

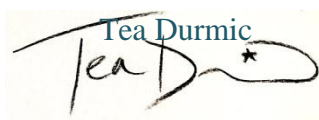
Expectations Under the Tuscan Sun:
Voluntary Work on an Organic Agritourism Farm



Drawing by Line, a volunteer

Degree of Master of Science (Two Years) in Human Ecology: Culture, Power and Sustainability

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Abstract

This thesis presents the volunteering on organic farms and the international organization WWOOF (*World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms*) that connects volunteers with organic farmers. In the summer of 2011, I volunteered at an organic agritourism farm in Tuscany, Italy. The thesis is based on the fieldwork conducted for eight weeks while working at the farm as a WWOOFer. It investigates the aspects of free labor or volunteer work, associated with the growing movement of organic farming. The thesis deals with the issues of power, unequal exchange and investigates the question of scales. It also addresses different aspects of sustainability, self-sufficiency, organic farming, food and cuisine. The thesis present the issues and challenges highlighted through interviews and participatory observation at the farm.

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Prologue

Some technical notes for an easier reading of the text:

- All Italian words or expressions are in Italics e.g., *pecorino cheese*
- All words added by author are put in square brackets e.g., [sic]
- or added words to the comments of the interviewees e.g., [he said] that organic ...
- All comments made by author in interviews are marked e.g., /laughs/
- All visual material (e.g., charts, maps, photographs) are produced by author, unless stated otherwise.

Introduction

Topic of the thesis

This thesis investigates volunteer work as an aspect of free labor, associated with the growing movement of organic farming. The text is interdisciplinary, using aspects of human ecology, including environmental sciences, economics, cultural studies, and political (ecology) and social sciences. While looking at the organization of volunteer work on a specific organic farm, it deals with labor and power relations, studies organic farming as opposed to conventional farming, touches upon food culture and the notion of cuisine. I conducted my fieldwork research during a two-month-stay at the farm in Tuscany, where I worked as a volunteer through the organization *World Wide Opportunities On Organic Farms* (WWOOF). The identity of the farm and the interviewees will remain anonymous, as disclosure of their identities is not relevant to this study. Suffice it to say that I was invited to join an organic agritourism organization, which agreed to take me in and educate me on matters of organic farming.

Research questions

How is WWOOF.org presented at this farm, on its own internet page and how is it regarded in the sphere of EU as an organization of volunteer work?

How are the power structures or relationships among owners/farmers/WWOOF-hosts, volunteers and workers at the farm displayed?

What kinds of challenges with volunteer work on organic farms were discovered during the fieldwork?

Does the study reveal problems that can be translated from the local (one organic farm in Tuscany) to the macro (international organization, WWOOF)?

How does WWOOF's philosophy relate to the economies, politics and environmental policies of the West, specifically the EU? Does it challenge the status quo?

Purpose of this study

This thesis describes a specific case of an organic farm that operates under the umbrella of an international organization (WWOOF). It analyzes means of organizing alternative forms of labor and considers it from the discipline of Human Ecology. The aim is to present the theoretical ideas of WWOOF and to identify the discrepancies that arise in organizing free labor on organic farms. The purpose of this thesis is to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on labor and exchange in the organic agricultural community.

My connection to Tuscany

The first time I visited Tuscany, I was 16. My high school for *Visual Design and Photography* class took a four day trip to Florence, Pisa and Sienna. We spent most of our time in *Firenze*, the capital of the region *Toscana* often cited as the birthplace of the Renaissance. This urban center of Tuscany was the polar opposite of the little village of Vinci that we also visited. Our bus was barely able to wind its way up the steep, narrow and crooked roads that find their way between vineyards and olive groves to the hill top to the birth-house of the great mastermind Leonardo da Vinci. He was born in the middle of the 15th century in this tiny house just outside the village and

in the old Italian tradition he carried its name *da Vinci*, meaning of the Vinci village¹. Ten years ago, this was my only connection to the rural side of Tuscany, but it left a great mark on me.



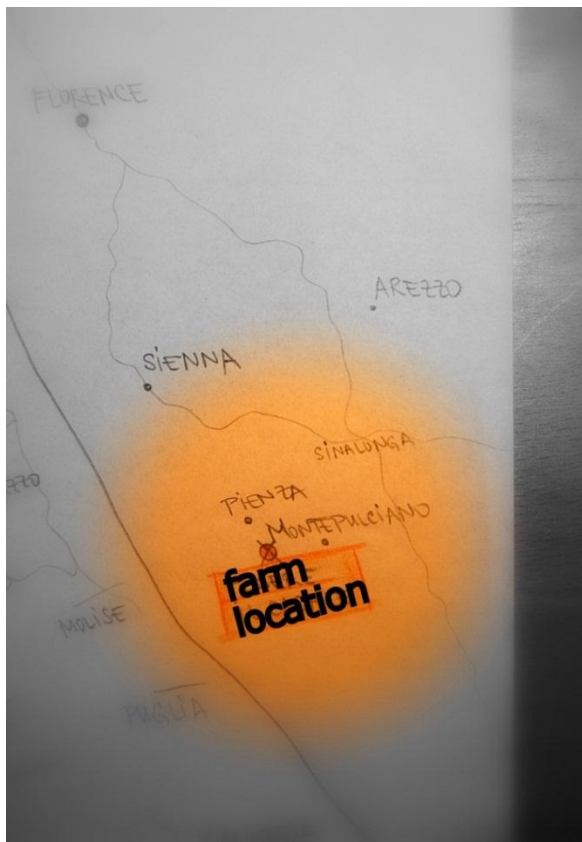
I returned to Tuscany exactly a decade later as a WWOOF volunteer. A recommendation about ‘a farm that produces organic food and serves it every day at 1 o’clock to their farm workers and guests’ was made to me and my travel companions by the owner of a B&B in Montefollonico, near Montepulciano as we were visiting in June 2011. This is how I ended up at the organic agritourism farm located between Pienza, Monticchello, Montepulciano and Montalcino. The cuisine and the gorgeous view of the whole valley are the main attractions for tourists. Not surprisingly so, since it lies between Montalcino, a town famous for its’ *Brunello di Montalcino* red wines², Pienza for its’ sheep cheese *pecorino* and Montepulciano with its’ *Vino Nobile di Montepulciano*. We had a lovely lunch, enjoyed the gorgeous views of Val d’Orcia and I ended setting up a two-month-long stay for August and September as a researcher and a volunteer. This agritourism is run by a family who lives on the land. Apart from running a restaurant with slow-food, their agricultural areas contain grains, olives, vines, some fruits and vegetables, as well as pastures for animals and hay.

¹ Apart from a few drawings that are on display in the house itself, visitors can find reconstructions of his inventions in the village’s museum www.museoleonardiano.it, as his famous paintings *Mona Lisa*, *The Last Supper*, *Annunciation*, *Adoration of the Magi* etc. and *The Vitruvian Man* and *Self Portrait* drawings find their home in world-famous museums on other locations.

² Grapes are to be found in every Italian region. Winemaking has a very long tradition in the country, and Italy enjoys a positive trade balance in this sector. The vines yield 9,459,000 metric tons of grapes and 62,618,000 hectoliters of wine (a hectoliter is 100 liters). Until the mid-1980s, wine production was not generally of a high standard and, indeed, much table wine was cheap and of very poor quality. The industry then went through a series of reforms that introduced strict quality controls, and standards rose to a level whereby Italian wines can compete at international level with French wines. Italy’s best-known wines are *Chianti* (produced in Tuscany), *Barolo* (produced in Piedmont), *Soave* (produced in the Veneto), and the white wines of *Collio* (produced in Friuli), *Marsala* (from Sicily), and *Brunello* (produced in Tuscany). (Encyclopedia of the Nations)

Figure 1: Italian region of Tuscany

The landscape reflects colonization by the merchants of Siena in the 14th and 15th centuries. (...) It was based on innovative tenure systems whereby the estates owned by merchants were divided into small properties and cultivated by families who lived on the land. Half of the produce was paid to the merchants as rent (UNESCO).



The landscape in rural parts of Tuscany is extremely pleasing to the eye and has been an inspiration for artists from the Renaissance onwards. The most famous example of man-made landscaping is the *Val d'Orcia* that is protected by UNESCO's World Heritage Program³. The valley combines agricultural lands in valleys and settlements atop hills in central Tuscany close to Siena. The landscape itself was arranged according to the aesthetics of the Renaissance to provide a pleasing picture, but be agriculturally efficient as well as reflect the Renaissance ideals of good governance. The most recognizable characteristic of this landscape is probably the dark cypresses, planted along the windy roads that crisscross the landscape of bright green during the spring and golden-yellow shades in autumn.

³ UNESCO



Figure 2: Aquarelle of Pienza and Monte Amiata view from my caravan

Tea D*

Figure 3: (Previous page) Farm location between Pienza and Montepulciano

What is WWOOF?

*“WWOOF is a world wide network of organisations.
We link volunteers with organic farmers, and help people
share more sustainable ways of living” (<http://wwwoof.org/>);
WWOOF.it “is a voluntary organisation set up to teach people
about the organic movement” (www.jova.it)*

When the organization was started in the autumn of 1971, by a British woman named Sue Coppard,⁴ it was called *Working Weekends on Organic Farms* and was quite quickly changed to *Willing Workers on Organic Farms* as volunteers' average stay lengthened.

Since then, in recognition of the world wide nature of the organisation and the confusion caused by the word 'work' with migrant workers which WWOOFers are most definitely not, WWOOF now stands for *World Wide Opportunities On Organic Farms*. This change of name was accepted at the meeting in the year 2000, though some WWOOF groups still prefer to use the old versions of the name [sic]⁵.

Nowadays WWOOF is an international organization divided into four sectors: Africa, Americas, Asia/Pacific and Europe; each contains nationally based WWOOF organizations. Fifty-one countries in these four regions⁶ are WWOOF members, and additional countries are listed as 'independents'⁷, meaning that volunteers can work on farms even in countries that do not have a national WWOOF organization (e.g., Slovenia⁸ lists 11 farms⁹).

WWOOF is set up as an exchange. The organization links volunteers (WWOOFers) with organic farms or smallholdings (WWOOF hosts). In return for volunteer help, hosts offer food, accommodation and opportunities to learn about organic farming and lifestyles¹⁰. There are certain expectations or guidelines provided by the organization to help the WWOOFers and their WWOOF-hosts. WWOOF.org is responsible for publishing lists of "organic farms, smallholdings and gardeners that welcome volunteer help at certain times"¹¹. Volunteers contact farms at which they would like to work and make all the arrangements for their stay (such as where they will sleep, what food will be provided, what kind of work they will be doing and for how many hours a day, etc.) Room and board are provided by the hosts in return for volunteers' labor. This specific farm had campers or tents for the volunteers, with the exception of two girls, who were friends of the family and lived with them in the house. We were provided with three meals a day. The work description was not as regimented; it varied from one volunteer to

^{4, 2, 3} <http://wwoof.org/history.asp>

⁶ see Appendix 1, WWOOF regional/national organizations

⁷ www.wwoof.org/independents.asp

⁸ www.wwoof.org/slovenia/index_en.htm

⁹ www.wwoof.org/europe/index.asp

^{10, 9} <http://wwoof.org/index2.asp>

another. WWOOF charges both the host and the volunteer a small fee¹² set by each national organization to help “maintain and develop the WWOOF network”¹³. WWOOF Italia follows the same principles as most of the WWOOF groups worldwide and provides health insurance for the volunteers; it charges both volunteer and host 25 EUR annually¹⁴. WWOOF Italia is accepted by the Italian authorities as a legal social promotion association, as long as hosts and WWOOFers abide by the rules set forth in the organization’s charter and no money is exchanged between members (such as salary paid or rent received)¹⁵. More than half of the volunteers at the farm did not have a WWOOF.it membership and found out about the farm through various other channels. Even so, the volunteers were mostly referred to as ‘WWOOFers’ and I will use both expressions interchangeably.

In this thesis I have looked at power relations at an organic agritourism farm, considered the question of scale and reflected on the concepts of labor and value, since, in the case of volunteering, we are not talking about an exchange of worker’s labor (the amount of energy invested in producing a commodity) for money from the employer. I analyze the exchange of voluntary labor for education about organic practices by looking at a specific case of a WWOOF farm, which has been a member of WWOOF.it since 2004¹⁶, but my case highlights challenges and issues on a more macro scale of WWOOF.org.

Each year, thousands of people worldwide volunteer their labor on organic farms – but are we talking about altruism? Or are there assumptions made about the labor given and about the values exchanged?

¹², ¹¹ More information on www.woof.org/europe/index.asp

¹⁴ Email correspondence with Bridget Matthews, who takes care of memberships, the host list and all correspondence of WWOOF Italia.

¹⁵ Email correspondence with Bridget Matthews.

¹⁶ Email correspondence with Bridget Matthews.

Research Methodology

“Grounded theory guidelines describe the steps of the research process and provide a path through it. Researchers can adopt and adapt to them to conduct diverse studies. How researchers use these guidelines is not neutral; nor are the assumptions they bring to their research and enact during the process” (Charmaz 2006, 7).

“Grounded theorists (...) try to learn what occurs in the research settings we join and what our participants’ lives are like” (Charmaz 2006, 2).

Much of the research consists of interviews and participatory observations from the farm¹⁷ and grounded theory provided a theoretical framework for the fieldwork and analysis. I have also used mass media online, (non)governmental sources, relevant statistics and visual materials and reviewed academic literature from the perspective of Human Ecology. Relevant aspects of environmental sciences, cultural studies, political science, international relations, economics and agriculture were used to analyze the farm and its’ connection to WWOOF in an interdisciplinary way.

Grounded theory (by Charmaz, building on founders Strauss and Glaser)

This text is based in grounded theory as presented by Kathy Charmaz as “[it] provides a way of doing grounded theory that takes into account the theoretical and methodological developments of the past four decades”, as she views grounded theory methods as “a set of principles and practices, not as prescriptions or packages” (Charmaz 2006, 7). This systematic methodological approach allows the researcher in social sciences to build a theory generated upon their gathered data. This presents the main approach that I followed while conducting the fieldwork in Tuscany, and later on through the writing of this thesis as it helps the researcher to systematically analyze literature and secondary sources.

This comparative method was first presented in the 1960s by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (Glaser and Strauss 1965, 1967, 1968, 1971)¹⁸. It was further developed in a Ph.D. study

¹⁷ (see ‘Primary Data’)

¹⁸ Glaser also published a book on *Theoretical Sensitivity* in 1978, followed by five books on grounded theory (Glaser 1992, 1994, 1998, 2001 and 2002); Strauss wrote *Mirrors and Masks* in 1959, *A Social Worlds Perspective* (1978a) and *Negotiations: Varieties, Contexts, Processes and Social Order* (1978b), and *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists* (1987).

undertaken by their student Kathy Charmaz (1973), and in her book (2006) on the method itself *Constructing Grounded Theory*, which was the text mostly used for my research¹⁹.

In order to follow grounded theory one has to build on originally generated results. In accordance with guidelines from grounded theory approach and theories on interviewing (Bernard 2006 and Seidman 2006), I recorded all my interviews, transcribed them verbatim and coded them to come to a few main topics as I studied my data and “begin to separate, sort, and synthesize” (Charmaz 2006, 3) information. I used “qualitative coding [meaning] that we attach labels to segments of data that depict what each segment is about. [It] distills data, sorts them, and gives us a handle for making comparisons with other segments of data. Grounded theorists emphasize what is happening in the scene when they code data” (IBID). From the main topics, I constructed a guide for semi-structured interviews and kept me focused throughout conducting my research (see Appendix 2, *From Talks to Results*). Later I shortened these transcriptions of interviews and fixed the language²⁰, but made sure that the message of the participants was still their own and original. For example:

Rebecca: We are here because I was a little bit sick of traveling because I wanted to go home because I don't feel so good and then Line said let's go to a farm and work there and meet some people and you have a station where we can live and feel like home.

Rebecca: We are here because I was a little bit sick of traveling and wanted to go back home because I wasn't feeling so good and then Line said: let's go to a farm and work there and meet some people and you have a station where we can live and feel like at home.

This helped me move to researching secondary data such as statistics and literature, and applying it to the topics discussed in the interviews. In accordance with grounded theory, I only then moved on to researching the applicable literature and theories “for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories ‘grounded’ in the data themselves. The guidelines offer a set of general principles and heuristic devices rather than formulaic rules” (Charmaz 2006, 2).

¹⁹ Charmaz also published her writing in numerous other books, such as *An Invitation to Grounded Theory in Ethnography* in the *Handbook of Ethnography*, *Grounded Theory in Qualitative Psychology: A Practical Guide to Research Methods*, *Constructivist and Objectivist grounded Theory* in the *Handbook of Qualitative Research and Qualitative Interviewing* and *grounded Theory Construction* in the *Handbook of Interview Research* to name just a few.

²⁰ Such as grammar mistakes and the flow of transcribing spoken word to written.

As I am a highly visual person, I decided to color-code the four main topics that I noticed after doing a few interviews, listening to the recordings late at night in my caravan and scribbling down notes about what caught my attention. This helped me follow through the semi-structured interviews that I did at the farm in the following weeks and it guided me through the transcripts later on. To make the whole procedure from the beginning of my fieldwork until the end of finishing my thesis writing analytical and visual at the same time, I compiled a list of ‘steps’ that I used: e.g., color-coding was ‘step 4’ (see Appendix 2, *From Talks to Results*).

