

Taking up organic farming in (pre-)Alpine Slovenia: Contrasting motivations of dairy farmers from less-favoured agricultural areas

Alenka Bartulović

University of Ljubljana, alenka.bartulovic@ff.uni-lj.si

Miha Kozorog

University of Ljubljana, miha.kozorog@ff.uni-lj.si

Abstract

This article discusses the motivations that have prompted a selected group of dairy farmers to transition from conventional to organic farming. Two locations in (pre-)Alpine Slovenia, both exhibiting less-favoured conditions for agriculture, were ethnographically studied. This article juxtaposes two different processes of conversion to organic farming: one taking place in the village of Čadrg, where farmers had taken up organic farming collectively before Slovenia entered the EU in 2004, and other in Škofja Loka Mountains, where farmers had individually gone into conversion after accession to the EU. The comparison indicates diverse circumstances of conversion in the same national context and illustrates differences and similarities in personal motivations as well structural conditions for conversion. The authors agree that a complex entanglement of factors influence farmers' adoption of organic farming. Nevertheless, the comparison suggests an essential difference between individual and collective conversion to the organic mode of agricultural production.

KEYWORDS: organic farming, dairy farming, conversion process, collective vs. individual conversion, (pre-)Alpine Slovenia, Common Agricultural Policy

Introduction

In the current socio-economic climate, farming is attracting more public and political attention than ever before. Environmental concerns and concerns for safe food have come to the forefront of public interest. Consequently, new agri-environmental programmes have been introduced since the 1990s, and farmers have become subjects of strict political and professional control. Nowadays, various political strategies influence farmers' decision-making in regard to taking up more sustainable farming methods (e.g., Barreiro-Hurlé

et al. 2008; McDonagh et al. 2009; Nugent 2003). Through this process, the status of farmers as being the most knowledgeable caretakers of soil and animal welfare has been diminished (cf. Hansen et al. 2006). Keeping up with the demands of society, specifically the political community and consumers who wish to dictate not just the quality of the food (cf. Holt 2006) but also the “proper” ways of its production (Hansen et al. 2006: 148), is the primary challenge of the contemporary, extremely heterogeneous agricultural community. Farming practices are, therefore, being rapidly transformed not just from the inside, but also by outside pressure.

In parallel with increased scrutiny of the intensive agro-industrial systems favoured by the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the European Union (EU), organic farming has become a topic of considerable debate in the context of the EU’s agricultural policies. It is considered to be an important alternative to environmentally unfriendly, capital-intensive specialised intensive farming. By definition, organic farming is a sustainable way of farming, which aims to establish a balance in the socio-natural systems of “soil-plants-animals-humans”. Although there are a number of documents and rules for adjusting production to meet the needs of certification processes that guarantee individual farming systems to be organic, the farmers themselves have quite specific perceptions and attitudes towards it. These influence their decision-making and direct their developmental strategies.

In 2004 Slovenia joined the EU, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry (MAFF) declared a strong commitment to the promotion of organic farming, realising that Slovenian agriculture is likely to face considerable difficulties when competing in demanding economic environments. They even stated that ‘to a large extent, the future of farms lies in organic farming, natural rearing, integrated production and other forms of environmentally friendly production’ (Frelih Larsen 2005: 27). However, the first agri-environment measures had already been introduced in 1999–2000, which included organic farming and integrated production, and the EU’s standards were introduced into Slovenian legislation in 2001. Furthermore, there was financial support for preservation of mountain pastures by the early 1990s onwards (Bavec 2001; Frelih Larsen 2005; Vilfan 2014).

This article traces the heterogeneous motives of farmers from two Slovenian (pre-)Alpine areas who have decided to take up organic farming in different periods (either before or after the EU accession) by negotiating between different production options. Our aim is to offer additional ethnographic case studies from Slovenia’s mountainous areas, which may reflect both obstacles and opportunities for the development of (as the Slovenian agri-environmental programme testifies) an important model of farming for the country. The national framework, with its common agricultural policy, often does not guarantee homogeneity on national level, which is why it is important to trace the complex set of socio-economic, cultural, institutional, familial, and other influences on farmers’ decisions in particular micro-locations. Our study thus moves away from the imagined coherence of the implications of the agricultural programmes on the national territory. The research investigates the variety of perceptions and personal motivations among farmers, who are the most prominent actors in the process of introducing organic farming

to a particular location. The question of what motivates farmers to convert has become one of the core questions in recent academic literature and policy making. Various factors have been analysed, e.g. the size of a farm, the farmer's education, the farmer's relation to the environment, the quality of information about organic farming, the farmer's income, the family size, membership in agricultural associations, the farmer's perception of the future, the role of opinion makers, etc. (Udovč & Perpar 2007). Our aim is to indicate yet another circumstance of conversion by distinguishing between conversion as a collective act, when farmers conjoin their endeavours to convert to organic modes of agricultural production, and conversion as an individual step, when a farming household acts more independently. Therefore, the comparative analysis reveals the similarities and differences among individual and collective conversions in Slovenian pre-(Alpine) locations.

The article begins with a short overview of organic farming in Slovenia, which is followed by a brief theoretical presentation of most prominent motivations for converting to organic farming. Then two case studies are presented, followed by the concluding comparative analysis.

Routes to organic farming

After World War II and the post-war food shortage (a time marked by the fear of hunger) there was considerable emphasis on specialisation, industrialisation and intensification in agriculture, which turned out to be at odds with general expectation of agriculture at the end of 1980s and especially during early 1990s, when a search for a new agricultural model began (van der Ploeg et al. 2000). A new "post-productivist" era followed (Guthman 2004), which implied 'the reconstruction of agriculture and countryside and their realignment with European society and culture' (van der Ploeg et al. 2000: 376). The EU introduced regulations for certifying organic products in 1992, which was followed by the introduction of financial incentives destined to encourage farmers to replace conventional and traditional farming practices with organic ones (Reed & Holt 2006). The political discourse on farming has been fuelled by concerns about food surpluses, food safety and environmental degradation (Bavec 2001; Podmenik & Kerma 2010). However, in the EU's political debates, there is a degree of discord among the perspectives of the advocates of organic farming and organic farmers, and the distinction between ideology and practice can be profound. Thus, on the one hand, organic farming is interwoven with an ideology that depicts the world as a system, the survival of which depends on respectful treatment (Holt & Reed 2006), but on the other, organic farming itself is composed of a multiplicity of methods and practices, motivations and reflections, which may be only conditionally united under a common ideological platform of nature protection (Bjørkhaug 1996). Additionally, it may also be entirely connected with economic stimulations and opportunities for increasing income. Hence, it is possible to talk of a split in the organic farming sector between those producers who are primarily market-oriented and those who incorporate evident ideological orientations into their work (Holt & Reed 2006). These different discourses, which cannot be completely separated, will also be evident from our case studies.

Organic farming is currently frequently characterised as being an inevitable and urgent approach to global practices of food production. Nevertheless, according to statistics from 2010, only 0.81 % of the world's farming land is managed under ecological principles (Willer & Kilcher 2010; cf. Paull 2010). Furthermore, in national policies, countries have not abundantly supplanted intensive farming with organic methods. However, there are significant differences between specific national contexts (Trydeman Knudsen et al. 2006), from among which Slovenia represents an interesting case.

