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THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF FOOD AND EATING IN POLAND AND BEYOND

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INTRODUCTION: THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF FOOD AND EATING IN POLAND AND BEYOND

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This special issue of *Ethnologia Polona* comprises contributions from an international group of scholars who scrutinize the culturally embedded politics of food and foodways in Poland and beyond. The idea for the special issue "The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating in Poland and Beyond" stemmed from discussions and collaborations with academics working in the area of food studies, and with those who use food as a lens to look at different social, cultural and political phenomena. Both groups share a commitment to a critical perspective in the social sciences and humanities, and a need to strengthen this position within international academia.

We developed this special issue around the cultural politics of food and eating in order to highlight the importance of a critical perspective while studying food-related issues. Our aim is to demonstrate both the thematic scope and the theoretical directions present in the contemporary studies produced by scholars working on Poland, as well as Polish researchers working on other regions. The territorial scope of the volume is wide as it features analyses based on abundant ethnographic and historical material from Poland, Belgium, Georgia, Ukraine, Dagestan and Argentina. The volume features contributions from scholars representing different disciplines (anthropology, sociology, social history and cultural studies) based on original research (extended ethnographic fieldwork, archival research and autoethnography) and presenting a clear methodological reflection.

FOOD STUDIES IN POLAND. A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Since the early 2000s, critical food studies has become a burgeoning academic field in Poland. Several academic achievements marked its early beginnings. In 2006 a monograph, *Cmentarz i stół. Pogranicze prawosławno-katolickie w Polsce i na Białorusi* (The Graveyard and the Table. The Catholic and Orthodox Borderland in Poland and Belarus) by Justyna Straczuk was published as part of a prestigious series of the Foundation for Polish Science.[1] Soon after, the academic curricula of the two most important

1 https://www.fnp.org.pl/en/ (accessed 02.12.2020).

Polish universities were enriched by courses in new subdisciplines: the anthropology of food conducted since 2008 by Renata E. Hryciuk at the University of Warsaw and the sociology of food taught by Ewa Kopczyńska at the Jagiellonian University since 2010. The growing interest in this area of the social sciences and humanities has resulted in the first research projects funded by Polish academic institutions (e.g. National Science Centre), including a large multidisciplinary project on changing patterns of food consumption in Poland (see Domański et al. 2015).

Over the last decade, we have also witnessed a substantial increase in publications dealing with food and foodways, of which the following special issues of Polish journals constitute just a selection: *Czas Kultury* on the politics of taste (2013), *Studia Humanistyczne AGH* on food fear and distrust (Bachórz, Kopczyńska 2018), *Studia Socjologiczne* on food and mobility (Bielenin-Lenczowska, Hryciuk, 2018), *Kultura Popularna* on food and film (2018) and *Revista del CESLA* on food heritage (Brulotte and Hryciuk, 2019). In summarising these developments one can say that the scholarship of Polish food research has reflected and developed the recent themes, approaches and methodologies of multidisciplinary and mainly Western food studies (see: Hryciuk and Mroczkowska 2012, Tierney and Ohnuki-Tierney 2012, Burnett and Krishnendu 2012, Murcott 2016, Hryciuk and Mroczkowska forthcoming).

During this period, an emerging group of scholars interested in critical food studies has been built up in Poland during the nationwide, multidisciplinary seminar "Socio-cultural Contexts of Food Practices" organised between 2013 and 2016 by the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Warsaw, in collaboration with the Institute of Sociology and Philosophy of the Polish Academy of Sciences.[2] In the wake of weak institutional support for this new and still under-recognized area of study,[3] an informal Food and Drink Research Network was launched in 2018 by Polish academics and scholars working on food-related topics in Poland.[4] The establishment of the network is an attempt at setting an agenda for the study of food and consequently for the grassroot institutionalization of a new discipline in

2 The seminar was a collaborative effort of Renata E. Hryciuk (University of Warsaw), Justyna Straczuk (Polish Academy of Sciences), Joanna Mroczkowska (Polish Academy of Sciences) and Zofia Boni (University of Adam Mickiewicz in Poznań) During three years, more than thirty scholars presented the results of their food-related research, a part of them was published in a special section "Food and Mobility" of Studia Socjologiczne (Bielenin-Lenczowska, Hryciuk, 2018): https://etnologia.uw.edu.pl/wokol-etnologii/seminaria/seminaria-jedzeniowe (accessed 02.12.2020).

3 Here two exceptions should be noted: The Research Centre for Food History and Culture established by Jarosław Dumanowski at Nicolaus Copernicus University and the post-graduate food studies program at the private Warsaw based University of Social Sciences and Humanities (SWPS) https://www.swps.pl/oferta/warszawa/podyplomowe/rozwoj-osobisty-coaching/food-studies (accessed 02.12.2020).

4 https://jedzeniesiecbadawcza.blogspot.com/ (accessed 02.12.2020).

Poland. For the time being, the Network holds regular meetings and (on-line) seminars. Some of the papers published in this issue have their roots in discussions held at the Network's meetings.

The papers gathered in this thematic issue of Ethnologia Polona present a diverse panorama of critical food studies in Poland. It contributes to ongoing methodological debates by scrutinizing the power relations in international food research (Bachórz and Paresecoli on positionality). It offers an insightful intersectional reading of the relation between food and migration (Urbańska on transnational maternal foodways and Bodzan on female refugees cooking for Warsaw culinary tourists), of gendered foodways in (post)socialist contexts (Stańczak-Wislicz on food habits and socialist modernization in post-war Poland and Król on factory tea production in Georgia), as well as of issues related to the ethics of eating and alternative food networks (Grasseni and Gracjasz on Food not Bombs and Food Banks in Gdańsk). Moreover, this multidisciplinary collection of articles engages in contemporary theoretical debates (among others in this volume Kołodziejska and Kujawska on the edibility approach in ethnobotany) and proposes new theoretical concepts (Urbańska's "maternal bustling around foodways").

STRUCTURE OF THE SPECIAL SECTION

The opening essay of the current volume, "Why Should We Care? Two Experiences in the Politics of Food and Food Research", deals with the cultural politics of doing food research by scholars with different positionalities within global academia. Polish sociologist, Agata Bachórz, and American food researcher and journalist, Fabio Parasecoli, provide an auto-ethnographic and reflexive account of a collaboration in an ethnographic and media study about the revaluation of traditional and regional food in Poland among urban middle classes. Their analysis raises questions about the authors' positionalities and the crucial role that these play in their research dynamics, and about the legitimacy of issues related to the study of food within academia and to scholars' engagement outside it.

The politics of food provides an axis of analysis for the next papers presented in this volume. The first is "The Cultural Politics of Food Gifting in Gdańsk. Between Food Not Bombs and Food Banks" by Aleksandra Gracjasz and Cristina Grasseni. Building on ethnographic fieldwork carried out by Gracjasz, the authors look at the re-invention of "food waste" in steadily gentrifying Gdańsk (northern Poland). Using a methodological framework designed for the comparative analysis of collective food procurement in European post-industrial cities, the paper analyses two food gifting initiatives that, despite their superficial similarities – they both give food – embody quite different socio-cultural logics. On the one hand are Food Banks, which are

embedded in a logic of market transactions (under the guise of gift-giving) and thus strengthen the cultural politics of the market. On the other is the Food Not Bombs movement, which aims at unmaking those market transactions through the act of giving away food and in so doing proposing an a-hierarchical and egalitarian logic of commensality. The comparison of these two cases shows the assumptions about citizenship and solidarity that are inscribed in each.

The act of commensality – of eating and drinking together – is one of the fundamental social activities. Building on ethnographic fieldwork in Warsaw, Magda Bodzan in "Cooking with Refugees and Migrants: Staging Authenticity and Traditionality for Warsaw's Culinary Tourists" offers a nuanced analysis of culinary workshops organised on behalf of refugees and migrants after the migrant crisis in 2015. Appealing to middle class Warsaw culinary tourists, such workshops create twofold effects. First, they build a space of empowerment for migrants through an embracing of their home country culinary culture. At the same time however, they offer simplified and folklorized representations of these cultures. Bodzan shows the strategies of recreating the "traditionality" of food that are employed by female refugees to authenticate their migration stories and reveals how these women play with commodified expectations concerning their ethnicity and experiences. She also looks at the ways in which migrants and refugees skilfully adapt to the ethical expectations of Warsaw's culinary tourists by creating hybrid, frequently vegetarian forms of dishes. Building on notions of "food capital" and "refugee capital", Bodzan shows how ideas that the host society and the "Other" have about each other are interwoven, reinforced or challenged.

The intersection of migration and foodways is also tackled by Sylwia Urbańska in her paper entitled "Weapons of the Weak Twisted in Jars of Love. Transnational Maternal Foodways of Polish Migrants in Brussels". Here, building on the results of extensive ethnographic fieldwork in both rural Poland and Brussels, and on the journeys in between, she looks at the practices of care employed by Polish working class women immigrants who left their families behind. Urbańska offers a contribution to the study of migration and gendered care practices by showing the development of a postmodern working class motherhood. The author demonstrates how women have to bargain with the expectations posed by patriarchy in order to preserve the rights to motherhood while being a part of a global labour force. When looking at transnational care through food-work, the author suggests that the theoretical frameworks of "long-distance/transnational maternal foodways" should be employed to analyse the experiences of the interviewed women. She suggests enriching the conceptualization of the food related practices of Polish migrants with the concept of a "maternal bustling around foodways". Urbańska sees this both as a strategy of unbecoming a mother and as a coping strategy against neoliberal mechanisms of violence.

Experiences of working class women are also reflected in the paper, "We Have All Lived and Breathed Tea": Gendered Spaces of Factory Tea Production in Western

Georgia", by Katarzyna E. Król. Building on material gathered during extensive ethnographic fieldwork, the author focuses on the understudied issue of public spaces of industrial food production, with a focus on female labour in post-socialist Georgia. Król shifts anthropological interest from Georgian hospitality and "traditional" consumption practices, and looks at the production of a commodity which is not widely considered a legitimate part of Georgian foodways. Nevertheless, as the author claims, it is a commodity that has shaped both the landscape and the life-scapes of a substantial number of people, turning tea production into an agent re-organizing the life of whole regions in Georgia. The collapse of the Soviet Union resulted in yet another re-organization of the infrastructure, markets and most importantly lives of tea workers. This paper looks at the gender regime and the contemporary position of female workers at the factory. Similarly to Urbańska, Król approaches the problem of working class female migrants struggling to adhere to or resist patriarchal ideals of womanhood.

The following paper, "The Edibility Approach, Chemical Ecology and Relationality: Methodological and Ethnobotanical Contributions", by Iwa Kołodziejska and Monika Kujawska combines ethnographic and ethnobotanical fieldwork. The authors argue for the expansion of the edibility approach (EA) in order to give more attention to cross-species interactions between humans and not cultivated wild plants placed in an environmental context. Based on rich material gathered in three different cultural settings and ecosystems (Dagestan, Eastern Podilia in Ukraine and the Atlantic Forest of Argentina), this paper advocates incorporating Inglot's idea of dwelling and chemical ecology into the edibility approach as a potentially fruitful methodology for the analysis of multispecies entanglements. The text includes a call for closer collaboration between anthropologists, ethnobotanists, ecologists and chemical ecologists in this type of studies.

The final article in this volume, "Eating Healthy, Eating Modern: The "Urbanization" of Food Tastes in Communist Poland (1945–1989)", by the social historian Katarzyna Stańczak-Wiślicz focuses on the changing meaning of food and its role in the process of socialist modernization in post-war Poland. The communist project of modernization included changes of food habits based on "science and reason": therefore, extensive efforts were made to establish special institutions and agendas providing expert knowledge. The author shows the role of dietary education in governing and feeding the nation. Building on a variety of archival sources (women's magazines, medical literature and personal narratives), Stańczak-Wiślicz challenges the perception of the period after 1945 as a monolithic era, both in terms of official food policies and people's responses to them. Instead, Stańczak-Wiślicz shows how fluid and dependent on the political situation in the country was the definition of "traditional": from being labelled as backward and unhealthy in the first years after the war to a sudden rehabilitation during the crisis of the 1980s, which brought a renewed appreciation of "simple and natural" recipes.

This special issue concludes with a review by Karolina Bielenin-Lenczowska of the monograph *Balkan Blues. Consumer Politics after State Socialism* published in 2019 by the Korean-American anthropologist Yuson Jung. Based on the results of extensive ethnographic fieldwork in Bulgaria, Jung analyses the everyday consumer practices and strategies of impoverished inhabitants of the capital city in one of the poorest post-socialist states of the European Union. The author looks at inequality in access to goods, the pursuit of consumer rights and, more broadly, consumption as a site of civic engagement. The bookl also includes an informative appendix on fieldwork methodology and the positionality of an East Asian researcher in the Balkans. In her final remarks, Bielenin-Lenczowska stresses that the book proves the concept of post-socialism to still be a useful and effective analytical tool, not only in the context of Central and Eastern Europe, but also in the Balkans.

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We believe that the present volume will be of interest both to the growing food studies community and to a wider audience of those interested in the deeper social and cultural repercussions of food related practices. We hope that both groups of readers will find in the journal an informative and inspiring collection of articles.

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WHY SHOULD WE CARE? TWO EXPERIENCES IN THE POLITICS OF FOOD AND FOOD RESEARCH

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The aim of this article is to analyse the political aspects of food and their significance as an object of study. The first author of the article has studied Polish society as an insider, while the other author had previously conducted research in other countries, before three years ago starting to explore Poland and Polish gastronomy, and thus finding himself in the role of outsider. The two scholars have recently been working together. The power relations between the societies and the academic worlds from which they come turned out to be crucial to the research dynamics and became one of the paper's key interests. Two main topics provide the structure of the collaborative paper: 1) the question of the authors' positionality; 2) the legitimacy issues related to the study of food within academia and to scholars' engagement outside it. The authors agree that an inextricable connection of food and politics has not only an academic or theoretical dimension, but also impacts on the realities of people's lives.

KEYWORDS: food studies, food politics, positionality, academic power relations, gastronomy field, public engagement

This article analyses the political aspects of food, their significance as an object of study and their impact on food research. Our goal is not so much to summarize empirical material gathered by the authors, nor to provide a definitive theoretical or methodological contribution to established fields, such as sociology of knowledge or institutional ethnography; rather, we provide comparative auto-ethnographic notes and a self-reflection on the political meanings, entanglements and implications of the authors' experience in food-related research, with a particular emphasis on their work in Poland and the Polish context in which they operate. This, we hope, will serve as material for future exploration on the form and tasks of food research, especially when it comes to international collaborations.

The political nature of food inevitably influences the way we look at it, and vice versa: our attention to food turns it into a more sensitive issue than simply that of physical sustenance. We argue that, although often perceived as not rigorous enough and erroneously discounted as dealing with the ordinary, food research should gain

greater recognition because of its political significance. Through our emphasis on the problem of positionality and the context of Eastern Europe compared to global centres, we consider politics in a broad sense: as an attempt at creating and governing communities while assessing their past, negotiating their present and imagining their future. Politics also refers to dealing with differences and hierarchies inside a society, while imaging particular forms of interactions with the external environment. In fact, food research (including ours) highlights how food practices and the discourses that support them reveal power relations, social inequalities and cultural differences among individuals and groups: the question of how such research hides or legitimizes these dynamics through research must be critically discussed.

Although certainly not all these topics can be covered in one article, we want to address some of them by reflecting on and comparing our two different academic experiences in researching food. We especially take into account the study of food and of the gastronomy field in Poland, the context in which we collaborate.[1] The first goal of the paper relates to positionality. We examine our different positions in the field: what does it mean to do research on food in Poland from both an (Eastern) insider's and (Western) outsider's perspective? We do not claim that this East v. West opposition is the only possible framework for reflection, but we acknowledge that in our experience it does matter. The juxtaposition of our different academic positionalities and biographies allows us to achieve the second goal of the paper, which is to highlight some of the political aspects of food research by focusing on the differences between Polish and American academia, on their contrasting statuses and circumstances, as well as on how these distinctive power relations are reflected in our own experiences and collaboration.

The first author of the article is Agata Bachórz, who has studied Polish society – through food amongst a number of other topics – as an insider. The other author is Fabio Parasecoli, who had previously conducted research in other countries and three years ago started exploring Poland and Polish gastronomy, and thus inevitably found himself in the role of an outsider. We have recently been working together in an ethnographic and media analysis project about the revaluation of traditional and regional food in Poland among urban, educated and upwardly mobile middle classes. The project, launched in 2018 with funding from the National Science Centre, aims to explore this apparent revaluation in terms of space – through the re-articulation of the categories of local, regional and national – and time, through discourses around

1 We refer to the gastronomy field (Matta 2019) in the Bourdieusian sense of a social field (Bourdieu 1993; Hilgers and Mangez 2014), as a dynamic and competitive interaction between people, institutions, materials, ideas, values and practices that determine the cultural aspects of the production and consumption of food, as well as its symbolic understanding. Of course, the structural and superstructural aspects of these matters cannot be totally separated, as Gramsci argued long ago in his critique of rigid Marxian approaches (Gramsci 2000; Laclau and Mouffe 1985).

history and tradition which include debates on authenticity. We try to examine new forms of cosmopolitanism resulting both from homegrown social dynamics and expanding entanglements with global cultures and practices through social media and other forms of communication. We also aim to understand how forms of cosmopolitanism expressed through the revaluation of Polish food influence the experience of national identity and heritage in everyday life. The research is ongoing, in collaboration with a third team member, Mateusz Halawa from the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the Polish Academy of Sciences. This paper is largely based on the notes and conversations that accompany the development of this project.

We have organized our collaborative reflection around two topics, which provide the structure of the article: first, the question of the authors' positionality, and second the legitimacy issues related to studying food within academia and to scholars' engagement outside it. We refer to and take examples both from our previous fieldwork and our experiences in and beyond academia, as well as from our joint research project on the revaluation of food in contemporary Poland. We compared our reflections on the two topics and built a dialogic, however not always smooth, narrative which led us to shared conclusions.

POSITIONALITY AND HOW IT INFLUENCES FOOD RESEARCH

The power relations between the societies and the academic worlds from which we come constitute the background of our collaboration: we suggest that a centre--periphery frame is an accurate conceptualization of this relationship (Canagarajah 2002; Bennett 2014). We understand it results in circumstances that are difficult to overcome for individual scholars who may seek personal recognition by agreeing to unequal relations, however symbiotic they may be, with a global centre. Such structural dimensions of research cannot be omitted when talking about the individual achievements of scholars engaged in the process of knowledge production in semiperipheral contexts (Duszak 2006; Wagner 2012). In our case there are two separate but connected issues: the first one is a question of the authors' positionality in academia at large and more specifically in food research. The second is that of their dynamics within the particular research field of food and gastronomy: issues of access to the field, availability of information and perceptions by interlocutors in the study which may help or disturb ethnographic work. Although the situation in food research would not seem to differ radically from that of other fields, we are not aware of a focused analysis that would apply to this particular context.

It is not without significance that a number of sociological and anthropological studies on "food in the Eastern Bloc" and "food in Poland" before and after 1989 have been carried out by Western European and American universities and publishing houses. After 1989, the new "postsocialist framework" was applied to replace and

redefine the former East-West division, recognized as reproducing inequality (e.g. Caldwell, Dunn and Nestle 2009; Yung, Klein and Caldwell 2014). However, this did not eliminate doubts regarding the inequalities and positionality issues embedded in knowledge production, even in cases where scholars themselves came from the countries studied.

In the field of food-related research, the use of postsocialism as the main framework led to, for example, imagining "everyday", or even "peasant", food as the only food worth studying in Poland, with gourmet food and fine dining construed as a privilege of the West. Speaking more generally, using postsocialism as a framework has turned out to be problematic and controversial, and has not achieved a levelling of the hierarchies built into academia (Stenning and Hörschelmann 2008; Müller 2019, cf. Kopczyńska and Bachórz 2018). In fact, while for some "postsocialism" was a lens to focus on agency with a goal of recognizing the value of local resources (Dunn 2004), others claimed it still maintained a binary picture of Europe under a new name and did not give a voice to representatives of the former Eastern Bloc (Červinkova 2012). A problem that arose in this kind of studies was an international division of labour in the academic field in which theoretical frameworks and analytical concepts were developed in dominant centres, while local scholars played the role of those who provided empirical data and "local knowledge" (Buchowski 2004; Buchowski and Červinkova 2015).

However, Eastern European scholars have highlighted the theoretical contributions that derive precisely from doing research in the periphery (Jehlička et al. 2020). In Bachórz's study (2018) of intergenerational food transfers within urban families in contemporary Poland, it turned out that in many cases urban modernity is conditioned by quasi-traditional relations in families, embodied in the circulation of food between parents' and adult children's households. In our shared project we have observed chefs and food producers who, although curious about international trends and cosmopolitan practices (also because they are more frequently featured in upscale Polish food media), are determined to find their own Polish way to achieve the high standards that they see in the international gastronomy field: standards which they appreciate, but towards which they also maintain a certain level of criticism or at least scepticism. As a result, we posit more complex under the surface links between "tradition" and "modernity" than the opposition often expressed in popular discourse, which tends to contrast these two conditions instead of showing their hybridity. Through dynamics of dialogue, acceptance and resistance, the local context refuses direct insertion into a globally produced framework in a way which helps to understand the hybridity of Eastern-European transformations (cf. Smith and Jehlička 2007; Jehlička, Kostelecky and Smith 2013) and provides further support for notions of non-Western realizations of modernity. We hope our work will also be in line with this approach, for instance by contributing to reflections on the role of nodes at all scales and of multidimensional networks in globalized cultural formations (Dürrschmidt and Kautt 2019; Parasecoli

and Halawa 2020), as well as on postcolonial analysis in the supposed absence in Eastern Europe of typical forms of colonization (Kołodziejczyk 2013; Bjelić 2016; Sobieraj-Skorski 2019).

How is this dynamic reflected on or dealt with in the academic work we are conducting in Poland? How do we engage with this imbalance of power? Beyond our shared experience in the research project in Poland, there are significant differences between our situations which affect our positionality both in and outside academia, as well as the methods and the practices we embrace. We have been quite straightforward in discussing the power relations among us, determined by factors inherent to the administrative organization of the research (Parasecoli is the principal investigator), being at different phases in our careers, our different education backgrounds, gender dynamics, our local and international visibility inside and outside academia, and our previous experiences, both in terms of research and of relationships with peers and individuals in higher and lower hierarchical positions.

Parasecoli, despite his background in history and media, would identify himself primarily as a food scholar, without a specific affiliation in any traditional discipline. As we will discuss, his opportunities to work within interdisciplinary programs and later in a department formally identified as "food studies" have given him a certain latitude in his intellectual pursuits. His past experience as a food writer for a well-known Italian food and wine media company, as well his current employment as a tenured, full professor in such a prestigious (and wealthy) American institution as New York University allow him to enjoy great independence in his choice of research projects, publications and relationships with actors in local food worlds and with other academics.

While Parasecoli belongs to a clear and distinct academic environment with food at its centre, Bachórz's entry into the field of food research may be treated as a new and probably not last stage in her academic career. She has previously studied food patterns as a sociologist interested also in questions of cultural participation, tourism and leisure, often using a postcolonial frame and focusing on East-West relations. She comes from an academic context where institutionalised food studies, in the sense of an identifiable field of research and pedagogy and structured programs or departments, has not developed and food scholars conduct valuable research in a variety of disciplines and departments. In Poland, academic explorations of food have expanded in a variety of directions, all deserving attention. For example, the growing omnivorousness displayed by Poles has entered the area of interest of scholars focusing on social structures (Domański et al. 2015; Cebula 2018). In addition to this specific aspect, relevant research is also taking place in history (e.g. Dumanowski 2016; Dias-Lewandowska and Kurczewski 2018; Milewska 2018; Sikorska 2019) and the social sciences (e.g. Łeńska-Bąk 2010; Jarecka and Wieczorkiewicz 2014; Kopczyńska 2017; 2018; Straczuk 2018; Boni 2017; Hryciuk 2018; 2019; Krukowska and Rancew-Sikora 2018; Mroczkowska

2019). In particular, we have observed a consolidation of research on alternative food networks conducted by social scientists from the rural sociology field, including the question of political activism through food provisioning and a local Polish specificity (e.g. Bilewicz and Śpiewak 2018; Goszczyński et al. 2019); the examination of cultural, legal and political tensions around local/regional food (e.g. Kleśta-Nawrocka and Kleśta-Nawrocki 2018; Stasik 2018; Boni 2019); food in art and popular culture (e.g. Drzał-Sierocka 2014; Michalak 2018; Stronciwilk 2019); and the intersections of food and medicine (e.g. Chowaniec-Rylke 2018; Rajtar 2019).

In terms of the consolidation and institutionalisation of food research in Poland, we wish to highlight bottom-up networking initiatives. First and foremost, both in terms of study curriculum and food research, we note the role of the "critical food studies" circle that operates mainly at the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the University of Warsaw.[2] However, despite the multiplicity of interests, the high quality of publications, and the frequency of talks and academic events concerned with food, many researchers would welcome greater collaboration between one another, which could be boosted by a national network or some kind of formal organization. This desire has been expressed in regular meetings among scholars from all over the country under the name of the Food and Drink Researchers' Network (*Sieć Badaczy i Badaczek Jedzenia i Picia*), which are also intended to provide support for participants in their individual work and to generate some impact in terms of greater interest, visibility and legitimacy within universities. Furthermore, the meetings also aim to contribute to overcome the centre-periphery dynamics in action also within Polish academia, which have often seen Warsaw at the forefront of new initiatives.

In Parasecoli's experience, the chance to work in a multidisciplinary environment brings opportunities to look at complex issues from a variety of points of view, which in turns allows for more holistic approaches. Conversely, those scholars more closely connected to a specific discipline at times feel that their food-related work does not meet the expectations of their peers in that discipline, a situation that may generate anxieties about recognition and legitimacy. Bachórz, however, acknowledges that being rooted in a discipline (sociology, in her case) rather than in interdisciplinary food studies has at least one important advantage: a habit of treating food as an indicator with reference to other issues, which can be used as an argument to give legitimacy to the study of food. Although Parasecoli operates in a well-established food studies

2 See the regular food seminar organized by Renata E. Hryciuk, Justyna Straczuk, Joanna Mroczkowska and Zofia Boni in 2013–2016: https://www.etnologia.uw.edu.pl/wokol-etnologii/seminaria/seminaria-jedzeniowe and the etnographic laboratory *"Antropologia (nie)równości: praktyki jedzeniowe w Warszawie"* for ethnology students, organized by Renata E. Hryciuk and E. Katarzyna Król in 2020–2022 https://www.etnologia.uw.edu.pl/dla-studentow/studia/laboratoria-etnograficzne.

department in a well-known university and food studies as a field is acquiring increasing respect and legitimacy, at times he still has to deal with peers from more established disciplines that look at his work as not rigorous or dealing with inconsequential matters. Such situations are arguably even more frequent for Agata Bachórz who represents a rather peripheral field inside a semi-peripheral academia. Moreover, despite various collaborative experiences, she is affiliated with the University of Gdańsk, which is far from being central in Polish academia and may allow her more limited access to resources and visibility. Her academic career is largely marked by a sense of being on the outskirts and searching for peer support. The necessity of doing small-scale research, which may give her some academic freedom, at the same time makes her particularly sensitive to such structural constraints. This is why the above-mentioned possibility of treating food research as a set of case studies referring to broader theoretical or abstract issues helps by adding a value of universality to her work.

What interests us most for this paper is noticing that these dynamics – together with the semi-peripheral location of Poland and the quasi-colonial relationship between "the West" and "the East" – influence the research field, which in our case is gastronomy. Gastronomy has evolved differently in the USA and Poland, which means that its study must take into account some inevitable dissimilarities. Historically, food in Poland on the one hand has belonged to the private sphere, while on the other, after the end of World War II, it became a responsibility for a state which was supposed to provide for its citizens. While it existed as a social practice among pre-WWII elites, eating out as a public leisure activity is a relatively new phenomenon for the majority of Poles: the gastronomy field here can be described as partly imitative and "in the making", searching for its identity while trying to gain visibility and reflect global trends. In our research, we have noticed how our interlocutors are not only interested and sensitive to what happens outside Poland, but also often ask Parasecoli about emerging trends, up-and-coming chefs or new media, revealing a built-in sense of operating in a periphery. As a consequence, his contribution (which he tries to provide beyond his personal opinions and preferences) is sought after and appreciated in the development of local projects, from farmers' markets to conferences and museums.

Parasecoli's first exposure to the Polish culinary landscape happened during a visit for food writers, funded in 2016 by the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, which immediately made him visible in local gastronomy circles. As a matter of fact, the decision to conduct an organized, long-term study partly derived from his ease in accessing interlocutors and interacting with them, often being invited to give academic talks, to participate in food events and to give interviews on Polish media outlets. We have observed that access to him is actually desired by local actors, who see a confirmation of the value of Polish food in his interest in it and his engagement with them. After one recent talk at the University of Warsaw, for instance, Parasecoli was given various types of *kielbasa* as a gift from an audience member, a food professional he knew and

had previously interacted with. This rather unusual performance, at least in academic circumstances, confirms that the gift-giver interpreted the event as a professional culinary one and behaved accordingly. In the past, Parasecoli has been invited to be a judge in culinary contests for specialties he was not previously familiar with, from *nalewki* to *czernina*, precisely because of his position as a foreigner with different taste categories. His participation was welcomed to give more gravitas, status and visibility to the contests and their participants. When food professionals launched the idea of "Twaróg Day" as a way to celebrate a simple but ubiquitous, traditional (and often handmade) product, Parasecoli was invited to be one of the signatories of the document: a gesture which points to how he is now considered not only an observer, but actually a participant in the changes taking place in the Polish foodscape (the declaration expressed both respect for existing practice and the desire to elevate the product to better fit higher standards of quality and taste). Furthermore, Parasecoli's notoriety has been leveraged to turn him into a Polish food ambassador of sorts. A Polish institution asked Parasecoli if he wanted to prepare an itinerary for foreign chefs visiting Poland as he was supposed to be better positioned to understand their interests and preferences (he politely declined, pointing out that there are very capable Polish food professionals who could do this). He has also been invited to give talks about Polish food in events organized abroad by, or in collaboration with, Polish institutions. This prompts us to again raise long-honoured questions in ethnography about the extent to which the researcher's very presence and actions shape the researched reality. In Parasecoli's case, the ambiguous and not entirely equal relation between the researcher and the field may be compounded by the fact that Parasecoli plays a dual role in the gastronomy field as a scholar and a journalist, and that he comes not just from outside Central-Eastern Europe, but in particular from the Italian culinary world and from American academia, both prestigious in their own right. A Western journalist and intellectual provides reassurance to a culinary world that feels stuck in the periphery and that often discounts its own value. In line with a postcolonial pattern, recognition and confirmation of value still come from outside. Parasecoli finds himself constantly trying to maintain access to interlocutors, while underlining time and time again that his role in Poland is an academic one, gently reminding actors in the gastronomy fields that some of their expectations cannot be met due to the researcher's conflicts of interest.

The occurrences and dynamics we have just described suggest that the gastronomy field is a dimension of the food system in which power relations, inequalities and conflicts around recognition become particularly visible through dynamics of taste, access and interests. This is the case also for us, but our positionality generates different experiences. Parasecoli has been invited to do research in some of the most expensive food establishments in Poland, from Michelin-starred restaurants to countryside spas, whose public relation operatives see in his presence an opportunity for visibility, also

because he still writes for media outlets outside academia. Paradoxically, it is easier for him to get acquainted with the upper echelons of Polish gastronomy than to explore the domestic sphere or less reputed restaurants or stores. It needs to be underlined that the aspect of performance that is part of any ethnographic fieldwork is amplified by his presence, as interlocutors want to showcase their best and, when possible, influence his perceptions and experiences. Furthermore, it is easier for English or French-speaking individuals to have access to him. These factors indicate the centrality of shared cultural and social backgrounds among researchers and interlocutors in shaping fieldwork.

Bachórz's role in the research is more difficult to describe because it is not so visible: there are not as many ethnographic facts to recall as in Parasecoli's case. Her presence does not manifest itself through vivid incidents that can illustrate her interventions. She also does not have – at least so far – many experiences of engagement with food-related activities in non-academic roles; this is probably more about her not being publicly recognizable than her being Polish. It is particularly interesting that her role is never linked to the evaluation of food as such, in terms of taste, quality or authenticity. As a sociologist, sometimes she is asked to comment on eating patterns, but not on food *per se*. We link this to the fact that Bachórz's first role is that of being a sociologist, while in Parasecoli's case food itself constitutes his primary public identity. Her role – we assume – is more clear and easy to define for people in the field.

Bachórz is usually well received by participants in her research, but her presence in the field is not particularly celebrated. For instance, she rarely experiences such benefits as a tasting opportunity and often has to deal with the limited time of her potential interviewees. Bachórz's limited public visibility, however, cannot be perceived only as disadvantageous because it does not give her such free access to the gastronomy field: in fact, her presence causes less doubts about her position when doing fieldwork. Perhaps this is to some extent a delusion of "transparency", but it can be assumed that the motivations of her interlocutors are less instrumental and that relations with them turn out to be less hierarchical. For example, only sometimes – when her role is misunderstood and not clearly linked to academia – did she have the impression of being expected to increase the visibility of an interlocutor's business. In general, she has not felt she has any debt to (symbolically) pay back, which does not guarantee, but is conducive to, a more critical approach.

THE LEGITIMACY OF FOOD STUDIES: INSIDE AND OUTSIDE ACADEMIA

As we have already mentioned, food scholars often have to struggle with the necessity of justifying their work as rigorous, legitimate and significant. The reason for this is not only the position of food research within academia, but also in public debates

around policies which may or may not recognize food as a central issue in social life, from local to national and international levels.

In the United States, the public is showing growing interest in food-related matters, from health and nutrition to gastronomy, sustainability and social justice (Nestle 2002; Poppendieck 2010; Fisher 2018). In a country that is ethnically and racially quite varied, food's centrality in the development of individual and communal identities is also increasingly understood among the general public. These themes are well developed within food studies and food research in the humanities and social sciences (Counihan and Williams-Forson 2012; Parasecoli 2019). This was not always the case: the field struggled to establish itself and was often branded as irrelevant, too connected to the banality of everyday life and the feminine sphere, and "light" from a scholarly point of view. However, as already discussed, it has grown exponentially since its inception in the late 1990s in terms of university programs, research, journals and books, acquiring legitimacy and visibility among both the general public and academia.

For these reasons, it is not unusual for Parasecoli and his department colleagues at NYU to be interviewed in newspapers and on radio shows, to be asked to contribute to museum exhibitions or online databases, and to act as consultants in matters ranging from culture to entrepreneurship. By engaging with traditional and social media, they are constantly prompted to explain complex issues in accessible ways to the general public. At times their books may not be strictly academic, but instead support important discussions in civil society. Parasecoli's book on food systems, published by MIT (2019), is an example of this kind of public engagement, which nonetheless also increases his legitimacy in academic circles.

This participation in important debates and in civic life makes food research more relevant and well respected also within the university and academia more widely, as is reflected also in terms of grants, funding and access to scholarly publishing. It thus becomes easier to be involved in large-scale projects, also with scholars and practitioners from other disciplines. Parasecoli, for instance, has increasingly participated in research and activities with designers and design theorists, which in turn has allowed him to expand his theoretical outlook and his research methods. In Poland, academia and the general public look suspiciously at the study of food as lacking rigour and relevance. Yes, everyone is interested in food, but it is – with exceptions – generally relegated to the category of leisure interests. Even though scholars who deal with food-related topics are aware of the political meanings and consequences of their work (we briefly described the field in the previous sections), the task of convincing practitioners and politicians is still an uphill battle. We assume there are two categories of reasons for this situation. The first is situated outside academia and reflects the historical experience of the progressive displacement of food into the private sphere. This may seem quite paradoxical, as after World War II food provisioning, understood in economic terms, became a matter of urgent political concern to the ruling socialist regime. The

central distribution of food products was combined with a particular food pedagogy, and served as legitimization of the governing party system. It was also a part of a socialist modernisation project that included the intentional building of a new – rational, non-traditional – lifestyle. Nevertheless, in the face of the limited effectiveness of these policies and the lack of trust in state institutions, bottom-up resourcefulness, self-provisioning and informal economic practices elaborated inside households turned out to be a more significant hallmark of food-related behaviours in Eastern and Central Europe, including Poland (Smith and Stenning 2006; Alber and Kohler 2008). We have encountered this understanding also during our work. Foraging, for instance, is often mentioned in our fieldwork as an aspect of the continuing resistance of the domestic sphere to massification and as an effective reaction to scarcity caused by government ineptitude. Food provisioning is continuously connected to the private sphere, while state production and state control over food distribution are – also in the light of our media analysis – perceived as not worthy of attention. The years of socialism are constantly construed as a time when traditions were lost, artisanal know-how was forgotten and local plant varieties and animal breeds were pushed aside in the interest of larger – but blander and less culturally meaningful – yields.

Another set of possible reasons why Polish foodways are explained mostly in private, domestic terms is connected to the systemic transformation in Poland after 1989 and its cultural consequences. Food choices – as a part of a wider set of consumer choices – started to be perceived as a manifestation of personal preferences, rather than being associated with communal identities and external constraints. Individuality – instead of collectivity – became a synonym of progress. This neoliberal approach has been gaining terrain after 1989, not only accustoming people to discount the structural aspects of their lives (such as class), but also leading to a favouring of an individualistic explanatory framework in public discourse and even in the social sciences. Warczok and Zarycki (2014) claim, with reference to Polish post-transformation sociology, that there has been a tendency to marginalise any approach describing social life in terms of conflict (including class-related), with individualistic and psychologizing explanations dominating instead. This probably constitutes one of the reasons why authorities at local and national levels have not engaged with far-reaching policies, including in the dimension of food, a phenomenon which also reflects general difficulties with long-term planning and strategic thinking. It is also important to reflect on the intra-academia circumstances that cause the importance of food studies to be downplayed. These topics were discussed during the Food and Drink Researchers' Network meetings in Cracow (5 April, 2019) and Gdańsk (4 October, 2019), during which food scholars in Poland indicated a lack of visibility as a part of their circumstances. Although being rooted in particular disciplines (like sociology, anthropology or history) has positive dimensions, as we suggest above, the structural framework of academia makes it difficult to achieve a strong voice under conditions of small-scale, individual,

and dispersed research, which are typical for scientific institutions in Poland. Scholars conducting small-scale and often bottom-up research may find it difficult to make broader conclusions referring to different social contexts or to the macro-level of social analysis. This systemic "shyness" is a part of Agata Bachórz's experience; she admittedly tries to extrapolate on ethnographic observations, like in her research on intra-family food knowledge transfer (Bachórz 2018), but at the same time she would like to further root her conclusions in broader empirical material. This is obviously not a problem exclusive to the field of food research, but it becomes vivid in the case of this newly emerging area. What we get is a vicious circle in which scholars have to convince the public and financing institutions of the meaningfulness of food-related research in a situation where prior support is needed to reach meaningful conclusions.

In this context, the public engagement of food scholars – like that of any scholars – must be also regularly and carefully questioned, not in order to retreat from the expression of urgent and engaged positions, but in order to examine them critically. In Poland (not only in food research), scholars' practical engagement with various industries and their role as public intellectuals clashes with the idea of social criticism, as Warczok and Zarycki (2014) claim for the field of sociology. This assessment cannot simply be transferred into the field of food research, but nonetheless this argumentation does have traction in explaining the specificities of Polish academia and the public activities of its members, as the limited doses of critical approaches on display in fact often contribute to sustaining the political *status quo*. It needs to be underlined, however, that the involvement of academics working on food in social debates is problematic in the US as well, as there too they can easily get sucked into partisan politics and ideological battles. Moreover, due to the funding structure of US private universities, there have been cases in which funders have influenced – or at least they have tried to influence – food related research, especially in the field of nutrition and food science (Nestle 2018).

Hidden ideological assumptions and different forms of inequality among academic and research fields may also have tangible consequences when scholars operate beyond academia. Most of all, one must be aware of using "inequality-blind" research in shaping or influencing local or national policies. It is possible that, although acting in good faith, due to a lack of data-driven policies scholars may apply knowledge about food-related behaviours and meanings that favour particular groups' interests or dominant lifestyles.

Agata Bachórz, for instance, collaborated in the revitalization project of a local food market. On the one hand, data-based sociological analysis of the situation in which the market operated was important also for the local community and the people working there. On the other hand, as a researcher she was afraid of being used either as an instrumental smokescreen or to support changes in a direction that would turn the market into a space inaccessible to its existing users, mostly elderly local dwellers.

Parasecoli has been invited to participate in various capacities to public and private initiatives meant to celebrate Polish food at the national level. While he had conversations with the organizations involved, Parasecoli did not contribute directly because his very presence could have given legitimacy to approaches that promote ideas and values he found went against his opposition to nativist and exclusionary takes on national cuisines. In fact, another important question regarding a scholar's participation in civil society debates and initiatives concerns the use of knowledge to change the *status quo* (as in development projects) and the ways in which scholars should communicate not only their findings, but also their underlying values and goals to the wider public.

In our shared project, we also deal with the question of social inequalities and in particular of middle-classness. This is why we devote some space to the problem of the entanglement of social research in dominant discourses. While observing the revaluation of regional and traditional food in Poland, a trend that is still limited to a small segment of the population (so far, mostly urban, well educated and upwardly mobile), we have noticed that some themes and discursive elements are trickling down. We observe how media are interested in these trends, covering them in newspapers, magazines and, above all, in TV shows with large audiences. The promotion of traditional food as a part not only of subjective, private, intra-family experience, but also as knowledge-based, demanding cultural heritage and expertise, is part of the media coverage addressed to the middle class, rather than to other segments of society. At the same time, locality and seasonality are presented as democratic, easy-accessible and cheap options, without noticing their socially distinctive character (in fact, they are time- or capital-demanding, or both). The naturalization of such approaches deserves critical attention and constant reflexive work in order to avoid marginalizing or even erasing large swathes of social experience, and thus supporting hegemonic worldviews and turning them into seemingly universal perspectives.

These issues, however, constitute the core of any reflection about the relationship between science and its non-academic environment. Is the issue of the public engagement of food scholars different from that in other disciplines? In our opinion: yes. Food is perceived as a most common and universal platform connecting people because "everybody eats". However, the truth is that everybody eats in different ways, which may express their positions in society. Seemingly innocent, food is interesting almost for everybody and carries hidden political meanings, some of which may be revealed when it is used by authorities and organizers of cultural activities as a convenient tool to conduct participatory projects, for instance in cultural (Krukowska 2017) or even in social welfare institutions, as well as in urban revitalization projects (Parham 2012, Newmann and Burnett 2013). The presence of food in public spaces can positively influence social inclusion or improve access to quality food, while at the same time there is a risk of strengthening particular worldviews on food itself. In public discourse,

in turn, the attractiveness of a seemingly "innocent" foodie culture may transform it into an arena for public "quasi-pedagogy" (de Solier 2008, cf. Bachórz 2019).

CONCLUSION

This article is the result of shared conversations between the two authors on various political dimensions of food and food research, especially the research we conduct together. We have found ourselves dealing with ambiguous issues in food research, linked to our respective positionalities and experiences, that take us beyond proving the obvious fact that "food is political". We are aware that in this article we have not addressed the links between food and climate change, questions of ethical/non-ethical consumption, debates about the cultural identities expressed through food or the meanings of alternative food networks in the Polish context. It was not our intention to provide broad theoretical contributions, but rather to share material from our ethnographic fieldwork, empirical data, experiences and auto-ethnographic reflections as we try to make sense of the specificities we encounter.

