, ASAT) and make requests on what crops to grow and how to do it. In fact, Producer 1, ASAT was persuaded to continue although she wanted to take a one-year break due to other engagements. In CT, there are also unequal power relations to some extent, with consumers requesting smaller boxes and more or less of certain vegetables. According to the initiators, the producers accommodate to these requests since they are afraid to lose customers, but there is therefore a risk of "self-exploitation" (Jarosz 2008:241) as they put in more time and effort. However, the producers also have power since they are in charge of what happens on the fields, and

given that consumers often do not have time to visit, trust has to be built between the actors. Indeed, an equal power balance between the involved actors is important in order to improve the functioning of AFNs (Jarosz 2000:281).

7.3.4. Demographic Disparities

The group of consumers in both ASAT and CT consist of fairly high-income groups, which raises the issue of inclusiveness. A common criticism to AFNs is that they may reproduce demographic disparities (Allen 2010; Hinrichs & Kremer 2002), meaning a risk for a division with affluent citizens accessing high quality food, and low-income groups being left with cheaper, industrial food from supermarkets. However, these particular AFNs should not be seen a one-size-fits-all solutions, and although the networks may largely represent a middle-class privilege, Goodman and DuPuis (2002:17f.) argue that their relevance should not be neglected and that this reflexive consumption still constitutes a political action and an "expression of agency". Nevertheless, it is problematic that there may be fewer opportunities for low-income groups to access good quality food in Cluj-Napoca, and Goodman (2010) argues that AFNs should have a strong focus on social justice so as to avoid becoming niche markets for the affluent. Furthermore, Hinrichs, & Kremer (2002:87) emphasise that in order to improve the "social access to and engagement with" more localised food systems, it is vital to move beyond the focus on the CSA itself and also organise a range of complementary initiatives for food security, such as community gardening.

In sum, following the terminology of Watts, Ilbery, & Maye (2005), I would argue that both CT and ASAT constitute fairly strong forms of AFNs considering that they are organising food provisioning differently through short and connected supply chains, rather than being solely about providing food with certain characteristics. However, the issues of quantity, the delivery arrangement, and unequal power relations could influence the functioning of the networks negatively. ASAT has the potential to be a more transformational mode of food provisioning, due to the intrinsic focus on community (Hinrichs 2000; Kloppenburg *et al*. 1996), and the high response rate by ASAT consumers in the survey gives indications that they are more engaged in their network than the CT consumers. However, in the survey, CT consumers reported a higher level of satisfaction with the quality of the food, the price paid, the delivery arrangement as well as the content of the boxes, indicating that the CT model is better suited to the interests of the consumers.

8. Analysing Layers of Embeddedness

Drawing on insights from the previous chapter, here I discuss the horizontal and vertical embeddedness of the AFNs. Firstly, I explore the horizontal dimension by focusing on the relationships between producers and consumers. Secondly, I assess the vertical embeddedness by examining what trends on national and European levels are limiting or assisting these networks.

8.1. Horizontal Embeddedness

Food exchanged through AFNs in Cluj-Napoca are to various degrees embedded in the local context with the food representing something more than just a product. It matters where and how it was made (Sage 2003). Since food systems in Romania only recently started to become disembedded because of the growth of the CFS (Rowe 2012), many of the consumers involved express a close connection to food and agriculture, as mentioned above.

8.1.1. ASAT Focus on Community

ASAT can be seen as more embedded than CT, since it is explicitly focusing on creating relationships between producers and consumers; there is a notion of community and solidarity. Although many ASAT consumers are not involved explicitly for the community aspect, they like the idea of knowing the origin and some want to get "closer to the produce, to visit more, to relate more" (Consumer 2, ASAT). Furthermore, ASAT attempts to embed food systems in *consumer-consumer* relations as well, through providing various opportunities for interaction and building community. ASAT is thus aiming to be what can be considered a "particularly transformative direct marketing institution" (Hinrichs 2003:39), although this process is only starting and can to some extent be seen as being pushed by the initiators since it is not fully aligned with the current consumer motivations. It does seem like involvement in the network can be embedding over time since, as I have observed, in the evaluation meeting for Producer 1, ASAT, who started in 2012, around half of the consumers attended, whereas for Producer 3, who started in 2013, only 1 (of 20) attended. Indeed, rather than being "shareholder CSAs", where the consumers take an active role in shaping the food system, as aspired by the initiators, ASAT is for the most part currently more of a "subscription CSA" (Bîrhală & Möllers 2014).

8.1.2. CT Embedding through Food Quality

CT is more of a direct service and many of the consumers do not know the name of their producer, but the system is embedded in the sense that the consumers find it important to know how and where their food has been produced. Further, although the consumers in many cases joined the network in pursuit of easy access to good food, similar to ASAT they express interest in creating more embedded food systems, by visiting the farm and connecting more with the producer. This is important in order to "establish a connection of trust between the sellers and the buyers", since it is not about "a usual product like a TV or something like this but something very important – food" (Consumer 14, CT). Compared to ASAT, I would then argue that CT is becoming embedded through a slower process which perhaps can be more sustainable in the long run. This is related to the role of the food itself in CT, since it seems like the perceived exceptional quality stimulates good relations: "I love them because they are humble, they produce good, they have values, they promote a solution /.../, I love what comes out of their hands" (Consumer 1, CT). Indeed, Holloway *et al.* (2007:81) emphasise how the significance of the food itself can involve "the holding together of particular sets of relationships and spatio-temporal arrangements". In this case, it seems like the quality of the produce accords with local notions of good taste among the consumers (Morgan, Marsden, & Murdoch 2006:12). The survey I conducted further sparked the interest in building relations, since it "would be nice to go and see how your vegetables are grown" (Consumer 8, CT).

8.1.3. Peasant Identity and (Re)peasantisation

Similarly, the producers express satisfaction with having more embedded food relations than what they previously experienced in the farmers' markets: "when you know that the customers are happy you are also happy" (Producer 3, CT). Producer 4, CT is aware that some consumers are mostly interested in the service, but states that this is fine: "you get to know the ones who are serious". This relates to the notion of pride in being a peasant and providing for the city, for example with Producer 2, CT emphasising how she loves working the land. Creating an identity in this way is part of the peasant principle, which is about a strive for autonomy and pride in your work (Ploeg 2008). This strive and other immaterial factors related to peasant farming can be seen as a resistance to the logic of Empire (*ibid*.:265). Like this, peasants use visibility and embeddedness as a way to circumvent the invisibility and disembeddedness created by the CFS, to position themselves as distinctively different. By engaging in these self-organised alternative markets, peasants strengthen their autonomy, and can therefore be seen as part of a (re)peasantisation process (*ibid*.:269).

This process is in part facilitated by the close producer-consumer relationships under construction within these networks, and can be seen among consumers as well. Some of them express an interest to "set up my own farm, I want to and I will do" (Consumer 1, CT), or to visit their producer to learn more about farming. I would argue that there is potential for (re)peasantisation here since these consumers are not aiming to engage in entrepreneurial or capitalist agriculture. Instead, their aim is to grow mainly for themselves in a more connected way to the natural environment, by using ecological methods, in other words "becoming more peasant" (Rosset & Martinez-Torres 2012:5). Consumer 2, ASAT sees this trend more broadly, "a new generation of farmers is emerging, young people leaving the cities, settling in the countryside and starting doing permaculture, organic farming - I hope to be one of them sometime". The importance of youth engaging in agriculture with such an attitude of adapting to and learning from the local context, rather than focusing merely on instrumental aspects, is also emphasised by Ploeg (2008:285).

