

**NEGOTIATING  
RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT  
AT THE LOCAL LEVEL**

**A case study in Pišece, Slovenia**

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## PROPOSITIONS

In order to understand the development of rural tourism we need to address power relations in local communities and to consider how various local community groups network within and beyond local boundaries through time.

*This dissertation*

'... Better understanding of social worlds enables better decisions. However, better understanding does not necessarily in practice (in political terms) contribute to better decisions.

*A. Giddens, 1984*

*The Constitution of Society: Outline of the theory of structuration*

Local communities are not passive sponges that soak up 'foreign' ideas, and any resultant social change is a reflection not only of the State, but also the underlying strength of local actors.

*This dissertation*

Rural tourism development should benefit the 'whole' local community, and not just a small élite group. This can not be achieved without a convergence of, and partnership between both bottom-up and top-down approaches to development.

*This dissertation*

Formalization/institutionalization of bottom-up approaches to development may threaten the innovativeness and flexibility of the process in the local community.

*This dissertation*

At a certain point during the development process, outside intervention may be needed to provide impetus and/or assistance to enhance the progress of the rural tourism development process.

*This dissertation*

The advice of 'experts' can often create problems, especially when their experience base is not socially aligned with the given historical and cultural context.

*This dissertation*

Tourism is like fire. It can cook your food or burn your house.

*M. Fox (1977)*

*The social impact of tourism: A challenge to researchers and planners*

Peoples' notion of society in transition, from a socialist self-management origin to a free market, has not changed as much as some would like to believe. In order to achieve what you want, it is important to know someone influential. Nowadays, that would mean someone who forged coalitions with actors from the 'right' political parties, in comparison to the past when the 'good old socialist boys networks' were dominating.

*This dissertation*

We need to address the intra-gender differences in order to understand the social complexities of tourism-related activities.

*V. Kinnaird and D. Hall (1994)*

*Tourism: A gender analysis*

Women have enormous social power based on the immediacy of the affection, but they adapt poorly to the institutionalization of politics.

*R. Rosanda (1994)*

*The women's movement in Latin America: Participation and democracy*

The advancement of women is central to achieving sustainable development.

*The FAO plan of action for women in development, 1996-2001 (1997)*

It is only with one's heart that one can see clearly. What is essential is invisible to the eye.

*A. de Saint-Exupéry (1995 edition)*

*The little prince*

Propositions presented with the PhD dissertation 'Negotiating rural tourism development at the local level: A case study in Pišce, Slovenia' by Alenka Verbole, The Wageningen Agricultural University, Wageningen, The Netherlands

To My 'Family'

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## List of abbreviations

CEFTA	Central European Free Trade Association
CFTP	Centre for the Promotion of Slovenia's Tourism
CIB	CRPOV Initiative Board
CMEA	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (the Warsaw Pact)
CPB	CRPOV Project Board
CRPOV	Centre for Rural Development and Village Revitalization
ECEs	Eastern and Central European countries
ETPLC	Project 'Ecological Tourism in Pišce Local Community'
GOLGS	Governmental Office for Local Self-Government
GZS	The Chamber of Commerce
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food
MOE	Ministry of Environment
MST	Ministry of Science and Technology
NTZ	National Tourist Association
RS	Republic of Slovenia
SfCT	Section for Catering and Tourism
SCU	Slovenia's Committee for UNICEF
SNSDA	Slovenia's National Strategy for Development of Agriculture
STWR	Slovenia's Tourist-Wine Routes Project
TDS	Tourism Development Strategy of Republic Slovenia
TS	Tourist Society
TZS	Slovenia's Tourist Association
WWII	Second World War
1994 Workshop	The International Workshop 'Residents-Management-Sustainable Development'

## Glossary of Slovenian words

cviček	a dry wine
črni	a term used to label religious people
delovna brigada	a working brigade of civilians who were helping to rebuild the country after the Second World War devastation
gasterbajter [ <i>gastarbeiter</i> ]	people that emigrated to foreign countries, mainly Western European for economic reasons, and return home on frequent a basis (i.e., summer holidays, Easter, Christmas)
mošt	apple cider
imigranti	people that immigrated permanently, mainly for political and in some cases economic reasons, to the United States, Latin America or Australia. Some of the political immigrants under the former political regime were not allowed to return to Slovenia
kmečki turizem	literally means farmtourism, the term is in Slovenia used as a synonym for all forms of tourism developed in rural areas
krajevna skupnost	a Local Community, an administrative area, in the previous political system an important actor in the development of the local community, its role became unclear under the new system of reorganized Local-Self Government
krajevni svet	a Local Community Council
krajevni urad	a Local Community Office, the headquarters of the Local Council
Lipov list	The yearly prize awarded by the Slovenia's Tourist Association to the Most Beautiful Small Settlement in Slovenia
mafija	the term used by people of Pišce to label people who are unemployed, or people who are assumed to be involved with the smuggling of goods across the Slovenian-Croatian border
mala šola	the pre-school education for children up to age 7
občina	a Municipality, an administrative unit and the basic local self-management unit
občinski svet	the Municipal Council, the highest decision making body in the Municipality
pijanček	layabout, drunkard
potica	traditional Slovenian cake with nut filing
pečenka	(pork) roast
rdeči	the term used to label non-religious people, communists and the progressive people
referent za turizem	Officer for Tourism Development
suha jabolka	dried apples

špricer	a traditional drink, mix of (white) wine and mineral water
turistični krožek	an off spring of the local Tourist Society at the local elementary school
Turistična vrtnica	the Tourist Rose Award, awarded by the Radio and Television Slovenia to the Touristic Place of the Year
večnamenski dom	a Community Centre, a place where all villagers would meet to discuss issues of common importance or participate in different activities
vinoteka	an exclusive wine shop
Vitezi Vina	an exclusive national brotherhood of the best wine connoisseurs in Slovenia
zbor krajanov	meeting of all the inhabitants of the Local Community
zvezdarna	a star observatorium

## Acknowledgements

In retrospect, I would have never believed that it was so difficult not to become over-emotional by the end of such a project as a PhD dissertation. So much has happened since I started this project. Throughout my travel I have met a number of great people without whom this research would not have been possible; therefore, I would like to use this opportunity to thank them.

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Patricija often protected me, not only from the harsh reality of Slovenian daily life by paying my bills and dealing with other urgent issues, but also insuring that I was current on the situations back home.

My grandmother was consistently a great source of inspiration. While seated in her green-painted kitchen, we often debated over Aristotle, the newest Slovenian roman, family history, modern Slovene language, Latin names of insects I had to learn (so I could forget them later) or to work out how the world would be in fifty years. I owe my rhetoric skills and love for reading to these debates.

To Jos, my partner in life and my 'rock', I will never be able to thank for his love, understanding, patience, help, 'technical' support, and all the 'stolen hours' he spent in the late evenings when he couldn't sleep as I typed so vigorously. We have passed together through the Slovenian war, snow storms, moving into a new home, while successfully avoiding those barriers found in the agitated 'dissertation' sea.

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## PREFACE

This dissertation concerns the policy and politics of rural tourism development at the local level in Slovenia. The study examines rural tourism within the wider context of Slovenia's socio-political situation and attempts to identify those factors (i.e., social, economic, cultural and/or political) that influence the development of rural tourism in Slovenia in general, and more specifically in a local rural community. Several steps were taken to clarify objectives and determine how to gain an understanding of the rural tourism development process.

Before going to the field, the initial concept was to analyse the development of rural tourism and its impacts by using several models used in tourism related research to monitor how tourism develops in local communities. This meant to analyse the role of local community in the development of rural tourism, and to look whether the perceptions of the people of particular localities towards rural tourism, in this case Pišce, would change over time, and to look closely at the impacts and implications of rural tourism development projects.

The project under the investigation was designed by the University of Ljubljana. The ideas for this project were initially and indirectly stimulated by a cry for help from a group of people from the Pišce Local Community. They asked the University of Ljubljana for assistance in developing their community. This situation, of course, influenced both the design and implementation of this project and direction of the research presented here.

The research essentially began with an International workshop on rural development in peripheral areas - organised jointly by the University of Ljubljana and the University of Klagenfurt in a health resort nearby Pišce - which is described in detail later in Chapter 4. This Workshop set the foundation for both the methodological and theoretical approach finally taken for the research. From the situation encountered in Pišce during the 1994 Workshop, it became quickly obvious, that the dynamics in the locality of study were too complex to be analyzed by the models I initially had in mind. To understand adequately how the people in this small community were trying to '*transform*' (i.e., how they were shaped by and how they reshaped the developmental process) rural tourism development to fit their desires, interests and needs, another approach had to be taken into consideration.

First, I needed an approach that would enable me to understand rural tourism development as a dynamic, ongoing socio-political process that should be analyzed within the wider context in which it was placed. Secondly, I needed an approach that would allow me to see a local community as a heterogeneous group of people who are not passive recipients in the process of development, but who are instead capable actors making the most out of a given situation. Then, the approach should, also, provide me with the analytical tools that would give an insight into the strategies various actors use to make the most out of a given situation, thus an insight into people's organizing practices and processes, into the power relations between various actors, discourses, and the clashes between the different ways of ordering and transforming the world.

The approach which suited better the aspects that I wanted to investigate and understand was Norman Long's actor oriented perspective (Note: a more detailed picture is given in Chapter 3). His methodological and theoretical approach, which takes account of actors' life-worlds, agencies, social networks (i.e., family clans and cliques), as well as biographies seemed particularly well-suited to my purpose. Notions such as domains and arenas in which the social actors interact, were felt to provide a better insight than an imposed structural or positivist model. Tourism development in Slovenia, as it is everywhere, is a negotiated process - meaning that we need to reflect on social actions of actors and their interactions. Who participates in such negotiations when speaking of the development of rural tourism, who initiates and finances the development, and who will actually benefit or lose from the process is a complex issue. In Slovenia, it presupposes an account of the new political and policy reality, but the old hierarchies and structures, likewise, cannot be neglected as realities and attitudes do not change as quickly as the times.

Local power structures and dynamics have much to do with the success of individual and more collective projects. To reach a better understanding of the process of change taking place within local communities such as Pišce as rural tourism is developing, and how this reflects upon interactions between those socially engaged in development practices, and upon the existing power relations whether external or internal interventions, would help to determine the nature of rural tourism in such contexts and how it can be successful and who really benefits or loses from such efforts.

Various local actors are involved in strategies to promote, control or reshape such policies, thus I needed concepts that would help me to understand tourism as a result of other complex sets of agencies (see Chapter 3) and struggles versus a 'thing' that exists in and of itself at different levels of social aggregation. Rural tourism is in collusion with the local economic interests and political agendas, and this dissertation tries to provide new analytical perspectives by studying tourism through an actor-oriented approach in attempt to demythologise the social realities of rural tourism development.

### **The relevance and utilization of the study**

I believe the relevance of this study is rightly justified since the people of Pišece requested it to be done. However, its 'real' relevance will only be clear when we see how and to what extent the information will be used.

Further, Slovenia as many other countries have, chose for a sustainable development of tourism and sustainable development of rural areas which implies that the development of rural tourism should be sustainable. In my opinion, sustainable rural tourism development cannot be achieved without full support of the rural community in question. Sustainable development can only be achieved when local peoples' needs are valued seriously, information is available to all, and everyone is able to participate in the decision-making process. This study attempts to take stock of these aspects.

Possible users of study results are people of small communities like Pišece, and it is hoped that results will be used in future research.

This study addresses the top-down approach of the State or other external actors (intervention perspective), and the bottom-up (participatory perspective) approach of rural actors struggling to reach their own ends. Further, it is hoped that this study was pragmatic, in its role to help guide rural tourism research practice in ways that respond to the specific socio-political, cultural, environmental and economic conditions.

The external validity of this work relates to the generalizability of research findings to

different social settings. I wish to clarify my position as one of working from a social constructivist research orientation. Constructivism, by contrast to positivist paradigm, posits that there is no 'objective reality' (Hamilton, 1995), but that individuals shape their own view of *reality* in a lifelong process of socially based interaction, negotiation and learning (Long, 1984). Thus, the main intention is not to generalize or maintain a reductionist stance, but to contextualize diversity and enrich the 'body of knowledge' about the ways in which different social actors use their *agency* in interface encounters during interactions within the process of transforming the development of rural tourism (and thus, also, rural areas).

This work is intended to provide different actors involved in rural tourism transformation processes (particularly in Slovenia) with a perspective that may be used as a basis for better understanding of these processes. As such, it is hoped that these actors will all be able to combine wider considerations of social, political, economic and environmental impacts of rural tourism (in a given location) to develop more sustainable approaches to the ongoing development of tourism.

Also, I have tried to organize my research in such a way as to strive for a high level of internal validity. For this I used 'multiple sources' and 'multiple methods', meaning that I have used a variety of research methods, techniques and analytical tools in an attempt to understand social actors' realities. In an ethnographic sociological study this creates the ability to cross-check information, and it enhances the possibilities to double check. Using multiple sources and methods, when coupled with return visits to the area and repeated discussions with the actor informants in this study, allowed for triangulation and checking of the research information.

The dissertation is organized as follows:

Chapter 1 outlines the wider context of Slovenia. It provides an insight into the Slovenian scenario, firstly by discussing the historical background of rural and tourism sector development, and secondly by focusing on the current developments in both sectors. The chapter finishes with a section on the state of rural tourism in Slovenia.

Chapter 2 presents the background relevant to the field situation and rural tourism development. The chapter begins by addressing the rural tourism phenomena, and then goes on to expand upon positive and negative aspects of tourism development in the countryside and its communities. Further, it focuses on sustainability as an alternative developmental paradigm. Of late, sustainability, with its multi-dimensional character, has been increasingly applied to the concept of tourism development. Some dimensions of sustainability continue to be overlooked however, and this is discussed in Chapter 2. This chapter also outlines the research objectives and lines of inquiry.

Chapter 3 presents the main concepts and analytical tools used during the first phase of the research process. The theoretical investigations had led me to the understanding that rural tourism is a dynamic, ongoing process that should be analyzed in the social, economic, political and environmental contexts in which a given tourist destination is placed. It was suggested in the literature (see Long, 1984 and other) that different *actors* 'transform' rural tourism development in a given destination intentionally as well as unintentionally to fit their interests and needs. This transformation is based on these actors' individual (and collective) perceptions of the possible costs and benefits of tourism. For data collection this line of thinking called for a more ethnographic exploration of different actors social realities.

Further, Part II of Chapter 3 discusses the applied methodological approaches and research methods used. This is followed by a description of the research process, and the research methods used.

Chapter 4 takes us into the context of the 1994 Workshop mentioned earlier, and it familiarizes the reader with the Local Community of Pišece, and its people. The 1994 Workshop is a case study that introduces us, albeit superficially, to Pišece's social reality. The reader gets the first glimpse of the complexities that are likely to be involved in the many interfaces and discourses of the rural tourism transformation process in Pišece. We are also able to sense the negotiations and power struggles taking place in the community.

Chapters 5 and 6 take us further in the ethnography and analysis of Pišece's reality. Chapter 5 outlines the social organizations and social practices of the community, and presents some key players in the community development processes. Some of them are identified as

important actors in Pišece's attempts to develop rural tourism. The chapter first introduces us to the pubs and inns of Pišece that present important locales in which the key actors and groups meet and socialize. Further, some of the important domains and arenas in Pišece are analyzed through which the rural tourism process became an important part of the local community's life. The analysis of locales, domains and arenas allows us to gain insights into various aspects of the life-worlds of the people of Pišece. After knowing more about the social context of local networks and modes of communication with regard to rural tourism development, in Chapter 6 the final veil is lifted from Pišece's social reality. This chapter elaborates more profoundly on the influence of power dynamics in the transformation of rural tourism development in Pišece.

The dissertation ends with comments on the findings of this research, and some refinements.

# 1 PLACING RURAL TOURISM IN THE SLOVENIAN CONTEXT

## 1.1 Introduction

The policy and politics of rural tourism development at the local community level in Slovenia is the subject of this dissertation. To understand the context in which rural tourism is developing there, it is necessary first to gain some familiarity with the country's wider socio-economic and political context. The literature suggests (Greffé, 1994; Cavaco, 1995) that rural tourism appears to be a domain involving two sectors: the rural (and agricultural) sector, and the tourist sector. While in Slovenia this is not yet the case (so far it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, thus agricultural sector), it is assumed that these two sectors will probably join forces sooner or later in the development of rural tourism; therefore, both sectors are examined in an effort to see what the future might hold in store.

Both sectors have been influenced by the social, political and economic changes, mainly due to processes linked to a double transition - the transition to an independent state, and the transition from a self-managing socialism<sup>1</sup> to a free-market economy. First, I provide some general information on Slovenia, and then the focus is shifted to historic and current developments in the rural areas. This is combined with an analysis of rural development and tourist policy. The chapter ends with a section expounding on the present situation of rural tourism in Slovenia.

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<sup>1</sup> I prefer to use here the term self-managing socialism economy (a sort of semi-planned) to that of central planned economy which is usually used to describe the economies of the countries of Eastern and Central Europe. According to Vahčić and Malačič (1993), self-managing socialism can be placed between the planned economy and the free market economy. The latter economy is characterized by a high protectionism of the industry of goods on behalf of the production of raw material. The centrally planned economy, on the other hand, brings forward the 'socialist way of industrialization' with public property and rapid development of industry on the account of agriculture (In Former Yugoslavia this approach was abandoned in the early 1980s).

## 1.2 General background

Slovenia is one of the smallest and youngest countries in Europe. Formerly, it was a constituent partner of Yugoslavia. It declared itself an independent state on June 25, 1991.

International recognition by most European countries followed on January 15, 1992.

Slovenia covers an area of 20,256 km<sup>2</sup>. The population numbers approximately 2 million, with a density of 93.4 people per km<sup>2</sup>. The country is mountainous,<sup>2</sup> and dominated by the Julian, Karavanke, and Kamnik ranges of the Eastern Alps. A stretch of coastline borders the Adriatic Sea (46 km) and it lies adjacent to Italy in the west, Austria in the north, Hungary in the east, and Croatia to the south (Appendix 1). The capital, Ljubljana, has a population of 305,000. It is also the administrative and cultural centre of the country. Maribor is the second largest city with over 100,000 inhabitants. The two Slovenian universities are located in these two cities.

Next to Ljubljana and Maribor, Slovenia has four more cities with more than 20,000 inhabitants. In total, one fifth of Slovenia's population lives in these six cities. The remaining population live either in one of the 6,000 towns, or in rural areas<sup>3</sup>. That means, almost half of Slovenia's population, one million people, live in the countryside. This high degree of population dispersion is the result of geographical characteristics, historical developments, and polycentric developmental policy that came to fore in the 1970s (Šircelj, 1996). The latter has prevented an excessive concentration of the population in bigger cities through relatively well developed basic infrastructure, such as roads, health care and education facilities, and investment in the economically and socially less developed regions of the country. Polycentric development was, however, less successful in the hilly regions, the Karst and the border regions with Croatia and Hungary.

Average temperatures through the year range from between 0°C and 22°C inland, and between 2°C and 24°C on the coast, although there are great variations between different areas. Rainfall varies from 3000 mm in the Julian Alps to 800 mm in areas of East Slovenia.

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<sup>2</sup> Slovenia's highest peak, Triglav (2,864m) is in the Julian Alps close to the northern border with Italy.

<sup>3</sup> Slovenia's official statistics distinguishes only between urban and rural areas.

Variation in climate and geography is great<sup>4</sup>, offering a potential for different types of tourism in the Alpine, Adriatic, Karst and Panonian regions (Slovenia's Strategy for Tourism Development, 1995).

### *Demographics of Slovenia and other characteristics*

The Slovenian population is aging, following the same basic pattern of demographic development in other developed countries in Europe. Since 1985, a negative natural increase was recorded. The average age of the population is now over 36 years. An average Slovenian family has 1.3 children (Verbole, 1997b).

Twenty-nine percent of the total population have completed primary education, 42.8 percent secondary education, and 8.8 percent have a higher or university degree. It is estimated that 17 percent of the population has no formal education (Slovenian Committee for UNICEF, 1996)<sup>5</sup>.

Although Slovenians are individualists, the family is very important to them (*ibid*). A 'Quality of Life in Slovenia' research project that started in 1994 shows that 'the family' as a specific socio-cultural institution, and its function are still very strongly embedded in Slovenia's culture. The analysis also pointed out the high significance of the extended family (the wider network of relatives including the grandparent generation).

The population is rather homogeneous in terms of ethnicity. It consists of 94 percent Slovenians, while the other 6 percent are ethnic minorities - Bosnians, Albanians, Croatians, Serbs, Hungarians and Italians. The percentage of those of other nationalities is higher in the cities.

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<sup>4</sup> The climate varies from Mediterranean in the coastal area to Alpine in the north and Continental in the east.

<sup>5</sup> To have no formal education means that people have not finished a compulsory 8-year primary school education. The percentage of people with no formal education is higher among older generations, factory workers and farming families (Verbole, 1997b).

On the other hand, Slovenian population is less homogeneous in terms of social classes. During the socialist period, society was made of the political élite on the top and working class at the bottom (Svetlik found in Barbič, 1994a). Outside this 'modified' pyramidal social structure, Svetlik (*ibid*) placed the intellectuals (scientists, writers, artists) and private farmers<sup>6</sup>. The former were 'excluded' because they were seen as being in opposition to the ruling [political] élite, while the latter, according to Svetlik, formed a marginal social group that was excluded from the official State policy, and had to take care of its own survival (this changed in the 1970s as we will see later). In independent Slovenia, new social and political élites are coming up (Adam, 1994). Adam (*ibid*) suggested that some new groups of nouveau riche, new political élite and a middle class are already emerging. Data from the field confirm this (Verbole, this dissertation).

### **1.3 Slovenia's administrative and political system**

For the purpose of this dissertation it is relevant that we become acquainted with Slovenia's political scene, and formal structures of authority in order to understand the complex situation encountered in Pišce later on.

With its new Constitution (Constitution of Republic Slovenia, 1992), Slovenia became a democratic parliamentary state, based on the principle of the separation of legislative and executive powers, and an independent judiciary<sup>7</sup>. Executive power is held by the government, and the President of the Republic, who is elected directly by the citizens. The government comprises a head of government chosen from the majority coalition parties in the National Assembly (*državni zbor*) and 17 ministers. The established principle is that the head of government comes from the party that won the majority of votes during elections (Lukšič, 1996). The legislative body is the National Assembly which is elected during the general

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<sup>6</sup> In 'socialist' Slovenia more than 83 percent of land was owned by private family farms.

<sup>7</sup> The highest judicial branches of power are the Supreme Court and the Constitutional Court, and in 1994, Slovenia established a Human Rights Ombudsman.

elections. The National Council (*državni svet*), as the second chamber of Slovenia's Parliament, has minor powers<sup>8</sup>.

While Slovenia was still a constituent member of former Yugoslavia, its political system until the first democratic elections in 1990 was characterized by a monopolist political party - *Zveza komunistov* (the League of Communist) that was integrated into the State leadership, and has been the exclusive centre of political power. However, in contrast to other socialist countries, Yugoslavia started the process of decentralization of the political system as early as in 1948. This meant that the powers in particular spheres of social life were gradually transferred from the federal level to the republics<sup>9</sup>, and further, to the municipalities (Lukšič, 1996). This process was speeded up after 1974 with the new Constitution that introduced the self-managing socialism. At the end of this process the only powers remaining at the federal level were in the areas of foreign policy, monetary policy, and military defence.

Thus, the transition from socialism to post-socialism was only a question of time. In Slovenia, this transition began in the 1980s, and it was a reforming fraction of Slovenian League of Communists, together with the opposition forces, who played an important role in the reform process towards restructuring the system of self-managing socialism to the parliamentary democracy.

The first democratic elections were held in 1990. They have resulted in the victory of the DEMOS coalition<sup>10</sup>, while the former president of the Slovenian League of Communists, Mr. Kučan<sup>11</sup>, won the elections for President of the Republic of Slovenia.

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<sup>8</sup> The National Council provides consultation and protects the interests which Slovenia recognizes of vital importance for its existence. The National Council is composed of representatives of employers, employees, small-scale business owners, farmers and local community representatives.

<sup>9</sup> The other five republics were as follows: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia with the two autonomous provinces: the provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo.

<sup>10</sup> The members of the DEMOS coalition were the Christian Democrat Party, the Farmers Party and Slovenia's Democratic Party.

<sup>11</sup> He was re-elected for the third time in 1997.

The second election in 1992, resulted in a so-called 'Grand coalition' (*Velika koalicija*). The grand coalition in the period from 1992 - 1996 consisted of the three parties: the Liberal Democrats as the strongest party (party assembled from the old as well as the newly emerging political structures), the United List of the Social Democrats (former communists) and the Christian Democrats. The Liberal Democrats have been, in this period, often accused of reascending to authority and usurping the levers of economic power or as Adam (1994:43) put it '... the government could do more to control wild capitalism.'

However, the Liberal Democrats did well also in the latest elections in 1996. They have got the majority of seats in the parliament (27 percent), while the Slovenian People's Party got 19,4 percent of all seats and the Social Democrats got 16,1 percent.

### **1.3.1 The two levels of government**

The Slovenian governmental system has two levels of government, namely the national and the municipal level<sup>12</sup>. They both have the capacity to influence rural as well as tourism development by their policies and actions. Currently, there is no intermediate level between the two levels of government, although the Law on the Local-Self Government of 1994<sup>13</sup> foresees the establishment of a region as an institutionalised form of cooperation between municipalities and the State.

In the following section, the focus is on the municipal level as it is expected that the municipalities will play an important role in the formulation and implementation of the general and specific (i.e., tourism, agriculture) economic developmental policies.

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<sup>12</sup> The legal framework for the establishment and operation of regions are the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, the Law on Local Self-Government and the Law on Regions (under preparation).

<sup>13</sup> Official Gazette of the Republic Slovenia 72-73/93.

In Slovenia, the municipalities<sup>14</sup> are the basic local self-governing units (Constitution of Republic Slovenia, Article 138). In 1997, Slovenia had 147 municipalities (see Appendix 2), and expectations are that their number will increase as the reform of Local Self-Government that began in 1994 has not been completed yet. A Local Self-Government should be in theory understood as ... opposed to the central government ... denoting the right and ability of municipal authorities to regulate and manage a substantial share of public affairs under their own responsibilities and the interests of the local population within the limits of the law ... (Vlaj, 1995: 37).

The following section depicts that over the past four years municipalities have both gained or lost some form of responsibility.

### **The Municipal Level**

The highest decision-making body on all matters concerning the rights and duties of the Municipality is the Municipal Council<sup>15</sup>. The Mayor, the Supervisory Board<sup>16</sup>, and the

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<sup>14</sup> A Municipality may comprise a single community or a number of local communities whose inhabitants are bound together by common needs and interests. A Municipality may be established by statute following a vote in favour of its establishment at a referendum conducted to ascertain the will of the people in the area affected (Constitution, Article 139).

<sup>15</sup> The Council duties are the following: to adopt the Municipality's statute, decrees and other municipal acts with which the rights and obligations of organisations and individuals in the Municipality are generally regulated, to adopt the budget and final account of the Municipality, to give consent when particular duties from State jurisdiction are transferred to the Municipality, to appoint and to dismiss members of the Supervisory Committee, members of commissions and committees of the Municipal Council, representatives of the Municipality in the Advisory Committee, and other representatives of the Municipality in public enterprises, institutions, foundations, etc., to appoint, upon the proposal of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor(s) and a Secretary of the municipal administration, communicates its opinion on the appointment of the head of the administrative unit, to decide on the acquisition and abandonment of municipal property (if the Mayor is not authorised accordingly by a municipal act), and, the Statute of the Municipality.

<sup>16</sup> The Supervisory Board exercises supervision over the management of municipal assets, supervises the use of budget means with respect to purpose and efficiency, and supervises the financial operations of users of budget means. The members of the Supervisory Board are appointed and dismissed by the Municipal Council.

Elections Commission<sup>17</sup> (see organigram in Appendix 3) represent the rest of the municipal bodies. Municipal bodies are elected every four years.

### *The Municipal Council (svet občine) and the Mayor*

The Municipal Council is composed of members (the number varies from 7-45 depending on the number of inhabitants in the Municipality) from different political parties who are elected by the citizens on the basis of general and equal voting rights at free and direct elections by secret ballot<sup>18</sup>. The Municipal Council has its own organs, namely the Chair and the Vice-Chair. They are both elected by the members of the Municipal Council themselves, while the Secretary is nominated by the Mayor. The Municipal Council has its Commissions (i.e., Commission on Urban Planning and Environment) and Committees. The latter may vary from one Municipality to another.

The Mayor is the legal representative of the Municipality. He/she proposes the municipal budget, decrees and other acts within the jurisdiction of the Municipal Council to be passed by the Municipal Council and is responsible for the implementation of the decisions of the Municipal Council. The Mayor is the head of the municipal administration. In relation to the Municipal Council, the Mayor has an equal status authority.

### *Competencies of the Municipal Authorities*

The Republic of Slovenia defined the competence of Local Self-Government in the Law on Local Self-Government (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia 72-73/93). This law

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<sup>17</sup> The municipal Elections Commission is appointed by the Municipal Council. This commission is responsible for the lawfulness of elections to the Municipal Council, approves candidates, determines polling stations, appoints elections boards, assesses the results of elections, and so on.

<sup>18</sup> Members of Municipal Councils are elected according to the majority or proportional systems depending on the number of members of the Municipal Council (the majority system applies in cases of up to 12 members, and the proportional system for more than 12) while representatives of minority communities are elected according to the majority system. Every citizen who has reached the age of 18 years on the day of holding elections and has not been deprived of voting rights has the right to vote. The citizen has voting rights in the Municipality in which he has permanent residence. Members of ethnic minorities (Italians, Hungarians and Gypsies) in ethnically mixed areas have the right to vote and be elected as representatives of the community in the Municipal Council. Minority ethnic groups are guaranteed the right to representation by the Constitution and Law on Local Self-Government.

specifies twenty general tasks that municipalities are to perform to satisfy their residents needs. Among these, the following activities are particularly relevant to this dissertation:

- to provide the conditions for the economic development of the Municipality,
- to provide housing through creating condition for building new houses and to increase the so called social housing fund,
- to protect the air, the soil, the water resources, to insure the noise protection, take care of the collection and recycling of waste, and to perform other activities related to the preservation of the environment,
- to build the local infrastructure, and to maintain the existing infrastructure including the recreational and other public areas (i.e., parks),
- to accelerate the development of sport and recreation activities, and
- to promote activities in the field of education, information, culture and to support the activities of various societies, tourism and culture on their territory.

In July 1996, the Constitutional Court returned some more jurisdiction to municipalities (Law on Local Self-Government; Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, 44/96) and I refer here to the competencies that are most relevant:

- preparing planning permit documentation, and
- decisions on land use.

In practice, this means that the municipalities have got the responsibility to adopt the *Physical Planning and Land-Use Plan (prostorski izvedbeni načrt)* as well as to adopt the *Long-term Plans for the Development* of the whole Municipality (*dolgoročni plan občine*), and to determine areas available for housing, industrial zones, and areas for the development of

tourism. At the same time, this also meant that municipalities would have to formulate their own local developmental strategies. These all had consequences for the developments in Pišece, as it will be shown in the forthcoming chapters.

One of the 'slips' of the reform of Local Self-Government was that it did not specify the role of a *krajevna skupnost* (the Local Community). The *krajevna skupnost* has been very important in the past, especially in rural areas. Each Municipality was encompassing a various number of *krajevna skupnost* as it was compulsory - with regards to local people's participation in the decision making in community matters. *Krajevna skupnost* has been, for example, playing an efficient role solving the problematic communal issues (i.e., water supply, road infrastructure, electricity).

### ***Krajevna skupnost (the Local Community)***

Under the new system of Local Self-Government, the existence, role, tasks, competencies and the future of the *krajevna skupnost* were suddenly questionable in terms of its relevance to the peoples' participation in the decision-making and in terms of what its real powers would be. The 1993<sup>19</sup> Law on Local Self-Government allows the establishment of a *krajevna skupnost*<sup>20</sup>, a Village Community or a Neighbourhood Community within a given Municipality. The main idea behind that was to increase the possibilities for the involvement of the 'local interests' into the Municipality's developmental policy<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> Official Gazette of the Republic Slovenia 72-73/93.

<sup>20</sup> At this point, I would like to clarify the use of the term local community in this dissertation. When used as a synonym for *krajevna skupnost* (the sub-municipal local administrative area that is usually made up of several neighbouring settlement) it will be written with the capital letter - the Local Community (i.e., the Local Community of Pišece). On the other hand, the term local community is used in this dissertation for the people that live in the Local Community.

<sup>21</sup> The 1993 Law on Local Self-Government assures the participation of the locals in the decision-making process through the direct participation in the citizens' assembly, referendums and citizen initiatives.

Following the new Law on Local Self-Government, all the powers are now transferred to the Municipality. The legal status<sup>22</sup> of the 'narrower parts' of the Municipality circuits, their legal independence, their rights and powers are to be determined by the Municipality's statute. Here I would like to point out, that the statutes of the municipalities are not identical, and while each Municipality follows the general pattern, there will be variations within the statutes regarding the status, role and responsibilities of *krajevna skupnost*. Some municipalities, for example, might reject the existence of the *krajevna skupnost* (Čuden-Rebula, 1997). The field data show that this has created some problems as the number of the channels for people to participate in the decision-making process has been reduced or as Lukšič (1996) suggests, peoples' participation is reduced to voting at elections - direct elections of Mayor and the members of the Municipal Council. I return to this issue in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

The administrative organ of the *krajevna skupnost*, is the Local Community Council (*svet krajevne skupnosti*) that is chaired by its President.

#### *The Local Community Council*

The Local Community Council represents the interests of the *krajevna skupnost*. The members of the Council are elected at the local elections every four years. Members of the Council will elect among themselves the Council's President, Secretary and Treasurer. The status and role of the *krajevna skupnost* are outlined by the municipal Statute, while the *krajevna skupnost* has to outline its own statute as well (along the lines of the municipal one), that needs to be accepted by the Local Community Council.

In general, the Local Community Council can perform tasks, such as to cooperate with the Municipal Council in the process of formulation and implementation of spatial planning, the conservation of the natural and cultural heritage, and to confirm and accept the plans and programs for the development of the *krajevna skupnost*. The inhabitants of the *krajevna skupnost* are able to participate at the *zbor krajanov* (the Assembly of all the inhabitants of the Local Community) to discuss the problems of the Local Community and the work of the

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<sup>22</sup> The status of *krajevna skupnost* can be either that of 'legal person' or one of 'person of public law'.

Local Community Council as well as the performance of their representative in the council and the work of the municipal organs from the perspective of the interests of the Local Community.

So far, we could observe that municipalities are sort of a link or intermediary between the local communities and the State. While this allows the State to communicate its needs concerning the development to local people efficiently, the question is whether people (i.e., at the Local Community level) possess an equal ability to provide feedback to constructive debate on policy direction. The question of whether the *krajevna skupnost* can play an important role in creating possibilities for direct local participation in development of local areas will be addressed later in this dissertation.

#### **1.4 Key features of the economy**

Slovenia is industrialized and export oriented. The main exporters are: the electronics industry, metal processing and machine building, textiles, pharmaceuticals, the chemical and paper industry, and more niche-oriented producers of for example jewellery, and skiing equipment. With a per capita income of US \$12,500 (National Office for Statistics, 1997), Slovenia ranks among the moderately developed countries of the European Union.

Most of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) is generated by industry (37.8 percent) and trade and business services (57.8 percent). Agriculture accounts for 4.9 percent of GDP, and tourism for 2.9 percent. The percentage of the GDP generated by tourism has been slowly increasing since 1993<sup>23</sup>.

While agriculture seems to be less and less important to the country's gross domestic product (Erjavec et al., 1997), tourism is becoming increasingly important, and it is expected that it

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<sup>23</sup> In early 1990s, Slovenia's tourism experts attributed the low share of tourism to the decrease in the number of foreign visitors, due to the atmosphere of extreme uncertainty caused by the war in the Balkans, the limited outside awareness that Slovenia is a new and an independent state, the confusion caused by a name with several variations (Slovakia, Slavonia, Slovenia), and the lack of a distinctive image (Informacija o turističnem prometu v Sloveniji, 1994).

will play a considerable role in the nations' future economic development also through its influence on the foreign currency flow (Slovenia's Strategy for Tourism Development, 1995).

The State's interest in the economic benefits of tourism development (see also Chapter 2) is easy to understand as the last seven years have dealt a near-fatal blow to the Slovenian economy. The economic down turn since 1991 is characterized not only by the double transition, but also by a whole range of external disturbances. The disintegration of Yugoslavia, the war in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the loss of the greater Yugoslavian market<sup>24</sup>, the disturbance of the transport and other communication links to Southern Europe, the confiscation of the property of Slovenian companies in other republics of former Yugoslavia and the non-selective international sanctions against the republics of former Yugoslavia are only some of the shocks that have negatively affected the country's economy. To this a growing competitiveness from the former Warsaw Pact (CMEA<sup>25</sup>) member states have to be added.

For a better understanding of the reasons 'behind' the changes in Slovenia's economic, political and social context, the situation before and after independence is briefly discussed below.

### *Slovenia before 1991*

Slovenia was the wealthiest and the most developed of former Yugoslavia's six republics. With eight percent of the total Yugoslavian population in 1991 (10 percent of the country's economically active population), it delivered around one-fifth of the Federation's social product. The average per capita social product was approximately twice that of the rest of the

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<sup>24</sup> While before independence Slovenia could always count upon a 'domestic' market of 22 million people, after independence this market shrank to two million. At the same time Slovenia had to face two developments which were not foreseen: the recession in Europe made penetration of new markets more difficult than it was anticipated, and the collapse of CMEA placed member states in competition for exactly the same markets and sources of foreign investment. It was difficult for Slovenia to distinguish itself in such a competitive market. From its position as supplier of high-quality goods to a 'Balkan' market, Slovenia risked becoming perceived as one of many providers of low-quality goods for the European market.

<sup>25</sup> CMEA stands for the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, also known as a Warsaw Pact. Slovenia (nor Yugoslavia) never belonged to this so called Eastern Block.

Federation, and the net personal incomes of Slovenians were 144 percent higher than the Yugoslavian average.

Slovenia specialized in such high-quality products as electrical equipment, electronics, pharmaceutical, and luxury goods. At the same time Slovenian family farms with only 7 percent of Yugoslavia's agricultural area delivered more than 30 percent of that country's fruit and 15 percent of its forest products. Before independence, Slovenia accounted for almost 30 percent of Yugoslavia's total export, and 22 percent of its imports. Tourism accounted for 2 percent.

### *Towards an independent state*

In spite of Slovenia's 'secure' economic position in former Yugoslavia, Slovenians pursued their independence. Contrary to common belief that the disintegration of the Yugoslav Federation mainly resulted from 'separatism' and 'nationalism' (Zimmerman, 1995), economic causes contributed to the decision of some of the constituent republics to choose independence. In the case of Slovenia, there were three principal economic reasons for withdrawing from the Yugoslav Federation:

1) *The federal policy of inter-republican distribution:* Slovenia as the wealthiest republic suffered most from this policy. In 1990, net transfer of funds from Slovenia to the rest of Yugoslavia was estimated at 6.5 percent of Slovenia's GDP. This re-distribution was regulated through various federal agencies, in which Slovenia's voice was only one among eight<sup>26</sup>. A high proportion of this redistribution, which was nominally directed to economic development, was often spent on prestigious administrative or cultural projects, or was spent on 'pet' projects of local bureaucrats, reflecting political patronage rather than an opportunity for economic growth, or was spent on the 'personal' projects of local bureaucrats.

2) *The opposition of the other republics to economic liberalization policies:* In the late 1980s, the Federal government began to deal with the need for economic restructuring. Different

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<sup>26</sup> Each of the six republics and the two autonomous provinces had a right to one voice in the various federal agencies and institutions.

strategies were proposed, among them the so-called Marković's Programme<sup>27</sup> of 1989 which was close to Slovenian economic interests. This programme envisaged rapid structural and institutional reform that would lead to the strengthening of a federation-wide market economy, and a reduction of the traditional practice of political economic intervention by republican élites. In addition, it called for support for a multi-party democracy instead of the monopolist position of the League of Communists. However, the other Yugoslavian republics resented this programme, favouring instead a continuing role for a paternalistic and interventionist State. The ill feelings generated led to constant conflicts between Slovenia and the other Yugoslavian republics.

3) *The currency reform and the restructuring of the banking system:* Different republics' attitudes to the Marković's economic reform were conditioned in part by their different orientations to the external world, especially in areas such as currency reform and the restructuring of the banking system. The currency reform was supposed to cut down inflation and that was not acceptable for some politicians. The reform of the banking system, on the other hand, was supposed to result in a bigger decentralization and was to allow the foreign bank to enter in Yugoslavia's banking system.

Slovenia's struggle for independence, and its part in the increasing political tensions in the late 1980s<sup>28</sup> that resulted in the painful and bloody disintegration of Yugoslavia, were rooted in its wish to establish control over its own economic destiny. Slovenia preferred to take its chances as an independent nation rather than continue to have the government in Belgrade dissipate its economic advantages in the pursuit of Federal policies and the support of a structure that did not serve its interests.

Nevertheless, independence has not brought all of the economic gains that people expected it would bring. It has proved more difficult to develop a market economy than to make the transition from a one-party to a multiple-party political system (Barbič, 1994a). Slovenia did not become a second Switzerland overnight, as some politicians hinted it would. Negative

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<sup>27</sup> Ante Marković was then the president of Federal Executive Council.

<sup>28</sup> Slovenia was the first republic of the former Yugoslavia to hold democratic elections.

rates of industrial growth and high levels of unemployment, both of which were almost unknown in the days of the self-managing socialism, are only two of the difficulties the country had to face. In 1996, unemployment reached 14.3 percent (Gospodarska zbornica Slovenije, 1997). The welfare state is slowly collapsing, resulting in cuts to the rights and benefits of the average Slovenian<sup>29</sup> (Verboie, 1997b). The quality of life is being maintained with the help of the 'grey' economy, i.e., the 'after-work' activities that generate extra income, helping some to survive and others to raise their standard of living (Slovenian Committee for UNICEF, 1996).

### *Independent Slovenia - Creating a niche for itself in the New Europe*

In the seven years since gaining its independence, Slovenia has been actively creating a niche for itself in the new Europe. The government has been formulating policies on all aspects of national life, including rural development and the development of tourism. Several processes (i.e., democratization, decentralization, privatization) are influencing the legal and political conditions in which these policies are evolving and are thus crucial to the explanation of the new orientations in Slovenia's development policy.

### *Political, economic and social changes that have influenced Slovenia's context*

The following processes have played an important role in changing the reality of Slovenia (Verboie, 1996; Mešl, 1996):

(1) *democratization*: this process has directly influenced the whole political, economic and social system. The distribution of power has changed and the reflection of these changes can be seen in a new governmental structure and policy orientation.

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<sup>29</sup> The former social benefits in Slovenia, for example, included free education at the university level, free health care service for all citizens (including dental and specialist care), pension and health insurance, all paid by the employer and guaranteed for all working people, including farmers. Women (optional for men) were guaranteed paid maternity leave for a period of one year (including farm women since 1982). Working people could have relatively cheap holidays in their company's facilities either on the Adriatic coast, at a health resort or in the mountains (so called social tourism, but preferably labelled 'workers tourism').

(2) *decentralization*: this process has influenced the transformation of governmental structure and the establishment of Local Self-Government which laid the framework for regional development strategies. The system of Local Self-Government in Slovenia was restructured in 1994 as we discussed in previous sections. In theory this means:

- more equitable distribution of power and direct support for local development (i.e., budgeting);
- more decentralization and transformation of the supporting institutions; and
- more opportunities for new programmes and support measures for local development.

(3) *privatization*: this process provided the foundation for economic restructuring in Slovenia. Privatization laws created new conditions, legislation and socio-economic structures.

The effects of these three processes have extended to rural areas and agriculture as well as tourism. Before going further, a brief review of the developments affecting the agricultural sector and the Slovenian countryside in the last few decades is presented. First, a description of the situation in the rural and tourism sectors before these changes occurred is given followed by an overview of the influence such change had on both sectors.

### **1.5 Developments in rural and agriculture areas**

The major changes in Slovenia's countryside and agriculture occurred after the Second World War. Post-war policies gave priority to industrialization of the country's economy over agricultural development. Consequently, most of the economic activities were concentrated in the cities, causing the rural population to migrate to urban areas in search of jobs. The rapid depopulation of rural areas, mainly by the younger farming population (Verbole, 1993), caused the agricultural work force to shrink rapidly.

In the early 1970s, a so-called agrarian reform began in Slovenia. It aimed at overcoming the negative trends in agriculture and the growing disparities in regional development. The first of the reform's objectives was more intensive agriculture and stronger market orientation of family farms. It was hoped to achieve this by stimulating intensive production, especially on livestock farms. The second objective was to assure better living conditions and greater prospects for employment in rural areas by stimulating industry and infrastructure development (Mešl, 1996). Since the 1980s, Slovenia's government has been intervening by providing subsidies especially in the marginal areas with specific developmental problems. These included subsidies for the planning and implementation of different rural development programmes, the building of local infrastructure, investment in the supplementary economic activities on family farms, investment in the development of small businesses in the countryside, and tourism development (Barbič, 1994a).

In the early 1990s, it was obvious that neither the programmes proposed within the 1970s agricultural reform nor the subsidies in the 1980s solved the problems of Slovenia's countryside. On the contrary, when the global transition process started, the following problems emerged as a direct result of the past policy orientation: growing unemployment, caused by changing markets; global restructuring of the economy which has effected industry in rural areas; part-time farming (as the unemployment rate among farmers has increased in the last two years by 150 percent); transformation of the natural landscape, caused by the switch from extensive to intensive land use in flat lands and valleys; and the trend toward the abandoning of land in the more peripheral areas (Mešl, 1996; Verbole, 1996).

At the beginning of the 1990s, the rural areas were characterized by:

(1) *Decreasing farm population and small number of full-time farms:* According to the 1991 Census<sup>30</sup>, almost half of the Slovenian population live (nearly a one million people) in rural areas. The rural population is a mixture of blue and white collar workers, intellectuals and farmers. In 1994, farmers made up only 7.6 percent of the total population. Only 12 percent of farmers were working full-time, thus earning all of their income from their farms. More

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<sup>30</sup> In Slovenia, the Population, Household and Housing Unit Census takes place every 10 years.

than 70 percent of farmers were part-time farming<sup>31</sup>. According to Kovačič (1995), an increasing share of the young farming population were taking jobs outside agriculture while agricultural production activities were carried out on the 156,549 family farms by the retired population (25 percent) and part-time farmers (20 percent).

(2) *Unfavourable production conditions for agriculture*: Most of the land (94 percent of the total area) is either agricultural land or forests; 8,698 km<sup>2</sup> (42.7 percent of the total area) is used for agriculture while 50.2 percent of the total area is covered by forests (see Table 1). Approximately 83 percent of total agricultural land is privately owned (an estimate based on the data collected by the National Office for Statistics, 1994).

Table 1: Land use in Slovenia in 1000 ha\*

	1960	1970	1980	1990
<b>agricultural land<sup>32</sup></b>	<b>937.6</b>	<b>944.9</b>	<b>875.2</b>	<b>866.4</b>
field & gardens	294.7	275.0	253.9	247.0
orchards	29.2	35.8	36.1	36.3
vine yards	23.1	20.6	21.3	21.5
meadows	288.0	323.4	333.4	347.7
pastures	299.2	286.8	226.8	211.5
other	3.4	3.3	3.7	2.4
<b>forests</b>	<b>955.0</b>	<b>947.7</b>	<b>1017.0</b>	<b>1041.5</b>

\* Data are from the National Office for Statistics (1994)

It is also necessary to point out that most of the agricultural land (72 percent) is situated in areas with limited production conditions<sup>33</sup>. Two more characteristics could be observed with regards to land use, namely that most of the farms have fragmented holdings (Verbole, 1993), and that there was no national land market (Mešl, 1996).

<sup>31</sup> Slovenian statistics distinguishes between part-time mixed farms where at least one of the family farmers is fully employed on the farm, and part-time supplementary farms where family members are all employed outside the farm.

<sup>32</sup> In Slovenia, agricultural land includes cultivated land (fields, orchards, meadows, etc.) as well as pastures.

<sup>33</sup> Areas with limited production conditions are alpine, sub-alpine areas and areas on the Karst plateau. Criteria are the altitude above sea level (600 meters or more) and the inclination of slopes (exceeding 20% or 11.5). For details see the Law on the Categorization of Land (Official Gazette of the Socialist Republic Slovenia, 45/82).

Two other aspects are important with regard to the structure of Slovenia's agricultural production. The first is that livestock production (animal husbandry) is the predominant activity since the result of the agrarian reform of the early 1970s. About 31,000 farms were included in the republic's programme to intensify milk and meat production. This has created market disparities, with overproduction of milk and meat, and low production of other basic agricultural products. The second aspect is the emphasis on self-sufficiency in production - meaning that farmers produce enough for their own needs, but do not have enough to sell and make extra income (Mešl, 1996).

(3) *Small-size farms*: The average size of a Slovenian farm is 5.9 hectares. This includes all the land categories. Almost one third of farms (28.4 percent) have less than one hectare of land, 36 percent have between 1 and 5 hectares and only 17.6 percent are larger than 10 ha (Kovačič, 1995). In recent years, the average size of farms has decreased despite the reduction in their number. With regard to the ownership, data show that part-time farmers held almost half of the total land. This among others suggests that the potential land fund for improvement of the structure is relatively modest.

(4) *Low image of farmers and farming in society*, and a lack of interest in younger generations to farm could be observed (Verbole, 1997b). Research shows that farmers and farm women often experience difficulties in finding life-time partners, they have lower education than the rest of the population (Barbič, 1994b; Verbole, 1997b). Often it is difficult to assure inheritance of the farm.

### ***Processes of change and the future of rural areas***

The political and economic changes brought about by the processes of democratization, decentralisation and privatisation also influence the rural sector. An explanation of how such processes play an important role in changing structures and trends in agriculture and rural development in Slovenia follows.

The process of democratization, as already mentioned, has directly influenced the whole political, economic and social system. The distribution of power has changed and with it the government structure and policy orientation. This has enabled stronger involvement from '*Slovenska kmečka stranka*' (the Slovenian Farmers Party) in agricultural policy developments. Consequently, the farmers' lobby has brought about several changes in the agricultural sector's development. In 1992, Parliament approved a new national Strategy for the Development of Agriculture (SNSDA) that set goals for the future of agriculture and rural areas placing emphasis on the socio-economic aspects of rural development. Two years earlier, in 1990, it had passed a special law to develop depopulated areas<sup>34</sup> as part of a package of new development support measures, which included providing new information and knowledge (local development plans), expanding the infrastructure (investment), and providing 'start-up' capital (loans to stimulate production). New opportunities and challenges for the rural sector opened with the passage of the new *Law on Enterprises*<sup>35</sup> which allows private initiative to be a vehicle for economic development in all sectors, including agriculture.

The decentralization process, at least in theory, has opened new possibilities for local development by relocating the distribution of power in favour of people under the new system of self-governing municipalities.

The passage of the *Law on Privatization*<sup>36</sup> has created new conditions, legislation, and structures in the rural sector as well (i.e., the 'denationalization' of forests). However, the privatization and related new legislation have destroyed the monopoly that the agricultural cooperatives had on marketing agricultural produce.

These reforms have created new conditions in the rural sector, which present various challenges and potential problems, namely:

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<sup>34</sup> Law on Stimulating Development of Demographically Threatened Areas (*Zakon o spodbujanju razvoja demografsko ogroženih območij v Sloveniji*), Official Gazette of the RS 48/90.

<sup>35</sup> Law on Enterprises (*Zakon o podjetjih*), Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia 30/93, 29/94, 50/94 and 82/94.

<sup>36</sup> Law on Privatization (*Zakon o privatizaciji*), Official Gazette of the RS 7/92, 55/92 and 32/94.

- How to stimulate development of new activities on farms and in rural areas within the limits imposed by the current (aging) population structure, the low investment capacity, and the poor educational structure;
- How to stimulate farmers' ability to capitalize on their land within the limits imposed by the current income structure, and the high dependency of part-time and supplementary farms on income from agriculture; and
- How to supplement the function of agricultural cooperatives in marketing the small-scale agricultural production under the new marketing conditions.

The Strategy for Development of Agriculture (1993: 77-87) set out guidelines for the future development: ... Rural development policy must be based on an integrated approach, encompassing ... agricultural adjustment and development, economic diversification - notably small and medium scale industries and rural services, the management of natural resources, the enhancement of environmental functions, and the promotion of culture, tourism and recreation.

Reflecting upon the proposed trends in rural development in Slovenia and the new challenges posed by the transition process now occurring, some conclusions can be drawn:

- Agriculture is no longer seen as the sole economic basis for the long-term development of rural areas, and there is more focus on increasing the quality of life through job creation and the development of the rural tourism and small scale entrepreneurial activities;
- Agricultural development should take place within the wider context of rural development; and
- Development of rural areas as a policy objective can be achieved by maintaining the countryside's identity and diversity.

The State takes several approaches to the realization of these goals via financial initiatives vis-a-vis research called *An Integrated Development Program for Agriculture and Rural Areas* (CRP Zemlja) and developmental projects within the program called the *Integrated Development of Countryside and Village Renovation (CRPOV)*.

The Centre for Integrated Development of Countryside and Village Renovation (CRPOV Centre) was established in 1991 by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food (MOA). The main idea behind it was to set up a public institution which would oversee the development of the countryside through the CRPOV developmental projects. At the same time CRPOV can be seen as the implementor of a national strategy for solving the problems of Slovenia's countryside (SNSDA).

The CRPOV projects put community-based initiative and active participation of the local population as central to the local development in rural areas (CRPOV Project Guide, 1995; Koščak, 1998). Among the projects that are expected to influence the development of tourism in the countryside the CRPOV project 'Slovenia's Tourist Wine Routes' needs to be mentioned as it seems to be receiving a lot of promotion and funding (Kokolj-Prošek, 1995; Perko, 1996).

Following the overview of Slovenia's agricultural and rural sector, an outline of the history and present day setting of tourism in general and for the rural areas in particular is discussed.

## **1.6 Tourism in Slovenia and the tourism sector's perspective on rural tourism**

The Slovenian State regards tourism as a potential stimulus to the development of a market economy. It also regards tourism as the best way to make the most out of Slovenia's 'selling points', namely, its favourable geographical position, its historical and cultural heritage, and its natural resources, most of which are still in pristine condition (Slovenia's Strategy for Tourism Development, 1995).

As declared by the National Secretary for Tourism in 1995, '*Tourism is one of the most important factors in the restructuring of Slovenia's economy ... Our goal is to ensure a domestic and foreign market in Slovenia for various locally made products*' (Kremenšek, 1995). According to the same source (*ibid*), 90 percent of all Slovenians see great opportunities in developing tourism. In 1996, Slovenia earned over a billion USD (Klančnik, 1998) on tourism and the number of tourists had increased by five percent to more than a million and a half tourists (Informacija o turističnem prometu, 1997).

#### *Brief review of tourism developments in Slovenia after 1991*

After separating away from Yugoslavia<sup>37</sup>, Slovenia got a rare opportunity to set afresh its guidelines for the future of tourism. The political and economic turmoil in which it found itself in 1991 created virtually an emergency situation - with no national development strategy, no tourism development policy, no Ministry for Tourism, no specific laws relating to tourism, the lack of an educational supporting system and an underdeveloped private sector. The Government has initiated the preparation of various portfolios (e.g., Tourism 2000 and a Slovenia's Tourism Development Strategy; 1995) in order to define strategic objectives for tourism development.

Slovenia designed its own strategy and policy for tourist development. The authors of Slovenia's Development Strategy for Tourism (*ibid*) have chosen to concentrate on several of the country's geographical features to 'design' an attractive tourist product. These are the Alps, the sea-coast with Karst, the health resorts and the cities. The Alpine Cluster<sup>38</sup> includes winter and summer activities and alpine features conducive to the development of tourism. Various forms of rural tourism have been developed in the Alpine, Health Resorts and Sea-coast Clusters. Mihalič (1993), on the other hand, points out also the rich potential for tourism

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<sup>37</sup> Yugoslavia's tourist policy emphasized the development of the Adriatic coast (most of it belonged to Croatia), catering mainly for mass tourism and low-priced holidays. Slovenia, therefore, with only 46 km of Adriatic coastline was unable to compete with Croatia on the international market as a sea-side holiday destination. Compared to the enormous 'Sun & Sea' tourist industry in Croatia, Slovenia had the image of a transit country, a place one travelled through to get to one's final destinations (Marković et al., 1981).

<sup>38</sup> A cluster is in the Tourism Development Strategy document defined as a group of touristic companies, tourist highlights (natural, cultural or artificial) and complementary services actively interacting in a homogeneous geographic and socio-economic unit.

development in the cities. The strategy document assesses the strong and weak points of the latest developments in Slovenian tourism. The authors make it clear that Slovenia cannot afford, nor does it want, mass tourism. The focus should rather be on quality tourism.

Slovenia has a lot to offer tourists, mainly because of the diversity of its natural environment. Slovenia's small size and its concern for the environment tends to rule out mass tourism. The current policies favour high-quality tourism for lovers of culture, nature sport, and a healthy outdoor lifestyle (Slovenia's Tourism Development Strategy, 1995). All this points to the need to focus more attention on rural tourism. However, rural tourism received little attention from the tourist sector.