Ecological farming in Slovenia has a short history, dating back to the late 1980s and early 1990s. The Mikrokozmos Association, from the flat easternmost region of Slovenia, Prekmurje, which uses the biodynamic method of soil cultivation, is thought to have been the first in this field. However, it was not until the second half of the 1990s that decisive moves in this direction were carried out on a national level. In the mid-1990s, the first courses on organic farming were organised for agricultural advisors at the Slovenian Agricultural Advisory Service of the Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry. The first standards of organic farming were given by MAFF in its *Recommendations for Ecological Farming in Slovenia* in 1997. In 1998, the Austrian organisation Austria Bio Garantie was invited to perform the first supervision of Slovenian organic products, and the first controls of organic farms were also accomplished. A year later, various associations of organic farmers were integrated into the Union of Associations of Ecological Farmers of Slovenia, and the first eco-market was organised in Ljubljana.

After the start of the year 2000, a few significant shifts in the national policy and economy of organic farming can be traced. First, the legislation set various regulations for organic food production and anticipated the financial stimulation of organic farming in the form of direct subsidies for each hectare of cultivated land. Second, the BIODAR brand for ecological products of Slovenia was registered by the Union of Associations of Ecological Farmers of Slovenia. Third, farmers started to sell their products to large food suppliers, later supplemented by specialised supply chains and shops for organic food (Podmenik & Kerma 2010).

The number of organic farmers in Slovenia has been steadily growing. In the 1998 control test, only 41 farms were taking part, while in 2005 around 1,700 were, and in 2011, there were more than 2,300. Additionally, on average these farms are bigger than the conventional ones (Podmenik & Kerma 2010). However, they are predominantly livestock farms, although consumers are more inclined towards buying ecologically produced vegetables and fruits. This situation is related to disadvantageous farming conditions in the mountainous parts of Slovenia, where stockbreeding is part of traditional farming and where organic farming was introduced as an improvement for the environment as well as being a better strategy for the marketing and selling of products. Specifically, Slovenian agricultural policy is favourable towards organic farming precisely because of its largely mountainous terrain with less-favourable farming conditions. Therefore, the trend has not been predominantly directed by consumers' demands but mostly by the national policies regarding farming conditions and the EU's environmental goals. The national agricultural policy emphasises issues such as the (de)population of the countryside, the preservation of cultural landscapes, and the ecological acceptability of human activities, and accentuates

ecological and social factors in addition to market-oriented ones (Knežević Hočever & Černič Istenič 2010). Although such a policy was present at the foundation of the Republic of Slovenia in 1991, it was reinvigorated in 2005 through the Action Plan for the Development of Ecological Farming in Slovenia to 2015. However, the plan most likely will not be achieved (Kolmanič 2012), since it anticipates the share of organic farming in Slovenia to be 15% in 2015, which is far from the present state. According to the statistics from 2013 only 4.1% of Slovenian farms are organic (ASEK 2014). Moreover, the speed of their growth in number has been rather slow (Kolmanič 2012). The reason for this could also be the divided opinion regarding organic farming among the farmers, since stockbreeders in the mountainous areas are much more inclined toward it than vegetable and fruit producers in the lowlands. Therefore, it is not surprising that organic farming is the most developed in mountainous (Podmenik and Kerma 2010; cf. Frelih Larsen 2005) and protected areas (Blatnik & Dovečar 2010; Štraus, Bavec & Bavec 2011).

Motivations and decision-making process of conversion to organic farming

Studies in general confirm that farmers from less-favoured agricultural areas benefit from organic farming. Organic farming adds value to the often marginalised small-scale agricultural sector (Fox 2010), and farmers thus gain an improved status on the market, which may lead to economic stability and sustainability of the farm (Milestad & Hadatsch 2003; Frelih Larsen 2005). However, this does not mean that all farmers from less-favoured areas would take up organic farming without hesitation; a number of structural as well as personal reasons might discourage farmers from converting to the organic mode of production (Frelih Larsen 2005; Wilson & Hart 2001; Padel 2001). A broad interdisciplinary field of research, which has been on the rise from the 1990s onwards, is therefore engaged with the question of why and how farmers adopt innovations and what their reasons are for changing from conventional to organic farming (see critical reviews of literature on this issue in Lamine & Bellon 2008; McCarthy et al. 2007).

Farmers' motivations are frequently linked with the concept of cultural value (cf. Puđak & Bokan 2011), with regards to both stability and change on farms. Placing value in inherited land, family relations, the farming way of life, the local landscape and environment, the village and its community, etc. are often equally important as the wish for new knowledge and technologies, the attractiveness of fashionable farming trends, market demands, national and international agricultural policies, etc. Besides cultural values, socio-economic motivations and farmers' own goals, and potential risks have also been considered (Padel 2001). Access to information on organic farming and the role of opinion makers, such as agricultural experts, family members and consumers, were exposed as being conditionally relevant factors (Udovč & Perpar 2007). In addition, it has been noted that farmers have quite different perceptions of nature and that their opinions on environmental issues can be quite polarised, causing the motives linked to the preservation of landscape and environment to be at varying levels of involvement in the conversion process (Bjørkhaug 2006). There are also a number of personal reasons that

direct farmers' decision-making processes, which may include personal health reasons, environmental concerns and political goals (McCarthy et al. 2007). Moreover, especially for younger farmers, personal challenges and their desires for innovation and farm improvements should be taken into consideration. All these variables, among others, form an amalgam from which farmers' decisions are derived, which is why each and every case should be considered in its own right.

However, as Padel notes, financial reasons have dominated in recent studies, which could be ascribed to the presence of a more demanding market and the more difficult financial situation of farming (2001). Some authors thus emphasise that financial gain is crucial for the conversion from traditional to organic farming, some implicating that anyone who converts to organic farming does it to sell their products for higher prices on the rapidly growing market. Caution should be exercised about drawing such general conclusions, since pragmatic motivations are much more complex than the maximisation of profits. For example, it has been noted that smallholders often convert to organic farming because their current economic situation does not allow them to rely on the external capital or inputs needed to sustain their previous farming practices (Trydeman Knudsen et al. 2006). Many of them also embrace organic farming because of negative experiences with conventional farming practices, such as increase in the prices of pesticides and prices of animal medication, soil degradation, etc. (Niemeyer & Lombard 2006 in 180; Padel 2001). Moreover, improving the quality of life of one's own family is part of a farmer's goal, so their pragmatism can also include the idea about producing quality food for their family (along with others). In addition, financial reasons reflect the wish for security and a guarantee for survival of the family farm. Nevertheless, recent studies have shown an increase in the desire to sell products for premium prices while reducing overhead costs in the organic mode of production (Padel 2001). Motives for conversion have frequently been studied, but they, as Padel (2001) observes, also change over time. Therefore, by examining the multiplicity of motives, we aim to analyse the complexity of decision-making process in both our cases.