8.1.4. Dangers of Defensive Localism

As mentioned previously, although ASAT and CT represent more embedded food systems, there are power relations involved as well. Thus, even though the embeddedness in social relations has many benefits for sustaining and promoting a sustainable food paradigm, it is important to consider potential drawbacks. For example, Winter (2003) stresses how AFNs sometimes are criticised from an environmental sustainability perspective for being more about a 'defensive localism', in other words a conservative sense of protecting local farmers against the threats of the global, rather than a turn towards quality production such as organic or agroecological. In CT and ASAT, peasants are seen as important parts of Romania, since "if [peasant farming is] gonna end, then we're gonna end. If we disconnect from the natural world we will be disconnected from the planet (Consumer 3, ASAT). Similarly, Consumer 11, CT, stresses that "we are a peasant country, so we should be a peasant country [in the future as well]". However, since peasant farming entails more diverse and environmentally sound production, I would argue that the favouring of "Romanian" and "local" produced, is intrinsically coupled with a concern for organic and "natural" food as well.

Thus, in a horizontal perspective, I see the AFNs as fairly embedded and in the process of becoming more so. In ASAT, this happens through an active focus on building relationships and a sense of solidarity, and in CT it is a slower process, where actors gain broader motivations to be part after experiencing the quality of the vegetables via a direct connection with the producer. This

encourages consumers to continue building relations, and engage in the AFN not just because it is convenient but also since the food comes with quality and from *somewhere*. However, these processes are only starting and personal motivations are still central for many of the consumers.

8.2. Vertical Embeddedness

The AFNs are less embedded in a vertical perspective, with policies implemented at national and EU levels largely promoting another kind of development for food and agriculture. Although some of the actors involved in the AFNs are conscious of these trends, being "nervous about the future, there are some big challenges going on" (Consumer 1, CT), most of them do not express a great awareness of this broader context. This may have implications for the prospects of the AFNs to contribute to a sustainable food paradigm, as I discuss more later.

8.2.1. Government Support of Entrepreneurial Farming

The Romanian National Rural Development Plan between 2007-2013 focused largely on increasing the competitiveness of the agricultural sector in order to participate in global markets, and facilitating the movement of labour from agriculture to other sectors (Government of Romania 2010). The plan for 2014 onwards is under development, and according to Szocs (2013b) it has similar aims and is likely to involve "the end of peasant farming in Romania". One aim of the plan is to involve more young people in agriculture, but as entrepreneurial farmers which according to Ploeg (2008:128f) has limited prospects to deal with the "squeeze on agriculture", a continuing trend involving falling prices and rising costs, as compared to peasant farming. Whereas entrepreneurial farmers respond to the squeeze through industrialisation and expansion, leading to social wealth being "squeezed out of agriculture", peasants respond by reducing their use of external inputs, in other words turning to agroecology (*ibid*.:130, 278).

In general, many consumers do not trust the government to do good things, as taxes are said to sink "into a black hole" (Consumer 3, CT). Given that AFNs growing larger can undermine the growth of the CFS, it is likely that the government will eventually regulate these initiatives which now operate in a grey legal zone, for example by taxing them. This can make them more inaccessible for low-income groups, and could also undermine the AFNs if consumers choose other channels due to the sharp rise in price. However, the consumers who find the mode of production (peasant farming) and the supply chain (direct) to be particularly important might still choose AFNs, since even if it is

"cheaper in the market, the fact that it comes to me, the fact that I support those people to continue what they are doing makes it OK for me" (Consumer 6, CT). This can be seen as an offsetting of personal incentives against broader societal benefits (Sage 2003:48).

8.2.2. Certified Foods and Construction of Quality

There is a trend of certification of organic and traditional produce in Romania (Tudor, Macau, and Butu 2013; Ion 2012). Large-scale commercial actors often have a competitive advantage in accessing and implementing these certifications, whereas many small-scale producers are facing challenges to do so (Lee, Gereffi, & Beauvais 2012; Sage 2003). The average farm size for certified organic products is around 72-75 ha, showing that this option is mainly pursued by large-scale farmers (Ion 2012). Indeed, peasants as well as the AFNs could get undermined by supermarkets focusing more on selling certified organic products, as this can take away consumers from AFNs and into the CFS (Watts, Ilbery, & Maybe 2005). This is problematic since these approaches within the CFS can only ensure sustainability to some extent, and often lead to the marginalisation of peasants and socio-cultural aspects of food (Marsden & Morley 2014; McMichael 2005).

Further, AFNs could be undermined if good food becomes increasingly associated with certified products rather than with trust and provenance as is the case in more embedded systems (Murdoch, Marsden, & Banks 2000). In particular, potential consumers could be in the process of constructing a notion of quality based on safety and control, for example if subject to advertising from the CFS (*ibid*.). Certification as a whole can be problematic; it can be seen in relation to the process of Empire as a strive for increased ordering and control by the CFS. This is an example of "politics of quality", where for instance authorities can impose safety standards labelling certain traditional products, such as raw milk, as unsafe (Brunori 2007:27).

8.2.3. Liberalisation of Seed and Land Markets

Ninety-four foreign companies had registered seeds on the Romanian market in 2012 (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development 2012:194f). Producers 1 & 3, CT, also mention how seed companies are promoting the use of hybrid and other commercial seeds to peasants. Replacing traditional seeds with hybrids can reduce the resilience and autonomy of peasants, since these seeds are often infertile, meaning that its usage replicates a model of industrial agriculture, with a constant need for external inputs (De Schutter 2010:5). Some of the involved producers state that they buy

hybrid seeds in order to increase their yields on largely exhausted soils, seemingly without knowing that there are agroecological strategies for handling this issue, such as mulching (Wezel *et al.* 2009). This behaviour, coupled with the continuous pressure from seed companies, means that the autonomy of peasants is further threatened.

Another trend is the liberalisation of land markets, and from 2014, land in Romania is available to buy also for companies in the EU. The result is that Romanian farmland is increasingly controlled by large-scale agribusinesses wanting to take part in the CFS, and produce mainly for export (Bouniol 2013). Land prices have increased during the last decade and are likely to continue doing so as competition increases (Voiculescu 2008:88). This can be a major obstacle for those who want to move to the countryside and constitute a pressure on peasants to sell their land. Although the fact that half of all land in Romania is owned by peasants (*ibid*.) is hindering these developments, the liberalisation of land markets is facilitating for a process of depeasantisation.

8.2.4. The EU Common Agricultural Policy

The development of the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) may also have implications for AFNs in Romania. This policy has by and large been unfavourable for peasants in Romania, due to an unbalanced focus on productivist agriculture rather than rural development (Gorton, Hubbard, & Hubbard 2009). Subsidies are only eligible for farms over 1 hectare, and have mainly been used by large-scale commercial agricultural enterprises (Möllers, Buchenrieder, & Csaki 2011). Although the administration costs are high, at least one of the producers in CT gets subsidies (Producer 1, CT), which they say is beneficial for them. However, even though the CAP has increased its focus on rural development and sustainability in recent years, many argue that it still mainly gives incentives for "agricultural intensification, despite its likely ecological costs" (Hartel & Fischer 2013:7). Thus, it seems like the CAP is facilitating for the growth of the CFS in Romania.