One of our focuses was on how our own positionalities and the impact they had in the work dynamics among the two of us reflect wider global power inequalities and their influence on the academic world. We both found ourselves inevitably confronting how our own background may influence our perceptions and even the topics we are drawn to. As both of us are urban, upwardly mobile and educated individuals, just like the interlocutors whose practices and discourse we are studying in our shared project, we constantly need to remind ourselves (and the audience) of our positionality in terms of class, access, gender, age and other socio-cultural factors that could generate bias and various forms of "blindness" to the dynamics of which we ourselves are part. As we stated above, this risk is even greater for Parasecoli, who as a foreigner finds it easier to connect with people who also have travelled and lived abroad, speak foreign languages and share cultural and political outlooks. We do not mean, however, that middle class scholars (including ourselves) should not study privileged sections of societies, like the middle or upper classes (cf. Nader 1972), but that we should do so critically, being aware that this is in fact a study of specific segments and not a whole society. We should also carefully think about not only the (hidden) assumptions, but also the reasonings behind doing research on the middle classes. To some extent, middle class imagery does not belong only to the middle class itself, since this imagery serves as a transparent and quasi-universal social ideal embedded in popular culture and public institutions. It makes sense to deconstruct this imagery or – let us repeat – public "quasi-pedagogy", also in the realm of food media. Studying the processes underway in generating Polish middle class lifestyles in particular – as stereotypically associated with those identified with Western "centre" – may also be useful in

examining local versions of modernization outside the above-mentioned unilinear approach.

We certainly do not want to state that cross-cultural research or cross-cultural scholarly cooperation is pointless because of embedded structural inequalities – this would be naive and also a loss of theoretical reflection (cf. Jehlička et al. 2020). We rather think critically about conducting joint projects, while overcoming the "local empirical knowledge versus global theory-making" trap. Our own experience points to many advantages in having different backgrounds, points of views and even methodological approaches, as long as we maintain a self-reflective attitude and are not afraid of discussing our own roles and our own entanglements with power structures. As academics, we are trained to identify and address these issues theoretically, but we are often less equipped to deal with them in interpersonal relationships and within institutional hierarchies, with all the emotional baggage that these incorporate. We acknowledge that in our work and public presence Bachorz's positionality ends up being somehow transparent and naturalized, almost "innocent", in the Polish context. In writing this article it was at times even difficult to find examples of "her role", while as an outsider Parasecoli can be more easily noticed, observed, analysed and critiqued in terms of the privilege his positionality affords him. Paradoxically, at the end of the day it may turn out that circumstances force Parasecoli to be more attentive and aware of his role and impact in the field and to constantly negotiate his presence.

While trying not to sound paternalistic and avoiding any unilinear evolutionary framework when juxtaposing the two academias in which we operate (Poland and the US) and their transitions of food research into food studies, we have used our own experiences as "lessons learnt" in order to underline the fact that it is impossible to disconnect the politics of food from the politics of doing food research in terms of involvement with power structures, hierarchies and hegemonic dynamics both in the public sphere and within academia itself. To some extent every food scholar has to deal with it – this is our shared position despite all our differences in positionality and experiences. We also agree that this inextricable connection of food and politics has not only an academic or theoretical dimension, but also impacts on people's lives. Food, although discursive, symbolic and imaginative, is also material and physical. Treating it seriously is not merely about recognition for "marginal" scholars, but is a basic demand of respect for cultural identities and – obviously – for the human right to food.

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FOOD-GIFTING IN GDAŃSK: BETWEEN *FOOD NOT BOMBS* AND THE *FOOD BANK*

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The *Food Citizens?* project compares cases of collective food procurement in three countries of the European Union (Poland, Italy and the Netherlands), specifically in three post-industrial cities of comparable size and population, namely Gdansk, Turin and Rotterdam. The project explores how networks of social actors organize themselves at comparable levels of intervention (foraging, namely gathering or producing food themselves; short food chains, namely engaging directly with producers; governance, namely rethinking markets, allotments and modes of procuring food that are relevant to urban procurement). The methodology of the project is to "compare by context" how these three levels materialize in the three cities: which social actors are actually engaged, through which concrete actions, and how politics and governance affect what is otherwise largely depicted as a mere issue of economics and/or sustainability (how to produce and procure food sustainably at affordable prices). This way, so-called (post)socialist food-ways assume a particular significance as not necessarily "the odd one out" in EU regions and economies, but rather as one of the possible identifiable cultural and economic pathways that collectivities take as they are informed by specific histories, territories, local economies, and social or demographic challenges. This article focuses on very different urban forms of food rescue and reallocation in Gdansk, namely through the grassroots activities of *Food Not Bombs* and through the *Food Bank*. Based on participant observation of relevant case studies in gentrifying Gdansk, the article focuses on the re-invention of "food waste", of food gifting, and food rescue.

KEYWORDS: Food gifting, *Food Not Bombs*, *Food Bank*, collective food procurement, solidarity

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The theoretical and methodological framework of this article is the on-going *Food Citizens?* project, which compares ethnographic cases of "collective food procurement" in three "post-industrial" cities of comparable size and population across the European Union, namely Gdańsk, Turin and Rotterdam.[1] Each of these "regional cities" (Soja

1 For a definition of "collective food procurement", see Grasseni 2018. The project "Food citizens? Collective Food Procurement in European Cities: Solidarity and Diversity, Skills and Scale" has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (Grant agreement No. 724151, www.foodcitizens.eu).

2010) has distinctive national and local styles of collective food procurement, which exceed the conceptual and empirical framework of "alternative food networks" (Goodman, DuPuis and Goodman 2012). The project asks how networks of social actors organize themselves at commensurable levels of intervention, one of which is "urban foraging", namely procuring food in the city (not necessarily by gathering and picking freshly grown food, but collecting it from available urban sites). In this article, we focus on two alternative manners of foraging for food without money in the city of Gdańsk, explaining how each method is embedded in radically diverging political imaginaries of food-gifting. Based on participant observation by Gracjasz, we compare and contrast the *Food Bank* of Tricity (a private-public partnership for food support to those in need) with the anarchist movement *Food Not Bombs* (FNB), which has been active for twenty years in the centre of Gdańsk. "The comparative method works best when the entities to be compared are different enough to present interesting contrasts, yet similar enough for the variations to be disciplined" (Jasanoff 2005, 29). In our case, both *Food Not Bombs* and the *Food Bank* practice food-gifting, but each represents idiosyncratic ways of doing so which reveal the often tacit but unique circumstances that define them as an "alternative" form of food procurement to buying food in the city.

Poland enjoys a continuity of informal food supply chains, while also projecting itself as the new granary of Europe. For example, at the 2015 Universal Exhibition *Feeding the Planet. Energy for Life* in Milan, Poland boasted the largest and most visited pavilion of all Eastern European states represented, competing for popularity with the Italian host itself. Shaped in the form of a giant stack of apple crates, it displayed a cunning compromise between economic prowess and traditional sensibility. As the largest EU grain and apple producer, the Polish pavilion showcased its technological advancement with numerous multimedia displays, while also offering an interactive human-sized digital "genius" that would answer the public's questions on Polish agricultural traditions, and advertised traditional Polish cuisine and local products. Despite, as in other post-socialist countries, everyday social discourse still including some of the stigma of a "perpetual state of becoming European" (Bodnar 2008, 141), Poland is economically well integrated into the capitalist "West". It is therefore all the more interesting to investigate how models launched in America, where excessive and intensive food production coexists with diffused citizen starvation (Patel 2012; Jacobson and Silverbush 2013), namely food banks and *Food Not Bombs*, take root in Gdańsk, given the diversity of their respective social values and premises.

Critical food studies research has generated a sizable literature on food tastes and changing patterns of food consumption in Poland. For example, Aleksandra Bilewicz and Ruta Śpiewak (2018) note that so-called alternative food networks (AFN) in Poland tend to be based on individualistic motivations, and favour taste and the organoleptic qualities of food. These networks can be characterised by a "distrust

toward the norms and regulations imposed from above" (2018, 20), which translates into a distrust towards ecological labels. In this reading, AFNs in Poland are driven first and foremost by personal benefits, rather than ecological motivations (Bilewicz and Śpiewak 2018, 19; 2015). Some AFNs, therefore, attract only the upper middle-classes, making access to "good, healthy and quality food" a matter of socio-economic exclusivity (Bilewicz and Śpiewak 2015). Moreover, the high prices of ecological products at specialised open-air markets effectively exclude people from lower income groups (Kopczyńska 2015).

Taking the socialist heritage into account, Harper claims that "the ability to support oneself through small-scale business endeavours was read as an economic rebellion against centralized, corporate state hegemony" (1999, 97). The Polish economist and economic historian Jacek Kochanowicz suggests that face-to-face relations are more trustworthy than those "within and between large and formalized systems" (Kochanowicz 2004, 67). This suggests that the continued existence of an informal food procurement system would be important to contemporary socio-economic processes. It also indicates that the emergence of *diverse* types of alternative provisioning is neither necessarily a result of, nor reflective of, western models or influence. Polish food cooperatives and open-air markets are culturally and historically rooted in pre-socialist times – the idea of cooperativism developed in Poland by Edward Abramowski was inspired by the French economist and historian of economic thought, Charles Gide – but equally are re-shaped by both socialist and post-socialist processes. In Poland, in contrast to other then-members of the Soviet Bloc, most farmland did not undergo collectivisation, instead remaining in the ownership of families; this strengthened the already existing network of informal economies, because families could trade home-produced food outside the purview of state authorities (Haukanes and Pine 2004, 108).

Diana Mincyte (2011, 43) argues that food procurement is a performative practice, "domesticating" food into daily routines. However, as Hébert and Mincyte (2014, 209) underline, narratives and practices of self-reliance in food procurement may "further entrench capitalist logics": for example, Lithuanian networks of the informal production and exchange of raw milk reposition "consumption as set in broader infrastructures, subjectivities, cultural formations, and power relations" (Mincyte 2011, 43) – in other words, as the co-editors of this special issue suggest, they situate food procurement in a "cultural politics" which reproduces "social order in performing daily tasks and routines". This reveals how food procurement is not a neutral practice, but rather (re)shapes personhood (see Dunn 2004) in ways that are germane to specific cultural and historical circumstances.

Nowadays, food self-provisioning is still widespread in Poland and it is believed to "result in beneficial environmental or social outcomes", which "do not relate directly or indirectly to market transactions" and "are not represented by the practitioners as relating directly to environmental or sustainability goals" (Smith and Jehlička 2013,

155). Such practices and networks – (as well as self-managed allotment gardens during the socialist era, see Smith and Jehlička 2007) are by nature informal and rely on "economies of acquaintances" (Kopczyńska 2017). In such networks, maintaining informal, often kin-based relations is of key importance for mutually successful transactions, while the working of food cooperatives is based on shared "objectives, ideologies, lifestyles, statuses, and positions" (Kopczyńska 2017, 653). A contrast between informality and formalization will inform some of our analysis of food gifting in a grassroots vis-à-vis that of a formalized setting (namely the circle of *Food Not Bombs* activists and the patrons of the *Food Bank* system in Tricity).

Here, we find that a distinction should be made between activists, such as those active in food sovereignty networks, and discerning consumers. Gracjasz's broader fieldwork observations in Gdańsk confirm that organic food markets, vegan shops and food cooperatives may well serve more mainstream motivations, such as individual satisfaction, health concerns and a sense of distinction based on taste. When we investigate "collective food procurement networks", however, more often than not we find engaged circles of activists working to challenge the dominant food system characterized by large organized distribution (supermarket) chains. They may challenge the power of such systems by promoting veganism, or advocating using animals in farming for their positive influence on soil and thus crops, or supporting small and local farms to shorten the food chain. Such efforts may be mainly for environmental, but also for labour rights' reasons, for example when activists promote boycotting farmer exploitation.

Through the following juxtaposition of two in-depth ethnographic case studies, we show how collective food procurement networks articulate multiple discourses and practices of solidarity – specifically food-gifting in the city. We will analyze in particular the ways in which food-gifting is practiced, the ways in which it is appreciated by beneficiaries, and how volunteers or employees are engaged in it in both cases, in order to draw some conclusions and syntheses on the values that are upheld and the performative practices that frame food gifting in either case. In so doing, we critically assess their potential meanings in terms of a "cultural politics of food".

METHODOLOGY

The ethnographic fieldwork upon which we base our analysis was carried out by Gracjasz in Gdańsk within the methodological framework of the *Food Citizens?* project.[2] This is premised on the lesson of Michael Herzfeld's "polyglot perspectives"

2 Please see the publicly available resources of the project methodology, including a shared Protocol for Ethnographic and AudioVisual Research in each of the three main sites of fieldwork: https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/foodcitizens/dissemination/public-resources (accessed 07.10.2020).

(2009), according to which fieldwork benefits from linguistic proficiency and fieldwork in one's own language cannot *per se* be defined as "auto-ethnography". Being Polish by birth and yet having lived outside of Poland for about ten years positions Gracjasz as an ethnographer in Gdańsk. A native Polish speaker, she is familiar with the basic cultural codes and common socialites that Herzfeld calls "cultural intimacy" (Herzfeld 1997). On the other hand, living abroad and using English as an academic and everyday language allows her to balance a thin insider-outsider line. Being Polish yet somehow foreign, her ethnographic attention can hone in on the idiosyncrasies of everyday "banalities".

The fieldwork upon which this article is based sums up nearly 1.5 years of living in Gdańsk (from January 2019 to July 2020, interspersed with sporadic project meetings in the Netherlands). As Gracjasz comes from the south of Poland, Gdańsk is perhaps one of the furthest places from "home" in the country. In order to begin fieldwork, she got to know the city's history and took actions to integrate herself into its social life. She visited local historical museums, cultural institutions (e.g. the World War II Museum, the European Solidarity Centre) and several libraries, and met and spoke with local scholars – sociologists, anthropologists, historians, humanists, architects and urban planners. Her fieldwork is not an auto-ethnography as she was not living the life she would live normally, but rather she moved to Gdańsk from the Netherlands where she had lived for around four years. At the same time, her research *can* be considered auto-ethnographic if we understand it as a way of producing holistic research, informed by personal experiences and aimed at articulating issues that elude everyday attention (Ellis and Bochner 2000).

The structured data collection methods included 65 interviews, mostly audio-recorded (some video-recorded), completed by four focus groups and nine "cultural maps" drawn with research participants. However, as the main research method Gracjasz used ethnography, namely participant observation, which combines taking notes of cultural happenings and engaging with these (Geertz 1973; Goodall 2001). The longitudinal dimension of the fieldwork allowed her to become part of several networks – specifically *Food Not Bombs* in Gdańsk – participating in their weekly actions, while at the same time observing their inner struggles, successes and developments. At the same time, Gracjasz volunteered in one of the three social shops of the *Food Bank* of Tricity, based in Nowy Port. In both cases, participant observation enabled gathering documentary evidence (with consent where needed) such as online articles, website screenshots and copies of archived documents. The fieldwork also resulted in a voluminous audio-visual archive of around four thousand photographs and more than 300 gigabytes of videos. In order to select participants, snowball sampling was used. This is a commonly accepted qualitative research method that allows access to a group by starting with one contact who then leads to others. The ensuing serendipity is considered as one "of the key characteristics of the ethnographic method" (Rivoal and Salazar 2013). Gracjasz also contacted people via social media (mainly

Facebook) or by calling contact persons whose phone numbers could be found on publicly consultable websites. The following ethnographic vignettes introduce the relevant case studies. Their aim is to explain the actions of participants, describe the atmosphere of the events and bring the reader closer to the scene in the first person singular, following the anthropological method of extracting larger inferences from in-depth insights.

ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE STUDY: FOOD NOT BOMBS

> We are standing in the middle of the main square in Gdańsk's Old Town, surrounded by colourful tall buildings that remind one of Danish or Dutch medieval towns. Behind us there is the historic 17th century Fountain of Neptune. Apart from being a tourist attraction, it is also one of the main meeting places for strikes and demonstrations. As it is Sunday, there is a bustling crowd of tourists, both foreigners and Polish. We have set up our plastic table and hung the banner "free hot meatless meals" written in four languages (Spanish, Russian, Polish and English). A huge pot of soup is placed on the floor, while several loaves of bread gifted by a local bakery are placed on the table. When the city bells ring midday, we see our first beneficiaries coming from a distance. They are easily discernible from the classy tourists, as they wear randomly arranged layers of clothing, often stained and dirty. We have met most of them already because they come every week. Some of them have visited regularly over the last few years. Sometimes they stop coming, never to be seen again, and we wonder if they have moved on, found a way to make ends meet or passed away. The steaming soup, very similar to the one from last week, is being served in plastic bowls by one of the volunteers of *Food Not Bombs*.[3]

Food Not Bombs is a movement born in the United States in around 1980 as part of the anti-nuclear movement, setting itself against "the perverse priorities of the US state and capital" spending money on nuclear weapons rather than on hungry citizens (Heynen 2010, 1229). The movement indicted the "link between the waste of nuclear power and arms production and there invigoration of inequality and poverty in the US" (Heynen 2010, 1229), and since then it has inspired over 400 self-organized movements worldwide. *Food Not Bombs* Gdańsk has existed since 2001 (Food Not Bombs 2019). Every year, from November through to March, its volunteers pick up excess vegetables from a local food market. Then, on Saturday night, they cook a pot of vegan soup together and collectively distribute it on Sundays.

The Excel sheet scheduling the division of labour established at the start of the season is empty, but still the soup gets cooked every week – not without hassle. Every week, someone picks up the vegetables from the market, usually someone with a car

3 This ethnographic vignette is based on a series of observations gathered during Gracjasz's weekly attendance of food distribution actions with FNB in Gdańsk during two separate seasons: from January 2019 to March 2019 and from November 2019 to March 2020.

because of the large amounts of vegetables. Then the collected food has to be transported to a place for cooking. Often, the location is unknown until the day before. At times, it is really hard to find a place, and when it is far away or difficult to access by public transport, not many members of the group show up. Often, different people do the cooking and the transporting. Once the pot of soup is placed in someone's car, it is taken to the centre of Gdańsk. Here one can meet other members of FNB, those who could not pick up the vegetables or cook, but who come to the serving location to show support, pour soup into plastic bowls and hand out pieces of bread. Despite the seemingly scattered and inefficient organization of the process, over the years people have developed ways to participate in the tasks that suit them. Perhaps the best proof that this spontaneous self-organization functions is the fact that soup is successfully distributed every Sunday of the winter season, without fail. After all the food is gone, we clean, pack up and discuss about whose house we will meet to cook at next Saturday.

Food Not Bombs' mission, in principle, is to target those most in need. However, as the Old Town has become increasingly touristic, the soup is given to anyone who wants it, including passers-by. Inspired by anarchist ideals, distributing free food without expecting anything in return, the group exposes the problem of poverty and challenges the dominant market-transaction ideology. This consciously marginal practice is a publicly and collectively performative call to a more sustainable management of resources, performed by a grassroots and unpaid group. De Musso (2010) has found similarly oriented practices among self-organised students gleaning at food markets in Bologna. As Heynen has observed, "unlike much charity, FNB works hard not to be complicit in the perpetuation of the capitalist states' biopolitics, but seeks to radically transform it" (2010, 1233). This meme, published on the Facebook page of FNB Gdańsk, expresses the same message.

Milton Friedman was one of the most famous American free-market economists of the 20th century. The Polish politician Ryszard Petru, inspired by Friedman, during his election campaign in 2017 for the party *Nowoczesna* (Modern), referred to Friedman's book *There's No Such Thing as a Free Lunch* (1975), using the same sentence as a slogan in Polish to critique the welfare system. The FNB Gdańsk meme (Fig. 1) shows a black and white picture of Milton Friedman lost in thought, next to the *Food Not Bombs* logo with a fist holding a carrot, and the sentence: "There is no one like Milton Friedman anymore, but there are free meals". This irreverent sentence pointed to the fact that, actually, the meals being distributed by FNB *are* free, while also pointing out that Milton Friedman is now dead. This slogan generated a heated discussion on social media. One critique was that even though the food used by FNB is procured without money, it still had to be paid for by someone in the first instance: it had been bought by wholesalers and market vendors. They thus bear the costs of the "free meal". FNB responded that "free" might mean both "without costs" and

Fig. 1. A meme referring to Milton Friedman's statement that "There is no such thing as a free lunch", was posted on the Facebook page of FNB Gdańsk.

"without paying", making clear that its members are aware that everything they do comes at a cost. However, by doing everything voluntarily and for free, and by not expecting anything in exchange for their work, the members of FNB are challenging its *monetary* cost, and are making the point that the "free lunch" they are cooking is a deliberate act of opposition to neoliberal notions that nothing comes for "free". FNB's approach is thus political. Additionally, it engages in the action of feeding the poor and exposing the problem of homelessness, while simultaneously dealing – conceptually and politically – with the problem of food "waste" in capitalist societies.

FNB in Gdańsk is composed of around ten core members, people who have been actively engaged in the group for a few years. The group is entirely informal. The members taking part in its activities compose a tight social network. They also keep connected and active through leisure and political activities beyond those related to food procurement. Although the group is open, the members are also comfortable in its stable setting. They do not actively look for new members, but rather wait for people to find out about them and join. The group is united mainly by the members' shared ideology. The majority of them adhere to anarchist ideals and many come from

the punk scene, which in Poland has its roots in the alternative scene of the 1990s. By providing "free lunches", FNB challenges capitalist norms of distribution and consumption, but also the conventions around the production of food, as preparing the food always happens in a group and in a private household with no health and safety oversight.

> In the busy square, many pass us by. We recognize our usual beneficiaries, as they rush through the crowds towards our stand, forming a small queue. We always split tasks on the spot. Whoever feels like it, stands by the large pot and pours the soup into plastic bowls. Someone else passes out the spoons, another shares the bread, some people come to chat and give support. A few minutes after midday, other people join us: a young woman always bakes a cake and waits on the side until people finish eating from the trays; a Hare Krishna follower in his 50s brings about 50 samosas (Indian deep-fried dumplings) as a Prasadam (a religious offering). Our stall consists of a small folding table, the pot and another smaller thermos pot, which keeps part of the soup hot and serves as an extra table. Behind us, on the metal fence surrounding the Neptune fountain, we hang the Food Not Bombs banner. Every now and then an intrigued tourist comes closer and asks about the price. Usually at this moment we point to the donation box (an old tin covered in anarchist stickers – fig.2) and explain that it is free food, but donations are welcome. On a good day, with many tourists and a particularly keen person holding the donation box, we can gather more than enough money to cover the costs of the dry products, the cooking oil and plastic bowls – all the products that cannot be obtained for free at the market.[4]

Fig. 2. A member of FNB holding a donation box. Photo Aleksandra Gracjasz

4 This ethnographic vignette is based on a series of observations gathered during Gracjasz's weekly attendance of food distribution action with the FNB in Gdańsk from January 2019 to March 2019 and from November 2019 to March 2020.

In a Maussian way, the tourists often feel obliged to give a small donation, especially when they realize that the food is primarily intended for the poor and the homeless. They feel morally obliged to support the cause and the poor, mainly because they can be seen close up. In this way, the tourist becomes the main source of income for FNB. In earlier days (2000–2010), FNB organized crowdfunding during concerts at friendly clubs. Before that, the members covered the costs themselves.

Food waste is regarded by *Food Not Bombs*' activists as an excess of the capitalist system. To align our interpretation of "excess" to theirs, we tap into the influential concept of "*dépense*" coined by George Bataille (1985), a significant representative of the surrealist movement of early 20th century France and a lingering, though often unrecognized, source of inspiration for the anarchist movement. Excess restores something to its true being outside of its being flattened into a commodity. According to Bataille (1991), the excess found in the natural world is necessary for growth: for example, the sun "gives without ever receiving" (Bataille 1991 28). Excess can be achieved through sacrificial acts, but also through being "luxurious".

Food Not Bombs use the excess of the capitalist system: they receive produce enriched by the energy of production, transportation and sale of other food at the market, they add the extra energy of their own work by picking up, cooking and distributing it, and by doing so they transform leftovers previously deemed to be without value into "worthy" meals. They are handling waste (literally, with their own hands, and figuratively, saving it from being wasted), reinventing it into wholesome hot meals. Their actions salvage the energy other people already put into growing and transporting produce which would otherwise be thrown away. However, they give it away, asking for nothing in return. This is a symbolic act that puts new "added value" into an otherwise leftover commodity. They make it valuable again, but without re-commodification: they give it away.

ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE STUDY: THE FOOD BANK

> It is Wednesday morning as I cycle to Nowy Port to volunteer in the Social Shop of the Food Bank. The shop is located on a main street in an old bakery, in front of a primary school. A few steps lead up to the small porch and an entrance. Later in the day, the porch crowds with people waiting to enter. It is early, and we are waiting for a delivery. A white mini-bus with the Food Bank and Carrefour Foundation logos parks on the side street and a few men in their 50s and 60s bring boxes of food inside. The driver is a Food Bank employee, the other men live in the homeless shelter and were asked to help out in exchange for free food. The boxes contain food with close-to-expiry dates and were collected from several supermarkets in the area. There are plenty of ready-to-eat products and, as always, the content of the boxes is random, unpredictable

> and often unfamiliar to the average customer (e.g. kebab sandwiches, avocado smoothies, Chinese sweet rice balls, or vegan spreads, for example).
> At 10am, we open the door and welcome the first "customers". Although the Social Shop does not *sell*, people pay for the products with points allocated by the Miejski Ośrodek Pomocy Społecznej (MOPS, the Municipal Social Welfare Centre). This points system was introduced as an element of economic education and a promotion of healthy eating habits: fruit and vegetables are cheaper, while meat and sweets the most expensive. Apart from the allocated points, choice is limited by the amount of food one is allowed to take. During the first few hours, the shop is open only to those that have received a "referral" from the MOPS. It is only during the last hour that the shop opens up to everyone. They are welcomed as long as they are sober, can provide identification and sign a form. If they follow these rules, anyone can collect up to 1 kg of free food three times a year. At the end of the day, we are left with several kilograms of food (at times close to 90kg) with today's expiry date. At this point, representatives from NGOs and charitable foundations pick up the food that has "become waste" for a second time.[5]

The *Food Bank* in Trójmiasto (Tricity) is the local unit of a countrywide NGO, itself part of a global network of food banks. Its activities include making and distributing emergency food packages, holding cooking workshops and lectures on food waste, and maintaining the *Social Shop* that has been running in Nowy Port since February 2019. This project won a contest organized by *Miejski Ośrodek Pomocy Rodzinie* (MOPR, Municipal Welfare Family Centre) – it was the only participant. MOPR is a public institution funded by The City of Gdańsk, including funding specifically designated for the *Social Shop*. In return for its financial support, MOPR has the right to control the *Social Shop* and it requires detailed reports with attached invoices. This generates a great deal of paperwork that must be meticulously completed – lest funding be lost. Access to public money triggers a host of expectations and lays the groundwork for making the *Food Bank* responsible for handling the problem of poverty and food waste on behalf of the local government.

Picking up the food products, placing them on shelves and in refrigerators, and re-distributing them among the customers are labour-intensive activities done by the poorly paid workers of the *Food Bank*. In fact, some of these workers admit that this job is more of a hobby, which they can afford thanks to other reliable sources of income. In practice, the government subsidizes an organisation that relies on exploiting semi-voluntary labour, devolving responsibilities for the poor to a community organisation. However, the government nonetheless maintains great decision-making powers over the *Food Bank's* daily processes. Those closest to the needs of the poor cannot use

5 This ethnographic vignette is based on a series of observations gathered during Gracjasz's weekly voluntary work at the *Social Shop* of the *Food Bank* in February and March 2019 and again from July 2019 to July 2020.

their knowledge to make informed decisions about who needs what. The workers of the *Social Shop* have direct contact with its customers, and thus know how much or how little food is delivered and re-distributed. However, they are not authorised to change the allocation rules, such as the number of people who can receive "referrals" to be *Food Bank* beneficiaries or the amount of food allocated to each person, without prior communication with the MOPR.

Not only does the Food Bank take on the government's responsibility of feeding the poor, the *Food Bank* rescues food "waste" and creates an institutionalised system for its distribution. Indeed, it serves as an intermediary between the state and the food industry (Butcher et al. 2014). The "problem of food waste" that the supermarkets would otherwise have to deal with, including its monetary consequences, disposal costs and taxes, is dumped (pun-intended) on the *Food Bank*. Supermarket profits, however, are not generally accounted for by those analysing the role of food banks in society. Garrone, Melacini and Perego (2014) highlight how supermarkets systematically rely upon donations to food banks in their waste management practices. In this sense, food banks may be characterized as a mechanism that distracts from the actual structural problems of food poverty (Booth and Whelan 2014). As early as 1998, the American sociologist Janet Poppendieck articulated a critique of the food bank system as perpetuating hunger and inequity. In *Sweet Charity?: Emergency Food and the End of Entitlement*, she exposes this as part of a wider range of flawed aspects of charitable food giving and food assistance policies in America. As Tarra Keny and Colin Sage underline in their study of food banks in the United States, the fundamental "structural unsustainability of the food system remains unchallenged" (2019, 281).

The *Food Bank*, in a sense, *performs the role of the state* in assisting the poor. The *Food Bank* has undertaken a job that has traditionally belonged to the state: caring for economically at-risk groups. However, it also executes multifaceted actions, which include not only food re-distribution (which can equally be characterised as waste management or the management of food excess) but also the education of the poor, for example through cooking workshops. A food bank does not instil co-operation and mutual exchange (which Kropotkin (1995) says could form the basis of a functional political economy). Charitable gifting, to both handle excess food and help the poor, does not contribute to implementing the right to (good) food for everyone. Rather, the people who are beneficiaries of the *Social Shop* are made to choose from processed products and occasionally from fruit and vegetables that are no longer fresh. In fact, the food they can choose from is often cheap and unhealthy, as evidenced by the fact that among several corporate partners of the *Food Bank* is the American fast food company KFC. It is perhaps to counter this effect that the Social Shop has, at the behest of the government, introduced a points system which not only simulates market transactions, but is a way to cajole "consumers" to choose fruit and vegetables by

making them the cheapest choices for the beneficiaries, and at the same time to discourage them from eating sweets, by making them point-expensive.

In 2018, 590 people received food through the *Social Shop* in Gdańsk (Związek Stowarzyszeń – Bank Żywności w Trójmieście 2018). The fact that food categorised as "waste" is given to the underprivileged places them in the "lowest" category – people who have to eat "waste" because they have neither the means nor the agency to procure fresh products. This association is apparent to the beneficiaries, who often feel shame when they come for food (cf. Horst, Pascucci and Bol 2014). Additionally, being a beneficiary of the *Food Bank* requires time. This is especially so if one is not considered the *most* in need and therefore is not gifted the special "referral" granting access to the shop during its opening hours. Without such a voucher, one must wait in a queue, as a limited number of people are allowed to enter at any one time. Ironically, people in this situation explain that such time requirements in fact take away from the time one could use to search for a job.

SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSION

The foodscape in Gdańsk is not entirely readable through the lens of individuals "neutrally" shopping and exercising their "consumer choice". In the cases we have described, eaters do not buy, but are gifted their food. The food comes to the Food Bank or to the *Food Not Bombs*' soup cauldron through a chain of actions. FNB activists "glean" fruit and vegetables from fresh-food urban markets. They gather, sort and transport them to a place for processing and cooking, before delivering hot meals to the serving location. Here they gift cooked food to all passers-by, whether tourists or the local homeless. In contrast, the *Food Bank* gathers food from corporate donors and is sponsored by both the city government and supermarket chains. It depends on the work of both salaried and volunteer "shopkeepers", and "sells" the donated food to accredited beneficiaries (the homeless and economically disadvantaged individuals) through a points system that is meant to educate them in how to shop responsibly. This system produces waste in its turn, namely undistributed food which is then passed to organised charities according to procedures that are regulated by law.

These formal and informal activities, driven respectively by anarcho-syndicalist ideologies and by government regulations, organise the gifting of food in radically different ways. Each premises a set of assumptions (about who should receive gifts, what is excess food and how it should be dealt with) which extend to what is citizenship, solidarity and charity, how market and society should interact, as well as to expectations of and from the beneficiaries. Before concluding, we turn our attention below to the re-framing of "food waste" in gentrifying Gdańsk through a final ethnographic cameo.

> The visits of FNB activists to the market are expected by vendors. In fact, there is a sense of familiarity between some of them and Food Not Bombs' members, built on relationships cultivated over the last eight years. At the end of October, some vendors are already waiting for FNB, and express their annoyance when they come a week later than the year before, as there is already so much food leftover that could have been used for cooking. Some of the vendors applaud this initiative openly: as helping the poor, giving their own time and energy, and not wanting anything in return. What strengthens the relationship with the vendors is the repeated FNB "gratitude ritual", namely sharing a warm meal cooked from vegetables from the market with all the vendors at the end of the season.[6]

We can compare the nuanced types of solidarity that are engendered through and around these different practices of food gifting. For *Food Not Bombs*, solidarity is not only performed between cookers and eaters, but also between collectors and vendors at the market. The latter come to know the food activists over time, empathize with the beneficiaries (even though at a distance) and show their support for the activists' initiative by offering unsold fruit and vegetables in edible conditions. In some cases, they set aside the produce to be collected so that it is not sold or spoilt by sitting with rotting food. Technically, they are not giving away "waste", but are rather making a conscious donation. In return, FNB activists "bring back" the cooked leftovers and offer the vendors hot soup. Once again, they gift it to *everyone,* both the vendors who gifted fruit and vegetables, and those who did not. Additionally, they feed the elderly people who come for their weekly shopping to the market and stay to share the meal.

In contrast, the "charitable giving" of the corporate donors supplying the *Food Bank* can be considered to also be compelled by provisions concerning food expiry dates, and no effort is made to set aside, sort or inject new value into this food procurement system. Value addition is instead managed by the city administration, which organises the *Food Bank* volunteers and pays its employees.

Unlike the points system of the *Food Bank*, which recreates a market transaction in the act of gifting, *Food Not Bombs unmakes* market transactions. Wasted food is given anew "use value", but without a new "exchange value", as it can neither be sold nor bartered. Instead, it is given away. Even though the labour needed to prepare the final product could be used to determine the exchange-value of the gifted food, for example by translating a certain amount of hours or the cost of petrol into a "value", this is consciously avoided. If *price* is understood in terms of its Latin root *pretium*, meaning "reward, prize, value, worth", then the reward for all the time, work and

6 Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in the spring of 2020 FNB activists for the first time could not share the meal with the vendors of this market. This ethnographic vignette is based on observations gathered by Gracjasz while attending food collection at the Gdańsk market Zielony Rynek in winter 2019/2020.

energy invested in the process of soup-making is immaterial and intangible. This is not a "price" as commonly understood, but rather a sense of fulfilment, a good deed and a political statement. Moreover, through this process FNB activists create and maintain a close network of relations. They know the vendors and beneficiaries – and they redistribute food across this network in an egalitarian way as intermediaries. Even though not everyone is equally positioned in it, this system emphasises the incommensurable value of social relations, one made invisible in capitalist exchange. Indeed, the fetishization of the commodity described by Marx (1990) whereby, in the context of market exchanges, the value of a commodity is extracted and translated into independently circulating money is challenged by the actions of FNB: members do not calculate a monetary value for their work. Rather, the value of their actions is understood in incommensurable terms, as they create relationships and solidarity networks with the vendors and the beneficiaries, which they neither attempt to translate into a price, nor into any form of "exchange", as purposefully indicated by the fact that everyone receives food on an equal basis: tourists and the homeless, vendors who have donated and those who have not.

Their gifting actions also have the potential to reconceptualise and bring nuances to Marcel Mauss' theory of the gift, particularly that any "free" gift comes with unspoken expectations of reciprocity (1970, 50). Activists of *Food Not Bombs* emphatically express that they do not expect *anything* from the beneficiaries, not even their participation in preparing the meals. However, a tacit relationship is built through the act of commensality, of being together in a public space, of sharing a meal rather than giving it as charity without partaking oneself. In this case, and this case only, the giver actually *shares* the gift with the receiver. To an extent, expectations *are* somehow inbuilt, however ambivalently. There is a donation box, but it is often not even visible. When it is made visible for beneficiaries to "give back", it is only partially made visible: that is, activists make the donation box visible to tourists who entered into the network of redistribution as beneficiaries.

We have observed a nuanced "cultural politics" of food-gifting in action in the city of Gdańsk, by focusing on the re-invention of food waste through re-valuation and redistribution on the part of *Food Not Bombs*, and through charitable and educational food-gifting in the *Food Bank*. While both case studies share the idea of helping the poor by increasing their access to food, and managing what would otherwise become wasted food, they do so in different ways and by creating different, almost opposing types of solidarity. In one case, the redistribution occurs strictly in terms of egalitarian efforts that refuse any form of hierarchy and any form of accounting (even of a distinction between tourists and the homeless, or between vendors who gift and those who do not). In the second case, charity is disciplined with a points system that is supposed to "educate" the beneficiaries to shop like customers, and to

use their (gifted) credit in a wise way, making rational choices on the basis of price and quality.

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COOKING WITH REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS. STAGING AUTHENTICITY AND TRADITIONALITY FOR WARSAW'S CULINARY TOURISTS

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During the migration crisis of 2015, a commonly shared belief about the integrating role of food resulted in the emergence of several culinary initiatives directed at refugees and migrants in Warsaw. I show that these culinary initiatives form a space for the creation of ostensibly opposing processes. On the one hand, they empower refugees and migrants by embracing the culinary cultures of their home countries; on the other, they facilitate the creation of simplified and folkloristic images of them. During culinary workshops, the role of migrants and refugees is to recreate traditional dishes, using "authentic" recipes. At the same time, they are restricted by the organizers' ethical foodways and the demands of Warsaw's culinary tourists, such as vegetarianism, to which migrants and refugees skilfully adapt. These processes result from a neoliberal logic, whereby refugees' and migrants' experiences and their ethnicity become commodities in the NGO market.
This article draws on ethnographic research conducted between 2017 and 2018 in Warsaw. I look at the biographies of six women refugees cooperating with selected initiatives. I analyse their strategies of recreating traditionality in the dishes they cook in order to authenticate their migration stories. I also examine their experiences and practices in the context of "food capital" that emerges as a result of the exchange of cultural capital between migrants and residents, and "refugee capital", defined as the ability to use refugee status for personal development and integration. Combining "food capital" with "refugee capital" turns out to be an excellent recipe for success for refugees' migration projects.

KEYWORDS: food capital, refugee capital, cooking, refugees, authenticity, culinary tourism, gender

In 2015 Europe recorded an unprecedented number of asylum seekers and refugees trying to enter its borders. This was also the year of parliamentary and presidential elections in Poland, which were won by the Law and Justice party and its representative for the post of president. The party had fuelled anti-migrant and anti-refugee discourse already in its election campaign; on coming into office, it ruled against receiving any number of refugees in Poland and has continued such policies ever since (Buchowski 2016). According to the "Contempt Speech, Hate Speech" Report (Bilewicz et al. 2017), in 2016 refugees, along with gay people, were the most common victims of hate

speech in Poland (Bilewicz 2016, 5). Fear mongering and anti-refugee discourse were repeatedly mentioned in the interviews I conducted with migrants and refugees in Warsaw in 2017–2018. They described experiencing intensified verbal and physical attacks on their communities at that time.

This anti-refugee discourse was opposed by those who were critical of the new government's policies. The availability of additional foreign funds for projects directed at refugee integration resulted in a rise in the number of entities interested in doing them. These projects were proposed by social enterprises (*Kuchnia Konfliktu*), socially engaged cafeterias (*Stół Powszechny, Zieleniak*), NGOs and informal groups (*TAK dla uchodźców*), some of which had no prior experience of working with refugees. They joined a field in which there existed already functioning and recognized organizations and initiatives offering various forms of help for refugees and migrants. However, their emergence also strengthened existing tensions in the Third Sector: rivalry in accessing grants and the fact that donors often preferred innovation over experience.

Numerous of these NGOs and informal groups organized all kinds of workshops and meetings during which cooking with refugees and migrants constituted a means to combat fear and negative attitudes towards newcomers. The projects aimed at creating a space for multicultural dialogue and at generating income for their beneficiaries. Migrants and refugees were given the task of preparing traditional dishes according to authentic recipes. The very act of cooking was supposed to put migrants and refugees in the role of agents, in order to help them leave the subordinate role manifested in their everyday difficulties in getting access to the job market and housing. For the inhabitants of Warsaw, culinary workshops were supposed to be a space where they can meet Others and learn about their culture in an accessible way.

How do refugees and migrants recreate original dishes and authentic recipes during such workshops? How do they adapt them to the organizers' ethical foodways and Warsaw's culinary tourists' demands, such as vegetarianism? How do they obtain food capital and refugee capital? What do they use it for? Based on the results of ethnographic research conducted between 2017 and 2018 in Warsaw[1], this text aims to answer the above-mentioned questions by analysing practices and narratives concerning the involvement of six refugee women in culinary activities.

During the course of the research, I conducted 20 in-depth interviews with migrants, refugees and the organizers of five cooking initiatives: *Kuchnia Konfliktu* (Conflict Kitchen), *GośćInność*, (Hospitality) *Historie Kuchenne* (Kitchen Stories), *Kisz*

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1 The research was conducted as part of the ethnographic laboratory group "Migrants and refugees domesticating space. Anthropology of mobility in Warsaw and its vicinity" (2017–2019) led by Karolina Bielenin-Lenczowska and Helena Patzer at the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Warsaw.

Misz (Kish Mish) and *Kuchnia Migrująca* (Migrating Kitchen).[2] I also talked to two participants of the workshops. The interviewees were from Afghanistan, Algeria, Belarus, Chechnya, Ukraine, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Syria, Tajikistan, Tibet, and Ukraine, while the organizers and participants were all Polish. I did participant observation in 12 culinary events organized by three existing culinary initiatives. The events took place in schools (2), public parks (4), a private house (1) and cultural centres, as part of the celebrations of World Refugee Day (4) and as Multicultural Breakfasts (1). For eight years (2010–2018), I have worked for multiple NGOs in the field of global education, humanitarian aid and advocacy for food sovereignty, thus I was very familiar with the conditions in which the Third Sector operates in Warsaw and I well understood the systemic limitations of the initiatives.

2 *Kuchnia Konfliktu* was created in 2015 as a space for dialogue and integration, giving refugees and migrants in Poland jobs and a chance to share the cuisine of their regions. The aim of the project is to intervene in public spaces through cooking. Thanks to Conflict Kitchen, Warsaw inhabitants have an opportunity to learn about the cultures of countries affected by armed conflicts and interact directly with the refugees and migrants who contributed to the project. The restaurant was closed in July 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and at present serves takeaway meals. The founders of the initiative are Jarmiła Rybicka, Paulina Milewska and Maciej Kuziemski. This information comes from the Conflict Kitchen's Facebook page and has been translated by the author. https://www.facebook.com/kuchniakonfliktu/ (accessed 09.11.2020).
GośćInność (the direct meaning is hospitality, but it is also a word play of two words: gość – guest, inność – difference) is an educational project funded by Nina Łazarczyk-Bilal, directed primarily at schools and young people. Under the guidance of migrant/refugee cooks, students prepare dishes from the cook's country of origin. They learn about the causes of migration and who migrants and refugees are. https://www.facebook.com/DobraStronaSwiata/ (accessed 09.11.2020)
Kisz Misz was a cooperative whose main goal was to create jobs for excluded people, including forced migrants. The initiative did not have its own kitchen. The formula of cooperation was variable – at one stage it provided catering, and in the summer the initiative had a stand on the banks of the Vistula. It was set up by the social cooperative "Terra" in 2013 and was closed in 2015. http://www.smakizycia.pl/wydarzenia/polecamy/kisz-misz-przez-kuchnie-do-zrozumienia/ (accessed 09.11.2020).
Historie kuchenne is part of a bigger project called CzujCzuj (Feel Feel), an initiative in the field of emotional education founded by Olga Ślepowrońska in 2010. The project is addressed to all excluded groups, including people with disabilities, Roma people and refugees. In 2012, Olga came up with KITCHEN HISTORIES, an interdisciplinary project based on the cultural heritage of representatives of various nationalities and ethnic groups living in Warsaw (not only refugees). https://www.facebook.com/histokuch/ (accessed 09.11.2020).
Kuchnia Migrująca was a catering company opened in 2015, in which refugees cooked for bigger events and business companies. They specialized in larger orders for 80–100 people. For its organizer, Alicja Pękalska, who was formerly involved in the Kisz Misz cooperative, the most important aspect of her business was financial support for refugees and migrants, and the creation of an efficient business. It ceased existing in 2019.