Studies usually focus on the 'turning point', i.e. on circumstances through which the decision for organic farming is implemented (Halberg and others 2006; Holt and Reed 2006). However, ethnographic investigations of this process are rare. Although we are aware that some authors (see Lamine & Bellon 2008) have warned that (in addition to the moments of change) researchers should also study the way people live with alterations in the mode of agricultural production and how these contribute to the alteration of familial, gender, generational and communal relations, etc. (see Lazaridis 2009; Fox 2010; Freljh Larsen 2006, 2009; Knežević Hočevar 2013; Knežević Hočevar & Černič Istenič 2010), this article is also focused particularly on the "turning point" of the conversion-process. Nevertheless, we take into consideration the dynamics of the process and the fact that the transition to the organic mode of production lasts much longer than the official legal period (see Lamine & Bellon 2008). The reason for focusing on turning points is that we believe that our case studies, which deal with different historical moments (i.e. before and after the Slovenia's accession to the EU), illustrate diverse circumstances of turning points in the same national context.

Case studies

Two locations in north-west Slovenia were selected for the comparison: four farms in the village of Čadrg (alt. 700 m) and three farms from the Škofja Loka Mountains area (Hotavlje, Gorenja vas and Žirovski vrh, alt. 400–800 m). Čadrg is located in the Alps and is part of Triglav National Park, while the Škofja Loka Mountains are part of the foothills of the Alps. The farms in the first location are all part of one village, while the farms are scattered across the municipality of Gorenja vas-Poljane in the second case.

In both locations, the ethnographic research was conducted during the winter months of 2012 and 2013, with some additional fieldwork in the village of Čadrg in the summer of 2013.¹ We combined participant observation with semi-structured interviews that were conducted with farm owners and their family members. Despite being focused on the examples of farms that have taken up organic farming or are in the process of organic conversion, an example of a farm that has decided to continue with conventional farming was also investigated. This article moves away from the typical comparative studies that juxtapose favoured and less-favoured agricultural areas. Instead, we aim to highlight similarities and differences between organic farmers in two less-favoured agricultural areas, both with distinctive cultural landscapes, but marginal from the main most productive and developed agricultural centres. The selected farms are disadvantaged because of short growing seasons, poor soil quality and often steep slopes, which make agricultural activity more demanding. Nevertheless, these competitive disadvantages can sometimes be transformed into advantages (Schermer 2006; Grasseni 2011).

A collective step into organic farming in the village of Čadrg

Čadrg² is a tiny alpine village with less than 40 inhabitants. It is difficult to access, since the only narrow road that connects the village with the plains of the Soča Valley crosses steep precipitous slopes where two vehicles can barely pass each other. However, the surroundings of the village are open, with meadows and pastures extending right to the edge of the abyss above the Tolminka gorge, and on the other side, to the steep pitch of the inclined plateau. The terrain around the village is entirely cultivated. There are four dairy farms in the village (all organic) and their main product is cow's cheese, which farmers collectively make in the village cheese dairy. In the dairy, work is based on mutual benefit, because each day one of the four associates makes cheese for all the four, and they rotate according to how much milk one has. This collaboration encourages mutual decision-making, which played an important role also in the decision to collectively take up organic farming, as the presence of even one conventional farm would preclude communal use of the village dairy. Mutual persuasion that the "ecological step" was an appropriate step was thus an important factor when organic farming was debated here in the late 1990s.

¹ The research in Čadrg was conducted as part of the research project Triglav National Park: Heritages, Actors – Strategies, Questions, and Solutions; the research in Škofja Loka Mountains was conducted as part of the research project Developmental strategies of contemporary family farms. Both research projects were financed by the Slovenian Research Agency.

² This part of ethnography was provided by Miha Kozorog.

However, the rotational cheese-making system was at that time in its infancy, and also, before the 1990s, the dairy was not run by the villagers. In the Yugoslav era it was under the management of the Planika dairy, which employed a cheese maker. In the early 1990s, it was denationalised and returned to the villagers. One of the farmers in the neighbouring village then learned how to make cheese. Between 1994 and 1998, he was making cheese for all of (at that time only three) village dairy farmers. Afterwards, other farmers joined him as cheese makers in the dairy and the rotation system for making cheese was gradually established.

In the 1990s, cooperation and mutuality arose between villagers and farmers in particular. For example, it was strengthened as a consequence of a devastating earthquake in April 1998. ‘The earthquake helped us the most, because houses were renovated, and the road was repaired. The village is much easier to access now. I think this was the switch to success,’ explains a young farmer. However, this farmer asserts that collaboration and collective decision-making were continuously present in this village: ‘We are small, and we are dependent on one another.’ Moreover, in the late 1990s, villagers also as a body decided to welcome a Don Pierino drug addiction centre into the village,³ regarding which a farmer in his sixties (the initiator of the idea) comments:

We have commons; a common dairy, everything in common, before even a common road, everything is still common in Čadrg, and nowhere else does the community function any more, which is unbelievable. Only such a strong community [as the one of Čadrg villagers] could’ve produced another community [the drug addiction centre].

Thus, with respect to the decision to choose organic farming made by the then three farms, ideas of togetherness were certainly important. However, the knowledge about organic farming came from elsewhere. The village is situated in the Triglav National Park (TNP), a protected area covering 880 square kilometres of the south-eastern section of the Alps. It seems that Čadrg is of specific interest to the management of the TNP, which operates under the Slovenian Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment. Specifically, among other domains, the park aims to “conserve cultural landscapes” and “ensure sustainable development”. Since the TNP is a predominantly uninhabited area, the few farmers within are perceived as being the holders of both the landscape and traditions. In fact, when listening to farmers in Čadrg regarding how proud they are of cultivating every area of the village surroundings, it seems that the interest of preserving cultivated landscape is contributing to a mutual relationship between the institution and the farmers. Even the most critical observer of the TNP among the village farmers remarks: ‘My work is here to maintain the cultural landscape, to farm, so that this pearl, as Čadrg is, remains in the Triglav park.’

The TNP management played a decisive role in the uptake of organic farming in this village. Among today’s four cow-breeding and cheese-producing farms, three decided to implement it in 1998, with the smallest one joining in 2001. A woman with good relationships with the TNP management, who perceives herself as a mediator

³ In the torrent of “not-in-my-backyard” discourses appearing all over Slovenia in relation to the placement of these addiction centres, the villagers of Čadrg were positively portrayed as being tolerant by the mass media.

in pivotal decisions regarding organic farming (and is so perceived by some of her associates) recalls that farmers in the broader area did not have a slightest idea about what “ecology” in relation to farming signifies. As pioneers in this field, the farmers from Čadrg were perceived by other local farmers as behaving strangely. She also emphasises that without the intervention of the TNP, they would most likely not have changed their farming practices at that early stage. Specifically, in 1998, the park organised workshops for farmers at their own farms, in which experts from Austria examined what exactly at each farm had to be changed or built in order to reach the prescriptive demands of organic farming. The visit of experts and examination *in situ* was, according to her an entirely different experience from what she had imagined to be a lecture on organic farming outside the home environment. She playfully explained that the most striking information the farmers received on that visit was actually concerning their customary way of keeping cows inside during the winter months: ‘Because you were used to keeping a cow in a stall, it was difficult to understand why it should go out, and how it would go out.’ Nevertheless, the personal role of this woman should not be underestimated, since she had a particular reason for thinking about the future and thus about organic farming as perspective. She moved with her family from a nearby town back to her father’s farm after his death in 1996. She was looking for options to provide subsistence for her five-member family at the farm and has found organic farming combined with tourism to be feasible.