Thus, regarding the vertical embeddedness there are several trends on national and EU levels which are working against the AFNs, and instead align with the CFS and the strive for increased ordering and control, especially by large agribusinesses. However, the impact of these trends can be mitigated if relationships within the networks are further strengthened, basing food provisioning on factors such as trust, community, and pride which differ largely from the logic of the CFS (Watts, Ilbery, and Maye 2005; Ploeg 2008). Table 3 below summarises the discussed aspects regarding the horizontal and vertical embeddedness of the AFNs. In the following concluding chapter, I answer

the main research question, and argue that AFNs in Cluj-Napoca are contributing to a paradigm shift by promoting agroecology, emphasising socio-cultural factors of agri-food, and being part of a (re)peasantisation process.

Table 3: The horizontal and vertical embeddedness of the AFNs

Aspect	*Horizontal Embeddedness*	*Vertical (Dis)Embeddedness*
Community and Struggles over Quality	Community focus in ASAT, although not aimed for by all consumers. Good quality food stimulating good relations in CT. Consumers and producers wanting to establish closer relationships.	Trends of certification of traditional and organic food, can influence potential consumers notion of quality towards more safety and control.
(Re)- and depeasantisation	AFNs being part of peasants strive for autonomy. Sense of identity and pride in providing good food. Consumers expressing interest in engaging in peasant farming. Consumers see peasants as an important part of Romania.	Romanian government encouraging entrepreneurial farming over peasant farming. Liberalisation of seed and land markets in Romania having implications for peasants' autonomy. CAP largely promoting productivist agriculture. Half of Romania's farmland owned by peasants.

Source: (the author)

9. Concluding with the Contribution to a Sustainable Food Paradigm

In this thesis, I set out to explore some of the diversity regarding alternative food practices in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, namely CT and ASAT, so as to understand how they can contribute to the establishment of a sustainable food paradigm. I began by outlining how the CFS has grown through the promotion of industrial agriculture with external inputs, in recent decades coupled with trade liberalisation and global markets. The result has been corporate concentration, with global trends of land appropriations, and supermarkets influencing global production and consumption patterns. I have argued that the implications of these trends are related to disembeddedness, where it no longer

matters where and how something was produced, and the dispossession of peasants, who are marginalised within the CFS. The sustainability turn within the CFS means that supermarkets and agribusinesses are increasingly involved in "quality" markets, a trend which is unsustainable in the long run, given that these actors are part of an economic growth paradigm. I have also argued that this turn can favour peasants, but largely the ones who have the means to become entrepreneurial farmers, which makes socio-cultural aspects of food production increasingly redundant.

The CFS is growing in prominence also in Romania and in relation to these trends, I have argued that it is crucial to explore the alternative strategies emerging as a response since they can give insights into how to organise food production and consumption differently. ASAT and CT constitute such alternatives and in this thesis I have examined potential synergies and conflicts *within* the networks and their level of embeddedness in the local as well as broader institutional and political context. What, then, has been learned from this study? How can these AFNs contribute to a sustainable food paradigm, and foster a process towards a point where alternative practices can more substantially challenge the supremacy of the CFS?

ASAT and CT accommodate to consumers' need for tasty, good quality, and local produce, and producers' need for a more secure and rewarding market. As seen in the analysis, CT consumers are more satisfied with their network, but ASAT might have the potential to be a more transformational mode of food provisioning, through the focus on building a sense of community and solidarity. Potential conflicts lie mainly in issues regarding quantity of food, the delivery system, unequal power relations, and inclusiveness. A major synergy within these networks is the idea of quality produce being closely tied to peasant production, which I see as limiting the prospects for the CFS to undermine these AFNs. This synergy constitutes a main embedding factor, especially within CT, where the perceived food quality assists in strengthening producer-consumer relations. Thus, although I have seen that the vertical embeddedness is limited considering disadvantageous trends on national and EU levels, the networks are in the process of becoming more embedded in a horizontal perspective which improves the prospects of a paradigm shift. Furthermore, I would argue that the equating of quality food with peasant produce can in practice be seen as a promotion of agroecology, as traditional farming systems are largely agroecological, thus contributing to a sustainable food paradigm.

I have argued that peasant farming is relevant for a sustainable food paradigm, and that engaging in AFNs and turning to agroecology are important strategies in peasants' strive for autonomy.

However, since agroecology is not an explicit aim within these AFNs, and not seen as a political strategy, some producers in the AFNs, for example, choose hybrid seeds over traditional ones even though this reduces their autonomy. Gonzalez de Molina (2013) emphasises that for agroecology to be able to effectively challenge the CFS, politics has to be at the centre which involves seeing how food production is closely "linked to the technological, political, economic, social, and cultural aspects of the broader food system" (Tomich *et al.* 2011:213), in other words recognising the vertical embeddedness. The actors involved in CT and ASAT are largely not aware of broader trends influencing food and agriculture in Romania, which indeed is a limitation of these AFNs.

However, this limitation could be dealt with by strengthening producer-consumer relationships since "[n]o agroecological transition will be fully successful without a major alliance between producers and consumers" (Gonzalez de Molina 2013:56). AFNs such as CT and ASAT could play an important role in creating such an alliance, since relationships between producers and consumers are already under development as food is exchanged and produced to various extents via direct interactions. These relationships could be further strengthened so that broader benefits, for example related to peasant livelihoods and environmental sustainability, can become central aims for the involved actors. I see that such strengthening opportunities are available in ASAT through the co-planning and community activities, but less available in CT, which might be a limitation.

The AFNs are further contributing to a sustainable food paradigm by emphasising the importance of socio-cultural aspects of agri-food, which I have argued can serve as a way to position the AFNs as qualitatively different from the CFS. In CT and ASAT, such aspects can be seen through producers expressing pride in providing urban citizens with food, consumers seeing peasants as an important part of the Romanian identity, and through having community and solidarity as important aims. On a related note, I have argued that the AFNs are part of a (re)peasantisation process, whereby the autonomy of peasants is increased. There is potential in furthering this process, considering the interest among consumers to engage in peasant farming themselves. However, (re)peasantisation is always threatened by depeasantisation, as a consequence of the developments within the CFS (Ploeg 2008). Therefore, I would argue that in order to effectively establish a new paradigm, it is important to consider how alternative practices can build connections between each other so as to constitute a more significant counter-force to the CFS and the process of depeasantisation.

For the future, I see that if actors within these embedded food systems in Cluj-Napoca are able to foster closer alliances between producers, consumers, and other initiatives, further emphasise the

socio-cultural importance of the food networks, and recognise the broader political significance in their actions, there is potential for a paradigm shift. A shift which would increase the potential for ensuring environmental sustainability and social justice. What the future for food and agriculture in Romania will look like remains unknown, but it is clear that ASAT and CT, despite the discussed weaknesses and external threats, constitute seeds of change towards the establishment of a sustainable paradigm for food.

10. Food for Thought

In order to understand the contribution to a paradigm shift further, a question for future research is if initiatives like ASAT and CT can or should explicitly challenge the CFS. This is important since alternative solutions may have limited prospects if the CFS increases its dominance. As of now, most actors in CT and ASAT do not express a direct purpose of undermining the CFS, and although their actions can still be considered as resistance in practice (Goodman & DuPuis 2002), they are more "civil" rather than "uncivil" (D'Alisa, Demaria, & Cattaneo 2013). Civil initiatives might not change broader structures, but can build a "network of pragmatic, local, day-to-day change", and be attractive to many individuals (*ibid*.:221). Together with more uncivil initiatives, which are explicitly oppositional to the CFS, they could constitute vehicles for change (*ibid*.).