To help me conduct interviews and observe participants in an ethical fashion while doing fieldwork in another culture, I also used *Key Methods in Geography* (Clifford and Valentine).

Participatory Observation

For generating primary data I conducted ethnographic fieldwork over the course of eight weeks at an organic agritourism in Tuscany, Italy. My approach rejects universalism²¹ and positivistic approaches (Comte²², Durkheim²³, Lazarsfeld²⁴) that were popular in science and academia in the first half of the 20th century, since there is no ‘true’ data²⁵:

We may trust documents, records, and census data as facts; however, individuals construct them, whatever stand as data flows from some purpose to realize a particular objective. In turn, purposes and objectives arise under particular historical, social, and situational conditions. (Charmaz 2006, 16)

They needed to produce evidence and this approach of doing just quantitative research was seen as the truly scientific methodology. Objectivity was something that could be measured in quantifiable ways, generalization was necessary and hypotheses could be (dis)proven in a deductive way. Though Glaser left his positivistic mark in grounded theory with “dispassionate empiricism, rigorous codified methods, emphasis on emergent discoveries, and its somewhat

²¹ Universalism as something being universal as a whole; I am not referring to theological doctrine from 18th century.

²² *The Course in Positivist Philosophy*. 1830–42.

²³ *The Rules of Sociological Method*. 1895.

²⁴ An Episode in the History of Social Research: A Memoir. 1969. In *The Intellectual Migration: Europe and America, 1930-1960*, ed. Donald Fleming and Bernard Bailyn 270-337. Cambridge, MA; Harvard University Press.

²⁵ see Appendix 3: First-, developed-, core- or western-world countries.

ambiguous specialized language that echoes quantitative methods” (Charmaz 2006, 7), the approach was balanced by Chicago-school-trained Strauss, who saw “human beings as active agents (...) rather than as passive recipients of larger social forces” and that “process, not structure, was fundamental to human existence; indeed, human beings created structures through engaging in processes (...) [bringing] notions of human agency, emergent processes, social and subjective meanings, problem-solving practices, and the open-ended study of action to grounded theory” (Charmaz 2006, 7; emphasis Durmic). In rejecting positivist tradition and following the guidelines of doing qualitative research and ethnographic fieldwork, I was very much involved with my surroundings.

With this in mind, I was a part of a small farm community, where I observed (and acted in) working and interacting processes, found research paths to further my knowledge and co-created situations that I now present to my reader. As mentioned above, the principles of grounded theory and other relevant literature guided me on my path to gather interesting and relevant data that could help explain this complex issue of voluntary work. I was a volunteer, therefore a worker, but I was also as a student conducting thesis research; I was doing research of some sort every moment of the day. I would talk to other volunteers, the owner and his family members, and guests as much as possible, taking quick notes. I took numerous photographs and made some paintings and drawings to visually present the farm to my reader. In my scarce free time (- usually the Italian lunch break – *siesta*) and the evenings, I conducted formal interviews with volunteers.

Interviewing

Charmaz’s guidelines ‘ground’ the researcher in ways structured and systematic. Even though comments from/about other literature and interviews are woven throughout the text and not compiled in a separate section, I followed grounded theory suggestions to conduct literature research after making one’s own analysis. The quotes from the interview transcripts are separated with an indentation in the text, as well as a different **theme font** to make it easier for the reader to separate my observations and comments, from those of interviewees’.

I conducted numerous informal interviews with visitors, the owners and their family members, the workers and the volunteers at the farm during the first two weeks of my stay. In the following weeks I continued on to do unstructured interviews. Through those, a more concrete topic of

figuring out the challenges of volunteering or WWOOFing was pinpointed; from then on, I focused on doing semi-structured interviews (Longhurst in Clifford and Valentine 2003) with the help of an interview guide (see Appendix 4, Guide: main questions/topics), which is a “written list of questions and topics that need to be covered in a particular order” (Bernard 2006, 212).

The talks with ten interviewees that I used for this text were the ten volunteers that were at the farm at the same time I was. They were not chosen on the basis on any other criteria. I used excerpts from their responses mostly in the main part of my text to illustrate their stories. Since participant observation was a part of my research, I will also write about my own experience in hearing, sensing, seeing (Charmaz 2006), working and learning at the farm. In the two months of my stay, there were about six more volunteers there, but they were either residing there in the first two weeks while I was still focusing on the topic of organic farming solely, or they had left the farm before I could interview them. Follow-up face-to-face interviews were not possible, because all the participants and myself come from different countries, even continents. Online surveys (see Appendix 5, Survey Responses) seemed like a perfect solution to this problem, but the more time had passed between our stay at the farm and the surveys, the less the participants remembered and fewer people responded every time, as can be seen from my graph about the number of participants in surveys (in Presentation of Results). While a bigger range of respondents might have given a deeper perspective of the topic, given the intense nature of my encounters with my fellow volunteers, the farm and owners, as well as from correspondence with WWOOF.it, I feel that I have been able to answer the questions I have posed.

Primary Data

The data that were generated through my own research are:

- ethnographic diary;
- voice recordings of my interviewees;
- transcriptions of those interviews;
- additional questions after (color) coding the transcripts;
- participants’ responses of online surveys;
- charts/visualizations from their answers;
- photos and maps.

In the end, ten semi-structured interviews with volunteers serve as my main primary data, along with the visual material. Throughout the entire stay of eight weeks I kept a diary of my observations, which has proven to be very helpful in the following months of researching and writing the thesis. The survey responses helped to present results to my readers and write the main narrative.

Photography, paintings and drawings (of maps)

Visual material is presented throughout the outline of the thesis to better inform the reader on the spatial frame or the context of the written text. All the visual material was generated by me unless stated otherwise (e.g., the cover illustration done by Line, which was given to me as a present). I omitted the identities of the people and places on the photos if I did not have specific permission for publication or felt that publication might compromise their identity. I also did numerous sketches while at the farm and used online material to help me draw maps of micro and macro locations that I was dealing with.



Figure 4: Map of Italy

Secondary Data

The information that I used and interpreted to help me show results was a literature review on the topic, done throughout the thesis, where I used books, online articles and videos, photos, charts, statistics, maps and more.

Key Concepts Developed and Studied

Labor = (It.) *lavoro*²⁶

Labor can mean “expenditure of physical or mental effort especially when difficult or compulsory” (Etymology Dictionary), or it can be in the economic sense “human activity that provides the goods or services (...) the services performed by workers for wages as distinguished from those rendered by entrepreneurs for profits” or childbirth. When the word *labor* is used in the thesis, it generally refers to the economic aspects of the work(er)-own(er) relationship and the activities connected to that; equivalent to the verb *to work*. According to Marx, I understand human labor as a productive act that gives value to commodities (Marx, Capital vol. I, 128) and I use it in my explanations of the exchange of voluntary labor for food and shelter, but also touch upon it while talking about the comparisons between ‘conventional’ and ‘organic’ farming.

Different forms of labor are commonly divided by economics into paid and unpaid. Paid labor is regulated by the nation states or unions and it is measured; we can obtain statistics and other information on it and have an overview. Unpaid labor can sometimes not only be unethical, but also illegal, if the work is not being done from free volition. There are different forms of unpaid labor such as child labor, unpaid household work, slave labor; but also internships and voluntary work.

Volunteer = (It.) *volontario*

The word *volunteer* first appeared as a noun in the beginning of 17th Century as an offering of a military service and it has its basis in Latin *voluntarius* meaning "voluntary, of one's free will" (Etymology Dictionary). As mentioned above, there are different forms of unpaid labor, including voluntary work, which is promoted by the EU as an invaluable opportunity of

²⁶ The word *labor* is based in the Proto-Indo-European language, which is believed to be the basis of most Indian as well as European languages. The word is used as a noun or a verb, and has an alternate *labour* spelling in English. The history of the usage of it shows a range of connotations, such as a task or a project, exertion of the body, work or toil, trouble, difficulty, hardship, pain, fatigue; or to perform manual or physical work, to work hard or to keep busy, take pains, strive and endeavor. Another meaning surfaced in 15th Century from old French, and that is labor of child or child labor, to give birth. In modern French, Spanish and Portuguese interestingly enough the verb *labor* means *to plow*, which suggests a strong connection to agricultural work in the past (Etymology Dictionary).

experiencing different cultures and enhancing one's possibilities for future employment²⁷. This thesis focuses on voluntarism as an important aspect of labor market, seeing that

[V]olunteers represent the equivalent of 3-5% of the economically active population in many countries; that they make a \$400 billion contribution to the global economy; and that if they were a nation, they would be the 9th most populous country in the world. (CEV1)

Volunteering work can mean anything from building houses, talking to cancer patients, teaching at schools, or farming; 'making a difference'²⁸ was the statement promoting the European Year of Volunteering 2011. Volunteering is a part of the economic sector, referred to as

The third sector, also known as 'third way', 'civil economy', 'social private sector' etc., [and it] constitutes a veritable galaxy of different types of organizations. The common element that unites all these forms is that they are all private, non-profit making organizations whose scope is that of social utility and solidarity. They all aim to foster direct citizen participation, amplify their specific activities, provide services and redistribute resources. (CEV2)

Obviously, volunteers are the driving force behind a volunteer organization, such as WWOOF that provides work on organic farms:

Voluntary organizations are therefore a component of the Third Sector. A voluntary organization (VO) is an organized group, endowed with its own autonomy and identity, capable of working towards objectives that are of a solely solidarity nature. Volunteers form the backbone of a voluntary organization: they are responsible for taking decisions and they are the ones who determine which objectives shall be pursued. (IBID; emphasis Durmic)

(For more debate on voluntary work and accompanying statistics, see Appendix 6, Voluntary Work and How to Measure it.)

Organic (or natural, biological, green, ecological) Agriculture

Since farming organically means not using chemical or synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, (commonly used in what is called conventional agricultural practices since the beginning of industrialization), I locate organic farming as a part of the permaculture movement. As such, it is a macro philosophy (see Appendix 7, Permaculture and Eco-Sufficiency). Organic farming was in use for thousands of years before the arrival of industrialization (see Appendix 8, Industrialization, Modernization and Globalization,); it is heavily labor-intensive. Because it uses

²⁷ http://europa.eu/youth/volunteering_-_exchanges/index_eu_en.html

²⁸ <http://europa.eu/volunteering/>

animal manure instead of chemical fertilizers and natural disease and insect control methods instead of chemical ones, organic farming yields are lower and slower-producing. Still, they are of higher quality for nature, including humans as a part of 'nature', and the two will not be treated as separate in this text. Salleh states that "[e]conomics is, in many ways, the dominant discourse of modern and postmodern societies.

The hegemonic role of the discipline is exposed in apartheid like statements about human interaction 'with' nature – as if the ecosystem were a distinct 'other'. For the word 'with' implies that nature is separate entity from 'man' – discontinuous from 'his' embodied human condition. [sic] (Salleh 2009, 19)

Other practices used in organic agriculture are crop rotation, natural feed for the animals, and composting. 'Natural feed' in the case of this specific farm means that the goats are taken to the forest twice a day, where they feed on the wild shrubs, grasses, herbs, and trees. The sheep go out to the grass-grown pastures once a day. Composting at the farm is mostly done with some leafy-leftovers from the garden, and the food leftovers are disbursed among the cats and dogs, but mainly given to the pigs. The pigs also receive the left-over whey-water from cheese production, so there is almost no organic waste at the farm. Organic farming also excludes the use of antibiotics, hormones and GMOs. It is defined by International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) as

A production system that sustains the health of soils, ecosystems and people. It relies on ecological processes, biodiversity and cycles adapted to local conditions, rather than the use of inputs with adverse effects. Organic agriculture combines tradition, innovation and science to benefit the shared environment and promote fair relationships and a good quality of life for all involved. (IFOAM)

Some EU nation-states and groups oppose the use of the word 'organic' since chemicals are also of organic descent; instead they propose the use of 'natural' or 'ecological'. Some consumers also use the word 'green' (foods), and in Tuscany and Italy the wording 'biological' is often used. The purpose of this thesis is not to go into details of these definitions, even though I recognize the differences between them. I will be using all of the above expressions as equal and opposite to 'conventional', chemically- and mechanically-based and mass-scale production farming that is common in our industrialized, modernized and globalized world.

Lack of trust in a certain brand or mark has been often expressed in informal talks with visitors and volunteers at the farm, as they expected the whole farm, not even just the food production, to

be run organically; meaning that they expect their food to be treated without chemical helpers. Here we come across an issue of trust in organic agriculture, since the practice might be misleading in its core if the methods are presented as purely 'natural'. Even organic farmers, as do the owners of this farm, use certain chemicals and pesticides to an extent e.g., "[they] use copper, sulfur, and copper sulfate as natural fungicides" (McWilliams 2009, 68) for their vineyard. According to the U.S. EPA, copper sulfate is a class I toxin, 'highly toxic' (IBID). Yet it is used at this farm to spray grapes, since "[a]griculture by its nature demand[s] human interference with nature's rhythms [and they are], synthetic or not, necessarily contrary to what 'nature' intends" (IBID, 66).

Sustainability & Eco-, Food- and Self- Sufficiency

Most of my interviewees also expressed their desire for (organic) food self-sufficiency. WWOOF.org promotes the idea of voluntary work on organic farms as the exchange of labor for education about organic farming, and this need was expressed mostly by the volunteers who found the farm through WWOOF²⁹. When asked what sustainability means to her, Joan responded:

/laugh/ Oh god! This sounds like a test! /I laugh/

Being able to do things in such a way that it lasts and that it's good for the Earth and you don't use up all of your resources, that you do things in such a way that you can renew it ...

She describes one aspect of sustainability, where 'nature' is paramount. In critiques of capitalist economics, "eco-sufficiency [is featured as] a strong sustainability, because it involves both metabolic fit with nature and transformations that reach down into the cultural fabric of socio-economic life; [such] moves towards eco-sufficiency and cultural autonomy would certainly destabilise injustice of the market" (Salleh 2009, 18; emphasis Durmic). Conversely, the corporate world has appropriated 'green' movement and its economic possibilities, turning it into a marketing strategy (e.g. Bryant and Goodman 2003). My critique of one-sided presentations of sustainability would be that examining solely one approach of sustainability builds walls between disciplines and elevates the importance of ecological, social or economic aspect

²⁹ These were April, Bonnie, Joan and Freddy; others, like Nina, Rafael and Tina said that they understand why other people were getting frustrated with the lack of education, but were not necessarily missing it themselves.

exclusively. Therefore, I see the triangulation between these three approaches to sustainability as truly long-term sustainability, because it is inclusive and gives equal importance to all of them (see Appendix 9: People, Planet & Profit).

Sustainability is generally defined as meeting your current needs while allowing future generations the capacity to meet theirs. (...) *Sustainable development* [in running a business] acknowledges that your company's commercial achievement is intricately linked to ecological and social success. The driving idea behind sustainability is that humans can't deplete the Earth's natural capital (water, minerals, soil, and the like) faster than its capacity to regenerate because eventually those natural resources are going to run out. (Swallow 2009, 10; emphasis Durmic)

Cuisine, Kitchen, Food

Food, cuisine, and self-sufficiency, were all integrated in talks with interviewees and visitors at the organic agritourism farm, which serves three meals a day in the style of slow-food as advertised on their web page³⁰. Tuscany and its famous cuisine stirred certain expectations regarding food.

In spite of the variability of individual differences in this regard, there is a point in trying to link people's feelings about food in some one particular culture with the foods that people in that society customarily eat—what gets called, more or less imprecisely, its 'cuisine'. (...) People know that the term 'cuisine' is borrowed from the French language, and that it means 'kitchen' (...) originated from the Latin verb *coquere*, to cook, which gave rise to *coquina*, and then to *cocina*, *cucina*, *Küche*, 'kitchen' and so forth. (Mintz 1996, 94)

It is safe to say the guests³¹ were coming to the agritourism solely for the food. The majority of the guests at the farm came from Australia, Canada and the U.S.; four out of ten of my interviewees were American and there were some other volunteers from North America as well. Interestingly enough, Mintz (1996) writes about the lack of cuisine in America and asks why is having cuisine important, is it like having literature, or music, and if a country does not have it, can it get one? This U.S. volunteer's frustration represents a similar need or want, but on a micro scale of his family:

Freddy: I really wanted to work in the kitchen, possibly make recipes and take them home to my parents and grandparents, because they're extremely into Italian food and cuisine, and I haven't been

³⁰ Link available upon request to Durmic; omitted from the text for the purpose of preserving anonymity.

³¹ For more about the volunteers' expectations about cuisine, see *Under the Tuscan Sun: Food*.

able to do that. I found that there are these cooking classes that go on for the guests, the customers, and that it's just not that easy to be in the kitchen.

Theoretic and Analytic Framework of Study

To position the farm and the voluntary work there on a macro scale of the EU, I rely on the macro-sociological perspective of Immanuel Wallerstein's (1976, 1984, 1991, 2004, 2006) explanations of the dynamics of capitalist economy and combine them with political ecological concepts of scale as presented by Paulson, Gezon and Watts³² (Paulson, Susan and Lisa L. Gezon (edit.) 2005).

Wallerstein was indebted to Marx and Weber, as he triangulated among sociology, economics and history in his mostly qualitative research. In line with his writing I use the notion of criticism of modernization (see Appendix 8), such as that not all nation-states are equal, that they cannot or should not follow the same path that would be applied to all on a global scale. He writes about the capitalist economy, as it is applied across the globe and as it spread from the west (Europe and USA) after the break of feudalist system and gained its power after the 19th century.