Farmers remember that when introduced to organic farming they discovered that they needed to change only a few things in order to meet the requirements. They maintain that their farming traditions were very close to organic farming, or in other words that they were already ecological before being introduced to the fashionable concept. A young farmer in the process of gradually taking over his parent’s farm explains that the Čadrg farmer

has kept to her/his own traditions and principles throughout the centuries. For us, the transition from conventional to ecological farming was not a difficult step, because we were farming sustainably already; for us, it was not a huge change.

A young farmer, who took over his parents’ farm in 2008, and his wife explained that at their farm they are in many aspects even more ecological than is prescribed by legislation – he adds: ‘Look, fifty years ago there was not even a word for “ecological”, because there were no toxins and no fertilisers. And everything was logical. OK, elsewhere [fertilisers] came before. But here, everything was bio.’ The previously mentioned woman’s son also explains that ecological farming ‘is certainly a good thing, although it is true that things were done in the same manner also beforehand, when we were not yet an “ecological village” and an ecological farm.’ Nevertheless, the decision to introduce changes that would meet the demands of organic farming was made by these young persons’ parents.⁴ Therefore, the narrative regarding traditional farming as organic can

⁴ Nevertheless, one of them recalls that although he was only sixteen in 1998, he was supporting the conversion into organic farming when this topic was discussed in the family. Young farmers are supposed to be more inclined towards organic farming than older ones (Niemeyer & Lombard 2006). In the case of Čadrg, however, it seems that quite diverse generations were involved when the possibility of taking up organic farming was discussed, e.g. this young man’s father, as the oldest among the farmers approving conversion was then sixty years old.

also be a result of the conversion-process and might as an imagined tradition pass on to the future generations of Čadrg villagers. This narrative is not rare among organic farmers (cf. Frelih Larsen 2005). Many farmers even state that the only real difference they make is the organic certificate they receive (see Milestad & Hadatsch 2003), and that they decided for organic farming because their traditional practices were sustainable, inviting no complications during the conversion-process. However, the truth is that advocates of organic farming have introduced many innovations into farming (Reed & Holt 2006; Holt & Reed 2006; Puđak & Bokan 2011); therefore, equating traditional and organic farming is very likely an ideological manoeuvre of farmers themselves, making their decision easier.⁵

One thing is sure when farmers in Čadrg are discussed: they did not take up organic farming for financial reasons only. Although they might have had a notion that it may provide better selling conditions in the future (which proved to be true), when they went into the conversion process this was not self-evident. As already mentioned, they were perceived to be strange by local farmers. The TNP official also recalls his experience of the first Eco Festival, which the farmers from Čadrg co-organised in the nearby town in 2002: ‘People came and were looking: “What’s happening with these guys, are they crazy or what’s wrong with them?”’ Therefore, in the beginning, the local consumer, who was and still is the pillar of their economy, did not financially reward their aspiration. Not was it rewarded by the state, since subsidies for organic farming were non-existent at the time. In contrast, the TNP management decided to support their decision financially by allowing a budget for a minor investment regarding organic farming at each farm. However, this gesture was made only *post festum*, after farmers already decided to take up organic farming, so it was not crucial to their decision process. Apart from these broad conclusions that financial reasons were not essential in their decision, farmers’ pragmatism should not be neglected. The aforementioned woman who was a devoted advocate of organic farming recalls that they were, to some extent, aware that conversion might make them more competitive in contemporary markets:

We’ve started to discuss that possibility for the future – that this is a vision for the future, right? That it should be ... That we are perhaps so small, so far from everything but it’s possible, if we had something of quality. Because we have quality nonetheless, but with a paper [a document] – because today there’s nothing without a paper, right? – that this can be of advantage of our products and perhaps to our village.

When listening to farmers in Čadrg, one becomes convinced that a cultivated landscape and harmonious environment is of the highest value to them. Thus, it may be concluded that such values prompted them to take up organic farming. However, one should also think of the arguments provided by the TNP and also the farmers’ sharing of,

⁵ For this particular case, we do not know what role was played by the TNP or the local agricultural advisors in convincing the Čadrg farmers that their traditional farming is similar to organic farming. It is known that developmental institutions are prone to idealise traditional farming as sustainable in order to convince farmers to accept organic farming (Cleveland 1998).

mutual discussing and collective supporting of pragmatic choices that might bring benefits in the future. Čadrg has certainly improved its standing after the introduction of organic farming.⁶ Because of their joint conversion, the mass media gave them the title of “eco-village”. Moreover, the TNP also played a significant role in the construction of its image. The collaboration between the Čadrg farmers and the TNP management also became very strong at that time because in 1999 the latter competed with the case of Čadrg at the Ford Call for Preservation of Cultural Landscape, winning a prize (afterwards invested in renovation of the village cheese dairy). It appears that the village started to function as the TNP’s case of “good practice”⁷ (cf. Prašnikar 2011) and occasionally its “protocol village”; for example, the Swedish royal couple visited the village as the TNP’s guests in 2004, and this has not been the only visit of high rank. For these reasons, for villagers and farmers in particular, concepts regarding the ‘ecological way of life’ now function as their core values, which will help them maintain their environmentally friendly approach into the future. As one of the young farmers stresses, there are many things yet to be achieved by the community in order to meet their ecological ideals, and to actually deserve the eco-village title created by the media.

The word *mutuality* was used in this part of our article regularly, and it may be a good way to describe the force that led towards the mutual benefit of both the farmers and the TNP. The aforementioned critical observer of the TNP explains that in 1981 the park was created for the benefit of the people who live there, but for a long time the reality was quite different, since according to him, people were usually neglected. However, he adds, things have changed, and the TNP management has begun to give consideration to the inhabitants. A young farmer comments that the older man’s observation is valid, but adds that the farmers from Čadrg in particular had recently experienced good relations with the TNP. What we can conclude from these last observations is that in a certain period, the TNP management apparently searched for cooperative relationships with the inhabitants and via the concept of organic farming and serendipitously found responsive farmers in Čadrg, who (with their collaborative spirit) were an excellent example of sustainability and preservation of traditions. Organic farming was thus a platform on which the interests of the protected area and of some farming inhabitants have amalgamated and opened a bright future for both.

Individualised semi-subsistence organic farming in Škofja Loka Mountains: The power of the EU’s subsidies⁸

On a sunny day in November 2012, I was welcomed to a pluri-active farm household in the village of Hotavlje. Although the members of this farming family did not classify their farm as being a mountain farm and often expressed their admiration towards “real” mountain farmers, the steep slopes of their farmland and the altitude of 445 metres

⁶ The roles of the earthquake, the drug addiction centre and other minor initiation factors should not be forgotten, but there is no room for further discussion of them.

⁷ This should be reflected in a broader perspective, since for the reasons of underdeveloped infrastructural and investment policy in Slovenia (Podmenik & Kerma 2010) organic farming in the TNP is stagnating (Blatnik & Dovečar 2010).