I decided to choose women refugees as research subjects because of their central role in foodways and culinary cultures. As Arlene V. Avakian notes, "Cooking is something that was and continues to be imposed on women" (1997, 6). The analysis presented here applies the concept of food voice, which understands food as a channel for the expression of meaning (Hauck-Lawson 2015, 21), as one of the possibilities to conceptualize the power and agency that women gain by cooking (Belasco 2008, 44). What the article adds to the existing body of knowledge is an analysis of the ways in which female refugees use their refugee and food capital for their own development and wellbeing. By examining refugees' deliberate practices of performing authenticity and traditionality of food in their host country, this analysis expands the study of food and migration through the topics of the commodification of refugee experience and of the agency of female refugee cooks.

FOOD AND MIGRATION

Most studies of food and migration have concentrated on the relationship between migrants and host societies, and the processes of integration and acculturation. They touch upon issues such as migrant agency, the (re)creation of home culture through food (Avakian 1997), the construction of culinary culture (Ray 2004; Mlekuz 2017), ethnicity and the concepts of belonging (Cook et al 1999; Diner 2001; Williams-Forson 2006) and gustatory boundaries in relation to "others" (Ray 2004). Since migrants are placed in a state of flux, they are subject to a range of influences in their everyday lives which construct and reconstruct their identities (Vallianatos and Raine 2008; Brembeck 2014; Abbots 2016). Food, being an element of the wider social setting, can facilitate the creation of new subjectivities. It embodies not only the place of origin, but also the achievements of migrants in their host societies (Diner 2001). Through smells and tastes, food can transport migrants back home (Seremetakis 1994 Stoller 1989; Sutton 2001; Ben Ze'ev 2004). In the words of a Palestinian chef, Sufian al-Ahmadi, it is because food is more than its delicious flavour: it is "the atmosphere, aroma, the taste, the memory (…) the family and above all, home" (Ben Ze'ev 2004, 152). For the very same reasons, food plays an active role in anchoring migrants in their new locations.

Food is also embedded in a set of relations of power and domination and can provide insights into the complex life of a migrant. Thus, food can be a powerful lens for understanding forms of exclusion and inclusion in host societies. This particularly relates to refugees in refugee camps and centres, whose food sovereignty is challenged by the fact that for months (or years) they are dependent on food provided by foreign governments, international agencies, NGOs and informal help groups. The food that is provided as part of such assistance reveals a lot about host countries' attitudes towards newcomers and is an issue regularly raised by refugees (Trapp 2016; Dunlop 2017).

Elizabeth Dunn, who spent a year doing research in a refugee camp in Georgia, called food aid products, such as macaroni, a symbol of the nothingness of displacement, food made by nobody and given out by nobody, the antithesis of deeply place-linked food (Dunn 2012, 40). This is because the nutritional logic embedded in humanitarian aid intends to provide enough calories per day per person, but not to ensure essential nutrients or culturally appropriate flavours. Refugees are expected to adapt to the most economical foods (Trapp 2016). The refugees I interviewed mentioned having been served stale food soaked in vinegar (to mask the bad taste) in the refugee centres they had lived in Poland.

Helen Brembeck who studied Bosnian women refugees in Sweden has also noted that for her interviewees eating and cooking formed a way to survive, not only physically, but also socially and culturally, during long months in refugee camps. Preparing meals filled their days with content and meaning and well-known roles and identities, creating a sense of normality in a chaotic world. It was a way to keep the family in check and adapt to the new homeland (Brembeck 2014, 106). For Chechen women refugees in Poland studied by Katarzyna Kość-Ryzko, cooking typical dishes from the home country despite limited access to many products was essential in raising their children so that "they do not forget their culture", "know where they come from" and "know their flavours". As she notes, this was not a result of a veiled ethnocentrism or reluctance to integrate. Rather, it came from a belief that they were the only pillars – figuratively – supporting their homes (without other fundamental "supports" in the form of a father, relatives or members of the community) and their exclusive role as "cultural reproducers" (Kość-Ryżko 2019, 265–267).

FOOD CAPITAL

Some researchers have shown that during the first phase of migration, refugees and migrants often suffer from food deprivation, either physiological, in the form of malnourishment, or socio-cultural, in the form of limitations of food autonomy and food preferences (Tolstokorova 2018, 82; Terragni et al 2014, 278). Drawing from Bourdieu's theory of non-monetary capital, Tolstokorova uses the notion of "food capital", which I find useful for the analysis in this article. She understands food capital as resulting from the exchange of "cultural capitals" between locals and migrants which endows to the latter "food dividends of migration". In other words, food capital accrues through an embodiment of new food -—related experiences enabled by access to foreign food cultures through migrancy. It also includes "culinary and gastronomic dividends", understood as learning the new skills and ways of cooking characteristic of the host cultures (Tolstokorova 2018, 72). Food capital is used by migrants for their own personal development and wellbeing, and together with the food dividends of migration,

is tied to place, i.e. the locale where it is invested – in the recipient society or at home (Tolstokorova 2018, 82).

Five out of the six women refugees I take as the key cases for this study acquired food capital in refugee centres, where they spent their first months or years after arriving in Poland. It is in the centres where their first encounter with Polish cuisine occurred. Through receiving strictly local food cooked by Polish cooks in the centres' canteens, my interlocutors got to know the "basic foods" and the primary edibles of the host country (Belasco 2008, 16). All my interlocutors also participated in culinary courses organized by various NGOs on the premises of the refugee centres. They thought of cooking as a potential paid job which non-native Polish speakers can take, even if some of the women I interviewed did not enjoy it and saw it more as a household duty, eagerly delegated to other family members or to home help in their country of origin. One of them recalled the words of her father who used to say that: "There are two things people could not do without: food and clothes". Acquiring knowledge of food products available in Poland was also important for their survival. The food they received in the centres was not sufficient for all their family members and they were forced to cook additional meals. As one of my interlocutors said, she became "the queen of the kitchen for 10 PLN"[3], as this was the amount of money she had each day for additional food for her entire family.

During the culinary courses organized by NGOs, my interlocutors not only learned new skills, products and taste preferences of Poles, but also saw that there is a demand for refugees cooking traditional dishes from their countries of origin on the market of Polish non-governmental organisations. NGOs that carry out projects directed at refugee integration organize various events outside refugee centres during which Poles can get to know refugees, and cooking together is one of the integrative activities they propose. Thus, it is important for NGOs to have direct relationships with refugees as it increases the attractiveness of their grant applications and their chances of receiving funds. My interlocutors recognized this opportunity, and to expand their food capital would call family members who had remained back home for recipes of local dishes.

Women refugees who enjoyed cooking and acquired food capital through exposure to Polish food in the refugee centres and through cooking courses offered by NGOs eagerly made use of it outside the centres. Conversations with them were enriched by talks about recipes, and differences and similarities between Polish cuisine and that of their home countries. They also told me numerous anecdotes about what they managed to arrange for themselves or their families thanks to cooking and to offering dishes from their home countries which were suitable for the local palate. One of my interlocutors offered a falafel sandwich to a woman who had repaired her TV. Not only did she not pay for the repair, but she also gained a new friend with whom she

3 10 PLN is about 2,5 EUR.

regularly goes to an allotment garden near Warsaw. Women who have children in Polish schools often talked about preparing dishes for multicultural days or other school events. They said their dishes pleased many people, and their cooking skills and sense of culinary taste paved the way for the faster integration and acceptance of their children in schools (cf: Terragni et al 2014). My Chechen interlocutor used her private money received from the Office for Foreigners to cook for her Polish neighbours when she moved into a new place. She set up a stall in the nearby park where she offered *mantas* and *chepalgash* for free. When asked why she used her private money for this, she replied that: "This was the price for integration; otherwise people wouldn't know us". These stories show that my interlocutors consciously used their food capital to build social capital and integrate themselves in the host society.

FOOD PERFORMATIVITY: AUTHENTICITY, TRADITIONALITY AND CULINARY TOURISM

Refugees and migrants involved in the culinary workshops I observed mostly came from war-torn places that are difficult to travel to, such as Afghanistan and Syria, or places that are interesting for Poles in terms of tourism, such as Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Georgia. During the workshops, questions circled mostly around food (ingredients, differences and similarities between cuisines) and tourism (recommendations of tourist attractions). Cooking refugees and migrants were presented as representatives of a distant culture, an exotic "Other". As the American folklorist Lucy Long notes, one of the dimensions of distinguishing otherness is that of an ethnic and national identity of which foodways are a constituent part (Long 2004, 24). Thus, participation in workshops where migrants and refugees cook can be perceived as an example of culinary tourism, which she describes as "the intentional, exploratory participation in the foodways of an other – participation including the consumption, preparation, and presentation of a food item, cuisine, meal system, or eating style considered to belong to a culinary system not one's own" (Long 2004, 21).

By dint of the intentional exploration of new foods, the audiences of the workshops, no matter whether they be new middle-class consumers, NGO workers or schoolteachers, become culinary tourists using food to explore new cultures and ways of being. One workshop participant I interviewed admitted that her reason to join was because she had never tasted Chechen food. A tourism based motivation of participants was also visible to my refugee interlocutor. She noted that people have more interest in workshops on Georgian than on Chechen food. The explanation she gave was that: "Poles can go to Georgia sooner than to Chechnya, and they want to know more about Georgian cuisine. It is not known when they will be able to go to Chechnya, and Georgia is easily accessible."

However, it is important to note that culinary tourism is based on a dialogue between producers/presenters of food and individuals who are exploring foods that are new to them. In the case of culinary initiatives involving refugees and migrants, the power structures are different since the initiative organizers are intermediaries between the producers and their clientele. They limit refugees and migrants' decisions about the choice of dishes and ingredients by imposing the requirements of authenticity and traditionality of dishes, and understanding authenticity as an objective category (MacCannell 1973) and a moral ideal (Bornstein 1973).

Arjun Appadurai argues that authenticity means the degree to which something should be a norm. He wonders who can really create this in culinary terms – a professional cook, an ordinary consumer or maybe a housewife (Appadurai 1986, 25). In the logic of the initiatives I was studying, authenticity is ensured by the ethnicity of the cook. This is well illustrated by the content of advertisements of cooking workshops:

> Family cooking workshops will be conducted by Elmira from Kyrgyzstan. Together with Elmira, we will learn the history of her country's culinary traditions, fry pancakes (boorsoki) and vegetable funchoza together.[4]
> Syrian cuisine workshops with the Ocalenie Foundation and Karima who will talk about what a traditional Syrian meal looks like (...). Karima is a cultural educator. She has Polish-Syrian roots, and was born and raised in the Syrian city of Aleppo.[5]

Thus, "staging authenticity" is a common practice at the workshops. Dean MacCannell, who coined this term, derived it from Erving Goffman's study of social performance and the division of the social world into back and front regions: "The front is the meeting place of hosts and guests (...) and the back is the place where the members of the home team retire between performances to relax and to prepare" (MacCannell 1973, 92). A tourist, wanting to experience authenticity, wants to go to the back regions, but most often becomes a viewer of a precisely directed spectacle. MacCanell claims that the tourist will always be entangled in a paradox: something that s/he considers authentic is only the authenticity created for her/his needs.

Migrants and refugees, being cultural brokers, are supposed to guarantee admission to the back regions to workshop participants. Some refugees took this requirement seriously. As one of them said:

4 https://grodzisk.pl/wydarzenie/tradycyjne-kuchnia-kirgiska-warsztaty-rodzinne/ (accessed 09.11.2020). It is interesting in this context that funchoza is an "acquired dish" in Kyrgyz cuisine, probably adopted from Uighur or Korean cuisine. It is a popular dish in the whole region of Central Asia, but it is not traditionally Kyrgyz. It contains too many vegetables to be authentic Kyrgyz, since flour, dairy products and meat are the basic ingredients in Kyrgyz cuisine. I would like to thank one of the reviewers for pointing this out.

5 https://www.facebook.com/events/550285795435081/ (accessed 09.11.2020).

> Well, I really tried to make it authentic, but it was a bit different from real Georgian food, because it wasn't possible to do it there. For example, eggplant with nuts must be made in a blender with porridge, very soft porridge. The walnut sauce looks completely different then. But we didn't have blender and we couldn't do it.

Some brought their own spices or recipes written in their own languages. However, there were also refugees who played with convention, as in this example: "Sometimes at the workshops I was making cookies. It was my recipe, but I was saying it was traditional Kyrgyz."

The refugees made conscious use of their position as the exotic "Other", as well as of their food capital, to respond to the needs of Warsaw's culinary tourists imposed by the organizers. Staging authenticity and performing traditionality were strengthened by additional elements, such as putting on traditional clothes for the workshops, performing traditional songs and dances, and performing practices which are associated with a given country, such as fortune-telling from coffee grounds.

> M: And how did you learn fortune-telling from coffee grounds?
> K: From the internet, now everything is there! I mean, earlier, when we were sitting with my female neighbours, each of us tried to do it. I heard that snake means something, bird means something else. And the rest I took from the Internet. I found a list, learned it a little, but also printed it for the workshops. And then you look, think what is drawn there, and you interpret it somehow.

My interlocutors learned fast that their ethnicity makes dishes and crafts appear authentic and that the words "authentic" and "traditional" are key in attracting an audience to such multicultural meetings, as the example below shows: "I showed them some slides and explained the meaning of felt in our culture. I prepared something fake out of it, but said it was traditional Kyrgyz. Well, *of course it was not*, but people liked it and now I already have several people coming to my classes."

Staging authenticity is a survival strategy for my interlocutors. They have been performing stories and images of themselves and their countries of origin from the very beginning of their journey, especially at the Polish border. They often compared this experience to being in a theatre, in which every person or institution had a role to play. There was a shared set of conventions – about what should be said and which actions were inappropriate – knowledge of which guaranteed the favour or disapproval of border guards, the defenders of the security of the Polish state. Culinary workshops were just another dimension of the same authenticating spectacle, inscribed in the culinary tourism frame of "groups using food to 'sell' their histories and to construct (…) publicly attractive identities" (Long 2004, 20).

Thus, stories about countries of origin and reasons for migrating are a particularly important part of the workshops. They are included in workshop advertisements and

usually also include short bios of the refugees who cook, and the skills and talents they possess. This is done to deanonymize individuals and show their non-refugee/migrant identities. Refugees are also expected to tell stories during the workshops. Most often, they consist of descriptions of nature, interesting places to see and tasty dishes to eat in their homeland. The approach of initiative organizers differs with regard to how much refugees' stories should be revealed. Some initiative organizers build their narration around them in order to show how much refugees have been through. Others see this as a desire to feed on someone else's emotions. As one of the organizers explains:

> You have something you have seen on TV, that is so awesome that you want to listen to and experience it. It's like a hunger for revelations, without realizing that this is someone's life. These people sometimes been through strong traumas, and maybe they just don't want to talk about it.

However, I observed that workshop audiences tend to expect detailed stories explaining why people needed to leave their homes. In other words, my interlocutors are expected not only to stage the authenticity of their dishes, but also of their migration stories: they need, as it were, to authenticate their presence. And in the same way as they invent dishes to fit the needs of Warsaw culinary tourists, they also invent their migration stories, as was pointed out to me by one of the initiative organizers:

> They [Polish clients] ask: "In Africa, how did you prepare those dishes? How do you season them?' Often, they don"t season them at all, because there is nothing to eat for example, or you eat the same thing all the time, and you do not care, whether you add more nutmeg or sweet pepper, because you do not think in such categories. Or "What did you do professionally when you lived in Congo? Probably nothing, right?" And then, you know, they invent stories. "Well, I've been doing this and that there for so many years."

Appadurai concludes that the notion of "authenticity" should not be applied to culinary systems at all, since it ignores the historical process of their evolution and implies an objective reality. Many argue that authenticity is negotiable and socially constructed (Molz 2004, 56). It is not about whether someone experiences authenticity, but what makes a given experience seem authentic. What I learned from my interviews with initiative organizers was that the reason why they decide to adopt MacCannell's definition of authenticity is the attractiveness of the promise of getting their audiences to the back regions. However, I argue that such an approach results in ethnicization and refugee and migrant experiences being seen as objects of experience rather than as lived by experiential subjects.

Such an approach also inscribes initiatives into a cosmo-multicultural discourse that requires little to no engagement between migrants and hosts. It positions the "ethnic feeders" as passive objects and gives subjectivity to cosmopolitan eating subjects (Hage 1997, 17). Ghassan Hage calls it a multiculturality without migrants, a plurality

of cultures without a plurality of people from different cultures, where otherness is perceived as a commodity, as abstract ethnic value, in other words as a product of forces which are far more linked to tourism and the international circulation of commodities than to the circulation of migrants (Hage 1997, 18).

The commodification of cultural products and practices, which John and Jean Comaroff accurately called "Ethnicity, Inc.", is a common commercial practice of ethnic cuisines. What I observed during workshops is that socially constructed notions of culture and authenticity, instead of being subject to criticism, are rather reinforced. The emphasis is placed on the interaction between "cultures", on tolerance and positive aspects of cultural diversity, which are limited to their most superficial and folkloric manifestations. Thus, celebrations of multicultural foods in the form of "cooking with refugees and migrants" workshops may deflect attention away from the structural inequalities that migrants and refugees face each day, such as very limited access to the job market and to housing. The staging of actively (re)constructed authenticity by migrants and refugees, as presented above, is a consciously applied survival strategy on their part.

VEGETARIANISM AND ETHICAL FOODWAYS

The requirement of authenticity and traditionality of dishes does not mean they are not subject to modifications. Vegetarianism or the ethical origin of products is often a must, even if this means creating new, hybrid dishes, not known in the home countries. These are conditions often imposed by the organizers of culinary initiatives, not proposed by the migrants and refugees themselves. The vegetarian restriction results from several factors. One aspect is that of sanitary requirements and logistical considerations. This is particularly important for initiatives that do not have their own kitchen and organize workshops in schools or community centres. As one of my interviewees explained:

> I proposed to the girls a recipe in two versions, a meat and vegetarian one. I think we did the vegetarian version because of simplicity. You must get to the school, the meat must be fresh, and so on. Later they said we needed to make two versions, because there might be kids on a vegetarian diet, and we would have to give them something. Making two versions complicated things, so logistically it was easier for us and nobody complained after the event.

Another factor is the growing demand for vegetarian dishes from clients. Plant-based cuisine has become immensely popular and even fashionable in Warsaw, as evidenced by the growing number of vegan and vegetarian eateries.[6] Migrants and

6 https://www.happycow.net/vegtopics/travel/top-vegan-friendly-cities (accessed 09.11.2020).

refugees who have been living in Poland for several years have observed this trend themselves, stressing that the tastes of urban Poles are changing. One initiative organizer recalled several orders, including one from a town hall and another from a large corporation, where strictly vegan and vegetarian meals were desired. This might reflect the specificity of the clients my interviewees cater to, who are well-travelled, cosmopolitan Warsaw foodies. However, in some circles, especially those related to the Third Sector, as I know from my own experience, a vegetarian menu is expected to be offered by such enterprises as a sign of inclusiveness, a concern for the environment and integrity.

The personal beliefs of organizers are another important factor. All initiatives are run by well-educated and well-travelled women, who are aware of the social and environmental impacts of meat production. Since their main goal is to keep their initiatives running in order to secure a stable workplace for migrants and refugees, they must take the above-mentioned factors into account.

Vegetarianism is therefore a principle to which migrants and refugees cooperating with culinary initiatives must adapt and modify their recipes accordingly, sometimes completely changing the original dish, as in this example: "*Vereshchaka* is a thick sauce, which is authentically cooked from various types of meat or sausages, with a little roux. But I modified it and we did a vegetarian version, with celery. In fact, only vegetables were there."

For some migrants and refugees, vegetarian modifications of dishes do not pose a problem. They underline economic savings, the health benefits of including more vegetables in their dishes and that there is less hassle with preparation. Some introduce vegetarian dishes in response to their clients' needs or perceptions about the countries they represent. My Tibetan interlocutor included lentil dumplings in the offer, while admitting that typically they are served with yak meat. Vegetarianism has only recently become Tibet's youngest "invented tradition" in exile (Bloch 2010) in order to fit with Western ideas about Tibet. Western logic has connected the Buddhist compassion for "all sentient beings" with not eating meat, and nowadays this image is used by Tibetan elites to promote their cause internationally (Bloch 2010, 124).

For my Chechen interlocutors, replacing meat with some other ingredient is perceived as a form of aberration:

> K: We do not make vegetarian mantas at home, for ourselves, because we make them with meat. They taste better. They should be with meat.
> M: In Chechnya you don't eat meatless mantas at all?
> K: No, we do not eat them.
> M: They are always with meat?
> K: Yes. They are always with meat.
> M: Oh, I thought there could be meat or vegetarian ones.
> K: No.

For them, meatless dishes have a different symbolic "weight" than dishes with meat (Belasco 2008, 34). They are lower-valued and perceived as poor people's food. Vegetarian dishes are mostly eaten when there is no money for meat and thus they are not dishes served to guests. Meatless meals do not fit into the category of "proper cooking"which involves more effort and a greater use of foods that the cook considers more unusual and special (Short 2006, 28). While leading their cooking workshops, the Chechen women repeatedly stressed that traditionally *mantas* are prepared with meat, and the reason we cooked them with spinach and cheese was just for the sake of the workshops. Thus, they were asked to cook dishes representing the richness of their regional cuisine, which they themselves did not find representative enough in their vegetarian version. One of the organizers told me that her Chechen employees were always talking about *mantas* with beef, and only when they were forced to come up with vegetarian dishes did they mention *mantas* with nettle or pumpkin pie. What Chechen women were referring to were probably the categories of food for guests and proper festive meals as the accurate representation of their food culture, while the organizer was asking them to prepare everyday dishes which do not fit the idea of good hosting. However, as creative women in need of employment, they adapted to these constraints with ease.

Another requirement coming from the initiative organizers is that of the ethical origin of the products used in cooking, i.e. the use of Fair Trade or ecological products, or "ugly" vegetables coming from dumpster dives in the spirit of so-called ethical consumption. From the organizers' point of view, the use of such products has a deep sense, as it shows the initiatives' integrity: an important keyword in the discourse of NGOs. By using Fair Trade products, they support not only migrants and refugees in Poland, but also small-scale farmers in the global South. By using ecological or "ugly" vegetables, they have less negative impact on the environment.

Introducing vegetarian restrictions and/or the usage of ethical ingredients can be interpreted as imposing not only ethical foodways understood as moral practices related to the production and consumption of food (Goody 1982, 157) but also the classist and ethnocentric attitude of the urban middle class towards the migrants and refugees involved in the initiatives. Whenever the migrant cooks mentioned products such as palm oil or Maggi sauce, which are normal ingredients in their home countries, it always aroused whispers of disgust among participants, who considered them unethical.

In 2011, when I was coordinating a project that promoted the idea of Fair Trade, such products were not available in most cities and towns in Poland and were chosen mostly just by followers of ethical consumption (Kuszkowska 2012, 27). Nowadays, vegetarianism, veganism and ethical consumption form part of the fashion for sustainability[7] and are one of the main proposals of the climate movement. Adaptation

7 https://home.kpmg/xx/en/home/insights/2019/01/trend-6-sustainability-goes-mainstream.html (accessed 09.11.2020).

of food recipes to exclude meat and unethical products also show migrants and refugees as agents who skilfully navigate in this imposed ethical consumer paradise.

CONCLUSIONS

From the perspective of my interlocutors, cooking with refugees and migrants is a good way to integrate into Polish society. When asked whether it had changed anything in their lives, one of the women replied: "Were it not for food, I would not have been in the place I am now." For her, it was not only an opportunity to earn money, but also to build social capital, and regain confidence and a sense of agency. Another believed that amongst the sweetest conversations one can have are those at the table, and enjoyed showing Poles her local food and being praised for its good taste. For a woman who held a public position in her home country, cooking satisfied her need to be the centre of attention. She also recalled workshops, after which a man who had declared holding prejudices against refugees changed his mind. The role of culinary initiatives is thus not limited to financial assistance for migrants and refugees, but also to social capital building and the potential to change attitudes in the host society. For these reasons, social initiatives directed at refugees and migrants choose activities centered around food and cooking together as a tool for integration.

However, I observed that the ways in which cooking with refugees and migrants workshops are organized fit into the assumptions of a cosmo-multicultural discourse (Hage 1997) linked to tourism and the circulation of culinary commodities and concepts, rather than the circulation of migrants. Such a discourse places migrants and refugees in an "us" and "them" dichotomy, and facilitates the creation of simplified folkloristic images of their countries of origin. Refugee and migrant experiences, together with ethnicity, become commodities in an NGO market where organizations compete for grants according to a neoliberal logic. Those refugees and migrants who have lived in Poland for some time now and move with great ease in the Third Sector use this as an opportunity to negotiate the pay for their work. They are aware that the uniqueness of their identities and a skilful reproduction of the authenticity and traditionality of their home dishes, combined with gracefully told stories about their refugee and migrant experiences are attractive commodities for the NGO market. However, as Hage notes: "To say that a specific kind of practice entertains certain illusions about itself and that it is based in a relation of power does not invalidate it, for such illusions are part and parcel of all cultural practices" (1997, 40).

Food plays a significant role in "anchoring" migrants in host societies and facilitates the creation of new subjectivities. Thus, it can be a great tool for challenging the dichotomous paradigm of "us" and "them". This could be done by assigning new meanings to it and taking a transnational perspective on the food-migration nexus.

One could look at hybrid dishes created by migrants and refugees or examine migrant foodways and build a dialogue around these processes. Refugees and migrants also participate in the global circulation of culinary commodities and have their own food adventures. Asked about them, one of my Chechen interlocutors replied:

> I just love Japanese cuisine very much, especially sushi. God, I wouldn't have survived without it, I'm really so caught up in it. I tried to prepare sushi myself and it turned out pretty good, but I prefer to go somewhere and eat it.

Such an approach would also relieve the burden of staging authenticity from migrants and refugees and transfer it to the culinary tourists experiencing it. In changing the way culinary initiatives perceive authenticity, the concept of "hot authenticity", coined by Tom Selwyn, might be particularly useful as it refers to the experience of the subject. Such "hot authenticity" arises from individual ideas about one's own life and a critical look at it, as well as from ideas about the reality that can appear during the journey. It emphasises the description of the subjective expectations and motivations of a tourist, including those related to cuisine (Horolets 2012, 119). Last, but not least, migrants and refugees' consent to play an active role in this spectacle can be seen not only as a sign of their subordinate position and purely economic needs, but also as a practice through which they try to make themselves feel at home in Poland.

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WEAPONS OF THE WEAK TWISTED IN JARS OF LOVE. THE TRANSNATIONAL MATERNAL FOODWAYS OF POLISH MIGRANTS IN BRUSSELS

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The aim of the article is to analyse social change in the area of the gendered care practices and identities of migrant mothers, who were forced by the social and economic situation in Poland to (illegally) work abroad without their children and families. It asks what kind of experiences of social change we can find if we look at the foodways practised by transnational mothers from the working classes. The concepts of "transnational maternal foodways" and "maternal bustling around foodways" will be used as tropes to discuss and explore the gendered changes in motherhood experienced by Polish migrants. The analysis presented here is based on the results of extensive fieldwork conducted both in the villages and small towns of Eastern Poland and in Belgium (particularly in its capital, Brussels), and on 54 autobiographical narrative interviews with Polish women who, during the two decades after the fall of socialism in Poland (1989–2010), worked permanently or cyclically abroad. The analysis combines critical food studies with gender and migration studies.[1]

KEYWORDS: transnational motherhood, foodways, gender, working class migrants, agency, (un) becoming mothers, Poland

The issue that especially caught my attention during ethnographic fieldwork in Brussels, conducted between 2007 and 2009 in the community of Polish transnational working class mothers, was a constant "bustling around" foodways (*krzątanie się*, see

1 The article analyzes data from the research project from the National Science Center "(Non)traditional traditionals? The transformation of rural famililies from the perspective of women in the years 1989–2019" (nr 2016/23/D/HS6/00705), part of which have not have not been analysed so far. The translation was financed by the Institute of Sociology, University of Warsaw (BST 173200). I would like to extend special thanks to Renata E. Hryciuk for her support in the process of preparing the article, and for creating a space for discussion at the anthropology of food seminars at the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Warsaw. I would also like to thank Dr. Helena Patzer and my colleagues from the Institute of Sociology, University of Warsaw, for inspiring discussions and comments on subsequent versions of the text.

Brach-Czaina 1999; Budrowska 2009).[2] This term depicts an intrinsic part of the experience of women who, after the collapse of socialism, between 1989 and 2010 were forced to migrate alone and take up illegal work as agricultural, care and cleaning workers. This "bustling around" was integrated into the space of the city and into the transnational network of Polish migrants. It would fill every free moment and was also strictly regulated by an – initially unclear to me – complicated code. It was focused on dozens of activities that together formed what I call "transnational maternal foodways".

The proposed term seeks to encompass two distinct areas. The first of these is the relationship between mothers and children left behind in the care of others in Poland. This relationship was organised around common beliefs, behaviours and practices regulating long-distance maternal care through food and feeding work shared by both migrant and sending communities. The second is comprised of a series of embodied and affective norms and moral patterns related to everyday foodways, in other words by the behaviour of migrant women in Belgium entwined in a nexus of gendered food cultures (Counihan 1999). This includes all the interactions and processes involved in making food undertaken by migrant workers, such as planning, shopping, preparing, cooking, sharing and eating food. All these practices were carried out both inside and outside their rented flats, as well as in the various socio-territorial spaces of the working class in Brussels. What is more, this study deals with the migrant mother's attitude towards herself, to the needs of her body: its nutrition, taste, pleasure, discipline and (self-) control. This dimension is too often absent from analyses of migrant women's motherhood, which focus mainly on work and the caring dimension of the relationship between women and their families.

All the above-mentioned practices making up "transnational maternal foodways" and the "maternal bustling around foodways" were usually co-practiced, observed, commented on, narrated, confirmed and controlled, as well as "displayed" (see: Finch 2007) in female migrant groups. Most often, these were constituted by roommates from rented flats: friends, neighbours and relatives from the same villages and small towns in Poland. Thus, they never escaped the attention of the transnational community of labour migrants, stretched between Poland and Belgium.

The aim of the article is to analyse the change in the area of gendered care practices and the identities of transnational migrant mothers. More precisely, I want to ask what kind of experiences of social change we can find, if we look at the foodway models that are practised by transnational mothers from working classes.[3] Through

2 The translation of the Polish phrase *krzątanie się* is cited after the work of Kowalczyk (2016, 47). In Polish this term is particularly associated with movements around the kitchen and the household.

3 The export of Polish women to do care work abroad after 1989, and then after Poland's accession to the EU in 2004, concerned not only women from the working classes, but also from the middle

this text I want to raise two theoretical questions. The first revolves around the question of agency and bargaining with patriarchy. The second pertains to the widening of the methodological discussion of female emancipation in migration, in order to include a more phenomenological approach, acknowledging women's feelings and emotions, body politics, intimacy and sexuality. To answer these questions, I will analyse data gathered during seven months of participant observation (carried out between 2007 and 2009). The group studied are mothers forced by the social and economic situation in Poland to work (illegally) abroad in the period of postsocialist transformation (1989–2010), and thus to leave their children and families temporarily in Poland. The ethnographic material consists of field diaries and 54 autobiographical interviews I conducted with transnational mothers in Belgium (Brussels and its surroundings) and in villages and small towns in Eastern Poland (Podlasie region). I analysed the narrations, but also observed non-verbalised, embodied practices of long-distance/transnational maternal foodways, including food and feeding work. I focus both on the content of autobiographical experiences and analyse the interactions in which I participated with the female migrants. The analysis is situated in the context of migrant communities, and also incorporates the local communities exporting women's work.

The results of the study in the Polish context will make it possible to broaden the already considerable body of knowledge about the foodways' of overseas care migrants and transnational mothers from Asia (see Patzer 2018; Camposano 2018; Mata-Codesal and Abranches 2018) and Central and South America (Dreby 2006; Carling and Menjivar and Schmalzbauer 2012). It will extend such approaches to the food experiences of migrants from Central and Eastern Europe, which are still understudied (see Main 2016; Ślusarczyk and Pustułka 2016; Bielenin-Lenczowska 2018). Focusing on food reveals new possibilities of interpreting patterns and the specifics of gendered emancipation in migration processes. It focuses primarily on the problem of the empowerment of the excluded: of working class mothers who feed into the European proletariat of migrant workers. The intensive development of food studies over the last decade in Poland (see Hryciuk and Mroczkowska 2012; Bielenin-Lenczowska and Hryciuk 2018) and in the world (see Carrington 2007; Jackson 2009; Counihan and Van Esterik 2013; Parsons 2015; Counihan 2018) opens up an analytical focus that can usefully be applied to the experiences of Polish migrants.

class. In Poland, the enormous costs of the transformation from socialism to a neoliberal economy fell mostly on women, regardless of their class background. In the period 2004–2007 alone, over a million Polish women left to work abroad. However, in the study the group that interests me most is working-class women who have struggled with multiple exclusions. The undocumented status of my respondents – even after Poland's accession to the EU – is related to the fact that many EU countries opened their labour markets to Poles later. This was the case with Belgium, which fully opened its labour market for Poles only in 2009.

TRANSNATIONAL MOTHERHOOD, AGENCY AND THE FOODWAYS OF WORKING CLASS WOMEN

"Transnational maternal foodways" and a "maternal bustling around foodways" cannot simply be interpreted in terms of the reproduction of patriarchy, since they constitute an important weapon of the weak (Scott 1985) or strategy of bargaining with patriarchy (Kibria 1995), as I was to find more than once during my ethnography with migrant women. Especially when I unwittingly violated these norms by inviting my interlocutors – who lived in crowded workers' flats, deprived of intimacy – to research interviews in Brussels cafés. When once again, in response to the suggestion of a place to meet, I encountered a similar pattern of moral outrage and a firm refusal, my initial confusion began to gradually give way to an understanding of the gendered rules followed by migrants in their everyday foodway practices.

The theoretical framework that I propose opens up wider possibilities of how to interpret gender negotiations when analysing the practices of individuals and groups, who suffer multiple social exclusions, or whose lives are played out in patriarchal "strongholds". Emphasizing the ambivalent complexity of agency through food renders it more difficult to automatically qualify the continuity of involvement of migrant mothers in transnational foodways as a mere top-down reproduction of existing gender norms in the household. That is why all the practices that I define as "transnational maternal foodways" and the ways in which they are implemented on a daily basis through a "maternal bustling around foodways", will serve to direct attention to the work of the excluded. I will show that these eating and feeding practices can be interpreted in terms of "weak resistance" (Pasieka 2015). This can be seen more clearly when we place the activities of migrant mothers in the context of two wider processes that are closely linked to their migrations and of global impact.

Firstly, "transnational maternal foodways" are a response to the neoliberal mechanisms of forced uprooting women from intimate family relationships. This process particularly affects poor women, who join the ranks of the migrant proletariat, and includes those fleeing systemically normalized violence and a lack of institutional safeguards (Urbańska 2016). In this context of coercion, and not infrequently illegal work and also poverty – and thus overlapping exclusions – resorting to practices associated with the traditional legitimate role of the "feeding mother", but in a new form adapted to transnationality, emerges as a strategy for fighting to maintain continuity of relations despite physical distance. Secondly, "transnational maternal foodways" become a struggle for the social recognition of the migrant woman as a mother. They take shape in the situation of a ubiquitous "context of suspicion" in relation to emigrating women and of various practices of "depriving them of their roles".

An important element of this deprivation of roles was the moral panic around Euro-orphanage in Poland, which broke out after the mass migrations of women

related to Poland's accession to the EU in 2004. Euro-orphans were defined as abandoned children, left behind by migrant mothers. The reaction to this spectre included the institutionalization of control and disciplining activities of migrant families, and investigating and monitoring children at schools. It also exacerbated various forms of social suspicion and a lack of legitimacy with regard to migrant women's work, while at the same time brushing over the economic coercion and violence that pushed the women to seek survival elsewhere (Urbańska 2015). The actions of migrant women generated in such a threatening context display symbolic aspects of identity related to care and sacrifice, as well as bustling around and resourcefulness. Such actions in conditions of coercion and social stigmatization become a causative, often reflective form of political counteraction: a specific management of the trajectory of "(un) becoming a mother in the transnational context" (Urbańska 2016), which has features of individual and collective women's resistance strategies.

The concept of "displaying families" (Finch 2007) that inspired me to develop terms such as "transnational maternal foodways" and "maternal bustling around foodways" helps to see this resistance in numerous interactions and in the "banal" micro-practices of everyday life. It assists in highlighting the identity-relational dimensions of maternal foodways, which take place on both sides of the border: in family settings and the sending community, as well as in the migrant communities. Janet Finch defines "display" as "the process by which individuals, and groups of individuals, convey to each other and to relevant audiences that certain of their actions do constitute 'doing family things' and thereby confirm that these relationships are 'family' relationships" (2007: 67). The concept of "displaying families" adds a social environment that should properly read, accept, and confirm these practices as necessary for the effectiveness of the process of family reconstitution. In my case, this perspective emphasizes the dimension of power negotiations by mothers and shows resistance and agency with regard to the trajectory of "(un)becoming a mother in the transnational context". Describing the different dimensions of the repertoire of "transnational maternal foodways", taking into account the perspective of displaying, I will try to address three of their elements: *why* is display important in transnational practices of mothering by foodwork and feedwork; *how* is displaying done; and to *whom* do "long-distance care relationships" need to be displayed? (see Finch 2007, 67, original emphasis).

LINKING FOODWAYS WITH A LOST DIMENSION OF MOTHERHOOD

The next point I want to raise in this article is the need of including both a wider perspective on motherhood and the concept of foodways in the research methodology (Parsons 2015), which enables covering a wider scale of phenomena than just food and feedwork (DeVault, 1991). I propose that those aspects of motherhood which are

absent from existing studies of transnational motherhood should be recognised and incorporated. This is primarily a question of adding to the analysis the subjective dimension of the migrant mother's relationship with herself. Among other things, this includes: her reflexive attitude towards herself as a woman, her relationship with her body (nutritional concerns, pleasure vs discipline), her intimate needs (sexuality) or needs related to pleasure, fulfilment and satisfaction, as well as notions of limitation, discipline and control. Through this approach, it will be possible to reveal further dimensions of "long-distance care" (Patzer 2015; 2018), as well as further aspects of the gender revolution in migration (Parreñas 2001).

Feminist theories of motherhood have for several decades emphasized that the inclusion of this dimension in analyses allows for a better understanding of subjectivity and the expression of a female "voice", how economic and political coercion plays itself out on the female body, and a break between "I" and "we" (see Hays et al. 1995; Hryciuk and Korolczuk 2014; Kronenberg 2016). Unfortunately, works devoted to transnational motherhood do not encompass this important dimension, focusing mainly on numerous transnational care practices, the circulation of care and forms of its reproduction, or on conditions of the gender contract reconfiguration (e.g. Parreñas 2001; Lutz 2010; 2015; Pustułka, Struzik, and Ślusarczyk 2015; Pustułka and Trąbka 2018). This lack is one of the reasons why I argue for compiling a more complete repertoire of ways of looking at the lives of working mothers. Linking renegotiated, often emancipating areas of their lives, as well as looking at the numerous ambivalences and contradictions that emerge when these areas are brought into mutual relation, may reveal interesting dimensions of social change. I refer here primarily to the juxtaposition of the most-analysed areas of work and transformations of care with the question of how workers relate to themselves as women and to their own bodies or intimate lives, issues only sporadically analysed in the area of migration studies.

TRANSNATIONAL MATERNAL FOODWAYS

The panoply of "transnational maternal foodways" performed by migrant mothers is impressive. Efforts are made to continue virtually each of the dozens of activities performed by women in family homes in Poland that make up the work around food (cf. Carrington 2007; DeVault 1991), in a form adapted to transnationality. The physical absence of the mother in the home, which requires a reorganisation of "the division of feeding work and foodwork in the household" (cf. DeVault 1991), rarely involves a full gender role reversal. Daily kitchen management is transferred to the virtual sphere (of phones, letters, text messages, etc.), where the mother becomes a transnational manager. In the new context, despite the distance of hundreds of kilometres, she still does both household work and physical work related to food. First of all, she

tries to maintain the status of a "gatekeeper": so she tries to plan, monitor and settle issues of food organization. On the one hand, these concern minor everyday issues, such as supervising the structure of family mealtimes and various nutritional concerns about the diet. On the other, it also involves decisions of greater importance related to nominating other people, usually women, sometimes institutions (boarding schools), to take over the everyday care and nutritional obligations of the mother, as well as the organization of a network of suppliers, or participating in the exchange of diverse barter favours in the neighbouring community (see Patzer 2018; Krzyżowski 2013).

Interestingly, in addition to the dimension of transnational management, mothers' practices also include a number of activities related to their own regular provisioning of the household (Carrington 2007), i.e. collecting purchases and preparing homemade food to be sent back to their families. This involves a range of activities that compose a cyclical developing of a stock of food in packages and those related to them: learning where to buy "appropriate" food, grocery and *marché* shopping, sharing favourite or new meals and products with children (see: "social remittances" Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011; Patzer 2015; 2018) and saving on one's own costs of living and eating abroad. Finally, and most importantly, it culminates in sending homemade food back home in packages (Carrington 2007).

There are so many efforts involved in the transnational foodwork and feedwork activities, that if one tried to identify those that cannot be reconstructed virtually, one would actually be left just with dishwashing and cleaning the table after meals. Although sometimes efforts are also made to virtually control even this area, as managing mothers sometimes outsource people from outside the immediate family (relatives, neighbours) to perform such activities. And on more than one occasion, I ended up travelling on a bus with new or second-hand dishwashers sent to families (as well as microwaves, grills, washing machines, sets of pots, etc.). Let us now have a closer look at these strategies.

DISPLAYING TRANSNATIONAL MATERNAL FOODWAYS: "BUSTLING AROUND" AS BARGAINING WITH THE TRAJECTORY OF (UN)BECOMING MOTHERS

At this point, I would like to return to the analysis of the mysterious refusals of my interviewees mentioned above, which appeared in response to my proposal to conduct interviews in Brussels cafés over cake and coffee. It was the similarity of the structure of the statements of the invited women, who did not know each other and could not hear each other, that enabled me to read them as rules and be sure they were expressions of normative behaviours. The excuses for refusing were offered in longer sequences

(accounts, see Scott and Lyman 1968). It therefore appeared that the very proposition of meeting in a café over coffee and cake was perceived as a stigma – as if I had assumed that the interlocutor belonged to the category of immoral women. A typical reaction was that of Anna, a thirty year old married woman and mother of two children, an economic migrant from a small town in Podlasie, who circulated alternately with her neighbour in a three-month system of house cleaning work. Although at first Anna willingly agreed to tell me about her experiences of transnational motherhood, explaining that she needed to speak to a stranger about her emotions, she reacted with indignation to my proposal to talk in a quiet café in Brussels: "I do not roam" around cafés here. I came here to work, not for pleasure." Upon my explanation that she would not incur any costs, because I would cover the bill from my grant allowance, and assurances that the café is a regular pastry shop, not a suspicious bar with dancing and alcohol, Anna refused even more strongly: "What would my husband think if somebody told him I was sitting here in cafeterias. You have to be very careful here, there are acquaintances everywhere, and people gossip".[4]

Anna's moral reaction, like that of other interlocutors, unveiled a gendered map of city spaces and urban practices marked with "moral suspicion" (Urbańska 2015). Above all, however, it unveiled a gendered evaluation of leisure activities closely linked to legally binding rules of displaying the identity of a migrant mother through foodways. The normative model of a good, committed, transnational migrant mother only allowed my interlocutors to work for the benefit of children and families: it forbade pleasures, which were burdened with the risk of casting doubt on women's economic motivations. In this way during their free time, which most of my surveyed migrants had only on Sundays (as on Saturdays most of them would work), only a "bustling around" focused on investing in family and children was an acceptable activity. It was in this Sunday bustling that proportionally the largest number of practices of maternal foodways were concentrated. Firstly, it incorporated the biological regeneration activities of a migrant woman who had to demonstrate resourcefulness, self-control and the ability to save on the food she bought and prepared. This entailed, for example, taking public transport to often far away stores and markets, to get the cheapest products to prepare several dishes for the whole week. This would be food intended to be heated "on the run" between houses cleaned in different parts of Brussels. Secondly, this "bustling around" in parallel also included a constant looking for cheap goods and gathering ordinary, as well as prestigious, goods or food, every now and then sent to Poland in parcels for children and families. There was a close relationship between these two activities, as it was thanks to saving on their own pleasures and a constant restraint of eating cravings that mothers could invest in the "pleasure of

4 The interview was recorded in my ethnographic diary.

food play" (Parsons 2015) of their children and families.[5] Thus, a displayed "bustling around" and dedication turned the ordinary, routine labour of foodwork into emotional labour (Hochschild 1983), or "love labour" (Lynch 2007). It demonstrated a continuity of caring commitment and mother's love. It allowed, however, an extension beyond the boundaries of a "gender domestic sphere foodways' order" into everyday "banal" transnational food work and feeding the family still coded as emotional feminized activity. It also reproduced a multidimensional hierarchy in which the mother serves the needs of the child. Thus, thanks to this strategy of bustling around foodways, women gained control and an opportunity to reverse the process of unbecoming a mother: a process in which physical absence (non-residency) combined with entering the hegemonic role of a breadwinner was treated as abandonment (Euro-orphanhood). The display of such an attitude of bustling around, and thus resourcefulness, economy and sacrifice, in addition to practical necessity, could justify their separation from their children and also testify to legitimate motivations to leave. We can therefore see that the work of a migrant woman can be seen as valid, as Frances Pine described in her aforementioned study of Polish mothers from the Podhale region of Poland (2000). However, my research reveals another condition of this empowerment, in that it is only realized when there is no room for mother's free time and pleasure during the separation. It is expected that she should give up on herself and make sacrifices to provide the "pleasure of food play" to her child.