The characteristic that is specific to Wallerstein's world-system is that the core and periphery are determined by the elements of the economic market. Similar to the ecological notion that focuses on the materials - a core that uses fossil-fueled machinery and the periphery where primary/raw materials are being extracted for the producing needs of the core. He writes about the differences in labor (the energy inserted in these commodities) in these same spheres that are co-dependent; the labor in the periphery that produces the surplus of materials moved to the producing core, that in exchange sells their manufactured goods back to the periphery. This illustrates the hegemony of core nation-states and power (Foucault 1980, 1994, 1997) over the weaker and thus poorer periphery, creating unequal exchange; but according to Wallerstein, hegemony is constantly challenged by the changes in the social system(s) and accompanying class struggles.

Unequal exchange has been a central concern of various strands of Marxist social theory, including early theories of imperialism, the dependency and world-systems perspectives of Frank (1967, 1978) and

³² "Other valuable takes on political have included analyses of conventional geopolitics and the history of unequal power relations between northern and southern nations (Escobar 1995, Grossman 1998, Sachs 1993), grassroots and academic engagement with environmental issues (Brosius 1999, Posey 1983), and red-green political activism (Atkinson 1991) (...)" (Paulson, Gezon and Watts in Paulson and Gezon 2005, 27).

Wallerstein (1974, 1974–1989), and more orthodox Marxist arguments focused on ‘modes of production’ and the international appropriation of labor value (for a review see Bunker 1985:38–48) (Hornborg 2001, 36).

Authors Roberts and Parks (see Appendix 9: Roberts and Parks) argue that inequality is driving a lot of the noncooperative actions between North and South (or core/periphery, as it might be). They write about poorer, underdeveloped nations who do not possess the capacity to negotiate effectively with the North when it comes to environmental issues and responsibility. They continue by saying that “[t]he experience of poorer nations in the world economy and their interaction with rich nations across multiple issue areas has reinforced a worldview and a set of causal beliefs that are at odds with those of the wealthy nations; this has bred generalized mistrust and polarized expectations about how to proceed on climate issues” (Roberts & Parks 2007, 8).

Other authors (Gezon, Paulson, Hornborg etc.) use different expressions to write about similar issues of injustice. Inequality is seen between rich, producing core versus poor, extracting periphery in the world-system. I believe that not only on a world-scale, but also on a nation-scale or even smaller we can notice similar injustices. I see EU as an example of a political union of nation-states in the same way as these authors explain the globe; there is a rich core and a poorer periphery. Countries such as France, UK and Germany have more (political) power and are more producing than the periphery countries of Poland or Romania that are extracting, whether it be their land for agriculture or be it labor (see Appendix 10: Enlargement of European Union).

Hegemony and political power are thus important issues when looking at political, economic and spatial scales. Paulson, Gezon and Watts write about how “*political* is used to designate the practices and processes through which power, in its multiple forms, is wielded and negotiated. In line with Alf Hornborg’s (2001) definition of power as ‘a social relation built on an asymmetrical distribution of resources and risks’ (...) we explore ways in which power circulates among and between different social groups, resources, and spaces” (Paulson and Gezon 2005, 28).

I view the world as a constantly changing system, similar to systems of natural biomes (see Appendix 11: Climate and Biomes). As mentioned above, the power of a certain part can be changed with changes in politics, social systems and economics conditions; nothing is static and constant. This is how I also understand smaller geographic units. For example, western countries

might be the ‘core’ on a world-scale and accordingly Italy would be a part of the ‘producing core’ as a part of European Union, which has the world’s third largest population after China and India (EU Population) and holds a certain political power. But if we look at Italy and try to view it as a solid union of solely ‘production’, it is impossible. The farm as a specific example is set in the countryside, not comparable in almost any way to urban centers³³ such as Rome, Venice, Milano and this puts it in a position of lesser power. The production of the food is local to the farm, making it the ‘extracting periphery’ in that sense, but the farmers themselves are also the merchants of their own goods, and the buyers come to the farm, which is the producer of the goods, thus the ‘producing core’. They are at the same time located in the periphery and the core on multiple scales. The farm and its owners have multiple identities in that sense, making it impossible to define their position from just one perspective (economic, political, social and/or environmental scale). Spatial scales of the farm’s socio-temporal frame are seen as a dual, but mutually-influential process; the workings of the international organization WWOOF are understood similarly, being positioned in the macro sphere, but having national offices (WWOOF Italia), whose members are actors in micro spheres of specific farms.

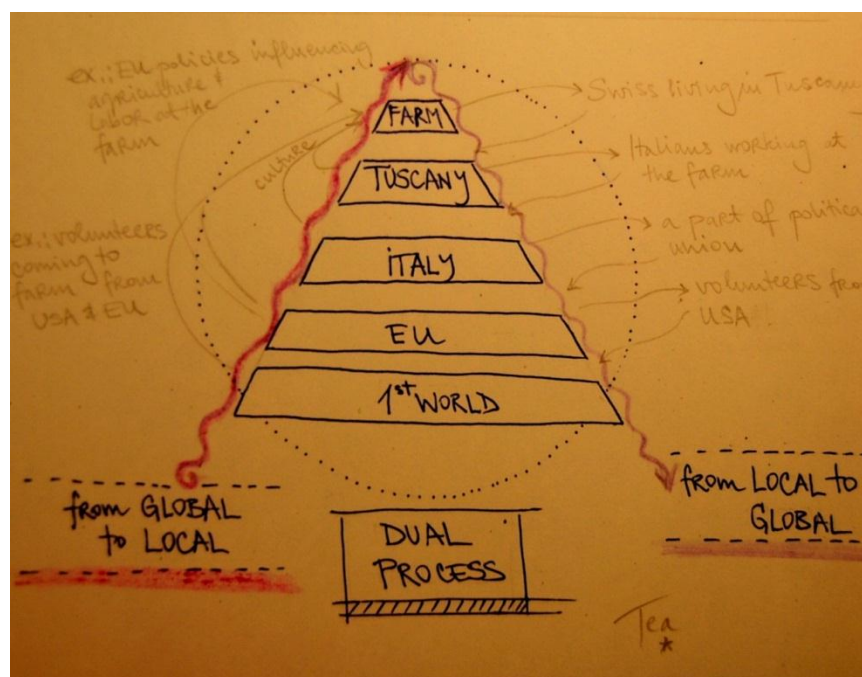


Figure 5: Questions of scale(s)

³³ For more on urban/rural differences in EU, see Appendix 12: EAFRD.

My interviews revealed the driving force behind the decision to join WWOOF.org or just to volunteer on an organic farm to be the need for personal (food) sufficiency, education about agriculture and care for the environment (for more on this topic see main part of the text). I used social ecology by Ariel Salleh's writing on worker politics, incorporated into ecology, even though I recognize that her work is intertwined with elements of ecofeminism as well (Salleh, 1997). I mostly relied on her aspect of eco-sufficiency, which connects ecology with political sciences and the issue of 'power' and also economics (Salleh, 2009), as it is shown in my 'Key Concepts' section.

Living and working *Under the Tuscan Sun*



Figure 6: Map of the farm³⁴

³⁴ See Appendix 13: How to Read the Maps

My agritourism farm is medium sized for the Tuscan region. It has 61 hectares (150 acres) of arable land, where they grow mostly cereal. There are 16 hectares for cereal, 1h of vineyard and 3h of olive trees with around 700-800 trees. There is also a small vegetable garden and a tiny herb garden. The farm has about 150 sheep, 25 goats, 20 pigs and some chickens; there are peacocks, cats and three dogs running around, and they also have two donkeys and a pony. They have a camp site and two guest rooms to rent, six caravans for the volunteers to stay at and they run a restaurant, serving breakfast, lunch and dinner. The breakfast is included in the night's stay, and all lunches and dinners are prepared by prior reservation. WWOOF Italia's description of the farm is exactly the same on the new internet page as it was on the previous version. The farm is family-run agritourism, needing help all year round not dependent on the season. Types of work are: working with vegetables, woodland, olives, vineyard, livestock, herbs, building/maintenance, preserving produce and teaching activities. It is stated that the farm has been controlled by the certificates AIAB/ICEA³⁵ since 1991.

Expectations

April: Both sides have expectations – they expect something from you to earn your keep, but you expect something from *them*, to learn, or to do something different.

Most of the interviewees quickly answered that they had no expectations prior to coming to the farm. While conducting interviews, it became noticeable that even if this was true, they had wishes or desires about the farm. I expected to learn about organic farming. I did not pay attention to my WWOOF membership at all - it provided me legal and health insurance: “accident insurance cover for WWOOFers and, providing both host and WWOOFer can produce membership cards, justifies the presence of voluntary labour on a farm” I did not look at guidelines or their internet page before I arrived. But when I started doing interviews, I noticed a common complaint amongst all the volunteers, not just WWOOFers specifically. The most common expectation was definitely the education about organic farming, since all the types of work stated in their description were to do with agricultural work, and nothing was stated about a restaurant or bar. They had prepared to work for free in monetary sense, giving their time and spending money to arrive there, but they expected to get farming

³⁵ <http://www.icea.info/Default.aspx?language=en-US> & <http://www.aiab.it/>

knowledge in return. This was especially true amongst those who have arrived as WWOOFers and having read the guidelines for WWOOFing, including

WWOOFing is NOT a cheap holiday and way to travel. It is a voluntary organisation set up to teach people about the organic movement and give them hands on experience and to help out organic producers as organic production is very labour intensive;

The host should be with you at times and be willing to teach you about organic farming. It is very likely that you will have to do things on your own a fair amount and many of the tasks may be mundane, but a lot of agriculture is! (WWOOF.org; emphasis Durmic)

The majority believed that they would be exchanging their labor for knowledge, and were not happy when they were asked to do chores such as washing dishes and serve tables. The hosts expected to get free labor in return for food, water, electricity, caravans and tents. The dishwashing truly became a representative of labor that everyone felt is not appropriate, because they expected farming work. A lot of people complained about it, but nothing changed. About the responsibilities of a WWOOFer, WWOOF.org writes that

You are expected to be interested in what they do and help. They would like some help with the chores (such as cooking and washing up) and appreciate it if you did not create more work for your host. Hosts are all very hardworking people mainly living on a tight budget and you should accept this fact and respect it [sic].

Initially, I did not get one complaint from a volunteer about a certain job, but after days of mostly dish washing, complaints started.

Nina: Of course I see the difference between what we are doing and what their paid workers are doing; because we are not doing a big deal. I MEAN, we ARE doing ... /sad laugh/ But I see mostly the dishwashing and the kitchen, because I am there. So far I have worked 8-10 hours more or less every day, and I've been here a week. I'm a person that can't take a break. When we went to pick the grapes for example, I had maybe only two minutes when I sat down because my back was hurting; I just feel like I want to do this work and I want to finish, but I feel bad to wash the dishes or clean out the tables. I understand that the guests are on vacation, but then I just feel like: 'Why would I have to stay?' And I am not staying, I'm leaving. I don't know if you noticed, but I don't stay very late. In the evening at 10 o'clock I go to shower or sometimes even before that. I don't stay until the end because really, I cannot do it. We have to wake up at 7 o'clock and it's just too much ...

Maria: I was leaving [the farm] a lot earlier than I was supposed to because I didn't like it there. I just had to wash the dishes. It was horrible.

WWOOF Italia reminds the WWOOFer to “[o]nce again check with your host what jobs you will be doing”. The description on WWOOF.it asks for help with working with vegetables, woodland, olives, vineyard, livestock, herbs, building/maintenance, preserving produce and teaching activities; there is no mention of tourist-related work. Out of all volunteers at the farm, only Nina was mostly interested in tourism work, saying

When I came here I knew I'm not willing to work with animals, I don't have any experience; I was willing to pick fruits and whatever, but I can't do proper gardening, so I told them I can do anything related to tourists, because I knew it was not only a farm, but a tourism.

A note from a blogger, who is living in the area, starting his own organic farm, shows the ideas or the expectations about WWOOFing nicely. The owner of my farm came with a group of WWOOFers to help the blogger with the harvest. In return, this blogger gave half of his olives to the farm. He will also borrow the sheep from this farm and they will work as lawn-mowers in his olive grove. The sheep will feed, and he will not have to do the extra olive and grass cutting. He added: “What is WWOOF, but a form of sharecropping? Unlike today's internships, where college grads become unpaid slave-apprentices hoping to get offered a job, WWOOFers give labor in trade for education, room and board in beautiful locales like ours. Everyone is happy in the end” (source omitted for anonymity; emphasis Durmic).

Volunteers expected to get education on farming, and ended up being unhappy, angry or disappointed when that did not happen. The host expected the volunteers to stay for as long as they agreed and were understandably unhappy when people left before they were supposed to. There is no written concrete contract between WWOOFer and host, therefore both can terminate their agreement at any time:

If for some reason the situation is not satisfactory for **you** discuss it with your hosts and if a solution cannot be reached you are under no obligation to stay if the situation is intolerable. Any feedback to us would be appreciated;

If your stay is not working out for your **host** he can always ask you to leave, although with good communication between host and WWOOFer it does not usually need to resort to this. (WWOOF.org; emphasis Durmic)

Freddy: The communication about the work is a problem because when you try to ask for instruction, it's not always given to you. So on one hand, there's a freedom and independence which I personally like, and on the other hand it becomes extreme at times because you feel like you're not learning anything. For some people that can be very frustrating; I think that's one thing that triggers the volunteers to leave (...) they cannot handle that and the owner of the farm is too vague and not always kind.

The majority (not just my interviewees) of people left early; only a couple did not have a set date of departure, and two stayed their course. Both ranged from the extremes - a girl with a Bachelors in gardening, who wanted to stay for a year to tend vegetables – she left after a week; to people leaving after three days instead of staying a week. The reasons stated for leaving ranged from dislike of/from the owner, to not doing agricultural work and to felling welcomed.

Happiness is subjective. It is hard to say who was happy or unhappy. This also changed greatly the more time passed. The owner would sometimes refer to a highly romanticized Hollywood movie³⁶ shot in Tuscany by saying that volunteers come there thinking this is going to be *Under the Tuscan Sun*, but it is not and adding that there is work to be done there. This became a metaphor for the title of my study.

Prior and Upon Arrival

The only thing that was directly specified to me while making arrangements to come back in August was to get a WWOOF membership card, because without that my work would be considered illegal. WWOOF guidelines are clear: “Before a host will accept you as their guest you must become a member of your WWOOF organization”³⁷. It surprised me when more than half of the volunteers there did not have this card (see Appendix 14, WWOOF Membership), meaning they were working illegally; luckily nobody without this insurance injured themselves while working, but if they did, the owners would have huge problems. Due to privacy laws, I was not able to find out if WWOOF.it has ever received a complaint from a WWOOFer about this particular farm. None of my interviewees has contacted WWOOF Italia after they had left the farm to comment on it either. WWOOF.it does not favor feedback in the form of public comments online, “because the type of relationship that develops when people live and work together sharing so much, even their own family's privacy, does not seem suitable to be reviewed in public. On the site members can find a form to fill out in case of problems that allows us to interact with the farm in question precisely in order to clarify any misunderstandings. All complaints are treated seriously and the farm is contacted by the president or regional

³⁶ *Under the Tuscan Sun*, movie. www.imdb.com/title/tt0328589/

³⁷ www.woofinternational.org

coordinator when a complaint arrives. If there are repeated complaints about the same farm, it is taken off the list” (correspondence with Bridget Mathews). This farm has been a part of WWOOF since 2004, but the owner’s opinion of the WWOOFers themselves is not very positive; one of his adjectives to use for volunteers was ‘useless’.

April:/referring to her and Bonnie’s first talk about work and WWOOF.org, -ers with John/

Jane took us here, it was really great, we were really excited to be here, it was our first farm, first experience here and he starts trash-talking WWOOFers: ‘I don’t understand these WWOOFers anymore, you’re a part of an organization, you’re supposed to be working on organic farms, but all the people that come here, all they wanna do is kitchen work. And do the dishes and do stuff like that and they don’t really want to make changes.

He also started bad-mouthing studying and universities and that sort of thing and then he asked us ‘So, what did you major in?’ and Bonnie majored in marketing so he was like ‘Oh, you’re really using your marketing degree right now!’ – you know like, great, that’s a boost in confidence! I majored in Art so he said ‘Oh yeah, so that makes sense, studying art!’ So I think from the get-go we just rubbed him in a wrong way. I mean, we’re so excited, so inspired, to work hard, to do stuff, and you’re trash-talking the organization that we’re involved in ... We’re here to help him, and he stats with ‘I don’t understand why you’re here, what you’re doing’. Like, do you want me to leave?! I’ll leave right away; I just walked through the door!

This was literally the first minute these girls stepped foot on the farm, as a few of us were watching the conversation from the cleaning room, the three of them sitting on the ground in the courtyard. We were commenting on the girls’ faces and how they sank with every passing second.

Work(ers)

There are the family, paid workers and WWOOFers/volunteers working at the farm.

John: [The workers at the farm] are basically me, Jane, Tomas [who] is working [here] for 14 years - a bit the heart of everything.

Then we have for the moment seasonally; there’s this Albanian worker, he’s doing a bit all tractor stuff, also a bit milking, because he can start in the morning and do all day the same. Me, Jane, Tomas, we can’t do all day the same. Well ok, when I do cheese, I do cheese, but then we have to split the other pieces half an hour this, 10 minutes this ...