⁸ This part of ethnography is by A. Bartulović.

testifies that it is part of a less-favoured agricultural area. In the courtyard, where tourists who visit the farm during the summer months can relax in the pool (or in the deep shade of nearby woods), I was greeted by the couple in their sixties who had handed their farm over to their youngest son a few years ago.⁹ The family farm was included in the measures of Early Retirement of Farmers (2004) and Setting Up of Young Farmers (2008), which were introduced by MAFF with the aim of promoting and securing earlier transfer of farms to younger generations. These measures are based on the assumption that younger farmers will increase the development capacity of their farms and the productivity of Slovenian agriculture in general.

At the time of my arrival, the young owner was busy. As his mother explained, he was occupied with adaptation of the farm's infrastructure, mainly old stalls, to meet the needs for a new mode of production: organic livestock farming,¹⁰ i.e. natural animal rearing of a native breed of cows called *Cika*.¹¹ They kindly invited me into their house, but it was only the next evening that the younger couple managed to find time for an interview. Over beer in their apartment on the second floor of the shared household, the farmer (in his thirties) explained his motivation for conversion to natural rearing:

Before, we had bulls ... In 2012, we changed our mind, and now we will raise suckler cows ... This is because of the money. We get higher subsidies. There is no other reason ... Few euros more ... Now in this conversion time, we will get even more. This is the only reason. That's it.

He emphasised that it was not just him, but all the farmers from the nearby area (especially those who had meadows in the hills), who were primarily motivated by economic reasons and direct payments. He even asserted that 'those who claim differently are lying.'

Similar attitudes, although not as radical, were expressed by his older colleague, a farmer in his mid-forties, who lives with his family on an isolated farm in the mountainous area of Žirovski vrh. He agreed that the conversion to organic farming was an excellent economic opportunity. Moreover, he also added that this seems to be the only solution for the survival of mountain farms in the 21st century:

Here we have ideal conditions for grazing ... down in the valley, where they have a lot of plots, they cannot afford grazing ... For us, this is ideal, but other things are far from perfect. We cannot compete with farmers from the valley. This is one of the reasons why we have decided to take up organic farming.

⁹ Research on Slovenian farms in the region of Pomurje indicates that younger farmers are in fact more innovative and more successful in the agriculture business (see Knežević Hočevar 2012).

¹⁰ A three-year conversion period is prescribed by the EU regulations on organic farming.

¹¹ This is a lightweight breed that is suitable for pasturing on steep slopes, because it is more resilient. It was dominant in the area before 1960s, when it was almost completely replaced by the Simmental breed (Frelüh Larsen 2005: 193). Among organic farmers, the Cika breed is regaining its popularity.

His partner, who comes from a small town in the valley and currently enormously contributes to the family budget by baking and selling her products at a local market, added:

If you compare farming here in the mountain to down in the valley, it's like comparing night and day, but they put us in the same basket. There is no difference to them [politicians and agricultural developers]. If we remain stubborn and persistent, farming will survive, but many young people won't stay, because there are no prospects...

At the time of my arrival, they were also in the process of conversion. As many mountain farmers have done before (see Milestad & Hadatsch 2003), Slovenian farmers started to view organic farming as a promising alternative to conventional farming. The EU's CAP and its policy of direct payments thus came as a solution for many farmers who found themselves in difficult positions in the face of dramatic structural agricultural changes. Farmers did not hide their primary motivation – quite the contrary. However, they have also to some extent embraced the discourse of agricultural developers and advisers,¹² who (in accordance with *Action Plan for Development of Organic Agriculture in Slovenia until 2015*) are attempting to promote organic options as being the best choice for low-input farms (Freljh Larsen 2009; Knežević-Hočevar 2012).

Even though control systems in the beginning were seen as being a barrier that hindered the growth of organic farming in general as well as in the Škofje Loka Mountains (see Freljh Larsen 2005), it seems that farmers have become used to surveillance and additional inspections, which were intensified after the EU accession. At the beginning of the 2000s, for example, Ana Freljh Larsen noted that the state control had an impact on 'farmers' decision regarding engagement with agri-environment measures, and especially with organic certification' in Škofja Loka Mountains (2009: 340). Today, most of the interviewed farmers claim that this is the only way they can afford to continue with farming. They presented it as being their only option.

At first impression, it appears that farmers' declarative statements on motivations for the conversion process gives additional support to the theory of neoclassical economists, who rejected the popular belief of agricultural economists and developers (who often portrayed farmers as economically irrational) and stated just the opposite: that farmers are profit-oriented, hence they are 'primarily motivated by their desire to maximise short-term personal utility' (Cleveland 1998: 331). However, this position is over-simplified. Robert Netting, working in the Swiss Alps (1981, 1993), provided an argument that might be (although the times as well as agricultural policies have changed immensely) most applicable to the case of the Slovenian pre-Alpine region. He emphasised the importance of farmers' concerns for future generations, which were always combined with striving for maximisation of profit, made possible by farmers' flexibility and adaptation skills (Cleveland 1998).

¹² This does not mean that agricultural programmes were not severely criticised by the farmers. Suspicious attitudes towards political involvement in agricultural development prevailed in all the discussions among farmers in informal settings.

The impact of the EU's neoliberal policy on the hierarchy of personhood (see Fox 2010) has had an enormous impact on farmers in Škofja Loka Mountains: visual manifestations of success (mechanisation, new farm buildings, newly acquired farmland, etc.) were often central topics of discussion and the proof of farmer's good management skills and sometimes even the result of (praised) cunning. Farmers in general were not reluctant to state the importance of financial gain. Sometimes, they even overemphasised it in order to communicate the difficult position of farmers trying to maintain a living in demanding mountainous areas.

However, on further inspection, it became obvious that, besides financial gains, there were other motivations for undergoing conversion to organic farming. Even though they were not predominant, a complex entanglement of motivations became evident, which were highly personal and varied among farmers. This was most evident on the farm in Žirovski vrh where, upon my arrival, young children took me for a walking tour, first introducing me to the animals in their stalls, then the farmland (woods, meadows, garden, orchard, etc.) and the surrounding environment. This tour was suggested by their father who (it was evident) took a great pride in his local environment and his management skills of farming in the marginalised mountainous area. Although he regarded it as being an obstacle to profitable agriculture, it was obvious that it was valued as being both heritage and landscape with a specific climate that dictates farming practices. He praised farming as a way of life and had a profound personal attachment to the land, although he had only moved to the farm when his father married the former owner of the property. Environmental motivations, combined with a strong will to preserve the inherited family farm, were, therefore, present, but they were much more subtle and harder to detect than the economic. He was never particularly fond of pesticides and agrochemicals:

Fertilisers became so expensive that we could not buy them anymore. And then I said: "If I don't use them, then it is best to take up organic." Also, it became evident that when we stopped forcing the cows in stalls to eat feed and all the other things, we realised that there were fewer problems with their health.

Therefore, the costs of veterinarians (which were quite high during the previous years) were reduced as well. As in many other cases, it seems that in Škofja Loka Mountains one of the motivations for conversion was the inability to cope with the expenses of conventional farming, in spite of the awareness that organic farming was much more dependent on the environment than conventional or traditional agriculture. Therefore, it is evident that economic motivations were strongly connected to the ideas of preserving the health of the animals as well as preventing soil erosion. Keeping the pastures grazed was part of the local, deeply internalised, aesthetic preference.