Therefore, future research could examine how alliances can be built between civil and uncivil initiatives in Cluj-Napoca. Following my own observations, there are, for example, community gardens, *Gustare*, farmers' markets with a lower fee for producers, and a free market with a people's kitchen, *Piața Autonoma*[7], which can be of relevance. These initiatives can also be studied in relation to inclusiveness. ASAT and CT mainly constitute niche markets for the affluent, and it is therefore essential to explore how to make good agroecological produce more widely available. Furthermore, whereas most research on AFNs focus on producers and consumers, I find it useful to also study the role of initiators in starting up, sustaining, and influencing AFNs.

Looking into how these kinds of alternative initiatives can flourish through the cracks of the CFS is of crucial relevance, especially considering their potential for improving the prospects of (re)peasantisation and environmentally sustainable and socially just futures in Romania and beyond.

7 In English: Autonomous Market

References

Allen, P. 2010. Realizing justice in local food systems. Cambridge Journal of Regions, *Economy and Society.* 3(2), 295–308.

Altieri, M. A. 2009. Agroecology, small farms, and food sovereignty. *Monthly Review.* 61(3), 102-113.

Altieri, M. 2012. The scaling up of agroecology: spreading the hope for food sovereignty and resiliency. *Sociedad Cientifica Latinoamericana de Agroecologia Rio+20 position paper.* Available at: <http://www.weltagrarbericht.de/fileadmin/files/weltagrarbericht/The_scaling_up_of_agroecology_Rio.pdf> [Accessed on: May 10, 2014]

Altieri, M. A. & Toledo, V. M., 2011. The agroecological revolution in Latin America: rescuing nature, ensuring food sovereignty and empowering peasants. *Journal of Peasant Studies.* 38(3). 587–612.

ASAT. 2013. *Parteneriate*. Available at: < http://asatromania.ro/parteneriate/> [Accessed August 22, 2013]

Badgley, C., Moghtader, J., Quintero, E., Zakem, E., Chappell, M.J., Avilés-Vázquez, K., Samulon, A., & Perfecto, I., 2007. Organic agriculture and the global food supply. *Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems.* 22(2). 86-108

Bailey, R. 2011. *Growing a better future: Food justice in a resource-constrained world*. London: OXFAM.

Bauman, Z. 2004. *Work, consumerism and the new poor.* 2nd ed. Buckingham/Philadelphia: Open University Press.

Bîrhală, B., & Möllers, J. 2014. Community supported agriculture: Is it driven by economy or solidarity?, *Discussion Paper, Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Development in Central and Eastern Europe*, No. 144

Bouniol, J. 2013. Scramble for land in Romania: an iron fist in a velvet glove. In: European Coordination Via Campesina. *Land concentration, land grabbing and people's struggles in Europe.* Transnational Institute

Brown, L B., 2011. The New Geopolitics of Food. *Foreign Policy.* Available at: <http://foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/04/25/the_new_geopolitics_of_food> [Accessed March 10, 2014].

Brunori, G. 2007. Local food and alternative food networks: a communication perspective. *Anthropology of Food*. S2.

Chatterton, P. 2005. Making autonomous geographies: Argentina's popular uprising and the Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados (Unemployed Workers Movement). *Geoforum* 36:545–561

Christoff, P., 1996. Ecological modernisation, ecological modernities. *Environmental Politics* 5 (3), 476–500.

Cioloş, D. 2013. *Local Agricultural Conference and short sales channels.* Bruxelles

Cluj.com. 2013. Cateva sfaturi "hostezenesti" pentru gradina de legume (partea I). Available at: <http://cluj.com/articole/cateva-sfaturi-hostezenesti-pentru-gradina-de-legume/> [Accessed on: May 2, 2014].

Cluj.Travel. 2013. *Muzeul hoştezenilor: despre un Cluj pierdut, dar nu uitat*. Available at: <http://www.cluj.travel/muzeul-hostezenilor-un-cluj-pierdut-dar-nu-uitat/> [Accessed on: May 2, 2014].

Collier, P. 2009. Africa's Organic Peasantry: Beyond Romanticism. *Harvard International Review.* 32(2). 62-65.

Cox, R., Holloway, L., Venn, L., Dowler, L., Hein, J R., Kneafsey, M., Tuomainen, H. 2008. Common ground? Motivations for participation in a community-supported agriculture scheme. *Local Environment.* 13(3). 203–218.

Creswell, J W. 2013. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design, Choosing Among Five Approaches*. Thousand Oaks: Sage

D'Alisa, F., Demaria, F., Cattaneo, C., 2013. Civil and Uncivil Actors for a Degrowth Society. *Journal of Civil Society*. 9:2, 2012-224.

Dale-Harris, L., 2014. Romania's peasants: standing in the way of foreign investors making a lot of money. *The Guardian*. Available at:

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/feb/19/romania-peasants-land-market-local-farming-economy> [Accessed April 10, 2014]

Deac, S.O., Irumus, I. A., & Pacurar, B.N. 2013. The Landscape Morphology of Cluj-Napoca Residential Neighbourhoods. *Studia UBB Geographia*. LVII. 2. p. 99-110.

De Schutter, O. 2010. Agroecology. *Report submitted by the Special Rapporteur on the right to food.* Human Rights Council Sixteenth Session, Agenda item 3 A/HRC/16/49. United Nations General Assembly, United Nations, New York. Available at: <http://www.srfood.org/images/stories/pdf/officialreports/20110308_a-hrc-16-49_agroecology_en.pdf> [Accessed on November 10, 2013]

De Schutter, O. 2014. The transformative potential of the right to food. *Report submitted by the Special Rapporteur on the right to food. UN General Assembly.* Human Rights Council Twenty-fifth session, Agenda item 3 A/HRC/25/57. Available at: <http://www.srfood.org/images/stories/pdf/officialreports/20140310_finalreport_en.pdf> [Accessed on: May 5, 2014]

De Vries, F.T., Thebault, E., Liiri, M., Birkhofer, K., Tsiafouli, M.a., Bjornlund, L., Bracht Jorgensen, H., Brady, M.V., Christensen, S., de Ruiter, P.C., D'Hertefeldt, T., Frouz, J., Hedlund, K., Hemerik, L., Hol, W. H.G., Hotes, S., Mortimer, S.R., Setala, H., Sgardelis, S.P., Uteseny, K., van der Putten, W.H., Wolters, V., Bardgett, R.D.,2013. Soil food web properties explain ecosystem services across European land use systems. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.* 1–6.

England, Kim V.L. 1994. Getting Personal: Reflexivity, Positionality and Feminist Research, *The Professional Geographer,* 46(1): 80-89

Feagan, R., 2007. The place of food: mapping out the “local” in local food systems. *Progress in Human Geography.* 31(1). 23–42.

Giddens, Anthony. 1990. *The Consequences of Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity in association with Blackwell.

Goland, C. 2002. Community-supported agriculture, food consumption patterns, and member commitment. *Culture and Agriculture.* 24(1):14–25

Gonzalez de Molina, M. 2013. Agroecology and politics. How to get sustainability? About the

necessity for a political agroecology. *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems.* 37 45-59

Goodman, D. & DuPuis, E.M. 2002: Knowing food and growing food: beyond the production-consumption debate in the sociology of agriculture. *Sociologia Ruralis.* 42, 5–22.

Goodman, D., & Goodman, M. 2009. Alternative food networks. *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography.* Oxford, Elsevier.

Goodman, D., 2010. Place and space in alternative food networks: Connecting production and consumption. In Goodman, M., Goodman., D & Redcliff, M [eds] *Consuming Space: Placing Consumption in Perspective*. Surrey: Ashgate.

Gorton, M., Hubbard, C. & Hubbard, L., 2009. The Folly of European Union Policy Transfer: Why the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Does Not Fit Central and Eastern Europe. *Regional Studies.* 1–13.