That is why I had to wait almost two months to record the interview with the aforementioned Anna. We did not meet until Anna's roommate left for Poland for a while, thus giving us space for a confidential, intimate conversation. We could not talk in a park, because in Brussels, just like in London, it rains all the time. In the meantime, however, I had numerous occasions to accompany Anna and her group of friends, as well as migrants from other groups, on their Sunday foodways' "bustling around" rituals, and accompanying interactions and conversations. The pattern of only Sunday afternoon "free time" spent this way by the migrants rarely changed. Weekly routine expeditions to the Polish Catholic Mission masses, and to special "ethnic" call centres for migrants (Internet Cafés) with telephone booths enabling cheaper calls to Poland, were intertwined with joint expeditions to often distant markets for food provisions, intended for weekly consumption and carefully prepared packages.

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5 Parsons uses this term to make a distinction that women in the kitchen do labour and men food play. "Men cooking for pleasure reinforces 'natural' distinctions between everyday food work carried out by women and the more exciting or expert food play men enjoy in the domestic sphere" (2015, 71); "The persistent distinctions between food play and food work contributes to the naturalizing of women's work within the home. Hence, 'feeding the family' is conceptualized as hurried, low skilled, mundane and routinised (DeVault 1991) unlike the artistry of the epicurean, which is not 'work' at all" (Parsons 2015, 22).

The Abattoir food market (*Marché de l'Abattoir*) was the most popular place of weekly shopping for the Polish community, functioning in numerous stories due to the possibility of purchasing the cheapest goods there: meat, vegetables and fruit. The market is located in the Anderlecht district, associated with the poorer proletariat and inhabited mainly by Polish and Arabic migrants. Although it happened that women tired of doing all-week-long physical work did shopping at places located closer to their apartments, the trip to l'Abattoir saved most money, because it made it possible both to buy food at reduced prices and to "collect" food (forced freeganism). Thanks to the joint expeditions to the market, I had a chance to observe embodied practices, which some of the interviewees either did not reflect on in interviews or were simply ashamed to admit to. Many of the products the women obtained were strategically won a quarter of an hour before the market closed, when sellers sold cardboard boxes with leftover goods for a few euros. These usually contained damaged, unattractive in appearance and overripe tomatoes, peppers, aubergines, various types of cabbage and lettuce, and bananas, as well as the fruit and vegetables which remained unsold. Women often strategically planned to arrive at the market an hour before closing: this was the time when prices for goods would fall sharply and it was possible to bargain for the last boxes. It was also a popular practice to collect fruit and vegetables left and scattered, after sellers left the market. The use of such strategies of resourcefulness was also suggested to me when an interlocutor during my research in Podlasie warned me, as a PhD student, about the high cost of living in Belgium. Some of my interviewees directly admitted, with a mixture of pride and embarrassment, that thanks to these time-consuming and somewhat shameful, but "justified" strategies, they were not only able to survive the economically difficult periods in exile, but above all, they could save more so that they could send more home.

The repertoire of this type of sacrifice, which made it possible to save on food and the high costs of living in Brussels, was indeed much broader. It was common practice to buy the cheapest products in the cheapest supermarkets and social shops ("look for products marked with one"), or to eat meals, whenever possible with patrons[6], as well as to take individual products from their pantry (for example, onions, or two carrots for a soup).[7] There were also situations, although probably less common, when migrant women admitted that they or their friends used an eatery for the homeless.

6 Economic female migrants in Belgium referred to their female employers as "patronesses", from the French *patron*.

7 The interviewees did not use the term "theft": rather they referred to the categories of resourcefulness, ingeniousness or cunning – categories positively associated with socialist resourcefulness in the case of an economy of shortages. Migrant women more often spoke about this type of practice in a generalised manner; however, several of my key female informants explicitly admitted to this type of practice.

They also often explained that this happened in the first stage of migration, when salaries were lowest and other cheaper life strategies not yet discovered. Many migrant women also brought as much relatively cheaper food as possible from Poland, most often in the form of dry, long-term provisions: groats, pasta, canned meat and fish, homemade smoked and cured meats, homemade marinades and ready meals, usually meat, in jars. It is important to note that this food was often prepared during "holidays" in Poland (on several occasions, I transported such packages from my interlocutors' children/husbands). During this time, migrant women would make double supplies of homemade food: both for themselves for their time abroad and supplies of "motherly food" for children, suitably portioned, frozen and bottled. In the case of women from the countryside, these undertakings were often connected with ordering half carcasses of a piglet. This multi-sided bustling around crossed borders, and time-consuming foodways' display could also be used during stays in Poland to legitimize the image of separation in terms of sacrifice and time beyond the principle of pleasure.

In addition to the fact that for many workers these foodways' practices were motivated primarily by economic necessity, and thus were a survival strategy, the reflection and displaying of this embodied sacrifice and "bustling around" was also a coping strategy, which could easily be qualified as a strategy of resistance. This mainly concerned those groups of migrants who did not circulate in the several-month system (in a popular rhythm of three months in Belgium, three months in Poland), because they worked permanently abroad. Usually, these were distant mothers for whom migration following the opening of borders after 1989 opened the only available path for marital separation, and the possibility of divorce or preparation for it. For many of these women from the working class, the migration option was the only available form of escape from domestic violence, sometimes one advised by helpless representatives of institutions (police). It was also a way of dealing with the conservative tendency, rooted in Polish Catholicism, to normalize and invalidate domestic violence, and a related pressure to stay in marriage despite problems (Urbańska 2015).

The mothers in this group were the most threatened by the process of (un)becoming mothers, as they dared to change and confront the normative expectations of self-sacrificing, of the need to be an altruistic, asexual wife and mother (a "Polish Mother", see Hryciuk, Korolczuk 2012). In addition, by emancipating themselves abroad, they sooner or later tried to use their newly acquired and hard-earned economic independence and the liberal moral context to shape their lives anew, on their own terms. Women in this group might therefore look for romantic relationships, pleasure, sexual fulfilment and also another marriage, although equally some, discouraged by the latter formula, decided on civil partnerships/unions inaccessible and invalid in conservative Poland (Urbańska 2015). These women were the most affected by the context of suspicion, of a failure to recognize and questioning of the status of mother, as well as by

the stigmatization strategies widespread in the migration environment. Their presence introduced a moral anxiety about the impact of the pattern of their migration (and emancipation) on the morality of Polish women (especially wives and mothers). It increased mutual control and distrust, generated gossip and moral judgements and divided the migration environment.

Recognizing this group of subversive mothers and the tension-ridden diversity of the migrant women of working classes in general allowed me to understand why Anna and other economic migrants refused being invited for coffee and cake so strongly. And, consequently, why they felt compelled to explain to me their identity, in which the major point of reference was sacrifice through the (display of) foodways and the principle of being cut off from the sphere of pleasure. Paradoxically, however, the pattern of displaying maternal bustling around foodways was even more strongly represented in "subversive" mothers, with whom, for a change, I was free to talk in cafés (they accepted invitations also to bars; some invited me to a dance) and in their homes (they usually rented small studios themselves). For example, Barbara, Wanda and Aldona were such mothers for whom, at first, forced economic migration coincided with the experience of separation, divorce and fighting for children and their upkeep. At the same time, it also entailed a process of arranging romantic life, on different principles and from scratch. For Barbara, Wanda and Aldona, each of whom in exile sooner or later was in a (not always constant) relationship with someone, showing sacrifice and "bustling around" foodways was the most effective "weapon of the weak" or strategy of bargaining with patriarchy.

The women in this group performed practically the same practices as economic migrants, with the difference that they performed them more intensively. They also paid more attention to the interactive communication of embodied sacrifices: especially when they negotiated/bargained their image of a mother tight-roping between hard work, physical absence in their children's homes, the commitment of a mother and finally the right to have their own romantic life. For example, Barbara used to send her daughter living in a dorm "homemade food prepared from scratch" (see: Parsons 2015) at regular intervals. This would be the daughter's favourite veal stew or stuffed cabbage, usually packed in jars, or portioned breaded cutlets. During the conversation we had at her house, Barbara showed me a blue, portable, plastic fridge with a handle, in which jars and frozen chops rode 12–16 hours by *camionette* from Brussels (stationed between Hôtel des Monnaies and Louise) to Poznań at a price of 20–30 euros. Moreover, she told me with undisguised satisfaction that her dishes were appreciated by her daughter's friends from the dormitory and that she, as a mother, provoked admiration with these practices. For Barbara, homemade food became a more effective form of showing affection and motherly love and care than the important, but not as strong symbol of motherly love, alienated money (see Patzer 2018; Camposano 2018). "Food not only nourishes but signifies" (Fischler 1988, 276), hence the packed jars

and frozen foods are real "weapons of the weak". Barbara tries to send much more so that her daughter can offer (and display) this supranational "love of her mother" to her friends. Although not all my long-term interlocutors could afford such practices for financial and family reasons, Barbara could, because she had only one daughter in a big city well connected to Brussels. Despite such restrictions, virtually every mother reflected and displayed in her interactions with children, family and social circles embodied foodways' practices of bustling around and sacrifice.

Wanda, who as a cleaner tried to maintain two households, one for herself in Brussels and that of her four children in the care of her mother-in-law in Poland, was unable to send packages. Instead, she regularly sent all the money she put aside to support her family to her mother-in-law, who had moved to Wanda's apartment and retired early to look after her granddaughters. Wanda explained to her daughters that she was not able to earn enough working as a cleaner and babysitter to send extra items in packages. She explained that even buying a bar of chocolate for everyone in Poland was too much of a burden for her tight budget. And when her relatives in Poland did not trust her explanations, because they still encountered a strong post-socialist representation of migrants and their families as living in luxury, then Wanda tried to display to her family her living conditions and her complex food survival strategies in a context of illegality in Brussels. In order to gain the support of her teenage daughters, provoked into rebellion by their violent father, she confessed to them that she collected scattered vegetables from markets, used an eatery for the homeless and had tried unsuccessfully to ask for financial help and accommodation in Polish Catholic Missions. She also admitted that at a time when her only job was night care for a sick elderly lady (she was only employed at night), to save on the cost of renting an apartment, she remained homeless for several months. This was a period when she would leave her suitcase behind the counter with a befriended shop assistant, and spend days walking around the city looking for work and social meals. When, after many years, she allowed herself to have a romantic relationship with a migrant from Congo, the initial resistance of her daughters and the moral accusations of her mother's identity were negotiated with the argument that a hardworking worker, "scrubbing someone else's toilet on her knees every day, deserves pleasure". So Wanda not only rejected the "migration lie" strategy (Sayad 2004), she also bargained with Polish patriarchy, using the hegemonic pattern of a Polish Mother's dedication to lead to its subversion through her own path of individualisation and sexual emancipation.

Although at first glance these strategies could be interpreted in terms of (re)traditionalization, nothing could be further from the truth. Rather, we are dealing here with a process of becoming a postmodern mother in a working class migrant's version. A similar pattern of reflective, strategic transformation of symbolic capital flowing from guardianship and transnational bustling around into legitimizing family identities in the process of emancipation was also strongly rooted in the practices of the other migrants.

GATEKEEPING OR LACK OF ROLE REVERSAL? TRANSNATIONAL MANAGERIALISM

Another dimension of "transnational maternal foodways" practices was that of managing food and feedwork in a household stretched across borders. In the new circumstances, these practices took the form of transnational (virtual) management. The women tried to maintain their position of pre-departure food gatekeepers (Radcliffe and Weismantel 1990; Stoller 1989, 15–22; McIntosh and Zey 2003) and despite the distance they continued to monitor, organize, delegate and control various aspects of veryday family foodways. They had a major impact on the overall management of food provision and family meals (mealtimes) and, above all, on the organisation of their replacement in this area and attempts to control the quality of food provision. Moreover, thanks to the material capital acquired through work abroad, their position as foodway gatekeepers, and thus their position of power, would often strengthen. Such a situation did not result only from coercion connected with rarely successful role reversals with fathers. The desire to maintain influence and control over the process of unbecoming mother was also important.

First of all, women tried to virtually monitor and participate in everyday family meals. I learned about this not only during interviews and free time spent with migrants or their families in Poland. This was also confirmed by covert observations that I conducted in low-cost "parlours" (term used by respondents) for Polish migrants in the multi-ethnic, Saint-Gilles district popular among female workers. I regularly used several Internet café points besieged mainly by migrants from Podlasie. There, while writing up my diary, I could at the same time hear spontaneous conversations leaking out of the booths. Similar results were obtained each time for several hours of observations carried out on buses on the Siemiatycze-Brussels route and on the way back. Food was a constant topic of telephone conversations with children and families. Migrant women asked about daily menus, which they helped to plan, suggested recipes and taught children to cook. In the course of the talks, they expressed concern about the appropriate diet of individual family members, as well as all kinds of nutritional concerns. They also tried to monitor the rhythms of the day, e.g. correcting the right time for family meals in Poland. This was an important form of building everyday intimacy, as well as showing proper gender engagement from the limited set of possibilities available in virtual space.

The second type of transnational management practices was the organisation of food and feedwork substitution in Poland, including monitoring its quality. The patterns regulating who will replace the mother in the kitchen and when, reveal ethno--local gender norms, as well as the women's access to various types of local networks, local community institutions, and financial resources. Women rarely talk about full role reversal, where the responsibility for family foodways is taken over by the father.

The prevailing pattern is one where the main responsibility for food and feedwork is transferred on the basis of nominations of other women (cf. Parreñas 2001; 2005; Carling, Cecilia Menjivar and Schmalzbauer 2012, 5). These are primarily (1) older daughters or mothers-in-law, as well as relatives (sisters, aunts) associated with family responsibilities.

An important role, especially in rural communities, is also played by (2) women from the nearest neighbourhood or local community (friends, close neighbours). Here, however, the organisation of the replacement takes place not on the basis of nomination or use of related relationships: rather, it is largely grounded in a rural, self-help institution strongly rooted in women's practices (see Szpak 2013). An interesting example of using both strategies, despite the strong commitment of fathers, is the case of Danuta (2 children) and Jagoda (3 children). These two economic migrants are neighbours in a small town in the east of Poland and, at the same time, each other's substitutes. They exchange work with the same employers in the system of 3 months cleaning in Belgium and 3 months vacation in Poland. In each household, the responsibility for food and feedwork is taken over by fathers and daughters. Additionally, during the absence of each of the neighbours, her substitute helps her friend's full-time working husband by organizing care and meals during his absence (hours on duty at work, short trips). She invites children for dinners, offers them cake and drops off shopping and agricultural produce brought from gardens and from families from surrounding villages. At the same time, the women remain in constant telephone touch with each other, managing their households, and arranging purchases and deliveries at a distance (e.g. ordering eggs, half-carcases of piglets, etc). An additional support for both families is the retired older sister of Jagoda's mother. She often helps out in the care of the children of both neighbouring households in exchange for numerous gifts and financial help that she accepts with resistance because of family relations. The households of the two women are thus connected by a complex network of mutual relations crossing national borders: relations managed virtually by both women, and including networks of close and further women. Interestingly enough, this popular coping strategy is not based on the codified care chain (cf. Parreñas 2001; 2005; Hochschild 2001; Lutz 2018) so common in other parts of the world. Rather, we are dealing here with the use of ethno-local patterns (see Radziwinowiczówna, Rosińska, Kloc-Nowak 2018), based on a complex network of bartering. They are governed by gendered expectations: the women know who should help in what situations and to whom this help should be offered. Commodification does not replace this pattern, but rather serves to complement it.

The other side of this circulating network of barter favours are conflicts, tensions and various types of hierarchies of inequalities that are formed in close relations. They are the result of a failure to renegotiate the gender contract with the partner and the overload of the gendered roles of women. An interesting example is the case of

the former farmer Aldona, a forced economic emigrant and mother of 2 children, who emancipated in the process of migration from a violent relationship with her husband and in-laws. Aldona's husband did not take up any paid work, he neglected farming and childcare, engaging instead in the grass-root politics of the conservative *Samoobrona* party active at that time.[8] Throughout the whole period, he exploited his wife financially, who became the only breadwinner of the family, forcing her to prolong her work abroad and to part with her children. What is more, during Aldona's stay abroad, he did not take care of the children, completely ceding care work to his mother, relatives and a neighbour, a friend of his wife. Until her divorce, which preceded the bringing of her younger daughter abroad, Aldona had been trying to manage her care at a distance through several years of separation. She regularly sent food packages, set up her contacts in the village and organised a network of fresh food purchases delivered straight to her home. Twice a week, a befriended bread courier brought home fresh buns, bread and dairy products for breakfast. Throughout her absence, food and feedwork – in exchange for friendship and gifts – was organized by Aldona's friend, who is also her neighbour. The friend cleaned the house, paid the bills, did shopping and regularly invited the children for home-cooked meals. Aldona's strategy was therefore based on transnational management of foodways and the use of gendered, local rules for supporting women and families, wherein a large role is played by the institution of rural neighbourhood self-help. In addition, Aldona practiced "maternal bustling around foodways", regularly sending parcels that change content during the course of her process of emancipation (unbecoming wife). At the instigation of Belgian employers whom she told about her marital problems, Aldona over time turned the initial financial transfers exclusively into gifts (food, household chemicals, clothes for children). This allowed Aldona to take control over her family's consumption and stop her husband from wasting her hard-earned money.

Aldona, like other migrants, also interweaves regular home visits in her management strategy. During her stays, she replenishes food in the pantry, cooks and freezes meals for the next few weeks, prepares and portions semi-finished products (chops) and makes preserves. Krystyna, an economic migrant and mother of 2 children, also mentions such a strategy of serving her family and husband in emergency situations, as did Aldona and other women. When one of Aldona, or Krystyna's children gets sick (a high fever), they negotiate a few days' holiday with their employer and go home for a dozen or so hours by *camionette* to watch over and cook their home broth (mother's homemade food as part of folk medicine, see Mroczkowska 2014). Strategies of transnational management, and at the same time the status, position and identity of the mother, are reinforced here by regular visits and work in the territorial

8 The Self-Defense of the Republic of Poland is a Polish conservative-agrarian political party founded in 1991.

space of the home. Some of the women decide to move the location of their workplace to a place closer to their home towns. They move from Belgium to Germany: all this, in order to be able to commute home at weekends or twice a month. An additional interesting possibility is to intertwine local institutions with these strategies. For instance, older children (secondary school level) may be moved to Catholic boarding schools, which provide adequate care and boarding in canteens during school days, and thus relieve fathers and supporting women from excessive responsibilities, as especially arise in the case of families of mothers with many children.

LOVE BOX: FOOD CHOICE AS A FOOD VOICE

"For many women (and some men), food is a significant voice of self-expression. In the meals they cook, the rituals they observe, and the memories they preserve, women communicate powerful meanings and emotions" (Counihan 2012, 174). The packages around which migrants are constantly bustling, and the selection of their content, constitute an important practice of constructing and renegotiating the mother's new identity. The selection of a package, or food choice – in emigration conditions – is part of prestige related social messages (Camposano 2018; Levitt 1998; Patzer 2018). By becoming a gift, it turns into a food voice (Counihan 2012).

First of all, for a mother who needs to reconstruct her role in terms of distance and a context of suspicion, this gift involves the expression (voice) of emotional continuity and commitment. With the help of packages, mothers develop a kind of intimacy code. The package becomes a measure of the status of relationships, which is why all changes in their content and the routines of their dispatch are noticed and interpreted. What matters here is both their content, size and the frequency of deliveries, but also the context and time of sending them, because in the sending communities the parcels are expected to be inscribed in the life events of family members, such as birthdays, anniversaries and festive cycles. Second, through packages mothers often try to construct a new (class) social position and power. Food choice expresses the class aspirations of migrant women and is perceived in such categories in a supranational community. These two dimensions, maternal commitment and status, are in fact closely linked. Therefore, the package becomes a form of establishing a new status of mothers as "successful providers", i.e. a kind of transnational intensive mother in the working class (see: "intensive mothering", Hays 1996; and "transnational intensive motherhood", Parreñas 2001). This specific "food voice" becomes an active transformation of access to economic capital into constructing the identity of a "good mother" in the family and in the community. Thus, it is a kind of simultaneous display of commitment, health care, parenting and pampering the child, as well as a display of class mobility.

This is why packages contain not only "home cooked meals" or "mother-made food", but above all prestigious food. The latter was composed primarily of foodstuffs more difficult to access in the countryside or small towns in the first decades after 1989, namely exotic fruits such as oranges, coconuts, melons and kiwi, and spices and nuts. The most important of these, however, were sweets, and to be more precise, Belgian chocolates known all over the world: pralines (so-called "mussels"), chocolate bars, multi-packs of candy bars and brown sugar that was still unknown or not very popular in Poland at the time. These products are mentioned on both sides of the border, by mothers and by the adult children with whom I had the opportunity to talk. These items were also chosen for various types of barter favours. Moreover, it is striking that while it was these particular foodstuffs that were packed most often, many migrant women at the same time expressed a great distance to other Western foods. Belgian bread, meat or vegetables were usually described in opposition to "homely", Polish and rural food, as more expensive and worse, because they were less tasty.[9] These products also construct new patterns of taste and demonstrate mothers as successful providers by providing food: (1) not available in children's homes; (2) unavailable to the average budget; (3) known for their nutritional values; or (4) unique taste qualities.

Food packages were also important signs saturated in a multitude of meanings in the family and sending community. I have participated in sending and receiving packages many times. I was asked to transport them, I delivered them and participated in their unpacking, criticism or affirmation. These were usually single, bigger bags. They were not large, as is the case of the *balikbayan boxes* widely known in migration literature travelling on a ship sailing for weeks from the USA to the Philippines (see Patzer 2018). On the other side of the border, in Poland, packages also had their place in the social imagination. My interlocutors (fathers and children) were waiting for packages: the whole family would go to the nearest town (to the international bus station) to pick them up. Receiving a package was an important social event, it initiated various types of social gatherings and associated exchange of gifts or barters (usually of sweets). Packages generated emotions and moral narratives: they were spoken about in the immediate vicinity and recognized as proof of sacrifice and dedication. The sender's nearest and dearest noticed resourcefulness, care and individualized memory: a remembering of the tastes, preferences and favourite flavours of family members. They assessed or criticized the mother's effort and choices, or the sense of her work abroad. The packages were also a third (non-human) actor in negotiating the mother's identity and the sense of her departure with her children and other adult family members. They were also an instrument of power. Having realized that her husband

9 To prove this thesis, migrants gave examples of the products for which Belgians shopped in Polish stores in Brussels: these included, among others, challah.

did not care for her children properly and that he would spend the money she sent to him on his love affairs, Aldona stopped sending cash. Instead, she started sending different items in packages. Other women do the same. Paradoxically, therefore, departure does not always weaken the position of the mother: sometimes it even strengthens it because of the access to financial resources and the power to distribute them, that it affords (see: Patzer 2018; Camposano 2018). *In absentia*, some of the women would gain more capital for gatekeeping.

CONCLUSIONS

I will now return to the key questions posed at the beginning of the article. Are we dealing with social change in the area of transnational mothers' gendered practices and identities? What do the food and foodway patterns of Polish transnational migrant mothers from working classes tell us about these experiences?

At first glance, the answer to this question seems unequivocal. It could be phrased as follows: as a result of migration, in the families of transnational mothers it is difficult to come across patterns of successful role reversal and transnational mothers continue to follow, or even enact with greater intensity, traditional patterns of food- and feed-work. They do this on their own and/or with the help of a network of close female relatives and friends. Such an interpretation would be difficult to refute in the light of the ethnographic and narrative data I collected. For these demonstrate a ubiquity of transnational care activities carried out by women: a constant bustling around, even at a great distance from the family home. They also bear witness to numerous moral restrictions (of control and suspicion) regarding free time and ubiquitous pressures on the display of maternal respect and self-sacrifice, also self-enforced by migrants themselves. An attractive thesis on retraditionalization would also fit well into a contemporary trend of international research, which focuses on showing bipolar directions of gender change in particular areas – unfortunately usually presented separately and fragmentarily – such as work, intimacy, religion and care (see Urbańska 2018).

However, I do not intend to stop at this interpretation of retraditionalization. As I have shown in the analysis, looking at the experiences of migrant women becomes more complicated when, first of all, we recognise and incorporate their complexity into the study. It is, after all, difficult to analyse separately the changes taking place in particular areas of life: changes in care are closely related to changes in work, intimate life (relationships, sexuality), and attitudes towards oneself. Secondly, the experiences of migrant women will not appear so unilateral when we recognise and incorporate into our interpretations the intersectional location of their practices: a dimension which is so important in the study of gender patterns, care and family life. The women I focused on in my study not only joined the European ranks of a migrational

illegal proletariat in Brussels. As working class members of the population, women from villages and small towns, second-class citizens deprived of protection against violence or mothers stigmatized by a discourse about Euro-orphanage, these women suffered multiple exclusions both in Poland and abroad. It was in relation to this specific social and economic context that they had to transform their family practices and identities. They also transformed them within a specific transnational migration community, combining new gender patterns in the Polish diaspora in Belgium with the communities that exported women's work. This network has developed many new gender patterns of moral control and suspicion in response to postmodern social change.

If we take into account these contexts, it is better to risk the claim that we are dealing here not so much with re-traditionalization, as with the development of a postmodern working class motherhood. First of all, mothers become breadwinners, trying to combine work with a new form of transnational (virtual) motherhood in their communities. What is more, some of them include in their migration trajectories the option unavailable in their communities of an emancipatory process of becoming an ex-wife and non-resident mother, and then entering into modern forms of second relationships. Second, in such an unfavourable context it is difficult to identify the entire "transnational maternal foodways" described here, or what I call "maternal bustling around foodways", simply with the notion of re-traditionalization. Rather, these practices are causative coping strategies, or strategies of workers' resistance to neoliberal uprooting mechanisms or violence. They are also a form of management of the trajectory of unbecoming a mother: a construction of relations and at the same time a struggle for social recognition in spite of the ubiquitous context of suspicion. From the perspectives of a transmigrant woman, it is not the issue of a choice of motherhood style, but a fight for the right to motherhood, to mothering that is in jeopardy in a transnational era. The women I focused on in my study strategically bargained with patriarchy in order to maintain continuity. The image of the Polish Mother (see Hryciuk and Korolczuk 2012) returns here, but in a new strategic guise. In many cases, it now accompanies emancipatory processes not only in the area of work, but also in the area of relationships or sexuality. Ethnography, therefore, does not allow for simplification.

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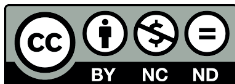

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"WE HAVE ALL LIVED AND BREATHED TEA." GENDERED MORAL ECONOMIES OF FACTORY TEA PRODUCTION IN WESTERN GEORGIA

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Scholarship on Georgian food and drinking culture has been expanding in the past decades. However, scholars have focused mostly on private spaces of food preparation and consumption, as well as on domestic practices of hospitality. This paper tries to expand the scope of these studies by looking at spaces previously omitted: namely spaces of industrial food production. Building on the results of fieldwork conducted in Western Georgia (the Samegrelo region) between 2016 and 2017, as well as several short field trips in 2015, this paper focuses on gendered moral economies of tea (*Camellia sinensis)* production in a context of economic change in Georgia.
This paper follows people who produce one commodity: tea. Although not broadly considered a legitimate part of Georgian foodways, it is imprinted in the lives of the people who both used to and still do work in tea manufacturing. The analysis focuses on one main protagonist: a tea technologist employed at a factory. In so doing, it demonstrates the moral economies in which downgrading, migration and coping strategies are embedded.

KEYWORDS: Georgia, tea, factory work, gender, moral economy

"Georgian Prince Miha Eristavi first encountered tea during his travels across China in the 1830s. Impressed with its taste he decided that he would take some seeds back to Georgia. At the time, exporting tea seeds from China was forbidden so the prince hid some seeds in a length of bamboo and smuggled it out of the country. On his return to Georgia he used the seeds to create the first tea plantations" (Carr 2018, 25).[1]

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1 A popular semi-legendary, promethean-like story about the origins of tea in Georgia, to be found on each blog entry and tourist website discussing Georgian tea, also recalled by some of my interlocutors. This royal motif is also used in branding by some of the tea companies. Although the majority of my interlocutors knew that the real popularity of tea came with the Soviet Union, they chose to emphasize the royal founding myth of tea plantations. If consumption is understood also as a symbolic act of "incorporating and performing the nation" (Muehlfried 2007, 10), "othering" tea by underlining how its consumption is not a part of traditional Georgian *foodways* could be seen as a negative performative act of drawing ethnic and political boundaries.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Georgian food and wine culture has received an abundance of interest from both the wider public and academic scholars (e.g. Capalbo 2016; Chatwin 1997; Curro 2019; Goldstein 2013; Mühlfried 2005; Söderlind 2009; Tsitsishvili 2006). Georgia is indisputably a cradle of wine. However, there is another beverage casually overlooked by the scholarship analysing Georgian *foodways*, which demands scholarly attention: namely tea. Although tea consumption may not seem as characteristic for Georgia as for neighbouring countries like Azerbaijan and Turkey[2], tea remains one of the commodities that has irreversibly transformed not only the ecological landscape, but also the lives of thousands of Georgians.

Georgia held the position of the main tea producer in the Soviet Union, with 152,000 tons of tea harvested in 1985. The landscape and the lifestyles of the population were severely influenced by tea production: with nearly 70,000 hectares of land allocated to tea fields and around 180,000 people employed at various stages of tea production (ENPARD 2015). Growing, harvesting and manufacturing tea constituted a way of life for a number of villages in the subtropical parts of Georgia: "We have all lived and breathed tea", as one of my interlocutors put it. The site of my ethnographic research, referred to in this text as Town, is inhabited by around six thousand people, nearly exclusively Megrelians.[3] Formerly, this was an important tea producing powerhouse; now it is a rather ruralised town with only one out of its former six factories still working. Shortly before my fieldwork started, the factory made a deal with China's Chedzani Ranrani Biotechnology for new investments as well as for tea orders, which provided a new hope and new dimension to the tea moral economies.

Tea (*Camellia sinensis*) is a labour-intensive commodity, globally relying on an availability of underpaid yet skilled workers. Growing tea also means profound changes in the local environment: it is grown on monoculture plantations, posing serious threats to local fauna and flora biodiversity. The intense use of pesticides and fertilizers required also creates environmental dangers. At the same time, tea is a knowledge-intensive commodity. Production cannot exist without a "knowledge economy", as Arnab Day (2018) describes the foundation of a tea enterprise, combining scientific discourse, agrarian ideology and plantation practice in colonial Assam.

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2 With distinct tea houses culture, serving as predominantly male spaces of socialization and leisure. In Georgia that style of tea consumption culture could be observed in the Adjara region and Kvemo Kartli (regions neighboring Turkey, and Azerbaijan respectively).

3 The Megrelians are generally considered to be a sub-group of the larger Georgian ethnicity, originally associated with the historical region of Megrelia (Samegrelo in Georgian) in western Georgia. The Megrelian language belongs to the Kartvelian family of languages, together with Georgian, Svan and Laz.

This paper focuses on the gendered moral economies of tea production in Western Georgia in a context of economic change. However, by applying the approach of moral economy, I will focus on highlighting values and norms in order to challenge economistic views (cf. Hann 2010). Applying such a perspective will shed light on the opaque logics and values that guide the livelihood practices of tea workers.

In the centre of my analysis I put one interlocutor – referred to in this text as Nino – a tea technologist employed at the factory. I supplement this with data obtained from other employees of the same factory. By observing the everyday realms of the post-socialist tea factory, I ask a question about the values behind Nino's persistence in making tea (despite the very limited and irregular economic remuneration she receives). In doing so, I want to enrich the existing understanding of the situation of Georgian women as female factory workers in a post-transition, yet globalized, peripheral context. I also ask a question about what is acceptable or desirable in terms of tea related labour: it is in order to shed light on this, that I explore the attitudes of the women workers towards migration to Turkey. More broadly, this paper also aims at addressing a gap in anthropological scholarship on women's public spaces in the Caucasus. It does so by attending to the often omitted public spaces of production occupied by women in Georgia, instead of looking at the private spaces of (re)production and consumption which have been keenly explored in recent years (cf. Curro 2019; Linderman 2011; Manning 2007; Mühlfried 2005; Tsitsishvili 2006; Tuite 2005).

THEORETICAL APPROACH

Scholarship on gendered spaces of food processing and manufacturing has shown that it is not only post-socialist, but global horticulture chains that depend on underpaid and disadvantaged female workers (Allen and Sachs 2012, 28). This type of work is characterized by its seasonal and flexible nature, failing to provide a stable source of income and security. Despite the number of studies on agricultural production, also in the post-socialist context (i.a. Mincyte 2014; Mroczkowska 2019), the material aspects of gender relations throughout the food system remain understudied (cf. Allen and Sachs 2012). Thus, it is worth asking about the gendered motivations and values ascribed to this type of work.

Scholars have shown how the specific context of industrial food production in the post-socialist context is linked to discussions on labour, and inevitably leads to comparison with the global market (Caldwell 2009, 17). One of the best examples of such ethnographies is provided by Elizabeth Dunn (2004), who observed the economic transition experienced by factory workers and explored what happens at the junctions of industrial spaces of food production in the Alima Gerber factory in Poland. In so doing, she demonstrates the links between models of management and the ways in

which workers relate to the commodities they produce, but maybe more importantly, to one another, and thus is able to highlight the alienating processes inscribed in capitalist production. Scholars have also problematized the question of "compliance with marketization" observed among workers in the first decade after the post-socialist transformation (Weiner 2005). Although broad engagement with this argument is beyond the scope of this paper, it is worth noting that my interlocutors expressed criticism towards marketization and the changes this entailed in the mode of production of tea. In this paper, however, I am more interested in the small-scale practices of everyday moral economies among female factory workers.

Bearing in mind the rich discussion about theoretical approaches towards the concept of moral economy in anthropology (c.f. Palomera and Vetta 2016), and the classical work by E.P. Thompson (1971) who highlighted the inseparable entanglement of both morality and economy, I choose to follow the path of Dimitra Kofti. Kofti argues that moral economy as a concept in anthropology can and should be used not only to investigate social struggles (e.g. rebellion, cf. Scott 1976), but "also people's everyday lives and struggles, and […] muted responses to inequality and precarity" (2016, 435). She focuses on precarity under flexible capitalism to show how collective moral confinements and individual acts and perceptions are intertwined. Therefore, her approach enables research into "moral incentives and relations of dependency, without losing sight of their dynamic actions" (2016, 435). Kofti introduces the notion of "the moral economy of flexible production" (2016, 439), to show how women in flexible capitalism occupying precarious positions morally prioritize kin and household obligations over solidarity with colleagues. In my paper, however, I show an opposite process taking place in the factory: exploring how Nino prioritizes community, and thus creates community-oriented moral economies of tea production.

In recent years, we can observe an increased interest in plantations as field sites for anthropologists and multidisciplinary research teams informed by postcolonial studies and working within the multi-species paradigm (Chao 2018; Kumpf 2020; Perfecto et. al. 2019). These define plantations as spaces of "cultivation through coercion" (Tsing 2012, 148) that imply nature commodification, a prioritization of production and an implementation of techno-scientific control over crops (Tsing 2012; Kumpf 2020). Drawing on ecologically informed approaches, these studies shift the paradigm to a more holistic approach in thinking about human and nonhuman life. Tsing et. al. show that plantations can be seen as an exemplification of anthropogenic disturbances of the landscape (Tsing et. al. 2019, 187), caused by "modular simplifications" (reducing the number of species on a specific area to just one chosen kind) and "feral proliferations" (the rise and spread of diseases caused by ecological unbalance). Further they underline that "plantations create monocrops to make it possible for coerced and alienated labor – and more recently, machines – to tend crops without the care that farming otherwise requires" (2019, 189). This article will not engage in a detailed

discussion with this approach, but nevertheless I would like to signal important differences that emerge from my data. Undoubtedly, tea has changed the ecological landscape of western Georgia. However, as I will show below, in the case of the de-industrialized context of tea production in the Town we observe different processes from those mentioned above. For Nino in particular, the decision to continue working in tea production was founded in an ethics of care for local people and an affective relationship with tea itself: thus, she regretted when its production was abandoned or when she felt its modes of production were becoming less quality based. I would also find it problematic to claim that she is alienated from her labour. More nuanced differences in the post-socialist and post-colonial plantation landscapes would definitely be worth discussing in detail. This paper, however, puts humans in the centre of its interest. I look at tea rather in terms of a commodity, the production of which creates particular types of (moral) economies, than as a non-human agent.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a result of ethnographic fieldwork conducted between 2016 and 2017 in the Samegrelo region of Georgia.[4] In this article, I focus on the data gathered in one location, the Town, although in my analysis I have also used data and insights obtained during several preliminary study visits, taking place between 2014 and 2016 in the regions of Adjara, Guria, Imereti, Samegrelo and Abkhazia[5], as before choosing my main field site, I mapped and visited several other locations known for tea production.

During the fieldwork, I used traditional ethnographic methods, mainly participant and non-participant observation. In particular, I conducted biographical and semi-structured interviews, both recorded and unrecorded.[6] The majority of my data

4 This research entitled: “Post Socialism in Georgia: an Anthropological Perspective on the Tea Industry” was financed by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. It was based at the University of Warsaw between 2014 and 2018.

5 Despite the problematic status of Abkhazia after the civil war, as a de facto state, the Georgian government and the majority of the United Nations’ countries recognize Abkhazia as part of Georgia. Also for my interlocutors the claims of Abkhazia to belong to Georgia were unquestioned. The Georgian Subtropical Agricultural Institute was located in Sukhumi (Abkhazia), and as such appears frequently in biographical narratives about obtaining education and training on tea during my research project. Thus, to avoid any further discussion on the political matter on Abkhazia, I choose to apply an emic attitude reflecting my interlocutors’ perspective.

6 The further into the course of my field research, the less I used the recorder. Also, some of the semi-interviews occurred spontaneously during my collective work with the interlocutors and as such were only recovered later in the forms of field notes and head notes.

comes from the experience of collective work and sharing everyday arduous tasks at the factory. I talked to people working in the tea factory; the director, the vice-director, mechanics, tea technologists, tea pluckers, the owners of the "cantine" located at the premises of the factory, representatives of local government and NGOs and other inhabitants of the town.

At the beginning of my research, during my preliminary short visits, I did not feel comfortable enough with my fluency in Georgian, although I had a substantial understanding of the language. Therefore, I would use Russian to conduct interviews whenever possible (which allowed me to talk mostly to middle-aged or senior men, who due to education or army service spoke good Russian). Before returning to the field, I improved my Georgian, but for multiple reasons ended up choosing a bilingual community (Georgian-Megrelian) as my final research destination. Megrelian is an unwritten language belonging to the indigenous Kartvelian language family, distinct from the national language of the Georgian state.[7] The politics of using Megrelian in public and private spaces differ, but it is spoken in different social contexts, including in many cases in the domain of work (Broers 2012). And indeed, Megrelian remained the language of choice and convenience in the factory and tea fields. I had to accept the fact that I would only speak the official language, as my knowledge of the language of convenience of my interlocutors remained rudimentary. This posed some limitations, especially in the beginning of the field research of which I am aware. I find some consolation though in the work of Michael Herzfeld, who points out the importance of gesture and "informal modes of embodiment" (2009, 131) in doing fieldwork as a process of gaining access to culturally intimate spaces.

THE PROTAGONIST: NINO

My stay and research at the factory was possible primarily thanks to the hospitality of Nino, a tea technologist. During a preliminary study visit in Georgia, I came across information about her work at the factory and her attempts to establish a tea cooperative. Since we could not meet in Tbilisi, I found her number through a long list of friends, acquaintances and strangers (a perfectly common and effective strategy in Georgia) and scheduled a meeting in Town. After our interview and her expressions of willingness to help me with my project, I had to convince the director of the factory. Although not ecstatic about my plans, he accepted my presence at the factory.

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7 It is beyond the scope of this article to refer to the ethno-linguistic discussion about the status of the Megrelians, but it is important to note that the debate about this has been and still is shaped by the political factors: while Russian linguists and ethnographers defined the Megrelians as a separate *natsional'nost'* during the Soviet period, Georgian intellectuals criticise such attempts as a separatist threat (Broers 2004).

Nino was at the time of my fieldwork in her early seventies and had worked as a tea technologist for the majority of her professional life. She lived nearby the factory, in a khrushchyovka style building.[8] From the balcony, she could see the factory. She never married, nor had children. The fact of departing from dominant gendered life course scenarios caused endless unrefined jokes and often painful comments from male employees. Occasionally they would even question Nino’s sanity, which indicates the extent to which the dominant model of life is discursively protected and reproduced. In her male colleagues’ view, she was an example of an “improper women” who chose work over family. Although she did not start a family of her own, she was close to her brother and his wife who lived in a family house in a village just outside Town and whom she often visited to help with the harvest of hazelnuts, vegetables and fruits.

We would spend together five days a week at the factory: from the morning when Nino would open the door, till the afternoon when she closed it. On the days of the delivery of fresh tea leaves, I would also come back in the evening to observe weighing, unpacking and price negotiation. I would use this as an opportunity to chat with tea picking teams. Nino, in her turn, would sometimes use it as an opportunity to comment on the unsatisfactory quality of the tea leaves provided by the team.

I decided to build my analysis about the gendered moral economies of tea production in the context of economic change around the story of one person: Nino. In the following sections, I will show how her biography embodies the processes which are the focus of this study. In order to contextualize this, in what follows, I sketch the historical background of current tea production conditions in the Town.

STUDY SETTING – GEORGIAN TEA IN TRANSITION

The collapse of the Soviet Union resulted in a deterioration of infrastructure and markets. For the tea industry, the civil war in Abkhazia (1992–1993) also meant the loss of the infrastructure of the Georgian Subtropical Agricultural Institute in Sukhumi, where some of my interlocutors studied.[9] In parallel with Burawoy’s observations from Hungary and Poland (and other post-socialist countries), Georgian workers soon “found themselves either without a job or working under ever more precarious con-

8 Khrushchyovka is a conversational name used for a type of low-cost apartment house, made of panel and brick, which were massively built in the USSR between the late 1950s and early 1980s. The name derives from Nikita Khrushchev, as most of these buildings were built during his leadership.

9 After the war, the Institute was moved to Kutaisi. A second institute, the Tea and Subtropical Cultures Research Institute in Anaseuli (Guria) also provided and still provides education on tea and other subtropical plants.

ditions and in a rapidly polarizing society" (2013, 531). What followed was a process of deindustrialization and de-modernization: "The socialism that they had spurned had now become the radiant past, whereas the promises of capitalism looked very tarnished" (Burawoy 2013, 531).