Although he expressed the highest environmental consciousness in the research area, his partner was very suspicious towards food with organic certification, and they – as many other farmers, even those who produced organic food (Kaltoft & Risgaard 2006) – had maintained their non-organic consumption habits. It seems that suspicion toward the certification process and the quality of certified goods was much more present

amongst the women on the farms, despite the fact that they have decided to (at least in some part) embrace organic farming. This is interesting, since several studies have shown that women were generally more inclined towards organic farming (Parrott et al. 2006).

The same suspicious attitude toward certification processes and organic food was present in the narratives of the female co-owner of the third, very successful conventional livestock and dairy farm in the Poljanska Valley. In the late 1980s, this very energetic and innovative freshly educated cheese-maker and her husband decided to specialise in producing dairy products, which are today known and valued not only amongst Slovenian customers but also amongst the cheese-producing community. She does not believe in the superiority of organic products. As she claims, certification is a reflection of interests of the main food-producing companies that direct the market. Although they also produce a certain amount of cheese from organic milk bought from their partners in the nearby hills,¹³ they are reluctant to place more value on the product. Nevertheless, they know that certified products improve the income and form a capital base for development of other farming activities (Parrott et al. 2006). That means that certified organic products can support a viable farm business and also other activities that members of the farm find important and relevant for their family wellbeing and personal, professional satisfaction. For them, this is a good way to earn additional money in a demanding market; however, they choose to use locally produced food from conventional modes of farming and agro-ecological methods. Hence, as did her fellow farmers, she assessed organic products drawing on a local knowledge of their farming system. She also stressed that she does not believe in the quality of organic vegetables that are sold on markets nor in stores, that is why she (alongside all activities connected to the cheese-making process and its selling and marketing) maintains her own garden where she grows vegetables for their own use:

This is healthier food than anything with the certificate.... I wouldn't sell it for a million, it is too valuable, and far above the so-called organic. But that is something consumers buy, ... so we have to adapt to the needs of the market, if we want to survive.

“Goodness of fit” between existing farming in the study area and the official requirements of natural rearing and organic farming measures was also highlighted in interviews. Farmers did not see the conversion process as something that required dramatic changes and investments. According to them, the farmer is obliged to be flexible in the present agricultural system and although they worked from dawn to dusk in adopting the infrastructure for organic farming (mostly adapting to standards for animal housing), they claimed that alterations to infrastructure and their farming practices would be minimal. This was often calculated in comparison with changes they have already endured, since they maintained that the work on the farm is never finished, suggesting ‘changes are the only constants in farming life.’

¹³ In fact, they have managed to persuade a local farmer, who found himself in debt, to start raising goats on the steep slopes of his farm. They bought him goats and they committed themselves to buying the milk for the production of popular organic goat cheese. This turned out to be one of the rare instances of cooperation among the organic or partly organic farms in the area.

However, most of the farms in this area that decided to take up organic farming would not be able to survive (as members of farming families claimed) if they relied only on farming. In addition, they were reluctant to believe that they would be saved from their financial worries after the conversion period. The operators of the farms believed that the answer to survival on the mountain farms in Slovenia was pluri-activity, since multiple sources of profit proved to increase flexibility and guarantee more autonomy to the farming family (often scrutinised for dependence on subsidies). However, despite a strong wish for control and independence (Frelih Larsen 2005), subsidies for organic farming in the EU context are simply seen as too valuable an opportunity not to be considered (and in the end accepted), even if organic farming contains risks and jeopardises the established order on the farm. Regulatory bureaucracy, although despised, is often a price they are willing to pay for higher subsidies. However, it is also important to note that the possibility for resistance to EU requirements (which include a number of biosecurity measures) has been very limited in Slovenia after accession (Frelih Larsen 2009).

Therefore, the primary motive for conversion to organic farming at the foothills of the Alps was economic, but it was often combined with environmental and ethical concerns. The good fit of traditional farming practices prior to conversion with official standards for organic farming was also an important part of the decision-making process (Frelih Larsen 2005). However, there are considerable differences not only amongst farming families in the area, but also among family members, who have different perceptions and expectations of organic farming. Therefore, we can discern heterogeneity in motivation as well as in farming practices amongst small groups of farmers in the Škofja Loka Mountains, where organic farming has been on the rise in recent years. However, organic farming in the area is highly individualised: farmers face different conditions for farming (some of the farms are in valleys, other on steep slopes; they vary in terms of production output, economic status, production orientation, farm size etc.). What they share is an aspiration for guaranteeing the vitality of their farming business and the preservation of the family farm.

Concluding comparative remarks

Our case studies reveal differences and similarities in the processes of conversion to organic farming in the chosen (pre-)Alpine locations in Slovenia. In both cases, although they embrace different processes of conversion connected to a particular time span (pre and post EU accession period), a complexity of motivations was revealed. A powerful interplay of economic, cultural and environmental reasons was present at every farm that we studied. Moreover, the desire for the economic viability of the farm and personal success, tied to the endeavours to preserve a family farm in a harsh environment of agricultural competitiveness, were important personal motivations, although they have not been always strongly articulated. Regardless, the farmers in both locations have stated a number of reasons that were, according to them, the most prominent in the decision-making process that guided them to conversion to organic farming.

Organic farming is perceived to be an appropriate and profitable choice for small farms in the areas with less-favourable farming conditions, because it may enlarge the

production and guarantee the self-sufficiency of a farm (Halberg et al. 2006). The CAP's subsidies make such perception even stronger. Therefore, farmers from both locations agree that organic farming has made their farm competitive and claim that subsidies are an important part of their survival. Nevertheless, subsidies were not available in the same manner when farmers from Čadrg decided for innovation. This, of course, does not mean that these farmers were not profit-oriented. They too were anticipating potential economic gains, although it must be emphasised that such motivations played a smaller role than during post-accession period, when higher direct payments for organic farming in Slovenia were introduced. Nevertheless, in the case of Čadrg, environmental reasons were emphasised as the main motivation for conversion. The latter can be assigned to the impact of the TNP's landscape preservation policy on Čadrg farmers. However, there was another factor that was of crucial importance both for the farmers' decision to take up organic farming and for the environmental argument they have cultivated in this process. It was their collective and mutual resolution about organic farming that stimulated discourses about sustainable farming as the maintainer of the balance in the human-nature-community complex. They have involved themselves in the joint efforts to create a community of sustainable farmers, while simultaneously producing its economic and ideological foundation. The local cheese was thus not only the product for sale, but it also represented the commons, mutuality and care for environment. The collective step to organic farming thus presents a circumstance in which an action has gained additional meanings and has profoundly influenced farmers' self-perception.