The main points of the Tourism Development Strategy are:

- the formulation of strategic developmental goals: *economic* (to double income from tourism, selling goods and services to tourists, to restructure the tourism economy); *social* (improving the quality of life for local communities); *cultural* (heightened sense of cultural identity); and *ecological* (sustainability);
- the creation of a framework for tourism to function in both the public and private sectors;
- the provision of guidelines to achieve the above mentioned goals; and
- the formulation of the plan of activities and measurements to preserve the tourism assets for future development.

This document however, does not specify who should 'carry on' the development of tourism, nor what kind of tourism should be developed, and last but not least, the document does not address the importance of the socio-economic and political changes in the wider context (i.e., the influence of privatization, reform of the Local Self-Government) on the development of tourism.

Thus, it can be concluded that the Tourism Development Strategy, and *Activities and Measures Scheme on Tourism Planning in Slovenia* do not set out the roles of national tourism organisations and other organizations involved with tourism development (for an overview of the organization of tourist sector see Appendix 4), and do not provide for assistance in the tourist industry. Last but not least, the policy agenda of national tourism development in Slovenia needs to be refined and mobilised.

### **Issues in Slovenia's Tourist Policy**

The Strategy for Tourism Development was formulated by Slovenian, Italian and Spanish experts. At first, they produced a 'cluster map of Slovenia', which completely neglected the countryside. The experts carried out these policy setting initiatives with little or no consultation of the local and regional Tourist Associations, nor the local people.

While it may be possible to policy makers to implement such a process with minimal consultation, things are very different in practice. The development of environmentally sustainable tourism is a widely used term among planners, but in reality, environmental and social concerns are not incorporated into government tourist policy. Some of the most frequently mentioned issues are: balance of payments, provision of infrastructure, balanced regional development and promotion. How such developments are to be achieved is not spelled out. The development of tourism is more than just the development of proper tourist products, and Slovenian tourism still has quite a long way to go.

Today, Slovenia's tourism, and especially rural tourism, is suffering from the additional problem of non co-operation between the relevant institutions. The need for cooperation between relevant parties (the State, the private sector, and voluntary organizations) is stated very clearly in the Tourism Development Strategy document, but this is more easily said than done. This non-cooperation does not simply exist because there is no structure to make the cooperation more likely it has to do also with the struggles between various ministries and other institutions. Similarly, little attention has been so far given to the political and economic

changes and their impacts on the reorganisation of the tourist sector at the local, regional and national levels including the new legislation enacted to encourage this process.

### *Local Self-Government and tourism development at the local level*

Under the new Law on Local Self-Government<sup>39</sup>, the municipalities were asked to become more and more responsible for their own affairs, picking up many of the services and activities which were before the provenance of a national state. That applies to public services in the field of traffic infrastructure, nature and culture conservation and physical and spatial planning, and municipalities can indirectly influence also the development of tourism at the local level<sup>40</sup>. The above mentioned law does not explicitly determine the responsibilities of the municipalities to the affairs of public interest when it comes to tourism, and that is a reason why municipalities often neglect them. The field data reveal the several problems that result from the poor organization of tourism at the municipal level.

Many of the local changes, such as the reorganization of Local Self-Government and an increased number of new municipalities, have disrupted the old system of planning at the municipal level. The introduction of a 'decentralized' power structure in the context of tourism presents all the agencies concerned with a potential source of problems. The municipalities are, according to the Law on Local Self-Government<sup>41</sup>, suddenly responsible for niche promotion co-financed by the Slovenia's Tourism Promotion Centre (CFTP), for local information to tourists, physical planning (including the demands relating to tourism and recreation), administration, and control of physical quality standards. It is difficult to imagine how many of the new municipalities<sup>42</sup> will be able to deal with the new demands, since they barely have the basic infrastructure to function themselves. It is very unlikely that they have

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<sup>39</sup> Official Gazette of the Republic Slovenia 72-73/1993.

<sup>40</sup> see Law on the Local Self-Government, Official Gazette RS 72-73/93.

<sup>41</sup> Official Gazette of Republic Slovenia, 72-73/93, 57/94, 14/95 and 44/96.

<sup>42</sup> The Law on Local Self-Government legalized the establishment of the new municipalities, so there are now 146 municipalities, while in 1989 there were only 66 (Vlaj, 1995).

the knowledge and information necessary to direct tourism development. According to a 1996 report of Slovenia's Tourist Association, there are only few municipalities employing people who have knowledge of tourism - also known as *referent za turizem* (Officer for Tourism).

Finally, the organization of tourism in Slovenia lacks the presence of the intermediate bodies between the State and the municipalities, and while some competencies in terms of who will do what overlap, others are inadequately covered.

### **Final thoughts**

In spite of the various attempts to enhance the development of tourism in Slovenia, the national tourist policy is poorly articulated. The lack of coordination at the national level makes it difficult to coordinate and control tourism development. The Government sees tourism primarily as a general development tool, as a panacea for under-employment especially in economically depressed and peripheral areas, and anticipates that the industry will bring in foreign currency and contribute to the improvement of local infrastructure. Much of the policy stresses only the benefits, glossing over the potentially negative impact. Environmental and social concerns are not incorporated into tourist policy at government level. Like Williams and Shaw (1988), I would argue that the quality and quantity of tourist development must be controlled in the interests of local development and its negative consequences must be addressed. There is a need '*... to look not just at tourism but at the opportunity costs of its development, and the alternative strategies which could be pursued by region or community*'.

However, after seven years there is still much to be done. A foundation for co-operation with all of the relevant sectors needs to be explored and a philosophy must be developed that will be conducive to developing a successful tourist industry. Tourism is not, after all, only about hotel keeping. On the other hand, the concepts such as 'countryside' are rarely mentioned in the Tourism Development Strategy. We need to examine in a Slovenian context why this is the case. The lack of an overall national strategy also creates problems for development. Policy for tourism cannot be created in a 'vacuum'. It needs to be co-ordinated with other

sectoral strategies. This leads now the discussion of the potentially problematic future of the development of rural tourism.

### **1.7 Tourism in the countryside - The perspective of the agricultural sector**

The new policies approach tourism in rural areas as a potential source of income generation that will enhance the viability of farm and rural communities (Strategy of Agricultural Development, 1993). We could observe so far that the development of tourism in rural areas seems to be the domain of agricultural sector, while most of the governmental institutions involved with the development of tourism seem to be perceived as of marginal interest.

#### *Initial developments of rural tourism: the pioneering role of 'agritourism'*

Some rural areas of Slovenia, mainly Gorenjska and Zgornja Savinjska dolina (the Upper Savinja Valley), have a long tradition of agritourism. 'Agritourism' is by definition in the Social Contract of 1981 on the Stimulation of Agritourism Development restricted in Slovenia to only those actors who are directly involved in agricultural production (*'Družbeni dogovor o pospeševanju razvoja kmečkoga turizma'*, 1981). The definition of rural tourism and various forms of rural tourism is discussed further in the forthcoming chapter.

Between the two World Wars, farmers in the two Alpine valleys were vacation hosts to the Slovenian bourgeoisie, rich farmers and land-lords from Croatia and Serbia. After the Second World War, tourism in the Alpine villages and rural areas stagnated as construction began on tourist resorts, hotels and campgrounds, not only in the mountains, but also along the coast, to meet the growing demand for tourist facilities. Often, the original 'tourist' villages disappeared completely, to be replaced by big hotels, as happened in Kranjska gora (Vesel, 1994). Agritourism had to give way to mass tourism.

In the late 1950s, agritourism was hindered by economic problems, poor organization, and negative propaganda as the real context of rural tourism was not grasped. The country was

trying to repair and rebuild the devastation left by the Second World War. Modernization through new technologies was well underway. Farm life, however, was becoming less attractive and less profitable. In general, the standard of living on farms was low. The infrastructure was poorly developed, and there was a lack of available credit. The formally designated structures responsible for promoting and developing agritourism showed little interest in taking on their responsibilities. Moreover, there was no legislation to support rural tourism (Dretnik, 1985).

Nevertheless, by the 1970s, the general situation in Slovenia had improved enough for a boom in tourism in the countryside which occurred simultaneously with the 'revitalization' of agricultural cooperatives (Kulovec, 1995). In 1968, Slovenia's National Assembly (*državni zbor*) discussed the practically unexploited possibilities for developing agritourism as a supplementary activity. These discussions coincided with the new policy on regulating the development of mountain and highland farms - Law on Development of the Mountain and Highland Areas ('*Zakon o razvoju hribovskih območij*). The hope was that supplementary activities (e.g., selling farm products and letting rooms) would provide farmers with additional income to supplement that from agricultural activities. Together, these sources of income could give the farming families in these areas a greater measure of economic security.

### ***Rural tourism after 1970s - the dominance of agritourism***

Slovenia has been the only republic of the former Yugoslav federation to develop agritourism and has, therefore, stood alone in creating relevant policy. Initial attempts to define agritourism as a supplementary activity was set out in the *Law on Craft* in 1973 (Official Gazette of the Socialist Republic Slovenia, 26/73). This law allowed farmers who were directly involved in agricultural production to offer accommodation, food and drinks to tourists for payment. It was a way to help support marginalized rural communities. The hope was that farmers would obtain sufficient income to become financially secure and would no longer be pressed to migrate to the towns.

However, agritourism did not develop as rapidly as intended, despite various financial schemes, such as loans, grants and even private credits<sup>43</sup>, to encourage and assist farmers to supplement their earnings by undertaking 'touristic enterprises' (Makarovič, 1987). Some agricultural cooperatives even hired an extension worker (the Agricultural Advisory Service has experts for farm family and supplementary activities) to help farmers develop tourist activities. These extension workers organized crafts demonstrations, but their most important role was an educational and advisory one, helping farmers with bookkeeping, financial plans and investments, informing them of the latest legislation, and advising them on promotion and marketing or providing the help of architects to renovate houses (Verbole, 1997b).

However, even with such support, few farmers chose agritourism as a supplementary activity, for at that time it was possible to derive sufficient income from farming alone, and there were also good opportunities for getting a job elsewhere (part-time farming). But as, in the other European countries, Slovenian family farms were forced to adapt to worsening circumstances. As the economic situation in Slovenia changed owing to the reduction of State support to agriculture, and with fewer off-farm employment opportunities, the low incomes, small size of farms, and limited production conditions led to a notable increase in interest for tourism on farms, which gave rise between 1970 and 1990 to an expansion in agritourism all over Slovenia (Kulovec, 1995). In 1990, 160 farms were practising agritourism with a combined total of 1,820 beds. Almost all of these farms offered first-category accommodation (i.e., rooms with a private shower and toilet). Another 240 farms, offering 10,500 seats, were involved in excursion tourism. Four farms had camping facilities. In the next four years, another 300 farms have become involved in agritourism within a framework of several rural development projects - mainly through the CRPOV projects (Kulovec, 1995).

Thus, rural tourism is not new to the Slovenian countryside. The focus has mainly been on agritourism, which is largely of three kinds: *Stationary (agri)tourism* with farms offering full board, half board or bed & breakfast arrangements, and guests staying either with the farm family or in a guest house; *Excursion (agri)tourism* revolving around 'open-door farms',

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<sup>43</sup> In the 1980s, Kompas (one of the biggest Slovenia's public tourist corporations) had offered farmers loans without interest in return for 5-years exclusive booking rights (Dretnik, 1985).

where tourists can eat and explore farm-life for just a few hours; and *Camping on the farm*<sup>44</sup>. Of these three forms, stationary agritourism seems to be the most popular among tourists.

Until recently, there were few other countryside activities, recreational enterprises and attractions. Now other activities are booming, including horseback riding, rafting, mountain biking and so on, and these enterprises are beginning to compete with the farms for the available resources and income.

### *Agritourism - rules and regulations*

To be eligible for official participation in agritourism, one has to be a farmer, actively engaged in farming, living at the farm, and making most of one's income from farming. The state treats agritourism only as a supplementary activity, which cannot be the sole source of income, as stipulated by the legally binding Social Contract of 1981 on the Stimulation of Agritourism Development.

The Social Contract was signed in 1981 by the Executive Council of the Republic, by the municipalities, Slovenia's Association of the Agricultural Cooperatives (*Zadružna zveza Slovenije*), public Forestry Management Associations, banks, and by Slovenia's Tourist Association, agricultural schools, and representatives of the tourism industry.

Based on this Contract, farmers were organized, plans for agritourism development were prepared, advisory services for agritourism were organized, and credits for renovation of old buildings and construction of new ones were made available. The Contract also set foundation for an organization of agritourism cooperatives.

In addition, the Social Contract stipulated that municipalities were responsible for stimulating the development of recreational and other facilities that would attract tourists, educating farmers in tourism, taking measures to preserve local traditions, assuring the cooperation of the *krajevna skupnost* in the development of agritourism, coordinating work, and determining the priority areas for agritourism.

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<sup>44</sup> In order to obtain a licence for any of the mentioned tourist activities a farm has to meet the minimum hygienic and technical standards (see Law on Catering, 1995).

Based on the above mentioned Contract 'Rules and Regulations on Awarding and Using a Trade Mark for Agritourism Facilities' (*Pravilnik o podeljevanju in uporabi zaščitnega znaka za kmečki turizem*)<sup>45</sup> were formulated in 1985, and further elaborated in 1997.

#### *Advice and infrastructural support for agritouristic activities*

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food has an Agricultural Advisory Service, which became a dependent of the Ministry in 1991<sup>46</sup>. Its advisors make relevant information and knowledge available about agritourism to farmers. Currently, there are 49 specialists known as 'specialists for farm family and supplementary activities' who, at the request of the farmers will give free advise on technical issues, provide support related to farm tourism, give training courses, and occasionally help the farmers to acquire financial support.

Results from the field, suggest the high relevance of the Agricultural Advisory Service for the development of rural tourism.

#### *The marketing of agritourism*

There are several approaches to marketing agritourism and other forms of rural tourism in Slovenia. These include self-marketing (formal and informal), marketing through tourist agencies, and marketing through the Association of Slovenia's Tourist Farms<sup>47</sup> (*Združenje turističnih kmetij*). This Association took over the promotion of Slovenia's agritourism after the Cooperative Tourist Agency 'Vas' ceased to exist in 1996. The Vas was founded in 1990 as an enterprise with limited responsibilities. Its membership comprised individual farmers (53) and agricultural cooperatives (10). In 1994, the number of farmers had increased to 93,

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<sup>45</sup> Official Gazette of the SRS 41/85. These rules have been substituted with the new ones in 1997 with the Rules and Regulations on the categorization of Buildings (*Pravilnik o merilih in načinih kategorizacije nastanitvenih obratov in marin* - Official Gazette 29/97). The quality of the accommodation is indicated by the various number of apples.

<sup>46</sup> The Agricultural Advisory Service was established in 1953, and has been until 1991 working under the national Association of Agricultural Cooperatives.

<sup>47</sup> In November 1997, more than 130 individual farmers from all over Slovenia jointly established the Association of Slovenia's Tourist Farms. The main goal of the new association will be to link the country's farms and to promote agritourism and other forms of rural tourism in Slovenia as well as on the international market with the help of the CFTP.

and the number of agricultural cooperatives increased to 14. In the same year, the Vas marketed 70 percent of the beds on tourist farms, and it brought in about 15 percent of the total number of tourists. It was very common for guests (most tourists come from Britain and Germany) to make their own arrangements with farmers after a year or two with the Vas agency. This and the high membership fees contributed to the cessation.

Agritourism has not gained evenly in strength everywhere in Slovenia. Research in the Slovenian countryside (Makarovič, 1987; Verbole, 1993) shows that not all farmers have positive attitudes towards agritourism and other forms of rural tourism. Reasons for their dislike vary. Instead of benefiting marginal farms, farm tourism was often found to benefit farmers with surplus capital, or at least enough capital to switch from agriculture to tourism. Many farmers found tourists too demanding, wanting luxuriously furnished rooms that farmers were not able to provide, and food that is rarely served at farmers' tables (Cohen, 1972<sup>48</sup>). The farmers expressed it in few words: 'Tourism? No thank you!' Moreover, many of them had seen tourists mistreat their farm land and animals. This was especially common on farms close to urban areas. These farms had problems with tourists trespassing, dumping their rubbish indiscriminately, and harassing the livestock (Verbole, 1993).

A more recent cause of discontent among farmers is the difficulty they have in providing adequate facilities. While in the 1970s and 1980s, credit for building tourist capacity<sup>49</sup> was readily available, in the 1990s, it was very difficult to acquire credit, even though there was a growing interest in tourism among farmers and the public. Thus, farmers were pressed to build new developments and facilities piecemeal, investing most of what they earned from tourism into further tourist facilities. Within the last year, the quality requirements had also changed (*Pravilnik o merilih in načinih kategorizacije nastanitvenih obratov in marin*, 1997).

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<sup>48</sup> Cohen (1972) suggested that tourists are not really prepared to expose themselves to the 'strangeness' of the host environment, but rather search for the familiarity of their home environment.

<sup>49</sup> This often led to misuse of the loans, in many cases at least some of a new capacities were never used for the purpose they were meant for.

## **1.8 Discussions and conclusions**

Slovenia has undergone dynamic changes since the country's independence. The transition period and related changes such as democratization, privatization and decentralization have not only influenced national political, economic and social context, but have also significantly contributed to the changes in tourism and rural sectors. So far, little is known about how the reform of local government influences the development of rural tourism.

While the tourism sector appears to be rather neglectful towards rural tourism, rural sectors have created new developmental projects that encompass, also, the development of rural tourism. These so called CRPOV projects placed greater emphasis on the active participation of the local population.

Within the agricultural or rural sector, there are various institutions involved in rural tourism development. They range from the public to the private developmental agencies. Within the tourism sector, Slovenia's Tourist Association (a voluntary organization), has been so far the one most involved with the development of tourism at the local community level. So far, there has been little observed cooperation between the two sectors with regards to the development of rural tourism, neither who is the 'carrier of the development', or what type of tourism should be developed.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food has launched the National Programme for Rural Development and Village Renewal of the CRPOV that also supports heavily the development of rural tourism through the CRPOV developmental projects. The results of these CRPOV projects have varied throughout the years. Although rural tourism development policy is rather top-down, the CRPOV projects are aiming to enhance the local participation in the development. However, so far, little research has investigated the issue of participation since it is taken for granted that local communities are homogeneous units. There is, also, little understanding of why some CRPOV projects at the local level failed and others succeeded, and why some local communities pursue the option for rural development and others do not. Little is known about the process of social change induced by the development of rural tourism at the local level.

The next chapter examines the development of rural tourism further, and explores in more detail, accepted views, and opinions of different writers and literary sources.

## **2 GENERAL PROBLEMS AND ISSUES IN THE FIELD OF RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**

This chapter addresses the phenomena of rural tourism, followed by an examination of both the positive and negative aspects of tourism development in the countryside and its communities. Further, it focuses on the community based approaches to tourism development and sustainability as an alternative developmental paradigm. The concept of sustainability, which highlights the multi-dimensional character of rural tourism development, has resulted in a growing recognition of both the importance of local communities participation in the tourism development process and, the so-called social dimension of sustainable tourism development. This implies that tourism development should be driven by the interests of local people and not only those of external actors (i.e., the State). However, some issues involved in sustainable development, for example political issues at the local community level, continue to be overlooked, and these will be discussed in the preceding section.

### **2.1 The phenomenon of rural tourism**

In recent years throughout Europe, there has been a renewed interest in developing rural areas. The reason lies in the profound changes that have taken place in the European countryside and in rural societies. Migration to cities, and the search for better (and easier) income and employment opportunities have begun to erode the essence and vitality of rural communities. Traditional methods of farming are practiced less or not at all, the quality of the environment is deteriorating, and global competition has led to lower food prices.

Many European countries began to search for new alternatives, and more profitable economic activities to help revitalize the countryside and rural communities in the mid-1980s as it became obvious that the agricultural sector alone was no longer the key to rural development. One of the main strategies of this search was to identify ways to encourage the diversification of rural economic activities. 'Rural diversification' brought with it the notion that tourism could be used to help this revitalization process. The hope was that tourism would be the 'saver' to improve the quality of life in the countryside and slow down the rural exodus

(Garcia Ramon et al. 1995), especially in less developed regions. Tourism would generate additional income for farm and rural families and create new jobs, lead to the stabilization of the rural economy, provide support to existing business and services, and contribute to creating new ones.

The shift in government policies was accelerated by the growing numbers of city people wanting to spend their holidays in the country (Hummelbrunner and Miglbauer, 1994). Scenery, with its mix of agricultural landscapes, forests, open spaces, and picturesque villages, and the human and cultural capital of the local communities were and are the main ingredients of the 'rural idyll' that attracts tourists to rural areas (Te Kloeze, 1994; Ravbar, 1995; Stanič and Naprudnik, 1995). As a consequence, various forms of rural tourism: farm, village and agri-tourism began to flourish in rural areas.

As we saw in the earlier chapter, rural diversification in Slovenia was complicated by problems resulting from political, economic, and social transitions and transformations. Recent government efforts to switch from a centrally planned to a market-oriented economy (see Barbič, 1993 and 1992), the growing trend towards privatization and decentralization, and cutbacks in social benefits strongly influenced and changed the basis of economic and social life in Slovenian society. Thus, some of the problems and challenges facing Slovenia and its countryside are unique to its specific situation and may be typified by conditions such as:

- restricted or limited services (i.e., health, educational facilities, and so on),
- poorly developed infrastructure (i.e., roads and public transport),
- residents with perhaps strong(er) attachment to agricultural land than elsewhere in Europe (Trstenjak, 1992) and,
- socio-cultural differences between rural and urban population in terms of manner of speaking, level of conservatism, dress, social interaction, social mannerisms, and attitudes toward gender - especially women (Verbole, 1997b).

Before preceding, a general comment concerning rural tourism is given. As discussed in Chapter 1, formerly in Slovenia, rural tourism was, in fact, dominated by the development of agritourism. What is rural tourism?

At first glance simple, the answer is quite simple: rural tourism is tourism which takes place in the countryside (Lane, 1994). However, in reality, the concept is much more complex, involving not only a non-urban environment, but, also, the use of all rural resources: nature, local people, and their culture. These are used by the different providers and consumers of rural tourism in order to achieve their goals and aspirations.

Keane and Quinn (1990) indicate that because of these varied characteristics, rural tourism does not yet have a distinct image. The literature uses many terms to describe tourist activities in rural areas (Keane and Quinn, 1990), 'agritourism', 'farm tourism', and 'countryside tourism', to mention only a few. Moreover, such terms take on different meanings in various cultural contexts and countries (Lane and Bramwell, 1994). Despite suggestions that agritourism was the best market description of tourism in rural areas, none of these terms has won acceptance in all parts of Europe (*ibid*).

For the purposes of this dissertation, the following definitions formulated by Jansen-Verbeke (1991) are adopted: *Rural tourism* refers to all those forms of tourism found in the rural area. *Agritourism* is all forms of tourism directly connected to the agrarian environment, agrarian products, or agrarian sojourns whose suppliers are directly engaged in farming. *Farm tourism* is all forms of tourism directly connected to a farm (e.g., meals at the farm, entertainment at the farm, day trips to the farm). In addition, *Village tourism* (Kovacs, 1993), which also falls into the category of rural tourism, is very popular in the Hungarian countryside. Along with these principal forms of rural tourism there are a number of special interest holidays such as nature holidays (e.g., green tourism), eco-tourism, action holidays in the form of walking, climbing, water and other sports, health tourism, hunting, and many other forms of recreational activity (Jones, 1987; Boo, 1990).

Consequently, rural communities and their environs became a resource with potential benefits for the farmers and the rural communities, providing them with a supplementary economic

means besides that of direct production (Lowe, 1990; Lowe et al., 1995). Their role is changing from just meeting the food needs of the population to meeting their recreational and leisure needs as well (Cloke and Goodwin, 1992). These demands put pressure on both rural communities and the environment.

Governments and other interested parties expected the diversity of rural tourism to beneficially change rural communities, their environment and the role of agriculture. However, the consequences and experiences of rural development have not always been as positive as planned (Mathieson and Wall 1982; Ryan, 1991; Briassoulis and Van den Straaten 1992). Besides the benefits, there have also been costs including economic, socio-cultural, and physical repercussions (Mathieson and Wall 1982; Doxey, 1975; Ap, 1990 and 1992). A more specific discussion of both the benefits and costs of rural tourism follows in the next section.

## **2.2 The impacts of developing tourism in rural areas**

Mathieson and Wall (1982) group the impact of tourism into three major categories, namely socio-cultural, economic, and physical. The *socio-cultural impacts* are associated with the ways in which tourism contributes to a change in value systems, individual behaviour, family relationships, collective lifestyles, safety levels, moral conduct, creative expression, traditional ceremonies and community structure. *Economic impacts* are associated with the monetary costs and benefits that result from the development and use of tourist facilities and services, and *physical impacts* with the way tourism contributes to alterations in both the natural and man-made environment, as the two are interconnected.

In reality, the differences between these categories may be somewhat arbitrary and their boundaries overlap. An influx of money into the local economy, for example, can be classified as both an economic *and* a social impact, as the availability of money, in addition to changing the economic situation, can also undermine occupational stability and contribute to a less traditional evolution of the family unit.

The literature mentions several pros of developing rural tourism. These include: additional income through the leasing of land, the leasing or sale of buildings, the sale of agricultural products to tourists (Gannon, 1994; Verbole, 1995b), employment in local tourist activities and services, the preservation of rural landscapes, fostering traditional activities that can be 'gazed upon' (Urry, 1990), and the growth of confidence and pride of the local people in themselves and their community. The down side includes inflation of land prices (Dernoi, 1983; Jansen-Verbeke, 1990), a shift in labour away from agriculture towards the service industry (Murphy, 1985) resulting sometimes in a complete cessation of existing agricultural activities (Te Kloeze, 1994), the creation of conflicts in the traditional understandings of land use, and the commercialization of rural life (Pearce, 1990). Some of these impacts may have a two-fold result, since some may benefit and others not. Of course, not all impacts will necessarily occur in a given local community and its environs; their intensity and effect will vary from situation to situation.

Most of the literature, dealing with the impacts of tourism development, largely refer to local communities that are already involved in tourism. Little is said about those that are initiating or re-juvenating<sup>50</sup> the development of tourism. Also little attention is given to the dynamics of the implementation process (i.e., development of rural tourism through the projects), which is of particular relevance for a locality of study discussed in this dissertation. The context of rural tourism development considered in this study is of this nature.

#### *Local versus external control over development*

Globalization and time-space compression of capital and travel have, according to Lash and Urry (1994), partly forced tourist sites and communities to compete to attract investments and visitors and have led to acceleration<sup>51</sup> of tourism development in rural areas and to growing interests of external forces to decide on and to control what happens at the local level.

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<sup>50</sup> see Butler's resort life-cycle model (1980). He identified six stages in the process of tourism development: exploration, involvement, development, consolidation and stagnation, followed either by decline or re-juvenation.

<sup>51</sup> The concept of acceleration of the impacts of tourism development does not refer only to the issue of speeding, but is also linked to issues such as authenticity, local culture, globalization and so on (Dietvorst, 1996).

However, literature suggests that local communities are not just passive recipients of externally imposed developmental plans (Long 1984 and 1989). Thus, one of the parameters that will determine how far acceleration of rural areas will go is the involvement of members of local communities and their participation in planning and implementing rural tourism development. However, we need to address one more issue - localities are complex in character. This means that different individuals and social groups have different views and interests in a place, as well as in rural tourism development. Some people expect they will benefit more from expanding the employment base, others from increasing the range of shops, others from making the place more secure, others from reconstructing the place's 'heritage', others from improving the physical environment, others from making a healthier environment to live in, and so on. The interests of individuals and groups are therefore heterogeneous, ranging from material to the cultural, medical or aesthetic. And of course different groups have differential access to resources, not only of money and power, but also of public opinion and organizational capacity, for realizing their interests within a given locality, to ensure, for example, that a set of old buildings should be preserved rather than demolished, that a nuclear station should not be built, etc.

Often, rural tourism policy is usually determined at a national or regional level, and increasingly at the global level even though its impacts of policy are felt at the local level, by local people and their cultural and physical environments (Hough and Sherpa 1989). Such a top-down<sup>52</sup> approach to rural tourism planning and development that entails a system of decision making and control in which external forces and institutions plan and decide what should be done in line with national or regional tourism policies and outside investment capital is the approach in most common use. The bottom-up, or community approach (Murphy, 1985 and 1988; Keogh, 1990; Inskip, 1991) which focuses on involvement of the local community in the decision-making and implementation processes is seen less frequently. Murphy (1985), following Doxey's (1975) work on local response to the impacts of the tourism development, suggests it is likely to prevent - what is often the case - tourism development by external intervention. Once the euphoria of initial plans and activities wear

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<sup>52</sup> Top-down approach means the exogenous model of tourism development which conceives the main forces of development as emanating from outside the tourist destination (Williams, 1993).

off, local people begin to realize the 'real' costs for them in terms of their daily life, routine and social life.

### *Heterogeneity of Local Community and Differential Responses*

One must be careful, however, not to dichotomise the different development approaches in terms of one being good and the other harmful. Both will have their advantages and disadvantages. The important questions remain to be asked from either approach: Who really decides? Who benefits and who loses in the short but also the long term from tourism development in a given locality? Not all members of the local community will share an enthusiasm for tourism development. Some may openly resent or object to certain aspects of such developments (Ryan, 1991).

Various researchers (Dogan; 1989, Ryan; 1991, Joppe 1996; Long 1984) note that host communities are not necessarily homogeneous, and that because of different interests, attitudes, and perceptions, local residents may see rural tourism in genuinely different ways. Farmers, developers, entrepreneurs, and workers cannot be put into homogeneous categories according to their interests and possibilities to participate in rural tourism development. Long (1984) suggests that even if the population is relatively homogeneous in terms of access to economic resources and standard of living there will always be important demographic, social and ecological differences between the households in a village, and between the villages in a region.

Thus, heterogeneity within the population of a given rural tourist destination raises a similar set of questions to those raised previously. What is the situation in the local community when tourism development is about to be launched? What happens when the community gets together and wants to initiate and be involved in tourism, or when farm women want to start agritourism? There is little experience related to such matters. How do local communities 'behave' in the new situation? How do they perceive this new factor entering their environment? Who gets to participate in development? How does rural tourism develop in

terms of power relations? Who really benefits and who loses from such development? What and whose excluded, how and why?

The response to the impacts of rural tourism will differ according to the perceptions, values and experiences of those influenced by the activity and the way they construct rural areas. This includes the interests and expectations of the benefits and costs that it might bring them. Individuals placed in preferred positions (i.e., Mayor, member of the Local Council) with regard to the benefits that might ensue, are more likely to use their position to defend and promote 'vested' interests. Tensions will inevitably arise that lead community members to apply social and political pressure on other community members. To prevent such tensions, the questions of why and for whom tourism is being developed should be openly discussed in and with the community and is central to the analysis of any costs and benefits. This implies the need not only to look at the heterogeneity of the local population and explore within that heterogeneity the differential impact tourism may have, but implies also the need to look at the power relations in a given tourist destination.

### **2.3 Sustainable development: a possible solution?**

The previous section reviewed key elements relating to the positive and negative impacts of rural tourism development. It is only in recent years that the costs (pressures on the environment, societies, and vulnerable economies) have been contrasted more fully with the tangible economic benefits. The rapid growth of tourism world-wide over the last three decades and its not-always-desirable impacts, and the rising concern about the state of the environment since the mid-1980s (as expressed in Agenda 21 of the Earth Summit, Rio de Janeiro 1994) have set the stage for inquiry into, and reassessment of, the role and value of tourism. The desirability of mass tourism and short-term planning perspectives on tourism development were questioned during the Earth Summit. One of the most valuable results of this reassessment has been the growing awareness of the relevance of sustainable development in the concept of tourism (Farrell and Runyan 1991; Pigram 1990).

The concept of sustainable development goes back some two hundred years (Bodenstedt, 1996). Yet, it was Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland's report of 1987<sup>53</sup>, that made sustainability central to the issue of our future development and the survival of the Earth. Even though this profound work did not address tourism per se, sustainability was soon recognized to be an integral part of most types of rural tourism and their related activities (Lane and Bramwell, 1994; D'Amore 1992). It would argue, however, that it is the environmental problems related to tourism development that will probably receive priority, though the social, cultural and other problems are also slowly coming into focus. Before further discussion of these 'other' problems, an introduction of the concept of sustainability and its relevance to rural tourism is relevant.

*Sustainability: As a concept*

Today, there are as many definitions of the term 'sustainability' as there are those writing about it. However, the essence of the debate is how to safeguard nature's productive capacity to support human existence in a way which best fits the lifestyle aspirations of present and future generations (Brundtland, 1987).

Following this line of reasoning, Jenkins (1991) defined sustainability, in the context of tourism, as a 'careful use of current 'tourism assets' to ensure their future availability.' He did not define in detail just what those tourism assets are, and his definition fails to see them in a broader perspective. He appears to regard the sustainable development of tourism as an environmentally benign development only or as a trade-off between economic and biological systems. Others, for example Murphy, (1985) and Inskip (1991) have gone further, pointing out that if tourism is to be sustainable it should emphasize not only the preservation of the host community's natural environment and resources as assets, but also the protection of its well-being and culture. So we must ask ourselves: What do we wish to sustain? For whose benefit are we sustaining it? What and with what instruments and how do we measure? Over what area? And for how long? But as importantly: Who has the responsibility and the

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<sup>53</sup> The Brundtland's report is known also as **Our common future**.

possibilities to set the goals in the local community? Who does or should participate in decision-making?

Inskip (1991: 460) called for the maximum involvement of the local community in tourism development:

*... sustainable tourism development aims to protect and enhance the environment; to meet basic human needs; to promote current and interregional equity; and to improve the life of all people by helping to integrate conservation, cultural compatibility, and local input.*

Similarly, Jones (1993) supported the active involvement and participation of the host community members in the development process, and called for local control over decision making<sup>54</sup> when issues were related to tourism development.

Thus far, the ecological, economic, social and cultural aspects of sustainability have been discussed. However, there is another dimension of sustainability. One interpretation of Inskip's definition of sustainable tourism is that he does not adequately address questions of interregional equity and does not look carefully enough into the social context. Further, although he acknowledges the importance of local input, he assumes that the local community is homogenous. Previous literature (see section 2.2) has shown that it is very unlikely that this will be the case and it is certainly not so in Slovenia. An essential contribution to the discussion on sustainable tourism development is necessary. The concept of sustainability has not only ecological, economic, cultural, and social dimensions, but also a political dimension that must be a primary facet of any discussion of how to make sustainability practical. Thus, this study focuses primarily on the political aspects of sustainable rural tourism development. The criteria taken into consideration when addressing this dimension of sustainability have to do with locals' participation in the process of rural tourism development, thus with local dynamics and power relations, as well as with the relationship between local and external factors.

In grounding the concept of the political dimensions of sustainability, several questions come to mind. The first one concerns the situation in the local community. How are the terms of

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<sup>54</sup> Jones believed that this could encourage interaction between hosts and guests, and promote cultural development, including choice of lifestyle and preservation of local traditions.

tourism development negotiated? And how free of interference or dominance by the local élite<sup>55</sup> is decision-making in the local area and community? This investigator believes the political dimension will inevitably influence participation in the decision-making process.

There is a growing literature on how important good facilitation skills, or even a good facilitator can be to obtaining the political and other compromises necessary if all major interests are to be catered for. The Dutch and British have made several attempts to reconcile the interests of farming, tourism and the nature conservation lobby with regards to the countryside (Van der Voet and Sidaway, 1993). This is a useful source of attempts made to move from government to local associations and even individuals - farmers as well as large landowners in the implementation of conservation schemes that are relevant for rural tourism. The recent Atlas of Van Broekhuizen et al. (1997) provides excellent examples of rural tourism and the associated problems showing several interesting and creative entrepreneurial activities as well as the enterprising people who pursued them.

A second question concerns the extended scene beyond the boundaries of the local community. What is the relation between the external and the internal forces in tourism development? To what extent can the requirements for sustainable development be initiated locally and to what extent are they limited to the activities resulting from the presence of an external intervener? And what is the necessary relationship between the two? If they are initiated locally, what procedures are to be followed to achieve sustainability? If tourism development is influenced by, or dependent on the State or other outside developmental bodies, then sustainable development will need to take into account the sustainability of the activities of these external actors as well. Several factors are important here, namely: the degree to which beneficiaries have been involved in initiating and executing rural tourism development (enrollment issues are discussed later); the extent of the local beneficiaries' commitment to rural tourism development in terms of their own resources, and the time and their ability to withstand the changes that may ensue in their physical and even political surroundings and relationships during the development processes (Riddell, 1990; Hall, 1994; Butler et al., 1998).

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<sup>55</sup> The local élite are the members of the local community who are considered to be socially or professionally superior to the rest of the local society (Webster's Dictionary, 1992).

Assumptions suggest that answers to some questions will depend on the goals, values, and priorities of the different actors involved in this type of development. It is possible to define and measure some of the economic, ecological, and even social parameters of tourism development (e.g., carrying capacity, saturation level), but their evaluation will be relative and a matter of negotiation (Verbole, 1997a and 1997b).

This implies, that any assessment of sustainability is relative and socially constructed. Certain alternative trends (e.g., eco-, green-, and soft tourism) are gaining in popularity against mass tourism, from a narrow economic or ecological perspective. But at the same time these trends, too, can be 'more' or 'less' sustainable when it comes to their social and political attributes. Although rural tourism development may be environmentally sustainable, there is no guarantee that it will be economically, socially, or politically sustainable (Verbole, 1997a). These different dimensions must be examined and balanced. For instance, it is problematic to develop an ecological farm that is well accepted in the local community and profitable with tourists if it has no political (policy) support. In terms of mass tourism, this is not necessarily or always undesirable or inappropriate as Wight (1993) argues, but may depend on which component of sustainability one takes into account.

Developing and evaluating sustainable rural tourism, like tourism itself, does not happen in a vacuum, but it is embedded in a given social, political, and historical context. An in-depth study of tourism in all the dimensions mentioned, and carried out in a specific context should contribute greatly to an understanding of how its many aspects are negotiated on the local and national levels and contribute to its development to benefit local communities. The intention of this dissertation was to analyse a particular context of rural tourism development. Thus, the following research objectives are presented.

## **2.4 Research objectives**

The impetus for this research was a request from a group of Pišce residents in eastern Slovenia for assistance to develop their local area. This request led to the preparation of an International Workshop on development in peripheral areas, and to the subsequent research

on rural tourism in Pišece. From the general discussion on rural tourism outlined above, some questions relevant to this study have been: Is it desirable to encourage rural tourism development in the area? Would it be socially acceptable? Who would participate in its development? What would the actors involved in the decision making do in such rural transformation? How would the process evolve in terms of power relations? Who would really benefit and who lose out?

The purpose was to investigate how people - as individuals, groups, and institutions - negotiate rural tourism development in this locality of study. More specifically, the intention was to explore how the negotiations of these actors are influenced by their perception of the social, political, economic and other impacts that rural tourism would have for them and their locality, and to look at what additional factors contribute in the given context.

This investigator believes that such research contributes to the increased awareness of the complexities of rural tourism development and is essential to be aware of them in order to promote tourism development in rural areas. In Slovenia, the State is involved in rural tourism development, and had to be considered when establishing guidelines for the project. The State intervenes to develop tourism resources for the benefit of local communities and the nation, and creates particular institutions and organizations for this purpose. Some of these agencies and institutions show a certain amount of sensitivity and respect for local communities and their environment, while others show none at all. Other interested groups were found in the case of Pišece (private sector and voluntary organizations) and were, therefore, a part of the research problem.

Another relevant factor is that Pišece's local community, similar to other communities in Slovenia, is far from homogeneous. Thus, the development of rural tourism and its impacts is unlikely to be seen the same by all members or groups of the community. It is assumed that their views will affect their interest or desire to pursue rural tourism as a form of developmental aid.

Local communities are, of course, not simply passive recipients of externally tailored development plans (Long, 1984 and 1989). Long (*ibid*) suggests that groups and individuals

negotiate and 'struggle' to make the most of such interventions. Results are influenced by the struggles which take place at many different local and state levels. One research objective was to look at how people as social actors<sup>56</sup> negotiate and create space for their own social 'projects' in the context of rural tourism development; and State involvement, as mentioned above, plays a major role. Individuals, while ostensibly working towards affecting the outcome of rural tourism projects, are at the same time pursuing their own ends, and as Mongbo (1995) shows, can often end up 'dismembering and appropriating development projects'.

Therefore, this study follows two main lines of inquiry summarized by the following questions:

*(1) What are the opinions, understandings and hopes of the different actors involved in the rural tourism transformation process in Pišcece?*

*(2) What do the actors do to negotiate the terms of rural tourism development from the standpoint of their own perceptions of (and interests in) the possible impacts of tourism development?*

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<sup>56</sup> The term social actors refers to individuals, groups and institutions (Long, 1989).

### **3 ACTORS, INTERFACES AND DISCOURSES IN THE TRANSFORMATION PROCESSES OF RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Part I: Theoretical considerations**

Following on overview of the main themes and issues of rural tourism, and the research objectives, a brief review of the models used in the study of rural tourism provides the theoretical basis from which to choose a model for this study. This investigator wishes to concentrate especially on the approach most suited to the issues raised to examine the policy and politics of rural tourism development at the local level according to the actor-oriented approach of Long (1984, 1989, 1992 and 1997).

#### **3.1 The search for the best theoretical and methodological approach**

Although many different disciplines have addressed the issue of tourism development in general, there is a lack of so-called 'tourism theory' (Jafari, 1990). Rural tourism, in particular seems to be the 'poor relation', although there are some exceptions to this commonly ignored issue (de Kadt, 1979; Bouquet and de Winter, 1987; Pigram, 1993; Lane and Bramwell, 1994; Butler et al., 1998; Hall and O'Hanlon, 1998). In this theoretical 'vacuum', tourism development has been studied from perspectives that reflect several disciplines (i.e., geography, sociology, anthropology and economy).

Of special interest were those perspectives on and models of tourism development that address the relationship between tourism development and the local community, especially from the point of view of the formulation of tourism policy at the local level and its implementation. Most models are discussed within the tourism planning field, although issues such as policy and politics of tourism development at the local as well as national level, are generally neglected (Hall, 1994). However, it could be observed that there is growing recognition of the finite limitations to tourism development not only in terms of the environmental but as well as social impacts. 'Residents' responsive tourism' (Ritchie, 1993; Haywood, 1993), 'community-based' or 'community-driven' tourism (Murphy, 1988), and

'sustainable community tourism' (Joppe, 1996) are the buzz words of tomorrow. Many authors argue (Pearce et al., 1996; Jones, 1993; Inskoop, 1991) that the role of the local community must be centrally placed in sustainable tourism development. In order to give it this central role it is crucial to understand the internal dynamics and politics before any development can be considered (Hall, 1994; Reed, 1997).

The majority of works on sustainable tourism development places emphasis on the physical environment, and the views of local people are in most cases of only peripheral interest (Jones, 1993; Joppe, 1996; Hunter 1997). Studies that do have an important human aspect either make reference to the impacts of tourism on communities already involved in tourism, or lay emphasis on local community's involvement in tourism development without coming to grips with the reality in which tourism develops and in which it will be continued (Hall, 1994; Pearce et al., 1996).

However, such studies do not give enough weight to the fact that people are engaged in many other activities, of which rural tourism is perhaps only one of many possible directions or options for their own and their community's development. Most models give scant attention to such factors, seeing local actors as merely pawns in the game of rural tourism development.

As we have seen, none of the models mentioned look at the development of rural tourism from the perspective of the local community and its members themselves. More importantly none of them focuses on the ideas and projects that the members of the local community have in mind for developing their community and area which will include opportunities as offered by the ideals of rural tourism. Rural tourism does not develop in a vacuum and local recipients of tourism opportunities are not passive recipients of the consequences or impacts of tourism as stressed earlier. Therefore, issues that need to be explored are namely, the social and political context and relationships that provide the context of rural tourism development, and the context in which local people themselves have *agency*, thus capabilities to 'make a difference' (see also forthcoming sections). Thus, the aim is to understand the process of rural tourism development, especially in relation to the participation of different (local and external) actors in this process, to know how the terms of development are negotiated among these

actors, and what are the effects of those negotiations on rural tourism outcomes. Thus, some insights were drawn looking from a perspective of intervention<sup>57</sup>.

### **3.2 Explaining Rural Tourism Development: An actor-oriented approach**

The following sections cover some of the key concepts of the actor-oriented perspective as developed by Norman Long and his colleagues at the Wageningen Agricultural University in the Netherlands.

Applying Long's actor-oriented approach brings to mind certain methodological and theoretical considerations (Long, 1997). These are: the identification of actors that are crucial to an understanding of the specific arenas of action and contestation; investigations and analysis of issues or 'critical events' as defined by actors themselves; ethnographic exploration of different actors realities, strategies and social practices, thus the ways in which their actions are materialized (made concrete) through the use and manipulation of various resources and discourses. These factors elude to the need for attention given to social configurations, social networks and patterns of organization through which the meanings and social constructions of value generated in different arena/situations are distributed. Further, actor-oriented approaches might employ looking closer at the organizing and ordering processes relevant to the different arenas and institutional domains. Further, portraying the critical interfaces that depict the points of contradiction or discontinuity between different actors' lifeworlds might be useful. In these arenas and interfaces the processes of knowledge/power construction are entailed which requires attention be paid to the reconfiguration of relationships and values.

Long's actor-oriented theoretical and methodological constructivist approach<sup>58</sup> to development and intervention is, a particularly helpful way of addressing and analyzing the

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<sup>57</sup> The concept of intervention is primarily used in this dissertation in reference to state policy and its implementations by government, development institutions, including research bodies. Planned intervention (i.e., measurement and policies) can be 'top-down' or externally organized. However, as well is intervention 'bottom-up' initiation aimed at advancing local interests, and thus reshaping state policy actions (Long, 1984: 177-179).

<sup>58</sup> see Booth (1994).

ways in which the multi-faceted social dimensions of the dynamics of rural tourism development are socially and discursively constructed. Below, a discussion of the application of some concepts central to this approach will help the reader understand the development of rural tourism at the local level as a result of complex sets of agencies and struggles versus a 'thing' that exists in and of itself at the different levels of social segregation. It is asserted, that rural tourism is in collusion with the local as well as external interests and various agendas, and through an actor-oriented approach this investigator attempts to demythologise the social realities of rural tourism development.

Application of the actor-oriented approach to the context of rural tourism development, firstly, makes it possible to conceptualize rural tourism development as a dynamic and on-going, socially constructed and negotiated process, and not simply as the execution of an already specified plan of action with expected outcomes<sup>59</sup>. Within this process social actors<sup>60</sup> (individuals, groups and institutions), negotiate and struggle to make most out of a given situation. Thus, rural tourism is an emergent property.

Secondly, the actor-oriented perspective regards people as 'active' and 'knowledgeable' agents that have (human) agency, a notion that 'attributes' to the individual actor or group<sup>61</sup> capacity to process social experience and devise ways of coping with life (Long, 1989; Long and Van der Ploeg, 1994). Thus, local people are not just passive recipients of the consequences of rural tourism development. However, the various actors will perceive and respond differently to changing circumstances brought upon them by the development of rural tourism. Long (1989) suggests they will align themselves with various normative and social interests. This means actors will form alliances with different local (and external actors) to pursue their own social 'projects' sometimes bringing pressure to bear.

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<sup>59</sup> An important aspect of the actor-oriented approach is also that it suggests that '... life is full of different kinds of unintended consequences with varying ramifications' (Long and Van der Ploeg, 1994: 66).

<sup>60</sup> The term social actor is restricted to those social entities that can reach decisions and act accordingly (Long, 1989). Thus, the concept of social actor should not be used to cover collectives, agglomerates or social categories that have no discernible way of formulating or carrying out decisions (Long, 1989).

<sup>61</sup> Long and Van der Ploeg (1989) argue that institutions (i.e., the Ministry of Agriculture) do not have an agency, although institutions shape people, and vice versa. However, institutions are put in practice by people.

An actor-oriented approach, allows us to look at the rural development process from the perspective of the people [*flesh and blood*] themselves, while allowing us to see it in the wider socio-economic and political context in which it is embedded.

All the above suggest the need to identify social actors involved in the process of rural tourism at the local level, the strategies they devise to 'transform' [reshape it and reconstruct it with their actions and meanings they attribute to it - Insert: Verbole] this process, the types of interactions that evolve at the local community level, and the interactions between local and external actors. Thus, an investigation into actors' organizing practices (i.e., social networks, family clans, cliques, factions and even more formally constituted groups and organizations such as local councils and so on) processes is needed as well as the need to give attention to the different social arrangements and discursive/normative commitments that emerge from these interactions. Further, an inquiry into power relations in an everyday-life situation, the local patterns of power and domination is needed. Further elaboration on these issues and their contribution to the understanding of the process of rural tourism development at the local level is presented later in chapters following the principles of grounded theory (see Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

Before going further, a brief discussion of the concepts previously mentioned is important since they are used in the field data analysis in the later chapters of this thesis.

### *Actors and Agency*

Actors operate within a certain socio-economic and political context, where they face different limitations and constraints (i.e., limited information, socio-political constraints). The capacity of actors to deal with these limitations and constraints, to give meaning to them, to organize, and to plan strategically is the nucleus of the concept of a human agency.

Arce (1993) argues that the term 'agency' covers the styles by which actors embody, internalise and translate the influences of the state, market, technology and culture ... 'The particular translations of contextual influence shape human action and provide actors with the

cognitive characteristics to organize, assemble and respond to influences in their lives' (Arce, 1993: 6-7).

In general terms, the notion of agency attributes to the actors capabilities to 'make a difference' to a pre-existing state of affairs or course of affairs. However, as pointed out by Long and Van der Ploeg (1994), agency is not simply the result of possessing certain cognitive abilities, persuasive powers or charisma, but it also requires organizing capacities. Thus, agency (and consequently power) is constituted through social relations and negotiation practices among social actors. In other words, agency and power both depend on the emergence of networks of actors who become, in most cases partially, enrolled in the projects and practices of other actors. Effective agency, thus requires the strategic manipulation of the network of social relationships and channelling of specific items (i.e., information) through certain networks (Long and Van der Ploeg, 1994: 66). This implies concentrating the analysis of the process of rural tourism development on how people organize themselves through social relations, social representations and negotiation practices, thus on their strategies.

The concept of 'human agency' is used in this study to help conceptualise how actors construct their strategies<sup>62</sup> in life (i.e., how they solve problems, how they interact, how they intervene), and employ different means and avenues to achieve their goals.

Further, there is a need to go somewhat beyond individual human agency as agency is not only about individual and/or collective capacities to process information and design strategies. One needs to consider the context of the present (and the past) social relations and representation forms in which it is embedded. Villarreal (1994: 166-167) suggested that agency is sometimes thrust upon the actors, and that actors can wield power also unintentionally, thus actor's capabilities to wield power are influenced by others' concepts and perception of power<sup>63</sup>. Agency, is thus also about the meaning people attribute to and ways

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<sup>62</sup> The issue of strategies is central to the research of social change conceptualized as an outcome of the struggles and negotiations that take place between groups of different and often conflicting social interests.

<sup>63</sup> For example, people have different ideas about who is 'powerful'. In Africa the concept of powerful might be associated with witch-craft, in an ex-communist country with the high position in the *League of Communist*, in Western Europe with money. This also implies that agency is constituted differently in different cultures and segments of the populations (see Long and Van der Ploeg, 1994).

actors' agencies are influenced by the context, perceived and labelled by social actors. This introduces the need to look at the workings of constraints that result out of these perceptions and labels. This implies looking at how actors' life-worlds are constrained by the context (see below).

Agency is what defines actors' position in society. The notion helps us to understand how different people who have the same subjectivity, meaning they face the same circumstances and constraints (i.e., within the process of rural tourism development), thrust upon them come out with different solutions, thus with different organizing practices (heterogeneity of responses). In other words, it helps us to understand how some actors come to dominate, why some actors win and others lose, thus why some actors benefit and other lose from rural tourism development.

### *Multiple Realities and Lifeworlds*

Different actors, either local or external, have different perceptions of reality. These multiple perceptions and opinions - multiple realities (Long 1984 and 1988) influence the ways actors respond to the changing circumstances brought on them (e.g., by the rural tourism development project/process). Actors' respective realities also influence how they align themselves with normative and social interests involving power, authority, and legitimation (how they develop strategies and responses to given situation), which may be just as likely to cause conflict among social groups as they are to contribute to the establishment of common ground.

According to Long (1989), there is a link between multiple realities and the concept, developed by Schutz (1962: found in Arce and Long, 1987), of an actor-specific set of motives, meanings, emotion, daily action, and behaviour (lifeworld). The lifeworld is defined by the actor who lives it, rather than by any observer (i.e., a developer or a researcher). The notion of life-world allows us to understand 'how people move through life', and enables us to learn about the types and contents of important social relations and activities that involve an actor. We can 'enter' the actors life-worlds by observing encounters (interfaces) between

different life-worlds that take place in different domains and arenas (see paragraphs below). It is important to stress that while the actor-oriented approach recognizes that actors' life world is influenced and limited by shared values and norms (by their cultural backdrop), it goes beyond that conceptualizing the notion as actively created and transformed by arguing that culture is constantly re-created through overlapping and conflicting discourses (Villarreal, 1994).

Grillo (1997) defines discourse to include the meanings of different arguments of a particular point of view, as well as the means of constructing those arguments. Foucault (1980) suggests that social life is never so unitary as to be built upon one single discourse. Discourses are constituted through social interactions, and are shaped by social actors themselves in terms of their own understanding, social experiences and relationships (Long, 1992; Villarreal, 1994). Actors draw on the stock of available discourses to make strategies and social constructions, and to wield or exercise power. Thus, social actors can always resist to or subvert the situation using links with other actors or social networks to undermine the existing social order, thus contributing to or initiating the change.

The actor-oriented approach relates, thus, actively to how individuals and groups create lifeworld for themselves. Lifeworld is not bound to formal boundaries and domains, but it cross-cuts the various domains (see forthcoming paragraphs) in which symbolic boundaries are created and re-created. This 'process of creation' affects people's lives, and it is important to focus on the level of interaction, how people learn about the world and how they give different meanings to it through personal experience. Social actors actions in a given local setting are constantly redefined and given meaning through social interaction, thus it is significant to analyze the moments of construction and sanctioning of values, interests and hierarchical relationships. This entails exploring the social discontinuities which are characterized by discrepancies in values, interests, knowledge and power. To deal with the issue of discontinuity in local settings, the concept of symbolic boundaries, may prove useful.

### *Symbolic boundaries*

Symbolic boundaries or socio-cultural boundaries was a concept developed by Cohen (1985). His concept expresses a number of relational ideas: the opposition to others or to other social entities, embodying for people their sense of distinction from others; a boundary that marks out distinction between 'them' and 'us' while creating a sense of 'belongingness'. These boundaries influence interactions and relations between particular actors. Such boundaries and relations are maintained by a series of formal and informal rituals (going to the same pub, kinship visiting each other).

The intention was to use this concept to examine the nature of access to the various social networks and domains in the locality of study. This enables us to understand how actors 'classify and label other actors' (who is one of us, who is one of them). The attention will be given to different social entities within the community, and the process of giving meaning to boundaries<sup>64</sup> and creating boundaries or discontinuities.

Symbolic boundaries, social identities and social networks are useful to understanding the process of regulating or limiting access to various networks, locales and domains (i.e., if actors from a certain social network want to access the other networks they have to deconstruct those boundaries). They are not given, but constituted in everyday life. They are given meaning and are constantly negotiated by those social actors who try to create room for manoeuvre, thus extending their social space.

Further, a search will be conducted for the critical interfaces between the local actors and intervening parties as they depict the points of contradiction or discontinuity between the different actors' lifeworlds. In these arenas and interfaces, the processes of knowledge/power construction are entailed which requires that attention be paid to the reconfiguration of relationships and values.

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<sup>64</sup> The boundaries are largely symbolic in character, however that does not imply only that they imply different meanings for different people, but also suggests that boundaries perceived by some may be utterly imperceptible to others.

### *Social Interfaces and Discontinuities*

Interface analysis is central to actor-oriented analysis. It deals especially with the discontinuities that occur in the lives of the various actors when their different worlds intersect (i.e., locals and the developmental agency). These junctures are often characterized by negotiation, struggle, and clashes between the different modes of rationality and power (Long, 1989). Characteristically, interface analysis focuses on the linkages between actors rather than on their individual strategies. It exposes the forces that cause conflicts or incompatibility between actors and it highlights the differences between the worldviews or cultural interpretations of these actors. This form of analysis stresses the need to look at interface situations over time and within the context of broader institutional frameworks and fields of power that cross-cut formal organizational boundaries and normative systems.

In a rural tourism context, social interfaces can occur when government or other external actors intervene in an attempt to develop rural tourism a particular area, its people and resources. Similarly, locals can initiate tourism development through bottom-up intervention which can also result in an interface.

Analysis focusing on the actors at the interface can help us to identify individuals, groups and social categories included or excluded from particular negotiations. It can also demonstrate how social actors 'internalize' the interventions, and use them as a part of resources and constraints to develop their own strategies. By incorporating interfaces in a broader framework, we should be able to explore ways in which the benefits and costs of intervention, thus also that of rural tourism development, are distributed among social actors.