Government of Romania. 2010. *National Rural Development Programme 2007-2013*. Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. Available at: <http://www.fonduri-structurale.ro/Document_Files//dezvoltarerurala/00000033/7a32o_National_Rural_Development_Programme_2007_-_2013_-_June_2010.pdf> [Accessed on: May 10, 2013]

Granovetter, M., 1985. Economic action and social structure: the problem of embeddedness. *American Journal of Sociology.* 91, 481–510

Griffin, K. 1979. *The Political economy of agrarian change: An essay on the Green Revolution*. London: Macmillan.

Gürel, B., 2014. Peasants under siege: the collectivization of Romanian agriculture, 1949–1962. *Journal of Peasant Studies.* 41(2). 291–294.

Hartel, T. & Fischer, J., 2013. Integrating rural development and biodiversity conservation in Central Romania. *Environmental Conservation.* (1698).

Hardt, M. & Negri, A. 2000. *Empire.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

Harvey, D. 2005. *A brief history of neoliberalism.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Harvey, D., 2010. *The Enigma of Capital and the Crises of Capitalism.* London: Profile Books

Higgins, V., Dibden, J. & Cocklin, C., 2008. Building alternative agri-food networks: Certification,

embeddedness and agri-environmental governance. *Journal of Rural Studies*. 24(1). 15–27.

Hinrichs, C.C., 2000. Embeddedness and local food systems: notes on two types of direct agricultural markets. *Journal of Rural Studies.* 16. 295–303.

Hinrichs, C.C., 2003. The practice and politics of food system localization. *Journal of Rural Studies*. 19(1). 33–45.

Hinrichs, C., & Kremer, K. S. 2002. Social inclusion in a Midwest local food system project. *Journal of Poverty. 6*(1). 65-90.

Hirsch, R. 2013. The peasants way – Initiatives to support peasant agriculture. In: *FanFest, Rosia Montana, Romania, August 17, 2013*

Holloway, L., Kneafsey, M., Cox, R., Venn, L., Dowler, E., Toumainen, H., 2007. Beyond the 'Alternative'-'Conventional' Divide? Thinking Differently About Food Production-Consumption Relationships. In: Maye, D., Holloway, L., Kneafsey, M.. *Alternative Food Geographies – Representation and Practice.* Elsevier Science

Holt-Giménez, E. & Altieri, M.A., 2013. Agroecology, Food Sovereignty, and the New Green Revolution. *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems*. 37(1). 90–102.

Holt Giménez, E. & Shattuck, A., 2011. Food crises, food regimes and food movements: rumblings of reform or tides of transformation? *The Journal of Peasant Studies.* 38(1). 109–44.

IAASTD. 2009. *Agriculture At a Crossroads: International Assessment Of Agricultural Knowledge, Science And Technology For Development Global Report.* Washington, D.C. Island Press. Available at: <http://www.unep.org/dewa/agassessment/reports/IAASTD/EN/Agriculture%20at%20a%20Crossroads_Global%20Report%20(English).pdf> [Accessed December 5, 2013]

IFAD., 2010. *Rural Poverty Report 2011: New realities, new challenges: new opportunities for tomorrow's generatio*n. Available at: <http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/rome2007/docs/IFAD%20Rural%20Poverty%20Report%202011.pdf> [Accessed on: April 5, 2013]

Ion, R.A., 2012. Analysis of Organic Farming Sector in Romania. *Review of International Comparative Management.* 1(3). 449–456.

Jarosz, L., 2000. Understanding agri-food networks as social relations. *Agriculture and Human Values.* 17. 279–283.

Jarosz, L. 2008. The city in the country: Growing alternative food networks in metropolitan areas. *Journal of Rural Studies.* 24. 231–244

Klein, N., 2008. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, London: Picador

Kligman, G., & Verdery, K., 2011. *Peasants under siege: the collectivization of Romanian agriculture, 1949–1962*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press

Kloppenburg, J., Hendrickson, J. & Stevenson, G. W. 1996 Coming to the foodshed. In: Vitek, W., & Jackson, W. [eds]. *Rooted in the land: essays on community and place.* New Haven, CT; London, UK: Yale University Press.

Knight, D K. 2010. *Romania and the Common Agricultural Policy – The future of small-scale Romanian farming in Europe*. Eco Ruralis. Available at: <http://www.ecoruralis.ro/storage/files/Documente/ReportCAP.pdf> [Accessed on: October 10, 2013]

Laird, R. 1998. Nonrenewal of membership and CSA inconvenience. In S Gilman (ed) *CSA Farm Network, Volume II*. Stillwater: CSA Farm Network

Lawrence, G., & Burch, D. 2007. Understanding Supermarkets and Agri-food Supply Chains. In: Burch, D., & Lawrence, G., [eds]. *Supermarkets and Agri-food Supply Chains – Transformations in the Production and Consumption of Foods.* Edward Elgar

Lee, J., Gereffi, G. & Beauvais, J., 2012. Global value chains and agrifood standards: challenges and possibilities for smallholders in developing countries. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America.* 109(31). 12326–31.

Lee, R.P., 2013. The politics of international agri-food policy : discourses of trade-oriented food security and food sovereignty. *Environmental Politics.* 22(2). 216–234.

Marsden, T., & Morley, A., 2014. Current Food Questions and their Scholarly Challenges: Creating and Framing a Sustainable Food Paradigm. In: Marsden, T., & Morley, A. [eds]. *Sustainable Food Systems: Building a New Paradigm*. Routledge.

Matson, P. A., Parton, W. J., Power, A. G., & Swift, M. J. 1997. Agricultural intensification and

ecosystem properties. *Science.* 277(5325), 504-509.

McMichael, P., 2005. Global Development and the Corporate Food Regime. *Research in Rural Sociology and Development.* 11. 265–299.

McMichael, P., 2006. Peasant prospects in the neoliberal age. *New Political Economy.* 11(3). 407–418.

McMichael, P. 2009. A food regime genealogy. *Journal of Peasant Studies.* 36(1). 139-169.

McMichael, P. 2010. Food Regimes Transitions. Paper for the RC-40 plenary at the *World Congress of Sociology*, Gothenburg, July 11-17, 2010

McMichael, P., & Friedmann, H., 2007. Situating the 'Retailing Revolution'. In: Burch, D., & Lawrence, G., [eds]. *Supermarkets and Agri-food Supply Chains – Transformations in the Production and Consumption of Foods.* Edward Elgar

Meadows, D., Meadows, D., & Randers, J. 2004. *Limits to growth: The 30-year update*. Chelsea Green Publishing

Meaker, S., & McFarlane, D., 2013. The peasants way – Initiatives to support peasant agriculture. In: *FanFest, Rosia Montana, Romania, August 17, 2013*

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (Ministerul Agriculturii şi Dezvoltării Rurale) 2012. *CATALOGUL OFICIAL al soiurilor de plante de cultură din România*. Romanian Institute for Seeds Testing and Registration . Available at: <http://istis.ro/files/folders/catalog_istis_2012/entry967.aspx> [Accessed on: October 25, 2013]

Morgan, K., Marsden, T., & Murdoch, J. 2006. *Worlds of Food: Place, Power, and Provenance in the Food Chain: Place, Power, and Provenance in the Food Chain*. Oxford University Press.

Murcott, A. 1982. The cultural significance of food and eating. *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society*, *41*(02), 203-210

Murdoch, J., T. Marsden & J. Banks. 2000. Quality, nature and embeddedness: some theoretical considerations in the context of the food sector. *Economic Geography.* 76 (2). 107–125

Murphy, S., 2008. Globalization and Corporate Concentration in the Food and Agriculture Sector. *Development.* 51(4). 527–533.