In contrast, the farmers in the Škofja Loka Mountains are more reluctant to emphasise their environmentalist motivations and additionally express a certain distrust in the certification process of organic products. They are more inclined to overemphasise the economic aspects of sustainable agriculture, i.e. achieving higher profits though lower inputs, lower prices for veterinary care, etc. Farmers from Škofja Loka Mountains have adopted the EU's rhetoric, pointing to subsidies as the platform that enables small-scale mountain farms to remain economically viable. In comparison to the farmers from Čadrg, they seem much more influenced by the CAP that fosters a model of a farmer's personhood as a "rational" choice-maker (Fox 2010). The intentions of agricultural policies thus indeed find their way into farmers' attitudes and self-perception, since their success is permanently measured by the productivity of a farm or by its adjustment to the declarations of the EU and national Action Plans.

The EU's policy of subsidies has, therefore, to some degree transformed the conversion process. While the case of Čadrg illustrates the power of cooperation in the process of converting to ecological farming, the Škofja Loka Mountains case shows the predominance of ideas of working individually towards the economic success of the family farm. The mutuality that is present among farmers in Čadrg is not based only on their common product, but also on their common identity as organic cheese-producers and farmer-environmentalists, while a similar identity is absent from Škofja Loka Mountains. However, this does not mean that the EU's subsidies have eliminated any alternative to what we perceive to be the main course of organic farming development in Slovenia, here presented by the post-EU accession case. In 2013 in the Škofja Loka Mountains efforts

were made to re-connect atomised agricultural community. The encouraging case is the cheese-making farmer's decision to encourage the re-introduction of the raising goats at the neglected farming household in the mountains, thus making a step towards network-building in the area, which could be (as the Čadrg case testifies) promising for the future development of organic farming.

References

- ASEK. 2014. *Analiza stanja ekološkega kmetovanja [Analysis of the status of ecological farming]*. http://www.mko.gov.si/si/delovna_podrocja/kmetijstvo/ekolosko_kmetovanje/analiza_stanja_ekoloskega_kmetovanja/. Accessed on 10 October 2014.
- Bavec, Martina, Miran Naglič, Franc Bavec, Polonca Repič, Zita Flisar Novak, Nevenka Poštrak, Irena Bantan, Tatjana Pevec, Jože Maljevič, Gustav Matis, Jože Miklavc, Peter Pšaker, Anton Darovic, Dominika Štabuc-Starčević, Ivan Ambrožič, Mitja Zupančič, Anamarija Slabe, Eva Tkalčič & Erika Orešek. 2001. *Ekološko kmetijstvo [Ecological farming]*. Ljubljana: Kmečki glas.
- Bjorkhaug, Hilde. 2006. Is There a Female Principle in Organic Farming? An Interpretation of Data for Norway. In: Georgina Holt & Matthew Reed (eds.), *Sociological Perspectives of Organic Agriculture: From Pioneer to Policy*. Wallingford and Cambridge: CABI, pp. 195–209.
- Blatnik, Matej & Matjaž Dovečar. 2010. Vloga ekološkega kmetovanja na zavarovanih območjih Slovenije [The role of ecological farming in the protected environments of Slovenia]. *Dela* 34: 211–22.
- Barreiro-Hurlé, Jesús, María Espinosa-Goded & Pierre Dupraz. 2008. Does Intensity of Change Matter? Factors Affecting Adoption in Two Agri-Environmental Schemes. Paper prepared for presentation at the 107th EAAE Seminar Modelling of Agricultural and Rural Development Policies. Sevilla, Spain, January 29th – February 1st.
- Cleveland, David A. 1998. Balancing on a Planet: Toward an Agricultural Anthropology for the Twenty-First Century. *Human Ecology* 26(2): 323–40.
- Fox, Katy. 2010. *Peasants into European Farmers? EU Integration in the Carpathian Mountains of Romania*. Münster: LIT Verlag.
- Frelih Larsen, Ana. 2005. *Mountain Farms in Slovenia: Negotiating Agri-environment Production Options*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation. Oxford: University of Oxford.
- Frelih Larsen, Ana. 2009. Semi-subsistence Producers and Biosecurity in the Slovenian Alps. *Sociologia Ruralis* 49 (4): 330–43.
- Geier, Bernward. 2007. IFOAM and the History of the International Organic Movement. In: William Lockeretz (ed.), *Organic Farming: An International History*. Wallingford and Cambridge: CABI, pp. 175–86.
- Grasseni, Christina. 2011. Re-inventing food: Alpine cheese in the age of global heritage. *Anthropology of Food* 8.
- Guthman, Julie. 2004. *Agrarian Dreams: The Paradox of Organic Farming in California*. Berkeley et al.: University of California Press.
- Haldberg, Niels, Timothy B. Sulser, Henning Høgh-Jensen, Mark W. Rosegrant & Marie Trydeman Knudsen. 2006. The impact of organic farming on food security in a regional and global perspective. In: Niels Halberg, Hugo Fjelsted Alrøe, Marie Trydeman Knudsen & Erik Steen Kristensen (eds.), *Global Development of Organic Agriculture: Challenges and Prospects*. Wallingford and Cambridge: CABI, pp. 277–322.
- Hansen, Lene, Egon Noe & Katrine Højring. 2006. Nature and Nature Values in Organic Agriculture: An Analysis of Contested Concepts and Values among Different Actors in Organic Farming. *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 19(2): 147–68.
- Holt, Georgina. 2006. A Conceptual Model of Willingness to Pay for Organic Food in the UK. In: Georgina Holt & Matthew Reed (eds.), *Sociological Perspectives of Organic Agriculture: From Pioneer to Policy*. Wallingford and Cambridge: CABI, pp. 88–106.
- Holt, Georgina & Matthew Reed. 2006. Sociological Perspectives of Organic Research: To Policy and Beyond. In: Georgina Holt & Matthew Reed (eds.), *Sociological Perspectives of Organic Agriculture: From Pioneer to Policy*. Wallingford and Cambridge: CABI, pp. 284–304.
- Kaltoft, Pernille & Marie-Louise Risgaard. 2006. Has Organic Farming Modernized Itself Out of Business? Reverting to Conventional Methods in Denmark. In: Georgina Holt & Matthew Reed (eds.), *Sociological*