### *Domains and Arenas*

Long (1997) points out that we can deal with the symbolic boundaries by looking at the encounters between different lifeworlds that take place in different domains and arenas. Long (1997: 5-7) uses the concept of 'domain' "to identify areas of social life that are organized by reference to a series of interlocking practices and values which, even if they are not

perceived exactly in the same way by everybody, are nevertheless recognized as a locus of certain 'rules', norms and values implying degrees of social commitment". Examples may include the domains of the family, the community, the political domain, and so on. This conceptualization allows also for less enduring domains to be identified as the process evolves and new institutions emerge or become institutionalized.

Another useful concept is that of arenas - in which actors strive for or wield power and influence. Long (1997: 6) defined arenas as 'social encounters or series of situations in which contests over issues, resources, values and representations take place'. That is these are social and spatial locations (i.e., pubs and the market place) where actors confront each other, mobilize social relations and deploy discursive and cultural means for attaining specific ends. As outlined by Long (1997) the arenas are either spaces in which disputes associated with the various practices of the different domains take place, or they are spaces within a single domain where attempts are made to resolve discrepancies in value interpretations and incompatibilities between actors' interest. A domain becomes an arena as soon as we can observe struggles.

Looking at the local domains and arenas will allow us to gain more insight into the relevance and meaning social symbolic boundaries have for local actors. The concept of domain allows us to establish 'who is who' in the locality of study, thus how social ordering works in a community, and what resources different actors have (see Chapter 5). The concept of arenas is important for mapping out issues, resources and discourses entailed in particular situations of disagreement or dispute.

Together with the notion of arena (and how they are bounded), domains provide us with the analytical handle on the kinds of constraints and enabling elements that shape actors' choices and room for manoeuvre. The latter notion relates to social actors' actions that they take to extend their influence or social space within the limitations imposed on them (Villarreal, 1992).

## *Organizing Processes and Practices*

The notions of the organizing practices and the emergent social forms are also central notions to an actor-oriented approach. They allow us to deal with the kind of social arrangements and discursive/normative commitments that emerge from social action.

Inter-individual action encompasses action in both face-to-face and more 'distanced' relationships. Long (1997) pointed out that the types of social relationships range from interpersonal links based upon dyadic ties (i.e., wife-husband, guest-host) to social and exchange networks of various kinds, to more formally constituted groups and organizations (such as village councils, churches and so on). Den Ouden (1997) suggested that actors use different organizing principles namely, ethnic, familial, territorial, class, religious principles to organize themselves. Further discussion of the organizing practices and processes is given in Chapters 5 and 6.

### **Final thoughts**

In line with the actor-oriented approach, we can assert that negotiations, struggles and power are essential dimensions of the rural tourism development arena ... and should be conceived as implicit within the social context of planning, decision-making and implementing change.

Reflecting back on sustainability, it is arguable that for rural tourism development to be considered sustainable, firstly it must address the local reality, especially the nature of local dynamics and power relations, and the processes that regulate or limit access of members of the local community to participate in the development of rural tourism. The process will be sustainable when all members of the local community are able to participate in the development through the various domains. And secondly, it needs to address the gross imbalance of power between the State (and other intervening parties) and local communities. The process will be sustainable when people at the local level possess an equal ability (to that of the State or other intervening party) to provide feedback on their needs to motivate the constructive debate on policy direction and so forth.

The line of thinking presented in this first part of the chapter called for a more ethnographic exploration of the different actors social realities which is the topic of the second part of Chapter 3.

## **Part II: Linking method with theory**

### *The methodological approach taken: An ethnographic exploration of different actor realities in Pišce*

The following sections discuss the methods and techniques used for data collection and analysis of the negotiation and transformation of rural tourism development processes at the individual, groups, local community and State (and other macro actors) level, and place emphasis on understanding and interpreting various social actors' respective views of reality, their strategies and social practices.

The first methodological option was for a qualitative and non-positivist inquiry. The positivist paradigm posits that a *reality* exists, which is waiting for an objective scientist to discover it. Constructivism, by contrast, posits that there is no 'objective reality' (Hamilton, 1995), but that individuals shape their own view of *reality* in a lifelong process of socially based interaction and negotiation. Thus, rural tourism development is an emergent property, it emerges out of the negotiations and struggles between the actors involved.

This brings processes of social change and dynamics into analysis. Among others, Strauss and Corbin (1990) contend that studying issues of change involves an in-depth investigation and incorporation of [social] action/interaction into analysis, as this varies over time in response to changes in condition. The very nature of studying social change and related processes and practices implied the use of methodology that allowed for possible widening of the study focus since information was gathered at different stages of the process. In addition, following the actor-oriented perspective (see Part I), the approach had to be sensitive enough to detect and look at problems and issues that go beyond the researcher's own perception and biases of what they may be. Thus, it was important to identify the problems and concepts as perceived and presented by social actors themselves, and to look for similarities and/or differences in their social interpretations, and to investigate types and contents of social relationships among these actors. In this particular study, that implied an investigation into social configurations such as networks and other patterns of organization. The data were

collected by using informal and semi-structured interviews, (extended) case studies (Mitchell, 1983), life-histories (Long and Roberts, 1984) and participatory observation (Bernard, 1988).

Before going further, let me explain briefly how I got involved with Pišece in the first place as this influenced some of the interactions and encounters that took place between the informants and the researcher. I heard of Pišece for the first time at the University of Ljubljana in late 1993. A young native of Pišece called 'Damjan'<sup>65</sup> depicted in his seminar paper a very depressing picture of the situation in his home area. He described the exodus of young people from Pišece because of the lack of opportunities to build a decent life, and he warned that Pišece would die if no action was taken.

I forgot about Pišece until I went there to present a paper concerning rural tourism development<sup>66</sup>, thereby entering Pišece's scene as a participant of the International Workshop 'Residents-Management-Sustainable Development' which took place in 1994 in Atomske toplice, a health resort nearby Pišece. This workshop was the outcome of joint efforts of a group of villagers from Pišece (who initiated a loose self-help bottom-up process to address the above mentioned issues), the University of Ljubljana and the University of Klagenfurt in Austria.

The 1994 Workshop resulted in many ideas for developmental projects (see Chapter 6), as well as increased enthusiasm for Pišece's potential to develop rural tourism well enough to be of benefit to the local community. But, what happened next, as Villarreal (1994) also discovered in her work in Mexico, and which I will analyse later was that webs of (power) relations that existed and of those that emerged later in Pišece influenced the developmental path of rural tourism in this local community. 'Experts' became facilitators of development as emerging relations not only involved local people, but also external actors, who, however neutral they wanted to be, were drawn into local conflicts and given positions in local society.

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<sup>65</sup> Following Wegner's (1983) suggestion on research implementation, names of informants in this dissertation are changed to protect the confidentiality of sources of data, and the integrity of the interviewees.

<sup>66</sup> see Verbole 1995a.

## **The research process: June 1994 - February 1997**

The research process consisted of four main phases described below. From June 1994 to February 1997, I travelled to the fieldwork area ten times for different lengths of returning every 3-5 months. Average visit was 5 days, with some visits only for a weekend. On four occasions, I dropped by a pub for coffee since I was in the neighbourhood. If I noted potential for something going on (i.e., locals' meeting), I adjusted my schedule to return earlier than intended to catch the 'momentum' of the occasion.

A total of 214 informants were contacted during the various phases of my 'research journey' (De Vries, 1994). Of these informants, 154 were members of the Pišece Local Community (males and females about equal in number), and 14 lived in neighbouring communities within the Brežice Municipality. The rest were either officials from different local and national organizations and institutions involved (or who should be involved) with the tourism development and tourist projects, and rural development and rural development projects (34). Others were fellow journalists (6) or fellow researchers (6) who were part of the team that visited Pišece in 1994. Former colleagues from my days as a journalist, and my colleagues who deal daily with the bureaucracy, proved to be valuable sources of information on 'who was who?' in tourism and rural (tourism) development at the national level, and on the thinking and happenings in the world of tourism and agriculture in general.

### *The reconnaissance phase: June - September 1994*

Most of the data on multiple realities of rural tourism development in this phase were gained at the International Workshop in June 1994. This workshop, that is in details discussed in Chapter 4, also served as an extended case-study. It provided a first insight into some of the dynamics and complexities in the locality of study. It also allowed me to identify further lines of inquiry. As Mitchell (1983) suggests ... a case study is an 'observer's data,' collected 'in view of drawing theoretical conclusions from it.' He also argues that, whereas statistical analysis is dependent upon formal theory, case study analysis is dependent upon establishing

a logical connection between a number of variables<sup>67</sup> in a specific example. The case studies can be either descriptive or analytical. In this dissertation, case studies allowed us to analyze the processes by which actors manage their everyday social worlds, and how they attempt to resolve problems they encounter. An ongoing strategy was to maintain the opportunity to use case studies, also, at a later stage of the research process, to analyze more closely the possible implications arising from actors' perceptions of tourism development at the local rural community level.

The reconnaissance phase was used in general to become acquainted with the area, the people, and the relevant local and external institutions before engaging in specific research. The first informal and open-ended interviews in Pišce were conducted during the 1994 Workshop. The informants<sup>68</sup> were 'knowledgeable' members of local society, especially those who were actively involved in the events that evolved around the organization of the workshop. However, interviews were also conducted randomly with villagers that came to some of the events organized in the Pišce Local Community within the workshop's programme.

During the 1994 Workshop, other qualitative techniques in addition to informal interviews such as participant observation, were used to collect data. While, I was a 'covert participant observer' during the 1994 Workshop, I declared my true interest as soon as I started my follow-up visits, thus becoming an 'overt participant' observant.

#### *The exploratory phase: October 1994 - January 1996*

The reconnaissance phase was followed by an exploratory phase conducted in Pišce, the Municipality of Brežice (to which the Local Community belongs administratively), and in the

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<sup>67</sup> Such variables were interests in the rural tourism development in relation to actors' perceptions, belonging to the specific social group, their capabilities to network, power relation, resource ownership, and so on.

<sup>68</sup> On later visits to Pišce, those people interviewed during my first visit were re-interviewed to document their differential responses to the new situation stirred up by the 1994 Workshop. The workshop had a major influence on the different expectations of various social actors as to the prospects for Pišce's revitalization, resulting in the preparation and implementation of several rural tourism development projects.

capital city of Ljubljana, where various institutions involved in tourism and rural development are located (see Appendix 6 and Appendix 7). Especially at the national level, I faced a far more complex and confusing situation than I had expected. Tourism, and especially rural tourism development, is a domain of many different institutions and organizations, and one has to develop a good framework of understanding, so as not to get lost in the tangle of connections and interrelationships. Also, the introduction of the Local-Self Government contributed to the confusion with regards to the role of the State and municipalities in the field of tourism and rural development. In addition, tourism, is now, thanks to economic changes, quite a big issue with many people trying to get a piece of the action.

Interviewing policy makers was interesting. Some welcomed me with interest and appeared glad that someone decided to research something other than the economic impacts of tourism development. Others found the topics irrelevant, wanting me to focus more on the relation between tourism and the gambling industry along the coast. Others saw the research as a threat. They did not express their antagonism openly, but tried in subtle ways to subvert the course of the research (e.g., not being available for a month, forgetting to send an invitation to a meeting, proposing new research questions). Since these are the very same people who must ultimately decide on the future of rural tourism development, it seems logical to infer that these strategies (avoidance, and the like) show that policy makers go to great lengths to maintain their position of power to stabilize the status quo or their own projects. Be that as it may, interviews with the policy makers offered a look behind the scenes, into the 'muddy waters'<sup>69</sup>, where the various vested interests create policy on rural development, tourism development, and rural tourism development at national and local levels, thus into the policy makers' games .

At the local level I've continued with informal and semi-formal interviews. At the same time I've searched also for secondary sources of information on issues relevant to Pišcece<sup>70</sup>.

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<sup>69</sup> The term 'muddy waters' refers to the policy makers not being open or explicit about certain issues related to rural tourism development (i.e., who is responsible for what, why there is little cooperation among the various ministries involved with the development of tourism in rural areas and so on).

<sup>70</sup> A literature study of secondary sources to obtain basic facts about the research area and its population was conducted for practical reasons, mainly to save time and money. Sources included official statistics, archive material, the parish chronicle, mass media sources (e.g., articles on tourism and on developments in Pišcece in the national

The selection of informants at the local level was, at first, based on the observations and impressions of Pišece's people and my familiarity with the general atmosphere I formed at the 1994 Workshop. The locals I've met at the 1994 Workshop, and informants they pointed out as relevant for collecting data on rural tourism development were the key-informants at the beginning of this phase. This approach to data collection is referred to in the literature as the snowballing technique<sup>71</sup>. Snowballing proved to be a valuable tool in the first visits to the field for assessing the different actors' satisfaction and dissatisfaction with a large array of items. The snowballing process of inquiry resulted in high efficiency with a substantial number of people being interviewed in a relatively short time (as I already knew with whom to speak next). Using snowballing in combination with selective sampling (people that would provide specific information needed), I conducted interviews which I felt could promote useful insights for this research. However, I had reached a saturation point<sup>72</sup> quite early in the research process, as it became necessary to find a way to explore the situation from other perspectives. In retrospect, the problem involved meeting people of the same network, family clans or members of the same clique over and over again. By chance, I saw the limitation of the snowballing technique and saw the need to access the other social networks in Pišece.

The cycle ended when one of the research assistants, met 'Marjan' (B 23)<sup>73</sup>, a man who lived in Pišece's castle. Marjan was a marginal character in Pišece, who was unemployed, and labelled by locals as a layabout. Yet, he was well informed about local history and loved to talk. After a short discussion, the two men ended up drinking in one of the local pubs. This was a major breakthrough, since previously, we only frequented one of three Pišece's pubs.

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newspapers *Delo* and *Dnevnik*, radio reports, and TV news items), and several government reports related to the development of tourism and rural areas in Slovenia.

<sup>71</sup> This type of the non-probability sampling technique uses certain informants as the starting point for nominating successive interviews with new informants. This type of sampling was also known as 'conservation sampling' (Dann et al., 1988.)

<sup>72</sup> Strauss and Corbin (1990) defined saturation point as a point at which data start to repeat itself. In the field the saturation point was reached at the point where I kept meeting people who all belonged to the same group, and were only able (or willing) to provide me with certain data.

<sup>73</sup> The informants's code is (B23). I have given a code to some of the actors to protect their privacy. The coding system for people of Pišece works as follows: the letters 'A', 'B' and 'C' indicate the actor's age ('A' stands for villagers who are 60 and older, 'B' stands for those who are between 40 and 60, 'C' for those between 20 and 40). The numbers are used to distinguish between various individual actors of the same age group (see Appendix 5). A similar coding system has been developed for external actors. This will be explained later on.

This pub had been pointed out by a group of young villagers whom I met during the 1994 Workshop.

Following this discovery, it was obvious that different groups of villagers frequented different pubs to socialize and to exchange news and information. It took some time to ascertain that people only visited specific pubs according to their specific social group's orientation. These groups had been formed according to the roles that different actors had played in a dispute dating back to the 1980s. This dispute is discussed further in Chapter 5. Here, it is suffice, to say it contributed to the social segregation in Pišece's local community. It was evident later that these groups were significant not only for general data collection, but also for analyzing data related to rural tourism development (e.g., as an indication of how networks were built, how symbolic boundaries were created, and how they influenced access to the various local domains).

As the research progressed, a number of contrasting social settings (e.g., Pišece' pubs and inns), the '*večnamenski dom*' (the Community Centre), and administrative institutions and organizations (i.e., the Local Community Council) as well as voluntary associations, societies and clubs, were chosen specifically to seek the different actors' points of view, and to learn more about different discourses.

These interviews were followed by an *in-depth period of field work in which field data were recorded and observations made*. Next, observational comments were reviewed and evaluated on issues such as the locals' expectations of rural tourism, the type of rural tourism they had in mind, who they thought was making the most for development of the community, and who should be involved in the development process, how they found out about what was going on in their *krajevna skupnost*, what they do with information and so on. I utilised overlapping case studies of various actors to gain insight into how local actors 'behave' in everyday situations, and whether the same would apply to the development of rural tourism. Further, I looked for how they perceive rural tourism development and its impacts, how they try to involve other actors' with their own projects in general as well as with those that have to do with rural tourism development, and/or how they try to manipulate rural tourism development in the direction they desire. Long (1989) argues that case-study methods are very useful in

highlighting and analyzing the processes by which social actors manage their everyday social worlds and attempts to resolve the problematic situations. In the case of Pišece, the use of case studies (the 1994 Workshop, a case study of developmental projects) provided insights to how actors play an active role in the process of rural tourism development transformation. The case studies presented in this dissertation are based on material gathered through interviews, observations of the specific social situations (i.e., workshop) and follow-up interviews with various actors. This approach revealed the so-called existing social order or patterns of social legitimacy and its fragility or fluidity.

While most of the data at the national and the municipal level were collected by myself, I frequently appointed two 'field-research assistants' during the interviews with the people of Pišece. They were both from Ljubljana. One was a human geographer and the other was a student of sociology<sup>74</sup>. Villagers received them quite well, and were less suspicious of them than I expected, feeling free to talk even about the more 'touchy' issues such as social divisions in the local community. However, some of the villagers preferred to discuss these issues directly with me, most being key-actors in local development.

The participation of the field research assistants extended the possibility of gathering data, and helped me to overcome the problem of being isolated as an 'outsider' and a 'single female' visitor in Pišece. The latter was not a problem per se, but especially during 'pub encounters', my male assistant was of great support.

In Pišece, and in other parts of 'rural' Slovenia, it is less common for a woman to go alone to a pub in the evening, for a glass of wine or beer, and talk serious matters with men. These men normally gather with friends and acquaintances to have a drink in peace (away from their wives and children), and to discuss the latest local and world news. Thanks to my field research assistants, I was able to collect the opinions of more people than I would have been able on my own. And, I was able to enter a different world: *the world of men*.

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<sup>74</sup> I knew them both very well as we worked on several research projects before, and I knew they were very capable to talk with the informants.

Working with field-research assistants also provided me with the opportunity to access various social groups (i.e., networks and cliques) and individuals I might have overlooked during my stays in Pišece, which would deprive the research of valuable insights in the local organizational practices.

'Aggressive interviewing' proved to be a very valuable method of data collection. It made it possible to access information I was unlikely to have collected in a normal interview. The idea behind this type of interviewing is that, during the interviews, the researcher consciously takes a 'position on certain issues' either by maintaining a sceptical stance or playing dumb, and thereby 'provoking' informants to give certain information which they would otherwise be unlikely to volunteer ... '*You would not be asking these questions if you didn't know what was going on*' (Dora, an inhabitant of Pišece, 1995). Many interviewees thought that I knew more than I actually did at the outset of conversations, so they opened up and told me everything that was on their mind, giving me their account of the situation.

This interview technique was based on my previous training and experience in journalism<sup>75</sup>, but later I found in the literature that Becker used a similar method to 'aggressive interviewing' in 1971 (Haralambos, 1994).

*Formalization phase: 'Back and forth to Pišece': February 1996 - September 1997*

Based on the information collected in the previous two phases a check-list was developed for subsequent interviews of specific issues requiring more information (see Appendix 7). Interview check-lists were adapted as necessary during an interview.

In order to gain more insight into the interactions between the different members of the local community (e.g., power relationships, lines of communication), different categories of social actors were interviewed. During this phase, I spent many hours in villagers' homes, vineyards,

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<sup>75</sup> Journalistic interviewing techniques (e.g., pausing to give people more time or less time to answer the question, patience, body language) were very helpful.

orchards, with their families and friends. I frequently visited the various local pubs (i.e., before and after the service in the local church, before and after a funeral) to listen to and talk with people. I also observed people in the shops where they stopped to buy supplies and exchange the news. I used the information gathered from interviews and participant observations to look for the webs of relationships within Pišece's context - how people in the local community related to each other across the generations, how families relied on their 'family clans and networks', how particular social networks and cliques came to exist, and how locals participated in decision making (i.e., the preparations for the 1994 Workshop, the CIB meeting). Thus, I was looking for visible and hidden alliances and factions in Pišece, and for visible and hidden cleavages.

In this phase, I had some interesting experiences with the informants at the local level. Some villagers would still welcome me with friendly interest, while others would receive me quite coldly. It became evident after several discussions, that some of the villagers thought that I was there to help the 'others'. The others were, locals that belonged to the other local social groupings.

*Confirmation phase: October 1996 - February 1997*

To fill in the informational gaps and to verify the positions of different actors and identify changes through time, I conducted interviews with the same people twice in the two and a half year period. This process excluded two informants who left Pišece for personal reasons (one married and moved to a nearby town, and the other moved to Ljubljana for employment reasons).

In this phase, I conducted also four interviews with small groups of 4 to 6 people. A modified version of the qualitative research method developed by Harrison et al. (1988) was used. Participants in these groups were either members of the same family clan or clique or they were active in the same voluntary association, society or club. In terms of gender and age these groups were mixed, but on two occasions they were approximately the same age. I

organized two groups myself, while the other two groups were organized by the interviewees themselves since I asked them to invite friends or others they thought I should meet.

The purpose of this method was to revisit and check results of the analyses of previously collected data on organizing practices of locals, and the local social groupings and divisions. At the same time, by observing the group dynamics (relationships within the group) and observing the non-verbal behaviour of the people in the group (i.e., the inflection of the voice, moments of silence, facial expressions and so on) proved useful in establishing whether the group shared views or if there were cleavages in members views on the development of rural tourism.

During these interviews, informants were encouraged to express in their own terms, their interests, ideas, opinions, hopes, and fears about the development of rural tourism, and its benefits and costs, and about the relationships between the different actors involved in rural tourism development. Also, informants were asked to highlight disparities between their and the 'others' (other social group in the community or external actors) perceptions of rural tourism development.

Before ending this section, it is necessary to mention that the various qualitative research methods and techniques discussed here were used in the field in an integrated and iterative way to approach the research problem.

The following three chapters (Chapter 4, 5 and 6) will take further in the ethnography and theory of Pišece's reality. Chapter 4 reviews the context of the 1994 Workshop and calls attention to the complexities that are likely to be involved in the rural tourism development process. Chapter 5 outlines the social organization and organizing practices within the community, and presents us with some key players in the community development processes through the exploration of the locales, domains and arenas in Pišece. After knowing more about the social context of local networks and modes of communication with regard to rural tourism development, we proceed to the next layer and in Chapter 6, the final veil is lifted from Pišece's social reality.

## **4 PIŠECE AND ITS POTENTIAL FOR RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT -**

### **First glimpse at the complexities of the rural tourism development process**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter is an introduction to the Local Community of Pišece and its people who requested help in their efforts to develop rural tourism as a means to generate a better living. This leads us to take a closer look at Pišece, its history, its prospects linked to rural tourism, and its people as well as the social and political context within which they were embedded. As such, this chapter represents the first of three chapters linking the ethnographic research data with the theoretical approach taken. This chapter, thus represents the first layer of observation of Pišece's social reality.

The chapter introduces us in more detail to the first impressions of the situation in Pišece as it was presented at the 1994 Workshop. Through the workshop we make first acquaintance with some locals, and therefore with some of the personal and collective local community's aspirations for a rural tourism project. People and situations as presented, both at a formal and informal level at the workshop, gave a first glimpse of the complexities likely to be involved in the many interfaces and discourses of transformation process of rural tourism in Pišece, which were not fully apparent at that moment to an outsider like myself. Nevertheless, we sensed the negotiations and power struggles taking place in Pišece and which are presented below.

The 1994 Workshop took place at Atomske toplice, a well-known Slovenian spa with working thermal springs. It was organized jointly by the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, and the University of Klagenfurt, Austria and given in response to a request for assistance from a group of people in Pišece. They voiced their concern and affront felt by many people in the Local Community, of the generally held negative image of Pišece as an isolated, dying community, with high unemployment, low income-generation opportunities and nothing to keep the younger generation at home. After reflecting on their situation, these locals initiated a process to address the issues. The 1994 Workshop intensified interest among the other locals

in the development of rural tourism in Pišece, and it affected the balance of influence and power in Pišece's society (see also Chapter 6).

I return to this workshop later and the associated discussions, but, first an overview of one of the local communities that was the focus or *raison d'être* for those discussions is given.

#### 4.2 The Local Community of Pišece

Here is a detailed picture of the geography of Pišece with the intention to provide an overview of this Local Community's limits and advantages for tourism as I first encountered them on a hot summer day, June 1994. I was visiting there as a participant of the International Workshop 'Residents - Management - Sustainable Development'. I thought it unlikely that many city dwellers like myself would be going to Pišece without a good reason for doing so. This could, of course, have been a personal bias, but I would argue that it is also a cultural one. I believe that most of my compatriots, even had they known where Pišece was, would agree that it was a some forlorn hamlet at the back of beyond. A visit to the Local Community was part of the 1994 Workshop programme. Organizers felt that it was important for participants to see the 'peripheral' areas first hand.

Pišece Local Community is in the Posavje<sup>76</sup> region in the southeast of Slovenia, less than 20 kilometres from the border with Croatia. Almost the whole of the Slovenian-Croatian border region (see Appendix 1) is underdeveloped and demographically threatened (Ravbar, 1995).

Pišece Local Community or Pišece *krajevna skupnost* includes five villages, namely Blatno, Dednja vas, Pavlova vas, Pišece village itself and Podgorje pri Pišecah. Pišece village is the seat of the *krajevna skupnost* ('administrative area' - the Local Community). To avoid further

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<sup>76</sup> The Posavje region represents 4,5% of Slovenia's surface, and 3,7% of the country's population is living there. The territory belongs administratively to three municipalities, namely the Municipality of Brežice, Krško and Sevnica. While Posavje might be a colourful region in terms of natural and cultural attributes, Ravbar (1995) argues that the region is underdeveloped, characterized by high migration, a low level of education, and a poorly developed infrastructure.

confusion, I will use the term Pišece when referring to the Local Community, while I will refer to Pišece itself as Pišece village. The term local community or villagers refers to all inhabitants of the Pišece Local Community.

Pišece village was my destination on this particular day. To get there from Ljubljana, Slovenia's capital city, is not easy. It takes almost three hours to drive the 140 kilometres from Ljubljana to Pišece. The main road to Pišece is not well surfaced along its entire length, and traffic sometimes gets very heavy, as this road is also the main road to Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, and it is used by many lorries and freight vehicles going to and from the south<sup>77</sup>. There are three other routes one can take to Pišece, namely via Novo mesto, Celje, and Sevnica, but the quality of the roads in all cases is poor.

Although Pišece village is situated off the main road, rail, and air routes, the village is relatively well integrated into the local road network, so the 15 kilometres from the town of Brežice - the seat of the Local Commune - to Pišece poses no particular obstacle. There is a decent road from Pišece to Krško, a larger town in the southwest, and to Zagreb (60 kilometres south), through the junction with the highway in Čatež. Čatež is a well known touristic place with a spa health resort - that attracts yearly about 450.000 local and foreign tourists (*Informacija o turističnem prometu*, 1996). There are asphalt roads to the neighbouring settlements around Bizeljsko to the northeast, but the terrain does not permit direct routes to the north.

Coming from Brežice, one sees the first sign-post for Pišece village only in the neighbouring village of Globoko. The village of Pišece has only about 400 inhabitants while there are 1241 people living in the whole Local Community. Administratively, the Pišece *krajevna skupnost* belongs to the Municipality of Brežice, along with eighteen other Local Communities<sup>78</sup>.

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<sup>77</sup> The number of lorries has decreased in the period from 1992 - 1995 due to the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

<sup>78</sup> see the Statute of the Brežice Municipality (1995). The description of the Slovenian Republic's administrative system can be found in Chapter 1.

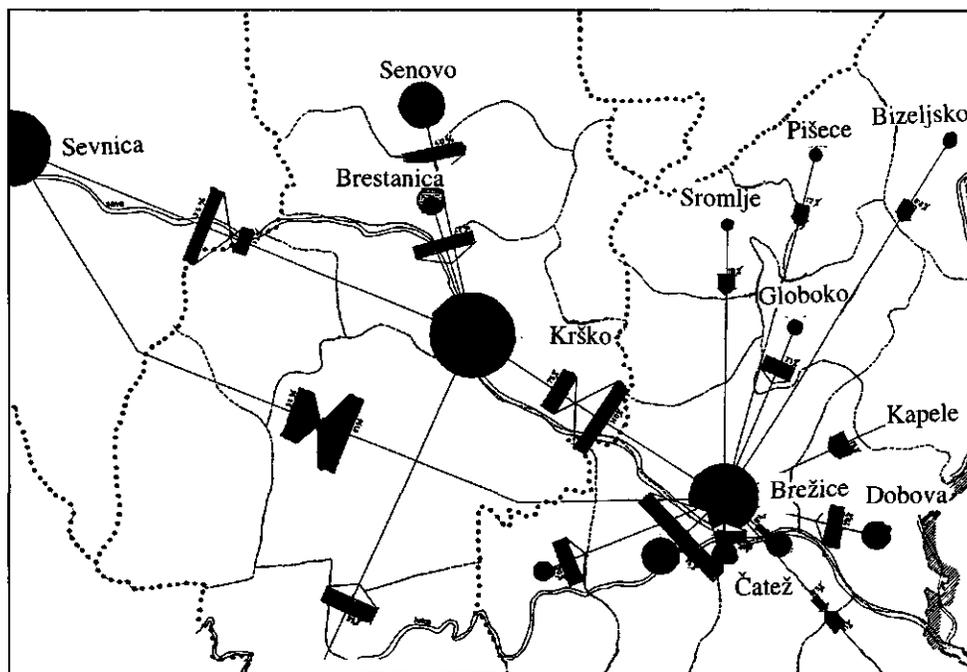


Figure 1: Local map of the Pišece area

### *Arriving in Pišece village*

For the final few kilometres before Pišece village, the road climbs upward, with meadows on either side. One can see a large yellow church in the distance, but the first impression is of a small, sleepy village, lying at the foot of Orlica hill (some 698 metres above sea level) in the midst of vineyards. On the day of my arrival, the village seemed deserted; everyone was hiding from the heat in their house or garden. Thus, I focused my attention on getting to know what the village looked like.

Entering from the south, one sees immediately the primary school, which is the biggest building in the village after the church. Later in the day, the parish priest told me that the school was named after the village's best known son, the linguist Maks Pleteršnik (1840-1923). Pleteršnik compiled the first Slovenian-German dictionary, which was published more

than 100 years ago, in 1884. The dictionary is still in use today, and contemporary linguists consider it an indispensable component of Slovenia's cultural heritage. '*With Pleteršnik's dictionary, Slovenian literature became accessible to the world of foreign languages, and only after its publication did the Slovenian language become an integral part of the research within the Indo-European language study groups.*'<sup>79</sup> This could certainly, therefore, be a touristic plus for Pišece.

I talked about the school with the local priest, Father 'Jože' (B1)<sup>80</sup>, after the meeting between the Workshop participants and the villagers (which I describe in detail in later sections). Father Jože did not strike me as being a typical man of the cloth. He was young (in his early forties), athletic, fashionably dressed, and eloquent. The general opinion was that he was a very charismatic, a lover of fine wines, and one who did not only appreciate the wines of others, but he also made his own vintage from the grapes grown in the church vineyards around Pišece. He gave advice on grapes for producing wine to some of the villagers (i.e., 'Maria' (A1) - who was the President of the Tourist Society at that time). In fact, his expertise was acknowledged far beyond Pišece's boundaries. At a later date, he told me that he belonged to the extremely prestigious 'Knights of Wine' (*Vitezi Vina*), an exclusive national brotherhood of the best wine connoisseurs in all of Slovenia. Its membership is by invitation only.

His interests extended to the local history and sociology (he had a university degree in social sciences). According to some of the locals (i.e., Damjan and 'Marko' (C1) - the two young participants of the 1994 Workshop) Father Jože, in the eight years since his arrival in Pišece parish from the Štajerska region, became a driving force in the community. He was an active member of several local associations, societies and clubs, organizing all sorts of community activities. When I arrived in Pišece for the first time, he was on the organizing committee for the 1994 Workshop, a member of the CIB, and on the committee for the celebration of the Centenary Anniversary of the publication of Maks Pleteršnik's Slovenian-German dictionary.

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<sup>79</sup> Sentiments expressed by Dr. Glonar, a contemporary linguist, in his oration to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of Pleteršnik's death (Parish Chronicle, 1993).

<sup>80</sup> The coding system for the villagers of Pišece was explained in Chapter 3.

Behind the Maks Pleteršnik School there was a football field and tennis court. Further, on the same side of the road, there was a *večnamenski dom* (the Community Centre), with the post office next to it. The *večnamenski dom* is where everyone meets to discuss issues of common importance at the so called *zbor krajanov* (meeting of all the villagers), to receive visiting dignitaries from the Brežice Municipality or from Ljubljana, and to enjoy leisure activities. Everyone who lives in the Pišece Local Community is welcome there. Opposite the *večnamenski dom* were two old, low, rather shabby houses of a dirty yellow colour, with terra cotta tiled roofs. Perhaps renovation could add some charm to this part of the village.

Past the *večnamenski dom* and the post office, the road curves right and narrows, barely permitting two cars to pass. Just past the curve, there was a refurbished building, two storeys high, with a pub on the ground floor. Across the road was an old fire engine (which meant that the fire station must be somewhere close), and next to the fire engine there was a grand green house, two storeys high, with tall white shutters and a large, overgrown front garden surrounded by a wrought-iron fence. I could see the school headmaster's children playing in the garden.

The road curved again to the right and there was a monument commemorating the dramatic events that have taken place in Pišece<sup>81</sup> in the last 400 years or so. A few meters further, the road splits. I decided to turn right, and there was, finally, the large yellow church. It is worth mentioning this church, since it is an obvious landmark as one approaches along the road from the village of Globoko. It is built on a small hill in the middle of Pišece. It is an impressive and puzzling sight to see such a large church in such a small village (see photo below).

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<sup>81</sup> The monument was raised in 1975 to commemorate the 30th anniversary of Pišece's liberation from Nazi occupation in 1945. It was designed to commemorate the major events in the village's history; including the farmers' rebellion of 1573 (known as Gubec's farmers' uprising), the end of the 1914-1918 War, the uprising of the partisan freedom fighters in 1941, the murder of local people by the Nazi occupants in 1943, and the end of the Second World War. The resistance in Pišece towards the occupants was so fierce that the German commando which re-named Pišece in German Dittmansberg called it Banditenberg (the Bandits' hill).



Photo 1: The view of Pišece's church

I later learned from Father Jože and from various literature sources, that the Pišece's church (and castle) had been very important for the Salzburg Archbishops in the thirteenth century, and later for the noble Moscon family (see also the forthcoming paragraphs).

Opposite the church was a relatively large building which housed a small general store and a pub. A few people were sitting on the pub's terrace.

Beside the church flows a stream that is the source of the river Gabernica. A few metres on is Pišece's last remaining water-mill, restored in 1972, with its waterwheel turning smoothly. The pupils of the local school who had delved into Pišece's history, have later told me that, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, there were seventeen water-mills on the Gabernica, most of which were used for grinding wheat. Although two of the mills were still standing at the end of the Second World War, they were closed down in the early 1970s because the

millers were unable to find a master craftsman to restore them to their function of grinding grain. Today, the last remaining mill serves only as a picturesque reminder of the past. The pupils also said that, after the mill stopped grinding grain, Pišece's bakery closed down, and the smell of freshly baked bread disappeared from Pišece<sup>82</sup>. By the time of my visit, most of the locals were buying bread along with their other supplies from the privately owned local shops. However, some older farm women still baked bread at home.

The only places to park in Pišece village were in front of the church and in a small car park next to the water-mill. Visible from this car park is a large old hay barn, full to the brim and as such an attractive sight. A few meters away from the combined pub-cum-shop opposite the church, one passes the *krajevni urad* (the office where the Local Community Council has its headquarters). The road from the *krajevni urad* continues to the east, to the village of Podgorje pri Pišecah and further to the Bizeljsko area, past several houses and the local graveyard. A little further along, one is out of the Pišece village, following the curves through terraced vineyards. Podgorje pri Pišecah is a smaller village and most of the houses stretch along the road to Bizeljsko, while some are scattered over the little hills and surrounded by vineyards.

At this point, it was time to turn and go back to explore the rest of the Pišece Local Community. Taking some photos at the church, I was approached by a woman in her early forties - I named her 'Silvestra' (B19) - with a shopping bag (I assumed she came out of the shop opposite the church) and asked me whether I had also come to see ... the castle<sup>83</sup>! She must have noticed me walking around the church with a camera, and assumed seeing also my LJ (Ljubljana) registration number plate that I must be a tourist. Later, I discovered that she was involved in agritourism. She gave me directions on how to get to the castle, saying:

*'Go west from the centre of Pišece on the road to the village of Pavlova vas*

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<sup>82</sup> The village bakery was opened in 1932. At that time, the baker sold 250 kilograms of bread a day on average (OŠ Pišece Report, 1996).

<sup>83</sup> At this point of my first exploration of Pišece, it is necessary to say I knew little of the area and its history, so I had no idea that there was also a castle.

*(keep following the road to Sromlje). There you will find first an old inn, 'The Srnjak Inn,' which is closed to the public. Just next door there is the 'Marellica Inn' (where one can get warm meals if one reserves in advance). After 'Marellica Inn', the road makes another curve, and a beautiful view of the valley of Brežice opens up. A few more curves further along the road is a local fishpond, and if you follow the tarmac road a few hundred metres further up the hill, there it is .... our famous castle.'*

Following her instructions I went to see the castle, the rest of Pišece village and the rest of the Local Community. And Silvestra was right, the castle was worth a visit (see photo below).

As explained earlier, I found out more about the history of the castle from Father Jože and from various literature sources (e.g., Stopar, 1982; school project).

The castle was built in the thirteenth century by the Archbishops of Salzburg, who began to colonize the region of Posavje in the twelfth century. To defend and administer their colonial possessions, the Archbishops built several castles in Posavje, amongst them the one at Pišece, which is the most recent. As historian Stopar (1982) informs us, Pišece's castle has been the silent witness of many events. The last family of knights died out in 1353. The castle then passed through the hands of various administrators until it was bought by Count Moscon in 1542. It remained in his family until 1927. Under the Moscons the castle and its noble inhabitants went through rough times due to several farmer rebellions<sup>84</sup>. According to some locals, the castle was haunted. A local legend says that long ago, a young woman was locked in the tower by her greedy relatives, and she died in isolation. Now, her ghost is said to walk through the castle's chambers. This could be another plus for tourism.

The last Count Moscon significantly contributed to the development of Pišece's infrastructure. It was he who ensured, around 1900, that Pišece got a good road connection with the towns of Brežice and Krško, and that a post office would open in the village. Three years later, he

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<sup>84</sup> In 1661, the local farmers, unhappy with the newly imposed high taxes that had been imposed by the Habsburg emperor for the army, organized a punt (a 'farmers' rebellion'). Count Moscon and his wife both lost their lives during this uprising. The Count was killed outside the castle and his wife was thrown from the tower.

made sure that the village got a telegraph service.

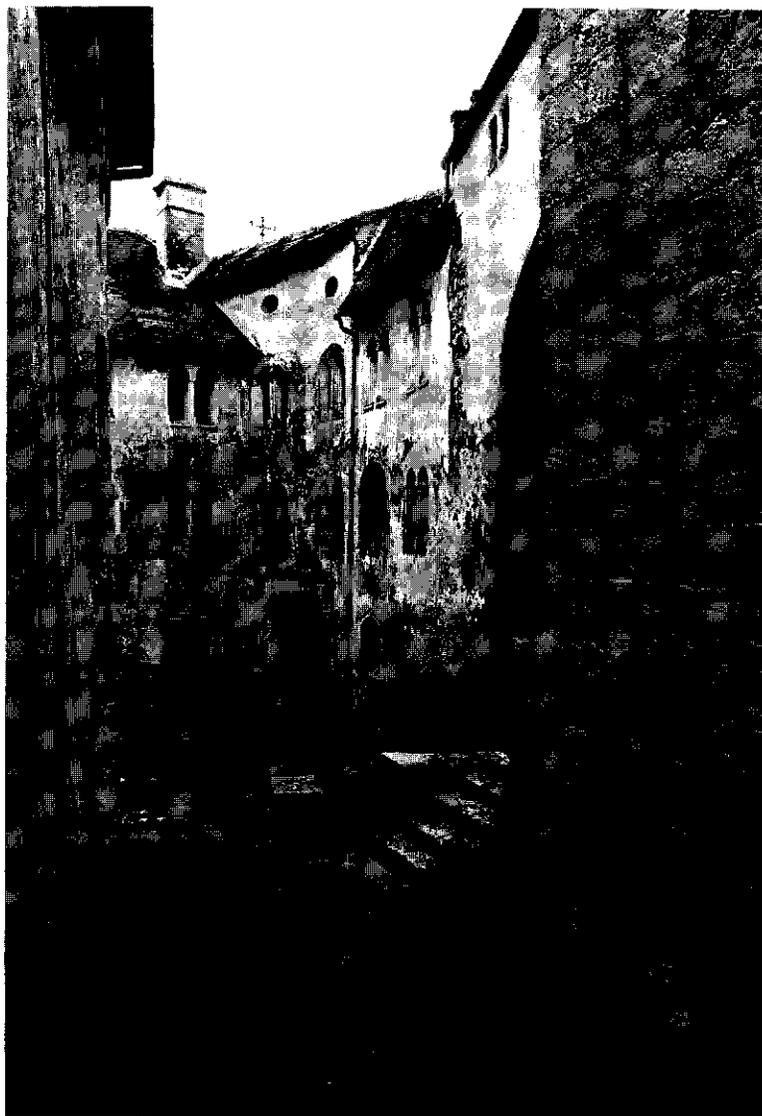


Photo 2: The Pišece's castle

With the outbreak of the Second World War the castle had new 'owners' soon, as the German occupying forces established their headquarters in the castle. As the war dragged on, many local patriots lost their lives in the castle's dungeons. The Germans were expelled in 1944. After the war, the castle was nationalized and used as emergency housing for displaced

people, returning survivors of Nazi concentration camps, and villagers whose homes had been destroyed. Today, it belongs to the Municipality of Brežice<sup>85</sup> and is in a very poor state of repair, although there are still two people living in it (local layabout Marjan and his friend). The castle is built on a hill, and the road up to it is nothing more than a dirt track. The road goes through a fairly thick forest, which becomes denser the closer one gets to it. Finally, a car cannot go any further and the last 300 metres or so must be walked.

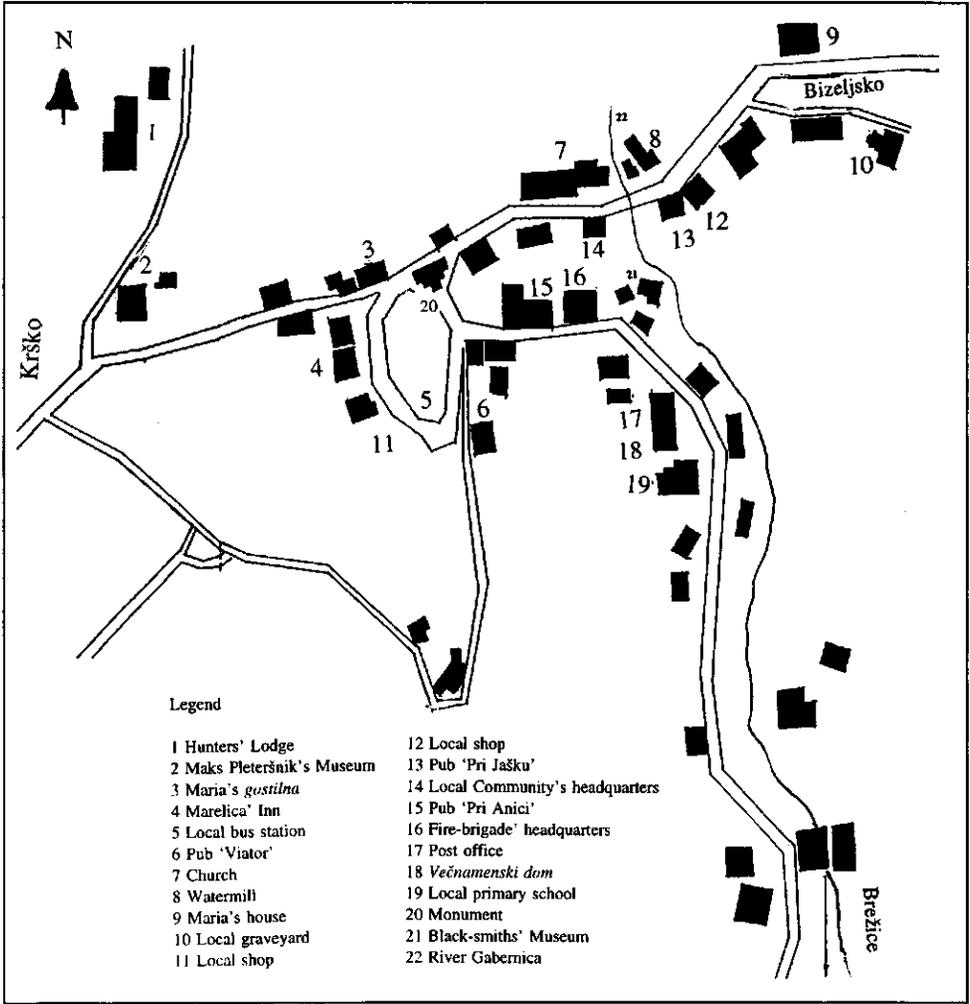


Figure 2: Map of Pišece village (Verbole, 1996)

<sup>85</sup> The Municipality of Brežice owns the castle, and the Brežice Museum manages it.

The castle is surrounded by a park, typical of an English country estate. This is also neglected and overgrown.

The Forestry Service of Brežice (GG Brežice) designed a forest footpath some five kilometres long that ends at the castle. The path was designed in 1992, thus while GG Brežice was still State-owned. The purpose was to provide an educational nature walk, through a woodland typical of the region, for students of Slovenia's general secondary and forestry schools. The path begins at the water-mill on the river Gabernica in the centre of Pišece village and runs past St. Martin's church. It climbs to Pleteršnik's home and up past the lodge of the local Hunting Society, from where there is a beautiful view of the Brežice Valley. From there, it continues uphill through the forest and the English-style park, where there are exotic trees and shrubs such as the giant sequoia, tulip trees and ginkgo.

Pišece village, then, is a 'cross' formed village, but it is not easy to determine where the centre of the village lies<sup>86</sup>. The centre of Pišece is not where the two 'axes' of the cross meet, but seems to be stretching along the main road through the village, all the way from the church to the school. The local bus station, the biggest privatized general store, and one of the inns are thus only a few steps from the centre.

We might recall, Pišece village is a 'centre' of Pišece Local Community with the school, the church, the post office, a few pubs and shops, the bus station and so on. The other four villages that stretch along the 'main' local roads to Sromlje, Bizeljsko and Čatež are, compared to Pišece, less developed in terms of infrastructure (shops and pubs). One will see more empty and old houses in bad state of repair than in Pišece village, and there might be still some ethnologically interesting old buildings and farm buildings (i.e., houses built in the traditional Panonian style). Pavlova vas (202 inhabitants) has its own church in baroque style. Most of the four villages are situated close to Pišece village, thus the seat of the Local Community is easily accessible. In retrospect, some of the locals found it important to know

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<sup>86</sup> The 'cross' form is rather unusual in Slovenia. Its countryside is most often characterized by two types of villages: the 'ribbon' village and the 'clumped' village. The ribbon village gets its name from the fact that the houses and other buildings are stretched along either side of the road that connects the village with the rest of the world. The clumped village grew up in concentric formation, around a central point, such as a square, or a landmark, such as a large (linden) tree.

who was from which of the five villages.

### *First Impressions of Pišece Local Community*

I went to Pišece expecting to find a run-down, under-developed place. My previous experiences in rural areas in the northwest and southern parts of Slovenia, and partly also my urban background, have led me to regard rural areas as marginalized and backward. With regard to Pišece, this preconception was reinforced by the paper I had read of a young native of Pišece called Damjan, of whom we already hear earlier. Yet, my expectations were met by something quite different. Upon arrival, I saw a pleasant, tidy village in a spectacular natural setting of hills, woodlands and vineyards. The roads were paved (and in Pišece village there were streetlights); there were many new houses and several older houses were modernized. Some of the old houses standing next to very new houses were not in such a good state of repair, but they were very few. The families had moved into the new homes and had simply left the old homes standing. In general, most of the buildings in the five villages were in a good state of repair. Of local architecture, there were very few examples of old buildings typical of the region, but for one house that had been preserved in the original Panonian style. The newer houses were so modern that they were impersonal (common to several regions in Slovenia) and, all together, the villages gave an impression of poor planning, often found in Slovenia's countryside (Drozg, 1997).

What was special about the Pišece Local Community was that there was an eight-year primary school<sup>87</sup> and a post office. Villages usually have one or two private shops (there are two in Pišece, and one in Pavlova vas), a *gostilna* (an inn) and a pub. The *večnamenski dom* is almost a necessity, and a fire station is quite a common feature too. It is less common, however, for a Local Community the size of Pišece to have its own primary school and post-office.

The locals are very proud of their primary school, which was established in 1820 when the

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<sup>87</sup> In Slovenia children, enroll in the formal educational system at the age of 6. After one year of this so called pre-school education they will enroll in the primary (elementary) school and go through its 8-year programme.

local boys had lessons in the castle at the initiative of Count Moscon. Today, the school is the centre of local cultural life, and it contributes considerably to the local sense of identity. The current school building dates from 1905<sup>88</sup>. The local school is a continuing source of conflict between the school's authorities, and the Municipality of Brežice, which wants to close the school down (I shall come back to this in Chapter 6). The pressure from the municipal authorities to close the school has been very strong, as the number of pupils has decreased steadily over the past twenty years. This is the indirect result of intensive migration of young people to nearby towns. Many of them, especially young women, have left Pišece in search of a more cosmopolitan lifestyle. Because of this, many young farmers and other villagers who have decided to stay, have not been able to find wives.

The second reason is that a primary school was opened in the nearby village of Globoko in 1976. For various reasons, some families from the Pišece Local Community preferred to send their children to the Globoko primary school. They argued that the school in Pišece only had a very small gymnasium, that the building needed to be refurbished (the last renovation dates back to 1983), that it was difficult to get teachers to come to Pišece (as there is no housing for them), and some parents also felt that the quality of education was not adequate. This last argument, however, is difficult to justify when one considers the last generations of pupils who have been to Pišece's local school. They have done well, going on to secondary schools in Brežice and Ljubljana, and many have enrolled in the University of Ljubljana. Some of them have even obtained prestigious scholarships<sup>89</sup>.

This then is Pišece. However, we must now return to the 1994 Workshop to meet some of its participants for the first time.

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<sup>88</sup> The building was burnt down in 1944 by partisans, but was renovated immediately after the end of the Second World War towards the end of 1945.

<sup>89</sup> One of such prestigious scholarships for talented pupils is the Zois scholarship, named after Count Žiga Zois (1747-1819), a famous Slovenian industrialist and mentor of the Slovenian Enlightenment, who fought for the use of the Slovenian language in public. At the time of my field research, two former pupils of the local school were Zois fellows.

### **4.3 The 1994 International Workshop in Atomske toplice**

The Workshop 'Sustainable Development-Management-Residents', as mentioned earlier in the introduction, took place near Pišece and lasted five days. After more than a year of hard work, the CIB had a reason to be satisfied - Pišece was now recognized on the map of Slovenia. Experts and journalists from Slovenia and Austria, all came to talk about the problems of Pišece and other similar villages in peripheral areas.

#### **4.3.1 The First Day of the International Workshop**

The Workshop in Atomske toplice began in the morning on a beautiful summer's day. The sun and the picturesque surroundings of Atomske toplice, a health resort, made it difficult for participants to remain indoors. Yet, the meeting continued, and the Spa's congress room soon became the venue for three intensive days of presentations and discussions relating to the development of peripheral areas in Slovenia and Austria.

As explained earlier, the idea for the 1994 Workshop had come about in 1993, resulting from an action by a group of Pišece inhabitants. A few members of this group were, as it was found out later in the process, endeavouring to enroll Pišece in the rural development programme of the Centre for Rural Development and Village Revitalisation (*CRPOV*) which is discussed in detail in Chapters 1 and 6. Later, in 1994, this group called itself the CRPOV Initiative Board (CIB) of Pišece.

One of CIB's first initiatives was to approach the University of Ljubljana. Damjan, who was one of the CIB's members, described Pišece's plight in a paper that he presented to his professor in 1994. His professor, 'Draga' (D1)<sup>90</sup>, was impressed with his presentation and asked Damjan to contact the other members of the CIB and locals having positions of authority (i.e., the President of *krajevna skupnost*). The response from Pišece was that Draga

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<sup>90</sup> The professor's code is (D1). The coding system works as follows: the letters 'D', 'E', and 'F' are for the members of team of experts, and the letters 'G' and 'H' are for actors at the municipal level. In addition, certain letters indicate the actor's age. For example, 'D' stands for actors who are 51 and older, 'F' stands for those who are between 30 and 40. The numbers are used to distinguish between various actors of the same age group.

should contact the municipal authorities of Brežice<sup>91</sup>, and get in touch with the rest of the CIB members. Damjan has up to now always been the most active CIB member.

In the course of these communications, it was decided to give attention to Pišece and its problems. Accordingly, Pišece was chosen to be the focus of an International workshop on the development of peripheral areas. Initial communications between the University, the CIB, Brežice Municipality, and the *krajevna skupnost* were through Damjan and later through the Secretary of Brežice Municipality. But, as the 1994 Workshop's organizers, especially the University of Ljubljana got more familiar with Pišece and its people, Maria and 'Hribar' (B2), the President of the local Tourist Society and the headmaster of the local primary school respectively, also became involved with the organization of the 1994 Workshop, and they too were used as communication channels to the local community. Also Father Jože emerged as an important local actor very early in the process of rural tourism development, although in retrospect, the 1994 Workshop organizers were at these early stages 'surprised' by his active engagement in community matters (see also Chapter 6).

At the end, the joint organisers of the 1994 Workshop were the University of Ljubljana, the University of Klagenfurt, and the Slovenian Government Office for Local Self-Government. Additional to the primary purpose of the workshop, which was to discuss the problems of peripheral areas in Slovenia and Austria, here was another objective, namely the investigation of the role of formal and informal local institutions and groups<sup>92</sup> in managing natural, man-made and human resources for rural development. This role was new, as prior to 1994, these groups and institutions had operated differently under the previous system of local government (see Chapter 1 and Chapter 6).

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Government Office for Local Self-Government, and, to a lesser extent, the Municipality of Brežice and the Pišece Local Community, provided funding for the workshop. The first three days of the 1994 Workshop were devoted to paper presentation, most of which dealt with rural development in peripheral areas (see below). The

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<sup>91</sup> see Appendix 8 for the structure of the Brežice Municipal Government.

<sup>92</sup> It is important to keep in mind here that the Local Self-Government Reform started in 1994, and that the role and the new status of *krajevna skupnost* have not been fully defined yet.

fourth and fifth days were for the comparative field trips to peripheral rural areas in Slovenia (Pišece) and Austria (Eisenkappel).

Looking back, the choice of workshop papers was revealing, ranging from papers dealing with general rural development issues to very specific such as the application of the fuzzy system approach<sup>93</sup>. This collection of papers showed clearly that a gap exists between how researchers and local people perceive rural development. Local people often have different ideas, priorities, and timetables for improving their situation.

During the official session in Atomske toplice, the Brežice Municipality Secretary dropped in for a few minutes every day. Several other prominent figures, including the Mayor of Brežice, usually made an appearance only during lunch or dinner. The official representatives of the Pišece *krajevna skupnost* were conspicuous by their absence. A group of young villagers from Pišece, however, participated actively throughout the whole workshop, discussing the problems of their community with professionals from both universities. They were eager to learn about the various types of rural development approaches being used in the countryside in other parts of Europe.

Other 'guests' participated at the official sessions: the national mass media (TV Slovenia and national newspapers) as well as local media (local radio and newspaper) covered the event several times. The 1994 Workshop was one of the issues on the evening TV News and Pišece came under the spot-light even if only for a short while.

After the conclusion of the official sessions in Atomske toplice, the members of the CIB, in the name of the Local Community, invited participants of the 1994 Workshop to visit Pišece. The visit began with a tour around the five villages belonging to the Pišece Local

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<sup>93</sup> *Global Post-Fordism: The Conditions for Rural Socio-Economic Development* (A. Bonanno), *Sustainable Development of Rural Areas - A project Approach* (A. Barbič), *The Reform of Local Self-Government in the Republic of Slovenia* (S. Vlačj), *From Rio ... to Pišece: Human Activities in the Environment* (M. Naprudnik and I. Stanič), *Tourism Development in the European Countryside: Costs and Benefits* (A. Verbole), *Contemporary Social-Geographic Characteristics of Settlements Changes in the Countryside* (M. Ravbar), *Modelling Decision Process - A New Application Field for the Fuzzy-System Approach* (P. Mandl), *The Environmental Problems and a Decision Making System* (A. Lukšič), *Environmental Auditing and its Relevance to Rural Areas* (F. Černe), *Social-Geographic Characteristics of Pišece: Problems and Potentials* (A. Rus), to the *Economic Restructuring of Eisenkappel - A Case Study of a Sustainable Development in an Underdeveloped Area* (D. Wastl-Walter and D. Hertzog).