Möllers, J (Ed.); Buchenrieder, G (Ed.); Csáki, C (Ed.) 2011 : Structural change in agriculture and rural livelihoods: Policy implications for the New Member States of the European Union, *Studies on the agricultural and food sector in Central and Eastern Europe.* No. 61.

O'Hara, S.U. & Stagl, S., 2001. Global Food Markets and Their Local Alternatives : A Socio-Ecological Economic Perspective. *Population and Environment: A Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies.* 22(6). 533–554.

Patel, R. 2013. The long green revolution. *The Journal of Peasant Studies. 40*(1). 1-63

Peck, J., & Tickell, A., 2002. Neoliberalizing space. *Antipode.* 34 (3). 380–404.

Perkins, J.H. 1997. *Geopolitics and the Green Revolution: Wheat, genes and the Cold War.* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Piketty, T. 2014. *Capital in the 21st Century.* Belknap Press

Pingali, P.L., Hossain, M., Gerpacio, R.V. 1997. *Asian Rice Bowls: the returning crisis*. Wallinford, UK: CAB International.

Ploeg, J. D. van der. 2008. *The New Peasantries: struggles for autonomy and sustainability in an era of empire and globalization*. Earthscan, London, UK.

Ploeg, J. D. van der. 2010. The peasantries of the twenty-first century: the commoditisation debate revisited. *Journal of Peasant Studies.* 37(1). 1–30.

Plumwood, V. 2002. *Environmental culture: the ecological crisis of reason*. London: Routledge.

Polanyi, K., 1944. *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of our Time.* New York: Rineheart and Co.

Prada S. 2008. The evolution of retail in Romania. *Management and Marketing, Editura Universitaria Craiova*, vol.1, 2008.

Raynolds, L. T. 2000. Re-embedding global agriculture: The international organic and fair trade movements. *Agriculture and human values*, *17*(3), 297-309

Reardon, T., & Gulati, A. 2008. The supermarket revolution in developing countries. *IFPRI Policy Brief 2.* International Food Policy Research Institute

Rockström, J., W. Steffen, K. Noone, Å. Persson, F. S. Chapin, III, E. Lambin, T. M. Lenton, M. Scheffer, C. Folke, H. Schellnhuber, B. Nykvist, C. A. De Wit, T. Hughes, S. van der Leeuw, H. Rodhe, S. Sörlin, P. K. Snyder, R. Costanza, U. Svedin, M. Falkenmark, L. Karlberg, R. W. Corell, V. J. Fabry, J. Hansen, B. Walker, D. Liverman, K. Richardson, P. Crutzen, & J. Foley. 2009. Planetary boundaries: exploring the safe operating space for humanity. *Ecology and Society* 14(2): 32.

Rosset, Peter M. 2006. *Food is Different: Why we must get the WTO out of agriculture.* New York: Zed Books.

Rosset, P.M. & Martinez-Torres, M.E., 2012. Rural Social Movements and Agroecology: Context, Theory, and Process. *Ecology and Society.* 17(3).

Rosin, Christopher; Stock, Paul; Campbell, Hugh. [eds] 2012. *Food Systems Failure: The Global Food Crisis and the Future of Agriculture.* USA/Canada: Earthscan.

Rowe, J. 2012. Matters of Perspective: Tracing Romania's Agricultural Challenges. *Brown University, USA.*

Sage, C., 2003. Social embeddedness and relations of regard : alternative "good food" networks in south-west Ireland. *Journal of Rural Studies.* 19. 47–60.

Schneider, F., Kallis, G. & Martinez-Alier, J., 2010. Crisis or opportunity? Economic degrowth for social equity and ecological sustainability. Introduction to this special issue. *Journal of Cleaner Production.* 18(6). 511–518.

Silverman, David. 2009. *Doing Qualitative Research: A practical handbook* (3rd). LA: Sage

Smith, P, D Martino, Z Cai, D Gwary, H Janzen, P Kumar, B McCarl, S Ogle, F O'Mara, C Rice, B Scholes, O Sirotenko. 2007. Agriculture. In Metz, B., Davidson, O.R., Bosch, P.R., Dave, R., & Meyer, L.A. [eds] *Climate Change 2007: Mitigation. Contribution of Working Group III to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.* Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press

Sonnino, R., & Marsden, T. 2006. Beyond the divide: rethinking relationships between alternative and conventional food networks in Europe. *Journal of Economic Geography*. *6*(2). 181-199.

Sultana, F. 2007. Reflexivity, positionality and participatory ethics: Negotiating fieldwork dilemmas

in international research. *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies.* 6(3). 374-385

Stassart, P., & Whatmore, S. 2003. Metabolising risk: food scares and the un/remaking of Belgian beef. *Environment and Planning A.* 35. 449–62

Szocs, A. 2013a. The peasants way – Initiatives to support peasant agriculture. In: *FanFest, Rosia Montana, Romania, August 17, 2013*

Szocs, A. 2013b. Romania Plans to Spends E8.15 billion on Rural Development. *Arc2020.* Avaiable at: <http://www.arc2020.eu/front/2013/12/where-will-romania-invest-euro-8-15-billion-through-its-national-rural-development-program/> [Accessed on: May 5, 2014]

Timmer, P.C., 2009. *A World Without Agriculture: The Structural Transformation in Historical Perspective* (Henry Wendt Lecture), Aei Press: Washington D.C.

Tomich, T.P., Brodt, S.,Ferris, H., Galt, R., Horwath, W.R., Kebreab, E., Leveau, J.H.J., Liptzin, D., Lubell, M., Merel, P., Michelmore, R., Rosenstock, T., Scow, K., Six, J., Williams, N., & Yang, L. 2011. Agroecology: A Review from a Global-Change Perspective. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources.* 36(1). 193–222.

Tudor, V., Macau, I., & Butu, M., 2014. Romanian traditional products. *MPRA Paper No. 55005.* Munich Personal RePEc Archive

United Nations, 2013. *Trade and Environment Review 2013: Wake Up Before it is Too Late - Make Agriculture Truly Sustainable Now for Food Security in a Changing Climate*. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. Available at: <http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/ditcted2012d3_en.pdf> [Accessed December 15, 2013]

Veţan, M & Florean, S. 2013. The peasants way – Initiatives to support peasant agriculture. In: *FanFest, Rosia Montana, Romania, August 17, 2013*

Voiculescu, C., 2008. Disappearing peasants? On land, rent, and revenue in post-1989 Romania. *Focaal.* 2008(52). 77–91.

Watts, D.C.H., Ilbery, B. & Maye, D., 2005. Making reconnections in agro-food geography: alternative systems of food provision. *Progress in Human Geography.* 29(1). 22–40.

Wezel, A., Bellon, S., Doré, T., Francis, C., Vallod, D., David, C. 2009. Agroecology as a science, a

movement and a practice. A review. *Agronomy for Sustainable Development.* 29(4). 503–515.

Weis, A. J. 2007. *The global food economy: The battle for the future of farming*. Zed Books.

Wilson, A.D., 2013. Beyond Alternative: Exploring the Potential for Autonomous Food Spaces. *Antipode.* 45(3). 719–737.

Winter, M., 2003. Geographies of food: agro-food geographies – making reconnections. *Progress in Human Geography.* 27(4). 505–513.

Wittman, H., 2011. Food Sovereignty: A New Rights Framework for Food and Nature? *Environment and Society: Advances in Research.* 2(1). 87–105.