[It is] important in the agriculture to have some sort of a low cost worker, that can stay the whole day on the tractor. Low cost means you can’t pay a thousand Euro, otherwise you stop immediately and this Albanian he’s great in this, he’s used to this, he doesn’t need a lot of money. In a sense he doesn’t want a lot of money. [He leaves] now at the beginning of the month /August/ and coming back at the beginning of September.

And then we have part time, Juliana for example, she is helping in the kitchen, cleaning ... She is working in the winter less, but in the summer more; Georgina is a bit similar, she’s helping me in the cheesery and then she’s doing the whole vineyard and when we need, she’s also helping in the kitchen. She is incredible really, cooking also really good, but she’s the last to arrive so we have to

look a bit so that others [don't] have the feeling to be .../laughs and pushes his hand up and down in the air/

And then we have one, he's doing a bit of office [financial work] with this organic stuff, registration ...

His wife does bureaucratic things, such as giving the information on the workers to the local police office, which is mandatory. Since most of the volunteers do not have their own cars, it is logistically easier to collect the information and she takes it there once a week. She also drives every morning to a recycling dump so they do not throw everything in the common garbage. She is very meticulous about this and the first morning I went with her she said "Yeah, I'm a bit of everything; I am also a trash lady" and we both laughed as we were sorting the garbage. The same morning she expressed her worries about the fact that the water coming from Monte Amiata that is currently available through the pipes of the municipality system will get privatized by a French company. The farm currently has its own well where they collect rain water and a pond that dries out during the hot Tuscan summers. This water is not drinkable and is used for watering the garden and other chores; in the bar/restaurant area they have a special filter and cooling system of their own installed even for the drinkable water coming from the municipality. They are very conscious of the lack of water in the region, which is especially scarce during the summer months and they tried to convey that to the guests, sometimes even by leaving notes in the common shower rooms and toilets. Even with that, there were numerous times that we ran out of water in during a hot and dry month of August, when the number of guests was also the highest.

My Stay

Without realizing after the first two weeks, I really started to push to be in the garden down in the valley, so I could get away from all the negativity, washing dishes and yelling going on up on the hill, in the restaurant, bar, and cleaning room.

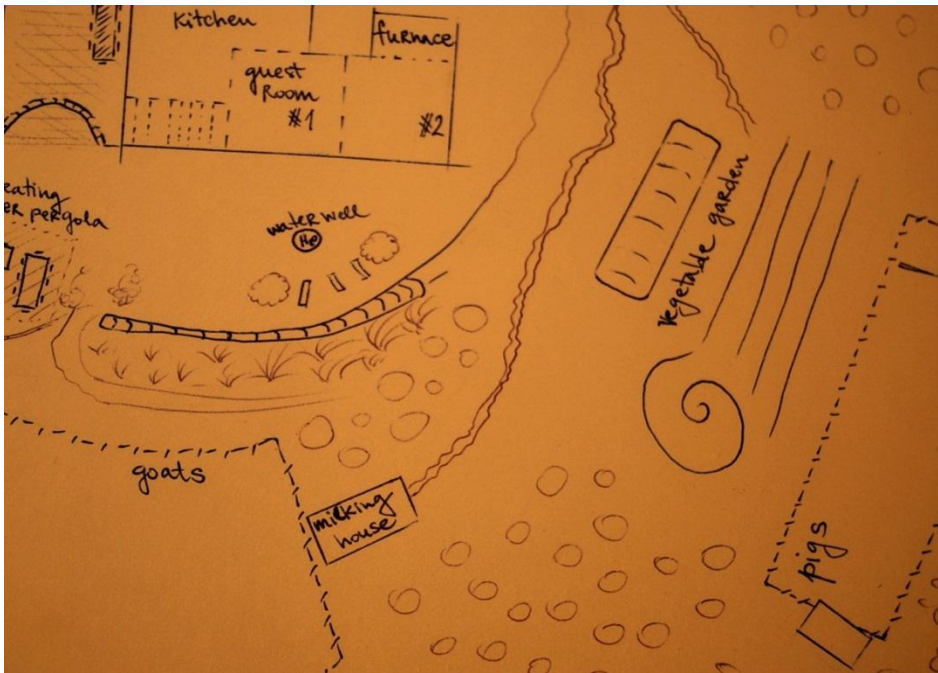


Figure 7: Location of the vegetable garden

Even though the time in the garden was scarce, because I was often summoned back to the kitchen/cleaning area, it felt much better to actually be on my own, take care of plants, plant seeds, dig soil, help with setting up the watering system and the raised-beds for the winter garden etc. Because of our agreement in June that I would be working with organic farming and doing research at the same time, I presumed that was OK. But they were very angry at that and said I was not helping enough with the cleaning and that they did not know my schedule. I started using my *siesta* to go to the garden, so I would not cut into the time they expected me to clean. It was so hot at that point in the summer (38 C) and I was in the garden from 2-5 pm, because otherwise I did not have the time. But sometimes even that was just impossible, as we would get summoned upstairs for lunch-time, cleaning dishes again, preparing tables, serving food to guests. The logistics of it were also uncomfortable, as we were all dirty and sweaty from working in the hot Tuscan sun for hours, with the soil and water, in the work boots and gloves etc. Then

we would come upstairs, dressed not appropriately to serve guests, all dirty and just un-presentable looking in general. Our clean clothes were in caravans or tents away from the toilet and showering facilities, so there was just no time to change and wash up and then go do all the tasks required of us. There were many times that I felt so embarrassed putting food in front of guests, having just washed my hands but still in my muddy boots and shorts, with my hair all messy.

This was a problem in general with not having any sort of schedule done for the work at the farm. For example, one day there were 40 guests arriving from another farm and they were doing their friends a favor by hosting a cheese tasting of the other farm's cheese. In the end, the tour was a financial success even for this farm, because the group ended up buying a lot of their smears and creams and olive oil. But a group of 40 people is not a minor change in the schedule, and the owners knew about it at least the previous day, because they mentioned it to me in passing, but they did not inform the rest of the volunteers who were just shocked when a bus full of people arrived and they had to drop whatever it was they were doing to help with preparing the tables and whatever else was needed. This was cut into the siesta, so many of volunteers were not even at the restaurant area, but at their campers. Obviously it is impossible to have a strict schedule on a farm, since things just float naturally and there are events that disturb everything and nobody can influence them – like the pony and the donkeys who found a way to open up the gates of their fence numerous times and sprinted from the stables, passing the pergola where the guests were eating. WWOOFers and usually Tomas dropped everything and ran.

The way things are organized is that the persons responsible for the next-day's breakfast and the sheep which go out in the morning are designated the previous night. One person usually prepares breakfast which is included into the price of a night's-stay for guests. If there were a lot of them, like one extremely busy week in the beginning of September, when the campsite was packed to the last corner with tents and campers and both of the guest rooms were taken, there are two people preparing food in the morning. There are usually two people taking the sheep on their feeding-time to one of the fields, but if there were not enough volunteers, there was just one.

Maria: I hated going with the sheep. When Tea and the Americans were gone, I was really scared that I have to go alone with the sheep, because they don't follow you.



Figure 8: Three people herding the sheep. Photo by Saskia.

This was also the case when just Leila and I were at the farm for four days, and she could not handle them after a few days of having to go by herself, so I had to take them two mornings. There is a flock of around 150 sheep that needs to be pushed forward, as opposed to the herd of goats that responds to the guiding calls of the shepherd. The second day I sprained my ankle sprinting after them as I was trying to stop the whole flock. For five days after that I could not go with any of the animals or work in the garden because I could barely stand, so I was in the kitchen and cleaning. I could not wait to get back on my feet, literally. I also missed the short white grape-picking or *vendemmia*, but tried to get information on how they do it in Italy³⁸ from the volunteers that attended. The farm outsources the red and white wine-making and receives the final product.

³⁸ I have worked in numerous grape-harvests since I was a child, coming from a wine-region in Slovenia. I also saw the initial stage of tying up the vines in June, when I worked for a day with the farms special volunteer, a local girl taking care of the garden, and two Canadian WWOOFers.

Nina: We collected the grapes in the boxes, put them at the end of the rows when they we're full, they would put it on the tractor. It was tiring because the boxes were heavy and had to fill it up to the end. But around 9, 10.30 it started being very hot, and we were tired already; I think we finished at 10.30 ... They just take the boxes. For example, I am interested to see how they make wine, but here they don't make it.

The only other activity apart from breakfast and the sheep that we could be certain of was the afternoon walk with the 25 goats, usually from 5-7 pm. For the last four weeks of my stay I was the designated goat-shepherd and I loved it. The last three weeks I also started milking them with Lucca, who is not only the farm's shepherd, but I would say an animal specialist.



Figure 9: In bosco with capre

One sign of things being done more accordingly to nature rather than the clock was how this milking-time kept getting pushed forward with every passing week, as the sun would set sooner and the night would fall faster and colder. I would soon stop taking my cellphone that served me as a watch to my goat walks and just looked at the setting sun; when it reached a certain low point on the horizon, I would start telling the goats in Italian that the sun is setting and that we need to get back to the house. By then I was so comfortable with them that I did not yell or even whistle, I would just speak and they would listen. That was the most gratifying feeling at the farm, apart from actually getting two deciliters of milk from them the first time I tried. Lucca said that I should not be afraid of them because they sense if a person is hesitant and start kicking; that I should realize that they are not human and that I am not hurting them by

squeezing hard on their nipples; that milking is good for them and that they enjoy it. With that in mind, my first milking was successful, even with the small quantity of milk.



Figure 10: My happiness over the first 2 dl of goat milk

He was very impressed and told me (with a little healthy jealousy, I would add) that the first few times he tried, they would not produce a drop. As he works half of the year in Italian-Swiss Alps with his other shepherd friends, and the other half here at this farm for at least a decade, he is the person that I can without a doubt say that all the volunteers liked and respected, especially when they saw how he treats the animals with respect and calm. But there was the issue of the language barrier:

Joan: And the other people, I don't really have much interaction with other people.

/Because of the language?/

Joan: Yeah, probably. Michael, I've never ever talked to him. Tomaso says 'hi' to me sometimes and stuff like that and that's fine; Timo, I don't understand him, he's really funny, I love Timo, '*siempre casino!*' /makes a mini cute impression of him & we both laugh/ he's so funny. And Lucca, I don't

understand him, he seems nice, but I dunno. I don't understand him, I can't talk to him. Juliana & Georgina are nice, but I don't understand them either. There's a lot of not understanding /laughs/.

Having Italian workers at the farm, who mostly did not speak English, really forced me to learn the language. It went slowly, from beginners-mistakes the first days to being able to talk to their veterinarian about medicine and treatment of animals the last few weeks. Out of his own conviction, and not just because the farm is certified organic, Lucca would treat the animals with homeopathic and nature-based medication and lotions only; their veterinarian, another Lucca, was practicing homeopathy as well. If some animal would be very sick and had to be treated with some severe medication, they would separate them from the rest of the herd and not milk her for the duration of that period either. A case like this did not occur while I was there, but one of the goats did have a severe infection on her udder which had to be sprayed three times a day with some natural medicine. She could not be milked at that time and I do not know how it turned out because I left, but Timo, the Albanian seasonal-worker was taking care of her while Lucca was on vacation.

Food/kitchen/cuisine

Nina: My problem is when I'm used to cooking all the time at home, even in Spain, but I have to try the food I am making. And HERE, all this food we make, it goes to the guests.

Me: But we get the same food!

S: Noooo! They give to you what is left, you get it mixed in the pasta the next day or something, like the cabbage and zucchini. I mean I like it, when they do this sort of healthy food with the vegetables. When they had fried fresh *ricotta*, we do not get that ... For me, it's not SO important, but I like to taste stuff, I enjoy it, and it's like if you're crazy about shopping and you can't buy the dress! When they were making the pasta in the cooking class, I was cutting the stuff in the background, and I would hear them talking, but you can't really concentrate on it, it's not like I can see how they were making the dough. And I would like to learn how to do it. And the tiramisu. If I'm not working in the kitchen, I don't mind not trying, because I don't see it! When Rafael is here, I tell him and I take it and try, but otherwise I don't like doing it because I know they have a problem with it. I can't help myself in the kitchen /she laughs through the whole sentence/ I always have something in my mouth, it's just like it is!! And don't put me in the kitchen, if I can't try the food!

The cooking lessons are solely for the guests, but I had the special privilege to be there for one, to listen and photograph, but the main focus still had to be the paying guests, which is understandable from the owners' perspective of not having enough time for everything.

As I found out through working with the owner at the cheesery, where I learned how they make *ricotta* and other cheeses, the cheese and the olive oil are two products that bring in the most money. Making cheese was one of the nicest things to do at the farm, and I was extremely grateful for the opportunity, especially because the production is done just once a week and there can be only one extra person helping, so not everyone had the privilege. I worked with John and Georgina three times, and these were the times when he really talked to me without yelling, told me a lot about the farm and the way things are run and I could see that he appreciates the extra help and I am sure he could see that I really like the work. It made me feel valued. Even though the work is hard in a sense because it is very hot and humid because of cooking of the milk, hot water for cleaning the machines and cheese molds, and the summer temperatures, it is also very rewarding to be able to start and finish a product and see results that make people happy, either the owner being satisfied after we were done, or the guests saying that this was the best cheese they have ever eaten. One of the best days at the farm for me was when I got to make *ricotta* in the morning, be present for the cooking lesson making fresh pasta, pick sage from the herb garden that I was watering every evening and then serve the *tagliattele con ricotta e salvia* to the guests and volunteers in the evening.



Figure 11: Cooking lesson in the kitchen, making pasta with Jane

Rafael was the main chef at the farm almost the whole eight weeks of my stay and he is a chef, working in an Italian restaurant in Sao Paolo, Brazil.

Rafael: I arrived to Europe to learn about the culture, and especially the culture of food & eating. First I went to Portugal and then arrived to Italy to find out more about Italy. I found out about the farm through a friend that was here before and told me about it. I contacted the farm and came here to see how they make cheese and how they work with the animals. I am working in the kitchen, with their own products from the farm. There are not so many products done here, but the ones that are, are good. It is very good for me to be here, because I'm learning about Italian culture and plus Tuscany is very beautiful. I think things here were very old when they bought the farm/house, so they had to invest a lot of money to start the farm.

We were eating pasta every day, for lunch and dinner, had pizza three times, potatoes once and rice twice in two months;

Freddy: The food is amazing, but it is too much of the same thing though – pasta for lunch and dinner.

The meat would be on the table maybe once a week and there was only one time when we ate meat from outside the farm and the chicken was certified organic.



Figure 12: Example of ICEA and *Agricoltura Biologica* certificates

Meat truly seemed to be the scarcest commodity at the farm, as it is expensive to buy (compared to pasta and vegetables) and there are a lot of mouths to feed between the family, the workers and the guests.

Rafael: I think that all the vegetables they are using are either coming from Pienza or Montepulciano; and this little piece of land they have here.

Maria: Positive things at the farm were nice weather; I liked the other volunteers, cats and dogs. Negative were the family and the food (every day the same food, no meat).

The only perk that Jane and John indulged in was Swiss chocolate, bought and brought from Switzerland. That was off limits to the volunteers and totally understandable – it is, after all, their kitchen, their house, their rules. In my rare trips to towns I would always buy dried meat and sweets. On 4th September I went to a local farmer's market that is going on every first Sunday of the month with Tomas when he went to sell products of the farm, mostly cheese, and I bought a kilo bag of famous Italian hard cookies *cantuccini*. The biscuits were very good and the old men selling them sold them to me for 10 EUR instead of 15, because he saw I was with Tomas and because he was impressed how much Italian I have learned in just three weeks, as he said. Later that same week, Tomas brought a huge, 20 kg bag of *cantuccini* from some friend, brought it to the kitchen and Jane served them to a few guests. Later I realized that they have packed those

same cookies into 125 and 250 g bags, labeled them with their house-logo and were selling them. This was during the fourth week of my stay.

Trust

Trust is central to relationships among the consumer, the merchant, and the producer. This farm is all of the above - they produce, they sell the merchandise, they also consume their products, but each part of their identity creates extending relationships with others (they buy from others, they have their own customers/consumers etc. Trusting the producer of one's food or in the case of organic certificates, consumers having a certain amount of trust in the officials and services that label and check the foods is necessary, because

consumers [are] becoming ever more quality-conscious about food, **voluntary EU quality marks** now help them make educated choices. These labels – indicating geographic origin, use of traditional ingredients or methods, including organic – also help make EU farm products **competitive on world markets**. (...) EU farm policy – known as the **common agricultural policy** – ensures adequate European food production goes hand in hand with economically viable rural communities and action on environmental challenges such as climate change, water management, bioenergy and biodiversity. (CAP)³⁹

When I arrived as a guest to the farm in June, I trusted the farmers completely. There was no reason for doubt as they served the food themselves, bringing it from the kitchen to the table, saying they cook and produce it themselves. The food we were eating was: white and dark bread, olive oil, pasta with vegetables, zucchini salad, fresh tomatoes with basil, fried ricotta cheese balls, prosciutto and some other types of cold cuts, different kinds of cheese (*pecorino* and *caprino*, but also some with walnuts and aged); we were drinking white and red wine, and had chocolate sponge cake next to *espresso*⁴⁰. They also told us and other guests when I was there as a volunteer that all of the ingredients are from their (organically certified) farm and that they serve the same food to their farmers. During my fieldwork there I realized that the white bread is only for guests, olive oil and wine are not produced at the farm, pasta-making is outsourced too even though the grain does grow there and most of the vegetables (like the tomatoes and basil, peppers and zucchini, which are used on a daily basis) are bought somewhere else.