Community, including visits to farms that were either involved with, or interested in, agritourism and other forms of rural tourism (see Chapter 2). There was a visit to a wine cellar, and also to a farm, where the participants sampled home-dried apples and apricots. After the tour, the participants were taken to a gathering of villagers in Pišece village. The villagers made welcome speeches and some members of the expert team presented papers. There were also villagers who described the activities of their local voluntary associations, societies and clubs after which the floor was opened to discussion. The gathering ended with a buffet supper and informal discussions that went on far into the night.

#### **4.3.2. The Round-table Discussion in Pišece**

The round-table discussion took place on 28th June 1994. I arrived in the village for the first time on that day, in the late afternoon. Members of the expert team, including myself, were expected to attend the public gathering in Pišece village, where local development options were to be discussed with the people of Pišece and representatives from the Municipality of Brežice. My colleagues arrived early in the evening from their field trip to the farms that the CIB had indicated as having possibilities for rural tourism activities. I had missed the tour, which I did later with my research assistants, and on that occasion it was Tine (C2) - a member of the CIB whom I had met at the Workshop - who was our guide, since other members had other obligations that day. It was Father Jože, who had insisted that the members of the CIB show me around.

However, as described above, I had already made a short tour of Pišece on my own, and now I was waiting with everyone else in front of the *večnamenski dom*. I was surprised to see so many people - the whole 'square' was full of men, women, and children, standing and chatting, waiting for the round-table discussion to begin. While waiting, I spoke with Tine who also 'missed' the tour of the 'soft,' picturesque landscape around the village, the vineyards, the church, and the castle. We both agreed on how much potential there was for tourist development.

When the bus arrived, my colleagues seemed to be in a very good mood, having spent all day eating local specialities, drinking wine from the local cellars, and discussing the potential for rural tourism with the current and prospective 'direct beneficiaries of rural tourism,' i.e., the people of Pišece.

Before we entered the *večnamenski dom*, a welcome drink was served. Then it was time for the speeches. We were welcomed by young Damjan, by the Mayor of Brežice Municipality, by Maria, the President of the local Tourist Society, Father Jože, the headmaster of the local school, and lastly, by the President of the Pišece *krajevna skupnost*. Except for the participation of the parish priest and Damjan's contribution, this type of welcoming formality could be considered as characteristic of Slovenia's rural culture at official or important gatherings... at least before Slovenia's independence.

#### ***Local authority's absence and exclusion from the 1994 Workshop***

It was only much later when reading my fieldnotes that I realized that the choice and order of speakers was indicative of an emerging new socio-political order in Pišece. For one thing, the parish priest was included in the programme, and for another, the President of the *krajevna skupnost*<sup>94</sup> was the last to deliver his speech. This puzzled me, as etiquette dictates that the President be the first to address the guests. It also puzzled me that the Secretary of the *krajevna skupnost* did not participate actively in the round-table discussion, although he was present throughout the whole afternoon and evening. I was also surprised to learn that the President of the *krajevna skupnost*, in his official capacity, had not been involved in the organization of the workshop's field trip. One of the possible explanations could be that the Community Council of the *krajevna skupnost* disapproved the whole event, or that there were potential asymmetries within the community power structures.

In trying to understand how these 'problematic' social relations in Pišece had affected

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<sup>94</sup> The president of *krajevna skupnost* presides over the Local Community Council (*svet krajevne skupnosti*). The Pišece Local Council consists of 10 members, and it is elected by local population (aged above 18) living in the 5 settlements of the *krajevna skupnost* Pišece. The elections take place every 4 years (for more details see Chapter 1).

participation in the 1994 Workshop, I first reflected on how the workshop had come about. It had been young Damjan through his studies and contact with his professor that the idea had first been raised, and who later, as the representative of a small group of locals with no formal mandate from the *krajevna skupnost* (the CIB), had contacted the University of Ljubljana. The group members had seized the opportunity and had thus taken a very informal approach to ask for help for Pišece, bypassing the *krajevna skupnost* altogether and partly the Municipality of Brežice. The CIB had taken the decision to do this, not after discussing it with the formal authorities during an official meeting or an appointment, but rather after talking with friends, and 'friends of friends' (see Boissevain, 1974) in their homes or over a pint in their favourite pub (see Chapter 5). It is perhaps indicative of the attitude of the young towards the established authority or perhaps in this instance it was their stance towards a particular set of representatives of the local authority. However, once the workshop was in the planning stage, the decisions taken about its organization remained outside the domain of the local government and remained in the homes of various influential people (e.g., the parental home of Marko, and the Pišece's pubs). Even the professionals from Ljubljana University had discussed the organization of the 1994 Workshop with CIB members and representatives of the Municipality without involving the President of the *krajevna skupnost*, who was notified about the plans to hold the workshop only a few days before it actually began.

Back in Pišece, after the welcoming speeches were over, we were swept inside the *večnamenski dom* and seated in the front row. The hall was big enough to contain at least 10 rows of 30 chairs. The chairs were all taken and there were even people standing at the end of the hall. The Community Centre's walls were covered with the paintings and texts of pupils from the local school. These works were arranged in an attractive display entitled 'Pišece - Our Future.' On the small stage in front of the room a panel of representatives of the Universities of Ljubljana and Klagenfurt, and of the Government Office for Local Self-Government was seated. No local people, however, were represented in the panel.

The meeting was opened by the very same person who had indirectly initiated this event with his university paper - Damjan. He welcomed us again to Pišece, and then he introduced the panel members (Draga, 'Arne' (D2), and 'Irene' (E1)) and the team of experts from the

Universities and the research institutions. We stood up while being introduced, so the local people could see who we were and approach us later with their questions. Some of my colleagues spoke briefly on their perception of the problems and potentials of Pišece, on a new system of Local Self-Government, and on the 'project approach' to the (sustainable) development of rural areas, thus the development of rural areas through developmental projects<sup>95</sup>. Barbič (1995d) argued that such projects should encourage development based on local resources, and should bring together bottom-up and top-down approaches to development. The project approach would also affect the formulation of the project proposal that was finally made (see Chapter 6).

The meeting was eventful, and the locals raised many questions and concerns to which I shall return later. But first, let us consider the demographic make-up of Pišece, its surrounding area, natural resources, and infrastructure. These data provide a (descriptive) background for the following discussion of the historical, social, economic and developmental characteristics of Pišece.

#### *Demography of Pišece*

The data presented were collected during the 1994 Workshop, and from several local and other sources after the workshop. The local sources include the parish chronicle, booklets about local history, and interviews with locals of all ages from all five settlements. The life histories of the older villagers ('A' generation) were recorded. With the younger villagers, i.e., the 'B' and 'C' generation in the sociogram (see Appendix 5), I discussed the current situation in Pišece and their ideas for the future.

At the last Census, in 1991, the population of Pišece village was 399. The total population of the Pišece Local Community (that of the village of Pišece and of the five surrounding villages) was 1241. Since 1910, when the population of the local community was at its peak with 1965 people (Rus, 1995), the population continued to decrease. In the 1910s and 1920s many locals migrated to Croatia, but also to the United States, and some were forced to join

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<sup>95</sup> In 1997, the project approach was proposed as the approach to the implementation of Slovenia's agricultural policy objectives (Erjavec et al., 1997).

the army of the Habsburg Monarchy and died fighting in the 1914-1918 War<sup>96</sup>. In the period between the two world wars, the population continued to decrease. During the Second World War this trend reversed, mainly due to the influx of numerous displaced people<sup>97</sup>, but after the war, the employment opportunities in the non-agrarian sector resulted in immigration to bigger towns in Slovenia and to Zagreb.

The age distribution of the local population has changed dramatically from 1965 to present, due mainly to out migration and Pišce's greying population. Half of the population is fit for work with nine percent unemployed. The level of education is relatively low, with approximately one-third of the villagers above the age of 15 having only a primary-school education<sup>98</sup>. The percentage of those having a college or university degree in 1991 was only one percent compared to a nine percent average for Slovenia as a whole. Most of the college and university-educated people belong to the younger generations ('B' and 'C' generations).

The low percentage of inhabitants with a college or university degree is said to be the result of the peripheral position of the Pišce Local Community, the poorly developed educational infrastructure in the region, and the agrarian history of the area (Rus, 1995). As recently as fifty years ago, Pišce was a community of farmers, millers, smiths, carpenters, and shoemakers<sup>99</sup>. Only a few locals continue to work in this field. Today there are several carpenters, but they do their carpentry work at the local factories. There are two smiths in Pišce, but they both work in the factories. The last miller retired more than fifteen years ago. The 50-odd jobs available in Pišce in 1994 were either in the local school or in small-scale

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<sup>96</sup> During the 1<sup>st</sup> World War, many villagers fought under General Rudolf Maister (1874-1934). Maister was Slovenian, charged with coordinating local forces. He fought in Štajerska, on the northern Slovenian border, to help dissolve the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The contested area included the town of Maribor. Ultimately, Štajerska was placed under the rule of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, created at the end of the War (see Saint Germain's Peace Treaty, 1919).

<sup>97</sup> During the Second World War, the Nazis deported whole families from Posavje to Germany and in some cases to Serbia. They moved Germans onto the vacated lands, and many Slovenians resented that. Pišce Local Community and the neighbouring settlements were on the border of this so-called 'deportation zone.' From 1941 to 1944, more than 400 people fled from the deportation zone and from concentration camps in Germany to Pišce, where they were offered food and accommodation. During this period, villagers hid many partisans and Jews (Filipčič et al, 1975).

<sup>98</sup> In Slovenia, primary school lasts for eight years. Children begin primary school at the age of seven. Primary school education is compulsory.

<sup>99</sup> The income from farming was low, so many farmers sent their children to learn from craftsmen in other villages.

local businesses. Of these jobs, the majority (20) were in the primary school, and only seven of these were occupied by locals. There were also jobs in the locally owned garment business<sup>100</sup> (15) and the construction company (6), and a few jobs (9) in the local shops, inn, and pubs. Of the eleven or so villagers who are self-employed, most were women (Rus, 1995).

Almost 60 percent of the total active population is employed in the primary sector (e.g., agriculture, forestry), either by *Agraria Brežice*, the large horticultural company, or in the textile and wood industry, or as unskilled labour by construction companies. Some locals are also employed in the nearby health spa resorts, Terme Čatež or Atomske toplice. Most of the locals (91 percent) commute daily to the nearby towns of Brežice and Krško, and to neighbouring Croatia. Many bottlenecks to employment in Croatia were created when communication with Zagreb stopped due to the new national border that was established in 1990 (Barbič, 1995a and 1995c; Gosar and Klemenčič, 1994).

Occupational variety is very limited, especially for people with college or university degrees. The only possibility is working for the nuclear power plant in Krško, which provides jobs for local engineers and technicians. This suggests that the Pišece Local Community is suffering from brain drain to other places in Slovenia able to offer jobs and housing. It also suggests that the prospects for development of Pišece's human resources are not very promising, which is perhaps a reason for the current interest in developing alternatives such as rural tourism. These thoughts were confirmed by the data collected by Barbič and her research team through interviews held in Pišece with a small number of inhabitants towards the end of 1994<sup>101</sup> while preparing for the project (see Chapter 6). A closer look at the semi-structured interviews concerning Pišece's potential for development showed that many villagers seemed to be not only quite poorly educated, but some of them were also depressed and demoralised.

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<sup>100</sup> The business was closed down in 1996. However, one of the former employees from Bizeljsko took over the business and moved it to her home village Bizeljsko, keeping most of the employees.

<sup>101</sup> These were the first semi-structured interviews conducted with the members of the local community after the 1994 Workshop, and the intention was to learn more about the Local Community. I am greatly indebted to Prof. Barbič for letting me use results from her interviews.

Although the border with Croatia is very close, there is little intermarriage and there are very few people belonging to other ethnic groups. Slovenians are the predominant ethnic group by far, representing some 95 percent of the population in Pišece village and the five surrounding settlements. The 1991 Census shows that 87 percent of the inhabitants of Pišece were Roman Catholic with less than one percent Protestant.

### *Land and natural resources*

Natural resources are limited in Pišece and its surroundings. The soil quality (categories 4 and 5)<sup>102</sup> is poor, limiting agricultural production to wine and fruit growing. The hills surrounding Pišece are densely wooded, mainly with chestnut and oak. Many locals own some woods and make extra income by selling wood to factories in Krško and Brežice. The forest cover is predominantly deciduous. The wildlife includes wild boars, roe deers, partridges, pheasants, foxes, and hares and it is therefore not surprising that the Pišece local community has a well organised Hunters' Society<sup>103</sup> and a Hunting Lodge on Špička hill.

On the lower slopes there are extensive vineyards, especially on slopes exposed to a milder climate<sup>104</sup> (cold winds from the North are stopped by Orlica and the surrounding hills). Vineyards and orchards have been cultivated for centuries in the area around Pišece, and a local variety of apricot - *pišečka marelica* (the 'Pišece apricot') - is recognized as the highest -quality autochthonous apricot variety in Slovenia. Between 1956 and 1958, the *kmečka zadruga* (the Agricultural Cooperative) of Brežice bought 100 to 150 tons of these apricots

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<sup>102</sup> The Law on Categorization of Land (Official Gazette of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia, 45/1982) recognizes six different categories of agricultural land, with the most valuable being land used for food production. In categories 1 and 2 is the most fertile land (fields), which can be used only for food production, and on which no buildings can be erected. In category 3 are included areas with less fertile soils. In category 4, the conditions for agricultural production are limited by the high percentage of soil moisture (sometimes to the point of being completely waterlogged). There is often the need for land drainage. Category 5 includes areas where the conditions for agricultural production are limited due to excessive inclination.

<sup>103</sup> Slovenia's legislation does not permit poaching, and all hunting is regulated by Slovenia's Hunters' Association and their local branches - the Hunters' Societies.

<sup>104</sup> The climate in Pišece is very mild. With an average annual temperature of 9.8° C Pišece is one of the warmest places in Slovenia, next to the Primorje, the coastal area. The coldest month is January, with an average temperature of -1.1° C, and the warmest month is July, with an average temperature of 19.4° C. The average rainfall is 1050 mm; the driest period is from December to February.

from the farmers in Pišece and Bizeljsko. Nevertheless, in the early 1970s apricot growing was abandoned because of the escalating costs of manual labour, and today there are only 4 hectares of intensively cultivated apricot orchards in the whole of the Brežice Municipality.

Before the Second World War, more than 85 percent of the total local population was involved in farming. In 1994, the number had dropped to only 18 percent (the average for Slovenia as a whole was 7.6 percent). Almost 75 percent of the total farm population worked on the family farms, either full-time or part-time<sup>105</sup>. Of the 1092 hectares belonging to Pišece, 53 percent is suitable for agriculture. The most recent Census (1991) showed that most of this land was under cultivation.

Wine grapes and wine are now the predominant agricultural products. Wine production in Pišece has been a tradition for several hundred years. At the end of the 19th century, the aphids destroyed almost all the vineyards. Most of the vineyards were renovated in the early 1970s with the financial help of Slovin Bizeljsko-Brežice (today's Vino Brežice), one of Slovenia's major wine producers. The local vintners nowadays produce the top-quality white wines like Riesling, as well as red wines such as *cviček* - a dry wine. Although the wine quality is more than satisfactory, the locals have had problems marketing and selling the wine since the political and economic changes which have taken place in Slovenia. Before the break-up of former Yugoslavia, Vino Brežice had contracts with the local agricultural cooperative that guaranteed to buy the farmers' entire output of wine grapes. As explained in Chapter 1, the privatization process and related new legislation (i.e., denationalization) have destroyed the monopoly that the agricultural cooperatives had on marketing of agricultural products. Furthermore, the newly drawn border with Croatia is negatively influencing the free flow of goods. Nevertheless, some of the biggest local wine producers have managed to establish their own markets in Croatia, and to a lesser extent in Slovenia. Compared to wine growing, the rest of the agricultural production (e.g. animal husbandry) is poorly developed. There are only three horses and 48 head of cattle in Pišece while in the whole *krajevna skupnost* there are 16 horses and 270 head of cattle (Rus, 1995).

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<sup>105</sup> Although members of the farming households are often elderly, land is seldom leased.

Farms in Pišece are small, which is typical of most farms in Slovenia (see Chapter 1). Only 17 percent of farms are bigger than five hectares. The majority of households in Pišece (84 percent) own some land, mainly vineyards (Rus, 1995).

### *Infrastructure*

Houses in Pišece village had electricity and running water prior to the Second World War. Houses in the remaining four villages of the Local Community received electricity in 1959. It took nearly 20 more years to supply all the houses in the five settlements with running water. Work on the water pipeline started in 1969, and ended in 1978. The largest part of the road networks were constructed by the late 1960s. In 1964, the road east to Bizeljsko was built. Ten years later, in 1974, the road west to Sromlje was built. In 1982, Pišece got the first telephone.<sup>106</sup> By 1996, there was approximately one telephone for every ten inhabitants. (Chapter 5 discusses how the installation of telephones in the Local Community had an enormous impact on social relationships and networks.)

Locals had a problem with the Housing Policy, introduced in 1980<sup>107</sup>. The Law on Physical Planning of 1980 made the villagers concerned about their children not being able to live in the area when they would grow up (this issue was raised also during the round-table in the village after the workshop - see the paragraphs below). During the interviews, many young villagers expressed their wish to remain in the village rather than move to nearby Brežice or to other cities. Both they and their parents seemed to value living in the same village. Families find it important to stay close together for various social and economic reasons (see also Chapter 1). In Pišece, family members often take care of each other and work together. They could frequently be observed working together harvesting grapes and picking fruit. Parents and children often run family businesses together, and the grandparents look after the grandchildren while their parents are away for work.

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<sup>106</sup> This was fairly early in comparison to other villages of similar size, especially those in mountainous areas (Verbole, 1993).

<sup>107</sup> While in the period from 1960 to 1980 the housing policy planning was rather loose, the Law on Physical Planning of 1980 limited possibilities by allowing only one of the family members to build a house next to the old house.

### *Villagers speak their mind*

With the preceding sections on the demographics of Pišece as a background, let us now look at what happened during the round-table discussion between the people of Pišece and professionals from the 1994 Workshop. Following presentations by the professionals, the villagers took a more active role, and the so-called 'experts' became passive participants. Fourteen representatives of the local voluntary associations, societies and clubs described their organisation's activities<sup>108</sup>. There was a notable number of such organisations considering the size of the population. My understanding is that these presentations were meant to make us - the guests - aware of how active the locals were. In retrospect, this was quite an overt display of the locals' pride in their community, their achievements, their interactions, their leisure activities, and their mobility.

A woman in her early sixties, Maria, stood out among the fourteen representatives. She energetically described the work of the Tourist Society (of which she was the President), the activities of the Red Cross Society (of which she was the Secretary), and the activities of the Maks Pleteršnik Board (of which she was the chairperson). I have heard about her from Draga who described her as 'great' and 'very active'. Maria was eloquent and it was obvious that she made quite an effort to make her presentation interesting. Her report on the work of the Tourist Society was very informative also with regards to the development of tourism in the past. Pišece seemed to have quite a long history in tourism dating back to the early 1960s<sup>109</sup> when purchasers from agricultural cooperatives came from all over the former Yugoslavia to buy fruit and wine. In 1962, the Tourist Society was established and through the years it motivated villagers to make their home place tidier, cleaner and full of flowers (later I was told that they did it for themselves as much as for tourists<sup>110</sup>). In the early 1960s, game tourism was increasingly popular - first with the local (politicians in Former Yugoslavia and

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<sup>108</sup> For the complete list of Pišece's voluntary associations, societies and clubs see Appendix 9.

<sup>109</sup> As for tourism development in Pišece before the Second World War information are very scarce. However, based on the information found in the literature sources on the development of tourism in the Brežice municipality in the last century that was mainly based on the thermal spa health resort tourism (Tourist Society Brežice), it is possible to infer that some drifters (Cohen, 1972) also visited Pišece.

<sup>110</sup> Frane (A6) - a man who initiated the establishment of the local Tourist Society, and who through years on several occasions occupied the position of the president of the local Tourist Society.

their guests) and in the early 1970s foreign hunters (mainly Italians and Austrians) became regular guests. The Local Community had thirty beds to offer tourists and business travellers in Pišece village in the 1970s. It was a popular day-visit destination for *gastronomers* from Slovenia and Croatia who wanted to taste the local specialities served in local inns, and occasional tourists from nearby health resorts who came to explore the local scene.

The 1970s were relevant in terms of local initiatives for preserving the local cultural and historical heritage - attempts to refurbish blacksmith workshops and restoration of the water mill. In the mid 1980s, however, many of the local people seemed to have lost interest in tourism. The number of available tourist accommodations decreased rapidly, and in 1994 there were no beds available in the whole *krajevna skupnost*. 'Frane' (A6), who was president of the local Tourist Society in the period from 1984 to 1988, later said the main reasons were: '*... people died, got fed up with it, or in most cases young ones used the tourist accommodation on the family farms to solve their housing problems...*'

However, the mid 1980s were significant for rural tourism development in terms of public recognition of Pišece's achievements to become an attractive tourist destination both at the municipal as well as national level. In 1985, Pišece village was chosen as the most beautiful place in Brežice Municipality, and one year later the village won the first award as the most beautiful settlement in Slovenia - *Turistični nagelj* - the Tourist Carnation Award of Slovenia's Tourist Association which gave the local Tourist Society an additional boost. The late 1980s were characterized by the attempts of the local Tourist Society to open Maks Pleteršnik's museum in his home (see the following chapters). At the time of the 1994 Workshop, the local Tourist Society was involved in the organization of the celebration of the Centenary Anniversary of Maks Pleteršnik's dictionary.

After the Tourist Society, we got to know better the local Craftsmen Society, Firemen Society, and many others. The presentations of the local associations, societies and clubs were more or less dominated by the male representatives of these organizations, so the presentation of the young female president of the Craftsmen Society - 'Zora' (C10), who was eloquent, smartly dressed and very business-like - was welcomed like a fresh breeze. She stressed in the importance of the development of small crafts and entrepreneurship in Pišece to generate

income. Later, I found out that she and her father owned a tailoring business that provided jobs to some local women, as well as several textile shops in Brežice and Ljubljana. Some members of the expert team thought that she had leadership potential.

In retrospect, the presentations of the local voluntary associations, societies and clubs had various effects on the villagers. Some presentations provoked a strong reaction from the public; others passed almost unnoticed. Everyone in the hall gave a warm round of applause to the representative of the local Firemen's Society. Maria's presentation about the Tourist Society was listened to carefully. However, during the Hunter's Society presentation, people began to talk and they interrupted the representative several times with shouts (i.e., as the issue of the Society's participation in the community affairs was mentioned or when the role of the Society in the preparation of the celebration of the 100th Anniversary of Maks Pleteršnik's dictionary were brought up). Regardless of this, at this point in time, it was obvious that while the objectives of the various associations, societies and clubs were diverse, all the voluntary organisations had one objective in common: to improve the quality of life in Pišcece.

After the final presentation, it was time for questions from the audience. The first question came from Marko, a member of the CIB who had participated all three days. He started by asking whether the attending 'experts' envisaged a hopeful future for Pišcece, considering the Local Community's remoteness in relation to Ljubljana and its underdeveloped socio-economic structure. The answer from the panel members was encouraging. They said, *'We have seen places in Slovenia that had far fewer resources and much less to offer to tourists than Pišcece, and these places have been transformed into centres with viable economies.'* In retrospect, some of the experts have probably been more retained than others.

The questions then came quickly from the floor. For the purpose of this study, I selected questions that reflected the atmosphere of that evening - the facts and feelings about the past, present, and future; the dreams and hopes related to the Local Community development. Some of the questions chosen were specifically about the development of rural tourism, and some came from actors who played an important role in Pišcece's developments. The questions which I present here give an impression of what was in the villagers' minds and a view of

their expectations that evening (e.g., better roads, more housing facilities, an enlarged school building, a renovated church). It became clear during the discussion that, although locals had been active and agreed to seek outside help by attracting a workshop to Pišece, there was a large number of different values, frustrations, and irritations between individuals and groups in the local community than originally anticipated.

'Marja' (C7), a woman in her early thirties wondered if the experts could explain what the CRPOV programme was exactly, and how Pišece could become a part of it. She told us later that evening she had heard about it from a friend, who lived in the neighbouring settlement of Kapele. According to this friend, the CRPOV had benefited Kapele in many ways. There was also a question from 'Janez' (C4), a man in his early forties, who was sitting at the back of the room. He was openly sceptical about the value of the round-table discussion, and wanted to know exactly what solutions the professionals would offer to the people of Pišece. Furthermore, he wanted to know how the village could derive practical benefits from the evening's event and the 'expert' team's presence. After he was through, an older man, 'Štef' (A13), stood up, and asked for extra ideas on how to develop rural tourism in Pišece. What would make Pišece more attractive for tourists?

The discussion continued for another two hours, with many of those present becoming more upset after their initial reserve. Voices were raised, and the tone grew accusatory. Questions flew thick and fast. Why has the Pišece area been neglected by the State and the Brežice Municipality for so long? How can we avoid the local school from being closed? What can we do to keep the young people? How can we get appropriate housing for young families? Before the situation became too chaotic, Damjan announced that it was time for the next part of the evening's programme, a social hour for people to have a chance to get to know each other. In other words, it was time to cool down and time for the experts team and villagers to do some networking.

### *The first signs of local divisions*

The local band, made up of seven boys from 16 to 19 years, played popular Slovenian folk music. Almost everyone danced the polka - the workers, farmers, schoolmaster, expert team members, young and old. Local women (most of them members of the Farm Women's Association) later brought in mountains of food - *pečenka* ('roast pork'), hams, home-baked *potica* ('cake with nut filling'), freshly baked cookies, *jabolčni krehlji* (dried apples), and, of course, a good supply of the local wine was set out on tables. The party went on late into the evening. The large group broke up into smaller groups, some inside the *večnamenski dom*, and some outside in the courtyard, where there was a fragrant linden tree, a folk symbol of Slovenia. Inside, a few people were still dancing to the band's tunes, a few local *pijančki* (layabouts) were enjoying another glass of wine, and a couple of older women were admiring the dancers.

Outside in the courtyard people enjoyed a beautiful summer night. Small groups were discussing various issues, mainly concerning the future of Pišece. I decided to circulate around to hear what was being said. One group had formed around Irene, a representative of the Austrian University, and two Slovenian members of the expert team, 'Tatjana' (E2) and 'Matej' (F1). Irene and Tatjana were geographers. Matej was an architect. The headmaster Hribar was discussing with Irene the possibility of twinning Pišece's school with a school in Klagenfurt and of establishing an exchange programme for pupils of both schools. Later, the Pišece school was indeed twinned with a school in Klagenfurt, and received funding from Austria to start a German language course for the students. Tine was inquiring about the possibility of obtaining a scholarship to continue his studies in Austria. Later he was offered one, but turned it down. Reflecting back on the conversations in this group, I concluded that the discussions were not only about collective interests, but also about personal interests. Some personal interests (e.g., Tine's) were expressed openly, while others (e.g., the headmaster's) were part of a hidden agenda (see also Chapter 6).

Draga, the Mayor and Secretary of the Brežice Municipality, Father Jože, Maria and Damjan were discussing Pišece's potentials for development, thus, ideas for projects in Pišece were coming to life. Would the University of Ljubljana formulate a project proposal? How quick

could this be done? What could people of Pišece do to help?, were some of Father Jože's questions. Perhaps some of the young students from Pišece could help with the research. The plans discussed in this group were very specific and focused on possible future actions.

Young villagers, namely 'Cilka' (C5), 'Mojca' (C6), 'Maca' (C8) and Marko had gathered around the two younger members of the expert team, 'Luka' (F2) and 'Laura' (F3), both of whom were from Ljubljana. The group was discussing such topics as the advantages of eco-tourism and the possibilities for developing it in Pišece; eco-food and 'what it was like to be a vegetarian.' Laura, the expert on water management, was particularly interested in the River Gabernica and Jovsi Park<sup>111</sup>. She thought that there was potential for establishing an educational nature walk along the banks of the Gabernica that would combine the functions of nature conservation and rural tourism. Luka, a vegetarian, claimed to have been swept off his feet by the dried apricots and dried apples. He was confident there would be a market for such products and he wondered what the possibilities were for expanding the production of *pišečka marelica*.

As I approached the group that gathered around Luka and Laura, I heard Marko asking: What do the experts think about building an observatory in Pišece? Would this attract tourists? We all looked up at the sky. It was a very clear night, and we could see the stars. I asked him where he got such an idea, since an observatory was not something one would expect to see in a village such as Pišece. He admitted that he had been thinking about it since seeing air-clarity test results in Slovenia conducted by the Nuclear Power Station in Krško, where he works. Tests showed that air-clarity in Pišece is very good. All of us thought that the idea was a good one. But how would it be accepted by the other locals? And how would they implement it?

At this point, it became obvious that some of the locals' enthusiasm about revitalizing Pišece was boundless to the point of clouding their judgement. Plans discussed by this group held a lot of idealism with little practicality. As the discussions continued, it seemed that no

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<sup>111</sup> Jovsi Park encompasses one of the few remaining areas of wetland in Slovenia. The park covers an area of 4.6 km<sup>2</sup> between Kapele and the River Sotla. More than 80 different bird species have their habitat there, among them 20 endangered species.

scheme was too wild for them to consider. Surprisingly, it was not just the young people of Pišece who had their heads in the clouds. In the heat of the moment, and perhaps the headiness of good wine, some experts as well got carried away.

We were joined by Father Jože who was already in a good mood. He was very proud of Pišece, and declared the whole event a great success. He and the rest of the CIB members, Maria and Hribar, Damjan, Marko, Tine, Cilka, Mojca and Maca had worked very hard to make this part of the workshop programme happen. As it was getting late, and there was still a trip to Austria ahead of us the next morning, we returned slowly to our bus for the trip back to the hotel in Atomske toplice, having learnt a great deal more about Pišece than we had known the day before, or from the CIB group that had dominated Pišece's representation at the 1994 Workshop.

#### **4.3.3 The Last Day of the 1994 Workshop - A field trip to Austria**

This section adds to complete a picture of the events held during the 1994 Workshop and provides further background information to illustrate the degree of interest of some Pišece's local actors for developmental issues in peripheral rural areas. In addition, it reflects the involvement of formal authorities in the initiation of the rural tourism development process in 1994 (thus in the early stages of the field research).

The morning after the field trip to Pišece, on the last day of the 1994 Workshop, a trip was organized to a small Austrian town, Eisenkappel, situated in the Charinthia - a region bordering Slovenia. This trip was meant to learn how the Eisenkappel Local Community managed to transform from a dying industrial town to a health resort by developing local resources and to learn more about the role of the state in that process (Wastl-Walter and Herzog, 1995).

What do Pišece and Eisenkappel have in common? Both are situated in peripheral rural areas with similar problems (i.e., being more or less agricultural) and more or less forgotten in the national developmental plans, characterized by a lack of income generating opportunities and

high migration of the young population to other places. Both were interested in developing rural tourism as an alternative economic activity to create new jobs and to boost the local economy. However, there were also some significant differences. Eisenkappel has a population which is three times bigger than in Pišece and, more importantly, a different history with regard to economic development. As a small industrial town, it had run into difficulties since the cellulose company that was the main 'job provider' to the local community, closed down in 1989. Lots of people, mainly low-skilled men lost their jobs. The local community of Eisenkappel was more or less left to its own initiative to look for solutions since the State had very little interest in restructuring the local economy (Wastl-Walter and Herzog 1995).

Slovenian experts, representative of the Governmental Office for Local Self-Government, and the group of young people from Pišece joined the field trip to Eisenkappel. No member of the Local Community Council or Municipality of Brežice joined this trip, although a meeting with the municipal government was scheduled to discuss how Eisenkappel initiated the change to 'revive' their home town.

In the case of Eisenkappel, the carriers of rural development were the Mayor of the Municipality of Eisenkappel-Vellach, the officials of the Municipality and the local Board (the administrative authority at the local community level), or in short Eisenkappel's formal authorities in cooperation with the Austrian Association for Regional Development (ÖAR)<sup>112</sup>. While the Austrian case may be very valuable in terms of practical solutions that might be of use to Pišece in their 'quest for development', and also valuable in terms of the local community's experiences with the negative impacts of tourism development<sup>113</sup>, this trip and the meeting with the local governments gave little insight into the process of rural tourism development in terms of more popular local participation. What could be concluded after the visit and the literature review (Wastl-Walter and Herzog, 1995) was that the financial incentive and know-how for the development came from outside (ÖAR), and that the

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<sup>112</sup> ÖAR was founded to foster endogenous development.

<sup>113</sup> The main complaints of the locals were that there are too many tourists in the summer season, heavy traffic, and so on (Wastl-Walter and Herzog, 1995).

municipal and local authorities carried out the rural development on behalf of the local community. Wastl-Walter and Herzog (1995) also observed the involvement of the local élite (e.g. teachers, doctors, big landowners, the owners of the private businesses and entrepreneurs - most of them were members of the local board) in the process by enrolling themselves in different working groups that were to formulate the proposals for development programmes together with the external experts (i.e., ÖAR). Part of the local population joined the programmes' realization later on in the process, while some locals (i.e., farmers) still resented new developments.

#### **4.4 Discussion about the first layer of observation of Pišece's reality - The actors, the first signs of power asymmetries, local divisions, interfaces and discourses**

One of the questions with which I began my research was: What happens in the local community when rural tourism is about to develop or when it is about to 'rejuvenate' as it seemed to be the case in Pišece?

Through the 1994 Workshop, Pišece was introduced as a tourist destination with potentials for further development. And, more importantly, we met some of the actors involved in the development of rural tourism, and received a taste of the dynamics in the local community reflected in the asymmetries between formal authorities and the newly emerging organizational social forms. The local actors seem to have differences of access to external actors. I shall return to these themes in Chapters 5 and 6, showing how these actors' networks influenced the local actors' position and possibilities to advance their position in the struggles and negotiations taking place in Pišece.

I would first like to reflect briefly on Pišece as a sort of stagnating rural tourist destination with potentials for further development before going on to discuss other aspects (i.e., of power) in the negotiation and transformation process in the community; these aspects and processes might stimulate or limit the development of rural tourism.

Firstly, we will recall that Pišece is a small local community with a small population, and

thus the extent of tourism that it can carry is bound to be limited – it would not be able to cope with mass tourism. Secondly, Pišece has many possibilities to develop into an attractive tourist destination. It has many assets: a favourable climate, vineyards and wine cellars, forests and river nature walks, a cultural and historical heritage, hospitable people and good food, and an active local Tourist Society. Within the local context, Pišece has a relatively well developed infrastructure. This cannot be said of many villages in Slovenia, especially in peripheral and marginal rural areas, no matter what their attractions are. Another asset is that Pišece is situated close to several health resorts, which attract thousands of tourists every year from Slovenia and abroad who might be interested in something else, apart from bathing in thermal waters. In the past, the whole area along the border was economically strongly linked to Croatia, and although at present, those links have weakened, the expectation is that the economic link will grow strong again.

Set against these positive aspects are a lack of accommodation for tourists, and limited human resources. The local population is aging and is relatively uneducated both in general terms, with regard to tourism and tourism related services. Furthermore, it seems that local authorities have little interest in rural tourism. Until today, rural tourism has largely been initiated by a voluntary association. Similarly, the initiative that resulted in the above described Workshop came from an informal group. It is perhaps time for nominal political powers to support the development of rural tourism more. This leads the discussion from the various positive and negative more structural factors involved in rural tourism development to other factors that might stimulate or limit its development in Pišece, i.e., Who is involved in tourism development, thus in the dynamics of power relations in the community? Who is powerful in the local community and who can and actually does influence the development of rural tourism? Secondly, it leads to examining whether the community's involvement in any tourism development process can be sustainable. This implies that an investigation into interactions and relations between local and external actors must be carried out.

In the coming sections, I return to the 1994 Workshop discussion to reflect on the 'visible' local and external actors involved in the process of change at that point in time, the nature of local community and the first signs of the complexities of rural tourism development emerging and requiring further investigation.

*The 'visible' local and external actors involved in the process of initiating social change - the 1994 Workshop*

The 1994 Workshop introduced us to some of the local and external actors involved in the organization of the activities that evolved around Pišece's first attempts to develop rural tourism:

- the group of the young intellectuals (recent graduates and students) who formed the core of the CRPOV Initiative Board (CIB). The CIB's main 'collective' objective was to ensure that Pišece should get rid of its peripheral image, and that they (the young people) should have the opportunity to live and work in Pišece. They were hungry for knowledge and information. They hoped that the 1994 Workshop would help them in achieving their dreams. Most of the CIB's members, such as for example Tine and Damjan, also had personal agendas in mind. The three more 'senior' members of the CIB, namely Maria, Father Jože and Hribar also had their own agendas.
  
- the Roman Catholic Church and the local priest. Father Jože was strongly involved in local matters. He seemed to be one of the key-actors in Pišece. He was a member of the team that helped to organize the 1994 Workshop, and a reference person for the organizers. He was a member of the guiding group around Pišece together with Maria and some other CIB members. In general, he dominated events related to the 1994 Workshop (pre and post round-table events) verbally and physically (see also Chapter 6). It was apparent that his main interest was to make Pišece 'young and alive' again. The 1994 Workshop was a first step in that process. The fact that, in the past, the Church was very unlikely to get involved with affairs such as community development makes Father Jože (and the Church) a very interesting actor to study. His active participation may be an indication that 'times are changing' meaning that the increased influence of the church on secular affairs might be more acceptable today, as well as an indication of the growing pressure of the Church (to fulfil its interest) to become active and influential beyond strictly religious matters.
  
- the local primary school and the head-master Hribar, who appeared to be another

important local leader. The school in Pišece was the centre of local cultural life with its various projects which were the outcome of Hribar's work. Although he did not directly participate in the workshop, he was present during the round-table discussion, and afterwards he was anxious to get as much information as possible. He was also eager to establish as many new contacts as he could, especially with the representative from the University of Klagenfurt in Austria. His main objective seemed to be to 'get information and make contacts'. In retrospect, he also had an agenda of his own.

- the formal authorities of the five villages - the President and Secretary of *krajevna skupnost* Pišece. The Local Council's President was the highest formal authority in the Local Community (see Chapter 1). Traditionally, in rural Slovenia, the President of this body had an important role in solving the local community's ongoing problems, in deciding the future direction of the community by formulating appropriate development strategies, and representing local interests in the Municipal Council (Vlaj, 1978). This changed with the introduction of the Local Self-Government.

In the field, it was evident that the President of *krajevna skupnost* was not participating in the activities that evolved around the workshop. Neither did he make any public appearance, nor did he try to make contact with the 'guests,' which was considered unusual from someone who was the official representative of the Local Community. His main objective appeared to be to maintain a low profile. In Pišece, the President at that moment seemed powerless, and this triggered my later inquiry into the power relations in the local community (see Chapter 5). The Secretary appeared to be fed up with the 'powerlessness' of the *krajevna skupnost* as I later learnt that he resigned prior the 1994 Workshop.

- the various voluntary associations, societies and clubs had diverse objectives, but at that time they all claimed at least one thing in common, and that was to improve the quality of life in Pišece. They successfully promoted themselves during the 1994 Workshop. In retrospect, an intriguing question arose: Why does such a small community have such a large number of associations, clubs and societies which is quite unusual in Slovenian context? The voluntary associations, societies and clubs always represented an important part of the local social life, especially in rural areas.

Through them, local people were able to express and fulfil their various interests and participate in the development of their place, and in some cases also fill the 'void' of the activities that were of less interest to the formal authorities.

An interesting question was: Is it possible that Pišece has so many organizations because of the heterogeneity of interests among locals, or is this phenomenon related to the nature of the local community? I shall return to this question later on in Chapter 5. It will be interesting to note the role of the various associations, societies and clubs in the development of rural tourism.

Among the local voluntary organizations, the local Tourist Society and its female President, Maria, seemed important to the development of rural tourism at the local level. Maria was present everywhere (i.e., organizing the Workshop, the guiding tour around Pišece and presenting activities of the various voluntary associations, societies and clubs). Her main objective was to promote the local Tourist Society, and, as president, promote Pišece as a worthwhile tourist destination. In retrospect, another question arose - the local Tourist Society has been active for more than 35 years, why could it not maintain the development of rural tourism in Pišece? It was assumed this was due to the dynamics in the local community and poor relations between formal and informal groups. I shall return to this question in Chapter 5 and 6.

Maria was also President of Maks Pleteršnik's Board; an ad-hoc group set up in 1992 to manage the renovation of Maks Pleteršnik's home and to organize the 100th Anniversary of the first German-Slovene Dictionary. The local head master and priest were the other two members of the three member Board who were actively involved in preparation of activities around the 1994 Workshop. They had 'helpers' - the young villagers who were also members of the CIB. The Board worked very closely with the Mayor of Brežice - who was formally appointed as an 'external member' of the Board. The main interest of the Board was to preserve and promote the literary work of Pišece's most famous son, and through the Workshop and media coverage it got to promote the forthcoming celebration in September 1994, thus a few months after the workshop.

- a small group of (anonymous) outspoken villagers and the 'silent' majority represent the rest of the actors we met during the 1994 Workshop. We could observe that, of the many local people that were at the round-table that evening, only a few pushed themselves forward, or actively sought information, while the majority quietly observed. I expected that some people came because of curiosity while others were told to come and had little idea of what was going on.

Next to the local actors, several external social actors were also involved in the Workshop and these are presented below:

- the Brežice municipal authorities - the Mayor and Secretary of Brežice Municipality. The presence of the municipal representatives indicates there was a certain interest by the Municipality to help the Local Community of Pišece to develop. These officials were involved with the preparation of the 'critical event' - the 1994 Workshop. They indirectly participated during the official session in Atomske toplice; the Mayor gave a welcome speech in Pišece prior to the round-table, and participated in social activities connected with the 1994 Workshop in Pišece. The Municipality's main objective with regard to the workshop was to gather information about locals perceptions and interests as well as information for the potential future development of Pišece. In retrospect, the 1994 Workshop was a good will gesture by the Municipality to do something for the Pišece Local Community.
- the team of experts from the University of Ljubljana and other Slovenian research institutions. The main objective was to help the villagers of Pišece prevent their place from 'dying'. The 1994 Workshop was the first step in this process. Perhaps the team's growing interest in active involvement in continuing the process of Pišece's transformation as a developmental project was less obvious at this point.
- the team of experts from the University of Klagenfurt. The main objective was to establish contact with the Slovenian colleagues and to exchange experiences in the field of rural development, especially in the development of peripheral rural areas. The Workshop was to be a first step towards future co-operation that would hopefully

result in joint projects focused on cross border co-operation.

- the staff member from the Office for Local Self-Government. The office was one of the main sponsors of the 1994 Workshop together with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food. The office's main objective was to get in touch with the situation in the field after the establishment of the Local Self-Government in 1994 (see Chapter 1), thus to see in practice what sort of role local communities, institutions, formal and informal groups play in the management of local resources for development.
  
- other important external actors, with indirect involvement in the running of the 1994 Workshop. Although these external actors were not directly present at the workshop, they were involved by supporting the organization and implementation of the Workshop. The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry as one of the event's main sponsors, the Ministry of Science and Technology, and the Ministry of Environment. These actors, however, had minimal involvement at this stage in the process of rural tourism development in Pišcece apart from financial support.

All the above actors (local and external) seemed to have their own perspectives and objectives when speaking about the future of Pišcece and rural tourism. Some voiced them more openly and were more agitated than others. The Workshop was the window to view the complexities that were likely to be involved in the interfaces and discourses of rural tourism in Pišcece, and some of these complexities are presented below.

I would like to mention that we can not expect, as suggested in the power literature (Bacharach and Baratz, 1970; Lukes, 1974; Clegg, 1989; Villarreal, 1994) that everyone participated in the 1994 Workshop. Certain interests might be excluded nor fully included in the events and actions related to the initiation of social change in Pišcece. At the time there were indications that some actors, either individual or group actors in the local community, might be excluded from participation in the activities that evolved around the event (see 3.2). This is important, since it implies that simple models of tourist development can not be effective if the knowledge of local organisations and other actors' struggles are not understood and taken into account when designing a proposal.

*Complexities within the local population - Potentials for social segregation among the locals and asymmetries of power between formal authorities and informal groups*

During the 1994 Workshop, it was felt, that several groupings might exist in Pišece. For example, some young villagers got together and stayed close to Father Jože. As an older member of the CIB, he appeared to have a very good relationship with the group of young villagers from the CIB whom he supported and advised during preparations for the Workshop. Maria stayed close to schoolmaster Hribar, and everyone ignored the local authority representative - the President of *krajevna skupnost*. A further discussion of actors' organizing practices follows in the forthcoming chapter.

Furthermore, it was apparent that the whole set of activities evolving around the workshop was organized in a way that by-passed this authority (i.e., the President of *krajevna skupnost* was informed at the very last moment). What, then was the meaning of the absence of local authorities?

Schermerhorn (1961: 88) suggested that the workings of power also include 'power struggles between formal and informal power structures in any community '... in all cities and villages, certain decisions are made by the local government, but many others are made outside the city council or local community president's office'.

Was that also the case in Pišece? What was, then, the real impact of the local authorities on the local community and its development? And do the formal and informal workings of the local government influence the acceptance of particular interpretations of rural tourism development? Schermerhorn (1961) argues that it is the community's confidence in its leadership, both formal and informal, that often determines what can or cannot be done by those who sit in a position of authority or power. In the case of Pišece, it can be assumed that community confidence in the formal leadership must have been low at this moment in time, otherwise the initiative for social change would not have been initiated by the informal group.

To answer these questions, we need to identify the nominal (formal) political powers in the location in question by defining those actors in administrative capacities. Along the line of

Long's thinking, I will then attempt to counterpoise the perspectives of 'the administered' - the locals in other Pišce domains and arenas of action where 'actual' or 'manifest' power become apparent. If we should assume, for example, that the role of informal leaders in a given locality of study has more influence in bringing about change than that of the legitimate leaders, then we might ask ourselves how this is reflected in the rural (tourism) development process. If the official power structure, for different reasons, is not able to bring about the desired change, then it may be necessary to look more closely at the informal power structures which have more influence than the legitimate and perhaps less effective formal powers. This implies the need to look closer into the relations between Pišce's informal (voluntary associations, societies, clubs and other groups) and local authorities. Have they perhaps been bypassing or usurping the local legitimate authorities for a long time?

Another issue which could be seen at the 1994 Workshop is a relatively low level of heterogeneity observed at this initial stage of tourism development in local actors' interests, attitudes and hopes concerning the development of their village, at least at the 'front stage' - they all wanted Pišce to survive.

### *Complexities related to the interactions between the local and the external actors*

It was argued in Chapter 3 that the development of rural tourism was necessarily mediated and transformed by internal as well as external actors. If we look at the interaction between the local and external actors during the 1994 Workshop, we could observe that during the official session the interaction was limited to the interactions between the 'experts' and the young villagers, occasional officials from the Brežice Municipality (i.e., Marko - a sort of informal leader and later President of the CIB, was also often seen with the Mayor and the Municipality's Secretary) and the staff of the governmental Office for Local Self-Government.

The conditions for more extended interactions were given during the field trip to Pišce. However, the majority of the contacts the external actors had that day with the people of Pišce were limited to only a small group - the people who they more or less knew from the 'official part' of the 1994 Workshop, and members of the local community who appeared to

have local clout (the headmaster, the President of the local Tourist Society, the priest). Hence, the team of experts had very limited contacts with the local population, and its interaction was 'controlled' by the CIB. This was perhaps not the intention, but on a brief visit this is perhaps understandable, especially as those they met were well motivated to forge as many useful contacts as possible and appeared 'knowledgeable' about Pišece's situation. Many of the local people at the round-table that evening appeared not to move forward or actively seek information.

The interplay and mutual determination of external and internal factors and relationships (and consequently the importance of human agency) is further explored in Chapter 6 to gain more insight into Pišece's social reality.

#### ***4.5 Final thoughts***

Rural tourism seemed to be 'the chosen' developmental policy in Pišece (i.e., the interest of villagers in the government CRPOV proposals, interest in the 'experts' team help). The major impetus for encouraging rural tourism was economic (income generation, improved infrastructure and increased employment opportunities), and partly the jealousies over the success of a neighbouring village. Most local (as well as external) actors perceived the potentials for rural tourism development. However, behind the local 'collective' acceptance of rural development as an alternative for preventing Pišece from dying, were individuals as well as groups that had their own agendas related to the development of rural tourism as will be seen in the following chapters. In general, the initial observations helped to identify two different groups that cross-cut all the social actors interested in village and tourism development in Pišece - a group of 'educators' and a group of 'practitioners'. The practitioners (i.e., Father Jože, Damjan and Maria) were interested in practical solutions, action, short-term results, and blue-prints. The 'educators' (i.e., Hribar and Marko) were interested in more rhetorical questions that the development of rural tourism should favour long-term solutions and a more holistic approach. The latter also stressed the importance of training and education for the local population.

We could observe that there were potential asymmetries between formal and informal (power) social forms in the local community as well as there were asymmetries in their attempts to initiate social change. The ideas came from the informal group, and not from the formal authorities, which demands a further investigation of the political domain of Pišece to determine the reaction of the local community to social change and to assess its chances for pursuing sustainable development of rural tourism in line with the arguments of Chapter 2.

These early experiences at the 1994 Workshop highlighted the general patterns that emerged after the first layer of Pišece's reality has been uncovered. Now, we need to look at the different social actors (individuals and groups) that exist in Pišece and to explore their ideas and plans for development in relation to rural tourism. At this initial stage, local actors responded differently to the 1994 Workshop (which following Long might be thought of as a critical event - an intervention into Pišece's reality) trying to benefit from it either by pursuing collective or personal objectives (i.e., Tine's scholarship), and open and hidden agendas. We obviously knew little at this stage about how the actors came by their power, or the resources they based themselves upon - nor how local power was generated and negotiated. To understand this we examine the dynamics of power in terms of social networks in the forthcoming chapter. And as argued in the previous chapter, interactional data on types of social networks and normative frameworks utilized by individuals, together with observational studies of cooperation and social conflict at the village level, often provide greater insights into social dynamics and complexity than any structural analysis could achieve. To determine the social variation and differentiation within the local population, networks are examined in various Pišece domains and in the arenas in which they strive for or wield influence. In Chapter 3, I argued along Long's thinking that domains are central to understanding how social ordering works, and to analyze how social and symbolic boundaries are created and defended. In order to come to grips with encounters between various aspects of the life-world of villagers in Pišece, I discuss this concept in the coming chapter.

## 5 PIŠECE'S DOMAINS AND LOCAL NETWORKS

### 5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter a veil has been lifted in the process of investigation into Pišece's social reality. We could see among other things, albeit-superficially, that even within the 'moment of unification' - when the locals of Pišece appeared to be one - all locals perceived Pišece dying as a threat there were indications of the potential discourses, interfaces and asymmetries of power in the local community. There also seemed to be many complexities involved in the development of the community and rural tourism.

To plunge further into Pišece's social reality which is ... 'made up of differing cultural perceptions and social interests and constituted by [the past and] on-going social and political struggles that take place between the social actors involved ...'<sup>114</sup>, we need to deepen our analytical insight to learn more about the people of Pišece. The essential relationships among the individuals and groups within the local population, as well as some of the changes that have taken place in the last 50 years will be highlighted.

Thus, this chapter outlines the social organizations and social practices (who is who in the community, local family clans and cliques, and social cleavages and divisions) of Pišece which is a composite amalgam of my encounters with the locals from 1994 to 1997. It presents those key players involved in the community development process, and those identified as important actors in Pišece's attempts to develop rural tourism. The different organizational forms embedded in the local community's daily life, actors' activities in various local associations, societies and clubs, their economic strategies and different social networks are described in order to help the reader visualize locals' access to the social, economic and political space of Pišece's local district.

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<sup>114</sup> see Long and Van den Ploeg (1989: 226).

This chapter begins with an introduction of the pubs and inns of Pišece that represent important social meeting places. However, it was observed during the fieldwork that access to these places has been limited or constrained due to the particular social dynamics of Pišece. Through this encounter with the local pubs we learn more about the two basic social divisions that cross-cut this small community.

Further, we learn more about some of the important domains<sup>115</sup> and arenas<sup>116</sup> in Pišece, and of the influential players discussed frequently in the analyses that follows. Many of the actors form what might be described as unofficial or informal structures (rather than official or formal) of power and influence in Pišece. The most important voluntary associations, societies and clubs of Pišece to which the key actors belong are represented to give an impression of actors' area of social network linkages and formation. This allows us to become familiar with encounters between the various aspects of life-worlds<sup>117</sup> of the villagers of Pišece and the arenas in which they strive for or wield influence. Examples include the domains of politics, family, voluntary associations, societies and clubs, and church. Long (1997) suggested that, depending on the issue or situation, particular domains will differ in their prominence, pervasiveness or social significance.

## **5.2 Pubs - social and recreational locales in Pišece**

Soon after the first visit to Pišece, I discovered that while villagers often chat in the post-office or by the school, in their daily lives, they frequently visit different pubs, shop in different shops – or, in short, belong to different village locales.

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<sup>115</sup> Domain refers to areas of social life where encounters between different lifeworlds take place (see Chapter 3 and Chapter 6).

<sup>116</sup> Arenas are defined as social encounters or series of situations in which contests over resources, values and representations take place (for more details see Chapter 3). The domain becomes an arena when we can observe the struggles (Long, 1997).

<sup>117</sup> see Chapter 3.

Giddens (1984) used the concept of locale when referring to the 'use of space to provide the settings of interaction'<sup>118</sup>. He argues that the 'setting of [social] interaction is essential to specify its contextuality'.

In Pišece, local pubs constitute specific social and recreational locales. There are three pubs, namely the '*Pri Anici*', '*Viator*' and '*Pri Jašku*', and one *gostilna* in Pišece, the '*Marellica*' Inn<sup>119</sup>. There is also Maria's Inn - the '*Srnjak*', but it is only opened on special occasions (e.g., weddings).

### **Social differentiation between pubs and gostilna's**

In Pišece, inns and pubs are important social meeting places where information is exchanged and opinions are formed. Also Boissevain (1974) suggested that pubs and shops often develop into regular meeting places for cliques of friends. A view of inn's and pubs' clientele provides an overview of the social divisions in the community. As clearly seen, some villagers visit a specific pub only while others frequent several. This is significant to the argument concerning the importance of networking (see the forthcoming paragraphs).

#### *The 'Pri Jašku'*

In the centre of the Pišece village, in front of the church, is the pub, '*Pri Jašku*'. As illustrated in Figure 3: Marko, Damjan, and Tine - some of the young members of the CIB - regularly met there. Found there almost every day, they come for either a social chat after the Folk-dance group practice or Sports Club meeting, or more importantly, whenever there is something to discuss concerning the future of Pišece.

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<sup>118</sup> 'Locales provide for a good deal of fixity underlying institutions, although, there is no clear sense in which they determine such fixity' (Giddens, 1984).

<sup>119</sup> For the village map see Chapter 5.

This pub is owned by 'Bine' (B8), a 49 year-old entrepreneur, who also owns the shop next door and a construction business that provides jobs for several locals. Regular guests are mainly people who have good relations with the bar owner, such as Marko's kin and friends (Cilka, Maca, Marja, 'Boštjan' (C15), 'Jaro' (C19), and Mojca). In general, Bine is not liked much by some local people. Rumour has it that he (his construction company) is involved in underhand manipulations with the water pipe-line that supplies not only Pišece, but also neighbouring Bizeljsko. The pipe-line supplying water to Pišece as well as to the neighbouring Bizeljsko area captures water from Gabernica river in Pišece. Over the past few years, with increased water consumption, the flow of water has diminished. Thus, the pipe-line has been a constant source of conflict within the Local Community as many people from Pišece believed their village should have priority when it comes to water supply. Frane - the co-owner of the '*Marellica Inn*', and some of the CIB members (this might be an indication of the cleavages within the CIB), actually perceive Bine as having economic interests 'external' to the Pišece area.

Father Jože is also seen in the '*Pri Jašku*' especially when meeting his group of young *protégés* Marko, Damjan and Tine. Occasionally, when discussing plans related to Pišece's future, 'Dule' (C9) and Janez would also join in. This pub is very popular among the supporters and members of the Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS)<sup>120</sup>, and the party's activist blacksmith 'Samo' (B3) who sits in the Municipal Council and is often seen patronising the pub.

'*Pri Jašku*' is not only a meeting place for Marko's kin and the CIB members, but it is in Pišece, known also as a regular meeting place for the '*phone group*', and the so-called '*blacks*'. Both labels (Wood, 1985) are related to two social divisions that cross cut Pišece's Local Community. These labels played prominent roles in locals' lives and consequently in Pišece's attempts to develop rural tourism. Wood (1985:5) suggests that a focus on labelling can 'reveal processes of control, regulation and management which are largely unrecognized even by the actors themselves'. In Pišece, labels were used to draw symbolic boundaries between locals.

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<sup>120</sup> This political party did well in the last elections for Parliament in 1996, meaning that they are among the four most represented political parties in Slovenia.

### *The 'Pri Anici'*

The pub '*Pri Anici*', is owned by 44 year-old 'Marjeta' (B14). This pub is known among locals as a place frequented by the local mafia - '*lokalna mafija*'. This label is used among locals for people who are presumably involved in the illegal smuggling of goods through the Slovenian-Croatian border. However, the term may also refer to people who made their money quickly and with muddy transactions (i.e., computer business), thus not necessarily only by smuggling. The pub is also frequented by unemployed people and people who live on social welfare (some of them are marginals in Pišcece). Inside, the pub is dark and full of slot-machines, men sit behind tables usually playing cards late into the night. The neighbours often complain about the noise that customers make leaving the pub late at night. Among the regular customers are 'Rok' (C17), a 28 year-old unemployed carpenter, Dule and Janez from the CRPOV Initiative Board, and Marjeta's husband, 'Mladen' (B16), a 44 year-old owner of the local truck transport business.