World Bank. 2007. *World Development Report 2008: Agriculture for Development.* Washington.

Appendix I: List of Respondents

Initiators

Respondent	Date of interview	Structure	Recorded
Initiator 1, ASAT	3/10-13	Semi-structured	Yes
Initiator 2, ASAT	15/10-13	Informal	No
Initiator 1, CT	31/8-13, 19/9-13	Informal	No
Initiator 2, CT	3/10-13	Informal	No

Producers

Respondent	Date of Interview	Structure	Recorded	Observation - Farm	Observation-Distribution	Observation - Meeting
Producer 1, ASAT	15/10-13	Informal	No	15/10-13	10/10-13	31/10-13
Producer 2, ASAT	22/10-13	Informal	No	22/10-13	10/10-13	-
Producer 3, ASAT	25/10-13	Informal	No	13/10-13 25/10-13	10/10-13	7/11-13
Producer 1, CT	9/10-13 31/10-13	Informal	No	19/9-13 9/10-13 31/10-13	31/10-13	-
Producer 2, CT	5/12-13	Informal	No	5/12-13	-	-
Producer 3, CT	4/12-13	Semi-	Yes	-	-	-

		structured				
Producer 4, CT	4/12-13	Semi-structured	Yes	-	-	-

Consumers

Respondent	Date of Interview	Structure	Recorded
Consumer 1, ASAT	October 23, 2013	Semi-structured	Yes
Consumer 2, ASAT	November 4, 2013	Semi-structured	Yes
Consumer 3, ASAT	November 5, 2013	Semi-structured	Yes
Consumer 4, ASAT	November 7, 2013	Semi-structured	Yes
Consumer 5, ASAT	November 12, 2013	Semi-structured	Yes
Consumer 1, CT	November 6, 2013	Semi-structured	Yes
Consumer 2, CT	November 8, 2013	Semi-structured	Yes
Consumer 3, CT	November 8, 2013	Semi-structured	Yes
Consumer 4, CT	November 8, 2013	Semi-structured	Yes
Consumer 5, CT	November 8, 2013	Semi-structured	Yes
Consumer 6, CT	November 11, 2013	Semi-structured	Yes
Consumer 7, CT	November 11, 2013	Semi-structured	Yes
Consumer 8, CT	November 11, 2013	Semi-structured	Yes
Consumer 9, CT	November 12, 2013	Semi-structured	Yes
Consumer 10, CT	November 13, 2013	Semi-structured	No
Consumer 11, CT	November 20, 2013	Semi-structured	Yes
Consumer 12, CT	November 21, 2013	Semi-structured	Yes
Consumer 13, CT	November 22, 2013	Semi-structured	Yes
Consumer 14, CT	November 22, 2013	Semi-structured	Yes
Consumer 15, CT	November 22, 2013	Semi-structured	Yes

Appendix II: Interview and Observation Guides

Interview Guide Producers

Thank you for taking part in this interview, it is highly appreciated. Your participation will be completely anonymous, so you are welcome to express yourself freely. Also, there are no right or wrong answers to the questions I will ask; I'm interested in hearing *your* story, *your* perspectives, reflections and experiences related to food in general and the box(es) in particular. I will use the material in my Master's Thesis in Development Studies at Lund University in Sweden.

Main questions	*Follow-up questions or clarification*
Can you tell me a bit about yourself and your family?	Do they all live here? Do any one else live here?
Can you tell me a bit about this area?	Neighbors, village,
Cutia Țăranului	
How did you hear about CT for the first time?	Who told you? What did you think?
How did it come about that you joined CT?	When did you join CT? Why did you join CT?
How would you describe what CT is about?	
How does the system work practically?	Packing, deliveries, contact with consumers. Who does what? What is the content of the box? How many consumers do you deliver to? How many would you like to deliver to?
What is your impression about CT?	
What do others say when you tell them about CT?	
Farming	
Can you tell me a bit about the farm?	What crops, seeds? Who helps out? Land size? What is most important regarding the farming? Methods/chemicals?
Can you describe a normal day on the farm?	
What are the main difficulties for your farming?	Weather, weeds, pests, time-consuming.
Have you made any changes in your farming since you started with the boxes?	More or less time-consuming? More production? How have you managed to increase the production?
Relationships	
Can you tell me a bit about your relationship to the consumers?	How often do you meet, and where? Have consumers visited your farm? Why do you think they take part? Do they ask about how you farm? What do they ask you about?
Can you tell me a bit about your relationship to the initiators of the project?	Why do you think they started the project? How much do you keep in touch? How involved are they?
What is important for you when it comes to food?	How much of the food you eat comes from the farm? Where do you get the rest from? Taste, quality, abundance.
Livelihoods/Influence by CT	
How is your life now compared to before CT?	What are the main differences? More money, more stable livelihood, can make investments. How did you sell food before? Do you still sell food there?
What do you think of the farmers' market?	Has things changed there, e.g. become more or less challenging for peasants.
Visions for the future	
When you think about the future (next year, 5 years) what comes to your mind? (in relation to CT, food, agriculture etc.)	Do you plan to continue being part of CT? Why, why not? How do you see the future of CT? What will happen to the farm? How do you see the future for peasants in

	general?
What do you see as the challenges to achieve this?	Internal or external. Is there anything happening in the area which you find challenging?
What do you see as the opportunities to achieve this?	Internal or external. Is there anything happening in the area which you find promising?
Outro	
Is there anything you've been thinking about during this interview that you haven't been able to say yet? What?	

Interview Guide Consumers

Thank you for taking part in this interview, it is highly appreciated. Your participation will be completely anonymous, so you are welcome to express yourself freely. Also, there are no right or wrong answers to the questions I will ask; I'm interested in hearing *your* story, *your* perspectives, reflections and experiences related to food in general and the box(es) in particular. I will use the material in my Master's Thesis in Development Studies at Lund University in Sweden.

- Can you tell me a bit about yourself?
- How did you get involved with Cutia Țăranului/ASAT?
- Why did you join Cutia Țăranului/ASAT?
- What is your impression of Cutia Țăranului/ASAT?
- How would you describe what Cutia Țăranului/ASAT is to someone who doesn't know?
- What reactions do you get from family and friends when they hear that you are part of Cutia Țăranului/ASAT?
- What products do you get from the basket? Do you get anything else than vegetables?
- In the winter, when you don't get food from the basket, where do you get food from?
- Do you follow any special diet?'
- When it comes to food, what are the most important aspects for you?
- What do you think in general about supermarkets?
- What do you think in general about the local farmers markets?
- Do you have any experience of farming, gardening or life in rural areas?
- How would you describe your relationship to the producer?
- How do you think this system works for her/him?
- When it comes to Cutia Țăranului/ASAT, what is the most important aspect for you?
- If you could describe your experience with Cutia Țăranului/ASAT with one word or sentence, what would you say?
- Do you plan to continue next year?
- How do you see the future for initiatives like Cutia Țăranului/ASAT?

- How do you see the future for peasants in Romania?
- Is there anything you would like to add?

Observation Guide

Pick-up points, home deliveries, planning meetings.

- What is happening? What is the general set-up? How does it work?
- What is the general atmosphere?
- How does the exchange of food/money function practically?
- Who are present at the sites?
- How do the different actors interact?
- What do the different actors talk about?
- Is anyone "in charge" at the meetings/pick-up points? How does this influence the atmosphere?