³⁹ see Appendix 15: Common Agricultural Policy EU

⁴⁰ The desert and coffee obviously have ingredients from a much farther geographic commodity chain, that was never an issue.



**Different sorts
of cheeses aging
in the large fridge**

John: At the moment we changed [the function of the fields] a bit because we had a very dry climate in the last few years, so I try to do all the fields for animals, grassland (...) because milk is more interesting for us than weed.

Rafael: Now it is the cheese they sell. But it cannot be a big production. The cheese products are very nice, because the animals eat only the stuff from the nature, and it also sells because the goat cheese is a specific, rare product. Here they truly follow a natural process, using processes that you could even call a little primitive; so it is hard to earn a lot of money. It is a truly poor region and the people here are poor. It is harsh: the summer is really hot, later in the winter it's really cold. It is hard to produce food and to work with the animals. They don't use so much of industrial process and the machines etc. - it is different from industrial farming, but therefore the quality is also totally different.

Machines

There truly are only a few machines at the farm, apart from a car. The 'most worked machine at the farm', as it was expressed by the owners when it broke down one day, is the dishwasher. There is a tractor and a few other machines to plow the fields and collect grain, but not much more, apart from the cheesery which is fully machine-run, as they upgraded their technology:

John: When I built the cheesery with subsidies, they [EU] gave me 150 thousand [EUR], but other 100 thousand I had to find ... /laughs/ The money, the capital you have to invest...our evolution, development, is very slowly, because we never have enough money (...)



Figure 13: Making *ricotta*

(Organic) Farming

“Financial **safety nets to support farmers are still in place**, but are used much more **selectively**” (CAP), compared to the policies in place over 50 years ago, after the II WW when the main goal was to provide enough food, which included subsidies for production and buying of surpluses of goods from farmers to support their prices. “The EU does supplement farmers' income with direct support to help them make a decent living – but in return they **must meet standards** on farm hygiene/food safety, animal health and welfare, biodiversity and landscape protection” (CAP), but on a larger, over-all scale the EU provides support for major issues like emergencies of natural disasters, outbreaks of animal diseases or unpredictable market imbalances that can influence the rural economy on a macro-scale.

John: [Subsidies are] a big lobby, a consequence a big fight. Our main problem, I think. I never ask anybody about money, but we had always problems with money, because we don't have it and it seems that they /other farmers/ have endless possibilities to find money ...

I'm never jealous to somebody that is rich! Rich in a sense of having a lot of capital, I am happy that I can be here, with nothing.

[Leslie, a merchant that came to visit the farm: You already have a lot more than other people, you have access to food!⁴¹]

John: Yeah, for me that's enough! That's why we also have to change our priorities a little because for example we are going very, very strong on these restaurant stuff, because it gives you immediately money.

The EU agricultural policies seem to lay heavy on the owners' everyday life. Especially John, who does not spare complaints about “useless bureaucracy” of the EU. But unless he decides to become active in politics, he will not be able to change the structure of the laws that govern from somewhere outside (from Brussels, as he keeps referring to the EU) and influence how, when and if he can do something at the farm that is his private property. Judging from the numerous

⁴¹ See Appendix 16: The owner talks to merchant

comments he has made directly to me, other volunteers or guests about it, this is indeed a big part of his frustration.

John: You know, organic is not a new tactic, it's just the way you should do, the way it was for thousand years or also more, but today it is an important part. Also a normal /conventional/ farmer is trying to introduce this, because he gets more subsidies /laughs/ It's a good politic, but ...

He feels the power structure that he is a part of, an outside source, an extralocal economic and political structure that is controlling what goes on in his own land. Yet the farm did not have to apply for organic certificates, which are the reason that they have to follow certain rules. As they told me, they did so because it brings in more money to have organically certified products. Whether this is so because the buyers trust those products more because they are being controlled by outside institutions or because it is 'modern' to be 'green' is not the question of this text.

Both Jane and John stressed that they have been doing organic farming here at this location the whole time since they have bought it; even more, they did not have to go through the three-year-conversion of the land to grow organically, which is necessary if a land gets transformed from 'conventional', pesticide- and fertilizer-use farming to organic according to EU guidelines nowadays.

John: Introducing organic culture for us was easy, because we already had this crop rotation. The preparation was perfect. We only had to change the chemical fertilizer to organic. The conversion at that time was I think one year, not three like now ... We were also working with a farmer back in 1991 so he asked me 'what should I do for you' so it was organized as the pass from his farm to our farm, it was coordinated transition.

They told me that the farmer who owned it previously also followed old-school agricultural practices as they called them, which I would label as 'organic'. This is another thing that bothers as they have done this for years and now they have to prove to some outside bureaucrat what and how they are doing in order to get and keep the certificate (note from my diary). At first, I could understand this frustration, because I am used to hearing similar complaints from Slovenian

farmers, where a lot of them never used chemical helpers either, and they have followed sometimes even stricter rules of their own than EU has set for organic farming.

The more I thought about it, the more I got confused: why would a farm like this one, which did not have to spend money to clean the land of chemicals, that seems to agree with the philosophy of organic growing, natural sustainability and whose owners seem to be so anti-capitalistic⁴² in their philosophy, even apply for the certificate if its causing them negativity and frustration? Is the exchange of money worth the frustration that it brings to them?

April: Jane has given me the impression that it's really hard here to get certified as an organic farmer. In America is not that easy to get a certificate, but compared to here it's relatively easy; only a small percent of the product needs to be organic in order to get that. (...) It depends on the lifestyle you live. It seems to me that a lot of things here are outsourced. They're a money-maker, and they want their restaurant to succeed, because that's what's bringing in the money. I wonder if they didn't have the restaurant here, what it would be like. What would they be focusing their energy on then? You know, out of passion. I just wonder ...

John: The farmer that is producing weed, and then selling it to some dealer, he will die. It works now because there are still subsidies. If they stop in 2, 3 years, because European community has less money, it will be finished⁴³. Or they have to invest in Poland or Slovenia /looks at me, being Slovenian/ ... It's not our game, but ... There will be a big change in the next year, two, three. Because European community spends 30 % on agriculture. And agriculture produces, 2 % of the GDP, or 3 or 5 ...

⁴² "The absence of a common definition of capital has made it difficult for historians to date the origins of 'capitalism'" (Marx, Wolf, Frank, Wallerstein, Braudel in Hornborg 2001). "Industrial capitalism can thus be viewed as the latest in the series of local modes of production anchored in material infrastructures of different kinds, whereas supra-local strategies of merchant capitalism have always integrated such local production processes in larger reproductive totalities" (Hornborg 2001, 56).

I understand capitalism as an economic systems philosophy, one that is guided by the notion of a free market, where governments are not involved in its mechanism; a philosophy guided by private property, wage labor and power structures that are culturally-specific depending on the spatio-temporal frame in which the philosophy operates.

⁴³ see Appendix 17: Current Funding Package Expiring in 2013

Now they are discussing on how to change not only agriculture, also the ambient, landscape, tourism. In Swiss⁴⁴ they did it very well. They decided that the farmer is not only a producer of food, they are also some kind gardener of the landscape. So when you have 60 hectares, you get a basic income, I dunno, 10000 EUR. And with this 10000 EUR you have to cultivate the land and in this way you take care of the land scape, you get the organic... or let's say ... sustainable agriculture, so you can't poison everything, and then you can produce something you can sell. So then you have 10000 and you sell and you get 5000 and then you have an income. But here [in Italy] we are still far away from this system /laughs/.

Their cheese is truly organic, and this was the only part of their organic production where I saw and participated in the whole commodity chain. I was a shepherd for the sheep and the goats, I saw what they eat; I milked the goats and poured milk into the cleaning containers; produced cheese on different occasions with John and Georgina; and I saw the sale of the cheeses in Pienza at the farmer's market with Tomas. As I was working in the cheesery, I was told that the water contains a lot of chlorine, demanded for cleaning the dairy machines. One of the times that I was not helping with the cheese, I noticed a strong smell and the sound of running water coming from underneath my caravan. I followed the pipes going from the cheesery, alongside the caravan, down into the thick bushes in the valley.

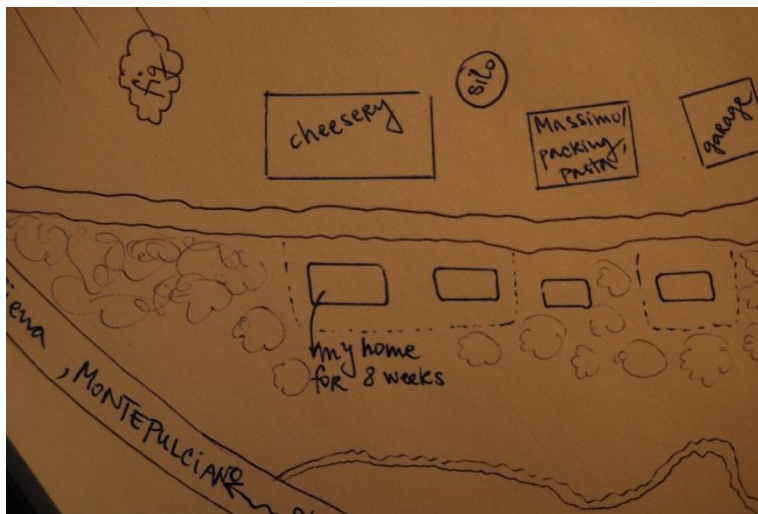


Figure 14: My caravan location

⁴⁴ See Appendix 18: On Cultural Identity

I could not reach the end of the pipes, as it was covered in thorny shrub, but I could smell the chlorine. I returned with an axe and Joan, and was really disappointed to find the ending of the pipe, where the water was running freely into the valley, with a strong smell of the chemical. So the production chain of the cheese was organic, but the waste-dump was not executed in the best manner.

One of organic farming practices also at this farm is crop-rotation, meaning that one of the three fields for cereal is always empty to let the soil breathe, and clover is being planted in the transition year, though they use copper and sulfur preparations that are approved for organic farming (e.g. for fighting fungus in the vineyard). In the last two years they are trying to convert the cereal fields to pastures for grazing of the animals, since the milk, better yet the cheese product, brings in more money than grains or pasta.

John: European community has a law for organic farming since 1992. I can't really remember, I'm not a bureaucratic spirit, but I think' 92 it was our first step and then all the modification. We had to show them that here it was a traditional farming, today it is a rotation; you have two years clover, then one year the wheat, then one year second wheat - I dunno if you have any agronomic background /laughter./ You had once biology at school, no?

Not that we had to grow clover that was the traditional way how to run a farm here. Because this is a very poor ground, so if you always do wheat, you for 4-5 years you'll have nothing. After clover u get very rich soil that means you can do a high quality wheat for either bread or for durum pasta, then u have very good crop. In the second year after you do second quality cereal, in our case normally barley or oat. I would say that's perfect way, without adding anything, just with rotation. And then immediately after barley clover then clover and wheat ...

Rafael: I think that he is truly doing a nice job, because he is producing the cereal using rotation system, they don't grow grain the third year - to save the land.

This means less crops to harvest quantity wise and it means a conscious decision on the side of the farmer to keep this system because the longer it is done, the more beneficial the technique is to richen the soil and keep nutrition. The only way they can bring in the money they are losing by following this slower growing, but more ecologically sustainable practice, is with obtaining the organic certificate.

Although it might be inspiring to have a grand mission like restoring the balance of nature, most farmers who go into sustainable agriculture are simply interested in improving crop yields or saving labor or money. While tradable credits for sequestering carbon could soon provide another farm revenue stream,

many farmers will likely go into sustainable agriculture simply because gas-and-oil-dependant agriculture is becoming more expensive. [sic] (Bates and Hemenway in *State of the World* 2010, 53)



Figure 15: Example of Agricoltura Biologica (Organic Farming) old EU logo on the left, and a package of pasta, marked with the new EU logo⁴⁵ for organic farming.

These are the paradoxes of having those labels, as they can charge more for their products in a market where the consumer is the king and has numerous other choices in a farm-filled place like Tuscany, but need to follow restrictions that frustrate them. As Juliet Schor (2010, 1998) writes about ‘keeping up with the Joneses’ in terms of the consumers having a need to buy (the amount of) things that are in accordance with their neighbors or the society, it is similar and yet so different for the farmers at this farm. If they wanted to survive, maybe even do upgrades at their farm like building a cheesery, they had to get certified to compete with the growing ‘eco’ or organic trend that is overflowing the west. Italy as a part of the European Union has to follow the

⁴⁵ “The new organic logo is the second certifying symbol for organic products in the EU. The first one was launched at the end of the 1990s and was applied on a voluntary basis. It is obsolete from 1 July 2010 although it may still appear on some products as they clear through the supply chain.

The EU organic farming logo offers consumers’ confidence about the origins and qualities of their food and drink and its presence on any product ensures compliance with the EU organic farming Regulation. From July 2010 the EU organic logo is obligatory for all organic pre-packaged food products within the European Union. It is also possible to use the logo on a voluntary basis for non pre-packaged organic goods produced within the EU or any organic products imported from third countries” (EU Logo).

EU guidelines when it comes to granting organic certificates and farmers need to follow rules from both. Tuscany is an important agricultural region in Italy, especially for cereals and grapes or wine. WWOOF.it has “130 farms in Tuscany so far this year, so yes it has more farms than other provinces – but it is also one of the largest!”⁴⁶ There is a high saturation of all sorts of farming going on. In the region of Val d’Orcia, one *agricultura biologica* sign follows another; from B&B’s that offer their own organically grown food, to restaurants, hotels, farms or stores with ‘organic certificate’ label(s). So if the owners of the farm wanted to ‘keep up with the Joneses’, in this case ‘the Joneses’ being other farmers or small business owners’, they needed to be legally ‘organic’.

Expectations about an organic agritourism in Tuscany were different, and yet somewhat similar for all volunteers. Reality of the farm set differently on each person, as we are all human, and yet as different as the olives on a tree – each olive ripens on its own and at a different time. One thing was clear at the end of my stay: no matter how big the complaints, no matter how strong

the frustration, the volunteers respected the owners and wanted them to be successful.

April: I think we’ve been a little discouraged because it is a little different than what we expected. I think I am mostly excited about sitting down, after being at five farms and really evaluate our experience.

Bonnie: Yeah, and the differences in each and very hopefully that not all run in the same manner that they do here; I think it’s overwhelming for them so they’re not really conscious of how they’re interacting with us and how we’re dealing with it ...

April: I was saying to Bonnie the other night that the reality of it is that I would recommend people to come here if they want a nice dinner, or a nice lunch – I think they have a great thing going on here! It’s absolutely gorgeous, their intentions are there, I think they’re doing it, they’ve really done the best they can, I respect them completely and I want them to succeed. But recommending somebody else to WWOOF here or help out, I don’t



⁴⁶ Email correspondence with Bridget Matthews, who takes care of memberships, the host list and all correspondence of WWOOF Italia.

think I would go as far as to do that and I think that it's a shame; it's a really beautiful place, it's a really great idea.

Discussion and/or interpretation of findings and results

In my fieldwork I have conducted interviews and participant observation, and did a literature review in my research after leaving the farm. In this thesis I am not claiming that all WWOOF farms are the same and even though the problems at this farm are micro specific, I believe that the talks with the hosts and interviewees, as well as my own experience at the agritourism farm highlight some issues on a bigger scale.

I have compiled a list of my steps through the fieldwork, which can be found in the appendix Step-by-step of interviewing, and created guidelines for the interviews (appendix Guide: main questions/topics, step 4). I was also got some quantitative data from survey responses, the coding of transcriptions of interviews and using participants' responses in general.

For example, the following visual presentation, showing why I chose to focus on the interviews conducted at the farm, seeing that those consisted of the biggest number participants:

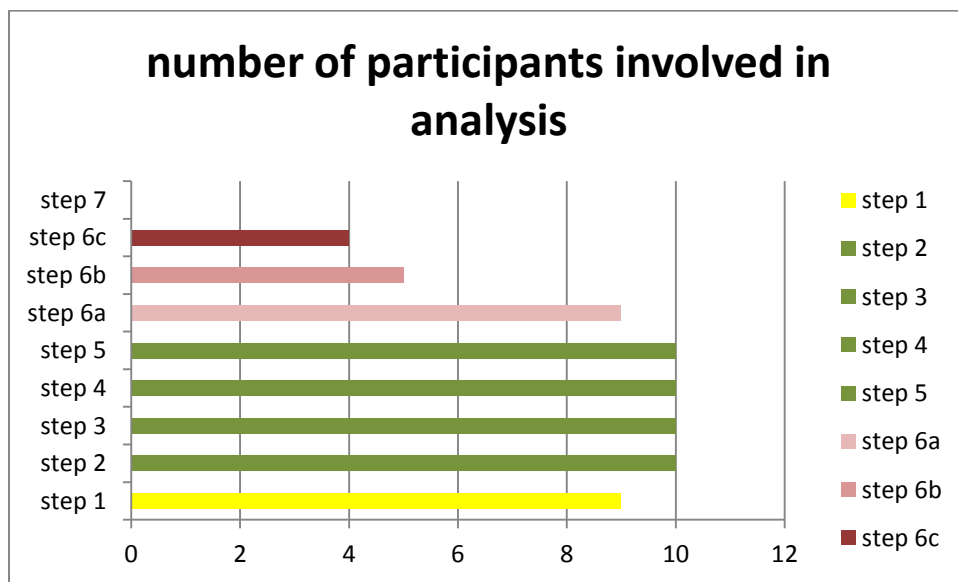


Figure 16: Number of participants in analysis

- Step 1: no Maria voice-recording, received written response later via email.
- Step 6: online surveys

- Step 6a: no contact with Nina after we left the farm; 9 participants responds to survey
- Step 6b: second online survey, 5 participants
- Step 6c: third online survey, 4 participants

An important part of the following were the expectations of volunteers, presented in the beginning of *Under the Tuscan Sun* text. There I also presented some of the main reasons for 7 out of 10 of my interviewees/volunteers leaving before they originally intended.