### *The 'Viator'*

The pub '*Viator*' is located at the bus stop (next to the largest local shop that was closed in 1994 due to privatization). It is owned by 'Zlata' (B27). Among her customers are often those locals waiting for the public bus to Brežice, Krško or Novo mesto. Also, many students will be seen there before taking the bus to school in towns previously mentioned. The pub is also frequented by Zlata's friends and relatives. The *Viator* closes (8 p.m.) earlier than any of the above mentioned pubs (the *Pri Anici* is the last one to close, just after midnight).

### *The 'Marellica' Inn*

The '*Marellica*' Inn, situated on the last curve just before reaching the church is located next to a hay barn decorated with old farm tools - hoes, horse cart wheels, ploughs ... that attracts by-passers' attention. An additional feature is the flowers seen in the windows. The '*Marellica*' Inn is owned by 70 year-old Frane and his wife 'Mira' (B27), whose ten years younger.

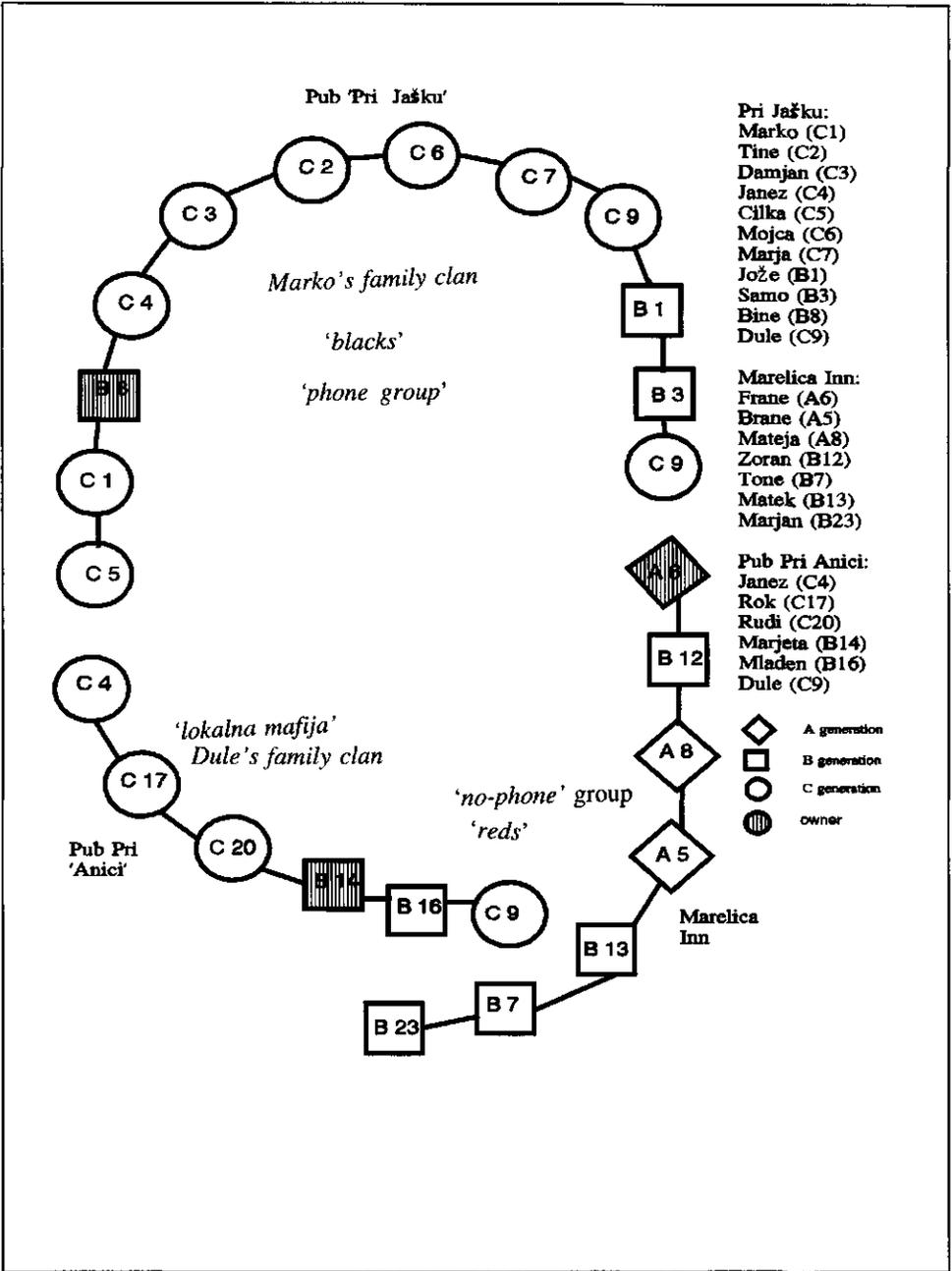


Figure 3: Pubs' networks

The inn has two spacious rooms, the first one serves as a bar, and the other one as a dining room for Frane and Mira's guests. The walls in the bar are covered with various awards given to the local Tourist Society. The reader might recall that Frane was President of the local Tourist Society from 1984 to 1988.

Although Mira and Frane devoted their lives to the inn, they hoped that their son (who lived in Ljubljana) would soon take over the business. While discussing the development of tourism in Pišce, they mentioned on several occasions the 'unfair competition' of Maria's inn. They often spoke of those guests who hung around late in the night drinking and playing cards, thus they began closing the inn at eleven in the evening.

It was at this cosy inn that I learnt about the phone dispute that created separation in the local community more than 10 years ago. In the 'Marellica' Inn, an old telephone was displayed on top of the bar as a reminder of the dispute (see the forthcoming section).

At the 'Marellica' Inn, you find among regular guests the 'no-phone group', as they refer to themselves. It was surprising to note that among them were no CIB members - and, at first, it seemed it was due to the phone situation. Yet, the inn was also a meeting place for the 'reds' which is elaborated further in the next section.

### *The telephone debate: A cause for divide*

Although today many of the households in Pišce have a phone, including those named the 'no-phone' households, an incident took place in the early 1980s as a result of a phone installation project in Pišce. Two members of the Phone Installation Board, 'Mario', then owner of the local blacksmith's workshop (he died in 1989),<sup>121</sup> and 'Polde' (B21), then President of the Local Community Council, are thought to have 'cheated' some of the villagers who had already made down-payments for phone-installations, but in the end did not receive one.

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<sup>121</sup> He was also a member of the Hunter's Society.

Among the 'cheated ones' were Frane and his family, 'Tone's (B7) family, 'Tibor's (B24) family, Damjan's family as well as many others. Although these locals who were, as I found out later, labelled by the local community as 'reds', had actually paid, they did not get their phones installed at the same time as the other villagers, for instance Marko and Janez and their families (among Marko's family 'blacks' were over-represented, while Janez's family had people in the right position). I will discuss this division between 'reds' and 'blacks' and its relevance further in the forthcoming section. The 'privileged' who received their phones first were nick-named by those who did not as the 'phone group' (i.e., Marko's and Janez's kin) and the 'cheated ones' called themselves the 'no-phone' group.

In 1982, the Phone Installation Board received a vote of no-confidence by the phone installation applicants, and a new board was appointed. Frane and Tibor, the later was a 46 years-old white collar worker, were new members. At the same time 'Zvezdana' (B26), Tibor's wife, was appointed by the State as Postmaster General. The legal appeal against members of the first Board took six years to process, meanwhile, applicants who had paid for the installation had their phones installed. Most of the credit for solving this problem goes to Tine's mother, Zvezdana.

This dispute illustrates how past events can be a significant player in present events and that allegiances made or consolidated in particular events can effect present alliances and decisions, as Schermerhorn (1961: 88) suggested in his book 'Society and Power': '*... the outcome of one dispute loads the dice in favour of a similar outcome the next time. A few such incidents may fix the path of community disputes for many years to come.*'

In Pišce, more than 10 years after the dispute, locals often use the *phone* as a framework of reference to distinguish themselves among each other, and they divide accordingly into these groups when visiting local pubs.

As one would expect, the history of Pišce has much to do with present day alliances and allegiances. The phone dispute reflects this history, and provides an idea why some villagers got phones and others not. This has much to do with the social divisions caused by both the philosophical and political allegiances formed between the 'reds' and the 'blacks'. This

division was due to the past - partly with events dating back to the Second World War (and in some cases prior to the First World War). During the Second World War, many families from Pišece area were deported to Germany or Serbia. Many families were torn apart because of that. On the other hand, there were those families that supported the partisan movement and those who did not (see previous chapter). However, the divisions have as much to do with historical events as with the peoples' religious orientation.

### *The 'blacks' and 'reds': A division from another dimension*

In Pišece, the 'reds' or 'rdeči', is a broad label used for people believed to be either communist or socialist, as well as for those considered liberal, progressive, or people who are classified in ideological terms as left wing. The 'blacks' or 'črni', is a label used for people who practice the Christian religion, and favour the political influence of the catholic hierarchy or clergy (also known as 'cler'<sup>122</sup>). The latter term is often used in Slovenia as a synonym for 'conservative', 'traditional' or 'right wing', concepts that Adam (1994) links to what he calls rural - Christian milieu. While being left wing may have its positive connotations in the rest of Western Europe, it has a rather negative one in Pišece, and by extension in Slovenia. Left-wing is not 'in' these days!

To illustrate the above mentioned division, the 'Marellica' Inn's owner, Frane, comes from a liberal family labelled 'red'. This feeling stems from the family's expressed deep resentment of Nazi occupation in Slovenia. Frane stated '*... my uncle was sent to a concentration camp in Germany in 1944, while I was together with some of my family members deported to Germany. At that time I was only 16 years old.*'

Frane did not return to Pišece until after World War II. He then joined 'delovna brigada' - the working brigade that was composed of civilians (men and women) who were helping to rebuild the country after the Second World War's devastation. He met and married Mira, who comes from Zagorje, a neighbouring region in Croatia. In 1960, Frane started to work as a

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<sup>122</sup> The term 'cler' originates from the term clericalism (see Webster's Dictionary).

manager of the local shop (at that time owned by the public food-store chain) and has stayed there for 30 years. Today, Frane is the co-owner of the 'Marellica' Inn and President of the Displaced Peoples' Association. Many of his guests and friends, or his clique following Boissevain (1974) are old *partisans* - members of the resistance - such as lawyer 'Brane' (A5) and his distant kin 'Mateja' (A8), or the descendants of the local progressive families such as 'Stane' (B8), who is a President of the Hunters's Society, 'Matek' (B13) an ex-Yugoslav army officer, and his friend from Brežice, 'Zoran' (B12), and Marjan. Among, Frane's circle of friends is also 'Miha' (C14), a 39 year-old agricultural technician, and owner of a farm with more than 15 ha of vineyards and a wine-cellar. He supplies Frane with wine, but he also sells his wine mainly to the health resort of Terme Čatež and to private *vinoteke* (exclusive wine shops). He sometimes organizes wine-tasting evenings in his wine-cellar. In 1994, he renovated his farm for agritourism.

Regardless of his political convictions, Frane was well respected among locals (especially among 'A' and 'B' generations), especially for his contributions as initiator and President of the local Tourist Society<sup>123</sup>. It was during his presidency that the Tourist Society's endeavours to 'beautify' Pišce to attract tourists was awarded both at the municipal as well as national level with the Tourist Carnation Award from Slovenia's Tourist Association. Therefore, it was quite surprising that neither the CIB (Marko, Tine, Damjan, Dule, Father Jože, Maria and Hribar) neither the Maks Pleteršnik's Board (Father Jože, Maria and Hribar) did not involve him in the debate over 'Pišce revival' strategies and the development of rural tourism, making use of his extensive knowledge and experience.

In retrospect, there was no direct communication between Frane and the CIB or Maks Pleteršnik's Board. That had to do with various factors (the petite jealousies over business between Frane and Maria, Frane's political affiliation and his anti-church attitude, the conflicts within the local Tourist Society and so on). Frane often got information about the CIB's activities and the activities related to the CRPOV from external actors (i.e., researchers,

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<sup>123</sup> Under his presidency, from 1984 to 1988, Pišce was chosen as the most beautiful location in the Municipality of Brežice in 1985. One year later Pišce also won the first award as the best settlement in Slovenia - *Turistični nagelj* - the Tourist Carnation Award of Slovenia's Tourist Association. Both awards are displayed in Frane's *gostilna* (inn), and the walls are decorated with the commemorative tablets that the Tourist Society, or he as its president, received during this period.

staff from the Brežice Municipality) or some of his locally based regular patrons that had access to the other pub's networks (i.e., the unemployed waiter Marjan).

I would like to stress here that the division between the '*reds*' and the '*blacks*' influenced practically every domain of Pišece's life seen in the forthcoming sections. These social divisions and cleavages, as stated earlier, were not apparent in the initial context of discussions, but through time proved to be very crucial factors in the decision-making process and lines of communication in Pišece. These lines of communication - which are in Pišece defined in terms of its history, and 'powers' they might represent - regulate access to different locales, and as later seen, influence the dynamics within the various domains of Pišece.

For senior members of the community, these divisions and cleavages were more marked than for members of the younger generation such as those in the CIB (the group of young people of Pišece representing a mixture of '*reds*', '*blacks*', '*phone*' and '*non-phone*' groups). Ultimately though, these divisions had a major influence on the village's long-term development. Sticking to their 'own' social networks while socializing and discussing serious matters was 'blocking' communication among the locals. However, it appears the younger generation's ('C' generation) experiences and memories were less associated by the divisions created by the Second World War, due to religion and church going losing its 'negative connotation' over the last 30 years while generation 'C' was growing up (and educated) under a more secular regime.

### 5.3 Pišece's Domains

The concept of domains refers to the areas of social life where encounters between different life-worlds take place (see Chapter 3). Thus, domains '... are central to understanding how social ordering works in Pišece (Long, 1997) and to analyzing how social and symbolic boundaries<sup>124</sup> are created, defended and changed in the local community'.

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<sup>124</sup> The symbolic boundaries are not given, but to a certain extent negotiated, and in this process reproduced and transformed (see Chapter 3).

Together with the notion of arena (and how they are bounded), domains provide us with the analytical handle on the kinds of constraints and enabling elements that shape actors' choices and room for manoeuvre. As outlined in Chapter 3, the arenas are either spaces in which disputes associated with different practices of different domains take place (i.e., Pišece's pubs) or they are spaces within a single domain where attempts are made to resolve discrepancies in value interpretations and incompatibilities between actors' interest as it will be illustrated below.

The various Pišece's domains, namely: the domain of politics, the domain of cliques, family clans, cliques and networks, the Church domain - are the main basis of social life and influence in decision making in the local community. What this means with regard to rural tourism development, and how important Pišece's domains are with regard to pursuing possible alternatives for rural development as considerations will be discussed later on. First, let me give a view of some of the domains and their key actors.

### **5.3.1 The Political Domain of Pišece**

Interactions within this domain focused on the functioning of the *krajevna skupnost* - the nominal political power - and its representatives. In Chapter 4, observed signs of potential 'struggles for power' in the community as well as signs pointing towards the potential interfaces with the Brežice Municipality were discussed.

The community power structure is defined as a pattern of relationships among the individuals and groups in the community which enables them to influence community decisions on a given issue (Tait, 1976). In the case of Pišece, this implies the need to look closer at the social interactions and relations within the domain of politics and especially at the relationships between formal (the local administrative authorities) and informal structures and their 'power' to influence Pišece's community decisions [and actions] on the issue of most importance to the locals - the issue of 'saving Pišece from dying'.

In the following sections, I shall first start with the analysis of the situation as I found it in 1994, by identifying the nominal political power vested in certain officials in the location in question (often referred to as positional power; Tait, 1976). This 'power' is then counterpoised by the 'actual' or manifest power structure(s) as seen in the confidence and perspectives of the 'administered' - the villagers of the Local Community of Pišce. In later sections, I will follow up the struggles that took place within the domain (the informal structures trying to overtake formal positions) as time passed by. Before going any further, I believe it would be useful to distinguish between two notions, namely that of 'authority' and that of 'power'. Mendell (found in Barnes, 1986) linked the notion of 'authority' to legitimacy and legally established authority representing macro actors (i.e., the State) and imposing regulations and development directions. In this dissertation, the notion applies to the actors that occupy social positions that historically carry legitimacy, argument and 'structure of domination' (relates to the issue of leaders and followers, hierarchy). The field data show that these 'structures of domination' are well embedded in Pišce.

Power is not a fixed structural property, but it is negotiated by social actors and can be extremely fluid (Arce, Villarreal and De Vries, 1994; Villarreal, 1994).

### *Štefan - Pišce's 'paper tiger'*

In 1994, 'Štefan' (B18), a 45 year-old technician who married and moved to Pišce from the Gorenjska region, was President of the *krajevna skupnost*, thus representing the highest nominal political power in the Pišce Local Community together with the rest of the Local Community Council. He was elected in 1990, so this would be his last year as President according to the legislation (the Local Community Council members are elected every 4 years). As President of the Pišce Local Community, Štefan was supposed to deal with various issues relevant to the five settlements that make up the Local Community of Pišce (see Chapter 4). This encompasses issues such as road building, phone installation, the preservation of the local primary school and so on.

The official power structure - represented by the President, Secretary and the Council of the Local Community in Pišece was not only weak, but also 'falling apart' in 1994 when I started my fieldwork. A growing influence of the informal structures trying to wield power could be observed such as the role of the CIB in the initiation of the 1994 Workshop described in the previous chapter, the role of the CIB during the workshop, the CIB's role in negotiations with the University of Ljubljana and the Municipality of Brežice.

Note that Štefan was only notified at the last moment about the 1994 Workshop held in the village of Pišece in 1994. He was pushed aside while the welcoming formalities were taking place, and was not present during discussions of the project proposal with the experts - making Štefan the '*paper tiger*', or simply a figure head. This would likely not happen in the past, when the President of the *krajevna skupnost* together with the local Secretary of the Slovenian Communist Party were the most important figures in the community (Barbič, 1992), representing at the same time what is nowadays labelled the '*old élite*'<sup>125</sup> in Slovenia.

In the past, the president of the *krajevna skupnost* had to be a member of the League of Communist. To illustrate the importance of the Local Community President's role in the past, I refer briefly to 1981 when Maria - the president of the Tourist Society at that time - proposed to the President of the Local Community to renovate the Maks Pleteršnik native home in 1981. The president, Polde (B21), did not approve the 'project'. Due to the lack of support from local political powers, there was no one strong enough to support Maria, thus nothing happened.

The situation was quite different in 1994. There might be several reasons for the President's weakening power to influence developments in Pišece. The President's personal problems (i.e., divorce), the fact that he was not 'local' - meaning he was not born in Pišece - should not be overlooked as this seemed quite important to the people of Pišece.

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<sup>125</sup> In the past, when referring to the local élites, it meant most of the times political elite, which consisted of the local functionaries, and their protegees. Intellectuals were only partly accepted as they were often seen as a threat to the ruling élite (see also Chapter 1).

There might be another reason for being seen as an 'outsider' by some locals. In retrospect, the President lacked access to relevant social networks - which in Pišce determined whether one could achieve things or not (see later sections). Perhaps, even more important were the changes to a multi-party democratic system of government that brought to surface the old division between the 'blacks' and 'reds' and put more oil on the fire since 'blacks' suddenly had lots of possibilities to access the political domain, thus to 'power'.

In the previous system of self-managing socialism, everyone who wanted to make a career (political, but in some cases also managerial or professional) had better chances if she/he was a member of the *League of Communist*. In the period of transition, when the multi-party system was introduced, many people 'uncovered' their real colours when they shifted their political orientation<sup>126</sup>. The reader might recall that 1994 was a year of the reform of local government that brought with it lots of change at the level of *krajevna skupnost* and municipal level (see Chapter 1). This wider-change in context also brought to question the role of the *krajevna skupnost* and its formal body of authority - the *krajevni svet* - the Local Council, including that of the President of the Local Community of Pišce.

In this 'insecure' situation - not knowing what the future would bring - caused by the various local as well as external interventions - the President and local formal authorities gave little impetus to the creation of opportunities either for the development of the Pišce Local Community, or for the development of rural tourism. It is obvious that the President's *strategy* was to maintain the 'status quo', and live through the rest of his official mandate with as little trouble as possible. He was prepared to put up with public ridicule (he was pushed from the stage during the festivities evolving around the commemoration of the 100th Anniversary) and his deteriorating position in the local power structure (loosing community's confidence) to avoid situations which demanded his involvement in decision-making. The Secretary of the *krajevna skupnost*, Dule, on the other hand had adopted another strategy - he resigned in late

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<sup>126</sup> There were known cases, when the same person changed several political parties in a period of a year searching for the one that would fit her/his political aspirations, but also searching for the one that was the most likely to govern the evolving political scene in Slovenia.

1994, because, as he put it, ...*'the situation was hopeless'*. Meanwhile, Dule became involved with the CIB's initiative.

In this 'status quo' situation (in terms of development as well as leadership) in Pišece local self-help initiatives, created by informal groups (the CIB), prospered as never before. Decisions regarding the development of Pišece were no longer made by the local government, but were made outside the Local Community President's office.

*'... We just need Štefan to sign the papers and put the official stamp on'*. (Marko and Tine, 1994)

Who then really held the most power in Pišece in 1994? Who was deciding the outcome of the issues that concerned the community - such as the development of rural tourism? To answer this question, first we must explore the nature of power, and its power determinants.

'Power', like 'love', is a word used often in everyday speech. Its meaning is understood intuitively, but rarely defined. We all know what the 'power game' is, but we may be hard pressed to describe it in concrete terms. Lukes (1974) defined power as: 'all forms' of successful control by A over B, that is securing B's compliance. This definition strongly focuses on the issue of control, coercion and, consequently, on compliance and subordination.

However, power is not only about increasing the claim-making capacity or striving to counter some sort of domination. Bernstein (1978) argued that the use of concept is inextricably linked to a given set of value assumptions which predetermine the range of its empirical implication. This dissertation goes beyond the 'power over others'. It includes the 'use of power to act' and the 'use of power to achieve chosen ends', and how this concept is related to the development of rural tourism in Pišece. To continue with Bernstein's argument, we see that power not only relates to the ability to influence others, but also to the ways and strategies the various actors use to negotiate the most favourable terms for development (in this case, of rural tourism). Secondly, as already pointed out earlier, power is not something one can own, but it should be seen as an outcome of negotiation (Clegg, 1989).

What determines power? Schermerhorn (1961) believed that power is conferred by access to different resources, by the identification and defence of particular interests<sup>127</sup>, and by the domination of the means of action in the struggle for access to resources and control.

Interpretations from Schermerhorn (1961), Bourdieu (1984), Long (1992) and Clegg (1992) reveal that several types of resources can be used either to advance power or strengthen a power position. These are:

- a) economic resources (i.e., different types of economic capital, financial means, land, labour, wealth);
- b) political resources (i.e., political status, formal position in society, legitimacy, legislation, laws);
- c) social resources (i.e., social status and position in society);
- d) symbolic resources (i.e., ideology, beliefs, value systems, religion, education, specialized knowledge and propaganda); and
- e) collective resources (power through collective agency, Giddens in Long 1992).

Which of the informal actors (individuals and groups) in Pišece had the resources to contest power and 'rule' in the domain of politics, and which resources were important in obtaining and maintaining power in Pišece? In exploring these issues, I introduce the reader further to the family domains and networks, and to the domain of voluntary associations, societies and clubs, and the domain of the church. The data show that in Pišece, actors' social networks influenced social practices. Especially, family clan networks were found to be influential in determining whether one will have access (and up to what level) to certain locales and domains where issues are discussed, commitments shouldered, loyalties and opinions shared or not and, consequently, where opportunities to wield influence are developed.

Leeuwis et al. (1991: 113) defined actors' networks as '... flexible and changing sets of social relations between individual and institutional actors that involve material, social and symbolic exchange ... Networks extend through time and space, and so particular interactions can be

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<sup>127</sup> An interest may be defined as a pattern of demands and expectations.

understood again in the context of 'network' or chain of previous and future interactions and in different spatial locations'. These networks can be consciously formed, or they can simply exist as informal agreements between people based on multi-purpose social relations (Box, 1990).

Social relations are seen in this dissertation as being of variable length and often changing (dynamic) chains through which power is generated and exchanged. Thus, power can be seen as a 'product' of networks (Law, 1992). As seen below, most of the 'new raising influentials' in Pišce's domain of politics used in their 'quest for power' related social actions and the 'back-up' of their multi-strand networks among which kin related networks played a very important role. We may recall the case of Štefan - he was isolated in his social actions and his networks were no longer useful in a given situation, thus he had little or no power.

### **5.3.2 The Domain of the Family Clans, Cliques and Networks**

Organizing social practices in this domain involved kin relations, networks of friends, and 'friends of friends' (Boissevain, 1974), but also sanctioning categorization against clique alliances (i.e., '*reds*' and '*blacks*', '*phone*' and '*no-phone*' group), family history and even personal history (i.e., Štefan) as suggested by Villarreal (1994). It became evident during the fieldwork that Pišce was a community dominated by several powerful family clans, each with its extended local and external networks, specific status and access to resources.

The five family clans depicted below are representing only a part of the total Local Community population. Nevertheless, they do present a very significant part of it. Throughout the research, I have identified these family clans as the centres of the struggle for power within the process of the development of rural tourism in Pišce. In most cases, these clans based on nuclear family<sup>128</sup> networks extend to those of their extended family (i.e., grandparents, cousins and so on). Few other family clans (i.e., Frane's clan, Zora's and her father's, Štefan's) which were identified during the research, however, have not been

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<sup>128</sup> The concept of nuclear family refers to the families composed of parents and their children.

represented - on equal terms - in the 'game for power' that was taking place. In retrospect, the exclusion of these Pišce clans from decision-making seemed to be related to various issues and these are addressed throughout this chapter as well as in the following chapter.

Some of the members of the five powerful family clans have, in order to strengthen their position and wield more power, formed a close-very knit informal group in 1993 - the clique<sup>129</sup> that had initiated the change in Pišce. This clique, composed of the members from all five family clans and Father Jože and Hribar (the two had no affiliation with any of the five family clans), had tried throughout the process to 'monopolize' the development of rural tourism by excluding as many locals - and their family clans - as possible. It seemed that the main criteria for inclusion or exclusion in the clique had to do with the fact as to whether the 'others' had any links to the five family clans' webs, and whether their networks were extended kin-based or friendship relations based or whether they had resources or power that made them relevant to the clique's aspirations and interests.

I would like to point out here that, while the family clans in Pišce are by definition social groups based explicitly on kinship ties, the cliques and factions are by contrast, informal groupings that are based on political or ideological orientations, and/or common interests. In comparison to the cliques, factions are defined as coalitions or groups of persons (followers) recruited personally according to diverse principles (i.e., religious or political orientation) by or on behalf of persons with whom they were formerly united over honour (respect, influence) and/or over resources. Further, contrary to the cliques, factions are likely to have centrality of focus, thus a leader (Boissevain, 1974).

In Pišce we could observe several cliques, and that boundaries or lines between cliques were drawn rather clear. The belonging to a certain clique, and thus having access to the cliques' networks and, consequently, the relevant resources and information, seemed to be an important factor determining whether one could participate in Pišce's developments and to

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<sup>129</sup> Boissevain (1974) defined clique as a coalition whose members associate regularly with each other on basis of affection and/or common interest, and poses a marked sense of common identity [members and non-members are aware of this identity], and have emotional or pragmatic reasons to be together. Further Boissevain (1974) suggests that cliques do not have a clear focus on one person, meaning they do not have a leader. An important point is also that cliques are relatively constant groups of exclusive sets of people.

what extent. What happened if locals belonged to the 'wrong' clique or family clan, but wanted to participate in the developments concerning the future of Pišece? Were they able to do so, and how? And what about the other locals - the passive ones - that seemed not to have much interest in the future of Pišece as they were preoccupied with their daily struggles to survive.

*'... I don't have time for such things, who is going to put food on the table...'*

(Roza, factory worker, 42 years old)

*'... what can I do ... they always do what they want...'*

(Katarina, farm woman, 84 years old)

*'... I will just do as everyone else..'*

(Rajko, unskilled worker, 50 years old)

Partly, their lack of interest might be related to their age, low education, as well as lack of access to information about what was going on (i.e., preparations for the workshop) ... and why such activities and actions were important to and for Pišece and them, thus people of Pišece. In other words, these actors did not have access or were excluded from the 'right' networks. While some might try to get in these right networks, the others have chosen to passively sit and wait to see what was going to happen (this also relates to the human agency).

### ***The Five Family Clans and their Extended Networks***

The following sections are more descriptive in order to provide the basis, enabling us to follow up the webs of essential social relationships within the local community surrounding the local people and organizations, thus outlining the social structure. At the same time, this also introduces us to some of the actors considered the most influential in the development of Pišece, and allows us to see how they used existing social organizations and practices, and how they build new ones (i.e., networks) to penetrate the domain of politics as well as the

domain of the voluntary organizations, societies, clubs, and how they tried to exclude other actors (potentially dangerous actors, and actors 'without power').

### *Damjan's and Maria's family clan and networks*

The reader might recall that Maria and Damjan played important roles in the 1994 Workshop's initiation and organization. What was not obvious at that moment was that these two actors are related. This is important since it enables us to 'see the reasons behind' Damjan's actions and strategies. Everyone in Pišece knew Maria – the 63 year-old President of the local Tourist Society, the President of Maks Pleteršnik's Board, a person who received an acknowledgement from the State for her contribution to the development of Pišece, a member of various local associations and societies, the owner of The '*Srnjak*' Inn - *gostilna* which she inherited from her parents, the 'business woman' who runs her own vineyards and orchards. Her active participation in Pišece did not necessarily mean that she was liked by all. She was known as a straightforward person, for her dominant personality, and .... her business vein.

*'She likes to be where the action is. I don't mind, but it does not seem proper that she's taking all the credit for things that were done in Pišece ... like that renovation of the Maks Pleteršnik's house. Father Jože was also there!'* (Darja, 1994)

*'Maria has a pension, she is selling wine and fruit, but still wants more money ... she is opening her inn to host weddings receptions, post - funeral ham and whisky gatherings, ... it's bad for our business. There is not enough income for us if she keeps opening her gostilna.*

(Frane and Mira, 1995)

These are typical statements about her. The truth is, Maria has always been active in public life. She told me how she and her late husband Miran, who was also an active member of the Hunters' Society, operated for many years one of the best *gostilna* (inn) in the area: '... Our inn was very popular with VIPs from Brežice and Krško as well as with public figures from Croatia, especially for its game specialities'.

Some of the good customers that came regularly to the inn pointed out that an important pull-factor was Maria's and Miran's sociability. Miran hunted not only to multiply his collection of trophies at every hunt, but also his circle of acquaintances. He often renewed his acquaintance with these 'friends' in the *gostilna*. Maria always took care that there was something going on in the *gostilna* - a carnival dance, a wine harvest theme party and so on.

It should be stressed here that in Slovenia game hunting used to be, and continues to be, a favourite sport for many politicians and businessmen. Local hunters' societies would always provide services and play host to the local as well as national 'political élites'. In return, hunters would often be granted special privileges (i.e., in a certain period, access to foreign currency), such as invitations to exotic hunting trips abroad, recommendations to other hunting friends, to foreign hunters, and so on.

Maria's inn was closed in the early 1980s, but it is indeed re-opened from time to time for special occasions for closed circles only (it is not open to the public). For the rest, Maria keeps herself very busy with her vineyards and orchards. As she lives alone, she needs to organize everything for herself - to get workers to help her in the vineyards and orchards in the spring and labour at harvest time and so on. Here, her extended social relations are very valuable. Father Jože for example, advises her on wine-growing, and 'Nejc' (B32), who retired some years ago from Agraria Brežice, helps her in the orchards every spring.

Maria is very innovative with regard to processing her harvest. Some years ago, she purchased a kiln to dry fruits and vegetables which she then sells to tourists that come to Pišce (she has a stand also in the Maks Pleteršnik's museum) as well as supplying some shops with 'healthy food' in the capital (she even created her own brand using the capital letters of her grandchildren's first names). She also sells home-made wine and home baked bread on the property to the Italians, and guests of Maks Pleteršnik Museum.

In 1994, Maria held several important positions in Pišce's voluntary associations, societies, and clubs which she 'earned' throughout the years. She has been involved with the Tourist Society for more than 28 years, most of the time in the position of President. One of her very few rivals for this position was Frane - The '*Marelica Inn*' owner. Further, Maria has been

an 'officer' in the Firemen's Society and member of the Farm Women Association for more than 20 years. Maria also served as President of the Slovenia's Firemen Society for a period of eight years. In her various positions within the voluntary organizations, societies, and clubs, she participated in most public events in Pišece; the yearly festivities which evolved around national days, the Firemen's Society actions, the Slovenian Tourist Association's action for the most beautiful settlement in Slovenia. She was also behind the establishment of the CRPOV Initiative Board, together with Father Jože. Pišece also has to give her credit for the personal intervention that finally led to establishing the Maks Pleteršnik's Museum to be established (see the next chapter).

In terms of the division that cross-cuts Pišece, Maria could be identified as a sort of 'red' because of her family's history (her father and brother were fighting in partisans), her links to VIPs from Slovenia and Croatia and to the Municipality's bureaucracy in the past and present, and her husband's links to hunters. On the other hand, Maria's ability to enroll Father Jože in her projects (i.e., her vineyards, Maks Pleteršnik Board) despite her obvious dislike for him (she called him several times that *pritepenec* - the stranger) and her high level of participation in the Pišece social life across the divisions of Pišece in the past and present support that assumption.

In 1994, Maria's business was booming but, at the same time, she was already making plans for the future. Her grandson Damjan, that we met in an earlier chapter, will inherit her *gostilna*. She was very fond of Damjan and at the same time very protective. This can perhaps be explained by the conditions of Damjan's birth. He was the illegitimate child of Maria's eldest son who now lives with his family in Ljubljana. Damjan's mother stayed in Pišece, married and had two more children. She and her husband are not involved in any local activity; they work in Brežice and keep to themselves.

Damjan was 24 years old in 1994, studying and living during the week in a student accommodation in Ljubljana, coming home on weekends. He was a member of several voluntary associations, societies and clubs (the Sports Club, Folk-dance group and Tourist Society) and most of his social life in Pišece took place through these voluntary associations, societies and clubs. It was through participating in voluntary organizations activities that he

met Marko, Dule and Janez, whom he later invited to participate in the process of initiation of the CRPOV Initiative Board (CIB).

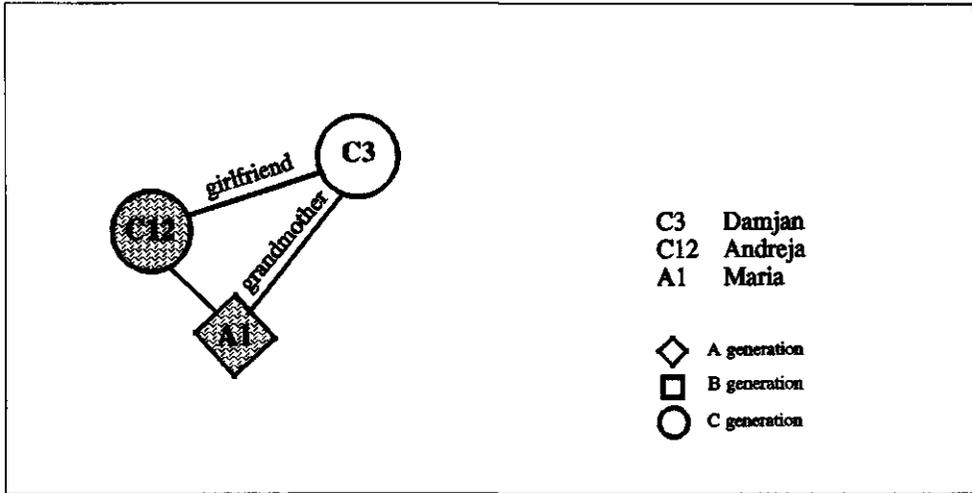


Figure 4: Damjan's and Maria's family clan

The reader might recall that it was Maria and Father Jože who encouraged him to get the group of young intellectuals together who later became the core group of the CIB. In retrospect, the idea originally came from Father Jože. He heard about the CRPOV for the first time during a discussion he had in 1991 with one of his parishioners in Dobova.

Now I wish to present other member of Damjan's network. 'Andreja' (C12), Damjan's girlfriend, is a daughter of the blacksmith Samo, who was also a member of the Municipal Council, in which he was elected as a delegate of Slovenia's National Party (SNS). Andreja worked as a physiotherapist at the health resort of Terme Čatež. She met Damjan in the Folk-dance group, where he invited her to join the CRPOV Initiative Board. Her father's access to the higher echelons of power and the municipal government, made her very valuable to the CIB who could use her as a link to her father and thus to higher decision making body in the Brežice Municipality. The link with Andreja was significant for the CIB, as they were able, through her, to bypass the area's administrative authority using her as a direct link to her father.

### *Marko's family clan and networks*

In 1994, Marko was 35 years old, still single, and living with his parents on the family farm in Pišece. He worked in the nuclear power station in Krško. He appeared to be a modest, hard working young man whose has been an active member of the CIB group. Many villagers spoke highly of him. They were very impressed by the way he helped to make the necessary arrangements with the Mayor (G2) and the Secretary (G1) of Brežice, for the workshop organization, as well as with his political career in the Municipal Council.

Actually, Marko is not only a representative of Pišece's young intellectual élite<sup>130</sup> that is increasing in Pišece, but also a typical representative of the newly emerging local political élite<sup>131</sup>. As a member of the local Christian Democratic Party (CDP), he was elected to the Municipal Council of Brežice in 1994. Holding the prominent position of councillor of this body, Marko was important to the local community (but especially to the CIB), as he could directly influence political decisions that concerned Pišece. Keeping in mind the diminishing role of *krajevna skupnost*, and (at least on paper) growing powers of the Municipality, his position provided him with a certain status in the Pišece's domain of politics.

*'... with Marko in the Municipal Council we can change and influence the future of Pišece....'* (Father Jože, 1995)

*'... we [the people of Pišece] hope to manage to change the municipal spatial-plan for the whole Local Community of Pišece so more than 200 people will be able to use their land to build the house... and Marko can help us get it...'* (Tine, 1996)

In contrast to his 'high profile' in the public sphere, Marko appeared to prefer a quiet private life. Although very active in the political sphere, in his private realm he appeared rather reserved, introvert and shy. Marko tried to spend as much of his time as possible with his parents when his busy schedule allowed. In his free time, Marko, like Damjan, liked to dance

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<sup>130</sup> Intellectual elite are professionals with the university degree, artists, writers, etc.

<sup>131</sup> Formal élite are people with position being political, organizational or public person.

with the local Folk-dance group (of which he was chairman). In addition to his work at the nuclear station, on the family farm and dancing, Marko always found time to pay regular visits to the local church. Sometimes he would also invite the local priest for the Sunday lunch at his parents' home. This link appeared important in his dealings and involvement with many groups and organisations, and Father Jože greatly influenced his social reality (his lifeworld).

There were two things I learned about Marko's family before I met him; they were one of the largest families in Pišce, and very religious. In spite of the fact that Marko's family was so large, most of its members lived in the community of Pišce. As far as villagers could remember, only one of his female cousins moved to Brežice after her marriage in late 1995. Thanks to their number, Marko's kin networks were spread, geographically speaking, all over the Local Community area. In Pišce's social life they had access to most of the social domains, and thus to a wide range of information sources.

Marko's parents, 'Štefka' (A3), and 'Zvone' (A9), have both lived in Pišce all their lives. Marko's mother is a farm wife and manages the family farm which produces wine and fruit. She and her husband run the farm together and they jointly make decisions. Zvone spends most of his time in a woodworking factory in Brežice (as a foreman), and he can only help part-time on the farm. Štefka is actively involved in the activities of different local voluntary organizations, societies and clubs as President of the local Red Cross Association and a member of the Farm Women's Association.

Zvone often mentioned that he looks forward to his retirement since this will give him more time to enjoy the 'fruits of his work', a house he built with his own hands, and working more in his vineyards. Marko's parents both hoped that Marko would soon have a family of his own '*... we are getting old... the farm is too big for one single man*', was one of his comments when discussing future plans. Zvone's younger brother, 64 year-old 'Martin' (A4) often comes to see Marko as well. He has been President of the local Firemen's Society for many years. Many locals speak of him with respect, and they always mention his contributions to the development of Pišce's road infrastructure. Martin was a member of the Road Construction Board in the 1970s when the road to Sromlje was built.

Marko has four female cousins and, until 1995, all of them lived in Pišece: Mojca - a 24 year-old student of agronomy at the University of Ljubljana, Cilka, a 30 year-old agricultural engineer, Maca, a 29 year-old technician of economy, and Marja, a 33 year-old economist. The latter two are Martin's daughters, while Mojca and Cilka are daughters of Marko's mother's sisters. All four cousins were members of the local Folk-dance group. Both Cilka and Marja were to be married soon. Cilka, who worked in Brežice in a shop specializing in selling pesticides and herbicides, planned to marry Boštjan (C15), a 32 year-old civil engineer from Pišece. He had already been living for some time in Brežice and was employed as Chief of the Department of Transport for the Municipality of Brežice in December 1994. They married in 1995, and Cilka left Pišece behind her.

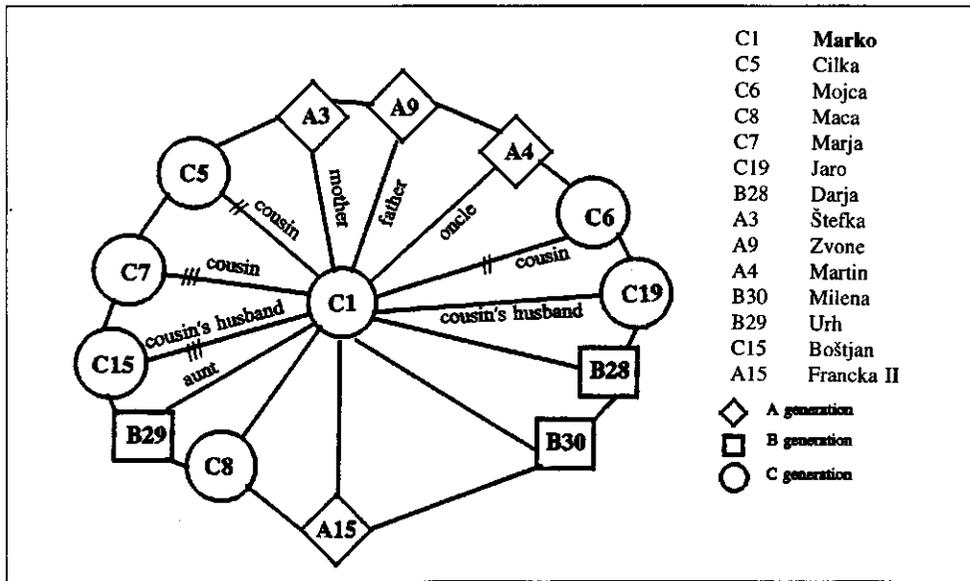


Figure 5: Marko's family clan

Marja was dating an 'outsider', 'Jaro' (C19), a 35 year-old economist from nearby Dobova in 1994. He was a professional politician (a Secretary of the Christian Democratic Party) and also represented the CDP in the Municipal Council. Actually, it was Marko who introduced them to each other during the CDP pre-election campaign meeting in 1992. This confirmed that one's political affiliation in Pišece influenced who one associated with personally (i.e.,

marriage, friendship, loyalty, etc.) - meaning people were grouping together according to their political affiliation, religious orientation, kinship and so on.

Mojca, was still single and lived with her parents on the family farm. The farm is one of the biggest in Pišece, and is one of the few in the area with cattle. They milk 30 cows, produce grapes in the vineyard, and are one of the few farming families in Pišece already involved in agritourism as an open-door farm (see Chapter 1). In 1994, they planned to refurbish two rooms to be classified as 1<sup>st</sup> category<sup>132</sup> accommodations, with full-board including three meals a day by 1996. They would provide a local guide, normally a pupil from the local school, if the visitors wanted.

It was Mojca's 51 year-old mother 'Darja' (B28) who thought of starting agritourism. She heard about it during a lecture at the Farm Women's Association meeting in 1978 by an agricultural extension officer. She and her husband 'Urh' (B29) agreed to inquire about developing such an activity on their farm. They applied for, but did not receive non-repayable funds from the Agricultural Cooperative in Brežice to refurbish their farm for agritourism. However, they decided to go ahead and renovate their old farmhouse on their own, which took much longer than planned. Mojca's family had their first visitors - a family with small children from Ljubljana - in autumn 1996. For a while Mojca's parents farm was the only one that offered this type of facility to tourists. However, in 1997 Miha, had his first guests. According to Darja, the income generated from agritourism does not yet cover the investments they have made. However, they were not worried, since income from cattle and vineyards was sufficient to support the family. In fact, this family lived on one of the biggest and most prosperous farms in Pišece.

The young generation of Marko's family has been actively involved in Pišece's latest attempts to create better living and working conditions. Each of Marko's four cousins joined the CRPOV Initiative Board, while the rest of his kin supported the CIB's Initiative through

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<sup>132</sup> Up to 1997, rooms on farm premises were classified in two categories. 1st category rooms had bath and toilet, and 2nd category rooms had shared bath and toilets. However, this changed as the parliament passed new Regulations on the Categorization of Buildings (see Chapter 1).

positions that they occupied in various voluntary organizations. A look at the list of villagers and organizations prepared to support the CIB Initiative<sup>133</sup> was enough to confirm that all of Marko's family were involved. In 1996, Mojca followed Marko's footsteps in politics. She was elected to the Council of the Local Community - *krajevna skupnost*. Thus, Marko's family clan obtained more power to influence decision-making and extended its 'room for manoeuvre' by assuring its presence in relevant local and meso level of the formal decision-making bodies. Long (1989) argues that the notion of 'room for manoeuvre' is central to understanding the ways in which actors attempt to create space for pursuing their own social projects, or for resisting the imposition of other more powerful actors. In Pišece, through the 'room for manoeuvre' that local actors created for themselves, they were able to directly influence some of the activities related to the development of rural tourism at the local level.

Marko's family appeared strongly rooted and attached to Pišece. They were attached to their land with feelings of loyalty for their community. The whole family was involved in activities to maintain Pišece for the young generation in the future. Thus, within the limitations imposed on them, Marko's family clan as well as other family clans strived to make the best out of the situation by developing a 'certain' space for manoeuvre.

#### *Dule's family clan and networks*

Dule is a 35 year-old farm technician and another member of the CIB. He is married to 'Irena' (C21) and they have two children. He and his family lived with his parents on a family farm. Dule worked in a horticultural company called Agraria Brežice in Brežice. In 1990, Dule was elected Secretary of the *krajevna skupnost*. He was then a member of the League of the Socialist Youth of Slovenia - the Liberal Party (ZSMS - LS). This implies that in reference to 'blacks' and 'reds' he would be classified as 'red'. His party later changed its name to the Liberal Democratic Party, one of the three most powerful parties in the nation. In his free time, Dule was also active in the Firemen's Society.

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<sup>133</sup> See list in Appendix 11. It was formulated by the CIB members based on results of the inquiry they conducted among the villagers. It can be seen that a lot of the villagers mentioned in this dissertation were not included in the list.

Dule comes from a typical 'part-time' farmer/worker family which can be found throughout Slovenia. During the period of self-managing socialism, workers or what would be called the 'lower social classes' in general in Western European societies, were hardly considered to be the lower social strata. Quite the contrary, in the 'quasi' classless society, they were on the same level if not even slightly higher than the intellectuals<sup>134</sup>. However, against the backdrop of the current socio-political and economic changes, this 'ideology of the distributive egalitarianism' as Klinar (1994) calls it, has fallen into disuse and new élites are emerging (see Chapter 1). Thus, a fast class and strata polarization can be observed in Slovenia. According to Klinar, the current process of social stratification and segregation in Slovenia reflects an increasing importance of capital or, in other words, if one has capital, then climbing the social ladder is not a problem. In Pišece, there were not many 'nouveau riches', although some had the potential economic resources to do so - i.e., Bine, Miha and Zora. Due to privatization, there were also possibilities that non-locals would make their claim on Pišece's natural resources, thus, be in position to benefit from it. One example well known in Pišece, was of an Argentinean citizen who was a relative of a native of Pišece who immigrated to Argentina after the Second World War, and reclaimed 400 hectares of forests currently managed by the local Hunters' Society.

Dule's family, on the other hand, was at this time of transition allied to the lower social strata. Dule's parents were now both retired, owned a smaller farm and grew grapes. They also owned a few hectares of woodlands. While Dule's father, 'Boris' (A10), worked in the construction industry in Brežice and was a part-time farmer, his mother 'Majda' (A13) worked in a textile factory in Brežice. It was decided that Dule, as the youngest child and only son, would inherit the family farm. He went to a vocational agricultural school in Celje and obtained a degree. At the moment, Dule does not farm, but helps his parents whenever his work schedule and political activities permit.

Dule's older sister Silvestra was a full-time farm woman. She co-owns one of the biggest farms in Pišece, and often sells farm products such as 'schnapps', apples and wine, to city

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<sup>134</sup> see Klinar, 1994.

dwellers who come for a Sunday trip to Pišce, especially during harvest, to buy *ozimmico*<sup>135</sup> (supply of fruit and vegetables for the winter).

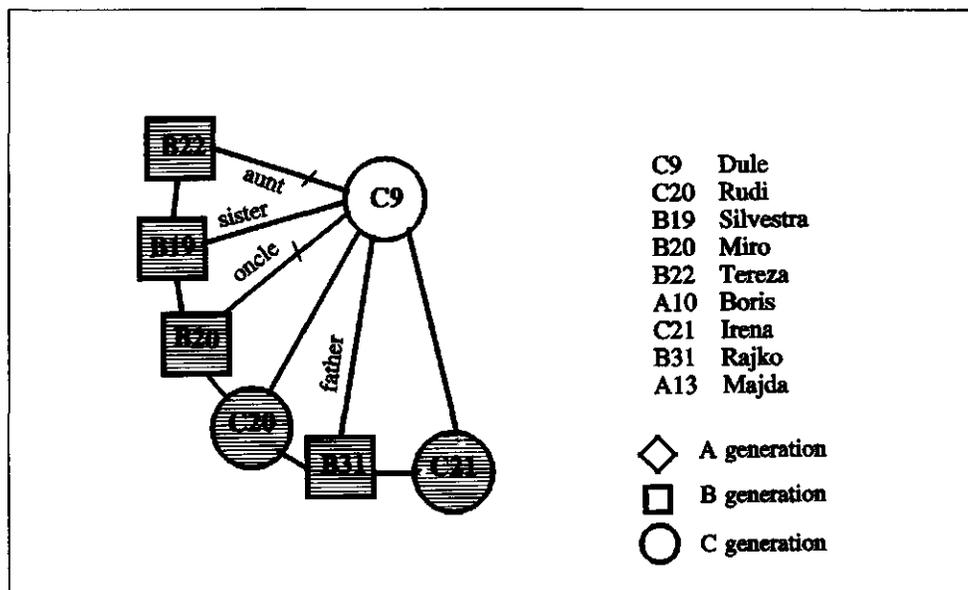


Figure 6: Dule's family clan

During the past few years she developed good business relationships with several regular customers, which brought her extra income. She had developed a reputation in the village as a successful 'business' woman, and was often asked by Maria to help with the organization of food, wine or flower exhibitions at the Farm Women's Association of which she was a member. Silvestra's husband, 'Rajko' (B31) was a forester and he used to work for GG Brežice. He's been active in the Hunters' Society.

Dule's maternal aunt, 58 year-old 'Tereza' (B22), was a teacher who taught at the local primary school. From 1978 until 1984, she was the school's Head Mistress. She was well

<sup>135</sup> In Slovenia there was and still is a tradition that every autumn people buy fruit and vegetables (preferably directly from framers or relatives in the countryside, but also on the markets in towns) which they store at home and use over the winter. This is due to the shortage in winter supply of fruit and vegetables due to the seasonality of fruit and vegetable production. Imports were limited and greenhouses were not so common in the past.

remembered among certain members of the local community for her negative attitude towards the Tourist Society's proposal to establish a Maks Pleteršnik's memorial room in Pišece. Tereza married 'Miro' (B20), owner of the local blacksmith's workshop. His shop was refurbished some years ago into a blacksmith's museum with the help of staff from the Museum of Brežice. Miro, who now works in Novo mesto, is a member of the Hunters' Society, while Tereza is active in the Culture and Art Society and the Red Cross Organization. Tereza and Miro have one son, 'Rudi' (C20) who is employed at his father's transport company.

### *Tine's family clan and networks*

Tine's family was well-known in the village. Both of his parents belonged to the local intellectual élite. Tine's mother, Zvezdana (B15), was the Postmaster General (a State position and as such considered important) and thanks to her, in the recent past, a large local dispute over telephone allocation was solved relatively peacefully. On her initiative, the local community of Pišece as of today has one phone per ten inhabitants. Tine's father, Tibor (B24), is a 46 year-old white collar worker in the Dolenjska Banka - a bank in Brežice. Tine's parents, like most of the other villagers, own vineyards. The whole family was very active in the Sports Club. Tibor was a founder of the local Sports Club, and is also active in the Hunter's Society and Tourist Society. His younger son Tristan (C11), who studied law, was involved with the Sport Club as well as the Folk-dance group. In 1996, he became President of the Sports Club.

Tine's family clan is also well known for his grandfather, Brane, a retired lawyer, who fought against the Germans in the Second World War. Brane is now President of the Second World War Veterans' Society. The Second World War heavily influenced the lives of many other members of the Tine clan. Tine's grandmother Jana was sent to a concentration camp in Germany but managed to escape from the train and joined the partisans. She died in 1979. Tine's grandmother's cousin Mateja (A8) is a 72 year-old who lives in Pišece now and her memories of the Second World War are vivid. She was deported by the Germans to Serbia in 1942. She returned after the war, enrolled in high school and worked as a secretary for a

big company in Brežice. Rebellious blood runs strongly in this family clan. Tine's late great-grand father, is also a local legend. He fought in the First World War with General Maister for the freedom of Slovenians.

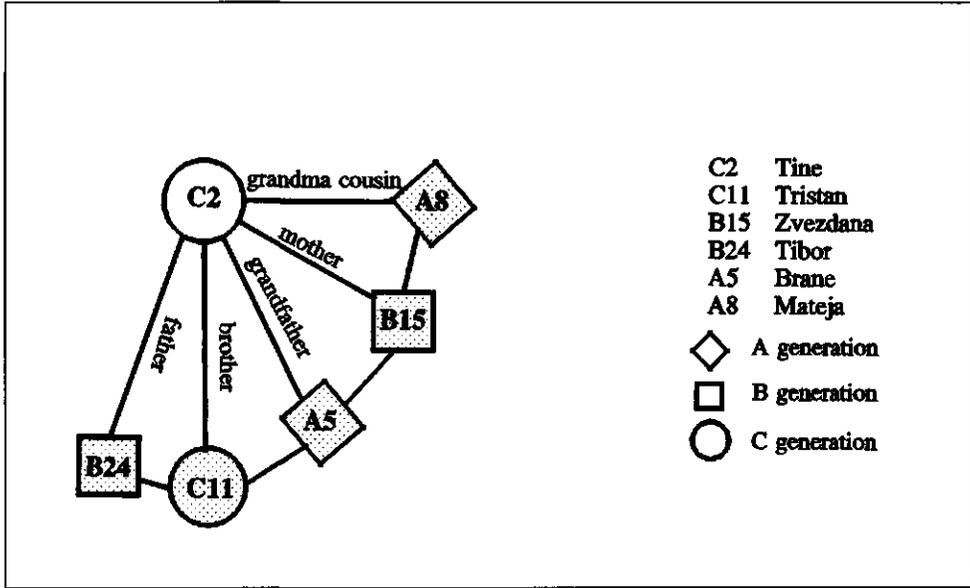


Figure 7: Tine's family clan

Tine's family clan was one of the 'dignified' families in Pišce; they were proud of who they were, and where they came from. This relates to the segregation in Pišce's Local Community between the 'reds' and 'blacks'. In the early 1990s, it was rare for people who were 'red' to stand up proudly while the 'blacks' spit on them. In the time of transition, many hid or shifted their political or religious orientation under the social pressure of their peers, but not Tine's family clan, who were not afraid to let people know which 'side' they belonged to.

*Janez's and Lenart's family clan and networks*

I also heard about Janez and his family long before I met him. The name of the family continually appeared in earlier interviews with villagers either in connection with Janez or his

uncle 'Lenart' (B10). Lenart, a 56 year-old civil engineer who works in the Nuclear Station, was named by the locals as one of the most 'influential' people in Pišece. He held the position of Vice-President on the Brežice Municipal Council and was believed to have access to all relevant information concerning the future development of the whole area of Brežice, thus also Pišece's Local Community. As such, it was assumed, he had the power to influence decisions made at the municipal level. Many villagers told me that they also relied on Lenart for his advice on legal matters and would turn to him for help when needed. Lenart's wife, 'Renata' (B34), worked in one of Brežice's companies as an administrative worker.