According to the Caucasus Research Resource Center, since the collapse of the Soviet Union more than twenty per cent of the Georgian population have emigrated (CRRC 2007). By 2015, tea production in Georgia had declined to only around 1,800 tons per year, with only 1,700 hectares of tea gardens still used (ENPARD 2015). Recent years, however, have brought some new opportunities (or at least promises) and official plans for the re-cultivation of Georgian tea production on both national and international levels.[10] It has been noted that tea could provide a stable source of income for impoverished rural communities, like Town in Western Georgia where only one of its six factories is still operating today.

Just before my fieldwork started, the factory in Town made a deal with China's Chedzani Ranrani Biotechnology for an investment worth $80,000. The deal involved investments in machines, specialist training in China for selected (male) factory employees and guaranteed orders for tea. Tea collected in May and June, considered to be of the best quality, was later processed in Town and exported to China. Although the director of the factory claimed that the agreement came into existence by pure chance, it has to be seen in a broader scope. In 2014, a substantial increase of Chinese investments (attaining an overall figure of $218 million) in Georgia could be observed, followed by the start of negotiations on a free trade agreement between the two countries in 2016.[11] These investments were linked to the so-called Belt and Road Initiative (Charaia and Papava 2017), a transit network designed to facilitate China's trade with the world. At that time, it seemed like Georgia could become a local hub for Chinese investments.

The collapse of the infrastructure and markets for Georgian tea after the fall of the Soviet Union has left many Town inhabitants, especially men, unemployed. Those who kept their jobs at the tea factory were employed in higher executive positions: like director and vice-director, sales managers, mechanics and drivers. Nino held the position of the main tea technologist, but actually was responsible for the whole production process: from assisting in receiving freshly picked leaves, through keeping an eye on the twisting, fermenting and drying processes, right through to packaging. Other women employed at the factory were responsible for bookkeeping and the hard physical

10 For example, several small tea holders have been recognized by the Georgian governmental agency – the Agricultural Cooperative Development Agency (ACDA) – and have received funding support from an NGO coalition led by CARE-International, as part of the EU's European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (ENPARD).

11 http://www.economy.ge/page=news&nw=180&s=saqartvelosa-da-chinets-shoris-tavisufali-vachrobis-shesaxeb-xelshekruleba-gaformdeba&lang=en.

labour on the plantations, and for refining dried tea from any unwanted elements – like bits of stems or not twisted enough leaves. Thus, as I could observe, the gendered division of labour at the factory put women in the less privileged positions, both in terms of stability of employment (for example tea picking is seasonal piecework) and the remuneration received. Also, opportunities for professional development were not offered to women: as only men were selected to attend training in China. Most of the female factory workers did not have a family which would provide a support network, thus making them more prone to accept inferior work conditions. Lack of possible alternatives served as an effective demotivating factor to renegotiate work conditions. In the next sections I discuss local moral economies: first on the community level, and then on the individual scale. Nino will serve as a guide in both sections.

Fig. 1. A mosaic on the wall of a closed tea factory, one of six that operated in Town. Photo by Ian McNaught Davis

COMMUNITY-ORIENTED MORAL ECONOMIES OF TEA: DOWNGRADING AND MIGRATION

Downgrading and migration are the two major features observable in professional biographies after the collapse of the Soviet Union tea production system. Although providing income, they both conflict with Nino and other workers' moral economies that put a high value on the notion of community.

The first years after the fall of the Soviet Union affected both genders differently: women had to face unemployment, a retreat to the private spaces of reproduction and shrinking state support for elder family members (e.g. Pine 2002). The need to provide for families, provoked by high unemployment rates among men who simultaneously lost their traditional breadwinner's position, conflicted with traditional expectations from Georgian women. In these first years of independence, characterized by rampant unemployment, women on average did significantly better than their partners: they were more flexible and more open to "downgrading" (Sumbadze and Tarkhan-Mouravi 2003), for example by accepting housekeeping or trading jobs despite higher qualifications.

Thus, it was not women who experienced the "retreat to the household" (to borrow a famous phrase from Frances Pine, 2002), but rather first and foremost their male spouses, unable to find new employment or unwilling to accept jobs below their qualifications.[12] My interlocutors expressed similar opinions to those mentioned by Elizabeth C. Dunn (2008) when describing the post-transformative condition of Georgian everydayness: namely experiencing an abandonment from the state. This put even more pressure on women to find ways to make ends meet, which often meant migration. In order to provide for their families, they would respond to the global demand for migrant female labour (Lundkvist-Houndoumadi 2010) or start "shuttle trading" careers (Bloch 2011). Bloch also notes, that they devoted a lot of emotional labour to hiding the fact of being the main breadwinners in the families. Similar struggles around the gendered division of labour in the household, especially in times of progressive economic deprivation have been observed in Georgia (Paulovich 2016). Most importantly, as Alexia Bloch has observed: "women entrepreneurs' accounts highlight not only anxieties about proper forms of labor" (2011, 318), but also a feeling of shame of becoming entrepreneurs involved in small trade, as this stood against all the values they had internalized as Soviet citizens. Nino, who had to provide for herself and occasionally support her brother's family, experienced a similar episode in her biography: "After the civil war, people left – some abroad, some to the bigger cities. I worked in trade. Years passed and I gradually became convinced that this was not for me". The feeling of performing an improper form of labour, even though the job provided her with a basic income, made her uneasy. The new job could not offer the feeling of fulfilment and sense of community that she had experienced in her previous job at the factory. Even after her return to tea production, the likelihood of keeping the factory running remained uncertain. Some hopes, however, have been brought by the Chinese investments in Town.

12 Women were also more active in the fast developing bed-and-breakfast and hostel sector. They were also more often employed by international organizations and were targeted as small grant receivers by development projects (Sumbadze and Tarkhan-Mouravi 2003).

Reflecting on the changes brought by the Chinese investments for local tea production, my interlocutors expressed mixed feelings. On the one hand, they felt pride and enthusiasm about the agreement, as it seemed to guarantee higher prices for tea and thus better and more regular wages for the employees. It was also believed that it would grant more workplaces and increase the acreage of the tea fields in use. For Nino, Chinese investment meant that more women would be able to work in the Samegrelo region and that economic migration would stop or at least diminish.

Contemporary attitudes towards female migration remain fairly unchanged to the dominant tendencies in the Soviet Union. Working class women are more prone to experience a backlash, whereas the migration of educated and highly skilled women is usually valued positively and considered prestigious. According to Yalçın-Heckmann: "Seasonal or long-term migrations for work and education were relatively common in the Caucasian republics of the Soviet Union" (2010, 123). It was considered normal for men to seek better material conditions in order to provide for their families and invest in the family house. Likewise, some of the female protagonists of my research who completed university degree training in tea technology shared the experience of migration to Tbilisi or Sukhumi for education. Later, they would spend some years in a state assigned location, potentially meet future spouses and decide to settle down. In the narratives I collected, the experience of moving away was perceived positively: more as an adventure and a reason to be proud of one's education and achievements. However, the perception of migration has changed after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The need to look for work outside one's place of residence has been caused mostly by war and impoverishment (Shahnazaryan 2005, 236). The contemporary global trend of the increased participation of women in labour migration has also been observed in the Black Sea Region: with Greece and Turkey especially popular destinations (Ferry 2015). Favourable conditions with regard to Turkish-Georgian migrant exchange and the possibility to work in tea fields made it a landing place also for women from the Samegrelo region. Yet, working class female migrants, like in many other places, have to deal with ambivalent judgements on the part of their spouses and wider society (Lundkvist-Houndoumadi 2010; Ferry 2015). The reason for a particular attitude towards female workers choosing Turkey in the public imagination is fuelled by occasional sensational news about Georgian women working in Turkish brothels. In Nino's view, migration was dangerous for women and unsuitable for a proper family life. On multiple occasions, she would commiserate over the fate of women and men who were "forced" to work in Turkey as tea pickers. Aside from migration misgivings, for Nino the misery stems from the fact that Turkish tea is not picked by hand, but is cut with scissors or even harvesters. It is believed that workers are treated in an inhumane way, as only the amount of harvested tea matters. Since work in Turkish plantations is considered backbreaking and as being quantity not quality oriented (and thus not in need of skilled and delicate female hands), men also

are recruited for this work. On rare occasions, couples also choose this type of seasonal migrant work. Even though work on Turkish plantations is considered much harder than that available locally, it offers undeniable advantages: it is fairly secure and much better paid, with the daily wages up to ten times higher. Again, economic and moral calculations do not go hand in hand.

Anthropological literature shows how ideas about being a "proper" Georgian woman are embedded in the values of a patriarchal society, underlining motherhood as the key role for a woman (Gavashelishvili 2017, 27). Consequently, migration poses a threat to the role of a mother "devoted to family and homeland" (Gavashelishvili 2017, 27). This has resulted in seeing migration as a risky and undesirable path, especially for women. For Nino, therefore, opportunities allowing women to work in Town are important for two reasons. First, it would secure a continuation of the tea heritage in the region: keeping local people seems vital in her view to ensure the revival of tea production, which could easily be jeopardized by Turkish plantations that already have more economic power and now also a workforce. Secondly, it would defend the moral economies that for her tea represents: by offering employment to local people. Nino had a strong ethos of hard work and duty for the land and the local community:

> I was born in a family of hard working peasants. I remember when I was in the third grade, after finishing school in the afternoon, I followed my mother to the tea plantation and picked 18kg of tea leaves [...]. I was always in love with tea. In Tbilisi, I bought all brands of imported tea and made sure that we could produce a significantly better quality Georgian tea at a lower price. When I returned to Town (after the civil war), I saw the on-going destruction of the remaining tea bushes. And yet tea could bring great good to the people who stayed in the village. Therefore, I started making tea again.

The moral economies of tea production applied by Nino were not only oriented around securing work for local people. She also had a strong feeling of belonging: when she recalled the collective farms (Georgian: კოლმეურნეობა), she would underline the cooperation and sense of local community it created. A community that was endangered nowadays as people struggled to support their families without secure jobs. This lack of stable employment has stimulated different coping strategies. Below, I discuss one of them.

MORAL ECONOMIES OF APPROPRIATION: COPING STRATEGIES

On a typically hot and humid September day I entered the main building of the factory, where I would usually find Nino getting ready for another day of selecting and packing tea. Normally, I would smell the specific aroma of fermenting tea

leaves – compared by some to freshly cut grass – and a bit of dust in the air, but today there was something else: a sweet aroma of fruit and hazelnuts. I found Nino in the back room, putting on her blue working apron and asked her about the nice aroma in the air. At first she did not say anything, just smiled impishly with a twinkle in her eyes. She asked me if I hadn’t seen Kote (the vice director of the factory) anywhere on my way, and when I replied in the negative, she led me to one of the newly obtained tea driers. Brought to the factory on lease together with other machines as part of the agreement with Chinese investors, this machine sparked ambivalent feelings among the factory crew. The new machines were not appreciated by the mechanics, as they could not repair them – even if they knew how to do so, the lease agreements obliged the factory to use the authorized company for regular check-ups and even the tiniest repairs. For mechanics who used to repair all the machines at the factory and even build some machines by themselves, this felt disrespectful, if not insulting. Also the tag with Chinese letters placed in the central part of the drier provided a silent, but persistent reminder of the foreign origin of the machine. I followed her. When she opened the drier, I saw threaded hazelnuts being prepared for *churchkhela*[13] (Georgian: ჩურჩხელ) and finely pitted and cut fruit: plums and apples. I was clearly surprised. Nino and other women giggled when they saw my bemusement.

The above incident demonstrates a coping strategy applied by Nino and other female workers in order to secure the production of homemade preserves and thus adhere to culturally prescribed gendered roles that can helpfully be described through de Certeau’s term of the tactical practices of *la perruque* (1984, 25). With this term de Certeau denotes a subversive act performed by a worker when she works for herself instead of working for the employer, and uses machines/materials/resources provided by the employer to pursue her own projects. But as de Certeau observes, “it differs from pilfering in that nothing of material value is stolen” (1984, 25). What Nino and other workers did with the new Chinese tea drier did not harm the timeline of tea production. It also did not pose any threat to the machine itself. Instead, it fulfilled their need to stock the pantry for winter with dried fruit, and made *churchkhela* production much faster and easier. They realized that with the capacities of the drier they can prepare more fruit much faster, without having to count on rainless weather. And even if the vice director was aware of this practice – as it was hardly possible to

13 *Churchkhela* (Georgian: ჩურჩხელ) is a traditional and iconic Georgian sweet (although an identical dessert is known under different names in other Caucasian countries, as well as Cyprus and Turkey). After nuts have been soaked in water for some time and threaded, they have to be dried in the sun (traditionally) and later dipped in grape juice thickened with flour several times to achieve the desired volume. After this, churchkhela is left to dry in the sun, although some eat it while still fresh. If prepared in the right manner, it can be stored for several months. It is usually prepared in the autumn, when fresh nuts and grapes are available.

ignore the characteristic aroma of drying hazelnuts – he turned a blind eye to it. In de Certeau's terms, such practices transform the time and work of the worker from that "owned" by the employer into the temporary practice of the individual. My interlocutors were drying fruit in the guise of work: somehow in addition to performing work related tasks, they were also doing what was expected from them as women and wives, in other words preparing supplies for the winter months. Simultaneously, they were negotiating the nature of the space of work: the factory was no longer a public space where paid work was being delivered, but now also a privatized space of homely food production. I interpret this as a moment of bridging: of old habits on the one hand and the application of new moral economies of coping on the other. By doing so, my interlocutors were practicing the moral economies of coping strategies in turbulent times. Despite their precarious economic position, they were committed to prepare homemade preserves, which presumably would mean savings (in terms of energy and food expenses in the winter months), but also they were opposing the market logic which had started to deprive them of their traditional way of life.

Anthropological research has shown how receiving and hosting guests is focused on gendered practices of performing the roles of a good host and hostess (Polese 2009). Moreover, as Constanza Curro has noted, "excess" can become a pattern of "proper" hospitality, drawing moral boundaries and influencing the process of personhood making on both individual and collective levels (2019). The practice that Nino and her colleagues were engaging in should not only be seen as saving time, but also in terms of fulfilling gendered expectations regarding homemade food in wider kinship networks. Parallels can be found here to the work of Dunn (2016), who looks at material objects to investigate how internally displaced people (IDPs) recreate their lives and what role the material world, food being of pivotal importance, plays in this process. To investigate the reasons behind a perceived lack of ontological value of donated material objects amongst IDPs, Dunn looks at the homemade preserves that she rather paradoxically found to be available at the IDP camp. This led her to the conclusion that it is the provenance of preserved food, embedded in kinship networks so important in Georgian sociality, that turned the ontological status of products into real food (Dunn 2016, 293). A rich body of research on Georgian foodways (with the above-mentioned work at its centre) show how food preparation and display is central to the proper performance of gendered roles in Georgian society (Curro 2019; Linderman 2011; Manning 2007; Mühlfried 2005; Tsitsishvili 2006; Tuite 2005). My interlocutors[14], amongst them those who did not own a proper house with a garden

14 My field site was also affected by the Georgian-Abkhaz civil war (1992–1993), resulting in the mass forced displacement of people. The Megrelians of Abkhazia were displaced to other parts of Georgia, with the majority now residing in the Zugdidi area (Samegrelo region) and the capital Tbilisi. Some of my interlocutors and factory employees had experienced displacement, and even after all these

allowing them to grow and prepare homemade preserves, were appropriating factory machines in order to be a part of kinship networks and homemade food exchange. In doing so, they were responding to economic deprivation and looking for ways to cope with an unprivileged position through an everyday act of preparing preserves.

Fig. 2. Inside the tea factory. Tea leaves picked earlier in the day are left to dry. Photo by Ian McNaught Davis

CONCLUSIONS

This paper explores the moral economies of tea production in times of economic change. It examines the experiences of women who had to face the casualization and informalization of work conditions, while also fulfilling the often contradictory expectations posed by a patriarchal society in times of social, cultural and economic turmoil. It looks at the small actions and gestures of everyday life in order to investigate the hierarchies of values applied by Nino and other female factory workers guiding their choices and actions.

years were unable to fully reestablish their lives: for example by buying properties of their own. This had a serious impact on their traditional everyday foodways, like for instance the preparation of homemade preserves or wine (cf. Dunn 2014 on IDPs after the Georgian-Russian war in 2008).

Nino, who became the main protagonist of this paper, started her adventure with tea in the times of the Soviet Union, experienced the transition to a market economy and now found herself as a subject of an unexpected international agreement with a Chinese investor. I show Nino as an example of a person who opposes the idea of unlearning the rules of being a good socialist citizen and instead tries to apply a community-oriented moral economy (cf. Bloch 2011) while producing tea. I explain her unfavourable opinions on two alternative ways of making ends meet, which are undesirable due to the fact that they fail to nurture a sense of community (trade) or even pose a symbolic threat to the community (migration). As a result, I propose to look at her ideas and practices as an example of "community-oriented moral economies of tea".

The women working in the factory use machines in order to secure the right amount of homemade food preserves for winter. I interpret this as a quiet, but important action against the logic of economic deprivation. By appropriating machines, workers were able to make highly valued homemade sweets, which will later enable them to be part of informal food exchanges. Thus, the values of community were prioritized over those of private property and work ethics. For Nino, it was also community oriented moralities that lay at the heart of her decision to go back into tea production and give up trade. The idea to provide work for the local people of Town, as well as a product of high quality and affordable price was prioritized in her calculation over individual values: understood primarily as monetary remuneration. Also her view on migration was influenced by moral judgments about the misery and hardships connected to migration, as well as the threat it poses to the integrity of the local community.

The concept of moral economy is for the most part focused on studying social groups, especially those excluded from dominant roles in social development. By focusing on observing the everyday practices of my interlocutors, such as their acts of compliance, struggles and small-scale solutions, I support Kofti's claim for the usefulness of such a framework for analyzing individual practices and ideas. My data shows major differences in creating moral economies from the ones described by Kofti, pointing to the need for more research on local conditioning and specificities of morally embedded economies of the post-socialist area in times of flexible capitalism.

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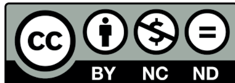

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THE EDIBILITY APPROACH, CHEMICAL ECOLOGY AND RELATIONALITY. METHODOLOGICAL AND ETHNOBOTANICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

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This paper combines ethnographic and ethnobotanical fieldwork with the edibility approach (EA), chemical ecology and Ingold's ontology of dwelling. The EA aims to "push harder onto and through the boundaries between edible plants and the human-animals that eat them to consider the outcomes produced as a result of these interacting materials" (Attala 2017, 130). This approach places ingestion in the light of multispecies entanglement. As proposed by Attala, this is still a philosophically "open" concept, of limited operational use in ethnographic (ethnobotanical) study. Our article argues for an expansion of the EA, based on this combined perspective and giving more attention to cross-species interactions placed in an environmental context. Our cases are about how people live *with* plants, exemplified by foraging practices of agriculturists in Ukraine, Daghestan and Argentina. The everyday social relations of our interlocutors are more-than-human interactions, and in these relations we pay a close attention to non-cultivated edible plants. We present two modes of writing ethnographies, in which we focus respectively on a single plant taxon or a group of plants, and where both people and plants are protagonists. We argue that incorporating the dwelling perspective and chemical ecology into the EA is one of the potentially fruitful approaches to the analysis of plant – people relations. The use of language and of the tools of ecology in an attempt to present different aspects of co-dwelling of people and plants, although it may seem anchored in Cartesian dualism, in fact allows for a deeper understanding of the relations among protagonists and their co-dwellers in the environment, and hence goes against dualisms. The relations and the ways through which organisms co-create their environment are the very essence of ecology. The close collaboration of anthropologists, ethnobotanists, ecologists and chemical ecologists is postulated in the article.

KEYWORDS: relational anthropology, edibility approach, dwelling perspective, foraging, Ukraine, Daghestan, Atlantic Forest, Argentina

INTRODUCTION

This paper combines ethnographic and ethnobotanical fieldwork with the edibility approach, chemical ecology and Ingold's ontology of dwelling.[1] The article argues for an expansion of the edibility approach based on this combined perspective, aiming to give more attention to cross-species interactions placed in an environmental context in the study of foraging practices and the use of wild edible plants by humans.

Recent intellectual projects, such as the ontological turn, not only aim at creating a more symmetrical dialogue between different ontological perspectives but also, importantly, search for a way out of a dichotomic and hierarchical approach to environments, non-human-animals and plants (Daly et al. 2016; Holbraad and Pedersen 2014; Kirksey 2014). Conceptual frameworks, such as multispecies ethnography, and the more-than-human and edibility approaches, challenge the human privileged position that has tended to dominate Western scholarship since the Enlightenment, attempting to describe and analyse human entanglement with other organisms in a more symmetrical relationship (Attala 2017; Kohn 2013; Tsing 2015; van der Veen 2014). The Edibility Approach (EA) proposed by Luci Attala (2017; 2019) conceptualises eating as a process "which is not achieved by the individual alone but rather emerges as a relationship where the brute materiality of engaging parties – the eater and the eaten – blend together in concert as flesh-becoming" (Attala 2019, xx). What are often referred to as metabolic processes, Attala recognises as a method by which "bodies of different species fundamentally and profoundly engage with each other" (Attala 2019, xx). This approach views ingestion through the optic of multispecies entanglement (Attala 2017, 125). Plants "eat sun" and people consume plants – these simple facts and complex processes shape relations. The point here is to present an aspect of human relationships that is often overlooked – specifically that people live *with* and are composed of the materials of the world, rather than just using them. Moreover, this concept draws our attention towards the porosity of species' boundaries previously highlighted by other scholars (Haraway 2008; Tsing 2015).

Perceiving plants as resources for humans is linked to one of the main constructs of modernist discourse: the dichotomy of nature and society (Pálsson 1996, 64), a dichotomy which capitalism attempts to strengthen and naturalise (Marder 2013). Plant utility does not have to be linked to commodity logic, exploitation, paternalism or conservation, i.e. modes wherein humans see their goals as above those of others and decide what is beneficial to them and to other organisms. Rather, the utility of humans to animals and plants, and vice versa, may be constructed through encounters

1 Each author's contribution in the conceptual development and writing of this article is identitcal.

and built via different types of relationships. Plants influence people's organisms by being eaten, but plants also benefit sometimes from being ingested. Michael Marder's claim is that "[p]lant-thinking does not oppose the use of fruit, roots, and leaves for human nourishment, rather what it objects to is the total and indiscriminate approach to plants as materials for human consumption within the deplorable framework of the commodified production of vegetal life" (Marder 2013, 184).

Timothy Johns has suggested that "people eat food not nutrients" (Johns 1994, 52). People have good reasons and the means to avoid eating unpalatable foods, such as bitter, pungent, astringent tastes, which contain phytochemicals – but nevertheless, as many studies show, people do not avoid unpalatable plants in their diet. Within the edibility approach, we maintain that people may eat secondary chemical compounds consciously. Hence, our claim here is that people both eat food (we take into account the complexity of the term) and chemical compounds. Chemical ecology is an extensive field of research, which largely concentrates on chemical compounds present in plants and their role in the interactions between organisms, including humans. The classical model of human chemical ecology argues that human ingestion of plant chemicals is part of an integrated adaptive response, which has biological and cultural components (Johns 1990; 1994). This general premise is not compatible with our approach, nor with the search for the way out from the nature-culture dichotomy. Nevertheless, some conceptual and technical aspects of chemical ecology have offered an important perspective in a number of studies dedicated to foraging practices (Grivetti 2006), in addressing processes of domestication and the genetic diversity of some staple foods (Johns 1990; McKey et al. 2010), and in studying the overlapping contexts of medicinal and food plant use (Etkin 1993).

Edible plants contain both primary metabolites, such as amino acids and proteins, simple sugar, carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals and plant hormones, as well as secondary metabolites (also called secondary compounds or allelochemicals) (Johns 1990; Klaser Cheng 2017). Allelochemicals are "chemicals by which organisms of one species affect the growth, health, behaviour or population biology of another species"; they are also described as plant defensive chemicals (Whittaker and Feeny 1971, as cited in Johns 1990, 5). Plants are sessile, in other words they cannot locomote, and therefore they protect themselves from being overgrazed by producing allelochemicals in roots, bark and leaves; but because the plant's strategy is to produce offspring in numbers that can be dispersed over a large distance, generally few allelochemicals are produced in fruits, which increases their edibility (Moerman 1994). Allelochemicals play an important part in the communication and interaction of plants, as well as between plants and other phyla (Karben, Shiojiri, Ishizaki 2011; Witzany 2006). By bringing the chemical-ecological perspective into anthropological research, we do not wish to analyse plants as "convenient and healthful storehouses of calories, carbohydrates, or

other units of stored energy" (Marder 2013, 185). Instead, we wish to point out that the perspectives of ecology and chemical ecology may give additional insight into processes of foraging, into food preferences and food avoidance, and into propagation strategies, with all of the above resulting from the ways people dwell in their environments. This perspective helps to understand the complex ecological webs of relations between people, plants, animals, objects and environments. To notice and understand these relations, imaginative engagement is needed, similar to that postulated by Willis in *The Ethnographic Imagination* (2000). To be able to imagine potential relations between plants and the people collecting and consuming them, and to remain open to less obvious connections, is an essential ability in this research. Some knowledge of natural sciences, e.g. chemistry and ecology, is required for the more-than-human exploration of these potential interrelations. These scientific insights play the role of the eye of the needle that "ethnography" plays in Willis's understanding (2000, viii).

Attala (2017; 2019) concentrates on the relationship which is created between the eater (human) and what is eaten (plant). She exemplifies the EA by discussing the agential properties of psychoactive plants in some Amerindian contexts. We, on the other hand, focus not only on the eating process, but also on foraging and food making practices, for which we need the broader ecological approach offered by Ingold's dwelling perspective (2000). We are going to apply this perspective both to the eater and to what is eaten. Within the human condition, foraging and food making requires enskillment and active engagement in the environment. What should also be taken into account is that the relation with eaten plants extends into the environment in which a given plant dwells and continuously becomes with. Therefore, within both the human and the plant condition, dwelling is an active engagement with one's environment. According to Ingold's approach to dwelling, it is human and non-human animals which are endowed with the capacity of building – the generation of forms (Ingold 2000, 172–181). This capability is not extended to plants. We, however, think that plants, although they seem very different due to their sessile nature and distributed self (Marder 2013), can be seen as dwellers too. They are beings "immersed in the currents of the lived worlds" (Ingold 2011, 10) and through their chemical traces they shape environmental conditions for their successors. Moreover, the plants' forms, which are seen as much more than just their life-forms, but include the chemical compounds, arise from the relational involvement in the surroundings.

METHODS

Our cases are about how people live *with* plants, as exemplified in the foraging practices of agriculturalist groups living in three different parts of the world. Complementary

to their agricultural activity, these people collect non-cultigens/wild edible plants for consumption. Our cases come from three separate, larger research projects: one concerns practicing plant knowledge in general terms and in all domains in Eastern Podilia (Ukraine), another the particular domain of edible plants of the Shiri people (Daghestan), and the third medicinal and food plants in the Atlantic Forest. In the cases, we employ different scales of people and plant encounters. While the Ukraine and Daghestani cases concentrate on one plant taxon and a small number of human protagonists, the Atlantic Forest case introduces a greater number of people and plants. Although the research projects differ in their techniques of data collecting, the main methods applied are ethnographic – participant observation, semi-structured, unstructured and in-depth interviews; cognitive – free-listing (free elicitation of plant species names used or known in a particular domain, for example of non-cultivated edible plants), ethnobotanical – walks in the woods and cataloguing of plants stored by interlocutors (Martin 2004). Forest walks are more or less experimentally organised forms of participant observation of plant collection, during which participants are asked to collect or show plant species they know or usually collect (Thomas et al. 2007). Within each project, herbarium specimens were collected, determined and deposited according to the project: in the herbarium of the University of Warsaw Botanic Garden, the Botanical Garden of the Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, and in the herbarium IBONE, Corrientes, Argentina. Precise taxonomic identifications of plant species were an important starting point in the search for literature concerning the phytochemical composition and pharmacological properties of the plants discussed. Within each project, expression of consent was required before each interview and it was accordingly obtained in verbal or written form.

Both researchers are female, with a background in anthropology and ethnobotany. IK is also a biologist. Our research was performed much more *with* people than *with* plants (cf. Noorani and Brigstocke 2018), because the plants in many respects were seen both through the lenses of our interlocutors and of ourselves, lenses which were, to some extent, influenced by biological and ecological perspectives. We acknowledge that the everyday social relations of our interlocutors are more-than-human social relations, and pay particular attention to the plant agents involved in these relations. Noorani and Brigstocke (2018) see such an attitude as the base for research *with* more--than-human actors not *on* them. Donna Haraway (2008) postulates that researchers should take the ethical responsibility to avoid treating other-than-human research participants as passive objects. We do take this responsibility and through EA, chemical ecology and the dwelling perspective, we show plants as active. We see the tools of ecology as helping us to see the *otherness* of plants and their autonomous existence, instead of assimilating them to "human frames of reference" (Noorani and Brigstocke 2018, 20).

CASE STUDIES

Edibility in disturbed times and habitats. Case study from Podilia, Ukraine
Protagonists: human – *babka*[2] Stasia and plant – *akacia* (*Robinia pseudoacacia* L.).[3]
In 2013, as a part of a larger research study (conducted in the years 2012–2018), 30 hours of video-recordings were co-created by pupils of a local primary school and anthropology students from the University of Warsaw. This case is based on a video-recorded interview with a local expert. The language of the research was *surzhyk* – a local mixture between Ukrainian and Russian.

In 2013, *babka* Stasia, the protagonist of the case study, was a 75 year old Roman Catholic woman, living in a village in Vinnytsia oblast (region) – Central Ukraine, in the geographic region of Podilia. In the period 2012 and 2018, the majority of the over 1500 villagers belonged to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate), whilst less than 1/5 of inhabitants were members of the Roman Catholic Church. The village is located in the forest-steppe zone – a transitional zone between forests in the west and steppe in the south and east (Bohn et al. 2004), formed in a subcontinental climate. The prevailing habitat types in the area are broad-leaved deciduous forests, coexisting with sharply delimited patches of meadow steppe of the South Bug Basin (Kuzemko et al. 2014). Forest and meadow patches are often referred to in everyday conversations. Rich, grey forest soils provide favourable conditions for agriculture, especially for fruit production (Kuzemko et al. 2014). Two big agricultural companies are major employers in the area: their flagship crops are apple varieties. *Babka* Stasia was very proud (as was typical for my interlocutors) of the recreational herbal teas she makes. Collecting edible and medicinal plants is part of the local and national identity (Kołodziejska-Degórska 2016). Moreover, in the context of plant collecting, safety arguments based on a distrust of producers and the state are common in the village (cf. Caldwell 2011; Gabriel 2005), and for some interlocutors economic arguments are important as well.

When we[4] arrived at her house, *babka* Stasia greeted us warmly and said that she was keen on taking part in the film about people and plants in her village. When asked by two of the local schoolgirls, she started to talk about the plant species she

2 *Babka* – a term used to address elder women, a sign of respect and affinity. I refer to her in the article in the way she was referred to and addressed in the village.

3 In the first instance, I give the local name and official Latin plant name (following The Plant List). The letter as part of the Latin name is an abbreviation of the last name of the person who described and named the species, an interesting indication of plant-human entanglement. I give here only local names that case protagonists used. There are more names that function simultaneously for the same taxon in the village and in the idiolects of particular village dwellers.

4 Jana and Kristina (12 year-old girls from the village), Olga and Rafał (ethnology students from Warsaw), Jacek (anthropologist and photographer) and IK.

collects and agreed to show us some. She went out and fetched a big jar (about 12 litres) of dried *akacia* flowers. The huge jar of bright flowers rolled on the floor of the dim-lit room, looking beautiful and spectacular.

"I'll make a cup of *akacia* tea for you," said *babka* Stasia. In the course of preparation, she added other plants to the tea and it turned out that she rarely makes recreational tea from just one herbal ingredient. She kept small, handy supplies of: *derevij/ tysiachylistnik* (*Achillea millefolium*), *miata* (*Mentha* spp.), *zveraboi* (*Hypericum perforatum*) in the summer kitchen in plastic bags. They were all kept together, and she took out the inflorescences and flowers as and when she needed. *Babka* Stasia mentioned that she had drunk the contents of a 3-litre jar of dried *akacia* flowers over the course of the winter – a huge amount for one person – but that she still had more than she needed. Like other women in her community, she stockpiles herbs to share them later with friends and family.

We learnt that, unlike other plants, *akacia* has to be stored in a glass jar. Once dried properly it preserves well, keeping its sweet taste and aroma, and the glass prevents insects from entering the container. It is not by accident that these flowers have an intense, sweet odour and attract animals: it is an important element of their evolutionary role. Mentioning the aroma and taste of the fresh flowers evoked memories of difficult times – of hunger and poverty, both very important to her, and both connected to *akacia*. *Babka* Stasia, rather animated, starts to recount:

> After the War in 1947 there was famine. In some places in Ukraine people starved, in others not. People from our village travelled to western parts of the country to survive and bring something to eat. Bloated people sometimes collapsed, and even died on the village paths. And we, we, my siblings and I, collected *akacia* flowers. Afterwards, we took the flowers off the stalk. Our mother would grind it to a pulp with a wooden pestle and make *bliny* [pancakes]. We survived thanks to the weeds, thanks to *akacia*. In '47 we ate only weeds… It is clear that they are healthy, because we were able to survive.

She mentioned other plants eaten at that time: *polutycia* (*Convolvulus arvensis*), *babka* (*Plantago major*) and others, but *akacia,* as a tasty one, was still of great importance to her. The taste that is attractive to human and non-human animals comes from high contents of amino acids, phytosterol and sugars in the nectar and pollen (Somme et al. 2016). This plant strongly invests in reproductive organs, producing a large flower crop and valuable nectar resources (Giovanetti 2018). Flowers are visited and pollinated (in the plant's natural range – the US) by bees (mainly the honeybee – *Apis mellifera*) and hummingbirds (Huntley 1990). This might be important, because a range of similar plant active compounds are toxic to both honeybees and human beings (cf. Jansen et al. 2012). This feature allows humans to use the same nectar sources as honeybees use. In contrast, attracting people to eat flowers does not directly influence the reproductive success of *akacia*, but it may influence the decision to plant this tree.

Babka Stasia doesn't prepare *akacia* the way her mother did back in 1947, but instead collects it in abundance and then dries and drinks it, or uses it to make infusions for irrigations or for rinsing the genitals. *Akacia* is both an edible and a medicinal plant. *Babka* Stasia has a strong emotional connection with the plant based on a gratitude which stems from the time of famine. Similarly to other village dwellers, she did not stop collecting edible plants after the famine experience (cf. Pirożnikow 2014).

In the meantime, the water in the kettle was boiling. A handful of *akacia* and several inflorescences of *derevij* and *zveraboj* were taken out of plastic bags and put into a small (300 ml) jar (Fig. 1). *Babka* Stasia poured boiling water onto the herbs. She inhaled loudly and asked: "Can you feel the smell spreading in the kitchen? Each herb has its own scent. *Akacia* smells like summer, like June in the middle of winter." Smelling was very important to her. She encouraged us to smell all the herbs she showed us.

Fig. 1. The process of akacia (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) tea preparation. Podilia, Ukraine.
Author: Jacek Wajszczak, 2013

Akacia flower collection practice is very common in the village, mainly among women. They use it for medicinal purposes (for irrigations and for rinsing the vulva in the case of excessive white vaginal discharge), but also as a recreational tea. *Akacia* grows in the village in a few places. For *babka* Stasia, the *akacia* wood is the main source of *akacia* flowers because it is remote enough (although still within the village borders) and is not polluted due to car traffic (as local opinion holds). What is more, inflorescences on the wood's edges are easily accessible, even for an elderly person.

Such woods spread spontaneously and have become a common feature of the Ukrainian forest-steppe (cf. Sytnyk et al. 2016), even though *akacia* is not a native tree there. *Akacia* often grows in dense thickets of clones (the wood in the village is such a thicket). Thanks to the root suckers (a vegetative regeneration), an extensive root system and the ability of nitrogen fixation (through cooperation with Rhizobium bacteria), it is well adapted for survival in disturbed areas (Cierjacks et al. 2013). Thanks to its clonal growth, it readily colonises new areas. This feature increases the potential of R. pseudoacacia for landscape change, also causing other changes, for instance in fauna and flora, animal behaviour, etc. (cf. Buchholz and Kowarik 2019; Cierjacks et al. 2013; Giovanetti 2018). Human-animal behaviour is also influenced, amongst others because such *akacia* woods are difficult to pass through. This is mainly due to the large thorns present on younger branches and the density of the undergrowth consisting of young root suckers.

The thorns are mentioned by many village dwellers, but the older generations remember them more vividly than others, as this particular feature of the *akacia* species poses a threat to bare feet. Nowadays, it is not a problem anymore, as shoes are not that expensive and a universal commodity. Nevertheless, some village dwellers, young boys in particular, still consider the thorns a threat to their bike tires. People rarely enter the wood *babka* Stasia mentions: instead they usually collect *akacia* flowers available at its edges. The thorns, a highly unwanted feature from the village dwellers' point of view, play a role in protecting the plant from herbivores (including human beings as shown above). The bioactive compounds present in all parts of the plant (except the flowers), and especially in the bark, may be toxic to human and non-human animals (Stankov et al. 2018; Tyśkiewicz et al. 2019). Thus, they play a similar role to thorns. Although the active compounds toxic for humans are destroyed by heat (Frohne and Pfänder 1984), all of my interlocutors used only the flowers of *akacia* as food. Drinking the *akacia* tea, we continued the meeting.

Edibility in the context of collecting, sharing and microhabitats. Case study form lowland Daghestan.

The protagonists: human – Aishat (about 55), Mariat (35) and plant – *zhibzhnil mokrica*, (*Stellaria media* (L.) Vill.). This case study comes from the research project "Documenting Dargi languages in Daghestan – Shiri and Sanzhi" conducted between 2012 and 2019 in Daghestan – a republic of Russia in the Northern Caucasus – a region characterised by high ethnic and biological diversity. The case was recorded in Druzhba village (lowland Daghestan) in April 2019 and is the result of a walk in the woods with two Dargi women. The Shiri community, who used to live in Shiri – a small village in the mountainous part of Daghestan, the Dakhadeyvskij region – speaks its own Shiri language (one of the Dargi languages). Nowadays, most Shiri people live in multi-ethnic settlements in the lowlands such as the village Druzhba. Druzhba

is mostly inhabited by Dargi (including Shiri), Tabasaran and Agul ethnic groups. The main language of research was Russian, which is the *lingua-franca* in Daghestan and is the most common language of communication with people outside the village. Sunni Muslims predominate in the community.

Geographically, Daghestan is characterised by four belts of physio-geographical provinces. Two physiographic belts are important for the case: first, the lowlands by the Caspian sea (where Druzhba village is located) have quite a dry and continental climate with a mean annual temperature of 12.5°C. Steppe is the prevailing habitat (Matuzaliev 2016) and industry and large-scale agriculture is also located in the area. Second, the intra-mountain belt (where mountainous villages mentioned in the case study are located) has a mean annual temperature of 6°C, and a prevalence of species-rich mountainous meadows and mountainous steppe habitats (Matuzaliev 2016). There are significant differences in flora between these belts (cf. Litvinskaja and Matuzaliev 2013, 10–19), which notably influence the collection of wild plants and plant exchange patterns between the dwellers of the belts.

When we[5] came to visit Aishat (a Dargi woman of Shiri origin), her friend Mariat (a Dargi woman from Urari) was already there. They were planning to go out to collect *mokrica*, which is one of the leafy greens collected in many parts of Daghestan and beyond (e.g. other parts of Russia and the former USSR). It is often traded at Daghestani markets by members of some ethnic groups (mainly Azeris and Tabasarans). For both our interlocutors, and generally for Shiri people, the leafy greens may only be bartered, but never sold (Kaliszewska and Kołodziejska-Degórska 2015). *Mokrica/zhibzhni* is used as a filling for *chudu* (a stuffed pie, also referred to as *ħuʕlkni*) and *kurze* (dumplings). Generally, wild leafy vegetables are a significant element of everyday social life in Shiri in regard to mutual care, respect for elders and local identity and pride (Kaliszewska and Kołodziejska-Degórska 2015).

We went together to collect *mokrica* in the so-called *sovkhoz* vineyards.[6] It was the end of March; the temperature in the lowlands, where Druzhba village is located, was around 10ºC. But in the mountain villages, from which both Aishat (Shiri) and Mariat (Urari) originate, it was snowing. The weather was an important subject in our chat on the way. Mariat stressed that she collected plants all year round, if possible. She told us that that year (2019) she had bestowed her son's teachers with two plastic bags of collected *mokrica* in January. It is the only leafy green that can be collected all year round in lowland Daghestan – in the mountains, the climate is harsher and there are

5 Iwona Kaliszewska and IK.

6 The name *sovkhoz* (Soviet state farm (rus. *sovetskoye khozyaistvo*)) is still used by locals, even though the former sovkhoz was transformed into a private enterprise and the lands belonging to it were sold.

no such plant species. She hoped that the teachers appreciated the gift, as it was difficult to collect *mokrica* in winter, because the plants are small and hands go numb in the cold. We understood that *mokrica* and other self-collected plants have significant informal economic value for her. She may use them in reciprocity practices, giving them not only to the teachers in the periods when it is difficult to get leafy greens, but also exchanging them with family living in the mountains. She is able to gather leafy greens in the lowlands, before the vegetation period in the higher elevated areas starts. So she barters them with her sister in Urari for dairy products and leafy greens typical for the highlands. Leafy greens from the mountains (for the species list of taxa collected by Shiri people, see Kaliszewska and Kołodziejska-Degórska 2015) are often seen as of better quality and taste. Such opinions concern taxa that are characteristic for the mountains and are not available in the lowlands. Moreover plants coming from the mountains are referred to as *ekologicheski chistoe* (ecologically clean) (for a broader post-soviet context of the term see, for example, Caldwell 2011, 74–100). Lowlands are seen by our interlocutors as polluted. Such a notion is based on the observation of the presence (now or in the past) of industry and larger-scale agriculture involving the use of agrochemicals and common knowledge of bioaccumulation processes in plants (cf. Reinert 2019). Additionally, this notion is greatly enhanced by the romanticised view of the places in the mountains from which particular communities originated.

Both women took plastic bags and small knives with them to collect the plants. Mariat was wearing a dedicated apron with a big pocket. Mariat was the leader during this expedition: she instructed us, as the less experienced ones, on how to use a knife to dig out and cut the plant, showed all of us (including Aishat) the vineyard rows we should collect in, and instructed all of us that it was the best to gather plants that were not flowering yet. It is usually easy to see a dense, prostrate carpet of infinitely spreading *zhibzhni* in the soil between the vines. This time it was not so dense, both women noticed. The plant prefers moist soil and a position in full sun or partial shade. In moist conditions, it flowers and sets seeds all year round (Turkington et al. 1980).

Mariat was moving fast through her row. She first placed the plants into her apron, and when it was full she would transfer the load in the plastic bag. When the bags were full, she left them by the vineyard's poles. None of us, including Aishat (a skilled gatherer of other plants), collected as much as Mariat did, or moved with such grace. Mariat told us that she had learned to collect *mokrica* from her Tabasaran neighbours. She loves plant collection; the actions following plant gathering, such as removing the roots and soil, soaking and chopping, are more tiresome for her and wear her out.