Freddy: Campers and volunteers have come; it's very rare that they've stayed for as long as they planned, so I think there's a lack of communication at this farm. [It is] vague, not a lot of direction. Around 14 people left here before they were planning to leave. Some farms are just more organized and this isn't really one of them.

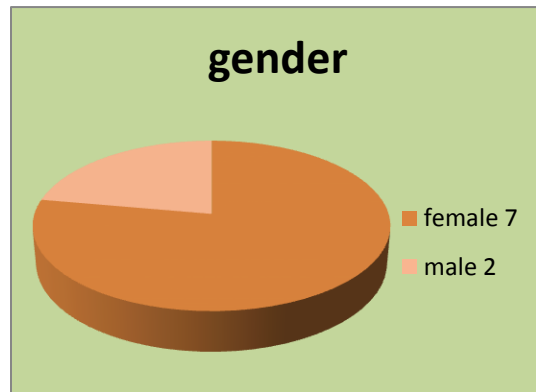
Tina: I wish I had a little bit of an introduction on this farm! Here is this, here is that, this kind of work is here, you can choose one, you can try it but this was not so. Also they have no time for volunteers,

Joan: It's just there's so much negative stuff going on here, I don't feel happy, I don't feel comfortable. If the WWOOFers keep leaving before they were supposed to, then they should realize that there's something wrong! If SO many people leave ... If one person does that, than you can say 'OK, this person's a flake', but if most people do that, the majority of people leave [10:00] before they're supposed to or even after a short amount of time, they should realize that some things are really, really wrong! With either how they're treating the people, or something's really off!

April: No clarity, not knowing what's going on (...) and nobody wants to do the dishes all the time. [More people] said that they got the same email, saying that they are here to work on the grapes /which was not the case in the end/. They said 'we're here to work on the grape harvest'. You know, that's misleading.

Nina: Someone gives you a task to do something and then another person gives you something else and then confusion happens, because this volunteering work is not very well organized.

The following pie shows gender ratios amongst the online survey respondents and while doing interviews at the farm, there were eight female and two male participants.



In my surveys, I also asked some more general questions about their origin. None of the interviewees had to pay for a visa to enter Italy, EU. Outside-EU residents had to wait three months to be granted the visa (5/9 participants) and more than half of the participants (5/9) started and ended their trip in their country of permanent residency (Italy was their only travel-location). For more presentation of online survey results and responses, see Appendix 5, Survey Responses.

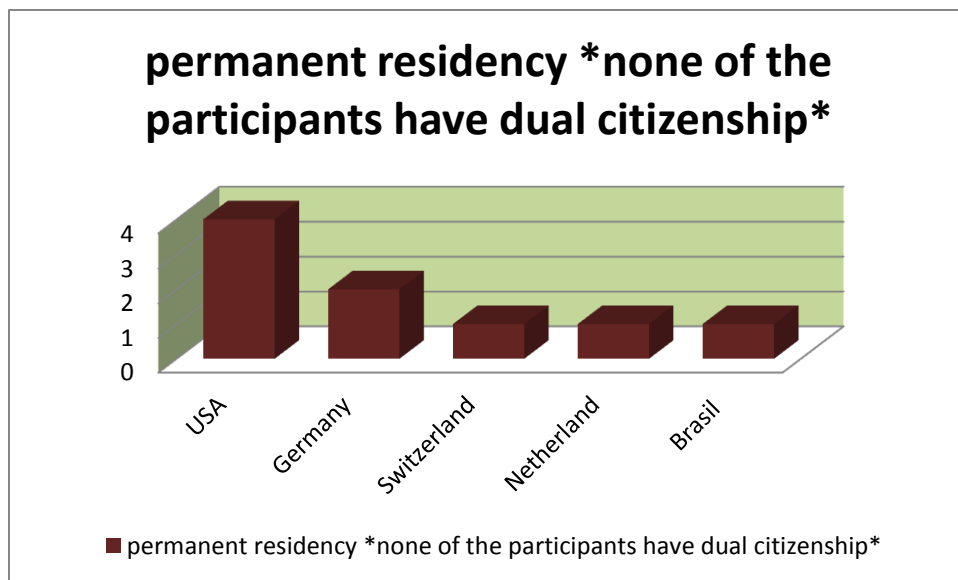


Figure 17: Residency of Interviewees

None of the participants that I interviewed found out about the farm from their own internet page. Apart from one that came to the farm randomly as a guest and decided to work, another

one where a friend recommended the farm (and him to the owners), and a third one that saw it in the book Eurotopia; seven out of ten interviewees found the farm through WWOOF.org/it.

On the question of how satisfied they are with their experience of WWOOFing, the majority responded with: it had its good and bad moments.

None of the participants in the surveys clicked the option 'If it wasn't for WWOOF.org, I would never think about this kind of work'; none of them also agreed with the statement 'I will do this sort of work permanently' and neither with 'I will never volunteer again'.

And their suggestions for solutions of the presented issues of problems at this agritourism farm?

Freddy: Change communication; give better instructions; explain; offer access to kitchen for cooking; teach

Maria: I think that the solution to some problems would be that [the owners] would help us more. They should spend more activities for the volunteers (explain how to make cheese, bread, pasta, olive oil and wine).

Tina: They should try to have a little bit time for us and what I think it is important too is that they would maybe talk in the evening with their volunteers, as to one's kids or to the other workers: how was the day, how do you feel, what do you want to change, then there's no problem, and miscommunication. I think it would help!

Joan: I would advise a new WWOOFer to have as much communication with the farmers as you can. Just ask them lots and lots of questions try and get a picture of how everything is there; and if they're not willing to tell you, then you know that there's a problem. I would say stick up for yourself; if you're not happy, just leave. Don't stick around and let them use you.

Bonnie: I think it's a shame cause you would want to be able to recommend the people here, because they don't have the means to hire people and you would want there to be a wholesome volunteer experience to be had. And I feel that with some rearranging and planning that could happen and that would be in their best interest,

Rafael: I don't know how other farms deal with the volunteers, if they have a program written – like, you learn it and you work! They could do a cycle – one week you stay in the garden, one week animals ...

April: I think they need to reflect more; if they were to sit down once a week and compile a list 'this week we're gonna accomplish this this and this', have some main goals ... they don't even have to break down who does what, but like to help have clarity, what needs to be done, the big tasks. And I think if they were to organize their volunteers – you're gonna specialize in the garden, you specialize in the kitchen ...

Conclusion

Hosting WWOOFers can be hugely rewarding as you are enabling people to learn first hand organic growing techniques and showing an alternative way of life. Many WWOOFers are so inspired by the experience that they end setting up their own organic farms! So as a host you are improving communication and growth within the organic movement!

www.woofinternational.org/howitworks.php

This thesis I write about the workings of WWOOF and focus specifically on a micro location of an agritourism farm in Tuscany. Throughout the text I have presented voice of both WWOOF.org and nation-specific WWOOF.it and interwoven it with responses about volunteering work on organic farms from my interviewees. I have presented secondary data in the form of agricultural policies of EU, as well as information on volunteering work as such. In the thesis I am also writing about the power relations that are influencing the workings of this specific farm. Expectations about this specific Tuscan location, as well as volunteering work itself are presented throughout the text and more intensively in the *Living and Working Under the Tuscan Sun* section, as they play an important role in presenting the issues and disappointments of my interviewees. I am conducting my text with solutions or suggestions to the issues or problems, identified through interviews and participatory observation.

If we see EU with its agricultural policies as a part of the developed world, thus the 'producing core', then we might see Italy as such too. But upon closer examination, we can see that Italy as well can be further divided into smaller units, such as urban centers or rural spaces, as core and periphery spaces are not static, rather they are fluid constructs. Those can be dissected into

regions or municipalities that serve as a core or periphery to one another. If a middle-sized organic agritourism farm in Tuscany might seem to be a part of the producing core because of its position in Italy, EU that is not necessarily true once we observe it from a smaller scale of Tuscan country-side. The farm that this text deals with is at the same time a producer, merchant and consumer of their products, and it serves as a connecting point between a larger-scale international organization of voluntary work on organic farms WWOOF and a personal-scale of a WWOOFer.

I believe that WWOOF's philosophy is attempting to challenge the existing political and economic structures by promoting volunteer work on organic farms, because of the nature of volunteering work and its position in the so called third sector of economy. The volunteers are not a part of typical capitalist exchange of labor for money and because of that their work can be seen as alternative. But whether or not this alternation is functioning, is another issue. Because of the lack of formal structure in the form of a contract between employer (in this case, a 'host') and worker (WWOOFer), exploitation of either party is quite possible. On the other hand, this exchange might be less exploitative because the volunteer is free to leave at any time, as well as the host has the right to turn away that volunteer. The volunteers at this farm left when they felt that they were a part of an unequal exchange and with that the owners of this agritourism lost valuable labor, very much needed in the labor-intensive organic farming.

In the two months of my fieldwork⁴⁷ I observed an unequal exchange in the relationships between the volunteers and the host. This inequality was not necessarily one-sided, though I would say that the host's previous bad experiences with WWOOFers made them less fair to their voluntary laborers. As the "host asks for maturity, respect, loyalty, commitment and some ability in this exchange. A willingness to communicate honestly is essential. The wwoofer expects nourishing food, clean accommodation, reasonable work hours and tasks and an integration into the family and its surroundings" ([sic] WWOOF International). There is a lot based on trust in this exchange, and it feels like previous bad experiences with WWOOFers that might have been taking advantage of this farm have tainted the experience for the newcomers. They should try and break that cycle and appreciate the working hands they get; but they cannot expect the

⁴⁷ See Appendix 19: Fieldwork and Mixed Identity of a Researcher

Wwoofers to be satisfied without educating them on organic farming. There is obviously still a positive trait-off for the farm somewhere in there, otherwise they would not continue to be Wwoof hosts. It might serve both sides for the better, if the host would draw up a contract, which would still not be legally binding, but would serve the purpose of having certain guidelines - written down rules for both the host and the volunteer to follow. Deviations from the requests stated in that form could be debated during the volunteer's stay and I believe that it would make the communication easier and smoother for both sides. The communication was lacking at the farm and both sides had a lot of complaints about the other in this regard.

From my experience, there were truly enthusiastic people arriving to the farm, willing to help with the (organic) farming, but because of whatever reasons, amongst them quite probably previous volunteers that wanted to be more 'guests' than 'workers', the owners' trust into the exchange has been broken. In return for providing education, food and shelter, the host deserves honest workers, ones that are not just looking for a free accommodation, as clearly stated in Wwoofing guidelines: "If all you are looking for is free accommodation on your holidays Wwoof is NOT FOR YOU [sic]" (Wwoof.org). We have to keep in mind that they have been a part of this exchange for eight years now, and have probably seen all sorts of different people, intentions and experiences. It is too bad that previous bad experiences end up chasing away the ones that truly want to work and contribute to their farm.

Each volunteer arrives to the farm anew; a lot of them have never either volunteered, Wwoofed or worked on a farm before and they expect and need guidance to an extent. I believe if that will be provided, the exchange will be satisfactory for both sides. Problem of management of the volunteer work was definitely an issue, because the owners were too busy with everything else to give enough attention to Wwoofers. The volunteer labor could be much better arranged and with that more output from the labor would be given to the host. The hosts should really consider hiring a young local person with good language and managerial skills to solely take care of the volunteers and nothing else. Better yet, they should reserve this position for their 18-year-old son, who is fluent in English, Swiss, German and Italian and currently doing a really nice job with welcoming the guests and helping in the kitchen – his skills would be of much more use in dealing with the volunteers and alleviating this responsibility away from his

mother and father. Another question is if he would want to assume this position, but generally this seems like a very applicable solution to me.

Another problem is that there is no mention of tourism or guest-related work on the WWOOF.it page. Even though the farm is named 'organic agritourism', most of the volunteers arriving there do not know what to imagine from that description. With that in mind, we are all of a sudden faced not with two, but three sides: owners of the farm, their guests and their volunteers. Guests arrive for the beautiful view and amazing food, and they do not care so much about the farming aspect apart from their touristic walk around the farm, where they admire the peacocks, comment on the cuteness of the little donkey or sheep, and they like to hear that the production is organic. The owners often mention WWOOF and volunteering to the guests, mentioning how many young people they have helping at the farm and nothing but positive traits about it. The story is different when they communicate with the volunteers, when it is often mentioned how lazy, stupid or useless the WWOOFers are and that they are spending their resources on feeding and providing shelter for them.

The gist of the problem as I see it is the lack of education about the (organic) farming and communication between volunteers and the owners. Most of the volunteers do not have either education or previous experiences with farming and they need guidance; even the ones with prior experiences need guidance, since every farm is a micro specific location, not just in terms of climate, but also in lifestyle. WWOOFers did not travel from across the world to volunteer to clean dishes – they want to learn to grow their own food. All this could be resolved by setting stricter rules, times and chores, better management in general. Volunteers are expected to do a large amount of work that is not related to agriculture, and is therefore not a part of the WWOOFing 'exchange' – it is just free labor. An integral part to this problem is also the fact that more than half of all arrivals to the farm during my stay did not have a membership card, an could therefore cause legal problems for the hosts, because such work is illegal. The hosts cannot expect the volunteers to be satisfied with non-agricultural labor, because in this way they risk losing the help; the most rewarding work for me personally was making the cheese and taking care of the animals, which were all amazing and special experiences that I will carry with me for the rest of my life. There are numerous other WWOOFing farms globally or in Tuscan region and WWOOFers are like bees – they are free to move from one flower to the next. The exchange

is based on mutual respect and trust, and it can only work in that manner. Two of my interviewees from the farm spent two months staying at four more different WWOOF farms in Italy. This farm was their first and through personal correspondence one of them told me about their other experiences, such as learning to make mead from honey and wild berries, making olive oil from fresh olives, sheering goats, pruning lemon trees, weaving baskets, and on one of the farms she taught the family to weave, using the yarn they produced there. She ended her letter with: “It was fun sharing stories & learning from our hosts!⁴⁸” and I wish that the owners of this agritourism farm are going to recognize that the volunteers come to them for the valuable knowledge and experiences on organic farming.

⁴⁸ For more on the story, see Appendix 20: Feedback About Other WWOOF Farms.

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Figures:

Figure 1: Italian region of Tuscany

Figure 2: Aquarelle of Pienza and Monte Amiata view from my caravan

Figure 3: (Previous page) Farm location between Pienza and Montepulciano

Figure 4: Map of Italy

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Figure 7: Location of the vegetable garden

Figure 8: Three people herding the sheep

Figure 9: In *bosco* with *capre*

Figure 10: My happiness over the first 2 dl of goat milk

Figure 11: Cooking lesson in the kitchen, making pasta with Jane

Figure 12: Example of ICEA and *Agricoltura Biologica* certificates

Figure 13: Making *ricotta*

Figure 14: My caravan location

Figure 15: Example of *Agricoltura Biologica* (Organic Farming) old EU logo on the left, and a package of pasta, marked with the new EU logo for organic farming

Figure 16: Number of participants in analysis

Figure 17: Residency of Interviewees

Appendix 1: Table of WWOOF regional/national organizations

Data source: www.woofinternational.org/ (accessed 30 March 2012).

Member Country	Africa	Americas	Asia/ Pacific	Europe	WWOOF Independents
List of national members	WWOOF	WWOOF	WWOOF	WWOOF	+ WWOOF
	Cameroon	Argentina	Australia	Austria	Latin America list
	WWOOF	WWOOF	WWOOF	WWOOF	
	Ghana	Belize	Bangladesh	Bulgaria	
	WWOOF	WWOOF	WWOOF	WWOOF	+ WWOOF
	Nigeria	Brazil	China	Czech	Independents:
	WWOOF	WWOOF	WWOOF	WWOOF	in countries
	Sierra Leone	Canada	India	Danmark	without a
	WWOOF	WWOOF	WWOOF	WWOOF	WWOOF
	Uganda	Chile	Japan	Estonia	organization
		WWOOF	WWOOF	WWOOF	
		Costa Rica	Kazakhstan	France	+ UK edition
		WWOOF	WWOOF	WWOOF	of
		Ecuador	Korea	Germany	Independents
		WWOOF	WWOOF	WWOOF	
		Guatemala	Nepal	Greece	
		WWOOF	WWOOF	WWOOF	
		Hawaii	New Zealand	Hungary	
		WWOOF	WWOOF	WWOOF	
		Mexico	Philippines	Ireland	
	WWOOF	WWOOF	WWOOF		
	USA	Taiwan	Israel		
	WWOOF		WWOOF		

Venezuela

Italy
WOOOF
Lithuania
WOOOF
Moldova
WOOOF
Poland
WOOOF
Portugal
WOOOF
Romania
WOOOF
Serbia
WOOOF
Spain
WOOOF
Sweden
WOOOF
Switzerland
WOOOF
Turkey
WOOOF
UK

Number of countries in national WOOOF

5 countries	12 countries	11 countries	23 countries
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Sum of all member countries = **51 countries** (Independents excluded)

Appendix 2: From talks to results

	Time&Location	Action	Notes	Equipment
Step 1	Aug–Oct 2011, Tuscany, Italy	Recording	Notes in fieldwork diary about important topics – helped me create guidelines for all the following interviews	Digital audio recorder
Step 2	December 2011, USA	Transcription & clean-up (spelling)	Making sure to note non-verbal expressions as well	Digital audio recorded & Office Word
Step 3	January 2012, Sweden	Shortening	Shortened version of transcripts + adaptation from spoken to written language + keeping the original (step 2) transcripts as well	Office Word
Step 4	January 2012, SWE	Color-coding important issues	4 main topics: Why & how did you come to this specific farm? How did you find/hear about WWOOF.org/(ers)/(ing)? What bothered you at this farm? What are your suggestions to change it for the better?	Office Word
Step 5	February 2012, SWE	Making numerical data	From interview responses; charts	Office Excel
Step 6	February 2012, SWE	Sending surveys	Online surveys; sent via email & Facebook	www.surveymonkey.com
Step 7	March 2012, SWE	Using stories from 4 participants	From survey responses	Office Excel

Appendix 3: First-, developed-, core- or western-world countries

In these text concepts of 1st world, developed world, the (producing) core and western countries shall be used interchangeably for the following reasons.