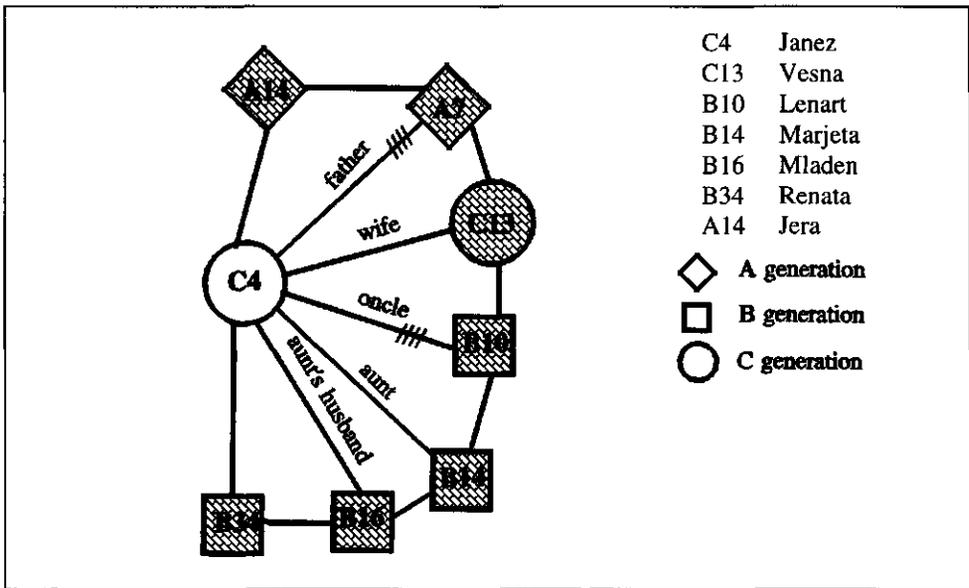


Figure 8: Janez's and Lenart's family clan

'Vesna' (C13), Janez's wife, is a technician with a specialization in economics, and worked in Brežice in the office of a textile factory. Janez's father, 'Ivan' (A7), a retired carpenter, was well-known for his wood working skills. He did a lot of the wood carvings in the Hunter's Lodge. Contrary to his younger brother Lenart, Ivan was active in local voluntary organizations, in the Hunter's Society and the Second World War Veterans.

Janez's aunt, Marjeta (B14), owned one of the four pubs in Pišece, and was married to Mladen (B16), a 44 year-old transport business owner, who has many business contacts with different people across the border. Owning a pub and having contacts in the transport business gives one access to the different networks which may be useful in many entrepreneurial projects.

In conclusion, the five family clans and their extended kin networks differ with respect to their access to resources, their status, their networks and alliances. Maria's and Damjan's family clan had access to the resources of the old political élite, like Tine's family clan. Marko's family clan for example, used collective resources and had access to resources from the new political environment. Janez's and Lenart's family clan also had access to the municipal political bodies, thus having access to places where decisions were made about the future of Pišece.

In the local 'environment', the family clan and cliques to which actors belonged were very important. The 'belonging to a particular family clan' has to a great extent determined the position of family clan members in the community, what they could do and even where they could go for a drink. The boundaries between the family clans and various cliques were drawn by the locals themselves.

The actors used their family clan networks to increase power within the domain of politics and the domain of voluntary organizations, societies and clubs (see the forthcoming sections). Different clans and cliques would not easily accept people from another family clan or clique. Those locals who were not included in the earlier mentioned family clans or clique networks were paralysed at that moment in time since they did not have the adequate power to penetrate the groups and networks that dominated the social life in Pišece. Exclusion or inclusion into the various social organizations had much to do with individual religious, political or social orientations.

### *The Five Family Clans and the CIB Clique*

As previously mentioned, the five younger members of the family clans described above formed a powerful local clique in 1993, together with two local key actors - Father Jože and Hribar. Both were external members in terms of belonging to the clan, making changes in Pišce and initiating the rural tourism development process. They started as an informal group. In 1994, they called themselves the CRPOV Initiative Board.

### *The active young members of the CIB in Pišce - The Prime Movers of the First Steps to a 'better life'*

While networking to form a new clique, Damjan, who belonged to the younger generation ('C' generation), played an important role. In 1993, he invited four other young men, who lived in the Local Community of Pišce - Marko, Tine, Dule and Janez - to help establish what was later called the *CRPOV Initiative Board* (CIB). As later discovered, he acted upon the advice of both his grandmother, Maria, who was at the time, President of the Local Tourist Society, and the local priest - Father Jože.

Damjan first approached Marko and Tine. Damjan and Tine were about the same age and have known each other since primary school. Meanwhile Damjan met Marko in the Folk-dance group. Marko was Father Jože's protege who at the time of the CIB formulation, 'pushed' him into politics by advising him to run in the elections for the Municipal Council as a candidate of the Christian Democrat Party. As we saw earlier, Marko won a seat in the Municipal Council in 1994. Thanks to membership on the Council and his family clan's high participation in community affairs, he was a valuable member of the CIB.

Damjan also knew Dule and Janez. Dule and Damjan knew each other from the Sports Club, although they were not really close, which is not surprising considering the age difference and their different life styles. Dule was a valuable member of the CIB because of his background in agriculture, his knowledge of agricultural problems, and his political orientation. The political climate favoured the development of his political party (the Liberal Democrats). In

1990, 1992 and 1996, Liberal Democrats won the majority of votes and made up government at the municipal and national level (see Chapter 1).

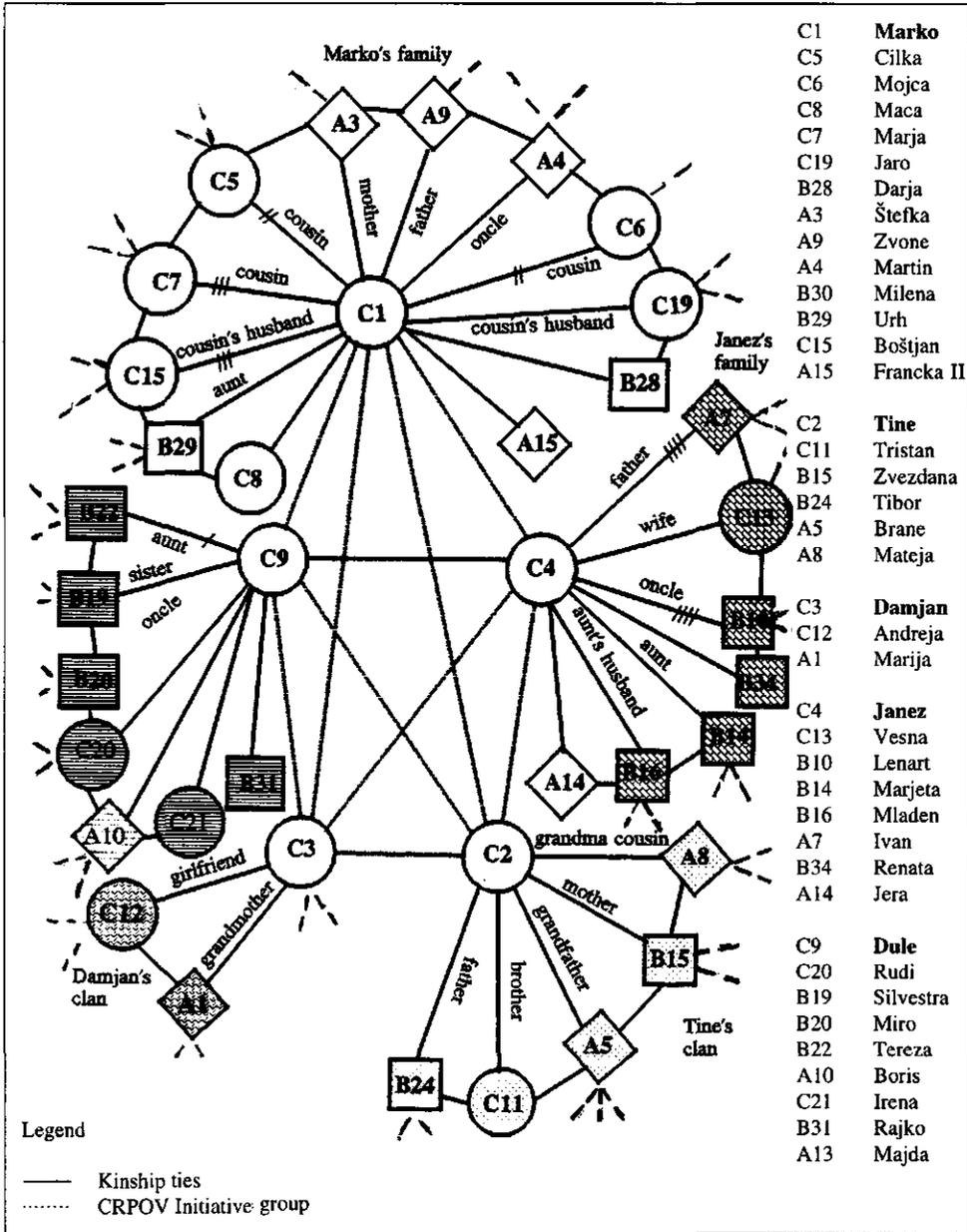


Figure 9: The five family clans and the CIB clique

Tine was also a member of the local Sports Club, where he got to know Janez, Dule and Damjan. His knowledge of the physical planning procedures and the relevant legislation concerning spatial planning was beneficial for the CRPOV Initiative Board.

Marko and Dule were very familiar with Janez. Marko, Dule and Janez were all same age, and went to primary school together. Later, their paths separated and, while Dule went to Celje, Marko and Janez studied together in Ljubljana (living in the same student flat). They worked together at the Nuclear Station in 1993. Janez, at first did not want to devote himself to the CIB, as ... *Time is Money* ... However, as we will see later, he changed his mind and joined the Board in 1995.

As observed above, the narrow family clan orientation was 'exceeded' (the actors saw and acted beyond the family clan or clique boundaries) when the young people of Pišece formed a clique including with two members of the older generations. This clique was based on their common interest to create conditions for their future rather than on their family clan orientation or any other division and cleavage that cross-cut Pišece. As noted, the voluntary associations, societies and clubs played an important role in this development. The young people knew each other and socialized together through activities organized by the various voluntary associations, societies and clubs.

### **5.3.3 The Domain of Associations, Societies and Clubs**

The social interactions within this domain were focused around activities such as organizing Pišece's beautification, baking cakes, playing volleyball, hunting, singing, as well as establishing links with the market (i.e., the Hunters Society, the Farm Women Association), and the State (i.e., the CIB). An examination of the various Pišece's associations, societies and clubs shows how social ties cut across the various domains in this small community. Different associations, societies and clubs had their own expectations for rural tourism development and their own resources to influence decisions related to tourism development. Voluntary associations, societies and clubs expectations and interests, as we will see, had much to do with the expectations and interests of its individual members or group of members

who pursued networks, through the particular organizations' interests of their clique or family clan (i.e., how Janez found it important to enroll in the Tourist Society in 1996).

With reference to the social divisions mentioned earlier, members of the associations, societies and clubs came from different family clans, and belonged to different groups such as the 'phone' or 'no-phone' groups, and were 'red' or 'black', thus access to this domain was granted to all members of the local community. However, at the same time, a dominance in various associations, societies and clubs was observed in terms of the social divisions mentioned earlier.

As we can see in Table 2 below, some villagers such as Maria and Tibor, Hribar, Father Jože, Frane, Tereza and some of the CIB Board members were active in several voluntary associations, societies and clubs. Furthermore, some villagers, such as Maria for example, occupied key positions in more than one. It seems that some actors viewed a few of the voluntary associations, societies and clubs as potential 'gates' to other networks and to power in the local community; thus they tried to enroll in several (see also Chapter 6). Interviews with locals have also shown they believed some of the voluntary organizations had played more important roles in the development of Pišce than others. A majority of locals mentioned the Tourist Society and the Hunters' Society as the most relevant voluntary organizations (see Appendix 10).

Table 2: Different family clans' members involvement and participation in voluntary associations, societies and clubs in 1994/1996

	Marko's clan (C1)	Tine's clan (C2)	Damjan's clan (C3)	Janez's clan (C4)	Dule's clan (C9)
Hunters Society	Rado (B25) Zvone (A9) Boštjan (C15)	Tibor (B24)	-	Ivan (A7) Mladen (B16)	Miro (B20) Sano (B3)
WWI Veterans	Zvone (A9)	Brane (A5)	-	Ivan (A7)	-
Farm Women Association	Štefka (A3)	-	-	-	Silvestra (B19)
Folk-dance group	Marko (C1) Mojca (C6) Maca (C8) Cilka (C5) Marja (C7)	Tine (C2) Tristan (C11)	Andreja (C12) Damjan (C3)	-	-
Craftsmen	-	-	Miha (C14)	Marjeta (B14) Mladen (B16)	-
Tourist Society	Boštjan (C15)	Tibor (B24)	Damjan (C3) Maria (A1)	-	-
Sport Club	-	Zvezdana (B15) Tine (C2) Tibor (B24) Tristan (C11)	Miha (C14)	Janez (C4)	Tereza (B22) Dule (C9)
Firemen	Martin (A4)	-	Maria (A1)	-	Dule (C9)
MPBoard	-	-	Maria (A1)	-	-
Red Cross	Štefka (A3)	Zvezdana (B15)	Maria (A1)	-	Silvestra (B19) Tereza (B22)
Church	Marko (C1) Štefka (A3) Cilka (C5) Boštjan (C15) Mojca (C6)	-	-	-	-
Disabled Society	-	-	-	-	Boris (A10)
CRPOV Board Initiative	Mojca (C6) Maca (C8) Cilka (C5) Marja (C7)	Tine (C2) Tristan (C11)	Andreja (C12) Damjan (C3) Maria (A1)	Janez (A4)	Dule (C9)
Displaced People Society	-	Mateja (A8)	-	-	-

To illustrate the complex networks cross-cutting Pišce's community within the domain of the voluntary associations, societies and clubs, the various local organizations in Pišce, and their membership are shown in Figure 10. Investigating villagers' links with different associations, societies and clubs allows us to look into how the informal structure of the local community relates to different actor activities within these organizations. Participation in a given voluntary associations, societies or club activities opened access to other networks (and domains) in Pišce, since some actors were affiliated with several organizations giving them the opportunity to extend their social networks.

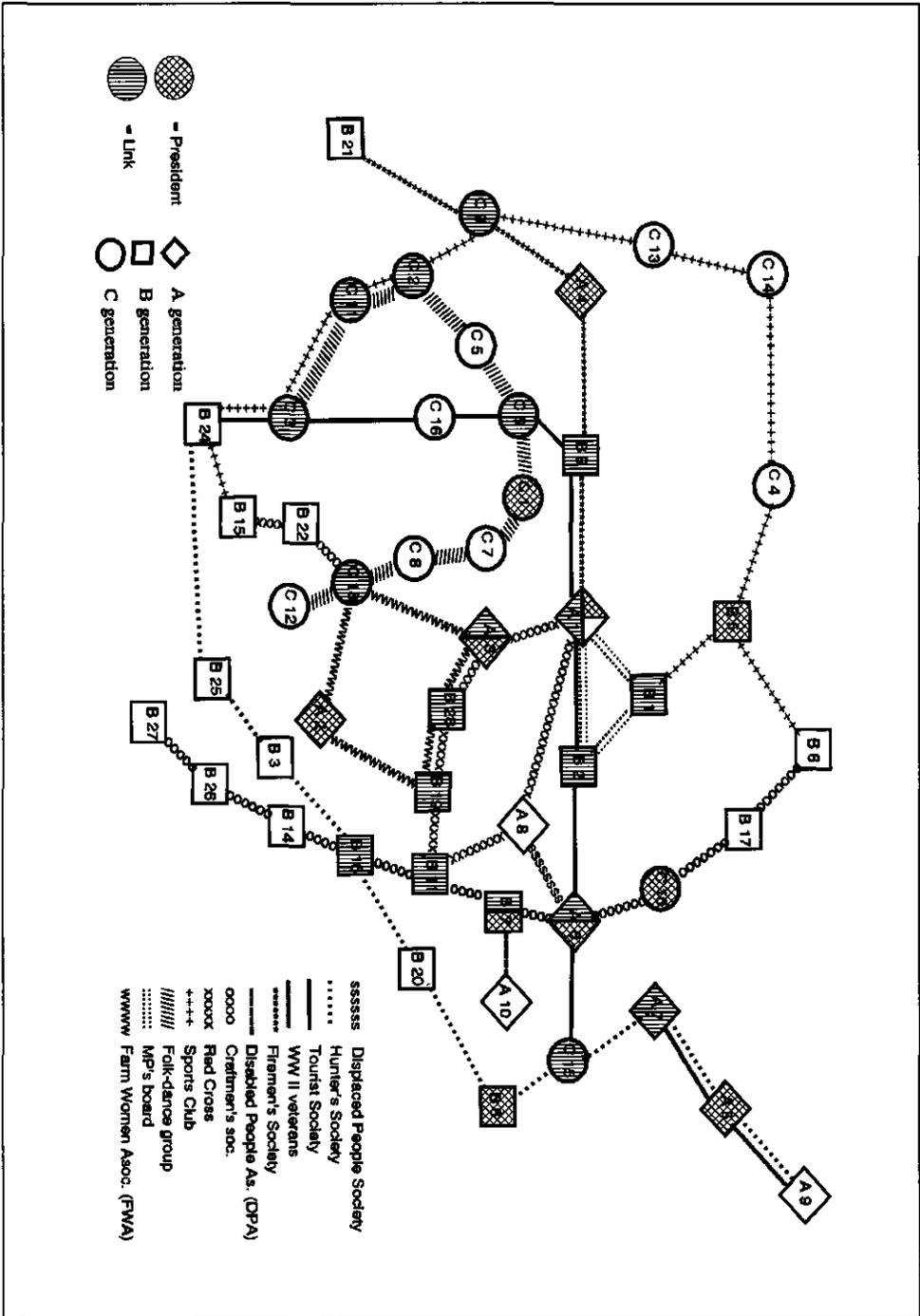


Figure 10: The participation of the locals in various associations, societies and clubs

One of the most popular voluntary organizations with regards to its role in the development of the community and the most active was the local **Tourist Society**, which had been operating in Pišece for more than thirty-five years (since 1962). Tourism was therefore not new to Pišece. Through the years, the Tourist Society had motivated locals to beautify Pišece (houses, farmyards and so on) and to enroll in several national competitions (i.e., for the most beautiful small settlement proposed by the Slovenian Tourist Association). The Tourist Society also organized ethnographic exhibitions, culinary, wine-growing related festivities and competitions together with Slovin<sup>136</sup>, flower, and hunting exhibitions and competitions. Many of these festivities coincided with national or seasonal holidays (St. Martin's). The Society had also purchased the historic water mill in 1972 next to the church, renovated it and fought for the renovation of Maks Pleteršnik's native house.

In 1994, the Society had more than 50 members and Maria was its President, while the schoolmaster Hribar was its Secretary. The Tourist Society has, since 1991, also an off spring in the local school - *turistični krožek* - that was supervised by 'Dora' (B9), a 44 year-old native of Pišece and teacher from the local school. Pupils enrolled in the *turistični krožek* were trained as local tourist guides.

Maria had been President of the Society on and off since the 1970s. Under her latest presidency, Pišece's Tourist Society's work was recognised once more in 1992 when Pišece received the *Turistično vrtnico* - the Tourist Rose Award given by Radio and Television Slovenia to the most Touristic Place of the Year. In 1996, when the Tourist Society was presided by Dora, Pišece won the prize again as the most beautiful small settlement in Slovenia - *Lipov list*. Among the Society's members were Father Jože, Damjan, Tine, Mojca and Frane. In general, the Tourist Society was slightly dominated by the 'reds'.

As far as the Tourist Society's interests in tourism development were concerned, the society wanted rural tourism to increase the number of tourists (and thus a need for tourist guides), opportunities to sell local products, money for the local economy, the preservation of handicrafts and the conservation of the local cultural heritage.

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<sup>136</sup> Slovin Brežice - was one of the big wine companies to help people from Pišece restore their vineyards in the late 1970s while buying their harvest.

Some of the Society's members (i.e., Frane) were inclined to support developments on a smaller-scale, seeing Pišece as a day-trip destination where guided tours around the village sights, lunches and picnics would represent the main tourist product. Others, like Father Jože, saw opportunities for special 'health and beauty' treatments. Father Jože thought that Pišece had the potential to become a health & recreational resort with a thermal water swimming pool (the source has yet to be found). He also thought of Pišece parish with its seven churches as a pilgrimage destination.

In retrospect, there were some locals who had less appreciation for the work done by the Tourist Society, and had their doubts about its future role in the development of tourism in Pišece. The most outspoken was Janez, who called the Tourist Society 'amateuristic' suggesting that the society could only handle tourism as a 'supplementary activity' (side or small scale activity). Further, Janez suggested the need for a private company or tourist agency together with the Tourist Society, to control and work on the development of tourism in Pišece.

The **Firemen's Society** (GD), founded in 1908, was the second most popular voluntary organization in Pišece (according to interviews with villagers). Firemen Societies are, in general, an important part of Slovenian rural social life. The societies are not only organised to fight fires but often regarded as pillars of social life in rural areas. The society organizes social gatherings and festivities, and helps with garbage collection and other civic duties in the five villages. The Pišece firemen wanted to maintain a positive image. Among the most active members were Martin (the President), Maria, Dora, Dule, and Polde. The Fireman's Society was involved in the discussion of tourism from the very beginning by Maria and President Martin, who is also Marko's uncle. As one might expect, and for obvious reasons, the Firemen's Society membership was mixed in terms of the division between '*blacks*' and '*reds*'. The views of firemen on tourism development were not particular, this society was mainly used to spread ideas to other networks.

The **Sports Club** was very popular among the younger generation of Pišece as well as among the non-farming population. It was founded in 1981 by Tibor. The Sports Club organizes mini-football, basketball and table-tennis matches in the school's gym or in the school yard

(two years ago they installed lights so they could also play at night). Skiing is a popular form of recreation in winter. The club bought two ski-lifts and used them on hills around Pišece. Recently, tennis and volleyball have become very popular, thus the club uses the school yard as a tennis court. Besides these activities, of which many would not be possible without the support of the local school master, the Sports Club organizes picnics, and *veselice* (public parties) where everyone is welcome. In 1994, 'Jure' (B5), a 42 year-old electrician ran the club. Among its active members were many of the actors previously described including Dule, Damjan, Tine and his brother Tristan, Janez, Miha, and Father Jože. Tine's brother Tristan became the new club's President in 1996. The Sports Club will likely be a focal point for future discussion about rural tourism as well as other development efforts. The club tends to be dominated by the 'reds'.

The **Hunters' Society**, founded in 1946, is an important local society in Pišece. In 1994, it had 54 members. It was considered by many villagers to be a prestigious organization providing fun and relaxation for politicians, businessmen, rich Italian and Austrian hunters, and the like. The Society was, thus, involved in rural tourism as a matter of course. However, the society was not very popular among some of the villagers. '*They are like peacocks, parading around with their guns, and their hunting dogs and four-wheel drive jeeps*'. '*I do not know who they think they are, but they behave as if they own this place*', were some of the comments I recorded.

A debate concerning the management of hunting grounds and the hunters' isolation from community matters has been going on for some years between the hunters and several villagers, like Martin, 'Ema' (A2), Maria and Darja. While some villagers dislike hunters for their snobbish attitude towards the Pišece's mere 'mortals' (see also p. 142 for further description of hunting as an élite sport), owners of local businesses wish to see more foreign currency from these visitors.

Hunting has always been a big business. However, game tourism in Pišece is totally isolated from the community, although there were some exemptions to the rule<sup>137</sup>. Hunters stayed

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<sup>137</sup> As earlier seen, Maria sold hunters home made products knowing the economic benefits.

with their colleagues or in the health resort in Čatež, and hardly ever visited the local inns or pubs. Further, farmers like Silvestra and Darja often had more 'concrete' complaints about hunters. Usually, it was about the damage done by game to the local vineyards and orchards, or about the damage done by the buzzards and hawks that stole poultry from the farm yards. Several hunters tried to solve the first problem by introducing regular inspections in the spring in the most likely affected areas. They even distributed among farmers free preventative creams for the grapes to protect the trees from the animals' teeth. Concerning poultry, hunters' actions were limited since the Law on the Protection of Endangered Animal Species protects buzzards and hawks. During the renovation of Maks Pleteršnik's native home in 1994, the Hunters' Society joined the 'project' and tarred the road to Pleteršnik's house, a great plus for their image in Pišce.

However, there was another side to this act of good will, as Maria pointed out. Hunters needed a tarred road to their Lodge (built in 1965), situated only ten meters further up the hill from Maks Pleteršnik's home. Hunters meet there often and provide accommodation for their Slovenian and foreign guests. However, as explained by the President of the Hunter's Society, they could not accommodate as many as they would have liked. That is the reason why the Society began lodge renovation in 1987. Pišce's hunting grounds are very popular with Italian and Austrian hunters. The Society manages almost 2500 hectares of land, of which more than four-fifths were used for hunting. Other members of the society include transporter Mladen, engineer Boštjan, foreman Miro, lawyer Brane, blacksmith Samo, and carpenter Ivan; hence, many hunters hold responsible positions and have influence in the community's power and social structure. For example, Stane was President of the *krajevna skupnost* - the Local Community Council, in 1984. He chaired the Society in 1994 and by the end of 1996, he was once again elected President of *krajevna skupnost*.

The Hunters' Society was interested in rural tourism for its own reasons. They saw it as a means to expand game tourism. For them, rural tourism meant more foreign hunters with a greater influx of foreign currency. Further, they wanted to introduce supplementary activities for guests such as horse riding along the 'Tourist-Wine Route from Bizeljsko to Sromlje', where some hunters have vineyards and could potentially open future wine shops. Another long-term interest was to renovate the Moscon castle. However, it was not likely to happen

in the near future since the castle did not belong to the local community. It belongs to the Brežice Municipality, which has shown no interest in renovation. There have been talks of leasing it (preferably to foreigners) since the early 1990s. In 1995, rumours were Italians would buy the castle, which has never happened. In terms of division, the hunters' society was mixed, but dominated by 'reds' and an old élite.

It was interesting to observe that many local farmers, most of them part-time farmers and not members of the Hunters' Society, had expressed similar interests to those of the 'hunters' with regard to the development of rural tourism. 'Zajce' (B33), for example, said it would provide them with an opportunity to sell farm products on their farms and earn extra money by offering accommodation to tourists. Thus, several farmers were interested in the CRPOV project, 'Slovenia's Tourist Wine Routes'. Some local farmers were actively pursuing the development of rural tourism by involving themselves in various associations, clubs and organisations such as the Tourist Society, the Farm Women's Association, and, also through the political parties (i.e., the Christian Democrats, the People's Party). There is also quite a high representation of part-time farmers in the local official power structure (Dule and Marko). Part of the local tourist product would be seed fish (pisciculture) in the local pond, and Dule told me that they (the Pišcece locals) were discussing this possibility with a special Agricultural Board within the Municipal Council.

The **Cultural and Art Club** (KUD Orlica) is led by 'Tinka' (B4), a 55 year-old teacher from Pišcece. Among its members we find once again, Father Jože, Hribar and Maria. The KUD *Orlica* is an umbrella organization for three independent cultural and art groups: the men's and the women's choirs and the Folk-dance group. The men's octet was established in 1977 and it performs all over Slovenia and sometimes abroad, especially where Slovenian immigrants live (i.e., Cleveland in the United States of America). One such visit resulted in a return visit of immigrants from Cleveland to Pišcece in 1988.

The women's choir, founded in 1985, was perhaps less famous, but valued by many women who felt it enriched their lives. Especially farm women found it important seeing it as their free-time and leisure activity, and a means to 'escape' for a few hours their everyday obligations. *'I hope that the choir continues, so women do not have to stay only at home'*

'Ana' (C18), a farm woman, commented. The choir, however, might have to give up its activities since the conductor would retire soon, and some women were leaving the choir. Contributing factors were the heavy workload of women, traditional views on women's free time, or as in case of Cilka and some other younger women - marrying and leaving Pišece (see also Verbole, 1997b).

While the two choirs were popular among middle-aged Pišece locals, among the younger villagers, the most popular group was the Folk-dance group presided by Marko. The Folk-dance group is the youngest among the three cultural and art groups established in 1992. Among the members of the group were Damjan, Tine, all four of Marko's cousins - Marja, Mojca, Maca and Cilka - who were all members of CRPOV Initiative Board as well. Among the members were Tine's brother Tristan, and their neighbour, Ana, a 26 year-old farm woman. After a while Ana gave up dancing in the late 1994, and Andreja, Damjan's girlfriend joined the group. Soon after, Andreja also became a member of the CPB. The Folk-dance group was performing local dances on such occasions as the opening of the Maks Pleteršnik's Museum. In 1995, they started making costumes based on folk-costumes worn in the 18th and 19th century together with a famous Slovenian ethnographer Dr. Markovič, invited by Father Jože. In terms of social division, these three voluntary associations, societies and clubs were dominated by 'blacks'.

The **Farm Women's Association (FWA)**<sup>138</sup> was established in 1991. In 1994 it had more than 70 members. Since 1991, it has actively participated in local community events such as preparing food, craft exhibitions and organizing training courses for farm women (i.e., cooking classes, book-keeping courses) together with the State Agricultural Advisory Service (AAS) from Brežice. To date, extension service is still free to the public. The Farm Women Association liaises especially with the local Agricultural Advisory Service Advisor for Farm Families and Supplementary Activities. The Association's President is a 61 year-old farm wife, Ema. Štefka, Silvestra, Maria, Darja, 'Francka' (A11) and Ana are among the most active members of the association. The FWA group has thus far been one of the most important actors in the development of agritourism; and it is even more relevant for future

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<sup>138</sup> Prior to this farm women were organized within so called *aktivni kmečkih žensk* (farm women organization).

developments since these women are the one who will deal with guests, taking on the extra work load (see Barbič, 1995b, Verbole, 1997b).

Many farm women such as Erna, Štefka (who is the organization's President), Silvestra and Maria are members of the local **Red Cross**. The Red Cross was founded in 1944, and has 27 members. Today, Red Cross activities focus on blood-donation and home care for the elderly.

The **Craftsmen's Society** is a professional organization of craftsmen in Pišce with 10 members in 1994. The President was a 31 year-old entrepreneur, Zora, who owned a locally situated tailoring business with 25 local employees. Included were Bine, who owned a bar, a shop and a construction business, Frane and his wife Mira who owned the '*Marellica*' Inn, Marjeta the owner of the '*Pri Anici*', Zlata a bar owner, the largest private shop owner of the village, 'Tadeja' (B17), the carpenter Tone, 'Leo' (B26) the owner of the car repair shop, and Mladen. Many people were grateful to local entrepreneurs for providing additional job opportunities in Pišce. The Society was interested in tourism development with some members showing more interest than others. Bine, for example, was advocating the need to build a 300 bed hotel. His idea was supported by some of the younger CIB members (i.e., Dule, and later Janez) and Father Jože.

The **World War II Veterans Club** was presided by Brane, with Martin and Mateja as the two most active members. The **Handicapped and Disabled People Society**, led by Tone, had 188 members in 1994, including eight war-invalids. The Association of Displaced People was led by Frane. Frane and Tone actually represented the two often forgotten groups.

The **Maks Pleteršnik's Board** was one of the youngest of Pišce's organizations. It was formed in 1992. Maria, the head-master Hribar and Father Jože were elected to this Board. The Board's main objective was to market the heritage of Maks Pleteršnik. This proved quite successful. Since its opening at least four tourist buses visit the museum every week.

*Pišeče's divisions and cleavages in relation to the voluntary associations, societies and clubs*

Although access to voluntary associations, societies and clubs was available to all members of the local community, during the fieldwork a dominance in various associations, societies and clubs was observed in terms of the social divisions mentioned earlier. Different family clans' members were dispersed through the various Pišeče's associations, societies and clubs. Marko's family clan, for example, was the most well represented within most of the Pišeče's voluntary associations, societies and clubs. Tine's family clan practically monopolized the Sports Club. Family clan members were involved with the Tourist Society and Hunters Society, while no one was a member of the Farm Women's Association, Craftsmen Society, Firemen's Society, the Maks Pleteršnik's Board nor in the Disabled People Society. Maria's and Damjan's clan was represented in the CIB, Folk-dance group, and the more business oriented Craftsmen's Society. Janez's and Lenart's family clan was less active in the informal life of Pišeče. However, its members were well represented in the Hunters's Society and the Craftsmen's Society. Dule's family clan was also well represented in the Hunters' Society and the Sports Club, while his female relatives were active in the Farm Women's Society and the Red Cross.

In retrospect, we observe that participation in voluntary associations, societies and clubs allowed locals to enter new social networks that cross-cut the entire community, thus enabling actors to extend their networks into other networks to gain information and support for their projects (see Chapter 6) of a general nature and those related to rural tourism development. Therefore, some actors were or tried to get involved in as many of the 'important' associations, societies and clubs as possible. 'Important' was perceived as those associations, societies and clubs that were either useful in terms of the potential to influence decision-making in the Local Community (i.e., due to their position in the Local Community) or in reference to gaining access to those 'powerful' people who happened to be members.

Secondly, some actors have, in order to increase their room for manoeuvre in the local power structure, strived to occupy as many key positions as possible (i.e., President, Secretary) in the various voluntary association, societies and clubs (see Chapter 6).

Thirdly, it was observed that some local voluntary associations, societies and clubs were more balanced in terms of social divisions between '*reds*' and '*blacks*' compared to others. The Sports Club, for example, was dominated by the '*reds*', while Folk-dance group and other cultural associations, societies and clubs were dominated by '*black*' membership. The '*blacks*' had a more conservative grounding in 'traditional' aspects of rural Slovenian life and tend to be less open to a progressive change towards modernity. '*Reds*' were more progressive. This implies that voluntary associations, societies and clubs could be used to focus on achieving goals of a particular social group rather than the interests of the voluntary associations, societies and clubs themselves or the wider local community.

With respect to the development of rural tourism, some voluntary associations, societies and clubs in Pišece were more likely to serve as a focal point for discussing the terms of development than others. Therefore, it was necessary to further investigate these associations, societies and clubs's and their ideas about rural tourism to determine those factors influencing their involvement.

#### **5.3.4 The Church Domain**

The activities within this Pišece's domain mainly focused on religious practise, however it also involved organizing and participating in local social activities such as the 1994 Workshop organization, the organization of the Centenary Anniversary of Maks Pleteršnik's Dictionary, and the farm youth games.

Practising religion was primarily a '*blacks*' activity, while '*reds*' had hardly anything to do with religion. For example, during a funeral while the mass took place in the church, a group of locals waited outside for the mass to finish, and when people emerged from the church, they rejoined the funeral procession to the local cemetery. Many of the people standing outside the church were previously identified as members of the '*red*' group.

On the other hand, some social activities organized by Father Jože, thus by the Catholic Church, have also been joined by locals with no religious affiliation, and who were labelled

'red'. For example, the owner of the local tailoring business, Zora, donated 20 T-shirts to '... the priest's project'; the shirts were used as symbolic awards and souvenirs for participants of the farm youth games. Further, a strong and active participation by Father Jože, and the Catholic Church was observed in the initiation process of some of the newly emerging informal groups in Pišece, namely the CIB and the Maks Pleteršnik's Board. The first was initiated with Father Jože's help who was also a member, and the latter was established as a result of joint efforts by Hribar, Maria and Father Jože. The Church's involvement with these two initiatives raised many eye-brows in Pišece, since many believed that a 'man of the cloth' should not be so active in the broader spectrum of community activities. Intriguingly, some '*blacks*' occasionally commented on Father Jože's activities as well. To some of them he was too '*red*'. The comment '*... he's a communist*', summarized their views very well.

Especially, in past times, the Church was unlikely to get involved with the 'secular or worldly affairs' such as community development. In Slovenia, the Church was and still is separated from the State. In the past, however, the Church was in the periphery of the political and social life although it had many followers. This had much to do with the Church's negative role during the Second World, when it collaborated with German occupiers. The increased relevance of the Church in rural development as observed was made possible first by the changes to a multi-party democratic system of government, and also by a liberalization of culture, suggesting that, in the future, new players in community development processes would have to be reckoned with. Secondly, the 'successful' involvement of the local Catholic Church in Pišece had much to do with Father Jože and his agency; his capability to influence others and enroll them in his projects, thus creating room for manoeuvre for himself as well as the Catholic Church and Pišece (see Chapter 3 and the forthcoming chapter).

#### **5.4 Discussion and conclusions**

This chapter presented Pišece's social environment and some of the key-actors involved in the development process at the local level, as well as some of actor attempts to develop rural tourism. Analyzing Pišece's social and recreational locales and domains (i.e., political, family clans, cliques and networks, voluntary associations, societies and clubs, and the church),

showed how this small community was cross-cut by two basic social divisions ('red' versus 'black', and 'phone' versus 'no-phone' groups). Some locals (individuals and groups) could not come to terms with each other due to the ongoing friction and resentment fed by past disputes, in addition to the problematic social aggregation that existed in Pišece long before rural tourism came into focus, and had to do with the local actors' political orientation and religious affiliation. The division stemming from that ('reds' and 'blacks') influenced practically every domain of Pišece, making them arenas of struggle. Further, a generational social division was observed within the local population.

In fact, all of Pišece's domains, excluding that of voluntary associations, societies and clubs, were heavily influenced by the first two divisions. For example, within the domain of family clans, cliques and networks, people from family clans with similar religious or political orientations (such as those belonging to the 'reds' or 'blacks') ended up in the same clique. Cliques are of course not permanent structures, as discussed in the next chapter. The domain of voluntary associations, societies and clubs was influenced to a lesser extent although it was obvious that some of them have been dominated by either 'blacks' ('phone') or 'reds' ('no-phone'). In general, the terms 'red' and 'black' were used more as a discourse by the locals as labels for people in informal everyday conversation, while 'phone' and 'no-phone' was used to a lesser degree and in a more subtle way. These differences can potentially have an impact on the present as well as future developments.

The social divisions and cleavages observed proved to be crucial factors in decision-making and lines of communication in Pišece. Communication between 'blacks' and 'reds' was limited and somewhat reserved, while the communication between 'phone' and 'no-phone' groups was even less. Between the two latter groups, everyday communication was civil at best. For more senior members of the community, these cleavages were more distinct than for the younger generation, i.e., the CIB. The CIB was perhaps the most interesting social group emerging from the transformation process, because of its heterogeneity with regard to the social divisions mentioned earlier. The CIB was based on its members' common interest to create conditions for Pišece's future rather than on their family clan orientation or any other division and cleavages that cross-cut Pišece. Members of the CIB came from different generations ('A', 'B' and 'C'), from different family clans, and belonged to groups such as

the 'phone' or 'no-phone' groups, and were 'red' or 'black'. It especially seems that the younger generation's ('C' generation) experiences and memories were less associated with the divisions created by the Second World War.

Similarly, the phone dispute took place when the young generation were in their teens, thus 'phone' as a frame of reference seems to have a less 'negative influence' for them as well. As for the older members of the CIB, at that time, their interests prevailed above the grudges they may have had against each other ... at least for a while (see Chapter 6). In retrospect, Maria and Hribar have been both 'red' and progressive, Hribar perhaps to a greater extent than Maria (he was also a member of the political party called United List - former communists). Father Jože, on the other hand, came to Pišce as late as 1986, and the phone dispute happened before he entered Pišce's scene. Of course, being a priest complicated things, as we previously discussed.

With regard to the resources upon which the CIB could draw to develop Pišce, one would assume that they would have access to the broader village social networks since the members represented the various segments of the local community. However, as noted in the next chapter, the CIB failed to do so, and this had a lot to do with the groups internal dynamics. Boissevain (1974) suggested that cliques may change over time and may realign or reconstitute themselves over specific issues. Factions may exist within cliques and when such divisions grow, points of cleavage may result in new cliques. The forthcoming chapter picks up on this issue.

In the local context, it was also important to which family clan or cliques actors belonged. This 'attachment' or 'label' of actors had, to a great extent, determined the actors' position in the community, and, thus access to different resources and, consequently, to power. Throughout this chapter we observed that various actors in Pišce differed in their access to resources, their status, their networks and alliances. Maria, and through her, Damjan (as a member of the same family clan), had access to resources from the old political élite (and in the forthcoming chapter we will see in more detail how they used them). Maria also dominated some of the voluntary associations, societies and clubs which provided her with the means to access other resources as well. Tine's family clan had access to resources from

the old political system, and more symbolic ones such as, for example, specialized knowledge on developmental issues and general legal issues as well as issues related to rural development and planning procedures. Marko's family clan could make use of the collective resources, and was well established in the political domain.

In their attempts to develop Pišece, the CIB, as the key actor, drew upon its different resources (their kinship and clique networks) that were, in the beginning, of a non-political nature. However, through the process of Pišece's development, the struggle related to the development of rural tourism was 'injected' in the domain of politics and new institutions emerged, or became institutionalized (see the forthcoming chapter).

Access to Pišece's political domain in the past was not equally guaranteed to everyone. It has been regulated by the 'lines of political affiliation' that were defined in terms of their history ('reds' versus 'blacks'). Also, within the domain of family clans, cliques and networks, we can see the same principle - regulated by lines of political or religious affiliation, or kinship - at work, making this domain being rather closed. In Pišece, it is important to which family clan and networks the actor belongs. It influences her/his access to information, the decision-making process and so on. For example, Marko's, and Janez's and Lenart's family clans active involvement in local community affairs and presence in the municipal decision-making bodies has given them a strong local presence, political respect and power to influence Pišece's collective decisions.

The family back-up has been observed as very important, so the President of *krajevna skupnost*, who was labelled as an 'outsider' and was in 1994 lacking support from his family clan (and clique) networks. Not being active in the voluntary associations, societies and clubs, the representative of the formal authority also had limited access to certain domains, and thus had less of a chance to build up more influence.

In comparison, Father Jože was an 'outsider' as well, and had no family clan to back him up, was much more successful in wielding power through his own and his 'friends of friends' networks based on its members religious orientation (see forthcoming chapter).

Among the 'locals' (i.e., Hribar and Maria) we could see that they differ in access to Pišece's domains. Why are some actors more successful in wielding and maintaining power than others?, is the question I strive to answer further in the coming chapter.

As the process of social change proceeded to be negotiated and transformed further, both the domain of politics and voluntary associations, societies and clubs have been very important to actors getting and exchanging information as well as for pursuing possible alternatives for the development of rural tourism. Active participation in the domain of the voluntary associations, societies and clubs was important since it enabled actors to extend their networks into other networks, get information, and get other actors to support their projects. This domain was less burdened with the social segregation taking place in Pišece.

At a certain point, informal groups hit the 'glass ceiling', meaning they had reached a point where they could not proceed further on their own realizing the need to institutionalize in order to negotiate better, and to establish links with other networks better able to contribute to the desired change.

The following chapter encompasses the local and external actors' strategies, i.e., how actors use their resources, and create room for manoeuvre. Villarreal (1994) stated that actors' actions, strategies and self-perceptions are not only dictated by other actors and their interpretations, but also by more global processes including an externally imposed system which to a large extent determines their livelihood(s).

## **6 THE TRANSFORMATION OF RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN PIŠECE - The internal and external actors' strategies**

### **6.1 Introduction**

Chapter 5 presented people of Pišece and their relationships within the Local Community, or in other words, a depiction of Pišece's reality. More specifically, an overview of the context in which actors operate and in which negotiations and transformations of rural tourism development take place through struggles between individuals and groups with differing and often conflicting interests was given. As seen in Chapters 4 and 5, both local and external actors were involved in this process of negotiation and transformation.

Both local and external actors adopt different strategies for pursuing their individual or collective agendas in the negotiation process. However, rather than focusing only on individual or groups' manipulations, this chapter presents the social process itself.

The concept of actors' strategies<sup>139</sup> allows deeper analytical insight into how social actors organize their resources within the limitations (i.e., normative or political) they face, and how they organize their own social spaces to obtain or assure their positions of power within the local and wider power networks, thus extend their 'space for manoeuvre'. Some actors were more successful than others. As seen in the forthcoming sections, actors' success has a lot to do with the actors' organizing capacities to enroll the other actors in their own projects (i.e., the CIB enrolls the University). As suggested in Chapter 3, actors' power and agency depend on the emergence of networks of social actors who become enrolled in projects and practices of other actors.

In Pišece, local leaders, cliques, and associations exercise power through networks of social groupings that form temporary alliances, or in other cases, more permanent coalitions. Kinship ties, economic linkages, political orientation and religious activities contribute to the formation of such webs of interactions. It appeared in Pišece that informal networks of power gained

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<sup>139</sup> Long and Van den Ploeg, 1989; Long, 1992.

their source of legitimacy from the 'folkway' [*local social communication system*], some which may be unique to the community and must be addressed as such (Schermerhorn, 1961: 88; italics Verbole).

This chapter further elaborates on the workings of power, and power dynamics in the transformation of rural tourism development in Pišece. First a discussion of what happened with the initiative for the development of rural tourism in Pišece after the 1994 Workshop is given. This first intervention in Pišece's reality had elements of local (bottom-up or participatory intervention) and external interventions (the top-down interventions of the research institutions, and the Municipality as the representative of the State). Since the development of rural tourism was stimulated, the Municipality of Brežice and the team of experts became involved with several developmental projects for Pišece. The interactions between local and external actors resulted in various interfaces<sup>140</sup> (i.e., the interface between the CIB and the Municipal government, the interface between the CIB and the 'team of experts from Ljubljana' - see forthcoming sections).

Both local as well as external actors used their agency to advance their positions in the arena of struggle (i.e., through the various Pišece domains within the developmental projects). In their attempts to wield power in Pišece, actors used their 'local', and 'global' networks to expand beyond Pišece and their own resources. Within this process various actors at the local level emerged as influential actors - dominating, controlling and manipulating the rural tourism development transformation(s). These actors, namely 'brokers' or 'mediators' (the notion is further explored below), often determined whether other local actors would be included or excluded from negotiating the development of rural tourism in Pišece by blocking their access to local networks, resources (i.e., information of CRPOV project) or other external actors (i.e., the University team). Inclusion or exclusion from the negotiation and decision-making process often went along the lines of the divisions that cross-cut the community.

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<sup>140</sup> see Chapter 3 for the discussion on the concept of the interface.

The study of 'brokers' .... or actors 'that stand guard over critical junctures or synapses of relationships which connect the local systems or *networks* to the larger whole' (Wolf; found in Long, 1972: 11) also allows us to comprehend more fully the mechanisms and social process through which local rural areas are socio-economically and politically integrated within the wider context.

### **'Brokers' and 'gate-keepers'**

Much has been written about intermediaries or mediators - social actors that bridge the gaps between various networks. Some authors refer to these social actors as 'entrepreneurs' or brokers (Boissevain, 1974; Long, 1972; Villarreal, 1994).

While gate-keepers and power brokers are both a sort of intermediary in the struggle for access to resources and control, they both draw upon a wide variety of resources, i.e., social informal and formal networks, kinship networks, and so on. There is a difference between the two notions. The notion of 'gate-keeper' refers to actors representing 'linkages' to other networks, thus indirectly to their resources and power (i.e., Damjan as a link to the University). A gate-keeper is in fact, a communication channel between different social groups and/or levels, and does not necessarily occupy key positions in the community's formal as well as informal power hierarchy. The term 'gate' refers to an interface (usually one actor) between the two networks or two 'worlds'. More importantly, the 'gate-keeper' does not manipulate his/her resources. The study from Pišece shows that this concept is dynamic because it is embedded in a wider social, economical and political context (i.e., the new position of '*reds*' and '*blacks*' in Pišece and Slovenia). That implies that if a context changes, so will the actors that occupy the position of gate-keepers. Data from Pišece show that, while in the past it was important to know someone who belonged to the 'old socialist boys network', nowadays it seems important to forge relations with people that belong either to the 'right' political parties or people with friends in the right societal positions (i.e., white collars in ministries).

Gate-keepers can become brokers. The term 'gate-keeping' refers to the ability of actors to

accept information and pass it to other actors. As soon as a gate-keeper, manipulates (filters or discards) the information, thus restricts other actors' awareness and access to all the information, she/he becomes a (information and/or power) 'broker'. Thus, 'brokerage' implies a certain degree of manipulation. It is assumed that power brokers have a considerable effect on the rural tourism development process and its outcomes, and thus on the costs and benefits of rural tourism development.

As power brokers, actors can sanction developments, suggest new ideas, and provide resources on access to resources, both inside and outside the community. Villarreal (1994) suggests that these actors may use their influence directly, to control economic and other resources, or indirectly, to manipulate strategic contacts with people who control such resources, or have access to influential people and relevant political networks, thus to the gate-keepers. Eventually, this control may obstruct specific groupings to participate in the rural tourism development process and limit the opportunity to benefit from development.

## **6.2 Workings of power**

Throughout the rural tourism development process, new power structures and relations emerged in Pišece. These findings support those given by Boulding (1989) and Villarreal (1994). Villarreal used the concept of 'fluidity of power' to underline the notion that power structure in local community changes through time as each actor involved in the process tries to wield power. Actors' actions, strategies and self perceptions are dictated not only by other actors and their interpretations, but also by more global processes, including an externally imposed system which to a large extent determines their livelihood(s).

Actors confronted with changing circumstances in relation to other actors will, according to Long (1984), search for 'space for manoeuvre'. It was argued in Chapter 3 that different individuals and social groups attempt to create space for themselves in order to benefit from new factors entering their environment. Making room for manoeuvre implies a certain degree of consent, a degree of negotiation and a degree of power. Creating space also implies a certain degree of interaction in the negotiation process. As the process of rural tourism

development also involves negotiation, it necessarily involves power and the struggle for power.

To understand the mechanisms behind these negotiations (i.e., how actors get together, and how they interact in processes of decision-making, etc.) one needs to reflect upon the different social actions. These actions are not predefined in terms of their functional significance to self-regulating systems. Rather, they are constantly being redefined and given meaning in dynamic interrelations between people and the natural and social environment. Thus, it becomes significant to analyse *interfaces* or, more specifically, the moments of construction of values, interests and hierarchical relations. One needs to delve into the forging of time and space of commitments and cleavages, of association and disassociation, which involve power and knowledge (Long, 1989). The investigation of these associations can be useful if we look at sets and sub-sets of actors as networks. In Chapter 5 we saw how actors networked at the local level, and in the forthcoming sections we will learn more about networking beyond Pišece, and the consequences that had for the development of rural tourism.

### **6.3 Rural Tourism and Integrated Rural Development and Village Revitalization Project (CRPOV Development Project)**

Several months after the 1994 Workshop, the locals of Pišece were excited. They were going to celebrate the Centenary Anniversary of the publication of the first edition of the Maks Pleteršnik's Slovene-German Dictionary. The President of Slovenia, Mr. Kučan, and many other important public personages would be visiting the village. Father Jože, Maria, and the schoolmaster Hribar, were working hard on the final details. The rest of the CIB members, Damjan, Marko, Tine, and to a lesser extent Dule, were also partly involved in the preparations for this important event.

At the same time, the CIB was struggling to get a CRPOV project for Pišece by lobbying at the municipal and national level. Beyond the local community, there were also struggles going on - more 'global' ones that concerned various external actors striving to obtain a development project for Pišece as soon as possible. The main actors here were various private

developmental agencies and research institutions. As the stakes became higher, so did the interest of the external actors who would get to design and implement the developmental project for Pišece.

As mentioned earlier in Chapter 1, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food (MOA) has been promoting the development of rural areas through the CRPOV projects for Integrated Rural Development and Village Revitalization since 1991. The CRPOV centre which functions within the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, has the authority to select suitable projects and appoint the implementors.

In order to enrol in a CRPOV project, the local community must go through a particular process from submission to formulation and implementation of the project as will be seen later in this Chapter. As the process itself bears a relation to the central argument of the text - the knowledge of, and a know-how to get the most out of a system (thus knowledge of what the CRPOV and Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food are looking for and how to write a proposal geared to the purpose) - a short introduction to the process of getting enrolled in a CRPOV project might be appropriate.

The first step in the process is about 'expressing the interest' through the submission of an application for CRPOV development project to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food. The 'interest' can be expressed by the so called initiative group (such as is the CIB for example) representing the interests of the Local Community, if, of course, the 'interest' is a matter that the Local Community can handle independently from the Municipality<sup>141</sup>. A project proposal including the arguments for introduction of the project is then submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food (CRPOV Project Guide, 1995). In the case of Pišece, this process took place in the period from October 1994 to April 1995. At that time, the role and status of the Pišece Local Community was not worked out yet. Pišece was depending on the Municipality (actually on the Municipal Council) to get the process started.

The next two phases, namely the phase of project formulation and the implementation phase

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<sup>141</sup> The powers and authority of the Local Community are determined by the Municipality's Statute and may differ from one Municipality to another (see Chapter 1).

of a CRPOV project follow up upon approval of the initial proposal. The applicant gets funding for a period of one year to work on the formulation of the project. The initiator of the project and the bidder (meaning the private and/or public developmental agency or research institution representing them) will then work together to formulate the project. The formulation is then judged by a special review commission. It is only with the positive opinion of this commission that the CRPOV will consider financing a given project. The project proposals are scrutinized carefully. An analysis of already existing data with a particular focus on the demographic situation is required, including the employment situation in the area, housing policy, the standard of living in the area and social aspects of life in the local community. Last but not least, the project must be formulated with the participation of the local community (CRPOV Project Guide, 1995).

The CRPOV also provides the funds for implementing projects assessed as suitable by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food and if the Municipality confirms that the project activities laid down in the project proposal should continue (*ibid*). The procedure involves the submission of an application, of technical documentation, and the financial plan with the evidence of co-financing. The Ministry makes the final decision as to who will implement the project. The CRPOV projects are funded jointly (50:50) by the Municipality to which a certain local community belongs. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food (in fact CRPOV) decides on the implementor.

### **6.3.1 Towards an application for CRPOV Development Project**

The following section provides a detailed outline and description of the process of applying for a CRPOV development project to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food as an illustration of the various interfaces that could be observed through the process. The process and its trajectory in the Pišce community allows us to reflect on some of the above themes and concepts in action. The first step is the submission, followed by the formulation of a project, finally leading to its implementation (CRPOV Project Guide, 1995).

Fourteen days after the end of the 1994 Workshop, the team of experts from the University

of Ljubljana and several other Slovenian research institutions formulated the project proposal titled '*Ecological Tourism in Pišece's Local Community*' (ETPLC). Most of the members of this team, from here on called '*Team I*', had participated as 'experts' on different issues at the Workshop. At this point in time, the negotiations for the CRPOV for Pišece, thus the negotiations between the CIB and the Municipality Council, just started. That meant that Pišece and the experts could not yet apply for the CRPOV funds (as the approval of the Municipal Council was needed to obtain half of the necessary funds). '*Team I*' found and seized another opportunity and applied for the CRP funds<sup>142</sup> in September 1994, so that some fieldwork could be done in Pišece while waiting to apply for the CRPOV project. Very soon, in a period of a month and half, it was announced that the '*Team I*' had not managed to obtain the CRP funds. There has been no official explanation as to why the proposal was turned down, but I would not be surprised if the decision was, as it is often the case, influenced by the fact that the project leader has allegiances with the 'wrong' political party. In 1994, that most likely meant that the project leader was associated with the '*reds*'.

Meanwhile, the CIB (with the help of Pišece's native councillors) negotiated with the Brežice Municipality to allow for a call for a tender to formulate the CRPOV programme for Pišece. As explained above and more in detail in Chapter 1, it is the Municipality's authority to formally initiate the process. The negotiations between the Pišece Local Community (the case was brought to the Municipal Council by the councillors from Pišece) and the Municipality took almost a year.

Throughout this period, several local and external actors played an important role in negotiating the terms for the future of rural tourism development in Pišece, and the section below illustrates how important the presence of local actors in the municipal bodies was as well as their extended networks at the national level.

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<sup>142</sup> CRP '*Zemlja*' - is an Integrated Development Program for Agriculture and Rural Areas established in 1993 by the government of Slovenia in order to provide a needed Research Technology (R & T) and funds for implementation of Slovenia's National Strategy for Agricultural Development. The funds come from the Ministry of Science and Technology (see Chapter 1).

### *Interface between Pišece's Local Community and the Municipality of Brežice*

As a result of the Municipal election in 1994, three Pišece locals were appointed to the Brežice's Municipal Council at a time when decisions were made about the future of Pišece, namely Marko, Lenart and Samo. They represented 10 percent of all Council members. The councillors from Pišece guaranteed councillor Jaro's support (remember that Jaro was to marry Marko's cousin, Marja) in their attempts to get Pišece enrolled in the CRPOV programme.

Pišece's interest in a CRPOV project was not exactly top priority on the list of the newly elected Municipal Council and the new Mayor of Brežice. Many other issues required their attention at that time; issues dealing with the introduction of the Local Self-Government, the new role and responsibilities of the municipalities, the unresolved question of the division of responsibilities of the State at the municipal level and that of the municipal administration, the economic problems related to a new border, new roads and so on.

It appeared to many of Pišece's people once on the Municipal Council, councillors forgot about Pišece.