Aishat collected *zhibzhni* without Mariat's ease, and was a bit puzzled by Mariat's suggestion to collect only not-flowering specimens. It was difficult to find such plants, and at the beginning she not only moved slowly and looked for not flowering plants,

but also tore off floral shoots. The plant individuals[7], without flowers, grew on drier microhabitats. Their shoots were a bit reddish and not as watery. Some of them had already fruited, which at first sight may be mistaken for flower buds. They most probably differed in their chemical composition, and the amount of active compounds and vitamins available. For example, in the research of Merritt (1986) on the tolerance of *S. media* to applications of ioxynil octanoate (a herbicide), plants grown under moisture stress contained greater concentrations of the pigments chlorophyll a, carotene and lutein (a xanthophyll) than moist grown plants did. Moreover, significant linkage was found between soil parameters and *S. media's* proteinogenic amino acid (precursors to proteins) content. Garden soil is the most favourable for amino acid content (Dziągwa-Becker et al. 2016). The preference for *mokrica* collection in the vineyard is motivated by its availability. *Mokrica* in the vineyard is easy to spot and collect in the large quantities needed for food supply for families. Additionally, the amino acid content could be higher in cultivated soil.

Both women called *zhibzhni* a "fat" plant (*zhyrna*), referring to its watery shoots and nutritional value. Mariat, like Tabasaran women, sees it as a plant full of vitamins, so she finds it especially important to eat it in springtime. It contains such vitamins as: A: 30mg[8]; Thiamine (B1): 0.02mg; Riboflavin (B2): 0.14mg; Niacin: 0.51mg; C: 375mg (PFAF, Lanska and Zilak 1992). *Zhibzhni* leaves contain active compounds, such as saponins, that play an important role for plants as allelochemicals, and in protection from herbivory (by mammals (Tava et al 2000, 45), and insects (Harmatha 2000, 138), fungi and microbes (Osbourn et al. 2000, 122)). The potential of these substances is used by humans in medicine (e.g. Mahato 2000), but in large quantities they can be harmful for people. That is why the procedures of food preparation of plants containing high amounts of saponins are so important, as they are broken down through cooking (Rao and Gurfinkel 2000). The undesirable properties of the water-soluble saponins can be neutralised by soaking the plants. In Druzhba, *zhibzhni*, when prepared for *chudu* or *kurze* filling, is first soaked, and then cooked. In the village, the plant is used as a healthy food (or a functional food in ethnobiological jargon), and is not known for its direct medicinal applications. Furthermore, it is absent from popular books on medicinal plants in the former USSR, such as Popov 1969; Gammerman and Grom 1976; Ivanov 1992, etc.

Both women knew that *zhibzhni* is considered a weed – a plant not wanted in the cropland. Nevertheless, for them, especially for Mariat, it is a valuable, edible plant. In the spring, *sovkhoz* vineyards are full of women collecting *mokrica* and other edible

7 Here understood as a grouping of shoots looking like an individual above ground: genetic variation and underground root connections are not taken into account. The definition of an individual in plants is much more difficult than in mammals.

8 In 100 g of leaves and shoots.

greens. Most of them are of Tabasaran origin. It is common to hear members of other ethnic groups referring to Tabasarans as having vast knowledge of plants and "eating everything that is green."

When all the plastic bags brought to the site were almost full, the women decided that we should finish collecting (Fig. 2) and we went back to the village.

Fig. 2. The women with plastic bags full of *mokrica* (*Stellaria media*), after foraging in the vineyard. Lowland Daghestan. Author: Iwona Kaliszewska, 2019.

Interactions of different migrant groups in the Atlantic Forest with the Myrtaceae species

Between 2007 and 2019, I (MK) worked with two groups in Misiones, Argentina: overseas migrants from central-east Europe and their descendants born in Argentina or Brazil, and with mestizo people who hailed from the same ecoregion as Misiones in Paraguay. For centuries, Misiones has been home to Guaraní indigenous people (Bartolomé M. 2009). During the 19th century, Paraguayan mestizos would visit this region for selective logging and yerba mate extraction. In the 20th century, Paraguayans came to settle in Misiones, due to economic and political push factors (civil war and

the long period of the dictatorship of Alfredo Stroessner). Between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of WWII, Misiones also witnessed a massive migration of European farmers and peasants, who hailed from temperate climes and settled in this subtropical region to dedicate themselves to subsistence agriculture, the cultivation of cash crops, such as yerba mate, tea, tobacco and pine forests, and/or cattle rearing (Bartolomé L. 1982; Bartolomé and Schiavoni 2008).

The study participants live in mixed ethnic settlements in the western part of Misiones along the Paraná River, the border with Paraguay. However, some of these settlements were established by European migrants, such as Wanda town and Lanusse village (Poles), Puerto Esperanza (Germans) and Ruíz de Montoya (Swiss). Overall, I worked with people of Polish, Czech, Slovenian, Ukrainian, Russian, German and Swiss origins, fully or part time engaged in agriculture, and with Paraguayan mestizo people (locally called *criollos*). The latter are comprised mostly of small farmers who farm on 1–2 ha. plots, with the men also finding employment in the forestry industry. Paraguayan people are bilingual – they speak Spanish and Guaraní.

Phytogeographically, Misiones belongs to the Atlantic Forest of the Upper Paraná – a subtropical humid forest (Campanello et al. 2009). Currently, nearly 40% of original forest cover is preserved in Argentina, in contrast to Brazil and Paraguay, where it comprises approximately 8% (Galindo-Leal and Câmara 2003). The progressive reduction of the forest surface has occurred due to the expansion of the agriculture frontier, animal husbandry and the logging of native tree species. Nevertheless, the Atlantic Forest still remains one of the most diverse ecosystems in the world (Da Ponte et al. 2017).

The encounters of Myrtaceae trees and people via fruit edibility

In the Atlantic Forest of the Upper Paraná, a large diversity of Myrtaceae shrubs and trees grow (*Flora del Conosur* 2020). Local indigenous and non-indigenous populations have explored the edible and medicinal properties of Myrtaceae fruits and leaves (Begossi, Hanazaki and Tamashiro 2002; Kujawska and Łuczaj 2015; Martinez--Crovetto 1968; Montenegro 1710; Schmeda-Hirchmann 1988). According to my records, European and Paraguayan migrants distinguish, name and use 15 different species of Myrtaceae (see Table 1). Fruits are edible to both humans and animals, and birds make a decisive contribution to their dispersion. The consumption of these fruits has been connected by interlocutors to childhood escapades of forest exploration and to family excursions and picnics on stream shores during hot springtime weekends. Men would consume these fruits on an opportunistic basis during work in the forest whenever they found them and, if abundance allowed, bring some back home to share with the family. The species discussed here bear fruits just once a year, in a relatively short period during the spring and early summer (October-December). But there exists some variability in this pattern due to variation in microhabitats, such as sun exposure, vicinity of a water body, etc. What is interesting in these narratives is the

conjuncture of the consumption context (adventure, strolling, picnic, work-break) and the relatively short period of foraging. It seems that there is little space for an unexpected encounter. Initial random encounters with Myrtaceae fruit trees and shrubs often happened as an outcome of wayfaring and forest exploration, but subsequently the trees were remembered and incorporated into embodied maps. Moreover, people exchanged information about the edible fruit bearing trees, adding more points to their maps. They also learned the ecology of Myrtaceae trees, so they were able to expect where to find them.

Enjoying the natural abundance of Myrtaceae fruits is not the only possibility the local people have and explore. Encouraged by the trees' versatile properties, their easy growth from seedlings and the pleasant scent of their flowers, some European and Paraguayan migrants started to propagate these trees by protecting them at their natural sites, transplanting them and sowing the seeds of preferred species in home gardens, pastures and agricultural fields. It is difficult to state when this process started, as migrants have settled in Misiones from the end of the 19th century arriving in different migratory waves, and the process of selecting and manipulating Myrtaceae species can be observed to this day. These practices imply two processes: *in situ* conservation and incipient domestication. The latter involves the conscious planting of selected seedlings which come from big fleshy fruits, so that these features can be manifested in further generations. Such incipiently domesticated plants have relatively low phenotypic and genetic differentiation compared to their wild relatives (Clements 1999; Lins Neto et al. 2014).

The names of different species of Myrtaceae originate from Guaraní, Spanish and Portuguese, but also from German and Polish. Some of the Guaraní names recorded in this study had already been mentioned in *Materia Médica Misionera* attributed to a Jesuit monk, Pedro Montenegro (1710). *Yva hai* (*Eugenia pyriformis*) is a Guaraní name that means "sour fruit". European migrants have adopted this name, sometimes pronouncing it as *ubahai*. German migrants, however, have invented their own name *saurer Apfel* meaning "sour apple" – taking an apple as the prototype fruit, but placing the taste characteristic – sourness – in its name as the Paraguayans had done. The above-mentioned German name, or the Polish name for *Eugenia involucrata* – *cerella* – *dzika czereśnia*, "wild cherry", were invented at a time when European migrants had had little contact with mestizo and Guaraní people, so they made up names based on different associations, in order to communicate and pass on knowledge. This was an important step in becoming familiarised with the local flora of Misiones.

When asked about the motivation for foraging for wild Myrtaceae fruits, interlocutors' answers were recurrent: the sensual pleasure – the scent of the fruits (they contain essential oils), their unique and complex taste: sweet and sour at the same time. Some fruits of Myrtaceae contain tannins (*Campomanesia xanthocarpa*, *Eugenia uniflora*) or saponins (*Psidium guajava*), which make them astringent (Silva et al. 2006). Hence, it is not only the sugars – the direct product of photosynthesis, but

also the allelochemicals present in fruits, which makes their taste and smell so attractive to people, and that makes them safe too when consumed in moderation. Another reason for consuming these wild fruits were the positive memories triggered through their smell and taste. On occasions, study participants would compare *pitanga*, *yva hai* or *guavira* with fruits available in grocery shops, and would contrast the complex taste of the former with the blunt sweetness of fully domesticated market fruits. Myrtaceae fruits are consumed on the spot as raw snacks, a practice due both to the context of consumption and to the scent of the fruits which is lost after some time (volatile oils evaporate). Some descendants of European migrants prepare homemade wine from *pitanga*, *cerella* and *yaboticaba* (Fig. 3). This practice seem being influenced by the tradition of making preserves for wintertime and a wide expertise in homemade fermentation (Łuczaj 2010), brought from their countries of origin.

Fig. 3. Homemade wine from the fruit of pitanga (Eugenia uniflora) made by a descendant of German migrants in Misiones, Argentina. Author: Monika Kujawska 2014.

The encounters of Myrtaceae trees and people via the pharmacological action of leaf and bark

The fruits of some Myrtaceae species have a medicinal value, due to the tannins, saponins, flavonoids and essential oils they contain (Pin and Céspedes 2009). However, apart from *Plinia trunciflora,* whose dried fruit skins (exocarps) are used as a remedy against diarrhoea, and *Eugenia pyriformis*, whose fruits are ingested against diabetes, no other fruit has been mentioned as being used as a food medicine (Fig. 4). Food medicine is defined here as food plants and products ingested for a specific healing purpose (Etkin 1993). Instead, we can observe a pattern in which the fruits of

Fig. 4. Yaboticaba (Plinia trunciflora) tree grown in a home garden of Polish descendants in Misiones, Argentina. Author: Monika Kujawska 2015.

Myrtaceae are ingested in a food context, and the leaves and bark are used as medicine and for hygiene (see Kujawska and Pieroni 2015; Kujawska 2018). This discrete use of fruits and leaves has its explanation in plant chemical ecology. In the medicinal context, the leaves or bark of different species of Myrtaceae are used predominantly in cases of diarrhoea. Moreover, the leaves of *Eugenia uniflora* are widely used in yerba mate infusions against hypertension. As a result of phytochemical assays, this species has been assigned hypotensive activity (Auricchio and Bacchi 2003). *Campomanesia xanthocarpa* is also used to combat bad smelling feet – the allelochemicals are absorbed transdermally (for more examples, see Table 1). Nina Etkin (1993) has observed that multiple uses of certain plants increases people's exposure to the chemically active compounds in these plants. Thus, multiple and multicontextual ingestion of fruits in a food context and leaves or bark in medicinal infusions increases the potential of exposing the dwellers of the Atlantic Forest to active substances found in Myrtaceae plants.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this paper, we brought together three different cases of people-plant relationships, viewed from a human foraging, food processing and edibility perspective. They clearly show that plant consumption and the ingestion of certain chemically active constituents take place in an environment specific context of dwelling. Not all plants in the environment are treated equally by humans, and people-plant entanglements may be anchored in plant utility. The utility of a particular plant derives from the vast ecological relations the plant has with other organisms dwelling in the same environment. It is important to note that most of the plant features that people find utile have not co-evolved only in interaction with people, but rather with other non-human organisms. The people-plant entanglement, even if deeply immersed in utility, enhances peoples' insight into plant ecology and plants' needs. Co-dwelling in the same environment with plants and paying attention to certain species *through* their edibility, stimulates people's enskillment. Our examples indicate that plant utility may be multicontextual and multidimensional, and not necessarily reduced to a commodity level. Within foraging practices not only are skills acquired, but also emotional bonds are created, such as thanksgiving to the *akacia* for helping to survive famine, showing care for relatives through *mokrica* or the moments of relaxation accompanied by Myrtaceae fruits.

Our choices and directions in telling the story about plant-people interrelations are certainly informed by our methodological choices and our background (both anthropological and in the natural sciences). Our cases are the results of a temporary co-dwelling with our interlocutors and learning with them the way they interact with

plants. The composition of the cases enables our interlocutors partly to speak for themselves, and the use of the languages of ecology and chemical ecology allows us, although in a limited way, to speak *for* the plants. The language of ecology does not go against the dwelling perspective, as one might have perhaps thought, because the relations and the ways through which organisms co-create their environments are the very essence of ecology. The existing intellectual division in academia between natural sciences and the humanities rests on Cartesian foundations. As Ingold rightly points out, "the only way to understand our creative involvement in the world is by taking ourselves out of it" [in terms of the dichotomies emerging from Cartesian dualism] (Ingold 2000, 173). This is why we have used ecologically grounded language in our analysis. Moreover, there are a few disciplines, including critical plant studies, that have emerged within the posthuman or nonhuman debate in the fields of critical posthumanities and feminist new materialism(s) that pay attention to the chemical aspects of plant communication and interspecies interactions (for example, in the works of such authors as: Donna Haraway, Michael Pollan, Stacy Alaimo, Carla Hustak and Natasha Myers).

Concentrating in the case studies on one plant taxon or an ethnotaxon is used as an explicit and direct way to operationalise the concept of the edibility approach. At first sight, the proportions seem unequal: we rarely describe one human actor as the counterpart to one plant taxon. Rather, we usually take into account many human narratives, multi-human standpoints, their background, age, gender, etc. But, indeed, here we do not write about a single plant, one exemplar, but about a population of plants of a certain species (or a family, in the case of the Myrtaceae). In similar fashion, in varying the number of human actors we depict in the particular cases, we aim to write about the relations between a certain population or a local group of *Homo sapiens* and the plants in question. The Ukrainian and Daghestani cases pay attention both to detail, as manifested in descriptions of movements in the environment and through references to sense and psycho-physical states, while also addressing broader social context. A more synthetic description of the interactions with Myrtaceae allows, on the one hand, a description of a greater number of plant protagonists and plant-human co-evolutionary processes (incipient domestication), but on the other elides individual human motivations and interactions with plants. These two modes of writing ethnographies, in which both people and plants are protagonists, strengthen the operational possibilities of implementing the above-proposed concepts and thus enable theoretical contributions (Goodenough 2004).

Paraphrasing Ingold (2000), although plants dwelling in environments work hard on the construction of their environment, nevertheless being tied with roots to a particular place, they rely on the physicochemical parameters of soil that are crucial for nutrient availability (Dziągwa-Becker 2016). The composition and quality of the microhabitat that a particular plant or a plant population grows in and co-creates

influences the plants' chemical composition (e.g. Hayati and Proctor 1990). Moreover, changes in the amount of some plant metabolites indicate response to environmental conditions and stress. Such factors, as shown in the case study from Daghestan, can guide people's choices of the particular plant individuals to be collected. The reason for this is that some of the differences in the chemical composition of plants are visible in their morphological features, as perceived by interlocutors and used by them as predictors of taste. The ability to notice these predictors forms a part of enskillment processes resulting from dwelling in a particular landscape (Ingold 2000). Dwelling results in an attunement to temporality, which is illustrated by the Atlantic Forest dwellers' knowledge of plant phenology: an experiential knowledge regarding where and when they can find fruits of particular Myrtaceae species. As a consequence of observing the plants in their environment, which is a multi-sensual task, they notice and stress the correlation between sun-exposure of fruits and their taste. Moreover, the taste and its temporality (the volatile nature of scent) plays a crucial role in the process of planting Myrtaceae trees in their gardens. The fact that the compounds responsible for floral scents have a volatile nature influences the behaviour of women collecting *akacia.* Those who are experienced harvesters know that it is better to preserve dried *akacia* flowers in glass jars than in plastic bags or air ventilated sacks. Additionally, the interaction with other non-human animals is taken into account, because dried yet still sweet flowers attract insects. Volatile compounds have a communicational role in ecological relations and people receive the messages, or just some parts of messages, addressed to various co-dwellers of a particular environment (Karben, Shiojiri, Ishizaki 2011).

The sessile nature of plants is closely related to the trait of a distribution of chemical compounds. Concurrently this feature of plants implies that when people perceive some plants as edible, they tend to propagate them, i.e. move them towards people's households. People's foraging practices are also related to the sedentary nature of plants, either through wayfaring in the environment in search of plants, or through moving from one place to another according to an embodied resource map, or a combination of these two. People actively nurture plants using different methods and techniques (toleration, protection, cultivation), plants on the other hand nurture humans when they are ingested and contribute to vital processes in human organisms.

Along with the importance of taste and individual nourishment in the shaping of the foraging practices in our study sites, it is worth mentioning social-body nourishment (Daly 2019). In Podilia, the gathering and consumption of wild plants is not only an everyday practice, but a part of a national identity discourse (Kołodziejska-Degórska 2016). As shown in the Daghestani case, people compare the flora of wild plants gathered by various ethnic communities. Wild edible plants from the mountainous villages are markers of local identity for the Shiri community (Kaliszewska and Kołodziejska-Degórska 2015). The wild edibles are seen as valuable enough to

circulate between localities in the lowlands and the mountains, as well as to be exchanged for goods or favours. In such a way, relations in the human community are maintained thanks to non-human actors (for more on the role of food circulation in the reproduction of social relations within communities in Daghestan, see Kaliszewska 2018). These practices emerge from humans not plants, but the EA argues that agency is a distributed force and not something that only resides in people.

According to Ingold's dwelling perspective, "the landscape is constituted as an enduring record of – and a testimony to – the lives and works of past generations who have dwelt within it, and in so doing, have left there something of themselves" (Ingold 2000, 189). Although Ingold refers in his work to animals (human and non-human), we argue that generations of plants who have dwelt within the landscape have also left something of themselves, for example generations of *akacia* (co-existing with *Rhizobium* bacteria) leave soil with higher nitrogen content. *Akacia* is a special agent of change in an environment which the tree shares with other organisms, influencing the foraging behaviours of animals, including humans (e.g. through thorns, soil nitrogen enrichment dense thickets, chemical composition of nectar). People dwelling in the Atlantic Forest with native Myrtaceae spp. result in their propagation (the effect of agency of both plants and "their people"), through processes which could be seen as leaving footprints in the forest, to paraphrase William Balée (1994). Historical ecology in the Atlantic Forest and Amazonia has shown that inhabited environments are most often testimonies of the agricultural activity of previous generations of agriculturalists (horticulturalists) or other groups (Balée 2013). European and Paraguayan migrants who arrived *en masse* in Misiones stood on the land (landscape) co-created by the Guaraní. These newcomers (or intruders, for the Guaraní), found Myrtaceae fruits which were part of the Guaraní legacy, an outcome of their long-lasting interactions with the environment (Montenegro 1710; Martinez-Crovetto 1968). One event of ingestion of Myrtaceae fruits did not provoke a craving for these plants on the part of European migrants – such a "eureka" effect produced by a single ingestion is more likely to be seen in cartoons. It was rather a long process which involved living with, as well as learning about and sensing (smelling, tasting) Myrtaceae fruits.

Some elements of chemical ecology can be helpful in explaining aspects of food preference, food processing and plant propagation from our cases. Humans, through taste and smell, may detect many different chemical substances, which act either as stimulants (attractants) or deterrents (repellents). Fruits of Myrtaceae act as attractants to both human and non-human animals through their sweetness and the pleasant scent of volatile oils. Perception of such stimuli depends on neurophysiological responses, but also on the interpretation of the stimuli. The sweetness of Myrtaceae is certainly above the threshold level for perceiving it, but with sweetness come other tastes and flavours: allelochemicals, which have not been eliminated through different techniques of plant protection and propagation. Humans' taste preferences are, here,

one of the factors creating an environment of domestication (Leach 2003). A vast number of chemicals cannot be detected by humans through their taste or scent. *Mokrica* (*Stellaria media*) is neutral in its taste and the saponins found in it cannot be detected and determined as deterrents. Thus, Shiri people have developed (or borrowed) a technique to eliminate saponins from the plant by soaking it in cold water, a practice that at the first sight may look just like a cleaning process. This example demonstrates how plant chemical constituents can lead to culturally specific human techniques of food preparation.

In this paper, we aimed to show that in order to realise the postulates of the edibility approach, an engagement in both practical and theoretical imagination (understood after Willis 2000) cannot be restricted only to people's everyday lives, experiences, conditions and practices, but should also be extended to those of non-human organisms. We personally see the tools of ecology and chemical ecology as those most complementary to ethnographic ones in helping to achieve this goal. Our recommendation is to build stronger and more insightful collaboration between ethnographers and ecologists.

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Table 1. Species of the Myrtaceae botanical family used by non-native population of Misiones Argentina

Botanical name	Local name	Plant part used	Category of use	Use
Calycorectes riedelianus O. Berg [syn. Eugenia psidifloraO.Berg]	guaporai'ti (Eur.)*	fruit	food	raw snack
Campomanesia guaviroba (DC.) Kiaersk. en Warming	ñandu›apysa (Par.)*	fruit	food	raw snack
		bark	medicine	diarrhoea
Campomanesia guazumifolia (Cambess.) O.Berg	sietecapotes (Eur., Par.), ñandu›apysa (Par.), grüner Apfel (Ger.)	fruit	food	raw snack
		leaves	medicine	diarhoea, *empacho*
		bark		dermatological – skin burn
Campomanesia xanthocarpaO.Berg, en Mart.	guavirá (Eur., Par.), ñandu›apysa (Par.)	fruit	food	raw snack, sweet preserves
		leaves	medicine	diarrhoea, hypertension, uric acid, appendix, pharyngitis, coughs, diabetes, feet bad smell
*Eucaliptus*cfr. *saligna Sm.*	eucalipto (Eur.; Par.)	leaves	medicine	coughs, bronchitis, respiratory problems, hot remedy
Eugenia involucrata DC.	cerella (Eur., Par.); dzika czereśnia (Pl.)	fruits	food	raw snack; fruit wine
*Eugenia myrcianthes*Nied.	ubajay (Eur.)	fruits	food	sweet preserves, juice
Eugenia pyriformis Cambess.	yva hai (Eur., Par.); sourer Apfel(Ger.)	fruits	food	raw snack; fruit wine; sweet preserves
		leaves, bark	medicine	hypertension, high levels of cholesterol, diabetes, uric acid, anxiety, digestion problems, diarrhoea

Botanical name	Local name	Plant part used	Category of use	Use
Eugenia uniflora L.	pitanga (Eur., Par.), ñangapiry (Par.)	fruit	food	raw snack, fruitwine
		leaves	medicine	hypertension, high levels of cholesterol, uric acid, diabetes, vomits, diarrhoea, pharyngitis, cold remedy, anxiety
Myrcianthespungens (O. Berg) D. Legrand	guaviju (Par.)	fruit	food	raw snack
Plinia rivularis (Cambess.) Rotman	guaporaity (Eur., Par.)	fruit	food	raw snack
		bark	medicine	diarrhoea
Plinia trunciflora (O. Berg) Kausel [syn. Plinia peruviana (Poir.) Govaerts	yaboticaba (Eur., Par.); yva puru (Par.)	fruit	food	raw snack, fruit wine
		fruit skin	medicine	diarrhoea
		leaves		hypertension
*Psidium*cfr. *australe*Cambess.	guayava (Eur.)	fruit	food	raw snack
Psidium guajava L.	guayava (Eur., Par.), arasa (Par.)	fruit	food	raw snack, dessert, sweet preserves
		leaves	medicine	diarrhoea, toothache, pharyngitis, coughs, common cold
Psidium guineense Sw.	guayava (Eur., Par.), arasa (Par.)	fruit	food	raw snack, dessert, sweet preserves
		leaves	medicine	diarhoea, toothache

Legend: *(Par) - names used by Paraguayan migrants; (Eur) – names used by European migrants and their descendants; (Ger.) – names used by German migrants and their descendants; (Pl.) – names used by Polish migrants.

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EATING HEALTHY, EATING MODERN. THE "URBANIZATION" OF FOOD TASTES IN COMMUNIST POLAND (1945–1989)[1]

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The paper analyses the changes of food behaviours in post-1945 Poland in the context of socialist modernization. It is focused on both discourses and everyday practices. After 1945 Poland was a nearly mono-ethnic rural society which experienced fast modernization, industrialization and urbanization. The communist authorities who promised social justice and universal prosperity faced a problem of painful food shortages. This resulted from the aftermaths of war, and later was a by-product of the socialist economy. Thus, dietary education became an important strategy in the effort to feed the new socialist Poland. Special institutions and agendas were established to modernize eating habits according to the "rational", "scientific" bases of the communist project of modernization. Up until the late 1970s, expert dietary advice promoted pre-prepared food, canned and frozen products, vegetables and meat consumption. Food columns in women's magazines, advice books and adverts presented the model of a modern cuisine, which was in the first place healthy, but also *urban*.
Official food policies affected everyday practices and, by the end of the 1970s, experts identified a process of the *denaturalization* of food in rural areas. This changed during the crisis of the 1980s, when "traditional" recipes came to be appreciated as simple and "natural". The analysis of expert and popular discourses (women's magazines, medical literature), as well as of personal narratives (personal diaries, memoirs, letters to the editor) shows the changing meanings of food, and their connections to processes of urbanization and social advancement which were elements of a socialist modernization which was not too different from the western modernity of the time.

KEYWORDS: socialist modernization, communist Poland, eating habits, taste.

"Nutrition is no longer a question of the private decisions of individual consumers, but has become an issue of great social significance,"[2] declared Aleksander Szczygieł (Szczygieł 1974, 198), the founder of the Institute of Food and Nutrition (Instytut Żywności i Żywienia) in the mid-1970s. He then went on to describe the great

1 Research for this paper was supported by the Polish National Science Centre, grant no 2016/23/D/HS3/03199.

2 All quotations of documents etc. are author's translations, unless stated otherwise.

achievements of the 30 years of the Polish People's Republic, but at the same time identified new problems and new challenges. It was no longer malnutrition and starvation that the nation had to face, but unhealthy eating habits, in particular the excessive consumption of sugar and meat products, identified as a side effect of rapid modernization.

This article aims to explore the changes of food practices in post-1945 Poland in the context of socialist modernization. It analyzes both discourses and everyday practices. Recognizing the dichotomy between thoughts, ideas and reality, it attempts to show how experts' diagnoses and instructions affected everyday eating habits.

Food practices in socialist Poland are rather poorly researched in Polish historiography. Apart from the popular monograph *PRL na widelcu* (*PRL on the fork*, Brzostek 2010), no comprehensive studies have been published on this topic. Only recently have some analyses of collective catering and of consumption practices during the crisis in the 1980s been published (Czekalski 2011; Stańczak-Wiślicz 2014a; 2014b). Specific topics, such as food panics, meat consumption and the *black market*, the rationing system and eating habits of rural societies, have been taken up by social historians (Kochanowski 2010; Szpak 2013; Zawistowski 2016). The development of nutritional sciences has been researched by medical historians (Ćwiek-Ludwicka and Gromulska 2018), and cookbooks analyzed by cultural and literary scholars (Żarski 2008; Jaroszuk 2012; Keating 2018). In general, current historiographical research mainly concerns the issues of food shortages and state control of consumption. Meanwhile, eating practices in the USSR, Yugoslavia and the GDR have been considered also in terms of modernization, ethnicity and even luxury consumption (Bracewell 2012; Jacobs 2015; Massino 2012; Penn 2012; Weinreb 2011; Freedman 2013; Lakhtikova et al. 2019).

My aim therefore is to expand the scope of research on food practices in communist Poland and to use *modernization* as a framework for interpretation. Recent studies emphasize that socialist modernity should be considered as "modernity in its own right" (Calic, Neutatz and Obertreis 2011, 12). *Modernization* was a crucial element of the communist project implemented in Poland after 1945. During the Stalinist period (1949–1955) it was associated with urbanization and rapid industrialization, whereas from the post-Stalinist Thaw "moderate consumption" and rising living standards became the key concern of the party-state authorities. The *kitchen debate* that took place at the American National Exhibition held during the Moscow fair in 1959 symbolized a new stage of rivalry, identified by Susan Reid as a confrontation and, to some extent, negotiation between the socialist and capitalist images of modernity. The exhibition's main attractions included a fully automated "miracle kitchen", which symbolized American modernity in contrast to Soviet backwardness. It was in the kitchen, that Khrushchev and Nixon jousted over the relative capacity of the socialist and capitalist systems to satisfy the needs of their citizens (Reid 2002, 212). The *kitchen*

debate initiated new economic plans aimed at improving living standards in socialist countries.

The new policies towards consumption in Poland gained momentum in the 1970s. Increasing living standards, leisure and consumption became more important than ideological involvement. Gierek's team welcomed cooperation with scientific milieus and the *expert turn*, identified by Barbara Klich Kluczewska, also impacted on the meaning of "socialist modernity" in this period (Klich-Kluczewska 2017, 154). A growing interest in public health and the development of nutritional sciences was a part of the knowledge-based social policy of the 1970s. However, the first scientific institutions devoted to food and nutrition had been established in interwar Poland (1918–1939). At the National Institute of Hygiene (Państwowy Zakład Higieny, PZH established in 1918) operated a Department of Biochemistry and Hygiene of Nutrition (Oddział Biochemii i Higieny Odżywiania) and the State Department of Food and Consumer Goods (Państwowy Zakład Badania Żywności i Przedmiotów Użytku), which worked on food safety issues. After 1945, the Department of Nutrition at the Institute of Rural Medicine in Lublin (Instytut Medycyny Wsi, founded in 1951) was established. In 1963, the newly founded Institute of Food and Nutrition (Instytut Żywności i Żywienia, IŻiŻ) in Warsaw took over all issues related to nutrition (Ćwiek-Ludwicka and Gromulska 2018, 544). Their aim was to modernize eating habits according to the "rational" bases of the communist project of modernization. Besides scientific institutions, women's organizations – the League of Women and Rural Housewives Circles[3] – and the mass media produced discourses about the modernization of the Polish kitchen.

The argument I make in this article is that urbanization and social mobility, official food policies and the growth of an "ideology of advice" in the mass media (McCracken 1993, 57) were followed by visible changes in everyday practices in Polish families. To show these changes, I analyse official documents produced by state agencies – the Ministry of Provisioning and Trade, the Ministry of Domestic Trade and the Ministry

3 The League of Women (Liga Kobiet) – formerly the Social-Civic League of Women (SOLK), created in 1949 as a result of the unification process under Stalinism. It was the only mass women's organization in communist Poland. In the mid-1980s, it had approximately 600 000 members. Within a framework of limited agency, the League developed programs and activities dedicated to women. The organization developed a variety of sections and committees, for example The Section of Lawyers and a Home Economics Committee. From 1981, it operates under the name: the League of Polish Women.

Rural Housewives' Circles – officially established in 1918, and preceded by the Society of Housewives (1866) and Rural Housewives Circle founded by Filipina Plaskowicka in 1877. During the inter-war period (1918–1939), the Circles developed various courses and activities for rural women. After 1945, they continued educational campaigns, ran home economics centres, clubs, kindergartens and rental offices with household appliances.

of Health and Welfare – and by women's organizations, as well as expert writings and popular journalism. Women's and lifestyle magazines, "Kobieta" ("Woman"), "Przyjaciółka" ("Girlfriend"), "Kobieta i Życie" ("Woman and Life"), "Gospodyni" ("Housewife"), as well as the expert magazines "Żywienie Zbiorowe" ("Collective Catering"), "Żywienie Człowieka" (Human Nutrition"), "Przegląd Gastronomiczny" ("Gastronomy Review") and "Gospodarstwo Domowe" ("Household") are particularly useful sources for a study of this sort. I also examine personal narratives, such as diaries and memoirs. Most of these were prepared for various competitions announced in the press in the 1960s and 1970s.

TO FEED THE NATION

"We live in difficult times. […] It happens that workers, professionals or even military families suffer from undernourishment," stated the newsletter of the Polish Army Propaganda Department in November 1945.[4] During the first years of post-war reconstruction (1944–1948), the fear of starvation constituted one of the most important collective emotions; so the main concern was to save the country from hunger (Zaremba 2012, 550). Experts from the PZH diagnosed the Polish post-war population as suffering from exhaustion, vitamin deficiencies and malnutrition-related diseases. To combat this, they advocated social campaigns focused on feeding schoolchildren and organizing milk kitchens for infants (Szczygieł 1974, 185).

The aftermaths of the war – the devastation of industry, agriculture and transport infrastructure – resulted in the rupture of food chains and consequently in painful food shortages. Newspapers described whole villages on the verge of starvation and, on the other hand, petty profiteers and looters who enjoyed delicious food and alcohol. It was therefore incumbent on the new communist authorities, who promised social justice and common prosperity, to develop an efficient and egalitarian system of food distribution. This included the introduction of a rationing system (1944–1945), officially incorporated as an element of the national welfare system. This was supplemented by foreign aid, provided by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), and by the free market.[5] Despite these attempts to stabilize food provisioning, particular products, in particular meat, animal fats and dairy, were scarce.

4 *Jak się żywi kraj? Wojsko Polskie Główny Zarząd Polityczno-Wychowawczy, Oddział Propagandy*, listopad 1945, 1.

5 The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) – an international relief agency, largely dominated by the United States, operating during the years 1945–1947. It provided medical services, food products, fuel, clothing and other basic necessities. Poland was among the largest recipients of UNRRA commodity aid.

Thus, dietary education became an important strategy in the effort to fulfil the promises of food abundance and to provide people with sufficient nutrients. Firstly, experts from the PZH and from the Institute of Medical Chemistry in Kraków identified the main challenges and then developed recommendations for state food policy.

Meanwhile, the new communist authorities followed the Soviet model of social policies and strongly recommended the development of collective catering: factory canteens and cheap eateries. This was an element of the household modernization project which was based on the idea of women's emancipation. Also, it was easier to manage limited food supplies within a system of collective catering, and to change eating habits and food tastes according to official food policy and dietary knowledge. "Today, due to collective feeding it is easier than before the war to have impact on the quality of alimentation," in 1946 declared Stanisław Knauff, an expert journalist specializing in nutrition issues. In order to implement dietary requirements, the Ministry of Provisioning and Trade produced feeding manuals dedicated for canteen managers (Knauff 1946, 2). An expert magazine "Żywienie Zbiorowe" published recipes for dishes based on available products, like cereals, soy beans and canned meat from military supplies (Witkowska 1946, 6–7).

Since the development of collective catering was limited only to urban workers in key industrial sectors and employees of state institutions, food experts were concerned about individual consumption. This was particularly important, because most schools did not run canteens and there were very few nurseries and kindergartens. Hence, the Polish Food Committee (Polski Komitet Żywnościowy, PKŻ established in November, 1947) organized special training sessions for housekeeping instructors and, in cooperation with the Social-Civic League of Women (SOLK)[6] and Rural Housewives Circles, courses and public demonstrations specially aimed at working women (Sprawozdanie 1950, 27). Women were encouraged to economize and to use leftovers for preparing meals. The SOLK, together with the Ministry of Provisioning, ran several social campaigns, such as "meatless days" or "cakeless days". The idea was both to introduce an egalitarian model of consumption and, more prosaically, to manage the limited food supply. Economising on products used for baking cakes was presented as an act of social solidarity: giving up luxury for the common good. Frugality and thriftiness were strongly appreciated and presented as a "contribution to post-war

During the period 1944–1947, small manufacturing and trade companies operated legally. The so-called "battle over trade" (bitwa o handel) declared in 1947 began the effort towards state control over production and consumption (see: Kochanowski 2010).

6 The Social-Civic League of Women (SOLK) – founded in 1945, at the initiation of some members of the Polish Socialist Party (PPS), was tied directly to the new political system in Poland. In 1949, due to a process of unification SOLK (together with a few smaller organizations) was transformed into the League of Women.

reconstruction" (Wróblewska 1947, 16). At the same time, physicians and dieticians were concerned about the nutritional value of meals. In search for a meat substitute, they campaigned to increase fish consumption. Since Poland had obtained access to Baltic fisheries but fish consumption was not popular, they promoted cod as a foodstuff that was cheap, healthy and available. "Our households have to get accustomed to the new food policy," persuaded the magazine "Żywienie Zbiorowe", and presented fish consumption as a "civic duty" resulting from post-war territorial changes (Biernatowska 1946, 3). Nutrition claims went hand in hand with political propaganda.

Following expert discourses, women's magazines published recipes for simple but nutritious dishes. They explained how to use canned food, powdered milk and nutrients provided by UNRRA. "Kobieta" edited by the SOLK, "Przyjaciółka", the country's largest circulation women's magazine,[7] and "Kobieta Wiejska" addressed to rural women, published proposals for weekly menus that were based on nutrition standards and experts' suggestions. In the column *We cook*, "Przyjaciółka" recommended potato chops with chive sauce, beans in grey sauce, groats with liver and curdled milk with potatoes ("Przyjaciółka" 1948, 9). Weekly menus published in "Kobieta Wiejska" were based on the culinary traditions of the Polish countryside. For example, in January 1949 the magazine's suggestions for weekday dinners were: sauerkraut soup with potatoes and noodles with tomato sauce; barley soup (*krupnik*) and cabbage cutlets with mushroom sauce; borscht with potatoes and buckwheat baked with cheese; potato soup and dumplings with lungs; baked potatoes with herring and noodles with plum jam. Only for Sunday did the magazine suggest a luxury dinner: chicken soup with noodles, boiled meat with onion sauce and cocoa jelly for dessert. The suggestions for suppers were simple: fried potatoes, cabbage and pickle salad, potato soup, egg noodles with cracklings or millet with butter and sugar ("Kobieta Dzisiejsza" 1949, 17). Analysis of the weekly menus demonstrates a very limited amount of meat in the meals, a dominance of potato and flour dishes, and a strong attachment to the tradition of a warm milk-based breakfast. This was a result both of insufficient food supplies and the traditions of rural Polish cuisine.

These new recommendations and practical suggestions for cooking did not differ much from those published before the war. The modernization efforts aimed at increasing vegetable consumption can be seen as a continuation of the educational campaigns arranged by the Institute for Home Economics (Instytut Gospodarstwa Domowego) and the Rural Housewives' Circles.

7 "Kobieta" (1947–1949) – edited by the Social-Civic League of Women, earlier "Kobieta Dzisiejsza" (1946–1947). Its approach was to show support for the new communist authorities. The magazine was closed after the unification of women's organizations in 1949.
"Przyjaciółka" – a weekly edited by the "Czytelnik" Publishing House from 1948, was the most popular women's magazine in Poland, with a mass circulation of about 3 million copies in the 1960s. It was devoted to life stories, practical advice, gossip, fashion and beauty.

In summation, during the first years of post-war reconstruction the main concern was to provide people with a sufficient amount of nutritious enough food. Rational and modern cooking identified with thriftiness was presented as a moral obligation to the country. The main concepts of the official food policy were food safety and the development of an egalitarian model of food provisioning. The biggest challenge, as in all post-war Europe and in the United States, was to replace lacking meat products.[8]

TO IMPROVE, TO MODERNIZE, TO PLAN RATIONALLY

"When talking about the issue of national nutrition, we should look very carefully at the guidelines of the Six-year Plan,"[9] declared the expert magazine "Żywienie Człowieka" at the beginning of the Stalinist era (1948–1955) in Poland (Iwaszkiewicz 1949, 2). Like other areas of the economy and social life, nutrition became covered by central planning rules and subordinated to the superior objectives of rapid urbanization and industrialization. Therefore, experts were expected to develop an effective dietary system adjusted to the limited food supply and to the needs of the new consumers: young industrial workers. This was especially important since food abundance and a modernization of common food tastes became substantial elements of the prevailing propaganda discourse.

Brian Porter-Szűcs has argued that the provision of consumer goods was a crucial marker of socialist success, and even for the Stalinist era the distinction between a capitalist model of consumption and ascetic socialism is too simplistic. The focus on industrial expansion at the expense of consumer production was justified by dint of the challenges of rapid industrialisation, but growth in consumption was also perceived as a fundamental goal of the socialist system (Porter-Szűcs 2020, 83–86). Actually, food shortages were by-products of the socialist economy. They were silenced or presented as "temporary difficulties", while journalists affirmed that after 1945 food supply was gradually improving. The promise of food abundance was contrasted with harsh pre-war living conditions: the malnutrition and even starvation of working classes and overconsumption of the privileged. Publicists praised the fact that after 1945 the consumption of meat increased, and workers and peasants could afford to have a pork chop for dinner (Knauff 1949, 1; Łoś 1950, 7). The availability of meat signified social justice.

8 The author would like to thank the anonymous reviewer for his/her comments about the similarities in food policies and practical suggestions for cooking in the West and in the Soviet Bloc.

9 The Six-Year Plan (1950–1955) was the second – after the Three-Year Plan (1947–1949) – centralized plan in communist Poland. It concentrated on heavy industrialization, with such projects as Nowa Huta.

However, contrary to this optimistic propaganda, people were queuing in front of butcher's shops, and sequential meat panics resulted in strikes and protests (Kochanowski 2010, 172). Due to the requisitioning of food to cities, rural families could hardly afford to consume meat. Women diarists described a poor home diet consisting of potatoes, low fat milk and a small amount of meat served once a month (*Czyste wody* 1975, 47). Food policy makers faced massive challenges: how to fulfil the promise of food safety despite the shortages resulting from the aftermath of the war and the inefficiency of the central planning system. In order to increase meat production, the government announced a so-called "H campaign" which subsidized public and private farms. The next step was state control of the market, and of food production and distribution. Consequently, private restaurants, bars and cafes, as well as groceries and butchers disappeared from Polish cities and villages. Instead, collective feeding was promoted. All issues related to canteens and public eateries were transferred to state agencies affiliated to the Ministry of Domestic Trade (AAN, 2/1354/0/1.17, 120). According to Tadeusz Czekalski, the popularization of mass catering became the most important manifestation of changes in culinary culture in the second half of the 20th century in Poland. Cafeterias and canteens in workplaces were supposed to provide workers with a rational food supply, to popularize scientifically developed food patterns, to increase productivity and to provide new job opportunities for women. Moreover, dining in the workplace was presented as an opportunity to integrate the worker into the workplace (Czekalski 2011, 78). During the years of the Six-Year Plan (1950–1955), the number of canteens and cafeterias in workplaces increased from 668 to 9206. This was officially presented as a shift towards an egalitarian model of food provisioning despite supply difficulties (Niedziałek and Żelazna 1974, 228), and as an element of the Stalinist project of women's emancipation based on the idea of the collectivization of housework.

Actually, people decided to use canteens due to an ineffective supply system. The Workers' Supply Departments (Oddziały Zaopatrzenia Robotniczego) established in 1951 provided canteens and cafeterias with food products not available on the free market. Needless to say, young single workers living in workers' hotels with no access to well-equipped kitchens were determined to use canteens. Canteens provided customers with solid, calorific meals, often one-pot dishes served with bread. The recommended menu for factory canteens in 1949 consisted of two versions of dinner: a more expensive two courses and a cheaper, one course. The second version proposed, for example, tomato and pork soup with potatoes or oatmeal served with bread spread with cheese, canned meat stew with potatoes and groats or pea soup with canned meat and potatoes served with bread (Witkowska 1949a, 6). Even though experts demanded increased vegetable consumption, real menus were based on potatoes, bread and canned meat. For this reason, canteens were criticized for menus that were too monotonous, and not suitable for children, the elderly and those suffering from

metabolic diseases. Therefore, dieticians developed a standard family nutrition model. It consisted of breakfasts and suppers served at home, and dinners served in canteens or cheap public eateries (Witkowska 1949, 17). The milk bars introduced in 1949, mostly in big cities, were promoted as “democratic” places where all working people could have simple and cheap, but healthy meals prepared according to up-to-date experts’ suggestions (Dłużniewski 1950, 11). They were supposed to replace home cooking for single workers. The bars served dairy products that were cheaper and more available than meat. Their offer did not make revolutionary changes to common eating habits. Breakfasts based on milk and dairy products were already popular, especially among people of rural background.