As mentioned in the debate about ‘trust’, different data stems from a different starting point. Mine is following the definition of 1st world countries being countries with high human development index (HDI) and adding to it my own dimension(s); I am not following the division on 1st, 2nd and 3rd world countries based on the GDP of a nation-state (or union) as it is the practice by the UN, “[f]or high GDP is not consistently correlated with human satisfaction and health” (Salleh 2009, 18).

For the purpose of naming 1st world countries in my definition I used the first 47 countries from the *Human Development Report* list⁴⁹ that are labeled as having ‘very high human development’. Then, I combined the *HDI indexes of countries* with the *GINI coefficient*⁵⁰ of the same number of countries (ranked 140-93) to create my own list of the most developed countries looking at aspects of: life expectancy at birth and health; mean and expected years of schooling, education; GDP per capita, living standards⁵¹ and equality.

According to this measure, 1st world countries are: Norway, Australia, Netherlands, Canada, Ireland, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, (South) Korea, Denmark, Belgium, Austria, France, Slovenia, Finland, Spain, Italy, Luxembourg, Singapore, Czech Republic, United Kingdom, Greece, Estonia, Slovakia, Malta, Hungary, Poland and Croatia.

There are some countries that were on the list of the first 47 countries according to the HDI, but have fallen out of my list because of their high unequal distribution of capital, measured by the GINI coefficient. Those countries are: USA, New Zealand, Japan, China, Israel, Singapore, Qatar, Lithuania, Latvia, Portugal, Chile and Argentina⁵².

⁴⁹ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/hdi/>; HDR 2011 Statistical Tables.

⁵⁰ (found on www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2172rank.html)

⁵¹ These are all categories that UN experts use to calculate HDI; <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/hdi/>

⁵² Liechtenstein, United Arab Emirates, Andorra, Brunei Darussalam, Bahrain and Barbados are not taken into statistics on CIA Factbook for various political and economic reasons therefore not comparable between the two lists.

This becomes geographically very confusing, but nicely shows the discrepancies and problems with dividing the world into 1st, 2nd or 3rd world countries since these categories drastically change depending of the measurements used. If we take into account only geography and nation-states, it is quite easy; it becomes complicated where to define the boarder – none of the nation-states want to be left out of the ‘developed world’. If we use just the GDP as a measurement, we are falling into the capitalist mode of calculation, taking only monetary means as a measure of success; taking GDP per capita is already a better measurement, but since I wanted to show the (in)equalities in society and distribution of power as well, I incorporated the GINI coefficient.

I tried to combine the social aspects, political and economic ones and got an approximate map of the so-called 1st world, showing a few countries that do not really fall into the category because of their high inequalities in income distribution⁵³, which shows a nice discrepancy from the measures that only take GDP into account.

I shall also keep some countries in accordance with their geographic position of the west on the list, since I am understanding the category of the west not only as political unit, but also geographic⁵⁴. Therefore I am adding countries with developed democracies, or belonging to such unions⁵⁵, to my list. My understanding of 1st world or developed world or producing core or western countries thus form the following 29 countries (in alphabet order): Austria, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, USA.

⁵³ These countries are USA, New Zealand, Japan, China, Israel, Singapore, Qatar, Lithuania, Latvia, Portugal, Chile and Argentina, as explained above.

⁵⁴ Therefore, I have removed Australia, Singapore and South Korea from my list for the purpose of geographic entity.

⁵⁵ These countries are: USA and Lithuania, Latvia and Portugal as parts of European Union as a political entity.



Map: Core Countries

Appendix 4: Guide: main questions/topics (step 4) for my interviewees at the farm and later

Who are they?

Why and when did they decide to join WWOOF? Where did they learn about WWOOF.org?

Why did they come to this farm specifically?

How do they see their experience with at volunteering at this farm? Why is it good/bad?

What would their suggestions be?

Appendix 5: Survey Responses

Why did you decide to come to this farm?

- We wanted to make a break on our trip where we could stay for a longer time and get to know other people more intensively and we wanted to get to know about the work on an ecological farm.
- I wanted the opportunity to travel, specifically to Italy, and be immersed in the culture. WWOOFing allowed me to learn about more than just agriculture, but also about the history and culture of all the areas I travelled to.
- To make my stay in Italy a little cheaper than when I had to stay in hostels all the time, and also because I thought it would be nice to stay at Podere Il Casale for a while (I had been there about 10 years before, as a guest of the camping site).
- It's a good possibility to help others and to get to know another culture extremely near.
- Because I wanted to travel and also enjoy hands on work on farms.

How come you specifically decided for volunteering on organic farms (and not some other form of volunteering)?

- We love the work in the nature and to work with animals, it was something new for us.
- Organic farming is something I had little experience in but a lot of interest. I wanted to experience how small family farms operated and worked toward self-sufficiency and pick up skills to apply at home.
- I specifically decided to go to this farm, and it happened to be organic. But I eat organic food since the '90's, so I guess that is why we stayed there during our holiday in 2002 in the first place.
- Because I'm interested in organic farms and I thought I could learn some organic things for my future. I'm dreaming of having my own garden and don't have to buy vegetables in supermarkets anymore.
- Because I knew people that had done it and had had good experiences and I knew it was pretty straight forward. I also had experience working on farms.

Survey 3 (only 4/10 people responded)

1 - One of the participants has two Masters' Degrees and has had part-time, full-time and freelance jobs before. She also did a 9-month-long internship prior to that that helped her get full employment later. One of the jobs she has had was in her field of study of the first Masters' which was in social sciences. She is not a WWOOFer and did all her arrangements directly with PIC, having been there 9 years before and wanted to visit again. "I have been a volunteer since I was 14, mainly organizing (small) events". Her expectations of volunteering were to "do something useful, something I am good in/talented for, while having a good time with nice people".

2 - "I had no expectations of volunteering work before I started. I just thought that it must be nice to work with other young people and to learn about ecological farms and their work" a volunteer from Germany, currently studying to be a teacher, and has worked with handicapped children before. This internship work was for a year, it was paid and it helped her get full employment later. "PIC was my first volunteering job on an ecological farm, it was an experience I don't want to miss and maybe I decided to do this again, but not at Il Casale". She was not a part of WWOOF.org, but saw the PIC in the book Eurotopia.

3 - Another volunteer that has a Bachelor's Degree in marketing and has worked as an intern in Sustainable Business, describes her expectations of volunteering: "I expected to get a feel a sense of purpose and get a lot of fulfillment from using my free time to help and benefit others" and adds "I have had multiple volunteer experiences prior to Podere Il Casale. A couple on farms and others with youth organizations." She was a WWOOFer and described her experience with their online page as 'satisfactory', 'very good', even 'excellent'; she stated that it made her like volunteering work more and that she learned a lot about organic farming. PIC was her first stop on a WWOOFing trip to Italy, where she visited ??? farms with her friend, another WWOOFer.

4 - Another volunteer comes from Germany, has a four year high school education and has had part-time and student jobs so far. She also did a one-month-long unpaid internship in a hospital in Germany and she wants to continue her education. PIC was not her first volunteering job, and her expectations prior to arrival were "to feel a little more welcome and that the people would be happy that I was working for free". She didn't agree with the statements that this work started a desire to volunteer more, she does not feel like she learned a lot about organic farming; the whole experience was a bit disappointing and she does not feel like she will do it again.

Appendix 6: Voluntary Work and How to Measure it

“Volunteer work is an enormous renewable resource for social, economic, and environmental problem-solving throughout the world.⁵⁶ (...) Despite this, however, little sustained effort has gone into its measurement⁵⁷” (ILO). On 23 May 2012 Youth Employment Forum⁵⁸ is starting in Geneva, fueled by number such as: “75 million young people are looking for a job worldwide. (...) Young people are three times more likely to be unemployed than adults. (...) 40 % of world’s unemployment are young people” (IBID).

With unemployment rates rising amongst youth⁵⁹, we can see raising interest⁶⁰ for alternative forms of labor, such as volunteering.

In the CEV report they are focusing mostly on how to deal with the problem of measuring the unpaid labor of volunteers in economic terms, but I would say that it is impossible to measure something that does not have a common data base. The start would be that all the volunteering work in a nation state or European Union would be registered in a common database system, where the amount and nature of the volunteering work would be noted.

Before that happens, we are looking at a situation where there is a lot written on the positive traits of labor work, its philanthropic nature⁶¹, all the different places where one might be able to volunteer; how to help someone and how the labor itself is going to contribute you. There are numerous organizations that offer positions for volunteers (similar to those with intern positions) and even if they are organized globally like WWOOF.org, they still have their local bases in

⁵⁶ www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/WCMS_153527/lang--en/index.htm

⁵⁷ www.ilo.org/stat/Publications/WCMS_162119/lang--en/index.htm

⁵⁸ www.ilo.org/global/meetings-and-events/events/youth-employment-forum/lang--en/index.htm

⁵⁹ www.tradingeconomics.com/united-states/unemployment-youth-total-percent-of-total-labor-force-ages-15-24-wb-data.html

<http://www.ilo.org/global/meetings-and-events/events/youth-employment-forum/lang--en/index.htm>

⁶⁰ <http://www.3s4.org.uk/drivers/trends-in-volunteering>, http://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2010/ted_20100205.htm,
http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/29263824/ns/us_news-giving/t/jobs-scarce-volunteering-rise/#.T6WLXev9OyE,
<http://www.volunteer.ie/Volunteering-on-the-Increase.html>, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/voluntary-sector-network/2010/dec/06/trade-unions-job-worries>

⁶¹ The Independent (video): *Is it Time to Consider Voluntary Work?* & World Volunteer Web, www.worldvolunteerweb.org/iyv-10.html

nation states e.g. WWOOF.it. Why not legislate that these organizations keep track of the hours volunteers spend working and have them on record? With that it might also become easier to see what kind of labor could (or should) perhaps be moved from a volunteering sector to a sector of paid labor and vice versus. Since volunteering is as of now in this ‘third sector’, it is hard to regulate; also any sort of policies are difficult to achieve to further the growth of volunteer labor because each organization has to find means of their own to promote it. As stated in the report:

Policy and decision makers such as governments seem to understand the language of economic value above anything else – by collecting accurate data civil society would ‘wake-up’ decision-makers and could pledge support with a powerful message behind. Accurate statistics would help to tailor volunteering policies according to real needs, as well as encouraging the development of new policies where none currently exist. (...) Economic figures help the general public and the volunteer sector itself to develop understanding of the enormous extent of volunteering and to achieve better visibility and recognition (CEV1).

A typical example of not having concrete data would be WWOOF’s statement that:

“WWOOFers have given 1000's of hours of help to organic growers and WWOOF hosts have given their time and experience to WWOOFers and opened the door to a way of living that has fundamentally changed people's lives” (www.woof.org/history.asp).

‘Thousands of hours’ is not telling us much as a measurement.

The situation with measuring volunteer labor is different in USA. There we can easily find data on volunteering through Volunteering in America, a governmental source that shows statistics on all 50 states and the District of Columbia. It serves as a common base of information of the number of hours volunteers worked, how this is translated into monetary measurements and we can also read about different organizations⁶² that provide interested public the opportunity to volunteer. I can for example look at the data provided by the source on the state of Pennsylvania or New York, where four out of my ten interviewees come from and present data from a primary and secondary source, thus understanding better what the volunteering culture and society surrounding them.

⁶² <http://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/highlights.cfm>

Appendix 7: Permaculture and Eco-Sufficiency

The term permaculture, a contraction of ‘permanent agriculture’, was coined by Australians Bill Mollison and David Holmgren and refers to a systems approach for designing human ecologies, from farms to houses to cities, that mimics the relationships found in natural biomes. It integrates concepts of organic farming, sustainable forestry, no-till management and the village-design techniques of indigenous peoples. (Bates and Hemenway, in *State of the World 2010*, 52)

I understand organic farming as a subcategory of permaculture, the latter meaning “*ethics and design principles* which can be used to guide efforts made by individuals, households and communities towards a sustainable future” (Permaculture). Permaculture refers to care of the earth and people and fair sharing lifestyles; people who follow permaculture principles use renewable sources of energy, trying not to produce waste, use slow-growing principles etc. In her book *Eco-Sufficiency* Ariel Salleh writes how “[t]he practice of eco-sufficiency from its functionalist closed-system reasoning and challenges corporate and government assumptions that ‘more’ of the same must be ‘better. Eco-sufficiency bypasses consumerism and energy wasting international markets. It rests on the logic of permanently reproducing the humanity-nature relation; it is a permaculture, to echo Australian ecologist Bill Mollison’s practical vision” (Salleh 2009, 18) and adds that “the European neglect of eco-sufficiency in sustainability science very likely reflects the fact that it threatens the neoliberal growth economy” (IBID).

Appendix 8: Industrialization, Modernization, Globalization

The historical differences among these three notwithstanding, all are intertwining processes that exemplify great change in societies worldwide. In four centuries, not just the Western societies, but the whole globe has been transformed from locally-based information, labor and food centers to a world-wide system of interrelating forces. Industrialization, modernization and globalization - all three together are understood as the greatest recorded shift in human society from heavily labor-based, locally-produced agriculture to technologically organized society.

I understand industrialization as processes that began in the 18th Century and started transforming Western agrarian society to a mechanized one. The concept of modernization is

also relevant. By serving so-called slow-food at the farm, using old ways of preserving meat, baking their bread by using ‘mama-bread’ as they call it (left-over yeast mixture from every baking, reused in the next batch), they are refusing to be ‘modernized’:

The progressive emergence of global systems has worn away at local culinary systems (...) In the west, local or regional cuisines have been modified-occasionally even eliminated in large measure-by freezers, new processing and preservation techniques such as irradiation, packaged foods, improved transport, and the like. (...) Modernization is tremendously important because it has served to surmount the constrains of time and place. (Mintz in Wilk 2006, 6)

Their refusal to ‘modernize’ brings them guests and volunteers from the ‘developed’ world (USA, Canada, Australia, also EU) who appreciate a local cuisine and slow-food; just as the converse is true in the ‘semi-periphery’ or the ‘developing’ world.

[I]n the eyes of Beijing consumers, McDonald’s represents ‘Americana and the promise of modernization’. Thousand of people waited patiently for hours to eat at the city’s first McDonald’s in 1992. Two years later, when a McDonald’s opened in Kuwait, the line of cars waiting at the drive-through window extended for seven miles. (Schlosser 2002 , 230)

[In 1989] the Berlin wall fell. And a few months later that extraordinary event, marking the end of the Cold War, the McDonald’s Corporation announced plans to open its first restaurant in East Germany. (...) During the summer of 1990, construction quickly began on the first McDonald’s in Easter German. It would occupy an abandoned lot in the center of [war-ruined] Plauen (...) the first new building erected in Plauen since the coming of a new Germany. (IBID, 229)

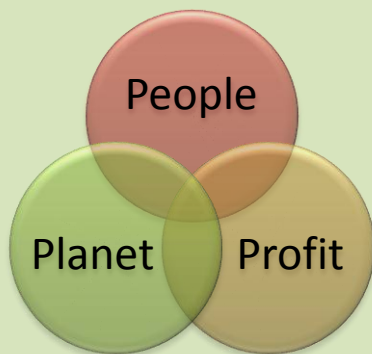
Eastern Germany is an example of Wallerstein’s notion of semi-periphery, which serves as sort of a ‘buffer’ between the ‘core’ or as it is called in other instances, ‘developed’ or ‘1st world countries’ and the ‘periphery’ or ‘underdeveloped’ or ‘3rd world countries’. This interested me enough to make an attempt of creating my own ‘division of the world’, using the available statistics and applying my own categories. As we can see, these different zones of the world are

not fixed, and they change depending on the spatiotemporally specific economic, cultural, social and/or political situation or data applied.

In the text, globalization is seen as change in media and transportation flows (Friedman Ekholm and Friedman 2008), developed from modernization, and modernization as born from industrialization, but neither is limited by concrete barriers - rather they are fluid.

Appendix 9: People, Planet & Profit

Three Ps	Triple E	What is it?
People	Equity	Human Capital
Planet	Environment	Natural Capital
Profit	Economics	Financial Capital



Long-term sustainability is the **intersection**

of people, planet and profit

(Swallow 2009, 11; emphasis Durmic).

Visual presentation as presented by

Swallow 2009, 11.