*'... They are more interested in protecting their [political] parties interests than in the interests of Pišece...'* (Father Jože, 1995)

Thus, things were moving slow for Pišece, so ... Father Jože acted on his own initiative. His networks with the different ministries proved useful to obtain information on how the CRPOV works, on the kind of development projects which are most likely to be approved, on the requirements for implementation, on where to obtain funding and so on. That provided the 'boost' in negotiating for Pišece's project with the Municipal Council.

*'... we knew what to do, we knew what to ask in order to get what we wanted at the Municipal Council meeting ... Without information provided by our Father Jože we would never have got that public order for the preparation of the CRPOV Development Project for Pišece ...'* (Marko, 1995)

At the time of the proposal, the chances of a project in Pišece being accepted by the CRPOV increased as Father Jože's friends at the various ministries promoted it via their own intra-organizational networks. Again, Father Jože's networks proved useful.

*'I had my classmate Regina constantly on the line [telephone] to see how far our application had gone in the selection committee for CRPOV projects'* (Father Jože, 1995).

Results from lobbying at the various levels of decision-making were visible in May 1995 when Brežice Municipality's request for a tender for the preparation of the CRPOV developmental project for Pišece was published in the Official Gazette<sup>143</sup>. The Municipality of Brežice allocated slightly more than 27,000.00 DEM for this project in May 1995.

While the councillors from Pišece lobbied in the Municipal Council for initiating the process and Father Jože lobbying at the national level, the 'experts' - 'Team I' - were taking actions to insure support from the Pišece local community for its slightly modified project 'Ecological Tourism in Pišece Local Community (ETPLC project).

#### ***Interface between the experts' team and the 'CIB'***

'Team I' proposed the project to promote development of sustainable rural tourism to the Pišece Local Community through the CIB. The proposal was based upon some of the ideas from the 1994 Workshop as well as locals' ideas on development of rural tourism 'discovered' later in the field.

The project aimed to educate local people about and for sustainable development (its economic and environmental dimensions), to encourage protection and preservation of resources in the long-term, and at the same time increase income generating opportunities by stimulating the development of rural tourism and other supplementary activities such as entrepreneurship, traditional crafts - together with ecological agriculture (horticulture and fruit growing).

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<sup>143</sup> Official Gazette of RS, 24/95.

An important aspect of the project was the inquiry into establishment of a relevant Local Self-Government that would allow locals to control their own development (political dimension).

### *The Project on Ecological Tourism in Pišce's Local Community*

'Team I's project aimed to develop Pišce on the basis of its already existing natural and cultural sights, with the major focus on sustainable rural tourism and ecological agriculture. The project was divided into several sub-projects that would be implemented simultaneously over a period of three years:

*Sub project I:* The formulation of Pišce's tourist product was based on local resources, e.g., the designation of an educational nature walk along the river Gabernica (see Chapter 5), the designation of a wine route (an early attempt to include Pišce in the CRPOV national Project 'Slovenia's Tourist-Wine Routes'), a cycling path, renovation of the castle's park and the improvement of local tourist facilities through the development of agritourism and farm tourism;

*Sub-project II:* The formulation of a Pišce market brand for locally produced agricultural products (e.g., wine, apples, apricots);

*Sub-project III:* The stimulation of ecological fruit and vegetable growing, including the re-introduction of the local apricot variety *pišeška marelica*;

*Sub-project IV:* Development of small-scale entrepreneurship in Pišce based on local resources (e.g., wine-barrels, wine-cellar and wine-shops, carpenters, smiths, millers);

*Sub-project V:* Local-Self Government development. This sub-project was meant to investigate the potential role of the local communities and various local institutions (formal and informal) in development. The idea behind it was to increase the local participation in decision-making.

The implementor of the project was to be the University of Ljubljana, with the help of

consultants from several other companies and research institutions both in Ljubljana and Austria. Since the '*Team I*' wanted the local community to be closely involved in the formulation of the project, several members of '*Team I*' went back to Pišece to conduct interviews with locals on their views of the current situation, and of their expectations of future developments in late 1994, and early 1995 (for results of this pilot-study see below and Chapter 4). The '*Team I*' also interviewed CIB members - the local CRPOV committee in charge of putting forward such proposals to the Municipality on several occasions.

Some locals interviewed showed interest in '*Team I*'s work. Many of these people attended the 1994 Workshop or had at least heard of it. On the other hand, there were many others who showed little interest, and were not familiar with the latest developments in the Local Community with regards to Pišece's tourism development attempts. The most surprising reaction came from the CIB. The ETPLC project proposal was not received by the CIB as '*Team I*' had anticipated.

The CIB actually gave no feedback on the proposal at first. Their reception was mixed, without any clear explanation as to why. '*Team I*' had every expectation the project would be approved by the people of Pišece since requested by them and developed on the basis of discussions during the 1994 Workshop, with the CIB, and other locals that followed after the 1994 Workshop.

Of course, '*Team I*', as beneficiaries of any successful development project proposal, had their own agenda in attempts to persuade the CIB, the President of the *krajevna skupnost*, the people of Pišece, and the representatives of the Brežice Municipality to accept their project and their point of view on rural tourism development in Pišece. The institutions involved, besides Pišece itself, would, of course, be beneficiaries of such a project. And for the members of '*Team I*' it would mean that they would have work for at least two years.

In retrospect, it is interesting to compare the above proposed project with the interests of the various local actors with regard to the rural development process. In Chapters 4 and 5 we have already discussed some local views, ideas, perceptions and expectations of the development of rural tourism and which are further elaborated on below.

*Locals' concepts for rural tourism development: economic benefits for locals, increased money for the Church, and a satellite village for commuting workers*

As previously mentioned in Chapter 4, rural tourism development seemed the 'chosen' policy in Pišece as no one really objected. The common perception was that the economic aspects of tourism development provided the most important benefits: the creation of new jobs, additional income generation for farmers and other locals, and an improved infrastructure. This was not unusual considering there were more than 100 unemployed locals (Rus, 1995). Very few people expressed concern about the potential negative environmental impacts, yet other interesting issues arose such as whether or not tourism in Pišece would be compatible with the rural life-style led by the different community members. For example, many people, especially the elderly, feared they could not leave their front door unlocked, as they do now. Others feared jealousy over increased income from tourism might negatively influence relations among neighbours, which was good to reasonably good thus far. Issues discussed during the interviews are illustrated in Appendix 12.

Most of those interviewed felt that possibilities for rural tourism development had not been explored sufficiently within the community. In addition, those villagers who were interviewed mentioned constraints to rural tourism development including the lack of restaurants and accommodations. Others mentioned such major obstacles as the bad co-operation between local pub and inn owners and the local Tourist Society<sup>144</sup> as well as the lack of an adequate tourist or travel agency in Pišece. This latter remark relates to some villagers' concerns about who should be 'in charge' of rural tourism development in Pišece. Many felt that if Pišece were committed to 'real development' (from which villagers could make living) that development should be 'professionally' managed. As determined earlier, local Tourist Societies are voluntary organizations which belong to Slovenia's Tourist Association. These organizations are generally established by locals themselves with the main objective to make places attractive for tourists by involving local people in tourism development to help minimise conflicts between locals and tourists. However, local Tourist Societies are not omnipotent and they depend on the support and co-operation from the nominal authorities.

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<sup>143</sup> The local Tourist Societies are voluntary associations and part of Slovenia's Tourist Association.

As seen in Chapters 4 and 5, the formal authorities in 1994 representing Pišece and its interests were very weak, thus it was unlikely they would get involved in negotiations related to the Local Community's development with the Brežice Municipality during that time period.

In Pišece, it was evident that the actors had their own views, perceptions and expectations of rural tourism. Some focused on the creation of new facilities for tourists. Others concentrated on ideas for building artificial attractions (i.e., a planetarium), or others wanted to take advantage of existing special natural features of Pišece's environment or wanted to make use of local products (home made food and wine from villagers' vineyards). Others wondered about organizational issues, such as the type of tourism (health tourism, a day-trip tourism and so on) and the extent to which rural tourism should be developed.

Several different ideas existed in Pišece with regards to the type and extent of rural tourism development. Some saw Pišece as a health and recreational resort. It was popular belief among some locals that the sub-surface aquifers in the local area yielded warm thermal waters, just because Pišece lies between the spa resorts of Atomske toplice and Čateške toplice. Thus, Pišece could be a health or a spa resort. Some also proposed that the 'air and beauty therapy' would attract lots of wealthier tourists. Advocates of this developmental scenario (Father Jože, Bine, Dule and Janez) would also like to offer tourists proper accommodation. Father Jože and Bine had an idea to build a motel with 300 beds. Father Jože even contacted '*gasterbajter*' [gastarbeider] that have worked (and then married) in Germany in order to ascertain whether he could see an opportunity in investing in the local hotel. Later, the idea about the hotel was substituted by that of a new *gostilna*; where tourists would be able to eat and sleep. Logically, an increase in tourists would mean new jobs, increase income for shops and pubs and so on.

Frane and Mira were sceptical and a bit resistant when they heard of the plans. Their *gostilna* had lots of unexplored possibilities to cater to tourists. However, it was all they could do to just make a living. They hoped their son would one day return from Ljubljana to revive the family business. Since they were not part of Father Jože's network, nor Bine's, it was likely their opinions would not be heard. In general, Frane saw the future of Pišece as more of a day-trip destination with locally guided tours around Pišece with organized lunches. Local

crafts and agritourism would be, according to Frane's view, an important part of Pišece's tourism product. Frane's line of thinking was very similar to that of Marko and Tine, who favoured small scale rural tourism development, with low impact on the local environment and its community.

As earlier seen, Father Jože and the CIB were interested in the development of rural tourism for several reasons. Firstly, they hoped that touristic activities would provide additional income for villagers and create new jobs. Secondly, tourism would help contribute to the extension and maintenance of existing road infrastructures, beautifying the landscape (especially in the Pišece village centre), increased attention from mass media, thus increasing possibilities to promote Pišece's natural and cultural heritage, and so forth.

Further, more personal agendas were involved. For example, a point from Father Jože's 'hidden agenda', was the expectation that 'increased livelihood opportunities' in Pišece would reflect positively on the wealth of the church, and the rest of the parish churches. He stated that, *'With more money from tourists, there will be also more money for the Church'* (Father Jože, 1996). He hoped that Pišece would become a pilgrimage sight.

Another of Father Jože's options was to turn Pišece into a 'satellite village' for commuting workers and this issue had been discussed with the Municipal Council. However, there was a legal obstacle to this idea that seemed quite acceptable to many locals; the Brežice Municipality would have to change the municipal Land-Use Plan by re-categorizing the land in Pišece's Local Community, which implied complicated and time consuming bureaucratic procedures.

Hribar saw the development of rural tourism as a way to increase opportunities for income generation not only for farmers, but for the entire local community. An increased income from rural tourism and new employment opportunities would help keep the younger generation at home and consequently help to maintain the local primary school. The headmaster favoured the refurbishment of Moscons' castle, and believed that it was necessary to attract external investors to Pišece and to promote Pišece more actively. The local Tourist Society, on the other hand, has been a main initiator of tourism development in Pišece for the

past 35 years. The Society promoted the development of rural tourism along the line of preservation of local handicrafts (i.e., carpeting, making wine barrels) and the conservation of local cultural heritage.

This overview shows that the 'real' wishes of locals with regard to rural tourism had been ignored to a certain extent by researchers as well as in the different decision-making arenas concerned with Pišce's development.

*How the CIB becomes the CPB: The rise of Janez and factionalism within the CIB*

While 'Team I' was networking to raise support for its project, Štefan - the President of *krajevna skupnost* - moved to Ljubljana and Dule resigned as Secretary. This resulted in a sort of vacuum (a complete status quo) with regard to the involvement and participation of the formal local authority in Pišce's development which had implications for the ETPLC project. More specifically, the young members of the CIB, seized the opportunity by taking over the role as representatives of the Local Community's interests.

During one of my regular visits to Pišce, in January 1995, CIB members were rather evasive by not telling me why they had abandoned the project with 'Team I'. Much later, as I learnt indirectly from Janez, who, became President of the CRPOV Project Board (CPB) in 1996, that it was all about money ... and power.

*'We wanted part of the money that 'Team I' would receive for the formulation of the CRPOV project [to cover various expenses made by the CIB members], but the project leader did not agree with this proposal, ... I was prepared to accept the deal 60:40 in favour for the 'Team I', but, ...*

Thus, the deal was off because Janez, and consequently the CIB, did not support 'Team I's' proposal.

To avoid confusion, a further explanation of the difference between the CIB and the CPB is

necessary. For Pišce, the CIB was a prime mover in the process of change, while the CPB was formulated in a later phase to enroll in the CRPOV programme as its successor.

At first, the CIB and the CPB were intended as two different groups with separate objectives. However, as time went by, the young members of the CIB (Marko, Damjan, Tine and Dule) realized that changes in the local community were stagnating with regard to securing the CRPOV project for Pišce and the chances to make a change were getting smaller as well. So they formed a faction - of the 'junior' members - within the CIB under Janez's leadership.

In 1995, Janez decided to join the CIB. He quickly became a sort of CIB leader as he played the key role in negotiations with *'Team P'*. He specifically insisted on the CIB getting its share of 'the pie' (project money) from the expert team. In retrospect, there might be two other reasons besides the economic benefits that could help to explain the CIB's behaviour. First, the organizational structure of the board had changed, which influenced actions of the board as well as personal relations within the board (see forthcoming section). Secondly, there was another developmental agency involved; a local privately owned 'Agencija'<sup>145</sup>, registered in Brežice, had also discussed chances for the project's acceptance with CIB younger members (see forthcoming sections).

Disappointed with the CIB, and thus local attitudes, and their lack of interest, *'Team P'* did not apply for its proposed project once the public order for the CRPOV programme for Pišce was finally published in the Official Gazette. One might wonder, 'what was the attitude and the level of interest among the other members of the CIB and other inhabitants of Pišce?'

In meanwhile, within the CIB itself, there were growing cleavages, while other locals of Pišce were not in a position to influence or even change the CIB's decision since they were not familiar with the details. For example, owners of the *'Marellica'* Inn, Frane and Mira, learnt about the CRPOV project from their customer (who heard about it from a neighbour). Yet, they had no specific details about what was happening until Maria stepped down as President of the Tourist Society and Dora, who had good relations with Frane and Mira, took

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<sup>145</sup> The name of the agency has been changed to 'Agencija'.

over her position. Through relations with Dora, Frane was able to stay abreast with what was going on in Pišece with regards to rural tourism developmental projects.

At this time, it seemed as if the CIB had control over the inhabitants of Pišece who had little or no access to information on developments in Pišece. Thus, the CIB was, now, a broker in the process of rural tourism development at a time when formal information channels were not functioning properly and some locals lacked access to the right networks (the 'no-phone' group networks and 'blacks').

### **6.3.2 The formulation of a CRPOV development project**

The first step in the CRPOV project process was to submit an application. The CIB took this role, and by May 1995, Pišece received approval to proceed with the second phase - the formulation phase.

By the end of 1995, it seemed the situation was going well with formulating a CRPOV project. After the project tender was published in the Official Gazette, several applications were received and passed on to the CIB for review, however, apparently none were completely acceptable.

That became obvious during one of my visits to Pišece when Janez asked me to submit a proposal for rural tourism development in Pišece. He stated that the CIB would use my proposal to negotiate both with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food and the Brežice Municipal Council to bring the CRPOV project to Pišece. He tried to make his proposal attractive by saying '*... if you accept this task, you and your two assistants will be given free lodging and food in Pišece for as long as you need it.*' This would be additional to the assistance required as long as necessary to finish my field work. This arrangement would also include a payment for the work. As explained earlier, I had to be as objective and 'independent' from local intrigues as possible during the field work, thus I refused his offer to maintain my neutral status. Otherwise, I might have been 'labelled' as belonging to or being owned by a specific local group. In fact, Janez's offer was quite a surprise. It

represented an unexpected change in this actor's behaviour as only two days before he had been very hostile towards me and my assistants, attacking us for stirring up trouble in the Local Community area by talking to people, and for taking his valuable time while interviewing him and the rest of the CPB members in Marko's parents house.

In retrospect, as Janez posed his invitation, there were several attempts going on to develop some new tourist attractions in Pišece. The locally based private developmental agency, 'Agencija' from Brežice, owned by an influential member of the national institute involved with water management, had submitted a proposal for a CRPOV development project. The formulated bid was partly based on 'Team P's proposal. In summary, a member of 'Team P' was also a member of the Agencija team and shared their ideas with Agencija. The main focus of the Agencija proposal was to implement ETPLC's sub-project to develop educational nature path along the river Gabernica. This idea was accepted by the CIB and by the Brežice Municipality since the path practically stretched through half the municipal area. Although, the path was the only project implemented, funding did not come from CRPOV, but from the EU's Regional Environmental Centre in Budapest. In September 1996, Pišece opened its Educational Nature Walk along the river Gabernica. The path starts in Pavlova vas, goes through Pišece village and continues on to Globoko, Kapele, Jovsi park and ends where the Gabernica river flows into Krka river. The opening of the Educational Nature Walk was another reason for Pišece to celebrate. The Tourist Society organized special festivities to commemorate this occasion. There were many new 'faces' present at the festivities.

### **New actors in the local power scene**

During negotiations for the above-mentioned projects, some new actors entered Pišece's scene along with Janez. For instance, Dora became President of the local Tourist Society in mid 1995. Maria stepped down '*... It is time for me to slow down and give the young ones a chance to prove themselves*', she said. Later on, I discovered that there were other reasons why Maria resigned. First, there were problems within the CIB. When Janez's role increased, relationships between the older (Maria, Father Jože, Hribar) and the younger generation become more unbalanced in terms of power which resulted in formation of a faction.

Also, there were cleavages among the 'senior members' of the CIB. Many people felt that Hribar received little or no acknowledgement for his contribution to the development of the local community. His acknowledgement was 'visibly' overshadowed by the more popular Maria and Father Jože. For example, the idea to organize the Centenary Anniversary was, in fact, Hribar's, although Maria deserved credit for getting the house in the first place. Further, Maria was suspected of using Maks Pleteršnik project for personal gain since she sold products from her farm at the museum.

Last but not least, Father Jože and Hribar did not like each other very much, probably because of diverse personalities. Father Jože was extremely outspoken, while Hribar was more of an introvert. Further, Father Jože represented the interests of the Catholic Church while Hribar was labelled as '*red*' (recall he was an active member of the political party, called 'United List', which, in Slovenia, implies links to old League of Communists).

Related to Maria's resignation might have been the problems that occurred within the Maks Pleteršnik Board and the way the Maks Pleteršnik's Board handled funds. Rumours in Pišce were that something went wrong with the money donated for the renovation of the Maks Pleteršnik's museum. The Tourist Society or, better yet, Maria, was (behind her back) labelled by some villagers (i.e., Janez and Marko) as the black-sheep in question. To avoid confusion, it is important to note that the Maks Pleteršnik's Board functioned as an ad-hoc group within the local Tourist Society; thus all funds donated for renovation to Maks Pleteršnik's house were deposited in the Tourist Society's bank account, meaning that funds from the Maks Pleteršnik's Board were combined with funds of the Tourist Society. Thus, careful book-keeping was necessary to maintain 'clear accounts' which, perhaps, was not the case.

In retrospect, all these events impacted relations within the CIB, and apparently, most members believed the rumours were true. This made Damjan, Maria's grandson, uncomfortable since the issue would be discussed within the CIB, but never openly in his presence.

While, most of the actors discussed in this report kept their positions in Pišce's social reality, it appeared that Maria's time was over. She was too conservative for some people,

meaning too little money-making or free-market oriented. Hribar and especially Father Jože wanted to take over; they looked for investors (within Slovenia, but also within Slovenia's immigration) to enhance Pišece as a tourist destination.

### **End of Maria's reign, her successor Dora and Frane's comeback**

Dora, a native of Pišece, was neutral regarding the phone issue which helped her acceptance by all the groups and cliques in Pišece, although in terms of 'red' and 'black' division she was characterized as a sort of 'red'. However, her position as a school teacher (which still yields respect in rural areas) was an advantage. Secondly, she had some experience with tourism development. She gained this experience through her work with youth at school, and she was perceived an expert on tourism in Pišece.

*'... you should discuss tourism development with Dora..'* (Janez, 1996)

Dora only had a little of the personal charisma so typical for Maria and people thought she would be easy to manipulate.

*'... Dora is acceptable for everybody, but I am not sure that she will know how to motivate people for joint actions and activities... and she has no plan yet'* (Frane, 1996)

In retrospect, Frane's concern proved to be illuminating in relation to his own hidden agenda. Soon after Dora took over as President of the Tourist Society, she worked closely with Frane on promotion of the Tourist Wine-Route project from Bizeljsko to Sromlje that passes through Pišece. Together, they designed signs (made by Frane's nephew) to mark the Tourist-Wine Route in Pišece. Thus, Frane (and his clique) was back in the picture. Through Dora and her networks, Frane acquired direct access to the development process, and used his position to influence it.

## **The Local Community's comeback and the growing appetites of some family clans**

In late 1995, a year later than officially required, according to the Law on Local Elections (Official Gazette of RS, 72-73/93) Pišece elected a new President of the *krajevna skupnost* - Stane, former President of the local Hunter's Society. Meanwhile, the increased participation of Janez and his family clan in community affairs could be observed. Janez's father was involved in the water path project, while Janez attempted to occupy as many positions of power and influence in the local community as possible. Next to his position as head of the CRPOV 'Slovenia's Tourist-Wine Routes' project for Pišece (see the forthcoming section), he was elected to the *krajevni svet* - the Local Community Council. He joined the local Tourist Society and he became a member of the School Board, obviously seeking ways to extend his room for manoeuvre, both in informal as well as formal organizations.

In 1995, the future role of Local Communities in the Brežice Municipality was resolved (Statutarni sklep o krajevnih skupnostih Občine Brežice, 1995). The Brežice Municipal Council decided that the Municipality would keep the *krajevna skupnost* (and through them enable locals to participate in indirect democracy - participating in decisions concerning local people). Thus, high status as a Local Council member was re-established.

Also, Marko's family clan tried to extend its power and space for manoeuvre. Mojca, Marko's cousin, was elected to the *krajevni svet*, thus Marko's clan gained access to the Local Community's formal channels of power and authority.

Janez's actions drew attention to the other issues. Janez's interest to become a member of the local Tourist Society implies that he considered the Society an important actor in rural tourism development in Pišece. On the other hand, Janez's participation in the School Board gave him an opportunity to influence future developments with regards to the local school. The Board has the authority to appoint the headmaster, and to determine employment policy. Last but not least, being a School Board member is a prestigious position.

### **6.3.3 The formulation phase of the CRPOV Development Project comes to an end and the 'Tourist-Wine Route' Project becomes Pišce's main project**

The educational water path was the main outcome of the 'Agencija's project proposal for Pišce which was intended to contribute to the development of Pišce and the development of rural tourism. It appeared the other potential resources were neglected and that things were not going as well as the young members of the CIB anticipated. Clashes with the Municipality were observed, and there were even cleavages within the CIB, as noted above.

The CIB obviously realized that changes in the community were stagnating, and concluded that something must be done. New possibilities for Pišce were created through Father Jože's networks with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food. Pišce would become part of a nationally co-ordinated CRPOV project, 'Tourist - Wine Routes'<sup>146</sup> (see Chapter 1). Once more, the CIB was excited about Pišce's future with its connection to an approved and funded project.

*'... they say the model is very good, it comes from Germany...'* (Marko, and Tine, 1995)

This nation-wide project proposed to design 20 Tourist-Wine Routes - a special tourist product made up of agricultural activities and nature in Slovenia's wine growing regions. This project would also, as argued by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, fit well to the interests and needs of those local people living along the routes by creating opportunities for additional income through the sale of their products (mainly wine). The route from Bizeljsko to Sromlje, chosen by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food as one of three pilot projects, passes through all five settlements of Pišce's Local Community. Although, Pišce meets the aesthetic requirements of a quality landscape, natural and cultural heritage and road infrastructure, it lacked catering facilities and accommodations. There were no festivals related to wine culture and no supplementary activities along the 'designated' wine route. The CRPOV project would provide funds for these activities, and Pišce's tourist

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<sup>146</sup> It began back in 1989 when the Slovenia's Tourist Association formulated a project committee for Wine Routes. This initiative was welcomed by the MOA and CRPOV. In 1992 the project started to gain form, and in 1993, a private company from Maribor finalized the project proposal (see formulation of CRPOV projects).

business would bloom.

The literature shows that such pre-fabricated 'national or international models for local development' have little or no consideration for the local 'atmosphere' (Cernea, 1991; Arce, 1993; Villarreal, 1994; Mongbo, 1995). However, in the case of Pišece this proposal seemed to have strong local support. If for nothing else, getting involved with the Tourist-Wine Routes project gave villagers the possibility to 'outgrow' the Municipality since it was a national project. And, presumably, there would be economic benefits as well.

In retrospect, the Tourist-Wine Route project in Pišece had much to do with the personal interests of some of the key players. While, back in 1996, none of the villagers could benefit from this project, a year later the first wine-shop was opened by Miha, and at the time of writing this thesis two more wine producers, namely Marko and Janez, were candidates for the next wine shop along the Tourist-Wine Route that goes through Pišece.

### **Gatekeepers, power brokers, room for manoeuvre, agency and projects in Pišece**

Thus far, we have seen that the development of rural tourism is a dynamic process. In their attempts to develop Pišece through promoting rural tourism, locals not only networked within the local community, thus using the horizontal networks and their resources (i.e., voluntary associations, societies and clubs), but they lobbied vertically beyond the boundaries of the local community using, sometimes, the external actors as a resource to obtain or advance their power position (i.e. Damjan, Maria, Hribar and Father Jože). Maria, for example, was a gatekeeper at the interface with the University<sup>147</sup>, due to her inclusion in decision making as a co-ordinating information mediator (who had access to all the relevant documentation to rural tourism development), and a broker who had manipulated contacts with influential actors in different networks and institutions that had to do with the development of tourism at the municipal and national level). Father Jože and Hribar were also recognized as gatekeepers in

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<sup>147</sup> Note: It was Damjan who made the first contact, and thus opened the 'gate' to the University of Ljubljana. However, later in the process Maria also became an important gate-keeper in the interface with the University of Ljubljana.

the rural tourism development process, with both having access to different power networks and information sources. Looking back at the 1994 Workshop, the CIB as a group, was also one of the brokers early in Pišece's attempts to develop.

### *From local to external networks*

#### *Damjan: Gate-keeper to the University and Research Institution Networks*

Remember that Damjan made the first contact between the people of Pišece and the staff of the University of Ljubljana. Later on through Damjan's contact with his professor at the University and his professor's actions, a group of experts from the university and other research institutions agreed to organize an international workshop in Pišece to discuss the issue of rural development in peripheral areas. This workshop not only benefited the local community, but also the University since the workshop might lead to demand for further experts' actions on behalf of the Pišece community. And, indeed this happened. At first, attempts to develop Pišece were positive from both sides. Damjan, in his role of gate-keeper, opened possibilities for locals to get help in their attempts to develop. At the same time he opened gates for the University to pursue its own agenda. As previously observed, the CIB was much more successful in enrolling experts in its own project than the experts themselves.

#### *From the University to the Local Office of Self-Government*

The link to the Local Self-Government Office in Ljubljana was re-established through Damjan's extended network. With the reform of local government in 1994, the older so called 'Communitarian system' was changed to a 'system of Local Self-Government' that was supposed to transfer many powers to the municipal authorities, formerly vested by the State (see Chapter 1). In fact, the reform actually diminished the direct influence of people in decision-making at the community level to a large degree, and data from the field confirm that. The most obvious shortcomings were observed at the Local Community level. The transference of functions to the municipalities also put the role of the Local Community - the *krajevna skupnost* Pišece (Pišece village itself, Podgorje pri Pišecah, Blatno, Pavlova vas and

Dednja vas) and its formal body of authority - the *krajevni svet* - the Local Community Council into question. As Lukšič (1996: 15-16) writes about the changes, 'the municipalities are smaller and have lost many powers ... the State has become strongly centralised and to a large degree this has decreased the peoples' direct influence in decision making on common matters.'

With these moves to Local Self-Government taking place, the future role and position of the *krajevna skupnost* had not yet been defined in 1994. The role and position of the Local Community Pišece was finally worked out in 1995 (Statut Občine Brežice, 1995; Statutarni sklep o krajevnih skupnostih Občine Brežice, 1995) at the Municipal level, while it took another two years for Pišece's Local Community Council to produce relevant legal documents (Statut krajevne skupnosti Pišece, 1997), which were no doubt related to complexities within the local community. The Municipality agreed to sponsor the 1994 Workshop because of the pressures from the University and the national Office for Local Self-Government (Note: which was interested in seeing what kind of role local communities, local institutions, formal and informal groups could play in the management of local resources under the new system of local government). In addition, pressures from Pišece's community natives that were sitting in the *Municipal Council* were relevant as well.

### ***Initiating process through links to other important external actors***

While planning for the 1994 Workshop was happening, external actors not directly participating in the workshop, but important to the rural tourism development process were contacted through the various social actors' networks. Maria contacted the Slovenian Tourist Association and Section for Catering and Tourism. Damjan's professor contacted the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Education, while Hribar contacted the Association of Linguists for Slovenian Language (see Figure 11).

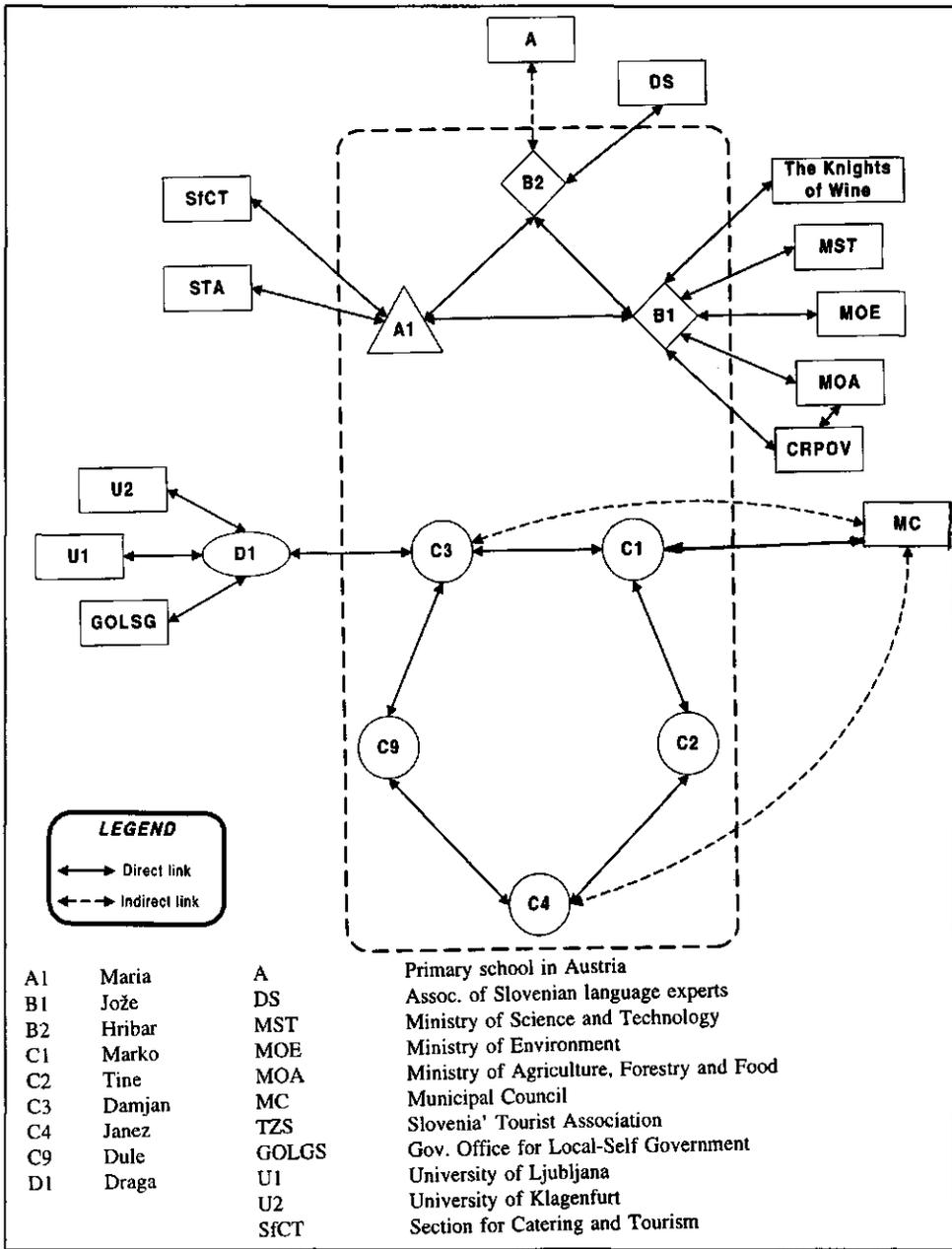


Figure 11: The gatekeepers and power brokers

In the process of negotiating change, several local actors played an important role, who were referred to as 'gatekeepers,' since they enabled the local community, or better yet some local community members access to information on rural tourism issues and to look beyond their own limitations. Consecutively, some gatekeepers provided access for external actors to penetrate the local community and follow their own agendas. Some gate-keepers became power brokers by taking advantage of their role as a gate-keeper.

In the following section, an outline is given of the several (local) gatekeepers and brokers in the negotiation and transformation process for rural tourism as well as their networks and strategies for facilitating social action.

#### *Father Jože as gate-keeper and power broker*

As seen earlier, Father Jože had a very good relationship with Marko's extended family and with some of the other younger members of the CIB. He moved to Pišece eight years ago. In the years following his arrival, he gained the respect of many villagers, but for some he remained *pritepenec* - a vagrant and a stranger. Some of his parishioners called him a *communist* when they saw him talking with the President of Slovenia, Mr. Milan Kučan during the celebration at Maks Pleteršnik's birthplace. During our discussion, I found that Father Jože had been a student of the only left wing Slovenian Bishop, Grmič, who was labelled by the Catholic Church as too 'red', although most villagers did not know this.

Father Jože managed to become extremely valuable to Pišece and by using his access to various sources of information and his external social networks, he increased his power in the local community. Friends and acquaintances from his study years occupied important positions at the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, the Ministry of Science and Technology, and the Ministry of the Environment. He knew the Secretary of State for Food personally, since they had travelled together on a pilgrimage. He had direct access to the CRPOV, dependent of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, where another good friend occupied a high position in the hierarchy, and who was also in charge of the CRPOV National Project, namely, Slovenia's Tourist-Wine Routes.

Father Jože used the information he obtained through his networks to initiate official proceedings for obtaining the CRPOV project. Through his ability to deal effectively with bureaucratic issues by having access to information concerning legislation and funding, and by having opportunities to approach important officers in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food and the Ministry of the Environment, Father Jože, thus, accrued power and established himself at the local level. He used his extended networks to become the spokesman for Pišece's villagers, representing their interests and hence attaining power at the national level. By building upon his network of social ties based on church membership and their kinship relations and by manipulating his networks at the national level he was able to build his image and accrue power at the local level and to extend his space for manoeuvre. Another example of the way Father Jože used his networks, concerns the special vintage wine memorabilia that he donated to prominent public figures for establishing contacts. As discussed in Chapter 4, Father Jože was also a member of the prestigious non-political organization, *The Knights of Wine*. Using his connection with the Knights of Wine, Maks Pleteršnik's Board managed to arrange the bottling of a special wine vintage (some 1600 bottles) to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Pleteršnik's Slovenian-German dictionary. Special wine glasses were also designed with the picture of Pišece on the glass. They were made at Slovenia's finest glass factory, Rogaška, and are now souvenirs that can be bought in the Maks Pleteršnik Museum.

It became apparent that Father Jože was not only a gatekeeper, but at the same time a power broker. He not only commanded a wide range of effective sources of information, he also occupied the key position in the communication networks, as the person to whom others turned to most frequently for advice and consultation. As a broker, he mediated between the community and the 'outside world', and managed to manipulate both 'worlds'. His access to political and social networks was relevant for holding his position within Pišece, and this played an important role in supporting groups in Pišece such as the young group of the CIB/CBP.

Father Jože's work also provides us with an insight into the multiplicity of roles that one actor can play in his various capacities in the social network's structure (e.g., the priest as a 'man of cloth', as a power broker, as a gatekeeper, as a 'politician', a lobbyist and a fighter

for Pišece). This multiplicity of roles enabled Father Jože and similarly other actors to present their 'agenda(s)' on rural tourism development to different local and external actors to achieve their goals.

### *Maria as a gatekeeper and power broker*

Maria was the 'soul' of Pišece and it is difficult to imagine how it would be without her. She has been involved in the development of tourism in Brežice for almost thirty years and particularly in Pišece as a member, President and Treasurer of the local Tourist Society, as well as being the owner of one of Pišece' inns. Over the years, she established good relations with Slovenia's Tourist Association, and during her presidency Pišece received several awards (see earlier chapters). She was a friend of Slovenia's Tourist Association's President. She was highly respected at the Slovenian Chamber of Commerce Section for Catering and Tourism. In 1995, an advisor to this section stated:

*'... Everybody knows Maria over here. I was very impressed with what she did with regard to the 100th Anniversary celebration. Everybody was there; the President of the State, distinguished professors and academics' It was commented further that '... Maria was the one who got the Slovenian Post and Telecommunication to issue the commemorative postage stamp to mark this occasion, not to mention the special vintage bottling at the Vino Brežice, and I could go on and on...'*

It was only later that I found out that these achievements were all jointly derived through the collaboration of all three members of the Maks Pleteršnik's Board. It was another demonstration of how little many of the people involved with the developments in Pišece actually knew about the different dealings and decision making processes going on in the local community. In this sense, having access to key informants becomes crucial to a researcher in order to find sources of significant information. However, it was thanks to Maria's initiative and persistence that Pišece was able to obtain the museum dedicated to Maks Pleteršnik in the first place.

The forthcoming description of Maria's initiative for the preservation of local cultural heritage offers a view of how Maria accomplished things. In 1978, Maria (then President of the local Tourist Society) and the curator of the Museum in Brežice, a native of Pišece (who died in 1988), requested from the owners of Maks Pleteršnik's house, who lived in the capital city to offer room in the house as a memorial to Maks Pleteršnik. This request was rejected. Three years later, Maria suggested creating a Maks Pleteršnik memorial room, this time in an empty room of the Pišece Community Office (*Urad krajevne skupnosti*).

The suggestion included a proposal for the active co-operation including Pišece's Tourist Society with the *krajevna skupnost*, and the primary school in this project. Both the President of the Local Community, Polde and the head mistress of the primary school, Tereza, opposed the project. It was my belief that these actors did not want Maria to have an advantage in the proposals. And, in retrospect, it was possible that old disputes played an important role as well.

More than 10 years later, in 1992, the Tourist Society (again presided by Maria), acting on Hribar's advice, invited several prominent locals to a meeting. The purpose of this gathering was to discuss actions for the national celebration of the Centenary Anniversary of Pleteršnik's first volume of the Slovenian-German Dictionary. This would take place in Pišece in September 1994. A Maks Pleteršnik's Board was appointed. It included Maria, the headmaster Hribar and Father Jože. The Board would be responsible for supervising and preparing the programme for the celebration. Maria became the President of the Board and Hribar the Secretary. Maria, as President, would also perform the tasks of Treasurer via the Tourist Society's bank account, overseeing funds for renovation. It was agreed at that meeting that the Tourist Society would oversee the renovation of the house and establish memorial rooms. It took some time before I discovered the missing link in this story (told below) of how Maria persuaded owners of his birthplace to agree and allow the Board to manage it.

With regards to Maria and the creation of the Maks Pleteršnik's museum, it took me a long time to build Maria's trust to speak with me openly. Eventually, she told me that, in 1992, a relative of the birthplace's owner and the last of Maks Pleteršnik's kin in Pišece, who was

a woman in her eighties collapsed in her home. A farm hand asked Maria for help. Maria called the ambulance and went with the woman to the hospital in Brežice, informed her relatives and took care of all the paper work at the hospital. The woman returned home on the same day and her relatives took her to Ljubljana, where she died 14 days later.

After this incident, Maria took care of the house and the adjacent orchard. In November 1992, Maria made a private request to the owners concerning the memorial rooms. The owners, after some negotiation, finally agreed to allow part of Pleteršnik's house to be renovated as a museum and gave the Board the right to manage it.

In their letter to the Tourist Society, the owners wrote : *' We are prepared to give up a part of the house to be managed by the Pišece Tourist Society exclusively towards the objective of honouring the work of Maks Pleteršnik'* (Barbič, 1995a). Soon after that a contract was signed between the owners and the Tourist Society, and the scholar's native home was declared a cultural monument. Works on the renovation of the house started immediately since the buildings were in very bad shape. Money for renovation was provided by the Ministry for Education and Sports, the Ministry for Science and Technology, the Ministry for Culture and the Municipality of Brežice.

Maria had also established contacts with the VIPs at the municipal level, not only through formal means and channels as President of Pišece's Tourist Society, but also via informal relations built up by regularly visiting VIPs in what she described as *"the best inn in the whole Brežice Municipality ... The Mayor of Brežice and the Secretary, the leading local craftsmen, the general manager of Brežice's textile industry and the general manager of the timber industry, hunters with their foreign guests etc. ... They all came to Pišece to have lunch or dinner in my inn* (Maria in 1994 showing her guests book).

With regards to the activities that evolved around the 1994 Workshop, Maria very quickly became one of the key persons in the process, and has been a channel for communication with Draga from the University of Ljubljana. Maria was both a gate-keeper (i.e., to Slovenia's Tourist Association) and a broker as demonstrated through her successful manipulation of her relations with the owners of Maks Pleteršnik's house.

### *Headmaster Hribar as a gatekeeper and power broker*

Hribar, a 47 year-old slavist scholar (expert of Slovenian language), a native of Pišece, has been a headmaster of the local primary school since 1985. Before that, he taught Slovene in school. In 1994, he became a Secretary of the Maks Pleteršnik's Board and has written several articles about the activities evolving around the renovation of Maks Pleteršnik's home. Hribar included the 1994 Workshop (and the external actors he met there) in the local school's fight to retain every pupil (see Chapter 4), and to persuade the State and the Municipality of Brežice that the local people cannot keep Pišece economically, socially and culturally alive without the school's involvement.

Thus, over the past five years, he had initiated several study projects at school through extra-curricular activities. The renovation of the bee-hives on the Pleteršnik estate (with the pupils' after school activities group - *čebelarski krožek*) and a research project on the life and work of Maks Pleteršnik were the first two initiatives undertaken. The idea of rediscovering a fellow countryman, Maks Pleteršnik, resulted in a set of 'new' school activities related to his life and work in the period from 1992 to 1994. These activities resulted in the publication 'Pišece 1894 - 1994' (the funds for printing were provided by the Brežice Municipal Council) which is on sale in the Pleteršnik's souvenir shop.

At the same time, the local school, on the basis of Hribar's proposal, designed a so-called *Pleteršnik's Hour* - a whole day programme including a visit to the exhibition of the study project concerning Maks Pleteršnik, a cultural programme, sight-seeing in Pišece in the local dialect and a visit to Maks Pleteršnik's native home and memorial room. In November 1994, Hribar organized, together with the Slovenia's Society of Experts on Slovenian language, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education and Sports, a symposium for Slovenian language experts (*Dnevi slavistov*) to be held in Pišece. This has been a yearly event since 1994.

Another after-school activity group, a tourism group (*turistični krožek*), was organized for pupils in 1991, jointly by the school and the local Tourist Society. This *turistični krožek* is an off-spring of the local Tourist Society (there are 160 off-springs in Slovenia) and it was

facilitated by one of the school teachers, Dora, who was also an active member of the Society. The reader might recall that Dora became President of the Tourist Society in 1996 when Maria stepped down.

In 1992, the *turistični krožek* participated in the Maks Pleteršnik project by working on a sub-project on Pišece's tourist sites (making an itinerary of the existing sites with descriptions and a collection of related literature). In 1995, the *turistični krožek* started to collect stories on old small handicrafts in Pišece and on Pišece's history. These activities resulted in another publication, 'Small handicrafts in Pišece' - an interesting guide about the past and present situation regarding crafts in the Local Community.

At the 1994 Workshop, Hribar was anxious to obtain information about the possibilities to re-vitalise Pišece, and to make contacts that would benefit the local school. Hribar's actions at the Workshop, for example, resulted in a German language course for pupils funded by the Austrian government.

### **Relations within the CIB in retrospect**

Initially, the CIB's role was to represent Pišece in the rural tourism development process as gatekeeper and broker. The other three gatekeepers outlined above, who belonged to 'A' and 'B' generations, were also power brokers. According to my interpretation two of the gatekeepers had an older and perhaps wiser stance in society than the relatively younger and less experienced members of the CIB. As a consequence, the more experienced, senior gatekeepers, sometimes appeared to 'manipulate' some of the CIB's dealings. For example, Father Jože influenced Marko by encouraging his involvement in the politics of the Municipality to have a direct impact on the decision-making process for Pišece's development. Father Jože's apparent influence over Marko was founded in the fact that Marko was religious as well as a member of the church.

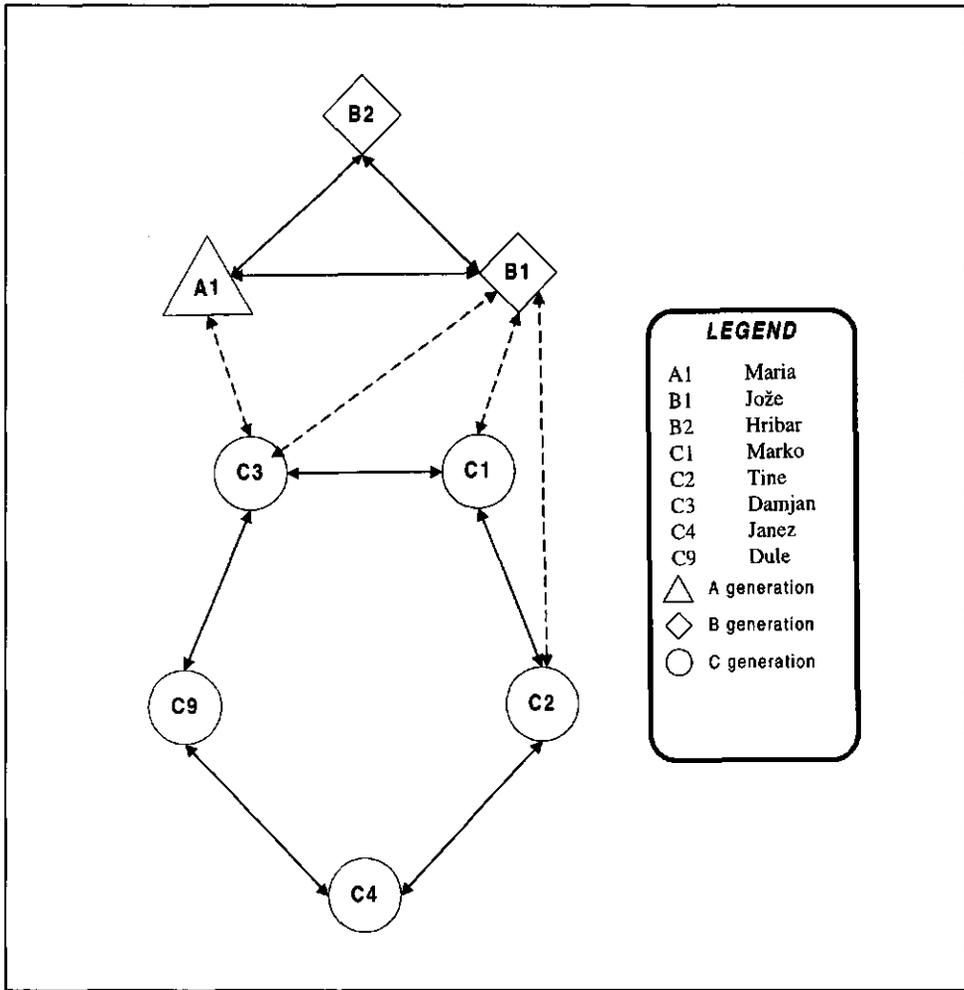


Figure 12: The CIB and relations within the group

By contrast, Maria influenced Damjan to follow up his paper for the University of Ljubljana and seminar work regarding problems in Pišce. It seemed that her hold over Damjan was founded on the ties and obligations of kinship and the clan system (most likely due to economic reasons since Maria planned to give him her inn). It became evident that, although these two more senior gatekeepers influenced the setting up of the CIB and the projects initiated, once the CIB was established they were, in time, relegated to a lower position of power and influence by their younger *protégés*. For example, when the CIB changed to the

CPB, as described earlier, Hribar and Maria were not consulted about the changes, and they eventually dropped out. The younger members made this decision by themselves and asserted that the local CRPOV project (the project with the University) had lost its priority in Pišece and the gateway to further progress was through enrolling in the CRPOV national project, 'Slovenia's Tourist-Wine Routes'. This break from the older generation coincided with Janez entering the CIB scene and perhaps it was more than coincidence. He seemed to boost the confidence and self-assurance of the group. The 'entrance' of Janez could be attributed to several factors, ranging from his personal interests to the tasks which have to be done within the CIB itself.

Looking back, Janez did refuse at first to join the CRPOV Initiative Board when invited by Damjan in 1993. However, he changed his mind later on. Meanwhile, he waited to see how things would progress with the CIB since Janez was a type who waits for the best opportunity. He was unwilling to waste his time on unsuccessful ventures.

Only after it was obvious, especially following the 'success' of the 1994 Workshop, that the CIB could 'make things happen' and when the idea of rural tourism development became more accepted by other locals, did he use his kin's political connections (see the earlier section) and his own leadership qualities to progress within the CIB. In 1995, he became a member of the Board. Soon after that, the CIB became the CPB and he was elected President, working with the national CRPOV project which included the Tourist-Wine Route through Pišece's Local Community as well.

Under Janez's leadership, part of the CIB *evolved* into the CPB, since they thought it may be able to achieve its objectives more effectively by enrolling in an already approved and funded project. Through Janez, the CIB obtained additional resources and power to change the situation in Pišece. Before his involvement, the CIB functioned as a flat-organization without any hierarchical structure; it was an informal flexible group with a lot of energy and ideas. Yet, through the process, the demands on the group increased, thus they needed a leader. Because of Janez's forthright character and his political allegiances, he proved to be a good candidate for the CIB, thereby creating a new faction known as CPB.

Janez's enrolment in the development process of Pišece did not stop here; he advanced to other positions in the local community while expanding his space for manoeuvre. Janez was, in fact, a sort of slider - switching legions not only between ideologies but also between associations, societies and clubs.

The ability of the new and old actors to obtain their share of power or to advance their position of power was conferred by their access to different resources (i.e., Father Jože and Janez), by the identification and defence of particular interests, by the domination of the means of action in the struggle for access to resources (e.g., the priest) and, most importantly, to stimulate the local self-help process. Power is a result of those organizing practices used by the various actors to negotiate for the most favourable alternatives for rural development.

Throughout the process, some actors were 'allowed' to enroll in the process of development for various reasons (i.e., Dora was perceived as easily manipulated) or because of their access to resources (Father Jože).

### **Reflecting on the actors' room for manoeuvre in Pišece**

Using their 'room for manoeuvre', local actors were able to directly influence some of the activities related to rural tourism development at the local level (e.g., the initiative for the formulation of the necessary legislation for the local community to become an administrative sub-unit with certain legal rights in the decision-making process). Thus, locals developed (or acquired) a 'certain' space for manoeuvre within the given limitations imposed on them, through struggling and trying to make the best out of a given situation.

What does 'space for manoeuvre' mean in Pišece? - It explains and helps to understand, for example, the reasoning underlying the actions of various actors, i.e., why the CIB was so anxious for experts (external actors) to come to Pišece and organize the Workshop in 1994. It also helps others to understand why the CIB made moves to formulate the CRPOV project proposal (presumably representing the interests of the majority of Pišece's Local Community). This action helped the Board to extend its influence and power with regard to

rural tourism, thus enlarging its 'space for manoeuvre'. This greater 'space for manoeuvre' provided the CIB with more possibilities for pursuing its interests and ideas concerning rural tourism development and also to have a stronger position when negotiating with other local groups.

Various actors and different groups from Pišce extended their influence by ensuring their presence in relevant local and meso level formal decision-making bodies. As they managed to initiate change, local actors realized that, as an informal group, they could only go so far within the existing socio, economic and political context. Further, they knew it was necessary to adopt a number of different strategies to further pursue their collective and individual projects.

### **Reflecting on actors' exclusion and inclusion in Pišce's projects and decision-making process**

This study showed that the community had managed to set the 'rules of the game' by which certain interests were included or excluded from the decision-making process (e.g., the interests of the '*no-phone*' group and to some extent the '*reds*' interests). Some actors were excluded from participating in the 1994 Workshop and their possibilities to benefit from the workshop (as an external intervention) were compromised to a large degree. In other situations, different actors were enrolled in various projects and relations on their own initiative, or through the initiative(s) of power brokers who used their position of influence to manipulate these actors.

It was the CIB who benefited from the 1994 Workshop (intervention) in the short-run after exercising its 'space for manoeuvre', getting the project proposal for free and gaining additional support from the CRPOV and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food to apply for a CRPOV project. However, in the long run, the CIB was also a loser. In failing to enroll other local actors in their project, the CRPOV Project for Pišce, they ultimately created a stagnated situation.

This stagnated, closed situation ended when Janez (his family clan and networks) entered the scene. However, the question remained, 'how would Janez taking helm effect the situation in Pišece?' The danger existed that he would overrule other local groups which would ultimately lead to another state of paralysis. We observed his dominating tendencies by the number of key positions he occupied in the local formal and informal structures that had influence over community affairs.

On the other hand, the local community might find common ground, language or interest in an effort to benefit from rural tourism in a more equitable manner as demonstrated by the trio: Dora, Frane and Janez. Their efforts paint a more sustainable picture for the future of rural tourism in Pišece, which pointed to the need for a 'bottom up - top down partnership'.

#### **6.3.4 A revisit: Pišece by the end of 1997**

My last trip to Pišece, during the vintage time in October 1997, was more than three years after my first encounter with Pišece. One could see the positive as well as negative changes that took place. Frane and Mira had closed the '*Marelica*' Inn; they decided it was time to retire. They maintained the place in the event their son ever decided to return to take over the business. At the same time, Frane was actively involved with the CRPOV project, Tourist-Wine Route from Bizeljsko to Sromlje, and continued to work closely with Dora - the President of the local Tourist Society. The activities of the Tourist Society evolved around putting up signs for tourists along the 'Tourist-Wine Route'. Small wooden barrels with verses from Slovenia's poems on wine and wine-growing were put up, and the Tourist Society was still striving for beautification of Pišece's centre. New large informational signs were posted near the entrance to Pišece to notify visitors to follow the Tourist-Wine Route.

Maria was still involved with the preparation of Pišece's cultural events and attempts to revive the women's choir. Father Jože continued his involvement with the project and advising role to the CPB, but to a lesser extent. Marko and Damjan dropped out of the CPB. Marko was juggling his job with the Nuclear Station and as councillor for the Municipal Council representing interests of Pišece and his own political party. He heard rumours that

people felt 'their' councillors were not giving 100 percent to Pišece, but supporting interests of their own political parties. Further, he and his parents worked hard to start agritourism on their farm while competing with Janez who would be their quickest rival. Damjan, who finished his studies, on the other hand, saw no opportunities for himself in Pišece, and was searching for work in Ljubljana. Meanwhile, Janez continued to strengthen his position as CPB's leader and representative of Pišece's interests.

The Municipal Council approved changes to the Municipal Spatial Plan, meaning that people would be able to build new houses. Here, it is important to note that in most cases, people in Slovenia, build their own houses with the help of craftsmen. Cilka and her husband Boštjan were returning to Pišece to build a house. Also, Janez started work on his house. Tine was thinking of building a new house as well. This was made possible thanks to Pišece's pressure on the Municipality Board to change the categorization of land-use in Pišece. Marko, Lenart, Samo and Jaro played an important role in this process as well.

Hribar was still involved with a number of activities. He seemed satisfied with referendum<sup>148</sup>, which allocated part of funds collected from the salaries of Pišece locals to build a school extension. During the last two years the number of pupils increased, thus the future of the local school was not jeopardized.

#### **6.4 Discussion and conclusions**

This chapter dealt with those social processes that took place between the various 'worlds' of the local and external actors at the different interfaces. We observed how social actors organized their resources within the limitations and constraints they faced, and why some were more successful in the negotiation and transformation process than others.

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<sup>148</sup> Referendums can be held at the local level following advertisement by the local authority in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia. A resolution was passed to hold a referendum for local self-imposed (agreed upon salary deduction) contribution in the Pišece Local Community (Sklep o razpisu referenduma za uvedbo krajevnega samoprisp evka v KS Pišece; Official Gazette of RS, 26/97).

Reflecting on the various interfaces related to the development project in the locality of study, it was obvious how the 'experts' team, as an external intervenor, failed to recognize the social divisions that cross-cut the local community, and their importance for the development of rural tourism. These social divisions not only determined the patterns of informal relations at the local level, but also influenced the decision-making processes. It was the informal social groups and relations that initiated the process of change, and they negotiated most of the terms of development on behalf of formal organizations. In short, they constituted the most important decision-making entities.