Farms:

- What does the land look like?
- What crops are being grown?
- How are the crops being grown?
- How are crops being harvested?
- How are residues from the harvest being handled?
- How are crops handled after harvest?
- Are any chemicals being used?
- Who is helping out with the farm work?
- Who is mainly in charge of packing/delivering boxes?
- Who lives on the farm property?
- Are there any neighbors close by?

Appendix III: Digital Survey

Survey Questions

This is a survey about food and your participation in Cutia Țăranului/ASAT. The results will be used to help improve the partnerships (if needed), and also in my Master's Thesis at Lund University, Sweden. Since the research is about the perspectives and experience of the people involved, your answers are highly valuable to me. Besides, my hope is that you will also find it interesting to reflect on Cutia Țăranului/ASAT and your habits and values related to food. So it would be really great if you take part! The survey takes less than 15 minutes to fill in, and your answers are completely anonymous. Please fill in the survey before October the 31th. If you have any questions or would like to know the results of the study, please contact me at josefin.smeds@riseup.net. Thank you very much in advance!

Josefin Smeds

Introduction

What year did you start getting food from Cutia Țăranului/ASAT?

( ) 2012 ( ) 2013

* What month did you start getting food from Cutia Țăranului?

( ) April ( ) May ( ) June ( ) July ( ) August ( ) September ( ) October ( ) November

On average, how many times a month do you get the following products from Cutia Țăranului/ASAT?

Either in the box or as an extra product.

	Never	Less than once a month	Once a month	2-3 times a month	Every week
Vegetables	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Fruits	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Cheese	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Meat	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Eggs	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Bread	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

*How many boxes do you get each week from Cutia Țăranului?

( ) 1 ( ) 2 ( ) More than 2

*What is the size of the box(es) you get?

( ) Small (for 1-2 people) ( ) Big (for 3-4 people) ( ) Other: _____

Motivations for participation

Some of the statements below have been made by people joining similar initiatives in other places. Please rate to what extent you agree with these statements.

I joined Cutia Țăranului/ASAT ...

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree
... to get food which is good for my health.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

... to get organic food (produced without synthetic chemicals)	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
... because I know other people who get food from Cutia Țăranului.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
... to be able to know how my food is produced.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
... to be able to know where my food comes from.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
... to get food that tastes good.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
... because I was not happy with the food I can get elsewhere.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
... to be connected to a small-scale producer.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
... to get cheap food.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
... to support the work of a peasant.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
... to get freshly harvested food	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
... *to get food delivered to my home. … *to access food in a convenient way	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

Have any of these motivations changed since becoming a part of Cutia Țăranului/ASAT?

( ) Yes ( ) No ( ) I don't know

If yes, how have your motivations changed? _____

Motivations for participation

What share of the food you eat during a week comes from Cutia Țăranului/ASAT?

Also including extra products such as meat and cheese.

( ) Less than a third ( ) About a third ( ) About half ( ) More than half ( ) Almost all

During the months you don't get food from Cutia Țăranului/ASAT, how much of the food you consume comes from the following sources?

	None	Very little	Some	Quite a bit	Very much
Supermarkets (such as Carrefour, Kaufland, Unicarm, Profi)	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Local farmers' markets	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Restaurants/cafés/fast-food	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Minimarkets/Small local shops	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

Food values

In general, how important are the following aspects for the food you consume?

	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
Taste	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Low price	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Produced by someone I know	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Knowing how the food is produced	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Organic (produced without synthetic chemicals)	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Produced within Cluj county	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Food is in season	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Produced by a small-scale farmer	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

Freshness	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Knowing where the food is produced	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Producer gets paid a fair price	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Easy access	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Produced with respect for nature	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

Has the importance of any of these factors changed since joining Cutia Țăranului/ASAT?

( ) Yes ( ) No ( ) I don't know

If yes, how has the importance changed? _____

This question is about supermarkets (for example Kaufland, Carrefour, Billa, Profi). To what extent do you agree with the following statements about supermarkets?

I think supermarkets... (see below)

This question is about local farmers' markets. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about local farmers' markets?

I think local farmers' markets...

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
... have a diverse selection of food	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
... have good quality food	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
... are easy to access	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
... have cheap food	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
... are economically beneficial for small-scale farmers	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

... are economically beneficial for large-scale farmers	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
... are economically beneficial for large agriculture companies	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
... are economically beneficial for the consumer	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
... are economically beneficial for the community where they are located	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
... mainly have food from Romania	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

Cutia Țăranului/ASAT

How satisfied are you with the following aspects of the partnership this year?

	Not at all Satisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied
Quality of the food	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Price paid for the food	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Delivery arrangement	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Content of the box	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

This question is about the producers and the value of the box. Please rate to what extent you agree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I would like to pay less for the box.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
I would like to pay more for the	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

box.					
I think the price I pay for the box contributes to the well-being of the producer.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
I think the price I pay corresponds to the value of the food in the box.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
I think the producer benefits economically from Cutia Țăranului/ASAT	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
I think Cutia Țăranului/ASAT is a good way for peasants to sell their food	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

How many times have you visited the producer's farm this year?

( ) Never ( ) 1 time ( ) 2-3 times ( ) 4 times or more

For what reasons did you visit the producer?_____

How many times have you contacted the producer (for example via phone or e-mail) this year?

( ) Never ( ) 1-2 times ( ) 3-4 times ( ) 5-6 times ( ) 7 times or more

For what reasons have you contacted the producer?

[ ] Discuss practical details related to deliveries [ ] Express gratitude

[ ] Ask about recipes/cooking guidance [ ] Set up meetings (other than deliveries)

[ ] Ask about the farming [ ] Report on issues with the food (for example something gone bad)

[ ] To ask if they need help [ ] Other

**How many planning meetings have you been to this year?

( ) 0 ( ) 1 ( ) 2 or more

**How many times have you helped out as a volunteer this year?

For example with distributions, communication with producer, communication with consumers, promotion of the partnership.

( ) Never ( ) 1-2 times ( ) 3-6 times ( ) 7-10 times ( ) 10 times or more

**Would you like to help out more as a volunteer?

( ) Yes ( ) No ( ) I don't know

**If yes, how would you like to help out more? _____

Do you plan to be part of Cutia Țăranului/ASAT next year?

( ) Yes ( ) No ( ) I don't know

Why not?_____

Based on your experience, how likely are you to recommend Cutia Țăranului/ASAT to a friend or colleague?

( ) Never ( ) Not likely ( ) Not sure ( ) Likely ( ) Very likely

Demographics

In what year were you born? _____

What is your gender?

( ) Female ( ) Male

How many people live in your household?

Adults: _____ Children: _____

What is the average income of your household per month?

( ) Less than 500 lei ( ) 500-1500 lei ( ) 1501-3000 lei ( ) 3001-4500 lei

( ) More than 4500 lei ( ) I'd rather not say

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

( ) Primary school or less ( ) Gymnasium ( ) High school ( ) Bachelor's degree

( ) Master's degree ( ) PhD degree or more

Interview

Would you be willing to take part in a short interview (about 30 minutes)?

The interview will centre around the topics of the survey (Cutia Țăranului/ASAT, food, agriculture), and will be an opportunity for you to share your experience of being part in this initiative.

( ) Yes ( ) No

Would it be possible for you to have the interview in English?

( ) Yes ( ) No

What is your contact information?

Thank you for wanting to take part in an interview. Please provide your contact information below and I will contact you in a few weeks with further details. Of course, your contact details will only be used for the purpose of the interview; I promise to guarantee the anonymity of your survey answers.

Name: _____ E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

If you have any reflections, comments or questions related to the topics of the survey, please write them here.

_____

Thank You!

* Specific question for CT
** Specific question for ASAT