Appendix 9: Roberts and Parks

“General theories about the behavior of states [involves] issues of trust, worldviews, casual beliefs, and principal beliefs—issue we believe are largely attributable to the position of countries in the global division of labor. Inequality (...) dampens utility-enhancing cooperative efforts by

enforcing structuralist worldviews and casual beliefs, creating incentives for zero-sum and negative-sum behavior, polarizing preferences, generating divergent and unstable expectations about future behavior, eroding trust and civic norms amongst different social groups, destabilizing policy coalitions, and making it difficult to coalesce around a socially shared understanding of what is ‘fair’” (Roberts & Parks 2007, 6).

Roberts and Parks also write about “the definition of sustainable development [in environmental debates], foreign assistance for the environment, and global versus local environmental concerns” (Roberts & Parks 2007, 6).

“Climate negotiations do not take place in a vacuum [but] at a time when concerns about Northern callousness and opportunism in matters of international political economy are rising, levels of generalized trust are declining, and calls for fair processes and fair outcomes are being marginalized. The North-South impasse on climate policy is (...) linked to larger systemic problems that hinder cooperation between rich and poor nations more generally” (Roberts & Parks 2007, 6).

Appendix 10: Enlargement of European Union

“The recent enlargements of the European Union have had the effect of increasing the significance of agriculture and have resulted in new economic and social challenges for the common agricultural policy (CAP). The new Member States have huge agricultural potential in terms of human resources and providing further farmland. However, this potential has yet to be fully realised. There is a considerable socioeconomic divide between the old and the new Member States in the agricultural sector. Through its intervention, the EU aims to prepare candidate countries for implementing the CAP, specifically by adapting their infrastructure and reducing the disparities between Member States upon their accession” (Agriculture: Enlargement).

EU farm policy is the most integrated of all EU policies and so takes a large share of the EU budget. But this is largely money your government would be spending on farming anyway – it is just managed by the EU rather than national governments. Nevertheless, **farm spending has**

dropped sharply in recent years as a share of the EU budget, from a peak of nearly 70% in the 1970s to just 34% in 2007-13. This reflects both an expansion of the EU's other responsibilities and **cost savings from reforms** – reforms that have enabled the EU to welcome 12 new member countries since 2004 without any increase in farm spending. (CAP)

Appendix 11: Climate and Biomes

There are enormous differences between urban centers and rural parts of all the nation-states in the EU. According to 1996 statistics, just over 67 percent of Italians live in an urban setting; the rest live in the countryside⁶³. And with the work-force of about 25 million (2010), only 4 %⁶⁴ are employed in agriculture. It is not easy to say whether Italy is either a core or a periphery country in EU. Rome as the urban center, and other cities like Venice or Milan might as well be a part of a producing-core, but what about the country-side such as Tuscany? The locals told me how Tuscany consists of numerous micro-climates and if one drives 20 kilometers in either direction, there are different conditions for growing vegetables or grains, that the olive trees and vineyards need not a region-specific, but a micro-climate-specific care etc. So not even a region can be seen as a unified entity, and in the environmental and specifically agricultural sense it is even less logical to have divisions by national borders, and not for example by bioregions. The world is not divided according to climate⁶⁵ differences, but national borders; unions such as EU or USA are divided into countries or states, and those are further divided into cantons, regions, municipalities etc. USA for example consists of four different climates (tropical, arid, temperate and continental) and EU has three different climates – arid, temperate and continental, which are divisions according to annual temperature and precipitation. If we divide it further into biomes, which show the division according to prevalent forms of life, specifically vegetation, we can see that only the southern part of EU (Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece) consists of savanna, shrub land and grassland, and all the rest is forest land and even tundra up in Norway and Finland.

⁶³ www.nationsencyclopedia.com/economies/Europe/Italy.html#ixzz1rlYWYtzj

⁶⁴ www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/4033.html

⁶⁵ www.essentialhumanities.net/s_civ_his_climate.php

Most of EU's land falls under the category of temperate climate, but then for example we have Julian Alps in the region of Switzerland, Austria and Slovenia that have polar climate. The political union of countries in EU on one hand certainly contributes to agriculture from a point that nation-borders are not prevailing over the natural ones anymore (e.g., the flat-lands of northeastern Slovenia that stretch out across the political border with Hungary all the way to Balaton lake, have agriculturally more in common with Hungary than they do with northwestern Slovenia and its steep mountain pastures of Julian Alps), but on the other hand the policies on agriculture in EU are generalizing the Union's agricultural land. They are not region-specific and local, micro issues are even harder to implement.

Appendix 12: EAFRD, European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development

The EU does recognize the urban-rural differences though and is trying to support the 'periphery' inside the EU itself by implementing

“Objectives and general rules on assistance. This Regulation lays down the general rules governing Community support for rural development, financed by the EAFRD. It also defines the aims of rural development and the framework governing it.

The Fund contributes to improving:

- the competitiveness of agriculture and forestry;
- the environment and the countryside;
- the quality of life and the management of economic activity in rural areas.

The Fund complements national, regional and local actions, which contribute to Community priorities. The Commission and the Member States are also to ensure that the Fund is consistent and compatible with other Community support measures”. ([EAFRD](#))

Appendix 13: How to Read the Maps of Farm Presented in Thesis

Tea*

X X place for TENTS

□ campers

▨ pavement

~ dirt road(s)

- - - fences(s)

H₂O water spots

○ olive trees

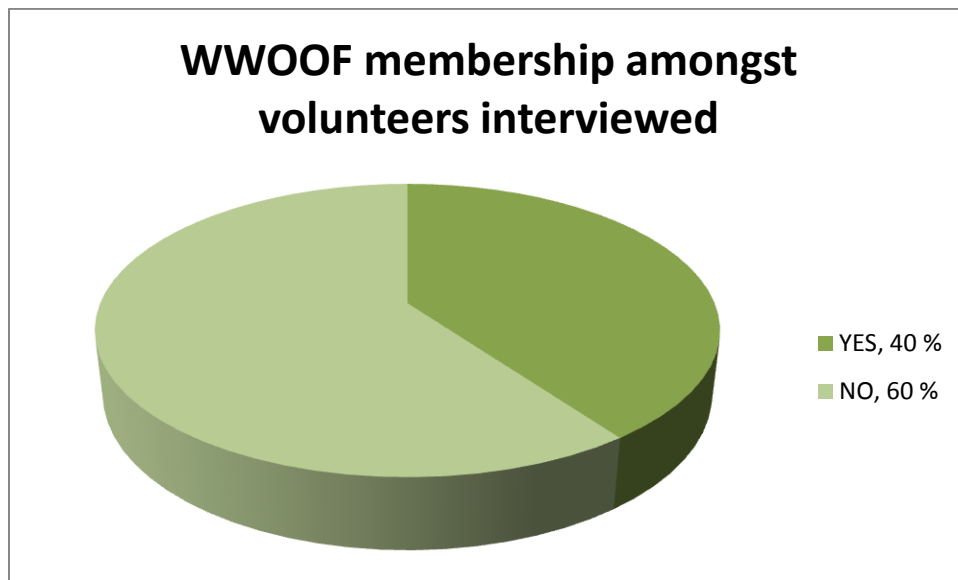
☁ bushes & shrubs & other trees

▨ stairs to upper floor

sheep

Comunale del Borghetto → Pienza, Mont...

Appendix 14: WWOOF Membership



Appendix 15: Common Agriculture Policy EU

Today, EU policy aims to enable producers of all forms of food – whether cereals, meat, dairy, fruit, vegetables or wine – to:

- produce **sufficient quantities of safe, high-quality food** for European consumers
- make a full contribution to **diversified economic development in rural areas**
- meet very high standards of **environmental care and animal welfare**. (CAP)

There are two main elements to the common agricultural policy (CAP): helping European farmers to be competitive and promoting development in rural areas, particularly in the least-favoured regions. With this in mind, the financing available to farmers has changed, increasingly focusing on environmental protection and on the quality, rather than quantity, of production. The EU has also made a greater commitment to rural development through a single financial instrument which promotes agriculture and forestry and all types of rural activity. Control and monitoring systems also play a key role in the management of these measures, whilst ensuring the proper conduct of operations and the development of the agricultural sector within the Union. (Agriculture: General Framework)

Appendix 16: The owner talks to a merchant that came to scout for new products to sell in her store with organic food

You could also do farming instead of dealing; you could do farming and producing. I think to have really satisfaction, you have to do this like this! To buy food is always a compromise! Because originally, before human beings thought to go into cities, to live as chickens (stress, running), all of us were a producer of our food. Perhaps it was normal that you bought a part of your food, but basically you were a producer.

Now here we have 150 years [of] Italian unification; [before], 80 % of money Italians had, they spent for food! Today they spend ... 8%. They were living average age of 33 years! Today it's 80 ... It's obviously the basic hygienic rules because at that time if you had 10 kids, 3 died in the first few months, for example, and then with a simple infection you would die, today you have antibiotics ... there are certain ingredients that makes these .

The agriculture was I think 60 % of the volume, production, and today it's 5 %. It's that we earn more money, or YOU earn more money, we don't ... but you spend the money for useless things!! [Things] that are not necessary to survive! But obviously, our society is running really strong and now again a bit collapsing /we were talking about recession before/ It's normal that you will never do all these money business only with food. So that's why you have to but all this stuff, you have useless things in this sense. You don't need in this sense computer, all this stuff... but it's big money! Look at how much Apple can earn with this stupid computers ...

/Merchant: but your computer helps you as well.../

John: I'm not against [the computers], but look how much they earn!! I've seen now, in New York they have this cube, [earning] 360 million of dollars every year. That means 1 million every day! They never close, 24 hours a day, every day, 365 days a year. It's some kind of ... /shakes his head/ Once the people went to Mecca to pray you know, and today they go to Apple!

It's a bit like the Swiss with this Swatch; when the new Swatch collection [came out], I've seen the queue in Rome in front of the shop, I said what for? ...

/Merchant mentions a niche market for organic farming and food, supposedly attracting people with more outside-the-box thinking./

Yeah, but it will never be so attractive as this Swatch shop or Apple store! /laughs/

Appendix 17: Current Funding Package Expiring in 2013

“Despite significant reform in recent years, more will be needed after the current funding package expires in 2013. Challenges include the **need to double world food production** by 2050 to cater for population growth and wealthier consumers eating more meat – in the face of climate change impacts (loss of biodiversity, deteriorating soil and water quality). When consulted about their views on such reforms in 2010, Europeans said they wanted EU farm policy to help farmers not just to produce food, but also to preserve natural resources and landscapes, improve animal welfare and keep rural communities viable, for example. In response, the EU has published a set of **reform proposals** that reflect these demands, with an emphasis on sustainable farming practices, innovation, research and the spread of knowledge – as well as a fairer support system for European farmers that puts them in a position to meet the challenges of tomorrow” (CAP).

Appendix 18: On cultural identity, history of the farm and financial issues

This is probably not what they imagined 20 years ago⁶⁶ when they bought the farm together with another family and another man from Switzerland. They were living in Zurich, the largest city in Switzerland, where he was a part of a punk band, playing the guitar and singing not so well, as he put it with a smile (note in my diary) and where they ran a bootleg music business together. There is a wind of anarchy and rebellion blowing through all of their stories about how they bought the farm and moved to Italy; wanting to have their own piece on Earth, where they would be their own bosses and they would do things according to their own views, and not outside influences.

⁶⁶ They just celebrated their 20th anniversary in June 2011.

They bought the farm together with another family and a man from Switzerland, and as his niece told me, there are still some issues between all of them with shares, ownership and financials in general; but the farm is legally registered just to the two owners that I have worked and lived with. He does not believe that their power is in money, as he states numerous times, they have none; furthermore, their power is in honesty, which brings them money:

John: To be transparent is our power! I always say when you have the possibility, come immediately here! Instead of very nice website, very nice publicity, PR material ...

I also try to expand; only it's impossible! Until there are subsidies. Also all these farms they take the land, also if they don't do anything because [for] every hectare you get 600 EUR every year!!! /Even if you don't work the land?/ Well, you have to do a minimal thing, but that's ...

They are both very proud to be Swiss, and so are their five sons, and do not miss an opportunity to stress this fact either to the volunteers or the guests. Being Swiss is definitely seen as a positive trait at the farm.

Jonh: But that's the big difference between a farmer let's say like we are or [mentions another neighbor farm], and the farmers they always say 'That's a secret' and you ask something and they give you another answer that is completely not according with your question! That is very typical in Italy and in fact we are Swiss; not only, but let's say the mentality is very Nordic, and the Bergamo, they are worse than Swiss! Swiss are working a lot and are very honest, and Bergamash they are working double then Swiss and they are very honest!

Nina: I understand them a little bit, I know which background they are coming from; they are not Arabic, they are not Italian, they are Swiss, you know. Like Swiss they are really punctual, and direct

Joan: This farm definitely has a very heavy Swiss influence, just the way that people are – because Swiss people are known to have like, a stick up their ass. /laughs/ Just went you think about Switzerland, they're all so clean and tidy, and everything has to be a specific way ...

Maria: My relationship with the family wasn't really better because we spoke Swiss, but it was a lot better because my family knows Jane and John - he would never yell at me.

Italian guests are considered to be the most demanding and as Jane put it, full of themselves because they think they know everything there is to know about Tuscany, also the food and the wine. American culture, politics and the system are often debated or talked about, mixed together with the bad influence of capitalism and unnecessary wars; this gets applied to the tourists as well, though they are appreciated and treated nicely face-to-face because they spend more money at the farm than others.

John: Summer there's more work than in the winter, also tourism, and cheese tasting is still a kind of tourism, also education because people normally never buy cheese, because you can't bring with the airplane and these restrictions... most of the cheese tasting are Australian, Canadians. The wine is the same, the problem is the weight and so on. For example, when they buy the wine, they ask for the smallest [bottle] that's why we do these little tins, because they're lighter - and it's incredibly expensive /to produce or buy/ a tin like that! Half a kilo honey costs perhaps the double of the 125 [grams] of honey, but the Americans buy the small one, because it's a question of weight [for the luggage]. I'm never flying, but you [probably know] how much weight you can bring on the [plain]. I have no experience. [He also mentions health reasons and restrictions] It's a lot of discussion with this raw-milk in the States.

Appendix 19: Fieldwork and Mixed Identity of a Researcher

I was living and working at the farm as a volunteer, which put me in the position of being a researcher (interviewer) at the same time as I was a volunteer working with the owners and meeting their family, friends, workers, talking to guests and the tourist guides that brought the guests to the farm. It truly was an experience of listening, seeing, smelling, tasting, feeling and much more. The diary I kept in Tuscany is full of my impressions on a daily basis, some of which got very confusing, maybe even a little schizophrenic at points, mingling between the above mentioned 'identities' of a volunteer and a researcher. For example, I found myself being

frustrated, sad or angry at the same thing that another volunteer would be complaining about, and yet somehow I would find myself defending the same actions that frustrated him or her, like they were frustrating me before, because I also tried to understand how the situation looked from the perspective of the owners, and sometimes my reactions or questions to the interviewees would reflect that.

Instruments used in fieldwork: Photo camera, digital voice recorder, mobile phone, clicker/tally counter, laptop, notebooks/pads, knives, axes, shovels, gloves, working boots, insect spray.

Appendix 20: Feedback About Other WWOOF Farms

All of my other farm experiences were much better than [this one]. Each was different but they all liked walking into the families homes & becoming members of their families. I loved sharing my life in the life of others. We learned a lot about people, farming & the different areas we lived in. Very inspiring.

Communication was different on each farm, but it was never an issue like it was at [this farm]. Certainly some farms expected more out of us than others, but they were all willing to share their knowledge & lifestyle with us. That was certainly missing from [this farm], they were less interested in sharing their lives with us & more interested in us as labor. (...)

The four farms after [this one] all shared their expectations in the beginning. Some changed daily, while others gave us tasks we have to do daily. For example, one farm mostly had animals ...donkeys, goats, chickens, ducks, peacocks & sheep. We were expected to feed the animals & clean up the donkey poo every morning, except on weekends. Then they would tell us what to do for the rest of the day which were tasks like weeding, planting seeds & watering. These tasks changed depending on what needed to get done.

[This farm] certainly had a lot to work on compared to our other four farms. They clearly had too much labor and no clear idea for each of them. They also did not understand the rules of WWOOF. One of the members of our second farm, a small family running an animal farm for fibers and olive trees to sell oil, also worked on websites. He was in charge of updating the new WWOOF Italia site & was very familiar with the regulations & purpose of WWOOF. When we told him how we were primarily loading & unloading dishes for [their] restaurant he was

flabbergasted. WWOOF is against this kind of labor that makes a direct profit and is a job that you should be paid for. He told us to contact WWOOF & complain, but we never did. I guess I just feel like karma will get them when it gets them. (...)

If [this farm] wants to be a better WWOOFing host they need to familiarize themselves with the rules. Figure out what they need to get done on the farm & find people for those skills. We were told we were helping with their grape harvest for wine, instead we were putting dishes in a dishwasher....

On a personal level in so many ways I wish we met on a different farm, or you were writing on a different farm. I gained so much from the other families I stayed with. While I really value meeting you, [and others]...unfortunately that's the most I gained from [this farm]!

On the other farms, I had the opportunity to share my skills & learn from the hosts skills. I learned to make mead from honey & wild berries, make olive oil from fresh olives, shear goats, prune lemon trees & weave baskets. On one farm I taught the family to weave using the yarn they produced on their farm. It was fun sharing stories & learning from our hosts! I could go on & on...