Following an actor-oriented approach throughout the rural tourism development process in Pišece, the issues of **power** have been strongly highlighted. We could see in this study that power is used at the local level in many different ways: to facilitate action and to initiate an attempt to sustain the development process. The people that believed or were believed to have power did not want others to have or get a hold of that power. Yet, power is not something one can own, since power is as suggested by Boulding (1989) and Villarreal (1994) 'fluid'. Further, in the process of rural tourism development, some 'moment of unification' as well as 'stalemate situations' may occur, but they are always 'broken' into multiple realities either by local, but most likely by external interventions.

## CONCLUSIONS

This thesis examined the transformations and negotiations that occur in the rural tourism development process to determine who participates, and who actually benefits or loses from this process while primarily focusing on the local level. More specifically, the study focused on the policy and politics of rural tourism development at the local community level. The study took place in a small community (Pišece) in Slovenia, and it places rural tourism development within the context of the country's dynamic social, political, cultural and economic environments.

My overall view, after completing this study, is that the rural tourism development process is not only a planned process, but a process involving many actors who continuously reshape and transform it. At the local level, the process was dominated by competition between the various social groupings (e.g., family clans and cliques) and factionalism. As such, this study provides evidence to suggest that it is important to consider the local organizing practices, (power) relations and social networks that occur within local communities when planning for future developments in rural tourism. It was seen, for example, that the more powerful the family clans, networks or cliques were, the more likely their interests would be implemented. Also ... the more likely it was, the more likely they wanted to keep their position of power ... And this does not necessarily mean 'sustainable rural tourism development'!

This study also draws attention to the role of the voluntary local associations, societies and clubs. Rural tourism in Pišece has not been a new phenomenon, especially thanks to the active involvement of some of the local voluntary associations, societies and clubs. It was observed, that in the past, in socialist times, the existing formal political structure was less committed to the development of rural tourism, and it was neglectful in terms of the general economic development of this demographically threatened area that administratively belongs to the region stretching along the Slovenian-Croatian border. In fact, the endeavours of the local voluntary associations, societies and clubs (i.e., Tourist Society) were often contravened or constrained by the local community's formal political powers. These actors did not want 'the status quo' to be disrupted with an imbalance of power (i.e., informal groups could

become too influential in the process, and might be given excessive merit in the eyes of the local population and higher authorities).

Rural development was given a new dimension by the younger inhabitants of Pišece since they had fewer social or political biases. They had different life-worlds and greater room for manoeuvre than members of the older generations who were more biased due to their past negative experiences. The bottom-up initiative by the young inhabitants that aimed to advance local interests influenced even those actors responsible for rural development (i.e., municipal authorities) who viewed rural development from new perspectives in the general term of development. On the other hand, an external intervention by research bodies partly contributed to the change in perceptions.

In a historical context, reflecting on Butler (1980), the general development of the Local Community and the tourism assets have been in a state of decline for 20 years since they never really got off the ground, but had now entered a rejuvenation phase. In other words, 'enough water passed under the bridge' to change, for cleavages to soften and for rural tourism and general rural development to pick up.

The major impetus for encouraging rural tourism at the local level was apparently for economic (the idea of a better life-style) and social (a fear of losing younger generations, and pride - if the neighbouring village can do it, we can do it as well) reason. Most locals (and many of the external actors) thought rural tourism would benefit the community in terms of increased income, improved infrastructure, increased employment opportunities, and keeping the younger generation if work was available. Attitudes and opinions were quite universal, however, the ideas of how to achieve these ends were quite diverse with a high level of heterogeneity observed in actors' strategies, interests, and so on.

Behind the 'collective' acceptance of rural tourism development as an alternative for preventing Pišece from 'further dying' within the local community itself, were *people* (flesh and blood) who tried to incorporate their interests and often hidden agendas in this process, and enrol other actors to follow their *view of* rural tourism development. In attempts to extend their space for manoeuvre, thus attempts to strengthen their positional power, and increase

their influence over decision-making in the local context, local actors developed networks with other local (family clans and cliques) and external actors (i.e., the research institutions). At the local level, the formation of social groupings was based upon kinship ties, religious orientation and political affiliation. Similarly, an old dispute influenced the social life in the local community as well.

Further, this research has shown that not only various local social actors were involved in the development of rural tourism, but also external sets and sub-sets of social actors who had their own interests in the development of the given locality.

At the local level, this study showed that in the locality of study, a large proportion of the population was involved in rural tourism indirectly. In reality though, only a small group of actors had direct influence over the ongoing development process. This small knit group - a clique - encompassed some of the most important local actors who mainly held the positions of informal power. Among them, which was especially interesting, was the strong presence of the voluntary sector and Catholic Church. The latter was linked to those changes that occurred due to the multi-democratic system of government and the liberalization of culture; suggesting that, in the future, new players in the community development process would have to be reckoned with.

Organizational and social network resources were evidently crucial for the success of the different local actors in their quest to achieve what they wanted in the rural development process. Enrollment of local actors in development was regulated and constrained by symbolic boundaries which were defined in terms of their history, and the 'powers' they represented. Here symbolic boundaries were recognized as socially constructed. The contrast of social constructions (perceptions, value systems, religious and political orientation) in opposing groups (i.e., '*red*' versus '*black*', '*phone*' versus '*no-phone*') was used as the main 'sieve' for exclusion or inclusion in the networks and 'projects', and also the main reason why poor cooperation existed in the locality of study. An increased awareness, acceptance or accommodation by different actors of these constructions (in themselves and others), may lead to improved communication and decision making, thus to 'smooth' development. One of the key actors in the development (the CIB), for example, was actually a collection of individuals

from several opposing groups, and is as such an indication that these divisions can be overcome, at least for a while. Then, the 'moment of unification' may, again, break down into the various realities.

External actors, on the other hand, also could not be viewed as a homogeneous group. They could be divided into at least five different categories; government policy makers (who may have clashing interests), government development agencies, private (commercial) development agencies, various national voluntary associations (i.e., STA), and public research institutions. The majority of external involvement in the locality of study was based on financial cooperation and gain through the State's development agencies (i.e., the CRPOV). The private (commercial) development agencies involvement was usually collaborative, with the State's development projects supplying capital, thus enabling financial cooperation with the private sector.

Both, local as well as external social actors adopted different strategies to act upon their interests. Firstly, local networks were built, and links to different actors who occupied important power positions in the local community (i.e., in decision-making formal structure, family clans, or cliques) were forged. Thus, a new local élite was formed. Secondly, networks to external actors were built by using normative links and political and symbolic sources of power while in some other cases other more informal links were used. And finally, the informal group that most likely contributed to the desired change had, through the process, become slowly aligned with the formal authorities which had positive as well as negative impacts on rural tourism development. Among the positive impacts are, for example, the increased possibilities to directly influence formal decision-making within the political domain. Among the negative ones is, perhaps, the most important, that the informal groups became more static - retarding their innovativeness and flexibility. Through the passage of time, they have become more and more fixed, and preoccupied with their own interests.

Several actors in the chosen future rural tourist destination were looked upon for guidance and these key-players were a primary frame of reference for other villagers, giving them power to influence the directions of rural tourism development. These key-actors were functioning as developmental power brokers - conduits through which information on rural tourism was

obtained, filtered and spread, thus controlled and manipulated. These power brokers were motivators or demotivators of the different initiatives by virtue of their power status and/or position.

On the other hand, some local actors functioned as gate-keepers. They not only opened the gate for other locals to external networks and resources, but also opened gates for the external forces to penetrate into the local society and establish themselves in the society (i.e., the research institutions and private development agencies). In this particular study, many actors used rural tourism development to a great extent for their personal rather than collective objectives (i.e., to advance their position of power) and objectives of a more political nature (i.e., Municipality and State governments). Decisions made (so far) give little consideration to the 'real' beneficiaries (or losers) of rural tourism development. In turn, this selective ignorance places doubt on the States's agendas for sustainable tourism development.

Thus, in the end, who were the beneficiaries of rural tourism development and who were the losers, especially with regard to the paradigm of sustainable development of local communities. Results of this dissertation suggest, that in the end, the local community, as a whole, was the loser. Following the arguments that rural tourism development is sustainable, when the needs of locals are fulfilled, and when all locals have equal opportunity to participate in the process of development, then it should be obvious that sustainable development concerns achieving a balance between the different actors, the different levels of social aggregation and the socio-political structure. Sustainability, also, concerns balancing friction between individualism and collectivism. Sustainability, in collective decision-making, discourages individual entrepreneurial ideas, innovation, cultivation of new concepts and understanding, while on the other hand, when people act as individuals all the time, one must deal with the un-coordinated mass. In Pišce, there was no local harmony; therefore, we can not speak about sustainable development, thus in the end, they were all losers.

In summary, for planners at the municipal and national level, it is important that sustainable tourism development perpetuates enrollment of all actors in the transformation process. Such enrollment allows actors to address issues of power relations and networks, thus opens gates

to change and better cooperation in providing quality tourist services for the benefit of hosts and guests.

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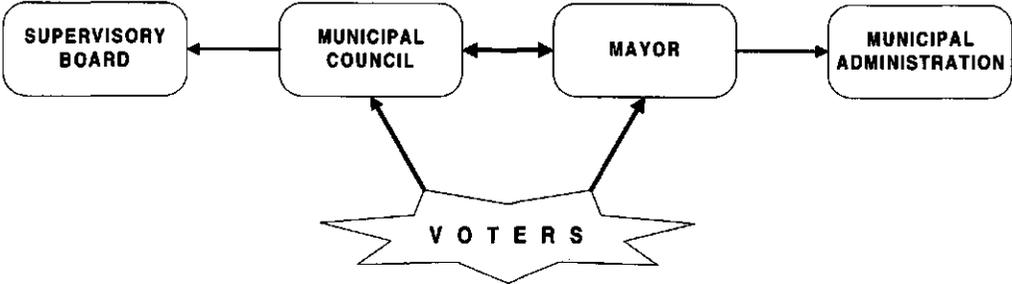
Appendix 1: Map of Slovenia







Appendix 3: The Organigram of the Municipal Authorities



## **The Public Sector - the powerful role of the State**

### *The Economy Board, Parliament*

The board functions as a standing committee that provides opinions and proposals to the National Assembly for formulating of future economic development policy. Its role is also that of assessing the state of the national economy, ascertaining whatever legislation might be needed and following up the implementation of the laws that have been enacted.

Tourism is now perceived by the Board (and most of the political parties) as an important contributor to national economic growth, as well as to growth in other sectors of Slovenia's economy, and a tool for co-ordinating regional development (Delo, 30.05.1997). In 1996, and the first half of 1997, the board has been much involved with formulating the proposed Law for Stimulating the Development of Tourism ('*Zakon o pospeševanju turizma*'). The Law finally passed the parliament in August 1998 (Official Gazette of the Republic Slovenia 57/98).

### *The Council for Tourism, Parliament*

The Council for Tourism was founded by government decree (the governmental Decree on establishment and objectives of the Council for Tourism, 196th Session of the Government of the Republic Slovenia 30. 4. 1996) in 1996 as an governmental advisory service on tourism development issues. Its main goals are to discuss and give opinions, suggestions and initiatives with regards to: implementation of the national strategy for development of tourism, formulation of effective and coordinated tourism policy, coordination of the promotion of tourism abroad, cooperation with similar international organizations, coordination of the work of the different governmental resort which are directly or indirectly involved with tourism, coordination of economic associations from tourism sector with other subjects, associations and governmental resort, coordination of the voluntary associations with other associations and government, formulation of laws and legislations, and regulation of other questions in the development of tourism. The Council encompasses the representatives of various ministries, governmental office for Information, National Tourist Association, Slovenia's Tourist Association and Slovenia's Association of Agricultural Cooperatives.

### *Slovenia's Tourism Promotion Centre (CFTP)*

The CFTP was established by the government (state owns 51 percent) and Chamber of Commerce (owns the other 49 percent) in 1995 as an autonomous structure with an independent budget (Official Gazette of RS, 21/95). The Centre has a monopoly on all promotional resources and efforts. Further, it is responsible for preparing the national marketing plan and marketing plans for the 'clusters', for promoting the country's resources and those of the four clusters', for conducting marketing research, for providing information to tourists, for creating a system of classification and for setting quality control criteria.

### *The Ministry of Economic Affairs, Tourism Department (TD)*

Slovenia had a Ministry for Tourism since 1984<sup>1</sup> through 1992 when the ministry was dissolved. In 1993, the tourism development sector came under the Ministry of Economic Affairs (MOEA). While the MOEA was in charge of stimulating the development of tourism with economic and other measurements<sup>2</sup>, its Tourism Department, run by the state secretary for tourism, was more an advising body on the legislation and promotion<sup>3</sup>. Further, it also collects basic statistical data and coordinates the activities of other 'carriers' of tourism development (i.e., Section for Catering and Tourism, CFTP, and Slovenia's Tourist Association).

### **The Private sector**

#### *Association for Catering and Tourism (Združenje za gostinstvo in turizem) at the Slovenia's Chamber of Commerce*

Slovenia's Chamber of Commerce<sup>4</sup> embraces all involved in any kind of economic activities. The Chamber's branch - the Association for Catering and Tourism embraces those working in the tourism and catering industry. The Association represents its members interests, helps with problem solving and serves as a link to the governmental institutions. It coordinates the cooperation between its members, and collects statistical data (for government) for predicting future budgeting in the tourism industry.

#### *Section for Catering and Tourism (Sekcija za gostinstvo in turizem) at the Chamber of Commerce for Small-Scale Enterprise (Obrtna zbornica)*

This chamber embraces all Slovenian entrepreneurs and it encourages the development of small-scale enterprise and trade as well as artisanal craft production. Amongst its 19 sections there is also the Section for Catering and Tourism. This section performs various tasks in four of the following areas: legislation (cooperation), development and business results, education and promotion of the quality aspects in tourism and catering (i.e., organizing educational activities for small scale entrepreneurs and established businesses), and promotion of tourism, fair and information activities (i.e., cooperation in the formulation of the promotion).

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<sup>1</sup> Before the independence the ministry was called the Republic's secretariat for Tourism (Republiški sekretariat za turizem) and Republic's Executive Council for Tourism (*izvršni svet za turizem*).

<sup>2</sup> To do this the MOEA provides financial incentives, courses of specialized training, and specialized know-how.

<sup>3</sup> Within the Tourism Department there were established two sub-units namely: sub-unit for Tourism and Catering Affairs, and a sub-unit for Slovenia's Tourist Promotion, each dealing with the specific issues.

<sup>4</sup> Zakon o gospodarski zbornici, Official Gazette RS 14/90.

### *Professional economic associations (gospodarska interesna združenja)*

The new legislation allows for establishment of the economic associations that are based on linking-up of various professionals with similar interests either on a local-municipal or national level. However, so far in the practice there has been little linking up between private sector and voluntary sectors or private sector and municipalities.

## **Non - Governmental Tourist Organizations: The Voluntary Sector**

### **The national level**

#### *Slovenia's Tourist Association (Turistična Zveza Slovenije)*

Slovenia's Tourist Association, the TZS, is a non-governmental, non-political organization. It was established in 1905 under the name the Provincial Association for the Increase of Foreign Traffic. The TZS has under its wing more than 350 local Tourist Societies (TS) spread all over the country, 29 regional and municipal societies, 150 sections for primary school pupils and 40 touristic information centres (TZS, 1995). The TZS has been highly successful developing tourism at the local level and in persuading local communities to participate voluntarily in tourism development.

The goals and tasks of the TZS range from stimulating the development of tourism in cooperation with the private and public sector to nature preservation, promotion and education (Programme for year 1996).

The main activities of the TZS were focused in the past on educating local people in matters related to tourism, with special attention given to ecology and aesthetic environment (e.g., maintaining and renovating houses and gardens, and so on). Among other projects, the TZS started a national campaign to these ends using the slogan 'Slovenia - Beautiful, Tidy and Clean'. In the last 15 years the TZS has organized various cultural festivals, and it has launched campaigns to preserve folk customs, folk dresses, the natural beauty of the countryside, and so on. Its main operational limitation revolves around financial problems. Results from the field, however, suggest that the TZS is important and provides the only effective link between tourism and local people. As for most of the bodies involved in tourism, the future association's role and functioning is affected by the processes of change occurring in Slovenia and its new role is still emerging. I believe that in the future, the TS might serve as a link between public and private sector - which is extremely important as regions in the administrative context have not been formulated yet, and the municipal borders have been re-defined.

#### *National Tourist Association (Nacionalno turistično združenje)*

The NTZ is a non-political, non profit-making organization with a primary focus on tourism promotion. It is recognized by the Ministry of Economic Affairs - Tourism Department as an equal partner in the process of developing tourism. The NTZ is made up of a number of Slovenian private companies with a direct interest in tourism, companies with indirect interests in tourism (e.g. insurance companies, transport organizations), as well as some of the

research institutions. The manager of the NTZ is a former Minister of Tourism<sup>5</sup>. Although recognised by the Ministry, the NTZ appears to be ignored by the government and by most other NGOs. Its role and function in the development of tourism is oriented towards promoting the financial interests of its constituent members and towards promoting management and business in tourism.

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<sup>5</sup> For a two year period after independence Slovenia had its own Ministry and Minister of Tourism. In 1993 the Ministry was supplemented by the Department for Tourism.

Appendix 5: Interviewees for the in-depth survey (the local community)

number/	code	name	age	sex	profession	membership
1/1	C5	Cilka	30	F	engineer	FD
2/3	C1	Marko	35	M	engineer	FD
3/4	B1	Jože	45	M	sociologist theologist	MPB,W, SC,GS
4/5	C4	Janez	35	M	engineer	SC, TS
5/8	C2	Tine	25	M	student	SC,FD
6/9	C3	Damjan	24	M	student	SC,TS
7/10	C6	Mojca	24	F	student	FD,RK,TS
8/11	C7	Marja	33	F	economist	FD
9/15	B2	Hribar	47	M	teacher	TS,MPB, KUD, GS
10/18	C8	Maca	29	F	econ.tech.	FD
11/19	C9	Dule	35	M	farm tech.	GS,SC
12/25	B3	Samo	48	M	black-smith	HC
13/38	B4	Tinka	55	F	teacher	KUD
14/39	A1	Maria	63	F	ret. shop & inn-keeper	TS,GS MPO RK
15/40	A2	Ema	61	F	farm woman	FWA
16/41	B5	Jure	42	M	electrician	SC
17/42	A3	Štefka	62	F	housewife	RK, FWA
18/43	A4	Martin	64	M	farmer	GS
19/44	B6	Stane	51	M	worker	HC
20/45	B7	Tone	54	M	carpenter	DI,DO
21/46	A5	Brane	70	M	lawyer (retired)	DV
22/47	C10	Zora	31	F	entrepreneur	DO
23/48	B8	Bine	49	M	entrepreneur bar-owner shop-owner	DO, SC
24/49	A6	Frane	70	M	inn co-owner retired shop manager	DP,TS,DO
25/50	C11	Tristan	24	M	student	SC
26/51	B9	Dora	44	F	teacher	GS, TS
27/52	A7	Ivan	68	M	carpenter	DV,HC
28/53	B10	Lenart	56	M	technician	GS

29/58	B11	Mira	54	F	bar-owner	DO,RK
30/59**	B12	Zoran	46	M	economist	
31/60	B13	Matek	45	M	ret. army officer	
32/67	B14	Marjeta	44	F	bar-owner	DO
33/75	B15	Zvezdana	43	F	post-master	RK, SC
34/77	C12	Andreja	25	F	physio- therapist	FD
35/78	B16	Mladen	44	M	transporter	HC
36/82	C13	Vesna	28	F	economist	SC
37/87	B17	Tadeja	40	F	shop-keeper	DO
38/99	C14	Miha	33	M	cellar owner	SC
39/103	B18	Štefan	45	M	technician	
40/106	B19	Silvestra	41	F	farm woman	FWA, RK
41/117	B20	Miro	60	M	foreman	HC
42/120	C15	Boštjan	32	M	engineer	HC,TS
43/124	A8	Mateja	72	F	secretary	DP
44/132**	C16	Neva	24	F	cook	TS
45/133	C17	Rok	28	M	unemployed	-
46/135	B21	Polde	59	M	miller	GS
47/142	C18	Ana	26	F	farm woman	FWA,FD, RK
48/147	B22	Tereza	58	F	teacher	KUD, RK
49/153	B23	Marjan	47	M	unemployed waiter	-
50/154	B24	Tibor	46	M	administrat. worker	TS, HC,SC
51/141	A9	Zvone	65	M	foreman	HC
52/138	C19	Jaro	35	M	economist	
53/123	B25	Rado	54	M	comm.tech.	SC, HC
54/108	B26	Leo	48	M	garage owner	DO
55/152	B27	Zlata	42	F	bar owner	DO
56/112	B28	Darja	51	F	farm woman	FWA,RK
57/127	A10	Boris	72	M	farmer carpenter	GS
58/24	C21	Irena	35	F	shop assistant	DO

59/7	B29	Urh	54	M	farmer	HS, FS
60/30	B30	Milena	53	F	housewife	FWA
61/35	A11	Francka	61	F	farm woman	FWA, RC
62/22	A12	Majda	62	F	retired worker farm woman	FWA
63/27	B31	Rajko	45	M	forester part-time farmer	HS
64/62	B32	Nejc	54	M	retired unskilled worker	
65/95	B33	Zajce	52	M	electrician part-time farmer	FS
66/120	B34	Renata	54	F	administrat. worker	
67/111	A13	Štef	62	M	retired foreman	HS, TS
68/126	A14	Jera	65	F	farm woman	FWA, RK
69/69	A15	Francka II	63	F	farm woman	FWA, RK

\*numbering on the original list of informants

\*\*informants originating from the neighbouring KS

#### Legend

Ax<sub>i</sub>/x<sub>n</sub> .... generation A; 61 years old and more

Bx<sub>i</sub>/x<sub>n</sub> .... generation B; 41 - 60 years old

Cx<sub>i</sub>/x<sub>n</sub> .... generation C; 17 - 40 years old

## Appendix 6: The interviewees at the municipal and national level

### *Interviews at the municipal level*

At the municipal level, a visit to the Mayor of Brežice municipality 'Prpar' (G1) was paid, and interviews were conducted with the staff of the Physical Planning and Development Department of the Brežice Municipality 'Rebek' (G3), and the staff of the Brežice Tourist Society 'Zorek' (G4) for their involvement with the Pišece, especially with regards to the development of the area in general as well as with regards to the tourism policy in Brežice Municipality.

### *Interviews at the national level*

At the national level, I interviewed the staff at the Ministry for Agronomy, Forestry, and Food, the staff of the Tourism Department at the Ministry for Economic Affairs, the staff of the Association for Hospitality and Tourism at the Chamber of Commerce ('Združenje za gostinstvo in turizem pri Gospodarski Zbornici Slovenije), the staff of the Promotion Centre for Tourism ('Zavod za turistično promocijo'), the president of Slovenia's Tourism Association (Turistična zveza Slovenije), a representative of CRPOV, and the staff of the Agricultural Advisory Service for their involvement with the rural tourism policy.

## Appendix 7: Examples of check-lists used to guide discussions

### I. Check-list used for villagers

#### A. General topics

- (1) Atmosphere in Pišece: How do they feel about Pišece? What do they like/dislike about Pišece? Why is this?
- (2) Expectations and perceptions: What would they change in Pišece if they had the opportunity to do so? How would they change it? Who should do that?
- (3) Local (cultural) identity: What would they point out to a tourist in Pišece, and what would they talk about?
- (4) Social issues: i.e., the relations among villagers? Who would they turn to for help or advice? Who's related to whom?
- (5) Ownership of the tourist sights: Who is the owner of Pletersnik's native home? Who are the owners of the other potential tourist sights?

#### B. Rural tourism development process

- (1) Participation and information: What actions of local residents to develop Pišece as a tourist destination are they familiar with?
- (2) Who are the initiators of these actions? What do they know about the endeavour of these persons? If they themselves were directly involved in the tourism development process, how did they become involved, and through whom?
- (3) Interests and hopes: How do they see rural tourism development in Pišece, and what do they expect from it? Why is this?
- (4) What propositions do they have about how rural tourism should be developed? What have they discussed with other people? Who? Why? What happened?
- (5) What do they feel should be done to let the people of Pišece benefit from rural tourism development? How can these recommendations be ensured?

#### C. Rural Tourism Impacts and the local community

- (1) What do they feel about building a hotel in Pišece? About a swimming pool? An observatorium?
- (2) Which, if any, local sight-seeing attractions do they visit? How will this change if there will be many more tourists around?
- (3) How many tourists would they like to see in Pišece? Why do they say this number?
- (4) How do they imagine life in Pišece will be after rural tourism development?

## **II Check-list used for responsible for tourism development**

### *A. Municipal level*

- (1) Municipality's tourism development strategy and policy, what are the priorities in the development of Municipality's tourism? What are the problems, and what are the possibilities? How does Pišece fit in this?
- (2) How does the Municipality see the role of rural tourism in relation to tourism development?
- (3) To what extent are the local communities involved in the decision making process (through the Local Self-Government) with regards to the rural tourism development? Who is involved in the planning process?

### *B. National level (State level)*

- (1) Slovenia's tourism development strategy and policy, what are the priorities in the development of the country's tourism?
- (2) How do the responsible governmental, private and voluntary bodies see the role of rural tourism in relation to national tourism development?
- (3) What are the governmental or other programmes for stimulating the development of rural tourism? To what extent are the Local Communities' interests incorporated in the planning and designation of the rural tourism development policies?

## **III Check-list used for responsible for rural development**

### *A. Municipal level*

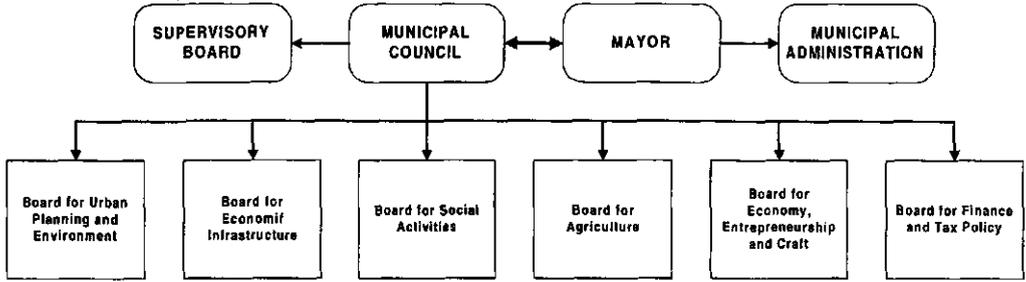
- (1) Municipality's rural development strategy and policy, what are the priorities in the development of municipality's rural areas? What are the problems, and what are the possibilities?
- (2) How does the Municipality see the role of rural tourism in relation to rural development?
- (3) To what extent are the local communities involved in the decision making process (through the Local Self-Government) with regards to rural development? Who is involved in the planning process?

### *B. National level*

- (1) Slovenia's rural development strategy and policy; What are the priorities in the development of rural areas?
- (2) How do the responsible governmental, private and voluntary bodies see the role of rural tourism in relation to rural development?

- (3) What are the governmental or other programmes for stimulating the development of rural tourism?
- (4) To what extent are the local communities' interests incorporated in the planning and designation of the rural development policies?

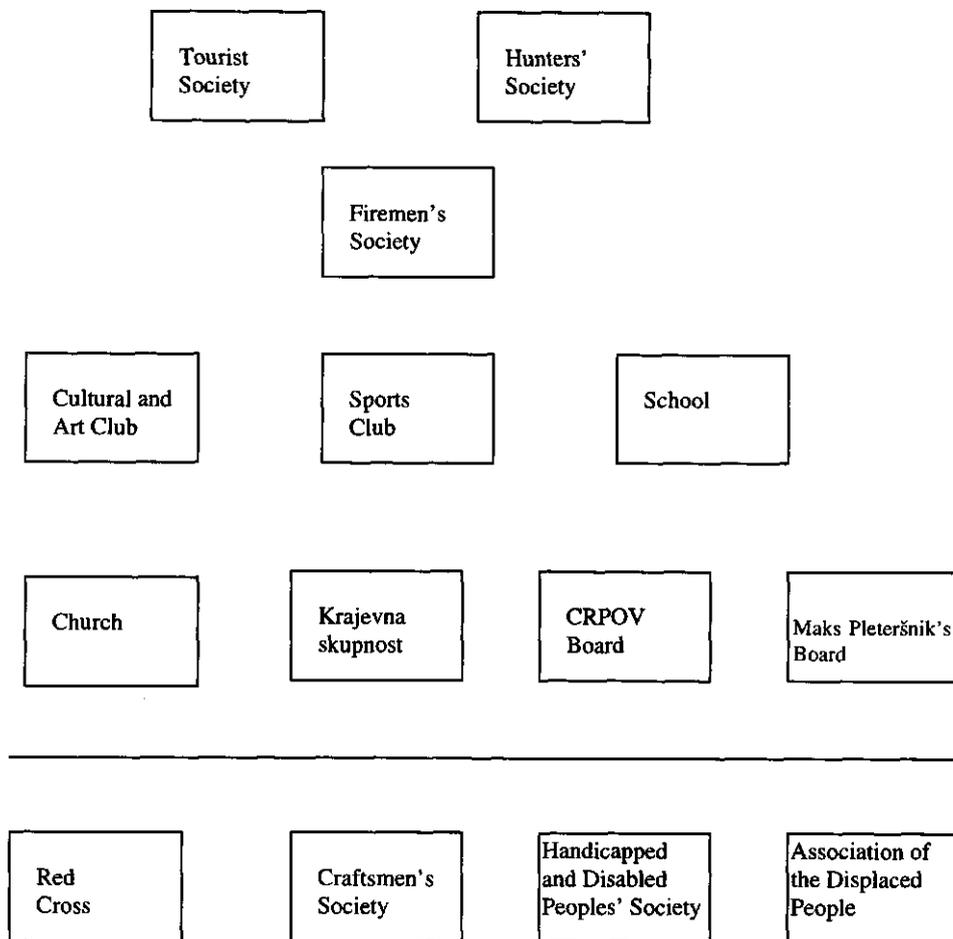
Appendix 8: The Organigram of the Brežice's Municipal Authorities



Appendix 9: List of voluntary associations, societies and clubs in Pišece

- I Farm Women's Association (FWA) - Zveza kmečkih žensk
- II Tourist Society (TS) - Turistično društvo
- III Sports Club (SK) - Športni klub
- IV Culture and Art Society (KUD) - Kulturno društvo
- IVa Folk-Dance club (FD) - Folklorno društvo
- IVb Women's choir - Ženski pevski zbor
- IVc Men's Octet - Moški pevski zbor
- V Hunters' Society (LD) - Lovsko društvo
- VI Slovenia's Red Cross (RK) - Rdeči križ Slovenije
- VII Second World War Veterans (DV) - Društvo veteranov
- VIII Craftsmen's Society (DO) - Društvo obrtnikov
- IX Firemen's Society (GD) - Gasilsko društvo
- X Handicapped and Disabled Peoples' Society (DI) - Društvo invalidov
- XI Maks Pleteršnik's Board (MPB) - Odbor Maksa Pleteršnika
- XII Association of the Friends of the Youth (DPM) - Društvo prijateljev mladine
- XIII CRPOV Self-Initiative Board (CIB) - Inciativni odbor CRPOV
- XIV The Association of Displaced People (DP) - Društvo izseljencev

Appendix 10: Pišece's voluntary associations, societies and clubs: ranking by locals according to its importance in the general local development



Appendix 11: List of the locals willing to participate in the implementation of the CRPOV project for Pišece (source: CIB, 1994/95)

Cilka (C5)	<i>Marko's family clan, CIB since 1994</i>
Marko (C1)	<i>Marko's family clan, CIB since 1993</i>
Rajmond (C22)	
Father Jože (B1)	
Boštjan (C15)	<i>Marko's family clan</i>
Janez (C4)	<i>Janez's and Lenart's family clan, CIB since 1995</i>
Lenart (B10)	<i>Janez's and Lenart's family clan</i>
Tine (C2)	<i>Tine's family clan, CIB since 1993, student</i>
Damjan(C3)	<i>Damjan's and Maria's family clan, CIB since 1993, student</i>
Mojca (C6)	<i>Marko's family clan, CIB since 1994, student</i>
Marja (C7)	<i>Marko's family clan, CIB since 1994</i>
Vesna (C13)	<i>Janez's and Lenart's family clan</i>
Jernej (C23)	
Andreja (C12)	<i>Damjan's and Maria's family clan, CIB since 1995, student</i>
Hribar (B2)	
Zdenko (C24)	student
Mara (C25)	student
Maca (C8)	<i>Marko's family clan, CIB since 1994</i>
Dule (C9)	<i>Dule's family clan, CIB since 1993</i>
Samo (B3)	link to <i>Damjan's and Maria's family clan</i>
Dejan (B37)	
Voranc (C27)	link to <i>Damjan's and Maria's family clan, pupil</i>
Maria (A1)	chair-woman of the Maks Pleternik's Board, <i>Damjan's and Maria's family clan</i>
Ema (A2)	chair-woman of the Farm Women Association
Jure (B5)	chairman of the Sport Club
Štefka (A3)	chair-woman of the Red Cross, <i>Marko's family clan</i>
Martin (A4)	chairman of the Firemen' Society, <i>Marko's family clan</i>
Stane (B6)	chairman of the Hunters' Society
Tonc (B7)	chairman of the Disabled Peoples' Society
Brane (A5)	chairman of the WWII Veterans Association, <i>Tine's family clan</i>
Zora (C10)	
Bine (B8)	
Gisela (C28)	pupil
Vida (C29)	pupil
Vojka (C30)	pupil
Gabi (C31)	pupil
Natalija (C32)	pupil
Lojzek (C33)	pupil
Angelca (C34)	pupil
Sonja (C35)	pupil
Lovro (C36)	pupil
Goran (B38)	
Vincent (B39)	
Jasna (C25)	
Sandra (B35)	
Zlata (B27)	
Zara (B36)	
Simon (C26)	student

## Appendix 12: Villagers' hopes and interests associated with rural tourism development

I am not sure what kind of tourism we should develop in Pišece. I don't want tourists all over the place like they are in Bizeljsko (neighbouring Local Community). They are dumping garbage all along the roads, they are often drunk, and they are often involved in accidents. Our roads are narrow and serpentine. But, I would not mind a bus of tourists per week.

(Tine, 1994)

We (Father Jože and some of his protégés) and a gastarbeider from Germany are discussing the opportunities to build a motel with about 300 beds here in Pišece. We feel that, if tourists could sleep somewhere in Pišece, they would stay in Pišece more days. And then our local guides (pupils of the village's school) can show them around the Pišece's sights, we have good wine.

(Parish priest, 1995)

We are thinking about building a planetarium on top of Orlica mountain. It is a beautiful spot to observe the stars. I already discussed this at the institute (Nuclear Station), and they seem to be very interested, too. This should attract specific types of tourists, more 'educated' ones, if you know what I mean.

(Marko, 1995)

Well, we are interested in starting agritourism. Since our children left, we have some empty rooms, and we could do with some extra income, but I do not want my wife to work too hard. We have worked hard all our lives, and we are not young any more. Perhaps we could also sell fruit and grapes to the tourists.

(Jure, 1996)

Rural tourism development would enable the renovation of the village's castle, it could be one of the most outstanding cultural and historical sights in the whole region of Posavje. A refurbished castle would attract tourists from Slovenia and abroad, and it could be also used as a casino or hotel.

(Maria, 1996)

I believe that development of tourism in Pišece will contribute to the improvement of the local infrastructure, and to the improvement of Pišece's landscape.

(Ana, 1995)

## SUMMARY

This study examines the policy and politics of the development of rural tourism at the local level in Slovenia. Its purpose was to increase our understanding of the socio-political dimensions of the rural tourism development process at the local community level by contributing to the current methods of investigating, describing and understanding of rural tourism.

This dissertation argues that sustainable rural tourism development cannot be achieved without the full support of the rural community that it will affect. Such communities are not homogeneous entities, thus it is necessary to critically investigate the various social realities of rural tourism transformation and negotiation processes.

Pišece, a small community of some 1200 inhabitants in the southeast of Slovenia, that requested assistance in developing their local community, was used for this case study.

The main focus was on the various social actors who tried to '*transform*' rural tourism development, as well as on the gap between the rhetoric of national planning and policy concerning the development of tourism (in rural areas), and on what actually happens 'on the ground'. Further, this dissertation addresses the gap found between researcher's and the locals' perceptions of rural development.

This dissertation approached rural tourism development at the local level from an actor-oriented perspective. It conceptualized rural tourism development as a dynamic ongoing process, with various actors negotiating and struggling to obtain the most benefits. The actor-oriented approach makes it possible to analyze rural tourism development within a wider social, economic and political context. Meaning, that it was possible to get an account of the new political and policy reality in Slovenia, in which the old hierarchies and structures were very much still present.

The actor-oriented approach further made it possible to understand the strategies of the various local and external social actors who were involved in rural tourism development. The case study from Pišece shows that various actors had genuinely different perspectives of rural development, based on their various vested interests, values and opinions. This means that in Slovenia (as everywhere else) the rural tourism development process at the local level was a negotiated process, and was influenced by various social realities.

This line of thinking called for a more ethnographic exploration of different actors' social realities when collecting data. The author of this dissertation collected data during three years of qualitative field research (1994 - 1997) from extended, mainly unstructured interviews, life-histories, extended case-studies, interface and situational analyses.

The results show that rural tourism development in Slovenia is the domain of both local as well as external actors. This dissertation shows that a large segment of the population of Pišece was indirectly involved in rural tourism development at the local level. Only a few local actors had direct influence over the ongoing development process. The local social groups such as family clans, networks, and cliques were very important in obtaining and controlling access to the decision-making process for development. It is through these family

clans, networks and cliques that various local actors become involved in various strategies to promote, control, reshape and make most of the internal and external interventions. The family clans in Pišece were, by definition, social groups based explicitly on kinship ties, while the local networks and cliques were built using other resources, such as religious orientation, political affiliation, value systems, and links to actors in positions of power in the local community and to external actors. These factors, importantly, influenced the exclusion and inclusion of actors from certain networks and cliques. Social divisions in Pišece made it very difficult for actors to shift between the networks and cliques. This is not true, however, of the younger generation. The youth of Pišece appeared to have fewer social and political biases than the older generations, and were more willing to cooperate.

The local power structure and dynamics of social interactions in Pišece influenced the success of individual and more collective 'projects'. Local power struggles finally ended in a stalemate, which could be only resolved by an outside intervention into Pišece's social reality. The intervention, when it occurred, gave the needed impetus to help proceed in the rural (tourism) development process. Intervention is never neutral, and soon after it took place, the negative impacts became apparent. Some external actors became enrolled in local 'projects' by local brokers, while others started to pursue their own interests.

This dissertation suggests that both local organizing practices and local dynamics are vital to future planning for sustainable rural tourism development. The development and implementation of policies, and options for sustainable development of rural tourism should not only identify which tourism assets must be sustained and how, but more importantly how they should identify the various interests of the social actors, and the allocation of power at the various levels of decision-making. Finally, any discussion of sustainable development should take into account the political dimension of rural tourism development. These findings apply to all other forms of tourism development whether it be rural or urban.

This dissertation is one of very few to address the social and political dimensions of rural tourism development in Slovenia. It challenges contemporary methods and theories of investigating, describing and understanding the rural tourism transformation process at community level. The points raised will facilitate and improve rural tourism planning by increasing the understanding of the decision-making process that occurs at the local level. They will also contribute to maintaining the long-term viability of local, rural tourist destinations by helping us to strike a balance between local and external needs and interests, and to facilitate cooperation between different actors.

The challenge for further research will be to investigate, in more detail, how the above findings combined with expanded accounts of different actor strategies, can be articulated into more structuralist and functionalist interpretations. The hope is that if policy makers can understand findings easily, they will be more ready to apply them, thereby creating better links between local social realities and State policy realities.

## SAMENVATTING

In dit proefschrift worden het beleid en de politieke aspecten van de ontwikkeling van ruraal toerisme op lokaal niveau in Slovenië bestudeerd. Het doel hiervan is een beter begrip te krijgen van de sociaal-politieke dimensies van het ruraal-toeristische ontwikkelingsproces op het niveau van de lokale gemeenschap door een bijdrage te leveren aan de huidige methoden van onderzoek en aan de omschrijving en begrip van het fenomeen.

In het proefschrift wordt betoogd dat een duurzame ontwikkeling van ruraal toerisme niet tot stand kan komen zonder de volledige medewerking van de betreffende rurale gemeenschappen. Dergelijke gemeenschappen zijn echter geen homogene eenheden. Het is dan ook noodzakelijk om de diverse sociale werkelijkheden van het ruraal-toeristische transformatie- en onderhandelingsproces te onderzoeken

Het onderhavige onderzoek speelt zich af in Pišece, een kleine gemeenschap in zuidwest Slovenië met ongeveer 1200 inwoners. De inwoners hadden zelf om hulp gevraagd voor de ontwikkeling van hun gemeenschap.

Het onderzoek richt zich primair op de verschillende sociale actoren die proberen de ontwikkeling van ruraal toerisme op lokaal niveau te 'transformeren'. Daarnaast wordt aandacht besteed aan de kloof tussen de retoriek van nationale plannen en beleidsmakers enerzijds en hetgeen wat zich daadwerkelijk afspeelt in de praktijk. Tenslotte wordt de leemte tussen de percepties van wetenschappers ten aanzien van rurale ontwikkeling en die van de lokale bevolking besproken.

De ontwikkeling van ruraal toerisme op lokaal niveau wordt benaderd vanuit een actor-georiënteerd perspectief. De ontwikkeling van ruraal toerisme wordt geconceptualiseerd als een dynamisch en gestadig voortgaand proces met verschillende actoren die zich beijveren om de grootste revenuen te verwezenlijken. Deze benadering maakt het mogelijk de ontwikkeling van ruraal toerisme in een breder sociaal, economisch en politiek kader te analyseren. Dit houdt in dat het mogelijk was de huidige politieke en beleidsmatige situatie in Slovenië te bestuderen, waarin de oude hiërarchie en structuren nog steeds aanwezig zijn.

De actor-georiënteerde benadering maakt het mogelijk een beter begrip te krijgen van de gehanteerde strategieën van de diverse lokale en niet-lokale sociale actoren, die betrokken zijn bij de ontwikkeling van ruraal toerisme. De case study over Pišece laat zien dat de verschillende actoren fundamenteel verschillende ideeën hebben over rurale ontwikkeling, gebaseerd op hun interesses, waarden en meningen. Dit betekent dat in Slovenië (zoals overal) het proces van ruraal-toeristische ontwikkeling op lokaal niveau een onderhandelingsproces is, dat wordt beïnvloed door de verschillende definities van de sociale werkelijkheid.

Deze gedachtenlijn volgend, moet de onderzoeker bij het verzamelen van gegevens de sociale feitelijkheden van de verschillende actoren vanuit een ethnografisch perspectief bestuderen. De auteur van dit proefschrift verzamelde, tijdens drie jaren kwalitatief veldonderzoek (1994-1997), gegevens van uitgebreide, voornamelijk ongestructureerde interviews, levensgeschiedenissen, uitgebreide case studies en 'interface-' en 'situatiele' analyses.

De resultaten van het onderzoek laten zien dat de ontwikkeling van ruraal toerisme in Slovenië het domein is van zowel lokale als externe actoren. Ook is duidelijk geworden dat een groot deel van de bevolking van Pišce indirect betrokken is bij de lokale ontwikkeling van ruraal toerisme. Slechts een gering aantal lokale actoren heeft echter directe invloed op het voortgaande ontwikkelingsproces. De lokale sociale groepen, zoals familieclans, netwerken en 'klieken', zijn zeer belangrijk bij het verkrijgen en beheersen van toegang tot besluitvorming betreffende deze ontwikkeling. Via deze familieclans, netwerken en 'klieken' raken lokale actoren betrokken bij strategieën voor het bevorderen, beheersen en hervormen van de interne en externe interventie teneinde zoveel mogelijk voordeel hieruit te halen. De familieclans van Pišce zijn per definitie sociale groepen die met elkaar verbonden zijn op grond van bloedverwantschap, terwijl de lokale netwerken en 'klieken' gebaseerd zijn op andere gronden, zoals godsdienstige banden, betrokkenheid bij een politieke partij, waardenoriëntaties, door contacten met actoren die een machtspositie bekleden in de lokale gemeenschap of door verbanden met externe actoren. Zulke factoren beïnvloeden zowel het uitsluiten van als het toelaten van actoren tot bepaalde netwerken en 'klieken'. Door deze sociale opdeling van Pišce is het voor actoren moeilijk zich te bewegen tussen de netwerken en de clubs. Dit geldt echter niet voor de jongere generatie. De jongeren van Pišce lijken minder sociale en politieke vooroordelen te hebben dan de ouderen en zijn zij eerder bereid tot samenwerken.

De lokale machtsstructuur en de wijze van sociale interactie in Pišce hebben het succes van particuliere en de meer collectieve projecten voor de ontwikkeling van ruraal toerisme beïnvloed. De lokale machtsstrijd resulteerde in een patstelling die alleen maar kon worden doorbroken door interventie van buiten af in Pišce's werkelijkheid. Nadat de interventie was gekomen, gaf die de benodigde stimulans om de ontwikkeling van ruraal toerisme te continueren. Echter, een interventie is nooit neutraal en al spoedig werden de negatieve effecten ervan duidelijk. Een aantal externe actoren raakte verwickeld in 'projecten' van lokale makelaars of bemiddelaars, terwijl anderen zelfstandig gingen opereren.

Dit proefschrift bewijst dat de plaatselijke machtsstructuren en georganiseerde praktijken, en de dynamiek hiervan, van vitaal belang zijn voor de toekomstplanning van een duurzame ontwikkeling van ruraal toerisme. Het ontwerp en de implementatie van planning en beleid en de opties voor een duurzame ontwikkeling van duurzaam toerisme moeten niet alleen moeten uitmaken welke kwaliteiten van toerisme ondersteund moeten worden en op welke wijze, maar ook, hetgeen nog belangrijker is, identificeren wat de belangen zijn van de verschillende sociale actoren en op welke wijze de macht op de diverse niveaus van besluitvorming moet worden gealloceerd. Tenslotte dient in iedere discussie over duurzame ontwikkeling van ruraal toerisme het politieke klimaat in aanmerking te worden genomen. Deze resultaten gelden voor alle andere vormen van toeristische ontwikkeling.

Dit proefschrift is een van de weinige die zich op de ontwikkeling van de sociale en politieke aspecten van ruraal toerisme in Slovenië richten. Het biedt een uitdaging voor de huidige theorieën en onderzoeksmethoden betreffende begripsvorming over het transformatieproces van ruraal toerisme op gemeenschapsniveau. De kwesties die aan de orde komen, zullen de planning van ruraal toerisme vergemakkelijken en verbeteren doordat de onderzoeker de besluitvormingsprocessen op lokaal niveau beter zal kunnen begrijpen. Deze onderwerpen zullen ook bijdragen aan het handhaven van de levensvatbaarheid van lokale bestemmingen voor ruraal toerisme door de onderzoeker te helpen bij het zoeken naar evenwicht tussen

lokale en externe behoeften en interesses, en bij het vergemakkelijken van samenwerking tussen de diverse actoren.

De uitdaging voor verder onderzoek zal liggen in het gedetailleerd nagaan hoe de resultaten, gecombineerd met uitvoerige beschrijvingen van de strategieën van de diverse actoren, kunnen worden geïnterpreteerd en verwoord vanuit een meer structuralistisch en functionalistisch perspectief. Uiteindelijk wordt gehoopt dat, wanneer de resultaten begrijpelijk zijn voor beleidsmakers, dezen meer bereid zullen die toe te passen, waardoor er een beter verband kan worden gelegd tussen de sociale realiteit van de lokale gemeenschap en de beleidsrealiteit van de staat.

## POVZETEK

Disertacija se ukvarja s politiko in politiziranjem razvoja podeželskega turizma na lokalni ravni. Namen disertacije je prispevati k trajnostnemu razvoju podeželskega turizma na ravni lokalnih skupnosti. Disertacija zagovarja dejstvo, da trajnostnega razvoja ni mogoče razvijati brez podpore lokalnih skupnosti. Vendar pa lokalne skupnosti niso homogene enote. Zato je potrebno kritično preučiti različne 'družbene stvarnosti' v procesu preoblikovanja podeželskega turizma.

Kot študijski primer je bila izbrana lokalna skupnost v jugovzhodni Sloveniji, v kateri živi okrog 1200 prebivalcev - krajevna skupnost Pišce, ki je zaprosila za pomoč pri razvoju njihovega kraja.

Na lokalni ravni je največ pozornosti namenjene različnim družbenim akterjem, ki skušajo 'preoblikovati' proces razvoja podeželskega turizma, kot tudi razkoraku med retoriko nacionalne politike, ko gre za načrtovanje razvoja turizma (na podeželju), in dejanskim stanjem v lokalnih skupnosti. Disertacija obravnava tudi razkorak v videnjih in pristopih raziskovalcev in lokalnega prebivalstva, ko gre za razvoj podeželja.

Pojav razvoja in preoblikovanja podeželskega turizma na lokalni ravni je teoretično opredeljen in analiziran s pomočjo takoimenovane 'actor-oriented' mikro perspektive (Long, 1984, 1989, 1992, 1994 in 1997). Ta pristop omogoča analizo procesa v širših družbenih, gospodarskih in političnih okvirih v katerih se le-ta odvija. V Sloveniji to pomeni, da je treba vzeti v zakup novo politično stvarnost, čeprav so stare hierarhije in strukture še vedno prisotne.

Prej omenjena perspektiva omogoča tudi razumevanje različnih strategij lokalnih in zunanjih akterjev, ki so vpleteni v proces razvoja. Raziskava je pokazala da različni akterji vidijo in razumejo razvoj podeželskega turizma različno, saj imajo različne interese, vrednote in mnenja, ki jih skušajo uveljaviti. Torej, v Sloveniji je proces razvoja podeželskega turizma, podobno kot povsod drugje, proces pogajanj in preoblikovanj, na katerega vplivajo različne družbene stvarnosti posameznih akterjev.

Za zbiranje podatkov je ta način razmišljanja zahteval pretežno etnografski pristop k raziskovanju družbenih stvarnosti različnih akterjev. Podatki, predstavljeni v disertaciji so bili zbrani s pomočjo kvalitativnih metod v obdobju od 1994 do 1997. Med kvalitativni metodami so bili uporabljeni nestrukturirani intervjuji, razširjeni študijski primeri ter analiza 'situacij' in 'interfaz' oziroma stičnih ploskev med dvema različnimjma 'družbenima stvarnostima'.

Raziskava je pokazala, da je razvoj podeželskega turizma v Sloveniji domena lokalnih kot tudi zunanjih akterjev. Na lokalni ravni je v razvoj večina prebivalcev vključena le posredno. V resnici ima vpliv na razvoj le manjši del lokalnega prebivalstva. Lokalne družbene mreže in klike so se pokazale kot zelo pomembne, saj vplivajo na možnosti za sodelovanje v procesu odločanja. S pomočjo mrež in klik različni lokalni akterji oblikujejo in udeležujejo strategije za promocijo, nadzor in preoblikovanje notranjih in zunanjih intervencij največkrat z namenom, da bi iz njih iztržili čim več. Lokalne mreže in klike se največkrat oblikujejo na temeljih kot so: družinske in sorodstvene vezi, versko prepričanje, politična pripadnost, pripadnost določeni družbeni skupini, in zveze z akterji na položajih moči bodisi znotraj lokalne skupnosti bodisi izven nje. Ti dejavniki lahko zavirajo ali pa odpirajo dostop do

posameznih socialnih mrež oziroma klik. V izbrani lokalni skupnosti je družbena razslojenost praktično onemogočala prehajanja iz ene mreže v drugo, razen v primerih, ko so za krajši čas prevagali skupni interesi. V tem primeru je bila očitna razlika med posameznimi generacijami. Mlajše generacije so bile manj obremenjene s preteklostjo in bolj odprte za sodelovanje ne glede na njihovo 'poreklo' kot starejše.

Kot je bilo pričakovano, lokalna struktura moči in dinamika odnosov v lokalni skupnosti v resnici pomembno vplivata na uspeh individualnih kot tudi bolj kolektivnih projektov. V izbrani lokalni skupnosti, naprimer, so se lokalni boji za moč in prevlado končali na mrtvi točki, kar je imelo negativne posledice za razvoj kraja. Za premaknitev s te točke je bila potrebna zunanja intervencija v družbeno stvarnost Pišec oziroma 'agencija'. Šele ta je dala potrebno spodbudo za nadaljni razvoj. Vendar pa zunanja intervencija ni nikoli nevtralna. Kmalu po posegu zunanjih akterjev je bilo moč opaziti negativne posledice te intervencije. Lokalni akterji so hitro 'vključili' zunanje akterje v svoje lastne projekte preko 'odpiralcev vrat' in 'posrednikov'. Po drugi strani pa so se tudi nekateri od zunanjih akterjev ukvarjali predvsem z zasledovanjem svojih lastnih interesov. V končni fazi je na izgubi lokalna skupnost kot celota.

V študiji je zato še posebej poudarjeno, da je pomembno pri načrtovanju nadaljnjega razvoja podeželskega turizma nujno preučiti lokalna razmerja moči in dinamiko odnosov v lokalni skupnosti, da bi lahko zagotovili trajnosten razvoj. Oblikovanje in izvajanje razvojne politike, ki bi zagotovila trajnosten razvoj podeželskega turizma, kot tudi katere koli druge oblike turizma, naj ne bi zajemalo le poizvedbe o tem katere turistične danosti naj bi razvijali in kako, temveč tudi poizvedbe na temo interesov različnih nosilcev razvoja in drugih akterjev ter delitve moči na različnih ravneh odločanja in kako le-te vplivajo na razvoj podeželskega turizma. Na kratko, vsaka razprava na temo trajnostnega razvoja bi morala vzeti pod lupo tudi politično dimenzijo razvoja.

Disertacija je ena od redkih študij, ki se ukvarjajo z družbeno in politično dimenzijo razvoja podeželskega turizma v Sloveniji. Hkrati predstavlja izziv sodobnim metodam in teorijam za preučevanje, opisovanje in razumevanje omenjenih dimenzij v procesu preoblikovanja razvoja podeželskega turizma na lokalni ravni. Izbrani pristop k razumevanju procesa odločanja in preoblikovanja v lokalnih skupnostih je mogoče koristno uporabiti pri načrtovanju razvoja podeželskega turizma, ki daje prednost vzdrževanju dolgoročne sposobnosti za razvoj danih lokalnih turističnih destinacij (usklajenost lokalnih in zunanjih potreb in interesov, in osredotočanje na pomoč pri oblikovanju partnerstev med različnimi akterji).

Izziv za prihodnje raziskave pa predstavlja vprašanje, kako je mogoče zgoraj omenjene rezultate skupaj s poglobljenim razumevanjem strategij različnih družbenih akterjev predstaviti bolj nazorno tudi z vidika strukturnih in funkcionalističnih teorij, torej z makro vidika. Na ta način bi dognanja postala dostopnejša in razumljivejša načrtovalcem razvojne politike, ki bi tako lahko zagotovili boljšo povezavo med 'lokalnimi družbenimi stvarnostmi' in 'državnimi razvojno-političnimi stvarnostmi'.

## CURRICULUM VITAE

Alenka Verbole was born on 31st August 1965 in Ljubljana, Slovenia, a young country which was a constituent partner of Former Yugoslavia until gaining its independence in 1991.

She attended the University of Ljubljana, graduating with an 'Agricultural Engineer with Diploma' title from the Biotechnical Faculty (Department of Agriculture). She earned the degree after completing her thesis entitled *Agriculture in the Work Community of Alpe-Adria*. Next, she worked as a professional journalist on staff with Slovenia's leading weekly newspaper for rural development which made it possible for her to combine both her profession and her hobby (journalism). She supported herself during her years of study working as a journalist in the News Editorial Office of Radio Slovenia.

She was hired as a 'young researcher' at the Biotechnical Faculty of the University of Ljubljana in 1990. One year later, in 1991, she received a scholarship for a degree of Master of Science in Management of Agricultural Knowledge Systems (MAKS) at the Wageningen Agricultural University in the Netherlands. She obtained her MSc in 1993, with completion of her thesis entitled *Slovenian Mountain Farmers and Their Role in Environmental Conservation: A Case Study of the Interface in the Triglav National Park*. She started work on her PhD at the University's Department of Environmental Sciences (Socio-Spatial Analysis and Recreation & Tourism Group) in December that same year.

Throughout her studies in Wageningen, Alenka was actively involved with the International Student Organization Wageningen (ISOW) as the Senior PR Officer, and later as an Advisor, and she was one of the initiators of the International PhD Student Network (IPSN).

Upon completing her MSc degree in 1993, she accepted a position as Associate Researcher at the Biotechnical Faculty of the University of Ljubljana. Since then, she has been very active in rural development and rural tourism development projects for Slovenia and other countries. She was a fellow of the Norwegian Research Institute at the Lillehammer College for Tourism (1995), and a British Council fellow at the University of Wales College of Cardiff (1994). She has lectured at her alma mater (1995) and published several articles. Titles of some of these are in the reference list of this publication.

Alenka Verbole belongs to various professional networks and associations (e.g., the European Society of Rural Sociologists for which she is a member of the Executive Council, and the International Federation of University Women). Her professional interests include rural development, rural tourism development, nature conservation, sustainability, local communities, and, last but not least, farm and rural women and their role in development. She is author of Slovenia's National Action Plan for Rural Women in Development, and of various articles related to gender issues.

In January 1999, she took up the post of Officer for Women in Development at FAO, Rome.