Canteens, milk bars and public eateries gained relative popularity in big cities. In rural areas, there were unsuccessful attempts to organize canteens in collective farms (Państwowe Gospodarstwa Rolne, PGR)[10], since the workers preferred to dine at home (Czajka 1956, 1). Only the *junaks* sent to work by the Powszechna Organizacja “Służba Polsce” (SP) were provided with mass catering. However, they used canteens only temporarily during their stays in SP brigades.[11] Since eating at home was still much more common and women played a key role in the preparation of food, experts developed recommendations for individual households. The dietary norms of the time were common to both sides of the Iron Curtain. First of all, experts advocated the idea of a rational planning of weekly and daily menus. In order to maintain a “nutrient balance”, they suggested combining meals from different products: meat, vegetables and dairy (Czerny 1949, 15). A total daily nutritional value of 3000 calories for adults should be divided into three meals, with breakfast consisting of high-protein products: dairy, eggs and cured meat. Experts warned that eating more than three meals a day was a dietary error, resulting from inadequate planning (Plewniak 1950, 13). In search of substitutes for meat, they supported social campaigns organized by the Ministry of Domestic Trade, like “fish days” or “cod actions”. This encouraged the serving of cod dishes on a weekly basis (“Żywienie Zbiorowe” 1950, 21).

Experts’ recommendations were popularized by the League of Women (Liga Kobiet) founded in 1949, the only mass women’s organization in communist Poland. In 1950, its’ Household Department declared a strong commitment to the implementation of the 6-Year Plan in the field of nutrition: the League of Woman stated an intention to have an influence on market supply and on the promotion of certain food products which were necessary for health and important for the state economy. Therefore, the League organized courses and demonstrations of modern cooking

10 State Agricultural Farms (Państwowe Gospodarstwa Rolne, PGR) – a form of collective farming, similar to the Soviet sovkhoz. They were created in 1949 and liquidated in 1991.

11 The author would like to thank the anonymous reviewer for his/her suggestion to consider “junaks”. For more about “junaks”, see: Jarosz 1998 and Lesiakowski 2008.

technologies and developed practical suggestions for cooking dedicated for working women (Adamusowa 1950, 29; Czarnecka 1950, 58). Since the idea of the collectivization of housework turned out to be unsuccessful, it was individual households that became the targets of the modernization project. In the official discourse of the time, the upgrading of the household should enable women to reconcile the role of housewife with a professional career and social activity (Stańczak-Wiślicz 2017, 127). Moreover, feeding the family was perceived in terms of production: as a way to prepare the body and mind for work. Therefore, recipes and weekly menus published in popular women's magazines were to show readers how to cook well-balanced, nutritious meals. Taste was less important.

The only difference with regard to recipes from the early post-war years was the higher proportion of meat and animal fat in the dishes. Meat consumption was slowly increasing. However, as shown by Brzostek (2010, 106), this was principally accounted for by second-rate meat products, like cheap sausage, giblets, or brown or black pudding. For example, in 1950 "Przyjaciółka" recommended four main course meat dishes in the weekly menu: stewed pork, pork chops, kidney stew served with groats and mash with pork rinds ("Przyjaciółka" 1950, 14). Simultaneously with the social campaigns for fish and vegetable consumption, women's magazines advised on how to make tasty fish dishes and encouraged their readers to serve more vegetables, mainly basic ones like carrots or cabbage.

Stalinist modernization in the kitchen can be perceived in terms of rational planning, efficiency, simplicity and relative abundance. Therefore, good eating was commonly identified with a meat- and fat-based diet, high calories.

MANAGING EATING HABITS

After the Stalinist era, the official attitude towards consumption changed. First of all, criticism appeared of an "overfulfilled" Six-Year Plan which prioritized investment over consumption. Regarding food-related issues, a strong dissatisfaction was expressed with the idea of collective catering. Experts criticized the poor quality of the food served in canteens, poor service and a lack of cheap, healthy dishes in the menus. They complained that in the countryside cheap eateries had become similar to shops selling foodstuffs (Hebdzyńska 1956, 3). From 1954, the number of factory canteens began to decrease dramatically, primarily because of the withdrawal of the Workers' Supply Departments (Czekalski 2011, 80). On the other hand, home cooking had remained popular all the time. "I had to learn cooking and baking, because my husband did not want to use canteens or to eat at my mother's place," noted a young woman diarist in the mid-1950s (AAN, pamiętnik 89, 3). This trend was reinforced due to the "post-Stalinist backlash" identified by Dobrochna Kałwa as a return to traditionally

defined gender roles (Kałwa 2015, 173). In the mid-1960s, experts argued that eating out had a negative impact on family life. They therefore promoted the use of catering services (buying half-finished products or ready dishes) and eating at home (Bitter 1965, 5). Although due to the project to improve working conditions the number of factory canteens increased in the 1970s (Czekalski 2011, 81), this did not significantly affect eating habits.

At the same time, expectations towards food were changing. Jerzy Kochanowski argued that mass migrations from rural to urban areas and adapting to the new urban lifestyle resulted in a growing demand for meat products. Moreover, since basic alimentary needs had been fulfilled, people now required better quality products and became more attached to taste (Kochanowski 2010, 161). One rural diarist complained that her husband, after serving a mandatory 2-year military service, had got used to an urban way of eating and demanded sandwiches with cured meat for breakfast, instead of milk with noodles (*Czyste wody* 1975, 324).

The post-Stalinist shift towards "moderate consumption" led to a growing interest in a modernization of eating habits. Efforts to intervene in people's everyday practices were nothing new, but unlike during Stalinism, it was now consumers' satisfaction and taste, not only food's nutritional values, that mattered. The good health condition of the entire population, a food abundance and even luxury "within rational norms" signified a socialist good life, which in turn was supposed to contribute to the legitimacy of the communist authorities. Thus, expert magazines proudly informed about new projects, like introducing "bar-buses" [*barobusy*] in touristic areas, launching "hot chops, the so-called hamburger" and various types of coffee drinks in Warsaw ("Przegląd Gastronomiczny" 165, 6; 1966, 19; 1966, 6). This aspect was especially emphasized in the 1970s, when increasing living standards and Western-like modernization became the main slogans in the official discourse legitimizing Edward Gierek's team.

Official food policy, still subject to central planning but now associated with the idea of raising living standards, was supported by the authority of scientists. Researchers from the Institute of Food and Nutrition and PZH acted as experts for the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agriculture and other state agencies, and cooperated with the FAO/WHO, the European Commission and the Food and Feed Safety Authority (EFSA). The Institute of Rural Medicine in Lublin was focused on the eating habits of the rural population. Experts from the IŻIŻ developed suggestions for a series of plans in the field of nutrition. On the one hand, they were expected to support party-state policies, and on the other, they believed in their strategic role in the transformation of society (Kennedy 1991). In 1969, the authors of the action plan for the Institute argued that their research should be integrated into "the economic life of the country" for the benefit of society (*Perspektywiczne*… 1969, 2). The "expert turn" of the 1970s resulted in a growing role of scientists and consequently in the development of a structured institutional system to implement their ideas (Klich-Kluczewska

2017, 157). Physicians and dieticians claimed a need for greater influence on the food policies. In expert publications, they insisted that due to processes of modernization "people have lost the instinct for what to eat", so they needed professional advice (Rusiecki 1974, 3). They also spoke at official forums. During a meeting of the Committee on the Population's Nutrition (Komisja Żywienia Ludności) affiliated to the Ministry of Health, Aleksander Szczygieł presented a draft Report on Food and Nutrition in Poland. He argued that, since poor eating habits affected society as a whole, scientists were obliged to help the government to develop a long-term food policy aimed at eliminating common dietary mistakes resulting both from modernization and tradition. Szczygieł insisted that the main challenge was to improve the dietary standards of the rural population (AAN, Komisja Żywienia Ludności 1976, 25).

Until the early 1970s, the rural population was still diagnosed as having poor eating habits: an extensive consumption of potatoes, accompanied by insufficient meat and vegetables. The model of "natural consumption", based on local products and strong attachment to traditional recipes was criticized for being inefficient. Physicians warned that this resulted in malnutrition and poor health of rural children and teenagers (Dłużniewska 1973, 81). Moreover, due to rapid urbanization and the communist project of modernization, the rural lifestyle was perceived in terms of conservatism and backwardness. This was not the only challenge. Dieticians were also concerned about the too monotonous diet of urban working class families, based on potatoes and low quality meat, and about a general trend towards an excessive consumption of sugar. They complained that during the 1960s and early 1970s vegetable production had grown more slowly than meat production and that raising living standards did not result in a better diet.

After identifying the main challenges, experts from the IŻIŻ developed practical recommendations. First and foremost, they emphasized the role of protein in food. On the basis of current research, they identified a category of first-class proteins of animal origin, as being the most nutritious and essential for human health. Therefore, it was highly recommended to serve good quality meat every day, though in a small amount. Dairy products and fresh eggs were also approved as sufficiently nutritious. Plant proteins were classified as second-class: healthy, but not sufficiently nutritious. Experts suggested adding them to meat dishes in order to get a fully nutritious meal (Wysokińska 1966, 11). They still promoted vegetable consumption and emphasized that a well-balanced, modern diet should consist of various products. They thus recommended that by 1990 the consumption of vegetables per capita should increase by 60%, and that of fruit by 100%.

Experts' recommendations evolved in line with current research. Although the urban diet based on high protein products, primarily meat and animal fats, was appreciated as a manifestation of abundance and modernity in the kitchen, from the late 1960s physicians and dieticians started to warn about the possible health risks of

a “too nutritious diet”. There was no longer any threat of hunger. Instead, they referred to Western research on nutrition-related civilization diseases and warned that extensive animal fat consumption might result in cardiovascular diseases (J.K. 1966, 16). They blamed rapid modernization for developing unhealthy eating habits (Szczygieł 1974, 21). There was also growing awareness of the negative effects of industrialization and the deterioration of the natural environment, which resulted in a low quality of drinking water and the “chemicalization” of food (Szczygieł 1974b, 98). This latest research resulted in a changing attitude towards traditional rural cuisine. Experts argued that rural eating habits did not necessarily have to result in nutritional errors. Through minor changes (for example increasing vegetable consumption) they might be the basis for a healthy diet (Narojek and Szczygłowa 1974, 119). During the crisis of the 1980s. traditional rural dishes were presented as healthy, nutritious and possible to prepare despite supply shortages.

In order to prevent health risks, food experts asserted a need for a reform of the diet. From the early 1970s, they began to argue that changes in lifestyle should result in changing eating patterns (Szostak 1974, 319). They therefore proposed that the total daily nutritional value of 3000 calories for adults which was accepted in the early 1950s should be lowered. They also recommended eating four or five meals a day instead of the earlier recommendation of three (Starzyńska and Zawistowska 1973).

In so far as detailed suggestions were concerned, dieticians recommended the consumption of low-fat milk and of poultry instead of pork. Poultry was presented as easily digestible, low-calorie and corresponding to a modern urban lifestyle (“Przegląd Gastronomiczny” 1965, 19). Polish consumers were at first dissatisfied with these suggestions, and only in the 1980s did poultry consumption increase and become normalized. Similarly, dieticians promoted the consumption of vegetable oils and margarine instead of lard and butter in order to prevent metabolic, heart and cardiovascular diseases. Although they did not recommend a vegetarian diet, they advocated a reduction of meat consumption and kept encouraging people to eat more fruit and vegetables. They therefore promoted the use of frozen and canned vegetables, and of ready-made preserves and concentrates. During the official meeting in the Ministry of Health, Aleksander Szczygieł advocated the idea of state subsidies for the production of canned and frozen goods (AAN, Komisja Żywienia Ludności 1976, 18).

Dieticians and physicians continued their mission to improve common eating habits up until the late 1980s. During the crisis of the 1980s, in contrast to public opinion, they appreciated the decline in meat consumption and focused on nutrition-related diseases. In order to maintain proper protein intake, they recommended milk, dairy, fish and vegetable consumption (Sekuła, Niedziałek, Szostek 1984, 93). In line with current Western research they made attempts to promote a Healthy Eating Pyramid. They criticized what they saw as a widespread tendency to overeating and once again advocated for essential changes in Polish eating habits (Szostak 1982, 17).

IMPLEMENTATION, POPULARIZATION

Physicians and dieticians were not the only agents of modernization. The League of Women and Rural Housewives' Circles undertook various actions to transfer expert knowledge to the general public. Moreover, the mass media also made attempts to popularize modern dietary guidelines. Educational activities and the popularization of eating habits were mostly aimed at individual households. Due to the post-Thaw shift, the League of Women called for a new focus on "practical activism" (Nowak 2004, 116). In 1957, the Home Economics Committee (Komitet do Spraw Gospodarstwa Domowego, KGD), the League's most popular national committee was founded. In general, the Committee was to contribute to the modernization of everyday life by preparing working women to be effective housekeepers. Up until the late 1980s, it provided courses, lectures and demonstrations, tested new household appliances, published brochures and collaborated with research institutions. To promote a modern healthy diet, it used social advertisement campaigns. Posters and leaflets showing the nutritional value of particular products or promoting food and vegetable consumption were distributed in home economic centres, health centres and even in schools in both urban and rural areas.

Outside the Committee, the 1960s saw the emergence of the "Praktyczna Pani" [Practical Lady] network managed by the PSS "Społem" consumer cooperative,[12] while Modern Housewife Centres [Ośrodki Nowoczesnej Gospodyni] founded by the Communal "Peasant Self-Help" Cooperatives (Gminna Spółdzielnia "Samopomoc Chłopska") functioned in the countryside. The KGD collaborated with both institutions, supplying them with pamphlets and study aids, and providing additional training to staff (Biernacka 1964, 65).

Since the kitchen chores involved in providing and cooking food were perceived as particularly oppressive for working women, the KGD, as well as Modern Housewives Circles, put the modernization of eating habits and of kitchen technologies at the forefront of their agenda. The expert magazine "Gospodarstwo Domowe" edited by the Committee published articles dedicated to home economics' teachers who were supposed to transmit expert knowledge to women. In order to do so, from 1958 the Committee began to organize home economics centres (*poradnie gospodarstwa domowego*). The consumer cooperative "Społem" founded its own household centres in cities, and correspondingly the Circles of Rural Housewives did the same in rural areas.

According to their activity plans, these centres, which were to be equipped with exemplary modern kitchens, organized courses, lectures and public demonstrations to promote new dietary recommendations and new kitchen technologies. Home

12 PSS Społem – a Polish consumers' co-operative of local grocery stores founded in 1868. During the PRL period, PSS Społem built and ran numerous stores and service centres.

economics teachers explained the principles of the modern healthy diet and provided women with knowledge about the proper composition of daily and weekly menus. They encouraged women to use cooking techniques recommended by experts, for example baking or stewing instead of frying. In the rural household centres were organized courses of making fruit and vegetable preserves, as well as homemade cured and canned meat. Since rural children were still diagnosed as being at risk of malnutrition in the 1970s, Rural Housewives' Circles collaborated with physicians and dieticians from the IŻiŻ in providing courses on producing and storing food. Moreover, in some areas (for example in the Lublin voivodeship) schoolchildren were provided with cheap, healthy lunches prepared according to dieticians' recommendations (Konieczna 1978, 10).

From the mid-1970s, these household centres became more engaged in presenting modern cuisine, which included even luxurious dishes such as chicken rolls and chicken roasted with raisins. This changed in the 1980s during which the KGD Institute organized demonstrations of the "crisis kitchen" and encouraged women to economize. For example, the local branch in Mława organized a presentation on how to make sandwiches with cheese and fish spread (Sprawozdania 1975–1989, 140). In order to modernize kitchen technologies, home economics teachers persuaded women to use modern kitchen appliances presented not only as time and labour saving, but also as essential for healthy cooking. For example, juicers and mixers were supposed to increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables (Rutkowska 1964, 45). Apart from courses and demonstrations, the local centres ran rental offices for household appliances. In their memoirs, rural diarists often mentioned that they could use modern appliances thanks to these rental offices. On the other hand, they also complained about insufficient office offers.

Cooking courses and demonstrations attracted attention. For example, in 1976 the home economics centre in Kutno (in the former Plock voivodeship) organized 3 courses for 75 participants and 250 presentations for an audience of 2500 persons (AAN, The League of Women, Home Economics Committee). Rural diarists appreciated cooking courses. Some of them were really proud of their new cooking skills and perceived themselves as agents of modernization in the family. "I baked a delicious lemon cake with icing and raisins for Sunday", noted a diarist from the Koszalin voivodeship in 1975 and she added that it was appreciated by all her family as very modern, unlike a traditional torte (AAN Kęcik, 2). Another author persuaded her mother-in-law to prepare homemade canned meat and to buy bread instead of baking it at home. She also declared collecting the new recipes that she had learnt at the course for her daughter (*Czyste wody* 1975, 139–142). The diarists tried to share their new skills with mothers and mothers-in-law, and often complained about their backwardness and unhealthy eating habits. By contrast, they appreciated their new identity of modern housewives (AAN Bober, 139).

On the other hand, home economics' teachers kept complaining about the backwardness of rural women. "We are aware that older housewives as well as young girls are not ready to give up traditional eating habits inherited from their mothers and grandmothers," noted one of the teachers. She argued that it was very difficult to develop complex healthy menus, because paradoxically fruits and vegetables were scarcely available in the countryside. However, she appreciated that rural women were interested in cooking and hoped that intensive courses would improve common eating behaviours (Ciemniewska 1959, 16).

The idea to modernize Polish cuisine was supported by the mass media. Women's and lifestyle magazines, which from the very beginning were supposed to constitute "engineers of female identity" (Attwood 1999, 12) acted as a "transmission belt" between scholars, home economics' experts and a wider audience. From the mid-1940s, they ran special columns dedicated to cooking and kitchen technologies. They published recipes for single dishes, as well as daily and weekly menus. According to the latest experts' recommendations, they propagated consumption of particular foodstuffs, for example margarine and plant oils, fish, fruits and vegetables.

The increasing role of women's magazines resulted in the emergence of "popular experts", such as Irena Gumowska, an engineer by education who authored numerous how-to-do books and ran an advice column in "Przyjaciółka". Kazimiera Pyszkowska (alias Felicja Zalewska) published recipes and practical suggestions for cooking in "Przyjaciółka", Zofia Zawistowska ran a special column in the monthly magazine "Zwierciadło". From the mid-1960s, they tried to accustom readers to modern healthy recipes based on vegetables and small amounts of meat. However, it was not only a healthy diet that mattered. The magazines displayed the imagined modern cuisine, focused both on taste and nutritional values. Thus, they presented, for example, French fries accompanied with canned green peas and beef as a full-value dish ("Przyjaciółka" 1965).

Culinary experts who contributed to popular women's magazines advocated the idea of modernization of eating habits for various reasons. First and foremost, it was public health that mattered. Next, they were attached to the idea of women's emancipation in the family. Thus, they were concerned with simplifying home cooking and promoted the use of food concentrates and half-finished products. They encouraged women to use instant soups on a daily basis and argued that the cooking of broth at home was a manifestation of backwardness. They complained that regarding the use of food concentrates Poland was far behind the GDR, Czechoslovakia, Austria and France (*Błyskawiczne zupy* 1974, 11). The popularization of frozen and canned food was supposed to support a more egalitarian division of work within the family. For example, frozen fries were recommended as a modern, Western-style side dish easy to prepare even for men ("Przyjaciółka" 1979, 14). Instant mashed potatoes were so easy to prepare that children could manage it ("Zwierciadło" 1980, 16).

TYRNOWO — klejnot architektury, prastare miasto carów bułgarskich. Baszta Baldwina Flandryjskiego i pozostałości pałacu Asenów... Ruiny Carewca i sylwetka Arbanasi — bojarskiego osiedla, które pozostało, chociaż jego książęta przeminęli... Zajazdy z marmurowymi kolumnami i domy zawieszone na skałach nad przepaścią... Kolumna, na której wyryta jest wieść o zwycięstwie Iwana Asena II nad Bizancjum w 1230 roku i klasztor Preobrażeński w [illegible] pod skałami... A w sąsiedztwie — nowoczesna dzielnica mieszkalna, wizytówka dzisiejszej Bułgarii, ludowego państwa, które w dniu 9 września obchodzi swoje Święto Narodowe — 21 rocznicę wyzwolenia przez Armię Radziecką.

Bułgarska kuchnia

Kuchnia to smaczna i pikantna. Ponieważ sprowadzamy z Bułgarii wiele owoców i jarzyn, spróbujmy wzbogacić nasz domowy jadłospis o kilka potraw z tamtejszej kuchni.

Żetwarska sałata (żniwiarska sałata)

Składniki: 4 papryki, 2 pomidory, 1 świeży ogórek, 1 cebula, 1 strączek pieprzu tureckiego (ostrego), 2 jajka ugotowane na twardo, 10 deka białego sera, olej roślinny, ocet, sól, zielona pietruszka.

Paprykę i pieprz turecki opiec na ogniu, następnie obrać i skroić na drobne kawałki. Pomidory i ogórki pokroić w kostkę. Cebulę skroić w cienkie plasterki, wygnieść i wymieszać z drobniutko usiekaną nacią pietruszki. Dodać do smaku octu i soli, skropić olejem. Ładnie ułożyć w salaterce i ubrać sałatę skrojonymi w krążki jajkami. Całość posypać utartym na tarce serem.

Tarator (zimna zupa ogórkowa)

Składniki: 2—3 ogórki, litr kwaśnego mleka, olej, koper, czosnek, sól oraz 1—2 oczyszczone orzechy włoskie.

Po umyciu ogórki obrać i pokroić w kostkę. Wrzucić je do rozbitego z wodą kwaśnego mleka. Zaprawić startym z solą czosnkiem, koprem i olejem. Zupę podawać ochłodzoną, posypaną mielonymi orzechami. Zamiast ogórków można użyć zielonej sałaty. Zupa zupełnie zmieni smak.

Kurban czorba

Składniki: ćwierć kilograma mięsa (baranie, cielęce, wątroba lub inne podroby), pół szklanki ryżu, łyżka tłuszczu (masło lub smalec), 2—3 pomidory, 1 jajko, zielona pietruszka, młoda cebula, 1 papryka, pieprz, liście mięty (można je nabyć w sklepach zielarskich).

Mięso pokroić na spore kawałki, trochę przegotować. Zdjąć z kości i skroić na małe kawałki. Włożyć z powrotem do rosołu. Wrzucić do niego drobno pokrajaną cebulę, przesmażoną w tłuszczu paprykę, obrane i drobno pokrajane pomidory. Ugotować. 2—3 minuty przed podaniem wlać cienkim strumieniem rozbite jajko i wsypać skrojoną natkę pietruszki oraz miętę.

Plakija z fasoli

Składniki: Szklanka fasoli, olej, 1 marchew, 1 seler, 2 cebule, 3—4 pomidory, czosnek, pół cytryny (lub kwasek cytrynowy), zielona pietruszka, sól pieprz, liście mięty i inne przyprawy podane niżej.

Przebraną i wypłukaną fasolę zalać zimną wodą na 8—10 godzin. Ugotować, aż będzie na wpół miękka. Teraz wrzucić pokrajaną marchew, seler i cebulę. Gotować dalej. Gdy wszystkie składniki będą już miękkie, wyłożyć je do brytfanny. Włożyć pokrajane pomidory, oraz: pieprz turecki, pieprz czarny (w ziarnkach), angielskie ziele, liście bobkowe, liście mięty, zieloną pietruszkę, plasterki cytryny (bez ziarn i skórki, lub nieco kwasku cytrynowego), sól i drobno pokrajany czosnek. Zalać olejem i zapiec w piecyku w ciągu 20—30 minut.

Wieprzowa kawarma kebap

Składniki: pół kilo mięsa wieprzowego, łyżka smalcu, 2 pory, 1 strąk pieprzu tureckiego, 2—3 papryki, mała łyżeczka pasty pomidorowej, pół szklanki czerwonego wina, sól, pieprz, liście bobkowe.

Mięso gotować, aż skruszeje. Teraz zdjąć je z kości, pokroić na 4—5 kawałków, przesmażyć. Wrzucić pory pokrajane na małe kawałki, posolić. Dodać kolejno: pastę pomidorową, pieprz (w ziarnkach), liście bobkowe i wino. Dusić na słabym ogniu, aż cała woda wyparuje i pozostanie sam tłuszcz. Wrzucić pokrajaną drobno paprykę i strąk pieprzu. Przed podaniem posypać pokrojoną zieloną pietruszką.

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The magazines also promoted luxurious foreign recipes. In 1965, "Przyjaciółka" published a series of articles: "Dishes from all over the world". Actually, these constituted recipes from the cuisine of socialist countries, such as Bulgaria.

Oto pełnowartościowe drugie danie: Frytki (ziemniaki surowe, pokrajane w paseczki, rzucone na gorący olej, a po osmażeniu i ocieknięciu z tłuszczu, posypane solą). Groszek i fasolka szparagowa z puszek, odgrzane i odcedzone. Całe pomidory mrożone, rzucone razem z porami na gorący tłuszcz na patelnię i odgrzane.

Wołowinę pokrajać w dużą kostkę, jak na gulasz, obsmażyć na patelni na tłuszczu, zalać wodą i dusić pod przykryciem do miękkości. Gdy już będzie gotowa, zdjąć pokrywę i obsmażać na złotobrązowy kolor. Do duszenia dodać listek bobkowy i parę ziarnek pieprzu.

Osobom, które boją się cholesterolu (sklerozy, czyli miażdżycy) radzimy jako jedynego tłuszczu używać oleju sojowego lub arachidowego. Oleje te, poza tym, że zawierają witaminę E (zwaną witaminą „odmładzającą") mają zdolność obniżania poziomu cholesterolu we krwi o około 30 procent.

(lg)

Przyjaciółka 1965, no 36
Foreign recipes, as well as recipes for sophisticated dishes like sausages in red wine or San Remo salad (F.Z. 1978, 12) to be served at home parties symbolized Western-style modernization in the 1970s.

In the 1980s, magazine experts tried to help women deal with supply shortages by advising about how to find substitutes for lacking products. They no longer wrote about modernization, but instead promoted "survival strategies" for times of crisis (see: Stańczak-Wiślicz 2014b).

Although the centrally planned economic system was defined rather in terms of a "culture of frugality" than one of abundance (Fehérváry 2013, 114), Polish popular magazines published adverts for foodstuffs and kitchen appliances. Considering the limited role of advertising in the socialist economy (Reid 2002, 218), I believe that these may be perceived as a part of the advice discourse. They were meant to educate people, to get them accustomed to new ways of life and to affect their consumption behaviours. Therefore, in the late 1940s magazines advertised fish consumption, and in the 1970s frozen food and concentrates. From the 1960s, the role of advertising grew in importance and, as Patric Patterson (2011, 57) has argued, "something very

closely resembling Western-style advertising" could function in countries where the political order was not based on the values of the market. The adverts of luxury products: like coffee, orange juice, foreign seasonings and preserves displayed a vision of how modern cuisine was imagined. They referred to ideas of taste, comfort and Western-style luxury. Adverts for foodstuffs disappeared during the crisis of the 1980s, and could be seen again only after 1985.

CONCLUSIONS

The social processes characteristic for post-war Poland – rapid industrialization, urbanization and social mobility – were followed by visible changes in everyday consumer practices in Polish families. The most spectacular change lay in a process of the uniformization and "urbanization" of tastes. Up to the early 1970s, rural families were criticized for their backwardness and diagnosed as having unhealthy eating habits. By the mid-1980s, experts identified a process of the *denaturalization* of food in rural areas, which resulted in a decline in the consumption of milk, potatoes and cereal products in favour of meat, eggs and animal fats (Gulbicka 1987, 8). In this sense, rural cuisine had become similar to urban standards.

Up until the 1980s when the project of socialist modernity failed, the eating habits of the Polish population became more uniform. Not only dieticians and physicians, but also sociologists and ethnologists described changing consumption behaviour in terms of standardization and made attempts to conceptualize the Polish kitchen that included some elements of local tradition (Szromba-Rysowa 1973, 50). The imagined Polish kitchen was a political project, associated with communist historical policy, which was focused on the idea of building a mono-ethnic society. Certainly, the book *Polish Cuisine* by Stanisław Berger and Helena Kulzowa-Hawliczkowa released in 1954 can be seen as a manifestation of this overall project (Jaroszuk 2012, 229).

The centrally planned economy in communist Poland affected food policies and, consequently, the food practices of the population. However, it is an oversimplification to claim that people were completely deprived of agency and that it was the communist authorities who decided how much and what to eat (Jóźwiak 2004, 229). The practice of controlling food supplies and food behaviours was common to both sides of the Iron Curtain (Burnett and Oddy 1996). Despite the authoritarian political system, various agents shaped official food policies and the idea to modernize the eating habits of the Polish population was linked to a general belief that under communism living standards should improve. This was founded on a scientific basis. Food shortages, experienced from the first post-war years until the late 1980s, were by-products of the centrally planned economy. Therefore, the changes in food taste and food practices under state socialism should be perceived rather in terms of modernization than totalitarian control. They were largely similar to the changes that took place in Western

countries. From the late 1960s, Polish experts also described the side-effects of modernization: excessive consumption of sugar, meat and animal fats, and made claims for change according to the latest research. Summing up, regardless of the political and economic system, *modernity* was the main factor that shaped official policies towards consumption and, thus, towards everyday life (Brown 2001).

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AAN From the competition for women's diaries, records with no call number.

AAN The League of Women (Home Economics Committee), seg. 80, records with no call number.

AAN The Ministry of Health and Welfare 2/1939/0, Minister's Office.

AP Warszawa, Mława branch, League of Polish Women ZG Ciechanów (1975–1989) 76/497/0, Reports.

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BORN IN THE BODY OF BEASTS. ANIMALS AND THE SOCIAL ORDER IN THE DIDACTIC BUDDHIST LITERATURE OF BURYAT-MONGOLS (19TH– BEG. 20THCENTURY)

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This paper engages with current discussions concerning the ways in which human cultures construct the sphere labeled as "social" against that of the broadly defined environment. I contribute to these discussions with ananalysis of the didactic Buddhist literature of Buryat-Mongols (19th–beg. 20thcentury), focusing on the image of non-human animals and their position in the social/universal order.
With the emergence of environmentalist trends in the humanities, pre-modern/"non-Western" inter-species relationships have often served as counter-alternatives to the problematic "Western" nature-culture dichotomy. While expecting to see the human being described as a part of "nature" in the analyzed texts, I found a different picture: the anthropocentric social sphere is clearly distinguished from animals, and in some fragments the idioms used with regard to animals are reminiscent of European evolutionist discourse. Though an exhaustive analysis of Buryat attitudes towards animals is beyond the scope of this study, this literature gives insight into a particular cultural discourse as represented in reputed sources of the period.

KEYWORDS: animals, social order, environment, Buryat-Mongols, Buddhism

While a strong conceptual boundary between human and animals used to be considered universal among human societies, recent scholarship admits wide cultural and historical diversity with regard to these categories (Mullin 1999, 202). In recent decades, anthropologists have come up with various arguments to see non-human animals not just as mere resources or a part of the natural environment, but rather to incorporate them as participants in social life, thus questioning the exceptionalism conventionally attributed to the human being (White and Candea 2018). In some cases, it has been argued that non-human persons and cultures exist (White and Candea 2018, 1), in others, societies without a notion of animality or "animals" as a distinct category have been made subjects of consideration (Mullin 1999, 202–207).

In the present study, I would like to discuss the way in which the human-animal relationship was conceptualized among the Buryat-Mongols, a formerly nomadic

community of Inner Asia. I draw on sources from Buryat religious elites, with a bias towards 19th century texts from Transbaikalia. I focus on Buryat Buddhist didactic texts which were in circulation till early Soviet times. I look at the human-animal relationship from a sociological perspective trying to understand the way non-human animals were perceived with regard to the social order in the Buryat didactic literature of the period.[1] I will explore whether animals were included in the social sphere and, if not, examine what was the classification of the living universe as outlined in didactic texts.

As George Barstow has recently pointed out, the human-animal question is not a new one in Buddhist Studies. As he rightly states, these studies focus mostly on South Asian Buddhist traditions, and often seek to define a pan-Buddhist approach to animals (Barstow 2019, 2). However, it is not the case that no attention has been paid to these questions in the Mongolian Buddhism context. For example, in her article *Placing Self Amid Others. A Mongolian Technique of Comparison*, Caroline Humphrey attempts to understand comparison as an intellectual endeavour in a non-European cultural milieu on the example of works by an 18th century Inner Mongolian Buddhist lama and poet, Mergen Gegen. Of particular relevance for this study is that, among other things, her analysis covers the way humans and animals were sorted and classified in these works (Humphrey 2016; see also Humphrey and Ujeed 2013). In my view, looking into the specific Buryat Buddhist tradition, based on the Tibetan version of Buddhism, should add value to this debate.[2] This study can potentially contribute to the various "turns" (the animal turn, or the ontological turn) in social analysis, introducing new archive data with a strong attention to distinctions between voices and texts (Pedersen 2001).

BUDDHIST DIDACTIC LITERATURE AMONG BURYAT-MONGOLS

"Buryat" Buddhism is not a monolithic entity, but a broad variety of viewpoints within the wider Tibeto-Mongolian tradition, primarily of the Gelug School. The numerous monasteries that spread around the region which was part of the Russian Empire from the early 18th century were primarily educational centers. Disciples were taught

1 Hereafter, I will use the term "animal" for all non-human animals.

2 The topic of animals in Buryat and in Mongol culture in general is a popular one in academia and has been considered in terms of phraseology, and of spiritual and material culture (Belyaeva 2020; Dondokova 2008; Badmaev 2002). The topic is also popular in the Buryat media, see: "The Cult of Nature" http://selorodnoe.ru/history/show/id3629604/ (accessed 10.04.2020), or "The Cult of Nature of Traditional Peoples of Buryatia" http://www.baikal-center.ru/books/element.php?ID=51042 (accessed 10.04.2020).

Buddhist theology, philosophy, astrology, medicine and art. The liturgical language was Tibetan and the monasteries extensively published religious literature. Aside from such centers as Beijing, Chakhar or Urga, Transbaikalia was one of the largest centres of book-printing of Buddhist literature (Tsyrempilov 2013, 189).

The practice of Buddhism in Buryatia is conventionally divided by scholars into its monastic and lay forms, as the prescriptions addressed to Buddhist monks and the laity differed significantly (Morokhoeva 1994). Buddhist philosophy in its full canonical form was predominantly available to monks. Few lay people could read and understand the Tibetan language and Buddhist terminology, and they lacked the necessary education, knowledge and experience needed to understand and interpret the sacred texts. The laity were taught to achieve enlightenment by gradual accumulation of "positive karma" through several subsequent incarnations.

While most canonical literature was not accessible and understandable to the laity, in the 18th century the literature called *yosun-u* š*astir* (sastras of the order), *surγal* (teachings)*, sayin nomlal* (good preaching) or *bičig* (letters) became one of the major ways of spreading Buddhist ideas among the lay people. Scholars conventionally denote these works as Buddhist didactic literature, as distinct from canonical literature (Khurelbaatar 1987; Tsydenzhapov 1990). In fact, this is only a conditional division since "didactic" literature could include fragments of the "canonical" texts as well.

These texts were initially translated from the Sanskrit and Tibetan, and were available in several versions. For example, *A Drop of Nectar, Arad-i tejigekü rasiyan-u dusul kemegdekü yosun-u šastir orusiba* attributed to Nagarjuna (as part of the Tibetan Buddhist canon *Tanjur*) was translated into Mongolian in the 18th century by Lobsan Danzan and Dai-gushri Agvan Dampli (1700–1780) and by Chakhar gebshi Lobsan Tsultem (1700–1810).[3] *The Precious Treasury of Aphoristic Sayings*, *Erdeni-yin sang subasid* by Gungaajaltsan (1182–1251) was translated into Mongolian in the 13th century in Beijing (Kara 1972, 31), and into Oirat script in the 17th century by Zaya Pandita (1599–1662), in the 18th century by Dambajalsan (1730–1780) and in the 19th century by Rinchen Nomtoev (1821–1907). Original Mongolian language didactic literature developed, taking these translated works as a model (Tsydenzhapov 1990, 9). The authorship of many surviving texts is unknown. Among the most popular Buryat authors from the 19th–20th centuries were Lubsan Galdan Rinpoche of the Anaa datsan, Erdeni Khaibzun Galshiev of the Khudan datsan (1855–1915), Dorzhi-Zhigmed Danzhinov of the Aga datsan (?–1899), Rinchen Nomtoev of the Tugno-galtai datsan (1821–1907) and Galsan-Zhimba Dylgyrov of the Tsugol datsan (1816–1872) (Chimitdorzhiev and Mikhailov 1994).

3 Commentaries to "A Drop of Nectar" were written by Rinchen Nomtoev "Yosun-u Sastr-a arad-i tejiegekii dusul tayilburi…" (1882) IOM: Q38, egz.1, accession number 3398.

The literature characterized by scholars as didactic (Dashiev 1997; Khurelbaatar 1987) includes fragments of the Tibetan Buddhist canon, short fairy tales, poems and short moral parables. These were relatively short works, from a few pages long to roughly a hundred pages of text, written in classical Mongolian script which lay people could understand, available in the form of printed or manuscript books. It is worth noting the high intertextuality of these works and their connection with the Buryat oral tradition. Unlike original Indian didactic literature, the Tibetan and Mongolian texts were closely connected with current social reality and the natural environment – for this reason, the authors used proverbs and images familiar to readers.[4] These included the four distinct seasons of the annual cycle, the migration of birds, the particular singing of the cuckoo, seasonal moving with cattle to fresh pastures, and young camel and horse training and races (Khurelbaatar 1987, 290–291). On the other hand, many expressions from these works enrich the phraseology of modern Mongolian languages, which shows that these texts were widely read (Tsydenzhapov 1990; Khurelbaatar 1987, 292). For example, the following contemporary Buryat sayings originated from these texts: "A real man grows wiser the more he suffers, a precious stone grows shinier the more it's rubbed" (Tsydenzhapov 1990, 59); "For a cow to give milk feed it well in wintertime, for you to prosper learn knowledge in your youth" (Arad-i tejigekü); or "If a swindler sees a saint he will scoff that the saint is faint, when a monkey sees a man it will mock that he has no tail" (Erdeni-yin sang).

The lamas used didactic texts as a means to spread basic elements of Buddhist moral principles which they wanted lay people to apply in their daily lives (Khurelbaatar 1987, 291). These texts were characterized by their authors as a small contribution to spiritual advancement: "a few words", "a drop", "a small piece of advice" or a "cure" for everyday practices which many people thought of as harmless (Ene sayin galab…). The target audience for these works were mainly "common people" (*egel kümün; yerü kümün*), although some texts were addressed to Buryat secular leaders (*qara sayid*). I would argue that the wide distribution of didactic literature among the Buryat population also promoted a shared vision of a social order, a question I intend to investigate in future research.

Unfortunately, a major part of original Buryat Buddhist literature was purposefully destroyed during the Soviet antireligious campaign in the 1930s. The collection preserved in the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Saint Petersburg is one of the few still surviving in specialized libraries, museums and in private possession. These didactic texts have mainly been studied in a linguistic and historical context (Dashiev 1997; Tsydenzhapov 1990; Khurelbaatar 1987; Muzraeva

4 For example, in the text *Teaching of an Old Man* one can find the proverb: "Far is the way for a man on a lazy horse" (*qasig mori unigsan kumun-du gajar qola*) (Erdini sastir neretü… 5a).

2013; Kollmar-Paulenz 2010, 2017; Sazykin 2004), but have rarely been considered as a source of social thought.

Since I have not encountered any texts dedicated specifically to animals, this article is based on about 30 random texts which I studied at the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts in Saint Petersburg.[5] Many of my key texts have Buryat authors and show local problems and realias of the relevant period. I have also studied the tales about Buddhist hell published in transliterated form and in Russian translation by Alexei Sazykin (2004). In Władysław Kotwicz's archives (in the Science Archives of the Polish Academy of Sciences and Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences in Krakow)[6] I studied a beautifully illustrated book *Molom toyin* (from the Khalkha Mongolian region), which was also popular in Buryatia in the 19th–20th centuries.[7] I have also made use of recently published didactic texts in the modern Buryat language, such as *Bilig-ün toli* by Erdeni-Khaibzun Galshiev (2012) and the anthology of Buryat pre-Soviet literature *Altan gadahan* (2009), compiled by Valentin Makhatov and Khanda Tsydenova.

Before proceeding to the main analysis, it is necessary to outline some limitations of the empirical material used in this article. First of all, this is a far from exhaustive selection of texts, which represents the view of a particular social strata, mainly lamas.[8] Though it was addressed to laymen, one cannot be sure what was the reception of these ideas: there might have existed different/contradictory elements of Buryat culture, e.g. folk views that do not coincide with those expressed/held by lamas. In future work, further investigating the social impact of these sources might therefore prove important. For now, we possess scant information on their social influences on the illiterate population, the scale of their distribution or their mode of use. However, it is nonetheless important to know what an average potential reader of these texts could learn about the "proper" social order.

5 My study was made possible by scholarship support from the German Historical Institute in Moscow (Project title: "The Ideas of Social Order of Buryats as Reflected in the Didactic Buddhist Literature and Legal Documents from the Archives of Saint Petersburg", 02.09–02.10.2019).

6 Financed by internal grants of the University of Warsaw BSt UW (Project title: "The Sources of Normative Systems in Inner Asia"). I also would like to express my gratitude to Karénina Kollmar-Paulenz and Michael Gulyaev for reading the first draft of the article, and Jargal Badagarov for correcting the Latin transcriptions of classic Mongolian.

7 This tale recounts the story of Maudgalyāyana's journeys to the Buddhist hells to save his mother. This tale has different versions spreading from India through Central Asia to China. In the 19th century, the tales apparently became so popular that illustrated books started to circulate (Kollmar-Paulenz 2010).

8 There exists a large number of ritual texts, praise poems, songs, riddles, etc., that concern animals that could be referred to in the future.

ANIMAL BODY AS A PUNISHMENT

Classical Buddhist cosmology divides the world into six realms, comprising gods (*devas*), semi-gods (*asuras*), humans (*manushya*), animals (*tiryak*), ghosts (*pretas*), and creaturesof hell (*niraya*). The Buryat texts use the word *amitan* (*ami-* life, vitality; *-tan* suffix *nomina possessiva*) to define all these sentient beings.[9] Each of these various worlds carry certain qualities and have their own distinct experiences, but no one is bound forever to a particular form (Bartsow 2019, 4; Wilson 2010). Caroline Humphrey, in her analysis of the illustrations by 18th century lama and poet Mergen Gegen (Inner Mongolia), noticed that living beings (*amitan*), including humans, are depicted as sorted according to their kind and their environment. Accroding to Humphrey, the aim of such a depiction conveys a didactic message: "Humans are animals (amitan «living beings») among others. They may have been animals in a previous life and as animals they may be reborn. In this human life they alone can achieve enlightenment by means of meditation, but a uniquely human, definitively superior position does not exist" (Humphrey 2016). In line with Buddhist cosmology, the Buryat didactic texts also frequently remind readers that their "soul" *sünesun* can acquire various "bodies" *bey=e* in the never-ending cycle of birth and death, depending on the "fruits of their deeds" (*üiliin üri*) during the current lifetime.