- Perspectives of Organic Agriculture: From Pioneer to Policy*. Wallingford and Cambridge: CABI, pp. 126–41.
- Knežević Hočevar, Duška & Majda Černič Istenič. 2010. *Delo in dom na kmetijah: raziskava odnosov med generacijami in spoloma*. Ljubljana: Založba ZRC.
- Knežević Hočevar, Duška. 2012. Family farms in Slovenia: Who did the measures ‘Setting Up of Young Farmers’ and ‘Early Retirement’ actually address? *Anthropological Notebooks* 18(1): 65–89.
- Kolmanič, Aleš. 2012. Ekološko kmetijstvo in trenutno stanje v Sloveniji. *Ekolist* 8: 32–6.
- Lamine, Claire & Stéphane Bellon. 2008. Conversion to organic farming: a multidimensional research object at the crossroads of agricultural and social sciences. A review. *Agronomy for Sustainable Development* 29: 97–112.
- Lazaridis, Gabriella. 2009. *Women’s Work and Lives in Rural Greece: Appearances and Realities*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate.
- McCarthy, Mary, O’ Reilly, Seamus, O’Sullivan, Aoife & Patrick Guerin. 2007. An Investigation into the Determinants of Commitment to Organic Farming in Ireland. In: *Proceedings of the 16th International Farm Management Association Congress: A Vibrant Rural Economy – the Challenge for Balance*. Cork: University College Cork, pp. 718–32.
- McDonagh, John, Tony Varley & Sally Shortall (eds.). 2009. *A living countryside? The Politics of Sustainable Development in Rural Ireland*. Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate.
- Milestad, Rebecka & Sonja Hadatsch. 2003. Organic Farming and Social-Ecological Resilience: the Alpine Valleys of Sölktaier, Austria. *Ecology and Society* 8(1).
- Netting, Robert. 1981. *Balancing on an Alp. Ecological Change and Continuity in a Swiss Mountain Community*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Netting, Robert. 1993. *Smallholders, Householders; Farm Families and the Ecology of Intensive, Sustainable Agriculture*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Niemeyer, Katharina & Jan P. Lombard. 2006. Emerging Scared: An Analysis of Socioeconomic Data on Conversion in South Africa. In: Georgina Holt & Matthew Reed (eds.), *Sociological Perspectives of Organic Agriculture: From Pioneer to Policy*. Wallingford and Cambridge: CABI, pp. 174–94.
- Nugent, Stephen. 2003. Whither *O Campesinato*? Historical Peasantries of Brazilian Amazonia. In: Tom Brass (ed.), *Latin American peasants*. London and Portland: Frank Cass, pp. 159–84.
- Padel, Sussane. 2001. Conversion to organic farming: A Typical Example of the Diffusion of an Innovation? *Sociologia Ruralis* 41(1): 40–61.
- Parrott, Nicholas, Olesen, Jørgen E. & Henning Høgh-Jensen. 2006. Certified and non-certified organic farming in the developing world. In: Niels Halberg, Hugo Fjelsted Alrøe, Marie Trydeman Knudsen & Erik Steen Kristensen (eds.), *Global Development of Organic Agriculture: Challenges and Prospects*. Wallingford and Cambridge: CABI, pp. 153–179.
- Paull, John. 2010. From France to the World: The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM). *Journal of Social Research & Policy* 1(2): 93–102.
- Ploeg Van der, Jan Douwe, Renting, Henk, Brunori, Gianluca, Knickel, Karlheinz, Mannion, Joe, Marsden, Terry, Roest De, Kees, Sevilla-Guzman, Eduardo & Flaminia Ventura. 2000. Rural Development: From Practices and Policies towards Theory. *Sociologia Ruralis* 40(4): 391–408.
- Podmenik, Dane & Simon Kerma. 2010. Izbrani vidiki ekološkega kmetijstva v Sloveniji s posebnim poudarkom na Slovenski Istri. *Annales* 20(1): 139–152.
- Prašnikar, Dušan. 2011. On the Sunny Side of the Alps: Slovenian Mountains and Their Perspectives. In: Georgi Zhelezov (ed.), *Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions: Southeastern Europe*. Dordrecht: Springer, pp. 195–202.
- Pudak, Jelena & Nataša Bokan. 2011. Ekološka poljoprivreda – indikator društvenih vrednosti [Ecological farming – indicator of social values]. *Sociologija i prostor* 49(2): 137–63.
- Reed, Matthew & Georgina Holt. 2006. Sociological Perspectives of Organic Farming: An Introduction. In: Georgina Holt & Matthew Reed (eds.), *Sociological Perspectives of Organic Agriculture: From Pioneer to Policy*. Wallingford and Cambridge: CABI, pp. 1–17.
- Schermer, Marcus. 2006. Regional Rural Development: the Formation of Ecoregions in Austria. In: Georgina Holt & Matthew Reed (eds.), *Sociological Perspectives of Organic Agriculture: From Pioneer to Policy*. Wallingford and Cambridge: CABI, pp. 227–42.

- Schmitt, Mathilde. 2006. Fertile Minds and Friendly Pens: Early Women Pioneers. In: Georgina Holt & Matthew Reed (eds.), *Sociological Perspectives of Organic Agriculture: From Pioneer to Policy*. Wallingford and Cambridge: CABI, pp. 56–69.
- Štraus, Saša, Bavec, Franc & Martina Bavec. 2011. Organic farming as a potential for the development of protected areas. *Acta Geographica Slovenica* 51(1): 151–68.
- Trydeman Knudsen, Marie, Niels Halberg, Jørgen E. Olesen, John Byrne, Venkatesh Iyer & Noah Toly. 2006. Global Trends in Agriculture and Food Systems. In: Niels Halberg, Hugo Fjelsted Alroe, Marie Trydeman Knudsen & Erik Steen Kristensen (eds.), *Global Development of Organic Agriculture: Challenges and Prospects*. Wallingford and Cambridge: CABI, pp. 1–48.
- Udovč, Andrej & Anton Perpar. 2007. Dejavniki odločitve za vstop v ekološko kmetovanje [Decision factors of engaging in ecological farming]. In: Stane Kavčič (ed.), *Slovensko kmetijstvo in podeželje v Evropi, ki se širi in spreminja* [Slovenian farming and countryside in the spreading and changing Europe]. Ljubljana: Društvo agrarnih ekonomistov Slovenije, pp. 167–74.
- Vilfan, Maja. 2014. *Presoja ukrepov kmetijske politike pri ohranjanju planin na območju načrtovanega regijskega parka Kamniško-Savinjske Alpe* [Evaluation of farming policy for preservation of mountains in the area of the planned regional park Kamniško-Savinjske Alpe]. Unpublished Master thesis. Ljubljana: Biotehniška fakulteta.
- Wilson, A. Geoff & Kaley Hart. 2001. Farmer Participation in Agri-Environmental Schemes: Towards Conservation-Oriented Thinking? *Sociologia Ruralis* 41(2): 254–74.

Povzetek

Članek razgrinja motivacije, ki so na primeru izbrane skupine kmetovalcev prispevale k opustitvi konvencionalnega in uvajanju ekološkega kmetovanja. Za etnografsko raziskavo sta bili izbrani lokaciji v predalpski in alpski Sloveniji, v obeh primerih območja z manj ugodnimi pogoji za kmetovanje. Članek primerja dva različna procesa preusmeritve v ekološko kmetovanje: v vasi Čadrg so se kmetovalci kolektivno odločili za ekološko kmetovanje pred vstopom Slovenije v EU; kmetovalci na območju Škofjeloškega hribovja so se posamično preusmerjali v ekološko pridelavo po vstopu Slovenije v EU. Primerjava razkriva različne pogoje preusmeritve v okviru istega nacionalnega okvira in kaže na razlike in podobnosti tako v osebnih motivacijah kot tudi v strukturnih pogojih prehoda. Avtorja poudarita, da je za razumevanje preusmeritev potrebno upoštevati kompleksen preplet različnih dejavnikov. Kljub temu pa komparativna analiza pokaže na bistveno razliko med individualnim in kolektivnim prevzemanjem ekoloških načel kmetijske proizvodnje.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: ekološko kmetovanje, mlekarstvo, sprememba kmetijskih praks, kolektivne in individualne preusmeritve, (pred)alpska Slovenija, Skupna kmetijska politika

CORRESPONDENCE: ALENKA BARTULOVIĆ, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Zavetiška 5, SI-1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia. E-mail: alenka.bartulovic@ff.uni-lj.si.