The didactic texts addressed to laymen, apart from familiarizing readers with the universal order, give relevant instructions for living in the human world. Birth in the "human body" (*küm*ün-ü *bey=e*) or "humankind/race" (*kümün-ü ijaguur; kümün t*ü*relkiten*), along with birth as gods, is presented as the one of the most desired incarnations. The texts also warn readers of three "bad fates" (*maγu jiyaγan*) or a "prison of bad fate" (*maγu jiyaγan-u gindan*) (Galshiev, 2012, verse 856) stating that the "hell dweller, hungry ghost or animal" are "the most undesired incarnations" and "the result of mistakes in this life" (*tamu*, *birid*, *aduγusun//küsel-ün moγai?// ene nasan-u gem*) (Olan amitan-u 21a). Ghosts are not able to sate their hunger, and spend their lives suffering and searching for any food. The dwellers of hell reside in agony and constant torture for their previous misdeeds. Hell was richly depicted in thangkas and other illustrations, with its residents shown as having naked human bodies and enduring enormous sufferings in hot and cold hells. The preventive function of this realm is reflected in one of the major topics in didactic Buddhist literature, descriptions of journeys to hell. In the Buryat regions, these included the Story of *Molon toyin*, the Story of *Choizhid dagini*, the Story of *Güsü Lama* and the Stories of Benefits of the Diamond sutra (Sazykin 2004).

9 In the contemporary Buryat language, the word amitan is usually used for animals only; see, the online dictionary of contemporary Buryat: http://burlang.ru/ (accessed 09.04.2020).

Birth as an animal is also considered to be a punishment (though a more minor one than being in hell) for misdeeds and sins in a previous life. Some may receive the "bodies of the animals that they killed during their lifetime" in order to atone for their faults (Choizhid dagini 36b, see Sazykin 2004, 166). According to the *Güsü Lama* tale, sinful people turn into predators (*aryatan*) after getting to the in-between world, *Zaguurdi* (Güsü lama 2b, see Sazykin 2004, 230). Besides predators, (Olan amitan-u 10) insects, especially those living in excrements (Üne yeke-tü ülemji 3b), are presented as the worst incarnations. The didactic literature thus richly uses the animal image to illustrate Buddhist teachings.

The category of animals includes the whole variety of non-human animals. In Buddhist theory, animals are divided into those born of eggs (birds, snakes, turtles), wombs (elephants, horses, cows, etc.) and from the vapour of the basic elements of the universe – water, wind, ground and fire (bees, mosquitos, etc.) (Yermakova and Ostrovskaya 2004, 151). Interestingly, the abovementioned lama Mergen Gegen illustrated "birds" generically on one page and "animals", on another (Humphrey 2016). There existed also a category of self-conceived animals like Garudas or Nagas, but they were not considered as inferior incarnations (Yermakova and Ostrovskaya 2004, 151); likewise, some animals were considered as sacred, like deer, bull and elephant, which were associated with the life of Buddha (Dorzhigushaeva 2002, 17). In the Mongolian practice of divination, animals represent the twelve months of the annual calendar cycle, and serve as symbols denoting years, directions, months and hours (Humphrey 2016).

"EVOLUTIONISM" AND SOCIAL ORDER

For the sociological perspective, it is important to note that the human and animal worlds are clearly demarcated in the didactic literature. The texts mainly use the term *adaγusun* or *adaγusun törölkiten* for denoting "animals", or more precisely "beasts", as opposed to humans and other sentient beings.[10] Also in the Tibet-Mongolian glossary from the 19th century, animals (*adaγusun*) and human (*kümün*) are given as separate entries (Yakhontova 2019).

It is notable that in both the didactic and other Buryat texts of the same period one can trace ideas reminiscent of European evolutionism. A history chronicle written in 1875 by Vandan Yumsunov (Vangdan Yumčung-un, 1823–1883) contains a vision of pre-Buddhist times: "people would behave as they feel like, according to their own reasons/habit; they gathered into clans, tribes and families to rob their neighbours,

10 Though *amitan* as a generic term may sometimes refer to animals in the didactic texts (Diamond sutra 61b, see Sazykin 2004, 125; Choizhid dagini 15, see Sazykin 2004, 190; 42, see Sazykin 2004, 120).

took their cattle and other property; they possessed and were gaining proficiency with handling bows, arrows, arrow cases, armour, helmets and other weapons; they armed heavily and prepared troops, looted and killed each other". This fragment recalls the debates over the *natural condition* of mankind to be found in early European political philosophy, tending towards the Hobbesian state of "war of everyone against everyone" (Hobbes 1994, 74–79). Likewise in Yumsunov's chronicle, the destructive "nature" of humankind is said to be quietened (*nomuqadqa-*) and improved (*sayijira-*) with the dissemination of proper teaching (Buddhism) and the both harsh and merciful laws of the khan (*qaɣan-u eldebqataɣu jögelen qauli*; *qaɣan* in this case is meant to be the Russian Tsar) (Yumsunov 1935, 141). It is important to note that I do not make claims concerning a historical linkage between Buddhist ideas and European evolutionism. This "civilizing" effect of Buddhist teaching is actually a very old trope which Tibetan Buddhist lamas used as early as the 13th century in the Mongolian Empire, and which was also present in later historical periods (Kollmar-Paulenz 2014). "Evolutionist" narratives thus have old roots in Buddhist traditions that developed independently from European intellectual traditions. However, it is interesting to point out some similarity in thinking about the "social" issues connected with "animality".

In a similar manner, the authors of didactic texts describe the human as possessing certain inclinations towards the "animal" way of behavior. Human communities first go through the stage of "savagery" then suppress their "animal traits", as a rule by converting to Buddhism. Erdeni Khaibzun Galshiev uses an expression "wild/savage human" (*jerlig küm*ü*n*) to describe someone roaming in the forest as opposed to those living in settlements and towns. The *Erdeni sang* didactic book refers to people who are marked by "egoism" and are not abstemious over food and drink, as "beasts on (two) legs" (*köl-tü aduɣusun*) or having an "animal-like way of behaviour" (*yabudal-un yosun inu aduɣusun adali*) (Erdeni-yin sang 8b, 16a). Animal behaviour designates a minimal moral level, as indicated by the frequent use of expressions like *aduɣusunču*, which means "even animal…": "Do not make public your evil deeds/ Even animals, dogs and cats, try to hide their excrements in sand (Galshiev 2012, verse 318). People should express and feel gratitude to those around them, if not, they are worse than a dog: "Even a dog after eating a meal at least swishes its tail" (Galshiev 2012, verse 782).

The human ability to live a social life is one of the traits distinguishing humans from animals: "If one knows how to live in unanimity and concord with others, he is a wise man; those who join together like animals compose a flock in a pitiful way" (Erdeni-yin sang).[11] Animals, although they reside together, are merely striving to satisfy their own hunger; the human community, on the other hand, is built through consent (*sanaɣ=a neyileku*) and harmony (*eb, el, ey=e*). To denote the human social

11 Busu busu amitan-u sanaɣan-dur neyileküi; yabudal-i medebesü mergen inu tere bui; aduɣusun bögesü ber jokilduqu ayimaɣ=tan; qamtu nige sürüg bolju ülü aqu buyu a.

order, the didactic texts often use the word *yosun*. The term *yosun*, which encompasses a wide range of meanings from rituals to tradition and culture, is one of the key elements of the Mongol view on the idea of orderliness (Tangad 2016a, 2016b). This term is also used in respect to secular and religious orders *qoyar yosun* (Kollmar-Paulenz 2001, 134). Thus, apart from the knowledge of Buddhist moral principles, humans should also know the secular social order: "Although you are a common man/ You should familiarize yourself with the laws (*qauli*) of this world/ The one who does not know what to accept and reject/ Is close to the status of animals" (Galshiev 2012, verse 722). Thus, calling a human an "animal" (*adaγusun*) certainly carries degrading connotations in the didactic texts. So what are the "human" traits that are absent among animals?

Another important human trait missing among animals is the ability to distinguish social roles and create hierarchies.The hierarchical social order provides safety, while those who do not have stronger protectors are like "a wild animal from a forest" (Galshiev 2012, verse 39), or those who shun (do not listen to) a knowledgeable person could be called an animal (Erdeni-yin sang 8b). The didactic texts pay a lot of attention to family hierarchy, especially regarding relations with parents and seniors. In many didactic texts, women and especially daughters-in-law are taught to know their place in the family and respect their older relatives. One text states that a daughter-in-law who is disrespectful to her in-laws "should not be counted as a human but as an animal"[12] (Beri ber qadam…). Family relations in this context are seen as an important feature of human society.

Like other Buddhist forms, the Tibetan/Mongolian tradition recognizes that animals are capable of emotions and some level of thought. Animals can feel fear, desire, love (Barstow 2019). However, from the didactic texts one can conclude that animals lack many other, what I would call "social" emotions, like *ečiguri* (shame,decency), *sonjiγuri* (disgrace), *ayiqu* (fear before parents, superiors). These "formal" emotions are an important constituent hierarchical arrangement regarding relations with parents, seniors, and secular and religious leaders. Thus, "the one who does not have a sense of shame and decency cannot be called a human, but should be called an animal" (Beri ber qadam…).[13] Having no shame in relieving oneself in public is designated with the same term used for animals' excretions, *aduuhan mete* (Galshiev 2012, verse 4). Moreover, animals are also unable to distinguish the difference between giving respect to (*takhi-*) and mocking (*bahamzhal-*) others (Galshiev 2012, verse 383).

Apart from the lack of some "emotions" and "feelings", animals are described as intellectually inferior. For example, in *Erdeni-yin sang*, animals and "animal-like behavior" are frequently opposed to the way *mergen*, the wise men, conduct themselves:

12 kümün-ü toγan-dur ülü abuγad aduγusan-u toγan-dur toγalaγdaqui.

13 ečigüri kiged sonjiγuri ügei=ten-i kümün kemen büüügüle aduγusan kemen ügülegdeküi.

unlike the former, the human can learn skills and knowledge (*arγa uqaγan*), improve the self, listen to the wiser. Especially, the fragments of the didactic literature make this distinction with reference to *cattle* – "as stupid as cattle" (*mal metü teneg*) (Arad-i tejigekü…4a), "cattle with two legs" (*khoyor khülte mal*) (Galshiev 2012, verse 236) and wild grassing animals (like antelopes), which though harmless and weak, due to a lack of wit and caution are said to often be misled by predators and hunters (Galshiev 2012, verse 277, 282). Animals' lack of intelligence means that they are unable to practice religion, more specifically Buddhism, and recite *maṇi* (mantra) (Barstow 2019, 9).

In original Mongolian texts, the authors used images of animals familiar to the reader from everyday life. Initially the majority of Buddhist literature of the Buryats were translations from Indian and Tibetan texts, which included animals exotic for a northern region like Buryatia. These include: crocodile (*matar*), elephant (*jaγan*), monkey (*saramaγčin, bičin*), turtle (*yasuta melekei*), lion (*arslan*), peacock (*toγus sibaγun*) and parrot (*toti*). These usually play the roles of characters in Indian fairy tales and often stand for various human character traits which are considered morally significant: a foolish vixen (*uqamsar ügei ekener ünegen*), quarrelsome monkey (*keder saramaγcin*) ormad elephant (*galjaγu jaγan)* (Arad-i tejigekü…; Yosun-u šastr-a… tayilburi). Such stories were often written in the form of satires and used animals as metaphors for negative human behaviour. However, some fragments show traits seen as inherent to particular animals. This is the case of some didactic texts, where dogs are described as capable of mean and villainous behavior like attacking an enemy, who is ill and grew weaker: people behaving like this are "being an old dog in human appearance" (Galshiev 2012, verse 470); or one who is tormenting a weaker counterpart is called "a dog on two legs and speaking human language" (Galshiev 2012, verse 692).[14] In another fragment, a person stingy with food is compared to "a dog showing its teeth" (Galshiev 2012, verse 21). A monkey is mentioned as ugly and gross (*γutumšiγ bičin-u adali*) (Onol-tu ebügen… 1a). Insects carry an important symbolic function due to their small size and as creatures not realizing their limitations: "as a worm climbing on a fortress" (Galshiev 2012, verse 328). Insects/worms (*qoruqai*) or parasites (*qubalja*) that grow by sipping animals' blood are the same as a human who grows richer from violence or sinful deeds (Olan amitan-u 12a). A snake is also described as unrecoverably viperous, just as are those people who live with evil thoughts (Erdeni--yin sang; Galshiev 2012, verse 496). Pigs are seen as eating everything, even rotten things, like people who do not distinguish virtue from sins (Erdeni-yin sang… 14a).

14 Natalia Dondokova in her analysis of Buryat proverbs expresses her surprise that unlike in Russian phraseology, where a dog is presented as a good friend of humans, in the Buryat phraseology, as a rule, a dog is described in negative categories: as an animal living among humans, but failing to distinguish their hierarchies and norms, as in the proverb: "A thoughtless dog is barking at the moon" (Dondokova 2008, 57).

It seems that in most instances mentioning animals carries negative overtones or refers to negative aspects of human behaviour except, perhaps, for the case of horses which are compared to a good friend (Qagan-u nigen…; Galshiev 2012, verse 400). Animals are considered to be inferior, because they are highly dependent on their natural needs and lack human will (Yermakova and Ostrovskaya 2004, 130), certain "social" emotional or intellectual abilities. However, the same as is the case for human and other sentient beings, there is no question that animals are capable of suffering, feeling physical and mental pain, and thus humans should consider their needs when acting in the world (Barstow 2019; Dorzhigushaeva 2002, 17).

Fig. 1. "The Molon Khatun enjoying sinful deeds". Source: *The Tale of (how) the saintly Molon toyin Bodhisattva, who attained great perfection, repaid good actions to his mother* (Mong. 417–19) Manuscript 19th century, Inner Mongolia (?). Reproduced with the permission of the Copenhagen Royal Library.

HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS ANIMALS

Promoting itself as a religion of compassion, Buddhism set itself in opposition to shamanism: animal sacrifices, common as part of shamanist rituals practiced by Buryats before the adoption of Buddhism (and after), were one of the major points of contention (Dorzhigushaeva 2002, 8). The didactic texts insisted that blood sacrifices are an improper form of worship. For instance, one of the major sins described in the Story of *Molon toyin* is that performed by the eponymous hero's mother: "(…) she

ripped out the hearts of living pigs, took them and offered them to the bad *ongɣod*" (Kollmar-Paulenz 2017,177). In the Story of *Choizhid dagini*, killing horses and dogs are cited in the same category of sins as killing humans. Sazykin explains that this is related to the initial period of the spread of Buddhism among the Mongols, and the struggle against local shamanist cults which most often used horses and dogs for sacrifice. The killing or torturing of animals was considered to be a sin also because animals are former humans: in "the universe where everything dies and finds its new incarnation without beginning or end"[15], everything has been one's mother in a previous life (*minueke boluysan*) (Ečige eke-yin… 5a). Despite such an attitude, the murder of animals was, and still is, one of the most problematic issues in this and other Buddhist regions.

According to Sazykin, the fact that Buddhism appeared in developed agricultural societies influenced the basic commandment of Buddhism to avoid killing animals for food.[16] However, moving northward from India to countries such as Tibet and especially Mongolia that were based on cattle breeding, this requirement became virtually impossible to implement. Thus, a way out was found: the sin of killing animals and the sin of eating meat from slaughtered animals were differentiated. Although both deeds are qualified as sins, in practice, the sin of consuming meat for food was considered much smaller sin than that of killing an animal for these purposes (Sazykin 2004, 234). For example, in the Story of *Choizhid dagini*, a man during a hell trial justifies himself as follows: "I have commited sins, I have consumed the meat of many killed animals, but I have not killed them myself"[17] (Choizhid dagini 15a, see Sazykin 2004, 190).

Indeed, few mentions are made in the texts of people being criticized for eating meat. Like Tibetans, from whom Buddhism was adopted, Buryats, who were nomads for centuries, had a complex relationship with the animals they bred. These traditionally included five types of animals (*tavan khushuun mal*): horses, camels, cows, goats and sheep. Buryats' daily survival depended on these animals, which were treated as means of transportation/carriage and as a source of dairy products, meat, wool, fur

15 törüku ükükü terigün ecüs ügei orčilang.

16 As Karénina Kollmar-Paulenz notes in private correspondence, this is only the case in Mahayana--Buddhism. In the Pali canon, there is no demand to avoid eating meat. On the contrary: the Buddhist monk has to eat everything people put into his alms bowl. Only if an animal is especially slaughtered for the monk, has he to reject it. Otherwise, he has to eat the meat. Interestingly, only a few lamas nowadays know that Buddha did not forbid eating meat. According to her personal communications with Tibetan and Mongolian lamas about this topic, they simply assume that not eating meat is required, but that they themselves are too weak to follow this rule (private communication, April 22, 2020).

17 kilinče-yin jüg-tüüyiledügsen olan amitan-i alaɣsan miq=a idebei: bi ober-iyen ami tasuluɣsan ügei.

and leather. Galshiev recommends that one should be grateful to animals, whose flesh or milk is consumed, or whose skin is being used, and pray for their well-being as one would for one's own mother (Galshiev 2012, verses 678, 679, 952). Even if condemnations of consuming meat appear, most of them do so with regard to an immoderate or improper way of consuming meat (e.g. abusive ways of cooking for the best taste, eating the meat of mass slaughtered animals) and wastefulness (e.g. eating only the best parts and throwing out or burning the rest). The following fragment of the Story of *Molon toyin* describes the way in which his mother committed such sins (Fig. 1):

> […] with gold and silver she bought many animals, fattened them, hung them from wooden hooks and hit the still living animals with wooden sticks so that the blood in their bodies stocked. Saying that they would taste good, she let them get killed, then mixed the meat and blood, flavored with garlic and sweet wine, ate and savored it. Further, she threw living fish into a pot, roasted and ate them. Furthermore, she threw geese, chicken and many other birds alive in a hot pot, so that they plucked out their own feathers and died (Kollmar-Paulenz 2017, 177).

According to this text, the improper way of consuming animals is punished in various sectors of hell. For example, a hell called "Crushing in a mortar" contains sinners who "during their lifetime tore the skins from live animals and took only their meat and marrowbone"[18] (Molon toyin 16b: Sazykin 2004, 54); a Hell of Swords, where suffer those who wasted meat and skin in fire (Molon toyin 17a: Sazykin 2004, 54); or a hell of a "Fire Town" – for "those who picked in their skirting bird eggs that did not see the sun and moonlight, and baked them in fire"[19] (Molon toyin 19a: Sazykin 2004, 55).

Traditional mass gatherings of people during summer feasts and wedding ceremonies required mass slaughter of animals for food. The authors of the didactic literature condemned this practice and encouraged a non-meat diet serving dairy and grain-based products instead of meat (*alaγsan miq=a*) during such events (Ene sayin galab…). A popular Buryat 18th century short novel about Princess Balzhan khatan also includes a similar passage: "When a girl is married off, due to the needs of the ceremony a lot of cattle (*aduγusan mal*) are slaughtered. My beloved father and mother, when the time will come to marry me off, when preparing the wedding ceremony do not take the life of cattle (*shuhata mal* – "cattle with blood"); use dairy products, fruits and bulbs for those needs, that will be enough" (Balzhan khatan tukhai… 1992, 215). A non-meat diet, which is currently often seen as foreign to the Buryat tradition, actually was present in the culture of the 19th century in ethnic Buryatia.

18 ede erigüten amidu büküi-tür adaγusud-un arisun-i öbčigsen miq-a inu kim-a tataγsan-u nigül-ün.

19 naran saran-u gerel-i ese üjegsen aliba sibaγun-u üngdeged-i abču qormoyilan irejüγal-un dotura bolγaγsan-u nigül-ün.

If the issue of domestic animals (*mal, adaγu mal, boda mal* "cattle"; animals residing "at one's home" *gertegen*) seems to be at least problematic for the authors from a moral standpoint, the viewpoint on the murder of non-domesticated/wild animals is more rigid.[20] In the didactic and folk literature, the figure of the hunter (*görügesüci, anguushan*) is often depicted as a negative character: "a sinful hunter" *qilensetei anguushan* (Galshiev 277; also in Molon toyin, especially The Stories of Benefits of the Diamond Sutra 35b, 41a–42b: Sazykin 2004, 79–80).[21] In the texts depicting journeys to the Buddhist hell, there frequently appear scenes in which hunters are punished for killing wild animals. In the Story of *Choizhid dagini*, during a hell trial a man explains that he used to kill wild animals because it was a tradition (*jang*) in the place where he lived. However, he was still convicted of murder: "while sinless wild animals nibbled grass, you chased some of them with dogs and killed them, caught some with a lasso pole, shot some with a bow. (…) you killed ninety wild goats, sixty-seven musk deer, five bears, seven big musk deer and seventeen monkeys"[22] (Choizhid dagini 34b, see: Sazykin 2004, 166). In the Story of *Molon toyin*, one of the hell residents who used to be a Brahmin was punished for many sins, including training falcons to hunt smaller and weaker birds, and training hunting dogs to chase game (Molon toyin 2015, 18).[23] This perhaps influenced the folk oral tradition, as I have heard stories about "punished hunters" during my fieldwork in Buryatia.

20 I would include into this category, predatory and grazing animals *ariyatan kiged görügesün* (Choizhid dagini 55a: Sazykin 2004, 207); and also worms/insects/pismire *siryuljin qoruqai terigüten* (Molon toyin 17b: Sazykin 2004, 54), birds šibagun and fish *jigasun* (Molon toyin 17a–b: Sazykin 2004, 54).

21 As Karénina Kollmar-Paulenz informed me in private correspondence, this actually goes back to the stories about Milarepa, who met a hunter and the deer he was hunting, and showed the hunter the way to liberation. This perhaps most famous of all Milarepa-tales has been translated into Mongolian very early on (around 1600).

22 görügesün-nügüd ebesün iden aqui-dur: či jarim-dur-iyan noqai talbiju alan: jarim-dur anu uriq=a tosqaju alan: či jarim-dur anu sumu-bar qarbuju alaγsan: tede inu yeren imagan görügesün: jiran doluγan küderi: tabun tüme doluγan yeke küderi: arban doluγan saramaγčin alaγsan-iya.

23 In the historic chronicles, some warriors asked to perform a three-day rite in a monastery after they hunted animals in a battue (Balzhan khatanai tuuzha… 1992, 221). We can find a similar trope of moral reflection in the diary of an Inner-Mongolian duke, Galdanwangchugdorji: "Always, since [I] was aged ten [I] liked killing and smashing things, and loved using traps, lassoes, slings, and sticks, and wandering in hummocks of thick grass, killing any baby animals which were bigger than rats or mice and sparrows. [I] roasted goose eggs on fires, and [I] made baby hares my food, and in this way [I] grew up making all those activities like games. From the age of fifteen, [I] went hunting on horseback, using a gun or a bow and arrows on the northern and the southern side of the mountains. [I] forced yellow and black people [lamas and lay serfs] to serve me, and in this way [I] made people fed up with me, but [I] did not know fear orshame, and [I] did not notice how my father and mother were worried about myacting like this, and I went on acting like an animal (adugusun mal)" (Humphrey and Ujeed 2013, 117).

Apart from consuming animals as meat, they were also considered as a "property object" (*edlel mal*) (Ekener-ün qubčad…) and a monetary unit (*boda*) as stipulated in the pre-revolutionary Buryat legal codes, which regulated the life of the Buryats in the Russian empire. In legal codes, terms like *andza* and *yala* were counted in *bodo*, which denoted material value calculated in terms of amount of cattle. A *Bodo* is equivalent to 1 cow/bull or 1 horse, 7 sheep or 10 goats – a camel, meanwhile, was counted as 1.5 *bodos* (Tangad 2013). In line with the Buddhist doctrine, the didactic texts condemned some social practices and commercial transactions which could have tragic consequences for animals. Particularly, the didactic texts condemned Buryat women's desire to dress up and use expensive and heavy jewelry made of corals, pearls, gems, gold and silver. The texts say that such excessive behaviour leads to the suffering and death of animals who are often sold in exchange for fashionable items: "it costs a lot, thus in order to cover its cost many cattle (*mal*) are sold, and thus are given to a butcher to be slaughtered; this brings harm (*qoor-a*) to the life (*ami*) of many creatures, and puts a lot of sins on those who are selling the cattle." The text also says that those women who enjoy wearing large-size jewelry will be born as worms living in excrement (Ün-e yeke-tüülemji… 3b). The horse racing and archery that took place during Buryat summer feasts were also condemned in the didactic texts. It is said that horses suffer from unnecessary lashing during races and that animals are used as prizes for winners and gamblers. Besides, people massively consume meat during these feast celebrations. Those who watch horse races are to be reborn as wolves and jackals (Olan amitan-u uile… 5a).

Thus, those who kill or torture animals may face serious challenges in subsequent incarnations. On the contrary, the kind treatment of animals, such as saving the lives of insects or refraining from beating cattle, may "relieve diseases", "maintain life in times of danger" and will bring positive karma for future incarnations (Galshiev 2012, verses 134, 136). In the story of *Molon toyin*, the protagonist had to save the life of animals in order to relieve the sufferings of his mother (Molon toyin 32 b: Sazykin 2004, 62). Human handling of and responsibility towards animals is thus based on humans' power over animals and their capacity to moderate this power.

CONCLUSION

The present study concerns the way in which Buryat Buddhist elites in the 19th and beginning of the 20th century presented animals and their place in the social and cosmic orders. The didactic literature makes a clear distinction between the human and animal orders. This view is clearly an anthropocentric one, based on the concept of human incarnation seen as a privilege. Animals are objectified in cautionary tales in ways that aim at discouraging humans from evil acts. While the texts prescribe treating animals

with care and highlight the possibility of humans being "downgraded" to animals, interactions with animals are presented mostly from a position of power.

This study aims to contribute to the general debates in the social sciences regarding the way human cultures construct the sphere labeled as "social" in opposition to the broadly defined natural environment (Latour 1993, 2005; Luhmann 1981). In post-humanist social theories and environmental philosophy, "non-Western" traditions of thought often serve as counter-weight alternatives to a conventional "Western" nature-culture dichotomy. The materials analysed in this article demonstrate, however, that Buryat conceptions of the relationship between human and non-human animals were coined in categories that seem to resonate more, for example, with Philipp Descola's idea of naturalism than with his rendition of animism or totemism (Descola 2013). I argue, moreover, that one should not necessarily see the ideas expressed in these texts as borrowed from or developed under the influence of European modernization processes mediated by the Russian Empire; instead, I see them as a part of Buddhist and other local traditions with long historical roots, which should be explored in more detail in future research.

An exhaustive analysis of general Buryat attitudes towards animals is beyond the scope of this study. It is possible that studying other didactic texts might expand and enrich the reading of the material presented here. My observations seem to be consistent with other similar research done in Buddhist Studies (Barstow 2019; Waldau 2002) and could serve as additional comparative material for the aforementioned debate.

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R E V I E W S

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NORMALITY, CONTROL AND THE STATE. REVIEW OF *BALKAN BLUES. CONSUMER POLITICS AFTER STATE SOCIALISM*, BY YUSON JUNG, BLOOMINGTON: INDIANA UNIVERSITY PRESS 2019, 192 PAGES

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Fake products, a lack of control, consumer access to goods and a longing for "normality" – these are some of the central issues touched upon in a recently published book by American-Korean anthropologist, Yuson Jung. Although *Balkan Blues* deals with post-communist Bulgaria, many conclusions and observations can be applied to other post-communist or post-socialist countries, not only those in the Balkans. The book deals with consumer politics after state socialism and discusses the ways in which people engage in daily consumer practices (shopping, using services), how they understand their rights as consumers and how they demand responsibility from the providers of specific goods. The author looks at unequal access to goods and, contrary to many other studies on the topic, she looks not only at the agency of consumers but also at their vulnerability. Furthermore, Jung proposes an understanding of consumption as a site of civic engagement. Bulgaria is one of the poorest countries in the EU, and balancing between choice and access is an important consumer concern.

I started reading this book from the appendix – and I recommend readers do the same. We only meet the author – a young woman, raised in South Korea and Germany, who graduated in the US – in this last part of the book. Without knowing the author's positionality and personal embodied experience, it would be more difficult to understand her relationships with people in the field and her trials in understanding post-socialist reality. Yusun Jung did "classic" long-term fieldwork in Sofia (1999–2016) focusing on the everyday consumption practices of Bulgarians at a time of transformation from a centrally planned economy to a consumer society with a market economy. She volunteered at the BNCA (Bulgarian National Consumers Association), observing and taking part in events and carrying out expert interviews. She also lived with families (12 she got to know very well), sharing their consumption practices and everyday activities.

Consumption practices and activities in post-socialist Bulgaria need to be understood in relation to the previous system: state socialism. Although this period was marked by shortages of goods, basic needs were guaranteed by the state (e.g. food, water, housing and basic services, including seaside holidays). At the same time, the distribution of goods was irregular, and citizens neither had any choice nor could they impact on the distribution of goods. At the same time, people came to expect that the state was controlling what was available on the market, and even though certain products were sometimes of low quality, they were accessible to almost everyone; and they were neither "garbage" nor "fake". The word "almost" is of the utmost importance here: the dire lack of many products and the absence of higher quality products led people into developing the habit of using their informal connections (*vruzki*) in order to access some goods. In the late 1960s, goods from the West were sold at a hard currency store, and later at a chain of stores called CORECOM. The name is an acronym from the French *Comptoir de Representation et de Commerce*, usually referred to in short as *korektsiya na komunizma*. CORECOM is understood by Jung as a marker of memory of consumer activities during socialism, juxtaposed with the experiences of long lines or hoarding that were common consumer strategies at that time: "As the state could not completely fulfill the necessities it defined, it had to correct its own agenda by creating stores like CORECOM that not only tacitly acknowledged the failure of the system on the one hand but also showed how the state took accountability in addressing that failure on the other" (p. 50). In the early days of CORECOM, only a few could shop there: the right document was required, along with hard currencies (dollars or marks). This was the reason why people relied on connections and on networks through which things were acquired in informal or even semi-legal ways.

These informal relations and strategies of getting things done while avoiding official bureaucracies are well described in the literature on post-socialist / post-communist practices[1], and it is a pity that the author does not devote more space to this in the book. One example of such of a strategy is the concept of *kombinowanie* which Nicolette Makovicky analyses on the basis of her research in Poland. This term literally means "to sort out", but is used to describe "a range of activities and (moral) dispositions, from economic and political corruption, to academic plagiarism, to do-it-yourself house refurbishment" (Makovicky 2018: 4). The same strategy is applied by Bulgarians, and using informal networks and practices that "involve illegal activity, or, more commonly, activities whose legality is ambiguous" (Galbraith 2003, 6) may also be analyzed as a much older cultural legacy than simply a socialist one. Tanya

1 There is no room here for the discussions of the category of post-socialism or post-communism itself. It is however important to remember that the category of post-socialism was introduced by Western scholars, while in the region itself the term "post-communism" tended to be used (cf. Skalnik 2002; Cervinkova 2012).

Chavdarova notes that such practices have a long history in Bulgaria and that in the aftermath of state socialism they are related to poverty and unemployment:

> The shortages of goods and services that typified the socialist economy were replaced by shortages of money, jobs and trustworthy partners. Compensating for these deficiencies became a highly significant and widely spread factor in *vruzki* exchanges. Recurrent exchanges of favors have shaped expectations and rules of behavior. The rules implicitly postulate that utility is expected to increase when impersonal relationships become personal (Chavdarova 2018, 66).

Furthermore, according to Ilkà Thiesssen (2007), an anthropologist who conducted research in Skopje in the 1990s, these kinds of practices fit into the discussion about Europe and the Balkans or about East and West. "We don't have a normal life like the Europeans", says one of Jung's research partners (p. 85), where "Europeans" mean citizens of the "old EU" (cf. Petrovic 2011). A "normal" life means anxiety-free (*spokoino*), and it is related to a "normal" state. During communism, it was the state who "took care" of citizens by providing them with jobs and goods, and even by organizing or facilitating holidays. Today, the state is still perceived to be responsible for the protection of consumers and the control of products on the market. "The state", writes Jung (p. 7), "can be understood […] as a conceptual and cultural category associated with control (especially over product quality and safety) and accountability (ensuring the legal and electoral systems to guarantee this control work)" or as "an abstract cultural category shaped by state socialism and reproduced through everyday consumption practices even for those consumers who did not have first-hand experiences with state socialism" (p. 40–41). This concept is similar to that presented by Anna Malewska-Szałygin, based on her research among Polish Highlanders: the state and the authorities are referred to as "they" (rich people who are in power, living somewhere in the capital city), and believed to be responsible for citizens' poverty, unemployment and chaos (Malewska-Szałygin 2017). In Bulgaria also, after socialism, the state is perceived to be absent. People distrust the post-socialist state and rely mostly on their own networks and informal strategies.

The book begins with a vignette about low-rise shops in Sofia, known as *kneel shops*, in one of which the author notices a fake (*mente*) Fanta. I remember similar situations from my fieldwork in Macedonia. In the sunny summer of 2000 or 2001, I bought some batteries for my voice recorder at the crowded Stone Bridge in Skopje. It was only when I got back to my rented room that I realized that I had bought a fake product: the brand read "Somy" instead of "Sony". My landlady started to laugh, and showed me a very well forged bottle of "Coca-Cola" and a pair of trousers labelled "Elvis". All the logos looked original at first glance. *Mente*, as Jung rightly writes, is an important term meaning not only fake products, but also corrupt politicians and greedy businessman. In the other words, *mente* stands for "everything that was not

right in the aftermath of socialism" (p. 1). *Mente* is a term that serves as a socio-cultural critique against new forms of power. Although in the post-socialist era there are plenty of goods, consumers either cannot afford them or do not trust them. Because purchasing power in Bulgaria is still much lower than in other EU countries, consumers should always balance between access and choices. Although Bulgarians were afraid of buying *mente* products, they were often not in a position to afford originals. The Sofians, with whom Yusun Jung did shopping, carefully examined products from the top and bottom shelves to find the best (value for money), and some would eventually choose the cheapest, being aware of the possibility that they were *mente* products.

The 1990s saw the emergence of a magazine titled *Mente i Originali* (*Fake and Originals*): a guide for consumers on how to recognize *mente* and shop sensibly. The magazine also showed that even original brands like Coca-Cola have different recipes for different markets and that, for example in Greece, it tasted differently than it did in Bulgaria (it is worth noting that according to Bulgarians' mental maps, Greece is part of the West). The magazine served as a kind of consumer advocacy forum, before consumers' organizations started their activities and before the implementation of a law on consumer protection. However, consumers did not want to buy a magazine and pay for information about tests on products. Also, they showed disbelief with regard to successful activities of NGO advocacy and no understanding of the goals of NGOs. Instead, they requested free information and protection from the state. Even in 1998, when a consumer protection law was introduced (the Law of Consumer Protection and Trade Rules), people did not trust it: it was widely believed that the law existed only on paper so that Bulgaria could join the EU, but that nobody applied or respected it. In fact, the law was a direct translation from relevant EU laws, with no reference to the historical and social experiences of Bulgarians.

The contemporary consumption strategies analysed by Jung are still based predominantly on trust and social networks. Since 2013, despite the opening of new chain supermarkets popular all over Europe, many people still prefer going to "old" neighbourhood stores they trusted. They did it even when the sellers were rude. Jung calls this "inverted power relations", and understands the position of seller over buyer as a socialist legacy. The answer to the question "why do they still go there" was that "[a]t least they do not sell *mente* products" (p. 63). The buyers know sellers and sellers know buyers, so – as Sofians explained – they cannot cheat. It would be interesting in this context to see how Jung would analyse "do-it-yourself" strategies. Other publications regarding Bulgaria and other post-socialist countries have dealt with the significance of homemade food (cf. a paper about yogurt in Bulgaria, see Yotova 2018), food preserves during the socialist "scarcity economy" and the various informal economic practices that emerged later (Chavdarova 2002; Polese, Rodgers 2011).

Heating problems were one such example of the informal practices of Sofians that resulted from the fact that their needs were no longer cared for by the state. Thanks

to long-term participant observation, Jung could herself experience cold Bulgarian winters without central heating in the block of flats where she rented a room. She was also able to understand how the issue of *parno* (heating) is important for Sofians, although rarely explicitly expressed. During communist times, heating, water and electricity were provided by the state and were accessible to everybody. In the aftermath of socialism, central heating was provided by a private (privatized state) company operating in the neighbourhoods and was no longer affordable for everybody. Thus, many people would turn off the heating and either suffer the cold or look for alternative, illegal methods, because the state "doesn't care". One of Jung's befriended families installed by themselves a wood-burning furnace so as to avoid freezing, because they could no longer afford central heating. This was an informal practice and informal strategy used not only by Jung's research partners. Heating problems were both private and public as they were widely commented on, and alternative heating strategies were a kind of civic engagement. Another example is that of affordable housing and a summer vacation. Jung found it difficult to understand that local people saw saving for at least a few days of holidays as a "need". Later on she learned that during socialist times it was "normal" for everybody to have their summer holidays at the Black Sea guaranteed by the workplace and that the working class right to leisure time was perceived as a part of "normal" life. People sought this "normality" also after communism, but affording a flat or travel was a lot more difficult than it was during communist times.

Balkan Blues. Consumer Politics After State Socialism by Yuson Jung is a good contribution to post-socialist and Balkan studies, showing well that the concept of post-socialism can still be useful not only in the context of Central and Eastern Europe, but also in the Balkans (cf. Bielenin-Lenczowska 2017). The book is based on long-term, deep ethnography and is well written. What it lacks is more focus on informality and local networks (connections or *vruzki*) – something that has been important in other post-socialist or post-communist countries. Still, I recommend it to anyone who wants to try to understand social, political, and economic differences in Europe and everyday practices related to the (imaginaries of the) state.

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WHEN SACRED PLANTS TURN INTO RESOURCES. REVIEW OF *CULL OF PERSONALITY: AYAHUASCA, SHAMANISM AND THE DEATH OF THE HEALER*, BY KEVIN TUCKER, BLACK AND GREEN PRESS: DENVER 2019, 208 PAGES

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Cull of Personality: Ayahuasca, Shamanism and the Death of the Healer tells a story of colonial encounters with different worlds, with a primary focus on the processes associated with turning human and non-human others into resources. Along with Christopher Columbus' "discovery" of the New World and the signing of the Treaty at Tordesillas, which divided its territory between European empires, began the era of the exploitation of local people, plants, animals and minerals. The author of the book, like many other scholars, points out that despite the fall of imperial powers, Western domination is not just a part of a cruel past, but is still enacted in many material and immaterial forms: inter alia in Euro-American claims on indigenous knowledge. In the light of the "psychedelic renaissance" (known also as a psychedelic turn) and the globalization of entheogens[1], Kevin Tucker's book offers a valuable approach to the phenomenon of the mainstreaming of psychedelic medicine plants. He reminds us that the history of *ayahuasca* is strictly intertwined with the history of colonialism, and that we should bear this in mind when engaging in practices connected with the Amazonian sacred brew. However, the author leaves no hope that Westerners may establish positive and sustainable relations with indigenous worlds, and postulates that they rather should stay away from them.

The starting point for Tucker's reflection is the tragic death of Maestra Olivia, a plant medicine healer from the Shipibo-Conibo group. She was shot by Sebastian Woodroffe, a Canadian who was lynched afterwards by the local community as an act of revenge. The recording of this assassination spread across the Internet and became a matter of global interest. Woodroffe, like many Western travellers and spiritual seekers, came to the Peruvian rainforest in search of *ayahuasca*, the potent

1 Psychoactive substances used in ritual settings with healing or religious purposes.

hallucinogenic brew which was traditionally consumed in the upper Amazon in the practices of plant healers using it as medicine and also as a tool for establishing contact with the spirit world. *Ayahuasca* is prepared from a combination of plants which, in the local context, are considered to be sentient beings that are able to share knowledge with people and may only be understood in the broader context of ecosystem relations grounded in animistic cosmology. Thus the brew itself is an animated and intentional entity which enables communication between humans and non-humans: plants, animals and ancestral spirits. Woodroffe came to the Peruvian rainforest to gain knowledge about the *ayahuasca* rituals in order to use it in the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder and addiction. An integral part of these rituals are the so-called *Iquaros*, songs chanted during the ceremonies which are considered not to be composed by humans, but given by the plants themselves and endowed with the potential to cure. Woodroffe killed Maestra Olivia after she refused to share her sacred chants with him.

Although *Cull of Personality: Ayahuasca, Shamanism and the Death of the Healer* is not, strictly speaking, an anthropological work (as Tucker does not ground his study in ethnographic methodology), it touches on deeply anthropological problems. The book takes the form of an extended essay, well-grounded in scientific literature. It is organized around the history of the conquest of the Americas, which serves as a starting point for the author's reflections on civilization seen as a tool of legitimization for the invaders' exploitive attitude, the problem of commodification of non-human others and the enslavement of local people. Tucker gradually unmasks the parallels between the processes which led to the tragic death of Maestra Olivia and the history of South America, a continent whose inhabitants and entire ecosystems have been extracted, reduced to resources and brought into new contexts deprived of their previous relationships. *Ayahuasca* shamanism became, in the author's view, a part of this assemblage. "*Ayahuasca* becomes the new gold. In the drastic retelling of the world, the one that lies at the heart of civilization from its inception, everything is a resource. Every resource has value" (p. 126). He recalls that the *ayahuasca* rituals in the form that we know them today were partly an answer to colonial oppression. They came about in the reality of rubber tapper camps as an instrument for resistance and as means of understanding a world which was forced upon indigenous people. Psychedelic tourism is for Tucker an act of spiritual extractivism which produces plastic medicine people and turns *ayahuasca* into a commodity.

The origins of Western interest in psychedelics date back to the second half of the 20th century, particularly to the discovery of the psychoactive potential of LSD by the chemist Albert Hoffman, as well as to Gordon Wasson's article in *Life* magazine in 1957 reporting on his participation in an indigenous ceremony of magic mushroom consumption which popularized knowledge about sacred plants and triggered a wave of psychedelic pilgrimage to Latin America. These events, together with the growing interest in non-western forms of spirituality, most notably shamanism, and the

counterculture movement paved the grounds for the psychedelic revolution. *Ayahuasca* itself entered the Western imagination with the publication of William Borroughs and Allen Ginsberg's *The Yage Letters*. The fifties and sixties were also a period of experiments aimed at introducing psychedelics into mainstream psychiatric therapies for mental disorders, which were then abandoned at the end of the sixties**.** During the era of the "War on Drugs", the psychedelic became an object of moral panic, a taboo, and practices connected with it were turned into a criminal activity. However, since the nineties there are strong global efforts by the scientific community to re-establish research on these substances and re-introduce them into mainstream medicine, especially for their potential in treating depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety disorders of terminally ill patients and addiction. In this process, psychedelics turn into medicines which may serve as a cure for modern crises, such as the opiate crisis or the epidemic of mental disorders often linked with a lack of meaning and community bonds. The psychedelic renaissance has resulted also in a drastic growth of psychedelic tourism and the amount of psychedelic retreats (criticized in Tucker's book), as well as of scientific publications on psychedelics.

Although Tucker does not refer directly to the phenomenon of a psychedelic renaissance, I find this book an important voice which may add very valuable insights for the ongoing debates within this turn. The author indicates dangers connected with this movement, such as the possibility of epistemological misunderstandings that may lead to the misuse of indigenous knowledge. Indeed, I read Tucker's book as a vast essay about deeply ontological enquiries. Thus, the issues analysed in the book seem very relevant to current anthropology where the problem of postcolonial encounters, and of the knowledge which has been produced through them, are hotly debated topics. Posthumanism postulates the need for a "decolonization of thought" (following Viveiros de Castro's famous quote) which should be performed on several levels. On the one hand, this should be achieved through recognizing that there are different ways of getting inside the worlds around us: and that therefore Western science should not be treated as the only proper epistemology, while any other cosmologies are seen simply as "beliefs". On the other hand, it should equally be implemented through avoiding scientific practices which may lead to treating local knowledge as a resource that could be introduced to our worlds without taking seriously local claims for this knowledge.

What remains questionable, however, is the rather extremist and unilateral perception of relations between the "Westerners" and the "Indigenous" which seem, in the author's view, doomed always to fail. He also passes over the problem of abuse committed by the second party or – what seems to me even more important – the possibility of creating common worlds together. Perhaps it would be enriching to move beyond the question of whether such encounters should happen at all**,** as such a strong statement that they should not could also be seen as an act of paternalization

of local communities, and ask instead under what conditions they might happen in order to create valuable relations for both sides.

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